



COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER
SUCCESS STRATEGIES FOR COLORADO NONPROFITS

A background photograph showing a group of people in a workshop or meeting. In the foreground, a woman with long dark hair and glasses is looking down at a document on a table. Other people are visible in the background, some looking towards the camera and others looking away. There are coffee cups and papers on the table.

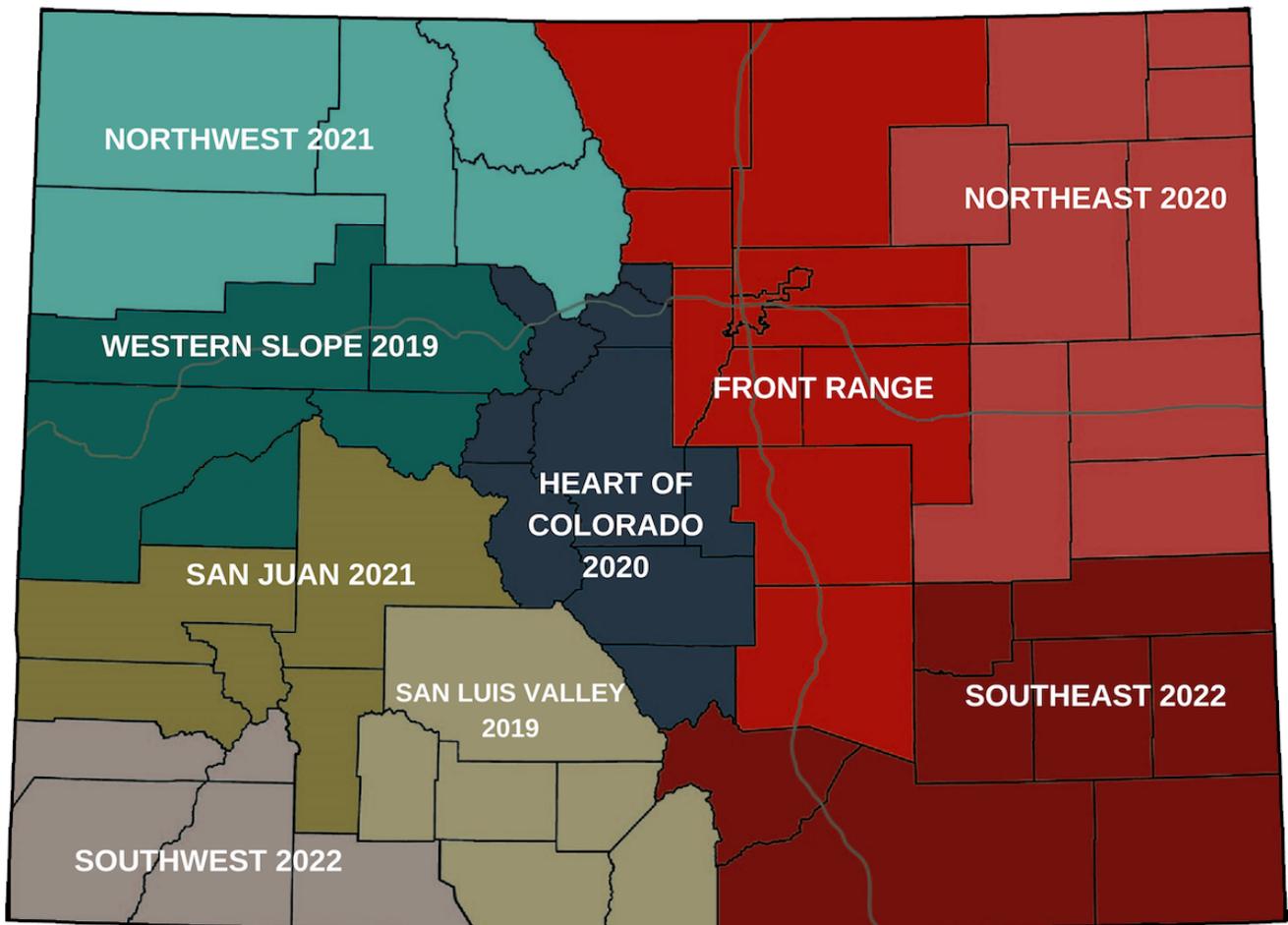
RURAL PHILANTHROPY DAYS 2019 EVALUATION REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For 28 years, local communities have worked together to coordinate Rural Philanthropy Days (RPD) in partnership with Community Resource Center, Anschutz Family Foundation, and statewide grantmakers. Each year, RPD stakeholders plan and execute two regional conferences. RPD conferences seek to bring financial, professional development, and network building resources to rural communities through a variety of programming. Since 1991, the program has demonstrated success in reaching the needs of rural nonprofits and local communities. In addition to conference outcomes, RPD evaluates funder engagement in rural communities, the flow of grant dollars to local nonprofits, and the impact of continued professional development outside of the conference structure. In 2019, RPD conferences were held in the Western Slope region in Hotchkiss and Paonia from June 12-14 and in the San Luis Valley region in Del Norte from September 17-19.

2019 RPD PROGRAM MAP



CONFERENCE STATISTICS AT A GLANCE

	Western Slope	San Luis Valley	Total
Total Conference Attendance	391	239	630
Funders in Attendance	68	62	130
Steering Committee Members	28	41	69
Steering Committee Volunteer Hours	1,237	2,548	3,785
Local Fundraising Total	\$72,575	\$51,650	\$124,225
Additional Economic Impact to Host Community	\$43,795	\$75,578	\$119,373



WESTERN SLOPE RPD
HOTCHKISS AND PAONIA
JUNE 12-14



SAN LUIS VALLEY RPD
DEL NORTE
SEPTEMBER 17-19



GRANTSEEKER FEEDBACK



Between the two conferences...

92% of respondents learned new skills at RPD that will increase their professional capacity

97% of respondents built new relationships with funders

97% of respondents built new relationships with other nonprofit leaders in their region

89% of respondents agreed that as a result of RPD, their organization will be more effective

Attendees are saying...

"Funders were so welcoming and CRC Staff really set the tone for friendly dialogues and great networking. Thank you! Wonderful regional partner connections."

"I loved RPD. It was an amazing experience and I am so grateful for the chance to participate."

"The best part of RPD was the opportunity to network with other non-profits in the region and major funders from across Colorado. Where else do you have the opportunity to sit down to dinner with a major funder and discuss your program and project ideas?"

96% of returning attendees agreed that they have implemented skills that have increased their professional capacity

90% of returning attendees agreed that they have increased access to resources that support their organization

80% of returning attendees said the relationships they built at previous RPD conferences have helped advance their organization's goals

65% of 2019 attending grantseekers were new to RPD

GRANTMAKER FEEDBACK

Between the two conferences. . .

- 97% of funders agreed that as a result of RPD, they have a better understanding of the assets and collaborations in the regional nonprofit sector
- 97% of funders agreed that they built new relationships with nonprofit organizations in the region
- 92% of funders agreed that as a result of RPD, they have a better understanding of the challenges faced by the regional nonprofit sector



Funders are saying. . .

"It was nice to put faces to emails I've had with certain individuals at the conference. The town hall was great to get a sense of the region before the conference activities and sessions."

"RPD is such a great way to bring the "Front Range" to the communities and given the face to face opportunity to discuss programs and grants."

"All regions of the state have a unique culture and set of resources, and the San Luis Valley is probably the most distinct from the Front Range. Having the opportunity to meet people on their land and tell their community stories shapes how I will work with them in the future."

Funder Engagement

At this year's RPD conferences, funders had the opportunity to engage with Steering Committee members and grantseekers in their communities via informative and casual local tours. During Western Slope RPD, funders had the opportunity to go on several walking tours of Paonia and Hotchkiss, which focused on both their growth and development as a region, as well as placed a focus on the county's rich histories. San Luis Valley (SLV) RPD offered unique and expansive regional tours which included Costilla County, Del Norte County, and an Agricultural Tour of the town of Center. These tours highlighted local voices, regional strengths, and recent advancements. Additionally, both conferences saw funders engaging with grantseekers through Meet the Funders panels. These panel sessions provide a platform for foundations to engage in dialogue with participating nonprofits on their grantmaking priorities, strategies, and goals for the future.



STEERING COMMITTEES

RPD Steering Committees are a diverse group of community stakeholders and leaders throughout the counties within that rural region. They are the primary organizing body of each RPD conference and bring a wide range of skills and leadership experience to the table, in addition to their robust understanding of the region. For over a year they volunteer their time and resources to shape the three day conference. Rural Philanthropy Days wouldn't be possible without the commitment of these passionate leaders.



Between the two conferences...

100% of Steering Committee members felt RPD helped create benefits for their community

100% of Steering Committee members felt their participation on the Steering Committee positively impacted the RPD Conference

80% of Steering Committee members felt participation on the committee was a meaningful investment of their time

Community Engagement

69 Steering Committee Members

Over **3,872** volunteer hours

\$98,465 in volunteer support*

* Based on 2019 Independent Sector data for Colorado, \$25.43/hr value of volunteer time.

"Serving on the steering committee allowed me to sit and talk face-to-face, break bread, and do real work with people who are invested in my SLV community. I gained so much understanding about the different nuances, cultures and challenges of towns across the Valley. My network is more expansive and so much deeper as a result of serving on the RPD Steering Committee"

- Amy Scavezze, SLV RPD Fundraising Chair

PRE-CONFERENCE TRAININGS

CRC and Anschutz Family Foundation staff conduct pre-conference trainings before each RPD conference at various locations in the region with a make-up session offered at the conference. The goal is to educate participants about what to expect at RPD and how to make the most of their experience. Grantseekers learn how to research the attending grantmakers and determine if they are a good fit for funding. Many grantseekers feel anxious about pitching to funders at the roundtables, and these pre-conference trainings give them a chance to practice their pitch and gain confidence telling their story.

"The training was exceptional! It made us first time participants feel so much more comfortable about the process."

Between the two conferences...

10

Pre-Conference trainings were delivered

329

total grantseekers registered

96%

of respondents felt attending a pre-conference training helped them feel more prepared for the conference

91%

of funders felt nonprofits were generally well-prepared for the roundtables



MEET THE FUNDERS

The “Meet the Funders” sessions provide an introduction to a group of Colorado grantmakers and the opportunity for nonprofit staff to ask questions. Foundation staff share information on their strategic funding initiatives, giving philosophy, and grantmaking process, with ample question and answer time. This new addition to RPD provides a unique opportunity for open dialogue - nonprofits gain valuable insight on potential partnerships with grantmakers.

97%

of grantseekers expressed a better understanding of foundations’ funding priorities as a result of the session

97%

of grantseekers felt more empowered to build relationships and follow-up with foundation staff

91%

of grantseekers believed that they will submit a stronger grant application to one or more of these foundations

18 sessions were held between the Western Slope and San Luis Valley conferences



FUNDER ROUNDTABLES

Funder Roundtables provide an opportunity for grantseekers to get immediate feedback from grantmakers on whether they are a potential good fit for funding. Each grantseeker has two minutes to give their pitch in a “speed-dating” style conversation with a grantmaking representative. The grantmaker then provides immediate feedback as to whether or not that grantseeker’s proposal aligns with their funding priorities and next steps where applicable.

46 tables were hosted by grantmaking organizations across both conferences

736 pitches to funders were recorded between the two conferences



"Not only were grantseekers able to connect with grantmakers, but several were able to discover ways of working together in grantseeker partnerships."

97% of grantmakers agreed that they built new relationships with nonprofit organizations in the region.

REGIONAL LEADERSHIP COMMITTEES

Because nonprofit education doesn't stop at RPD...

Participating on a Rural Philanthropy Days Regional Leadership Committee (RLC) presents individuals with a unique opportunity to work with a group of other leaders in their community to advance the solutions to problems often only discussed or dreamed of.

Regional Leadership Committees host regional trainings and workshops in between their RPD conferences, in addition to the statewide trainings conducted by CRC. Between these two activities and all the interim rural regions of the state, 2019 brought...

11 rural training events

269 attendees

29,523 total miles traveled to rural regions by the CRC team

Training Highlights from this Year

Northeast: 2019 RPD Kickoff Event
50 Attendees

San Juan: Strategic Planning Training Series
94 Attendees

Southwest: Regional Board Training Series Sponsorship
86 Total Attendees



BEHAVIORAL IMPACT STUDY

Participants that attended a Rural Philanthropy Days conference in 2015 or 2016 were surveyed to research the sustained impact RPD has had on participants in the one to two year period after the conference.

The survey analyzed key behavior changes and opportunities that RPD conferences created. It also measured if the goals of the conference were met after organizations had time to use the connections and resources that RPD provided. This survey is implemented every two years to gather longitudinal data; the survey to capture 2017 and 2018 will go out in the winter of 2020.



RPD is a catalyst for stronger, more effective nonprofits

- 70% write stronger grant applications
- 71% call and email funders more frequently
- 75% more effectively understand and utilize grant tools

Which part of the conference was most impactful?

“It was an incredible experience. I was fairly new to the world of nonprofits, and so it was amazing to find that there were so many people willing to encourage and equip me to continue in my work with immigrants in the mountain resort communities, where the immigrant population is so vital to our existence.”



RPD creates long lasting relationships

- 72% of respondents made three or more new connections at RPD
- After over a year, 85% of respondents have maintained these relationships

What do those relationships look like?

“Being more aware of the other organizations in our area with similar missions and demographics served, we have formed partnerships that increase efficiency and impact.”



RPD is a valuable investment for local nonprofits

- 60% submitted a grant to a funder they met at RPD
- 81% of those who submitted a grant received funding

RPD serves key leadership in the sector

- 50% of participants lead their organization
- 60% have been in the nonprofit sector for over 10 years

Why come back to RPD year after year?

“The people, other funders, and exceptional organizational skills made each of these events exceptional.”



RPD facilitates the growth of nonprofits in Colorado

- 85% were more prepared to tell the story of their organization
- 59% serve an organization with a budget under \$500,000
- 56% attended RPD for the first time in 2015-2016

As our sector grows, RPD provides a space for learning:

“The kindness, helpfulness and empathy of others. As a first-timer, it is intimidating to make the 'ask.' RPD made us feel welcome and showed us the way.”

MAPPING REGIONAL GRANT DOLLARS

CRC annually collects data on rural giving to better understand the distribution of resources across the state. The following table shows the distribution of grant dollars in 2018, comparing the rural RPD regions to the Front Range. **CRC is proud to report that the allocation of grant dollars to rural regions is proportionally higher than the population distribution**, meaning that rural Colorado nonprofits are being well supported and included in philanthropic giving.

Geographic Area	2018 Grant Dollars Awarded	Percentage of State Grant Dollars	Percentage of State Population (2018)*
All RPD Regions	\$38,899,695	21%	16.3%
Front Range	\$146,356,731	79%	83.7%

Table 1

*2018 estimates from Colorado State Demography Office

<https://demography.dola.colorado.gov/population/population-totals-counties/#population-totals-for-colorado-counties>

CRC tracked grantmaking trends for core RPD funders in Colorado between 2009-2018. During that time period, we have seen a fluctuation in regional and statewide giving. When compared to 2009, in 2018, there was a 15% increase in Statewide giving and a **15% increase in rural funding**.

	2009	2018	Percentage Increase
Statewide Funding	\$167,486,444	\$ 197,142,964	15%
Front Range Funding	\$139,968,079	\$ 114,092,981	-23%
Rural Funding	\$27,518,366	\$32,440,466.00	15%

Table 2

The significant increase in "Statewide" and decrease in "Rural" and "Front Range" funding seen in 2018 (Table 2 and Figure 1), is thought to be due to a modification in the coding of grants allowing intermediary or multi-regional grants to now be coded as statewide programs.

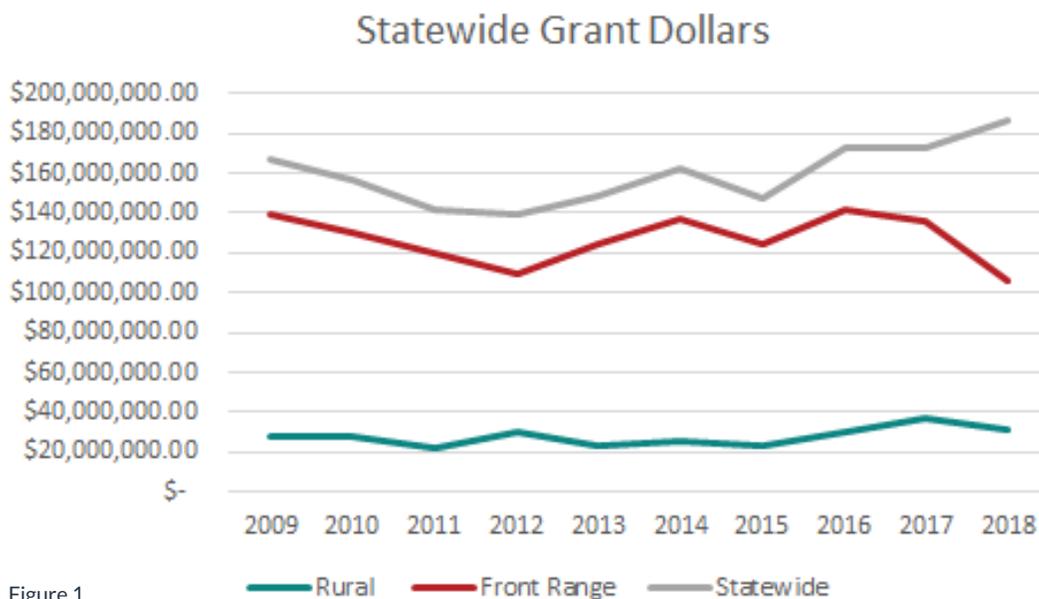


Figure 1

RPD's 2019 Core Funders are the Anschutz Family Foundation, AV Hunter Trust, Boettcher Foundation, Buell Foundation, Caring for Colorado Foundation, Corporation for National and Community Service, The Colorado Health Foundation, The Colorado Trust, El Pomar Foundation, Gates Family Foundation, Kenneth King Foundation, and Next50 Initiative.