



PHILANTHROPY PORTFOLIO REPORT

2026



GARY PHILANTHROPY TEAM



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We welcome the opportunity to connect with organizations engaged in aligned work at any time. Please feel free to reach out to the contacts above.

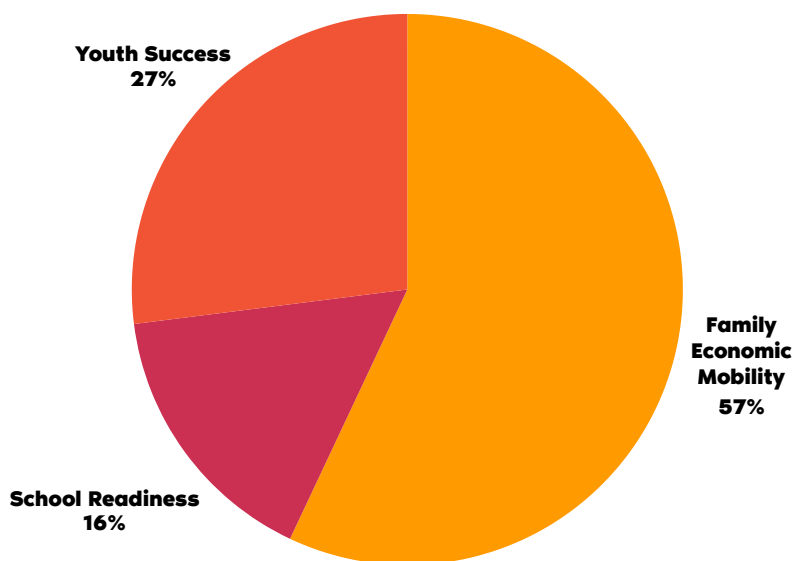
GARY PHILANTHROPY: CATALYZING SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

At Gary Community Ventures, philanthropy is more than grantmaking; it is part of our integrated strategy to transform systems and build wealth for Colorado kids and families. As an impermanent philanthropic organization, designed to sunset in 2035, Gary uses all of our tools – catalytic grantmaking, impact movements, policy and advocacy, and new ventures – to tackle complex challenges and create longer-lasting impact than any single approach could achieve alone.

The following report summarizes Gary’s philanthropic investments across early childhood, economic mobility and youth success.

Our 90 active grants, totaling \$19.3 million, support partners across school readiness, youth success, and family economic mobility.

Our grants are designed to address the foundational, structural, relational, and transformational conditions of systems change as highlighted below and detailed in the following pages.



OUR PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENTS ACROSS FOCUS AREAS, SOUGHT TO:

ALIGN FOUNDATIONAL CONDITIONS

Build leadership and champions to move systems

- Identified and supported a Statewide 9th Grade Success Champion to scale one of the strongest evidence based high school solutions across districts

Shift systems toward shared outcomes that matter

- Supported local early childhood leaders to identify where Universal Preschool access was falling short in serving low-income families and families of color and take action

STRENGTHEN STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS

Ensure policy wins translate into real family impact

- Led implementation and evaluation of the Family Affordability Tax Credit, supporting distribution of more than \$800 million, giving Colorado the lowest child poverty rate in the nation

Unlock durable public/private partnerships and shared funding streams

- Transitioned My Spark to the Denver Public Schools Foundation, securing district and city funding, while connecting 4,000 students to after school opportunities

Build the infrastructure for resources to flow to Colorado kids and families

- Launched the Benefits Transformation Fund to redesign Colorado's benefits management system
- Launched the Ignite Futures Fund early wealth building pilot

BUILD RELATIONAL CONDITIONS

Building trust-based relationships that enable systems change

- Nurtured deep partnership with grantees and agencies enabling acceleration of aligned priorities like the community colleges centering economic mobility as a key outcome

Staying proximate to families to generate systems intelligence

- Supported a cohort of county human services agencies to identify where benefits systems break down and test/pilot local solutions
- Assisted district partners in navigating implementation challenges for high school redesign

SHIFT TRANSFORMATIONAL CONDITIONS

Changing narratives and assumptions that hold systems in place

- Partnered with Gary's storytelling team to increase the public's understanding of child care challenges Colorado is facing
- Conducted multiple rounds of voter engagement and message testing to explore viable child care and preschool financing pathways

As you explore the following pages, you'll see the ways we are working with and learning from partners across our outcome areas to ensure our systems better support kids and families.

SCHOOL READINESS

SUNSET VISION: ALL KIDS IN THE EARLY YEARS ARE ENJOYING A FOUNDATION FOR A HEALTHY LIFE.

STRATEGY	NUMBER OF GRANTS	AMOUNT
Expand Early Learning	20	\$2,984,544
Increase Family Supports	2	\$150,000
Total	22	\$3,134,544

CURRENT STATE & ACTIVITIES

- Advance Gary’s commitment to child care and preschool by continuing to explore statewide ballot solutions while building lasting state and local capacity. This includes a child care voter engagement strategy, deeper policy alignment across partners and support for local initiatives.
- Engage the business community as a visible and influential partner in child care solutions through a business activation strategy with the [Colorado Chamber](#) and a targeted group of local chambers. This work builds employer understanding of child care challenges, elevates the economic consequences of inaction, and creates new pathways for business leaders to shape and support solutions.
- Leverage insights from Gary pilots to inform bold, scalable policy approaches that strengthen informal child care and unlock effective, replicable financing models for child care facilities.

YOUTH SUCCESS

SUNSET VISION: ALL STUDENTS HAVE THE SKILLS, SUPPORT, AND STRONG RELATIONSHIPS TO CHART THEIR FUTURE.

STRATEGY	NUMBER OF GRANTS	AMOUNT
Increase Academic Skills	8	\$1,000,000
Advance Youth Wellbeing	12	\$3,118,000
Increase Postsecondary Success	8	\$1,076,000
Total	28	\$5,194,000

CURRENT STATE & ACTIVITIES

We are deeply focused on a few big bets this year:

- Build upon success to [replicate My Spark](#) in new locations and maximize the potential opportunity with the federal scholarship tax credit to provide sustainable funding for afterschool and summer learning opportunities across Colorado.

YOUTH SUCCESS CURRENT STATE & ACTIVITIES CONT.

- Support the structural conditions in five metro-area school districts to reimagine high school to help students build choice-filled lives through industry credentials, college credit, and work-based learning.
- Launch a challenge to shift the educational technology community to build AI tools focused on multilingual learners, in partnership with a national funder collaborative.
- Advance a shared youth mental health strategic and policy vision for the state through our co-leadership of the Blue Bear Collaborative, a funder collaborative focused on youth thriving, and launch of a statewide thriving metric.

FAMILY ECONOMIC MOBILITY

SUNSET VISION: ALL FAMILIES HAVE THE RESOURCES THEY NEED TO RAISE THRIVING CHILDREN.

STRATEGY	NUMBER OF GRANTS	AMOUNT
Grow Income	22	\$4,521,000
Build Wealth	12	\$5,958,000
FEM Policy-Related	6	\$480,000
Total	40	\$10,959,000

CURRENT STATE & ACTIVITIES

We are working with our partners to advance several efforts this year:

- **Grow Income:** We are entering our final year of the CO Pay It Forward Fund (COPIFF), which is funding high-quality workforce programs using recyclable capital. In addition, we are partnering with four other funders on a request for proposals to Colorado community colleges ready to implement institution-wide plans that improve economic mobility.
- **Decrease Expenses:** We're fundraising for the Benefits Transformation Fund to support the reimagining of Colorado's public benefits delivery system. Related, we'll execute the second and final year of our Family Affordability Tax Credit and County Benefits Innovation Cohorts, both of which have contributed valuable insights to our broader benefits work.
- **Wealth:** Our early wealth building pilot (the Ignite Futures Fund) is live, as is a pilot to accelerate employee-ownership conversion among retiring business owners. We're also working to launch an Essential Wealth Metric for CO with the Aspen Institute. Finally, we are partnering with the Colorado Housing & Finance Authority (CHFA) on implementation of Schools To Home, created by Senate Bill 25-167 to provide down-payment assistance for public school employees. These efforts reflect our commitment to both structural and transformational systems-change conditions.

We look forward to building on this work as we advance our strategic priorities with our current and new grantee partners. Learn more about our work to transform systems and build wealth at garycommunity.org.