



# Chaffee County Public Health

448 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street • Suite 137 • Salida, CO 81201 • 719-539-4510 • Fax: 719-539-7197

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For immediate release, contact:

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## **We Are Chaffee Storytelling Initiative to Focus on Belonging**

Chaffee County, CO – We Are Chaffee’s Future (WACF), a local storytelling initiative managed by Chaffee County Public Health (CCPH), was recently awarded a 2-year grant from Belonging Colorado, a special fund at The Denver Foundation. The Denver Foundation has a 100 year-long history of supporting community initiatives throughout the state. The “We Are Chaffee Future Belonging Project” is 1 of 15 co-hort projects throughout Colorado to be funded by Belonging Colorado, an effort designed to bring people together in new ways, grow resilience in our state, and expand Coloradans’ sense of who belongs.

The We Are Chaffee’s Future Belonging Project will focus on bridging divides within our community through the fostering of constructive dialogue and exposure to active engagement opportunities to create an understanding across intergenerational group lines.

A small group of intergenerational participants will meet periodically to engage in activities and learn about each other in order to find common goals, build trust, and develop a shared sense of belonging utilizing methodology developed by UC Berkeley’s Great Good Science Center. The project will begin in late summer of 2025 and in early 2026, the participants will continue this bridging work and engage with local artists to create physical representations of their personal stories that reflect their sense of community belonging through the creation of public art and storytelling. WACF has begun recruiting participants and artists to be part of the project, more information may be found at [www.wearechaffee.org/future](http://www.wearechaffee.org/future).

Chaffee County Public Health and other local organizations have been working to identify needs within our youth and older adult populations and recognize that learning how to bridge divides and building a sense of community belonging in individuals greatly enhances chances of living healthier lives. The goal of this project is to create a greater sense of understanding and belonging among project participants, raise public awareness of the social challenges within our county, and initiate long-term positive change both within our intergenerational populations and within our greater community through education and exposure to public art and storytelling.

“Chaffee County Public Health is grateful to receive this grant funding from The Denver Foundation. We look forward to beginning this important work that will benefit local intergenerational engagement and the entire community bringing us all together at a time when so many forces are pulling us apart,” Andrea Carlstrom, Director of Chaffee County Public Health said.

*CCPH Vision: All people in Chaffee County have opportunities to achieve health and connected lives in a community that embraces every aspect of health and wellbeing.*



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What can you do to help?

1. We are actively looking for outdoor or indoor public space(s) throughout the county to display our artwork that may include a variety of approved locations and size of spaces throughout the county. The goal for the public is to make each piece visible to as many people as possible. If you own a space that fits this criteria, please reach out.
2. If you know someone who would be perfect for this project, please have them visit the We Are Chaffee website for more information and to apply.
3. If you or someone you know is a local artist who has the time, skills and desire to help, please have them visit the We Are Chaffee website for more information and to apply.
4. If your organization would like to host a short presentation and Q&A by WACF staff about this project and/or support this project, please reach out.

WACF looks forward to working with current partners and future partners during this project. Existing partners are listed below:

Age Strong Chaffee County  
The Alliance  
The Boys and Girls Club of Chaffee County  
Buena Vista Police Department  
Chaffee County Public Health/We Are Chaffee  
Chaffee County Youth Alliance  
Chaffee County Family and Youth Initiatives  
Partnership for Community Action  
Sol Vista

## About The Denver Foundation

This project is funded through the Belonging Colorado grant provided by The Denver Foundation. [Belonging Colorado](#) is a bold, new effort to bring people together in new ways, grow resilience in our state, and expand Coloradans' sense of who belongs. We seek to invest in good ideas for building connections across lines of difference—racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, political affiliation, age, and more. Our state is not immune to the trends of social division and disconnection affecting our nation. It is more essential than ever that Coloradans work effectively across differences to bridge divides and support our state's long-term health, resilience, and well-being.

The Denver Foundation has been building a stronger, thriving Metro Denver, Colorado, and beyond for 100 years. The Foundation has received \$2.1 billion from generous donors and given \$1.6 billion in grants to support community initiatives that address the current and future challenges in Denver and Colorado. To learn more about The Denver Foundation, visit [www.denverofoundation.org](http://www.denverofoundation.org).

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For more information about this project and to apply to be a participant or artist, visit [www.wearechaffee.org/future](http://www.wearechaffee.org/future)

For further information or to provide thoughts about this project, email Lisa Martin at [LMartin@chaffeecounty.org](mailto:LMartin@chaffeecounty.org)

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