The Philanthropy HUB at the Santa Fe Community Foundation presents:

**New Mexico Women of Color Nonprofit Leadership Initiative**

**Testimonials:**

“When I applied, I honestly did not think I deserved it...who was I to think of myself as a “leader?” But the opportunity was too enticing to resist. What I had intended to learn were basic leadership skills--how to write a grant, public speaking skills, team management. What I learned was how to stand in my own melanin and power! During the last session, I had this overwhelming feeling of belonging, not just with the cohort, but in my skin, as a Woman of Color leader. I know that moving forward, I now own my power, my voice and this path of servant leadership.”
-Attiana Virella-Fuentes, NM SFPS Adelante Program

“I was seeking a connection to other Women of Color in the nonprofit sector, a mentor, and knowledge about how to authentically lead. I am now connected to Women of Color who I love and respect, I have a fabulous mentor, and I know exactly how I want my voice and skills to ripple through the nonprofit sector. Most notably, I embraced a deeply meaningful life shift that probably wouldn’t have happened if it were not for this program. I now know and feel the beauty and strength of doing things together with others, versus doing them by myself.”
-Kira Luna, New Mexico Child Advocacy Networks, Director of Engagement

“I think one of the most influential experiences an emerging Woman of Color leader can have is being part of a group that supports their vision. Oftentimes, young, emerging Women of Color leaders in the nonprofit sector have to deal with people questioning their intelligence and it can be extremely exhausting. I would tell an emerging leader to apply to the cohort in order to meet supportive, like-minds while also learning how to redesign definitions and practices in leadership. In order to lead, we do not need to emulate toxic models. In addition, I would share that the Initiative takes a positively unique approach to planning and building a leadership and mentorship path.”
-Hanna Negusie, Academy for the Love of Learning

“I applied to the NM Women of Color Nonprofit Leadership Initiative because I was looking for community--even though New Mexico’s population is a majority people of color, I am constantly surprised by how few people of color (and especially Women of Color) I see in leadership roles, including in the nonprofit sector. As a young leader in this industry, it was crucial for me to find women I could look up to who validated and reflected my experiences in the world. This, and more, is what I found in the cohort.”
“Whenever women of color are connected and validated, they are able to effect change far beyond their immediate professional realm. I think on a more ideological level, this cohort validates the crucial position of women of color in the nonprofit sector, and the crucial recognition that our experiences are different and that we need a space that is by us and for us.”
-Jordan Bosiljevac, Breakthrough Santa Fe Associate Director

“I assume that I came into nonprofit work like many individuals: to serve a purpose, to address a need, and to fill a gap. What I was seeking was to provide community driven care to fill in the known gaps around birth, motherhood, and parenting. What I learned is that leading this work requires a set of skills that need careful development and a circle of people who support me as I develop them. The NM Women of Color Nonprofit Leadership Initiative reaffirmed my ideas of creating an eco-system of support while I find my place in leadership. Before I was part of this cohort, it wasn’t clear who those people were and where to place them. This alone opened up a lot for me, because I wish to support others in their leadership development.”
-Nicole L. Gonzales, Changing Woman Initiative Founder & Executive Director

“I would most definitely encourage other WOC to take part in this program. I would tell them that the opportunity to share, learn, reflect and network is invaluable to their work in the community, but perhaps more important, a gift to their own well-being. The time I have spent on self-reflection and the realization of what I need as a Woman of Color will only serve to make me stronger. This impacts my work in the community, and also makes me a better person. I love thinking about the legacy I want to leave.”
-Inez Jiron Leibman Mesa to Mesa - Home Repair from the Heart Española, New Mexico