

## **COVID-19 Response Framework – The Foraker Group Proposal**

**March 26, 2021**

### **Proposal Description**

This past year has been a time of hardship and also of great adaptation. As the state's nonprofit association, we have helped Alaska's nonprofits navigate how to continue achieving their missions during a pandemic. We regularly work with hundreds of nonprofits in the Municipality of Anchorage who serve thousands of Alaskans tackling a wide variety of issues related to child care, homelessness and housing, arts and culture, education, the environment, recreation, economic development, and more. These nonprofits rely on Foraker for trusted information, trainings, and technical assistance. Weathering the pandemic has been a full-time job for us and for every nonprofit, both big and small.

Nonprofits have been on the front line in Alaska's response to the global pandemic and have truly operated as an essential component of the safety net for Alaskans physical, emotional, cultural, spiritual, and creative health during this pandemic. We doubled and tripled down to serve Alaskans even as we were closing our physical doors, and losing our volunteers. We did what Alaskans do to help each other. For the first time in history, the federal government recognized the essential role nonprofits play in our economy by including our sector in every relief package. The State of Alaska and the Municipality of Anchorage, along with many other local governments and tribes across the state, have honored that intent in the CARES distribution, and we are urging all governments to honor it again in distribution of funds under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

The pandemic highlighted the multisector approach that works so well in Alaska and Anchorage – nonprofits, government at all levels, and the private sector working together to serve Alaskans. We urge the municipality to maintain that commitment to partner with the nonprofit sector.

The ARPA funding can be about more than just a continuing response to the COVID pandemic – it can be a forward-looking approach to charting a strong, thoughtful, and strategic path for long-term recovery and resiliency. As trusted partners, nonprofits will be an integral part of recovery for Anchorage and Alaska, and our innovative approaches can help fuel resiliency.

To that end, Foraker proposes that we work with the municipality to leverage funds in ways that help nonprofits continue serving the people of Anchorage. Not unlike our partners at the Anchorage Community Land Trust and the Small Business Development Center who focus on the private sector, Foraker is the trusted voice for the nonprofit sector.

Foraker has been active in this area since day one of the pandemic. We have offered our services very quietly behind the scenes in every way possible to support the sector. Funding for Foraker would leverage your funding to:

- Provide technical assistance to Anchorage nonprofits to help them make strategic decisions about recovery and resiliency. This could include assistance with researching funding streams within ARPA and/or assistance with grant writing to access those funds as helpful and strategic.
- Communicate with Anchorage nonprofit leaders to share the latest on legislation, funding relief, and more through webinars (over 800 Anchorage nonprofit leaders attended these webinars in the past year), newsletters (with approximately 1,200 Anchorage subscribers), and our [COVID relief web page](#).
- Guide the municipality to develop nonprofit related funding tracks similar to what we did in round one as partners with Cook Inlet Lending and the mayor's office.

### **Framework Priority Area**

Economic Stimulus

#### **Is this a short- or long-term funding need? Or both?**

Both. While the funding is short-term, there will be a long-term impact on the resiliency of the Municipality of Anchorage safety net of health, human service, arts and civic nonprofits. For Foraker specifically, the funding is short-term. It will allow us to fully engage with the Municipality and ramp up our staffing to support access by the sector to APRA funds. This would not be possible without financial support. Additionally, over the past year Foraker has shifted the way we do business to meet the needs of the sector. Our typical business model relies on fee-for-service – nonprofits pay us for guidance and expertise. We expect that over the next year many of our team will be focused on providing free service related to recovery efforts. Eventually our business will return to “normal.”

#### **Cost Proposal**

An investment through Foraker of \$150,000 will cover temporary hiring of navigators/grant writers who will specifically focus on helping nonprofits access relief and recovery funding. It will also underwrite our outreach and education on relief and recovery opportunities and provide technical assistance needed by the assembly, the mayor's office, and Cook Inlet Lending to support the sector.

#### **What are the guiding principles in your proposal?**

Foraker's core values are words that motivate us to achieve our core purpose by weaving the essence of these ideas into every product and service we offer. These values are: Sustainability – Strategic – Collaborative – Urban/Rural/Native/Non-Native. The last value reflects our commitment to serving all Alaska's people and communities. The following statements are deeply rooted in our core values and drive how we show up and what we believe in our daily work.

- **The nonprofit sector is essential to our democracy.** Nonprofits bring people together to create change and provide a voice for civil society.
- **Nonprofits are a part of everyday lives.** Every day we as Alaskans rely on nonprofits to support our health and well-being, stand-up for causes that matter, bring people together, teach our young, care for our elderly, and so much more. Donors, volunteers, and staff work to improve our communities in both visible and invisible ways every day.
- **Successful leaders are supported leaders.** We need support from one another to achieve our greatest goals.
- **No organization can achieve mission on its own.** It is only when we connect, convene, and collaborate to strengthen relationships that we achieve something greater than ourselves and any one institution.
- **Leaders make better decisions when they represent the communities they serve.** Decisions made **with** a community are more viable than decisions made **for** a community.
- **Local leaders make things happen.** Community change is driven by local leaders. Collectively they best know their needs and solutions.
- **Strong nonprofits build strong communities.** When nonprofits work together within and across sectors, they solve complex problems, create opportunities for quality of life, and offer invaluable networks and connections that strengthen our sense of place.
- **Vibrant economies need nonprofits.** Nonprofits contribute to the wealth and resources of each region in our state by creating jobs, leveraging resources, promoting philanthropic investments, and engaging people in using their voice for the greater good.
- **Strong nonprofits are diverse nonprofits.** Foraker is uniquely positioned to research, develop, and implement learning tools that integrate the Foraker Nonprofit Sustainability Model and focus on increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion, resulting in a more robust and representative nonprofit sector in Alaska. We seek a shift in nonprofit board and staff composition so that they are reflective of community and mission.

- **We are part of the journey.** We believe we are a catalyst for this work and as each organization shifts there will be great value for the people and places of Alaska. We will build on what we are doing right and learn from missteps along the way. We recognize our understanding of the work will deepen and grow as we move forward. There is no path – there is only the journey.

**Who are your collaborators in your proposal?**

On behalf of all nonprofits and to help them access the information they need to act, we will work closely with those who have been our partners in the past in this specific work of helping nonprofits navigate COVID relief including Cook Inlet Lending and the Mayor's office. We also will continue our relationship with the Small Business Development Center that has been an advisor and co-educator for organizations across Anchorage and Alaska.