



THRIVE NETWORK

REQUEST FOR HOST PROPOSAL

Executive Summary

The Thrive Network (Thrive) is a nonprofit organization that empowers under-resourced individuals and entrepreneurs through proven, equity-centered programming. Thrive seeks a host partner to provide fiscal, administrative, and operational support to sustain and expand its community impact.

Thrive is dedicated to advancing economic development and addressing the root causes of inequity by equipping individuals with the tools, confidence, and resources to achieve self-sufficiency through personal development, mentorship, and entrepreneurship. Its tailored curriculum is designed to meet the specific needs of under-resourced communities—bridging income disparities, reducing recidivism, and promoting generational wealth.

Thrive proudly serves a diverse population, with a primary focus on women, minorities, and individuals with criminal justice involvement, helping them build sustainable pathways to success.

Each year our organization reaches approximately 200 individuals annually, including both active cohort participants and alumni who continue to receive case management, mentorship, and professional development support.

A strategic hosting partnership will enable Thrive to broaden its reach, maintain high-quality program delivery, and strengthen long-term operational sustainability, ensuring that more residents gain access to pathways for financial independence and small business ownership.

Thrive invites proposals from organizations that share its commitment to economic mobility, equity, and inclusion. Ideal host partners may include community foundations, workforce development agencies, higher education institutions, or multi-service nonprofits offering complementary programming in education, job training, or community development.

This partnership aims to create a collaborative framework that strengthens both organizations while generating measurable, lasting impact within the communities we collectively serve.

About Thrive Networks

Mission

Thrive's mission is to educate and empower individuals in Southeast Colorado Springs to unlock their potential and build resilient businesses. We strengthen under-resourced communities through personal development, career certifications, and entrepreneurship training, creating sustainable pathways to financial independence and generational wealth.

Vision

Thrive envisions communities where every person has the resources, support, and opportunity to realize their full potential. In this future, residents achieve stability and prosperity, and their successes strengthen a vibrant, resilient local economy.

Purpose

The organization provides culturally responsive personal development and entrepreneurship training that breaks cycles of poverty and disempowerment. By combining practical tools with mentorship and community connections, Thrive helps individuals build confidence, increase income, and create lasting change for their families and neighborhoods.

Thrive is a beacon of hope and possibility for under-resourced communities. The founder's journey of overcoming adversity demonstrates the power of transformation and the belief that anyone, given the right support and resources, can rise above their circumstances. By focusing on personal development, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and sustainable economic growth, Thrive is building a stronger, more equitable future for the communities it serves.

History

Thrive was founded in 2015 by Pastor Myron Pierce and Community Leader Taj Stokes to spark grassroots economic revitalization in Southeast Colorado Springs due to its growing impoverishment. In 2018, the organization became a 501c3. Thrive originally began by using the Icehouse curriculum to empower residents to start their own small businesses and revitalize Southeast Colorado Springs from the

inside out. That curriculum was then customized to meet the specific needs of Southeast Colorado Springs and further customized to meet the needs of individual students. As Thrive students learned and iterated, the organization learned and iterated as well. Its evolution and growth have paralleled that of its students.

Southeast Community Context

Southeast Colorado Springs, encompassing the 80910 and 80916 zip codes, faces ongoing and persistent economic and social challenges. Median yearly household incomes are more than \$30,000 below citywide averages. About 16% of residents live below the federal poverty line and over 1/3 of households are cost burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing. Violent crime rates are over double that of the national average and a higher percentage of individuals who have a criminal justice background live in these zip codes. The area is also racially diverse—approximately 35% Hispanic and 20% Black—with many non-English speakers and undocumented residents. Limited educational attainment, scarce career advancement opportunities, and systemic inequities compound these difficulties, underscoring the urgency of Thrive's mission.

Statistics show that a staggering 70% of an individual's health is influenced by behaviors, environmental conditions, and socioeconomic factors such as education and income. In response to these critical challenges, Thrive is dedicated to uplifting individuals from poverty and improving their socioeconomic status. Our programs empower individuals to build better futures for themselves and their families. By providing the necessary tools and resources, we aim to help people achieve their goals and create lasting positive changes in their lives.

Why We Exist

Thrive focuses on underserved regions of Colorado Springs where economic disparities are prominent. We champion entrepreneurship as a means of enhancing economic and social mobility for residents in these areas and providing opportunity to build generational wealth. Through our program, we empower residents to view their challenges as opportunities and offer guidance to launch small businesses to address community needs. The businesses launched through our program not only contribute to economic growth by creating new jobs and circulating profits within the community but also address critical community needs, such as childcare services in areas lacking sufficient coverage.

Thrive's mission to empower underserved communities is deeply informed by the needs and feedback of those we serve. Our curriculum has been developed with extensive input from the community and is tailored to address the specific challenges faced by entrepreneurs in under-resourced areas. The development of our curriculum was informed by ongoing feedback from participants and community stakeholders.

We engage with the community through events and strategic partnerships with local organizations and businesses. Our program activities are designed to address the unique needs of our participants while fostering a supportive community environment, incorporating feedback to ensure relevance. Recent initiatives, such as a standalone personal development program and translation of our curriculum into Spanish, demonstrate our commitment to inclusivity and responsiveness. By adapting to community needs and fostering strong local relationships, Thrive effectively supports entrepreneurs and drives positive change.

The ability to run a business also creates the opportunity to build generational wealth, which many of the individuals we serve may not have the opportunity to do otherwise. Additionally, it fosters leadership skills, improves personal finance habits, and boosts confidence. Thrive takes entrepreneurs through a FREE intensive program with hands-on education, mentorship, and networking opportunities. It is designed to help entrepreneurs through struggles in the first years of business ownership, ensuring longevity and success. This program also strengthens the under-resourced community's current entrepreneurial culture through direct revenue growth and capacity building.

Inclusiveness

Thrive is deeply committed to equity and inclusion across all aspects of its work. Programs are intentionally designed to serve women, BIPOC, and justice-involved individuals facing systemic economic barriers, particularly in Southeast Colorado Springs. Thrive prioritizes economic empowerment for African American and Latina women, offering bilingual programming (English/Spanish), culturally responsive instruction, and accessible locations.

Staff and instructors mirror the communities served, bringing lived experience and cultural competency to their work. Board recruitment efforts focus on ensuring diverse leadership, with representation from women, people of color, and individuals with justice-involved backgrounds. Thrive's volunteer network is growing and intentionally inclusive, engaging mentors, business professionals, and community members who understand the challenges participants face. This inclusive, community-rooted approach ensures Thrive's programs are not only equitable but also empowering and culturally resonant, laying the groundwork for long-term individual and community transformation.

Distinct Advantage

Unlike other regional programs, Thrive provides all current programs and services entirely free of charge, ensuring that financial barriers do not prevent individuals from accessing essential resources and training. This commitment to accessibility is vital

for communities facing economic hardship, where the cost of education and mentorship can be a significant obstacle. Thrive's holistic approach—combining personal development and entrepreneurship training—ensures that participants are not only prepared to launch businesses but also to build resilient, long-term economic stability.

While there are other organizations in the region who offer similar services, Thrive offers distinct advantages that address significant service gaps. Thrive uniquely prioritizes cultural relevance and representation by intentionally highlighting teachers and mentors from diverse backgrounds, including different cultures, races, socioeconomic statuses, and lived experiences. This approach ensures that participants, particularly those from BIPOC communities and individuals with justice system involvement, can connect with instructors who understand their specific challenges and aspirations. This relatability fosters trust, encourages participation, and enhances program outcomes. Another key differentiator is Thrive's emphasis on continuous mentorship. Unlike other programs that end once the course concludes, Thrive offers support throughout the class and beyond graduation. Alumni benefit from ongoing personalized case management, creating a long-term ecosystem of support that significantly increases the likelihood of business success and sustained economic mobility.

Core Programs

Baseline Personal Development Program – Baseline is a free, 8-week personal development program for individuals aged 16 and older. The program reduces cycles of disenfranchisement and helps community members unlock their full potential through education, mentorship, and skill-building.

This program covers essential life skills, including emotional intelligence, effective communication, emotional resilience, goal setting, stress management, leadership development, time management, and personal financial literacy-tools often taken for granted but critical for navigating both personal and professional landscapes. Participants complete the program equipped with a personal budget, savings plan, and a personal theory of change to guide and improve their future. By guiding individuals to create a Personal Theory of Change, a customized plan rooted in their most pressing need, Baseline helps them take actionable steps toward stability and long-term success. By completion, individuals will have a clear vision for their future, actionable strategies to achieve their goals, the foundational skills necessary for pursuing further opportunities, and work towards overcoming their disadvantaged beginnings.

This program was designed in 2025 because we found that the populations we serve have a lack of soft skills and understanding for a variety of reasons (lack of understanding in their communities, lack of knowledge within their own families, lack of access to any other programs in the community). This created the inability to have

access to opportunities, and without these skills, they would not be able to “Thrive” in their own personal possibilities. Without targeted interventions like Baseline, many residents remain trapped in survival mode, unable to acquire the foundational life and workplace skills necessary to pursue sustainable employment, entrepreneurship, or further education.

Business Incubator Program – Thrive’s Entrepreneur Incubator empowers aspiring business owners—especially those facing poverty, justice system involvement, and language barriers—to create sustainable enterprises that revitalize their communities.

This program is a free 5-month program empowering participants from underserved communities to create and sustain small businesses who are focused on solving real-world issues such as childcare deserts and food insecurity. The program provides hands-on support from the ideation stage through business launch and up to the first few years in business. Graduates leave with a full business plan, three-year financial projections, a marketing strategy, and a polished pitch deck. Notably, graduates can present their business ideas at our community event, Pitch Night, which attracts around 200 attendees ranging from potential investors to future clients and supporters. Historically, about 80% of participants complete the incubator and 65% launch a business within six months, creating measurable revenue growth and local jobs.

Business Accelerator Program - To better support established small businesses, Thrive will launch a Business Accelerator Program in 2026. This comprehensive, year-long initiative will provide participants with monthly education sessions, performance assessments, one-on-one mentorship, and structured deliverables designed to help enterprises scale strategically and sustainably.

The Accelerator will operate as a fee-based program, with specific pricing and participation details to be announced closer to the official launch date.

Across all Thrive programs, alumni receive continued case management, access to networking opportunities, and ongoing professional development designed to support sustained business growth and long-term success.

Who We Serve

We prioritize serving individuals from historically underrepresented and under resourced communities that are historically marginalized in traditional economic systems. We work with individuals facing economic hardship, including those who qualify as low to moderate income based on the Federal Poverty Level metrics (83%), unemployed (20%), and lack college education (21%).

The primary beneficiaries of our programs include 77% Women entrepreneurs with a focus on African American (30%) and Latina (40%) individuals who face disproportionate barriers to business ownership and economic advancement. 35% of the individuals have prior involvement in the criminal justice system and encounter significant challenges in securing sustainable employment.

Thrive Leadership Team

Thrive's impact is powered by a dedicated team whose lived experience, expertise, and commitment to equity ensure culturally responsive, high-quality program delivery. Together, our staff brings over 40 years of combined experience in business development, education, nonprofit leadership, and community engagement.

Heather McBroom – Executive Director

Heather has more than 25 years of experience across the insurance, legal, and construction industries, with deep expertise in business management, bookkeeping, and payroll. She has founded, scaled, and sold multiple companies and holds degrees in Computer Operations, Business Management, and Social Work from CSU-Pueblo. Her background in social work fuels her passion for helping others succeed. Heather was named *Small Business Champion of the Year* (2023) by the SBDC/BBB/Chamber & EDC and serves on several local committees, including Pikes Peak Small Business Alliance (PPSBA) and the Colorado Entrepreneurship Coalition. She also facilitates programs with Exponential Impact and other local partner agencies. She joined Thrive in 2022 and became the Executive Director in 2023. Heather also serves on the Pikes Peak Workforce Board.

Andi Propst – Operations Coordinator

Andi combines business acumen with purpose-driven leadership. With a background in nonprofit management and business education, she has been instrumental in shaping Thrive's operational success since 2019. Previously part of YWAM's *Business as Mission* team, Andi helped design and implement cross-cultural business training programs. She also serves as Board Secretary for *Thrive Ukraine*, supporting foster teens through job skills training.

Karina Cruz – Bilingual Program Facilitator

Karina is a legal professional and university instructor with more than fourteen years of experience in Mexico and the United States, specializing in legal, educational, and public service sectors. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Law and a Master's Degree in Electoral Law, along with diplomas in *Pedagogy of Teaching* and *Educational Update*. She has served as a university professor at the *University of Specialties (UNE)* and *UTEG University*, promoting active learning, critical thinking, and the development of ethical values within inclusive and collaborative environments. Her career combines legal practice with a strong educational vocation. She has held positions such as Head of the Litigation Department at the

National Forestry Commission, Legal and Immigration Advisor, and Legal Representative for several private companies, gaining experience in institutional management, regulatory compliance, human resources, and accounting. Karina is deeply committed to education, social justice, and community empowerment, her mission is to contribute to the strengthening of the social fabric through teaching, professional ethics, and equitable access to knowledge.

Impact

Supporting small businesses stimulates economic activity. In Colorado, small businesses constitute 99.5% of all businesses, employing 49.6% of the private-sector workforce. In 2020, these businesses generated over \$225 billion in economic output, underscoring their significant role in the state's economy. ([Co Chamber](#))

Supporting small business owners also enhances workforce development. With access to resources, mentorship, training, and supportive services, these local businesses will be able to create jobs more quickly. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, Colorado Springs has approximately 74,287 small businesses, representing 98.7% of the metropolitan area's businesses. These small businesses employ around 121,651 individuals, accounting for 47.4% of the area's employment. ([coloradospringschamberdc.com](#)) Thriving small businesses also drive local economic activity, creating a ripple effect that supports suppliers and service providers within the community.

As businesses thrive and expand, they contribute more tax revenue, which can be reinvested into public services, education, and infrastructure improvements. Colorado imposes a flat individual income tax rate of 4.40%. Many small businesses operate as pass-through entities, meaning their income is taxed at the individual level rather than the corporate level. This structure implies that a substantial portion of individual income tax revenue is derived from small business earnings. ([taxfoundation.org](#)). The state also has a sales tax rate of 2.90% and with many of the small businesses we serve being main street businesses, they are directly contributing to the state sales tax collected each year.

Providing economic opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment—such as those with criminal histories—helps reduce recidivism by 50% and create safer communities.

Investing in small businesses who are focused on solving community problems helps create community revitalization. Locally owned businesses contribute to a neighborhood's unique character, attracting residents and visitors. Community-focused businesses often support local events, schools, and nonprofits, fostering social cohesion. Additionally, neighborhoods with thriving small businesses have higher civic engagement, as business owners and customers invest in their local community.

Through its comprehensive programs, Thrive currently **serves approximately 200 individuals annually**, including both active cohort participants and program alumni who continue to receive case management, mentorship, and professional development support, with benefits extending to families and the broader community. We track a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) tied directly to program goals. These outcomes are captured through pre-/post-assessments, case management records, business tracking tools, and follow-up surveys at regular intervals.

Qualitative Assessment

Outcomes are captured through pre/post assessments, case management records, business tracking tools and follow up surveys at regular intervals. The following information is assessed.

- Program completion rates across personal development and entrepreneurship tracks
- Business outcomes, such as business launch rates, annual revenue, jobs created, and business longevity
- Participant engagement metrics, such as attendance, homework completion, and alumni program involvement

To complement the numbers, Thrive collects participant stories, group feedback, and open-ended survey responses to understand the lived experiences and personal growth journeys of those we serve. This feedback highlights areas like:

- Increased confidence and self-efficacy
- Increased personal financial literacy, lowering of debt, and increasing savings
- Feelings of inclusion, belonging, and support
- Personal development and leadership development, and opportunities within the community
- Perceived quality and cultural relevance of programming

By integrating these methods, Thrive ensures that success is measured not only by economic outcomes but also by personal transformation, long-term resilience, and the ripple effects of empowerment within families and communities. Graduates strengthen their own economic stability while generating new jobs, increasing tax revenue, and revitalizing their neighborhoods. Continuous mentorship and culturally responsive instruction improve business survival rates by over 40% and reduce recidivism, demonstrating that inclusive entrepreneurship is a powerful driver of community transformation.

Thrive's Impact at a Glance

Program Outcomes

- 184 graduates of the Thrive program to date
- More than 60 alumni are currently operating businesses
- \$4,187,000+ in alumni business revenue generated in 2024
- 52+ jobs created by alumni businesses in 2024

Financial & Personal Advancement

- \$95,000 reduction in public benefits reported by alumni
- \$86,000 increase in alumni savings
- \$277,000 decrease in alumni personal debt
- \$42,000 savings in healthcare costs
- Alumni reported an average of 4.04 / 5 improvement score in quality-of-life areas

Community Trust & Partnerships

- Platinum Seal of Transparency on Guidestar
- 10 years of grassroots credibility with underserved communities
- Formal collaborations and MOUs with 15+ community partners

Current Landscape

Organizational Planning and Priorities

Thrive's planning process is collaborative and community-driven, engaging program participants, staff, partners, and local stakeholders. Current priorities include expanding high-impact programs while maintaining personalized support, strengthening data systems to measure outcomes and return on investment, diversifying funding through individual giving and social enterprise, and cultivating internal leadership to ensure a strong succession pipeline. These efforts position the organization for sustainable growth and long-term community impact.

Current Challenges and Opportunities

Thrive is engaged in an in-depth strategic planning process to guide the organization through 2025–2027. This effort builds on community input, program data, and board engagement to chart a course for sustainable growth. Several key challenges inform the work. Rising program demand continues to outpace staff capacity, creating pressure on operations and leadership. The financial landscape is shifting as grants become more competitive and philanthropic dollars are stretched across many causes, requiring new approaches to long-term funding. In addition, rapid neighborhood changes in Southeast Colorado Springs—driven by both economic pressures and redevelopment—demands that Thrive remain nimble and deeply connected to the residents it serves.

These challenges are paired with significant opportunities. Thrive's strong community reputation and proven outcomes position the organization to expand high-impact programs such as the Entrepreneur Incubator and the forthcoming Business Accelerator. New partnerships with local government, small-business coalitions, and educational institutions offer avenues for shared resources and co-branded initiatives. There is also growing interest from regional funders and corporate partners in culturally specific, equity-focused economic development, which aligns directly with Thrive's mission. Finally, the organization's commitment to bilingual, no-cost programming provides a competitive advantage as funders and policymakers seek scalable, inclusive solutions, while also introducing a fee-based accelerator program to ensure long-term sustainability and expanded impact.

By candidly addressing these challenges and seizing these opportunities, Thrive is strengthening its organizational infrastructure, diversifying revenue streams, and refining its data systems to measure and communicate impact. This planning process ensures that the organization can meet rising demand while staying true to its community-driven values and holistic model of economic empowerment.

Financials

Thrive currently operates with an annual budget of approximately \$250,000, supported through a diversified mix of grants, sponsorships, fundraising initiatives, and individual and corporate donations. This balanced funding structure ensures stability while allowing flexibility to respond to evolving community and program needs.

All Thrive programs are offered free of charge to participants, reinforcing the organization's commitment to equitable access and reducing systemic barriers to economic opportunity. As demand for services continues to increase, Thrive projects a budget expansion to \$500,000 within the next three years, driven by strategic partnerships, expanded funding streams, and the introduction of new programming.

By July 1, 2026, Thrive will launch a fee-based Business Accelerator Program to serve established small businesses seeking scale. This initiative is expected to

diversify revenue sources, strengthen long-term sustainability, and extend Thrive's impact within the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

By 2026, Thrive also plans to license its curriculum and offer the programs to other states, specifically more rural areas, that could utilize the curriculum in their communities. The license will be renewable yearly.

Hosting Thrive presents a significant opportunity for the partner organization to enhance its community investment portfolio, aligning with a proven model of inclusive economic development, and expand both organizations' reach through shared resources.

Strategic Opportunity We Are Seeking

Hosted Partnership Overview

Thrive intends to enter into a hosted partnership that maintains its independent 501(c)(3) structure and program identity under a clearly defined shared governance framework. The partnership will align strategic oversight and compliance with the host organization's administrative systems, ensuring operational stability and enhanced community impact.

Host Expectations:

Under this partnership, the host organization will deliver fiscal, administrative and operational support, while Thrive retains full control of program design, delivery and strategic direction.

The host organization's areas of responsibility may include, but are not limited to:

- Financial Management: bookkeeping, payroll processing, accounts payable/receivable, and audit coordination.
- Human Resources: employee benefits administration, regulatory compliance, recruitment, and onboarding.
- Operations and Infrastructure: provision of facilities, IT systems, and general administrative support.
- Development and Communications: collaboration on shared fundraising initiatives, marketing, and external communications as appropriate.

The Thrive Executive Board members will retain responsibility for programming strategy, community engagement, curriculum development, and delivery, and will collaborate with the host's leadership and Board of Directors to ensure alignment with shared strategic and operational priorities.

Governance and Accountability

Thrive shall remain an independent 501(c)(3) organization governed by its own Board of Directors and Executive Team. The hosting relationship shall be governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the specific delineation of duties, authority, and accountability between Thrive and the host organization.

Under this framework:

- Thrive's Board of Directors will maintain oversight of organizational mission, program strategy, community engagement, and performance measurement.
- The host organization will provide fiscal oversight, administrative compliance, and operational support as outlined in the MOU.
- Both entities will participate in joint planning and reporting meetings to ensure transparency, alignment of objectives, and continuous improvement.

Mutual Benefits and Outcomes

The hosting partnership will create measurable value for both parties. By hosting Thrive, the partner organization will:

- Integrate a proven entrepreneurship and business development program into its portfolio.
- Gain access to Thrive's established community credibility among BIPOC and justice-involved populations.
- Leverage Thrive's impact data, outcomes reporting, and experienced staff with over 40 years of combined expertise in business, nonprofit, and leadership development.
- Enhance its eligibility for new funding opportunities related to inclusive economic growth and equitable community development.

This collaboration will strengthen the operational capacity of both organizations, expand community reach, and reinforce the region's reputation for innovative, equity-centered economic solutions.

Risk Mitigation

Thrive recognizes that hosting arrangements require thoughtful planning to minimize potential financial, operational, and reputational risks. To ensure stability and accountability, Thrive maintains robust financial management practices, including transparent accounting systems, documented internal controls, and regular financial reviews. Strong data management and reporting systems support effective program monitoring, evaluation, and informed decision-making.

Thrive's programs are delivered by a trained and experienced team committed to consistent, high-quality service. Standardized procedures, ongoing staff

development, and clear operational protocols help mitigate risks related to program performance and continuity.

The organization's long-standing community credibility and trusted partnerships serve as an additional safeguard against reputational risk, reinforcing its commitment to ethical conduct, cultural responsiveness, and inclusive engagement. Governance and fiscal responsibilities will be clearly defined through a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and supported by regular communication and joint review, ensuring that both Thrive and the host organization operate with clarity, trust, and mutual accountability.

What Thrive Brings to the Table

Asset	Description
Curriculum	Culturally responsive personal development, incubator, and accelerator programs; scalable and replicable.
Brand & Reputation	10 years of trust, Platinum Seal with Guidestar, strong grassroots credibility.
Impact Metrics	Data-driven outcomes supporting growth and evaluation.
Trained Team	Dedicated staff of 3 with 40+ years of combined business expertise.
Community Network	200+ alumni, 30+ local partners, strong connections in under-resourced communities.
Funding Streams	Diversified funding totaling \$250,000 annually.
Operational Systems	Automated processes saving 20+ staff hours weekly.

Next Steps

We invite interested organizations to submit a proposal that includes the following:

- Overview of your mission, programs, and strategic priorities.
- Proposed hosting arrangement (services provided, expectations of Thrive).
- Alignment with Thrive's mission and potential for joint impact.
- Capacity to provide fiscal/administrative hosting.

Timeline

- Proposal Submission Deadline: 2/19/2026
- Exploratory Calls/Visits: 4/20/2026
- Decision Announcement: 5/15/2026

Please note: Prior to exchanging proprietary information, Thrive will request a signed Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA).

Conclusion

Thrive is a catalyst for economic equity and generational transformation. By focusing on personal development, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship, Thrive is equipping under-resourced individuals with the tools to build sustainable businesses and stronger communities.

A host partnership will not only sustain Thrive's impact but amplify it so together we can create a more inclusive and resilient economic future.

Contact Information

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