



### **Raising The Philanthropic Tide**

Over the past 18 months, the world has experienced a crisis unprecedented in our lifetimes. For many, it was an experience of isolation and fear. In contrast, those of us involved with the [Center for Nonprofit Leadership](#) were inspired by what happens when a community faces a crisis with a unified mission.

The words of our member organizations speak volumes about how they see themselves in this community:

Elaine Sierra of [Nevada County Citizens for Choice](#) shares, “Nevada County's nonprofit sector is particularly strong for a community of our size, helping to meet many, diverse needs. Through our mission-driven work, nonprofits strengthen our social fabric, by providing vital health and human services that the private and government sectors could not address on their own, or by enhancing community members' quality of life through arts and entertainment and cultural events.”

Lang Waters of [Sierra Streams Institute](#) adds that, “Nonprofits cover all of the gaps in services that our local government doesn't provide and supplements many others they do provide. As government funding for services dries up, nonprofits step up. Nonprofits are an integral part of our local safety net, and the general well-being of our community and environment.” This vision of our member organizations as part of a larger philanthropic community and as makers of opportunity is integral to their outsized impact.

At the [Center for Nonprofit Leadership](#), we think of our organization as the rising tide that raises all philanthropic ships. Our mission is to strengthen the nonprofit community to better realize the philanthropic good. We achieve our goals in a wide range of ways: We provide educational programming and access to resources for staff, volunteers, and board members; we advocate on behalf of the varied needs of our member organizations; and we encourage and help to facilitate collaboration between the philanthropic sector, for-profit businesses, grant makers, and governmental agencies. Through a partnership with the [County of Nevada](#), we are also assessing ways to make public monies more accessible to not-for-profits while ensuring the highest level of accountability.

According to Julie Hardin of [InConcert Sierra](#), “InConcert Sierra is a founding member of CNL, and our board, staff and committee members have taken countless workshops and seminars that have helped our organization create a strong foundation and culture. It is due to CNL that ICS adopted policies that were either necessary or suggested, created a much-needed sustainability fund, long-term strategic planning, and a solid patron and funding base.”

Since 2020, the [Center for Nonprofit Leadership](#) and its incredible Director, Wendy Willoughby, have adapted to provide support, programing, and structure that helped many organizations weather this storm. We provided critical support to the [Nevada County Relief Fund](#) that helped keep our businesses going. We hosted Executive Director Exchanges that brought our leadership together to share concerns, solve problems, provide access to information about funding opportunities, and share resources and draft policies. We increased the scope of our educational programming to assist with fundraising, volunteer and board communication, staff management, virtual communication, and a wide range of other COVID-necessary topics, Sadly, we also experienced the loss and struggle of some of our members, and we hope this series will help all of us to take stock of the power of giving in our lives and community.

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