



The Denver Foundation

2022 Public Policy Principles

The Denver Foundation is a community foundation that inspires people and mobilizes resources to improve life in Metro Denver. In 2021, the Foundation and its donors awarded \$115 million in grants. The Denver Foundation has three roles: stewarding an endowment to meet current and future needs for Metro Denver, working with community leaders to address the core challenges that face the community, and managing more than 1,000 charitable funds on behalf of individuals, families, and businesses.

WHY DOES THE DENVER FOUNDATION HAVE POLICY PRINCIPLES?

The Denver Foundation listened to the community’s suggestion to deepen our public policy and advocacy work. Nonprofit organizations, donors, past grantees, fundholders, and community members were aligned in this feedback. This policy and advocacy work is a key component of our new Strategic Framework, which launched in 2021. The policy principles will drive the Foundation’s engagement on policy proposals, including legislation, ordinances, regulations, ballot measures, and other policy proposals. Our Board of Trustees along with our Policy Committee, which includes community members, helps guide our decision making about policy positions and our level of engagement.

OUR 2022 PUBLIC POLICY PRINCIPLES



Economic Opportunity

We believe that economic opportunity is achievable when the community has the tools and resources to build wealth, increase assets, and create local and just economies.

We will consider policy proposals that strengthen community wealth building and workforce development opportunities across Metro Denver. Such proposals may address displacement, asset ownership, worker cooperatives, and workforce development programs to support transitions into new economies.

Our Recent Work: We fund nonprofits that address economic opportunities in their communities through the Community Grants Program. Organizations recently funded include Aurora Economic Opportunity Coalition, Center for Community Wealth Building, and Rocky Mountain Microfinance Institute.



Education (K-12)

We believe that access to a well-funded and racially equitable education system is critical for communities in Metro Denver to thrive.

We will consider policy proposals that prioritize racial equity in the K-12 public school system and increase school funding equitably. Such proposals may address reforms to address curriculum, student voice, and student discipline and modify the school funding formula to increase funding to school districts equitably.

Our recent work: Our recent opposition to Denver Ordinance 304 helped maintain funding resources for the Denver Preschool Program and Prosperity Denver.



Environment & Climate

We believe that environmental justice begins with targeted policy efforts and investments in under-resourced communities to address the impacts of climate change.

We will consider policy proposals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create resilient communities across the Metro Denver region. Such proposals may address equitable investment in energy efficiency, renewable energy, and air quality programs across Metro Denver and adopt adaptation and resilience plans for under-resourced communities.

Our Recent Work: We fund nonprofits that address environment and climate issues in their communities through the Community Grants Program, Environmental Affinity Group, and Climate Equity Fund. Organizations recently funded include Energy Resource Center, Colorado Agrivoltaic Learning Center, and The Nature Conservancy.



Housing

We believe housing programs designed to address affordable housing and homelessness should be well funded and respond to the history of exclusionary housing policies.

We will consider policy proposals that increase the affordable housing supply and establish systemic support to address barriers to housing security. Such proposals may address lessening regulatory barriers, enhancing funding to create affordable housing and increasing support for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Our recent work: Our support of Denver Bond Measure 2B will provide funding for emergency housing in Denver. We also opposed Denver Measure 2F and funded lobbying efforts to defeat the measure.



Transportation

We believe that access to reliable and affordable public transportation options is a core function of a thriving community.

We will consider policy proposals that make equitable investments into public transit to address the current challenges impacting ridership. Such proposals may address equitable infusion of federal, state, and local funding in transportation systems in Metro Denver and improve service routes to get people to needed services, education, and jobs.

Our recent work: Our support of Denver Bond Measure 2C and increased parking meter rates will dedicate more funding for transportation programs to improve Denver's transportation system.



Philanthropic Giving and Nonprofit Sector

We believe that philanthropists must elevate the work of the philanthropic and nonprofit sectors to ensure that policies further both sectors' investments in community change.

We will consider policy proposals at the federal level to further charitable giving, deepen collaboration between philanthropists, nonprofit organizations, and government entities, and address evidence-based concerns of the philanthropic and nonprofit sectors. Such proposals may address philanthropic giving and nonprofits in Colorado and community foundations.

Our recent work: We serve on national and state-level workgroups with philanthropic organizations to identify reforms to address concerns behind the Accelerating Charitable Efforts (ACE) Act.

WILL THE DENVER FOUNDATION CONSIDER POLICY PROPOSALS OUTSIDE OF THE ISSUES OUTLINED IN THE POLICY PRINCIPLES?

The Denver Foundation's Policy Framework specifies an opportunity for engagement in critical and timely policy proposals. Recent examples include policy proposals to address the COVID-19 pandemic and racial reckoning. The Framework's evaluation criteria for policy engagement will determine engagement on such policy proposals.

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