



Addressing COVID Needs on the National Level

Lilly Endowment's decades-long relationships with key national charitable organizations were leveraged in 2020 to help meet various compelling needs arising from the pandemic. In April, the Salvation Army was granted \$15 million to bolster its efforts to provide for the basic needs of those most negatively affected by the pandemic. With \$10 million allocated to the national office and \$5 million to Indiana, the funding enabled the organization to provide food, shelter and counsel to those who lost jobs as the economy imploded.

The Endowment also granted \$10.5 million to the American Red Cross, including \$3 million for its Indiana Region. The infusion helped with sheltering, feeding, buying and distributing relief supplies, storing equipment, and providing health services. The grant, along with an earlier grant from the Endowment-supported Central Indiana COVID-19 Community Economic Relief Fund (C-CERF), helped the Indiana Region “ensure our community’s blood supply remains strong” among other benefits, Robert L. Gauss, chair of the Greater Indianapolis Chapter, noted in the spring.

The Endowment made a \$3 million grant to the United Service Organizations (USO) to support its Combat COVID-19 Initiative. The initiative is providing pandemic relief and supporting the recovery and resilience of military communities throughout the U.S. and around the world. The grant in December enabled the USO to bolster food delivery, virtual programming and military transition efforts, which are helping the USO build community and keep military service members and their families connected as they face isolation and other hardships because of the pandemic.

A \$5 million grant to UNCF addressed immediate necessities of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and helped position the institutions to flourish into the future.



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When the pandemic hit, UNCF and our HBCUs were not sufficiently prepared to operate virtually. Lilly Endowment support is helping us build robust online capabilities that [we] will need for long-term recovery and transformation.

— Michael Lomax, UNCF



The grant supported training for more than 700 faculty at its 37 member institutions and helped schools convert in-person curricula to online formats. Expanded training with institutions, including Martin University in

Indianapolis, will continue in 2021. The shock of shifting to remote learning also propelled UNCF to begin developing a long-discussed comprehensive virtual learning platform called HBCUv. UNCF President Michael Lomax anticipates the platform’s pilot to go live in early 2022 (above).

Recognizing the heavy reliance of UNCF and its member institutions on galas and other in-person fundraising events, the venerable organization is leveraging part of the Endowment grant to design and launch a virtual fundraising center. UNCF is consulting with Indiana University’s Lilly Family School of Philanthropy in Indianapolis to create the center and to train UNCF staff and staff at member institutions.

Other Endowment grants of \$1 million each are supporting historically Black theological schools that were facing significant risk of losing students who, because of the economic effects of the pandemic, were considering dropping out of seminary.

Payne Theological Seminary in Ohio quickly created one-time scholarships for 20 students deemed at risk of dropping out after the churches that support them closed due to COVID restrictions. President Michael Joseph Brown says that all 20 students stayed.

He believes that the Endowment’s infusion into Payne persuaded additional donors to open their wallets. The school

received \$150,000 in donations to support doctoral students, Brown adds.

Brown’s vision extends well beyond the pandemic. The seminary is using part of its grant to establish a Lay Leadership Institute, with the first class expected to graduate in 2023. Another portion of the grant has sparked two scholarships—one went to an international student, whom he hopes will inspire social change around the world.

“The COVID grant helped us address immediate needs and also do new things,” Brown says. “Grants like this can be transformative and mean the difference between thriving or just surviving. The future looks pretty good to us.”

- Support to the American Red Cross ensured that the nation could maintain its blood supply, while the USO was able to help military members and their families stay connected during the pandemic (opposite page).
- Payne Theological Seminary President Dr. Michael Joseph Brown—standing before a portrait of the school’s namesake, AME Bishop Daniel A. Payne, and his wife, Eliza—led efforts to help students facing COVID-related economic challenges stay enrolled (below).



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