

2024 Annual Report



COLORADO **HEALTH** INSTITUTE

coloradohealthinstitute.org

To our community,

For the Colorado Health Institute, 2024 was a year of clarity.

We clarified our mission statement:

CHI strengthens communities and systems with trusted analysis and collaborative solutions to improve health.

As a nonprofit, nonpartisan public health institute serving the Mountain West, we answer critical questions, make sense of complex issues, and support others to reach actionable solutions. In short, CHI works to improve health for all.

In 2024, CHI clearly demonstrated how we use evidence and analysis in smart, sensitive ways to lift the voices of communities that are often overlooked. In this annual report, you can read about three projects that illustrate how we provide trusted analysis and collaborative solutions to improve health:

- ▶ The **2023 Colorado Health Access Survey**, which revealed the effects of COVID policy choices on Coloradans' well-being
- ▶ The **Colorado Lotus Project**, in partnership with the Colorado AAPI Giving Circle, which integrated data and storytelling to paint a detailed picture of Colorado's diverse Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander communities
- ▶ **The Colorado Belonging Barometer**, in partnership with Belonging Colorado, which surveyed state residents to see how connected they feel to their workplaces, schools, and communities

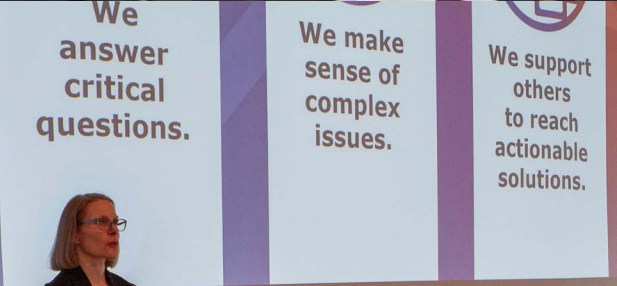
This is the type of work the community can expect from CHI as we move into an unpredictable year. CHI is your reliable partner. We are a source of trustworthy data, analysis, and sensemaking. We provide spaces to have challenging conversations.

CHI is here to help. Please call us to talk about how we can work together to improve health for everyone.



A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Sara Schmitt". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a dark blue background.

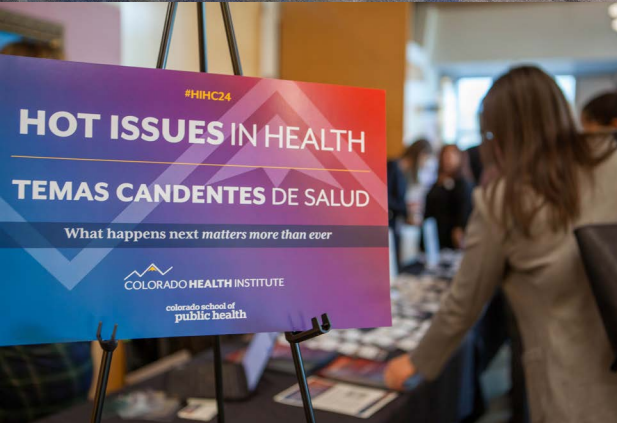
Sara Schmitt
President and CEO
Colorado Health Institute



We answer critical questions.

We make sense of complex issues.

We support others to reach actionable solutions.



2024 By the Numbers



39
Public-Facing Reports



7
Blogs



9
Webinars



1,440+
Webinar Attendees

Social Media Followers



4,592



1,962



1,721



89,171

Website Users

198,650

Website Views

Hot Issues in Health

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

- ▶ **181** In-Person Registrations
- ▶ **292** Online Registrations
- ▶ **3** Presentations
- ▶ **3** Colorado News Editors on Our Media Panel



Media panel from Left: Luige Del Puerto, Colorado Politics; Megan Verlee, Colorado Public Radio; Stephanie Daniel, KUNC

Operating Funders





CHI's Strategic Direction

CHI has served many roles since our founding more than 20 years ago. We have been a data repository, an incubator for programs like Connect for Health Colorado, and a convener of health policy experts.

In 2024, we adopted a strategic plan that builds on the skills and reputation we have earned over the past two decades to set out a clear direction for CHI in the coming years.

Our values underlie our strategic direction. The work we do forms our three pillars, which hold up our vision and mission.

We move into 2025 with a clarity of purpose — we want to provide the greatest value and have the greatest impact for the people of our state and country.



At the end of 2024, we promoted longtime CHler **Karam Ahmad** to a new role at CHI, Managing Director of Partnerships and Development. Karam's role is to work with longtime partners and new friends to see where CHI can add value to their work.

Please share your ideas with Karam:
ahmadk@coloradohealthinstitute.org or 720.382.7089



OUR VISION

All people have what they need to be healthy.

OUR MISSION

CHI strengthens communities and systems with trusted analysis and collaborative solutions to improve health.

The Colorado Health Institute is a nonprofit, mission-driven public health institute. Our work is built around three strategic pillars:



We answer critical questions.



We make sense of complex issues.



We support others to reach actionable solutions.

OUR VALUES

Accessibility. We communicate clearly and aim to make sense of issues in a way that invites participation and understanding.

Collaboration. We engage with others in a spirit of authenticity, transparency, and respect.

Curiosity. We ask questions because we don't pretend to know everything in advance — and because learning is fun.

Equity. We work to build systems that put people first, internally and in our work with others.

Integrity. We are committed to truth and accuracy in our research and in our partnerships.

NOTABLE WORK:

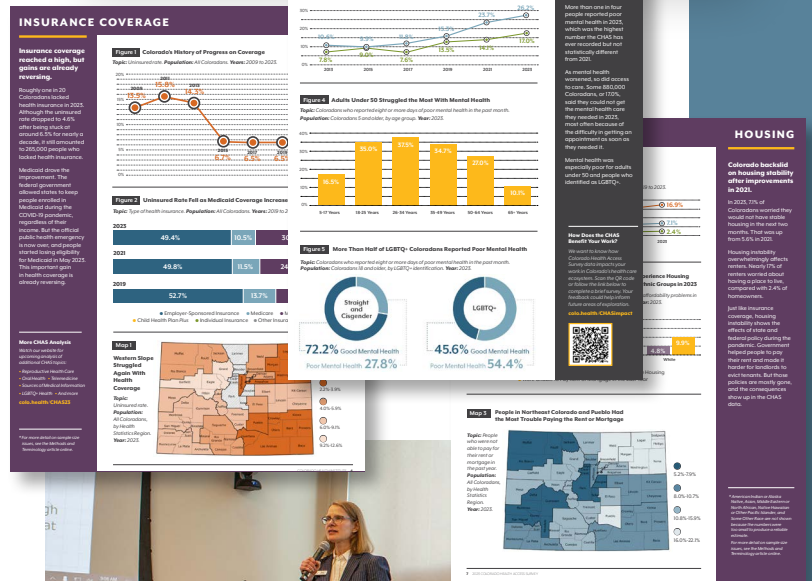
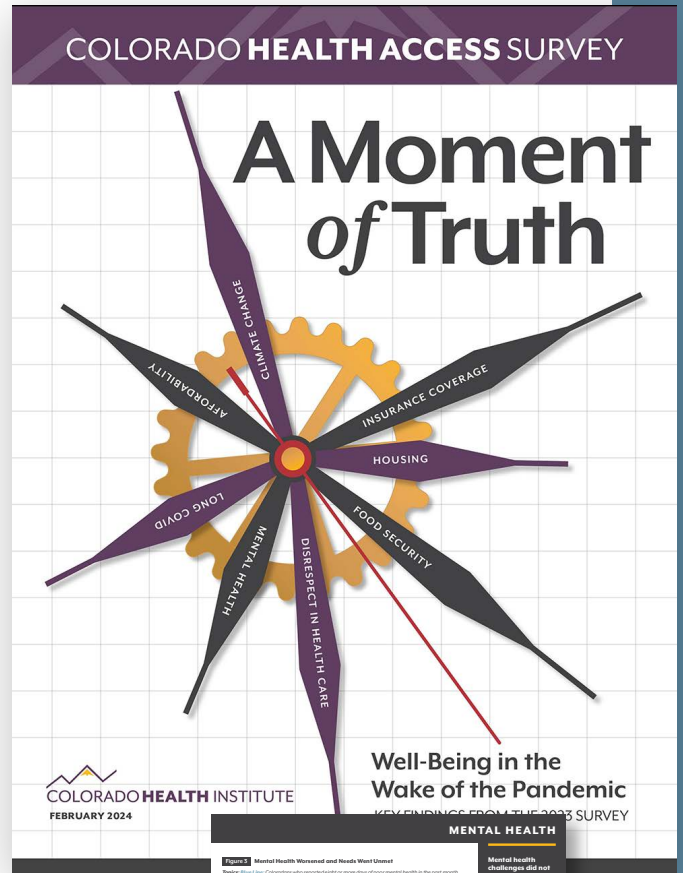
Colorado Health Access Survey

In February, CHI published the full results of the 2023 Colorado Health Access Survey (CHAS). The eighth edition of the biennial CHAS revealed substantial changes in health, health access, and economic issues stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic and the government’s response to it.

CHI analysts spent the year exploring CHAS data in depth. We published briefs with interactive graphics on topics including housing stability, LGBTQ+ health, and a detailed look at Hispanic and Latino identities.

In addition to the main report, CHI produced:

- ▶ **22 topical briefs** — the most CHI has ever published from a single CHAS
- ▶ **8 data workbooks** to make the numbers accessible to anyone
- ▶ **A public use file** to allow anyone to explore CHAS data at no cost
- ▶ **Fact sheets** for all 100 legislative districts and 21 Health Statistics Regions
- ▶ **8 Behind the Numbers stories** that explore the data through real-life experiences
- ▶ **An interactive dashboard** that lets users build their own graphics using 14 years of CHAS data
- ▶ **30 responses** to information requests from community organizations, government agencies, and researchers



CHI Data and Analysis Manager Lindsey Whittington, left, and President and CEO Sara Schmitt present findings from the 2023 Colorado Health Access Survey.



See everything at colo.health/CHAS23

Colorado Lotus Project team members at the report launch event.



NOTABLE WORK:

Colorado Lotus Project

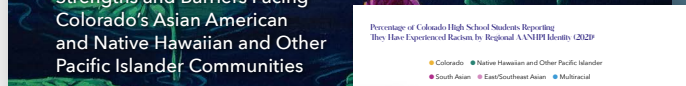
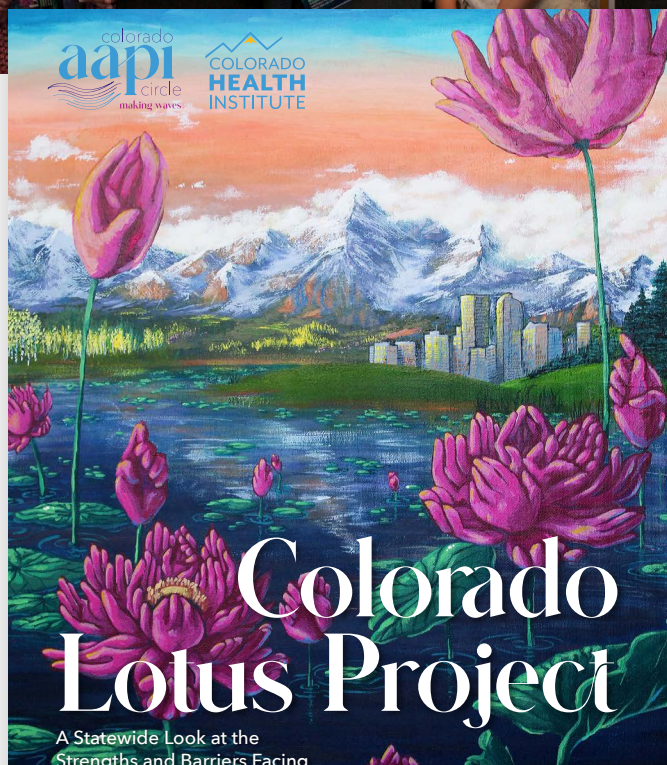
The Colorado Lotus Project is a groundbreaking effort to uplift the unique voices and experiences of Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (AANHPI) people living in Colorado. This project was created by the Colorado AAPI Circle and the Colorado Health Institute. In partnership with the community, including an advisory group of 10 AANHPI community members and leaders, the Colorado Lotus Project highlights the diverse experiences of Colorado's AANHPI communities, refuting the idea that they are one monolithic group.

In addition to the main report, CHI produced:

- ▶ **Seven fact sheets** on topics such as health, housing, and education
- ▶ **An overview flyer translated** into Burmese, Marshallese, Nepali, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Urdu, and Vietnamese
- ▶ **A data metric inventory** to help community leaders understand data about AANHPI people in Colorado
- ▶ **The Colorado Lotus Project Thought Exchange**, a survey of community members about their greatest strengths and challenges
- ▶ **An interactive state map** for Lotus Project partners to explore data by AANHPI identities



Explore all Lotus Project materials at colo.health/COlotus



AANHPI Strengths and Barriers Housing

The Colorado Lotus Project focuses its work around seven areas to better understand the strengths and disparities faced by Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (AANHPI) communities. These include demographics, health, housing, income and economic opportunity, education, crime and justice, and democracy.

This fact sheet highlights data and community voices related to housing experiences for AANHPI people living in Colorado, such as access to affordable and high-quality housing.

Spotlights

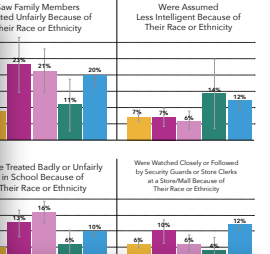
- In Colorado, AANHPI communities are experiencing housing cost burden (defined as spending more than 30% of monthly income on housing costs).** In Colorado, 27.1% of Asian and 32.0% of Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander people experience housing cost burden, which is close to the Colorado average of 27.6%. However, looking apart this data shows that most identities within the AANHPI category are experiencing a much higher burden, with rates as high as 57.0% for Bangladeshi Coloradans.¹
- Pakistani and Burmese people in Colorado are more likely to live in low-quality housing.** The Census Bureau defines low-quality housing as a structure that is missing either complete plumbing facilities or heating facilities. Data shows that Pakistani people are 10 times as likely (5.1%) to live in low-quality housing as the Colorado average (0.5%) and Burmese people are 17 times as likely (8.5%).
- Immigrants and refugees may be more impacted by housing affordability and quality.** "Most [immigrants and refugees] are struggling with housing... [They're] going to the hospital for mold [which] the landlord won't fix, [but] they can't leave the house because it's too expensive to leave" - Former community organizer who participated in a key informant interview

Colorado Lotus Project

A Statewide Look at the Strengths and Barriers Facing AANHPI Coloradans

The Colorado Lotus Project is a effort to uplift the unique voices and experiences of Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (AANHPI) people living in Colorado, and to work with the AANHPI community in a meaningful way to call attention to the need for better data and to achieve a more responsible education of resources.

For more data, or further understanding of the people behind the numbers, visit the metrics library for reports and toolkits at colo.health/COlotus

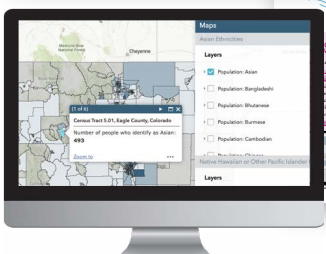


လိုဒိုကော့ လိုတပ်ရော့ မိမိနိန်း

မိမိနိန်းအတွက် လိုဒိုကော့က အားပေးချက်

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- AANHPI ဆိုသည့်အရာသည် မြန်မာ၊ ဗမာ၊ တိုင်းရင်းသားများကို ရည်ညွှန်းသည့် စကားလုံးဖြစ်သည်။
- မိမိနိန်းသည် မိမိတို့၏ စွမ်းရည်ကို မြှင့်တင်ပေးရန်အတွက် အားပေးချက် ဖြစ်သည်။
- AANHPI ဆိုသည့်အရာသည် မိမိတို့၏ စွမ်းရည်ကို မြှင့်တင်ပေးရန်အတွက် အားပေးချက် ဖြစ်သည်။
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NOTABLE WORK:

Colorado Belonging Barometer

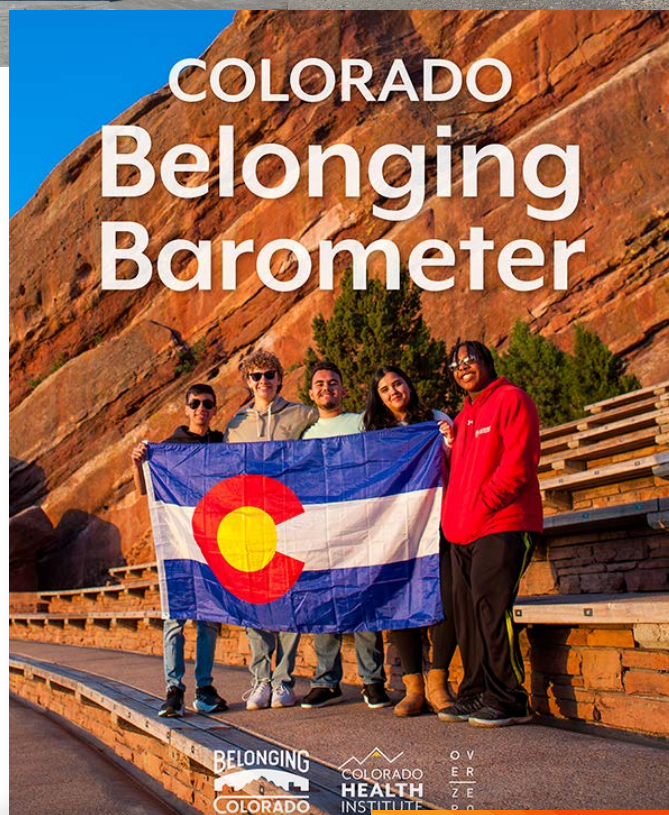
A lack of belonging can fray the fabric of society through increased loneliness, political polarization, and discrimination. A strong sense of belonging can improve people's well-being by increasing trust in one's neighbors and community members, as well as local institutions. But the concept of belonging — and how to foster it — is not widely understood.

That's why CHI, in partnership with Belonging Colorado and Over Zero, adapted the national Belonging Barometer to Colorado. The Barometer is a survey that measures the multifaceted nature of belonging, such as whether people feel they have a voice, are socially connected, and are welcomed and included.

Belonging Colorado, housed at The Denver Foundation, is using the Barometer to inform a major philanthropic campaign that aims to make Colorado a place where everyone belongs.



Explore the Colorado Belonging Barometer at colo.health/belong



Colorado Belonging Barometer

Nuances of Factors and How They May Impact Belonging

Demographic Factors

- Factor: Gender Identity**
Settings: Workplace, Child's School
Gender identity can influence a sense of belonging through the social norms and expectations of gender roles and expectations. The Colorado Belonging Barometer found that male-identifying people are more likely to experience belonging in workplaces while female-identifying people are more likely to experience belonging at a child's school. Perceptions of belonging may be affected by these social norms.
- Factor: Immigration Status**
Settings: Child's School
People who are not U.S. citizens or are without documentation may have increased fear when interacting with others at their child's school, especially figures of authority.
- Factor: Language Spoken at Home**
Settings: State
Language spoken at home may influence belonging as it can be a component of one's cultural identity and therefore create a strong sense of belonging with others who speak that same language. Alternatively, people may feel less belonging if they feel they cannot express themselves fully to others who don't speak their language, or customs.
- Factor: Race/Ethnicity**
Settings: Local Community, Workplace
Race/ethnicity is a component of cultural identity in which people may feel a strong sense of belonging. Individuals who identify as belonging if they are surrounded by others with similar traditions, languages, or customs.

Factor: Education
Settings: Local Community, Workplace, Child's School
An individual's education level may influence belonging in different ways. For example, education is often used as a credential in a workplace. Therefore, people may feel a greater sense of belonging if they are around others with similar levels of education. Alternatively, higher levels of education can lead to job opportunities, higher income, or involvement in social networks. This may influence belonging as individuals may feel better integrated into these networks or more empowered and agency.

Factor: Local Community
Settings: Local Community, Workplace, Child's School
An individual's local community may influence belonging in different ways. For example, education is often used as a credential in a workplace. Therefore, people may feel a greater sense of belonging if they are around others with similar levels of education. Alternatively, higher levels of education can lead to job opportunities, higher income, or involvement in social networks. This may influence belonging as individuals may feel better integrated into these networks or more empowered and agency.

Factor: Age
Settings: Local Community, Workplace, Child's School
Age may influence belonging in local communities due to differences in activities and engagement that happen in those settings. For example, age may influence whether one participates in sports or activities in their neighborhood or at their local recreation center. Local communities can encompass a range of day-to-day settings and perceptions of acceptance in these settings may also vary with age, which may affect belonging. Further, age may connect with the amount of time someone has lived in their local community thereby influencing belonging.

Factor: Income
Settings: State, Local Community, Workplace
Income affects a person's access to resources and opportunities, social networks, and perceptions of status, which may influence belonging.

Factor: Exclusion
Settings: State, Local Community, Workplace
Exclusion is the opposite of belonging. It is the feeling of being left out or not being part of a group. Exclusion can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness, which can negatively impact one's mental health and overall well-being.

Factor: Social Connection
Settings: State, Local Community, Workplace
Social connection is the feeling of being connected to others. It is a key component of belonging and is essential for mental health and overall well-being.

Findings

Overall, 41.3% of Coloradans felt belonging (as defined in Figure 1) in the state while 52.9% experienced belonging in their local community. The highest percentage of people experiencing belonging was reported at their workplace (67.9%) while less than half of Coloradans experienced belonging at their child's school (49.7%). On the other hand, very few people said they felt excluded in any setting, just 3.8% of Coloradans felt excluded in the state setting, however, a large portion of Coloradans experienced ambiguity. On average, across all four life settings, 37.5% of people felt ambivalent about their belonging. See Figure 2.

The percentages of Coloradans experiencing belonging in their local community and at their workplace was much higher compared with findings from the national Belonging Barometer. Only 29% of Americans reported belonging in their local communities and 38% in their workplace. These life settings were the only two included in both the Colorado and national surveys.

While this may suggest that Coloradans' communities and workplaces foster a greater sense of belonging, it is important to consider the context of the national survey. It was administered in December 2021, during a global pandemic and increasing polarization.

Higher rates of local and workplace belonging may also indicate that Coloradans have a higher rate of social connection and social support, which are key components of belonging.

Introduction

Belonging is a tapestry that is built from threads such as social connection, feeling like you can be yourself, having a voice, and others. These concepts can be complex, especially when woven together. But their complexity doesn't make them less important. Researchers have found that humans have a biological need to seek out belonging, social safety, and connection. We are born to want to belong. This is reflected in how society organizes itself. Whether it's being a member of a family or friend group, sports team, specific hobby, or the community or country we live in, "every aspect of our lives is organized around belonging to something." Belonging is, quite simply, an important part of being human.

Experiencing belonging is associated with several benefits in social fabric, such as trust in local government and other public institutions, civic participation, and positive perceptions of belonging — or feeling like you have a voice — in workplaces.

A sense of belonging and its interwoven threads are predictors for mental, behavioral, and social well-being and socioeconomic outcomes. Strong social connections, including relationships with friends, family, and community, are associated with a 50% reduction in the risk of premature death. Belonging is also associated with a 20% reduction in the risk of heart disease and a 30% reduction in the risk of dementia.

Colorado Belonging Barometer

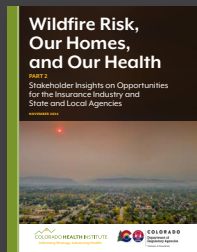
Making a Difference for Coloradans

Most of CHI's work happens behind the scenes, in partnership with others who share our vision of a world where all people have what they need to be healthy. We use our skills in facilitation, strategic planning, evaluation, analysis, and communication to make our partners' work better.

Here are some of the many organizations that partnered with us in 2024.

▶ **Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing: Cover All Coloradans.**

CHI set up and managed a community ambassador program to promote Cover All Coloradans, the no-cost health coverage program for children and pregnant/postpartum people whose immigration status keeps them from receiving Medicaid.



▶ **Colorado Division of Insurance: Wildfire Risk, Our Homes, and Our Health.**

With support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, CHI conducted a multiyear research project to help policymakers, local and state agencies, and residents to better prepare for and respond to climate-change driven disasters.

▶ **Colorado Gives Foundation: Strategic Planning.**

CHI helped this Jefferson County-focused foundation develop a theory of change to guide its work. We also gathered and analyzed data to help the foundation measure its impact.

- ▶ **Change Matrix**
- ▶ **Colorado Association of Local Public Health Officials**
- ▶ **Colorado Department of Human Services**
- ▶ **Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment**
- ▶ **CommonSpirit Health**
- ▶ **Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation**
- ▶ **Denver Department of Public Health and Environment**
- ▶ **Intermountain Health**
- ▶ **John Snow Inc./Environmental Protection Agency**
- ▶ **Kaiser Permanente Colorado**
- ▶ **Milbank Memorial Fund**
- ▶ **Speak Our Minds**
- ▶ **The Colorado Health Foundation**
- ▶ **The Denver Foundation**
- ▶ **Youth Healthcare Alliance**





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