May \_\_\_, 2021

Dear [ELECTED OFFICIAL/GOVERNMENT LEADER],

Representing more than [NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS AND THE KINDS OF SERVICES THEY PROVIDE] that serve [JURISDICTION’S] communities most impacted by mental health and substance use challenges, we believe that immediate, targeted, and additional investments are urgently needed to address the severe increases in behavioral health issues associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

As [ELECTED/GOVERNMENT BODY or AGENCY] determines how it will spend the approximate [TOTAL AMOUNT, if known] of fiscal recovery funds it will receive from the American Rescue Plan (ARP), we ask that you dedicate [REQUESTED AMOUNT] to support [LIST BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAMMING] through the end of 2024, when the funds expire.

As the ARP makes clear, these funds are dedicated “to respond to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19),” which includes “the negative economic impacts” it has had on “nonprofits.” These mandated purposes perfectly align with our requests. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profoundly destabilizing impact on [JURISDICTION], driving severe spikes in mental health and substance use incidence and crisis levels. [2 - 3 SENTENCES TO MAKE THE CASE FOR HOW ADDITIONAL FUNDING WILL HELP FILL AN URGENT GAP IN YOUR STATE.]

Even before the pandemic, our organizations were stretched thin from being on the frontlines of addressing our state’s behavioral health crises in the most vulnerable communities. During the pandemic, our organizations have gone above and beyond our normal work to respond to this aspect of the pandemic’s “public health emergency.” Throughout the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, the staff of our organizations have risked their own health and safety to serve as front-line workers, providing life-saving care, and responding to behavioral health needs during the pandemic, as well as delivering food, PPE, and other essential services to people who lack access to vital resources.

On behalf of [ORGANIZATIONS], we urge you to make these targeted investments with the [JURISDICTION’S] ARP fiscal relief funds in communities that have suffered the most during the pandemic. By investing in these proven solutions that provide targeted prevention and recovery to communities in crisis, [JURISDICTION] can increase the health and well-being of all its residents.

Sincerely,