



THE
COLORADO
TRUST

A Health Equity Foundation

April
2024

2023 Year In Review

Writing Our Next Chapter

Sunset over the Rocky Mountains, Sedalia, Colo.

DEAR COLLEAGUES,

On behalf of the staff and board of trustees of The Colorado Trust, we are pleased to share this overview of our work and accomplishments from 2023.

We spent more than half of the year engaged in a robust strategic planning project to envision the future of The Colorado Trust's funding and other efforts. The resulting [2024-26 strategic plan](#) charts a new path forward for the foundation and its grantmaking, with multiple new funding initiatives resulting from the plan being unveiled in the first part of 2024. We are proud of the hard work of our colleagues on this important and necessary undertaking, and we hope this plan provides opportunities for partnership and promise with entities across Colorado. You can learn more about the strategic plan process and results on the next page.

Despite the considerable time and energy dedicated to strategic planning, we continued to provide health equity-focused funding across the state, issuing more than 500 grants and event sponsorships in the calendar year. These included the culminating grants in the Community Partnerships for Health Equity initiative, increasing our support of the Denver Basic Income Project, one-time grants to help bolster the nonprofit ecosystem statewide, celebrating the ongoing accomplishments of the Building and Bridging Power grantees, and much more. You can find more details on the following pages or our [English](#) and [Spanish](#) websites.

We are also pleased to share that Alamosa Mayor Ty Coleman and Don Nease, MD were appointed to our board of trustees, with their terms beginning in January 2024. Learn more about them on the next page.

Thank you for your continued interest in our work to advance the health and well-being of the people of Colorado. We look forward to continued collaboration with you.



Rev. Louise Westfall
Chair, Board of Trustees



Donald J. Mares, Esq.
President & Chief Executive Officer

MEET OUR NEW TRUSTEES

A nine-member board of trustees governs The Colorado Trust. Trustees are selected based on numerous factors, including professional and lived experiences, geographic location, commitment to the foundation's health equity vision, and more. Based on their unique skills and qualifications, the following trustees were elected to the board in 2023, with their terms beginning in January 2024:



Ty Coleman has served as mayor of Alamosa, Colo. since 2017. He is also director of corporate relations, mutual self-help housing development, and lending solutions at Community Resources and Housing Development Corporation. A licensed mortgage broker, he currently serves on the boards of Early Childhood Council San Luis Valley, First Southwest Community Fund (a Colorado Trust grantee), Kiwanis Club of Alamosa and Alamosa Parks & Recreation.



Donald Nease, MD is a professor of family medicine at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. Additionally, he is the Green-Edelman Chair for Practice-Based Research, and director of community engagement and health equity for the Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute.

SETTING A NEW DIRECTION

Our board, staff and several external partners spent over eight months of 2023 working on setting a new direction for The Colorado Trust and its grantmaking. The resulting [2024-26 strategic plan](#) is based on substantial data gathering and analysis, including online surveys, personal conversations, statistical research, literature reviews and community meetings across the state. We are grateful to the community members, nonprofit leaders, peer foundation staff, elected officials and others who provided valuable input along the way.

While we hope you take a moment to review the plan in full, here are some of its salient points:

- Our [mission and vision](#) remain the same.
- We reaffirmed our [commitment to health equity](#) and the people we aim to serve via our grantmaking.
- We sharpened our focus to primarily fund entities and efforts addressing **food, housing, or mental and behavioral health**—three of the most pressing issues in our state.

Learn more about the plan on our [website](#), and click the image on the right to watch a video overview from its launch.



DON MARES

President & CEO, The Colorado Trust

REV. LOUISE WESTFALL

2023 Board Chair, The Colorado Trust

OUR GRANTMAKING

Culminating the COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS INITIATIVE

After deciding to sunset the [Community Partnerships for Health Equity](#) initiative in 2022, the board of trustees committed more than \$6 million to culminate the incredible work by community members over the initiative's 7-year span. Colorado Trust staff worked with community members to provide one-time funding to grantee organizations working to reduce health inequities in their communities.

This final phase of the Community Partnerships initiative resulted in 23 grants across Colorado; [click here to learn more](#) about each grantee and the funded projects. You can also click the images to the right to watch videos about three grantees in Avondale, Clifton and Fort Morgan.



KASSI ROBINSON

COMMUNITY PROGRAM AND COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST, AVONDALE RESIDENT TEAM

Avondale, Colo.



ANDRES SANCHEZ

COMMUNITY ORGANIZER/YOUTH COORDINATOR, CLIFTON COMMUNITY LEADERS

Clifton, Colo.



LOREN BOYETT

HOUSING ORGANIZER, FT. MORGAN CULTURES UNITED FOR PROGRESS

Fort Morgan, Colo.



**COMMUNITY
GRANTEE**

Montbello Organizing Committee:
The FreshLo Hub

IMPROVING FOOD AND HOUSING ACCESS IN NORTH DENVER

A few years ago, we were pleased to be able to support the planning for a new commercial hub in the north Denver neighborhood of Montbello. The FreshLo project promises to combine affordable housing, a grocery store, mental health services, community space and more at a single location in a historically underserved part of the city. After years of planning work, the Montbello Organizing Committee and other project sponsors held a groundbreaking ceremony in March, and we were pleased to be able to

have staff attend it. Construction is now underway.

SUPPORTING COLORADO'S NONPROFIT ECOSYSTEM

While working on the new strategic plan, we made a series of one-time grants across the state as part of what we called the "Landscape Project"—a tiered initiative to bolster the overall nonprofit ecosystem in Colorado. This included \$150,000 grants each to seven regional community foundations; 10 grants totaling \$440,000 to organizations focused on serving the state's African American communities; and \$1.85 million to organizations working on a specific social issue or serving a specific marginalized population. In 2024, this effort will continue with support for entities serving American Indian and Alaska Native communities, the state's philanthropic sector and more.

RECORD SUPPORT FOR RURAL PHILANTHROPY DAYS

We are proud to have funded and participated in [Rural Philanthropy](#)

[Days](#) for 15 years. For 2023, we continued our backing of the Community Resource Center to oversee this program and increased our grantmaking to new levels by funding eight nonprofits via the virtual roundtable events and another 17 nonprofits as part of in-person events held in Durango and La Junta. Grants ranged from \$2,500 to \$5,000 per recipient; [click here to learn more](#) about each.

BUILDING AND BRIDGING POWER INITIATIVE CONTINUES

At the end of the fourth year of the [Building and Bridging Power](#) initiative, our external evaluation partners at Community Science created a detailed summary of the myriad accomplishments by grantees so far. Among the dozens of examples cited in their evaluation, it was wonderful to see how many are directly relevant to our new focus areas of food, housing, and mental and behavioral health. For example, one or more Building and Bridging Power grantees have:

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

- Over 500 grants and event sponsorships
- More than \$19.5 million in charitable contributions
- Average grant amount: \$37,550



East Colfax Community Collective staff

BBP GRANTEE PROFILE

[Meet the Nonprofit Relentlessly Fighting Displacement on East Colfax](#)

- Established a legal clinic to address neighborhood housing issues
- Supported an affordable housing ballot initiative
- Supported weekly alcohol- and drug-free spaces in the community
- Secured city council support for local affordable housing projects
- Secured resident-led purchases of mobile home parks
- Partnered with community groups to deliver healthy meals and groceries to older adults
- Established Gay-Straight Alliances in a rural school district
- Secured funding and land for a community farm in an underserved neighborhood.

and investigative reporting spurred governmental actions that included a response from lawmakers to media coverage of runaway children from residential care.

Most of the Building and Bridging Power initiative will conclude at the end of 2024, and we look forward to sharing many more success stories and results from its ongoing evaluation in the months ahead.

Among the initiative’s media and narrative component, hundreds of equity-related stories were published by grantees statewide over the year. For example, The Colorado Sun published dozens of articles on issues like the impacts of solitary confinement on incarcerated people, deficiencies in Denver’s rental inspection law, and the use of social media among newly arrived immigrants. These articles and others resulted in numerous Colorado Press Association awards,

DENVER BASIC INCOME PROJECT SHOWS IMPRESSIVE EARLY RESULTS

We made our second grant—this time for \$1 million—to the Denver Basic Income Project in 2023. The decision to extend our commitment to this effort—which is providing unconditional cash transfers to unhoused people in Denver—was only reinforced by the initial evaluation findings for this universal income pilot. University of Denver researchers [found](#) increased housing stability, more employment and fewer emergency room visits among program participants after only six months.

As part of our continued support, we also pledged to match the first \$300,000 in donations as part of a spring 2023 fundraising campaign by the Denver Basic Income Project. And Morris Price (pictured), our vice president of grants & impact, spoke at the Basic Income National Day of Action event in September at the state capitol.



Morris W. Price, Jr.

IN OTHER NEWS...

- In what may be a first for the foundation, Colorado Trust staff met with the tribal councils of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and Southern Ute Indian Tribe.
- Our staff members spoke at Colorado Nonprofit Association Connecting Colorado events in Colorado Springs, Denver, Grand Junction, Greeley, Pueblo and Sterling.
- We sponsored a four-part educational series featuring Celesté Martinez speaking on the history of social movements led by Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/x and other people of color. ([Check our website](#) for event recordings, available in early 2024.)
- We hired nine new staff members, ending the year with 26 employees. ([Visit this page](#) to learn more about our team!)
- The board approved two additional years of funding for the [Colorado Equity Compass](#), beginning in 2024.



Celesté Martinez

EDUCATION SERIES

[The History of BIPOC Social Movements in Colorado: San Luis Land Rights](#)

EVALUATING OUR IMPACT

2023 was a year of transition for us in the areas of research, evaluation and strategic learning. At the end of the year, under the guidance of our former longtime evaluation leader Nancy Csuti, we announced that we would be hiring a new director of research & evaluation as part of a forthcoming new team within the Grants & Impact Department. We look forward to sharing more news on our evaluation efforts in the months ahead. This reorganization did not prevent us from publishing evaluation fundings, frameworks and more during the year:

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR HEALTH EQUITY (2014-22)

- **Macro-evaluation Final Report:** Offers rich insights into the preparation and capacities needed to implement a statewide community-driven effort to advance health equity, as well

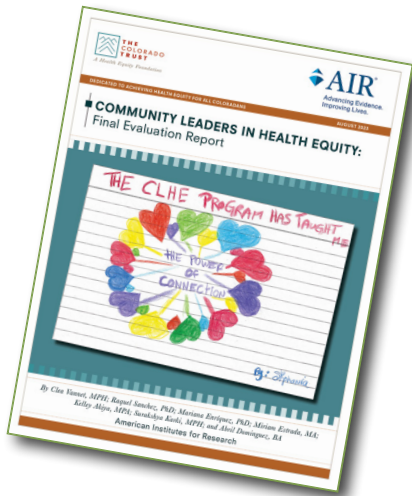
as recommendations for future initiatives with the same intent.

- **Accomplishments of Participating Communities, 2014-22:** Highlights efforts across the state by teams of community members who participated in the initiative and forged partnerships, built relationships, and contributed to meaningful activities and change in their communities.
- **Context Matters:** Examines when and how context matters and draws on data collected for the macro-evaluation of the initiative.



COMMUNITY LEADERS IN HEALTH EQUITY (2018-22)

- **Final Evaluation Report:** Summarizes and analyzes data collected from activity observations, feedback surveys, social network surveys, participant reflections and focus groups.



BUILDING AND BRIDGING POWER (2019-24)

- **Evaluation Framework – Grassroots and Grasstops Funding:** Provides an overview of the evaluation framework for the grassroots and grasstops components of the initiative.
- **Evaluation Framework – Media Funding:** Provides an overview of the evaluation framework for the media and narrative component of the initiative.



SHARING AND EDUCATING

For many years, our [Collective Colorado](#) story platform has sought to illuminate, instruct and inform on health equity issues and challenges faced by people living in our state. We published 32 original stories at Collective Colorado in 2023, accompanied by nearly 100 original photographs. All were contributed by some of the most respected journalists working in our state today. We also published several stories on our main website about our grantees and their work, including looks at an [affordable housing effort in southwest Colorado](#) and a program aiming to increase mental health awareness and services [among farmers and ranchers](#).



GRANTEE STORY

[The Golden Girls of the Western Slope](#)

We have six core [organizational values](#), among which include **integrity, stewardship and trust**. You deserve to know where our funding is going and how we care for the resources entrusted to us. These are among the reasons why we are proud to provide an interactive online [grants database](#). There, you can learn more about our recent grants and search and sort listings by grantee name, funding initiative, grant amount and more. We also publish our tax returns, audit reports and more as part of the [financial information](#) section on our website.

Learn more about us and our work at www.coloradotrust.org.

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