



**THE
COLORADO
TRUST**

A Health Equity Foundation

2021 Annual Review

Sustaining Support Through Difficult Times

MARCH 2022



Activist Tziavii Stevens of Pueblo fights for accurate Indigenous representation and breaking of stereotypes. [Click here](#) to read our story about Stevens from 2021.

Message from Leadership

We believe that all Coloradans benefit when people historically excluded from decision-making have the power and opportunity to transform their communities. This ethos is exemplified in a [recent video](#) showing real-life examples of this approach to health equity. These stories—from Fort Morgan, to the San Luis Valley, to the Hillside neighborhood of Colorado Springs—illustrate that when people experiencing hardships have the ability to make positive changes in their communities, they can find solutions that benefit everyone. This lesson remained at the core of The Colorado Trust's grantmaking and other activities in 2021.

Coloradans endured a second year of the COVID-19 pandemic that was marked by loss, tumult and change—yet despite it all, communities endured and carried on. Much of The Colorado Trust's focus was again on providing support to people disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. We relied on advice and input from community members statewide to find out where and how our funding could have the most impact for those with the greatest need. From April 2020 to December 2021, we provided nearly \$9 million in pandemic response funding to more than 120 organizations and entities. Knowing that we enter 2022 still in the midst of the pandemic, we will continue to look for opportunities to help marginalized communities endure and recover from this prolonged crisis.

At The Colorado Trust, 2021 was in many ways a year of transition. We said goodbye to Dr. Ned Calonge, who departed the foundation at the end of the year after more than a decade of leadership. We are grateful to Dr. Calonge for his efforts to shift our focus to health equity and community-driven grantmaking. We also bid farewell to other staff members and welcomed new ones, including leaders and managers for some of our core funding strategies.

Grantmaking Activities

We complemented an impressive group of grassroots and grassroots policy-advocacy grantees in the [Building and](#)

[Bridging Power](#) strategy by selecting organizations to be funded under the strategy's media and narrative component. This strategy component was prompted in part by the findings of a [media landscape study](#) commissioned by The Colorado Trust and published in March 2021. Media outlets were funded under several categories, including investigative/accountability journalism, community news and others. We [partnered with the Colorado Media Project](#) as a manager and thought partner for many of these grants, including to provide support for newsrooms wishing to undertake internal diversity, equity and inclusion work.

2021 also brought some impressive results from our preliminary evaluation of the Building and Bridging Power strategy. Grassroots grantees reported progress creating greater power at the local level, such as speaking out at city council and school board meetings, or helping to establish a legal defense fund for immigrants. Grassroots grantees shared examples of engaging grassroots organizations and community members more actively in advocacy efforts, leading to state-level policy and legislative changes like expanding earned-income and child tax credits. The grantees also reported substantial progress in terms of capacity building and networking between organizations, with much more to come on these fronts. We look forward to seeing how Building and Bridging Power's grassroots, grassroots and media/narrative grantees all work towards shedding light on systemic inequities in our state, and hopefully ultimately lead to meaningful policy change.

In the [Community Partnerships](#) strategy, we are currently partnering with and supporting resident groups ranging from 3-26 members in nearly 20 communities across Colorado. We believe that when community members are able to build collective power, they can begin to address injustices that impact the most marginalized people. In 2021, the strategy continued a shift begun in 2020 towards centering community organizing. Fifteen community actions were completed under this new approach in 2021, including:

- Raising awareness of Indigenous culture and issues in southwest Colorado through public events and planning for the creation of an Indigenous-led podcast;



San Luis Valley in southern Colorado.



Montbello (Denver) community members meeting with Naropa University staff.



Hillside neighborhood in Colorado Springs.



Community Leaders in Health Equity graduation ceremony.

■ Revitalizing community spaces through:

- Community cleanups in Dog Patch (also known as Eastside, a neighborhood of Pueblo), and the Hillside neighborhood of Colorado Springs;
- Building a communication kiosk in Hillside and a “blessings box” in Dog Patch to address food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic;

■ Filling gaps in services, including a language cooperative providing translation and interpretation in the San Luis Valley, and a cleat exchange program for underserved youth in Fountain to participate in sports;

■ Hosting or supporting events that brought community together to connect and promote issues such as:

- Improving recreational opportunities and mental health for youth in Craig;
- Promoting literacy and hosting a youth puppet theater camp in the Denver neighborhood of Montbello;
- Co-hosting a “stop the violence” barbecue and celebrating the unveiling of the revitalized Leon Young Pavilion in Hillside; and
- Hosting a job fair in Dog Patch that featured free haircuts, COVID-19 vaccinations and onsite interviews with language interpretation.

Across all Community Partnerships communities, activities and actions helped to build awareness of the social determinants of health and systemic racism, and highlight the experiences of residents who have been historically excluded. The activities also addressed service gaps to help fill community needs by providing a direct service, advocating for a service, supporting expansion of services by partners, or using networks to share information about existing services. Resident team members also connected with elected officials and established new relationships, attended meetings, ran for or were appointed to local offices, or became a go-to resource for decision-makers.

The pandemic prevented us from hosting any in-person [Health Equity Learning Series](#) events in 2021, but the silver lining was the opportunity to instead host online discussions with incredible guests like Professor Ibram X. Kendi, Soledad O’Brien and Isabel Wilkerson. We hope to resume in-person events again in 2022, and when we do, details will be posted to the [events section](#) of our website and shared via email and social media.

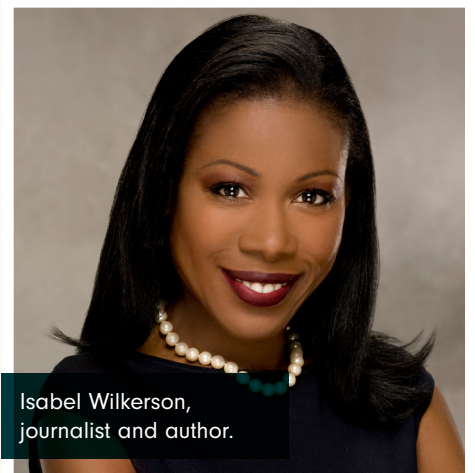
[Community Leaders in Health Equity](#) expanded with a second cohort of participants, as well as a segment of the first cohort returning for ongoing leadership training and to implement projects using their new skills. Completed projects included



Ibram X. Kendi, historian and author.



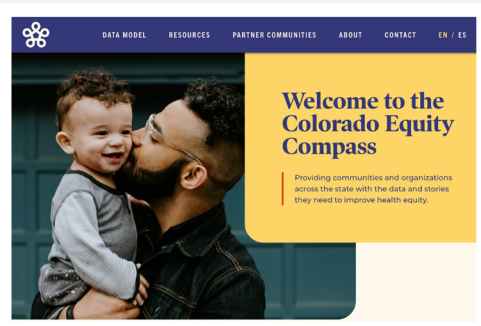
Soledad O'Brien, producer and anchor.



Isabel Wilkerson, journalist and author.

such things as increasing language access for Spanish-speaking parents in several communities; a new playground for children with disabilities; a voter registration campaign; and one participant running for city council. This program, designed and implemented by Transformative Alliances, trains Colorado residents to become health equity leaders in their communities.

The Colorado Trust continues to support the [Colorado Equity Compass](#), a data and storytelling platform that has enabled more people to learn about variables impacting health and well-being in their own communities. Notably, in 2021 the platform [announced](#) it would award 20 grants to organizations and community groups, in order to support the creation and sharing of stories related to the social determinants of health. We look forward to seeing the resulting work this year.



Other News

Last year also included the launch of a new [Colorado Trust website](#), with a refreshed look and feel, as well as new functionalities that make it easier and faster to find information on funding opportunities, our [core funding strategies](#) and more. We are proud to continue to offer all of our website content in [Spanish](#), as one of the only fully bilingual philanthropic foundation websites nationwide.



PHOTO CREDITS: Cover: Joe Mahoney. **Page 2:** Luna Anna Archey. **Page 3 (top l. to r.):** Eli Imadali; Parker Seibold; Joe Mahoney. **Page 3 (bottom l. to r.):** Stephen Voss; handout; Joe Henson. **Page 4:** Headshots by Ellen Jaskol.

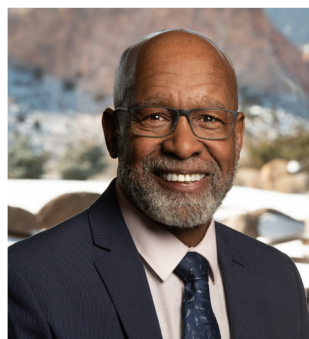
We also launched a brand-new companion website at the end of 2021. For many years, The Colorado Trust has served as a resource for reliable, nonpartisan information about issues that impact the health and well-being of people living in our state. We contract with professional journalists and photographers to tell stories about these issues; the resulting work now has a new home called [Collective Colorado](#).



Hundreds of stories are categorized into 14 topic areas on this website. This content—also [available in Spanish](#)—continues to be available for media outlets and other websites to republish for free.

As part of our ongoing commitment to organizational transparency, we publish comprehensive [financial information](#) online, including audited financial statements and federal tax returns. Additionally, we maintain robust, interactive databases for our [grantees](#) and [reports and publications](#), for those interested in where our funding goes and analyses of its impact.

We thank you for your continued interest in our work to advance the health and well-being of the people of Colorado.



Warren T. Johnson
Warren T. Johnson, MD
2021 Board Chair



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