The Colorado Health Foundation™

Locally Focused Work: Rio Grande County



At the Foundation, our community engagement approach is significantly enriched through our locally focused initiatives. We invest substantial time and effort in understanding individual communities. Rio Grande County is one of nine communities where we are deeply committed.

Our goal is to cultivate profound and meaningful relationships, connect with residents and support long-term efforts that prioritize community-informed, collaborative solutions to health challenges.

Why local focus? We firmly believe that solutions generated at the local level are more likely to address the community's unique needs and drive lasting change.

What We Do In Rio Grande County

As the gateway to the majestic San Juan Mountains, Rio Grande County draws inspiration from the spirited flow of the Rio Grande River that connects each community in the picturesque San Luis Valley. Spanning 912 square miles and adorned with mountain ranges from 7,000 to 13,000 feet in elevation, this county embodies the essence of Colorado's natural wonders. Its diverse population of 11,703 people, including 43% of residents belonging to the vibrant Hispanic community, paints a vivid tapestry against the stunning mountain backdrop.

An Economy Embracing the Outdoors

Rio Grande County’s economic landscape is as diverse as the geographic landscapes. Agriculture, a cornerstone accounting for 37% of the economy, flourishes with 1,722 agribusinesses. Residents include retirees settling in South Fork, contributing 16% of the region’s economic impact. Regional services and second homes weave into the county’s fabric, each contributing

11% of the local economy, while historic ties with tourism remain strong, constituting 7.5% of the economy.

Health Care Oasis

Rio Grande County's commitment to well-being shines in the health care sector. The county boasts the region's highest number of registered nurses and primary care physicians, second only to Alamosa—one city whose population nearly equals all of Rio Grande County. The local hospital and clinic extend care to patients from neighboring counties, underscoring the demand for skilled health care workers.

Facing Challenges Head-On

Amidst the breathtaking beauty, Rio Grande faces challenges. Generational substance abuse has propelled many seniors back into the workforce, with over 50% of the county's children raised by resilient grandparents. Our youth, the heartbeat of tomorrow, yearn for more accessible outdoor activities but face transportation and location hurdles.

Get Involved

If you have ideas about creating a healthier community or want to learn more about the Foundation, please email Show email, program officer, or call her at 303-953-3617.

Activities In Rio Grande County

Community Harmony

Rio Grande isn't just a place; it's a community where history and culture

intertwine. Its commitment to addressing generational substance abuse, empowering youth, enhancing public health and catering to specific community needs is at the forefront. From the quaint towns of Del Norte and Monte Vista to the sprawling rural landscapes, each community adds a unique note to the community symphony.

Foundation Nurturing

The Foundation has supported Rio Grande County since 2015 with grants illuminating paths to better health care, enriching after-school programs and fostering outdoor recreation and education.

Resources

Sign up for our mailing list: Stay updated on upcoming publications, funding opportunities and events.

Program Officers



Monique N. Johnson Senior Program Officer