

81Thrive

In recent weeks and months, we've witnessed disruption and loss in ways not seen in our lifetimes. Fortunately, thanks in large measure to the generosity of our community and through the work of our nonprofits, many of the needs of our most vulnerable citizens are being met.

Given the seismic shifts in the economy, however, **we are concerned about our region, and more specifically our nonprofit sectors' ability to thrive** in a new era of fundamental change and disruption. Earned revenue and philanthropic support – long the twin pillars of non-profit sustainability – have been interrupted putting nonprofits at risk.

81Thrive, aims to partner with our nonprofit community and **provide capacity building support services to help them navigate changes** they face while also providing operational funds to meet critical needs. How we respond to these new realities and the needs of our vital nonprofits will define our community for many years to come.

PURPOSE

Since the onset of the pandemic, the Covid-19 Emerging Needs Fund has supported nonprofits by providing support for the delivery of basic, essential services to Rockford area residents, especially in the areas of housing and food insecurity.

Now, the work will pivot to **support for nonprofits addressing their own unforeseen needs as the pandemic continues to affect the future viability of our region's nonprofit organizations**. It is imperative that our nonprofits not only survive, but thrive so they are able to provide crucial programs and services for vulnerable individuals, children and families, and offer arts and cultural opportunities, all of which also help the Rockford region thrive.

The 815 Community Response Team's professional grant making team will oversee the application process. The Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence (NICNE) will guide the capacity building component enhancing nonprofits' ability to achieve their mission and sustainability.

WWW.815CRT.ORG

GOALS

Specifically, we aim to **raise and deploy \$2 million** in support of vital nonprofit organizations that support our residents and add to our region's vibrancy. Through 81Thrive, we seek to harness the collective generosity of Rockford to help our nonprofits to:

REBUILD

Nonprofits have been dramatically impacted by the pandemic through lost program revenue, cancelled events, increased demand for services, and required facility closings. Together, we can rebuild organizations and systems impacted by the worst economic storm of our lifetime in a way that builds capacity and sustainability.

REDESIGN

There will be no v-shaped recovery. Nonprofit losses are deep, and the opportunity is great to redesign service delivery and systems operation. We seek to help our nonprofits adapt to new realities while infusing financial resources to meet operational needs.

SUSTAIN

Our nonprofits are critical to the health of our community, we want to help them thrive now and into the future.

KEY MESSAGES

- The impact of COVID-19 is significant and will be long-lasting.
- Many of our nonprofit organizations have been unable to provide needed services, have had to drastically alter their service delivery, have lost needed revenue from event cancellations, seen disruptions in services due to social distancing and shelter-in-place orders, or have had to implement staff furloughs and lay-offs.
- For those delivering essential services, **nonprofit leaders have seen an increased demand for services** with deep concerns for the safety of staff, volunteers and participants.
- This is an extremely difficult time for all of us but especially for nonprofits. **We cannot afford to lose the vital resources they provide.**
- **We are reaching out to you as a community leader to ask you to join us, other grant makers, and donors as we pool resources to respond to the needs of nonprofits impacted by COVID-19 and support sustainability of vital nonprofit organizations.**
- **We recognize that we have more leverage and greater potential impact as a consortium of funders.** We believe our collective work can do more than individual efforts and coordination will reduce duplication and expedite results.
- We are working with the 815 Community Response Team and have set up the 81Thrive Initiative with a common process linked to professional supports for nonprofit organizations focused on rebuilding, resilience, and sustainability.
- We will be reaching out to you by phone to talk further and answer your questions. We look forward to our conversation and the opportunity to work together in the best interest of our community and the nonprofits we all support.

COLLABORATION

81Thrive is led by the 815 Community Response Team (815CRT), which is a collaboration of:

- Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence
- The Kjellstrom Family Foundation
- United Way of Rock River Valley
- Community Foundation of Northern Illinois
- Transform Rockford
- Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
- The Workforce Connection

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

Grants up to \$50K for operations paired with Capacity Building Support up to \$25K.

ELIGIBILITY

- 501(c)(3) organizations in the Rockford area, including those located in Winnebago, Stephenson, Ogle, and Boone counties, with a priority given to Winnebago County-based organizations.
- Organizations must be willing to enter into a Capacity Building Process with the Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence

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United Way of Rock River Valley -
81Thrive Initiative