June 19, 2020 — Denver — The Denver Foundation is proud to announce the Black Resilience in Colorado (BRIC) Fund, which will direct resources to address systemic racism and its impact on Black communities across the seven-county Metro Denver region.

The Denver Foundation’s goal is to distribute $1 million through the Black Resilience in Colorado Fund in its first year, through a community-led process. The fund will focus on racial inequities that have been intensified by the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 and amplified by a recent wave of racial violence across the United States.

The fund will support nonprofit organizations that are led by and serve Black communities. Grants and resources for capacity building will help these organizations withstand current crises and build long-term sustainability.

“The Denver Foundation has been working to advance racial equity for more than 25 years,” says Javier Alberto Soto, President and CEO of the Foundation. “With the launch of the Black Resilience in Colorado Fund, we deepen our commitment and live up to one of our core responsibilities, which is to invest in organizations that the community knows and trusts.”

The Black Resilience in Colorado Fund has been many years in the making, Soto adds.

“No is clearly the time,” he says. “We have two pandemics facing our communities: The COVID-19 pandemic, which is now well understood to disproportionately impact people of color in extremely harmful ways, and the historic pandemic of institutional racism.”

The Black Resilience in Colorado Fund will be housed and managed by The Denver Foundation, which has made an initial contribution of $50,000.

The Colorado Health Foundation has invested $500,000.

“The unprecedented civic demonstrations in Colorado and across the country have brought into focus the longstanding systemic racial injustices happening since the dawn of our nation,” says Karen McNeil-Miller, President and CEO of The Colorado Health Foundation. “This moment in time is an opportunity to amplify the power and effectiveness of Black communities in driving and affecting change themselves. We are pleased to support the Black Resilience in Colorado Fund, which will serve as a catalyst to shifting and building the power needed to dismantle anti-racist policies and advance health equity.”
Other initial partners include Mile High United Way and Denver African American Philanthropists (DAAP), a men’s giving circle housed at The Denver Foundation.

The Denver Foundation seeks support for the Fund among foundation peers, Black membership organizations, businesses, corporations, and individual donors of every background.

Gifts can be made online or by contacting the Foundation.

Grant awards will typically range from $5,000 to $25,000. Organizations will be selected following a competitive application process and review by a volunteer advisory committee composed of local Black leaders. The Denver Foundation prefers requests for general operating support but will consider both general operating and program support.

Eligibility: Applying organizations must:

- Be a viable 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization or have a fiscal sponsor.
- Be Black-led and Black-serving. The Denver Foundation defines “Black” as encompassing people of African and Afro-Caribbean descent, including African immigrants and refugees.
- Serve the seven-county Metro Denver area.
- Fit one or more of the identified priorities, to be determined by a community-led advisory committee.

Applications will open in mid-July.

Website: [http://www.denverfoundation.org/BlackResilience](http://www.denverfoundation.org/BlackResilience)

Supporting Community Leadership in Times of Crisis
The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately harms Black people in Metro Denver. Many face higher risk of exposure, especially among low-wage service workers; loss of income and jobs due to shelter-in-place orders; limited to no access to services to meet health and other basic needs; and small business loss and instability.

In times of crisis and critical need, individuals, families, and businesses turn to the organizations they trust most. In many cases, local people create these organizations in response to the unmet needs of their communities. Yet these organizations are historically and chronically under-resourced. The pandemic has laid plain the inequitable access to resources among grassroots community organizations, particularly those that are led by and serve Black people and/or African immigrants and refugees.

“The Denver Foundation has been listening closely to many organizations that are led by communities of color,” says LaDawn Sullivan, the Foundation’s Director of Leadership & Equity. “These organizations are very close to the ground, and they keep coming up against the same things, especially during COVID-19: They are under-resourced, without the same access to dollars as white-led organizations. Many of them face insurmountable challenges when trying to serve communities that trust them while also trying to meet the ‘high bar’ of white-centered processes expected by white-led funders and foundations.”

Many grassroots community organizations face uncertain futures. The pandemic has required them to be nimble and adaptable — to transition to virtual platforms, for example, and to protect workers and volunteers that provide frontline services to communities. Budgets have been
depleted amid a rising, urgent need. In an uncertain moment, when philanthropy is also adapting to widespread and urgent needs, dependence on core donors is not sustainable long-term.

**Committed to Advancing Racial Equity in Communities and the Nonprofit Sector**
The Black Resilience in Colorado Fund is the latest Denver Foundation initiative to support long traditions of nonprofit leadership and philanthropy in communities of color.

Other current initiatives include:
- Executive Directors of Color Institute, which provides nonprofit leaders of color with a peer-learning network for leadership development and capacity building.
- The Landscape Project, a cohort of 18 nonprofit organizations (nine people of color-led; nine white-led) that are strengthening and expanding racial equity policies and practices in the nonprofit sector at large through peer learning.
- Elevating Philanthropy in Communities of Color (EPIC), a partnership with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation’s Catalyzing Community Giving Initiative. Through EPIC, the Foundation focuses on increasing and leveraging the engagement and philanthropic activities of donors of color.

The Foundation is also home to several relevant giving circles and philanthropic affinity groups, including Denver African American Philanthropists (DAAP), LatinasGive!, Latinos Impacting our Future Together (LIFT), and the White Rose Fund.

**About The Denver Foundation**
The Denver Foundation is a community foundation that inspires people and mobilizes resources to improve life in Metro Denver. In 2019, the Foundation and its donors awarded more than $80 million in grants. The Denver Foundation has three roles: stewarding an endowment to meet current and future needs for Metro Denver, working with community leaders to address the core challenges that face the community and managing more than 1,000 charitable funds on behalf of individuals, families, and businesses. For more information, visit [www.denverfoundation.org](http://www.denverfoundation.org).