VOTERS’ GUIDE TO NONPROFIT ISSUES
In Mesa County and Beyond

Produced by the Community Impact Council

2020 GENERAL ELECTION
Dear Voter,

The Community Impact Council of Mesa County (CIC) is pleased to present its first Voter Guide addressing the future of nonprofits and the people they serve under newly elected leadership in November, 2020.

The CIC exists to strengthen Mesa County nonprofits and increase their impact by providing a collective voice for advocacy and forum for education and collaboration. The all-volunteer organization acknowledges the web that connects individuals, businesses, nonprofits, and governmental agencies and facilitates a strong interdependency by welcoming businesses and individuals – as well as nonprofits – as members. In 2015, the CIC grew from the roots set by the Human Services Council and expanded its membership to include nonprofits representing all sectors: animals, the environment, health and human services, and arts and culture.

The impact of nonprofits in Mesa County cannot be overstated. In addition to the safety-net services provided to thousands of people of all ages in need of housing, healthcare and food, nonprofits shelter and find homes for animals; land is preserved and conserved for wildlife habitat, recreation, and water quality; children receive supplemental education and protection; and art and music add dimension and depth to our community’s culture and enjoyment. And while all of this happens, nonprofits contribute substantially to the regional economy, as much as $133.8 million, in fact (The Economic Contribution of Community Impact Council Members on the Mesa County Economy. Nathan Perry, Phd. Colorado Mesa University. 2017).

The role of nonprofits in strengthening and supporting communities continues to grow, and especially now in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic as people struggle with new challenges daily that threaten their physical and mental health, families, and livelihoods. If unemployment continues to rise and tax revenue decreases, public support for individuals and families will be further strained. Mesa County’s nonprofit community has a track record of efficiently and effectively rising to meet the needs of our neighbors. Businesses, too, have contributed significantly and generously to the nonprofit community. Response to the pandemic in supporting our community will require an “all hands on deck” approach; government officials who understand the needs of the community and the role nonprofits play will be a contributing factor to the strength and pace of our collective recovery.

With the upcoming election, we wanted to give citizens an opportunity to hear from candidates on their perspective on nonprofits. The CIC asked candidates in local, state, and federal races for their responses to two nonprofit-related questions. This Guide presents a non-biased forum for candidates to express their qualifications and platforms on issues affecting the communities and people of Mesa County. The CIC does not endorse any candidates. Their unedited responses are presented as submitted.

Your voice is an important part of helping Mesa County be a thriving and vibrant place to live, work and play, for all. We encourage you to vote, whether by mail or at a polling place on Tuesday, November 3, 2020.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors, Community Impact Council

Community Impact Council

The CIC is a non-profit coalition whose mission is “To provide a collective voice and forum for advocacy and education of non-profits in Mesa County.” There are 68 members of the CIC, several of whom are private businesses or government funded agencies, and all of whom work together to further the CIC’s mission.
**KEY DATES**

- **OCTOBER 9**
  - Ballots mailed to registered voters the week of October 9th

- **OCTOBER 19**
  - In-person early voting begins at polling stations

- **OCTOBER 26**
  - Last day to submit an online voter registration to receive a mail-in ballot

- **NOVEMBER 3**
  - Election Day!
  - You can still register to vote and vote in-person until 7 pm

**NONPARTISAN RESOURCES**

- **Check your registration status or register**
  - https://www.sos.state.co.us/voter/pages/pub/home.xhtml

- **How to cast your ballot**
  - Return by mail at least one week before the election, use two stamps.
  - Hand-deliver to a drop-box.
  - Vote in-person at a polling station. Bring your ID.
  - Absentee ballots must be received at the election’s office by November 3rd at 7:00 p.m.
  - https://clerk.mesacounty.us/elections/election-hub

- **What’s on our Mesa County ballots** (candidates and ballot measures)
  - https://clerk.mesacounty.us/elections

- **BallotPedia**
  - https://ballotpedia.org/Colorado_2020_ballot_measures

- **Rock the Vote**
  - https://www.rockthevote.org

- **IssueVoter**
  - https://issuevoter.org

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2020 GENERAL ELECTION
**QUESTION 1**

COVID-19 has deeply impacted Colorado’s nonprofit community as it has most sectors and families. The mission of our nonprofits is more critical than ever to the vulnerable Coloradans they serve and to all Coloradans who benefit from their enormous social and economic contributions to our state. As Mayor and Governor, I supported efforts for government to coordinate closely with nonprofits to ensure that our first response was not only from government but from the community.

Supporting nonprofits has been a priority of mine throughout my career. Prior to elective office, I served on numerous nonprofit boards and committees and started and financially supported nonprofit organizations. As Mayor of Denver and Governor of Colorado, we elevated cooperation with and support and recognition of nonprofits to new levels and I met regularly with nonprofit and religious organizations.

As Senator, I will fight to strengthen the financial and human resources capacity of the nonprofit sector to address the extraordinary needs in our communities. This includes addressing the rising health care costs that impact nonprofits as well as other employers, exploring new funding mechanisms for nonprofits, streamlining applications and reporting requirements for federal grant programs, ensuring that nonprofits benefit as other employers do from economic incentives for job creation, protecting tax exemptions for nonprofits and strengthening tax incentives for volunteerism.

I will bring these deep roots in the nonprofit community to Washington, seek the nonprofit and religious community’s input and extraordinary expertise on legislation, and continue to welcome input and their guidance on challenges, concerns and priorities.

**QUESTION 2**

The extended COVID crisis will impact every sector of our community, including nonprofits and their ability to accomplish their mission, serve their clients and keep staff employed. What, if any, opportunities do you see as a result of this emergency and how would you specifically help nonprofits take advantage of those opportunities in order to thrive and better serve the community?

No response was received from this candidate after multiple attempts to contact via email and phone.
QUESTION 1 | Nonprofits exist in order to fulfill unmet needs that impact all aspects of our community. As our elected official, what specific steps would you take, or efforts would you support, to ensure that nonprofits will continue to meet the demand for the services they provide?

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QUESTION 2 | The extended COVID crisis will impact every sector of our community, including nonprofits and their ability to accomplish their mission, serve their clients and keep staff employed. What, if any, opportunities do you see as a result of this emergency and how would you specifically help nonprofits take advantage of those opportunities in order to thrive and better serve the community?

LAUREN BOEBERT
REPUBLICAN

DIANE MITSCH BUSH
DEMOCRAT

QUESTION 1
I know first hand from my experience as a community volunteer, former Routt County commissioner, and former State Representative for Eagle and Routt Counties how critical nonprofits are to making our communities thrive and improving life for all.

There are a few things that I can do at the federal level to support and uplift nonprofits in Western and Southern Colorado. The first is making sure that federal grant programs keep their funding. So many nonprofits rely on federal grants to operate and serve their communities. There have been efforts for years to undermine federal grant funding. Not only will I oppose those measures, but I'll fight them in Congress.

Second, the most important job of a representative is to listen to her constituents and help them find solutions to their problems—and that includes regularly meeting with nonprofits and stakeholder groups to talk about the challenges they're tackling. I'll always be a transparent, present, and honest representative that meets regularly with nonprofit organizations that are working to make my constituents' lives better. Working with nonprofits in this district is just one of the ways we can improve life for people in Colorado's Third District.

QUESTION 2
This crisis has taken a terrible toll on Western and Southern Colorado. People have lost their jobs, are struggling to pay rent and keep up with health care bills, can't buy food for their families, and don't have the child care they need. We need a holistic approach to economic recovery in this country—not just support for individuals and small businesses, but also financial resources for nonprofits that provide direct services to people and need help closing the gap. I support funding for nonprofits in any future coronavirus relief package so that organizations can continue serving their clients and communities.

But we can't stop there. I'd also make sure that my office helped nonprofits apply for and receive federal funding if legislation passed that provided support to those organizations. Application processes can be long and cumbersome—lots of small businesses had difficulties applying for the Paycheck Protection Program earlier this year. I would use the full weight of my office to help nonprofits complete their applications and secure funding.
**QUESTION 1** | Nonprofits exist in order to fulfill unmet needs that impact all aspects of our community. As our elected official, what specific steps would you take, or efforts would you support, to ensure that nonprofits will continue to meet the demand for the services they provide?

**QUESTION 2** | The extended COVID crisis will impact every sector of our community, including nonprofits and their ability to accomplish their mission, serve their clients and keep staff employed. What, if any, opportunities do you see as a result of this emergency and how would you specifically help nonprofits take advantage of those opportunities in order to thrive and better serve the community?

**QUESTION 1**
We need to protect the tax free status from the non-profits funding balance. We need to be sure that non-profits are REALLY non-profits and have a vision/mission statement that actually make them of service to our communities.

**QUESTION 2**
The opportunities for non-profit clinics to be able to do continued phone and "Zoom" visits. These need to be paid at the office visit rates as they have been. Alternative fundraisers need to be permitted without the extensive paperwork needed for games of chance.

**QUESTION 1**
I fully support nonprofits and currently serve on the board of a couple of nonprofits and volunteer for a couple others. Whether it is providing shelter and food to the homeless or preserving history, providing medical care, or providing ongoing education et.c., nonprofits are critical to the success of a society. As an elected official, I have worked to establish a relationship with the nonprofit community and through conversations is how I can be vigilant to addressing issues which may help nonprofits and oppose legislation which may hurt nonprofits.

**QUESTION 2**
I supported legislation that would provide state grant funds as a stopgap for nonprofits affected by the Covid Pandemic. As we go into the next fiscal year, I plan on fighting for resources to help ensure the survivability of our nonprofits. Many nonprofits have been the lifeblood of the community in this time of need and without them; the state could never have been able to weather through the Covid storm. I see many opportunities for nonprofits to re-establish themselves as the can-do entities of action in the community to help people and to help the community.
**COLORADO STATE HOUSE**  
**DISTRICT 55**

**JANICE RICH**  
REPUBLICAN

**SCOTT BEILFUSS**  
DEMOCRAT

**QUESTION 1** | Nonprofits exist in order to fulfil unmet needs that impact all aspects of our community. As our elected official, what specific steps would you take, or efforts would you support, to ensure that nonprofits will continue to meet the demand for the services they provide?

**QUESTION 1**  
I recognize that our non-profits play an important role in our community. My voting record will prove that I support you. I am also a former board member of Manillac Clinic. While I am not in the majority party in the Legislature, I am always open to bringing non-profits together to listen to ideas that the State Legislature could support.

**QUESTION 2** | The extended COVID crisis will impact every sector of our community, including nonprofits and their ability to accomplish their mission, serve their clients and keep staff employed. What, if any, opportunities do you see as a result of this emergency and how would you specifically help nonprofits take advantage of those opportunities in order to thrive and better serve the community?

**QUESTION 2**  
Many of the non-profits are not state funded. Several rely on contributions. There are, however, some tax exemptions, if they qualify, that help non-profits. The role non-profits could play, and perhaps you do this already, but continue to be an interactive member with the state and local governments in an effort to not duplicate service so specific organizations can enhance those services. In general, work collaboratively.

**QUESTION 1**  
Nonprofits in Mesa County are the glue that keep our community going. There are so many needs in the health care, aging, education, outdoors, conservation, environmental, homelessness, kids needs, etc. that are very much met through local nonprofits. I would guess that most residents do not realize the breadth of services here that are met by nonprofit groups, many of which they may have never heard of.

During this time of COVID, I know many of the nonprofits are being strained by the same circumstances that have hurt business, government and education. As a representative, I would work to include nonprofits in planning and decision making on the many challenges and problems we are facing here. Having been active with many nonprofits here over the last 10 years, it has been a great experience working with the many amazing talented people who work for them. The skill set to be a good nonprofit organizer is extremely broad and demanding. Good nonprofit leaders can get things done that many private and government sector people would take years to figure out!

Consequently, I would work to bring more nonprofit leaders to the problem-solving tables, especially those from small nonprofits who often get overlooked. They often have big picture skills that are needed to solve problems. They also have organizing skills that are very transferable to any problem’s communities are facing.

**QUESTION 2**  
Nonprofits have an opportunity now to help coordinate and plan responses to developing COVID problems that are not going to disappear with a vaccine. Mental health, job training, kid’s emotional needs, educational support, are among many areas that nonprofits can make huge differences. The affordable childcare problem needs lots of attention. The quickly growing elderly population is not going to be served exclusively by the private sector. They need nonprofit help and support badly.

I would hope that we could develop “buddy” programs to match nonprofits to areas of need so that relationships could be nurtured, and unique needs could be met. In addition, very often there are community resources available to help people, but communication is tough. There is no reason we could not have community TV/Radio/Print/Social Media resources that coordinate outreach during times of need. Government, through our many branches, could be part of a robust communication network.

We should not overlook either, the role nonprofits provide to people wanting to be a part of a good cause and feel more connected to our communities. We have lots of skilled retirees who love the opportunity to volunteer through nonprofits.

With all the positives nonprofits bring to a community, I feel that many entities need to put down their egos and work more closely with them to solve problems. I feel as a legislator I could help cut through some of the endless insurance and legal roadblocks that prevent nonprofits and public sector organizations from working together. We need to break down those barriers and work together to help those in need and fill in areas that need support.
MESA COUNTY COMMISSIONER
DISTRICT 1

KATHRYN BEDELL
DEMOCRAT

CODY DAVIS
REPUBLICAN

QUESTION 1 | Nonprofits exist in order to fulfill unmet needs that impact all aspects of our community. As our elected official, what specific steps would you take, or efforts would you support, to ensure that nonprofits will continue to meet the demand for the services they provide?

QUESTION 2 | The extended COVID crisis will impact every sector of our community, including nonprofits and their ability to accomplish their mission, serve their clients and keep staff employed. What, if any, opportunities do you see as a result of this emergency and how would you specifically help nonprofits take advantage of those opportunities in order to thrive and better serve the community?

QUESTIONS 1 & 2
Nonprofits exist in order to fulfill unmet needs that impact all aspects of our community. As our elected official, what specific steps would you take, or efforts would you support, to ensure that nonprofits will continue to meet the demand for the services they provide?

I am sure we will continue to see the need for Non-profits to fill important needs in our county as our budget is unable to meet the needs of the community. Non-Profits which take care of the needs of our most vulnerable citizen can expect my full support. I will help call attention to their important work, assist with grants and grant writing, write letters of support, and when the county budget allows it to consider direct financial support. I am very aware of the precarious financial situation many of us find ourselves in and know that we are only as strong as our weakest link. Our community will only recover if we all can feed our family, find a good paying job, and take care of those community members suffering from mental hardship.

The extended COVID crisis will impact every sector of our community, including nonprofits and their ability to accomplish their mission, serve their clients and keep staff employed. What, if any, opportunities do you see as a result of this emergency and how would you specifically help nonprofits take advantage of those opportunities in order to thrive and better serve the community?

The opportunity I see is the desire to build our community spirit by building our economy from within, create community gathering places, and support those in need. I’m a big believer that our road to the future is to return to our agricultural roots. We can feed our community because we can grow everything the community needs right here. We need to return to food processing and manufacturing in our community. This can create good paying jobs and most importantly keep our community food supply secure for all members of the community. The agricultural community already supports the local and regional food banks during the growing season, we could extend this support to year-round with food manufacturing. Additionally, agricultural jobs in processing and food manufacturing will keep money in our community making more money available to non-profits.

QUESTION 1
Non-profit organizations are vital to the health and well being of our community. My wife and I have been foster parents for ten years now, and we’ve worked hand-in-hand with both government and private interests in the process. One of the greatest and most influential organizations we have worked with is Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). CASA is a non-profit organization that has stepped in and filled a need that both government and private industry had not. I see great value in non-profits and their service to the community. The government should have a limited and specific role to serve in the community as funds are taken from taxpayers and used for general purposes. The government cannot and should not fill every need in society. Where government is limited and market forces do not provide solutions, non-profits can serve the many and varied needs of those in the community. Non-profits are born out of a specific need and sustained by the community in which they serve. As your next Mesa County Commissioner, I’ll support collaborative efforts between non-profits and government that serve the best interest of the community. One of the most considerable obstacles that non-profits face is funding. Mesa County helps fund a number of these non-profits, in part, as their value is undeniable and function irreplaceable. Whereas the county cannot support every non-profit, it can create an environment where success and prosperity are celebrated, and a charitable spirit is championed. People make value judgments every day, and I want Mesa County to be a place where people can value noble and charitable organizations and where they have the freedom and wherewithal to support them financially.

QUESTION 2
Undoubtedly, COVID has created a callous environment for non-profits because the market has been hampered and shut down by state governments; in an attempt to restrain the spread of COVID. The quickest path back to a thriving economy, which is how non-profits are best-funded, is to open the economy and let people get back to work. The approach to reopening must be thoughtful and safe, but it must reopen and get back to full operation as quickly as possible.
QUESTION 1 | Nonprofits exist in order to fulfill unmet needs that impact all aspects of our community. As our elected official, what specific steps would you take, or efforts would you support, to ensure that nonprofits will continue to meet the demand for the services they provide?

Non-profits are critical to a healthy community. In many cases, non-profits can respond to social issues better than government. They are usually more nimble and tend to be able to do more with less.

They are also important to our overall economy. According to a 2016 study by Colorado Mesa University, the total gross economic output for CIC members is $250 million and includes 2,161 jobs. One quarter those revenues come from outside Mesa County. So not only do our local non-profits meet critical needs, they are an economic driver for our community. As such, county government should always look for ways to partner with our local non-profits.

I believe Community Partnerships that include non-profits, businesses and government agencies, are the best way to address community issues and pressing social needs. Simply put, partnerships with non-profits allow us to do more with less.

Over the last 20 years I’ve had the opportunity to help spearhead several community collaborations to solve problems including the Meth Taskforce and the How are the Children?® initiative. More recently, I’ve been involved with a new faith-based collaboration meeting the needs of kids in the foster care system and other vulnerable populations. I don’t believe the proper role of county government is to fund non-profits. The county could never fund all of them, so it would turn into a competition that wouldn’t be good. But the county can play a supporting role in helping to secure grant funding as needed or provide staff support for community partnerships.

Financial challenges can often force us to think about new ways of operating. Other opportunities to support local non-profits may come from pooling resources for shared services, such as payroll, accounting, HR, etc. Sometimes the economies of scale can help drive down the cost. In some situations, multiple non-profits sharing office space can help stretch their dollars during financially challenging times.

QUESTION 2

A recently formed community partnership that I’ve been involved with, the Faith-in-Action collaboration, is a good example of how local non-profits found an opportunity to respond to the COVID emergency. Through this group of non-profits and faith-based organizations we launched CarePortal, an online portal that connects vulnerable populations in need with volunteers/donors from local churches and community organizations.

DHS and other non-profits serving vulnerable populations make referrals directly into CarePortal, and those needs are automatically shared via email with community responders. In many cases, needs are met in a few days, sometimes even a few hours.

Not only has CarePortal allowed us to connect with a new source of donors and volunteers, it has helped us streamline non-profit services. It helps eliminate duplications (of some individuals receiving help from multiple agencies) and fill gaps (for those who aren’t able to be served by any agencies).

Just since April 1, 2020 CarePortal has served 84 kids/families with goods and services valued at over $21,000. We project serving 450+ kids in 2021. This was done without starting a new non-profit, but by coordinating with existing, local non-profits.

MESA COUNTY COMMISSIONER

JANET ROWLAND
REPUBLICAN

QUESTION 2 | The extended COVID crisis will impact every sector of our community, including nonprofits and their ability to accomplish their mission, serve their clients and keep staff employed. What, if any, opportunities do you see as a result of this emergency and how would you specifically help nonprofits take advantage of those opportunities in order to thrive and better serve the community?

As Mesa County Commissioner, I will work to coordinate county social services with services provided by the nonprofit community.

Counties in the US manage funds provided by the federal and state governments for the relief of poverty.

Counties have primary governmental responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of their citizens. The only exception is that the federal funds for housing go through the largest city in each county, in our case, through the Grand Junction Housing Authority.

In all other cases, funds to aid the relief of poverty and to ensure the safety of our citizens are passed through Mesa County.

I believe that it is my responsibility to make sure that these funds are used to maximize the benefits due to our citizens, and that coordination with local nonprofits ensures that County funds are most effectively used.

With the looming threat that the Affordable Care Act may be overturned by the Supreme Court, the County’s responsibility to provide for the health and welfare of our citizens will be stretched beyond the limits of our staff and funds. Our hospitals and healthcare providers will be financially challenged, and many will go out of business.

Mesa County will have to work with Hilltop, Marillac Clinic, WestSprings and many others to make sure that even just the basic medical and mental health needs are met.

Healthcare, childcare, food, housing, income support all need the combined and coordinated work of all of us to make sure we can do our best in helping those in need.

Creative partnerships with nonprofit organizations in the valley will help us stretch as far as we can to help those in need and those in crisis.
QUESTION 1 | Nonprofits exist in order to fulfil unmet needs that impact all aspects of our community. As our elected official, what specific steps would you take, or efforts would you support, to ensure that nonprofits will continue to meet the demand for the services they provide?

I support nonprofits working in our public schools to enhance student education on a variety of topics that public schools may not have as part of their curriculum. In my own community I can think of ten nonprofits that provide short-term programs in our public schools that definitely make a positive contribution. These are: Advocates of Routt County that teach children about the prevention of domestic and partner violence; the Yampa Valley Sustainability Council and teaches children about creating a healthier environment for our community and our planet; Opera Steamboat that introduces opera to school children through short operas and educational materials; Junior Achievement, a well-known program that builds student life skills; Rotary, that offers an international student exchange program and has summer programs to build leadership skills; Partners of Routt County that partners adults from the community with students who need mentoring in a variety of areas; the Boys & Girls Club that provides after-school programs and a safe place to be when child care is needed; Yampatika, that teaches children about the local wildlife and environment and environmental preservation; Integrated Community that works with immigrant children and their parents to make a smooth transition into our community; and United Way that offers the book program for preschoolers called the Imagination Library and offers volunteers to work after school with children needing extra help with homework. This is but a short list of the many nonprofits active in our local schools. They enrich the educational experience of all our children. I would continue to encourage this kind of participation by nonprofits in school districts state-wide.

QUESTION 2 | The extended COVID crisis will impact every sector of our community, including nonprofits and their ability to accomplish their mission, serve their clients and keep staff employed. What, if any, opportunities do you see as a result of this emergency and how would you specifically help nonprofits take advantage of those opportunities in order to thrive and better serve the community?

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COMMUNITY IMPACT COUNCIL

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