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El Pomar Foundation's Colorado Assistance Fund for COVID-19 aid reaches \$3.1 Million with third phase activated in December

Colorado Springs, Colo.—December 16, 2020—Since March, 253 organizations throughout Colorado have received grants from El Pomar Foundation's Colorado Assistance Fund (CAF). Now entering into its third phase in 2020, the fund has now reached \$3.1 million since its activation in March to provide immediate aid to nonprofit organizations and government entities across the state in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

[The initial \\$1 million CAF funding](#) was activated by the Foundation's Trustees on March 9, within a week of Colorado's first confirmed case of COVID-19, and supported 175 organizations in 48 counties of Colorado with grant amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$25,000. Grants supported a range of emergency services such as food access, rent and utility assistance, and medical supplies. Organizations for the initial deployment of funds, known as CAF Phase I, were nominated for funding by public health departments or members of El Pomar Foundation's [regional councils](#). Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in Colorado, El Pomar's regional council members have been in regular contact with Foundation staff and Trustees to provide first-hand insight regarding their communities' most critical and emergent needs.

In May 2020, with the original \$1 million disbursed, El Pomar Trustees approved another \$1.1 million for a second phase of CAF. Each of El Pomar's 11 regional councils recommended strategies for the allocation of \$100,000 in their multi-county regions of Colorado. The focus of CAF Phase II dollars was to encourage and support the eventual return of healthy, functioning communities across Colorado as they were beginning to emerge from the crisis. In CAF Phase II, 60 organizations received grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$100,000.

Now in December 2020, with the continued surge of COVID-19 infections, El Pomar has activated a third phase of CAF, to grant an additional \$1 million statewide. CAF Phase III is distributing funds across Colorado in support of nonprofits, counties and communities that are experiencing a rise in COVID-19 cases and increased public health restrictions resulting in financial hardship. One of the most pressing needs continues to be food assistance throughout the state of Colorado, so the focus of this third phase of funding is food insecurity and support for organizations that provide food assistance to those in need. In CAF Phase III, 139 organizations received grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$50,000.

"As stay-at-home orders started in March, the St. George Community Meals and Food Pantry recognized that food insecurity was a much greater problem in our community than we had known," said Amy Frykholm, a community meals supervisor for the Community Meal/Pantry at St. George Episcopal Church in Leadville. "Thanks to partners like El Pomar we have been able to respond to this crisis by giving away more than 300,000 pounds of food in 2020 (30 times the estimated amount in 2019) and are striving to make sure that no one in our community goes hungry."

"We have seen a tremendous increase in need across Colorado as a result of COVID-19, and that need for food assistance has been consistent since March," said Erin Pulling, President & CEO, Food Bank of the Rockies. "To keep pace, our monthly food distribution volume has increased by 60% over the same period last year with some months more than 80% over pre-COVID-19 levels. We are grateful for support such as these grants from El Pomar Foundation, which will help us provide the equivalent of 280,000 meals to our community to meet this

moment. Gifts like these are essential for Food Bank of the Rockies to fight hunger and ensure our community thrives.”

“The Piñon Project is grateful for the Colorado Assistance Funding received from El Pomar Foundation. This funding has helped sustain the Montelores Emergency Assistance Coalition’s mission of preventing homelessness in Montezuma and Dolores Counties,” said Kellie Willis, Executive Director of The Piñon Project in Cortez. “The Piñon Project believes in the inherent strength of our community, and while 2020 has created a challenging climate for individuals and families within our community, this funding enabled us to provide rental and utility assistance that supported people in meeting their basic needs. During the period of July 1, 2020 through today, The Piñon Project has provided \$160,979 in emergency service payments; a 124% increase from the same period last year.”

“El Pomar Foundation initially created the Colorado Assistance Fund in 2008 to bring immediate assistance to Coloradans who were affected by the Great Recession,” said El Pomar President and CEO, Kyle Hybl. “Our Trustees and staff again activated CAF in 2020 to support nonprofits serving those who are experiencing challenges due to COVID-19. Thanks to the quick, effective and thoughtful work of organizations all over the state, we are pleased these funds are bringing immediate relief, as well as aiding in recovery efforts.”

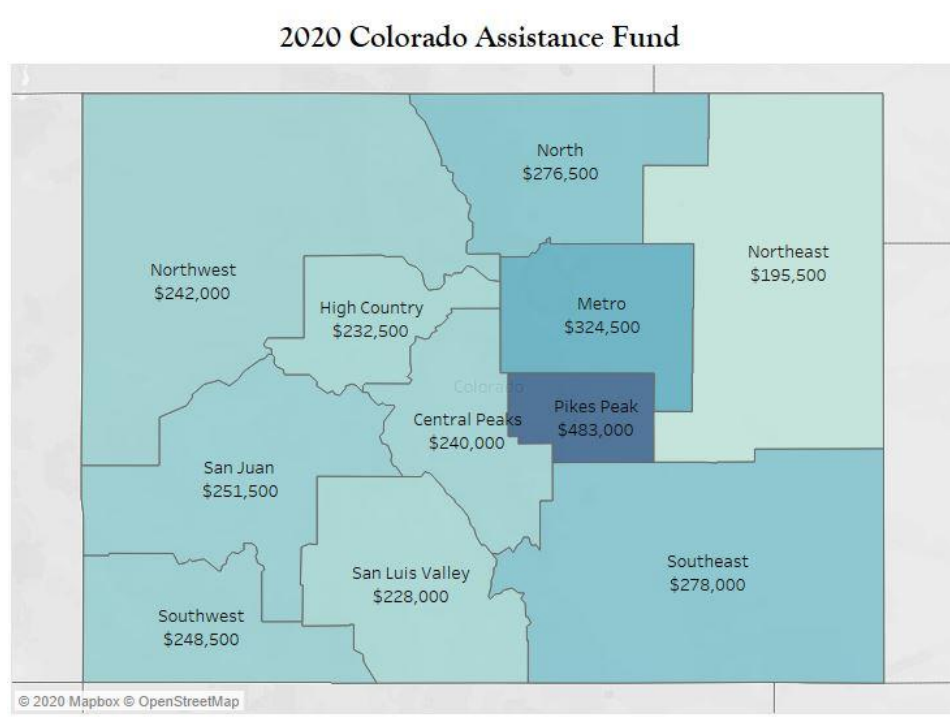


Figure 1: Colorado Assistance Fund dollars distributed in 2020, per region, through December 16, 2020

Along with regional distribution of grant funds through the three phases of CAF, El Pomar also dedicated the following funding:

- In CAF Phase I, as communities begin to shift their focus from crisis response to recovery, El Pomar’s Trustees closed the \$1 million funding with an \$82,500 grant to Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services to fund summer work opportunities for youth in the Pikes Peak region.
- In CAF Phase I, El Pomar’s Trustees also dedicated \$100,000 from the Foundation’s Freda Hambrick Fund to support pet food banks, or to support veterinary clinics in covering costs of pet food or veterinary expenses for families that were impacted by COVID-19 and unable to afford those expenses.
- In CAF Phase III, grants were awarded for statewide food assistance to Care & Share Food Bank (Southern CO) and Food Bank of the Rockies (Northern CO) in the amount of \$50,000 each.

With three phases now deployed from El Pomar's 2020 COVID-19 Colorado Assistance Fund, this brings the total funding this year for statewide assistance to \$3.1 million, and marks the seventh and eighth times El Pomar Foundation has dedicated a Colorado Assistance Fund. Prior to the activation of the three phases this year for COVID-19 support, 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.

To view a full listing of El Pomar's funds and grant making areas, please visit our website at <https://www.elpomar.org/grant-making/>.

El Pomar Foundation is one of the largest and oldest private foundations in Colorado. El Pomar contributes approximately \$22 million annually through grants and Community Stewardship programs to support Colorado nonprofit organizations involved in health, human services, education, arts and humanities, and civic and community initiatives. Spencer and Julie Penrose founded El Pomar in 1937 with the mission to enhance, encourage and promote the current and future well-being of the people of Colorado.

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