The Colorado Health Foundation™



Creating More Flexible Processes to Meet Grantee Needs

The major historical events that mark 2020 have created far too many obstacles for Coloradans, including those working tirelessly to keep their nonprofits afloat and their services intact. We've learned firsthand – alongside our families, friends, neighbors and community partners – what it's like to live in the tight grip of an unforgiving pandemic. We've witnessed the disproportionate social, financial and health outcomes of the crisis among communities of color. We've watched civic demonstrations unfold across the nation, and we've heard loud and clear the call for us to upend the longstanding institutional and systemic racism of our country.

We understand many of our grantees, partners and nonprofits across the state have been deeply impacted by and responding to the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis and racial injustice we're experiencing as a nation. Our approach in this time of great need has been to dedicate our time, energy and resources to ensure a thoughtful approach that supports the nonprofit community as best as possible – to help open as many doors as we can – with equity at the heart of all we do.

Over the past nine months, we have been compelled to reflect on some of our grantmaking processes to better meet the current and emerging needs of Colorado communities. Keeping the grantee experience front and center, we've considered ways to enhance efficiencies across our grantmaking operations.

In the spirit of opening as many doors as we can, we increased our investment in communities in 2020 at least 25% over our initial budget to help address the unfolding and long-term implications of the pandemic. As of today, we've provided $36.8 million to support response efforts across the state in the areas of food security, housing and homelessness, primary care, mental health and well-

being, advocacy, capacity building needs and support for organizations led by or centered on people of color. We've also worked closely with intermediaries to further distribute funds into communities with the most need.

Recently implemented grantmaking processes, listed below, aim to alleviate administrative burdens, deepen trusting relationships with nonprofits, and simply make things easier for everyone involved.

In late March, we communicated about some changes to existing grants to provide grantees with additional support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those included:

- Flexibility with grant reporting requirement submissions
- Flexibility for project and capacity building grantees to use Foundation funding to meet community needs
- Grant term extensions without requiring an amendment for project delays of less than three months

As a result of our ongoing process improvement work, we also made some long-term changes this year. These include:

- Removal of line item budgets from grant agreements to allow more flexible expenditure of funds to meet grant outcomes
- Use of electronic (ACH) payments and increased use of email communication and e-signature system versus hard-copy documents
- Updated communications guidelines to provide grantees with more flexibility on sharing the news of their grant with their networks

The refinements we've made this year to our grantmaking processes reflect our ongoing commitment to the nonprofit community. This commitment comes with the responsibility to show up for Colorado communities in meaningful ways during this unprecedented time of need – now and in the months ahead.

And still, we know there’s more we can do. As we continue to look for opportunities to create better processes and supports for our grantees, we ask for your input on how we’re doing. Your Show email helps us understand more clearly the impact of our operations on grantees, partners and nonprofits, and informs our decisions around what’s working, what’s not and what else we should consider.

Our doors are always open to your feedback.

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