

Innovation at Foothills United Way

Strategic Plan

Mobilizing the caring power of our communities



GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.

LETTER FROM OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Dear Neighbor,

Foothills United Way believes an innovative community deserves an innovative approach to community solutions. Since our work in the non-profit sector has changed very little over several decades, we asked residents and leaders across Boulder and Broomfield counties what a reinvented Foothills United Way should accomplish for our region.

The strong and consistent answer to that question? Foothills United Way should use its relationships across the business, government, non-profit, faith and education sectors to create and pursue a shared community agenda, bringing separate activities together for the good of all residents. We took that feedback to heart and have developed a plan that we believe you will recognize as a truly “united way.”

In the next few pages, you’ll see a very different Foothills United Way described than we’ve been familiar with in this region. We invite you to take a look at the type of organization we are becoming and the type of community we will build.

Sincerely,



Doug Yeiser
President & CEO



Edie Ortega
Chair, Board of Directors



EVOLVING FOR THE FUTURE

Foothills United Way has been a leader in rallying the community to support key services for our neighbors for over 90 years. In that time, the important work that we have done has brought us into close partnership with the major Community Leaders in our regions—corporate professionals, local government officials, non-profit executives, clergy, donors and volunteers—in order to advance the common good. With this strong history of serving as a uniting force for this region, Foothills United Way has committed to ensuring that we are creating the greatest value possible by harnessing the collective power of our **resources** and **relationships**.

This region possesses significant community assets, including: a strong safety net, a citizenry concerned about the well-being of their neighbors, one of the best educated and technologically proficient populations in the US and national leadership in citizen engagement. With these assets comes the opportunity to engage in a coordinated effort to work across institutional boundaries towards common goals to overcome our greatest challenges. In order to move us toward that promise, our board of directors set a new vision and mission for Foothills United Way in the summer of 2014.

Vision

A community working together in which all people can achieve their full potential.

Mission

Collaboratively:

- Identify community priority needs and desired outcomes
- Unite community resources in pursuit of agreed upon goals and
- Take action.

VALUES IN ACTION

The board, staff and volunteers of Foothills United Way recognize our responsibility to donors, the service providers in the community with whom we partner and the citizens of Boulder and Broomfield counties who we serve. In order to pursue our mission in a way that meets this responsibility and achieves our vision, our work will always be:

- **COLLABORATIVE**-bringing together all the necessary community partners to address community issues.
- **PROACTIVE**-we meet community needs before they become community crises.
- **SOLUTION-ORIENTED**-rather than perpetuating the status quo.
- **INNOVATIVE**-being collaborative, proactive and solution-oriented requires inspiration.
- **ACCOUNTABLE**-to donors, service providers and the community based on measurable outcomes, and
- **TRUSTWORTHY**- the relationships we rely on to accomplish our work begins and ends with the trust of its partners.

SPRINGBOARD FOR COMMUNITY PROGRESS

Foothills United Way has long been the most active non-governmental organization making community investments in the Boulder/Broomfield region. The approach to that work up until now has looked much like the activity of many traditional United Ways—by partnering with major employers and other donors, we have been able to raise money to make grants to many individual non-profit agencies with specific missions.

“Working together, the Community Leaders in the region are capable of transforming the safety net into a springboard for community progress.”

Although the value of this contribution to the region is undeniable, the Board of Directors for Foothills United Way knows that this region is ripe for change. The Boulder/Broomfield region is home to an unusually robust collection of social safety net organizations. Working together, the Community Leaders in the region are capable of transforming the safety net into a springboard for community progress.

By shifting the focus of community investment from organizations to communities, Foothills United Way intends to harness the full power of **resources** and **relationships**. This approach to investment will support collaborative initiatives that leverage the influence of each organization in order to address difficult issues. We will look to support partnerships that execute strategies that prevent crises and promote stability and strength in the community.

FOOTHILLS UNITED WAY TO WORK IN NEW WAYS

In order to be an effective supporter of collaborative work that brings together **resources** and **relationships**, Foothills United Way must be prepared to work in new ways. In order to provide support and guidance to these efforts, this organization must be flexible, share decision-making with other partners and demonstrate a long-term commitment to collaborative initiatives.

With flexibility will come a new identity. Many current partners see Foothills United Way as only a “funder.” Moving forward, this organization must also be known as a convener, connector, advocate, coordinator and guide. Collaborative initiatives will come forward in different ways. Some may require assistance to organize the right coalition of Community Leaders. Others may require financial support to properly lead their efforts and deliver effective services. Some initiatives may require both. Although the level and type of engagement with any particular effort may vary, what will remain consistent is that

Foothills United Way's work in all respects will:

- Involve as wide an array of Community Leaders as possible, especially co-funders
- Rely on measurement indicators shared with funding partners
- Address our strategic priorities

Whether it is working with those funding partners, working with service providers to create initiatives or allowing investment choices to be shaped by community input, Foothills United Way is willing to serve as a cooperative partner in open dialogue to make smart decisions. One important way that this must happen is by investing in concert with other major funders. The alignment of funding leverages greater financial resources and ensures that projects this United Way supports are sustainable.

This sustainability is essential because investing in community progress can take years. That is why Foothills United Way will be supporting collaborative initiatives based on the project timelines the partners set to achieve their goals, not on arbitrary funding cycles.

LIVE UNITED®

MEASURING COMMUNITY PROGRESS

Foothills United Way has become a leader in our region in convening community volunteers to make decisions about the use of community resources. This strategy makes sure funding decisions are made based on the knowledge gleaned from a broad spectrum of experiences.

In recent years, Foothills United Way has also worked with other regional funders to link investment decisions to available data. By aggregating information about community condition and service provider outcomes, we have worked to target funding to results. Moving forward, cooperation will include aligning the strategies for measuring community progress

with indicators used by those partners. Foothills United Way will continue to work with all of its partners to strengthen the quality of data available so that volunteers can integrate this information into the decision-making process.

Additionally, future community outreach efforts will allow this United Way to take into account the grassroots voices of people across the region. By staging regular focus groups for collaborative initiatives and Community Conversations that guide Foothills United Way's direction, the community will know that this organization has done everything possible to base community investment decisions on the true community needs.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR COMMUNITY IMPACT



Strengthening families for early childhood success

90% of brain development takes place before the age of five, yet significant public investment in child development doesn't begin until children reach kindergarten. Meanwhile, study after study shows that promoting healthy cognitive, socio-emotional and physical development for our children is among the most effective ways to build our economy, reduce deficits, create safe communities and secure a creative, productive workforce for the next generation. If Foothills United Way is going to embody the values of being *PROACTIVE* and *SOLUTION-ORIENTED*, this organization must make the work of supporting our young people a top priority.

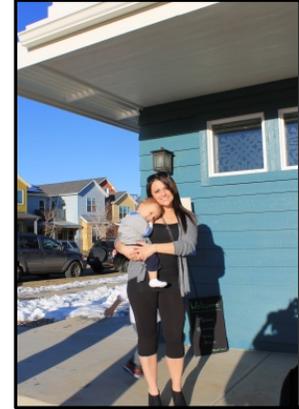
However, preparing kids for school and life requires more than just investment and action for those children. Kids become healthy and successful when they grow up in a nurturing environment. Together, we can ensure that parents and families have the tools they need to make sure that children are receiving support and love they need to

be on their way to success by age eight.

Supporting regional efforts to secure adequate, stable, affordable housing for all people

Housing is the most essential human need. Without a place to live, no individual or family can escape the reliance on subsidized services. Through community data and our efforts in responding to the 2013 flood, Foothills United Way has witnessed how difficult gaining access to affordable housing is for people in our region. In line with national “Housing First” movements, Foothills United Way is committed to working as a part of ongoing efforts in our region to create a housing system that serves everyone and prevents other emerging social issues.

Our work in this area highlights the importance of our mission to always operate collaboratively and think upstream. Foothills United Way has partnered with organizations in Boulder and Broomfield Counties since 2001 to promote access to affordable housing and financial stability for residents through the Personal Investment Enterprise program. By helping individuals gain the financial skills they need and develop savings to reach their financial goals, we have helped 82 families purchase homes, 86 people pursue higher education and an additional 55 start their own small business since the program’s inception. This success has shown the importance of empowering individuals to participate in their own development as the basis for community progress.



Our experience has taught us that housing is an incredibly complex issue involving the needs and interests of many stakeholders across the community. Foothills United Way is uniquely positioned to draw together those diverse actors to champion a common agenda that ensures everyone in this region—from our most vulnerable neighbors to the ones on the path to self-sufficiency, from our workforce to our retired seniors—has their own place in the community to call home.

Optimizing community networks with an emphasis on community engagement, community resilience and nonprofit management support.

Foothills United Way is uniquely positioned to provide leadership in connecting individuals and organizations in order to solve community problems, prepare the community to respond to community crises, and build the capacity of our partners involved in achieving our mission of a community working together.

Community Engagement

Foothills United Way’s Volunteer Connection has been active in promoting voluntarism and referring citizens to volunteer opportunities in Boulder County since 1969. Through the leadership of important programs like this one, Boulder ranks as the #3 medium-sized city in America for citizen volunteering.

Foothills United Way is now looking to expand on this success by exploring opportunities to more actively engage our neighbors by:

- **continuing to grow our corporate volunteer program**
- **developing supports for school age and university student to volunteer**
- **supporting neighborhood level Community Leaders**
- **engaging in community outreach to integrate grassroots input into community initiatives**

Community Resilience

As much as any community organization in this region, Foothills United Way understands the importance of being ready for crisis. We have stepped up to play an active role in disaster response and recovery over the last decade as our neighbors have been impacted by major fires and a historic flood. We are invested in preparing this region to withstand and recover from anything that comes our way. We know that we can be a leader in this work by **integrating disaster preparedness strategies into our work to strengthen the social safety net.**

Non-profits, faith communities and public agencies are involved in non-stop work to serve individuals and families in crisis. These are the very partners that we look to during major disasters to step up and support those who are impacted. By ensuring these groups are interdependent and are adequately prepared to meet the ongoing need, they will be ready to respond during a disaster.

Non-Profit Management Support

In 2010, Foothills United Way teamed up with Boulder County Community Services to move to the cutting edge of strategic philanthropy in developing the Non-Profit Cultivation Center. By making sure that **non-profit organizations have the tools they need to work effectively and efficiently** for the community, we are helping to make the whole region stronger. Moving forward, Foothills United Way will continue to support programming that empowers non-profit leaders to make sound organizational management decisions, grow into strong collaborators and use data to plan and evaluate services.

JOIN US

- Encourage your favorite organizations to work in partnerships rather than acting alone.
- Use our Volunteer Connection online search to find volunteer opportunities and contact our Volunteer Connection staff about team building projects for your company.
- Volunteer your time at Foothills United Way to drive these initiatives to build a stronger region.
- Make an annual contribution to Foothills United Way to advance innovative, collaborative projects.
- Promote the use 2-1-1 as a resource for people to find assistance they need.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On behalf of the entire Boulder/Broomfield region, Foothills United Way extends a special thanks to the volunteers that made this plan possible, including:

Board of Directors

Edie Ortega <i>Chair</i>	Kim Felton
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Jane Brautigam	Jon Kottke
Suzanne Crawford	John Olson
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