



The Colorado
Health Foundation™

LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Chief Executive Officer
The Colorado Health Foundation

Denver, CO

Our mission is to improve the health of Coloradans.

A Compelling Opportunity

[The Colorado Health Foundation](#) (CHF) stands out as one of the largest private foundations in Colorado and one of the most significant health philanthropies in the country, at a moment when independent philanthropy has an important role to play. With an endowment approaching \$3 billion, CHF has the resources, relationships, and statewide reach to help make health more possible for every Coloradan. Its strength is not only financial; it comes from a clear commitment to health equity, a willingness to listen to communities, and a belief that lasting change requires more than grants alone.

That strength is the result of years of deliberate leadership that helped CHF focus more clearly on the conditions that shape health—such as housing, economic opportunity, primary and behavioral healthcare, and community power. In that time, CHF has deepened its commitment to health equity and racial justice while working to build more trusting, responsive relationships with grantees and communities. Today, partners across Colorado describe CHF as more than a funder: a convener, a listener, a learner, and a partner willing to support the hard, long-term work of organizing, advocacy, capacity building, and systems change.

As the current Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Karen McNeil-Miller, has announced her retirement, the incoming CEO will step into an organization whose culture, board, staff, and community relationships are already oriented toward this mission; a foundation ready to be led further, not reintroduced to itself.

The timing adds real weight to the role. Changes to public programs, rising costs, and a more divided public climate are affecting the very communities CHF exists to serve. CHF's independence gives it the ability—and the responsibility—to stay clear about its commitments, use its resources with purpose, and stand with people and organizations working for a healthier, more equitable Colorado.



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Headquartered in Denver, CHF works statewide to improve the health of Coloradans by advancing health equity through racial justice.



This is, in short, a rare leadership opportunity: a chance to steward a financially strong, mission-clear institution through a consequential period for Colorado and to help CHF become even more trusted, more connected across the state, and more effective in advancing health equity.

About The Colorado Health Foundation

CHF traces its origins to a 1995 joint venture between a Denver-area nonprofit hospital system and a for-profit hospital operator. The charitable proceeds from that transaction were preserved in a dedicated philanthropic entity, which adopted the name “The Colorado Health Foundation” in 2006. CHF’s board later sold its remaining stake in the joint venture in 2011 for \$1.45 billion, and in 2016 the organization completed its conversion to private foundation status.

Over three decades, that history has made CHF the largest private foundation in Colorado and among the largest health-focused philanthropies in the country. Headquartered in Denver, CHF works statewide to improve the health of Coloradans by advancing health equity through racial justice. Its work is grounded in the understanding that health is shaped by the places people live, learn, work, play, and age—and that the people most affected by inequities should help shape the solutions. CHF prioritizes Colorado’s communities who have less power, privilege, and income, with a special emphasis on Coloradans of color and rural Coloradans.

CHF uses a range of tools to advance this work, including grantmaking, program-related and mission-aligned investments, policy advocacy, research and learning, convening, strategic communications and narrative change, and [partnerships with communities](#) and institutions across the state.

For example, to help address the urgent need for affordable homes in central Denver, CHF purchased property directly across from its headquarters. This acquisition allows CHF to steward the land toward a future that aligns with its values: increasing access to affordable homes and wrap-around services, such as childcare and healthcare, while strengthening resources that support community well-being. The site will be developed into [The Tapestry](#), a multi-phase, multi-generational affordable housing community designed to support long-term stability for Denver families.

At its core, CHF uses most of its resources to provide grants to nonprofits in Colorado. CHF's grantmaking includes open and solicited funding opportunities and initiatives, and more responsive support, with investments in direct services, organizational capacity, community organizing, policy advocacy, and systems change. Its annual grants and contributions have exceeded \$100 million in recent years. Guided by a charter to exist in perpetuity, CHF continually balances urgent needs today with responsible stewardship of its endowment for the future.

Often coupled with grantmaking resources, CHF has built a suite of capacity-building programs that enhance and build leadership skills and other abilities to do better advocacy and increase the sustainability of nonprofit organizations.

CHF regularly convenes Coloradans from all sectors of community to learn and build networks that enhance nonprofit and community-based organizations' skills. CHF hosts events and gatherings of all types in communities all over Colorado. CHF recognizes that public policy and public discourse shape opportunities to be healthy. While private foundation rules limit direct lobbying, CHF informs, educates, and engages the public and policymakers on issues affecting Coloradans.



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Finally, CHF views strategic communications as a powerful tool to support organizational voice and influence. CHF is known for speaking out regularly on crises or matters affecting Coloradans. CHF also funds the largest statewide public opinion poll to share how Coloradans feel and think about health and health related issues.

CHF's diverse staff of 75 reflects a disciplined, relationship-centered operating model suited to a statewide foundation deploying significant capital with purpose and focus. The team currently works on a hybrid schedule of three days in-office (required) and two days remote. Senior leaders, including program officers, hold meaningful responsibility across substantial portfolios, developing deep partnerships with grantees and external allies to extend CHF's reach into every region of Colorado.

In this context, the CEO's strategic judgment, [priorities](#), and public presence are central to how CHF translates its resources, relationships, and values into statewide impact. A Board of Directors, drawn from health care, business, education, and philanthropic leadership across the state, provides oversight and governance and partners closely with the CEO on strategy, investment policy, and payout.

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The Mandate

The next CEO will build on a strong platform while helping CHF continue to learn, adapt, and deepen its impact. This leader will bring people together across community, philanthropy, business, government, healthcare, and civic life, including voices CHF has not yet fully reached. The mandate is to use CHF's influence responsibly and courageously—staying clear about centering health equity, strengthening relationships across Colorado, and supporting the people and organizations working to change the conditions that shape health.

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the CEO holds full executive accountability for strategy, operations, and culture. This leader will be called to hold two truths in tension: responding urgently to communities in crisis as federal and state support recedes, while sustaining patient investment in the policy, legal, and organizing infrastructure that permanently changes systems.

The CEO must protect and deepen CHF's commitment to health equity, resisting pressure to soften that commitment for political convenience. This leader will be called upon to continue and amplify CHF's physical presence across Colorado. The next CEO must close the gap between funding and on-the-ground presence, and continued relationship building.

The Board is looking for a builder of trust and culture—someone approachable and transparent, comfortable with uncertainty, capable of holding a long-term vision while responding to urgent, immediate need, and able to inspire a talented staff and a broad community of grantees around a shared sense of purpose. Above all, the ideal candidate combines the discipline to steward an institution of significant scale with the humility to remember, in every decision, that the communities CHF exists to serve are not its beneficiaries; they are its partners.



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Key Responsibilities

External Leadership, Vision, and Advocacy

- Serve as CHF's most visible public voice and principal relationship builder across the philanthropic, nonprofit, health, business, and government sectors.
- Shape a clear, compelling vision for how CHF can help make health more possible for every Coloradan.
- Bring together partners who may not traditionally work side by side to address the conditions that shape health and well-being in Colorado.
- Elevate CHF's presence nationally; cultivate and nurture relationships to expand its presence beyond the state of Colorado.
- Speak clearly and consistently about CHF's commitment to communities that have faced the greatest barriers to health, and invite other funders and policymakers into shared responsibility.

Strategic and Organizational Leadership

- Set and continually refine CHF's strategic direction in close partnership with the Board, translating community insight, staff expertise, and Board guidance into clear institutional strategy.
- Ensure CHF's priorities remain responsive to a shifting political, fiscal, and social landscape without losing coherence or discipline.
- Model and encourage greater organizational appetite for risk, including support for emerging and bold ideas.
- Foster innovation, learning, accountability, and inclusion throughout the organization.

Board Partnership and Financial Stewardship

- Serve as the Board's primary strategic partner and most trusted advisor.
- Raise, and help the organization think through, important questions about mission-aligned financial strategies, including how to balance fiscal health with the flexibility and risk tolerance needed to advance the mission.
- Oversee responsible stewardship of the nearly \$3 billion endowment, ensuring the full balance sheet, investments, and grants align with the Foundation's equity and health mission.
- Lead the organization through an annual strategic and budget cycle that balances ambition with fiscal discipline.

Grantmaking and Program Oversight

- Provide executive-level oversight of a substantial statewide portfolio, ensuring investments strategically balance direct services, capacity building, policy advocacy, and systems-change work.
- Set organizational direction to champion and support new grant innovations, advancing multi-year, flexible, general operating funding models as a core strategic priority.
- Hold the organization accountable for continually reducing administrative and reporting burdens for grantees.
- Ensure grantmaking and strategy are shaped by community insight, grantee experience, staff expertise, Board guidance, and relationships with urban, rural, immigrant, and historically underserved communities statewide.
- Strengthen CHF's presence and credibility in rural and mountain communities through direct engagement, sustained relationships, and time spent outside Denver.

Leading the organization through an annual strategic and budget cycle that balances ambition with fiscal discipline will be a key responsibility of the next CEO.





The Board is seeking a leader who pairs bold, collaborative vision for long-term systems change with deep humility and lived proximity to community, someone who can steward this scale of institution with rigor while never losing the instinct to listen first.

People, Culture, and Organizational Health

- Build and sustain a high-performing, mission-aligned staff culture rooted in humility, responsiveness, and accountability to community.
- Ensure the organization's ongoing fiscal health by developing and managing the annual operating budget and upholding sound financial stewardship and accountability across the organization.
- Attract, retain, and develop qualified and well-rounded leadership talent.
- Continue CHF's demonstrated commitment to staff and grantee wellness, including sabbatical and wellness programming.
- Ensure CHF's internal culture reflects its external commitments through transparency, consistency, responsiveness to grantees, and shared accountability to community.

Ideal Characteristics

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Professional Experience

Executive Leadership

- Substantial senior executive experience at scale (CEO or comparable senior leadership role) in philanthropy, nonprofit organizations, government, or another complex, mission-driven institution.

- Proven success managing significant budgets, executive staff, and multi-stakeholder governance structures.
- Genuine understanding of how philanthropic capital and institutional power can be deployed responsibly and effectively.
- Direct grantmaking experience is valuable but not required.

Systems-Level Change & Coalition Building

- Evidence of systems-level change: policy advocacy, coalition building, or public-private sector partnership.
- Fluency in how power moves through legislatures, agencies, public and private budgets, not just the ability to run an effective grants program.
- Ability to ask and address difficult questions related to the communities serves.
- Experience building unlikely coalitions across health systems, employers, government agencies, and grassroots organizations around shared goals.
- Demonstrated ability to lead a large institution through a politically charged environment without compromising its mission.

Institutional Finance & Governance

- Fluency with institutional finance and governance at a scale appropriate to CHF.
- Comfort engaging a sophisticated Board on endowment strategy, policy, and mission-aligned investing.
- Operational maturity to lead a statewide organization through ambiguity and rapid external change.



The CEO will have a demonstrated ability to lead a large institution through a politically charged environment without compromising its mission.



The ideal candidate will be a bold, visionary leader who can help CHF shape the future of health and well-being in Colorado.

Personal Attributes:

The ideal candidate will be a bold, visionary leader who can help CHF shape the future of health and well-being in Colorado.

- Authentic, trustworthy, values-driven, and grounded in purpose.
- Excellent communicator and equally comfortable communicating with the governor, a community member, or staff.
- Humble enough to listen first and courageous enough to act decisively.
- Visible, accessible, and committed to building trust across Colorado's diverse communities.
- An exceptional relationship builder who can bring people together across differences.
- Emotionally intelligent, empathetic, culturally aware, and self-reflective.
- Collaborative and inclusive, while able to make difficult decisions when needed.
- Curious, adaptable, and committed to continuous learning and improvement.
- Passionate about advancing opportunity, well-being, and equitable outcomes for all Coloradans.
- Carries lived or current experience with the systemic barriers CHF's grantees navigate daily.
- Appreciation for lived and living experience as a meaningful form of expertise.

Other Requirements:

- Bachelor's Degree in a discipline that aligns with the expectations of the position.
- 15+ years of management and leadership experience.
- Advanced business acumen.
- A valid driver's license.

The Relationships

The CEO reports to:	The Board of Directors, The Colorado Health Foundation.
And leads:	A staff of 75, through a senior leadership team that includes two C-suite executives and a team of senior directors.
While stewarding key relationships, such as those with:	Community leaders, grantee partners, elected and public officials, civic and business leaders, healthcare and education partners, peer foundations, and others working to shape a healthier Colorado.

Location & Salary

Colorado offers an exceptional quality of life, combining a thriving business environment with unmatched access to the outdoors, including world-class skiing, hiking, and an average of 245 sunny days per year. Denver, the state’s capital and largest city, has emerged as a major hub for industries ranging from technology and aerospace to healthcare and renewable energy, attracting top talent from across the country.

The starting range for this position is \$626,000 to \$736,000. CHF offers a robust benefits and wellness package, including the following benefits: medical, dental, life/LTD, 401(k) match, and generous paid leave programs.

Summary

Few leaders inherit a platform of this scale, strength, and possibility. With significant financial resources, deep statewide relationships, and a clear commitment to health equity, CHF is positioned to shape the future of health and well-being in Colorado. The next CEO will build on that foundation by earning trust, listening closely, leading with courage and humility, and leveraging CHF’s resources, voice, and influence to deepen its impact and make health more possible for every Coloradan.

For potential consideration or to suggest a prospect, please email

CHF@BoardWalkConsulting.com

or call **Crystal Stephens, Sam Pettway, Sarah Gaines,**
or **Patti Kish** at 404-BoardWalk (404-262-7392).

This posting will remain open until the position is filled.

For the current status of this and other searches, please visit www.BoardWalkConsulting.com.