Dear Partner,

During this challenging time, we know you and your staff have been facing unprecedented challenges as COVID-19 has impacted your work. Our entire team and Board hold you all in our thoughts as you shift and adjust to what a new normal means for your organizations. Like you, our organization has also been faced with unexpected challenges, which is why I am writing to you today.

As the pandemic has continued, the impact on our portfolio has been substantial. As a result, our operating budget has been reduced by half. While we would like for 2020 to remain at our previous funding levels, the economic impact has necessitated this reduction. We anticipate that we will award around $2.3 Million in grants for 2020 rather than the $4.5 Million we scheduled initially to award. The same may be correct for 2021. Recognizing the impact of this funding cut on our partners and their work has been tremendously challenging, and our staff and Board are committed to examining our financial strategy going forward.

1. To minimize the harm to our partners, we plan to eliminate:
   - Capacity building initiatives
   - Co-learning workshops
   - Planned pilots of several new initiatives

2. This allows us to maintain our focus on:
   - Centering those most impacted by disaster
   - Initiatives led by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), Immigrant, Youth and LGBTQI+ leaders
   - Engaging in advocacy that will use this time as an opportunity to fight for justice long-term
   - Incorporating a focus on healing justice

In tandem with the impact to our finances, the impact of COVID-19 on our community partners, and the events that have occurred within the last week, it is clear that there is still a lot of work to be done in terms of support, continued learning and growth, not just in our organization but in the philanthropic community as a whole. The Foundation will continue to leverage our opportunities and privilege to push the sector, advocacy, and support of movements and leaders.

What does this mean for you?
For organizations that completed our social justice survey and found to be in strong alignment with our priorities, you will receive an invitation to attend one of this year’s remaining information sessions and submit a proposal. In 2020,

- We are not in a position to increase grant sizes or commit to multi-year funding as we have in the past.
• We will continue to reduce or eliminate paperwork requirements and, as often as possible, provide unrestricted support.
• We will keep grant sizes to $20K-$50K range.
• We will honor multi-year commitments made in prior years but will not be able to increase those grant awards.

What does this mean for us?
We would like to make a few commitments to our partners.
• We will keep you informed of changes at the Foundation in as timely a manner as we are able.
• We will be discussing with our Board ways we can improve our financial strategy moving forward.
• We will let you know about our 2021 financial standing later this fall as we learn more.

It is a somber time in our community. We realize that this letter carries extra weight for all our grant partners. Our team sends our deepest gratitude for the work that you do in our community. While we remain in uncertain times in the middle of this pandemic, I assure you that The Simmons Foundation is laser-focused on pursuing justice with our funding. Our sincere respect goes out to you and your staff in this moment and always.

In solidarity,

Amanda Cloud,
President and CEO
The Simmons Foundation