

March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Dear Chair Pratt and Members of the Senate Jobs and Economic Growth Finance and Policy Committee,

We write to strongly encourage Senate support of a nonprofit relief fund. We ask that you go beyond the Governor's recommendation of a \$50 million dollar fund and instead support Senator Nelson's bill for a \$200 million Nonprofit Relief Fund (SF3593). This legislation would provide vital support for the nonprofit sector – we are one of several nonprofit organizations submitting this ask along with the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits for support to the organizations who have remained a constant for community through a pandemic and major economic and social shifts.

The mission of YWCA Minneapolis is eliminating racism, empowering women and girls, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. We are one of more than 200 local associations connected to YWCA USA – and all of our associations uplift our mission in unique ways. YWCA Minneapolis is one of four YWCA entities in Minnesota, with sister sites in St. Paul, Duluth, and Mankato. YWCA Minneapolis operates three health and wellness sites, five early childhood education centers, a workforce development teacher training programs, and one of the largest out-of-school time youth programs in the city.

During this time of great community need, we have been carrying extra costs to keep our doors open during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to keep spaces for children, youth, community members, and staff - safe and accessible. We have tried to retain teaching staff and frontline health and wellness staff, who have been most impacted by the pandemic. Behind the scenes challenges have continued to grow – cleaning protocols, staffing shortages, fair wages, etc. At the same time, with our fitness memberships decreasing each month as the pandemic continues, a source of revenue that fuels YWCA programs is dwindling.

COVID-19 continues to have a significant impact **on the operations of our Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs**. The rate of COVID-19 cases, and associated classroom closures, in our centers increased at the end of second quarter with the emergence of the Omicron variant.

**Downtown**  
1130 Nicollet Mall  
Minneapolis, MN 55403  
612-332-0501

**Midtown**  
2121 East Lake Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55407  
612-215-4333

**Uptown**  
2808 Hennepin Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55408  
612-874-7131

**North Commons Park**  
1801 James Avenue North  
Minneapolis, MN 55411  
612-522-6559

**Children's Center at  
Abbott Northwestern Hospital**  
800 East 28th Street #15103  
Minneapolis, MN 55407  
612-863-0971

**Children's Center  
at Ecolab**  
80 West 7th Street  
St. Paul, MN 55102  
651-250-3540

**Children's Center at Hubbs  
Center for Lifelong Learning**  
1030 University Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55104  
651-744-7525

[ywcamps.org](http://ywcamps.org)

These classroom closures have a significant financial impact on the YWCA, as we are not currently able to bill private pay or Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) families for these closure periods (see SF 2876 for additional support for this issue).

The pandemic continues to play a major role in the outcome of **health and wellness (H&W)**. At the end of December, we were at 3,098 memberships, which represents 82% of our budgeted goal. As COVID-19 waves hit our community, so went the "peaks-and-valleys" associated with the general public's interest in venturing into a health club environment.

Throughout the pandemic, nonprofits have risen to meet the needs of the community. The pandemic made us appreciate how critical quality child care is. It highlighted the need for health care for everyone. Most of all, it made apparent how interconnected and dependent we all are on one another. In order for nonprofits to survive this pandemic, it's imperative that lawmakers create legislative action to protect Minnesota's nonprofit organizations from the impact of the pandemic. Nonprofits in our community are not only on the front lines delivering critical services, they also employ 730,000 Minnesotans (around 13 percent of the population, according to the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits 2018 Economic Report).

A general operating grant would help us supplement budget shortfalls we've experienced from an overall organizational standpoint in relation to operational costs at our three YWCA owned facilities; keep educators employed and children in early childhood education; and provide necessary wellness, justice, and youth programming to our community.

Thank you for the work you do for Minnesotans and for hearing this recommendation.

Sincerely,

***YWCA Minneapolis***