How gifts to CU create a kaleidoscopic picture[1]

Boasting a vivid kaleidoscope theme, the new University of Colorado annual donor report shares important financial highlights that underscore the power of contributions across the CU system.

The online report[2] from the system Office of Advancement explores the 2023-24 fiscal year, when a diverse community of more than 44,000 donors made more than 70,000 gifts to CU — adding up to a remarkable total of $429 million.

Like facets in a kaleidoscope, these individual gifts all play a vital role in shaping our big picture by supporting areas of the university like these:

World-class health care:?$244 million for the advancement of health care training, innovative research and cutting-edge treatments.? **Scholarships:**?More than **$48 million**?awarded to deserving students.? **Research initiatives: $178 million** to address some of the most significant scientific, social and environmental issues of our time.? **Top talent:**?More than **$23 million** invested in faculty recruitment and retention.?
The numbers tell a powerful story of the impact collectively achieved by donors. To delve deeper into these insights and see how giving is making a difference at CU, **view the full report**[2].

Diverse entrepreneurs share experiences, challenges[3]
[4]

As Colorado's population becomes increasingly diverse, its entrepreneurial landscape is evolving in tandem. The number of Black, Latino, Asian and Native American residents is expected to grow from 1.8 million in 2017 to 4.0 million by 2050, according to the Bell Policy Institute.

Within this demographic shift, the new majority, historically underrepresented communities, are finally being recognized as influential economic drivers. Despite being among the fastest-growing groups in entrepreneurship, these communities still face significant barriers – especially in accessing capital and resources essential for starting and scaling businesses.

A recent workshop presented by the University of Colorado in partnership with the Latino Leadership Institute[5] (LLI) was more than just a conversation about business – it was a look into the real-world experiences and hurdles faced by diverse founders. Last month's event centered on helping entrepreneurs, particularly from underserved communities, navigate scaling challenges.

Panelists included CU and LLI alumni, among them Roberto Meza[6] of Emerald Gardens[7], Marie Peters[8] of B:Side Capital[9] + B:Side Fund[10], and Amy Sweeting[11] of VAMP Stucco[12]. It was moderated by serial entrepreneur Jessica Acosta[13] and CU Denver Smart Cities Future Lab[14] Director Dan Griner[15], who shared powerful stories and tangible strategies, igniting discussions that felt both personal and universally relevant.

Empowering through ecosystems and mentorship

A central theme of the workshop was the need for robust support ecosystems. Founders underscored that mentorship, technical assistance and a strong network were not just helpful but necessary, especially for those scaling businesses in underserved communities.

"An ecosystem isn't just about connections; it's about people willing to guide you through rough patches," Peters said.

Panelists encouraged leveraging resources like the Small Business Administration's free courses and Small Business Development Centers' counseling and mentorship programs.

Addressing funding challenges head-on

Securing capital remains one of the largest obstacles for diverse founders. Meza, an advocate for sustainable practices in agriculture, emphasized how traditional funding sources often overlook marginalized founders. He stressed the importance of innovative models, such as 0% loans, to break down barriers.

“We need to reimagine how funding can flow to communities that have historically been excluded,” Meza said.

From personal challenges to entrepreneurial inspiration

Panelists also shared how personal experiences often inspire entrepreneurial endeavors. For Sweeting, financial challenges became a powerful catalyst to launch her business.

“Entrepreneurship is a journey, often one born out of necessity,” Sweeting said. Many founders are driven to create businesses that align with their personal missions and aspirations to make a broader impact.

Laying the foundation for generational wealth

Beyond immediate business growth, the workshop also focused on the importance of long-term wealth creation for diverse communities. Panelists discussed financial literacy and strategic investments, such as property ownership, as key components of building generational wealth. Attendees were encouraged to adopt financial planning and investment strategies that can foster economic resilience over time.

Calling for action in supporting underserved communities

While support for diverse founders is often pledged, founders at the workshop highlighted a gap between promises and tangible action. They argued that underserved communities need more than just lip service.

“Don’t tell us what you think we want to hear – invest in resources that make a real difference,” Sweeting said.

Inspiration for aspiring founders: Resources and recommendations

Organizations:

Latino Leadership Institute[5] (LLI), Watson Institute[16], Slow Money Organization[17], B:Side Fund, Mad Capital[18], DEDO[19], SBA[20], BNI[21], Denver Metro SBDC[22], Mi Casa Resource Center[23]

Podcasts:
Armchair Experts (people being vulnerable – great for sales) Financial Feminist A Slight Change of Plans How I Built This
Tools:
Chat GPT, (IBM skills build free course on AI) Speechify (reads documents) Online learning modules Books: Radical Candor Radical Respect

CU faculty researchers invited to apply for Boettcher Investigator status[24]

The University of Colorado and the Boettcher Foundation are pleased to announce the 2025 Boettcher Webb-Waring Biomedical Research Awards[25] program.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Boettcher Foundation established the Boettcher Webb-Waring Biomedical Research Awards program, which will

provide up to five grants of $250,000 each covering up to three years of research activity with the intent to provide independent research opportunities to promising and talented early career investigators. Awardees will carry the prestigious title of Boettcher Investigator.

The biomedical research, supported pursuant to this grant program, will be designed to find ways to prevent disease and improve human health through basic and applied biomedical research. The intent of the program is to fund meritorious research that has the potential for new discoveries or advances a discovery to the proof of its potential value as an application to improve human health. This research will improve the understanding, treatment and prevention of human disease.

Since the first awards were granted in July 2010, the Boettcher Foundation has awarded CU's 70 current Boettcher Investigators[26] more than $16.3 million.

PRE-SUBMISSION WEBINAR: 1:30-2:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 11. Potential applicants can get more information about the award program, the application and selection process, application tips, and participate in a Q&A with the chair and vice chair of the 2025 selection panel. REGISTER HERE[27]

HOW TO APPLY: Eligible faculty researchers from all four CU campuses are encouraged to apply. For purposes of the 2025 award year, an eligible early career investigator (ECI):
Is an investigator who is four years or fewer from their initial career-track academic appointment as of Jan. 1, 2025, (i.e., whose initial career-track appointments began no earlier than Jan. 1, 2021); Has not previously received a major, independent research award; Is an investigator who received a terminal degree or completed their initial medical residency within 10 years of Jan. 1, 2025 (i.e., on or after Jan. 1, 2015); and Is an investigator who is either a U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident, as of date of application in 2025.
For more details, go to: http://www.cu.edu/bfww/eligibility[28]

Applications must be submitted to your campus grants office by the deadlines included in the campus-specific instructions. Links to the campus-specific documents are available here[29].

Do not contact the Boettcher Foundation directly.

Call for submissions: President's DEI Awards and Grants[30]

Nominations for the President's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Awards are now open and applications for the President's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Grants are now being accepted.

President's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Awards[31]

Nominations for the President's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion awards are now open.

This annual award honors individuals and units that have demonstrated outstanding commitment and made significant contributions to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion within the University of Colorado community.

Recipients of the honor receive $2,000 and a commemorative award.

A reception to honor awardees is set for 2:30-4:30 p.m. April 17, 2025, at 1800 Grant St.

Categories are:

Faculty. Full-time CU faculty includes tenured faculty, tenure-track faculty, IRC (instructional, research and clinical) faculty.

Staff.

Student. Undergraduate or graduate.

Academic or administrative unit.

The deadline for nominations is **Jan. 17, 2025.** To submit a President's DEI Award nomination, click here[31].

President's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Grants[32]

Applications for the President's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Grants are now being accepted.

The President's DEI Grants are designed to fund innovative and creative projects that promote diversity, equity and inclusion throughout the University of Colorado. Proposal funding is for one year with a maximum request of $8,000.

Grant winners will be acknowledged during a reception from 2:30-4:30 p.m. April 17, 2025, at 1800 Grant St.

Eligibility: Grant proposals must be submitted by CU full-time faculty (see above) or full-time staff. Students or student groups interested in submitting a proposal must have a faculty or staff sponsor submit the proposal and include a letter of support.

The deadline for proposals is **Jan. 17, 2025.** To submit a President's DEI Grant application, click here[33].

Not sure how to write a grant? Join a virtual informational session, 11 a.m.-noon Dec. 18, where we'll talk you through what you need to know, including the application criteria and helpful tips on structuring your submission. To attend, please email systemdei@cu.edu[34] and we'll send you an invitation.

For more information, check out our Grants FAQ[35] page.

Health Savings Accounts: Good for your physical and financial health [36]

It's all about you: New website resource makes it easy to update personal information [37]

100 years of memories from CU's most famous fan [38]

November Campus Update: C3 Innovation, campus leadership searches, more [39]

New CU Denver-spawned academic journal explores issues of non-permanent faculty[40]

CU Anschutz scientists look to the next generation of immunotherapy [41]

Publication note: No CU Connections on Thanksgiving, Dec. 26 and Jan. 2[42]

CU Connections will not publish new issues on Thanksgiving Day (Nov. 28), Dec. 26 and Jan. 2.

Deadline for submissions for the Thursday, Dec. 5, issue is noon Tuesday, Nov. 26.

The final new issue before the winter holiday break will appear Thursday, Dec. 19; deadline for submissions is noon Friday, Dec. 13.

CU Connections returns after the winter break on Thursday, Jan. 9. Deadline for submissions is noon Friday, Jan. 3.

During the holiday breaks, the website will be updated with news should events warrant.

Gillis on life in space[43]

Sampson outlines bold new vision [44]

O'Rourke to join Children's Hospital Colorado [45]

CU Boulder launches free digital clinic[46]

This is how our veterans lead us into the light on Veterans Day[47]

Art to See at U.S. Museums, Galleries and Auction Houses This Fall[48]

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/how-gifts-cu-create-kaleidoscopic-picture[2] https://giving.cu.edu/2024/impact-report[3] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/diverse-entrepreneurs-share-experiences-challenges[4] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/div-entrep_top.jpg[5] https://latinoslead.org/[6] https://www.linkedin.com/in/roberto-meza-08b53929/[7] https://www.emeraldgardens.farm/[8] https://www.bsidecapital.org/marie-peters[9] https://www.bsidecapital.org/[10] https://www.bsidefund.org/[11] https://www.linkedin.com/in/amy-sweeting/[12] https://www.vampstucco.com/[13] https://www.linkedin.com/in/acostajessica/[14] https://www.smartfutureslab.com/[15] https://www.linkedin.com/in/dangriner/[16] https://watson.is/[17] https://slowmoney.org/[18] https://madcapital.com/[19] https://www.denvergov.org/Government/Agencies-Departments-Offices/Agencies-Departments-Offices-Directory/Economic-Development-Opportunity[20] https://www.sba.gov/[21] https://www.bni.com/[22] https://www.denversbdc.org/[23] https://micasaresourcecenter.org/[24] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-faculty-researchers-invited-apply-boettcher-investigator-status-5[25] http://www.cu.edu/bfww[26] https://www.cu.edu/bfww/cu-investigators[27] https://cusystem.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_pmHP73eDTfa-CaV--MIo8A[28] http://www.cu.edu/bfww/eligibility[29] https://www.cu.edu/bfww/how-apply[30] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/call-submissions-president-s-dei-awards-and-grants-0[31] https://www.cu.edu/dei/presidents-dei-awards-and-grants/presidents-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-dei-award[32] https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cu.edu%2Fdei%2Fpresidents-dei-awards-and-grants%2Fpresidents-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-grants&data=05%7C01%7Cvicky.mcpheron%40cu.edu%7C4061ab17efea4e05195508dbf6892840%7Ce889e28f74d447f287e853732cbbe7ec%7C0%7C0%7C638374841185836115%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=cymfCrTLlEDRjiU3Ihn6vdLmEFuCcdpJhZ%2BEPIL%2Fzcw%3D&reserved=0[33] https://www.cu.edu/dei/presidents-dei-awards-and-grants/presidents-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-grants[34] mailto:systemdei@cu.edu?subject=[35] https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cu.edu%2Fdei%2Fpresidents-dei-awards-and-grants%2Fpresidents-dei-grants%2Ffaqs&data=05%7C02%7Cdedrick%40cu.edu%7C97e06146ff2c43fadc4708dd08e665bf%7Ce889e28f74d447f287e853732cbbe7ec%7C0%7C0%7C638676507827457235%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=pvLyvNwsGvSCCPReaKs5IMiD5keCYeoUPNmYRTVDUXw%3D&reserved=0[36] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/health-savings-accounts-good-your-physical-and-financial-health[37] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/it-s-all-about-you-new-website-resource-makes-it-easy-update-personal-information[38] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/100-years-memories-cu-s-most-famous-fan[39] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/november-campus-update-c3-innovation-campus-leadership-searches-more[40] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/new-cu-denver-spawned-academic-journal-explores-issues-non-permanent-faculty[41] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/cu-anschutz-scientists-look-next-generation-immunotherapy[42] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/publication-note-no-cu-connections-thanksgiving-dec-26-and-jan-2[43] https://connections.cu.edu/people/gillis-life-space[44] https://connections.cu.edu/people/sampson-outlines-bold-new-vision[45] https://connections.cu.edu/people/o-rourke-join-children-s-hospital-colorado[46] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/cu-boulder-launches-free-digital-clinic[47] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/how-our-veterans-lead-us-light-veterans-day[48] https://connections.cu.edu/itn/art-see-us-museums-galleries-and-auction-houses-fall