RATIONALE
The strength of Colorado’s state and local economies is central to improving circumstances for low-income children and their families.

For most families, financial stability is determined by their job and conditions of their employment. In addition to improving families' financial health, we are engaged in fostering a business and neighborhood-level environment that is supportive of family development. To do this, we will invest various forms of capital and technical assistance into organizations that support low-income families through employment, access to capital, skill development opportunities, and other relevant services.

Additionally, if children are to become productive members of their communities, they must be raised in a built environment that supports and encourages healthy growth. Real estate should be developed with an eye toward benefiting residents rather than simply gaining short-term financial returns. For example, community residents should have access to quality housing, childcare, high quality education, food and public transportation at an affordable price, and have local ownership opportunities as their neighborhoods develop.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES
Low-income families and individuals have opportunities for employment stability and advancement, and their businesses have access to appropriate capital.

The physical environment enables all residents to effectively access and use community assets.

A vibrant and diverse community of thought leaders and practitioners who promote effective policy, allocate strategic capital, and support strong intermediaries, to allow for low-income families to take advantage of sustained community assets.

State and local economies offer opportunities for families and individuals living in low-income communities.

AREAS OF FOCUS
To make progress toward our long-term Community and Economic Development outcomes, we are focused on achieving the following short-term goals.

Access to Capital: Increase the amount of financing available to support low-income families, small businesses, and community development initiatives.

Community Ownership: Increase the number of ownership opportunities available for low-income residents.

Innovation Labs: Increase the effectiveness of our investees and the capital absorption capacity of Colorado.
Our current work within the Community and Economic Development areas of focus include the following strategies and activities:

**STRATEGIES**

**Access to Capital**
Strategies include investing in community development financial institutions, credit unions, financial technology platforms, and funds that provide capital to support low-income families and their communities.

**Community Ownership**
Strategies include augmenting the capital available for community ownership opportunities such as cooperatives and other worker ownership structures, financing employee ownership, and investing in land trusts and real estate development that supports low-income families; promoting the impact of community ownership; supporting anchor institutions, such as universities, hospitals, governments and large corporations, that have the ability to empower the communities where they are located through local hiring practices and procurement; encouraging collaboration across different sectors to augment capacity building for community development initiatives; and engaging community partners to redefine community and economic development in low-income neighborhoods.

**Innovation Labs**
Strategies include investing in cross-sector collaboration to identify system gaps affecting low-income families; creating partnerships with local and national funders to explore capital alignment; incubating, capitalizing, and/or creating non-existing and required financial and service delivery solutions that support low-income families.

**FEATURED INVESTEES**
The following are two organizations we have invested in as part of our Community & Economic Development strategy. For a list of more recent investments, visit [www.garycommunity.org/investments](http://www.garycommunity.org/investments).

**Accion**
Providing the capital and resources that underserved entrepreneurs need to operate and grow their businesses.

**Rocky Mountain Employee Ownership Center**
Making the current economic system more inclusive by advocating for and providing pathways to employee ownership.