



Request For Proposals

Community Resilience Initiatives: Policy and Advocacy

General Information

Funding Opportunity Release Date: Jan. 16, 2024
Pre-Application Webinar Date: 10:30-11:30 a.m. MST, Feb. 9, 2024
Online Application Forms Open: Feb. 15, 2024 (online application link will go live)
Deadline to Register for the Grants Portal (required to submit application): Mar. 1, 2024
Application Due Date: 4:59 p.m. MST, March 15, 2024
Anticipated Award Notification Begins: May 31, 2024
Anticipated Grant Start Date: July 1, 2024
Grant Period: July 1, 2024 – Dec. 31, 2026
Length of Funding: 30 months
Total Initiative Funding: \$2,010,000
Individual Award Floor (for 30 months): \$550,000
Individual Award Ceiling (for 30 months): \$670,000
Number of Awards: up to 3

Background: Community Resilience Initiatives

The Community Resilience Initiatives (or CRI) is the collective name for the funding initiatives that The Colorado Trust is implementing to support the achievement of the [2024-26 strategic plan](#). Under the umbrella of CRI, there will be distinct funding initiatives that will support one or more objectives under the goals of the strategic plan. Most of the funding initiatives under CRI will be multiyear and allow grantees time to plan and implement projects to combat prevalent concerns in the food, housing, and mental and behavioral health realms, and build up systems or programs that can sustain and prevent further issues. CRI will support the implementation of myriad elements ranging from fostering social cohesion, building strong social networks, engaging in deliberate, respectful and effective communication, enhancing physical infrastructure, and providing access to resources and support systems that contribute to health and well-being.

For more information on all of the current Community Resilience Initiatives, please visit www.coloradotrust.org/CRI, and send any specific inquiries to CRI@coloradotrust.org.

CRI: Policy and Advocacy

Policy and advocacy play essential roles in advancing health equity in Colorado. Nonprofits that focus on these aspects can effectively influence decisions, mobilize resources, and drive systematic long-lasting change. A concerted effort to support nonprofit organizations in their policy and advocacy work can significantly improve the lives of Coloradans impacted by inequities in The Colorado Trust's focus areas of food, housing, and mental and behavioral health. Policy and advocacy organizations play a crucial role in bridging the gap between citizens, government agencies and elected officials by facilitating effective communication and collaboration, ensuring that the voices of people living in Colorado are heard by decision-makers who have the power to impact their lives. In our ever-changing world, where new challenges arise regularly, this connection becomes even more vital.

The current policy infrastructure in Colorado faces significant challenges due to the lack of organizations that possess the capacity to lead initiatives and coordinate with the state legislature effectively for long periods of time. This results in a loss of crucial skills and knowledge, impeding long-term progress. Nonprofit organizations focused primarily on service provision struggle to navigate the complexities of legislative processes, further exacerbating this issue. It is crucial to address these inadequacies and foster strong leaders and organizations with relevant expertise to drive positive change within the state's legislative landscape.

The Colorado Trust is seeking to fund up to three policy and advocacy grantees that would focus attention on the public policy, public affairs and regulatory landscape for each of the three focus areas (food, housing, and mental and behavioral health). The purpose of this initiative is to fund entities to provide policy-related services, as well as policy-related support to other CRI grantees.

The Colorado Trust is hoping to achieve, through this funding and through the work of its grantees, the following longer-term outcomes (as mentioned in its 2024-26 strategic plan):

- How did grantees work to advance policy and regulatory actions related to their goal areas?
- What did it take for the policy and advocacy grantees to successfully work with program and service delivery grantees to meet their policy needs?

Grant Period

The anticipated funding period is 30 months, from July 1, 2024, through Dec. 31, 2026. This grant period will encompass three grant/budget years:

- July 1, 2024 – Dec. 31, 2024: Up to six months of this time will be funded as a planning period, and will allow grantees time to hire and train staff, build internal capacity, plan, and ramp up for program implementation.
- Jan. 1, 2025 – Dec. 31, 2025: This 12-month span will be for full program implementation.
- Jan. 1, 2026 – Dec. 31, 2026: This 12-month span will be funded to support program implementation, as well as any wind-down and final sustainability activities.

Grant Awards

The total available funding for this initiative is approximately \$2,010,000 over the 30 months to support up to three grantees. The minimum total individual award (grant floor) for the entire grant period is \$550,000 and the maximum (grant ceiling) is \$670,000. Grant awards will be made for no more than \$170,000 (no less than \$150,000) for the first six-month planning period and no more than \$250,000 (no less than \$200,000) for each of the two, subsequent 12-month implementation periods. Approximately three individual awards will be given.

Eligible Entities

Applicants must be Colorado-based and Colorado-serving community or grassroots entities. This includes nonprofits/charitable entities, health care organizations, educational institutions, government agencies, American Indian tribes and their designated operating divisions, and Native American-serving organizations or organizations providing services on a reservation or tribal land with a letter of support from the applicable tribe. An entity that is fiscally sponsored by an eligible organization is also eligible to apply.

The Colorado Trust will not permit grants to organizations that engage in “hateful activities,” which is defined to mean activities that incite or engage in violence, intimidation, harassment, threats or defamation targeting an individual or group based upon their actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin (including an American Indian or Alaska Native tribe), ethnicity, immigration status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, political affiliation, age, physical or mental ability, marital or familial status, parental status or military service.

Eligible entities are permitted to apply for more than one funding opportunity under CRI; however, entities can only submit one application per funding opportunity. Entities can serve as partners, contractors, consultants or collaborating entities on multiple applications on which they are not the primary applicant. Applicants under the policy and advocacy funding initiative can apply and could be funded for more than one of the three focus areas.

Required Project Elements

- Engagement with community.** The proposed project must explain how the grantees will be engaged throughout the grant period.
- Intended outcome.** The funding opportunity is intended to support the cohort(s) of grantees funded under the Community Resilience Initiatives. The project must identify the plan to build a cohesive policy and public affairs program over the 30 months of funding and the impact it hopes to make for the state and/or issue. Applicants should refer specifically to one or more of the stated initiative evaluation questions when explaining their desired impact.

Required Application Components

- Project application narrative.** The Colorado Trust is using an application with pre-determined questions to comprise the project narrative of this application. Applicants must respond to all of the questions in the application.

- B. Work plan.** Applicants must submit a work plan ([using the provided template](#)) laying out proposed objectives, activities, deliverables and timeframes. Applicants need to complete the work plan table for the first 18 months of the project, and then provide a narrative overview of what the final 12 months of the project will look like. Of the first 18 months, up to six of the initial months can be used as a planning period, and then the remainder of time through Dec. 31, 2025 (at least 12 months) is to be used for program implementation. Organizations that do not require a full six months of planning do not need to commit to the entire six months of planning and can begin program implementation earlier.

In the project narrative and work plan, applicants should be prepared to discuss their history and experience undertaking state and local policy work in the respective focus area; their plan to track and monitor relevant state and local bills and regulations; their ability to analyze and share such analyses on the potential impact of pending bills and regulations; their plan to provide local policy support to grantees funded to work on food, housing, or mental and behavioral health; and their ability to work closely with assigned Colorado Trust staff to undertake joint policy efforts, as well as efforts to support CRI grantee cohorts. Applicants should feel free to share what they think are the greatest policy opportunities in the space of food, housing, or mental and behavioral health, and what may be wins that can be achieved within the span of three years, either at the state or local levels.

- C. Budget.** Applicants should review The Colorado Trust's [grantee guidelines](#) for a list of allowable expenses and their respective thresholds, and additional information on budgetary expenditures and activities. The total award amount will depend on what is proposed by the applicant and approved by The Colorado Trust. Applicants need to share in the application the total dollar amount (for 30 months) for which they are applying; however, even though the funding opportunity is for 30 months of funding, applicants only need to submit a detailed budget with narrative explanations (template provided) for the first 18 months as part of the initial application. Applicants can apply for any amount between the floor of \$550,000 and the ceiling of \$670,000 for the 30 months. Up to six of the initial months can be used as a planning period and then the remainder of time through Dec. 31, 2025 (at least 12 months), is to be used for program implementation. Organizations that do not require a full six months of planning do not need to commit to the entire six months of planning and can begin program implementation earlier. Doing so will not impact the budgetary allocations.

Policy and advocacy grantees will be permitted to use up to 40% of the total requested annual grant amount as general operating support, with at least 60% annually supporting programmatic activities. The budget should be written and the template completed for the programmatic element and dollar amount (at least 60% of the total annual requested amount). Once that is completed, the general operating support portion (no more than 40% of the total requested amount) should simply be added as a single line item to the programmatic total. Indirect costs will only be applied to the programmatic total and not the general operating support portion. The general operating support portion should be captured in the budget as a single line item, whereas the programmatic portion needs to be broken out and described and justified through the narrative elements. Applicants should use the provided [policy and advocacy budget template](#) and refer to the [budget instructions](#) for additional guidance on how to complete the narrative elements.

a. Budgetary allocations by grant year

1. July 1, 2024 – Dec. 31, 2024: Floor: \$150,000; Ceiling: \$170,000
2. Jan. 1, 2025 – Dec. 31, 2025: Floor: \$200,000; Ceiling: \$250,000
3. Jan. 1, 2026 – Dec. 31, 2026: Floor: \$200,000; Ceiling: \$250,000 (grant year 3 budgets will be submitted by grantees as part of a continuation application and is not part of this initial application package).

b. Required budgetary elements

1. The budget should include travel expenses for one or two staff or consultants (at least one paid staff person) to attend a two-day grantee meeting in the Denver metro area during the first half of 2025.

D. Required Fiscal Documentation

- a. Fiscal information.** For all applicants and fiscal sponsors, financial documentation (per the guidelines below) must be uploaded in the organization profile section of the grants portal (once invited). This information only needs to be submitted once per organization.

A. Annual Operating Budget Below \$250,000

- Current year operating budget, with differentiation between program vs. fundraising expenses.

B. Annual Operating Budget \$250,000-\$999,999

- Current year operating budget, with differentiation between program vs. fundraising expenses
- List of net assets and liabilities (statement of financial position/balance sheet)
- List of revenue and expenses with/without donor restrictions (statement of activities/income statement).

C. Annual Operating Budget \$1,000,000+

- Current year operating budget, with differentiation between program vs. fundraising expenses
- Audited financial statements with audit management letter for the most recent audit
 - Organizations who must complete a single audit based on federal government regulations can confirm they have uploaded their most recent audit to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse website for The Colorado Trust to review.

- b. Fiscal sponsor or agents.** The Colorado Trust allows applicants (and, ultimately, grantees) to work with a fiscal sponsor or agent to apply and receive funding for the initiatives under CRI. An agreement between the fiscally sponsored organization and the fiscal sponsor must be signed (by both entities) and included with the application. A template for a fiscal sponsor agreement is available [here](#), and the applicant should refer to The Colorado Trust's [grantee guidelines](#) for more information on fiscal sponsorship. The sponsored organization must upload a completed fiscal sponsor agreement in its organizational profile in the grant portal.

E. Additional Documentation

- a. **Letters of support and commitments.** Applicants can include letters of commitment from partners, consultants or contractors, and letters of support from other entities. These are optional and not required. The only letter of support required is if an applicant organization is providing services on an American Indian reservation or tribal land, and a letter is required notating and approving this from the applicable tribe. Non-required letters of support will not be included in the review and scoring process for applications.

Application Checklist

The following will comprise a completed application package:

- Organizational Profile
 - a. Organizational contact information
 - b. Fiscal documentation (depending on the size of the annual operating budget there may be one to three required pieces of fiscal documentation)
- Project Application
 - a. Project narrative (the responses to the set questions)
 - b. Work plan (using the [template](#) provided)
- Budget (using the [policy budget template](#) provided)
- Fiscal sponsor agreement (if using a fiscal sponsor or agent)
- Letter of support (required only if an organization is working on tribal land).

Evaluation

The Colorado Trust prioritizes strategic learning and is asking grantees to think about how they can collect their own project-specific data and use it to strengthen their project. Applicants will be asked to provide some insight into this in the narrative portion of the application. Policy and advocacy grantees will be required to collect data on the nature of the services they are providing or conducting. Additionally, all Community Resilience Initiatives grantees will be asked to participate in Colorado Trust grant monitoring activities (such as site visits, grant reports, financial reports and regularly scheduled check-in calls), and initiative-wide evaluation activities (such as interviews or surveys). These required elements will be discussed in more detail with grantees within the first six months of funding.

In alignment with the [grantee guidelines](#), and the desire of The Trust to evaluate its funding, grantees may be asked to share their internal programmatic data (including data collected on the results of policy support activities with other grantees) with The Trust as part of its overall evaluation of the Community Resilience Initiatives.

Applicants can allocate up to 10% of the total award for evaluation-related costs (staff, consultants, meeting expenses, etc.).

Grantee Selection and Awards

All CRI applications will be scored on a 100-point scale using an established rubric provided to the reviewers with the total maximum points per each required application component detailed below.

Application Component	Possible Points
Project application narrative	50
Work plan	40
Budget	10

The Colorado Trust will extend five points to any applicant who meets at least one of the following criteria. These criteria will be assessed based on the questions already provided in the application:

- experience working with American Indian tribe law or policy
- leadership by a person of color (either by executive leadership or board majority)

Successful applicants will be notified of their award through the receipt of a notice of award beginning May 31, 2024. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified beginning June 30, 2024.

Payments

Grantees will be required to register with The Colorado Trust's online payment portal to receive payment. Grantees will have their approved funding amount paid out in three payments based on the grant years.

- July 1, 2024 – Dec. 31, 2024: Payment made on or around July 2024.
- Jan. 1, 2025 – Dec. 31, 2025: Payment made on or around January 2025.
- Jan. 1, 2026 – Dec. 31, 2026: Grantees will file a continuation application for the final 12 months of the project. Payment will be made on or around January 2026.

Additional Relevant Information

Incomplete applications will not be considered, reviewed or scored.

All applicants are expected to adhere to The Colorado Trust's [grantee guidelines](#), both in preparing applications and implementing funded activities should an award be made.

There are no set word or character limits for the application., although The Colorado Trust is asking applicants to only include narrative elements that pertain to the application questions posed, and refrain from including extraneous or “nice-to-know” information (versus “need-to-know” information).

Application documents, forms and attachments should be uploaded into the system in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) or Microsoft Excel (.xls) format.

The Colorado Trust, in part of its commitment to capacity building, will be providing constructive feedback to all applicants based upon its internal review of the application, regardless of final award status. Colorado Trust staff will seek to provide this during late summer and early fall of 2024.

The Colorado Trust is utilizing an online application form for this initiative. Applicants are encouraged to use the provided application documents on the [CRI landing page](#) to construct and organize their applications. Applicants will then need to cut and paste the application elements into an online form. Applicants should not use photos, large or complex graphics, or uncommon fonts, tables or spacing in the application. The Colorado Trust apologizes in advance for the duplication of work or inconvenience that this may cause for applicants.

To remain unbiased in its review of applications and to avoid providing an unfair advantage to any single entity, Colorado Trust staff will not be engaging in conversations regarding the funding initiatives outside of officially sanctioned pre-application activities (such as the webinars). Colorado Trust staff will create and maintain, on www.coloradotrust.org/CRI, a [frequently asked questions \(FAQ\) document](#) that will be used to house clarifying information on the initiative, RFP and the application process. Applicants are encouraged to attend the pre-application webinar and to check the FAQ document frequently to access the most up-to-date information. Applicants can

also email CRI@coloradotrust.org with their questions regarding the funding opportunity. A response will be sent, and then the emailed questions and responses will be added to the FAQ document.

The period for which The Colorado Trust has approved for support (grant period) is for the full 30 months, and this will be shown in the notice of award provided to grant recipients. The notice of award will be made with the assumption that funding will be available and the intention to fund the full 30 months. However, funding and payment for subsequent periods after the initial grant period is based upon the availability of funds.

Expectations of The Colorado Trust

Grantees can expect the following from The Colorado Trust:

- Serve as a thought partner with each grantee to help ensure grantee success
- Actively engage in all monitoring and evaluation activities to improve systems and processes to support grantee success and internal grantmaking
- Develop relationships with each grantee to support receiving feedback directly from grantee partners
- Bring resources to the relationship, when appropriate, beyond just funding
- Create and support learning opportunities to assist in the continued evolution and improvement of our collective work.

Expectations of Grantees

The Colorado Trust has the following expectations from its grantees:

- Work diligently to undertake funded activities
- Communicate honestly, responsively and regularly with The Colorado Trust about progress and challenges
- Complete required monitoring and evaluation activities by their designated due dates
- Adhere to the required elements mentioned in the RFP, the notice of award and The Colorado Trust's [grantee guidelines](#)
- Attend and actively participate in grantee convenings and meetings
- Participate in joint capacity-building efforts and cohort activities.