



HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL

- Regional Partnerships Newsletter -

A Multi-Year Investment in At-Risk Middle School Youth

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Over the last several years, certain regional councils have started to make more multi-year grants, rather than single-year grant recommendations. As more regional councils have moved toward multi-year funding, they have also considered how to further support their grant partners during the terms of their grants. In 2019, the High Country Regional Council aligned with this approach and funded five organizations for five years. Each of the organizations supports services for at-risk middle school youth in one of the region's five counties: Aspen Family Connections (Pitkin County), Full Circle (Lake County), Mountain Youth (Eagle County), Mountain Youth Network (Clear Creek County) and Summit Pre-Collegiate (Summit County).

In connection with these grants, the Council committed to establishing long-term relationships with each grant partner to encourage their success. Over the past year, the Council has sought to support its grant partners in several ways:

- **Liaison Roles.** Each Council member committed to serving as a liaison to the grant partner in their county. These designated members connect with the grant partner in their county and participate in one-on-one check-ins and conversations to cultivate strong relationships. These one-on-one relationships aim to increase trust and transparency between the Council and its grant partners.
- **Grant Partner Conversations.** The Council is in the process of inviting each grant partner to a Council meeting so that the entire Council can learn more about the organization. In addition, El Pomar staff is holding annual staff check-ins to hear about updates and to cultivate a stronger relationship with the organization's leader.
- **Grant Partner Convening.** In February 2021, El Pomar staff and High Country Council Member, Katie Baldassar, facilitated a conversation among all five High Country grant partners. This gathering offered an opportunity for each organization to meet and discuss similar challenges and opportunities faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. The organizations had an opportunity to share best practices and offer support with similar organizations in the same geographic region.
- **Professional Development Opportunities.** The High Country Council continues to explore other ways it may support its grant partners, including through offering professional development opportunities. The Council hopes to explore this issue further in the coming months and to alert its grant partners to opportunities available to them, such as El Pomar's Nonprofit Executive Leadership Program.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued to upend communities in Colorado's High Country region, the Council and its grant partners benefitted from their joint commitment to each other. The Council came alongside these five organizations to offer support and flexibility. Whether it was support for a change in funding purpose or an extension on a grant report deadline, the Council recognized that COVID-19 fundamentally impacted how these organizations have operated over the last year and sought to be a supportive partner and funder.

The High Country Regional Council and staff are eager to develop deeper relationships with each grant partner as they continue to work together in the coming years, and are grateful for the work of each organization to support at risk youth during such a critical time.