



**BLACK RESILIENCE IN COLORADO**

# IMPACTING AND EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

2020-21

"Juneteenth" BRIC-funded mural  
by Denver Artist and Muralist Thomas "Detour" Evans

## **IMPACTFUL WORK**

BRIC Influence Locally and  
Across the Country

## **POLICY & ADVOCACY**

Discover the BRIC  
Movement for Equity

## **1619 FORWARD**

The Continued Journey  
and Road Ahead

# EXECUTIVE STATEMENT

*“Successful people are those who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown at them.” ~ David Brinkley*

Historically, members of Black communities in Colorado and throughout this country are far too familiar with having to shield themselves from the bricks thrown at them, overcoming the many obstacles that block their path and fighting to protect their livelihoods. The last couple of years were undoubtedly defining moments. Would we fall or rise when faced with a devastating global pandemic, escalated racial violence, a resurgence of civil rights threats, and a weakened economic state? As always, we rose together as a collaborative community – dusted ourselves off, healed our wounds and collectively laid the bricks to rebuild our communities better and stronger.

In its first two years, the Black Resilience in Colorado (BRIC) Fund developed and expanded its efforts to make an impact by financially supporting community-based Black-led and serving nonprofits. BRIC’s community-led approach yielded innovative solutions and provided critical resources so those nonprofits could continue to provide much-needed services while strengthening their organizations and the fabric of Black communities.



**LaDawn Sullivan**  
Director, BRIC Fund

BRIC’s goal is to be a perpetual resource, which comes with accountability to be constantly hip-to-hip in partnership with the Black communities we serve to be for US, lead by US, supported by US. We must always be intentional to build on the community assets that already exist, and hold space for learning to build a better understanding of the communities we serve. If we’re ever in the space of ‘knowing,’ then we’ve failed.

I’m proud to share this report that provides a snapshot of how the BRIC Fund is working to impact, empower and enrich communities through its resources, programs and collaborative partnerships. It’s through this multi-layered framework we fulfill our commitment to strengthen Colorado’s Black communities. In doing so, we seek to elevate the community’s Black leadership, voice and power, to own the narrative of its history, resilience and giving to build strong Black communities from the inside out – BRIC by BRIC.

In gratitude & solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "LaDawn M. Sullivan".

LaDawn Sullivan  
Director, BRIC Fund

# BUILDING BRIDGES AND COLLECTIVE NETWORKS

*"IN THE MOMENT OF CRISIS, THE WISE BUILD BRIDGES, THE FOOLISH BUILD DAMS."*

~ AFRICAN PROVERB

## BRIC'S PEER NETWORKS

Since its inception BRIC has been a trailblazer in Black-focused funds that continue to emerge across the country. BRIC has shared its learnings with 50+ philanthropic institutions/groups. BRIC has developed a partnership with the POISE Foundation (Pittsburgh, PA) and the BIG Equity Fund (Greensboro, NC) to elevate best practices, innovation and collaboration during Black Philanthropy Month.

While building Black communities BRIC by BRIC in Colorado, we have also worked to pave a path across the country and have served as a blueprint to develop other Black-focused community funds and initiatives. From Washington to Connecticut to Canada, bricks have been laid to establish more than 50 funds and philanthropy initiatives that provide a network of thought leadership, innovative programming, and a pipeline of financial resources to support and strengthen local organizations.

BRIC has developed an ongoing partnership with the POISE Foundation in Pittsburgh and Black Investments in Greensboro (BIG) Equity Fund to continue to share best practices, create innovative collaborations, and elevate their collective impact.

## IMPACT QUOTES

"The BRIC Fund is a great example of how leaders from the Black community can create collective vehicles we control to support the communities we know best. POISE Foundation is excited to partner with, mentor and share the experience of Black philanthropy."  
~ Mark Lewis - President and CEO, POISE Foundation

"The BRIC Fund has inspired our efforts in Greensboro, North Carolina. It has been reaffirming to know there is another Black-led philanthropic fund that demonstrates the power of Black philanthropic leadership." ~ Athan L. Lindsay - Vice President of Grants and Community Impact for the Black Investments in Greensboro (BIG) Equity Fund



# BRIC GRANTS

## BY THE NUMBERS

In over two years, the BRIC Fund has raised more than \$3.2 million and granted more than \$2 million to 136 Black-led and serving nonprofit organizations in six focus areas: Emerging Needs, Health, Housing, Economic Opportunity, Racial Justice and Youth. Youth-focused programs intentionally received the bulk of support, to continue to create new paths and opportunities for Black youth.

In meeting the urgent need of our nonprofit partners, the BRIC Fund provided each with flexibility through general operating support grants. This allows grantees to use the funds for operations, capital improvement projects, ongoing program support or critical emerging needs.

Flexibility has been crucial during and throughout the pandemic when grantees identified the increased need for wraparound services for members of Black communities, including rent and mortgage assistance, access to food, health care and more.



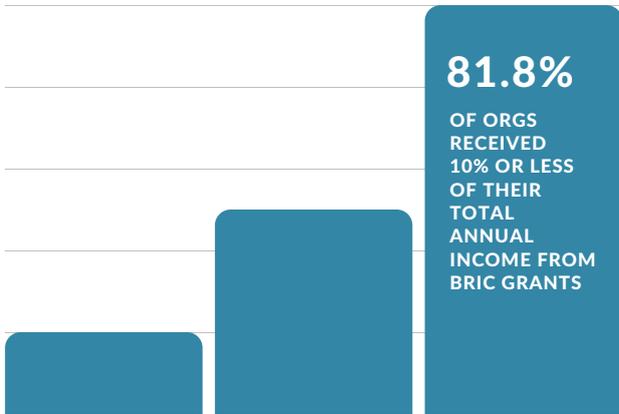
During this time, the services of our nonprofit grantees kept Black Coloradans housed, healthy, employed, educated and safe during an unprecedented time in the United States, which was compounded by police brutality and systemic racism, which continues to create disproportionate harm. Yet, our ability to come together during times of crisis to support one another further illustrates the commitment we share to invest in and lift up communities.

## 2020-22 BRIC Grant Distributions

Focus Areas	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Fall 2021	Spring 2022	All Totaled
Emerging Needs	35,000	68,250	29,000	25,000	157,250
Health	43,300	61,250	69,000	55,000	228,550
Housing	53,400	53,250	57,500	43,750	207,900
Economic Opportunity	83,300	98,250	53,750	57,500	292,800
Racial Justice	110,000	75,750	97,750	66,000	349,500
Youth	142,500	178,750	178,000	92,750	592,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$467,500</b>	<b>\$535,500</b>	<b>\$485,000</b>	<b>\$340,000</b>	<b>\$1,828,000</b>

# BRIC GRANTS

BY THE NUMBERS CONT.

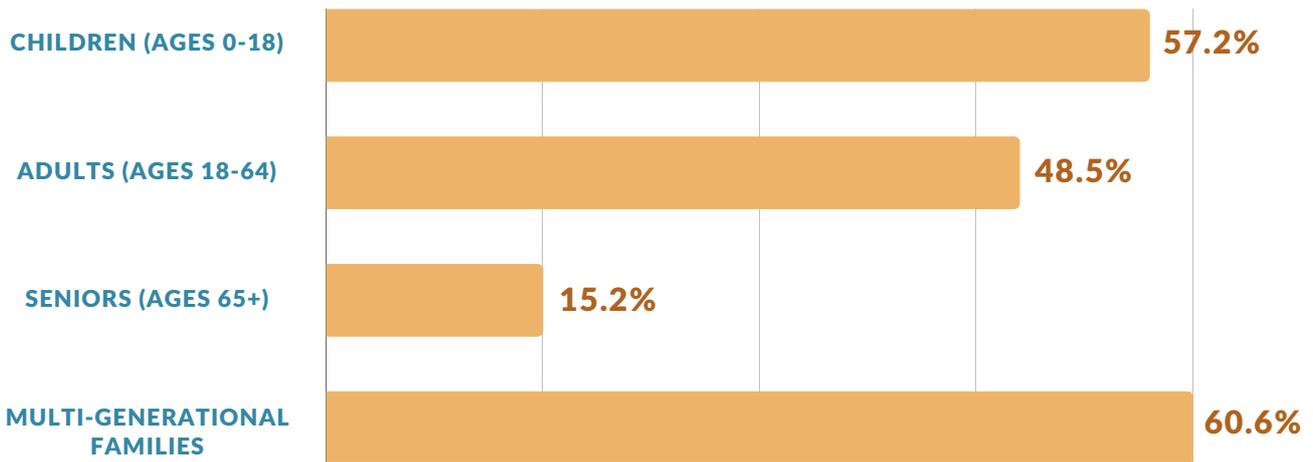


IN ADDITION TO GRANTS, MORE THAN 15% OF ORGS SURVEYED PARTICIPATED IN THE BRIC LOAN FUND.



With 50% of grantees responding to the survey, more than **147,626 people** were directly served or impacted through BRIC grants.

## TARGETED POPULATION INFLUENCED AND IMPACTED\*



\*Respondents selected multiple options that applied.

“The BRIC funding has been water for the seeds we’ve sown, and now the mustard seeds of our shared faith are moving mountains of racial inequity with compassion.”

Almost 50% of grantees participated in the **Executive Directors of Color Institute**

In the spring of 2021, the BRIC Fund and Urban Land Conservancy (ULC) partnered to establish and launch the BRIC Loan Program. The BRIC Loan Program was established in recognition of the historical barriers of systemic racism Black nonprofits and the Black communities they serve face in accessing capital financing. This new program offers low-interest loans up to \$50,000 to support capital projects or other improvements for Black-led and serving nonprofits across the seven-county Metro Denver region.

The loan program works in parallel to our grant program. Applicants can apply and receive grant funds for general operating support and apply for low-interest loans in support of targeted programs. The BRIC Loan application process minimizes barriers, and the loan interest rates and terms are designed to be affordable.

Impact:

- Empowered nonprofit organizations to make critical operational improvements and increase programs and reach
- Lessened the restraints and financial implications of traditional loans
- Increased financial resources and support opportunities



**BRIC Loan Program Update**

- **26** Inquiries
- **17** One to Ones
- **3** Loans totaling **\$150,000**

# ELIMINATING BARRIERS THROUGH THE BRIC LOAN PROGRAM



## Urban Land Conservancy (ULC) Investment

This \$250,000 loan fund offers low-interest loans up to \$50,000 to support capital projects and/or other improvements for Black-led and serving nonprofits.

## IMPACT QUOTE

"Having access to capital is always a challenge. We don't want to be a part of the problem but a part of the solution in ensuring that Black-led organizations have access to not only grants but other capital at a low-interest rate. When a nonprofit is on the cusp, they need to know they have partners who move quickly and that funds aren't held up. That's what our partnership does."

~ Aaron Miripol, President & CEO, Urban Land Conservancy

# COMMUNITY VOICE AND VISUALIZATION OF IMPACT



## PROJECT VOYCE (VOICES OF YOUTH CREATING EQUITY)

Supporting their mission to partner with youth to cultivate transformational leadership that addresses the root causes of inequity in underrepresented communities by training, employing, organizing, and building equitable youth-adult partnerships.

*“Support from the BRIC Fund allows us the space to take bold action and move with the confidence that comes from community investment. In deep equitable partnership with our youth leaders and informed by stakeholder data, we dared to dream and began co-designing the framework for our current organizational upgrade. We are now in the phase of implementing and evaluating these changes, which*

*will eventually offer a replicable model for operationalizing the principles of healing justice in the practice of transformational youth development. The support of the BRIC Fund lets us do the work that is vital, pressing, and led by youth who know their worth.” ~ Vanessa Roberts - EDCI Alum*

## CLEO PARKER ROBINSON DANCE

Supporting their arts-in-education programs delivered to students within 10 schools and participants throughout the metropolitan area that served nearly 40,000 individuals.

## THELMA'S DREAM

Supporting their mission to empower underserved communities out of the darkness of poverty with compassion and lead them to a pathway of success.

*"The BRIC grant funds have helped Thelma's Dream invest in the long-term sustainability of our organization. We have used the funds to pay for insurance, rent, office supplies and website maintenance. Sustainability is important because we are a resource center that serves at-risk and underserved communities. Without the BRIC grant funds, we would not be able to keep our doors open or maintain our insurance, which is required for our programs. We have been able to use the BRIC grant funds to continue our programming for youth and to maintain consistent resources for our families." ~ Doretta Tootle – Executive Director and Founder, Thelma's Dream*

## SECOND CHANCE CENTER, INC.

Supporting the organization's re-entry program expansion, growth of the Impact 100 Employment Opportunity Lab, and the development of its racial justice advocacy programming.

*"It is not lost on us that the legacy of racism is perpetuated when people of color do not have access to the resources to build wealth. We have purchased land at the intersection of Acoma and Florida in Denver to build the Residences at Acoma, 55 permanent supportive housing apartments and 63 workforce apartments for formerly incarcerated individuals at different stages along their recovery and re-entry journey."*

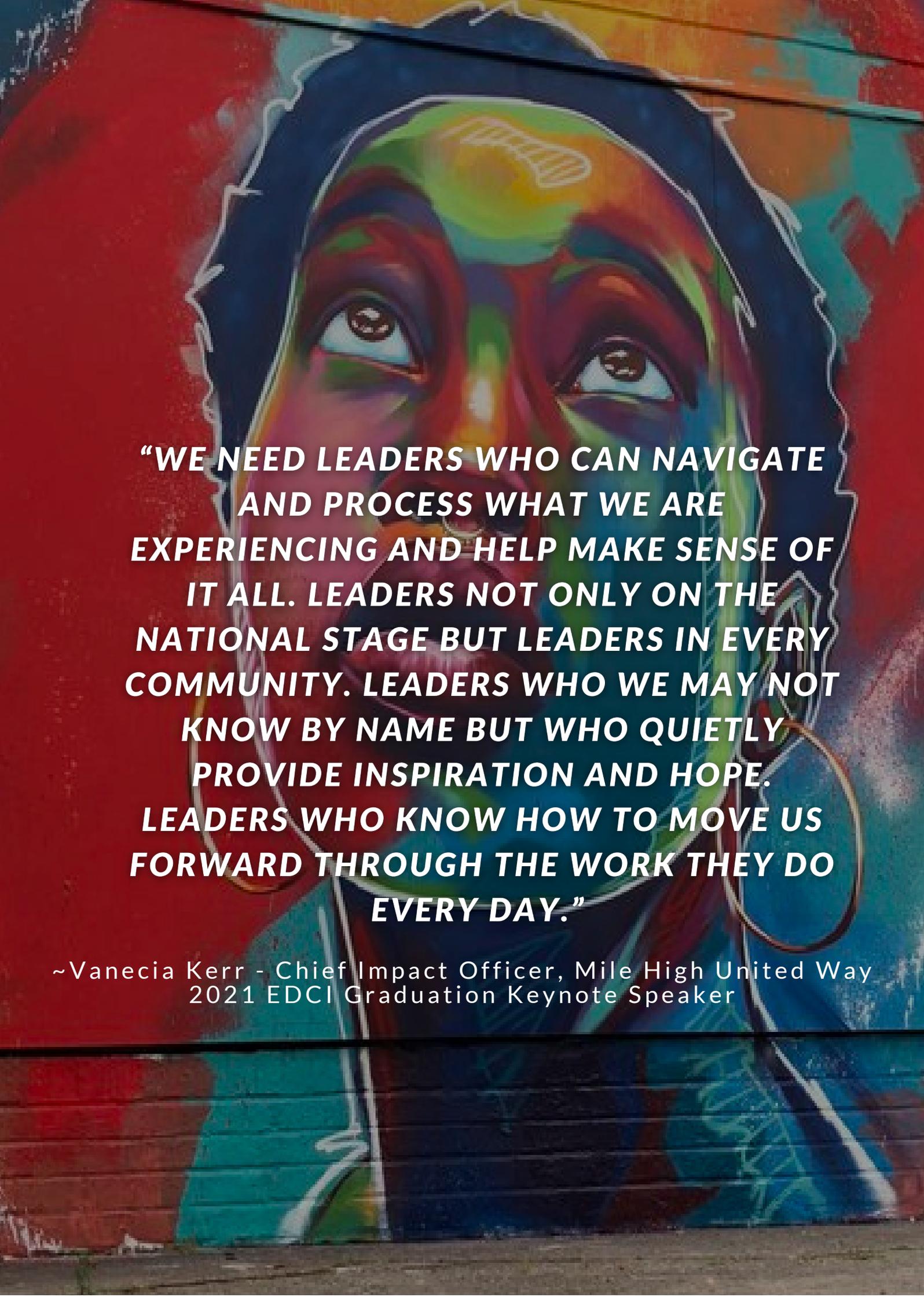


## DELTA ETA BOULÉ FOUNDATION

Supporting their mission to create the next generation of Black Leaders through scholarships, internships, mentorship and professional development opportunities.

*"We have used BRIC funds to support reorganization of our mentorship program, hire consultants to improve our fundraising and organizational capacity, support training for our data management system, and to provide emergency funding for our scholarship recipients. BRIC funding has allowed us to serve more students through our mentorship and professional development offerings, especially through monthly virtual seminars. We impact our community by creating new role models for other young Black men to emulate." ~ Gregory Moore – Chairman, Delta Eta Boulé Foundation*





**“WE NEED LEADERS WHO CAN NAVIGATE  
AND PROCESS WHAT WE ARE  
EXPERIENCING AND HELP MAKE SENSE OF  
IT ALL. LEADERS NOT ONLY ON THE  
NATIONAL STAGE BUT LEADERS IN EVERY  
COMMUNITY. LEADERS WHO WE MAY NOT  
KNOW BY NAME BUT WHO QUIETLY  
PROVIDE INSPIRATION AND HOPE.  
LEADERS WHO KNOW HOW TO MOVE US  
FORWARD THROUGH THE WORK THEY DO  
EVERY DAY.”**

~Vanecia Kerr - Chief Impact Officer, Mile High United Way  
2021 EDCI Graduation Keynote Speaker

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OF COLOR INSTITUTE (EDCI)

EDCI is a two-year individual leadership development and organizational capacity-building program that engages the collective expertise of Black, Indigenous and people of color who lead nonprofit organizations that support communities of color. EDCI has provided participants with a safe, affirming space to grow and lead unapologetically for over a decade.

In 2021, EDCI celebrated its 10th anniversary and recognized the impactful history of more than 160 graduate community leaders, many of whom continue to serve in nonprofit and civic leadership roles in Colorado and beyond. Due to its overwhelming popularity and success, EDCI expanded the program statewide in 2022. Our alumni are engaged in communities across the country, amplifying the lessons learned through EDCI to make an impact worldwide.

The institute seeks participants looking to grow and expand their skill sets, contribute to a dynamic network of peers, and work to inform, shape, and maximize the opportunities in today's nonprofit sector while making the industry more inclusive and equitable.

## CURRENT UPDATE

- **42** 2022 Cohort Participants
- **35** Active alumni coaching grants
- EDCI to host its first (in person) biennial Leadership Summit on September 23, 2022.



## IMPACT QUOTE

" My class was unique in that we went through the EDCI program during the pandemic's peak and the height of the racial distress in our country. EDCI provided a space for like-minded individuals facing the same challenges to come together to talk, heal and share everything we were experiencing as executives of color in our community. It allowed me to bring my whole self as a woman of color to my work and the communities we serve."

~ Tanaka Shipp - Founder & CEO, QueenShipp

# THE LANDSCAPE PROJECT COHORT

*“Because of the Landscape Project, racial equity is not just a goal. Racial equity is the focus of our conversations, the heart of our planning, and integrated into our organization on every level.”*

*~ Landscape Project Cohort Participant*

The purpose of the Landscape Project Cohort is to establish, embed, and advance internal inclusive and racially equitable practices and policies. By doing so, the goal is for nonprofit organizations to have a more significant impact in direct services, to influence nonprofit peers, and to help dismantle systemic oppression and injustice.

The work of the cohort strives to institutionalize Racial Equity and Inclusion (REI) into policies, procedures, practices, and planning. The goal is to ensure efforts are long-term and inclusive of the whole organization – not dependent on one leader for one year or one-off initiatives. It also requires that all voices are heard throughout the process to build a genuinely inclusive foundation for the work to take root and grow. For this first cohort, leaving room for discovery was important, intentionally providing opportunities for the organizations to influence the process as they leaned into an uncertain journey and awakening together.

## Outcomes/Achievements

- Twenty-five nonprofit organizations within the Denver Foundation’s Community Grants Program that demonstrated engagement in REI work were invited to apply for the inaugural cohort by submitting a one-year REI objectives and actions plan.
- Seventeen organizations were ultimately selected – 10 led by executive directors who identified as white and seven led by executive directors who identified as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).
- Eighty percent of the organizations reported that they either made significant progress or achieved their REI goals during their time in the cohort.



## IMPACT QUOTE

“By far, the Landscape Cohort differed from any other local efforts I’ve participated in. The upfront investment into organizations, to encourage leaders to learn, and influence change was amazing. The Cohort truly provided the space to be innovative.”

“Racism is endemic to our nation’s past and present. Against this backdrop, COVID-19, police violence, social protest, and a polarized election have brought new levels of trauma to Denver’s communities of color and our organizations.”

“A key transformation for us has been the investment of everyone—the vast majority of our staff and board not only understand the WHY of the work, but are taking action to dismantle organizational systems and structures through the equity lens. It no longer lives in our REI leadership team as about 82 percent of staff are voluntarily working on Equity Lens Action Committees to advance the work.”

# House Bill 1356 will provide grants up to \$100,000 to at least 350 organizations

**“It’s an opportunity for the state of Colorado not only to say that we are promoting equity, but we are putting in practice equity in the way we are doing better investments for small nonprofits.” ~ Ricardo Perez, CLCT Member and executive director, Hispanic Affairs Project**

## BRIC POLICY & ADVOCACY

***“If you wish to move mountains tomorrow, you must start by lifting stones today.” ~ African Proverb***

BRIC is more than a fund. It is a movement to strengthen communities and be a voice for change. BRIC also serves as a vehicle to amplify the voice of community members often unheard around social issues and policies directly affecting them.

The BRIC Fund is a founding member of the Communities Lead, Communities Thrive (CLCT) Steering Committee, a coalition of small Colorado nonprofits that serve Black, Indigenous, Latino, Asian American and Pacific Islanders, LGBTQ+, and rural communities. As Colorado strives to ensure equitable recovery from the pandemic, the coalition came together to ensure that nonprofits and the communities they serve were not left behind.



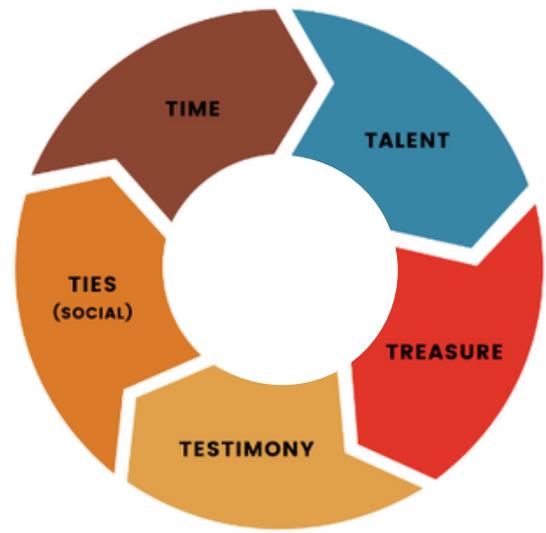
## Outcomes/Achievements

- In early 2022, CLCT proposed Colorado House Bill 22-1356, which requested \$35 million of federal American Rescue Plan Act funds to provide infrastructure grants for smaller nonprofits that provide culturally appropriate and relevant services and resources to families and communities. But also, those organizations that have been historically underrepresented, underfunded, under-resourced, and continue to struggle with pandemic recovery.
- HB 22-1356 - the Small Community-based Nonprofit Grant Program Bill - was passed by the Colorado Legislature and signed by Gov. Jared Polis on June 3, 2022.
- This bill awards grant funds directly to the organizations best equipped to identify and generate community-led and culturally responsive solutions to address their specific needs.
- Grants scheduled to be distributed in the first quarter of 2023.

# FIVE Ts OF BLACK PHILANTHROPY

Giving is a rich part of Black history, and the five Ts of philanthropy are rooted in our cultures. We have long shared our Time, Talent, Treasure, Testimonies and social Ties to better our communities and create the change we wish to see.

The Five Ts are integrated into the BRIC Fund's foundation, allowing us to help one another address emerging and urgent issues. We use them to create new economic opportunities for people in our communities. We use them to advocate for and advance causes rooted in racial justice. And we use them to uplift and protect our youth. When we leverage our collective resources, we bring unstoppable and unmatched energy to our philanthropic work.



"Philanthropy is not a transaction. In order for change to happen, there needs to be engagement and dialogue, which helps bring a strategic focus on how we can make a collective impact. The Black community has a long history of philanthropy that comes from resilience and optimism - because you can't have one without the other."

~ Karen McNeil-Miller - President & CEO, Colorado Health Foundation





# 1619 FORWARD.... THE CONTINUED JOURNEY AND ROAD AHEAD

*"Know from whence you came. If you know whence you came, there are absolutely no limitations to where you can go." ~ James Baldwin*

## Impact Quote

*"Our democracy's founding ideals were false when they were written. Black Americans have fought to make them true."*

*~ Nikole Hannah-Jones*

The BRIC Fund and our community, corporate and philanthropic partners are working toward building a stronger future. While there have been significant changes and progress over the last 400 years, it's evident over the past couple of years that the path to "true" liberation and freedom from racism and oppression is still a destination to reach. The bricks paved led us to today. However, it's our responsibility to continue to pave the path forward and be the change we hope to see. If not, we risk repeating history.

The BRIC Fund commits to being mindful of our steps, thoughtful in addressing needs and steadfast in our work...all the while laying BRICs for the future. The BRIC Fund deepens its resolve to strengthen Colorado's Black communities in which we will:

- Integrate and be led by the diverse voices of Colorado's Black communities.
- Continue to invest in our Black-led and serving nonprofits and leaders of color.
- Integrate Black artists and the arts to elevate their work and our stories.
- Work collaboratively with local, regional and national community leaders for racial equity.
- Continue to invest in and build community leaders - lifting as we climb.
- Educate ourselves about laws, policies, and practices to change those that harm and exclude US.
- Participate in Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) coalitions to build power, leverage and change through organizing, advocacy and policy.
- Bridge and connect with white allies, accomplices, and co-conspirators to dismantle racism.
- Always center the Black community and Black leadership in the core/heart of our work.
- Invest OUR 5Ts – Time, Talent, Treasure, Testimony and social Ties, to increase how we historically and culturally invest in Black-led efforts to drive our own progress.

Lastly, as a perpetual resource to Black communities in Colorado and beyond, BRIC will continue to be a leader of equitable change. We will continue to work toward dismantling systemic racism and oppression so collectively we can have our liberation - for us, by us.



# BRIC BUILDERS



*If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together – African Proverb*

The work of BRIC is not done alone. We are thankful for our collective “BRIC Builders” for believing in our vision, for your unyielding commitment to lay bricks within the Black community day-to-day and for your invaluable investment. But more importantly, for joining us to move our vision into progressive and impactful action that seeks to address systemic racism and historic inequities to help build strong communities BRIC by BRIC.

## ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

John-Claude Futrell	Haroun Cowans
Stephanie Rance	Richard Lewis
Javon Brame	April Denmon
Desta Asfaw	Yvonne Moore

Eula Adams (not pictured)

## PARTNERS

- BIG Equity Fund
- Communities Lead Communities Thrive Coalition
- Latino Community Foundation of Colorado
- Poise Foundation
- The Denver Foundation
- Urban Land Conservancy

## MAJOR DONORS AND SUPPORTERS

- Beacon Fund
- Caring for Colorado Foundation
- Colorado Health Foundation
- Community First Foundation
- DAAP
- Davis Graham & Stubbs
- Denver Broncos Charities
- Gates Family Foundation
- Google Fiber/WebPay
- HealthONE Foundation
- Kaiser Permanente Foundation
- Mile High United Way
- Molson Coors
- The Colorado Trust
- Wend Collective

## CONTACT:

BLACK RESILIENCE IN COLORADO FUND  
C/O THE DENVER FOUNDATION  
1009 GRANT STREET  
DENVER, CO 80203  
LSULLIVAN@BRICFUND.ORG

