



Bonfils-Stanton Foundation
1033 Santa Fe Dr, Denver, CO 80204
Contact: Anthony Grimes
Email: Anthony@bonfils-stanton.org
Phone: 303-642-6994

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Announces New Strategic Framework Grounded in Equity

Plan features bold ideas informed by community, self-reflection, and innovation in philanthropic sector

DENVER, CO May 25, 2023 – In an effort to keep pace with the changing cultural landscape of Denver and historic inequities in philanthropic ecosystems, Bonfils-Stanton Foundation announced today a bold new strategic framework. While the plan stems from the foundation’s decade-long shift toward prioritizing equitable arts and culture and nonprofit leadership in Denver, the latest iteration is very much informed by more recent societal injustice that has inspired the foundation to act with more urgency.

“The injustices of the last several years — everything from George Floyd’s murder to healthcare discrepancies during the COVID pandemic — continue to remind us that doing business as usual is never enough,” said Gary Steuer, President and CEO of Bonfils-Stanton Foundation. “Now is always the time to bring our boldest solutions to bear on issues of racism and this framework is our best attempt at radical hope for change in our city through the lens of our specific mission. We believe that a thriving, just Denver must have a vibrant, diverse and equitable cultural infrastructure, as well as diverse, empowered, supported nonprofit community leaders,” said Steuer.

For over a year, Bonfils-Stanton board and staff members first underwent a racial equity planning, training and self-reflection process while working with The Gemini Group. This work then became the foundation of a year-long strategic planning process that included gathering input from community stakeholders, researching other models we could learn from, and self-reflection on whether its own grantmaking and operational procedures might be perpetuating inequity. The result was a robust plan backed by the community. The four key pillars of the plan are:

- An increased focus on fostering a diverse, healthy cultural eco-system by supporting cultural organizations and arts engagement through grantmaking.
- Nurturing creative, transformational nonprofit leaders and artists through programs like the Livingston Fellowship.
- Intentionally investing financial assets toward mission-aligned investments managed and run by BIPOC owners when possible.
- Elevating the visibility and value of arts and culture through increased storytelling efforts.

“The Foundation views this framework as a dynamic document that will allow us to continue evolving as a learning organization,” said Elaine Torres, Board Chair at Bonfils-Stanton Foundation. “We seek to build upon our strength as an adaptive and responsive relationship-builder, and to create a more diverse and equitable ecosystem in arts, culture, and nonprofit leadership in the metro-Denver area,” said Torres.

Each of the four pillars of the plan has an array of specific initiatives associated with it including:

- Launching a new Equity in Arts Education grantmaking initiative.
- Creation of a multi-year capacity-building investment in 4-6 smaller BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and disability informed, led and serving organizations.
- Capital investments to address space affordability for artists and arts organizations.
- Creative Community Resiliency – a new grant program that will invest in select Denver-area historically BIPOC neighborhoods to support the role of arts and culture in preserving and celebrating community history, culture and well-being.
- A new Technical Assistance grant program.
- Increasing the number of Livingston Fellows from five to as many as eight in each class and evolving into an every-other-year process.
- In the intervening years, launching a new Individual Artist recognition program that will award unrestricted awards to artists who have a social practice as part of their artmaking.
- Making “Arts and...” grants to incentivize collaborations between two or more Fellows that use the arts to address a community need or issue.
- Prioritizing communications and storytelling around why a vibrant diverse cultural sector is critical to our community’s well-being as a core programmatic function of the Foundation.
- Investing the entire foundation endowment into value and missioned aligned investments.
- Developing a collaborative fund with a local community foundation partner that would give individual donors opportunity to pool their funds and have Bonfils-Stanton Foundation run a fair and equitable grantmaking process inspired by the success of its COVID Arts & Culture Relief Fund.

View the new strategic framework, which premieres on the Bonfils-Stanton website today, at www.bonfilsstanton.org/about-us

About Bonfils-Stanton Foundation:

Bonfils-Stanton Foundation believes that extraordinary arts and leadership are key to building a vibrant Colorado. Every day, the Foundation strategically invests in imagination and innovation, because cultivating the creative spark is vital to making our community an exciting place where people want to live, work and thrive. Since its founding, the Foundation has distributed over \$87 million in charitable contributions. Visit **bonfils-stantonfoundation.org** for additional information.

####