

The Next 75



# 2022-2026 Strategic Plan

---

Deepening our commitment to Colorado



# Gates Family Foundation

## 2022-2026 Strategic Plan: Education

Monday, Feb. 28  
12 to 1 p.m.

### AGENDA

#### Welcome

- Webinar overview and objectives

#### Presentation

- Gates Family Foundation Background
  - Mission, Vision, Values
- Strategic Plan Overview
  - Community feedback / development process
- What's Staying?
- What's New?

#### Discussion

- Questions from attendees

#### Closing

- Next steps and future engagement

Building on 75  
years of  
addressing  
some of  
Colorado's  
toughest  
challenges



- Celebrating 75 years of impact
- More than \$456 million in grants since founding
- Continuously evolving while maintaining intense focus on people, communities, and natural resources of Colorado.





# Strategic Plan Process: *Throughout 2021*

## LOOKING AHEAD

Trends, Challenges  
& Forecasting

## REACHING OUT

Community Feedback

## LOOKING BACK

Internal Reflection  
& Assessment

# Gates Family Foundation

## Mission & Vision

### **MISSION**

We work with partners and communities to build a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable Colorado for all.

### **VISION**

A vibrant and verdant Colorado where all people and communities thrive.



# Gates Family Foundation Values

---



RESPECT

CREATIVITY

ENGAGEMENT

PLACE

EQUITY





# Commitment to Equity

---

We prioritize individuals and communities that have been historically marginalized by addressing systemic barriers and creating pathways to opportunity.



# Foundation Approach

---

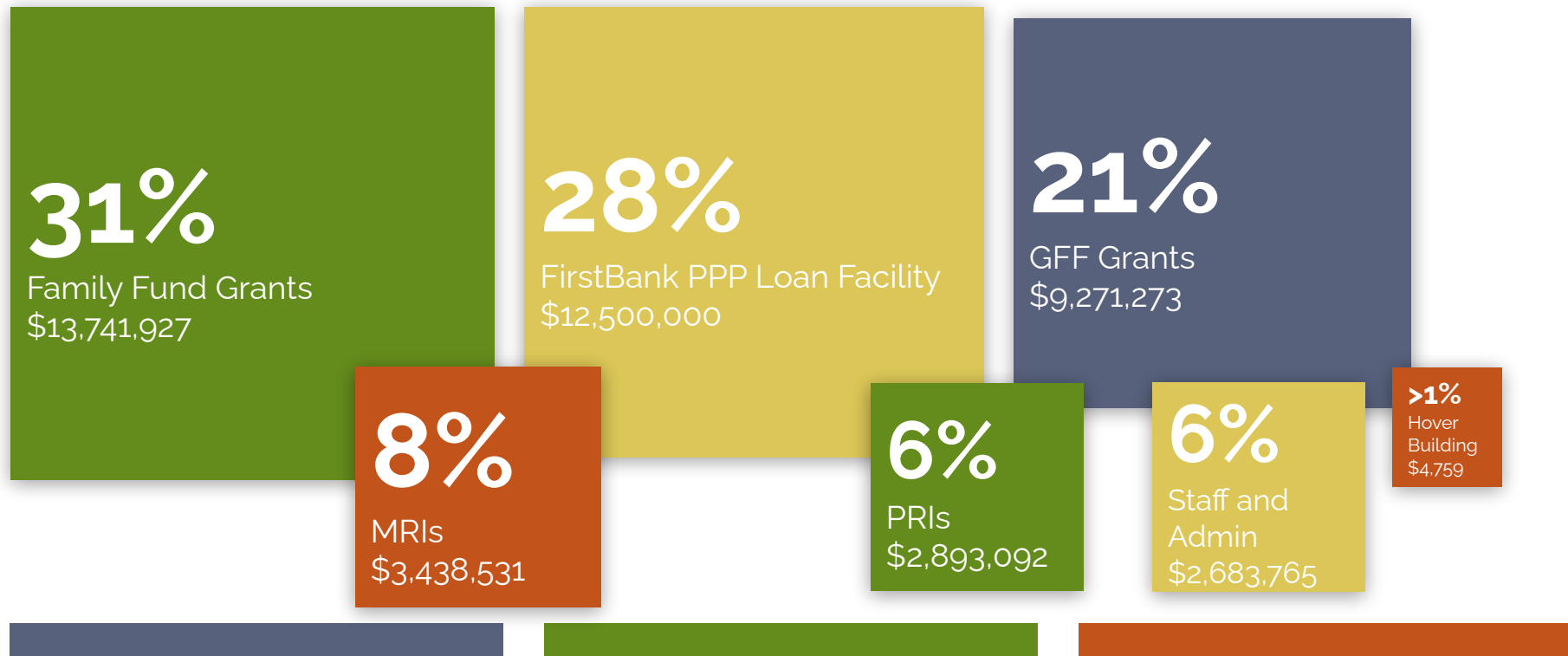
- We use both financial and non-financial tools to serve partners and advance core strategies
- Our staff serve as connectors, resources and thought partners in the ecosystems where they work
- We intentionally convene and participate in multi-partner, systems-level work to drive innovative solutions
- We actively seek to collaborate with an even more diverse array of stakeholders and potential partners





# 2021 Total Philanthropic Activity: \$44.5M

---



# 2021 Strategic Grants Paid: \$5,699,000

---

**39%**

Natural Resources  
\$2,232,000

**39%**

Education  
\$2,209,500

**15%**

Community  
Development  
\$882,500

**7%**

Informed  
Communities  
\$375,000



# 2021 Responsive Grants Paid: \$3,572,273

---

**29%**

Community Development  
\$1,030,000

**26%**

Education  
\$925,000

**16%**

Art and Culture  
\$565,000

**2%**

Other  
\$80,000

**15%**

Well-being of  
Children, Youth  
and Families  
\$535,000

**12%**

Natural Resources,  
Parks & Recreation  
\$437,273



# What's New

---

- Foundation-wide focus on addressing **climate change** and advancing **diversity, equity and inclusion** across all programs
- Natural Resources expands focus on **forest health** and **watershed restoration**
- **Informed Communities** formally becomes a fourth program area
- Community Development topics (mobility, food systems, placemaking, community planning) encompassed within new focus on **economic mobility** and **place-based community asset-building**, with a particular focus on **affordable housing**
- Increased focus on **leadership development** and **capital project planning support** for leaders and communities of color, and others needing early-stage support
- Increased percentage of Foundation assets dedicated toward **impact investments**





23%

## EDUCATION

- Innovative Learning Environments
- Innovations in School Systems
- Conditions for Sustained Innovation



23%

## NATURAL RESOURCES

- Balanced Water Management
- Forest Health & Watershed Restoration
- Landscape Conservation & Land Trust Capacity



12%

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Economic Mobility for Individuals and Families
- Equitable Community Assets



5%

## INFORMED COMMUNITIES

- Stronger Civic News Ecosystem
- Coverage in Gates' Core Focus Areas
- Inclusive News Leadership, Voices & Models



37%

## CAPITAL GRANTS

- Amplify Needs and Goals for Capital Projects
- Leadership and Capital Planning Support for Diverse Leaders



# Education

---

## GOAL

All children, regardless of race or socioeconomic status, have access to educational opportunities that support their long-term success.



# Looking Back: 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Education Focus Areas

---

## Six Focus Areas

Autonomous  
Public  
Schools

Systems  
Reform

Rural  
Community-  
Based  
Programs

Advocacy

Human  
Capital

Innovation  
and  
Incubation





# Education Lookback: What We Learned

---

- Innovation in systems and learning environments has been the highest leverage area of work within Gates' education program
- Lyra and Gates' combined capacity allows Gates to act quickly and strategically to support innovative efforts across the state
- Design and launch of collaborative funding structures continues to be a strength of the Gates team
- Design and launch of collaborative funding structures continue to be strategic levers



# Education: What We Heard

---

- Technology is more central to teaching and learning than ever
- Solutions to retaining and attracting teachers and principals require clearer equity lens and additional supports in rural Colorado
- Innovation requires more flexible systems to elevate and sustain ideas of students, families, and educators
- More focus on social-emotional learning and mental health support is needed
- Students want to be involved in decisions that impact them



# Education: Where We Are

---

## Challenges

Most Colorado students still not performing on grade level - 35 percent of Colorado students are demonstrating proficiency in math, while 46 percent are proficient in English Language Arts.

Inequities in funding support persist. The state's districts serving the most students of color receive about five percent less (\$549 less) in funding for each student when compared to districts serving the fewest students of color.

## Opportunities

Increased funding at the federal, state, and local levels

ESSER Funding and Biden administration's Family Plan

# Education: Priority Strategies for 2022-2026

## Learning Environment Innovation

Support for  
autonomous  
schools  
and new ways  
of learning

## School System Innovation

Lead innovation  
in school models,  
policy and  
governance

## Conditions for Sustained Innovation

Diversify the  
pipeline of  
educators  
and support  
effective state  
education policies

# What's New?

---

## What stays the same

- Support for autonomous public schools with innovative models
- Focus on DEI/equity through advocacy focused on student voice and empowerment
- Continued support for state-level policy work addressing systemic education challenges

## What's expanded?

- More support for and greater focus on rural education

## What's new?

- Focus on climate change education through school system innovation
- Support for out of system/school learning and innovations
- Funding teacher prep and placement programs for rural schools and districts especially those serving culturally and linguistically diverse student populations



# LEARNING ENVIRONMENT INNOVATION

---

*Gates' support might look like:*

- Support for new learning models in schools with a very high bar for results
- Support for informal out-of-system learning environments (such as micro-schools or learning pods)
- Support for organizations and individuals that want to pilot new ideas during the summer and out-of-school time



# SCHOOL SYSTEM INNOVATION

---

*Gates' support might look like:*

- Support for multi-school district partnerships with institutes of higher education around climate change education and/or college and career pathways (Climatarium)
- Continuing to look for new governance and system models that support a) school-level and educator autonomy and academic accountability (Innovation Zones) and b) sustaining innovative initiatives from rural school districts





# CONDITIONS FOR SUSTAINED INNOVATION

---

*Gates' support might look like:*

- Support for efforts to diversify, attract, and place talent - particularly in rural areas
- Support for advocacy efforts that elevate student voice
- Support for organizations and initiatives seeking state-level policy changes that advance GFF priorities
- Creating new collaborative and pooled funds with other funders and stakeholders - especially to support innovation
- Helping to launch new organizations (e.g. RootEd, Lyra) to address unmet challenges in education



# Education: Application Process for Strategic Grants

## Outreach to Program Officers (Mary Seawell and Ana Soler)

- Program officers are eager to hear about evolving opportunities
- Send an email
- Submit an inquiry via online form
- Call to introduce your organization or talk through your idea

## Define the Project & Submit Application

- Back and forth process; may take 2-6 months
- Define learning questions, goals, project milestones, impact indicators
- Rolling deadlines (Feb., April, July, Oct.); time-sensitive proposals may be fast-tracked

## Gates Board Decision & Grant Agreement

- Decisions at meetings in April, June, September, December
- Notification, grant contracts signed, funds released
- Ongoing communication w/program officer
- Interim and final reports

# Capital Grants for Education

---

*We invest in capital projects because we believe that land and facilities are long-term assets that can help nonprofit and community organizations serve Colorado communities.*

## **We support capital projects that:**

- serve a majority of low-income students
- build or improve education facilities that will be heavily used by a majority of the community
- increase access to education in rural areas
- provide learning opportunities for a broad audience

## **Funding examples:**

- charter schools seeking matching funds for a BEST grant
- rural schools improving an auditorium or athletic field for community use
- early childhood education centers
- GED, literacy, or vocational training centers



# Capital Grants for Education

## Outreach to Program Officers (Mary Seawell, Ana Soler or Lisa Rucker)

- Send an email
- Submit an inquiry via online form
- Call to talk through your idea

## Submit Application

- Use the Colorado Capital Common Grant Application
- Proposal deadlines: **March 15 and September 15**
- See full at details at: [www.gatesfamilyfoundation.org/how-to-apply](http://www.gatesfamilyfoundation.org/how-to-apply)

## Gates Board Decision & Grant Agreement

- Decisions at meetings in June and December
- Notification, grant contracts signed, funds released
- Ongoing communication w/program officer
- Interim and final reports

# Impact Investments for Education

---

## **Program-Related Investments**

Specific to Colorado; align with strategic priorities; below-market commitments of capital (loans/ guarantees); need a clear source of repayment – ex: Colorado Charter Facility Solutions

## **Mission-Related Investments**

Investments within the Foundation's portfolio; market-rate returns; investing in innovation in the sector – example: education technology funds

**Process:** PRIs often initiated through contact with program staff – contact Mary  
MRIs are part of the investment management process – contact Sue or Tom



# Questions From The Community

---

- Does your Foundation-level commitment to advancing equity mean you expect to fund more BIPOC-led organizations?
- How will your focus on climate change impact priorities in your education program (and others)?
- Do you have a preference for ongoing program versus shorter-term projects?

*Please view the last 15-20 minutes of the video for answers!*



# What's Next?

## Open Opportunities

---

- We're searching for a new **Program Officer for Natural Resources**.
- Public officials can apply by **March 4** for a **Gates Fellowship** to attend Harvard this summer.
- Our next deadline to **apply for a capital grant** is **March 15**.





# What's Next? Learn More

---

## NEXT WEBINARS:

- [Community Development \(March 1, Noon to 1 p.m. MT\)](#)
- [Natural Resources \(March 2, Noon to 1 p.m. MT\)](#)
- [Informed Communities \(March 3, Noon to 1 p.m. MT\)](#)
- [Impact Investments \(March 14, Noon to 1 p.m. MT\)](#)

## EDUCATION QUESTIONS/INQUIRIES

Mary Seawell, Senior Vice President  
[mseawell@gatesfamilyfoundation.org](mailto:mseawell@gatesfamilyfoundation.org)

Ana Soler, Senior Program Officer  
[asoler@gatesfamilyfoundation.org](mailto:asoler@gatesfamilyfoundation.org)



# Thank You

Let's keep the conversation going.  
With your partnership, we amplify our impact.