

MISSION DRIVEN

SPRING 2021

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NAMING WHAT MATTERS



LAUREN Y. CASTEEL
President & CEO

In my first letter to our community six years ago, I committed that during my time as president and CEO, we would name the things that matter. I promised to speak the names of those who came before us – sheroes and heroes upon whose shoulders we stand – and to celebrate people using their chosen names and identities. Unapologetically, we would identify the truths that lie in the shadows of systemic barriers, and fearlessly call for self-reflection and action.

I feel immense pride in the progress we've made. Across our research, grantmaking, policy/advocacy, convenings, and communications – we have not only named the issues, but we also have built an infrastructure that places community insights and needs at the center of our work. We can say with certainty we are putting community into your community foundation. And, we are using best practices to sustain our business for the future.

Through these painful and complex times, our impact in Colorado is more urgent, relevant, and responsive than ever. Let me be clear, I am not patting us on the back for having arrived. I am holding us accountable to being a learning-centered foundation that uses all our resources and assets in pursuit of gender, racial, and economic equity. That vision starts and ends with our own board and staff. Allow me to share with you what we've named.

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*"my name is many
and in truth without
all parts i have no
name at all..."*

ADJOA ANDOH

from "My True Name"

GOING THE DISTANCE: JOIN OUR LAST ADVOCACY TRAINING OF 2021

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16

Join our last nonpartisan training of the legislative session on **Wednesday, June 16, from 12:00-1:30 p.m.** You'll hear the outcomes of the 20-plus bills* we're supporting in 2021 that address gender, racial, and economic equity and discover how to keep the momentum going after the session ends.

REGISTER AT **WFCO.ORG**

**See page 11 for a list of bills WFCO is supporting during the 2021 Colorado General Assembly.*



**The Women's
Foundation of Colorado**
Women Thriving. Colorado Rising.®

OUR MISSION

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

WFCO.ORG

Naming What Matters, continued



Our name is The Women's Foundation of Colorado. Without all of our parts, we have no name at all.

Nuestro nombre es La Fundación de Mujeres de Colorado. Sin todas nuestras partes, no tenemos ningún nombre en absoluto.

- **2021-2025 Strategic Framework.** In an updated strategic framework to be shared in June, you'll see a focus on supporting women with the least access to economic opportunity because of historical and systemic inequities. Our body of work will openly address the intersections of identity that put someone further away or closer to economic opportunity.
- **Responsive grantmaking.** Our new Women & Girls of Color Fund and board-controlled grantmaking will continue to be community-led and community-driven through participatory, trust-based philanthropy. We will improve access to flexible resources that put decision-making power in the hands of women.
- **Sustainable investments.** We will inspire donors and investors, while increasing engagement and expanding funding sources. We will be philanthropic leaders by increasing diverse manager and gender mandate percentage targets in our investment strategies.
- **Bold conversations.** Our Chat4Change series that kicks off this summer will illuminate the issues and facilitate the conversations that aren't always easy but necessary. We'll go deeper on holding ourselves accountable to promoting gender, racial, and economic equity.
- **Statewide impact.** We will ensure that Colorado women of every background, identity, ability, sexual orientation, immigration status, and religion can participate in our work, have their voices heard, and find ways to give their time, talent, treasure, and testimony.

With humility and appreciation for the support we received this last year, I recognize that this is only possible with you – our village of women and men. By and for your love of community, we reached a new summit in our grantmaking last year. Including our board-controlled WAGES funding, COVID relief funds, community-led funds, donor-advised funds, and giving circles, WFCO invested nearly \$2.2 million into Colorado women and families.

As economic reimagining and co-creating gains momentum, women – especially women of color – cannot be an afterthought or a byproduct. Your generosity has never been more important or needed. Throughout this newsletter, you'll see many opportunities to engage. We invite you to claim your space within our community foundation.

Sincerely,

LAUREN Y. CASTEEL
President & CEO

VIRTUAL EVENTS CALENDAR

June 3: Money on A Mission

Your money fuels our mission. Our investments maximize your impact. Join WFCO and Syntrinsic Investment Counsel for a one-hour overview of the market, WFCO investment practices, our gender lens strategy, and commitment to working with diverse portfolio managers.

June 11: Strategic Framework Presentation

Join our quarterly Colorado Ambassador Network meeting that connects individuals across the state to our work and to each other. WFCO will present our 2021-2025 strategic framework and upcoming grant opportunities. You don't want to miss this one!

June 24: Grant Opportunities Information Session

A presentation and Q&A session on two upcoming WFCO grant opportunities. Learn about the Women & Girls of Color Fund Front Range grantmaking cycle and a new statewide opportunity for direct-service and policy nonprofits that builds on our WAGES program.

Register for all events at wfcog.org

EMBEDDING EQUITY AND INCLUSION THROUGHOUT THE FOUNDATION



JAMIE MORGAN

Morgan & Rushton Consulting is an independent training and consulting firm specializing in supporting deep organizational transformation through the integration of DEI, racial justice, and healing justice principles. Jamie is invigorated by continually exploring ways to weave embodied and transpersonal approaches into the facilitative processes, shifting the way teams think about and practice equity work as a vehicle for individual and collective liberation.

My journey with The Women's Foundation of Colorado began in 2006. I was the only Black woman on the board, and there was not a culture or tradition then of having conversations around gender and race. Although there was interest, we hadn't yet developed the muscles to do so.

Since last summer, I've worked with WFCO's board and staff to develop those muscles. I had watched The Foundation's growth under Lauren's leadership and was thrilled to be invited to help WFCO operationalize its commitment to equity and inclusion.

It's well documented, but I've seen firsthand that when diverse voices are welcomed and listened to, new approaches to problem solving and creativity open up. Work cultures that encourage authentic power sharing see leadership blossom where it wasn't expected. Shifts in policy also are common, such as more intentional distributions of grants and investments or new well-being practices as organizations ask how they can meaningfully take care of their staffs.

Truly valuing and becoming inclusive of diverse identities requires a systemic approach. In WFCO's case, understanding and addressing the marginalization and trauma of communities of color and LGBTQ+ communities are essential to achieving its mission. Together, we are making sure practices related to senior leadership and management, the board of trustees, culture, programs, human resources, philanthropy, finance, and communications support this goal.

With an intersectional approach to economic equity, WFCO is positioned to help other philanthropic institutions, nonprofits, businesses, and government entities understand the layers and complexities of identity and what they mean in terms of access to opportunity and resources.

*Thank you
Raymond
Foxworth,
vice president
of First Nations
Development
Institute, and
Cori Wong,
assistant vice president
for diversity at CSU,
for your guidance
and partnership in
WFCO's equity work.*

BOARD STATEMENT:

BLACK WOMEN AND WOMEN OF COLOR CANNOT CARRY THE BURDEN OF TRANSFORMATION ALONE

As a community foundation, we envision a future where people of every background and identity feel valued and safe where they live and where they work. Since the verdict in the George Floyd murder trial, that future is only one decision closer than it was a year ago, when an unarmed Floyd cried out for his mother; 6 years ago, when Sandra Bland's death ignited the #SayHerName movement; and 66 years ago, when the beaten body of 14-year-old Emmett Till lay in an open casket for the world to see.

Black women and other women of color have been living with an unrelenting fear of racial violence toward themselves and their loved ones for too long. We cannot allow them to suffocate under literal or figurative knees any longer. They alone cannot carry the burden of transformation. Whether or not we are directly impacted by the cruelty of systemic and historic racism and white supremacy, we all need to step up and hold others accountable – not for change, but for real, tangible progress.

Even after hearing "guilty" on all counts, we must assure Black women and women of color that when their voices are hoarse and arms are heavy, others will keep the work for justice moving forward. We call on all members of our community to join us in using our resources, power, and privilege – especially white privilege – to create a state built upon our shared vision of gender and racial equity.

TRUSTEE TRANSITIONS & ADDITIONS

WFCO NEW BOARD LEADERSHIP

- **BOARD CHAIR:** Joyce Vigil, Pueblo, Robb & Vigil, LLC
- **VICE CHAIR:** Adrienne Mansanares, Denver, Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains
- **SECRETARY:** Christina Ortiz, Denver, indieDwell
- **TREASURER:** Jennifer Cottrell, Littleton, Pinnacle Healthcare Consulting

WFCO thanks **Katie Kellen**, Denver, for her leadership during the last year as board chair, as well as several trustees who completed their board terms: **Stephanie Bruno**, Denver
Jennifer Colosimo, Denver
Kelley Duke, Denver
Kami Guildner, Evergreen
Pat Kendall, Fort Collins

NEW TRUSTEES AIM FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE



"I love the fact that WFCO is focused on making sustainable change. **WFCO has the programs and initiatives to accomplish systematic, long-lasting changes for women and families of all colors in our state.** I can't think of a better organization to be a part of."

RAYNARD GRAY,
Denver, Xcel Energy



"As a young woman, **it was participating in The Women's Foundation board that put me on a self-discovery path.** Serving as a trustee at that time, more than 25 years ago, opened the door for me to engage with so many women mentors who truly invested in my future. Rejoining the board at this stage of life is most certainly about paying it forward and working alongside women who are driven to impact systems change that can create life changing economic opportunities for generations to come."

GERRI GOMEZ HOWARD,
Castle Rock, Gomez Howard Group



"It is impossible to talk about my passion and commitment to empowering women, especially women of color, without talking about my mom. My mother, an immigrant from South Korea, a nurse, mother of three, a gutsy businesswoman, and an artist, taught me to fight. **To fight for my own dignity and for those whose voices are muted or whose bodies are objects to be exploited or for those who have been denied equal access to The American Dream.** WFCO, as the only statewide community foundation devoted to improving women's access to economic opportunity, feels like home. I'm deeply honored to be part of an organization that has the expertise, partnerships, and enduring commitment needed to ensure equitable and sustainable futures for Colorado women and families."

TANIA ZEIGLER,
Denver, Burn Bright Coaching and Consulting, LLC



"As a woman, I strongly believe that every woman and girl should have the ability to advance their knowledge, have every opportunity afforded to male counterparts, and earn wages that allow them to be self-sufficient and provide for themselves and/or their families. **As the daughter of immigrants, understanding the need to work and support your family has been ingrained in my upbringing.** My mother and grandmother were both working moms – helping to support the family to ensure each generation after had a 'better' chance of opportunity, knowledge, and self-sustainability. It's my turn to do the same."

SONYA MARQUES-CORREIA,
Denver, Margulf Foundation



"WFCO's mission and work to promote the success of young women is **a great way for me to pay it forward and thank the many people who have supported me** and others to create an opportunity to become productive, involved community members."

SUE WAGNER,
Fort Collins, Bank of Colorado



THE SUPERPOWER of COMMUNITY

OUR ANNUAL LUNCHEON IS BACK IN PERSON & ONLINE

Ka-Pow! The Women's Foundation of Colorado's Annual Luncheon is back at the Colorado Convention Center* and in your home or office. Join us and passionate supporters of Colorado women for this renowned community building event. Whether you join us in person or virtually, it's going to be a dynamic gathering that harnesses the **Superpower of Community!**



The WFCO Annual Luncheon is the state's largest fundraiser on behalf of Colorado women and their families.



Act today and unleash your superpower to create change by purchasing a sponsorship or House Party Kit.



MEET SPECIAL GUEST

Robin Arzón

A WOMAN OF MANY POWERS

Robin Arzón wears many capes – Peloton instructor and executive, ultramarathoner, and best-selling author. Robin, of Cuban and Puerto Rican heritage, is also a new mom and a person living with type 1 diabetes.

Robin discovered her passion for athletics after healing from a traumatic experience through movement. She fearlessly left behind a successful law career to embark on new adventures in the health and wellness space and has since reinvented herself into an avid ultramarathoner and renowned fitness coach.

As vice president of fitness programming and head instructor at Peloton, she believes that sweat transforms lives, and her story is living proof. In 2020, she was named one of the most influential people on Fortune Magazine's "40 Under 40" list. Her superpowers are redefining, reforming, and rethinking possibility through movement.

Sponsorships from \$3,000-\$50,000 and House Party Kits are available now at wfc.org.



*Space will be limited.

Individual tables and tickets will become available this summer in accordance with Colorado Convention Center event and capacity guidelines.



Nneka McPhee



Jodi Rogers

Luncheon Chairs

This year's luncheon co-chairs, **Nneka McPhee** and **Jodi Rogers**, will lead our passionate and fun luncheon committee. To get involved or learn more, email **Colleen LaFontaine**, at colleenl@wfc.org.

Honorary Chairs

Colleen Abdoulah	Lucille Echohawk
Jandel Allen-Davis	Gracie Gallego and John Schultz
Stephanie Bruno	Margie Gart
Christine Chin	

GIVING CIRCLES BROADEN WFCO IMPACT

WFCO is proud to host eight giving circles, a space where our donors give collectively and connect for meaningful conversations, thoughtful grantmaking, and community building.

BEYOND OUR BORDERS

Nearly 40 women make up Beyond Our Borders, which extends WFCO's grantmaking focus on economic security to women globally. In 2020, Beyond Our Borders supported 10 organizations focusing on issues ranging from maternal healthcare in Sierra Leone to anti-human trafficking in Thailand. As WFCO's first giving circle, Beyond Our Borders has granted more than \$1 million since its founding, which is a tremendous milestone to be celebrated. Congratulations!

BFFS WHO CARE FUND

At regular social engagements, a great group of BFFs would discuss the longevity of their relationships and the power of their networks. They decided to leave a legacy that will be passed on to future generations, united around lifelong giving, connectivity, fun, and friendship. In 2020, the giving circle donated to the Susan G. Komen Foundation.

THE COMMUNITY CHEST

Started by nine friends who have survived breast cancer and wish to build a more empowered and connected Denver community.

EAT, DRINK, GIVE

A newly formed group of accomplished women who support women and children in Colorado while also building lasting relationships with each other. A social group with a purpose to eat, drink, and GIVE. 2020 grantees include The Gathering Place, Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking, and Urban Peak.

THE LOTUS COLLECTIVE FUND

An inclusive group of women effecting change in the Denver community by granting funds to innovative organizations.



The first four board chairs of Beyond Our Borders: (l to r) Eliza Woloson, Marjorie Seawell, Jane Ragle, Jo Lynne Whiting.



Beyond Our Borders today: More than 40 members make a difference for women globally.

THE PUEBLO AREA GIVING CIRCLE

Founded by Trish Orman and Alice Hill, The Pueblo Area Giving Circle is a new and inclusive group of multi-generational women supporting women and girls who strive toward leadership and family development opportunities in Pueblo and surrounding communities. Paying it forward and introducing women to philanthropy are giving circle goals. Members can join for \$250.

SISTERHOOD OF PHILANTHROPISTS IMPACTING NEEDS (SPIN)

A philanthropic giving circle of Black women in Denver who leverage their collective strengths to positively impact marginalized women and adolescent girls. SPIN makes a difference through charitable contributions, community service projects, and civic engagement. Members contribute at least \$400 annually. In 2020, SPIN supported Urban Leadership Foundation of Colorado and Collaborative Healing Initiatives Within Communities (CHIC).

WOMEN'S IMPACT INVESTING GIVING CIRCLE (WIIGC)

A giving circle for women who wish to learn about impact investing and create equitable funding opportunities for women entrepreneurs (see article on opposite page). The 3rd WIIGC cohort will launch in November 2021.

Questions? Contact Renee Ferrufino, vice president of development, at reneef@wfc.org for giving circle membership information.

Thinking About Joining PEP & EC? Now is the Time

Two communities of giving at The Women's Foundation, the Power of Extended Philanthropy (PEP) and Empowerment Council (EC), are actively seeking new members and encouraging existing members to renew. More than 300 PEP members donate a minimum of \$1,000 per year to The Foundation for three years, and 80+ EC members donate \$500 for one year. Both offer ongoing inspirational, educational, and networking opportunities.

GIVING CIRCLE SELECTS FINAL FOUR ENTREPRENEURS FOR FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

The Women's Impact Investing Giving Circle will fund one or more women-led social ventures this month. This is the second year that WFCO donors will directly invest in social ventures (projects, nonprofits, for-profits, start-ups, and ideas) through the giving circle. In the giving circle's inaugural year, **Sistahbiz Global Network**, founded by **Makisha Boothe**, and **The Village Institute**, founded by **Ellie Adelman**, received funding.

Why invest in women entrepreneurs?

The Women's Impact Investing Giving Circle supports economic equity by providing funding for women entrepreneurs, who consistently have less access to capital. According to a National Women's Business Council report, female founders received only 2.2% or just \$2.9 billion of the total \$130 billion of 2018 venture capital dollars. And since 2009, Black women founders have received only .0006% of all venture capital dollars. Latina women received 0.36%.

Despite this gap in new business funding, startups founded and cofounded by women actually perform better over time, generating 10% more in cumulative revenue over a five-year period (Boston Consulting Group and MassChallenge).

An educational & empowering application process

In December 2020, WIIGC received 113 applications from women entrepreneurs. In March, they interviewed with nine semifinalists and then narrowed the pool to four finalists. Throughout the process, members learned about gender bias in access to capital, the needs of social ventures, due diligence, and deal creation to inform their decisions.

Each member donates a minimum of \$2,000. Any principal returned or income earned from the investments is returned to WIIGC for future investment cycles.

Sign up for our e-newsletter at wfco.org to find out who receives funding.

» Congratulations to the final four applicants and all women who applied!

The final four projects showcase the talent, creativity, and passion of the women of Colorado. All of the projects are thoughtful efforts to address pertinent, persistent social issues and all individually are on a path toward success.

Shayln Kettering, WIIGC Member



Focus Points
FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER
Learn. Grow. Achieve.

CHERI GONZALES FOCUS POINTS FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

The new venture will create a culinary incubator hub/marketplace at a new ArtPark development where Comal graduates can launch their culinary businesses.



MICHELLE LASNIER RUBY'S MARKET

Ruby's Market supports local, immigrant, and minority entrepreneurs by mobilizing intercultural events and exchanges that promote global expression through artisan goods.



TOI MASSEY JEKL FOUNDATION

Offering a variety of high-quality interactive workshops and programs designed to expand the understanding of the interdependent STEM disciplines and art/design.



CASS WALKER RURAL WOMEN-LED BUSINESS FUND (FIRST SOUTHWEST COMMUNITY FUND)

Supports the dedicated entrepreneurial spirit of rural Colorado by investing in the people, culture, and ideas that fuel innovation and financial knowledge in their community with an emphasis on areas of greatest need.

PUTTING WOMEN & GIRLS OF COLOR ON THE FRONTLINES OF PHILANTHROPY

While COVID-19 itself is indiscriminating, it has shown us that our nation's systems are not. Inequitable access to resources such as healthcare, child care, housing, and capital resulted in women of color being hit first and hardest economically by the pandemic and being among the last to recover. More than one year later, Black women and Latinas still experience higher rates of unemployment than other groups.

Philanthropy is a known tool for change, but it, too, is a system that continually underfunds and undervalues women of color. According to the Ms. Foundation's "Pocket Change" report, grantmaking to women and girls of color accounts for about .5% of the total \$66.9 billion given by foundations in 2018.

Women and girls of color are frontline leaders for social change. They should also be on the frontlines of philanthropy.

Making more intentional and explicit investments

In 2020, WFCO committed to more intentional and explicit investments in women-of-color-led, and women-and-girl-of-color-serving organizations. We launched the state's only Women & Girls of Color Fund and formed a community advisory council to lead the grantmaking process. The council is comprised of 20 women and nonbinary people of color who span four generations and a range of socioeconomic circumstances. This spring, they made their first round of grants totaling \$192,000 to 12 rural organizations serving 23 counties.

WFCO recognizes that women and girls of color mobilize grassroots movements, are the thought leaders who shape our understanding of gender and race, and are uniquely positioned to lead us into a better future because of their lived experiences. We envision a future that fully honors, leverages, and invests in their strengths, talents, and gifts. With equitable funding and direct investments in their leadership, we can get there.

"This fund has an opportunity to stand out and stand up and to be unapologetic in how it centers women of color, how it centers women of color in leadership. We can address some deep inequities that exist around funding."

Advisory Council member Carly Hare (<i>i kita u hoo <i>i Ja hiks), Weld County



TOP ROW (L TO R): Nadia Ali; Goddess Tyescha Clark; Amber Coté; Mariana Diaz; Magenta Freeman

2ND ROW (L TO R): Lupita Garcia; Shay Giles; Keeley Griego; Carly Hare (<i>i kita u hoo <i>i Ja hiks); JoKatherine Holliman Page;

3RD ROW (L TO R): Ashlee Lewis; Ariana Lopez; Nneka McPhee; Anjanette Mosebar; Angell Pérez;

4TH ROW (L TO R): Sarah Rimmel; Rhianon Schuman; Emily Shamsid-Deen; Nina Vendhan; Cori Wong

Grantmaking timeline

The next Women & Girls of Color Fund grant cycle will open July 5, 2021. Organizations based in the Front Range interested in applying can read our FAQs, submit an interest form, and sign up for a June 24 Grant Information Session at wfco.org.

Thanks & how to support

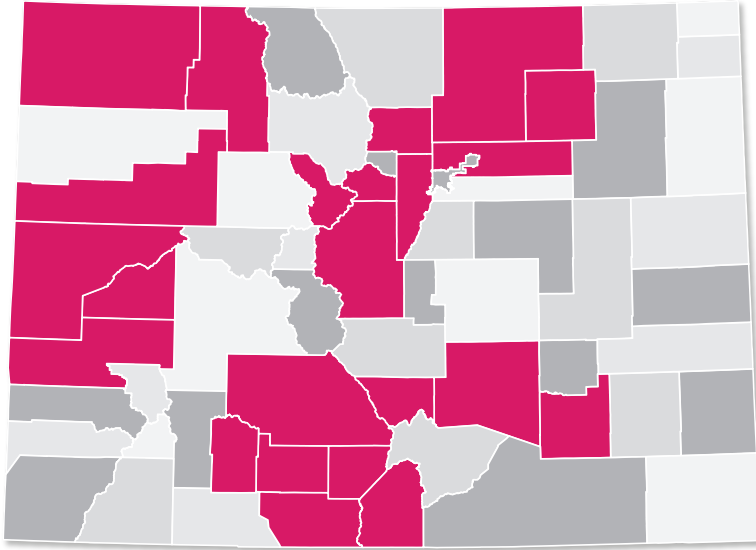
Thank you to The Colorado Health Foundation, Chambers Initiative, Xcel Energy, Margulf Foundation, Dawn and Andrew Marshall, WomenGive – United Way of Larimer County, and individual donors who have made this fund possible as well as our incredible Women & Girls of Color Fund advisory council!

Do you share our vision?

Thanks to Ford Foundation's generous \$50,000 matching grant, your gift of \$5, \$50, \$100 or more goes even further to increase philanthropic investments in women and girls of color. Donate at wfco.org.

WOMEN & GIRLS OF COLOR FUND

RURAL GRANTEES BLAZE TRAILS IN 23 COUNTIES



Action Is Safer

Shannon Robinson, Founder/Director

Serving Delta, Mesa, and Montrose counties

Mission: To provide grassroots advocacy, mutual aid for Black, indigenous, and queer women, and build organizing capacity. We help to build leadership skills and work skills by encouraging BIPOC and queer women to claim their seat at the table.

Colorado Mountain College School of Transitional Education

A. Yvette Myrick, Program Director

Serving Garfield and Summit counties

Mission: To help individuals from under-privileged backgrounds get prepared for post-secondary degrees, supporting them through English as a Second Language (ESL) training, high school equivalency training (GED), and Career and Technical Education (CTE) readiness.

County Collective, Inc.

Hermine Ngnomire, Founder and President

Serving Adams, Boulder, and Weld counties

Mission: To empower historically marginalized groups to positively lead and mobilize community transformation through youth-centered leadership, knowledge, and opportunities for action.

El Movimiento Sigue

Theresa M. Trujillo, Interim Board Chair

Serving Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Otero, and Pueblo counties

Mission: 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

Milena Quiros, Director

Serving Summit County

Mission: To break 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

Nancy Rae Kochis-Clark, Founder

Serving statewide and Custer County

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

Nelly Navarro, Executive Director

Serving Moffat and Routt counties

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

Michele Trujillo, Executive Director

Serving Conejos County

Mission: To provide youth from 1st-8th grades justice education (social justice, food justice, environmental justice).

The Learning Council, Delta County

Alicia Michelsen, Executive Director

Serving Delta County

Mission: To support lifelong learning and education as a resource for everyone by providing complimentary educational opportunities, celebrating the arts and agriculture, stimulating creativity, enriching local culture, and bolstering community health and vitality.

OneMorgan County

Susana Guardado, Executive Director

Serving Morgan County

Mission: To foster relationships among diverse people and organizations to strengthen the well-being, safety, and cohesive nature of our community.

PeaceWorks, Inc.

Lori Cuno, Executive Director

Serving Clear Creek, Jefferson, and Park counties

Mission: To advocate for ALL survivors, their children, and companion animals of intimate partner violence/abuse, sexual assault, sex trafficking, teen dating violence, and stalking.

Tu Casa, Inc.

Theresa Ortega, Executive Director

Serving Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, Rio Grande, and Saguache counties

Mission: To support healthy, violence-free lives and relationships for all children and adults in the San Luis Valley.

THE PROOF IS IN THE PAY: CASH ASSISTANCE IS AN EFFECTIVE ECONOMIC EQUITY STRATEGY

Research from California to Canada to Colorado shows that directly providing cash assistance to individuals with low-incomes offsets poverty.

• **In 2018, Foundations for Social Change in Vancouver provided 50 people experiencing homelessness with approximately \$6,000 USD.** At the end of the year, the people who received cash assistance moved into stable housing faster than those who did not receive cash, and they saved enough money to maintain financial self-sufficiency over the year of follow-up.

• **In 2019, the Stockton Economic Empowerment Distribution (SEED), funded by philanthropic donations, gave 125 low-income individuals \$500 a month for two years to use as they needed.** The income reduced recipients' income volatility and better prepared them for unexpected expenses. More importantly, it positively impacted recipients' mental health and full-time employment.

• **Through our own WAGES (Women Achieving Greater Economic Security) grantee cohort and our WFCO Relief Fund,** WFCO has also seen cash transform opportunity, increase financial stability, and reduce the impacts of systemic inequities.

"Participants in cash assistance programs often work and earn more once they have the resources needed to pursue better jobs."

Louise Myrland, WFCO vice president of programs

Women can address their unique circumstances with flexible cash resources

Many WFCO Relief Fund grantees used funding to provide direct cash assistance to community members as an immediate response to the pandemic. Providing direct cash assistance to women and families for rent, utilities, food, and other needs was critical during a time when many experienced reduced work hours or loss of employment. Additionally, several WAGES grantee partners use cash assistance to complement their job training programs. "Women know what they need to move forward financially. Trusting women with flexible cash resources to address their unique circumstances is a pathway to economic equity," said Louise Myrland, WFCO vice president of programs. "While it may surprise some, participants in cash assistance programs often work and earn more once they have the resources needed to pursue better jobs."

Testimonies from WFCO grantees: An infusion of cash makes all the difference

"Your donation is allowing me to continue my education in early childhood without the worry of rent for the month of June. Thanks to you, I am enrolled in summer courses for two more classes to obtain my teacher's certificate."

Participant,
Pueblo Community College

"We issued her \$1,000 in emergency relief, which she used to pay for her rent and utility bills. She had enough money left to buy fresh food for her children. This no-strings-attached direct cash assistance put the power in her hands to decide what were the highest priorities for her family in a time of survival."

Valley Settlement staff

"I received money that I used for tires. That to me was incredible that I was given the power to make my own decisions for what was needed for my family."

Participant,
Eagle County Department
of Human Services

"We've noticed that the Cliff Effect really starts taking effect on the third month of employment – that's when TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and other benefits start to fall out. Our participants receive an earnings supplement in months three, four, and five of full-time employment. It keeps them going in the early months of a new job."

Center for Work Education and
Employment (CWEE) staff

CHANGE TO RESHAPING SYSTEMS, EASING ECONOMIC BURDENS CAUSED BY COVID-19

With only weeks to go in Colorado's 2021 legislative session, WFCO anticipates a frenzy of activity and opportunities to advocate for Colorado women. We are supporting 20 bills addressing issues ranging from Black maternal health to Medicaid expansion for family planning services to gender identity discrimination. The three bills below that address historic and systemic barriers *and* the economic fallout of the pandemic received lobbying resources.

SB21-027

Emergency Supplies for Colorado Babies and Families

According to the National Diaper Bank Network, it costs \$80/month to diaper a child. In many cases, diaper needs cause more anxiety than food or housing because public supports such as WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) and SNAP (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program) cannot be used to purchase them.

Sponsored by four women policymakers, SB21-027 establishes a grant program for nonprofit entities to administer diaper distribution centers throughout the state.



Nonprofits, such as **WeeCycle** (pictured), will administer diaper distribution centers.

SB21-236

Increase Capacity Early Childhood Care & Education

According to Early Milestones Colorado, 10% of Colorado's child care providers closed their businesses during the pandemic. Think it's just a problem for working parents? Everyone relies on someone who relies on child care.

One bill creates four new grant programs to increase the capacity for early childhood care and education, improve recruitment and retention rates for early childhood educators, and increase salaries for educators. According to National Women's Law Center, typical annual wages for a woman working full time, year round in the child care industry were \$29,900, or approximately \$14.38 per hour.



93% of child care workers are women.
45% are Black, Asian, and Latina.

Photo courtesy of Scott Dressel Martin,
Clayton Early Learning

HB21-1311 & HB21-1312

Income Tax & Insurance Premium Property Sales Severance Tax

As we shift to economic recovery from the pandemic, we can put money in the pockets of tens of thousands of Colorado workers, small business owners, and families who are still struggling financially. Tax credits are proven as an effective anti-poverty measure.

The expansion of the state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the funding of the Child Tax Credit (CTC) ensures that people with low wages have access to more resources to support their families.



Children in households
receiving **EITC** have improved health
and educational outcomes.



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Foundation of Colorado**

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2021

COLORADO CONVENTION CENTER, MILE HIGH BALLROOM
AND LIVE STREAMING AT YOUR HOME OR OFFICE

Details and speaker information on page 5