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Baton Rouge Foundations Grant \$1.2 million to La. Governor's Fund *Gov. John Bel Edwards to use money for coronavirus response*

A consortium of Baton Rouge-based foundations has contributed \$1.2 million to seed Gov. John Bel Edwards' COVID-19 Response Fund. The governor anticipates grants from the fund will be needed to fill gaps in service until federal dollars become available.

Edwards requested \$1.2 million from the Baton Rouge Area Foundation to help organizations that are overstretched because of the pandemic. In turn, the Foundation asked the Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation and the Irene W. & C.B. Pennington Foundation to join as partners, and their boards this week agreed to share equally in the funding. Each foundation has granted \$400,000 to the governor's fund.

"We all have a role to play in slowing the spread of this illness, and I want to thank BRAF and their partners for once again rising to the occasion," said Gov. Edwards. "These funds will help tremendously with addressing immediate needs that arise as we continue to combat the spread of COVID-19. Louisiana has seen its share of challenges before, but the citizens of this great state are always eager to help their neighbors in need."

"We started collaborating with the Wilson and Pennington foundations after Hurricane Katrina, when the three foundations came together to raise and distribute millions to organizations across South Louisiana," said John G. Davies, president and CEO of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation. "The Pennington and Wilson foundations have been loyal to our communities after every big disaster. We share knowledge with them about recovery and all three of us pitch in to provide grant money for immediate needs."

Disaster relief follows a familiar pattern. Local foundations and philanthropists make grants soon after disasters. Months, sometimes years, later the federal government delivers resources.

"The Irene W. and C.B. Pennington Foundation has a long history of collaboration with local and national funders, particularly in times of crisis," said Lori Bertman, President and CEO of the Irene W. and C.B. Pennington Foundation. "The Foundation sees the Gov. John Bel Edwards' COVID-19 Response Fund as a strategic and innovative way for public and private partners to collaborate in the best interest of serving the most vulnerable communities in Louisiana at this critical time."

"We recognize the COVID-19 pandemic does not discriminate and will have a particularly devastating impact on our community's most vulnerable residents," said David Beach, President and CEO of Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation. "While this is a global pandemic, local challenges will require local solutions. We pray these resources will provide food and shelter to those most in need. We are thankful for the many local charitable individuals and corporations that will provide relief in the midst and aftermath of this crisis."

About the Foundation: The Baton Rouge Area Foundation is a community foundation serving South Louisiana. The Foundation does three things: 1) manage philanthropy for our fund donors, 2) provide consulting services to nonprofits, 3) lead projects for the civic good. The Foundation's current projects include fundraising for coronavirus relief, preserving the University/City Park lakes, and coordinating and expanding services for people with mental illness and addictions. BRAF has granted more than \$550 million since inception in 1964.

About the Pennington Family Foundation:

The Irene W. and C.B. Pennington Foundation was established in 1982 by Claude B. "Doc" Pennington and his wife, Irene Wells Pennington. The Foundation has a long history of community giving in the Greater Baton Rouge area and surrounding parishes, including East and West Feliciana and Pointe Coupee. The Foundation focuses on innovative projects and programs that leverage resources in new ways, both on a local and national scale, particularly in the fields of human services, the arts, health and mental health, community development, disasters, and the environment.

About the Wilson Foundation: Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation was created to better the lives of the people in the Greater Baton Rouge community. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson believed communities should use their local talents and resources to solve problems; however, communities sometimes need additional support along the way. The Foundation believes when people have their healthcare, education and basic needs met they can be self-sufficient, productive, and successful members of society. The Wilsons knew that the most disadvantaged people in our communities need the most assistance, so the Foundation focuses on the sick and disabled, the indigent, and the formerly incarcerated. Since 2000 the Foundation has invested more than \$50 million in causes throughout the 10-parish capital region.