




ROCKY MOUNTAIN WELCOME CENTER

2025

Annual Report



Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Our Mission & Vision | 1 |
| A Message from the Executive Director | 2 |
| Our Annual Performance at a Glance | 3 |
| Main Programs | |
| Culturally Appropriate Information and Campaigns | 4 |
| • Cultural Navigation | |
| • Perspectivas | |
| Youth Programs | 5 |
| • Youth Rule the World | |
| • Healing Through Arts & Nature (HAN) | |
| Kindergarten Prep | 6 |
| Springs Academy | 7 |
| Mental Health | 8 |
| CARES & Legal Support | 9 |
| • CARES (Community, Advocacy, Resources & Education) | |
| • Rental Assistance | |
| Special Programs | |
| Forum Series: Quarterly Community Discussions | 10 |
| Back-to-School Bag Distribution | 11 |
| Community Soccer Day | 11 |
| Our Partners | 12 |



OUR MISSION

Foster intercultural learning, understanding, and integration among immigrants, refugees, and the local community through programs and activities that develop supportive multicultural communities.



OUR VISION

A welcoming and inclusive Colorado where immigrants, refugees, and receiving communities collaborate, thrive, and recognize one another as valuable contributors to a shared future.

A Message from the Executive Director

This year, I am proud of the continued impact Rocky Mountain Welcome Center has made in fostering belonging, opportunity, and connection for immigrants and refugees across the metro Denver community. Guided by our belief that integration is a shared responsibility, we have expanded programs, strengthened partnerships, and created welcoming spaces where newcomers can thrive.

As an immigrant, this mission is deeply personal to me. I am continually inspired by the resilience, talent, and contributions of the individuals and families we serve. Their journeys reaffirm our commitment to building a more inclusive Colorado where everyone is recognized as a valued member of the community.

Our progress is made possible through the support of our partners, volunteers, and donors who share our vision of collaboration and mutual understanding.

While we celebrate the strides made this year, we remain dedicated to growing our impact and expanding pathways for successful integration.

Thank you for being part of this journey and for helping us create communities where everyone can feel at home.

With gratitude and commitment,

Diana Higuera

Founder & Executive Director





Our Annual Performance at a Glance

In 2025, we served a total of

2,552 individuals

1,100

Individuals served through Cultural Navigation program with Colorado Department of Public Health (CDPHE)

133

Youth services program participants

Programs include:

- Youth Rule the World
- Healing through Arts & Nature
- Springs Academy Soccer Program
- Kindergarten Prep

377

Individuals reached through outreach, presentations, and Forum Series

154

Mental health clients served

675

Individuals received Legal Support & CARES

113

Individuals dropped in for system navigation & winter coats and clothing

Culturally Appropriate Information and Campaigns

Cultural Navigation

In 2025, Rocky Mountain Welcome Center’s Cultural Navigation program, supported by CDPHE, bridged critical gaps between public health systems and immigrant and refugee communities across the Denver metro area. Through a team of trusted, community-connected Cultural Navigators speaking Somali, Spanish, and Oromo, we reached over 1,100 individuals with accurate, timely health information.

Navigators delivered culturally responsive education, guided families through immunization processes, and supported public health interviews and response efforts. Rooted in lived experience and deep community trust, they made systems that often feel inaccessible more understandable.

The program met families where they are, using in-person engagement, translated materials in community gathering spaces, and digital communication through platforms like WhatsApp. Together, these strategies increased access to immunizations, strengthened trust in public health systems, and empowered families to navigate care with confidence.

Perspectivas

Perspectivas, RMWC’s Spanish-language radio segment, extends this work by bringing trusted, real-time information directly into the community. Aired on a widely followed program reaching approximately 250,000 listeners, the show features expert interviews that break down complex topics, from public health to immigration rights, into clear, culturally relevant conversations.

By pairing community voice with expert insight, Perspectivas combats misinformation, elevates lived experiences, and ensures families receive critical information in a format that feels familiar and accessible.

1,100
Individuals served through Cultural Navigation program

250,000
Listeners reached through Perspectivas radio segment



Youth Programs

Youth Rule the World

This dynamic program empowers immigrant and refugee youth to build confidence, leadership skills, and emotional well-being as they navigate life between cultures. Through activities like team building, dialogue, and creative expression, participants strengthen resilience, explore identity, and build meaningful connections in a supportive, peer-led environment.

Healing Through Arts and Nature (HAN)

This program deepens this work by creating space for healing beyond the classroom. Through outdoor experiences like hiking, kayaking, and snowshoeing paired with guided reflection and peer dialogue, youth process trauma, build emotional regulation, and reconnect with a sense of wonder.

For many, these are first-time experiences in nature, moments that spark confidence, belonging, and a lasting connection to the environment. By removing barriers such as cost, transportation, and access, HAN ensures immigrant and refugee youth can experience Colorado’s outdoors as a place where they feel safe, seen, and at home

These initiatives are supported by the Colorado Health Foundation, whose commitment to advancing the health and wellness of all Coloradans aligns with RMWC’s mission to promote holistic development and belonging among newcomer youth.



The one thing that helped me in [Youth Rule the World] is self love and a place where I can call home and somewhere that I can be happy and trust

Paulina, program participant



Kindergarten Prep

Kindergarten Prep is an early childhood education program that helps immigrant and refugee children gain the academic, social, and emotional skills needed to confidently enter kindergarten.

Using a play-based curriculum that nurtures curiosity and language development, children build foundational skills in early literacy, writing, math, and social-emotional learning, including empathy, problem-solving, and expressing feelings. The program also supports parents as they learn to navigate the U.S. school system and enroll their children, ensuring families feel prepared and connected from the start.

This initiative is made possible through the support of the Buell Foundation, which champions quality early childhood education, the Colorado Gives Foundation, which invests in strengthening Colorado communities, and the Christian Foundation.

Together, their partnership ensures that newcomer children and families have equitable opportunities to succeed from the very start of their educational journeys, while creating a sense of belonging, confidence, and long-term success in school and beyond.



Rae Ann
Kindergarten
Prep Teacher

40

 children enrolled

All children who participated in at least **88% of classes** had significant improvement in the following areas:

1. Oral expression and listening in English
2. Reading in English for all purposes
3. Writing and composition
4. Math
5. Social emotional learning



Springs Academy

Springs Academy exists to ensure immigrant and refugee youth have a place to belong. Originally founded by members of the Ethiopian community and later expanded through partnership with Rocky Mountain Welcome Center, the program creates a safe, consistent space where young people build confidence, identity, and connection through soccer.

Youth not only play on the field, they lead, mentor, and grow. Older players guide younger teammates, while structured practices intentionally build communication, emotional regulation, and teamwork alongside athletic skills. With support from the Colorado Health Foundation, this work strengthens both physical and mental well-being, helping newcomer youth develop resilience, healthy habits, and a strong sense of community on and off the field.

714
hours

88
players



Mental Health

154 clients

in individual, family, and group therapy

RMWC's Mental Health Program provides culturally responsive, trauma-informed care for immigrant and refugee families navigating displacement, stress, and isolation. Services are offered in multiple languages and delivered in trusted community settings such as schools and shelters, reducing barriers to access and meeting families where they are. By integrating mental health support across youth programs, family services, and crisis response, RMWC helps individuals build resilience, strengthen identity, and improve overall well-being, ensuring families not only stabilize, but thrive.

RMWC delivers these services in partnership with trusted community organizations to ensure care is accessible and culturally grounded. Psychoeducational groups are offered in collaboration with Holy Family Catholic Church, Boston Elementary (for parents), and Regis University. Clinical services are further expanded through partnerships with Angelica Village for couples therapy, Conectores de Montbello for individual therapy with older adults, and Tamarac Family Shelter for play therapy with children, meeting families across life stages and settings where they feel safe and supported.

Supported by Colorado Access, and Caring for Denver, and The Denver Foundation, whose missions align with advancing health, wellness, and equity, we help immigrants thrive physically, mentally, and socially while fostering a sense of belonging and community across generations.

CARES & Legal Support Programs

CARES (Community, Advocacy, Resources & Education)

The CARES (Community, Advocacy, Resources & Education) Program helps immigrant and refugee families move from crisis to stability through individualized system navigation. Staff connect families to healthcare, legal services, and essential resources while providing rapid-response support during urgent moments such as detention, income loss, or housing instability.

Families most often seek support with employment, wage theft, healthcare enrollment, legal processes, and document translation, areas where barriers can quickly become overwhelming without trusted guidance. By pairing immediate assistance with ongoing support, CARES helps families regain stability and move forward with confidence.

Additionally, our partnerships with the Immigration Response Group, South Asian Bar Association, Colorado Asylum Center, and Justice and Mercy Legal Aid Center expand access to trusted, low-cost immigration legal support.

Through clinics and one-on-one consultations, families access trusted legal guidance, respond to requests for evidence, and navigate complex systems, reducing the risk of immigration detention or family separation.

Support from Colorado Access and Rose Community Foundation enables CARES to deliver timely, culturally responsive services that keep families safe and moving toward stability.

Rental Assistance: Small Support, Lasting Stability

In 2025, thanks to a generous private donor, we provided \$12,000 in emergency rental assistance to a total of 12 families: immigrant households from Venezuela, Honduras and Mexico.

These were largely working families facing sudden setbacks: lost hours, medical emergencies, or unexpected immigration-related costs. Many came to us already behind on rent or at risk of eviction, often supporting larger households in Arapahoe, Denver and Jefferson County.

By stepping in at the right time, this support helped families stay housed, stabilize income, and avoid crisis, proving that a small, timely investment can keep a family safely on track.



 **675** individuals
received Legal Support & CARES

 **12** families
received Rental Assistance

Forum Series: Quarterly Community Discussions

RMWC's Community Forum Series creates space for meaningful dialogue between immigrant, refugee, and receiving communities. Each forum brings together lived experience and professional insight to help participants better understand the complex realities shaping immigrant lives.

The series is designed to move beyond headlines by centering personal stories and pairing them with expert perspectives in areas such as mental health, public policy, education, and legal systems. This format helps participants connect individual experiences to broader systems, ask thoughtful questions, and engage with issues in a more informed and human way.

Past forums have explored topics such as trauma and mental health, immigration policy and detention, barriers facing newcomer youth, and the impact of misinformation.

Supported by the Rose Community Foundation, the Forum Series offers an accessible and welcoming environment where community members can learn, reflect, and build connections. These conversations foster empathy, challenge misinformation, and strengthen a shared sense of responsibility to respond with understanding and action.

“ At each forum, I watch something important happen. People lean in. They listen carefully. They ask thoughtful questions.

Tana Finley Padilla, Community Member
Justice and Mercy Legal Aid Center (JAMLAC)



Back-to-School Bag Distribution

To support a strong start to the school year, RMWC partnered with the Aurora Police Department to distribute backpacks and essential school supplies to dozens of children from immigrant and refugee families through the Springs Academy soccer program.

The initiative eased financial stress for parents, affirmed children's sense of belonging, and helped set students up for academic success. Held just days before Community Soccer Day, the event underscored RMWC's commitment to educational equity and family stability.

150
bags distributed



200
children with
parents



Community Soccer Day

At Soccer City Aurora, RMWC brought families, youth, and community partners together for an evening of sports, connection, and celebration. Children ages 5–17 participated in friendly games and skill-building activities, while families enjoyed food, resource booths, and interactive experiences including the Aurora Police Department's popular gaming trailer.

The event also included the distribution of 200 food boxes from the Salvation Army, providing tangible support alongside recreation. Supported by multiple partner organizations, the Soccer Day strengthened trust, inclusion, and community pride.

To Our Partners— Thank you!

2025 has been a powerful reminder of what’s possible when individuals choose to stand with immigrant and refugee families. Because of our individual donors, neighbors, friends, and first-time supporters, this year has become a historic moment of grassroots generosity for Rocky Mountain Welcome Center.

In the first half of 2025 alone, we saw:

343% increase in individual contributions

114% increase in new donors

79 new supporters

Compared to the same time last year.

We are especially grateful to those who chose to give monthly, helping us build steady, reliable support for families navigating change. This year, we saw a **125% increase** in monthly giving, strengthening our ability to respond when families need us most.

Every gift, one-time or recurring, represents a belief in dignity, belonging, and the power of welcome. To our individual donors: thank you for making 2025 a year defined by hope, momentum, and community-driven impact.



Kristen Conrad
Development Director



The Colorado Health Foundation™



The Denver Foundation




SAINT JOHN'S CATHEDRAL

Thank you for supporting us and the work that we do!

Learn more about the work and how you
can sustain immigrant communities in
Colorado:

 rockymountainwelcome.org

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