



## The Women's Foundation of Colorado

Women Thriving. Colorado Rising.

*For Immediate Release*

### Media Contact

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## **WFCO Invests \$192,000 in Rural Grantee Partners Through Its Women & Girls of Color Fund Inaugural Grantmaking Cycle**

**DENVER (March 29, 2021)** – The Women's Foundation of Colorado (WFCO) announced that its Women & Girls of Color Fund advisory council selected 12 rural grantee partners to invest in as part of the fund's first grantmaking cycle. The grants totaled \$192,000 and will impact women across 23 counties. In July, Front Range and statewide organizations will be invited to apply for funding as part of the second cycle, with grants awarded by the end of September 2021.

WFCO launched the Women & Girls of Color Fund, a community-led field of interest fund, in 2020 in response to the economic fallout of COVID-19, which *highlighted and exacerbated* the disparities women and girls of color face in health outcomes, pay, wealth, access to capital, and more. As the only statewide community foundation focused on the economic advancement of Colorado women of every background and identity, The Foundation initiated the fund to explicitly and directly invest in women-of-color-led and women-and-girls-of-color-serving organizations. All grants are unrestricted and can be used at the grantee partners' discretion to achieve their missions.

### **Meet the 2021 Women & Girls of Color Fund Rural Grantees**

#### Action Is Safer, Mesa County

- Founder/director: Shannon Robinson
- Mission: Providing grassroots advocacy, mutual aid for Black, indigenous, and queer women, and building organizing capacity. Action Is Safer builds leadership skills and work skills by encouraging BIPoC and queer women to claim their seats at the table.

#### Colorado Mountain College School of Transitional Education, Garfield and Summit counties

- Program director: A. Yvette Myrick

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Catalyzing community to advance and accelerate economic opportunities for Colorado women and their families.

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- Mission: Colorado Mountain College (CMC)'s unit focused on transitional education/preparatory education exists to help individuals from under-privileged backgrounds prepare for post-secondary degrees. This program directly supports those individuals through English as a Second Language (ESL) training, high school equivalency training (GED), and Career and Technical Education (CTE) readiness.

### County Collective, Inc., Weld County

- Founder and president: Hermine Ngnomire
- Mission: Empowering historically marginalized groups to positively lead and mobilize community transformation through youth-centered leadership, knowledge, and opportunities for action.

### El Movimiento Sigue, Pueblo County

- Interim board chair: Theresa M. Trujullo
- Mission: El Movimiento exists as a means of continued organizing, direct service, and systems change work with folks impacted by marginalization and historic neglect – primarily Chicanx, indigenous, and immigrant people in Pueblo County and throughout this area of the state. EMS ensures past efforts are recognized and present work is supported.

### Growing Together, Summit County

- Director: Milena Quiros
- Mission: Growing Together breaks down barriers by providing culturally appropriate tools and opportunities to engage, empower, value, and integrate immigrants and their children into the community.

### Herbal Gardens Wellness, Custer County

- Founder: Nancy Rae Kochis-Clark
- Mission: To create together one community of intersections of native cultural diversity, equitable health and wellness access including environmental preservation for current and future generations.

### Integrated Community, Routt County

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- Founder: Kelly Navarro
- Mission: To proactively promote and support successful integration of immigrant and local community members in Northwest Colorado through education, intercultural exchange, and collaboration to build a more united community where its members can communicate, participate, and contribute.

### Justice Heritage Academy, Conejos County

- Executive director: Michelle Trujillo
- Mission: The Justice and Heritage Academy serves youth from 1st-8th grades in Conejos County. In August 2017, Justice Heritage Academy launched a Home School Cooperative program that is rooted in justice education (social justice, food justice, environmental justice). It is currently observing how justice-oriented education and transformative teaching/learning cycles impact student achievement.

### The Learning Council, Delta County

- Executive director: Alicia Michelsen
- Mission: The Learning Council is a community organization supporting lifelong learning and education as a resource for everyone. The Learning Council provides complimentary educational opportunities, celebrating the arts and agriculture, stimulating creativity, enriching local culture, and bolstering community health and vitality. The Learning Council believes in lifelong learning and education as a resource for everyone.

### One Morgan County, Morgan County

- Executive director: Susana Guardado
- Mission: OneMorgan County fosters relationships among diverse people and organizations to strengthen the well-being, safety, and cohesive nature of our community.

### PeaceWorks, Inc., Park County

- Executive director: Lori Cuno
- Mission: PeaceWorks' mission is to advocate for ALL survivors, their children, and companion animals, of intimate partner violence/abuse, sexual assault, sex trafficking, teen dating violence, and stalking. PeaceWorks' provides inclusive services for ALL, including

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crisis intervention, emergency shelter, culturally responsive and trauma informed advocacy, and local prevention and education to create social change.

### Tu Casa, Inc., Alamosa County

- Executive director: Theresa Ortega
- Mission: To support healthy, violence-free lives and relationships for all children and adults in the San Luis Valley by providing crisis intervention, shelter services, and advocacy to victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence, and their non-offending family members/caregivers; empowering the community to affect sustainable social change through awareness building, prevention education, and coordinating professional efforts to respond to interpersonal violence in a victim-centered manner.

### **About the Women & Girls of Color Fund**

Women and girls have historically been underinvested in, receiving only 1.6 % of all charitable contributions in the U.S. Even more staggering, philanthropy invests even less in women and girls of color, with a mere .5 % of the \$66.9 billion that Foundations grant each year benefiting them. Given the immense contributions that women and girls of color make to the health, well-being, and advancement of our communities, these statistics are alarming.

Direct investments in women and girls of color create equitable opportunities for their economic mobility, which subsequently impacts the prosperity of their families, communities, and the economy as a whole. The Women & Girls of Color Fund aims to create systems change, influence the philanthropic sector as a whole, and give women of color and communities of color the resources they have been denied historically to prosper.

The Women & Girls of Color Fund advisory council, comprised of 20 Colorado women of color, girls of color, and nonbinary people of color ages 17 and older, oversees the grantmaking process. The members learn, review applications, and select the grantees together. To ensure a well-diversified group of grantee partners and meet WFCO's goal of funding those most underfunded, the advisory council considered factors such as populations served, counties served, type of services offered, size of organizations, and more.

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In addition to WFCO's own seed investment of \$50,000 for the first three years of the Women & Girls of Color Fund, generous grants from The Colorado Health Foundation, Ford Foundation, Chambers Initiative, Xcel Energy, and gifts from a diverse group of individual donors helped bring the fund to life. The Ford Foundation is supporting the launch of our Women and Girls of Color Fund by offering \$50,000 in matching dollars.

The fund adds to the myriad ways that WFCO invests directly in the economic security of Colorado women, joining The Foundation's WAGES (Women Achieving Greater Economic Security) grantmaking and the Women and Families of Colorado Relief Fund (WFCO Relief Fund). Together, these initiatives funded 102 social entrepreneurs and direct-service, research, and public policy organizations in 2020. Additionally, hundreds of WFCO donors annually fund diverse organizations directly through giving circles and donor-advised funds.

### **For more information**

The application and frequently-asked questions can be found at [www.wfco.org/wgcf](http://www.wfco.org/wgcf). Potential grantees can contact Camisha Lashbrook, donor relations manager, at [CamishaL@wfco.org](mailto:CamishaL@wfco.org) with additional questions.

### **ABOUT THE WOMEN'S FOUNDATION OF COLORADO**

WFCO is the only statewide community foundation dedicated to creating more pathways to prosperity for Colorado women through the power of community, philanthropy, and impact. Since 1987, WFCO has served as an essential partner, resource, voice, and catalyst in strengthening Colorado's families, communities, and economy through the power of women. In its 34-year history, WFCO has funded dozens of research reports that identify the systemic barriers that keep women from earning a livable wage, helped pass key legislation to spur women's economic advancement, and granted more than \$19 million to nonprofits that work with women and families in communities statewide. For more information, please visit [www.wfco.org](http://www.wfco.org).

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