

## Wage Equity Call to Action

The devaluing of work and workers by race and gender is America's founding story and a root cause of wealth inequities. Recent data from the University of Washington School of Social Work demonstrates that human services work, particularly in nonprofits, has been and continues to be devalued. For example, median wages for full-time nonprofit human services staff are 37% less than median wages for jobs of equivalent difficulty in non-care related industries. We know that women and people of color constitute a large percentage of the workers in the nonprofit sector so, again, this wage discrepancy is continuing to perpetuate wealth inequity on the basis of race and gender. Furthermore, the inequitable distribution of resources, complex grant and public contracting processes, and funding less than the true cost of services has contributed to high employee turnover and fewer resources directed to nonprofits and the communities they serve.

Wage equity is an issue that impacts the health and well-being of workers and communities across Washington. The Statewide Capacity Collaborative (SCC), a collaborative of private funders working in communities across Washington state, believes that all those who support and contract with the nonprofit sector must ensure that nonprofit workers are not just making a living wage but are earning a "thriving wage," meaning a wage that enables individuals and families to pay for all their necessities, have some disposable income, and save for the future (definition from Vega Mala Consulting, [www.vegamala.com](http://www.vegamala.com)).

As a result, the members of SCC are committed to reviewing and questioning our grantmaking practices and approaches and to making whatever changes we can, whenever we can. We may not create change overnight, but, over time, by working individually and collectively, we can have a significant impact.

We call on all funders, whether private or public, to join the SCC in asking questions and challenging our assumptions and our thinking. Specifically, we call on funders to:

1. Explore what a thriving wage is for those living in your community today. Be curious and investigate the nonprofit salary data that you use, data that is often rooted in race and gender bias. Share what you learn with your grantees.
1. Start a conversation with your staff, board, and grantees to ensure that you provide thriving wages, with benefits, to your staff and that your grants enable nonprofits to offer thriving wages, with benefits, to their staff.

2. Avoid judgment and explore different approaches to compensation and working conditions, such as a four-day work week or a work week that is less than the standard 40-hours.
3. Make inflationary adjustments to your grants and build-in future inflation adjustments for multi-year grants.
4. Consider increasing your annual grantmaking budget by increasing your annual payout percentage (if you have an endowment) to meet urgent community needs.
5. Fund the work that you support at the ecosystem level as well as funding individual nonprofits. This may mean building additional funding into each grant to support additional capacity or directly funding coalition work.
6. Sign on to the work of the Nonprofit Association of Washington on government contracting and urge your local and regional government contacts to assess and evolve their contracting practices.

We can, and must, continue to work to ensure that nonprofit workers receive a thriving wage that enables our nonprofits, and the communities they support, to flourish. If we do not, then we are contributing to a problem that will continue to have a detrimental impact on the health and resilience of our communities.

If we do nothing, we are part of the problem. If we commit to doing something, then we can be part of the solution.

Signed:

Bernier-McCaw Foundation  
Cedarmere Foundation  
Magic Cabinet  
Medina Foundation  
Satterberg Foundation  
Sherwood Trust  
Social Venture Partners Seattle  
And Members of the Statewide Capacity Collaborative

United Way of King County  
Asset Funders Network  
Sheng-Yen Lu Foundation