

2020

# MISSION DRIVEN

WINTER 2020

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## 2020: A MOVEMENT OF LIFT

Brimming with the possibility and promise that a new year brings



**LAUREN Y. CASTEEL**  
President & CEO

Melinda Gates, in her 2019 *New York Times* bestseller, "The Moment of Lift: How Empowering Women Changes the World," asks, "How can we create a moment of lift in human hearts so that we all want to lift up women? Because sometimes all that's needed to lift women up is to stop pulling them down."

Brimming with the possibility and promise that a new year brings, I pondered her question. And it struck me. 2020 is a rare gift, a year that offers so many powerful chances to create moments of lift, that collectively, we can build **a movement of lift for women**. The Women's Foundation of Colorado believes in a future where women and girls of every background and identity can thrive. If you share this vision, I offer you the following moments in 2020 to advance and accelerate this movement for Colorado women with us.

### Lift Locally

National funders are catching on that women's foundations are a smart investment. Supporting foundations that change structural systems through policy while advancing women and their families through grantmaking is an effective way to pave long-term social change and positively impact our economy.

The Gates Foundation is just one funder that announced late last year new investments in the women's movement. They understand that transforming opportunities for women takes time, and structural systems must be built with women in mind. Will individual donors follow suit? Currently only 1.6 percent of all charitable donations in the U.S. benefit organizations dedicated to women and girls. National funding initiatives are encouraging, let's be clear. But to ensure impact in our communities and for the women who live in them, we must give where we live. That's what our WAGES program is all about (see page 10).

### Count to Lift

The census is a once-in-every-10-years opportunity to lift women statewide. Population counts decide which families and children can count on equal access to federally funded programs that support nutrition, education, housing, and healthcare. Visit [census.gov](https://census.gov) to find out how you can encourage participation in your community.

### Vote to Lift

Creating a movement of lift depends on each of us voting in the 2020 election (and every election for that matter). When we vote to advance policies and elect candidates that prioritize improving opportunity for women, we create lift. Similarly, when we encourage others to vote, we lift. When we share what we learn about barriers that impact diverse women and the means to dismantle those barriers, we lift.

*continued page 2*



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

## OUR MISSION

Catalyzing community to advance and accelerate economic opportunities for Colorado women and their families.

WFCO.ORG

2020: A Movement of Lift, continued

Later this year, The Women's Foundation will release an updated version of our nonpartisan voter handbook, "The Womanifesto." Make sure you download it to learn about specific statewide ballot measures and their impact on Colorado women.

### Celebrate, Commemorate, and Lift

It can be easy to forget that just 100 years ago the 19th Amendment was ratified. As a member of Gov. Polis' Women's Centennial Vote Commission, I know events are planned across the state to raise awareness of the struggle to win voting rights for all women and rally together for greater empowerment and equality. I recommend attending one of History Colorado's statewide events, as well as other community events by WFCO that will inform, illuminate, connect – and lift all women. WFCO will kick off a series of community conversations, Chat4Change, in February 2020.

### Lobby to Lift

Two issues that greatly impact women's abilities to earn for their families will play a prominent role in the 2020 Colorado General Assembly. Since the last legislative session, The Women's Foundation has been deeply involved in coalitions that are working to improve access to early care and education and paid family and medical leave for all Coloradans. Join our statewide network of advocates and help us pass these key bills in 2020. See more details about the bills on page 11 and register on our website for upcoming advocacy days around the state and our third annual Lobby Day on March 5.

### Find YOUR Lift

Find your own place in this movement of lift for women. Reactionary philanthropy, episodic giving, or more recently dubbed "rage giving" have become popular tools to respond to disasters, tragedies, and gross injustices we see in the news. These investments are necessary, but imagine what our world look like for women if donors continued to invest with such urgency long after a news cycle closes or their anger simmers?

The Women's Foundation offers more ways than ever to join the movement – from giving circles to donor-advised funds to monthly sustaining memberships. Find the one that works best for you. **Find your lift.**

Sincerely,

**LAUREN Y. CASTEEL**  
President & CEO

# SUPPORTING WFCO WITH YOUR TAX RETURN IS AS EASY AS 1-2-3



**RENEE FERRUFINO**  
Vice President of Development

It's January and income tax filing season is upon us. Did you know that in 2019, Colorado returned more than \$1 billion in refunds to 1.9 million state taxpayers?

This year, thanks to Colorado Nonprofit Association's leadership, a new program will allow Coloradans who receive a state income tax refund to donate all or some of it to a local nonprofit they know and trust, such as WFCO.

Imagine if all state taxpayers chose to donate just a portion of their refunds to the nonprofit of their choice. Talk about creating a movement of lift!



### ReFUND CO

The ReFUND CO initiative offers information about this new system of charitable giving. Whether you do your taxes yourself or use a tax preparer, you can find simple instructions on [RefundWhatMatters.org](https://RefundWhatMatters.org) for how to direct your refund donation to your favorite nonprofit. Truly, it's as easy as 1-2-3:

- 1 Decide how much of the refund to donate.
- 2 Enter "The Women's Foundation of Colorado" and our registration number "20033007286" in the Donate to a Colorado Nonprofit line on your state income tax return or tax software – or just give this info to your tax preparer when you share your tax documents.
- 3 Know that you've made a difference for Colorado women.

To learn more, visit [RefundWhatMatters.org](https://RefundWhatMatters.org) or email me at [reneef@wfc.org](mailto:reneef@wfc.org).

We're grateful for your past support of WFCO and we hope you'll consider continuing your support in this new way.

» Visit [RefundWhatMatters.org](https://RefundWhatMatters.org) for  
more information

# GOOD NEWS AND THANK YOUs

## GOOD NEWS!

- The Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce named the following women among the "Most Powerful Women in Business":
  - > **Akasha Absher**, PEP member, DAF holder, Women Will member
  - > **Ann Ayers**, Partner, Colorado Women's College
  - > **Jennifer Evans**, PEP member
  - > **Kami Guildner**, Trustee, PEP member
  - > **Kasia Iwaniczko MacLeod**, Giving circle member
  - > **Monique Lovato**, Grantee, Mi Casa
  - > **Amber McReynolds**, Empowerment Council member
  - > **Jamey Seely**, PEP member
- Honorary Trustee **Katherine Archuleta** will be inducted into the Colorado Women's Hall of Fame in 2020
- PEP Member **KC Becker**, WFCO President and CEO **Lauren Y. Casteel**, and Honorary Trustees **Lucille Echohawk** and **Anna Jo Haynes** were appointed to the Governor's Colorado Women's Vote Centennial Commission
- **Christine Benero**, Honorary trustee and giving circle member, received the Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce's 2019 Athena Award for professional excellence, community service, and for positively influencing women. Christine is also featured in History Colorado's "What's Your Story?" exhibit of 101 Colorado changemakers, along with Honorary Trustees **Dan Ritchie** and **Pat Schroeder**
- **Barbara Bridges**, Honorary trustee and DAF holder, received the University of Denver's Bridge Builder Award for her service, passion, and philanthropy in Denver and beyond its borders
- PEP Member **Russell Kemp** received the Citizen Diplomat Award from WorldDenver
- **Amber McReynolds**, Empowerment Council member, and **Stephanie Donner** published their book "When Women Vote"
- **Natalie Rekstad**, Honorary trustee, PEP and Women Will member, was selected as 2019 Top Philanthropist of the Year by the International Association of Top Professionals and included in Conscious Company's "43 World-Changing Women in Conscious Business"
- PEP Member **Katica Roy** received a special mention in *TIME*'s "Best Inventions 2019" for her software platform, PIPELINE, that helps employers identify and analyze bias in the workplace
- PEP Member **Jamey Seely** won *Denver Business Journal*'s "Outstanding Women in Business" award in the Large Business Leader category
- **Judi Wagner**, Honorary trustee, DAF holder, Pearl PEP and Women Will member, is being inducted into the Colorado Business Hall of Fame in January 2020



Recent graduates of Young Invincibles's "Young Advocates" program

- Young Advocates, a four-month program by WFCO grantee partner **Young Invincibles**, helps women and men 18-34 develop skills and gain experience in the core functions in advocacy and public policy. Congratulations to latest graduates!

## THANK YOU!

- Thank you to the WFCO trustees who have completed their terms and will become honorary trustees in 2020: **Kelley Duke**, **Nancy Hartley**, **John Ikard**, and **Eunice Kim**.



As part of the Governor's Colorado Women's Vote Centennial Commission Lauren Casteel delivers a motivational speech from the State Capitol on Women's Equality Day 2019

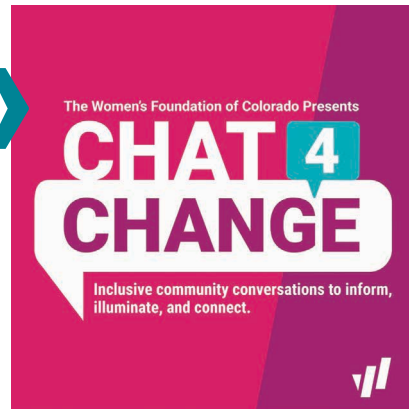
# 2020 PREVIEWS

## CHAT4CHANGE

The Women's Foundation of Colorado introduces Chat4Change, our new series of inclusive community conversations to inform, illuminate, and connect. With each conversation, we'll focus on diverse populations of women throughout Colorado and what access to opportunity looks like for them.

Our first Chat4Change will focus on the **economic status of refugee and immigrant women**. Colorado has a growing community of immigrants – making up nearly 10 percent of all residents – who face unique challenges in reaching economic security. Together we'll explore these challenges and opportunities through a gender lens. Panelists include:

- **Susana Guardado**, Executive Director, OneMorgan
- **Ndeye Ndao**, Asylee Outreach Coordinator, International Rescue Committee
- **Zahraa Otaifah**, Colorado Refugee Speaker's Bureau
- **Kit Taintor**, Senior Advisor to the Governor for New American Integration



### Wednesday, February 5

Registration 5:30 p.m. | Panel discussion 6:00-7:30 p.m.  
Posner Center for International Development  
1031 33rd Street, Denver

- Light snacks provided
- Free & open to the public. Register at [wfco.org/chat4change](http://wfco.org/chat4change)

## WFCO Lobby Day

March 5, 2020

REGISTER TODAY

[wfco.org/lobbyday](http://wfco.org/lobbyday)



### Thursday, March 5

7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.  
Colorado State Capitol

- Breakfast and lunch included
- Free & open to the public. Registration opens January 31 at [wfco.org/lobbyday](http://wfco.org/lobbyday)

## LOBBY DAY

Are you interested in becoming more civically engaged but need help getting started? Or do you want to polish up your advocacy skills? WFCO's got you covered at our third annual Lobby Day.

- Discover how the legislative process works
- Observe members of the House and Senate on the floor
- Connect with your legislator
- Meet Colorado policy makers and other passionate volunteer advocates
- Learn about WFCO's priority bills
- Receive tips and tools for effective advocacy
- Become more confident in the power of your influence to create change

*"It surprised me how accessible the lobbying forum is to everyday citizens. I firmly believe as someone who lives in this country that if I want to see something changed, I need to take part in making that change possible."*

–Julia Doria, Denver

*"After attending Lobby Day, I was able to apply what I learned by having an opportunity to attend a town hall meeting with my local representative and we talked about family leave."*

–Kim Jackson, Colorado Springs

# MANY STORIES, ONE FOUNDATION

## Donors share their reasons for giving to WFCO

During our Movement Maker gathering on Colorado Gives Day, several WFCO donors shared their unique reasons for supporting our work. We are honored to have their support and the support of all members of our communities of giving.



"I had no idea where to start building my network when I moved to Denver from Colorado Springs. When I was introduced to the Empowerment Council it seemed like **a really great way to get involved** in Denver and meet people everywhere."

ALEXIS THOMPSON,  
Empowerment Council



"I give to WFCO because **I have such dreams for the women and girls of Colorado**. And my big dream for them is that they know how powerful they are as people. I want them all to know how strong they are and how much we need them to be successful to change our world."

DANIELLE SHOOTS, Trustee



"I am particularly passionate about the work of The Women's Foundation for two reasons: **I'm passionate about women's issues and I like the combination of advocacy and grantmaking**. My passion lies in the purpose and the tools."

SANDY COOK, PEP member



"I am grateful for WFCO because I have been a single mother and have been humbled by some very serious life experiences in my younger years when I too needed help. I feel that this foundation **offers women opportunities they wouldn't have otherwise**. It's my pleasure to be in a position to give funding to help those women."

BRENDA WILD,  
PEP member



"I'm really grateful to be part of the The Women's Foundation because **I'm learning a ton about all the incredible organizations and the incredible network of people** who really care about women in Colorado."

TANIA ZIEGLER (on left),  
DAF holder

"My time with WFCO dates back many years. What I loved about it from the very beginning was the policy work and the work on the Cliff Effect, **building an environment for women to be self-sufficient and successful on their own**, and having the opportunity to create a financial vehicle to support that."

RUTH ROHS (on right),  
Giving circle member



"**So many women have done so well** as a result of The Women's Foundation's programs. I just think there's nothing more important than that. It takes time, but this movement is incredible."

ANNA JO HAYNES,  
Honorary trustee



"I love how The Foundation has **helped bring together women who want to make a difference** and want to make our voices heard. I really love that we have a place where we can work together to empower other women."

STEPHANIE VISSCHER,  
Empowerment Council



If you have a story you want to share about why you support The Women's Foundation, email Lisa Christie, senior director of communications, at [lisac@wfc.org](mailto:lisac@wfc.org)

## DONOR PROFILE: ADRIANNA ABARCA

Celebrating and supporting Latino culture through philanthropy

There is a movement happening in the Sun Valley neighborhood of Denver that will transform the cultural arts scene regionally and internationally. Situated between Empower Field at Mile High and the Denver Housing Authority redevelopment is a series of colorful buildings that house the *Latino Cultural Arts Center of Colorado* (LCAC). Plans are underway for it to become an integrated campus that weaves performance and visual arts, and features an arts academy, a library, two museums, a gift shop, coffee shop, black-box theater, and more.

All of this will soon be a reality because of Adrianna Abarca, the founder of the nonprofit LCAC, who has long dreamed of creating an institution where Latino art, history, and culture are accurately represented and celebrated. Adrianna saw and felt an unmet need in Denver and Colorado's Latino community for a permanent space where multiple generations could gather to collectively learn from the diversity of Latino creative expression.

"As social beings, we need to identify with a larger group and feel as though we belong. Having the physical space to gather is important. The Latino community has been in survival mode for decades, but it's not enough anymore. We deserve to thrive," said Adrianna.

As the visionary and seed-funder of the LCAC, Adrianna uses donor-advised funds (DAFs) to house her philanthropic dollars, so that her money can grow over time and ultimately, she can

grant more to like-minded organizations. Adrianna holds DAFs at several Colorado community foundations and opened two funds at WFCO to expand her philanthropic network and invest in the 100 percent gender-lens portfolio.

*"The LCAC is not about me, it's about putting our community in the spotlight for its many contributions..."*

In addition to the *Latino Cultural Arts Center*, the A&A Abarca Fund, one of her two donor-advised funds held at WFCO, supports other Latino-led organizations and arts programming. Recently, *Cleo Parker Robinson Dance* received a grant. "They are very supportive of Afro-Latino dance and making cross-cultural connections," she said.

Both the arts and philanthropy are deeply personal for Adrianna and her family. The A&A Abarca Fund is a joint fund for Adrianna and her 17-year-old daughter, Arisela. Just as she first learned of philanthropy from her parents, Adrianna wants to pass along her knowledge to her daughter.

Adrianna recalls that as the owners of *Ready Foods*, her parents "created good jobs for people with good benefits, including bonuses." When there was a profit in the family business, they would give back to the community that made them successful. Over the years, as *Ready Foods* grew, Adrianna and Marco, her brother, gave new voice to the family's philanthropic approach by expanding their financial support to encompass their time and talent, which includes serving on several boards and offering technical support to non-profit organizations. "We are still in the learning stages of the impact that philanthropy can have, and how it can empower our communities across generations," said Adrianna.

In addition to philanthropy, Adrianna inherited her passion for the arts from her father who slowly built an impressive art collection that she has continued. The Abarca Family Collection will be permanently housed in the *Museo de Herencia Mexicana* and will include folk and fine art, photography, and textiles.

"If folk traditions and artistic expressions aren't supported, they tend to die off," she said. Through the LCAC, Adrianna is ensuring they won't. She is determined that the contributions from Colorado's Latino community no longer go unnoticed.

"The LCAC is not about me, it's about putting our community in the spotlight for its many contributions, whether it be in dance, food, music, visual arts, and/or scholarship. Stay tuned—we are just getting started."



Adrianna Abarca in the library of the *Latino Cultural Arts Center*

# DONOR PROFILE: PATTI KLINGE & CONNIE McARTHUR

## Gender-lens portfolio "a motivating factor" in opening DAF

For almost 20 years, Patti Klinge and Connie McArthur held a donor-advised fund at Schwab Charitable. They enjoyed the tax advantage of their charitable contributions and making decisions about their philanthropy over time. Eventually, they spent down the fund, and as Patti completed her term as board chair of The Women's Foundation in 2018, they opened another. This time, they opened it at WFCO.

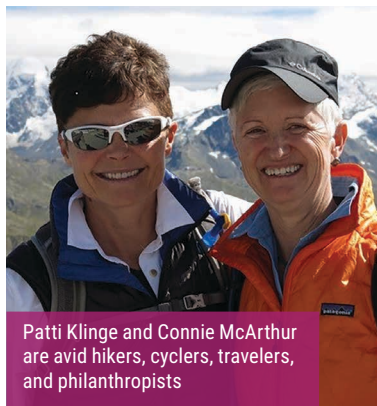
WFCO offers a unitized investment portfolio, which is 21 percent gender-lens invested as of December 2019, and a 100 percent gender-lens portfolio that invests in companies that prioritize advancing women's leadership. Patti and Connie chose to invest in the latter.

"Being able to put our money into a gender-lens portfolio was a motivating factor," said Patti, a retired human resources executive and former chair of the WFCO board of trustees. "It aligns with our belief that more women in leadership roles contributes to stronger organizations, communities, and families."

### THE KLINGE/McARTHUR FUND FOR WOMEN & GIRLS

Fundholders at WFCO can grant to any 501(c)(3) in the U.S. Although grantee organizations do not have to focus on women and girls, that is the focus of the Klinge/McArthur Fund for Women & Girls. Currently, only **1.6 percent of all charitable giving** in the U.S. supports initiatives for women and girls. Patti and Connie want to change that.

Avid cyclers, hikers, and travelers, Connie and Patti also support other philanthropic passions with their time, talent, and treasure including Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Florence



Crittenton, The Center, The Arts Students League of Denver, and The Colorado Supreme Court Nominating Commission.

Additionally, both currently serve on boards that shape healthier communities. Connie is a trustee for National Jewish Health and a member of Colorado Judicial Institute Board. Patti serves on the Denver Health and

Hospital Authority Board and the advisory board for The Center for Women's Health Research at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus, which combines her passion for health and women.

They know that there's still a lot of work to do to create an equal and just society for women. That's why they remain committed to growing their fund to keep investing in WFCO and its gender-lens portfolio.

"My vision boils down to access – access to opportunities – for young women and all women to be able to reach their potential," Connie said.

Patti added, "My focus is choice – not just reproductive choice, but creating opportunities for women so they have the economic freedom to make a multitude of choices in every aspect of their lives."

WFCO's legacy giving program, **Women Will**, ensures your commitment to women's progress continues well into the future. Thank you to those who have made us a part of their legacies.

Akasha Absher  
Katherine Archuleta  
Mary Armour  
Letty Bass  
Jean Bodman  
Barbara Brett  
Stephanie Bruno  
Elizabeth A. Bryant  
Eileen Byrne  
Maxine Carnes  
Lauren Y. Casteel  
Merle Chambers  
Kelly Condon  
Joan Dalbey

Susan Damour  
Kelley Duke  
Linda Fedak  
Julia Fitz-Randolph  
Mary Flemke  
Elaine Gampel  
Ann Garrison  
Loren George  
Janice Gieskieng  
Cheryl Godwin  
Rhondra Grant  
Elisa Hamill  
Linda Hamlet  
J. Bourge Hathaway

Anna Jo Haynes  
Elsa Holguin  
Swanee Hunt  
John Ikard  
Joy Johnson  
Eunice Kim  
Charlotte Kimberlin  
Patti Klinge  
Mary Ann Littler  
Brenda Lyle  
Jan Mayer  
Deanna McCrery  
Lynda McNeive  
Janet Meck

Betsy Mordecai  
Christina Ortiz Bluth  
LaRae Orullian  
Nikki Parker  
Lisa Pease  
Essie Perlmutter  
Catherine Petros  
Fern Portnoy  
Karen Possehl  
Dean Prina  
Jane Ragle  
Natalie Rekstad  
Daniel Ritchie  
Margaret Roath

Lisa Robinson  
Karen Rosica  
Jean Saul  
Holly Simpson  
Lisa Snider  
Susan Sturm  
Susan Suggs  
Marilyn Taylor  
Jane Vennard  
Judi Wagner  
Maria Williams  
Carol Wolf  
Barbara Yondorf

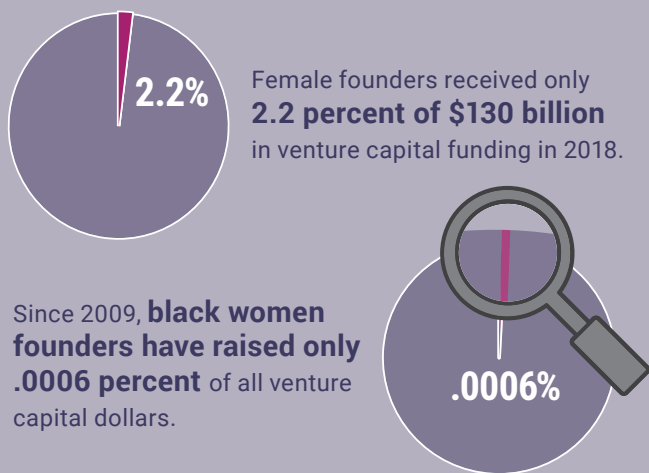
*If you have included WFCO in your will or estate plans, please let us know. It would be our honor to recognize you for your generous gift. For more information on Women Will, please contact Renee Ferrufino, vice president of development, at [renee@wfco.org](mailto:renee@wfco.org).*

# WHERE PHILANTHROPY MEETS IMPACT INVESTING

Philanthropy today is not your mother's philanthropy.

It has expanded to include new, innovative vehicles that accelerate social change, such as impact investing. WFCO offers several vehicles for donors to maximize their philanthropic dollars through impact investing. This includes our 100 percent gender-lens investment portfolio for DAF holders and the new Women's Impact Investing Giving Circle (WIIGC), which invests directly in women entrepreneurs. Access to capital is a real issue for women, especially women of color (see graphic).

## Access to Capital: A Barrier for Female Entrepreneurs



## Activating Impact Investors with Impact Finance Center

Impact Finance Center is a Denver-based nonprofit academic center that trains and activates philanthropists and investors to become impact investors. IFC's founder, Stephanie Gripne, Ph.D., knew WFCO was the right philanthropic institution to help close the gender gap in funding through impact investing.

"When looking for a partner to pilot the first ever impact investing giving circle, we searched throughout the country for an innovative community foundation that shared our commitment to expanding the types of capital available to social good projects," said Stephanie. "WFCO was our top choice to collaborate with and we're so grateful they took the leap of faith with us."

## Making A Difference for Women-led Social Ventures

In partnership with IFC, WFCO opened membership for the giving circle in 2019 and 37 women jumped at the chance to make a difference for women-led social ventures.

"Impact investing is an innovative philanthropic tool, and what better way to learn about it than with a great group

of women and the expertise of The Women's Foundation of Colorado," said WIIGC member Margie Gart.

"Women of color are the fastest growing and most underfunded entrepreneurs in Colorado and across the nation," said member Dianne Myles. "If we don't change that, we'll miss out on innovative ideas, with a positive social impact on our communities and financial return. And we'll never eliminate the gender and racial wealth gap. I'm here to make sure that women of color entrepreneurs are seen, heard, and have access to capital to bring their ideas to life and grow their businesses."

IFC provides giving circle members with education in governance, social ventures, due diligence, and deal creation. The members determine how to deploy their pooled resources. Currently, the giving circle is accepting applications for funding from social ventures (projects, nonprofits, for profits, and funds) led by and benefiting women. The application deadline is Feb. 7, 2020, with 2-3 social ventures receiving funding in the neighborhood of \$20,000-\$40,000 by this summer.

Because of statewide efforts to boost opportunity for women entrepreneurs, including WIIGC, Colorado jumped to No. 1 this year among the best states for women entrepreneurs, according to a ranking by FitSmallBusiness.

## WFCO Impact Investing Menu Growing In 2020

Aspiring impact investors can join the next cycle of the Women's Impact Investing Giving Circle. WFCO is seeking approximately 40 women to contribute a minimum of \$2,000 each to invest in diverse women entrepreneurs while learning together. To learn more, contact Colleen LaFontaine, director of development, at [colleenl@wfc.org](mailto:colleenl@wfc.org).

In 2020, WFCO will expand its impact investing options further by joining with Gary Community Investments, The Gates Family Foundation, Chinook Fund, and others to launch the Colorado Small Business Impact Fund. This new fund held with DreamSpring will provide small business loans with strict priority to non-metro (counties with less than 175,000 people in the most recent census), low- to moderate-income (HUD-defined metric), minority, or female entrepreneurs residing solely in Colorado.

**Thank you to the DAF holders who made this possible.**

## The Global Impact Investing Network

defines impact investing as "investments made into companies, organizations, and funds with the intention to generate social and environmental impact alongside a financial return."

# LACIEY'S STORY: THE DIFFERENCE A YEAR CAN MAKE

At the beginning of 2019, Lacey Eidson had no idea how much her life would change in one year.

Her financial future looked bleak as she navigated life as a newly single parent on a part-time real estate income. One day, as she sat in an orientation for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), she experienced a moment of clarity in which she knew she would have to try something different to create a more stable future for herself and her 12-year-old daughter.

Lacey, 37, saw a brochure for an accelerated Information Technology program at the Community College of Aurora and immediately knew she could do it. She qualified for a grant from the Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) that covered her tuition. Still, she struggled under the chronic stress of her financial situation, and during her first semester, she failed a class.

*"I never in a million years would have found this job if it wasn't for CCH."*

She was three months behind on her electricity bill and unsure how she would stay in school when her SWFI career coach connected her with Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (CCH). Fueled by a grant from The Women's Foundation of Colorado WAGES program (Women Achieving Greater Economic Security), CCH provides vocational services for women who have experienced homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness. It also provides other supports that are vital to women's success in job training programs. For Lacey, connecting with CCH meant a paid electricity bill, gas to get from Westminster to Aurora, and other essentials, such as updated registration tags for her car. Without these supports, "I wouldn't have been able to make it to school," acknowledges Lacey.

With a little bit of breathing room, Lacey rebounded with As and Bs the next semester and earned her CompTIA A+ certificate. CCH placed her in an IT internship at A2J Tech Store, where she earned minimum wage. She expected to gain critical web design experience, but never expected that she would ascend directly into a management position. In November 2019, just months after her internship began, A2J Tech Store offered Lacey full-time employment. She now supervises three part-time employees, soon to include an intern from CCH, whom she will mentor.

In addition to a raise, she now earns a percent of the company's monthly revenue.

"I never in a million years would have found this job if it wasn't for CCH" she says, smiling. Along with the perks of secure employment and a steady income, Lacey is grateful for continued growth opportunities. A2J has asked CCH for help providing Lacey with a career coach who can mentor her as she grows in IT. CCH has also signed her up for a coding training class and will be glad to help her with the cost of additional training/supportive needs. "Just because someone finds employment doesn't mean our relationship ends," said Victoria Johnson, vocational services manager at CCH. "We want to help our ladies continue their success."



Lacey with her A2J supervisor, Joseph.

In 2019, CCH provided several women with IT, construction, and pest-control training programs and supportive services. CCH has learned that supportive services are essential, especially for women, many of whom are starting over after traumatic experiences, including domestic violence.

"Being able to fund things like bus passes, child care, or make the down payment on an apartment can make all the difference to a woman trying to change her life," said Victoria.

*"Being able to fund things like bus passes, child care, or make the down payment on an apartment can make all the difference to a woman trying to change her life."*

Victoria Johnson, vocational services manager at Colorado Coalition for the Homeless

# THE POWER OF WAGES

In November 2019, WFCO trustees voted to extend The Women's Foundation's WAGES (Women Achieving Greater Economic Security) grantee cohort for a fourth year. The 15 direct-service grantees and eight public policy grantee partners will enter their third year as part of the cohort in 2020. The decision to extend the length of the cohort was an easy one.

"Tremendous progress is being made to propel women into careers that enable them to meet the needs of their families," said Louise Myrland, WFCO vice president of programs. "But this work takes time. A woman lifting herself out of poverty faces innumerable barriers and is further challenged by an extremely high cost of living in Colorado."

## WAGES Direct-Service Grantees Advance Opportunities

WFCO's evaluation partner, OMNI Institute, reported that through the first 1.5 years of the program, WAGES direct-service grantees advanced opportunities for an estimated 613 women and 1,288 members of their households. Of those 613 women, 130 made employment gains, 208 women reached their educational goals, and 47 reduced their need for public supports.

*"The value beyond the grant is the connection and collaboration with other grantees. We are a small piece of the puzzle. To see the bigger picture is really interesting. I appreciate the thought put into developing this funding model."*

**MEGAN BURCH**, Grantee partner  
Eagle County Human Services

## Using Innovative Solutions to Remove Barriers

The direct-service organizations use innovative solutions to remove key barriers to women earning a livable wage, among them access to child care, housing, and transportation. Almost all of their program participants receive case management and employment services, and a majority receive financial assistance. Many direct-service grantees have made necessary program adjustments in the first two years to help participants reach their goals, such as providing stipends and developing peer-to-peer support to help the women complete their education or job training.

"The impact of WAGES is boosted by WFCO giving enough flexibility to grantees to adapt their services as needed," said Myrland. "But the real power lies in bringing our direct-service and public policy grantees together to learn and collaborate. Information exchanged about the most-pressing needs and economic challenges of women in Colorado is invaluable, especially for our grantees who may not have had access to this kind of network."



The WAGES grantee cohort at a September 2019 convening in Colorado Springs.

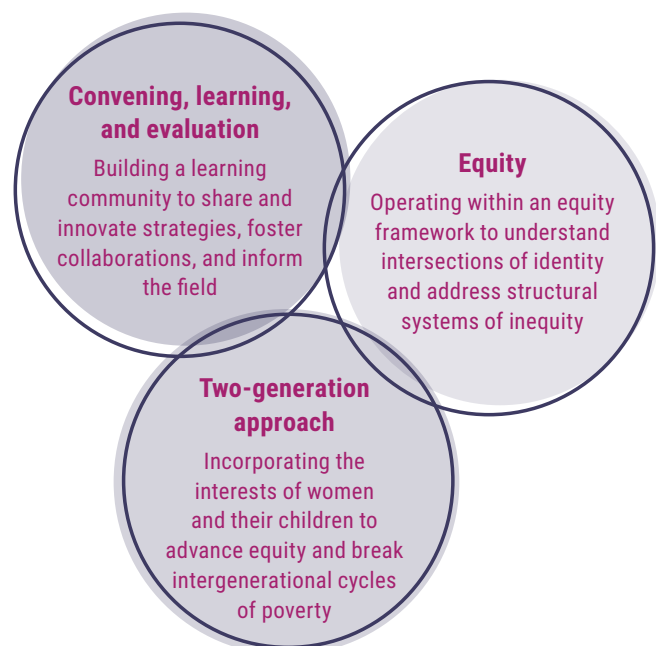
## Public Policy Grantees Bolster Resources for Women

Insights gained together through expert-facilitated convenings prompted the cohort to recommend to WFCO that improved access to child care is the greatest need among women striving to earn a livable wage. Additionally, the cohort agreed that Colorado's tax and budget policies must be reformed to allow for sufficient resources for women's advancement. Those recommendations shaped WFCO's policy focus in 2020 as well as the work of the cohort in its remaining two years.

"Improving access to child care has always been a policy priority for WFCO, but our WAGES grantees confirmed that it should be our top priority in 2020. It's where we can make most the difference in the lives of the women we work with," said Myrland.

In 2020, WFCO is working side by side with its public policy partners at the Capitol to strengthen the early care and education (ECE) workforce, including spearheading a working group with the Colorado Children's Campaign and the Office of Gov. Polis. Together, our efforts to bolster the state's resources for women and their families have the potential to impact all 2.8 million women and girls in the state.

## Components of WAGES grantee cohort



# 2020 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

## Transforming opportunities for Colorado's 2.8 million women and girls

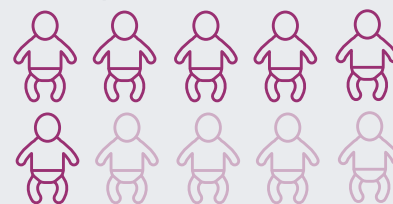
Public policy is an incredibly powerful tool for changing systems that perpetuate inequality. Just one bill can transform opportunities for all 2.8 million women and girls who reside in Colorado – for example, the passage of the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act, a WFCO priority bill that passed in 2019.

During the 2020 legislative session, WFCO is prioritizing three bills that will strengthen the early care and education (ECE) workforce and improve access to paid family and medical leave for Coloradans.

### EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Accessible, high-quality child care is imperative for parents of young children to enter, succeed, and remain in the workforce and to meet their families' needs. And yet Colorado's early care and education (ECE) sector is experiencing a shortage of qualified workers. Think it's just a problem for working parents? There's a ripple effect to the health of our economy. Everyone relies on someone who relies on child care and it's an essential ingredient for the growth of businesses. To get more people into child care careers, it's going to take multiple strategies. With input from our cohort of direct-service and public policy grantees and over 50 expert stakeholders in ECE, workforce development, and public sectors across the state, WFCO will focus on two bills.

Colorado only has licensed early care and education capacity for roughly **60% of the 247,000 children under 6 years old with all parents in the workforce**



BILL	WHAT IT DOES
<b>Supports For Early Childhood Educator Workforce</b> HB20-1053	This bill will bolster the stability and growth of the ECE workforce in 3 ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Streamline pathways to the classroom for aspiring educators</li> <li>* Establish ECE recruitment and retention scholarships and grants</li> <li>* Create apprenticeships</li> </ul>
<b>Income Tax Credit For Early Childhood Education Fix</b> HB20-1043	This bill will make a technical fix to one of WFCO's priorities from 2019. It supports those in the ECE workforce with a tax credit that will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Encourage improvements in providers' quality</li> <li>* Improve compensation of the early childhood workforce</li> <li>* Increase access to child care providers for families facing the greatest barriers</li> </ul>

### PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE



Thousands of Coloradans need time off to care for family members each year – whether that's bonding with a newborn or adopted child, caring for an aging parent, or addressing a major medical issue. Without paid family and medical leave, families can face financial hardship or devastation. Some employers currently offer paid family leave, but many Colorado employees are left behind. No Coloradan should have to choose between caring for a loved one and providing for them. Access to paid family and medical leave means more women can remain in the workforce, more families

can stay afloat, employers can retain talent and reduce costs, and economic activity increases. At the time of this newsletter's publication, a bill had not yet been introduced.



Visit **wfco.org** for updates on all legislation we support during the session, to read our civic engagement guide, and sign up for our third annual Lobby Day on March 5.



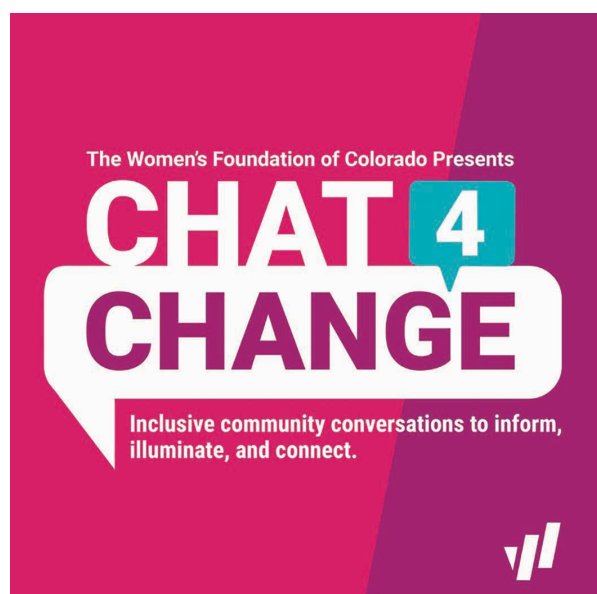
# The Women's Foundation of Colorado

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**FEBRUARY 5, 2020**

The Economic Status of Refugee and  
Immigrant Women in Colorado

Register at [wfco.org](http://wfco.org) today