

Hanbin Park
George Washington University
B.A. in Human Services & Social Justice
Senior, class of 2021

How has COVID_19 impacted the community in which you attend school? How is this influencing how your class approaches grantmaking?

The Impact of COVID_19

The coronavirus pandemic has hugely affected the George Washington University community, especially in new undergraduate students' enrollment. The university usually has high records of students joining the community at the beginning of a new academic year. Nonetheless, since 2019, the university has seen a sharp decline in the number of new students. The decrease in the number of new students can be attributed to the decline in international students. Additionally, the majority of the admitted students preferred to defer studies as a containment measure against COVID_19.

The current pandemic has hugely affected research activities at the university. The George Washington University is closely monitoring and responding to the impacts of COVID_19. Resultantly, the university has put up guidelines such as social distancing and avoiding overcrowding as measures to contain the virus. Resultantly, these measures have negatively affected research in the school fraternity by limiting on-site library and laboratory visits to only critical activities. Moreover, the pandemic caused the university to switch to online learning. Online learning has hugely impacted group projects as the majority of learning is now dependent on telework. The result is delayed or postponed projects and tasks, which directly affects students' academic progress. Besides, the COVID_19 has heightened homelessness in Washington DC.

Mayor Muriel Bowser in December 2020 announced an order to reduce the amount of funding granted to local organizations that support homeless residents. This directive was a measure to cut down the budget channeled to homelessness because of the economy's decline due to Covid-19. The order was excellent, but the timing was inappropriate as the mayor implemented it during a severe housing crisis exacerbated by the COVID_19 pandemic. The mayor's guideline affected how we approached the grant-making project as a class through the

GW Arc Foundation. Due to the mayor's directives, we have decided to support individuals experiencing homelessness in the DMV area by providing funding to nonprofit organizations.

The GW Arc Foundation was established to provide monetary support for organizations geared towards addressing social justice issues. Each year the foundation unanimously chooses one issue that we hope to combat and provide relief towards. This year, the GW Arc Foundation's mission is to support individuals experiencing homelessness in the Washington Metropolitan area by providing funding to nonprofit organizations to alleviate homelessness and its contributing factors. We recognize the need to support organizations that might be at risk of losing funding due to recent D.C. policy changes. The foundation recognizes the need to extend monetary support to organizations that might be at risk of losing funding due to recent D.C. policy changes.

This support will ensure that organizations providing homelessness services within Washington DC can continue to carry out their services even amid the surging pandemic and its effects. The grant boosts and supports initiatives within these organizations. Following the pandemic, homelessness is a pressing issue within the Washington Metropolitan area. However, we hope that this act of philanthropy will go a way to reduce homelessness and related issues within the region. Providing funding to nonprofit organizations that work towards alleviating homelessness is the best experience during the current pandemic. The philanthropic act has been encouraging to see that something good can come out of the pandemic. The grant-making project will always remain amongst my most memorable moments and the act of philanthropy the best experience.