



# MEETING THE MOMENT

A 2020 Report to  
the Community



The Denver Foundation



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**MEETING THE MOMENT:**

A 2020 Report to the Community was published by The Denver Foundation, October 2020. The complete report is available online: denverfoundation.org/2020report. To request a printed copy, please email lbond@denverfoundation.org.

**ON THE COVER**

JayLynn and Marquies Whisenton of Feeding the Multitudes, a partner of the Center for Community Wealth Building, photographed at Sun Valley Kitchen, February 2019. Photo by Flor Blake. The Center for Community Wealth Building was one of 65 organizations to receive COVID-19 relief funding through The Denver Foundation's Critical Needs Fund since March.



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# LEADING & LEARNING

Reflections on resiliency and a moment that has changed us all.

I was only six months into my tenure as the leader of The Denver Foundation when the pandemic became startlingly real. On that Friday before the shutdown, we pulled our entire staff together, not knowing that it would be the last time we assembled in the same room together for months. And while we all knew the road ahead would be difficult, we couldn't imagine the ways The Denver Foundation and the community we serve would be challenged in the days and weeks to come.

Though it's certainly not the way I expected to get to know my new home, I've been amazed and heartened by how our community has risen to meet an incredible moment. It's given everyone at The Denver Foundation strength and motivation to do our work better than ever before.

As a community foundation, The Denver Foundation is uniquely equipped to bring people together in times of crisis, to pool resources and put them to immediate use. As you'll see in this report, every aspect of our work has accelerated since the pandemic took root in our community. We listened deeply to understand the community's most essential needs. In partnership with our generous donors, we activated our Critical Needs Fund to meet them.

Our fundholders responded with a similar urgency, quickly adapting their grantmaking strategies. In June, donor-advised giving was up nearly 30% over the same period in 2019. Since March, fundholders — including affinity groups, field of interest funds, and giving circles — have dispatched more than \$41 million to hundreds of nonprofit organizations helping people in Colorado and across the country stay safe and healthy. Many of these nonprofits are fighting for their own viability, too, as the public health crisis continues.

As the pandemic has made very clear, philanthropy plays a huge role in addressing a community's struggles in times of

crisis. Philanthropy also has a responsibility to bring people together to learn from the moment — and to lead us into a better future.

That's why The Denver Foundation has regularly convened our donors and partners to share resources and knowledge on issues that the pandemic has brought to the forefront, from systemic racism to the need for a stronger civic fabric. It's why we've collaborated with our foundation peers to create new tools and resources including the COVID-19 Arts & Culture Relief Fund and the Rural Response and Recovery Project. And it's why we've built on our 25-year history of leading on racial equity to deepen our partnership with the Black community, including Black philanthropists, through our new Black Resilience in Colorado (BRIC) Fund.

I recently invited our staff to share how the pandemic has changed their work. Many spoke to feelings of deep unity and shared purpose. "The nature of a community foundation is such that our reach is far and wide," wrote a member of our Philanthropic Services Group. "COVID-19 provided an opportunity for The Denver Foundation to come together and connect every aspect of our work. We now see the full breadth and strength of our community foundation in a time of crisis."

There should be no doubt that we will face more challenging moments in the months ahead. With your continued partnership and generosity, I know that we'll meet them together.

**Javier Alberto Soto**  
President and CEO



# TIMELINE

The community and The Denver Foundation came together to weather an unforgettable seven months.

## MARCH 5

First cases of COVID-19 reported in Colorado.

## MARCH 10

Gov. Jared Polis declares a state of emergency in Colorado.

## MARCH 16

The Denver Foundation office closes; staff transitions to remote work.

The White House issues federal stay-at-home guidelines.

## MARCH 18

First round of Critical Needs Fund grants awarded to eight organizations in Colorado, totaling \$480,000.

## MARCH 26

Gov. Jared Polis issues a statewide stay-at-home order.

## MARCH 27

Congress passes the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

**APRIL 3**  
\$1.3M raised for Critical Needs Fund.

**APRIL 24**  
Second round of Critical Needs Fund grants awarded to 44 organizations across Colorado, totaling \$700,000.

**APRIL 30**  
Grantmaking from donor-advised fundholders totals \$16.8M.



**MAY 4**  
Bonfils-Stanton Foundation and The Denver Foundation launch the COVID-19 Arts & Culture Relief Fund.

**MAY 25**  
George Floyd killed by police, sparking protests that continue through the summer.





### JUNE 8

Third round of Critical Needs Fund grants awarded to six organizations working to advance racial equity in Metro Denver, totaling \$100,000.

### JUNE 19

The Black Resilience in Colorado (BRIC) Fund launches on Juneteenth.

Enhance Law Enforcement Integrity Act signed into law in Colorado.

### JUNE 30

The Denver Foundation and donors contribute more than \$1M to Help CO Now Fund.

### JULY 2020

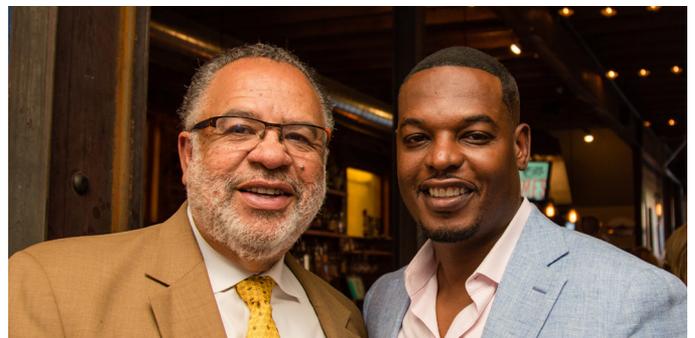
The Denver Foundation launches the COVID-19 Recovery & Resilience Fund.

Six organizations across Colorado receive funding through the Rural Community Response and Recovery Project.

### JULY 31

Grantmaking from donor-advised fundholders tops \$35M.

The Denver Foundation completes a move from its long-standing home in Cherry Creek to Casa Grande, a historic building in the Capitol Hill neighborhood.



### AUGUST 4

\$1.2M awarded to 41 organizations in Metro Denver through the COVID-19 Arts & Culture Relief Fund.

### AUGUST 31

More than \$3M in scholarship grants disbursed since January, supporting more than 630 students, a 19% increase over the same period in 2019.

Grantmaking from donor-advised fundholders exceeds \$41M.

\$2.3M raised for Critical Needs Fund.

More than \$1M pledged for Black Resilience in Colorado (BRIC) Fund.



**PHOTOS** *Opposite page: Sarafina Kidane, Manager of Whittier Cafe, one of six organizations to receive a Critical Needs Fund grant to advance racial justice. This page, left: The La Puente Home food pantry serves people in the San Luis Valley. The organization received a grant through the Rural Communities Response and Recovery Project. Above: Gary M. Jackson and Haroun Cowans attend a Black Giving Day Celebration in 2019.*

# THE CRITICAL NEEDS FUND

## Activating an urgent response for extraordinary times.

No one could have foreseen the ways that dueling pandemics — a dangerous virus and the systemic inequities it exposed — would change and shape our lives.

Fortunately, The Denver Foundation is prepared for extraordinary times, when normal resources just aren't enough. Built by gifts from donors, The Critical Needs Fund addresses urgent community needs through flexible and responsive grantmaking.

In March, when the coronavirus first took root in Colorado, The Denver Foundation immediately activated the Critical Needs Fund, rallying our donors to join us. In less than a month, gifts to the Critical Needs Fund exceeded \$1 million. By the end of September, the total exceeded \$2.3 million.

With the same urgency, our team tapped into networks of trusted nonprofit organizations to understand where communities most wanted and needed support. Early on, we learned that those facing food insecurity, lost revenue, domestic violence, housing insecurity or homelessness, and with limited access to health care were most vulnerable to the health and economic impacts of the pandemic. These groups include a disproportionate number of immigrants and Black/Indigenous/People of Color (BIPOC).

In partnership with leaders on the ground, we dispatched dozens of Critical Needs Fund grants statewide. We prioritized organizations that support vulnerable populations and were unlikely to receive other sources of support such as government funding.

In addition to our rapid response grantmaking through the Critical Needs Fund, we expedited the Community Grants grant cycle to award an additional \$1.1M in COVID relief to 38 organizations.

65

GRANTS FROM THE CRITICAL NEEDS FUND TO COLORADO NONPROFITS

234

GIFTS FROM DONORS TO THE CRITICAL NEEDS FUND

44

GRANTS EXPEDITED THROUGH THE COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM

\$1.5M

TOTAL GRANT DOLLARS DISTRIBUTED

\$2.3M

TOTAL GIFTS

\$1.1M

TOTAL GRANT DOLLARS DISTRIBUTED

*Data reflects activity from March 13, 2020, to September 30, 2020.*



In these difficult and trying times, this grant could not have come at a better time as our organization strives to address the emerging and dire needs of our neighbors.

—DONNA GARNETT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MONTBELLO ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

↑ Colorado Coalition for the Homeless used a Critical Needs Fund grant to provide shelter and health care to unhoused people in Metro Denver. The organization secured 663 hotel rooms where those diagnosed with COVID-19, or awaiting test results, could recover and quarantine. The Coalition also partnered with the City and County of Denver to operate 24-hour shelters at the National Western Complex and Denver Coliseum. Both facilities provided health screenings, serving more than 1,000 people.

← By supplying fresh, nutritious food as well as personal protective equipment, the Five Star Education Foundation helped families in Adams County stay safe. With support from the Critical Needs Fund, the foundation provided home delivery and converted school buildings across the Adams 12 district into community hubs. More than 168,000 meals were distributed between May and June.

# DONOR-ADVISED GIVING

Fundholders gave quickly and generously to help the community navigate the pandemic's difficult early days.

As the first cases of COVID were reported in Colorado, even before federal and local stay-at-home orders signaled the seriousness of the challenge ahead, The Denver Foundation's network of engaged donors mobilized to help.

In the first weeks, Denver Foundation fundholders directed \$8.8 million in donor-advised grants. In the coming months, giving continued to be robust, at times outpacing grantmaking in previous years by 30%. By September 30, fundholders had made 1,784 grants, totaling \$46M.

Many of these grants were made in partnership with The Denver Foundation through gifts to the Critical Needs Fund, the COVID-19 Arts & Culture Relief Fund, the COVID-19 Relief Fund established by Gov. Jared Polis, and Black Resilience in Colorado (BRIC).

**\$2.3M**

**CRITICAL NEEDS FUND**

**\$1.7M**

**COVID-19 ARTS & CULTURE RELIEF FUND**

**\$937,000**

**GOVERNOR'S COVID-19 RELIEF FUND**

*Data reflects activity from March 13, 2020, to September 30, 2020.*

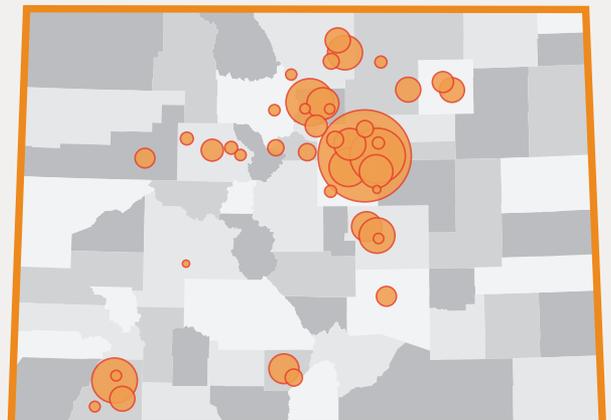


We are so grateful that we are able to support those in the community needing assistance during these difficult times. Thank you for facilitating our giving.

—ANN BEAUPREZ, NORDIC PEARL FUND

## GIVING ACROSS COLORADO

Seventy-five percent of donor-advised COVID-19 relief grants were made to organizations in Colorado. While the majority of these grants were concentrated across Metro Denver and the Front Range, fundholder giving extended across the state. Many organizations that serve rural areas have headquarters in Denver.



**1,784**  
GRANTS

**\$46M**  
AMOUNT

**21%**

INCREASE FROM SAME  
PERIOD IN 2019

**14%**

INCREASE FROM SAME  
PERIOD IN 2019

BIENVENIDOS A/WELCOME TO  
CASA DE PAZ



→ Casa de Paz provides people coming out of immigration detention with a safe, comfortable, and compassionate transitional home in which to recover and prepare for complete reentry into their lives. In just three months following the start of the pandemic, Casa de Paz reunited 96 immigrants with their families, friends, and sponsors. Casa de Paz is supported by donor-advised grants from Denver Foundation fundholders as well as the Critical Needs Fund.

# WHERE DONORS GAVE TO SUPPORT COLORADO

When the pandemic hit, nonprofit organizations of all sizes were suddenly confronted with immense, urgent, and sometimes competing needs. Fundholders stepped in to help organizations across Colorado make immediate and necessary changes, offset losses, and, most important, keep vulnerable communities safe. From direct-service, frontline organizations to those that nurture the spirit and senses, support was broad, deep, and generous.

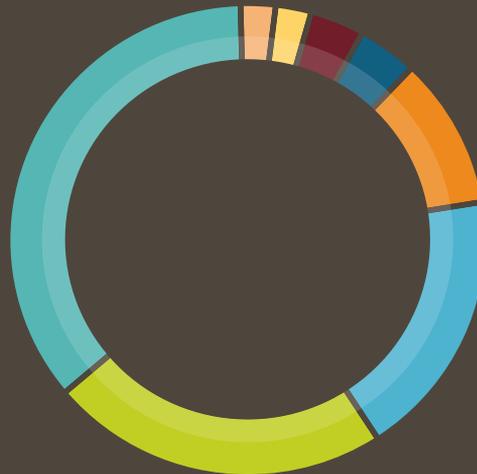
1,237

TOTAL GRANTS

\$35M

AMOUNT

- 36% BASIC HUMAN NEEDS
- 23% COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT
- 19% EDUCATION
- 10% HEALTH
- 4% ANIMALS & ENVIRONMENT
- 3% ARTS, CULTURE, & HUMANITIES
- 3% YOUTH
- 2% RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS



*Data reflects activity from March 13, 2020, to September 30, 2020.*

**\$12.7M** BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

**\$7.9M** COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

**\$6.5M** EDUCATION

**\$3.5M** HEALTH

**\$1.5M** ANIMALS & ENVIRONMENT

**\$1.2M** ARTS, CULTURE, & HUMANITIES

**\$0.9M** YOUTH

**\$0.7M** RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS



➤ **Larissa No Braid, Coordinator of Denver March Powwow, donated time and materials to make hundreds of masks for the Native American community in Colorado. Denver March Powwow was among 41 organizations to receive a grant from the COVID-19 Arts & Culture Relief Fund, which was funded in part by donor-advised grants. Photo by Miss Grace.**

# GRANTEE HIGHLIGHTS

## Faced with an uncertain future, nonprofits adapted to meet urgent needs.

Nonprofit organizations know how to stretch resources to meet community needs. But even the most seasoned nonprofit leaders have been challenged by the deep and diverse demands of the pandemic.

When offices closed and services moved online, nonprofits scrambled to accommodate those with limited internet access. Clients, volunteers, and providers in normally crowded clinics, food banks, and shelters had to be separated by six feet. New safety protocols meant new, unplanned-for expenses for masks, hand sanitizer, and cleaning products. Supply chain disruptions made essentials like food hard to come by. Many helpers stayed home, draining volunteer power and donations.

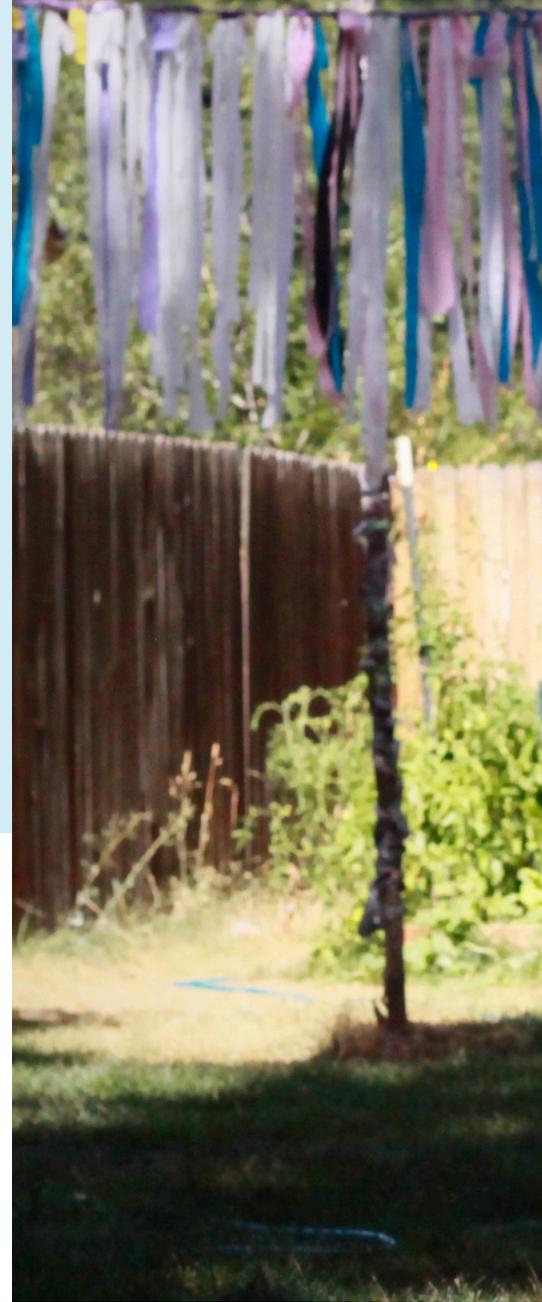
The financial outlook grew murky. Fundraising events and campaigns were canceled. City and state budgets were cut.

Meanwhile, community needs grew and grew. Many organizations described this time as a period of “triage.” They responded to needs by degree of urgency, doing their best to care for a community.

To do so, they adapted. They pulled from the strengths, lived experiences, and creativity of those they serve. They felt their way through and found creative solutions to problems they had never before encountered. They inspired all of us.

And they did it with the support of generous people who banded together to help.

Here are highlights of six nonprofits that received support from Denver Foundation fundholders and/or the Critical Needs Fund between March and September.





## QUEER ASTERISK

Queer Asterisk thrives on person-to-person connections. The Boulder-based organization provides queer-informed counseling, educational programs, and community programs such as writing groups and yoga classes. So when the pandemic forced its programs online, Executive Director Sorin Thomas was worried. March, April, and May are the busiest months for both counseling and educational trainings, the organization's two major sources of income. Would clients embrace a move to telehealth? What about those who were, understandably, concerned about spending money during an economic slowdown? Initially, Thomas' concerns were borne out, as the caseload lightened considerably. Training stopped altogether. Eventually, though, Queer Asterisk found a groove on Zoom. The flexible, mobile-friendly platform led to an increase in clients and in the kind and number of community programs. A \$15,000 grant from the Critical Needs Fund helped Queer Asterisk keep its doors open during a period of transition, even if those doors were virtual.

← *Self-portrait by Freeda Be, creative director and counselor at Queer Asterisk.*

## HOPE HOUSE

Hope House is a beacon of stability and support for a group that felt the impact of the pandemic right away: teenage mothers. The organization helps moms and their children meet basic needs including food, housing, access to child care, and transportation. When COVID hit, demand for all of these needs and more tripled. With support from a Critical Needs Fund grant, Hope House made sure rents and utilities were paid for nearly 80 families. Hope House also recast its residential group home into a temporary shelter for four moms and their children who were at risk of homelessness and/or living in unsafe situations. One unexpected bright spot? "The quarantine provided the perfect opportunity for potty training, and staff guided moms on this developmental milestone," says Lisa Steven, Hope House's Executive Director.

*Photo of Hope House moms and their children by Stephanie Trowbridge. →*



# GLOWMUNDO

Glowmundo believes that resilient and emotionally intelligent adults have a positive impact on children. So when the pandemic amplified the stress experienced by teachers, principals, students, and parents in Aurora Public Schools, they ramped up their programs and took them online. With support from a \$20,000 Critical Needs Fund grant, the organization provided virtual resources for stress management and self-care, mindfulness, and resiliency to nearly 1,400 people. Parents said Glowmundo's programs helped them feel more at ease and confident about managing their children at home, while both teachers and principals said they felt calmer and more compassionate toward their colleagues.



# SERVICIOS DE LA RAZA

When the pandemic hit, Servicios de la Raza saw an increase in the need for essentials like food and clothing. But it also saw a spike in anxiety, fear, and stress. With support from a \$20,000 Critical Needs Fund grant, the organization shifted its in-person operations to provide online, telehealth-based behavioral health services to approximately 250 English and Spanish speakers every month. The organization also provided COVID-19 testing, health insurance enrollment support, and other emergency services to help the community stay healthy, connected, informed, and well.

← *Self-portrait by Ana B. Vizoso, MA, LPC, LAC, Director of Behavioral Health Services, Servicios de la Raza.*

# RE:VISION

In the days following the statewide shutdown in March, resident leaders in Westwood set out to understand what was most worrying their neighbors. When Re:Vision's network of Promotoras called more than 800 people, what they heard most were concerns over food and housing insecurity. In partnership with the RISE Westwood Collective and a group of local Westwood Latinx chefs and business owners, and with support from the Critical Needs Fund and Denver Foundation fundholders, Re:Vision distributed more than 14,000 grab-and-go meals to community members between March 30 and June 30. In April, Re:Vision, Lifespan Local, and Kaizen Food Rescue launched a no-cost grocery program, distributing tons of food to more than 400 families a week. The organization also helped locals establish high-yield gardens in their yards and set up a virtual marketplace. While some of these emergency responses initially were planned to last only eight weeks, the groups have committed to extending programming through the end of the year and possibly into 2021. "Whether it was the RISE Westwood Collective or our partnerships with Lifespan Local and Roots Family Center, we have learned the power of the collective," says JoAnna Cintrón, Re:Vision's Executive Director. "Being able to bring in partners with certain expertise and experiences allowed us to create robust, multifaceted programs that addressed multiple community needs at once."

↓ *Fresh food on its way to the community in Westwood, thanks to Re:Vision and community partners Rise Westwood Collective, Lifespan Local, and Kaizen Food Rescue.*



# VILLAGE EXCHANGE

Undocumented workers were among the first to feel the economic hardship that arrived with the pandemic, vulnerable to the virus and excluded from government benefits and the federal relief package. Through the Undocumented Workers Fund Pilot, Aurora-based Village Exchange provides \$1,000 to undocumented immigrants who lost their jobs to the shutdown. A \$20,000 grant from the Critical Needs Fund, as well as contributions from Denver Foundation donor-advised fundholders, underwrote contributions to more than 20 people. The pilot was part of the Left Behind Workers Fund, which was established with support from The Denver Foundation along with the City of Denver, Rose Community Foundation, Social Venture Partners Denver, and Impact Charitable.

*Among its many services to immigrant and refugee populations, Village Exchange operates a food pantry in Aurora. →*



# A RECKONING ON RACE



## Dueling pandemics strengthened the Foundation's commitment to racial equity.

How people experience the pandemic depends a lot on who they are. Those who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) are at greater risk from the health and/or economic impacts of this public health crisis. Among the many interconnected reasons, BIPOC communities are more likely to have underlying health concerns, work low-wage frontline jobs, and have limited access to health care, health insurance, and other resources.

The coronavirus exposed the deep, systemic inequities that span American life. In June, those inequities took center stage following the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and others, which sparked months of protests, passionate demands for reforms, and culture-wide affirmations of the value of Black lives.

Drawing on our 20-year history of advancing inclusiveness and racial equity, The Denver Foundation has taken steps to lift up BIPOC communities through this moment of racial reckoning. We listened carefully as our community partners shared their needs and concerns with us, building on relationships built over

decades. We invited our donors to join us on our learning journey and centered racial equity in our daily operations — as well as our planning for the future.

## SUPPORTING AN EQUITABLE NONPROFIT SECTOR

As nonprofits themselves faced challenges from the pandemic, The Denver Foundation fortified its support for BIPOC-led organizations. The Executive Directors of Color Institute and the Landscape Project adapted their programming to a virtual world, finding new ways for leaders to connect, share resources, increase capacity to provide service on the front lines, and deepen their practices of inclusion and racial equity inside and outside their organizations.

The Denver Foundation also provided direct financial support through the Community Grants Program. In the second round of 2020 awards, the Foundation prioritized organizations led by and serving the Black community. The Foundation also directed six grants through the Critical Needs Fund to advance racial equity, totaling \$100,000.

# BLACK RESILIENCE IN COLORADO (BRIC) FUND

Launched on Juneteenth, the Black Resilience in Colorado (BRIC) Fund addresses systemic racism and its impact on Black communities across the seven-county Metro Denver region. BRIC supports nonprofit organizations led by and serving Black communities.

Even in normal times, organizations that are led by and serve Black people and/or African immigrants and refugees have fewer resources and less access to mainstream, white-dominant philanthropy. Through grants for programming and capacity building, BRIC will help these organizations withstand current crises and build long-term sustainability.

Many years in the making, BRIC builds on The Denver Foundation's work to acknowledge, engage, and support the philanthropic investments of BIPOC communities and the profound ways in which their contributions positively impact Metro Denver. BRIC is managed by The Denver Foundation in partnership with local Black community leaders.

BRIC has generated support from fundholders, individual donors, foundations, and the Denver African American Philanthropists, a men's giving circle housed at The Denver Foundation. The Colorado Health Foundation contributed \$500,000. The goal is to raise \$1.5 million by the end of 2020.

↖ *Angela Davis mural by Shepard Fairey, Larimer Street, 2018.*



↑ *Gov. Jared Polis signed the Enhance Law Enforcement Accountability Act on Juneteenth, the celebration and commemoration of the end of slavery in the United States. Polis was joined by the bill's sponsors, Representatives Leslie Herod and Serena Gonzales-Gutierrez and Senators Leroy Garcia and Rhonda Fields. The bill, which will increase accountability and transparency within Colorado's law enforcement system, was supported by The Denver Foundation. Photo by Jesse Paul, courtesy of The Colorado Sun, coloradosun.com.*

**\$1M+**

**TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO BLACK-LED AND -SERVING ORGANIZATIONS IN BRIC'S FIRST YEAR**

**\$1M+**

**RAISED FOR BRIC BETWEEN JUNE 20 AND SEPTEMBER 30**

↓ *Javon Brame of Denver African American Philanthropists (DAAP), which supported BRIC with a \$10,000 donation, with Jice Johnson, Founder & Chief Visionary Officer of the Black Business Initiative.*





# COLLECTIVE IMPACT

With two new collaborative funds, The Denver Foundation joined forces with philanthropic partners to expand reach and deepen impact.

Shuttered theaters and museums. Canceled performances, festivals, and entire seasons. Colorado's arts and culture sector was hard-hit by the shutdown. According to a report from Colorado Creative Industries, more than 32,000 jobs and \$823 million in revenue were lost statewide between April and July, reversing years of gains in creative industries.

To address this crisis, the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation made a \$1 million commitment, reach out to the Denver Foundation and together the two organizations created the COVID-19 Arts & Culture Relief Fund to provide emergency support to struggling arts organizations across Metro Denver. A true cross-sector collaboration, the fund has received significant support from Denver Arts & Venues, the Gates Family Fund, the R C Kemper Charitable Trust, the Anthony and Delisa Mayer Foundation, the JFM Foundation, the Cranaleith Foundation, Create Boulder, Rose Community Foundation, and Hemera Foundation. Individual donors including Denver Foundation fundholders made contributions ranging from \$15 to \$15,000.

↑ *Javier Flores and artists from Access Gallery created this mural based on Pablo Picasso's "Guernica," to advocate for disability rights. Access Gallery opens doors to creative, educational, and economic opportunities for people with disabilities through the arts.*

→ *Tony Diego and Santiago Jaramillo are the founders of D3 Arts, an anchor of the Westwood Creative District in West Denver.*

*Both organizations received grants from the COVID-19 Arts & Culture Relief Fund.*

## THE COVID-19 ARTS & CULTURE RELIEF FUND

**\$1.2M**

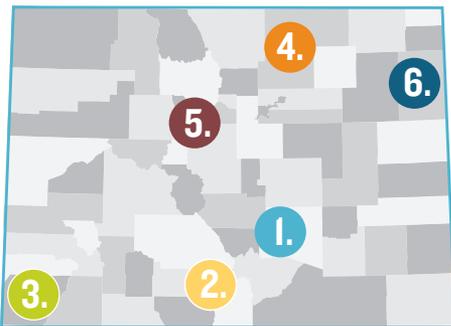
**IN FIRST-ROUND GRANTS  
DISTRIBUTED IN AUGUST**

**41**

**GRANTS TO ARTS ORGANIZATIONS  
ACROSS METRO DENVER**



# THE RURAL COMMUNITY RESPONSE AND RECOVERY PROJECT



## PROJECT GRANTEEES

1. Caring for Colorado Centennial Fund, Pueblo
2. La Puente Home, San Luis Valley
3. The Piñon Project, Cortez
4. Rural Communities Resource Center, Yuma
5. Summit County Family Resource Center, Silverthorne
6. United Way of Weld County, Greeley

Rural areas have seen unique hardships during the pandemic. Job losses, under-resourced public health and health care systems, and the erosion of the overall economy have exacerbated existing financial troubles in many communities. The service organizations that support families with food insecurity, housing, and child care have seen the demands for their services increase dramatically. Yet federal, state, and philanthropic response dollars have not flowed proportionately.

In July, The Denver Foundation, the Telluride Foundation, and ZOMA Foundation launched the Rural Community Response and Recovery Project. The goal is to address gaps in infrastructure and capacity that have made it difficult for rural Colorado communities to navigate the economic and humanitarian impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through this collaborative effort, nonprofit organizations that serve as community hubs will receive technical and financial support to build on their assets and better serve vulnerable people across rural Colorado. Working in partnership with an advisory committee of rural community development experts, the three foundation partners will provide grants to rural organizations that provide COVID-19 response programming and technical assistance to local agencies. Grantees will also participate in a peer learning cohort facilitated by the Rural Funders Learning Network.

↑ *A grantee of the Rural Community Response and Recovery Project, La Puente Home connects isolated households living in underdeveloped and remote areas of the San Luis Valley to resources and a safety net.*

# DONOR HIGHLIGHTS

From affinity groups to donor-advised funds, Denver Foundation donors expanded and adapted their giving to meet urgent needs.

## DONOR-ADVISED FUND

### SETH AND MEGAN BENT

Like many generous people, Seth and Megan Bent quickly adapted their giving strategy to help their community navigate the pandemic. Through the Sparkplug Philanthropy Fund, their family's donor-advised fund, they were among dozens of fundholders to contribute to the Critical Needs Fund. The Bents also gave to The Denver Foundation's new Black Resilience in Colorado (BRIC) Fund and the OUR Center in Longmont. They are regular donors to The Nature Conservancy, as well.

#### HOW HAS THE PANDEMIC CHANGED YOUR PHILANTHROPY IN 2020?

In previous years, we have made an effort to evenly support initiatives in conservation, education, community, and the arts. With so many people struggling as a result of the pandemic, we are increasingly focused on helping the people and communities that have been adversely impacted.

#### HOW DID YOU DECIDE HOW TO GIVE DURING THIS TIME?

The overarching theme of this pandemic seems to be instability. Health, housing, food, employment, and education are just a few of the things that millions of people are struggling with every day. By supporting strategic initiatives and organizations through the Critical Needs Fund, we hope to provide a bit of stability to people who are struggling.

By serving as a true thought partner, The Denver Foundation helped us create a strategy to maximize our philanthropic impact. The staff's expertise and insights have been invaluable as our goals evolve in an ever-changing world.



## DONOR-ADVISED GIVING

### MARY AND WARREN WASHINGTON

Over decades of generosity and community service, Mary and Warren Washington have learned the importance of adapting to changing needs. Since establishing a donor-advised fund in 2003 to honor the legacy of their son, Brian, the Washingtons have supported women and children experiencing domestic violence, youth who have been underserved and marginalized in Metro Denver, and people recovering from disaster in New Orleans and Haiti. That spirit of flexible and engaged philanthropy has defined their giving this year.

#### HOW HAS THE PANDEMIC CHANGED YOUR PHILANTHROPY IN 2020?

When we established our donor-advised fund about 17 years ago to honor the memory of our son Brian, we focused on continuing his legacy of philanthropy. He had been donating to agencies that provided assistance to abused women and children.

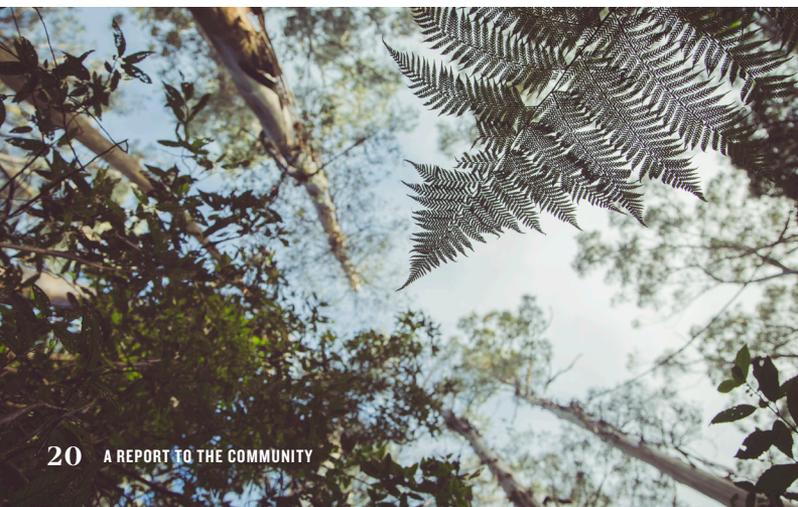
Over the years, the communities have changed. Recently, COVID-19 has disproportionately blanketed the Black community with pain. So we want to address our efforts toward some of the people who currently are in deepest need. This year we are expanding our efforts because of the tremendous needs.

#### HOW DID YOU DECIDE HOW TO GIVE DURING THIS TIME?

With the activation of the Critical Needs Fund and most recently the Black Resilience in Colorado (BRIC) Fund, The Denver Foundation has made giving convenient and helps us to target the correct population for our giving. We are looking forward to expanding our giving this year and in the years to come.

↑ *Mary and Warren Washington expanded their efforts because of tremendous needs.*

← *The Nature Conservancy is helping nature preserves and national parks adapt to changes brought on by the pandemic.*





## FIELD OF INTEREST FUNDS THE LOWE FUND

First established as a private foundation in the 1960s, the Lowe Fund has been an active Field of Interest Fund at The Denver Foundation since 1994. The Fund supports training, education, and research into the causes, cures, and treatment of cerebral palsy, development disabilities, and other nervous and muscular diseases and disorders.

This spring, in addition to its two annual application cycles, the Lowe Fund made distributions to help trusted organizations sustain services to those with physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities and their families. This special relief funding totaled more than \$208,000 and provided support to 13 organizations including the Chanda Plan Foundation, The Arc of Colorado, Bayaud Enterprises, and more.

“For grants made this cycle, the criteria were first and foremost to honor the intention of the Lowe family,” says Marilyn Rovira, on behalf of The Lowe Fund. “Additional criteria were to assess where funding could help make a significant impact on the organization and to fund groups with limited access to other resources.”

↓ *While honoring its founders, The Lowe Fund serves people with disabilities, who face heightened risks from the coronavirus and economic shutdown.*

### AFFINITY GROUPS

## ENVIRONMENTAL AFFINITY GROUP

A network of informed and engaged environmental philanthropists, the Environmental Affinity Group (EAG) focuses on local and regional efforts to address climate change and its effects, with a particular emphasis on BIPOC communities. Co-founder Peter Kirsch shared thoughts on the year in giving.

### HAS THE PANDEMIC INFLUENCED THE ENVIRONMENTAL AFFINITY GROUP'S GRANTMAKING STRATEGY IN 2020?

The pandemic was a wake-up call. The kind of major social dislocations caused by COVID-19 are a mere hint of the impacts of climate instability, especially in disadvantaged communities and for people of color. We believe that our focus has become even more relevant and vital as people confront the impacts of the pandemic.

### DID THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE ABOUT RACIAL INEQUITY INFLUENCE YOUR GRANTMAKING?

The COVID-19 pandemic did not cause or exacerbate systemic inequality and implicit systemic racism. It did bring those problems to the fore: The pandemic made it harder to ignore inequality and racism in our midst. Whether it was coincidence or not, the simultaneous national dialogue about racism has very much affected our thinking on environmental grantmaking. It has reinforced our commitment to those communities where our small grants and the substantial reputation of The Denver Foundation can have the greatest multiplier effect. We do not deceive ourselves that the Environmental Affinity Group's grantmaking will, standing alone, bring about systemic change. But we are hopeful that it will introduce donor-advised fundholders to new organizations and open their eyes to the importance of funding local, grassroots, hands-on work to address climate change among the most vulnerable in our own community.

↑ *Two trainees learning to bend conduit with GRID Alternatives, a green energy nonprofit and Environmental Affinity Group grantee. Courtesy GRID Alternatives Central Valley.*





## DONOR-ADVISED GIVING

# THE ROLLIE R. KELLEY FAMILY FOUNDATION

As longtime Denver Foundation fundholders, the Kelley family has a giving history that stretches back many years. When everything changed in March, they worked closely with The Denver Foundation to adapt.

### HOW HAS THE PANDEMIC CHANGED YOUR PHILANTHROPY IN 2020?

COVID prompted us to abandon our normal grantmaking cycle, which typically would not begin until late summer. We also abandoned our normal vetting process, which usually spans several months. Instead, in prioritizing timeliness and impact, we identified a handful of organizations with whom we had worked previously and which we knew would be able to help people immediately. We also settled on a total dollar amount that would not hinder our ability to conduct our regular grantmaking process later in the year, knowing that even once the immediate crisis was averted, the increased demand for services would likely be ongoing.

### HOW DID YOU DECIDE HOW TO GIVE DURING THIS TIME?

In choosing the recipients, we focused on those who would meet the immediate needs of the newly and suddenly unemployed and those with health challenges that prevented them from working. We chose Food Bank of the Rockies, Metro Caring, Project Angel Heart and the YMCA, because we knew their experience in providing critical services, including food distribution and child care for essential workers, would be invaluable. We also granted funds to the Denver Zoo to help defray the enormous fixed cost of feeding and caring for its inhabitants.

Finally, we contributed to The Denver Foundation’s Critical Needs Fund because we knew its very purpose is to get funds to where they are most needed quickly. Without The Denver Foundation, we would never have been able to act as quickly and effectively as we did when the COVID crisis hit.

↓ *For immediate impact, the Kelley Family embraced a whole new approach to grantmaking.*

## DONOR-ADVISED FUND

# THE MALCHOW FAMILY FARM FUND

Peggy Malchow Sass and her siblings spent their childhoods on the family farm, which sits just off Highway 287 outside of Berthoud. Known for its iconic big, red barn, the farm sustained the family in many ways: The Malchows raised cows, sheep, and ducks and made butter, bread, and ice cream. They grew grain to feed the animals. Their father sold sugar beets, vegetables, and milk.

Growing up, Peggy knew the land had once belonged to the Arapaho and Cheyenne people; her father sometimes found arrowheads in the ground. In college, as Peggy learned more about Native Americans, she volunteered with advocacy and service groups. And after the farm’s sale in 2016, she used a portion of the proceeds to establish a donor-advised fund at The Denver Foundation, focused on “what Native Americans need and what they’ve been through.”

“It’s not generosity,” she says. “It’s reparations and gratitude for what that land gave to me and my family.”

In June, Peggy made a grant from the Malchow Family Farm Fund made a grant to the Northern Arapaho Tribe in Wind River, Wyoming. Across the country, Native Americans have been hit hard by COVID-19, especially the elders. “They told me, ‘Our elderly are our tribe’s greatest asset. Their wisdom and knowledge and life experience are treasured and valued, and they’re the most vulnerable people at this time,’” she recalls.

In collaboration with The Denver Foundation, Peggy learned that in addition to traditional disbursements through donor-advised funds, some donors can make Required Minimum Distributions to tribes through IRAs — a message she shares with other philanthropists.

“All of us in Colorado are living on what used to be Native American land,” she says. “I like to get people thinking about helping the tribes as reparations for all that has been taken from them.”





# WAYS TO ENGAGE

Working together with our generous philanthropic and community partners, The Denver Foundation will continue to mobilize resources for recovery, rebuilding, and reimagining.

➤ *Like many engaged philanthropists, members of March On, a Denver Foundation giving circle, shifted their giving strategy in response to the pandemic.*

## GIVING OPTIONS

### GIFTS THROUGH YOUR DONOR-ADVISED FUND

The Philanthropic Services Group will help you initiate a grant to a favorite organization or find an organization to support.

### THE FUND FOR DENVER

Please consider an unrestricted gift to The Denver Foundation's Fund for Denver, a permanent endowment to meet today's needs and build a better future for Metro Denver.

### THE CRITICAL NEEDS FUND

The Critical Needs Fund meets essential community needs when an unexpected disaster or emergency arises. This flexible, immediate funding can provide support during crises outside of the Foundation's typical grant cycle and impact areas.

### CHILD CARE CONTRIBUTION TAX CREDIT FUND

The Colorado Child Care Contribution Tax Credit Fund supports organizations providing crucial child care services and early childhood education programs in our state. Donors who make a qualifying contribution may claim a state income tax credit of 50% of the total qualifying contribution.

## HOW TO GIVE

Visit [denverfoundation.org](https://denverfoundation.org) to donate online, or mail a check to The Denver Foundation, 1009 Grant Street, Denver, CO 80203. Checks should be made to The Denver Foundation, with the program/fund indicated in the memo line.

Please contact the Philanthropic Services Group at 303.300.1790 or [gifts@denverfoundation.org](mailto:gifts@denverfoundation.org) to discuss these and other options, including ways to donate real estate, personal property, vehicles, and other complex gifts. Our expert team is ready to help you identify organizations to support, based on your interests and our deep community roots.

## FOR NONPROFITS

### COLORADO NONPROFIT LOAN FUND

The Colorado Nonprofit Loan Fund, formerly the Community Cash Flow Fund, has funds available for loans to nonprofit organizations to help bridge cash flow timing problems. This loan fund supports nonprofits throughout the state and is easily accessible for nonprofits through an easy application process.

**Learn More and Donate Online**  
[DENVERFOUNDATION.ORG](https://denverfoundation.org)



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