



MOSES TAYLOR  
FOUNDATION

*Advancing Our Legacy of Health*



April 10, 2017 | A letter from the President and CEO of Moses Taylor Foundation



## Dear Grantees, Colleagues, and Friends:

It has become commonplace to see the work we care about debated by pundits and evaluated on cable news. While it remains to be seen how changes in federal and state policies and funding will impact our region, it is clear that change is coming. At Moses Taylor Foundation, we think a lot about our role as a champion of the region's health-specifically, the best ways to respond to the needs of our partners and advocate on behalf of our communities. No doubt you are also engaged in similar discussions in your organizations and with your boards. It's in that spirit that we'd like to share some lessons we've learned about navigating uncertainty.

The current political climate is frequently described as unprecedented. However, there's a lot that we've learned from other times of great change about nonprofit resilience and how nimble, focused nonprofits withstand challenging circumstances.

### Reaffirm Your Mission

While the context of our work may change, the durable, compelling mission that grounds our work remains the same. Have you considered what the best and highest use of your organization is at this time to serve your mission and the people you care about? Most commonly foundation's like ours are recognized as grantmakers. However, the current context also compels us to consider how we can activate our convening, communications, or thought leadership capacity to advance our mission and support our partners. What are you compelled to do? This is not an invitation to mission creep, but a challenge to consider what it means to sharpen your focus in service to your mission at this particular time. Has your board or your leadership team discussed what's at stake for your organization or the people you serve? If tough decisions need to be made, what programs and services are most critical to the people you serve?

**Resource:** [BoardSource, In Times of Change Board Members Must Be Advocates](#)

## Prioritize Revenue Scenario Planning

How well does your leadership team or your board understand the funding mix that sustains your organization? While you may not have funding that comes directly from a state or federal source, do you have revenue that comes indirectly through another entity, such as a county, collaborative or partner? What would be the impact on your organization if there was a significant loss of public funding? Do you have updated cash flow projections and systems in place that can provide timely data and aid management in decision making?

**Resource:** *Nonprofit Finance Fund*,  
[Managing in a Changing Economic Climate: Questions to Consider](#)

## Connect with Peers

There's strength in numbers. Moses Taylor Foundation benefits greatly from connecting with other foundations and learning how they are working at this time to support their nonprofit partners. Likewise, there is much that you can learn from connecting and collaborating with your industry peers. How are other organizations like yours thinking about scenario planning? What advocacy is happening at a local or national level to which you can contribute? What information is available about planned legislation that may impact your work? Conferences, webinars and one-on-one conversations with peer organizations locally and nationally provide vital support and resources.

**Resource:** *Philanthropy News Digest*,  
[Why and How Do Nonprofits Work Together?](#)

## Tell Your Story

Last fall, we invited Andy Goodman from the Goodman Institute to deliver a program on storytelling. And while storytelling is important for a host of reasons including fundraising, outreach, board development and advocacy, it is particularly critical during times like these. You know well the real stories behind headlines regarding women's health, afterschool programs and homelessness. You also know the cumulative impact of those individual stories and can speak with specificity about outcomes and return on investment. These are critical stories to share in your boardrooms with public officials and the broader community.

**Resource:**  
[The Goodman Center](#)

## Take Care of Your Team

In challenging times, it is particularly important that nonprofits are attentive to the well-being of their teams. Increasing demands and shrinking resources thwart the insight and creativity required to respond quickly and effectively to emerging needs. Opportunities for open dialogue and renewal are critical to aiding teams in navigating uncertainty. Earlier this year, we launched an effort to promote nonprofit workplace wellness. We were inspired by the great interest in this project and the creativity of the grant applications we received. Throughout 2017, we will highlight these grantees and share practical applications of their grants that other nonprofits can adopt.

**Resource:** *The Huffington Post*,  
[The Critical Need for Self-Care in Our Work](#)

## Stay in Touch

As you are navigating uncharted territory, we hope that you will stay in touch with us and your other funding partners. You have direct knowledge of what's happening in our community and how proposed policy and budget changes will impact your organization and the people you serve. We want to hear about the opportunities and challenges you see. It helps us align our funding priorities with your areas of greatest need and better understand the levers for change and impact.

Without question, philanthropy can never replace substantial losses in public funding. Nonetheless, Moses Taylor Foundation is committed to standing with you and assisting in meaningful ways as we navigate an uncertain future. If you have additional thoughts or recommendations on how we can best support you during this critical time, please feel free to contact me.

As always, thank you for all you do to improve NEPA's health.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "LaTida Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "LaTida" being more prominent than the last name "Smith".

**LaTida Smith**

President and CEO

Moses Taylor Foundation

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**About Moses Taylor Foundation**

Moses Taylor Foundation is a private foundation dedicated to building healthy communities and providing opportunities for people in Northeast Pennsylvania, especially the most vulnerable, to lead healthier lives. The Foundation was endowed in 2012 with the net proceeds from the sale of the Moses Taylor Health Care System to Community Health Systems of Franklin, Tennessee. Information on the work of Moses Taylor Foundation is available on the Foundation's website: [www.mosestaylorfoundation.org](http://www.mosestaylorfoundation.org).