

Executive Summary

Project Background

Point b(e) Strategies partnered with The Women's Foundation of Colorado (WFCO) to evaluate WINcome for a second year. In Year 2, WFCO continued to support Year 1 grant partners to advance gender, racial and economic equity through flexible and holistic resources. Grant partners continued to provide direct services and flexible and direct cash assistance and work toward systems change.

Methodology

Point b(e) Strategies, in partnership with WFCO, utilized a mixed-methods approach and engaged in the following activities: (1) Convened a WINcome Evaluation Advisory Committee made up of grant partners and Foundation staff to guide the evaluation, (2) Collected data through a grant partner survey, focus groups, participant data, and the WINcome renewal process, and (3) Analyzed all qualitative and quantitative data.

Outcomes

WFCO, Point b(e) Strategies and the Evaluation Advisory Committee revised the logic model and evaluation plan from Year 1. Based on feedback from WFCO and the Evaluation Advisory Committee, the evaluation sought to measure the following nine outcomes:

1. Organizations supporting gender, racial, and economic equity are better resourced to do their work.
2. Direct service and advocacy organizations work together to advance women's economic security and resiliency.
3. Priority policy and systems change issues are identified that center those most impacted.
4. The community is informed about public policy and systems change issues related to economic security and solutions for women.
5. Narratives and commonly held ideas related to women go beyond the individual and address systemic issues that directly impact women.
6. Women progress toward achieving their personal goals regarding economic security.
7. Women are supported in navigating economic opportunities and services, including childcare, education and job training.
8. Women's basic needs are met and crises are mitigated.
9. Women's opportunities to become economically secure and resilient are expanded.

Why does this matter?

The evaluation of the second year of WINcome sheds light on the work of grant partners to provide services and cash assistance while working on systems change toward more money for more women. It also illustrates grant partners' experiences working with WFCO as a funder-partner and within the philanthropic sector, especially as grant partners experience philanthropic attitudes and practices reverting back to pre-COVID19 pandemic tendencies. The need for trust-based, flexible funding for cash assistance and related policy work is clear and provides further evidence for this funding structure and focus for the entire philanthropic sector.



"What might be a basic emergency can turn disastrous for our participants. While participants want to have more stability in their lives and free time to enjoy with family and friends, the reality is that our systems have not provided the support they need. In fact, it is quite the opposite. Because of the lack of social and financial capital, a basic emergency can end up costing twice as much and compound any mental or health issues. This vicious cycle makes people feel helpless. I share this because the impact of direct cash assistance goes beyond the direct cash they receive. We will never be able to quantify what is prevented, but I am definitely starting to notice it."

—Grant Partner

KEY FINDINGS

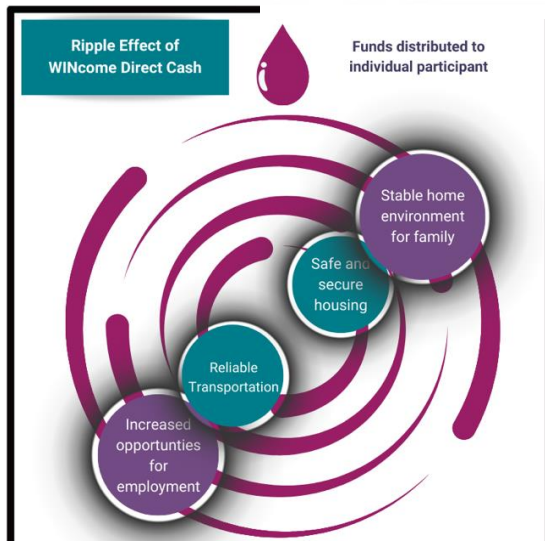
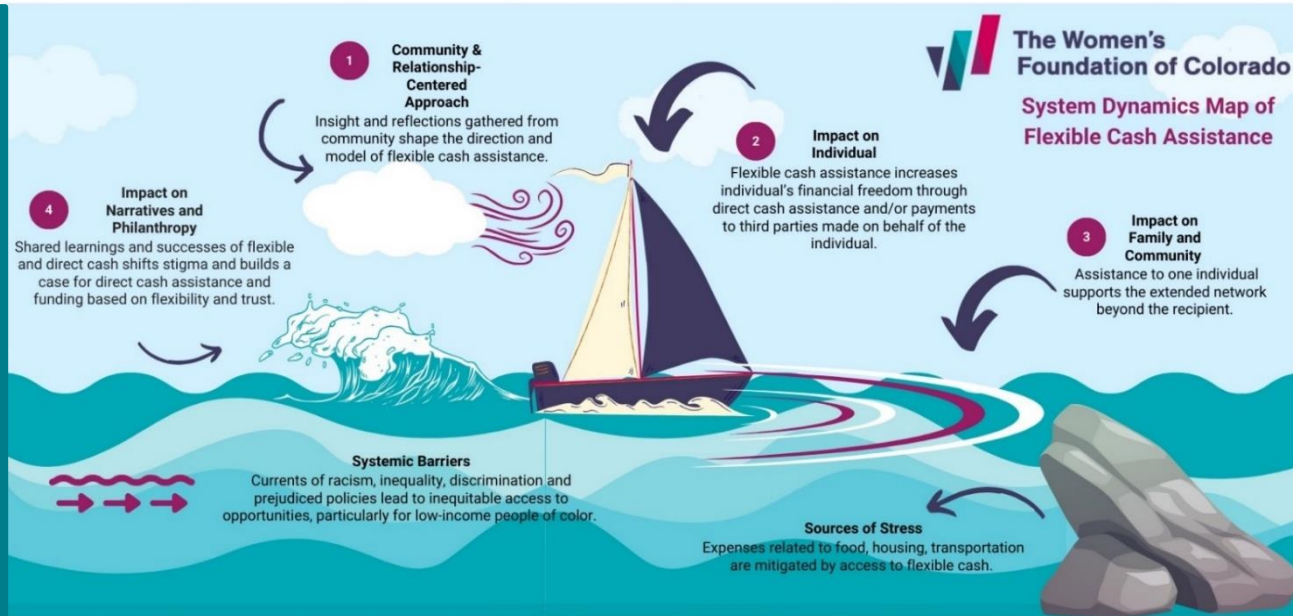
Impacts on Grant Partners

- Grant partners were able to increase their ability to meet community needs.
- Grant partners were able to extend the trust from WFCO to participants and clients.
- Grant partners provided assistance without restrictions on the how, who and what could be funded and assisted.
- Grant partners have transformed the ways they think about the impact and common perceptions of direct and flexible cash assistance.

Impacts on Systems Changes and Narratives

- Grant partners are listening to community members and have brought in community voices to support their advocacy work through ambassador programs and compensating community members.
- In the community, narratives about systemic issues that relate to women have decreased overall and shifted from a focus on economic hardship to reproductive health and gender affirming care. As a result, momentum for systemic solutions that alleviate economic hardship for women also decreased.
- Policymakers' understanding of systemic issues as they relate to women have generally increased, especially due to timely topics like reproductive health and paid family medical leave with the fall of Roe v. Wade and the implementation of Colorado's statewide paid family and medical leave insurance program (FAMLI).

In addition to the systems change work WINcome grant partners are leading, they also operate within and navigate complex systems and societal challenges. Cash assistance through WINcome is one tool intended to address systemic barriers that push people to the margins and uphold inequity.



Impact on Participants

- Cash assistance is supporting women and their families, helping them buy necessities for their children, supporting reunification and providing children with more opportunities and resources.
- Cash assistance is providing relief, reducing stress, giving participants peace of mind, and increasing their confidence.
- Cash assistance supports participants' ability to focus on other basic needs and goals, including getting to and retaining their jobs.
- Cash assistance is filling gaps from other assistance programs, especially as direct aid and funding from the pandemic fades.
- Top three uses of the cash assistance were in the following categories: rent, mortgage, housing; transportation or car expenses; home expenses.