

The Coleman Foundation Announces New Director, Launches Updated Grantmaking Strategies

Nora Garcia named Executive Director as updated strategies launch in Entrepreneurship, Health, and Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities.

CHICAGO, IL, UNITED STATES, April 22, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Coleman Foundation](#) is

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Esther Barron, Co-chair of the Board of Directors of The Coleman Foundation

pleased to announce its appointment of Nora Garcia as its new Executive Director, effective July 7, 2025. Garcia was chosen through an extensive national search by the Foundation’s Board of Directors, with the assistance of Russell Reynolds Associates. She brings more than two decades of leadership experience in health and educational equity, youth development, and immigration reform to her new role at The Coleman Foundation.

“For more than 70 years, The Coleman Foundation has supported individuals and families in the Chicago region, helping them improve their health and well-being by removing barriers and increasing access to resources,” said Garcia, “The opportunity to center community, values, and responsiveness is timely in this moment. I look forward to

collaborating with our grantee partners, staff, and board to deepen the legacy of The Coleman Foundation in strengthening the local ecosystem of organizations and leaders.”

Garcia’s appointment comes as The Coleman Foundation launches its new grantmaking strategies, updated to meet the challenges of the next three years, across the Foundation’s key focus areas of Entrepreneurship, Health, and Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities.

“Nora’s deep experience and values-driven leadership make her the right person to guide the Foundation in this exciting new chapter,” said Alison Fitzgerald, Co-chair of the Board of Directors of The Coleman Foundation. Co-chair Esther Barron added, “As we launch our new grantmaking strategies, grounded in collaboration and community insight, we are confident Nora will strengthen our impact and steward our mission with clarity, care, and conviction.”

Garcia joins the Foundation following a seven-year tenure at the Healthy Communities Foundation (HCF), where she served as Director of Programs. In this role, she partnered with The Coleman Foundation to support their shared Community Health Worker (CHW) initiative, which broke down barriers to healthcare access by expanding a network of CHWs across the western suburbs of Cook County.

Garcia led the development and implementation of HCF's grantmaking strategy and special initiatives, engaging stakeholders that included community-based organizations, institutions, government bodies, and residents.

Prior to joining HCF, Garcia was a philanthropic consultant to Chicago-based family and private foundations where she supported grantmaking, communication, and strategic planning efforts. She also managed the Peace Grants Project, a fund established by the City of Chicago focused on youth violence prevention. For more than a decade, she developed partnerships between community and philanthropy with roles at Communities in Schools (CIS) of Chicago, BUILD Chicago, and the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR).



The Coleman Foundation Executive Director, Nora Garcia

Garcia earned a master's degree in social work from the University of Chicago and a bachelor's in political science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She has completed fellowships with Leadership Greater Chicago, the Grantmakers in Health Terrance Keenan Institute, The Field Foundation of Illinois, and the Voice Lab at Nonprofit Quarterly. She currently sits on the boards of Mujeres Latina en Acción and AMPT: Advancing Nonprofits.

The Board of Directors and staff are deeply grateful for the leadership and significant contributions of outgoing Interim CEO Peter Handler, who joined The Coleman Foundation in December 2024.

About The Coleman Foundation

The Coleman Foundation is a private grantmaking foundation created by entrepreneurs Dorothy W. and J.D. Stetson Coleman, one-time owners of Fannie May Candies. Its mission is to invest in the efforts of community-based organizations and local institutions to preserve and strengthen

the physical health and the economic and emotional well-being of people living in the greater Chicago region. The Foundation typically awards \$9 million in grants annually.

Learn more at colemanfoundation.org.

Sarah Sommers

The Coleman Foundation

+1 773-251-4772

info@colemanfoundation.org

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