

Colorado Media Project

Funder Table - Principles of Membership

Mission: CMP is a nonpartisan philanthropic initiative housed at Rose Community Foundation dedicated to supporting people, projects, and organizations working to build a healthier and more equitable local news and information ecosystem for all Coloradans.

Vision: We envision a future where all Coloradans have access to high-quality local news and information that they trust and use to learn about important issues facing their families, local communities, and the state; to engage with their neighbors and community; and to participate in democracy.

Value Proposition: Now more than ever, Colorado communities need innovative, cross-sector solutions to a number of interrelated "wicked problems" facing our democracy: The decline and fragmentation of local journalism, the deluge of digital disinformation, polarization of our civic dialogue, and widespread mistrust caused by vast inequity and a lack of common ground.

Philanthropy must play a pivotal role in catalyzing and supporting new approaches, because progress on every single issue that our communities care about — from public education and public health, to addressing climate change and racial and socioeconomic inequity, to supporting civic participation — hangs in the balance.

Colorado Media Project brings together multiple funders – local and national foundations, public funders and impact investors – to learn from innovators across Colorado and the U.S., to strategize together via a peer-funder network, and to leverage resources via pooled funds and co-funding to address big issues that extend beyond any single newsroom, organization, topic, sector or community. (More on our accomplishments and lessons learned since 2018 is [here](#).)

Priorities: CMP leverages funding and resources to support Colorado communities as they build healthier local news and information ecosystems by impacting three priority areas:

- **Trusted Local News and Information:** Greater access to high-quality, fact-based, nonpartisan local news and information on a range of important issues, providing Coloradans with critical information they want, trust, and need to engage in their communities, civic life, and democracy.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** Greater equity and inclusion in how various players in Colorado's local news and information ecosystem engage with and serve communities of color, linguistically diverse communities, rural communities, and other historically marginalized communities.
- **Sustainability and Efficiency.** Stronger investment in independent, nonpartisan sources of local news and information by philanthropy, public funding sources, and news consumers – and more solutions that support efficient and sustainable community journalism, public data and information at the local level.

Strategies: Within a dynamic ecosystem, CMP serves as a funder, catalyst and advocate for innovations that make Colorado's local news and information ecosystem more resilient, collaborative, inclusive, trusted and responsive to the public it serves.

- **FUND:** We pool funds and offer strategic grants to spur innovation and impact, equity, inclusion and resilience in Colorado's local news and information ecosystem.
- **CATALYZE:** We support and facilitate catalytic, cross-sector conversations and connections that surface new and sustainable approaches to address gaps in Colorado's local news and information ecosystem, combat mis/disinformation, and deepen civic participation.
- **ADVOCATE:** We commission research, share learning, and leverage our collective influence to bring more knowledge, allies and resources and better public policies and professional practices into the movement to strengthen and reimagine local news and build a healthier, more solutions-focused public square.

Governance and Structure: CMP is governed by an Executive Committee representing institutional funders that provide significant multi-year financial and/or in-kind support to advance CMP's mission, vision, and activities. The Executive Committee invites additional funders to participate in CMP as non-voting members of a Funder Table. Community Advisors and Sector Advisors ensure that CMP funding and activities are grounded in community information needs and support a sustainable, collaborative, nonpartisan news and information ecosystem. *A grid outlining each of these roles and commitments is below.*

Funder Collaboration and Coordination: We recognize that most funders do not have a specific focus in local news and information, so there's no up-front financial obligation to join CMP's Funder Table — but we are seeking to identify a small group of funders who will commit to regular dialogue, problem-solving and leveraging collective impact. We also understand that each funder has unique priorities that may not completely align with those of CMP, and that each newsroom, community group and partner has its own organizational funding and sustainability needs. Participation in CMP does not require funders to drop their own efforts, and we strongly encourage continuation of direct grants to newsrooms and other nonpartisan information providers. However, a key goal of the Funder Table is to keep one another informed of relevant grantmaking and investments, what's working, and what we're learning along the way – so we do ask participants to commit to a level of transparency and open discussion that will benefit all stakeholders.

Commitments to Nonpartisanship, Journalism Independence and Transparency: CMP adheres to [Rose Community Foundation guidelines](#) for nonpartisan advocacy and public policy. We expect all journalism grantees to adhere to the [Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics](#). CMP's journalism funding may be targeted to support broad topics or coverage areas, but is not contingent on promoting specific messages or stories, and partisan agendas will not drive strategic priorities or decisions. All major CMP contributors (over \$1,000) are named on the CMP website, and a detailed report of all contributions will be published annually.

	Executive Committee	Funder Table	Community Advisors	Sector Advisors
Primary Roles/ Purpose	Oversee CMP strategy, governance and grantmaking; approve committee recommendations for open-call grant awards; select and support CMP staff; lead funder outreach and education to grow the field of support	Share learning and strategizing; platform for co-funding grantees and initiatives	Help identify information needs, gaps and priorities for CMP funding; serve on grant review committees and working groups; make recommendations to guide funders, grantees and partners	Ensure CO remains on the forefront of local media and civic engagement innovations and trends nationally; bring current work, perspectives, and contacts, and new innovative opportunities to funders, grantees and partners
Members	CMP funders of at least \$250,000 per year (cash or in-kind; min. amount may be adjusted at EC discretion)	Foundation and public sector funders and impact investors (depending on interest, we may establish various membership tiers)	Up to 15 cross-sector, grassroots and grassroots community leaders from across Colorado (non-journalists)	Up to 15 Colorado-based and national innovators and leaders in fields germane to CMP's mission (journalism, civic engagement, public information, trust-building)
Membership commitment	Three-year commitment of service; significant, multi-year financial contribution and/or in-kind support to advance CMP's mission, vision, strategies and grantees	Annual commitment of participation; financial contribution (of any size) to CMP, one of its pooled funds, or one or more of its grantees or projects	Three-year commitment of service; serve at-will; hold no fiduciary responsibility for CMP; no compensation for this role	One-year commitment of service; serve at-will; hold no fiduciary responsibility for CMP; no compensation for this role
Participation	6 governance and strategy sessions/year 6 learning/innovation meetings/year Invitation to working groups and convenings	6 learning/ innovation meetings/year Opt-in to funder-only strategy sessions Invitation to working groups and convenings	6 learning/ innovation meetings/year Invitation to working groups and convenings	6 learning/ innovation meetings/year (CO-based) 2 learning/innovation meetings/year (national) Invitation to working groups and convenings