

September 12, 1988

SUBJECT: First Meeting of the Statewide Nonprofit Organization
Leaders, August 31, 1988

The first meeting of the statewide nonprofit organization leaders was held at WKKF on August 31, 1988, from 10 a.m. through lunch. Ten leading nonprofit organizations in the state of Michigan were represented. The participants and a brief description of the organization follows:

Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Michigan (AICUM) -- represented by Richard Marburger, Chairman of the Board, and Edward Blews, Jr., President. A membership association of Michigan's private colleges and universities -- chief function is advocacy. ✓

Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF) -- represented by John E. Marshall, III, Chairman of the Board, and Dorothy Johnson, President. A membership association of Michigans' foundations and corporate giving programs -- chief functions are technical assistance and advocacy. ✓

Michigan Association of School Administrators (MASA) -- represented by James Doyle, President of the Board, and Donald Elliott, Executive Director. A membership organization composed of school superintendents of central office administrators -- chief functions are technical assistance and advocacy. ✓

Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) -- represented by Mary Jason, President of the Board, and Justin King, Executive Director. A membership organization including every school district in Michigan -- chief functions are inservice training, conferences, and superintendent searches. ✓

Michigan Health Council (MHC) -- represented by Terence Davies, M.D., Chairman of the Board, and James Tarrant, Executive Director. Chief functions are to serve as a convenor and facilitator, to support health promotion efforts, and advocacy. ✓

Michigan Community College Association (MCCA) -- represented by Thomas M. Bernthal, Executive Director, (Richard Calkins, President of the Board, had planned to attend but was detained by an emergency) -- chief functions are inservice training and advocacy. ✓

Michigan Council for the Arts (MCA) -- represented by Kathryn Martin (a board member designated as the surrogate for Leon S. Cohan, Chairman of the Board), and Barbara "Bunny" Goldman, ✓

Executive Director -- chief functions are support for artists and promotion of the arts.

Michigan League for Human Services (MLHS) -- represented by Ernest C. Browne, Jr., Chairman of the Board, and Beverley McDonald, Executive Director -- chief functions are research, advocacy, and administration of the Michigan Emergency Cash Flow Loan Fund for nonprofit organizations. ✓

Presidents Council of State Universities of Michigan (PCSUM) -- represented by Arend "Don" Lubbers, Chairman of the Board, and Glenn Stevens, Executive Director -- chief functions are a convening and self-regulating role among state universities. ✓

United Way of Michigan (UWM) -- represented by Fulton B. Eaglin, Chairman of the Board, and Howard L. Shapiro, Executive Director -- chief function is to serve as the coordinator for the state's 106 autonomous local United Ways. ✓

The meeting was convened in the Kellogg Room by Russell G. Mawby, who explained that WKKF had decided to convene the meeting because it seemed that Michigan's nonprofit sector faced common challenges and opportunities. In terms of challenges, all nonprofits are concerned with challenges to the tax-deductibility of contributions, contemplated changes in the Unrelated Business Income Tax, reductions in federal support, and the elimination of the nonitemizer deduction. In terms of opportunities, there seemed to be great potential for mutually beneficial actions through cooperation, which had never been tried before in Michigan.

Dr. Mawby then sketched out seven areas of mutual interest for all nonprofits:

Education (general, preservice, inservice);

Increasing philanthropy (expanding the philanthropic "pie");

Legislative/Regulatory arena (promoting positive legislation and regulation);

Research (expanding the frontiers of knowledge in theory and in practice);

Recognition of the nonprofit sector (assuring that donors, volunteers, and professionals receive due credit and praise);

Economic impact of nonprofit organizations (to demonstrate how many jobs and how much economic activity is directly traceable to this sector); and

Media (to promote positive coverage and avert negative coverage).

In the discussion that followed, Dr. Mawby asked the assembled leaders to add to, subtract from, disagree, or agree with the list. The viewpoints of the leaders showed a great diversity of opinion. Stevens and Blews felt that the basic concern for NPOs lay in legislative and regulatory initiatives. Eaglin, on the other hand, saw the "shrinking pie" to be the paramount issue. Davies felt that education was most important. Elliott's main concern was to raise public awareness of the nonprofit sector. Marburger commented that it was important to discover a "single concept" to recommend to funders. Shapiro felt that the real issue was competition between the nonprofits which is counterproductive and wastes much time, money, and effort. Given the discussion, it seems sensible to say that "reducing competition" should become number eight on the list.

Blews suggested another addition, that of voluntary leadership. Martin agreed that this is important, but McDonald believed that it could lead to a tendency to forget the importance of volunteers who do essential but unglamorous tasks. Accordingly, "voluntary leadership" should be added to the list as number nine.

The meeting then adjourned for lunch. The group divided into three subgroups led respectively by Lubbers, Shapiro, and Johnson. A list of people at each of the three tables is appended. Each group was charged to consider the questions of whether this meeting was useful, whether it would be desirable to meet again, whether any other group should be invited, and if so, to name the group/groups. The three leaders reported as follows at the end of lunch:

Table 1 (Lubbers) -- The meeting has been very useful. Only the CEOs should meet again in Lansing to set goals for future cooperation. CMF's Improving Philanthropy effort could provide staff work for this effort. Other groups could and should be invited but not until this effort becomes more mature.

Table 2 (Shapiro) -- This has been a useful meeting which could be the first step toward a statewide nonprofit organization council. There should be another meeting like this one (that is, with both board and CEO involvement) in Lansing, and Stevens volunteered the facilities of PCSUM as the venue. It is probably premature to add other organizations at this time but eventually religion must be included.

Table 3 (Johnson) -- The meeting has been useful possibly as the first step towards a Michigan Nonprofit Coalition (not a formal organization, but a coalition of organizations). WKKF should convene a meeting of the CEOs only in Lansing. The group should not be expanded at this time, but ultimately more health representation and youth-serving groups will need to be included.

It was decided that the organization would stay the same size for now, that there would be a meeting of CEOs only at PCSUM offices in Lansing in early autumn. The meeting concluded with a group portrait.

Subsequently, the meeting of the Executive Directors was set for October 17, 1988, at the PCSUM offices in Lansing. Peter R. Ellis and Joel J. Orosz will represent WKKF.

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Table Assignments
August 31, 1988

Table 1

Lubbers
Mawby
Eaglin
Doyle
Jason
Tarrant
McDonald
Patterson

Table 2

Shapiro
Orosz
Marburger
Marshall
King
Stevens
Goldman

Table 3

Johnson
Ellis
Blews
Elliot
Davies
Bernthal
Browne
Martin