The Coronavirus Pandemic has produced a change to our lives in such a quick period of time like never seen before. New effects of the pandemic occur daily. Consequently, the responses to these effects evolve daily. Philanthropy will play a major role in aiding those affected by the pandemic crisis. Marion Community Foundation, as a leading philanthropic partner in the community, stands ready to assist however we can.

Given the magnitude of the problem, the primary assistance that will be needed must come from governmental sources. Such help is on the way with a myriad of stimulus packages and other governmental programs. Some problems of the pandemic will not be able to be solved by money, such as scarcity of medical equipment/supplies and breakdowns in supply chains. Some problems will arise immediately, while other problems will only surface much later. What may seem urgent or useful now, may be less of a priority later. Too much is unknown.

Based on what we know today, Marion Community Foundation stands ready as follows:

**Focus and Funding Priorities**
Marion Community Foundation is engaging with the community to identify and respond to the emerging needs brought on by the pandemic. The magnitude of this crisis will require far more than the Foundation’s resources. One response by the Foundation will be to collaborate with charities and bring partners together that can meet urgent or emergency needs. The Foundation will also be a resource to disseminate information about other forms of assistance provided by both public and private means.

While assisting with present needs during this crisis, Marion Community Foundation will not forgo its regular focus to support the ongoing need for costs of operating and annual programs for our local non-profit and charitable organizations. This balance will have the purpose of allowing these organizations to sustain and meet the future demand for their services, lost revenue, and incurred costs.

**Immediate Emergency Assistance and Response**
To not duplicate efforts, Marion Community Foundation will not be creating a special emergency fund, but will instead support the efforts of its ally, the United Way of North Central Ohio, to maintain that organization’s “Community Relief Fund”. You can find information about that fund at: [https://unitedwaynco.org/covid19-response-resources/](https://unitedwaynco.org/covid19-response-resources/)

Marion Community Foundation is open to receive inquiries for grant money assistance via phone (740-387-9704) or email (info@MarionCommunityFoundation.org). In keeping with our general policy, any grants awarded by Marion Community Foundation must only be made to charities with the 501(c)(3) designation (confirmed by the IRS) and 501(c)(3) equivalents (i.e., schools, hospitals, and governmental bodies).

**To make a grant request proposal, submit a written proposal via email to:**
info@MarionCommunityFoundation.org. Such proposal should contain the following: (1) a detailed description of the grant’s need; (2) a summary of your organization’s purpose; (3) the cost of the program; (4) other resources available to you; (5) other organizations with which you are partnering or collaborating; (6) a timeframe for the use of the grant money; and, (7) complete contact information.

There is no deadline for grant applications and there is no timetable for grant decisions by Marion Community Foundation. Grant proposals will be evaluated in relation to the needs of the community, the priority of those needs, the relationship of proposals to other proposals, and the ability of the Foundation to adequately address those needs with the available resources of the Foundation. Although the offices of Marion Community Foundation are closed during this crisis, the Foundation’s staff remains working full time and we monitor our phone and voicemail at 740-387-9704.
Long-term Marion Community Foundation Grant Programs
Marion Community Foundation has an impactful “Community Grants Program”. The application for this larger grants program can be found at our website, www.MarionCommunityFoundation.org. The application will be open June 1 (or sooner, if possible), and the application deadline will be July 13, 2020. Decisions for this program are not typically made until October 1, but we encourage your organization to look ahead to the possibilities of grant awards from this program for longer-term and larger needs. It remains our purpose to provide financial support to charities that allow them to meet the needs in our community.

Council on Foundations Pledge
Finally, as a guide star to its actions, Marion Community Foundation has joined numerous other public and private foundations across the country in a pledge initiated by the Council on Foundations. Accordingly, over the days, weeks, and months ahead, Marion Community Foundation pledges to do the following:

- Loosen or eliminate the restrictions on current grants. This can include: converting project-based grants to unrestricted support; accelerating payment schedules; and not holding grantees responsible if conferences, events, and other project deliverables must be postponed or canceled.
- Make new grants as unrestricted as possible, so nonprofit partners have maximum flexibility to respond to this crisis. We will also support organizations created and led by the communities most affected that we may not fund currently.
- Reduce what we ask of our nonprofit partners, postponing reporting requirements, site visits, and other demands on their time during this challenging period.
- Contribute to community-based emergency response funds and other efforts to address the health and economic impact on those most affected by this pandemic.
- Communicate proactively and regularly about our decision-making and response to provide helpful information while not asking more of grantee partners.
- Commit to listening to our partners and especially to those communities least heard, lifting up their voices and experiences to inform public discourse and our own decision-making so we can act on their feedback. We recognize that the best solutions to the manifold crises caused by COVID-19 are not found within foundations.
- Support, as appropriate, grantee partners advocating for important public policy changes to fight the pandemic and deliver an equitable and just emergency response for all. This may include its economic impact on workers, such as expanded paid sick leave; increasing civic participation; access to affordable health care; and expanded income and rental assistance. It should also include lending our voices to calls to action led by grantee partners, at their direction and request.
- Learn from these emergency practices and share what they teach us about effective partnership and philanthropic support, so we may consider adjusting our practices more fundamentally in the future, in more stable times, based on all we learn.

Most importantly, follow the social distancing and stay-at-home orders, as well as proper hygiene methods, to avoid getting and spreading the virus. We are all in this together. It will be a difficult time and it will be a long time. Such difficult times always bring out the best in humankind, and this event will be no different. We thank you for all you are doing, and will do, for our community. Now, more than ever, Marion Community Foundation is: For You; For Marion; Forever.

Be well,

Dean L. Jacob
President & CEO