



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



# **WINcome**

## **Evaluation & Learning: Process and Impact Report**

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January 2023

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# Executive Summary

## WINcome Evaluation & Learning: Process and Impact Report

### Project Background

Point b(e) Strategies partnered with The Women's Foundation of Colorado to evaluate WINcome grantmaking. WINcome's overall priority is to advance gender, racial, and economic equity through flexible and holistic resources. In the program's first year, The Women's Foundation of Colorado supported 19 grant partners. Grant partners included both direct service organizations distributing flexible cash assistance in addition to programs and public policy organizations working towards systems change.

### Methodology

Point b(e) Strategies and The Women's Foundation utilized a mixed-methods approach to accomplish the goals of the evaluation and engaged in the following activities: (1) convened a WINcome Evaluation Advisory Committee, (2) developed a logic model and evaluation plan to clarify the intended outcomes of WINcome grantmaking, (3) conducted and supported data collection and analysis, (4) facilitated two technical assistance trainings available to all grant partners, and (5) developed narratives and storytelling from feedback collected.



### Outcomes

The Women's Foundation and Point b(e) Strategies developed a logic model and evaluation plan to guide the evaluation activities. Based on feedback from grant partners, the Advisory Committee and The Women's Foundation, the following eight outcomes were identified:

1. Women progress towards achieving their personal goals regarding economic security.
2. Increase access to economic opportunities & services for women, including access to childcare, education and job training.
3. Women's basic needs are met and crises are mitigated.
4. Develop women's skills to stabilize and become economically resilient.
5. Priority policy & systems change issues are identified that center those most impacted.
6. The community is informed about public policy & systems change issues related to economic security and solutions for women, women of color, and women with disabilities.
7. Narratives, or commonly held ideas, related to women speak to and address systems change issues impacting women, women of color & women with disabilities.
8. Organizations supporting gender, racial, and economic equity are better resourced to do their work.

### Key Findings

#### The Importance of Flexible Funds

- > Cash assistance works best on a case-by-case basis—when grantees and participants decide how funds are managed, distributed and used.

#### Primary Impacts of Flexible Cash Assistance on Participants

- > Shifts in participants' day-to-day experiences ranging from having reliable transportation to feeling more valued, more motivated, and experiencing less stress and anxiety;
- > Feelings of freedom due to the removal of financial stressors;
- > Connection to economic opportunities they would not otherwise have access to; and
- > Benefits of flexible cash assistance, not just for the individual but for their whole family.

#### Primary Impact of Flexible Cash Assistance on Grant Partners

- > Grant partners were able to meet needs for their clients in ways that they otherwise would not have been able to because of the freedom and flexibility of WINcome;
- > Grant partners increased support of and engagement with BIPOC folks;
- > Grant partners launched new programs; and
- > Partnerships were strengthened to support advocacy and systems change work.

#### Primary Impact of WINcome on Grant Partners' Policy & Systems Change Efforts

- > Participants and those served identified policy issues to prioritize, including housing, employment, job security, transportation, and business sustainability and growth.
- > Grant partners did not feel that policy makers understand majority of key systemic issues as they pertain to women. Most notably, grantees did not believe there was an understanding about the importance of support for employment for women.
- > Only one-third of grant partners indicated that current narratives about women address systemic issues. However, over the past year grant partners have noticed an increase in narratives about women that address systemic issues.

# Introduction & Methodology

## Introduction

The Women's Foundation of Colorado believes all women, non-binary, and trans people have promise and deserve opportunity to fulfill it. Their [2021-2025 strategic framework](#) outlines the investments The Foundation makes in systems change as well as in the inherent leadership and talents of women through flexible and holistic resources, so they can transform their lives, their families, their businesses, and their communities.

From 2017-2021, [Women Achieving Greater Economic Security \(WAGES\)](#) was The Women's Foundation of Colorado's grantmaking approach centered on helping women with low incomes earn livable wages. From WAGES and their grant partnerships over the last decade, The Foundation saw firsthand that flexibility is critical when it comes to supporting Colorado families meeting their needs. After the conclusion of WAGES, the next grantmaking approach evolved: WINcome (Women + Income = Thriving). WINcome's overall priority is to advance gender, racial, and economic equity through flexible and holistic resources. WINcome centers and operates from a place of trust—between The Women's Foundation and their grant partners, and between grant partners and their participants. WINcome is an intended three-year commitment with each grant partner and supports grant partners who demonstrate that individuals can advance economically when they are trusted to make their own decisions about their needs. Grant partners include both direct service organizations distributing cash assistance in addition to programs and public policy organizations working towards systems change.

In the first year of WINcome, grants ranged from \$32,000 - \$55,000 and The Women's Foundation of Colorado's investment totaled more than \$900,000. Grants to public policy partners provide general operating support. For direct service partners, funding includes both unrestricted funding of up to 50 percent of the grant and funds dedicated to providing flexible cash assistance to individuals. Each grant partner could choose how best to use the unrestricted funds (e.g., general operating, programs, or other needs). In WINcome's first year, The Women's Foundation supported 19 grant partners, working on statewide policy change and serving communities in 37 Colorado counties.

Nearly 70% of direct service grant partners, and more than half of all WINcome grant partners, are led by women of color. The Women's Foundation prioritizes investing in organizations that advance equity and work diligently and mindfully to represent the communities they serve in their leadership. For more information about WINcome, please visit <https://www.wfco.org/impact/wincome>.

Point b(e) Strategies partnered with The Women's Foundation of Colorado to evaluate their WINcome grantmaking. To help guide and inform the evaluation, Point b(e) Strategies facilitated regular meetings with an Advisory Committee consisting of grant partners and Women's Foundation programs staff. We express our gratitude to:

## **Grant partners**

Stephanie Cole (Full Circle of Lake County)

Yessica Holguin (Center for Community Wealth Building)

Marisa Krueger (Center for Work Education & Employment)

Julie Pecaut (Bell Policy Center)

## **Women’s Foundation board member and co-chair of The Foundation’s Direct Service Grantmaking Committee**

Raymond Foxworth

In addition to a program evaluation, Point b(e) Strategies developed storytelling pieces for WINcome based on data from the evaluation.

## **Methodology**

The Women’s Foundation of Colorado, the WINcome Evaluation Advisory Committee, and Point b(e) Strategies developed a logic model and evaluation plan to guide the evaluation activities. In addition, Point b(e) Strategies, in partnership with The Women’s Foundation and Advisory Committee, conducted a Grantee Survey to collect feedback on outcomes currently measured, available data, grantee capacity, and participant capacity. Based on feedback from the Grantee Survey, the Advisory Committee, and The Women’s Foundation, the following outcomes were identified:

- Women progress towards achieving their personal goals regarding economic security.
- Increase access to economic opportunities and services for women, including access to childcare, education, and job training.
- Women’s basic needs are met and crises are mitigated.
- Develop women’s skills to stabilize and become economically resilient.
- Priority policy & systems change issues are identified that center those most impacted.
- The community is informed about public policy and systems change issues related to economic security and solutions for women, women of color, and women with disabilities.
- Narratives related to women speak to and address systems change issues impacting women, women of color and women with disabilities.
- Organizations supporting gender, racial, and economic equity are better resourced to do their work.

Point b(e) Strategies and The Women’s Foundation of Colorado designed the evaluation process by centering the needs of grant partners in the following ways: 1. Leveraging existing opportunities for data collection; and 2. Providing flexible formats for data collection and submission. Point b(e) Strategies developed and gathered data through the following evaluation tools:

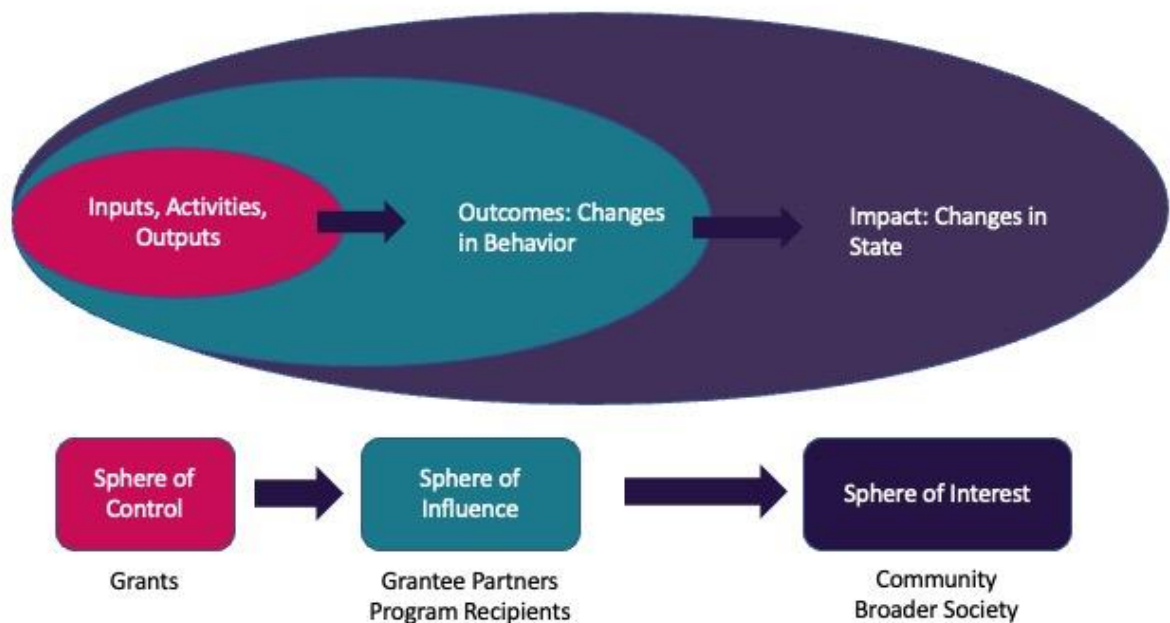
- **Renewal Application.** Grant partners completed a mandatory renewal application in association with WINcome. Point b(e) Strategies worked with The Women’s Foundation to access and analyze data from relevant questions within the renewal application.
- **Evaluation Survey Within the Renewal Application.** In addition to questions specific to WINcome’s renewal application, Point b(e) Strategies developed separate evaluation questions that were included as an optional section of the renewal application for both direct service and public policy grant partners. Seventeen grant partners participated in the evaluation section of the application.
- **Participant-Focused Data Collection.** Point b(e) Strategies developed a menu of participant questions from which grant partners could self-select to collect based on their current data collection, and on their understanding of their participants and their program structure. Grant partners had the option to ask participants all, some, or none of the questions from the menu. Grant partners were asked to submit participant-focused data with their renewal application. Nine direct service partners collected and shared participant-focused data.
- **Narrative-Based Information Gathering and Storytelling.** Point b(e) Strategies reviewed notes taken during The Women’s Foundation and grantee meetings and the qualitative responses from data collection to lift up primary narrative threads. The goal of this method of evaluation was to center the stories of participants and organizations as “storytelling lends itself to participatory change processes because it relies on people to make sense of their own experiences and environments” (McClintock, 2004). Emerging narrative themes were integrated into graphic depictions to provide a visual representation of impacts.

# Framing

## Spheres of Impact

As part of the WINcome grantmaking process, Point b(e) Strategies facilitated conversations with The Women’s Foundation leadership and the board to situate The Foundation’s impact in the community. The Spheres of Impact framework (Outcome Mapping Learning Community, 2011) in Figure 1 below provides a critical lens for interpreting what The Foundation can control and influence through the WINcome grantmaking process.

**Figure 1. Spheres of Impact**



Source: Outcome Mapping Learning Community. Webinar: *Introduction to Outcome Mapping* (2011)

Sphere One is the Sphere of Control, which looks at the inputs, activities and outputs that an organization has direct control over. For The Women’s Foundation, this is its grantmaking process. The Women’s Foundation has direct control over how the funding process is structured, who receives the funding and how much funding partners receive. Sphere Two is the Sphere of Influence, which looks at the outcomes and change in behaviors that organizations are seeking to achieve. For The Women’s Foundation, this sphere consists of its grant partners. The funding from The Women’s Foundation has an influence on grant partners, particularly at the organizational level. Funding can help strengthen the organization and its programs. However, it is at the discretion of the grant partners to control how funds are spent, how flexible cash assistance is distributed, and how its programs are implemented in the community. Finally, Sphere Three is the Sphere of Interest, which looks at larger-scale social impact. These changes occur at the social, economic or societal level and encompass the changes The

Women’s Foundation wants to see in systems and communities. However, it is important to note that these changes fall outside of The Women’s Foundation’s Sphere of Control and Sphere of Influence. To further situate the control and agency granted to each partner in the WINcome grantmaking process, the following graphic showcases the sphere of control for The Women’s Foundation, grant partners and participants.

Figure 2. WINcome Grantmaking Spheres of Control





# WINcome Background & Implementation

## Direct Service & Flexible Cash Assistance

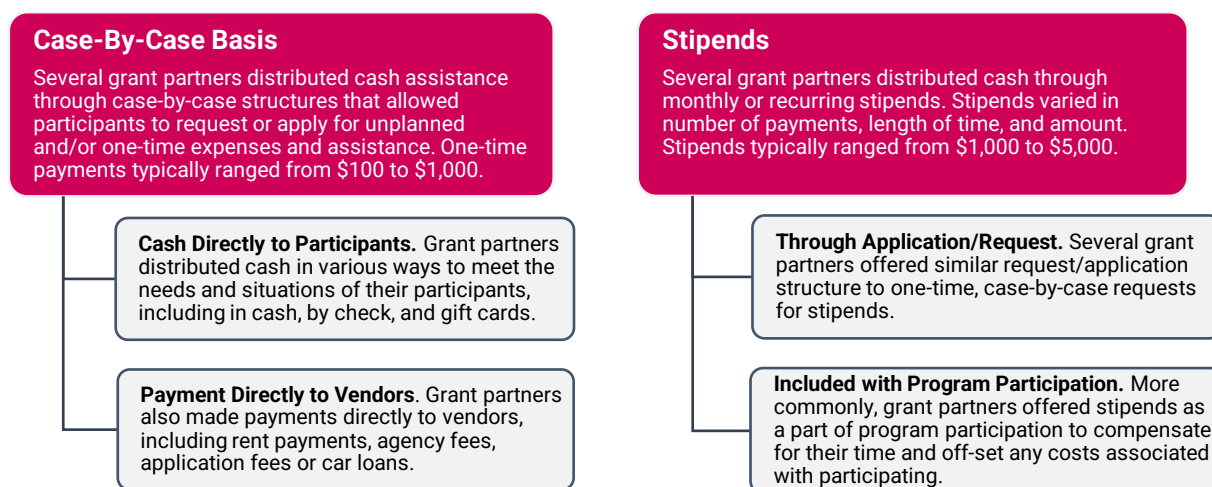
WINcome funds organizations that provide flexible cash assistance to women experiencing poverty or facing barriers to economic security to supplement their incomes and complement the services received through partners' programs. In 2022, 13 WINcome grant partners focused on offering direct services and providing cash assistance to participants.

### Direct Service Partners

- [Action is Safer/Western Colorado Alliance](#), serving Mesa and 22 surrounding counties
- [Alianza NORCO](#), serving Larimer and Weld counties
- [Center for Community Wealth Building](#), serving Adams, Arapahoe, and Denver counties
- [Centro de la Familia](#), serving El Paso and Teller counties
- [Center for Work Education and Employment \(CWEE\)](#), serving Arapahoe and Denver counties
- [Collaborative Healing Initiative Within Communities \(CHIC\)](#), serving Denver and Arapahoe counties
- [Denver Indian Family Resource Center \(DIFRC\)](#), serving Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, El Paso, Fremont, Jefferson, and Weld counties
- [Domestic Violence Initiative for Women with Disabilities \(The Initiative\)](#), serving Denver County
- [Full Circle of Lake County](#), serving Lake County
- [OneMorgan County](#), serving Morgan County
- [Posada](#), serving Pueblo County
- [The Gathering Place](#), serving Denver County
- [The Senior Hub](#), serving Adams and Arapahoe counties

In 2022, direct service grant partners distributed cash assistance in various ways to meet the needs of their organization, programs and participants. Grant partners shared the need to be flexible in how they distributed funds on a client-by-client (or participant-by-participant) basis, as each individual had unique needs and requirements that did not allow for a standard cash distribution structure. Figure 3 below illustrates the unique and community-driven ways grant partners distributed flexible cash assistance.

**Figure 3. Cash Assistance Structures**



*“Because The Gathering Place members are experiencing extreme poverty and often homelessness, many members do not have banking or checking accounts, and so providing a check creates another barrier. Providing cash directly to an individual living on the streets or in a shelter can create a genuine safety risk, as these individuals do not have a secure way to store or manage cash without potential of loss or theft. As every member has a unique situation, [our organization] evaluates each financial assistance need on a case-by-case basis.”— The Gathering Place*

As grant partners demonstrated, there is no one way to implement and provide cash assistance. Cash assistance looked different for each organization, program and participant. Grant partners shared how they were intentional in learning how best to distribute cash in ways that took into consideration and worked around barriers due to systemic issues and experiences. In addition to some of the barriers illustrated in the above quotation, one of the particular barriers these organizations face is the “benefits cliff”—also known as the “cliff effect.” This happens when a shift in finances precludes individuals from accessing public benefits, yet they still do not have enough funds to sustain their household (Leap Fund, 2022). This was a major concern for many grant partners who were eagerly seeking creative solutions to work around this challenge.

Two direct service grant partners stated that their participants encountered challenges or experienced benefit cliffs. A couple of grant partners—although their participants did not encounter challenges—were thoughtful about designing their programs in a way that accounts for the cliff effect.

*“Stipends have long been a key feature of the Steps to Success program, designed to offset the cliff effect these participants face when they begin employment and lose many of their public benefits that may not be immediately replaced by their new income. [Our program] participants automatically receive three \$200 stipends (\$600 total) in the second, third, and fourth month of employment and [program] participation, contingent only on their ongoing participation in the program.”*  
— Center for Work Education and Employment (CWEE)

## Public Policy

WINcome also supports public policy and systems change to increase access and public investment in flexible resources and holistic supports that foster economic opportunity, security and equity. Seven of the 19 WINcome grant partners were focused on public policy. These partners were also awarded flexible, unrestricted funds to support their work, whether through general operating support and/or through programmatic support.

### Public Policy Partners

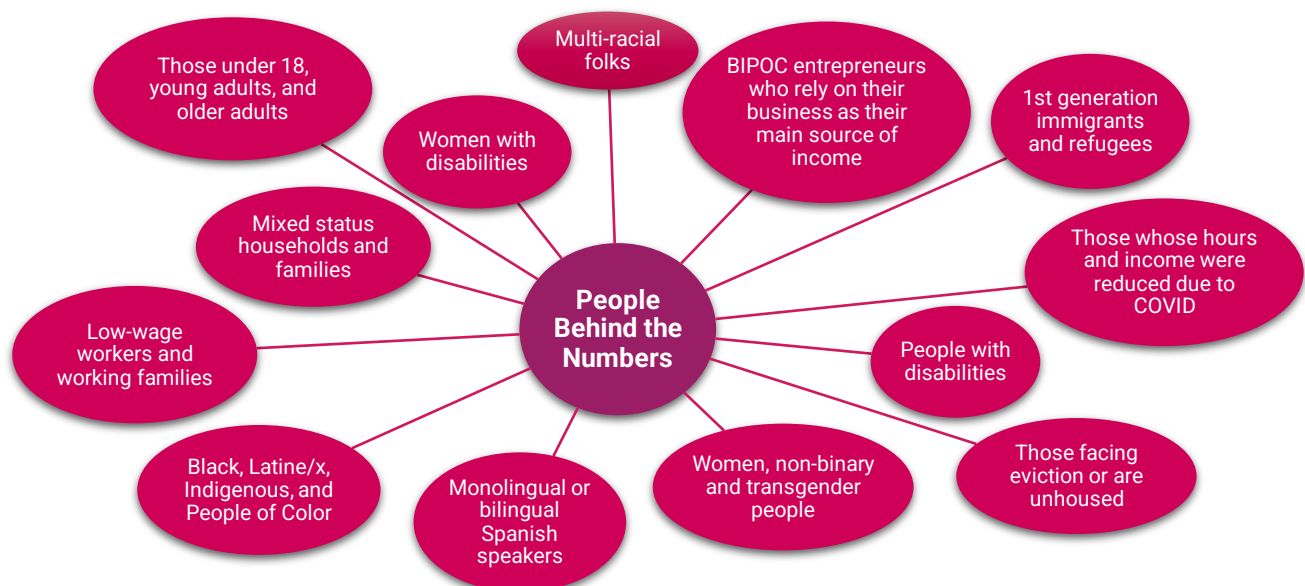
- [9to5 Colorado](#)
- [Bell Policy Center](#)
- [Clayton Early Learning](#)
- [Colorado Center on Law and Policy](#)
- [Colorado Children’s Campaign](#)
- [Colorado Fiscal Institute](#)

Public policy grant partners shared how they are working on policy changes, including engaging communities, legislators and leaders. While direct service partners are focused on finding flexible ways to distribute cash assistance, public policy partners are focused on working toward policy changes that support cash assistance for women.

## People Behind the Numbers

WINcome grant partners served more than 15,400 individuals overall, and of those served more than 1,600 individuals have or are expected to be served through flexible cash assistance. Behind the numbers and data represented in this report are individuals of diverse identities, ages, and stories. Figure 4 below illustrates the diverse identities of participants supported by grant partners through WINcome, including women of color, non-binary and trans individuals, people with disabilities, and first-generation immigrants.

Figure 4. People Behind the Numbers



# Findings

## Defining Economic Security and Resiliency

The evaluation sought to understand how program participants defined economic security and resiliency. Several grant partners asked participants for feedback on what these terms mean to them. The following themes emerged from participants on what economic security and resiliency means:

- 1. Being able to pay bills and expenses for basic needs.** Participants shared about the ability to pay bills and financially meet basic needs without having to choose between expenses.
- 2. Freedom.** Participants shared definitions that addressed the feeling and impact of being able to pay bills. Participants used the word “freedom” when asked what economic security and resiliency means to them in association with not having to worry about paying bills, ability to enjoy life more, and being less stressed.
- 3. Stability.** Participants shared feedback about stability in general, and stable income and life.
- 4. Being financially independent.** Participants stated being economically secure is being able to financially support themselves and not rely on others for assistance.
- 5. Being able to provide for their family.** Several participants defined it as the ability to provide for their families.
- 6. Leaving a legacy for their families.** Participants mentioned being able to leave a legacy for their family and being able to pass on wealth and assets.

*“It means that I have inner peace, and a great sense of freedom. I will be able to enjoy my journey with my business/life better. No worries or very little worries.”*

*—Program Participant*

*“Having enough stability so that if another pandemic happens, I don't have to worry about not being able to work for weeks. I was so worried that I would lose my house and my business. Stability would be having a cushion, so I don't have this fear.”*

*—Program Participant*

*“It means financial stability and legacy for me and my family. To not have to worry about how to cover my personal expenses. To not have to choose if I pay for food or medication.”*

*—Program Participant*

# Outcome 1

## Women progress towards achieving their own personal goals regarding economic security.

In order to measure this outcome, The Women’s Foundation and its grant partners first sought to better understand the varying personal goals of participants. Grant partners asked participants for feedback on what their personal goals were related to becoming economically secure/resilient. The following goals were shared by participants:

- **Building, advancing, and obtaining careers.** Participants stated goals related to gaining new careers, getting promotions, and getting raises.
- **Stability.** Participants stated goals related to having stable employment, housing, and a stable environment.
- **Accomplishments and advancements for personal business.** Participants who own their own business stated accomplishing business goals and advancing their businesses.
- **Saving money.** Participants stated saving money and building savings as goals.
- **Pay off debts and loans.** Participants stated goals related to paying off loans and debts, including car loans and credit card debts.
- **Complete or go back to school to then build a career.** Participants stated goals related to going back to school or completing school.

In addition to understanding the goals themselves, grant partners collected data from participants on the impact of cash assistance or program participation on meeting their personal goals. As Figure 5 illustrates below, of those receiving cash assistance, 96% indicated that cash assistance had a positive impact on meeting their goals (or agreed that cash assistance helped meet their goals). Similarly, of those who participated in programs, 90% indicated that program participation had a positive impact on meeting their goals of becoming economically secure/resilient.

**Figure 5. Impact of Cash Assistance and Program Participation – Participant Data**

### Positive Impact of Cash Assistance and Program Participation on Meeting Personal Economic Security/Resiliency Goals

% of participants who stated the following had a positive impact on meeting personal goals of becoming economically secure/resilient.



## Outcome 2

### Increase access to economic opportunities and services for women, including access to childcare, education and job training.

WINcome through its grant partners sought to increase access to economic opportunities and services for women, including access to childcare, education, and job training.

Grant partners were asked feedback on the extent they felt cash assistance helped address barriers for participants to become economically secure and resilient (rated on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not at all and 5 = A great extent). As Figure 6 illustrates below, all responding grant partners indicated they felt cash assistance helped address barriers for participants to become economically secure and resilient.

**Figure 6. Feedback on Cash Assistance and Addressing Barriers – Participant Data**

**Extent Grant Partners Felt Cash Assistance Helped Address Barriers for Participants to Become Economically Secure and Resilient**  
rated on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not at all and 5 = A great extent



In addition, several grant partners collected feedback directly from their participants around access to opportunities. As illustrated in Figure 7 below, 94% of participants stated cash assistance from a grant partner helped them access economic opportunities they didn't otherwise have access to.

**Figure 7. Feedback on Cash Assistance and Access to Economic Opportunities – Participant Data**

**Amount Cash Assistance Helped Participants Access Economic Opportunities They Didn't Otherwise Have Access To**

rated on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not at all and 5 = A great amount



## Outcome 3

### Women's basic needs are met, and crises are mitigated.

WINcome sought to meet the basic needs of women and mitigate crises. However, what a crisis looks and feels like varies for each woman, individual, and family. What one may consider a crisis is another's everyday recurrence, and what mitigation looks and feels like also varies. Therefore, the evaluation sought to prioritize measuring basic needs met as a way to mitigate crises.

Overall, through WINcome grantmaking, grant partners were able to provide cash assistance to more than 1,600 women and non-binary people. Participants used cash assistance to help with various expenses for various reasons, including unplanned expenses, off-setting lost income, off-setting lost benefits, and easing financial pressure in order to focus on other areas, among other reasons. As Figure 8 demonstrates, cash assistance helped support participants in affording food, transportation (including public transportation), housing, clothing, and more.

**Figure 8. Uses of Cash Assistance**

<b>Uses of Cash Assistance</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
Food	604
Transportation	458
Rent or mortgage	185
Clothing	160
Other (Specific use not collected or individuals used cash for various basic needs)	112
Home expense(s)	84
Identification (e.g., birth certificate, driver's license, state IDs)	50
Health expense(s)	43
Education or educational opportunities	41
Childcare	18
Business expense(s)	7
Job training	3
Business ownership training	1

Behind the number of participants served are stories and impacts that go beyond meeting a basic need. Direct service grant partners shared the following impacts of cash assistance:

*"About half of the members (clients) who have received WINcome assistance at [The Gathering Place] to date, used funds to obtain vital documents. These aren't big expenses, generally less than \$40 at a time.*

*However, even that amount is hard for our members to access and not having vital documents is a significant barrier to obtaining housing, employment and other necessary services."*

*— The Gathering Place*

*"Safe, timely, and reliable transportation is one of the biggest needs for our participants. This funding also allowed each participant to receive an indoor garden kit and have healthy salad and herbs on hand.*

*Some of our folk have severe peanut allergies and were able to purchase soy butter and gluten-free products that most food banks do not carry."* — Action is Safer/Western Colorado Alliance

*"Feedback from participants reveal that most common use of the cash assistance was to cover health insurance co-pays for themselves and their dependents. A woman shared that the stipends have been particularly useful in providing assistance for unplanned expenses."* — The Senior Hub

Several grant partners also asked participants to share feedback on changes to their day-to-day experience due to receiving cash assistance. Participants shared the following changes that go beyond meeting basic needs and the impacts on how they feel.

- **Less stress and anxiety.** Participants shared cash assistance helped them feel less stressed and anxious about their bills and financial struggles, making things easier for the time being.
- **Opportunity to think about business improvements.** Participants who own businesses stated they were able to invest in their company and think about improvements.
- **Ignited motivation.** Several participants shared that cash assistance ignited their motivation.
- **Feeling valued.** Several participants shared changed attitudes and behaviors due to someone believing in them and seeing them as a human first.
- **Having reliable transportation.** Several participants stated they now have reliable and safe transportation to go to work, run errands and pick up their children.

*"It eliminated the worries of financial struggles. Thank you"*  
*— Program Participant*

*"It's really helping me to think about my business in a different way. I'm learning how I look at my customers and my target market to make my business stronger."*  
*— Program Participant*

*"I have been able to live on my own confidently and pursue a career."* — Program Participant

*"I will be more accepting of programs because I now know that there are some that actually see me as a human first"*  
*— Cash Assistance Client*

*"Reliable transportation for work and taking my children to school"*  
*— Program Participant*

Figure 9 below illustrates the impact of these changes in participants' lives with the core concept of "freedom"—both tangibly (in the form of bills and expenses), and mentally (in the form of less stress and anxiety and more space to think about business endeavors).



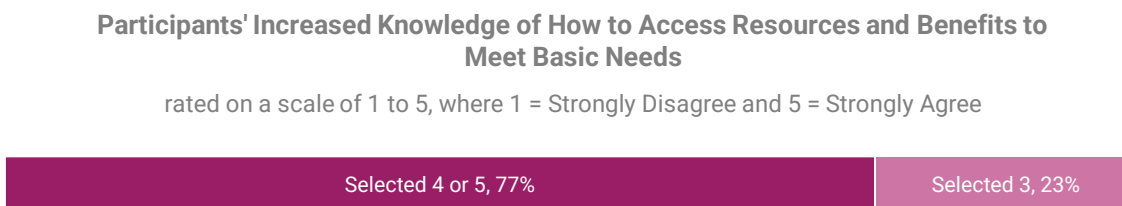
**Figure 9. Impact of Flexible Cash Assistance on Participants**



The Women’s Foundation and Advisory Council also discussed the challenges within systems that hinder the ability for individuals to easily access resources and benefits that are available to them. As part of this evaluation, participants were asked how much their knowledge of how to access resources and benefits to help meet their basic needs increased due to their participation with a grant partner.

One grant partner collected information from their participants related to knowledge of how to access resources and benefits. As Figure 10 illustrates, three-fourths (77%) of their participants increased their knowledge.

**Figure 10. Increased Knowledge of Accessing Resources and Benefits – Participant Data**



In addition to measuring the programs' outcomes pertaining to meeting basic needs, several grant partners collected participant feedback on current public assistance available. Participants generally shared that public assistance is helpful; however, several stated there needs to be more assistance and programs, and more marketing or efforts to increase the awareness of these programs. Participants also mentioned that public assistance programs could be timelier, that they sometimes feel competitive, are difficult to access, and are not designed or created for immigrants, as applications and processes are not inclusive.

## Outcome 4

### Develop women's skills to stabilize and become economically resilient.

While it was not an explicit focus or expectation of WINcome for grant partners to focus on skill building, several direct service grant partners offered programs and services related to building economic security and resiliency through personal and/or business skills in addition to cash assistance. The Women's Foundation and Advisory Committee discussed outcomes related to developing skills as important to WINcome when complementary to providing flexible cash assistance, shifting narratives and working toward systems change. WINcome sought to develop women's skills to stabilize and become economically resilient.

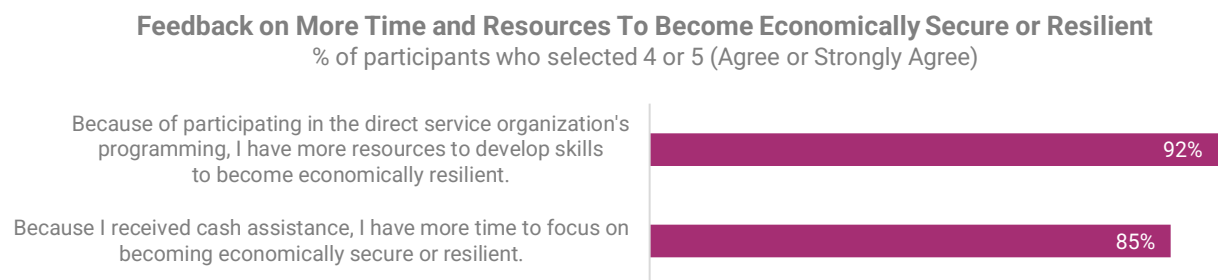
Grant partners had the option to ask participants their level of agreement to statements related to more time and resources to become economically secure or resilient, based on what this means to the individual participant (by rating on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree). One grant partner shared participant data on this question. As illustrated in Figure 11 below, 92% of their participants have more resources to develop skills to become economically secure/resilient because of participating in the grant partner's program, and 85% have more time to focus on becoming economically secure/resilient because of cash assistance.

*"Information rarely reaches the people who need it the most."  
— Program Participant*

*"Wish there were more resources."  
— Program Participant*

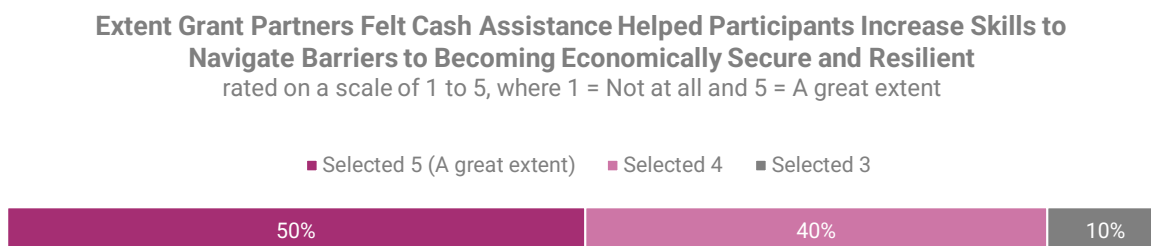
*"Helpful but not for everyone. Honestly, as an immigrant those are not for us."  
— Program Participant*

**Figure 11. Feedback on More Time and Resources to Become Economically Secure – Participant Data**



Grant partners were also asked for their feedback on cash assistance and its impact on increasing skills to navigate barriers. As Figure 12 illustrates below, 90% of responding grant partners felt that cash assistance helped participants increase skills to navigate barriers to becoming economically secure and resilient.

**Figure 12. Feedback on Participants' Increased Skills**



## Outcome 5

**Priority policy & systems change issues are identified that center those most impacted.**

WINcome included grant partners who focused on advocacy and systems change work at a policy level. Through this work, an outcome of WINcome was that priority policy and systems change issues were identified that center those most impacted.

To better understand the most important issues within various communities served, several direct service grant partners asked participants to provide feedback on needs or issues that matter the most to them that impact their economic security/resiliency. Participants shared the following issues and needs:

- **Housing.** Several participants stated issues surrounding housing, including concerns about inflation in the housing and rental market, along with stable housing and gentrification.
- **Employment.** Several participants stated employment and job security as an issue that matters the most to them.
- **Transportation.** Participants stated transportation, with one participant stating the need to rely on public transportation.
- **Business sustainability and growth.** Several participants in programs related to business development stated growing and strengthening their business.

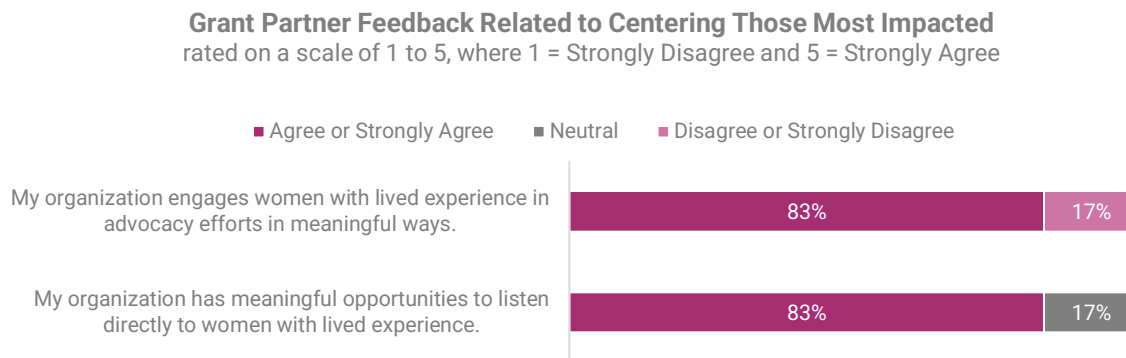
*"Inflation in the housing market. Rents continue to increase but income doesn't."  
— Program Participant*

*"We're in a difficult situation. I wish my clients did not suffer because of changes in the market. When my clients suffer, I suffer too."  
— Program Participant*

Public policy grant partners were also asked feedback on the priority issues they have identified and are working on. Public policy grant partners identified several priority issues, with seven priorities as the median. Priority issues include those impacting low-income women, working women, women of color, immigrant and refugee women and their families. Specific issues grant partners are focusing on include economic mobility, paid family and medical leave, support services and adult education, and fiscal and economic policies.

Public policy grant partners were asked for feedback related to centering those most impacted in their work by rating their level of agreement to a series of statements. As Figure 13 illustrates below, 83% of public policy respondents agreed that their organization has meaningful opportunities to listen directly to women with lived experience, and that their organization engages women with lived experience in advocacy efforts in meaningful ways.

**Figure 13. Grant Partner Feedback on Centering Those Most Impacted**



In addition to the above indicators, public policy partners shared feedback (through their renewal application) on current and upcoming initiatives and efforts to further listen to and engage with women and community members to guide and support their work, including listening sessions, meetings, and trainings for community members.

*“Leveraging our community connections to serve as an opportunity to hear from women from across the state with direct lived experience of economic insufficiency to hear and understand their perspectives. Throughout the course of this year, we conducted many different listening sessions to help inform our economic security policy agenda.” – Colorado Center on Law and Policy*

## Outcome 6

**The community is informed about public policy and systems change issues related to economic security and solutions for women, women of color, and women with disabilities.**

To move toward longer-term outcomes and systems change, WINcome sought to inform the community, including policymakers, about public policy and systems change issues related to economic security and solutions for women, women of color and women with disabilities.

Public policy grant partners held various meetings, events and opportunities to inform and engage community members about issues related to the economic security of women. As Figure 14 illustrates below, public policy grant partners held more than 200 meetings and events with community members and had more than 2,000 in attendance overall. In addition, more than 1,000 community members participated in community organizing efforts to address issues related to the economic security of women.

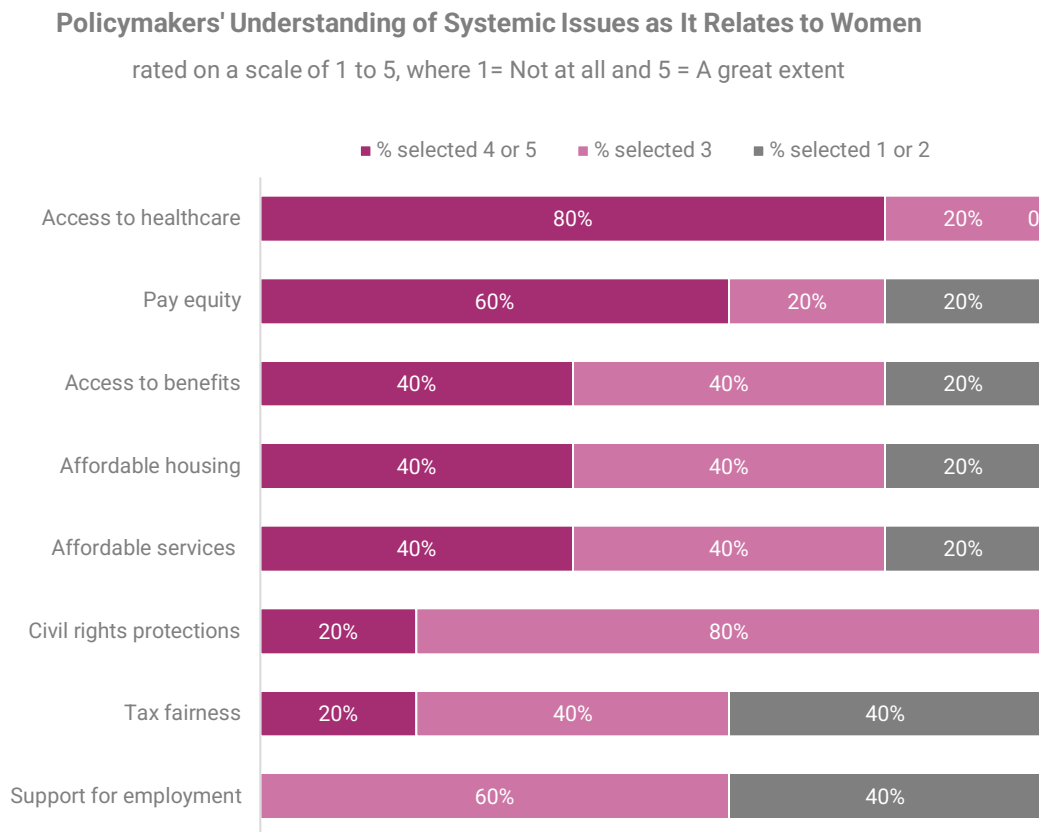
Public policy grant partners also aimed to reach more than 29,000 community members through newsletters, emails, and social media.

**Figure 14. Community Outreach and Engagement Efforts**

<b>Community Outreach and Engagement</b>	<b>Overall Total Among All Grant Partners</b>	<b>Median</b>
Number of meetings and events held with community members about issues related to the economic security of women	227	32
Total number of community members who attended meetings and events about issues related to the economic security of women	2,014	259
Number of individuals who participated in community organizing efforts to address issues related to economic security of women	1,203	50
Total number of people receiving information (e.g., newsletters, emails) on issues related to the economic security of women	29,400	5,425

Public policy grant partners were also asked to rate the extent to which they believe policymakers understand several systemic issues as they relate to women (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not at all and 5 = A great extent). As Figure 15 illustrates below, the majority of grant partners believe policymakers understand access to healthcare and pay equity as they relate to women. However, when it comes to access to benefits, affordable housing, affordable services, civil rights protection, tax fairness, and support for employment, fewer than half of grant partners believe policy makers understand these systemic issues as they relate to women.

**Figure 15. Grant Partners’ Feedback on Policymakers’ Understanding of Systemic Issues**



*“[W]hile policymakers may understand the issues we target, they may not have a full understanding of the urgency of these needs, the public momentum or will, or the perspectives that each independent advocacy organization brings in order to energize legislation on their own.” – Colorado Children’s Campaign*

Although policymakers have a general lack of understanding of several systemic issues as they relate to women, public policy grant partners are working in various ways to increase and strengthen awareness, relationships, and legislative champions for systemic issues impacting women’s economic security and resiliency.

*“CCLP serves as a consistent voice for women’s economic interests in Colorado at the legislature, and we regard our role as not only passing bills, but also educating policymakers about the economic situation facing Colorado women and their families.” – Colorado Center on Law and Policy*

In addition to efforts previously mentioned to inform the community, public policy grant partners are engaging with and sharing information to policymakers and legislators. As Figure 16 illustrates below, public policy grant partners held more than 300 meetings with policymakers about issues related to women’s economic security. Additionally, grant partners distributed more than 400 research reports.

**Figure 16. Policymakers and Legislator Outreach and Engagement Efforts**

<b>Policymaker and Legislator Outreach and Engagement</b>	<b>Overall Total Among All Grant Partners</b>	<b>Median</b>
Number of meetings held with policymakers about issues related to women's economic security	303	50

## Outcome 7

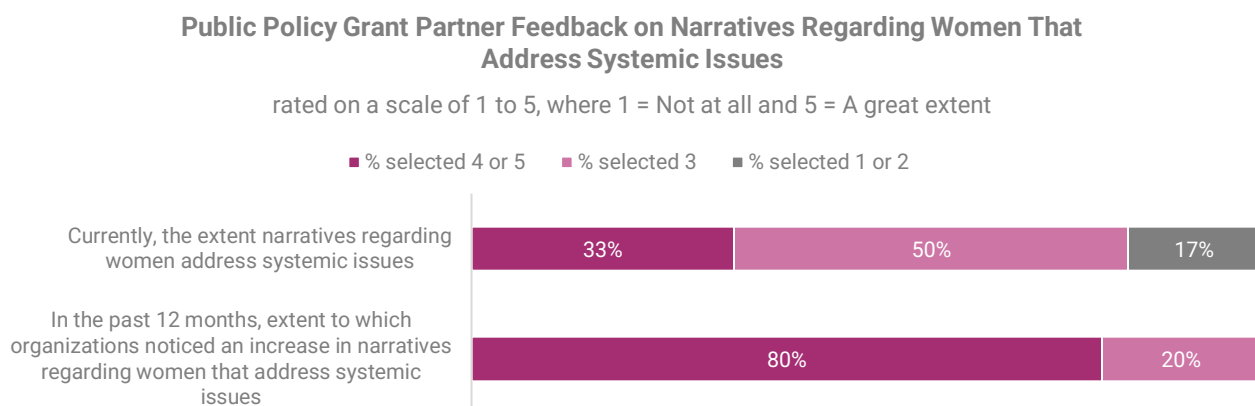
### **Narratives and commonly held ideas about and related to women speak to and address systems change issues impacting women, women of color, and women with disabilities.**

The Women’s Foundation and Advisory Committee recognize that narratives related to women often discount or omit the larger systems that impact and affect women and their economic security. Narratives and stories about women have the power to shape, dismantle, or uphold ideologies and commonly held ideas about women that impact their wellbeing and economic security (Medium, 2021). To address this, an outcome of WINcome is that narratives related to women speak to and address systems change issues that impact women, women of color, and women with disabilities.

As Figure 17 illustrates, only 33% of responding public policy grant partners rated 4 or 5 (out of a scale of 5, with 1 = Not at all and 5 = A great extent) when asked the extent their organization believes narratives regarding women address systemic issues currently. However, 80% rated 4 or 5 (out of a scale of 5, with 1 = Not at all and 5 = A great extent) when asked the extent their organization has noticed an increase in narratives in the past 12 months. Several grant partners shared how current events have helped shed a light on the systemic issues impacting women, specifically COVID-19 and *Roe v. Wade*. However, one grant participant stated concerns over the window closing on the focus and attention from the media and public.

*“The pandemic and the coverage around some of the issues related to the pandemic did shed more light on some of the systemic issues women are encountering. Unfortunately it feels like that window is closing, with less attention being paid to caregiving and other areas that were focused on this previously.” — Bell Policy Center*

**Figure 17. Grant Partners’ Feedback on Narratives**



Public policy grant partners also shared how narratives have historically overlooked women and especially women from marginalized communities.

*“Narratives about women are built on years of sexism and inequality, intersecting with race, class, ability, and so many other identity markers. In policymaking, these narratives can be hidden beneath language that seems neutral on the surface, though the impact disproportionately affects women. For example, in our work to address early childcare and education professionals, we have witnessed the disrespect these providers receive. Though “provider” and “professional” may be gender neutral terms, the reality is that this demographic is disproportionately women and women of color.” – Colorado Children’s Campaign*

## Outcome 8

### Organizations supporting gender, racial, and economic equity are better resourced to do their work.

The final outcome, yet most directly influenced by WINcome and The Women’s Foundation, is that organizations supporting gender, racial, and economic equity are better resourced to do their work. As previous outcomes measured impacts of grant partners’ efforts on participants, communities, and narratives, with the support from WINcome, the final outcome looks to measure impacts on the grant partners themselves.

Grant partners were asked the impact of the WINcome grantmaking on their organization. The following themes emerged:

- **Freedom and flexibility to meet needs while validating the work of organizations and their clients.** Grant partners shared that the relationship and partnership through WINcome has validated and reaffirmed their work as an organization, and in doing so their communities served. Grant partners also shared the positive impact and value of having the freedom and flexibility to not only meet the needs, but also the way in which they can meet the needs with their clients. Grant partners stated they are able to serve and assist clients without having to place requirements and criteria on participants.

*“The biggest change noted by the Community Access Team Manager is that they are able to say “yes” so much more. Before receiving this grant, the team received daily requests for assistance with a range of financial needs that TGP could rarely address. Members would be referred to external organizations that may not have been able to address the need, or simply told there were no resources available. Now, the team has access to flexible funding that can support a range of needs.” – The Gathering Place*

*“The greatest impact has been the freedom to meet the needs of our clients, without having to force clients to jump through a million different hoops. Most of the time, providing financial assistance to clients requires that client’s needs must meet very specific criteria, and the funds can typically only be directed to very specific items such as housing only, or groceries only. The direct cash assistance that The Women’s Foundation of Colorado provides free’s clients from these restraints and gives clients the dignity and freedom to decide where the money can be the most useful and impactful in their own lives. It relieves them of the traditional patronizing system that controls and limits their ability to determine what is best for them in their own lives.” – The Initiative*



*“It is incredibly valuable to CHIC to have a partner like The Women’s Foundation, who values this commitment enough to fund it, thereby encouraging and validating CHIC’s work and clients; who values actively learning with and from us about our work on the ground, thereby creating trust and partnership; and who partners with us over multiple years, thereby giving us a “runway” to plan for future years and consider expanding our programs.” – Collaborative Healing Initiative Within Communities*

- **Supported more opportunities to center and serve BIPOC and marginalized communities, women, and their families.** Grant partners shared how WINcome has helped them further center and serve women of color and those from marginalized communities in their programming, research, advocacy and more. Grant partners have used the funds for programs that uplift and support as well as initiatives that allow grant partners to listen and engage with more BIPOC women.

*“A main activity initiated by Skills2Compete and its Support Services Committee through the support of this grant has been to perform listening sessions with diverse communities across the state. Thus far, there have been 7 listening sessions that involved a total of 47 individuals in different programs, and an additional 41 staff from direct service organizations, community agencies (such as libraries) and public agencies that have daily responsibilities to assist individuals with accessing digital services, equipment, training, online resources and effective public policies. Of these 88 total individuals, 34 of the staff were women providing services primarily to women, and 27 of the program participants were women.”*  
– Colorado Center on Law and Policy

*“This has allowed our organization to assist marginalized folx in being able to afford to live and thrive.”*  
– Action is Safer/Western Colorado Alliance

- **Helped launch new programs.** Grant partners shared how funding helped launch new programs and initiatives, including programs to support and strengthen business owners, help participants obtain IDs in partnership with the DMV, provide immigration legal services and more.

*“This grant has been critical in our ability to launch the only nonprofit immigration legal service program in Northern Colorado. We would not have been able to provide this much needed resource to our community. When we launched our program this summer, we had a wait list of over 70 people, and we are continuing to see more people as the news of our program has spread. We cannot overstate how critically important this grant has been to accomplishing a long-held goal in our immigrant rights movement.” – Alianza NORCO*

*“The WINcome grant has made it possible for Clayton to create the Community Ambassador Program and engage nearly 50 participants in the policymaking process. The impact has been significant. With WINcome funding, we have been able to focus on solid advocacy education, helping our participants grow and strengthen their skills, and have removed the barriers that make involvement difficult. What matters most to us is that we have prepared and empowered a new group of primarily women to advocate for themselves and their families. It is truly an inspiring outcome to witness.”*  
– Clayton Early Learning

- **Strengthened partnerships and peer learning that leads to systems change.** Grant partners, especially public policy partners, shared that through WINcome, they have been able to learn from direct service organizations and gain potential new partnerships that help drive their advocacy efforts to change systems.

*“The connection to a cohort of potential partners who are also working on advancing economic opportunity and equity for women strengthens our work and gives us opportunities for greater collaboration and collective work. In particular, we have benefited directly from the insights of some of the direct service partners in the cohort, who are raising issues and also offering vital perspectives on how our policy work could impact the participants they serve.” – Bell Policy Center*

Figure 18 below illustrates the primary impact areas of WINcome funding on grantee partners.

**Figure 18. Impact of WINcome on Organizations**



# Recommendations & Conclusion

## Recommendations

Grant partners also provided feedback throughout conversations, meetings and data collection on opportunities to further support them through WINcome. The following are opportunities that emerged:

- **More opportunities to learn from each other.** Grant partners shared feedback on the impact and value of a holistic approach to the issues by bringing together both direct service/flexible cash assistance organizations and public policy organizations. They also shared a desire for more opportunities to learn and hear from one another.
- **Continue efforts to increase flexible cash assistance programs.** Grant partners mentioned the importance and shortage of grantmaking approaches like WINcome that are intentionally structured within all aspects to support truly flexible cash assistance to organizations and the community members they serve.

## Conclusion

The evaluation for the first year of WINcome provided meaningful insight into the experiences of grant partners and their participants, along with how the grantmaking approach is meeting its outcomes. Overall, WINcome is meeting its outcomes. As the findings demonstrated, supporting direct service, flexible cash assistance, and public policy through WINcome have helped grant partners address women's economic security and resiliency in a holistic way. The unrestricted, flexible funding to grant partners, specifically direct service grant partners, not only lifted burdens and limitations for the organizations, but also for clients and participants. The function of flexible cash assistance and funding as a complement to grant partners' existing programs and resources, means that participants, along with grant partners, were able to have the space and time to think about other important areas, their future, and working toward their goals of becoming economically secure and resilient.

The evaluation provided insights into recommendations to continue supporting grant partners, along with deeper learning and evaluation opportunities to better understand outcomes and perspectives related to participants.

By operating from a foundation of trust, autonomy, and flexibility, WINcome and its grant partners have been able to come together to help address the economic security and resiliency of women, non-binary, and trans people.

## Looking Ahead

The evaluation of the first year of WINcome also presented impacts that go beyond intended outcomes originally identified. In the summer of 2022, The Women's Foundation of Colorado joined the co-convening team for the [Colorado Direct Cash Transfer Community of Practice](#), or the CCOP. This state-focused community of practice was inspired by the national Guaranteed Income Community of Practice that is spearheaded by the [Economic Security Project](#). The

CCOP meets regularly to learn from and with various direct cash stakeholders, including direct cash pilots, interested nonprofit organizations, governmental entities, public policy organizations, and community participants in direct cash pilots. A branch of the CCOP, the [Benefits Cliff Working Group](#), began concurrently and dives deeper into understanding and mitigating benefits cliff effects on direct cash and flexible cash assistance program participants.

WINcome grant partners actively engage with the CCOP and the Benefits Cliff Working Group. The Women's Foundation plays an active role in co-convening stakeholders from across Colorado and is committed to continuing this support in the second and third years of WINcome.

WINcome grant partners are providing input on the design of the CCOP, as well as additional grant partner-specific gatherings.

Looking ahead, Point b(e) Strategies will join The Foundation in learning from and with the CCOP to inform the work of WINcome more deeply.

# Works Cited

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