

## Statewide Philanthropy Program Evaluation

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

September 2021



**RESULTS LAB**

ACCELERATING IMPACT

## Context & Background

Caring for Colorado Foundation (CFC) works to create a more equitable approach to grantmaking, providing easier access to funding and addressing power dynamics between funders and applicants/grantees. As part of its ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) journey, CFC remains committed to learning about themselves, their processes, and their grantees. Through this commitment to learning and improvement, CFC launched a partnership with ResultsLab in December 2020 to evaluate the Statewide Philanthropy Program which works within the focus areas of Healthy Beginnings, Healthy Youth, Strong and Resilient Families, and Public Policy Advocacy. As the third-party

evaluation partner, ResultsLab led all phases of the project—from the data collection to analysis—to help CFC gain a greater understanding of the successes and challenges of the Statewide Philanthropy Program.

This executive summary provides a brief description of the evaluation process and key findings from the data. CFC hopes that learning from grantee organizations will serve as one step in achieving the Foundation's purpose of creating equity in health, well-being, and opportunity for Colorado's children and families.

## Learning Questions

Through the evaluation of the Statewide Philanthropy Program, CFC sought to answer the following questions:

- To what extent does CFC funding reach organizations that reflect the populations we aim to benefit?
- Is CFC funding building capacity of various types of organizations (from grassroots to larger organizations)?
- Is the grantmaking process accessible and low-burden?
- To what extent do grantees feel that CFC is a strong partner (in their work and in the field)?
- Are organizations gaining valuable connections through their relationship with CFC?
- To what extent and in what ways have CFC grantees been able or unable to build capacity as a result of funding?
- Are organizations thinking about their approach/work differently? What has contributed to this?

## Recommendations for the Statewide Philanthropy Program

During the evaluation process, nonprofits shared many different ideas and suggestions for CFC to further optimize its statewide grantmaking program. ResultsLab synthesized those ideas and brought them together with overall recommendations for CFC to consider when exploring new grantmaking methods and approaches.

**ResultsLab proposes the following recommendations:**



**Advocate** for organizations by understanding their needs: Continue to give organizations the opportunity to share their perspectives and voice. Hear what they have to say and use your influence to be a sounding board across the foundation community.



**Convene** like-minded organizations to facilitate sharing of ideas: Bring organizations together in an intentional manner that will provide the space for organic collaboration and dialogue.






**Collaborate** across the funding community: Work with other funders to simplify the grantmaking process for nonprofits. Collaborate to create similar processes (as appropriate) that will allow for more accessible applications for nonprofits.



**Optimize** funding structure to allow for accessible, high-value, and high-impact grants: Continue efforts to simplify the grantmaking process. Allow organizations to demonstrate their impact in a way that is meaningful to them.

# Methodology

TOOL	PURPOSE	TARGET AUDIENCE	TIMING
 Feedback Survey	Gain an understanding of nonprofits' perception of the grantmaking process, CFC's partnership, and suggestions for improvement	Applicants and current/recent grantees	March- April 2021
 Focus Groups	Further explore themes from the feedback survey with the CFC staff and current grantees	CFC Statewide Philanthropy team and current grantees	May- June 2021
 Demographic Survey	Better understand the demographic composition of grantees	Current grantees	June 2021

ResultsLab used the following general criteria to classify nonprofit organizations:

## Grassroots and non-grassroots organizations:

Budget size was the primary factor used to distinguish a grassroots organization from a non-grassroots organization. Generally, organizations with a budget under \$1M were classified as grassroots.

## Urban and Rural Organizations:

Organizations located outside of the Front Range were classified as rural. All others were considered to be urban organizations.

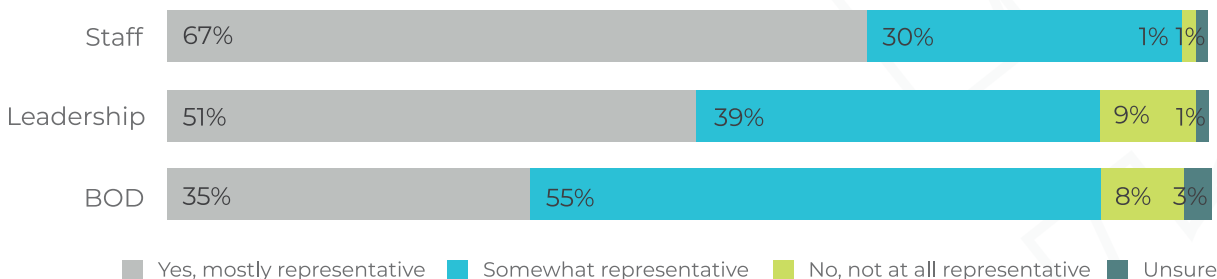
CFC staff also assisted in categorizing grantees based on their personal knowledge of the organizations.

# Key Findings: Portfolio Overview

## PORTFOLIO DEMOGRAPHICS OF GRANTEES

### REPRESENTATION

A majority of organizations reported that staff and leadership are mostly representative of the populations they serve. Generally, Board of Directors were seen as at somewhat representative of the communities served.



Source: CFC Grantee Demographics Survey, May-June 2021; n=77

## ETHNICITY & RACE

OVER  
**50%** of CFC grantees  
Employ a large proportion of  
**Hispanic, Latinx** or **Spanish** origin staff

Close to  
**HALF** of CFC grantees  
Reported predominantly  
**White** staff

But  
**MOST** Organizations reported  
**Modest representation**  
of other **Racial Groups**

## GENDER

MOST  
**Organizations' Staff**  
Identify as **cis female**



**Agender, gender fluid, and transgender**  
identities were **less represented**

## ABILITY

The **most prevalent**  
**challenge** faced by  
grantee staff were



**long-term mental**  
**health conditions,**  
such as:

**ANXIETY &**  
**DEPRESSION**



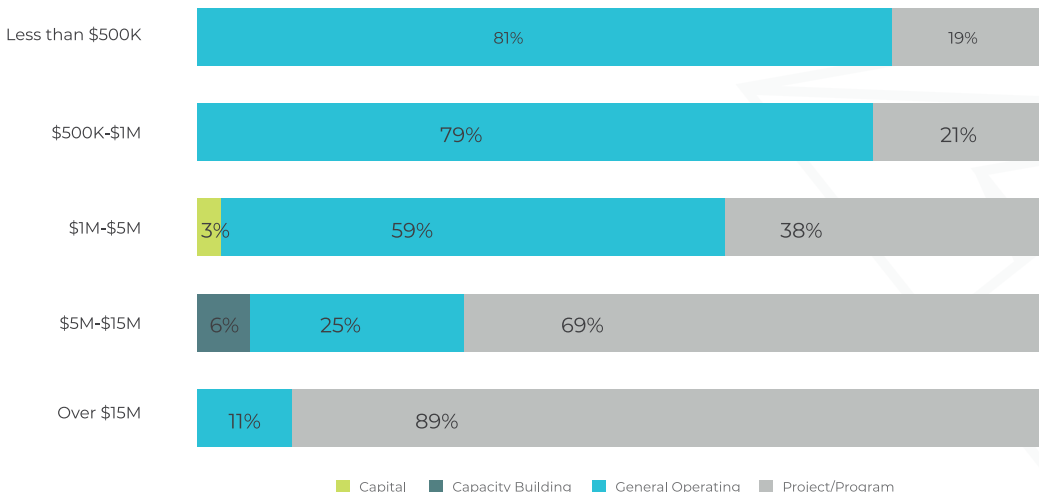
## FUNDING USE

OVER  
**3/4** of the CFC  
portfolio  
was dedicated to organizations  
with **budgets under \$5M**



and OVER  
**HALF** of grantees  
**Served in urban settings**

Most small to mid-sized organizations received general operating grants, while larger nonprofits received project/program specific funding.



Source: CFC Fluxx database, 2019-2021 grantees; n=204

Grantees used funding in a variety of ways, with about 40% dedicating funds to capacity building. Both grassroots and non-grassroots organizations built capacity for growing/scaling programs, and non-grassroots organizations also used funding to fill budget gaps.



Sources: CFC Grantee Satisfaction Survey, March 2021; n = 71

## Key Findings: Grantmaking Process

### GRANT APPLICATION

Most grantees and applicants found the new application to be low-burden: **accessible, simple to understand, and feasible to complete on time.**

Grantees noted that additional improvements could further reduce burden: **aligning questions with other foundations, finding simpler ways for grantees to tell their story (e.g. video), and eliminating character limits.**

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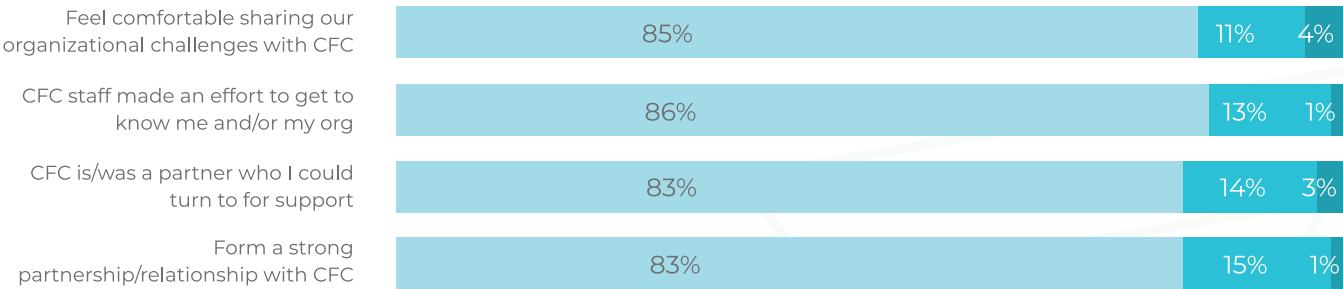
*They just wanted enough [financial information] to make a decision, enough to hold us accountable, and not so much in the weeds.*

Urban Grassroots Org

”

### PARTNERSHIP

Grantees feel a **strong sense of partnership** with CFC.



Sources: CFC Grantee Satisfaction Survey, March 2021; n = 71

Agree/Strongly Agree    Neither    Disagree/Strongly Disagree

Over 80 percent of grantee survey respondents reported feeling **comfortable sharing organizational challenges** and turning to CFC for support. They also believed CFC worked to **intentionally build relationships with grantees.**

“

*They came into our community [...]. You don't always get people who spend the time to come out [here].*

Rural Non-Grassroots Org

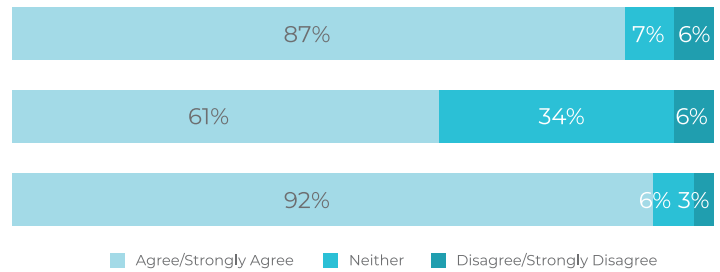
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Grantees appreciated CFC's **recognition of their expertise and knowledge** of the field but were less certain about CFC's presence in the community.

CFC recognizes my organization's knowledge, expertise, and value in the community.

CFC is generally present in my community.

CFC understands the field in which I work.



Sources: CFC Grantee Satisfaction Survey, March 2021; n = 71



*It's more than just writing you a check [...] it feels like a long-term investment.*

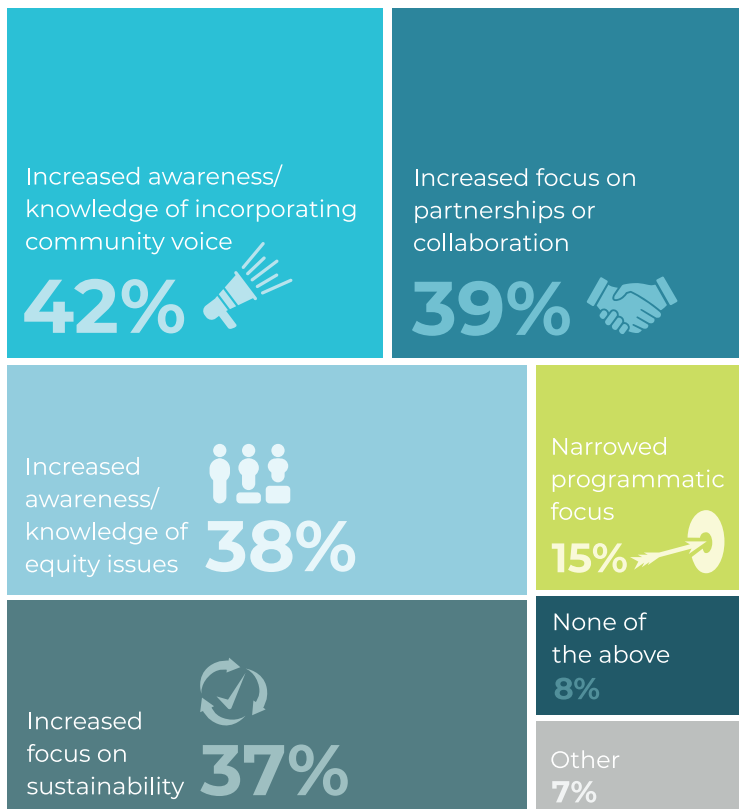
Urban Grassroots Org



Grantees offered **mixed responses** to whether or not they are gaining valuable connections through their relationship with CFC.

## INFLUENCE

Some grantees reported that CFC has influence on their approach, primarily in the areas of community voice, partnerships, and equity issues.



*We were already doing some of those [DEIJ] things, and so Caring for Colorado just helps to reinforce and support that work.*

Rural Non-Grassroots Org



Grantees **do not feel that CFC is influencing their approach** to a great extent, but CFC has helped several grantees to think about how to incorporate community voice and collaboration/partnerships into their work.

## Additional Information

For more information about the Statewide Philanthropy Program evaluation, please contact Melanie Bravo, Vice President of Philanthropy, at [mbravo@caringforcolorado.org](mailto:mbravo@caringforcolorado.org).

For detailed findings, see the following link: [CFC Statewide Philanthropy Program Evaluation: Data Portfolio](#)



**RESULTS LAB**

ACCELERATING IMPACT

Resultslab is a social enterprise that propels organizations, communities, and networks to the next level of impact through quality design and effective use of data- reinventing impact management and developing a culture of learning.

info@resultslab.org | resultslab.org | 720.699.8099