

2023 Women & Girls of Color Fund Advisory Council

The Women & Girls of Color Fund is led by a group of incredible women and nonbinary people of color from across Colorado. The advisory council makes all grantmaking decisions and, with staff, help guide the process and implementation of the fund. The 2023 Women & Girls of Color Fund advisory council is multi-generational and represents a range of socioeconomic circumstances and professional experiences. Most importantly, they reflect the breadth of identity and depth of experience of women, girls, and nonbinary people of color across rural and Front Range communities. They are uniquely qualified to guide this fund.

Dr. Auset Ali, Denver County



Dr. Auset (she/her) is a holistic doctor, trained at ALOP, who incorporates indigenous healing and practices in all that she does through her work at Healer Auset Maryam. Her Masters work was obtained at HTH in Education Leadership and her focus is equity. She is the Founder of VPAC, an independent school system dedicated to project-based and competency learning for underserved communities. As the CEO of Organizational Equity Solutions, she aids companies and organizations in the design, implementation, and sustainability of change management, diversity, equity, inclusion, equity auditing, and operational structures and systems. She serves on many boards and has completed many prestigious fellowships. Auset is a strong community organizer and volunteer. Her biggest accomplishment is being a mother of two HBCU students and one high school junior.

Trennie Burch, Denver County

Trennie Burch-Foster (she/her) is a member of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe was raised and grew up on the Southern Ute reservation and is a part of the LBGTQ2S+ Community.

As an Native American woman, Burch has started working around social justice in the hopes to bring BIPOC voices to the forefront of communities that directly impact Native Country and vice versa. As a 'boots on the ground' organizer, Burch co-founded Four Corners Mutual Aid Network during COVID-19, Ignacio Mutual Aid, Four Corners Food Coalition and thoroughly understands the importance of being with and in community.



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Nicole Castillo, *Denver County*



Nicole Castillo's (she/her) mestizo family descends from Southern Colorado and Northern New Mexico. She has a passion for nonprofit work, and has spent the last 18 years of her career working in the field of gender-based violence. She's worked in urban, rural, and suburban environments in Central New York, Massachusetts, and Colorado. Nicole is passionate about leveling the philanthropy field to support more BIPOC lead organizations. She's been a giving circle member, grant writer and reviewer, and currently works as a nonprofit foundation fundraising consultant.

Nicole holds a BA from the University of Colorado Boulder and an MDiv from Harvard University. She also holds certificates in Nonprofit Management and Leadership from Tufts University, as well as in Gender, Leadership, and Public Policy from the

University of Massachusetts Boston. Nicole is a committed volunteer, and has served on a number of nonprofit boards that focus on reproductive justice, ending intimate partner violence, supporting LGBTQ youth, and promoting the advancement of women in politics. She lives in Denver with her partner and her cutie Pomeranian, Sasha!

Melissa Clyde, *Adams County*

Melissa Clyde is a citizen of the Navajo Nation. Melissa is a social worker by professional education. She provides consultation, coaching, training and technical assistance on culturally-appropriate system change efforts, community engagement, child and family services, and various topics to strengthen local capacity building in communities. She facilitates discussions and meetings that address self-determination and inclusion of those directly impacted by programs and policy. Melissa is invested in educating and supporting leaders to be informed about children and family issues. She is a resident in Adams County. Melissa is a parent volunteer on several committees that address diversity, equity and inclusion and representation of the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee for the Adams 12 Five Star Schools District.



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Alejandra Diaz, *El Paso County*
they/she

Sendi Estrada, *Pueblo County*

Sophanite Gedion, *Denver County*



Sophanite Gedion is the Chief Program Officer at Govern For America where she sets the strategy for program development, evaluation as well as recruitment and selection. Govern For America is a nonprofit working to build the next generation of public servants to create a more responsive government that better reflects and serves our communities. Before joining the GFA team, Sophanite worked to fight for more equitable outcomes in K-12 education in the public and private sectors. She started her career as an AmeriCorps Member and has worked to influence change as a classroom educator, school district administrator, and state department of education consultant. The professional experiences that have shaped Sophanite most are working with the New York City Council Progressive Caucus, Denver Public Schools and the Center for Public Research and Leadership at Columbia Law School. She believes that education and community service are the root and

stem of lasting change. Sophanite holds a B.A. in Political Science from Colorado State University and an M.P.A from New York University's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service.

Seyanna Hitt, *El Paso County*

Seyanna (she/her) holds a Masters of Nonprofit Management from Regis University. Prior to accepting a fellowship at CCDC in 2021, she worked for more than a decade with and for the Denver metro area community to address issues related to sexual and domestic violence. Her service to the community has afforded her the insight to recognize avenues of intersectionality that present as barriers for various members of the community to have opportunities to live a full and authentic life. Seyanna championed CCDC's revamped youth program early on in her fellowship as an avenue for young people living with disabilities to elevate their voices in systems and individual advocacy efforts. It is Seyanna's hope to further uplift and encourage community autonomy by intentionally moving monetary support to areas in which the community determines to be the most helpful.



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Ankita Jhaveri, *Denver County*
she/her



I am a mom, wife, aunty, and sister; a peer, friend, leader, learner, neighbor, and everything in between; an aspiring writer; a yoga enthusiast; a reluctant runner; an avid reader; and a daydreamer. I am a constant work in progress. I navigate the world by asking questions. My two daughters are my greatest accomplishment and greatest love; they remind me to never stop fighting for what is right and just.

Born and raised in India, I am the younger daughter of immigrant parents. I was taught to thrive across boundaries of age, gender, language, race, socioeconomic status, and culture among others. In all my identities, I hold equity, inclusion, and belonging at the center; I also hold joy, wellness, and rest at the center. My efforts focus on breaking down and rebuilding social systems that are not rooted in, designed by, and built for local communities. I know that power and privilege shape our work and our world. I aim to understand my own identity and biases to disrupt behaviors that perpetuate inequities.

I have worked in the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors, spanning strategy and planning, program management and operations, network development, culture and team building, and system and process creation. I believe how we do the work – work that values humanity in each one of us – is as important as the work itself. Relationships and trust are foundational in my life.

Gloria Kat, *Larimer County*

As the first Latina to lead The Family Center as the Executive Director, I embrace diversity and strongly believe that through collaboration, education and support our community will continue to prosper and gain a sense of belonging. I am committed to leaving a legacy and ensuring that all the actions taken toward gender and social justice are embraced and honored by the new generations. My gratitude goes to the Women Foundation for allowing me to be part of the Women & Girls of Color Fund advisory council and for offering a safe space for collaboration and learning.



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Natasia Lovato Garcia, Larimer County
she/her



Women and Girls of color are rising up every day to become wonderful leaders in our communities. They represent the underserved population in such an impactful way. Because of my enlightening experience of being a woman of color in a predominantly white community, and the challenges I continue to overcome, I have made it my mission to carve a less challenging pathway for other future female leaders of color. I believe that directing resources to organizations led by women of color provides one less barrier for them to overcome on their journey toward their career and professional development. I am so thrilled to have the opportunity to serve this cause as a Chicana & community member with many years of nonprofit programmatic experience.

Khali Okazaki, Arapahoe County



Hi! My name is Khali Okazaki (she/her), and this is my second year on the advisory council. Prior to joining the council, I taught special education before transitioning into disability advocacy for the Arc of Aurora where I sat on the Children's Disability Advisory Committee. In my spare time, I enjoy listening to new podcasts, running, yoga, and spending time with my husband and our two dogs!

Ashley Panelli, Denver County



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Milena Quiros-Ramirez, *Summit County*
she/her



Shannon Robinson, *Mesa County*



Katherine Rosechild, *Denver County*



Adry Santiago, *Larimer County*
she/her/ella



Dafina Tucker, *Denver County*