

Promoting Family Economic Security – Position Statement

Introduction and Background

Caring for Colorado Foundation has a history of promoting health and access to health services for individuals and families. Our new strategic plan focuses on the broader experience of families and the interrelated factors that impact child and family health both within and outside of health care. While we have long recognized that health and well-being is influenced by economic and social systems and factors, we want to move forward with clearly stating our position that family economic security is critical for the overall health and well-being of children and families.

Many protective factors impact health and well-being, including economic security, nurturing and attachment, positive parenting, parent/caregiver resilience, social connections, and social and emotional competence. Below, we state our position on economic security specifically – defining it as families having enough income to meet their basic monthly expenses, including housing, food, transportation and child care expenses, and to save for emergencies and retirement.

Alignment with Caring for Colorado Foundation’s Purpose, Values and/or Focus Areas

Caring for Colorado’s vision is that Colorado’s children and families are happy, healthy and thriving. Our purpose is to create equity in health, well-being and opportunity for Colorado’s children and families.

Opportunities for health and well-being are significantly impacted by a family’s ability to provide safe and stable environments and relationships for children. A family’s economic security is a fundamental factor in children’s development, and families often face structural barriers and inequities to economic security and upward mobility.

Caring for Colorado Foundation’s Position

- All families need access to basic services, affordable housing, education and economic opportunities to increase the likelihood that they will be able to provide safe and stable relationships for their children and contribute to their communities.
- Achieving economic security requires long-term work and commitment; it can take as many as five generations for families who have experienced intergenerational poverty to realize full economic stability.
- We believe the official federal poverty threshold is outdated, does not accurately measure the ability to provide for oneself and one’s family, and does not account for geographic variations in cost of living or availability of employment opportunities.
- We believe Colorado families with limited incomes face systemic obstacles to upward economic mobility.

- Persistent structural racism leaves many families of color in more economically precarious situations and facing more entrenched systemic challenges to safety and security.
- We believe families need both financial resources and human and social capital to provide the experiences, resources and services that are essential for children to thrive and to develop into healthy adolescents and adults.

Potential Use of this Statement

Caring for Colorado supports programs, policies and services that foster family economic security, stability and mobility. The foundation will recognize this position in public comments and factor this position into decisions to join partnerships and/or collective actions, when weighing in on public policy, when making investment decisions and when developing strategies.

References

- National Center for Children in Poverty. (September 11, 2019). Retrieved from <http://www.nccp.org/>.
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- Colorado Center on Law & Policy. (August 29, 2019). Retrieved from https://cclponline.org/focus_area/family-economic-security/.
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