



An Introduction to the Caring for Colorado Board of Directors

Caring for Colorado is a private, grantmaking foundation, working with communities across Colorado to catalyze and accelerate change to improve the lives and health of Colorado's children, youth and families.

Our 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.

With optimism and dedication, we work to improve the lives of children and families in Colorado through collaboration, partnership, shared knowledge and grantmaking. We take a long-term view of our work as we seek to address root causes, promote prevention, improve systems, and advance policy change. **Equity is at the center of our work.** We believe that Colorado prospers when **all** our children, youth and families thrive. We intentionally direct our resources to those denied opportunity in our society. We stand together with communities to create policies, environments and systems that support the goal that **every** child in Colorado has love, stability, support, and opportunity.

Board Practices and Expectations.

The Caring for Colorado Board of Directors is the governing body of the organization, setting policies and ensuring that the organization is managed in a way to meet its mission and follow all legal requirements.

The Board is designed to represent the interests of children, youth, and families throughout Colorado. Therefore, a diverse range of experience, background, race/ethnicity, professional skills and community knowledge is prioritized.

Caring for Colorado has an annual operations budget of around \$3 million, an annual grantmaking budget between \$7-\$9 million annually; 2 offices; 15 staff; and a statewide agenda. Caring for Colorado is a 501c4 organization.

The Caring for Colorado Board of Directors meets 4 times per year generally in the foundation's Denver office. One of these meetings is a multi-day Board Retreat, rotating to different communities in Colorado. Virtual attendance is possible, but in-person attendance is preferred.

Primary board functions include:

- Monitoring the financial performance of the organization
- Determining an annual spending allocation from the endowment
- Approving an annual budget
- Reviewing organization policies
- Developing board policies and positions

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- Approving a regular strategic plan for the organization
- Consulting on philanthropic approaches and grant awards with staff
- Hiring and evaluating the chief executive officer.

The board delegates the operations of the foundation to the chief executive officer.

Membership on at least one Caring for Colorado committee is required. The CFC committees include:

- Philanthropy (meets 4 times per year)
- Finance and Investment (meets 4 times per year)
- Audit (meets 1 time per year)
- Governance (meets 1 - 2 times per year)
- Nominating (meets 2 times per year)

Board terms are for four years with the ability to renew one time (for a total of 8 years).

As a statewide foundation, we strive to have at least one third of the Board reside in rural/frontier communities.

Unlike many non-profit boards, the Caring for Colorado Board of Directors does not require a financial contribution or fundraising by its members.

Essential Roles of CFC Board Members:

- 1) Steward philanthropic resources** – Board members are entrusted to care for the foundation’s philanthropic resources to the best of their ability during their time on the board. This means making decisions about policies, practices and investments that will have positive impact on the foundation and the communities it serves today and in the future.
- 2) Show up and participate** – The work of the foundation is complex and takes time to learn. Therefore, showing up for every meeting is important to understanding the work of the foundation and for being an effective board member. Participation on at least one foundation committee is encouraged as it helps members have a stronger understanding of the organization and connection to the work.
- 3) Share expertise** – Board members bring rich personal and professional experiences and expertise to the Board. Sharing wisdom and applying learnings enriches the decision making of the board.
- 4) Continuously learn** – No foundation board member knows everything. Philanthropy is a field that is dynamic and is built to respond in flexible and innovative ways. Time on the Board is an opportunity to learn about many aspects of community needs, strengths, resources, and opportunities throughout Colorado.

- 5) **Have a philanthropy mindset** -- Rather than approaching our work as a charity (meeting current needs), Caring for Colorado strives to use our resources to create systemic change to complex problems. A philanthropy mindset means taking risks to try new approaches, investing in innovative ideas, digging into complex issues to fund root causes, and seeding projects/programs with the intent that early learnings will shape work that is sustainable and/or scalable.
- 6) **Look ahead** – Board members should take a long-term view. This is as true for grantmaking and community engagement strategies as it is for investments and financial stewardship. Take opportunities to anticipate how community needs may change over time. Planning also applies to any changes that may be needed in board governance practices.
- 7) **Think critically and ask questions** – Board members should ask questions and challenge assumptions in the spirit of making the best decisions possible for the organization.
- 8) **Stay ethical and legal** – There are three overarching duties when it comes to serving on a foundation board:
 - a. **Duty of Care** – Caring for the interest of the foundation in terms of its management, investments, and pursuit of philanthropic interests. This includes staying aware of the foundation’s business operations, investment performance, attending board meetings fully prepared and ready to engage in discussion and maintaining an understanding of the legal requirements that govern foundations.
 - b. **Duty of Loyalty** – Serving in the best interests of the foundation above any personal interests. This includes avoiding conflicts of interests and abstaining from voting or attempting to influence the outcome if a conflict is present.
 - c. **Duty of Obedience** – Following the rules, both the internal rules of the foundation such as by-laws and policies and the external laws and regulations that govern foundations so as not to jeopardize the foundation’s tax-exempt status.

Board Culture

The Caring for Colorado Board Members recognize their privilege and responsibility in working to direct resources to address complex community health needs. To do this well, the Board operates in the following ways:

- Showing up as a positive, hopeful body of people working on community-informed solutions.
- Uncomfortable with the power and privilege afforded foundations and therefore works to make decisions and develop policies that minimize power dynamics or biases in decision making.
- Listening and learning from a place of curiosity and open-mindedness.
- As much as possible, working toward consensus in Board decisions.
- Lending personal and professional expertise to strengthen the organization.

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- Continually examining the alignment of foundation purpose and values with CFC decisions and opportunities.
- Relying on the expertise of the professional staff to conduct the day-to-day business of the organization.
- Sharing an appreciation and philosophy of the importance of government and the non-profit sector in meeting needs and promoting positive social change.
- Embracing the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion; leading with these values and intentions.
- Bringing a diversity of opinion and experience when making decisions. Embracing alternative viewpoints and believing in constructive dialogue to arrive at the best decisions.

Resource: Putnam Consulting Group, 10 Essential Roles of Foundation Board Members, 2016