



# NEWS from the FOUNDATION

## **Colorado Assistance Fund in Review: 2020**

*Matt Carpenter, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer*

As with any position in an organization, the Trustees of El Pomar Foundation have a job description. Some key components of the Trustees' roles and responsibilities include honoring the Penroses' legacy and donor intent, having a broad understanding of the state of Colorado and its needs, and being flexible to provide a quick response when needed.

On March 9, 2020, El Pomar Foundation's Trustees held a special board meeting within a week of Colorado's first confirmed case of COVID-19. At this meeting, the Trustees approved the activation of a \$1 million Colorado Assistance Fund (CAF) to provide immediate basic human needs and support access to appropriate healthcare for individuals and communities throughout the entire state impacted by the pandemic. Organizations were nominated for funding by El Pomar's more than 70 regional council members as well as county public health departments. Grant amounts ranged from \$1,000 to \$25,000, and these funds supported a variety of emergency services such as food access, rent and utility assistance, and medical supplies.

On May 1, 2020, an additional \$1.1 million was approved for the second phase of CAF in 2020 as an approach to partner with El Pomar's 11 regional councils covering all 64 Colorado counties. This CAF phase focused on longer-range recovery efforts to encourage the eventual return of healthy, functioning communities across Colorado as they emerge from the COVID-19 crisis. Each of El Pomar's 11 regional councils employed a different strategy for the allocation of \$100,000 in their multi-county regions, according to the unique needs for each. These grants ranged from \$1,000 to \$100,000 and supported a variety of issues from childcare, economic recovery and education to housing and health needs.

Due to the increased public health restrictions resulting in financial hardship, the Trustees understood food access was still a significant concern throughout Colorado and anticipated it would continue into the first quarter of 2021. El Pomar's Trustees approved a third phase of the Colorado Assistance Fund on November 20, 2020 to distribute \$1 million in early December. These grants ranged from \$2,500 to \$50,000 and supported children to seniors receiving food from food pantries, meals on wheels programs, family and senior centers, local churches and schools.

In addition to the three phases of assistance granting, Trustees heard about the growing challenge facing animal owners impacted by the economic conditions unfolding with the COVID-19 pandemic. El Pomar's Trustees then also approved up to \$100,000 from the Freda Hambrick Fund – which supports animal welfare organizations in Colorado – to rapidly respond to the immediate needs of animals. In 2020, \$25,000 of this funding was distributed.

Over the three phases of El Pomar's 2020 Colorado Assistance Fund, the total funding for statewide emergency assistance in 2020 totaled more than \$3.1 million and marks the sixth, seventh and eighth times El Pomar Foundation has implemented the Colorado Assistance Fund. Prior to the activation of the three phases in 2020, the five previous funds were activated during and in the immediate aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis and distributed more than \$5 million between 2008 and 2012.

The Trustees believe the Penroses would be proud to see how El Pomar Foundation and their legacy continue today as they intended when the Foundation was created in 1937. Understanding the needs in Colorado and providing a flexible and rapid response to partner with nonprofit and government organizations ensures that the Penroses' vision of serving the well-being of the people of Colorado continues, especially during a challenging year as we experienced in 2020.