

Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab:

3 Years in Action

The Colorado Lab is a strategic research partner for Colorado government. We specialize in actionable research that informs policy and practice decisions of multiple state or local government agencies.

The University of Denver is a private university committed to public good. The Colorado Lab embodies this commitment through its genuine partnership with the Governor's office.

The Colorado Lab is different from most research institutes because their 'research agenda' is to answer the questions posed by government leaders and generate insights that are used to improve policies, practices, and ultimately the lives of Coloradans.

CORINNE LENGSFELD

Sr. Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Education,
University of Denver

We believe that smart, strategic partnerships with government have the potential to improve people's lives.

The Colorado Lab launched with philanthropic funding as a partnership with the Governor's office. As it has grown, the Lab has expanded to work with the legislative and judicial branches, county and municipal governments, and philanthropy.

The Lab is the first program of its kind in Colorado. We owe it to the citizens of our state to ensure that the programs we undertake not only deliver on what they set out to do but that they are high quality, measured, and push for improvement.

SENATOR-ELECT JOHN HICKENLOOPER

former Governor of Colorado



29

Government Partners

(State and local agencies and offices)



21

Research Partners

(State and local agencies and offices)



STORY: With support from the Colorado Lab, researchers from the University of Northern Colorado created interactive maps showing where people's access to affordable housing and their challenges with mental health overlap.

For more information about the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab, visit our website at coloradolab.org.

So we listen to our state and local government partners to understand the most pressing challenges they face.

The Colorado Lab’s research supports data-driven decision making with respect to the priorities that governments set for themselves. Therefore the Lab focuses on the priorities of Colorado’s Governor. The Lab values the **perspectives of government staff at all levels** from executive directors to program staff to data analysts.

The Lab meets government partners where they are on the **Steps to Building Evidence**.

“Access to these data has been critical for us. The dashboard is already informing the Governor’s goal to improve the ECE workforce and ensure all young children have an opportunity to succeed before they enter kindergarten.”

SCOTT GROGINSKY
Governor Polis’s Special Advisor for Early Childhood

Hickenlooper Administration Priorities

Polis Administration Priorities



Reduce recidivism for adults and juveniles



Affordable Housing



Prevention / intervention: child welfare, justice-involved youth



Move electric grid to renewable sources by 2040



Foster an economy that works for everyone



Fulfill every child's potential regardless of zip code



Save Coloradans money on healthcare



Good Government and Efficiency Projects



Marijuana-Funded Programs



Reduce recidivism for adults and juveniles



Prevention / intervention: child welfare, justice-involved youth



Cross-system solutions for Coloradans



STORY: In the early days of the COVID19 pandemic, Colorado leaders needed to mobilize the early childhood care and education workforce to help care for the children of essential workers. LINC helped make that happen...while creating a dashboard to demonstrate the depth and breadth of Colorado’s early childhood workforce.

Then, we activate the research community to work with those partners to generate insights.

Colorado has a **rich talent base of academic researchers** at public and private universities throughout the state. The Colorado Lab serves as a bridge and translator between state and local government and this academic community by matching subject matter experts from universities across Colorado to the projects that meet the decision-making goals of government partners.

The Lab helps researchers use administrative data to meet project goals and offers assistance with data security. For all projects, the Lab facilitates proactive and timely communication to help leaders put research findings into action.

“As a dean and a researcher, I am impressed by the Colorado Lab’s success in linking academic researchers and methodologies to real world problems, with a focus on data integrity, and helping to make Colorado a better place to live and work.”

PAUL TESKE
Dean of the School of Public Affairs,
University of Colorado Denver

38 Research Projects



Children & Youth



Education & Workforce



Justice System



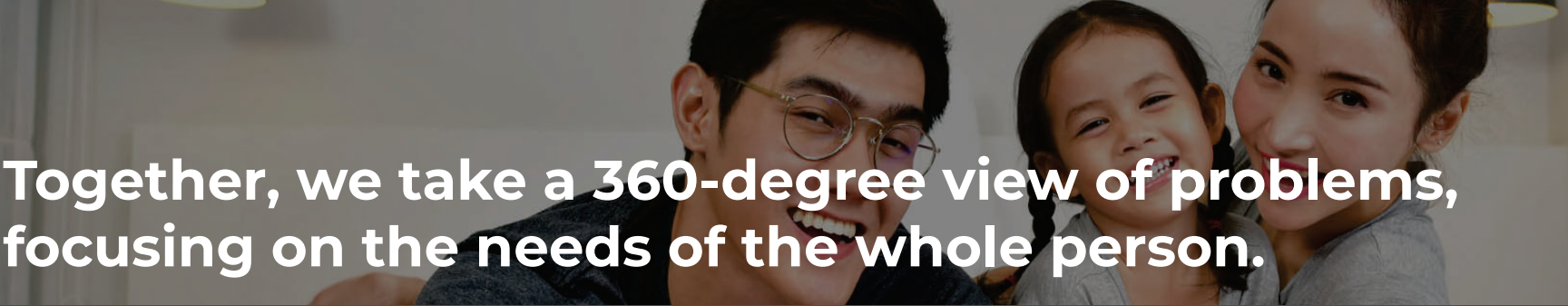
Mental & Physical Health



Other



STORY: The Colorado Lab worked with researchers at the University of Denver and in the Colorado Division of Probation Services, studying the link between traumatic brain injury and recidivism, and how the criminal justice system can help.

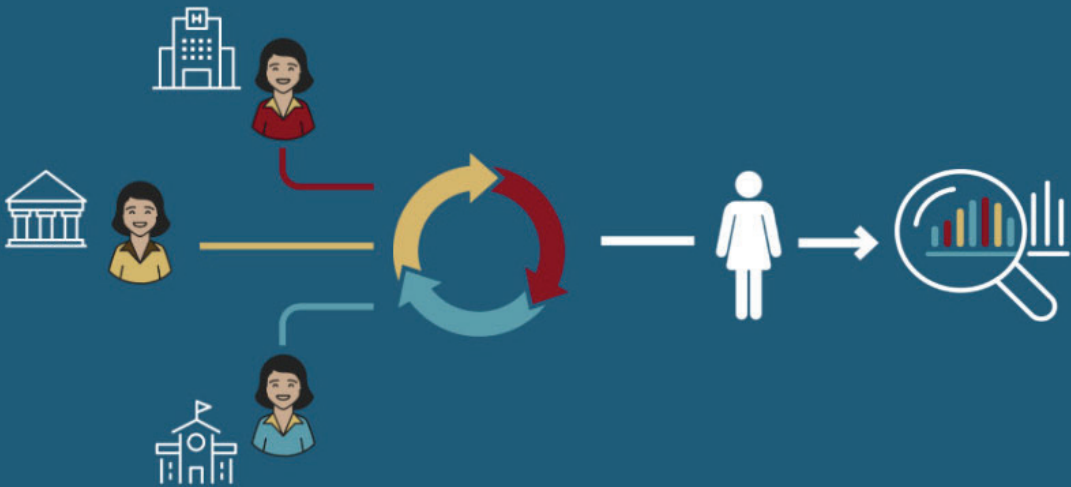


Together, we take a 360-degree view of problems, focusing on the needs of the whole person.

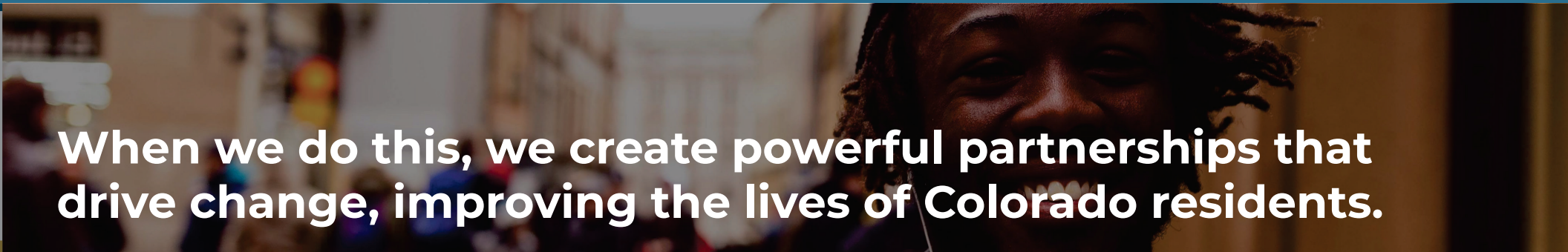
Public systems can better address community needs when they use data to understand the complex challenges people face. But this is complicated by the fact that people interact with public systems in different ways, and data from just one agency doesn't usually give a complete picture. The **Linked Information Network of Colorado** (LINC), a public-private partnership between the Colorado Lab and the Governor's Office of Information Technology, addresses this challenge by securely connecting data across systems to address specific, approved research questions. After people's identifiable information is removed, these data can be used to conduct research to improve decisions about policy and programs.

“LINC's public-private partnership allowed it to launch with fewer bureaucratic barriers than other states and counties have experienced. This also means that all LINC partners get to share its successes.”

CHRIS KINGSLEY
Senior Associate for Data Initiatives at the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a national funder of AISP which supported the technical assistance to launch LINC.



STORY: Substance misuse during pregnancy is a growing problem in Colorado and across the nation. The Colorado Lab and its partners are linking maternal and infant records to inform policies and practices that address this challenge and help build healthy lives for whole families.

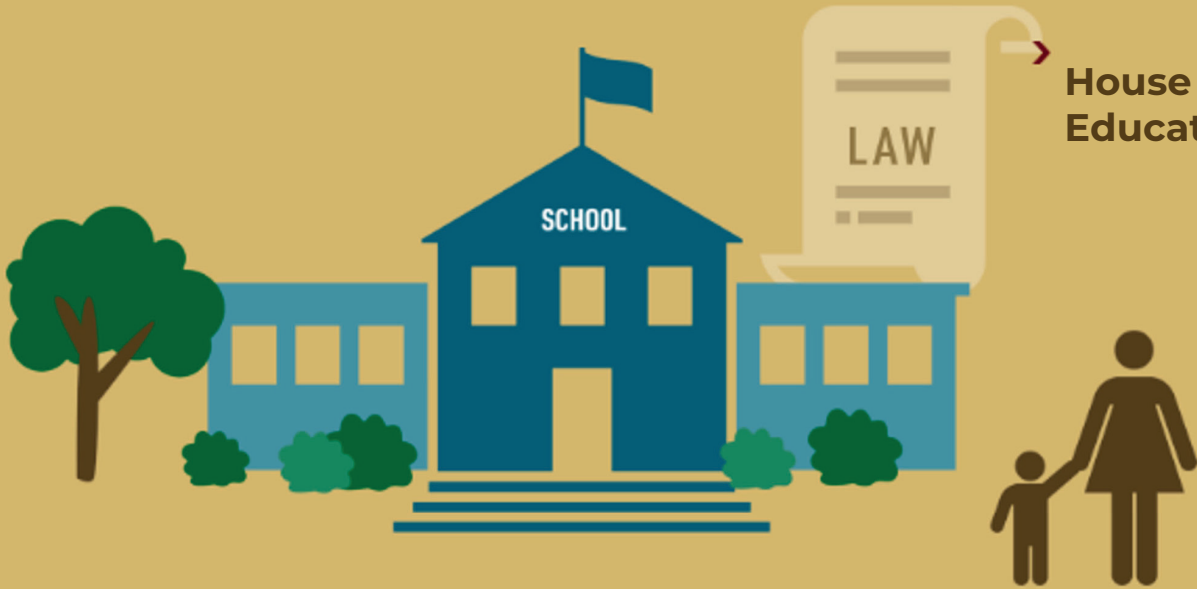


When we do this, we create powerful partnerships that drive change, improving the lives of Colorado residents.

At the Colorado Lab, research has to be actionable. It has to have the potential for improving lives. So one of the first things we consider before taking on a new project is how strategic communications strategies that drive change will be built into the project design. We partner with agencies to inform prospective legislation, programmatic decisions, and investments.

“The pandemic has highlighted the importance of programs, like **Fostering Opportunities**, to ensure that valuable students do not fall through the cracks. The researchers at the Colorado Lab have provided the support to help this critical program achieve its goals.”

DAVID KOLLAR
Director of Student Engagement
Jeffco Schools



House Bill 18-1306 Ensuring Educational Stability



STORY: The Colorado Lab partnered with state agencies to understand the educational attainment gaps for students in foster care. This research informed educational stability legislation and the development of the “Fostering Opportunities” program that brings local child welfare and education together to ensure youth have the support they need to be successful in school.

How can you invest in putting actionable research to work for Colorado residents?

Seed funding from philanthropy in 2017 launched the Colorado Lab and gave it the resources to ensure research could be conducted on a timeline that matches the decision-making cycles of government. The Colorado Lab has also been funded by numerous state agencies and philanthropies to partner on key research.

The Colorado Lab's partnership with the State of Colorado's Office of Early Childhood to map our early childhood education workforce was masterful. The online dashboard they created will be helpful to our state and all of our stakeholders as we work together to support the future of Colorado's ECE workforce.

STEFFANIE CLOTHIER
Investment Director, Child Development
Gary Community Investments



Philanthropy

Invest in project- or issue-specific research, including government initiated projects or research fellowships. Help the funders' grantees evaluate the effectiveness of their programs and connect them with state or local government leaders to investigate bringing their approaches to scale. Use LINC to track key indicators in your foundation's areas of focus.



State and Local Government Agencies

Connect with the Lab through the Call for Ideas to find the best research partners to answer key questions about your areas of focus and wildly important goals. Leverage LINC to address cross-functional research questions or track performance.



Nonprofit Organizations

Get help determining effectiveness and connect with state or local government leaders to investigate bringing your approaches to scale.

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