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Pictured: Ricardo Rocha (far left) works with Tom Chi (second from left) within the Uncharted Food Access program. Photo courtesy of Uncharted.

## CO4F METRICS

AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2017

**\$8,300,000**  
Total Capitalization

**\$4,621,307**  
Funds Available

**\$3,678,693**  
Total Funded and Committed

## CO4F Customers Participate in Food Access Program

Uncharted and the Denver Office of Economic Development partnered earlier this year to create an exciting new program expanding access to healthy food for low-income neighborhoods. The program was open to organizations currently working in Denver, or committed to expanding to Denver in the very near future. Those accepted into the program received education, mentorship, financial training, and introductions to investors.

Among the ventures selected into the program are CO4F customers; Goodness Groceries/Abarrotes Bondadosa and The GrowHaus. Both businesses have found the program to be highly beneficial.

"We have found the experience invaluable! The program has added greatly to our 'toolbox,' to help us measure and relay our impact and story in a more compelling and accurate manner. Additionally, our team has been matched with incredible mentors across from the country who have provided helpful input, and who have continued working with our team beyond the week-long bootcamp," said Kayla Birdsong, Executive Director for The GrowHaus. "This program brought together 10 (mostly local) ventures working on food access from different angles, and challenged all of us to think about this difficult issue together. The collaborative nature of the program and the space provided for sharing lessons learned will help The GrowHaus continue to think

*Colorado Fresh Food Financing Fund (CO4F) improves access to healthy food in underserved Colorado communities by financing grocery stores and other forms of healthy food retail.*

## PARTNERS



The Colorado Health Foundation™

colorado  
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*A Health Equity Foundation*

and work in a collaborative manner that prioritizes great partnerships to move toward a healthier Denver."

Ricardo Rocha, CEO of Goodness Groceries/Abarrotes Bondadosa, found value in the program as well and describes how learning rapid prototyping from Google Glass co-creator, Tom Chi, helped his business achieve immediate results.

"Perhaps most impactful, was the time spent with Tom Chi. Tom walked with us around the neighborhood we would be serving and gave us a one-on-one session on rapid prototyping where we presented the product (in this case our website) to the customer, gathered data on user-experience, made changes, and presented the product again, this time to a new customer. Our plan was to perform our first delivery sometime in November but before midday, we had our first order and we delivered it that afternoon! The takeaway being: do not wait for a perfect product, instead learn from anyone who is willing to try it out, improve it, present it again, and never stop learning from your product," said Ricardo.

To learn more, view [Uncharted's Food Access Learning Report 2017](#).

## Developing a State Food Action Plan to Mitigate Hunger in Colorado

We know that food insecurity, a condition where individuals or families lack access to sufficient food because of limited resources, is strongly linked with poor health outcomes and higher health care costs and utilization. Inversely, increasing food access and food security is widely recognized as an impactful strategy for improving health outcomes and lifting families out of poverty. Colorado consistently falls short when it comes to enrollment of individuals and families who are eligible to participate in federal food assistance problems.



*Brian Clark, Colorado Health Foundation*

One of the Colorado Health Foundation's [2017 policy priorities](#) is to improve support for Coloradans experiencing food insecurity by reducing administrative inefficiencies and barriers to participating in food assistance programs. To inform this work, the Foundation commissioned the [State Plans to End Hunger: An Opportunity for Colorado](#), a white paper that maps out the Colorado food security system, identifies potential opportunities and offers recommendations.

The white paper reviewed three states that have developed comprehensive and collaborative state food action plans: Oregon, Maryland and Pennsylvania. The development of these plans, as well as the plan's outcomes, were summarized and interviews with key advocates in two of the states were included for commentary on the process. The information documented how to achieve goals to improve food security and serves as examples for a Colorado blueprint.

According to *State Plans to End Hunger: An Opportunity for Colorado*, some common aspects of effective state food action plans include:

- Maximizing the use of the Supplemental Nutrition



- Assistance Program (SNAP) and striving to have all eligible individuals enrolled
- Expanding participation in school breakfast programs
- Creating a multi-sector strategy that promotes collaboration between business, agriculture, local and state government, nonprofit/community-based organizations, policy and advocacy organizations and schools
- Improving and streamlining the administration of the National School Lunch Program, including increasing direct certification
- Expanding access to the Summer Meal Program
- Integrating AmericaCorps and Vista service programs into the state's hunger and obesity reduction efforts (including outreach and enrollment assistance)
- Creating or expanding centralized easily accessible, multi-benefit application assistance resources
- Partnering interests of farmers and businesses with low-income community members
- Supporting efforts to reduce poverty

Since the release of this white paper back in June, over 30 nonprofits, advocates, governmental partners and funders have worked together to draft a state food action plan for Colorado. The resulting Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger will be released in early 2018. Check back in the next *CO4F Quarterly News* for more information about the Blueprint.

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