

The Women's Foundation of Colorado

Women and Families of Colorado Relief Fund

Prepared by OMNI Institute

The Women's Foundation of Colorado (WFCO) implemented the Women and Families of CO (WFCO) Relief Fund in April through June of 2020 to rapidly and responsively distribute general operating grants to 501(c)(3) and other tax-exempt organizations that were addressing the emergency needs of Colorado women and their families who were most impacted by COVID-19.



Funds were awarded to 85 direct service (DS), organizations across 24 Colorado counties, 9 policy advocacy (PA) organizations, and 8 social ventures led by and benefitting women. Direct service organizations provide services to individuals while policy advocacy organizations address systems-level change. A brief survey was disseminated in August and September of 2020 to learn more about how funds were used and their perceived impacts; 89 of the 102 (87%) organizations completed the survey.

Funds Reached Diverse Women and Organizations Across Colorado

DS grantees reached an estimated **99,353 diverse individuals and/or families** through the WFCO Relief Fund, and an estimated **4,234 organizations** received support.

Over 80% of DS grantees used funds to serve:



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Funds Helped Keep Doors Open Safely

DS grantees used funds to support operational costs, staff salaries, and programming so that organizations could remain open safely during the pandemic. WFCO relief funds were used to:

- ☑ Transition to remote/online service delivery, including telehealth and virtual home visits
- ☑ Extend operations and staffing to meet the increased need for emergency assistance while complying with social distancing guidelines and safety requirements
- ☑ Address funding gaps that resulted from canceling fundraising and community events

"The funds we received were instrumental to keep the doors open. Our funding comes from events and we had to cancel all events because of COVID."

- DS Organization Staff

Funds Provided COVID-19 Responsive Care to Women and Families

Many DS organizations utilized the WFCO Relief Fund as **direct cash assistance** to community members as an immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic. **Providing direct cash assistance to women and families for rent, utilities, food, and other needs was critical during a time when many community members were experiencing reduced work hours or loss of employment.**

WFCO relief funds were used for:

- ☑ Housing to prevent homelessness and evictions
- ☑ Food/meal distribution to ensure women had safe access to nutritious food
- ☑ Child care, including to support essential workers who needed care for their children
- ☑ Technology and WiFi to help with remote learning and access to critical information
- ☑ Domestic violence crisis intervention such as safe housing support and case management
- ☑ Mental health services to help women manage intense stressors and re-traumatization
- ☑ Enhanced case management and access to professional development
- ☑ Support for students, immigrant families, and others who did not have access to state/federal assistance programs

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Funds Kept Coloradans Informed & Supported Local Businesses

Complementing and enhancing the work of DS providers, PA and social venture organizations used the WFCO Relief Fund to support systems, local businesses, and communities.

Policy advocacy organizations used funds to:

- ✓ Develop and distribute resources and information about COVID-19-related issues and state and federal policy responses
- ✓ Support the early childhood system and child care providers
- ✓ Conduct outreach to voters not traditionally targeted by mainstream efforts

Social Ventures used funds to:

- ✓ Provide needed operational support to businesses to address cash flow problems, apply for COVID-related grants and loans, and to transition to remote services
- ✓ Support basic needs of families of local business owners to keep businesses operational
- ✓ Provide community support such as rental/utility assistance, resource/services navigation, and distribution of basic needs items

Substantial Longer-term Needs Remain

- ⚠️ DS organizations and small businesses need additional support to sustain their operations as the pandemic continues
- ⚠️ Women and families will continue to face substantial economic challenges and need support with lost/reduced incomes and balancing remote learning for their children and work responsibilities
- ⚠️ Essential workers, often women, will continue to be at greater risk for contracting COVID-19 while earning low wages
- ⚠️ Access to internet and technological services is still not equitable, and is more important than ever
- ⚠️ Sustaining women- and Black-owned local businesses remains a high priority

“As our team looks forward to the months ahead, we recognize that we are in the calm before the storm. We are anticipating a significant influx in the need for more rental and utility assistance as regulations such as the eviction moratorium are lifted in the upcoming months.”

- DS Organization Staff

