The Colorado Health Foundation™

The Women's Foundation of Colorado Awarded $1 Million Grant from the Colorado Health Foundation to Support Strategic Plan, Bolster Infrastructure

Reaching economic security ensures better health outcomes for Colorado women and families

DENVER, CO – The Women's Foundation of Colorado (WFCO) is thrilled to announce that the Colorado Health Foundation has awarded it a $1 million grant to support the remaining four years of its 2017-2021 strategic plan. With the grant, WFCO will enhance operations to strengthen infrastructure and leverage philanthropy to broaden its statewide reach, deepen its impact, and affirm its role as an anchor institution for the economic advancement of Colorado women and their families.

WFCO is the only statewide community foundation focused on catalyzing community to build more pathways to economic security for Colorado women. While Colorado's economy thrives, too many women are not: In 2018, not only are women still more likely to be impoverished, they earn less than men at every level of education and are more likely to suffer poor health.

"When we open opportunities for women to thrive economically there are positive ripple effects for children, families, communities, and entire economies," said Lauren Y. Casteel, president and CEO of The Women's Foundation of Colorado.

“Economic status is a leading determinant of physical, mental, and behavioral health. Women experience incredible stress when they work hard but are unable to meet their families’ needs. Our goal is to help all Colorado women achieve economic security, which leads to better health outcomes for them and their families.”

More than 260,000 Colorado women live in poverty and hundreds of thousands more live on an economic edge, in which one unanticipated expense can send them spiraling into financial turmoil. And although unemployment is historically low, wages are stagnant. According to WFCO grantee partner Bell Policy Center, when adjusted for inflation, average weekly wages have only risen $33 since 2000.

“The headlines suggest that Coloradans are flourishing financially, but as cost of living soars, many women are struggling to grow their own wages. Additionally, substantial pay disparities persist for women of color,” said Casteel. “We are thrilled with the Colorado Health Foundation’s belief in the importance of our work and generous support to help WFCO advance economic progress for all women in our state.”

In 2017, WFCO formed WAGES (Women Achieving Greater Economic Security), a programmatic body of work to advance equity through research, public policy, and direct-service grantmaking. Informed by the insights of nearly 1,300 Coloradans, WAGES helps women reach economic security by increasing access to education, job training, equal pay, paid family leave, and affordable high-quality child care.

“We believe that investing in WFCO’s strategic plan and bolstering its infrastructure for the future will bring health in reach for more Coloradans across the state. Policies such as paid family leave are not only economic issues – they are health issues,” said Karen McNeil-Miller, president and CEO of the Colorado

Health Foundation. “Systemic change takes time and it’s critical that WFCO has the resources it needs to continue pursuing gender equity in our state. We hope our grant inspires individuals, foundations, and corporations to generously fund the ongoing, essential statewide work of WFCO.”

The Colorado Health Foundation’s $1 million grant is the second grant WFCO has received in two years from leading philanthropic organizations to support its statewide work. In 2017, Women’s Funding Network awarded WFCO $150,000 for up to three years to shape public policy that will help break intergenerational cycles of poverty by addressing the needs of caregivers and their children at the same time.

About The Women’s Foundation of Colorado
WFCO is a unique community foundation creating more pathways to prosperity for Colorado women through the power of community, philanthropy, and impact. Since 1987, more than 70,000 individual gifts have helped WFCO fund more than 30 research reports, pass nearly 50 pieces of legislation, and grant more than $18 million to nonprofits in communities statewide. Visit www.wfco.org for more information about our communities of giving, including donor-advised funds, Power of Extended Philanthropy, Empowerment Council, Women Will, Dads for Daughters, and more.

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