



# MISSION DRIVEN

ELECTION EDITION 2018

## VERIFYING OUR VOICES THROUGH OUR VOTES

The basic tenet of our democratic society is a privilege that so many people worked to maintain, expand, and share with others: the ability to engage in civic processes and to vote.

Over 50 years ago, when I was 10, my father, Whitney M. Young Jr., stood with Martin Luther King, Jr. on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and spoke at the historic 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. I will always remember watching my father on television from my living room, and the words that he said remain as true today as they were for our forefathers, suffragettes, and proponents of the Voting Rights Act.

On that memorable day, my father said: “We must march...to renewed faith and confidence due to tangible programs and visible changes made possible by walking together: to the PTA meetings, to the libraries, to the decision-making meetings, to the schools and colleges, to the adult education centers for all and...to the voter registration booths. The hour is late, the gap is widening.”

I am grateful that we can express our perspectives and verify our voices through voting. It becomes even more valuable when we do so thoughtfully, making use of available tools for education, researching issues, attending forums, and asking questions of candidates for office. The Women’s Foundation of Colorado’s 2018–19 nonpartisan voter handbook, *The Womanifesto*, is one such tool, based on input from dozens of diverse Coloradans. We wrote it to help voters, candidates, and community members across our state understand the issues that impact women and families. You can find out more about it in this newsletter and find it online at [wfco.org/womanifesto](http://wfco.org/womanifesto).

WFCO is proud to be nonpartisan, a stance that means we seek to learn from people of a variety of background and persuasions; at the same time, we make decisions based on the values and the goals of our strategic plan and that are reflected in the make up of our board, staff, and volunteer committees. In the same way that developing *The Womanifesto* was a carefully considered and

informed act, I believe that voting should be an informed act based on your values and your vision for the future.

Through civic engagement and voting, we create shared rules for the collective space in which we live our lives together, for our natural resources, our cities and towns, our communities, and our future. Ballots include the names of individuals who should not be considered as personalities but as leaders and representatives who will shape policies and practices as they relate to areas as varied as child care, equal pay, education, and the environment.

I urge you to read *The Womanifesto*, turn to other sources of information, ask questions, express your voice with respect, and build community dialogue wherever you can. Like philanthropy, voting and civic engagement should be done in the spirit of love for humankind, with appreciation for the past, and hope for the future. It is a gift to have the opportunity to vote, and a privilege that should not be treated lightly.

This November, I hope to see many of you proudly wearing the sticker on your lapel that’s more valuable than any brooch of precious metals, the one that proclaims, “I voted.”



**LAUREN Y. CASTEEL**  
*President & CEO*

# WFCO CELEBRATES EXTRAORDINARY GRANT

We are thrilled to announce that the Colorado Health Foundation, one of the nation’s largest health foundations, awarded WFCO a \$1 million grant to support the remaining four years of our 2017-2021 strategic plan.

We will use the funds to enhance operations to strengthen infrastructure and leverage philanthropy to broaden our statewide reach, deepen our impact, and affirm our role as an anchor institution for the economic advancement of Colorado women and their families.

More than 260,000 Colorado women live in poverty and hundreds of thousands more live on an economic edge. Although unemployment is historically low, wages are stagnant. According to WFCO grantee partner the Bell Policy Center, when adjusted for inflation, average weekly wages have only risen \$33 since 2000.

“Headlines suggest that Coloradans are flourishing financially, but as the cost of living soars, many women struggle to grow their wages and face incredible stress trying to make ends meet for their families,” said Lauren Casteel. “This extraordinary grant from the Colorado Health Foundation reinforces the importance of our mission in advancing economic opportunities, and health outcomes, for women and their families.”

In 2017, WFCO formed WAGES (Women Achieving Greater Economic Security), a programmatic body of work to advance equity through research, public policy, and direct-service grantmaking. Informed by the insights of nearly 1,300 Coloradans, WAGES helps women reach economic security by increasing access to education, job training, equal pay, paid family leave, and affordable high-quality child care.

“Investing in WFCO’s strategic plan and bolstering its infrastructure for the future will bring health in reach for more Coloradans across the state. Policies such as paid family leave are not only economic issues – they are health issues,” said Karen McNeil-Miller, president and CEO of the Colorado Health Foundation. “We hope our grant inspires individuals, foundations, and corporations to generously fund the ongoing, essential statewide work of WFCO.”



Left to right: Ava Smith, Becca Alfaro, Samantha (Sam) Josey-Borden

WFCO is committed to fostering the growth of diverse young leaders. This summer, we benefited from the perspectives and passion of our paid 2018 summer interns **Becca Alfaro** and **Ava Smith**, and fellow **Samantha Josey-Borden**. Thank you for your support!

Becca worked with the communications team researching and writing for our blog and newsletter. After her internship, Becca traveled back to Sweden to finish her master’s of social science with a specialization in gender studies at Lund University.

From data collection and analysis and research to events, Ava is supporting the development team in all aspects of its work across the state through the end of the school year while completing her senior year at Regis University.

For her Leadership for Educational Equity (LEE) fellowship, Sam worked with the programs team to begin a project tracking the women who are running for Colorado public office. This fall, Sam returned to Memphis where she teaches kindergarten with Teach for America.

# Change Makers and News Makers

- The Bell Policy Center welcomed **Kathleen Beatty**, WFCO honorary trustee and fundholder, as their new board chair.
- WFCO President and CEO **Lauren Y. Casteel** received the MRBES Success Summit Legacy Award.
- Honorary Trustee **Lucille Echohawk** was given a special birthday legacy honor for her work at the Denver Indian Family Resource Center.
- **Lee Everding**, WFCO honorary trustee and Beyond Our Borders member, and **Sister Lydia Peña**, WFCO honorary trustee, were honored at the 18th annual Stellar Women Celebration.
- Former WFCO intern **Kayla M. Hardin-Lawson** accepted her first job since graduating from college at Warren Village.
- WFCO Honorary Trustee **Anna Jo Haynes** has been inducted into the Latina Legacy Circle.
- WFCO Honorary Trustee **Arlene Hirschfeld** and her husband, **Barry Hirschfeld**, were honored by Bonfils-Stanton Foundation for their Community Service in the Arts.
- Beyond Our Borders member **Laurie Hirschfield Zeller** is the new publisher at *The Colorado Independent*.

# THE WOMANIFESTO

A Nonpartisan Voter Handbook for Everyone Who Cares About Strengthening Colorado

## wo·man·i·fes·to

*noun: a public proclamation of policy goals, intentions, or views, especially one issued before an election; a policy statement or platform*

On September 25, National Voter Registration Day, WFCO released a nonpartisan voter handbook—The Womanifesto—to educate policymakers and community members about advancing women’s economic security and provide policy solutions to strengthen Colorado’s economy by improving opportunities for women and families.

The handbook is intended to help people learn about the key issues, such as the persistent gender pay gap, and policy solutions to unlock women’s full participation in and contribution to the economy. More than 70 diverse community members provided their perspectives and reviewed WFCO’s proposed solutions.

“The sorts of changes we’re advocating for matter to women at every economic level as we strive for greater economic security in our lives – from child care provider to cashier to CEO,” said Louise Myrland, vice president of programs for WFCO. “Everyone benefits when all Colorado women have access to the tools to thrive and resources to enter, remain, and succeed in their careers.”

We hope that the following policies will be considered by community members when completing their ballots and addressed by elected officials. It is vital that we advocate for women and their families as we work for a thriving Colorado.

## ELEVATE CHILD CARE

Advance policies that put high-quality child care within reach for working families. Improving access and affordability of high-quality child care promotes women’s participation in the workforce, women’s abilities to support their families, and fulfillment of employers’ current and future labor demands.

## MAKE WORK WORK

Pursue policies that make work work for everyone, such as establishing systems for paid family and medical leave insurance for all workers and standards for earning paid sick time, raising wage standards, and prohibiting gender- and race-based discrimination. Including and supporting all workers benefits employers, the workforce, and the entire economy with improved workforce stability and productivity, and broader economic growth.

## PROPEL OPPORTUNITY

Strengthen policies that propel educational and professional opportunities for women. Promoting opportunities for women to prepare for and succeed in careers that pay livable wages advances economic growth for individual women, families, employers, and the state as a whole.

The Womanifesto also includes action steps for voters and policymakers who want to effect change to strengthen Colorado. It encourages Coloradans to learn about the issues and apply that knowledge as voters; to share The Womanifesto and encourage friends, family, neighbors, and networks to register and be informed voters; to connect with their elected officials to elevate these issues and policy solutions. Find the entire handbook online at [wfcu.org/womanifesto](http://wfcu.org/womanifesto).

The Womanifesto voter handbook is just one of WFCO’s nonpartisan community civic engagement and advocacy tools, which also include research, educational events, and a lobby day. Learn more at [wfcu.org/civicengagement](http://wfcu.org/civicengagement).

*“Everyone benefits when all Colorado women have access to the tools to thrive and resources to enter, remain, and succeed in their careers.”*

**LOUISE MYRLAND**

Vice President of Programs



» Voters can access The Womanifesto online at: [wfcu.org/womanifesto](http://wfcu.org/womanifesto)





VoteRunLead partnered with Colorado 50-50 to hold a “Run As You Are” training in Fort Collins last spring with 52 current candidates, potential candidates, and women who want to help other women win.

## A DONOR-ADVISED GRANT PROPELS WOMEN TO RUN FOR OFFICE

Through civic engagement, we all have the power to strengthen our shared community. With practical training and hands-on tools, more and more women are raising up their voices, taking on new leadership opportunities, and being heard. National, nonpartisan organization VoteRunLead is at the center of this important work, and their Colorado efforts have been amplified by a donor-advised grant from a fund held at The Women’s Foundation of Colorado.

Started in the fall of 2016 to maintain friends’ connections, Soeurs de Coeur, a WFCO donor-advised fund, centers on four women’s shared passion for supporting other women and girls. Honorary Trustees Kelly Condon, Deb Luginbuhl, Lisa Pease, and Pamela Smith met through their service on WFCO’s board of trustees. When life scattered them across the country, they created a donor-advised fund.

Late in 2017, the donors created lists of the issues currently at the top of their minds, and found that they were all interested in advancing civic engagement.

“We all hold the belief that when women are involved in decisions in corporate, public, or private arenas, the outcomes are better,” explained Lisa Pease. “It’s been shown that women work more across the aisle, they develop consensus, and they generally have other women and their families, as well as men, at the forefront of much of their thought process. We felt being involved in civic engagement had the greatest potential for systemic impact, and it felt especially timely.”

The Women’s Foundation offered to support the Soeurs de Coeur by reaching out to three local and national organizations that WFCO knew were doing great work to see what each organization might do with a donor-advised grant. Together, the fundholders reviewed the thoughtful proposals, and decided to fund VoteRunLead.

“VoteRunLead said that this grant could double their impact in Colorado. Their proposal was very compelling,” said Renee Ferrufino, vice president of development at WFCO. Soeurs de Coeur awarded the nonprofit a generous \$25,000 grant.

With the grant, VoteRunLead expanded outreach and access for women interested in running for office across Colorado, especially in rural areas. Staff now had the resources to respond to community requests to hold a training event in Fort Collins in March and have plans to host an event on the Western Slope. Importantly, VoteRunLead can offer reduced registration fees so that cost is not a barrier to participating, just as it should not be a barrier to active participation in our democracy.

In early 2019, VoteRunLead plans to host a multi-city “How to Run for Office” event, with parts of Colorado serving as one of several hub locations for the thousands of women estimated to attend. The organization is well on its way toward its goal of training 30,000 more women by 2020.

“Ultimately, WFCO is at the heart of our Colorado connections: to women’s networks on the ground there, and to the issues and challenges that are relevant to Colorado women,” explained Amanda O’Donell, COO of VoteRunLead.

The four Soeurs de Coeur are thrilled to see the progress so far. “We hope that, at the end of this grant, more women are successful in midterm elections at whatever level they’re running,” said Lisa.

For more information about donor-advised funds at WFCO or VoteRunLead, contact Camisha Lashbrook at [camishal@wfco.org](mailto:camishal@wfco.org).



**Donor-advised funds** at WFCO, started for as little as \$2,500, receive a \$2,500 match, amplifying fundholders’ investments back into the community!

## EMPOWERMENT COUNCIL, A GROWING COMMUNITY OF GIVING

Building community is something that takes time. It’s about showing up, digging in, and helping out.

When Kelley Duke, now a WFCO trustee, learned about The Women’s Foundation of Colorado (WFCO) in 2007, she saw the opportunity to expand The Foundation’s community of giving to include young professionals. She called it the Empowerment Council (EC). Over the last 10 years, Kelley’s idea has grown into a thriving group of emerging philanthropists who seek career mentorship, networking opportunities, and a space to support each other while making a difference in the lives of Colorado women.

“The Empowerment Council has a little bit of everything. As a member, you’re supporting a really great organization, and our programming is about women supporting women,” said Carly Wendt, a financial advisor and current member of the Empowerment Council as well as PEP and WFCO’s investment committee.

Now over 70 strong, Empowerment Council members contribute \$500 per year – paid on a monthly, quarterly, or annual schedule – to support The Women’s Foundation’s work for Colorado women and their families. Members create and host events each month, sharing their expertise with one another and tapping into WFCO’s networks, research, and resources. Last year, a national expert on leadership led Empowerment Council members through a discussion about how to express their unique value proposition.

At another event, EC member and then-Denver Director of Elections Amber McReynolds led a tour of the Denver Elections Division where members received a behind-the-scenes look at the city’s award-winning ballot tracking technology.

*“The Empowerment Council is a space just for women who are seeking experiences and perspectives they don’t necessarily get at work or in their current social networks.”*

### CAMISHA LASHBROOK

*Donor Relations & Communications Manager*

This summer, Carly organized a Women and Wealth event for the Empowerment Council. Attended by approximately 40 guests, the event featured a panel of experts discussing how women, who often aren’t taught how to plan for their financial futures, can prepare for retirement and meet their financial goals.

“Many members work in male-dominated fields and even women’s networking events can feel like simply exchanging business cards,” said Camisha Lashbrook, WFCO’s donor relations and communications manager. “The Empowerment Council is a space just for women who are seeking

experiences and perspectives they don’t necessarily get at work or in their current social networks.”

“I began supporting WFCO because the idea of catalyzing and accelerating change was really exciting to me,” said EC member Kelly Hall. “I wanted the experience of connecting with other women who feel the same way I do about moving the needle for other women.”

For more information about the Empowerment Council, visit [wfco.org/EC](http://wfco.org/EC) or contact Camisha Lashbrook at [camishal@wfco.org](mailto:camishal@wfco.org).



EC members visit WFCO grantee Florence Crittenton



## WORKING HARD TOWARD A CAREER IN WELDING

Sharna Frazier isn't scared of hard work.

She often works up to 50 hours a week between attending classes for her welding apprenticeship and her new construction job, which pays \$23/hour and provides full benefits.

Hard work excites Frazier. She enjoys the physical challenges of working in construction and knows that when she completes a welding class or reaches a certification, she's eligible for the next pay grade. Most importantly, she knows that by working hard and absorbing all that she can, she'll be in a strong position to start her own business when she graduates.

"I've never had a job with a chance for raises before," said Frazier, who is the first black woman in the apprenticeship program through Ironworkers Local 24. "I just want to do really good."

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the need for welders is expected to grow 26 percent by 2020, which makes welding one of the fastest growing professions in America. Nearly everything we use in our daily life is welded or made by equipment that has been welded. In construction, welders use their specialized skills for building and repairing bridges, erecting wind turbines, industrial plant maintenance, and even helping to improve the environment by building pollution control devices.

Collaborative Healing Initiative within Communities (C.H.I.C.), a member of WFCO's WAGES (Women Achieving Greater Economic Security) grantee cohort, recognized the opportunity to place women in training programs that will prepare them for careers in construction and other high-growth industries. In 2016, with the help of fiscal sponsor and partner organization Impact Empowerment Group

(IEG), it kicked off a program to help families break intergenerational cycles of poverty and violence.

C.H.I.C. offers a variety of services, including employment and education outreach that in 2018 will help up to 40 women secure employment with business partners such as Allied Universal, Amazon fulfillment centers, IRON Workers Union, Colorado Homebuilders Association, Concessions International, Denver Works, LGC Logistics, and Road Safe Traffic.

Earlier this year, Frazier, 29, never would have guessed she would be one of these women. When she moved back to Denver from Montana, where she had worked as a certified nursing assistant, she just wanted to increase her wages while helping her siblings take care of her mother. Her brother connected her to C.H.I.C. and within weeks she had passed a rigorous "gladiator" physical exam and completed a fire watch training program.

"Frazier came to us looking for a job, and through her work ethic and determination, she is making a career for herself," said Hilari Smith, associate director with C.H.I.C. "Her spirit, focus, and positive outlook are inspiring – without a blink she will jump into a new challenge. She encourages me just as much as I encourage her."

Frazier feels like she found C.H.I.C. for a reason. C.H.I.C. opened the door to work that she truly enjoys and that provides enough income for her to do more for her mom and even buy materials for her number one passion – painting.

Hard work is just a part of who Frazier is. In addition to a future in welding, she also aspires to become an EMT in her spare time, learn phlebotomy, and grow her own food.

"Let's do it!" she said.

## WOMEN ACROSS COLORADO HEAD BACK TO SCHOOL WITH HELP FROM WFCO

Each fall, millions of Colorado kids head back to school, but this also is a reality for women of all ages. Several WFCO direct-service WAGES grantees support women as they take this important step to open doors of possibility for their futures.

### PUEBLO COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Twenty-five women enrolled in Pueblo Community College's (PCC) DualStar Project, which helps women earn certificates and degrees in medical coding, Health Information Technology (HIT) management and support, and HIT network security. Starting salaries with an HIT degree range from \$17-\$18 per hour.

"WFCO has provided us with scholarship dollars or emergency funds where if a student can't pay rent or afford child care, we can help make sure they stay in the program," said Linda Tremblay, PCC grant writer.

The DualStar Project prioritizes accessibility through its online platform that gives students the option to enroll full-time, 1/2-time or 3/4-time and helps them secure internships in their respective STEM fields.

"Placement has been highly successful, especially through internships. There are multiple employment possibilities in hospital facilities, long-term care facilities, insurance companies, community health programs, and private practice," said Marianne Horvath, PCC HIT Faculty Coordinator.

### COLORADO COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

Recognizing the increasing demand for qualified information technology (IT) workers, the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) launched an IT-focused job-training program in Denver in June.

Through the Women's Tech Training program, 12 women will develop their basic IT skills and earn the CompTIA A+ certification, which qualifies them for positions such as a computer hardware technician. Entry-level salaries range between \$30,000 to \$45,000 with an average 5 percent annual pay increase.

Tammy Bellofatto, CCH director of vocational services, describes the diverse student participants as formerly homeless, homeless, or at risk of homelessness.

"Just because someone is forced to sleep in their car because of skyrocketing housing costs doesn't mean they shouldn't have the opportunity to engage in meaningful work opportunities," said Bellofatto.

The women-only program provides wrap-around services, such as child care and transportation, to prevent single mothers from having to miss class.

CCH's educating partner LEADERQUEST, an approved Workforce Initiative Opportunity Act (WIOA) trainer, has created a pipeline to employment for student participants through corporate partnerships including Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Ball Aerospace, CenturyLink, and Sierra Nevada Corporation, boasting a 76 percent job attainment rate for past participants.



Athena Clemens celebrates her graduation from University of Colorado Boulder

## 2018 Dottie Lamm Award Winner Athena Clemens

In 1987, WFCO created the Dottie Lamm Award to honor the former first lady and her commitment to advancing and accelerating opportunities for women and their families throughout the state, by recognizing the resilience of women on the path to economic security. One woman is honored annually and receives a \$1,500 cash award. In 2018, that woman is Athena Clemens.

With an unstable home life, Athena became independent at age 17. She experienced bouts of homelessness and foster care, hunger and sleepless nights, while working full-time in high school to support herself. Her extraordinary hope and immeasurable tenacity helped her finish as valedictorian of Wasson High School in Colorado Springs.

Athena insists that she could not have done it alone. She thanks many communities for helping her flourish, nurturing her talents, and providing her with unconditional love while she overcame an economically unstable situation and changed the course of her future. She expresses gratitude for her high school counselor, Mrs. Neary, who brought Athena into her family while she finished her senior year, and the Boettcher Foundation, which invested in her as a first-generation college student.

In May 2016, Athena graduated from the University of Colorado Boulder with majors in integrative physiology, neuroscience, and biochemistry. Today, she is pursuing a master's degree in modern human anatomy

and a teaching certificate on the Anschutz Medical Campus while applying to medical schools to become a neurologist and volunteering with children by introducing them to the sciences.

"Athena is an incredible young woman who has overturned barriers and overcome unbelievable circumstances," said Lauren Casteel. "Watching her soar and impact her community is awe-inspiring."

*"I've never had a job with a chance for raises before. I just want to do really good."*

Frazier works up to 50 hours a week between her welding apprenticeship and construction job. Photo credit: Molly McCormick



# The Women's Foundation of Colorado

Women Thriving. Colorado Rising.®

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**INSIDE**

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