



For public health innovation

TRAILHEAD INSTITUTE

Annual Report

2023 Year in Review &
Visions for 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Trailhead Core Business	3
Trailhead Operations	6
Core Business.....	6
2023 Accomplishments	7
2024 Growth Opportunities.....	8
Trailhead Programs Core Business	9
Core Business.....	9
Workforce Programs & Initiatives	9
2023 Accomplishments.....	11
2024 Growth Opportunities.....	12
Regional Health Connector Program	13
2023 Accomplishments.....	13
2024 Growth Opportunities.....	14
Youth Sexual Health Program	15
2023 Accomplishments.....	15
2024 Growth Opportunities.....	16
Emerging in 2024: Firearm Violence Prevention	18
Opportunities for Expansion	19
Trailhead Projects	20
Core Business.....	20
CCTSI	20
CEAL	20
REACH-OUT	21
DECIPHeR	21
Health Care Provider Training Program	22
All Projects	22
2023 Accomplishments.....	22
2024 Growth Opportunities.....	23
Trailhead Administrative Partnerships	24
Core Business.....	24
2023 Accomplishments.....	24
2024 Growth Opportunities	25
Gratitude	26
Trailhead Staff and Board of Directors.....	26
Trailhead Affiliate Staff.....	27



TRAILHEAD

Core Business

This December marks 30 years since Trailhead Institute was founded in 1993. As we reflect on our work in 2023 and envision new possibilities for growth in the year ahead, it is remarkable to pause and consider how our roots have expanded from a founding embedded in fiscal sponsorship through a powerful value of relationships and a deeper mission to advance innovation and collaboration in public and environmental health.

In the three decades since our founding, we have become a nimble and supportive systems partner working across the public health field. Today, our work supports a vast network of community-based partners, state and local entities, academic institutions, and national initiatives addressing a diverse spectrum of community health needs and the evolution of the public health workforce.

Our unique role as a public health institute is both strategic and responsive, supportive and leading, and leverages our power to rethink systems and structures that better serve individuals, organizations, and institutions who work in direct service to communities. This willingness to evolve to meet the needs of others is what enables us to grow not only as an organization, but also as individuals.

Over the last 30 years, our flagship offering of fiscal sponsorship has honed its impact through reducing barriers to information and financial resources to bolster initiatives and community-based organizations with greater autonomy, decision-making power, access to funding, and the ability to focus on their missions. As the Administrative Partnership Program continues to deepen its learning and practice of building administrative equity, Trailhead is modeling how fellow agencies can evolve their administrative practices to build relationships and center collaboration with communities in ways that build collective power to challenge the underfunded, undervalued need for public health.

Our relationship building strength has also enabled us to grow our work in community engagement and strategic programs, through which we continue to serve as a bridge to resources and play a critical role in facilitating collaboration between organizations working on public health issues.

While the focus areas of Trailhead's work are diverse and ever-evolving, a notable and unifying tether through our programs is a strive to transform systems. We see this reflected in a myriad of ways – through leading coordinated efforts to strategically develop Colorado's new and evolving public health workforce as the field rebuilds from the COVID-19 pandemic; reimagining how to improve young people's health and well-being by evolving the delivery of sexual health education in Colorado; providing support and advocacy for workforces that are building better connected health systems across every region of our state; and by moving collaboratively to engage funders and partners across sectors in meaningful action to prevent firearm-related death and injury in Colorado.

As we begin a new decade in Trailhead's history, we appreciate all the ways that our organization has grown, and continue to explore the intersections and impact of our work. As we move into 2024, we are excited to continue working with Weav Studios to further define our commitment to equity within the public health landscape and build understanding of how we are achieving our vision of ensuring all people have the opportunity to be healthy and live in a healthy environment



TRAILHEAD OPERATIONS

Core Business

At Trailhead, Operations is the work of (re)designing and maintaining the structures needed to support the inner processes of the organization so that they flow and evolve mutualistically. This means that a healthy organization is inseparable from healthy employees. The Operations budget reflects this commitment by:

- Supporting Trailhead staff and Affiliate staff in their ability to understand, accomplish, and articulate their work and the work of the whole to others and themselves (Communications).
- Providing an exceptional organizational culture and employee experience based on mutualism, the recognition that employee wellness is interconnected with organizational wellness (HR & Benefits).
- Establishing clear and easy-to-follow systems that allow for cohesion across all of our work (Internal Organizational Logistics).

In 2023, we had the opportunity to implement the new processes and procedures we developed in 2022. This year, Trailhead welcomed 8 new employees, ending the year with 23 Trailhead staff and 14 Affiliate staff. We continue to lean on effective and consistent practices as we grow and scale. This helps us balance new demands with measured, sustainable and regenerative growth.

Defining Trailhead's Theory of Change

Trailhead staff and board launched work with Weav Studios in 2022 to support the organization in developing an explicit racial justice framework across our systems, structures, and practices to better serve our communities. In January 2023, we formed a staff/board "Design Team" to assess the viability of a community advisory board to inform Trailhead's work. This Team reached the critical conclusion that Trailhead first needed to define the organization's Theory of Change, which would in turn inform the next strategic plan, and so a new staff/board Design Team convened to support this new focus. The purpose of the project is to:

- Articulate a clear shared theory of change grounded in racial justice and equity and regenerative organizational principles;
- Support our staff and board members collectively in thinking strategically about our purpose, goals, what work we choose to do, and how we do our work;
- Help us intentionally prioritize our time and capacity to best meet our individual, team, and organizational goals while maintaining our commitment to staff wellness and regenerative principles.

Trailhead's work with Weav will continue into 2024, and will engage all members of Trailhead's staff and board at various stages of the project, using the rotating Design Team model and other means of engagement.

2023 Accomplishments

What we're proud of:

Trailhead staff came together for an annual all-staff meeting in April, where the team identified how the organization's core values show up in daily practice. Our hybrid-remote team will continue to meet in person once annually, and additionally in teams as needed.

We continued to improve opportunities for virtual connection with regular monthly staff and team meetings, drop-in Virtual Support, and cross-team connection points through semi-monthly Accountability Groups. These groups allow for employees to share their key work with one another as well as explore guiding questions around strengths and the practice of ethical communication.

The Operations Team also supported several organization-wide and program-related initiatives throughout 2023, noted below.

Advancing a Framework of Administrative Equity

In 2022, Trailhead was awarded a subgrant from the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) to advance administrative equity. Utilizing funding from the Health Equity Technical Assistance (HE-TA) grant, Trailhead engaged in a cross-program collaboration to develop an [Introduction to Administrative Equity](#) report.

- Together, staff from Trailhead's Operations, Finance, Strategic Programs, Workforce, Administrative Partnerships, and Directors teams worked collaboratively to identify equitable philosophies, policies, practices, and procedures across Finance, Contracts and Procurement, and Human Resources functions.
- The Administrative Equity Guide serves to improve how agencies collaborate with and build the power of communities and community-based organizations by alleviating barriers to accessing information and financial resources and promoting inclusive workplaces.
- Trailhead staff have presented the Introduction to Administrative Equity report to several sectors, including to:
 - Strategic Scholars at the National Network of Public Health Institutes' (NNPHI) annual meeting in May.
 - The Roaring Fork Certified Public Manager Program in Aspen, Colorado in partnership with CU Denver's Colorado School of Public Affairs. Attendees included members of the local police department, library, fire rescue station, fire department and city hall.

This work is continuing through the development of a Program Office Report: Considerations and Toolkit. Trailhead acts as a fiscal sponsor and program office home for several existing initiatives and has upcoming opportunities to expand this work. Through the HE-TA grant, Trailhead worked with Government Performance Solutions, Inc (GPS) to highlight best practices and areas for expansion.

Expanding Our Office Footprint

Trailhead has expanded its office footprint through the addition of a 5th dedicated office and also signed a new 2-year lease. We welcomed a new Office Coordinator to our Operations Team and anticipate more staff being in the office more consistently.

Supporting Key Initiatives

The Communications team supported the release of numerous reports including:

- [Colorado's 2023 State of Adolescent Sexual Health Report](#) lead by the Youth Sexual Health Program.
- [RESTORE: Colorado's Blueprint for Innovative Public Health Workforce Development](#) and [Engaging Military Veterans in the Public Health Workforce – A National Literature Review and Environmental Scan](#) lead by Workforce Programs & Initiatives.
- [Introduction to Administrative Equity](#), a cross-program collaboration engaging Operations, Finance, Strategic Programs, Workforce, Administrative Partnerships, and Directors teams.
- [Colorado's Public Health Roundtable on Firearm-Related Violence Prevention](#), co-authored by Trailhead Institute and Wellstone Collaborative Strategies.

Expanding Employee Benefits

Trailhead has continued to expand its robust benefits offerings to both attract new employees and retain the great employees that we have. Notable changes include:

- Covering 50% of dependent costs for medical, dental, and vision insurance.
- Offering more comprehensive dental insurance in 2024.
- Providing eligible Employees with up to 12 weeks of paid parental leave.
- Increasing the organization's 401(k) match to 100% up to 10%.
- Adding two paid holidays to 2024 - Juneteenth and an additional day in July for Summer Break.
- Access new benefits, including options for discounted pet insurance and BenefitHub.

Exploring Evaluation Efforts

Trailhead's Evaluation Team spent the majority of this year exploring alternatives to the organization's internal assessment, the Organizational Health Index, and conducting an environmental scan of the various external evaluations happening across programs. All Trailhead staff were engaged in informing these efforts.



Celebrating Board Impact and New Committees

Trailhead's Board of Directors retained 11 members through August, with two members leaving after serving two 3-year terms.

- Trailhead celebrated the contributions of Dr. Mary Davis (Evaluator) and Tom Gonzales (Director, Larimer County Public Health) at the Annual Board Meeting in August.
- Trailhead's Board launched a new Board Development committee to set guidelines around Board giving and develop a gift acceptance policy embedded in equity principles.

2024 Growth Opportunities

What we hope to sustain, evolve, or grow in 2024:

- The Operations Team is planning to expand the organization's communications supports. These efforts include:
 - Hiring a Communications Coordinator by March 2024 to focus on social media and content development.
 - Bringing on a strategic communications agency in 2024 to meet Trailhead's growing need for earned media and awareness.
 - Budgeting for additional communication contractors to support storytelling as our programs and projects reach out into broader communities.
- Building the capacity of all Trailhead teams to lead and participate as active partners in hiring processes.
- The Operations team is preparing to hire part-time Operations staff to deepen storytelling efforts and support strategic messaging and support with HR and Operations needs.
- The Board Governance and Development committees collaborated on Board recruitment in the fall, with anticipation of bringing on new members in early 2024.



TRAILHEAD PROGRAMS

Core Business

Trailhead Institute Programs are the public health implementation programs dedicated to evolving with communities as they provide systems-level, capacity-building services tailored to advance the public health goals and missions of the community and the field. Trailhead has successfully developed and implemented programs across the state and the country and is a trusted partner in work that spans all 64 Colorado counties. Within this broad scale, Trailhead Programs strive to address the needs of our partners, taking into account the uniqueness of each community and how this informs the systems within which they operate. Trailhead's extensive experience in public health programs speaks to our expertise in providing excellent community engagement, capacity building, and project or program management.

The programs across Trailhead include Workforce Programs & Initiatives, Youth Sexual Health Program, and Regional Health Connector Program. The Strategic Programs Team oversees the continued movement and growth of Trailhead Programs through building connection and understanding across programs, building upon each program's strength and finding strategic opportunities for cross program collaboration and growth.

Workforce Programs & Initiatives

Trailhead Institute's [Workforce Programs & Initiatives](#) (WPI) activate public and environmental health career entry pathways and innovative workforce sustainability strategies and help develop and advance the evolving public and environmental health workforce. With an approach oriented toward equity and inclusion, WPI efforts engage partners across multiple sectors and interdisciplinary areas that influence public and environmental health. The efforts are focused on reinforcing a healthy workplace and healthy workforce since people power public health.

WPI is leading the following programs and initiatives in Colorado:

Colorado Public Health Workforce Collaborative

The [Colorado Public Health Workforce Collaborative](#) (CPHWC) is an initiative launched by Trailhead Institute convening a partnership of organizations providing structure and support for the field of public health through coordination and collaboration across partners leading workforce initiatives in the state of Colorado. The collaborative, consisting of 20+ statewide members, has together developed [RESTORE: The Colorado Blueprint for Innovative Workforce Development](#), a tool that prioritizes equitable recruitment and retention, career pathways, and actionable data for the future of the public and environmental health workforce.

The Colorado Community Health Worker Training Program

Trailhead serves as the project administrator for the Health Resources and Services Administration Community Health Worker Training Program, a multiyear, national initiative where grantees are supporting training and apprenticeship efforts for community health worker (CHW) workforce.

Working in partnership with [Patient Navigation and Community Health Worker Training Program](#) (PNCT) and [The Alliance of Colorado Community Health Workers, Patient Navigators and Promotores de Salud](#) (Alliance), the program's objectives are to recruit people to the CHW workforce, place trainees in CHW apprenticeships and field placement internships, deliver upskilling learning opportunities, and support the job placement of CHW trainees.

Public Health Infrastructure Grant

[The Public Health Infrastructure Grant](#) (PHIG) is a groundbreaking program funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as part of an unprecedented \$3.84 billion investment to support critical public health infrastructure needs of public health departments across the United States.

As a Public Health Infrastructure Grant partner, Trailhead is leading a fully collaborative Hub model in partnership with Colorado Health Institute, Montana Public Health Institute, and Public Health Institute at Denver Health. As one of nine Regional Innovation Hubs under the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) Hub Model, Trailhead and fellow Hub partners are providing the technical assistance serving PHIG recipients in Region 8 including Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming.

The Hub model is a proven framework that has evolved over 20 years to leverage local expertise, foster public-private partnerships between institutes and governmental public health systems, and foster multi-sector solutions. Together, the *Region 8 – Innovate!* Hub will provide technical assistance (TA), training, and strategic solution-building around topics such as workforce recruitment, retention, and advancement; data use and modernization; and the public health core competencies.

Colorado Public Health Works Program

[Colorado Public Health Works](#) is a groundbreaking AmeriCorps Apprenticeship program providing career entry into the field of public health from local communities throughout Colorado. This innovative program marks the first time AmeriCorps has integrated with a registered apprenticeship program in Colorado and is paving new pathways into the field for Colorado's next generation of public health leaders.

Through the Colorado Public Health Works program, AmeriCorps members serve in regions throughout the state and many are simultaneously pursuing certification as a Community Health Worker through a U.S. Department of Labor registered apprenticeship designed to increase the capacity of local public health agencies.

Engaging Military Veterans in the Public Health Workforce

To better understand the needs of Veterans transitioning to civilian life and the capabilities and value that Veterans can bring to the public health workforce, Trailhead Institute's Workforce Programs & Initiatives, [Amaka Consulting and Evaluation Services](#) (ACES), [Black Ladies in Public Health](#) (BLIPH), and Informing Veterans and Dependents (IVAD), designed and conducted a national literature review and innovative environmental scan leveraging extensive research and discussions with veterans across all branches of the military.

The resulting [literature review and environmental scan](#) move toward collaboratively defining strategies to support employers and the public health community with engaging military veterans in the public health workforce.

2023 Accomplishments

What we are proud of:

Colorado Public Health Workforce Collaborative

- The Workforce Collaborative has begun action planning concerning equitable recruitment, retention, career pathways, and workforce data. The collaborative continues to meet monthly for shared learning around public health workforce topics. Trailhead reached employers and learners by delivering workforce development presentations online, at Colorado at Public Health in the Rockies, and at the national APHA meeting in Atlanta, Georgia concerning the Blueprint and current programs.

HRSA Community Health Worker Training Program

- In the first year of this program, creating a quality infrastructure was valuable. Trailhead was able to enact cross-organizational partnership practices to ensure the successful onboarding and stipend payments of new trainees in collaboration with the Patient Navigation and Community Health Worker Training Collaborative. With support from the Alliance of Colorado Community Health Workers, Patient Navigators, and Promotoras de Salud, community members and partners were engaged to assure successful outreach, program access, and cultivate interest among potential trainees reaching over 100 learners.

Public Health Infrastructure Grant

- Trailhead led the way as the first region to host a convening for the Public Health Infrastructure grant. Held at the Trailhead/Colorado Health Institute offices, the convening engaged national partners, institutes, and state and local grantee recipients to discuss opportunities concerning the public health workforce, data, and capabilities. In the first year of this program, creating a quality infrastructure across three public health institutes as hub partners delivering technical assistance was important to assure that regional grantee requests are received, collaboratively discussed, and fulfilled with richness and depth.

Colorado Public Health Works

- As the sponsoring agency, Trailhead continues to refine its approach for onboarding new host sites to be more efficient and effective amidst robust documentation required. We also include mentors for AmeriCorps members and apprentices in monthly shared learning sessions and are making designated efforts to offer resources that support quality mentorship.

Exploring Short-Term Workforce Development Projects

- Trailhead supported a local public health agency partner in assessing its workforce capacity and opportunities for staffing. Trailhead, in partnership with CDPHE, also convened nonprofit hospitals around the opportunity to serve as host sites for apprentices, including designing and facilitating a shared learning series about the opportunity. These both represented a chance to explore opportunities to engage in short-term, contracted workforce development efforts.

2024 Growth Opportunities

What we hope to sustain, evolve, or grow in 2024:

- We aim to continue engaging trainees in the HRSA CHW Training Program with at least 80 more trainees for the current program year.
- We hope to strategically grow our engagement with employers to increase the number of host sites and internships sites that are available to learners that are excited about public health.
- Efforts supporting the public health infrastructure will continue to evolve where more proactive technical assistance can be offered as we start to identify and experience trends concerning the assistance that is being requested.
- Action planning for the Workforce Collaborative will be sustained during 2024 with released resources and opportunities for the public health community to restore the workforce.



Regional Health Connector Program

Healthcare and service providers are increasingly looking outside their clinics to improve the health of their patients' communities. To support a better-connected system to improve the health and well-being of all people living in Colorado, the [Regional Health Connector Program](#) (RHC) established and supports an innovative, community-based workforce that is dedicated to connecting clinics and primary care providers to local behavioral health, public health, social services and other community organizations.

Regional Health Connectors (RHCs) are hosted in every region of Colorado and are successfully developing and supporting these clinic-community linkages because they live, work, and play in the regions they support.

2023 Accomplishments

What we are proud of:

- The Regional Health Connector program continues to be community-led in all aspects of RHCs' work to amplify assets and address regional health needs.

Program Sustainability and Advocacy Efforts

In June, Governor Polis signed House Bill 23-1244 providing \$1.5 million in part-time funding for the Regional Health Connector Program in 2023 and 2024.

- Advocacy efforts were supported by the RHCs themselves, RHC supervisors, and host organization representatives who participated in both virtual and in-person outreach and connection with their legislators.
- Several RHCs provided testimony including Eric Stevens with the San Luis Valley Area Health Education Center, Mary Burt with Tri-County Health Network, Mari Plaza-Munet and Namrata Shrestha with West Mountain Regional Health Alliance, and Adams County Health Department.
- Trailhead's Executive Director and RHC Program Staff also delivered and supported testimony on behalf of the RHC program, in collaboration with partners from CU Anschutz' Department of Family Medicine and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

Capturing Stories of Impact

The RHC program continues to lead a human-centered storytelling initiative, highlighting stories of impact from Regional Health Connectors working across Colorado.

- Over the course of the year, Trailhead staff captured stories about efforts to address substance use and stigma in Colorado's Eastern Plains; improving mental health support and services for Latina mothers in the Roaring Fork Valley; and building bridges between sexual health and youth mental wellness in Pueblo, Colorado.

Supporting Community Needs Assessments

Trailhead's RHC team supported RHCs with public health tools focused on systems change as RHCs engaged in conducting mini community needs assessments that will be finalized in December 2023.

- RHCs utilized elements of the [Public Health Learning Agenda](#) shared from the Rocky Mountain Public Health Training Center and utilized the "Five Whys" method focusing on identifying root causes and systemic barriers to health.

Forming New Connections & Program Awareness

- The Regional Health Connector program hosted virtual partner connection calls with RHCs, creating recurring opportunities for new partners working across public health, health care, and social sectors to connect with RHCs to learn more about their work and the important role that they play in communities across the state. The connection calls helped to expand new partnerships.

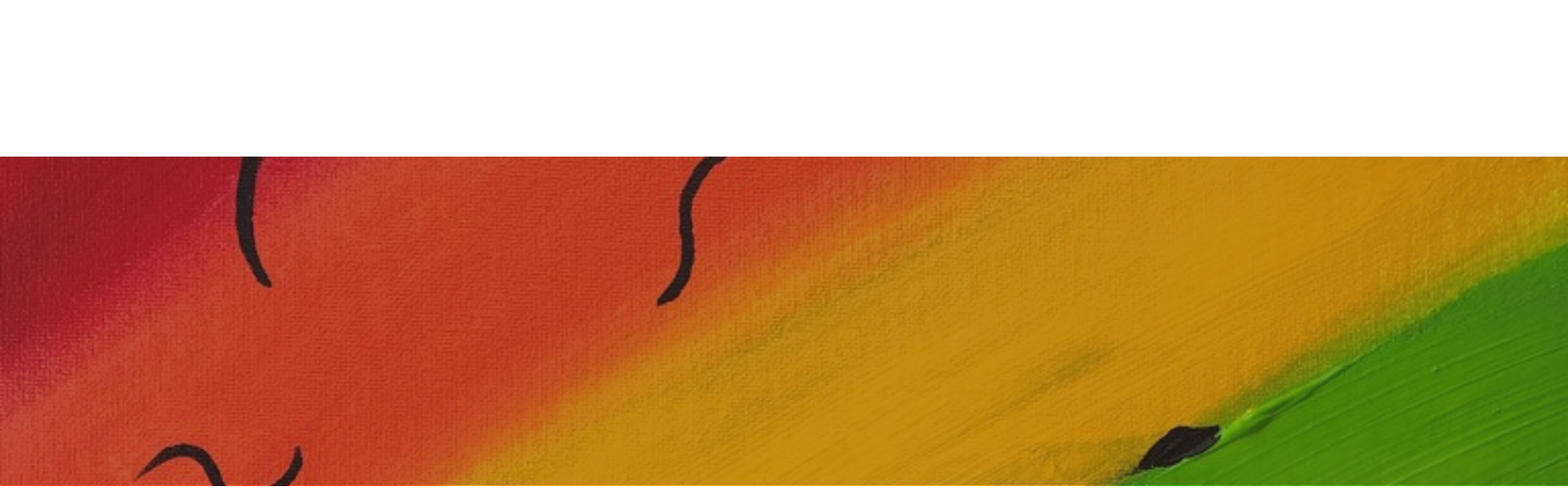
Trailhead's Regional Health Connector Program team also presented at multiple conferences and convenings.

- In March, to the Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) office on the impact of RHCs across Colorado in pursuit of additional funding. Ultimately the funding was not awarded due to the legislative funding later received in June.
- In May, to the Hospital Transformation Program on equitable community engagement approaches within the RHC program.
- In September, to conference goers at Public Health in the Rockies on a practical guide to understanding systems change through the RHC program.
- In November, to incoming medical students at CU Anschutz on the RHC program.

2024 Growth Opportunities

What we hope to sustain, evolve, or grow in 2024:

- The Regional Health Connector Program continues to advocate for long-term, sustainable funding and will be preparing for the 2025 legislative session as funding from HB 23-1244 spends down in 2024.
- The Regional Health Connector Program is continuing to work with partners at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment as the program prepares to transition to the purview of CDPHE's Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention (HPCDP) branch in July 2024, as determined in HB 23-1244.
- RHCs will begin implementing the action plans developed from the mini community-needs assessments identifying health priorities in their regions. Once finalized in December 2023, the action plans will be implemented in January through June 2024.
 - These needs assessments and resulting action plans model the process used for the short-term Behavioral Health Recovery Act projects implemented successfully by RHCs from February through June 2023, 90% of which were sustained after the BHRA funding concluded while catalyzing over \$854K in new funding to sustain project efforts.



Curves and Queerness, by an anonymous young person from Inside Out Youth Services
for the 2023 State of Adolescent Sexual Health Report

Youth Sexual Health Program

Trailhead's [Youth Sexual Health Program](#) (YSHP) supports organizations, collaboratives, communities and school districts in increasing access to comprehensive sexual health education and resources for young people using an approach that is collaborative and community-driven.

The Youth Sexual Health Program operates and implements programming based on the belief that every young person has the right to receive medically accurate information so that they are empowered to make informed decisions about their own sexual health. Central to the program's work and mission is the belief that youth sexual health education must be inclusive and intersectional, pleasure-based, aware of oppression, and accessible for all. These foundational beliefs are practiced through centering youth voice, practicing authentic community engagement, and sharing power with people whose identities have historically been excluded from youth sexual health education and decision-making spaces.

2023 Accomplishments

What we are proud of:

Increasing Youth Partnerships

In 2023, the YSHP increased its youth partnerships with multiple youth-serving and youth-led organizations.

- Beginning in January, the YSHP supported, built, and maintained a strong relationship with Colorado Youth Congress, supporting them in their comprehensive sex education initiative where they are revising and customizing a CSE curriculum to better reflect their experiences and identities and are planning to begin a pilot program at one of their local schools.
- In February, the program began supporting Girls Inc. of Metro Denver's Leadership Out Loud Program with their comprehensive sex education initiative, updating the Denver Public School IHAM (Health and Family Life/Sex Education) policy and presenting it to the school board.
- Both of these examples of youth partnerships are entirely led by young people, and reflects the YSHP's values of centering youth voice in comprehensive sex education efforts and initiatives.

Reimagining Colorado's 2023 State of Adolescent Sexual Health Report

In February the YSHP released the [2023 State of Adolescent Sexual Health Report](#) (SASH).

- For the first time in the creation of this report, the SASH was developed in a website format to promote greater depth of learning and to provide more robust resources as the field advances sexual health education in Colorado. Due to the new format of the SASH, the report has reached thousands of viewers from across the world.
- Notably, the 2023 SASH report exclusively focuses on the systems that govern and influence the experiences that young people have with sexual health.

Planning for SASH Implementation

In response to the vulnerability and effort of the Youth Sexual Health Program Board (YSHPB), the YSHP team spent several months taking inventory of the anti-oppressive recommendations and action steps identified in the SASH to determine alignment with the YSHP's work and built out a strategic vision in response to the recommendations made by the YSHPB.

- The YSHP team partnered with independent contractors Tomei Kuehl of Consulting Within Your Context and Goddess Tyescha, who supported in the decision-making of the program's SASH implementation plan.
- Over the course of several months the team centered joy, excitement, and accountability in deciding the anti-oppressive recommendations they wanted to implement and drive the program's work for the next few years.
- Through the support of our contractors and keeping the voices of the YSHPB at the center, the program decided on four areas of work that represent several anti-oppressive recommendations and embody the core boundaries and liberating practices elevated in the SASH. The YSHP will be working on the following areas of work: **exploring a health graduation requirement; funder accountability; WISE (Working to Institutionalize Sex Education) enhancements;** and **co-collaboration efforts** in the field of youth sexual health.

2024 Growth Opportunities

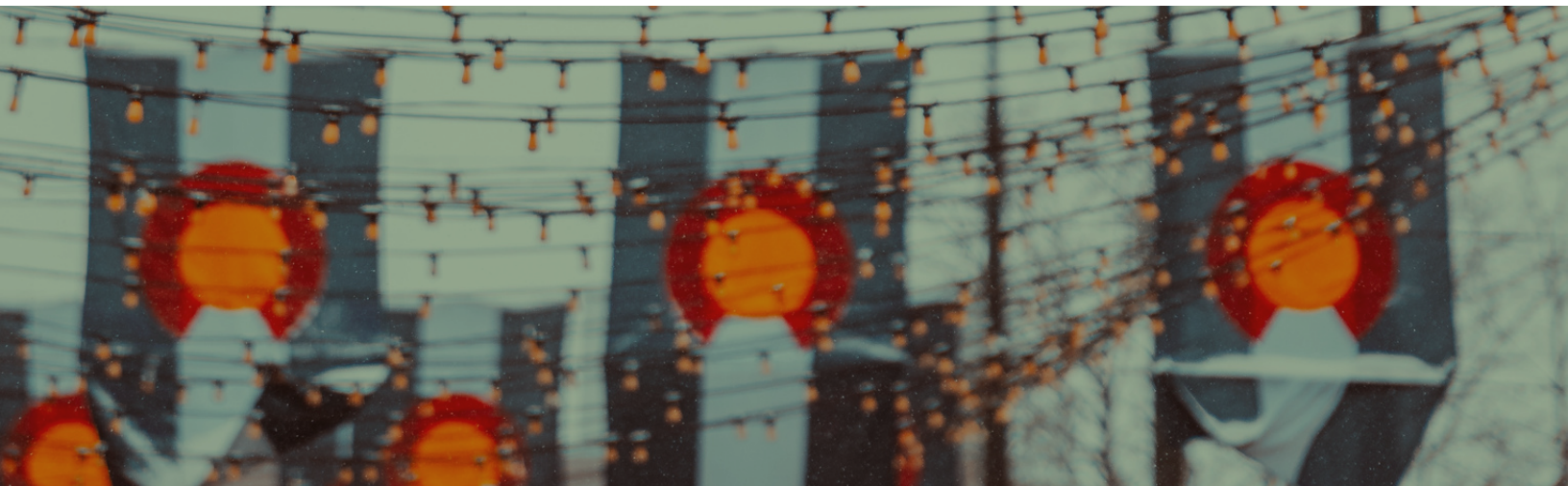
What we hope to sustain, evolve, or grow in 2024:

- Over the last year, the YSHP has been exploring the possibility of hiring young people within the program. The team has spent time learning from colleagues in other organizations who center youth, compensate them, and position them as leaders in sexual health and public health work and have collected feedback directly from young people about what youth positions they would like to see within the YSHP. Through this research, the program is hoping to have young people sustainably compensated within the YSHP to guide the program's work in a way that centers and reflects their lived experience and expertise as young people.

- Through one of the program’s primary initiatives, Working to Institutionalize Sex Education (WISE), Trailhead partners with school districts to support comprehensive sex education efforts within their district and community. Traditionally, the program partners with district administrators or folks employed in CBO’s. Moving into 2024, the Youth Sexual Health Program team is envisioning the facilitation of the WISE initiative starting with building partnerships with young people directly, supporting them in identifying areas of needed support/improvement in CSE, and building a collaborative vision for how to have an impact on CSE that centers the lived experience of the young people within that district or community.
- In order to achieve a responsive approach and continue the work of the YSHPB, the YSHP has researched and begun engagement around the recommendation to explore health as a graduation requirement. Through initial conversations with partners and research, it is clear that there currently isn’t an organization or entity leading the exploration of the potential benefits to the overall health of young people in Colorado or the current landscape of a health education graduation requirement for the state. The YSHP is excited to make connections with new and existing partners to better understand what is currently happening with health education and what are the potential barriers or areas of growth for the education system. Additionally, the program will begin exploring potential new funding partnerships to support the capacity of the work.



Untitled, by Aves (He/It), a young person from Inside Out Youth Services
for the 2023 State of Adolescent Sexual Health Report



Emerging in 2024: Firearm Violence Prevention

Since 2017, Trailhead has developed and engaged a partnership of public health leaders to define Colorado's Public Health Approach to firearm violence prevention. By early 2020, exploratory efforts to convene partners to create a statewide plan were stymied by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2021, the Colorado State Legislature passed HB21-1299, which formed The Office of Gun Violence Prevention (OGVP) within the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. A critical part of the office's mission is to support communities with public health tools to address firearm-related violence. As OGVP was developing, Trailhead made a deliberate decision to put the organization's work on hold to ensure OGVP and its leaders had the time and space necessary to establish OGVP's infrastructure and envision their role in the public health system. During that time frame, Trailhead began building a relationship with OGVP's leadership.

At the beginning of 2023, OGVP approached Trailhead to resume efforts to define Colorado's Public Health Approach to firearm violence prevention. To move that forward, OGVP and Trailhead co-hosted the first [Public Health Roundtable on Firearm-Related Violence Prevention](#) in June of 2023.

Over the course of two days, nearly 100 community leaders, researchers, and public health professionals gathered from across the state to build an apolitical framework and create a shared definition of what a public health approach to firearm-related violence prevention is. To ensure a comprehensive understanding of how firearm violence impacts people living in Colorado, the Roundtable focused on four main types of firearm-related injury and death including suicide, community violence, domestic violence, and targeted and mass violence.

Following the Roundtable event, Trailhead and Wellstone Collaborative Strategies produced a [summary report](#) offering a comprehensive understanding of how firearm-related injury and death impacts people living in Colorado. Furthermore, the report introduces a population level approach informed by a statewide, cross-sector collaborative of experts to address the factors that contribute to and protect communities from firearm violence.

2024 Opportunities to Expand this Emerging Opportunity

The summary report that was created after the Roundtable event outlined several strategies that are needed across the state to ensure a comprehensive public health approach to preventing firearm injury and death. As the co-host of the event and co-crafter of the report, Trailhead is accountable to ensuring these next steps are followed up on and not left behind. **These steps include the following elements:**

- **Follow-through:** First, to invest in taking the initial discussions held at the roundtable and turn them into a set of tools that communities can use. This likely requires an advisory committee, workgroups and additional targeted outreach to communities not well represented at the roundtable.
- **Communities of Excellence Model:** At the same time, infrastructure needs to be built to begin a model of support for urban, rural, resort, and suburban communities to become Communities of Excellence in responding to and preventing firearm death and injury. These communities ideally would be supported in the short- to medium-term to have collaborative discussions in order to identify the data, risks and protective factors and strategies by type(s) of violence they want to address within different populations.
- **Learning Cohort:** Local facilitation support would be augmented by developing a learning cohort of facilitators and convenors for training and shared learnings.
- **Evaluation:** Communities would also be supported with evaluation services to be able to measure the impacts of the approach.
- **Resources:** Collaboration and implementation resource supports should be included, recognizing that the community will need to invest as well. In addition to state and foundation dollars, crowd funding could be explored.
- **Statewide Supports:** Statewide infrastructure, such as training, certification and systems change are also needed to best support communities. This will require resources and investment in statewide partnerships and supports.

Since the roundtable event, Trailhead has engaged with OGVP, roundtable participants and potential funders of this initiative to maintain momentum of the work done and work toward a vision that centers Colorado communities to develop solutions to the root causes of firearm injury and death.



TRAILHEAD PROJECTS

Core Business

The Projects at Trailhead have been some of the longest standing work at Trailhead. They span the skills and expertise of Trailhead as an expert in administrative excellence, program management and capacity building. The work is contract based and driven by the goals of external partners and organizations. Currently, the majority of Trailhead projects are in partnership with the University of Colorado. These include the projects outlined below.

The Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (CCTSI)

The [Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute](#) (CCTSI) is a collaborative enterprise involving Colorado universities, research organizations, health care organizations, and multiple community organizations. Together, these organizations seek to translate research discoveries into improved patient care and public health more quickly within our communities—with the ultimate goal of reducing health disparities in the Rocky Mountain Region. Recognizing the crucial role of community engagement in these endeavors, the Community Engagement Core of CCTSI was created to transform the existing community research processes and infrastructure using community-based participatory research principles while growing community-academic partnerships. A dynamic Partnership of Academicians and Communities for Translation (PACT) guides the work of the Community Engagement Core while enabling a more collaborative exchange between communities and academic programs.

Trailhead manages all the funds that are going into the community for this program and oversees a Community Research Liaison (CRL) Program and a Pilot Grants program. Within the Pilot Grants program, Trailhead oversees and reviews the Requests for Applications (RFA) process and serves to alleviate administrative burdens on the university system to better serve community partners. Throughout 2023, Trailhead has also continued to bridge the Regional Health Connector Program and CRL program through relationship building with CCTSI staff and presentations at program meetings.

Community Engagement Research Alliance (CEAL) Against COVID-19 Disparities

Community Engagement Research Alliance (CEAL) Against COVID-19 Disparities builds on the long term success of CCTSI in partnership with the University of Colorado clinical trials infrastructures in such a way that our ability to reach Colorado's most vulnerable populations with COVID-19 vaccines, testing and therapeutics is enhanced.

The work of the partnership brings together a Health Equity – Dissemination/Implementation (EQ-DI) framework to clinical and translational research. The research questions center around understanding what misinformation communities are receiving and how community-driven messaging can change vaccine uptake in those communities. In order to achieve our goals and answer these questions, the research team and Trailhead partnered with five of Colorado’s most disproportionately impacted racial/ethnic communities (urban Hispanic/LatinX; urban Black/African American; urban American Indian/Alaska Native; rural Hispanic/LatinX; rural Black/African American). In each community we have worked with community connected and data collectors to recruit a cohort of 200 people per community survey in order to inform our understanding of COVID-19 misinformation, vaccine barriers and hesitancy and attitudes about COVID-19 trials and therapeutics. The research team has intervened with proven Boot Camp Translation methods, now adapted for translation of rapidly evolving science, to translate information about COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics into culturally sensitive messaging and materials, using trusted community partners as communication channels for these messages and materials on COVID-19 vaccines, their safety and efficacy.

To date, the project has completed the first round of surveys and all Boot Camp Translation events have launched, with several making big strides in building effective messages. Trailhead has been key in ensuring all people who are collecting data, taking surveys, participating in Boot Camp and facilitating the processes are paid and engaged.

Research, Engagement and Action on COVID-19 Health Outcomes via Testing (REACH-OUT)

The goal of Research, Engagement and Action on COVID-19 Health Outcomes via Testing (REACH-OUT) is to improve the reach, uptake and sustainability of COVID-19 testing among 4 underserved and socially- or medically-vulnerable populations via a community-based, participatory action research approach. This project has built off of the work of both CCTSI and CEAL in the specific area of COVID testing hesitation.

Disparities Elimination through Coordinated Interventions to Prevent and Control Heart and Lung Disease Risk (DECIPHeR)

Disparities Elimination through Coordinated Interventions to Prevent and Control Heart and Lung Disease Risk (DECIPHeR) is a new project and partnership for Trailhead in 2023. DECIPHeR is an initiative to address health disparities in diverse Colorado communities through community, school and health sector engagement. The overarching goal is to help disadvantaged kids with uncontrolled asthma breathe better. Trailhead’s Director of Philanthropy & Community Engagement supported the research team to connect with communities across Colorado and help the research team to think through how the structure that is set up in the start of this project can support long term sustainability for the project.

In 2023, Trailhead's Projects Manager was brought on board to support the DECIPHeR Project. This included support with contracting Organizers/School Liaisons (also known as asthma navigators.) We look forward to seeing how we can support the growth and movement of this project in Colorado's communities.

Health Care Provider Training Program

Trailhead was the selected contractor for the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment's implementation of House Bill 22-1267. The funding provided through the bill is funding nonprofit organizations, healthcare providers and healthcare associations to conduct culturally relevant and affirming training with healthcare providers to improve health outcomes of underserved and marginalized communities.

All trainings through the Health Care Provider Training Program will be in adherence to the national CLAS standards and will focus on capacity building, cultural responsiveness, and improvements to the quality of healthcare for underserved and marginalized communities.

2023 Accomplishments

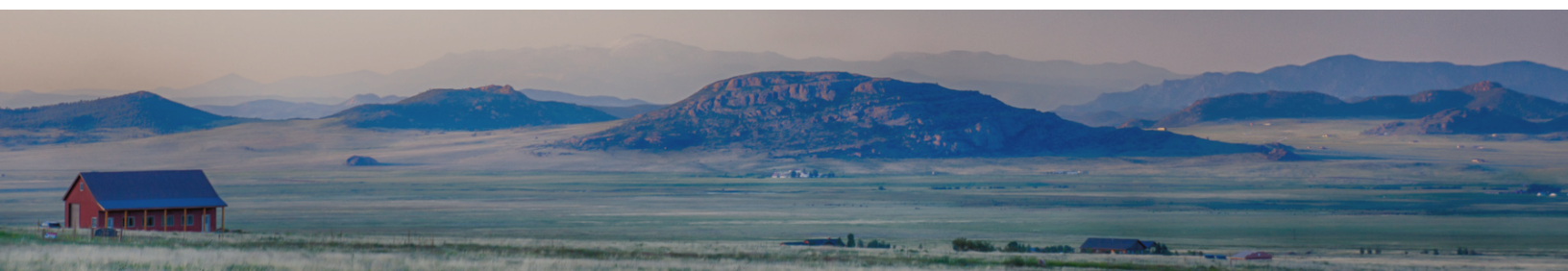
What we are proud of:

University Projects

- Trailhead continued to support the University in statewide surveys and feedback related to vaccine hesitancy and health responses, as well as supporting another cohort of community-based research pilot grants with success in their independent projects.
- Trailhead continued conversations with the University for increased work based on the continued need expressed for projects similar to this, where community support is critical.

DECIPHeR

- As a result of cross programmatic coordination and communication, we have been able to support the DECIPHeR state advisory board in understanding current legislation regarding community health worker workforce sustainment and potential future compensation. Through our connections across state agencies, we plan to continue elevating the work of the regional asthma navigators so that additional funding can be identified to sustain their positions after the research funding has concluded.



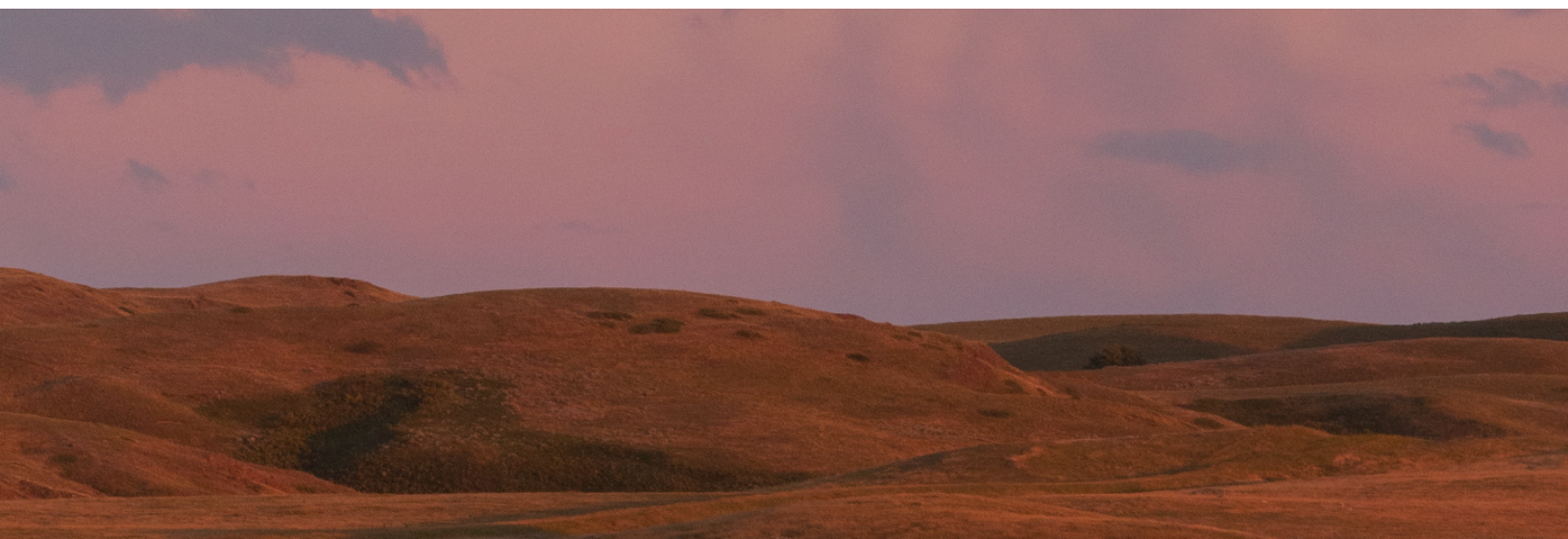
Health Care Provider Training Program

- Trailhead released the RFP for the Health Equity Training Grant in September and received 16 applications during the application period.
- Trailhead staff facilitated exceptional discussions with the Health Equity Training Grant reviewers to make decisions on applications and announced nine awarded applicants who include:
 - Castillo Primary Care
 - Colorado Alliance for Health Equity and Practice
 - Envision: You
 - Gyedi Project
 - Health Team Works
 - I Am Well Foundation
 - Immunize Colorado
 - Southwestern Colorado Area Health Education Center
 - Youth Seen

2024 Growth Opportunities

What we hope to sustain, evolve, or grow in 2024:

- The Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (CCTSI) was awarded its next multi-year award. This award marks the first 7-year grant – an increase from the 5-year grants that have been traditionally awarded – giving more room for strategy and the work to grow. The work will continue into 2030.
- Similar to work with CCTSI, the Colorado CEAL project has been going on since the early days of COVID-19. This project has received another extension and it was announced that an RFP will be released for an additional 4 years of funding. This is a huge development given that this funding has been year-to-year so far, making strategic development and planning very difficult.
- The Health Equity Training Grant is anticipated to continue through May 2024. A final report is expected in June 2024.



TRAILHEAD ADMINISTRATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Core Business

Trailhead leverages its expertise in community engagement and administration to increase the capacity of communities and community-based organizations (CBOs) to secure, manage, and administer funding so that these organizations can serve their community in the ways that work best for them.

Through the [Administrative Partnership Program](#), Trailhead serves as a flexible and strategic administrative partner, providing fiscal sponsorship and operations support to individuals, organizations, and collaboratives. Partners may be unincorporated entities, a 501(c)(3), or an LLC in need of an administrative partner, with or without funding in hand, on a specific grant or project. Trailhead's approach allows Administrative Partners to leverage the organization's back office services while maintaining full control over their projects.

Managing the fiscal and administrative responsibilities of a public health initiative can be a complex and time-consuming burden that diverts precious staff and resources away from an organization's core efforts and objectives. Trailhead believes that by investing time, energy and passion into these partnerships and organizations from the early stages, we can help them build their capabilities to think strategically and expand their administrative capacity for the long term.

Trailhead is currently focused on addressing the stark disparity between communities/community-based organizations (CBOs) and larger academically and professionally seasoned organizations, particularly in their ability to independently secure, manage, and administer large grant funds. This inequity results in a decreased capacity for communities and CBOs to implement innovative, community-informed programs designed specifically to address each communities' unique needs.

2023 Accomplishments

What we are proud of:

- Began the development of active prospecting and recruitment of partners.
- Saying no to partners when we're at capacity.
- Creating intentional spaces for partners to connect, such as communication platforms and virtual gatherings.
- Facilitating stronger equity among partners through the structures that we operate within.
- Increased our network of organizations that are supporting nonprofits in fiscal sponsorship and development.

2024 Growth Opportunities

What we hope to sustain, evolve, or grow in 2024:

- Refine our active prospecting and recruitment of partners.
- Refine our structures to provide more capacity for incoming partners.
- Exploring Model D fiscal sponsorship, through which the project gets 501(c)3 status with separate application to IRS under the sponsor's supervision/control.
- Implementing informational teaching webinars.
- Exploring more grant opportunities for infrastructure development/general operations.





With Gratitude to Our Staff

People are at the heart of the work, impact, and growth reflected within this report. It is through the originality, passion, wisdom, and commitment of Trailhead's staff and Board members that our organization is able to evolve and prosper as we work with partners and communities to ensure that all people living in Colorado have the opportunity to be healthy. We are grateful to journey alongside one another in our work this year:

Adrienne Gomez, Senior Program Manager

Ashley Loveless, Public Health Infrastructure Manager

Andrew Stricker, Finance Manager

Benjamin Robb, Director of Projects & Partnerships

Gabe Rodriguez, Senior Project Manager

Gillian Grant, Senior Program Manager

Holly Coleman, Director of Community Engagement & Philanthropy

Ida Nelson, Finance Manager

Jennifer Edwards, Director of Workforce Programs & Initiatives

Juan Carlos Machuca, Finance Manager

Kari Dement, Finance Manager

Kayla Guerra, Workforce Coordinator

Lisa Olcese, Director of People & Strategic Initiatives

Lyndie Kenlon, AmeriCorps Senior Program Manager

Mia Brewer, Office Coordinator

Natalie Finke, Bookkeeper

Ocean Candler, Youth Sexual Health Senior Coordinator

Sara Scarim-Smith, Operations Manager

Sarah Lampe, President & Executive Director

Tess Burick, Communications Manager

Tyler Shirey, Director of Finance

Yuliza Hernandez, Projects Manager

Trailhead's Board of Directors

Bruno Sobral, Board Member

Erica Snow, Board Member

Jana Persky, Board Member

Jon Samet, Board Vice Chair

Lauren Gearhart, Board Member

Meghan Guevara, Board Secretary

Melanie Zeitler, Board Member

Susan Perrigo, Board Treasurer

Tom Butts, Board Chair



With Gratitude to Our Affiliate Staff

Our team is also comprised of affiliate staff who work on their own distinct programs and projects supporting communities across Colorado. While not specifically reflected in this Annual Report, we recognize the impactful work of:

[The Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger](#)

Dana Wood, Food Access Manager

Dolores Ramirez, Executive Director of Vision

Greta Allen, Policy Director

Joël McClurg, Executive Director of Integration

Justice Onwordi, Impact Director

Leticia Macias, Executive Assistant / Translator

Michelle Ray, Visibility Director

[Colorado Equitable Economic Mobility Initiative](#)

Roger Low, CEO & Founder

Perla Bustillos, Chief Operating Officer and Director of Programs

[Jefferson County Food Policy Council](#)

Hallie Nelson, Director

Javier Alvarado Vega, Community Organizer

[Morgan County Interagency Group](#)

Elaine Horton, Coordinator

Vanessa Castellon, Family Support Partner

[North Central Regional Healthcare Coalition](#)

Michelle Deland, Executive Director

Chelsie Burdick, Readiness and Response Coordinator

[Northeast Region Health Care Coalition](#)

Jobeth Hawkins, Readiness and Response Coordinator

[South Region Healthcare Coalition](#)

Kimber Weddle, Readiness & Response Coordinator