



# ILLUMINATE COLORADO

**A STATEWIDE NONPROFIT'S INITIATIVE**  
**GROWING PREVENTION EDUCATION**  
**THROUGH MINI-GRANTS**

2020 CHILD PROTECTION CASE STUDY



The number of reports of child sexual abuse are on the rise in Colorado. Reports have increased by nearly 15% over four years, and reports show that 7% of the 286,534 allegations of child maltreatment in Colorado over the last five years involved sexual abuse.<sup>1</sup> However, child sexual abuse is significantly under-reported and Colorado aims to educate and empower children and adults to reduce stigma and prevent child sexual abuse.

## THE ISSUE

In 2015, three child-health focused organizations (the Colorado Alliance for Drug Endangered Children–Colorado DEC, Prevent Child Abuse Colorado–PCA Colorado, and Colorado Chapter of National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders–NOFAS Colorado) merged to become one single entity, Illuminate Colorado.

They also built a strong partnership with the Colorado Office of Early Childhood, which was funding Sexual Abuse Forever Ending (SAFE) to provide Darkness to Light’s sexual abuse prevention training. Through the Children’s Trust Fund, administered by the Office of Early Childhood, SAFE was able to train adults in not only *Stewards of Children*<sup>®</sup>, but also as Darkness to Light Authorized Facilitators equipped to provide the training in their own communities.

SAFE soon joined under the umbrella of Illuminate Colorado. Together, the organization is focused on strengthening families and reducing child maltreatment through collective education, advocacy, and family support by:

- strengthening individual knowledge and skills,
- promoting community education,
- educating providers,
- fostering coalitions and networks,
- changing organizational practices, and
- influencing policy and legislation.

The addition of SAFE made Illuminate Colorado the state intermediary between the Office of Early Childhood and facilitators and learners. It also led Anne Auld, Illuminate Colorado's Director of Education, to an interesting discovery. The facilitators SAFE trained were not conducting their own trainings, because there were a variety of unexpected barriers they had to overcome in order to actually execute an in-person session. Auld quickly realized that Illuminate Colorado needed to be more strategic about its approach to equipping facilitators. It wouldn't be effective to simply push them to train more adults. They had to address the root barriers.

## THE SOLUTION

Illuminate Colorado learned that for many adults, there were multiple barriers to participation including lack of childcare, food scarcity, lack of transportation, and more. Additionally, facilitators lacked the financial resources needed to provide a training environment that met these needs.

With this knowledge, Illuminate Colorado partnered once more with the Office of Early Childhood to provide "mini-grants" from the Children's Trust Fund. Facilitators can apply for these mini-grants and receive funding for training in two stages: half of the grant in advance of the training, and half once the training is complete and final evaluations are submitted. This ensures that Illuminate Colorado is able to remain data-driven and keep a pulse on trainees' understanding of child sexual abuse.

Illuminate Colorado also conducts their own regular *Stewards of Children*<sup>®</sup> and facilitator trainings. Auld is a Darkness to Light Certified Instructor, meaning that she trains and authorizes new facilitators to conduct trainings. Illuminate Colorado requires that potential facilitators not only fill out an application, but commit to a training goal and develop a plan for how they will engage their community in that goal. Because they provide state-wide funding, Illuminate Colorado is also able to connect organizations who want training to facilitators in their area.



**“It is really important to me to be intentional about training facilitators. It’s not an Oprah moment, like: “Now you’re a facilitator! Now you’re a facilitator!” We have to be strategic to be effective.**”

**– Anne Auld, Director of Education**

Any facilitator who participates in the mini-grant program or is trained by Illuminate Colorado is required to participate in quarterly support meetings. These workshops are check-ins with facilitators and support them in their individual training journeys. This creates community and a system of accountability among the Colorado facilitators. Currently, there are around 80 active facilitators involved.

## THE RESULT

To date, there are more than 7,000 Coloradans trained to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. In 2019 alone, Illuminate Colorado trained 1,762 individuals in *Stewards of Children*<sup>®</sup> and 127 became Authorized Facilitators. Illuminate Colorado has also conducted its own evaluation to learn how well the program helped change adult attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs around child sexual abuse prevention. 92% of adults trained reported learning new skills that they would use to better protect children. 96% report that they can better recognize the signs of sexual abuse, 94% are willing to talk to a child abuse sexual abuse, and 93% are more willing to report suspicion of sexual abuse.<sup>2</sup>

In 2020, Illuminate Colorado launched its tipping point initiative, Tip Colorado, to empower adults to protect children in every community in Colorado from experiencing child sexual abuse. Using the theory of “tipping point,” Illuminate Colorado believes that once 5% of a

population adopts a change in behavior, the momentum for change in that population becomes unstoppable.

Calculating the number of people who need to receive training in every county in Colorado, Illuminate Colorado identified the tipping point the state, as well as each county. In order to achieve this goal, 284,149 people in Colorado need to be trained. Not deterred by this number, within the first two weeks of announcing the initiative, Illuminate Colorado had more than 500 requests for information or to get trained.

**“It’s about the communities. We have to make sure they have the resources they need to prevent child sexual abuse, and be the partners they need to make sure all the adults have a similar language and capacity to be able to keep children safe.”**

**– Anne Auld, Director of Education**

## SOURCES

<sup>1</sup> Colorado Department of Human Services, Types of Allegations of Maltreatment Report Time Period: January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2019. (2020). Retrieved from CDHSDataMatters.org [https://rom.socwel.ku.edu/CO\\_Public/Login.aspx?H=7061](https://rom.socwel.ku.edu/CO_Public/Login.aspx?H=7061)

<sup>2</sup> Illuminate Colorado 2019 Year End Report.