



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

WINcome

Evaluation & Learning: Year 2 Process and Impact Report

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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

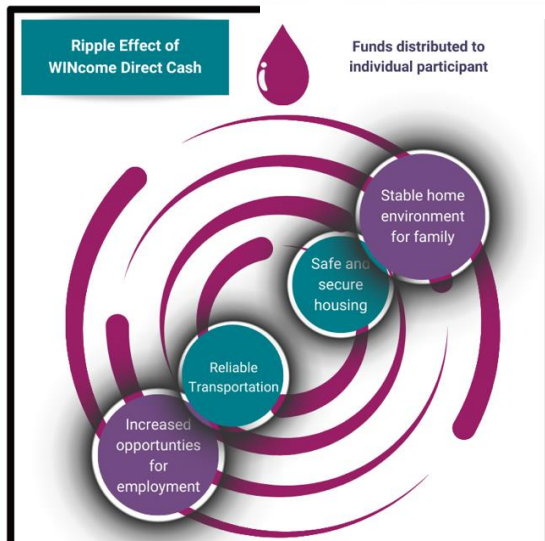
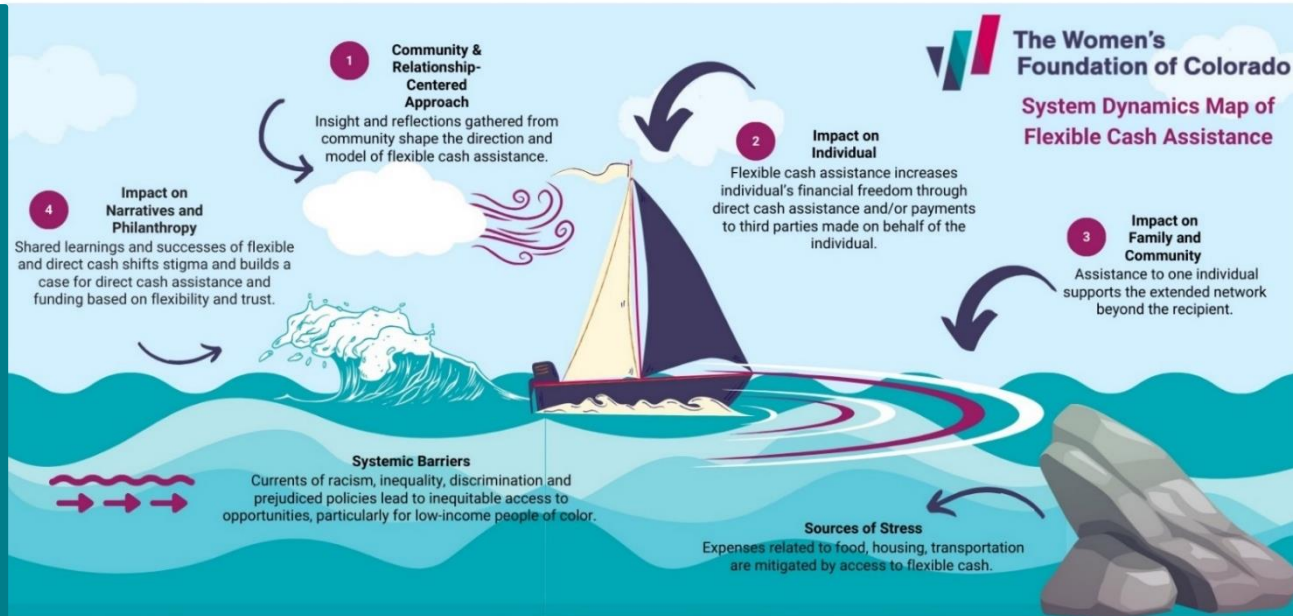
Impacts on Grant Partners

- 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.

Introduction

In 2021, The Women’s Foundation of Colorado (WFCO) launched WINcome (Women + Income = Women Thriving) after the conclusion of [Women Achieving Greater Economic Security \(WAGES\)](#), and after recognizing that flexibility is critical when it comes to supporting Colorado women and their families in meeting their needs. 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 WFCO and grant partners, and between grant partners and their participants. WINcome is an intended three-year commitment with each grant partner. Grant partners demonstrate that individuals can advance economically when they are trusted to make their own decisions about their needs. Partners include both direct service organizations distributing cash assistance in addition to providing services and public policy organizations working toward systems change.

In the second year of WINcome, WFCO invested in the Year 1 grant partners, 13 of which were direct service partners and six of which were public policy partners. Grants ranged from \$35,000–\$61,000, and WFCO’s investment totaled more than \$1,000,000. Following the same structure as Year 1, grants to public policy partners provided general operating support, and grants for direct service partners included both unrestricted funding of up to 50% of the grant and funds dedicated to providing flexible cash assistance to individuals. According to the recent report, [Cash in Colorado: A Landscape Analysis of Colorado Direct Cash Transfers](#) by Point b(e) Strategies in partnership with WFCO, WFCO funds 13 of the 32 direct and flexible cash assistance programs in Colorado.

Point b(e) Strategies partnered with WFCO to evaluate WINcome for a second year. To help guide and inform the evaluation, Point b(e) Strategies facilitated meetings with an Evaluation Advisory Committee consisting of grant partners and WFCO staff—several of whom were engaged in the Year 1 evaluation. Point b(e) Strategies and WFCO express their gratitude to the grant partners involved in the Advisory Committee:

Lili Avalos, Posada
Kim Bowman, Posada
Josette Garcia, Posada
Yessica Holguin, Center for Community Wealth Building
Marisa Krueger, Center for Work Education & Employment
Julie Pecaut, Bell Policy Center
Maria Manriquez, The Initiative

Methodology

Point b(e) Strategies facilitated a discussion with The Women's Foundation (WFCO) and the Evaluation Advisory Committee to update the logic model and evaluation plan from Year 1. Based on discussions, several changes were made to better center participants' and grant partners' efforts. The following outcomes were identified for Year 2:

- Organizations supporting gender, racial, and economic equity are better resourced to do their work.
- Direct service and advocacy organizations work together to advance women's economic security and resiliency.
- Priority policy and 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.
- Narratives and commonly held ideas related to women go beyond the individual and address systemic issues that directly impact women.
- Women progress toward achieving their personal goals regarding economic security.
- Women are supported in navigating economic opportunities and services, including childcare, education and job training.
- Women's basic needs are met and crises are mitigated.
- Women's opportunities to become economically secure and resilient are expanded.

Similar to the Year 1 evaluation, a core value of the evaluation design was to limit the burden on grant partners while also deferring to them in how they wanted to engage in the evaluation. To reflect this value, Point b(e) Strategies and WFCO designed the evaluation in the following ways: 1) Offer completely optional participation for grant partners with no requirements or expectations for engaging in the evaluation; 2) Utilize existing opportunities for data collection instead of adding more tools for grant partners to implement or manage; and 3) Provide flexible formats for data collection and submission. More specifically, Point b(e) Strategies developed and implemented the following evaluation tools:

- **Renewal Responses.** In an effort to offer options to meet the various needs of grant partners, the WINcome renewal process for Year 2 allowed grant partners to choose to either have an hour-long conversation via Zoom with a WFCO staff member or submit written responses. Both options included the same five questions. 76% of grantee partners selected the conversational approach to the renewal, including all policy advocacy grantees. The renewal is a requirement for all grant partners seeking funding in WINcome Year 3. Point b(e) Strategies partnered with WFCO to align evaluation and renewal questions and to obtain access to renewal responses to be included as data for the evaluation. Individuals interested in learning more about the renewal process for WINcome can email Crystal Ayala-Goldstein, programs manager at WFCO, at crystal@wfco.org.

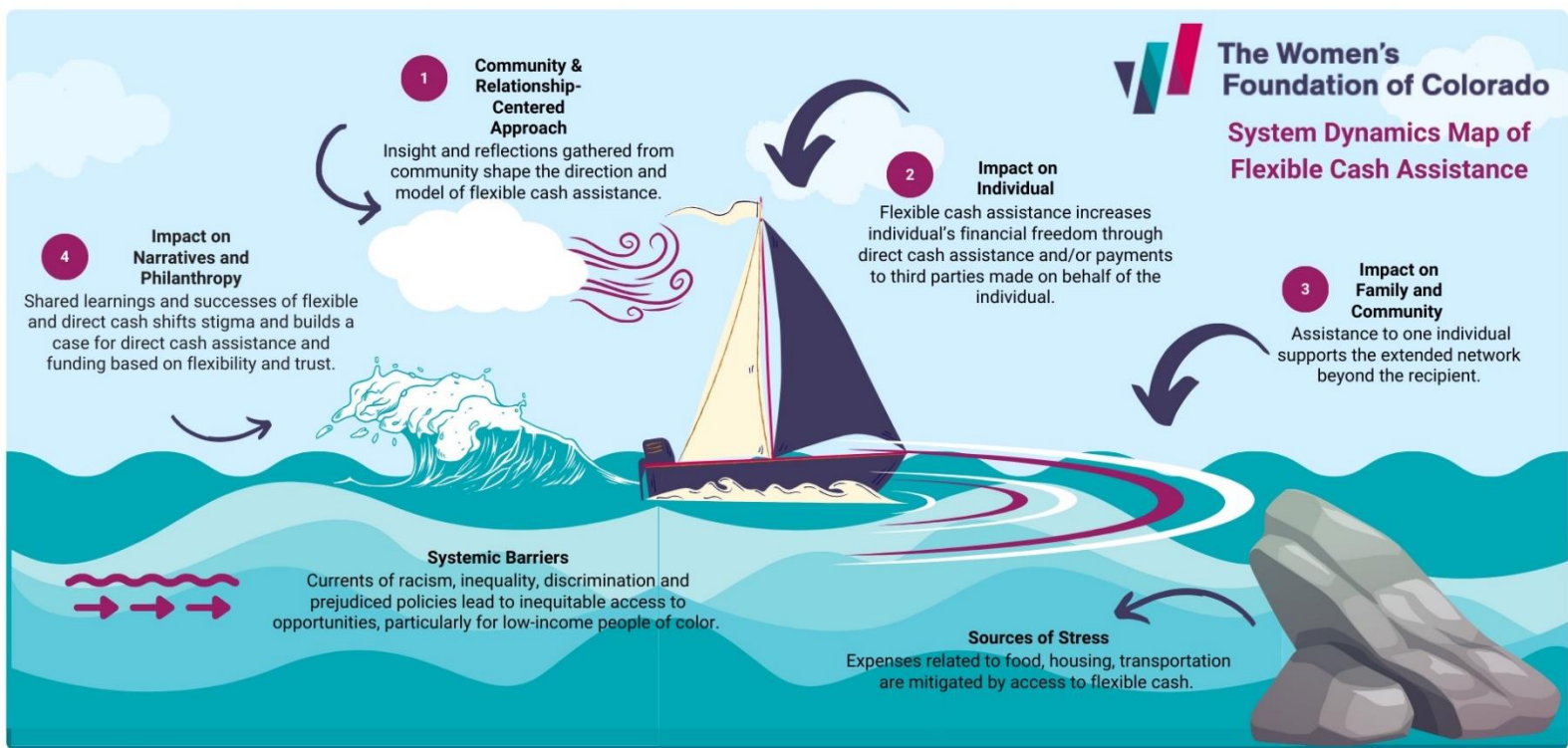
- **Grant Partner Survey.** Point b(e) Strategies developed a survey for grant partners. Thirteen of the 19 grant partners participated in the survey (a 68% response rate).
- **Participant-Focused Data.** Point b(e) Strategies revised its Menu of Participant Questions from Year 1 and, again, gave grant partners the option to ask participants all, some or none of the questions from the menu in their own evaluation and data collection methods. Grant partners submitted participant data with the Grant Partner Survey. Three grant partners collected and shared participant data.
- **Grant Partner Focus Groups.** Point b(e) Strategies conducted two focus groups with grant partners to collect further feedback on their experiences. A total of 11 participants from nine grant partners participated in focus groups. Additionally, one grant partner participated in an interview. All responses from these interactions are kept confidential with Point b(e) Strategies. WFCO was not present at these sessions to ensure grantees could share openly and honestly about WINcome.
- **Narrative-Based Information Gathering, Storytelling and Visualization.** Point b(e) Strategies analyzed the qualitative and quantitative responses from the data collection process to lift up primary narrative threads. These narratives informed the design of a graphic depiction of impact. Preliminary concepts and visuals were shared with WFCO and the Evaluation Advisory Committee to understand whether the visual representation of narrative themes resonated with them and their efforts. Their reflections refined the narrative visualization process and the graphics included in this report.

A total of 17 grant partners participated in the evaluation, for an 89% participation rate for Year 2. The two grant partners who did not participate are not eligible or chose not to apply for Year 3 funding, therefore, the Year 2 evaluation encompasses feedback and data from all 17 Year 3 grant partners.

Visualization of WINcome System Impacts

Point b(e) Strategies engaged in a conversation with the Evaluation Advisory Committee and The Women’s Foundation (WFCO) to understand the larger systems that WINcome grant partners and their participants must navigate. This conversation led to the creation of a visual representation of the complex societal challenges that direct cash assistance intends to address and disrupt. Figure 1 depicts a systems dynamics map, with the primary currents of inequity and sources of stress experienced by organizations and individuals—particularly those who are BIPOC, low-income and/or in some other way pushed to the margins by systemic oppression. The map also portrays the way in which direct cash assistance has been shaped by community knowledge and how it is a means to navigating inequitable systems, bypassing common sources of stress such as expenses related to food, housing, and transportation. Lastly, the map showcases the broader potential impact of this approach on the philanthropic sector as it continues to illustrate a funding model that centers trust and flexibility for participants as a more effective means to supporting communities.

Figure 1. Systems Dynamics Map of Flexible Cash Assistance

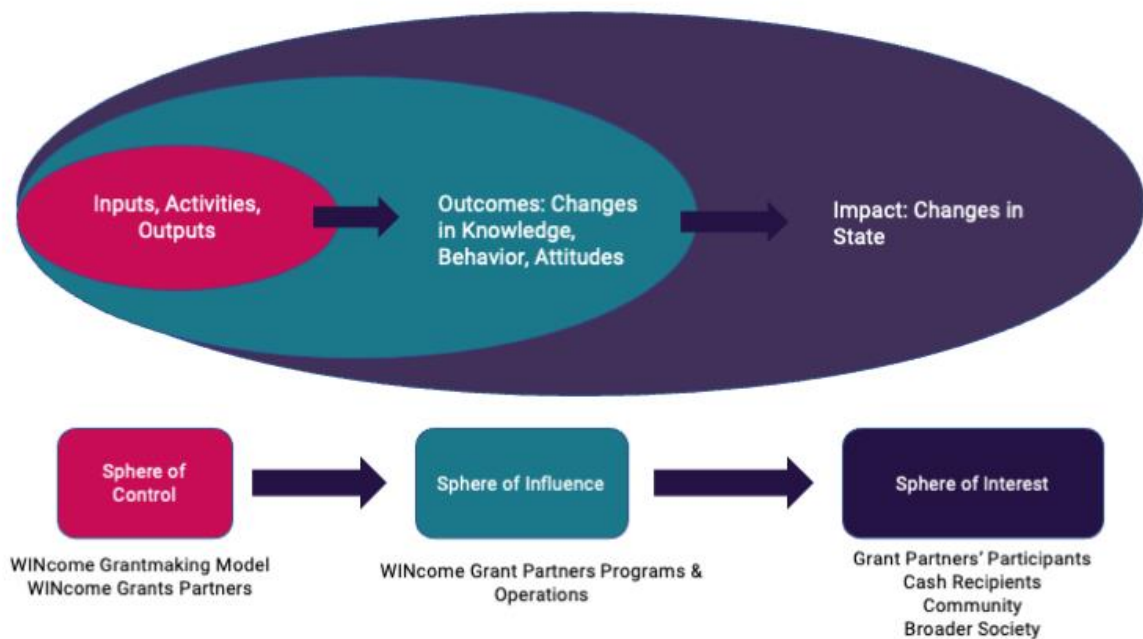


The Systems Dynamics Map helps frame WINcome’s outcomes and its role within the larger system. Findings from Year 2 demonstrate, in further detail, WINcome’s impact on the different components illustrated in the System Dynamics Map.

Findings

As stated in the Year 1 evaluation report, Point b(e) Strategies centered the Spheres of Impact framework (Outcome Mapping Learning Community, 2011) for the WINcome evaluation, recognizing it as a critical lens to determine the level of control and influence WFCO has through its WINcome grantmaking. Point b(e) Strategies structured the Year 2 report to highlight findings in the order of Sphere of Control (Organizational/Grant Partner Outcomes) to Sphere of Interest (Participant Outcomes).

Figure 2. WINcome Spheres of Impact



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

Organization Outcomes

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

Within WFCO's Sphere of Control sits its grantmaking and funding activities and strategy. Therefore, an outcome of the WINcome program is that organizations supporting gender, racial and economic equity are better resourced to do their work.

As mentioned in the Introduction section, WINcome funding can be renewed up to three years, and WFCO funded all 19 grant partners from Year 1 again in Year 2. In Year 2, WFCO increased their investment per organization, with grants ranging from \$35,000 to \$61,000.

The survey asked grant partners to share feedback on the extent WINcome funding increased their organization's ability to meet community needs. As illustrated in Figure 3, nearly all (92%)

grant partners indicated WINcome funding increased their ability to meet community needs to a great extent or quite a bit.

Figure 3. Extent WINcome Funding Increased Organizations' Ability to Meet Community Needs



*To what extent did WINcome funding increase your organization's ability to meet community needs? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1= Not at all and 5= A great extent.

Additionally, direct service partners shared additional information on the amount allocated to general operating supports. Grants to direct service partners included up to 50% of unrestricted funding. WFCO supported direct service partners in allocating more than \$190,000 toward general operating. Five organizations provided additional details on the uses of general operating funds outside of direct or flexible cash assistance to participants. All five organizations used the funds to support administering direct and flexible cash assistance itself, three organizations used funds for continued operations, and two used funds as relief from some fundraising pressure. Lastly, funding supported one organization's virtual or physical infrastructure, supported one organization's pursuit of innovation and new opportunities, and supported two organizations' staff or personnel.

Grant partners also provided qualitative feedback on WINcome's impact on their organization through focus groups, the renewal process, and the Grant Partner Survey. The following themes emerged from qualitative data:

- **Bringing in community voices to support advocacy work.** Public policy grant partners shared feedback on continuing to center, lift up, and include the voices of those most impacted in their advocacy work, including continued opportunities for participants and those with lived experience to be Community Ambassadors and provide support with research for advocacy efforts.
- **Extending trust to participants/clients.** Grantees shared positive feedback about the trust between their organizations and WFCO, and in return their ability to build relationships based on trust with their participants and clients.

"The WINcome grant placed a lot of trust in organizations like ours without having to determine how that aid should be spent. Gave women and organizations agency around the decisions of this program. When a foundation allows this sort of latitude, both our organization and our clients benefit." – Focus group participant

- **Providing assistance without restrictions on the how, who and what.** Similar to Year 1, grant partners shared how the level of flexibility and freedom on how to use the funds is impactful; they also shared that funding without restrictions or regulations is valuable. Grant partners added that WINcome funding helps fill funding gaps from other restrictive grants. The Evaluation Advisory Committee also mentioned additional context on the value of unrestricted WINcome funding to fill in funding gaps, as they have experienced funding sources pulling back on pandemic-era funding practices that were once flexible, unrestricted, or low burden.

“[We have the] freedom to be able to respond to our women’s needs without a lot of regulation. WINcome allows us to be able to respond with compassion.” – Focus group participant

- **Transforming ways to think about cash assistance.** Grantees shared how their teams are transforming the way they think about cash assistance, including solidifying their support of cash policies as an impactful way to advance equity for women and families, and changing how their team thinks about cash distribution and its common conceptions.

Ways The Women’s Foundation Can Further Support Grant Partners

Lastly, grant partners were asked to share feedback on ways WFCO can further support their work. The following themes emerged from focus groups and survey responses:

- **Continue amplifying grant partners’ work.** Grant partners shared positive feedback on WFCO’s efforts to share and lift up their work. They also conveyed that they would like more support from WFCO on telling their stories, including ideas like providing video storytelling for their organizations, helping grant partners write stories or gain media attention, and providing workshops on storytelling.
- **Share the WINcome funding model with others.** Grant partners posed questions around WFCO’s current work in messaging and sharing its WINcome funding model with other funders. Grantees shared that if WFCO is not doing this currently, it should be sharing its experience and efforts with other foundations locally, regionally and nationally.

“I would like to see The Women’s Foundation share what their experience has been with other funders. It is a helpful model. Share with other funders that you can trust people to do the right thing and they will. They are so well respected in the funding space. Share that this is a model for funding, and here is what we have learned. Get more people on board.”

- **Support Executive Directors and help address turnover.** Nine grantees experienced an executive director transition in the past year and at least one will be experiencing a transition in early 2024. Related to high turnover, grantees shared about the challenges with retaining executive directors and experiences with high staff burnout. Grantees suggested ideas for how WFCO can support them. These suggestions included

providing a sabbatical program and offering funding and incentives to go to spaces to learn and attend nontraditional professional development opportunities (like attending movements or rallies).

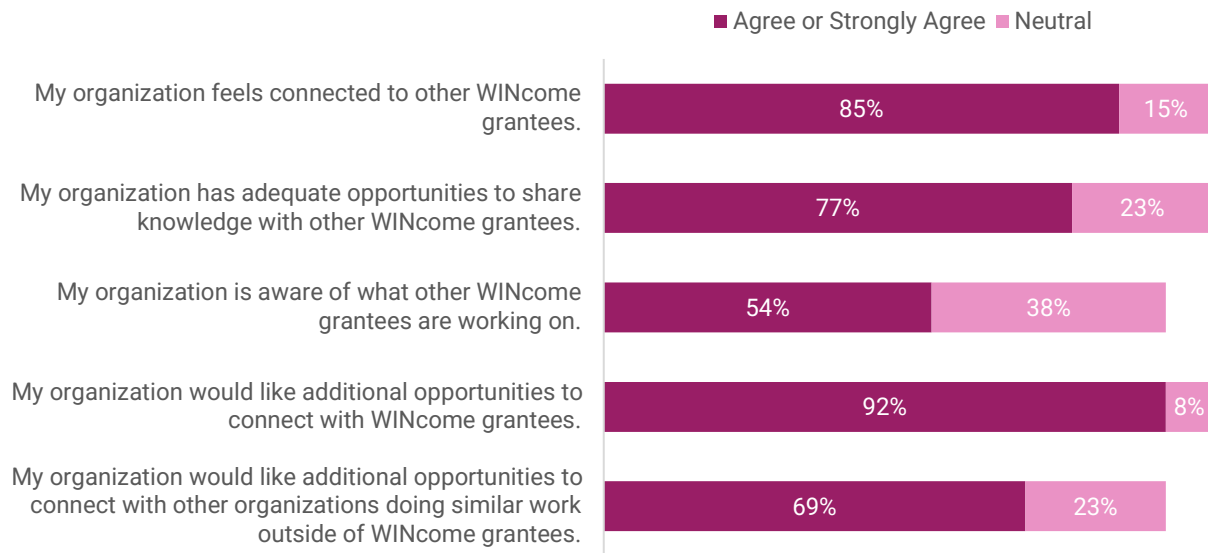
"We are a team of five, it's difficult to support someone when you are down in the trenches as well. It's important to have the ability to step back and analyze for yourself what is best – if our leader is burning out, all the work is falling on the rest of us. You have to distribute to make sure everything is getting done. It would benefit an organization, whether it is small or big, to know that they have that support and that they have what they need to come back stronger than they are." – Focus group participant

Outcome: Direct service and advocacy organizations work together to advance economic security and resiliency

WINcome is designed to provide grant partners with funding that is renewable for up to three years. Through this design, WINcome is naturally structured as a cohort of direct service and public policy organizations working together in pursuit of gender, racial and economic equity. In its second year, WFCO held WINcome grant partner meetings and served as a co-convenor for the Colorado Direct Cash Transfer Community of Practice, where WINcome grant partners were invited to join. Based on the cohort structure and gatherings provided to WINcome grant partners, an outcome of WINcome is that direct service and advocacy organizations are working together to advance economic security and resiliency.

In the survey, grant partners were asked to share feedback on their sense of connection with other grant partners. As Figure 4 illustrates below, 85% of survey respondents agreed that they feel connected to other WINcome grantees, and 77% agreed that they have adequate opportunities to share knowledge with other WINcome grantees. However, slightly more than half (54%) of survey respondents agreed that they are aware of what other WINcome grantees are working on, and 92% agreed that they would like additional opportunities to connect with other WINcome grantees. These findings indicate that, although grant partners feel connected and have opportunities to share knowledge, they would like more opportunities for gathering and collaboration with each other.

Figure 4. Feedback on Connections with other WINcome Grant Partners



*How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1=Strongly Disagree and 5= Strongly Agree.

Additionally, the evaluation sought to understand how helpful the Colorado Direct Cash Transfers Community of Practice (CCOP) and the WINcome gatherings have been for grantees.

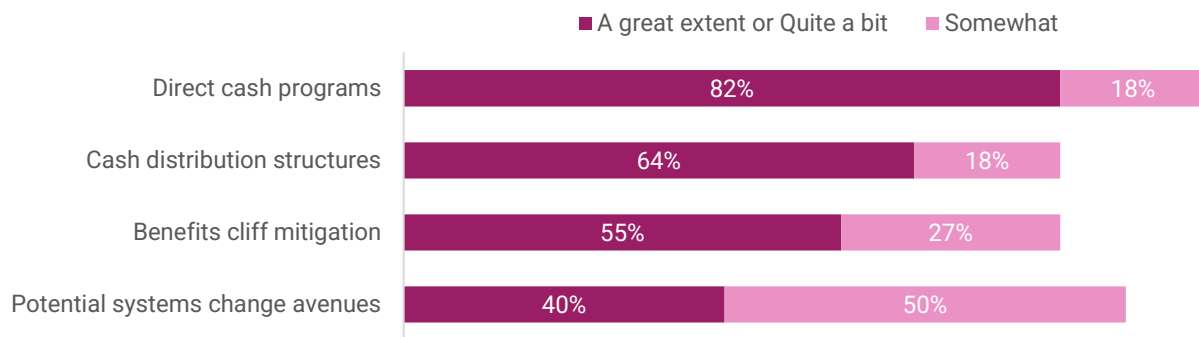
The CCOP is a Colorado-state-focused community of practice that meets regularly to learn from and with various direct cash stakeholders, including nonprofits, direct cash pilot programs, governmental entities, public policy organizations and community members. WFCO is one of eight co-conveners for the CCOP. Additionally, the CCOP created the Benefits Cliff Working Group to discuss mitigating benefits cliff effects on direct and flexible cash assistance program participants. This working group transitioned into a Policy Working Group in August 2023, with the goal to create systems change that result in more money to more Coloradans. The CCOP and working group are open to those involved in the movement for flexible cash assistance, including WINcome grant partners. Since WINcome grant partners are involved in the CCOP, the evaluation also sought to understand how the CCOP is supporting grant partners.

There was a total of six CCOP sessions in 2023, one of which included a presentation and discussion of [Cash in Colorado: A Landscape Analysis of Colorado Direct Cash Transfers](#). In these sessions, attendees heard from seven direct cash programs or studies. Presenters shared how they developed their program, their cash distribution structure, and their evaluation or research design. Each session included a presentation with the opportunity to ask questions.

Further, WFCO held WINcome grantee gatherings hybrid in-person or virtually, or fully virtually where grant partners checked in with each other and learned about how they could engage in advocacy efforts. Grantee gatherings were held in January, May, and December.

Through the survey, grant partners were asked the extent the CCOP supported their learning. As illustrated in Figure 5 below, 82% of survey respondents indicated that the CCOP and/or the Benefits Cliff Working Group supported their learning of direct cash programs to a great extent or quite a bit, and 64% indicated that the CCOP and/or the Benefits Cliff Working Group supported their learning of cash distribution structures. However, only a little more than half (55%) of respondents indicated that the CCOP and/or the Benefits Cliff Working Group supported their learning of mitigating the benefits cliff, and only 40% indicated that it supported their learning of potential systems change avenues.

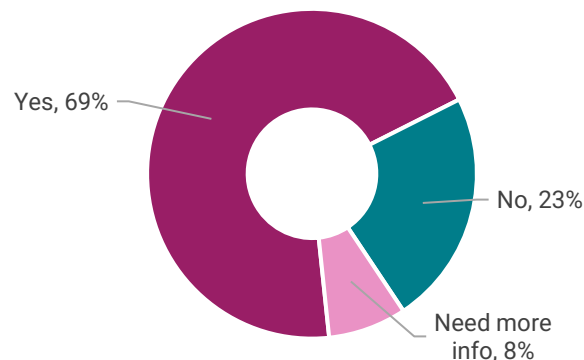
Figure 5. Extent to Which the Colorado Direct Transfer Community of Practice and/or the Benefits Cliff Working Group Supported Learning



*To what extent has the Colorado Direct Cash Transfer Community of Practice and/or the Benefits Cliff Working Group supported your organization's learning of the following? Please rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not at all and 5 = A great extent.

WINcome grant partners were also asked if they plan to participate in the CCOP or recently formed Policy Working Group in the next year. As Figure 6 illustrates, 69% of survey respondents indicated that they plan to participate in the CCOP and/or Policy Working Group next year. One survey respondent noted the difficulty in being able to attend the CCOP and suggested varying meeting days or times to allow more participation.

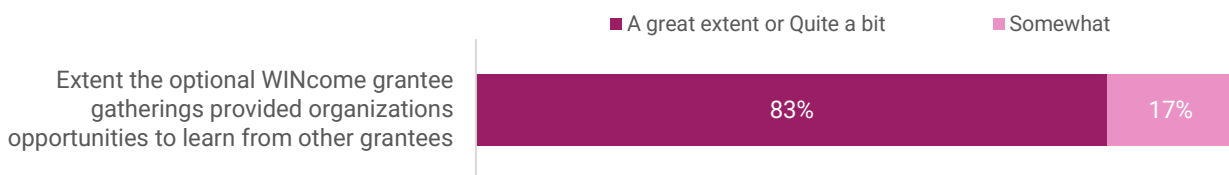
Figure 6. Organization's Plan to Participate in the Colorado Direct Cash Transfer Community of Practice and/or Policy Working Group



*Thinking about the next year of the WINcome grant, does your organization plan to participate in the Colorado Direct Cash Transfer Community of Practice and/or Policy Working Group?

In addition to the CCOP, WFCO provided optional gatherings for WINcome grant partners. These gatherings were offered hybrid in-person or virtual, or fully virtual. The survey asked grant partners to provide feedback on the WINcome grant partners gatherings. As illustrated in Figure 7, 83% of survey respondents indicated that the WINcome grant partner gatherings provided opportunities to learn from other grantees to a great extent or quite a bit.

Figure 7. Extent to Which the WINcome Grantee Gatherings Provided Opportunities to Learn from Other Grantees



*To what extent have the optional WINcome grantee gatherings provided your organization opportunities to learn from other grantees?

Feedback on Ways to Build Stronger Connections

Focus group and survey participants were asked to provide feedback on ways to build stronger connections between each other in general. Grant partners shared the following suggestions:

- **More opportunities to learn about and hear from each other.** Grant partners shared feedback on wanting to learn about each other’s programs, upcoming events and updates through presentations by grant partners, written updates and emails, or a database of programs and program structure. Additionally, public policy partners suggested panel presentations or a way for them to hear and learn about direct service partners and the issues they and their participants are facing to help support their advocacy efforts.
- **Intentional time for networking.** A couple grantees shared suggestions for having intentional time built into meetings and agendas for networking and community building.
- **Space to talk freely without funders present.** Participants from one focus group discussed a desire for the space to talk freely with each other without WFCO present to more openly talk about their failures and challenges.
- **The Annual Luncheon and CCOP is helpful.** Lastly, grant partners shared positive feedback about being able to connect through the Annual Luncheon and CCOP (as well as the working groups).

Although grant partners shared that they wanted more opportunities to engage and connect, they also shared feedback about time constraints, limited capacity to engage and the need for accommodations to attend (e.g., travel costs, childcare). One focus group also appreciated the number of opportunities provided by WFCO but acknowledged that they still felt obligated to attend even though it may have been “optional.”

“No matter how level the playing field, there’s always expectations and requirements sent to grantees that are always optional but as women, we have

felt the need to overachieve, and we are more fearful about how we approach the situation. What if other grantees are doing it, and I'm not, am I going to be noticed? Changing the expectations sent to organizations would free us up – especially small, grassroots organizations like ours – these small additional meetings [from multiple funders] take away from the good we are trying to do. If they could find a way to reaffirm that optional is real and that this is going to further our work, then we can expect to [have more opportunities].” – Focus Group Participant

Lastly, focus group participants and survey respondents shared specific feedback on ways direct service and advocacy partners can work together to advance public policy efforts. The following feedback was shared:

- **Help support direct connections and matching.** Grant partners shared feedback on ways WFCO can help make connections and intentional pairing between direct service partners and public policy partners as The Foundation has more awareness of grantees' work, efforts and focus. Additionally, one grant partner stated the need to be cognizant of ensuring relationships don't feel transactional for direct service partners and that it is a meaningful partnership between direct service and public policy partners.

“WFCO could be an active connector when it sees potential for mutual support. E.g., Connecting a direct service nonprofit talking about removing systemic barriers with a policy advocacy organization who works on the issue, or two direct service nonprofits who could benefit by mutual referrals or combining efforts.” – Survey respondent

- **Consider more regional convenings and advocacy work.** Several grant partners suggested working more at the regional, county and local level, including holding convenings between direct service and public policy partners to be more accessible for those outside of metro Denver and working at the county and local advocacy level.

“Overall, a lot more action happens at the County level and at the rulemaking level for state agencies than what people realize, and I think this may be an underdeveloped space for collective action.” – Focus group participant

- **Consider a WINcome day at the Capitol.** Grantees shared ideas for a WINcome day at the Capitol for grantees to gather and educate legislators on the impact of direct cash assistance.

Additional, less common suggestions included continuing to provide advocacy workshops, the need to properly fund advocacy work, and using WFCO's work around equal pay as an example of coming together.

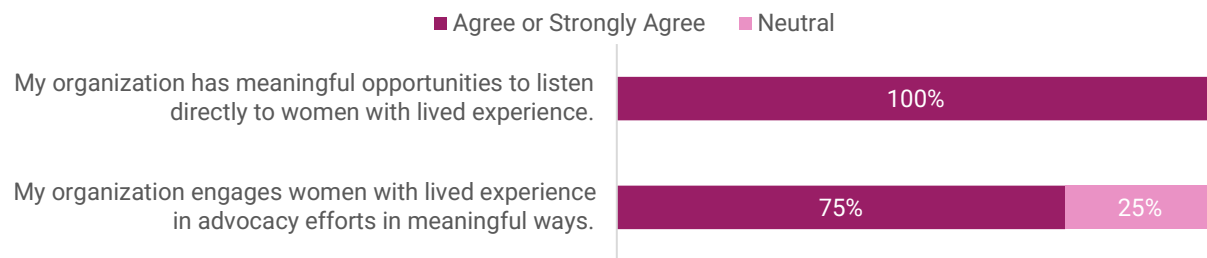
Outcomes on Policy and Narrative

Outcome: Priority policy and systems change issues are identified that center those most impacted.

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

Public policy grant partners were asked for their feedback on centering those most impacted in their work. As Figure 8 illustrates below, all (100%) of public policy survey respondents agreed that their organization has meaningful opportunities to listen directly to women with lived experience, an increase from 83% of respondents from the Year 1 evaluation. Additionally, 75% of public policy survey respondents agreed that their organizations engage women with lived experience in advocacy efforts in meaningful ways.

Figure 8. Public Policy Grant Partner Feedback on Opportunities to Center Those Most Impacted



*How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1= Strongly Disagree and 5= Strongly Agree.

As shared in previous findings related to organization outcomes, advocacy and public policy grant partners were able to bring in and lift up community voices more and used funding to compensate community members. For example, one grant partner has been able to continue expanding its newly launched Community Ambassador program from Year 1.

“We have been able to train a participant to do some research for us to do advocacy work.” – Focus group participant

Participant Feedback on Issues That Matter to Them

Lastly, grant partners collected feedback from participants on issues or needs that matter the most to them. Feedback from participants helps to inform advocacy and public policy efforts that are centered on the needs and issues identified by women.

Three grant partners shared feedback from participants on issues or needs that matter most to them. Participants shared the following issues and needs:

- Access to childcare, including affordable and quality childcare, and caregiver responsibilities that hinder their work or education.
- High cost of living and inflation, including increased costs for food and groceries.
- Lack of resources and inadequate public assistance or safety net programs.
- Language barriers.
- Stable and affordable housing.
- Stable employment and income, including fair pay and hours for job positions.
- Theirs and their family’s health, including affording medical care and access to healthcare services.
- Transportation and car expenses, including high cost of gas.

Outcome: The community is informed about public policy and systems change issues related to economic security and solutions for women.

To move toward longer-term outcomes and systems change, an outcome of WINcome is that the community is informed about public policy and systems change issues related to economic security and solutions for women.

Public policy grant partners held numerous opportunities to inform and engage community members about issues related to the economic security of women. Four public policy grant partners provided data on their activities and efforts. As Figure 9 illustrates, 91 meetings were held with 3,235 total community members attending across the four grant partners. Additionally, the four public policy grant partners provided a total of 14,200 individuals with information on issues related to the economic security of women. Public policy grant partners are also collaborating with other organizations, partnering with 128 organizations in total.

“As a policy organization, most of our policy advocacy work is in collaboration with and in service to grassroots community-based groups who hold direct relationships of trust with community members.” – Survey respondent

Figure 9. Community Engagement and Outreach Efforts – Policy Partners

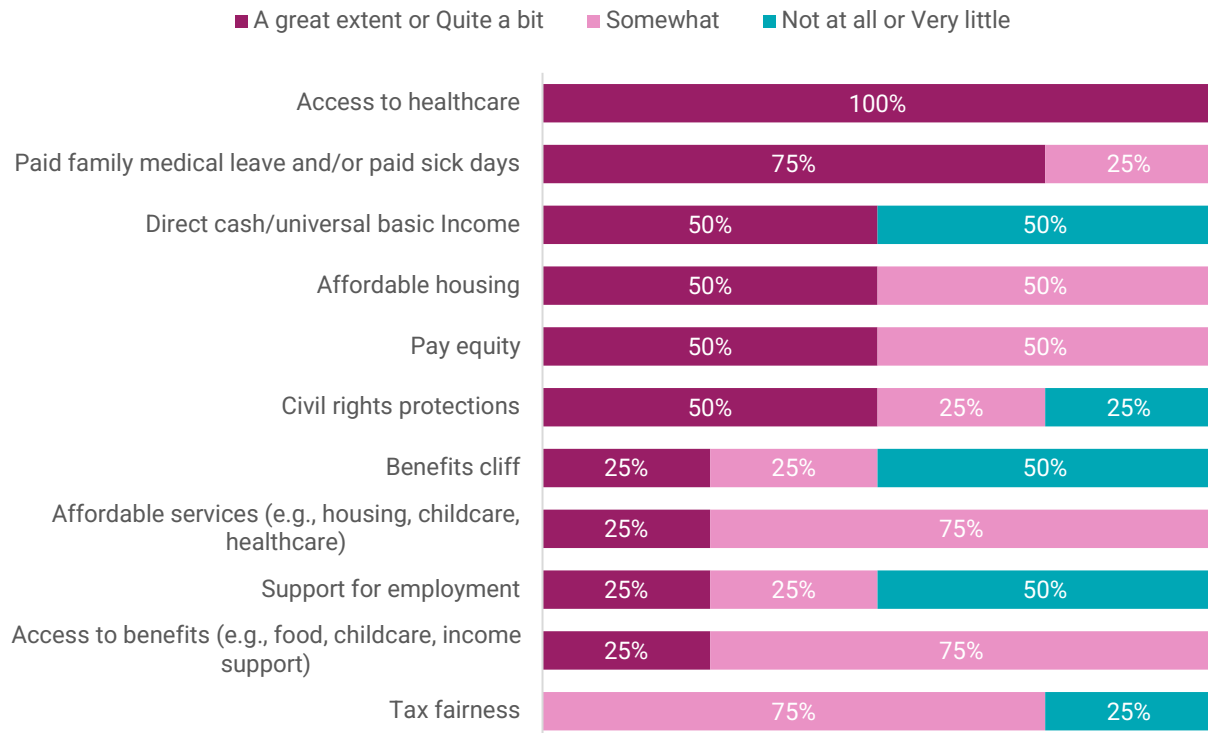
Community Outreach and Engagement	Overall Total Among 4 Grant Partners
Number of meetings and events held with community members about issues related to the economic security of women:	91
Total number of community members who attended meetings and events about issues related to the economic security of women:	3235

Number of individuals who participated in community organizing efforts to address issues related to economic security of women:	176
Total number of individuals receiving information (e.g., newsletters, emails) on issues related to the economic security of women:	14200
Number of partner organizations working with your organization:	128
Number of earned media:	1214
Number of research reports developed related to economic security of women:	30

Additionally, public policy partners were asked to share feedback on policymakers' understanding of systemic issues as they relate to women. As Figure 10 illustrates below, all (100%) of public policy respondents indicated that policymakers understand access to healthcare as it relates to women to a great extent or quite a bit, up from 80% in Year 1, and 75% indicated that policymakers understand paid family medical leave/paid sick time as it relates to women. However, only half of the public policy respondents indicated that policymakers understand direct cash/universal basic income, affordable housing, pay equity and civil rights protection as they relate to women. Even fewer respondents indicated that policymakers understand benefits cliff, affordable services, support for employment, access to benefits and tax fairness as they relate to women.

Additionally, regarding healthcare, respondents stated that policymakers (and the community) most understand systemic issues impacting women when it comes to reproductive healthcare.

Figure 10. Feedback on the Extent Policymakers Understand Systemic Issues as They Relate to Women



*To what extent does your organization believe policymakers understand the following systemic issues as it relates to women? Please rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not at all and 5 = A great extent.

Public policy grantees also shared feedback on some increase in policymakers’ understanding of specific systemic issues regarding women—more specifically around Roe v. Wade and reproductive health, caregiving, affordable childcare and childcare shortages. Additionally, the implementation of several state policies (i.e., Equal Pay Act and POWR Act) has increased understanding and narratives.

Although there are several issue areas where policymakers may not understand their impact on women, public policy survey respondents shared positive feedback on the increased diversity within the Colorado legislature and higher percentages of women and those with lived experience.

“Within the last 3-4 years the Colorado legislature has become more diverse. We now have more women, women of color, Black and Latino legislators, and working-class legislators making policy decisions. This change in the makeup of the legislature has brought with it more infusion of perspectives on lived experiences, including the impact of policies on women, especially women of color.” – Survey respondent

In addition to efforts to inform the community, public policy partners are engaging and sharing information with policymakers and legislators. As Figure 11 illustrates below, three public policy grant partners held a total of 149 meetings with policymakers about issues related to women’s economic security.

Figure 11. Feedback on Policymaker Engagement

Policymaker Engagement	Overall Total Among 3 Grant Partners
Number of meetings held with policymakers about issues related to women’s economic security:	149

Public policy partners also shared feedback on what they see as opportunities ahead. The following are the various issues policy partners stated they are working on:

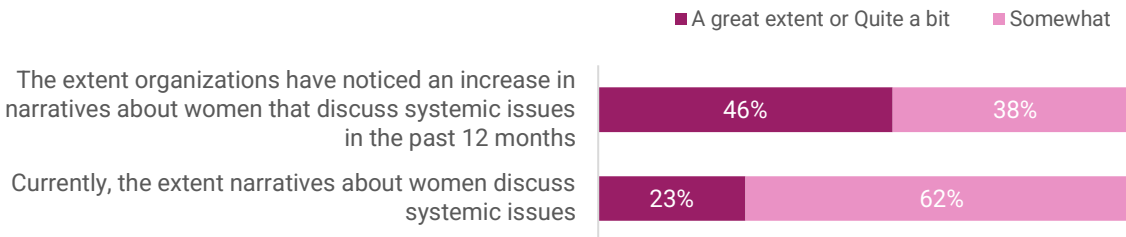
- Housing, including supporting renters’ rights and tax credits
- Care economy and Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) provider funding
- Education justice
- Implementation of FAMILI
- Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit expansions
- Early childhood education and Universal Preschool
- Transportation
- TANF reforms
- Food justice
- Universal basic income

 **Outcome: Narratives and commonly held ideas related to women go beyond the individual and address systemic issues that directly impact women.**

The Women’s Foundation recognizes that narratives and commonly held ideas related to women often discount or omit the larger systems that impact and affect their daily lives. To address this, an outcome of WINcome is that narratives related to women speak to and address systems change issues impacting women.

Grant partners were asked in the survey to share feedback on the extent narratives regarding women address systemic issues. As Figure 12 illustrates below, only 23% of respondents indicated that narratives about women discuss systemic issues to a great extent or quite a bit currently, down from 33% in Year 1. Additionally, half (46%) indicated that they have noticed an increase in narratives about women that discuss systemic issues in the past 12 months, compared to 80% in Year 1. Findings on the decrease in narratives between Year 1 and Year 2 indicate the value and importance of continuing to highlight and shift commonly held ideas and stories about women.

Figure 12. Feedback on Narratives



*Currently, to what extent do narratives about women discuss systemic issues (e.g., articles, news stories)? In the past 12 months, to what extent has your organization noticed an increase in narratives about women that discuss systemic issues (e.g., articles, news stories)? Please rate each on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not at all and 5 = A great extent.

Evaluation Advisory Committee members shared additional context regarding how the narratives that emerged at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic which focused on women being pushed out of the workforce have shifted as society has returned to “normal” while inequitable systems have not changed. Additionally, committee members discussed the challenges of maintaining a focus on economic hardship amid ongoing attacks on human rights—including access to reproductive health and gender-affirming care—and the need to address these attacks. Committee members also shared that this has been reflected in philanthropic trends, where funders practiced greater flexibility during the pandemic but have returned to traditional, extensive applications and rigid reporting requirements.

“We have noted some increased narratives on systemic issues regarding women, particularly as it relates to caregiving, participation in the workforce, and reproductive rights. Reproductive rights (specifically how women and other people with the ability to get pregnant have been endangered by roll backs of reproductive rights in the courts and in legislation) have been more of a focus because of the emergent nature of these issues, while the pandemic-era focus on women’s exit from the workforce has received less attention as of late.” – Survey respondent

“To some extent, the pandemic has created more space for these narratives, but this is still happening in the context of a larger racist, sexist narrative structures.” – Survey respondent

Impact on Participants

Program Structures

Similar to Year 1 findings, WINcome direct service partners are providing cash assistance in several ways that best meet their participants' and communities' needs—whether that be cash given directly to participants or flexible payment options. As Figure 13 illustrates below, 73% of grant partners are distributing cash on a case-by-case basis, 27% of grant partners are providing cash assistance with program participation, and some grant partners are providing cash assistance in both ways depending on the participant's need. Grant partners providing cash assistance on a case-by-case basis are doing so through gift cards, direct cash, stipends and payments to vendors. Among all cash assistance programs is the key tenet of trusting participants and clients to choose how they use the funds to best serve their own needs.

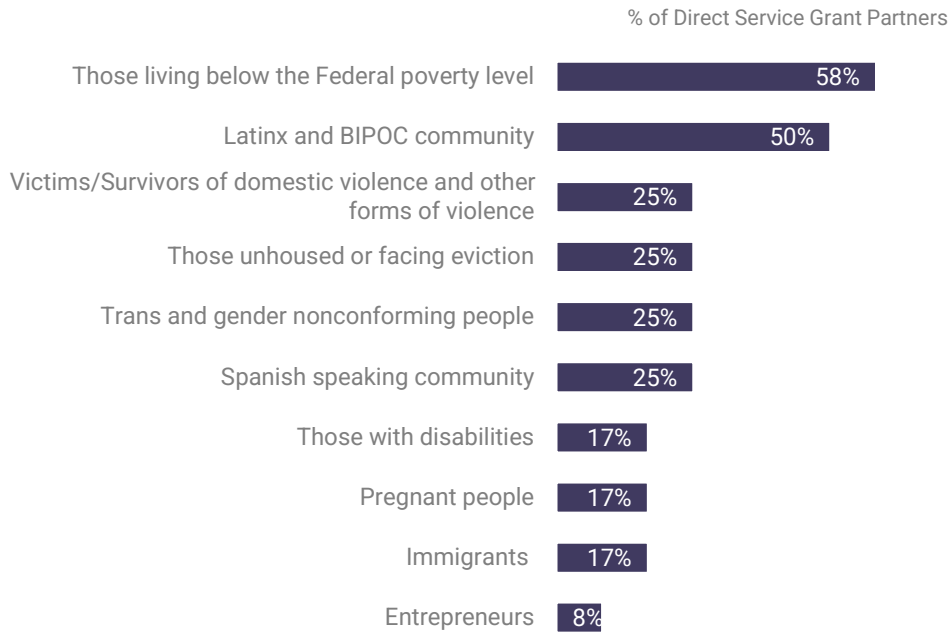
Figure 13. Cash Assistance Structures



People Behind the Numbers

Behind the numbers and data represented in this report are individuals of diverse identities, ages, and stories. Grant partners served diverse identities, including Latinx and BIPOC entrepreneurs, mothers, immigrants, people who are trans and gender nonconforming, and those who are unhoused. As illustrated in Figure 14 below, half of the grant partners served those living below the Federal Poverty Level and Latinx and BIPOC communities.

Figure 14. Primary Communities Served



Participant Outcomes

Grant partners were asked to provide feedback on the impacts on their participants through their experiences with participants and through their own participant data collection. The following sections include findings from both the perspective of the grant partner and directly through the participant.

Grant partners were given a Menu of Participant Questions from which they could select from to include in either existing or new data collection. Three grant partners provided participant data that help provide insight into participant outcomes and experiences.

Outcome: Women progress toward achieving their personal goals regarding economic security.

As mentioned previously, WINcome provides funding that is flexible and gives organizations the freedom to determine how best to distribute and structure their cash assistance programs based on the needs of participants and clients. Through this structure, The Women’s Foundation and Evaluation Advisory Committee recognize that each program and each participant may have different goals. Therefore, the evaluation sought to measure women’s progress toward achieving their personal goals regarding economic security.

Aligned with Year 1, the evaluation sought to first understand the varying personal goals of participants. Three grant partners shared

Defining Economic Security & Resiliency

As identified in the Year 1 report, participants define economic security and resiliency as:

- Being able to pay bills and expenses for basic needs
- Freedom
- Stability
- Being financially independent
- Being able to provide for their family

feedback from participants on their personal goals related to becoming economically secure and resilient. The following themes across the three grant partners' participants expand on insights into personal goals from the Year 1 evaluation:

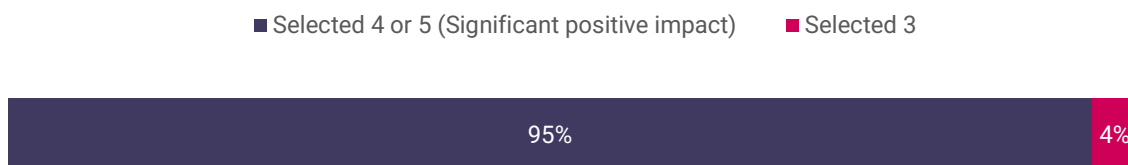
- **Be able to budget money and improve financial literacy.** Participants shared they would like to be able to budget their money wisely, improve their financial literacy and money management skills and become financially independent.
- **Get a stable and secure job.** Participants shared they would like to get a stable job, including finding a new job, working full-time, and finding a job that provides benefits.
- **Have stable and safe housing.** Participants shared they would like to have stable housing, including safe housing, housing for their families, save for down payment and purchase a home.

“Getting a house my kids can call home.” – Participant feedback

- **Complete education or training to further their career.** Participants shared they are working toward completing a degree, certificate program or training that would then provide opportunities for better job prospects, increased income, and stable careers.
- **Reduce debt and catch up on bills.** Participants shared feedback on goals related to catching up on bills and paying off or reducing debts.
- **Increase income.** Participants shared feedback on wanting to increase their incomes, including starting a business or side hustle.

Additionally, the three grant partners also collected feedback from participants on the impact of cash assistance on meeting their personal goals of becoming economically secure and resilient. As Figure 15 illustrates below, nearly all participants (95%) indicated that cash assistance had a positive impact on meeting their personal goals.

Figure 15. Impact of Cash Assistance on Meeting Personal Goals – Participant Data



*How much of an impact did cash assistance have on meeting your personal goals of becoming economically secure and resilient? Please respond on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Significant negative impact.

Outcome: Women are supported in navigating economic opportunities and services, including childcare, education and job training.

WINcome's direct service partners not only provide direct and flexible cash assistance but also provide additional programs and services that support women and their families. Through this work, an outcome of WINcome is that women are supported in navigating economic opportunities and services.

As stated earlier, several direct service partners provide cash assistance with a specific program, including programs that support entrepreneurs and those starting their own business, programs that provide professional financial coaching, and programs that support family and individual goals. Direct service partners are also providing legal services and resources, life skills classes and programming, case management, housing programs, emergency shelters and transitional housing.

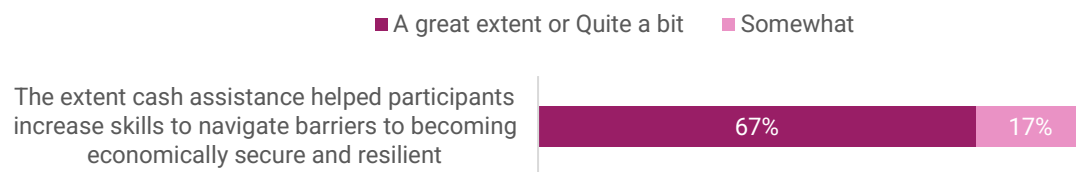
Grant partners shared feedback on supporting women through the various programs they offer as well as by being flexible and responsive when supporting each individual. Additionally, through feedback provided by three direct service partners, participants shared how grant partners helped them navigate housing applications and options, resources available in their community that they were unaware of, obtaining technology or internet access for education, or work and immigration legal assistance and services.

"I was connected to the diaper program and was able to save on diapers." – Participant Feedback

"I was introduced into navigating resources in order to help my daughter with her health." – Participant Feedback

Direct service partners were asked the extent cash assistance helped participants increase skills to navigate barriers to becoming economically secure and resilient. As illustrated in Figure 16 below, 67% of respondents indicated that cash assistance helped participants increase skills to navigate barriers to a great extent or quite a bit.

Figure 16. Extent Cash Assistance Helped Participants Increase Skills to Navigate Barriers – Grant Partners



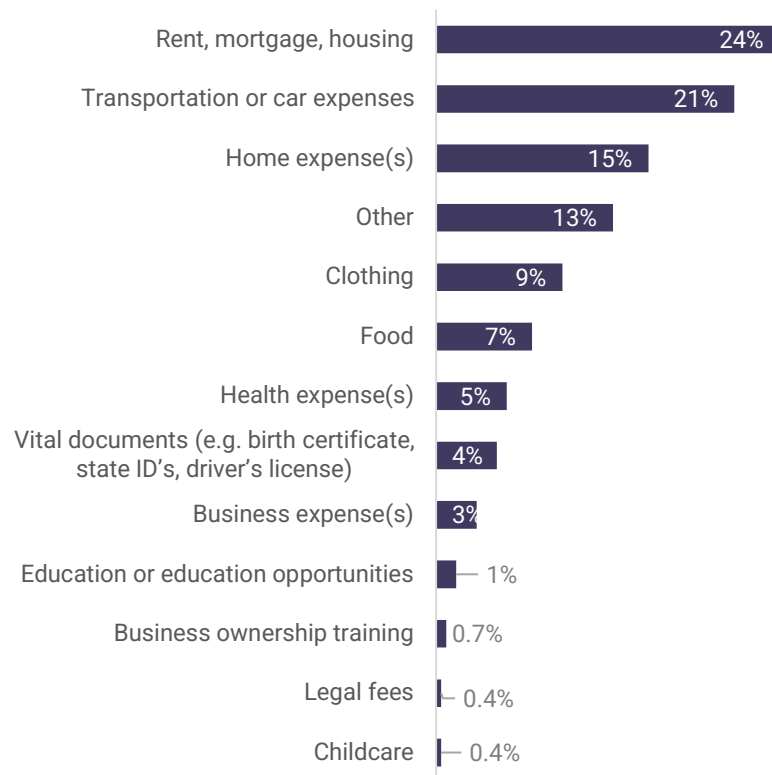
*To what extent has cash assistance helped participants increase skills to navigate barriers to becoming economically secure and resilient? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1=Not at all and 5=A great extent.

Outcome: 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 for each individual. Therefore, the evaluation sought to prioritize measuring basic needs met to mitigate crises.

Seven organizations provided data on participants' uses of cash assistance. Findings from the data provided help illustrate community need for cash assistance. As Figure 17 illustrates below, 24% used cash assistance to help with rent, mortgage, or housing (including temporary housing), 21% used cash assistance for transportation or car expenses, and 15% used cash assistance for home expenses. Uses included with "Other" (13%) are costs for storage (e.g., storage units), financial assistance, temporary housing (i.e., motels), and tax liability.

Figure 17. Uses of Cash Assistance



Participants from three grant partners shared additional qualitative feedback on the uses of cash assistance to meet basic needs and mitigate crises. Participants shared feedback on using cash assistance to help cover essential living expenses like bills, gas and car insurance, rent, groceries and necessities.

“This will pay my car payment and phone bill, giving me a way to get to work, a phone for work and gas to get there.” – Participant

Direct service partners also lifted up impact stories and uses of cash assistance, including providing cash assistance that helped women be able to get to work, pay for unexpected expenses, escape abusive relationships, transition to stable and safe housing, obtain vital documents, reunite with family, and obtain immigration support and legal resources.

“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

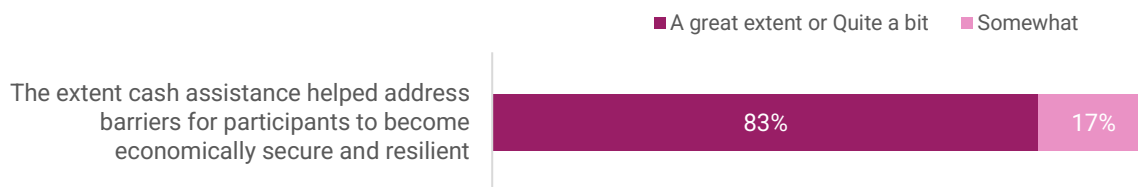
“These funds allowed us to act when someone is going to lose their home. There isn’t a lot of funding out there that is free and unrestricted – wasn’t dictated on how it was going to be used. We don’t have anything else that compares to it in the funding realm. Knowing that this was set aside for direct aid in an unrestricted way, was really different.” – Grant Partner

Outcome: Women’s opportunities to become economically secure and resilient are expanded.

Findings from the Year 1 evaluation illustrated the impacts beyond meeting basic needs and mitigating crises. Therefore, the Year 2 evaluation sought to understand how WINcome and cash assistance are expanding opportunities for women to become economically secure and resilient.

Direct service partners were asked the extent cash assistance helped address barriers for participants to become economically secure and resilient. As Figure 18 illustrates below, 83% of respondents indicated that cash assistance helped address barriers for participants to a great extent or quite a bit.

Figure 18. Extent Cash Assistance Addressed Barriers for Participants



*To what extent does your organization feel cash assistance helped address barriers for participants to become economically secure and resilient? Please respond on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Not at all and 5 = A great extent.

Additionally, grant partners and participants shared stories of the impact of cash assistance on participants and their community that extend beyond meeting basic needs and mitigating crises. The following themes emerged from both grant partners and participants:

- **Supporting women AND their families.** In Year 1, most findings centered around the impacts on individuals. However, in Year 2 grant partners and participants shared feedback on cash assistance and support that helped women *and* their children,

including reuniting families, being able to get necessities and gifts for children, and opportunities to focus on and provide more resources for their children.

“I was able to allow my kids to participate in afterschool activities. I was able to concentrate on my kids and not stress.” – Participant Feedback

- **Impacting their mental health and confidence.** Similar to findings from the Year 1 evaluation, grantees and participants shared feedback on the mental health impacts of providing flexible cash assistance, including the relief, reduced stress and peace of mind knowing they can pay for bills, basic needs, and necessities. Additionally, grant partners and participants shared how participants gained a sense of empowerment through the trust provided to use funds as needed and the increased confidence knowing they can pay for necessities and other items.

“We have seen it has allowed them to grow as a person – they feel more confident and reliable in themselves as a person, see them grow and blossom as a person. They were intimidated and now they are ready to continue on with their life. We have seen how it impacts their clients and we have seen them become self-sufficient through the support from WINcome.”– Focus Group Participant

- **Ability to focus on other basic needs and goals.** Grant partners and participants shared feedback on the ability to focus on other issues or needs, their goals and future because of the cash assistance.
- **Filling gaps from other assistance programs.** Grantees shared feedback that flexible cash assistance has helped both them and their participants fill gaps where other funding and assistance programs or public benefits lack. Grant partners also shared feedback on increased needs from communities as certain pandemic-era assistance programs, stipends, and funding are no longer available.

“The biggest struggle is getting rental assistance – left behind workers fund closed – the process was so complicated and backlogged, no way to get emergency funding; people would have to get into a dangerous situation before they could access it – a long and exposing application. The restrictions, lack of nutrition assistance that is culturally relevant, lack of utility support, onus on us as an organization to fill those gaps in the community.” – Focus group participant

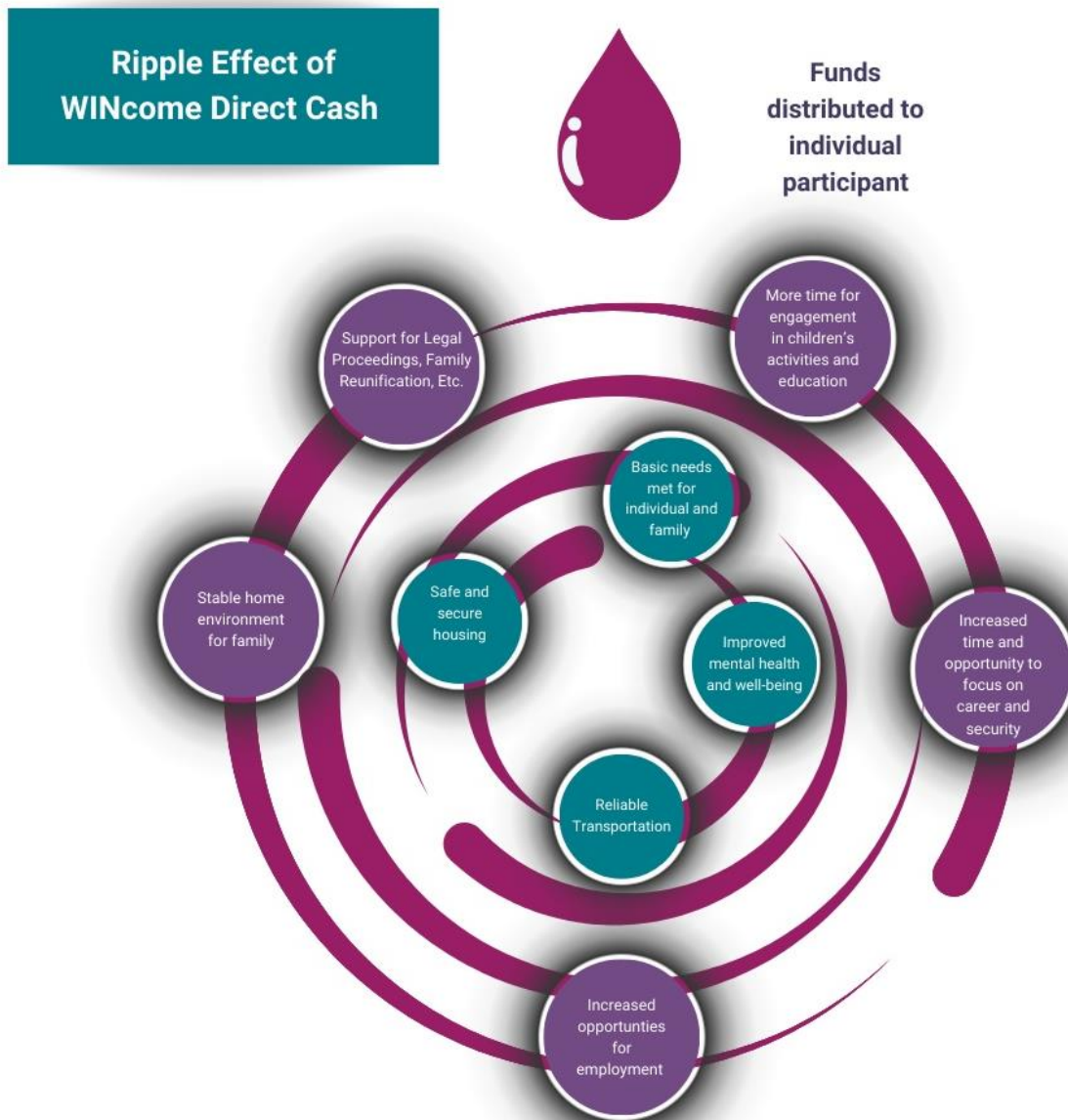
“As direct-aid assistance dried up in other organizations, we saw an increased need for us to assist in other areas outside of legal direct aid. It was difficult to take the decision to help with other types of needs because we worried about having cases we wouldn’t be able to financially support in the future.

However, once we made the decision to support more areas, we saw the impact on our clients and the beauty of being able to tell someone, “You decide what you’re going to do with these funds.” – Grant Partner

Visualization of Participant Impact

Figure 19 below illustrates the “ripple effect” of WINcome funds on each individual’s extended network and their economic security. The graphic depicts how the impact of direct cash is similar to the ripples generated from a drop of water—individuals were able to extend support to their children, families, and broader network.

Figure 19. Ripple Effect of WINcome



Recommendations & Conclusion

The Year 2 evaluation provided further insight on the direct and flexible cash assistance movement. The evaluation illustrated the importance and value of providing women cash assistance and the ripple effects that it can have on multiple generations, including the ability to support future goals and activities through the support of basic needs and the opportunity to build trusting relationships. The evaluation also illuminated the realities of shifting focus and attention from one systemic issue to the next, and the continued need for transforming narratives and commonly held ideas about women holistically.

The evaluation also illuminated several recommendations based on feedback from grant partners. Point b(e) Strategies recommends the following to improve WINcome and further support grant partners and participants:

- **Provide more opportunities for connections, including additional ways to connect direct service and policy organizations.** The Women's Foundation (WFCO) should consider more opportunities for grant partners to connect and build community, including considering gatherings at different times of the day to be more accessible, intentional networking time or community building activities during meetings, direct connections and introductions between grant partners by WFCO, and opportunities for grant partners to discuss their efforts without WFCO present.
- **Further build the movement for direct and flexible cash assistance and the WINcome model.** WFCO should share with grant partners its efforts and activities for building awareness for the WINcome funding model and direct cash assistance within its network. Additionally, WFCO should consider opportunities and activities for grant partners to gather at the Capitol and regionally to advocate for direct and flexible cash assistance.
- **Consider ways to support executive directors.** As nearly half of the grant partners experienced leadership or key staff transitions, WFCO should consider programs, funding or support for executive directors and leaders to address burnout. This can include a sabbatical program and/or supplemental funding for culturally and organizationally relevant professional and personal development.

Overall, WINcome is helping fill funding gaps for organizations and build connections between organizations that advance direct and flexible cash transfer efforts and is thereby transforming direct cash assistance in Colorado. By doing so, WINcome grant partners are building trust with their participants and communities, responding to needs in flexible, thoughtful ways, and contributing to the movement for direct cash through their programs and advocacy efforts.