The Colorado Health Foundation™

Colorado Health Foundation CEO Karen McNeil-Miller to Retire in December 2026



The Colorado Health Foundation (CHF) today announced that President and CEO Karen McNeil-Miller will retire at the end of 2026 after more than a decade leading the organization. CHF's board will oversee a national search process for transitioning to a new leader.

“Karen McNeil-Miller's extraordinary leadership—rooted in equity, accountability, and community voice—has positioned the Foundation for a smooth and steady transition. After years of extraordinary service, she deserves the opportunity to step into retirement with the time, space, and good health to enjoy what comes next,” said Dr. Terri Richardson, chair of CHF’s Board of Directors. “While her shoes are impossible to fill, our strategy, equity commitments, and partnerships remain firmly in place, and our experienced and thoughtful staff will continue advancing CHF’s work without interruption. Our communities and partners can expect stability, continuity, and clear communication throughout this process.”

For over a decade, Karen has led CHF through one of the most ambitious and values-driven transformations in contemporary philanthropy. Under her leadership, CHF evolved from a traditional grantmaking institution into a nationally recognized model for equity-centered, community-responsive philanthropy—one that listens deeply, invests boldly, and holds itself accountable to the people and communities it exists to serve.

“Serving as President and CEO of The Colorado Health Foundation has been one of the greatest honors of my life,” Karen said. “Over the years, I’ve had the privilege of being out in communities across Colorado—listening, learning, and walking alongside people who are doing the hard, hopeful work of advancing health equity. Every day, I sit humbled and awestruck at the state’s nonprofit leaders and the life-changing work they engage in tirelessly. I leave this role with deep gratitude for that trust, immense pride in what we’ve built together, and full confidence in the strong values, systems, and people who will carry this work forward.”

Karen joined the Foundation after more than 10 years as president of the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, one of North Carolina’s largest private foundations, where she led its evolution into a strategic, impact-driven organization with

national influence on issues ranging from rural health to access to care. In Colorado, she brought a proven commitment to transforming philanthropic institutions from the inside out—grounding strategy in community voice, shifting power to those closest to the work, and building systems designed to last.

At CHF, Karen led the Board and staff in adopting a comprehensive racial equity framework that explicitly names racism as a structural determinant of health and embeds equity across governance, strategy, operations, investments, and partnerships. She established clear organizational cornerstones to guide every decision: creating health equity; prioritizing people of color and those with less power, privilege, or income; and ensuring Foundation decisions and strategies are informed by those CHF exists to serve. Together, these changes rewired the Foundation's culture and practice—moving equity from aspiration to action.

Karen's leadership was especially visible during moments of crisis. In 2020, she mobilized tens of millions of dollars in emergency funding and ensured that communities of color disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic guided funding decisions. That same year, as the country's racial reckoning unfolded, she convened honest listening spaces with BIPOC leaders and publicly named racism and injustice when many institutions remained silent. Her steady, values-anchored leadership helped position CHF as a trusted partner and moral voice during one of the most challenging periods in the Foundation's history.

Across her tenure, Karen has also championed long-term investments that strengthen community power, not just programs. She helped launch and grow initiatives supporting organizations that traditionally face barriers to accessing flexible capital, leadership development, real estate, reserves, and technical assistance; expanded access to culturally-rooted health and economic resources; and reimagined philanthropy's role in supporting rest, healing, and sustainability for nonprofit leaders. Among her signature contributions are the Nonprofit Executive Sabbatical Program, which redefined the importance of rest for leaders

doing hard upstream work, and the vision for CHF's Tapestry Block affordable housing campus now under construction in Denver's Uptown neighborhood.

Throughout her career, Karen has described herself as wanting to be "a different kind of leader"—one who leads with proximity, humanity, and clarity, even when the work is difficult. She takes particular pride in the many leaders she has hired, supported, and mentored who are now shaping philanthropy and community change efforts across Colorado and the country. Drawing on her earlier experience at the Center for Creative Leadership, where she spent 16 years developing expertise in leadership development, succession planning, and organizational change, Karen has consistently invested in people as the most enduring drivers of impact.

Karen's legacy at CHF is not only what the Foundation has accomplished, but how it now works: with courage, accountability, and an unwavering commitment to equity grounded in community wisdom. Her leadership has strengthened CHF's role as a bridge—across race, geography, and power—helping make health equity real for Coloradans today and for generations to come.

For more information about the executive search process, please contact Show email. For other questions about CHF, please contact Show email.

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