



**ABFE**

A Philanthropic Partnership for Black Communities

**Testing our Faith and Philanthropy's Truth  
Call to Action  
Regarding COVID-19**

Dear ABFE Members and Friends;

I am writing from my home office to share ABFE news and updates with you. These clearly are challenging times. We are blessed as an ABFE team to have safe homes so that we can carry on the important work of the organization – we do not take this privilege lightly. Like so many of you, we are working remotely until further notice. It is so easy to fall into a place of anxiety, channeled by fear but we must rely on each other to pull us back from the brink. This is when we must all lean in.

At ABFE, we are laser-focused on ensuring that the sector's response to this pandemic acknowledges that our communities are disproportionately impacted by crises. We know why we must be concerned. First, deep-seated inequities that disproportionately affect us – like a lack of paid sick leave and adequate health insurance, over-incarceration, income disparities, and access to medical facilities — can heighten the effects of a crisis like the Covid-19 outbreak on our people. Second, we know that resources – whether they come through the public or philanthropic sector – don't make it to Black-led organizations in our communities in amounts proportionate to need. These two factors together are the ingredients to disaster.

The philanthropic sector is responding with urgency to the virus outbreak – thank you to the foundations that have pledged to a set of actions that will ease the burden on grantees; <https://www.cof.org/news/call-action-philanthropys-commitment-during-covid-19>.

***Here is our Call to Action for the ABFE Network: It is now on us to ensure that Black-led organizations are aware of philanthropy's response, benefit from the flexibility that foundations are currently allowing and have access to emergency funds. Specifically, let's ensure that organizations that are led-by Black people and support Black communities know that grantmakers are:***

- a. loosening restrictions on grants;
- b. allowing project-based grants to be used for operating support;
- c. accelerating payment schedules;
- d. allowing grantees to keep sponsorship and registration fees for cancelled or postponed events; and
- e. postponing grant reporting requirements during this challenging time.

Community organizations who have been impacted by this pandemic should reach out to their funders and ask assistance with these practices in mind.

In addition, let's ensure that nonprofits in our neighborhoods are aware of the emergency response funds that are emerging around the country. One of the most extensive lists of funds that I have seen is the one compiled by the National Center on Family Philanthropy ([www.ncfp.org](http://www.ncfp.org)); the Council of Foundations also has a page dedicated to COVID-19 that can be helpful to community-based organizations as well (<https://www.cof.org/news/covid-19-resource-hub>).

A long-standing question for all of us is whether the sector will respond to this crisis, led by the principles of equity and justice. This is a test of our faith and philanthropy's truth on these issues. Stay vigilant and stay focused.

Wishing you peace,

Susan Taylor Batten, President and CEO