



A \$1M COLORADO TRUST GRANT SUPPORTED CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW CLIFTON COMMUNITY CENTER CAMPUS, WHICH OPENED TO THE PUBLIC WITH A RIBBON-CUTTING EVENT HELD ON JUNE 22, 2024.

THE COLORADO TRUST

# 2024 ANNUAL REVIEW

NEW DIRECTIONS AND FOND FAREWELLS



**THE  
COLORADO  
TRUST**

A Health Equity Foundation



THE COLORADO TRUST  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES



BETTY VELASQUEZ



DON MARES

## A WORD FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR AND CEO

DEAR COLLEAGUES,

On behalf of The Colorado Trust's staff and board of trustees, we are pleased to share this overview of our activities and accomplishments from 2024.

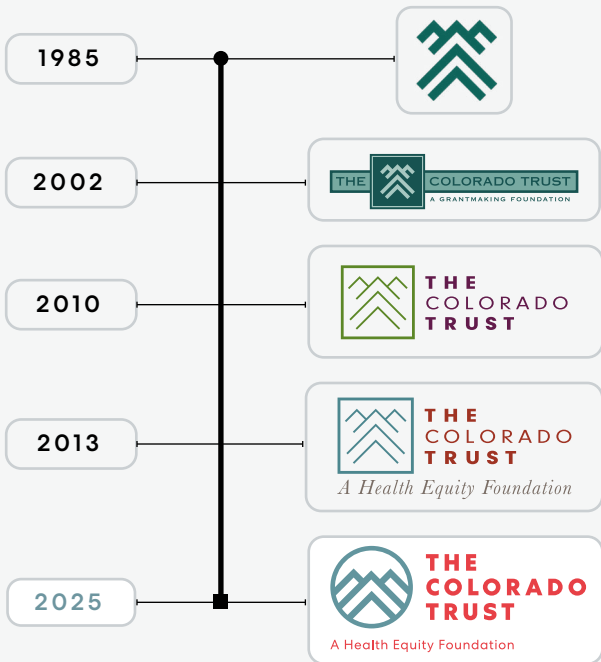
This was the first year of implementing our [2024-26 Strategic Plan](#), reaffirming our commitment to advancing health equity in Colorado. The plan called for prioritizing funding efforts addressing three pressing issues: food, housing, and mental and behavioral health.

In the first half of 2024, we did precisely that by rolling out the [Community Resilience Initiatives](#). Our staff worked tirelessly to design and deploy these funding opportunities, select the grantees and launch these efforts. These grants and organizations are serving and supporting communities across the entire state. You can learn more about the seven funding initiatives on the following pages.

In addition to these new funding opportunities, we issued hundreds of other grants and event sponsorships during 2024. These included continuing our support of the [Colorado Equity Compass](#), launching an effort to bolster Black-focused philanthropy in Colorado, providing additional one-time grants to help strengthen the nonprofit ecosystem statewide, a unique grant to help sustain Colorado's local media landscape, and much more. You can find more details on the following pages or our [English](#) and [Spanish](#) websites.

At the end of 2024, we also spent time refreshing The Colorado Trust's logo—a new symbol for a new era at the foundation. Our new logo features a circular border for the first time, along with cleaner lines, modern colors and a new font, while still honoring the upward momentum and mountain imagery of the parallel lines at the icon's heart.

Here's a look back at the evolution of some of our logos over the years:



While our strategic plan implementation and logo refresh are taking us in new directions, 2024 also marked the end of an era in some respects. This was the final year of the Building and Bridging Power initiative, our core policy advocacy funding since 2019 (more on that later in this publication). We also said [goodbye to the iconic building](#) on Sherman Street in Denver that had been home to The Colorado Trust since the 1980s. In spring of 2025, we will move our office to the confluence of the River North and historic Five Points neighborhoods.

Thank you for your continued interest in our work to advance the health and well-being of the people of Colorado. We are grateful to partner with you.

Betty Velasquez  
Chair, Board of Trustees

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

## OUR GRANTMAKING

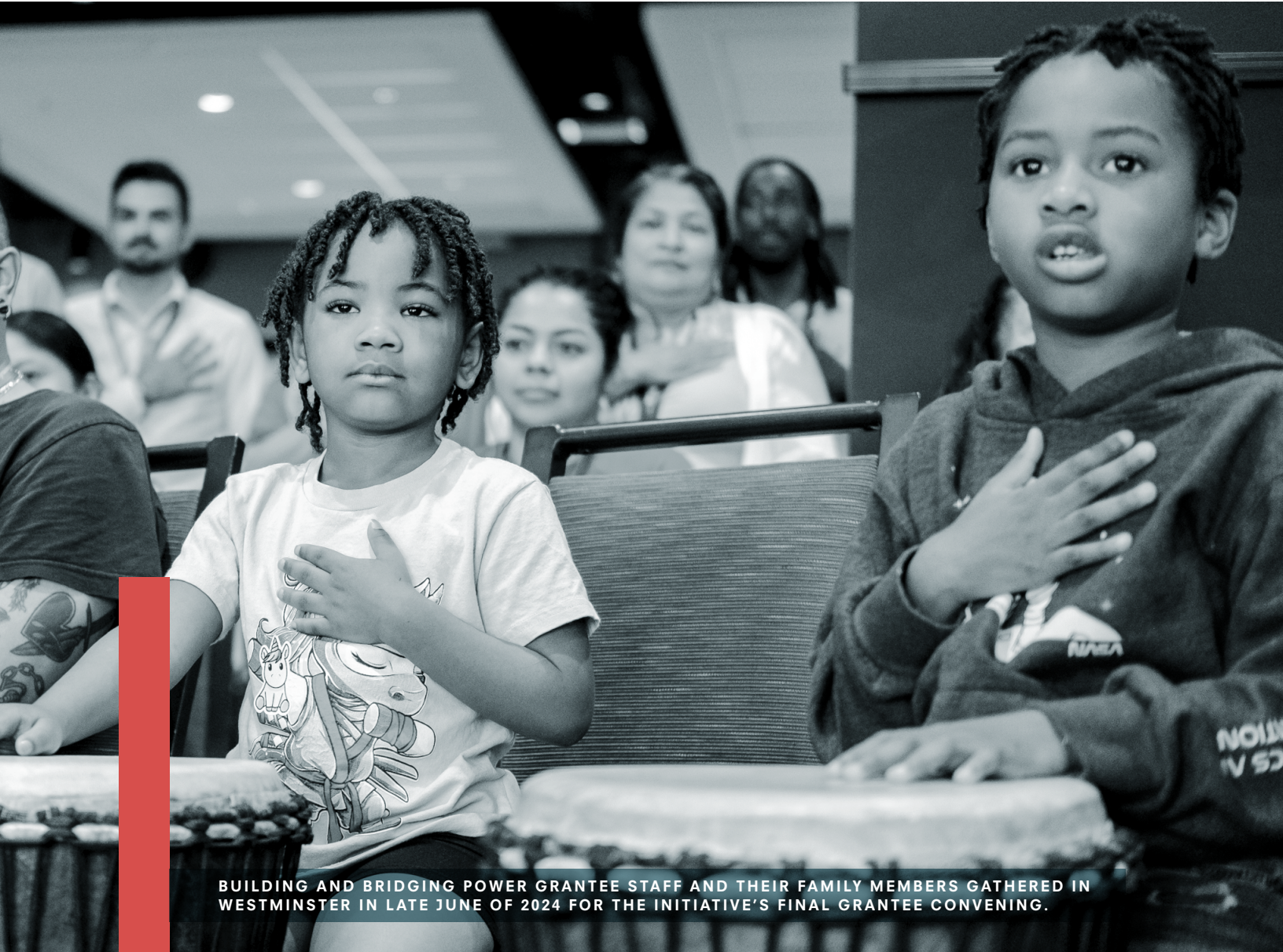
### COMMUNITY RESILIENCE INITIATIVES LAUNCH

In our [2024-26 Strategic Plan](#), we committed to advancing health equity across Colorado through grantmaking initiatives that address the most pressing health and well-being challenges that Coloradans face. In the first phase of this effort, we created seven [Community Resilience Initiatives](#) that concentrate on our three new focus areas (food, housing, and mental and behavioral health). These multiyear investments were designed to support communities experiencing ongoing or new disruptions, including economic downturns, social turbulence, public health crises and ineffective public policy.

The Colorado Trust received more than 600 applications for these competitive funding

initiatives. All applicants were asked to describe how they would use grant funding to develop, implement and sustain effective methods to address areas of concern in the communities they serve. Thus, a pool of grantees was generated to address food, housing, and mental and behavioral health via a locally informed lens.

Through these initiatives, we are supporting more than 80 grantees with nearly \$35 million in total funding across three years, actively working to ensure they successfully achieve their goals. These grants began on July 1, 2024, and will run until the end of 2026. To support non-awarded applicants, we held a webinar in August 2024, attended by more than 60 people, and provided tips on locating and securing



BUILDING AND BRIDGING POWER GRANTEE STAFF AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS GATHERED IN WESTMINSTER IN LATE JUNE OF 2024 FOR THE INITIATIVE'S FINAL GRANTEE CONVENING.

funding opportunities. We also paid for numerous organizations to receive three-month subscriptions to the [Colorado Grants Guide](#).

Fifty-three percent of the entities that applied for the Community Resilience Initiatives funding were first-time applicants, and 61% of the awardees were new grantees of The Colorado Trust. All 64 Colorado counties will be served by one or more of the grantees in the seven initiatives.

## BUILDING AND BRIDGING POWER INITIATIVE CONCLUDES

2024 marked the conclusion of this transformative \$17 million policy effort, culminating in significant achievements made by grantees. Throughout this final year of the [Building and Bridging Power](#) initiative, which began in 2019, grantees worked diligently on a wide range of health-related issues, including Medicaid and Child Health Plan Plus enrollment, strengthening civil rights protections in health care, enhancing protections against disability discrimination, safeguarding access to

reproductive health care and increasing health care access for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients.

Among the notable bills passed during the 2024 legislative session was the [State Income Tax Credit for Care Workers](#), which allocated \$1.4 million to benefit over 89,000 caregivers. Legislation was also passed to [create a racial equity study](#) to help identify and address systemic health care disparities within Colorado communities. This study was secured with \$500,000 in state funding with the help of several partner organizations.

While this initiative ended in 2024, these policy wins and programmatic achievements established a lasting foundation for continued progress in addressing health equity through policy advocacy. In 2025, a comprehensive evaluation of the initiative's strategy, impact and lessons learned will be published.

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## ONGOING SUPPORT FOR COLORADO'S NONPROFIT ECOSYSTEM

In 2023, The Colorado Trust made a series of one-time grants across the state—as part of what we called the “Landscape Project”—to support community foundations and nonprofits across Colorado. This effort was extended in 2024, with more than 30 additional grants and event sponsorships deployed across the state. This year, a particular focus was placed on supporting American Indian and Alaska Native tribes, nonprofits and Native-serving entities, with 16 grants totaling \$500,000.

## 2024 GRANTMAKING

> 640 GRANTS AND EVENT SPONSORSHIPS

> \$24.8 MILLION IN CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

AVERAGE GRANT AMOUNT: \$56,610



### GRANTEE STORY:

[Lafayette Residents Rally to Buy Mobile Home Park and Protect Affordable Housing](#)

## RURAL PHILANTHROPY DAYS SUPPORT

We continue actively participating in Rural Philanthropy Days, which connects funders with nonprofit organizations serving rural Colorado. In 2024, we again granted the Community Resource Center to help manage this vital program. Colorado Trust staff and trustees attended the in-person Rural Philanthropy Days events in Fruita in June and Alamosa and Monte Vista in September. The Trust ultimately funded a dozen organizations with \$5,000 general operating grants each; [click here to learn more](#) about them.



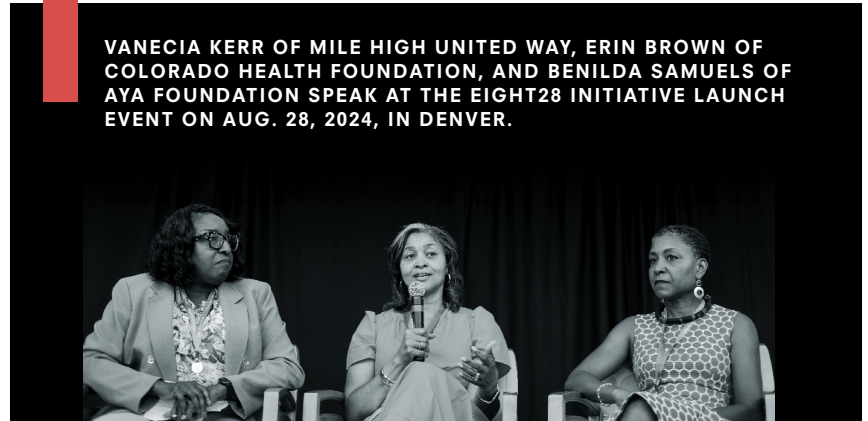
### WATCH:

[Denver's Experiment to Increase Affordable Housing](#)  
(video based on a [Collective Colorado story](#))

## EIGHT28 EVENT MARKS MILESTONE

On Aug. 28, The Colorado Trust helped celebrate August as Black Philanthropy Month with a special event and new initiative launched during a luncheon at the Cable Center. The launch commemorated a new partnership with Colorado Gives Day, making Aug. 28 the official [Colorado Trust Eight28 Giving Event](#), building on the momentum of Black Philanthropy Month with a statewide online fundraising campaign for Black nonprofits to build capacity and drive more philanthropy. The Eight28 event brought together more than 100

attendees from various nonprofit organizations and the philanthropic sector. Panelists and speakers included representatives from the AYA Foundation, Black Resiliency in Colorado Fund, Chinook Fund and the Colorado Health Foundation.



VANECIA KERR OF MILE HIGH UNITED WAY, ERIN BROWN OF COLORADO HEALTH FOUNDATION, AND BENILDA SAMUELS OF AYA FOUNDATION SPEAK AT THE EIGHT28 INITIATIVE LAUNCH EVENT ON AUG. 28, 2024, IN DENVER.

### ROAD TRIP!

As part of an enhanced effort to more regularly connect with communities across Colorado, Don Mares, The Colorado Trust’s president & chief executive officer, set out on a couple of road tours in the summer and fall of 2024 to meet with community members, nonprofit leaders, elected officials and others and learn more about health equity issues at the local level. Don’s first trip was to the state’s southwest region in August, where he met with Ute Mountain Ute tribal officials, toured the site for the new tribal marketplace and artisan incubator, and visited the Kwiayagat Community Academy, a Colorado Trust grantee. He also visited Compañeros: Four Corners Resource Center (another grantee), Fort Lewis College (also a grantee), the Community Foundation Serving Southwest Colorado, and chatted with area nonprofit staff at a reception held at Fort Lewis College.

In September, Don traveled to Eagle and Summit counties, meeting with grantees, including Mountain Dreamers and the Family & Intercultural Resource Center. He also met with The Summit Foundation, Eagle County Department of Human Services and Your Hope Center staff.

Colorado Trust staff and trustees accompanied Don on these visits, and Don has plans to visit several more communities in 2025.



### GRANTEE STORY:

[“A safe place for kids to play”: Clifton Community Center Opens in Mesa County](#)

## 2024 EVENT SPONSORSHIPS

EVENTS SPONSORED: 142

TOTAL AWARDED: \$281,450

## COLORADO TRUST FELLOWS REUNITE AT REGIS UNIVERSITY

Launched in 1996 and running for over a decade, The Colorado Trust Fellows initiative helped cover tuition for students enrolling in the master of nonprofit management degree program at Regis University. The overarching goal was to support a future generation of nonprofit leaders in the state. Regis selected nearly 100 fellows over the program's lifespan, averaging about a dozen each year. Each new class of fellows had an acceptance rate of less than 20% among applicants.

In May 2024, several dozen past Colorado Trust Fellows gathered at Regis University to reconnect, reminisce and share how valuable this program was to their future careers. We are thrilled that so many of them reunited, and we look forward to working with Regis University to help keep all the Colorado Trust Fellows connected well into the future.

## COLORADO EQUITY COMPASS CREATES LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

The [Colorado Equity Compass](#) was founded by The Colorado Trust in 2016 and [received grant support](#) in 2023. This data platform helps communities (and the organizations that serve them) better understand health equity-related issues and advocate for change using data and stories. The platform [completed a data refresh](#) in February 2024, adding new federal American Community Survey information. Additionally, the Colorado Equity Compass announced the launch of its Data Use Learning Collaborative in August 2024. This competitive effort provides selected participants with education sessions and support from the Colorado Health Institute. It was designed to offer an opportunity to build connections and gain practical skills to effectively use data to promote health equity. The Colorado Equity Compass made sub-awards to eight organizations as part of the program, which will continue into spring 2025.

## NEW PRINTING PRESS SUPPORTS LOCAL COLORADO MEDIA

At the end of 2023, The Colorado Trust committed \$250,000 to support the National Trust for Local News's goal of helping small local and community newspapers maintain the continuity of their print editions. Print newspapers remain a vital way to reach underserved Coloradans (especially in small and rural communities) and promote civic engagement, and access to trustworthy information is essential for the well-being of communities. In the fall of 2024, the new printing press and commercial printing facility went online and now prints publications for Colorado Community Media newspapers and other local and ethnic-focused media outlets. The printing facility in northeast Denver has created several full-time jobs.



### WATCH:

[Changing the Face of Outdoor Recreation](#)  
(video based on a [Collective Colorado story](#))

# STORIES TO ILLUMINATE, INSTRUCT AND INFORM

Our [Collective Colorado](#) story platform is another way that The Colorado Trust works toward its vision of health equity in the state. We believe people must be well-informed about the challenges and opportunities for all Coloradans to lead healthy lives.

To that end, we published 30 original stories at Collective Colorado in 2024, almost all of which included original photography featuring the people who shared their life experiences with us. These stories and photographs were provided by some of the best freelance journalists working in Colorado. We also work with a professional translator to create Spanish-language versions of these stories and all our online content. We are proud and grateful to have such wonderful partners in these efforts.

Most of these stories highlighted our focus areas of [food](#), [housing](#), and [mental and behavioral health](#). We are also grateful to our partners at The Colorado Sun, El Semanario and other media outlets for republishing many of these stories and helping us reach more readers. Our most-read story of 2024 looked at [what happened in Steamboat Springs](#) when one of the most ambitious affordable housing communities in state history was proposed. We also worked with our partners at Chance Multimedia to create videos based on some of our most popular stories. Links to these videos can be found throughout this report.



## WATCH:

[Breaking the Cycle: Reducing Recidivism](#)

(video based on a [Collective Colorado story](#))

We firmly believe in transparency about where our funding goes. That's why we proactively maintain an interactive online [grants database](#) that is fully sortable, searchable and even downloadable. We also publish our tax returns, audit reports and more in the [financial information section](#) of our website. Our 2024 iterations will be posted as soon as they are finalized.

**PHOTO CREDITS:** Cover: Barton Glasser. **Page 2:** Group photo and headshots by Ellen Jaskol. **Page 4:** Eli Imadali. **Page 5:** Eli Imadali. **Page 6:** Eli Imadali (top), Barton Glasser (bottom). **Page 7:** Parker Seibold. **Page 8:** Screenshot from Chance Multimedia video (top), group photo by Ellen Jaskol (bottom). All photos special to The Colorado Trust.



THE COLORADO TRUST STAFF, DECEMBER 2024

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