

CATHOLIC PROGRAMS SERVING THE COLORADO COMMUNITY



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An Economic Impact Report of The Catholic
Church in Colorado

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Commissioned by: Stephen P. Patterson
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THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Catholic Programs Serving the Colorado Community

AN ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN COLORADO

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE FOR POLICY RESEARCH

Dear Reader,

The Catholic University of America's Institute for Policy Research (IPR), founded in 1974, is an interdisciplinary policy research center whose fellows, scholars, and students provide timely analysis of policy issues relevant to the life of the Catholic Church, academics and the academy, legislators, scholars, professionals, and concerned citizens.

With that mission in mind, IPR is proud to offer this report that highlights the economic impact of the Catholic Church in the state of Colorado. In this report, we estimate that the Catholic community-serving organizations within the Archdiocese of Denver, Diocese of Pueblo, and Diocese of Colorado Springs generate \$4.8 billion annually in economic activity to the state of Colorado while serving an estimated 609,000 Coloradans.

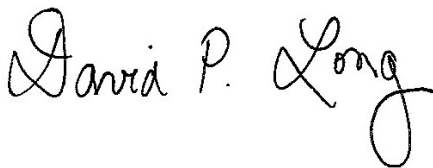
This report illustrates how the Catholic Church in Colorado and the programs derived from it provide amplifier benefits for their surrounding communities, including capital campaigns and tourism for Catholic pilgrimage sites and events, whose combined attendance was nearly 750,000 and provided a "magnet effect" of over \$31 million in 2019 alone.

By the end of this report, I hope it becomes clear that the Catholic Church is an invaluable asset to the state of Colorado and the communities it serves in all facets of life from conception until natural death, including education, housing, mental health support, healthcare, social services, nutrition services, and 'magnet' effects that support local and statewide economies alike.

My thanks go to Dr. Anna B. Faria and Dr. Grant Clayton of the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, and Dr. Gary W. Ritter of St. Louis University, for their work in authoring this report. I also thank Stephen P. Patterson for commissioning this report, and the Colorado Catholic Conference for spearheading the logistics of this project.

Finally, I thank you for taking the time to read this report, and I hope it provokes conversations regarding the positive impact of the Catholic Church in the economic and social spheres of the state of Colorado.

Sincerely yours,



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PART 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Catholic Programs Serving the Colorado Community addresses the shortfall in the knowledge base around the many types of benefits and their economic impact in Colorado. This report provides a concise and comprehensive overview of the various benefits and estimated the economic value — expressed in dollars — of each. We start with the foundational level of the Catholic Church, the local parish. We expand our analysis to capital campaigns and Catholic organizations and conclude with education and hospitals.

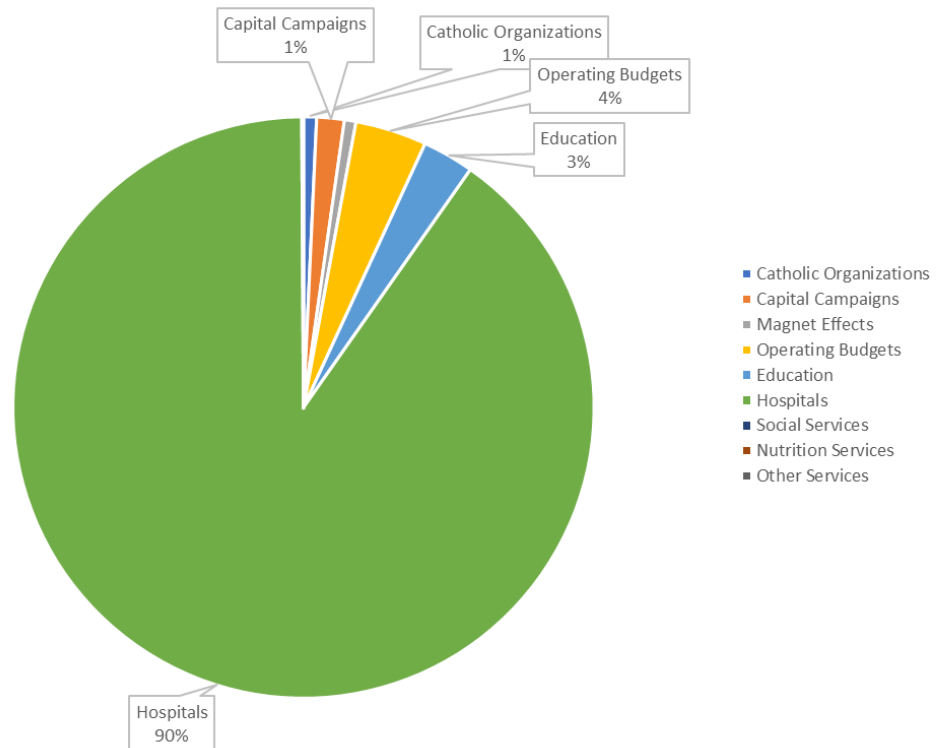
Their total economic value is conservatively estimated at \$4.8 billion or about the same as the University of Colorado. These benefits included over 600,000 people directly served annually, approximately 11% of the population of the state. Food ministries serve nearly 15,000 Coloradans monthly including the homeless and families in economic crisis. Charitable organizations such as local parishes, Grand Valley Catholic Outreach, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, and diocesan prison ministries donate nearly a quarter million volunteer hours annually. Capital construction campaigns total over \$146 million with direct economic benefits to the economy of over \$73 million.

The Catholic Church also supports the social fabric of Colorado through events such as weddings, funerals, and festivals with a combined attendance of nearly 750,000 and a “magnet effect” of over \$31 million. Similarly, the Mother Cabrini Shrine brings approximately 115,000 visitors to the city of Golden annually.

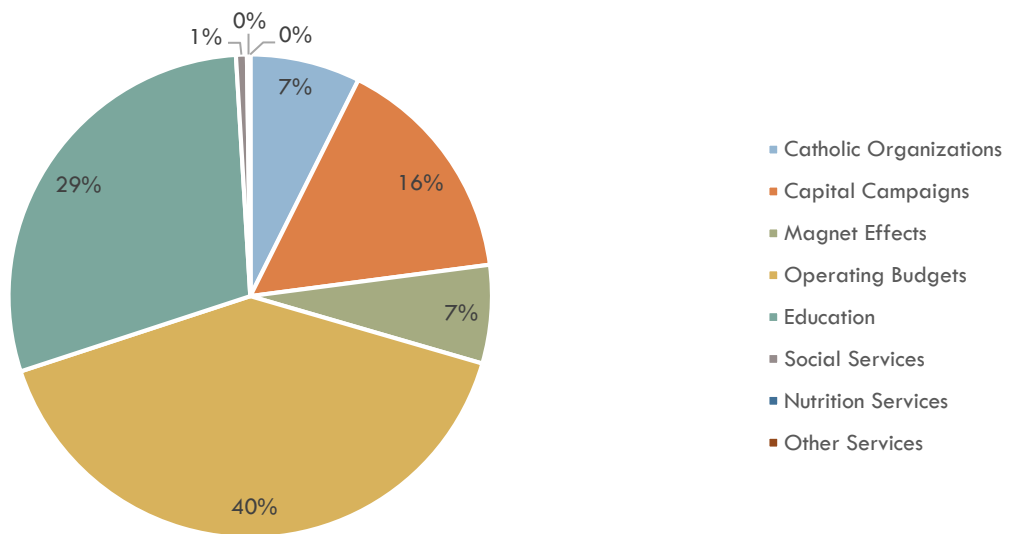
Annual Estimated Total Economic Benefit of the Catholic Church Programs in Colorado

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| Parish Contributions | \$195,645,706 |
| Independent Catholic Organizations | \$34,873,491 |
| Diocesan Capital Campaigns | \$73,419,393 |
| Magnet Effects | \$31,076,665 |
| Catholic Education | \$137,441,356 |
| Catholic Healthcare | \$4,332,252,591 |
| Total Economic Effects of Catholic Church | \$4,804,709,202 |

Catholic Impact on the Colorado Economy is \$4.8 Billion



Catholic Impact on the Colorado Economy, not including hospitals, is \$472,456,611



PART 2: INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

Part 2a: The Catholic Church in Colorado

History

The history of the Catholic Church in the state of Colorado dates back to 1858, when the first European settlers came to what would later become the city of Denver. Catholicism was the fourth denomination in the settlement at the time, and the second church to exist in the village was a Catholic place of worship. Flash forward to today, and Colorado is home to 832,273 Catholics (according to 2018 statistics from the Catholic Directory), which makes up around 16% of the total population of Colorado.

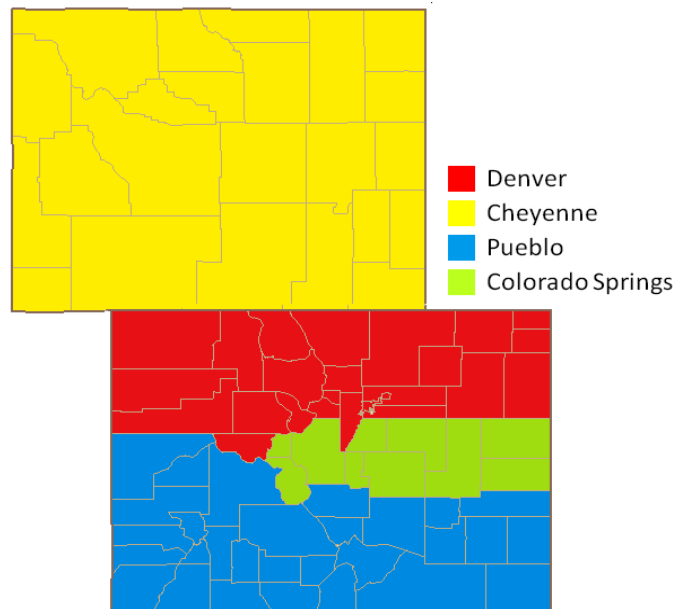
Organization

In 1868, Pope Pius IX split territory from the Diocese of Santa Fe and the Diocese of Grass Valley to form the Vicariate Apostolic of Colorado and Utah. Nearly 19 years later, Pope Leo XIII created the Diocese of Denver.

Before 1941, the Diocese of Denver covered the entire state of Colorado. Pope Pius XII divided the Diocese of Denver, to create the Diocese of Pueblo. This, in turn, elevated the former Diocese of Denver into the Archdiocese of Denver.

This formation lasted until 1983, when Pope John Paul II created the Diocese of Colorado Springs, using territory from the eastern and central part of the state.

Ecclesiastical Province of Denver



The distribution of the Archdiocese of Denver splits the state of Colorado into three regions: Archdiocese of Denver, along with two suffragan Dioceses: Pueblo and Colorado Springs. Using the graphic above (focusing only on Colorado), it shows the Diocese of Pueblo spans nearly half the geographic area of the state. In terms of counties, the Diocese of Pueblo covers 29 of the 64 counties in Colorado. The Archdiocese of Denver dwarfs the Diocese of Pueblo in terms of Coloradans served, but the Archdiocese serves 25 less counties than the Diocese of Pueblo. The Diocese of Colorado Springs covers the remaining 10 counties in the state. In terms of parishes, the Archdiocese of Denver oversees 122 parishes, while Colorado Springs and Pueblo oversee 37 and 52 parishes, respectively.

The Catholic Church in Colorado serves many purposes. The Catholic Church aids communities in education, hospital services, social services, nutritional services, and much more. In this report, we will delve into the economic benefits of the programs run through the Catholic Church in Colorado.

Part 2b: Estimating Economic Impact

Businesses and for-profit entities, such as sports franchises or entertainment venues, are often lauded for their amplifier effects on the community where they reside. Policy makers are rightfully interested in the economic impact of groups in their community. This type of analysis is common, and examples include the estimated contribution of Denver International Airport at \$33.5 billion and \$4.2 billion for the University of Colorado in 2019. Regan (1995) estimated the economic impact of the Denver Broncos at \$215 million (in 2021 dollars) while Matheson and Baade (2006) showed estimates for the Super Bowl around \$400 million.

Tierney (2016) conducted an analysis of the economic impact of the Catholic Church in Philadelphia and Cnaan et al. (2013) presented a framework for valuing the economic activity of congregations. We extend the work of these two studies to create *Catholic Programs Serving the Colorado Community* to estimate the economic impact of the Catholic Church in Colorado across six key areas parish-run programs, independent Catholic organizations, Diocesan capital campaigns, education, and health care.

Part 2c: Overview of the Church's Contribution to the Public Good

Catholic Programs Serving the Colorado Community estimates that the Catholic community-serving organizations within the Archdiocese of Denver, as well as the Diocese of Pueblo and the Diocese of Colorado Springs, generate \$4.8 billion annually in economic activity. Parish-run programs and independent Catholic organizations helped serve an estimated 609,000 Coloradans (excluding Coloradans served in hospitals) in 2019. Businesses and for-profit entities, such as sports franchises or entertainment venues, are often lauded for their amplifier effects on the community where they reside. The Catholic Church and the programs derived from within it provide similar benefits for the surrounding community.

In terms of economic reach, the Catholic Church is more widespread than one might imagine. The Catholic Church's benefit to the communities in Colorado fall into the categories below:

- **Parish-run programs**
- **Independent Catholic Organizations**
- **Diocesan capital campaigns**

- **Magnet effects of Catholic events and spaces**
- **Education in the PK-12 sector**
- **Catholic health care organizations**

This report will provide an in-depth overview of how each of these programs are operated, as well as the economic benefits provided to the community from each area.



Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Archdiocese of Denver (Dedicated October 27, 1912)
Photo © Brian LoBue, April 10, 2007, Structurae License for non-commercial use

PART 3: ECONOMIC IMPACT OF INDIVIDUAL CATHOLIC PROGRAMS

In this section, we present estimates of the economic impacts of various categories of Catholic programs and services that produce direct or indirect economic benefits for the citizens of Colorado. We start with the lifeblood of Catholic life – the Parishes operating within Colorado. We then branch out from the parishes, focusing next on the programs and services provided by independent Catholic organizations across the state. Third, we move to the Diocesan level and present estimates of the economic impact of Diocesan Capital Campaigns. Fourth, we present estimates of the so-called ‘magnet’ effects; that is, we consider the extent to which Catholic landmarks or events such as weddings and festivals draw outsiders to support the local economy. Finally, we close by presenting our estimates of two staples of Catholic services and programs in the history of the Catholic Church – Education and Health Care.

Part 3a: Parish Programs in Colorado

The economic impact of parishes can be manifest in various ways. Most simply, the day-to-day work of managing a parish and the operating budgets that accompany this work produces an economic benefit for Colorado citizens. Beyond this, Catholic parishes also serve the broader community through social services, nutrition services, and other programs.

As noted above, there are three distinct Dioceses serving the state of Colorado: the Archdiocese of Denver, the Diocese of Colorado Springs, and the Diocese of Pueblo. Within the Archdiocese of Denver, there are 122 total parishes serving an average of approximately 1,200 families each. Within the Colorado Springs Diocese, there are 37 total parishes serving an average of approximately 770 families each. Finally, within the Pueblo Diocese, there are 52 total parishes serving an average of approximately 480 families each.

In total, these 190 parishes in Colorado are home to roughly 200,000 parishioner families, but their work extends well beyond these families into communities across Colorado. To quantify the economic impact of the parishes, we consider four separate categories: Parish Operating Budgets, Parish Social Services, Parish Nutrition Services, and Other Parish Services.

With respect to Operating Budgets, we estimate that 80% of total budgets support the economy of Colorado. The result is just over \$191 million in estimated economic benefit in this category, 87% of which was generated in the Archdiocese of Denver. In the category of Social Services, we include spending on Clothing Assistance, Direct Financial Assistance, Homeless Outreach, and Burial Services. In sum, these services result in an economic benefit of more than \$3.4 million. Parish Food Ministries, such as food pantries, injected nearly \$1 million (just over \$991,000) into the Colorado economy. Finally, we include services such as Counseling and Ministry to the Sick in the category of Other Services, and we estimate these expenditures at approximately \$54,000. In total, Parishes contribute nearly \$196 million in economic benefits to the state.

Annual Estimated Total Economic Benefit of Parish Work in Colorado

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| Direct Operating Expenditures (80%) | \$191,159,849 |
| Social Service Expenditures | \$3,440,294 |
| Nutrition Service Expenditures | \$991,493 |
| Expenditures on Other Services | \$54,070 |
| Total Economic Benefit of Parish Work | \$195,645,706 |

Part 3b: Independent Catholic Organizations

In this section, we share estimates of the economic impact of the work done by the many independent Catholic organizations serving the citizens of Colorado. One of the more prominent independent-run Catholic organizations is Catholic Charities. Colorado is home to three Catholic Charities agencies: Catholic Charities Denver, Catholic Charities of Central Colorado, and Catholic Charities of Southern Colorado. Other notable groups include Centro San Juan Diego, FOCUS and Amazing Parish. While including smaller groups would create a list too voluminous for this report, other notable examples include the St. Vincent de Paul Society, community groups like Westwood Unidos, and the Mountain Voices Project.

Catholic Charities agencies is home to many community-serving ministries across the state. For example, the Archdiocese's Catholic Charities provides a continuum of care for more than 2,000 clients annually, Catholic Charities Central Colorado's Hanifen Employment Center helps individuals develop the tools and resources needed to land a job, and Catholic Charities Southern Colorado operates SafeCare, which works with parents of children ages newborn to five years create a safe home environment. Catholic Charities agencies provide essential services including health care, housing, and human services. Alongside Catholic Charities, the Catholic Church supports homeless ministries, wedding venues, sports and recreation, funeral and burial services, and prison ministries.

Grand Valley Catholic Outreach, an outreach center in Grand Junction, CO, helps serve the poor and the homeless. Grand Valley organizes a day center, where people can receive home amenities including laundry and showers. Beyond the day center, Grand Valley Catholic Outreach provides help in a variety of ways. There are financial aid programs that help with utilities, rent and transportation. Grand Valley helps with hunger, running a food pantry and soup kitchen. **We estimate that Grand Valley Catholic Outreach serves nearly 162,000 Coloradans, over 76,133 volunteer hours, and contributes \$1,748,627 in expenditures.**

While Grand Valley Catholic Outreach operates and assists people on the western slope, places like Christ in the City assist people within the Archdiocese of Denver. Christ in the City, **with estimated**

expenditures of \$650,000, is a ministry that serves the homeless population around the Denver area. The organization hosts and trains missionaries who walk the same streets regularly and foster meaningful relationships with the homeless. In addition, Christ in the City hosts a food ministry. In total, the Independent Catholic organizations in Colorado provide approximately \$35 million in economic benefits. Below is the breakdown of the economic benefits of the Independent Catholic Organizations for Colorado.

Breakdown of Independent Catholic Organizations in Colorado

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Coloradans Served | 354,717 |
| Volunteer Hours (<i>valued at \$12 per hour</i>) | 246,344 |
| Expenditures (<i>estimate 80% as economic benefit</i>) | \$39,896,704 |
| Total Estimated Economic Benefits | \$34,873,491 |

Part 3c: Diocesan Capital Campaigns

Among the many benefits of programs within the Catholic Church, we estimate the economic benefit of Capital Campaigns and the associated construction projects. We gathered data on construction projects in the Archdiocese of Denver from 2019. In addition, we gathered data on capital campaign dollars raised by parishes in both the Colorado Springs Diocese and the Pueblo Diocese.

As the table below indicates, the vast majority of the nearly \$150 million of Campaign and Construction spending for the Catholic Church in Colorado took place in the Archdiocese of Denver. The standard methodology to estimate the economic impact of campaign and construction expenditures is to assume that 50% of the spending benefits the local economy.

Thus, we estimate the total economic benefit of Capital Campaigns for the Catholic Church in Colorado to be over \$73 million.

Annual Estimated Total Economic Benefit of Capital Campaigns

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Archdiocese of Denver Construction | \$119,075,438 |
| Colorado Springs Capital Campaigns | \$23,661,327 |
| Pueblo Capital Campaigns | \$4,102,021 |
| Total Estimated Capital Campaigns | \$146,838,786 |
| Total Economic Benefit of Campaigns | \$73,419,393 |

Part 3d: The ‘Magnet’ Effects of Catholic Events and Spaces

Borrowing from a 2016 report conducted by the Program for Research on Urban and Civil Society at the University of Pennsylvania on the economic impact of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, we estimate the economic “Magnet Effects” of activities associated with the Catholic Church.

These so-called Magnet Effects occur when church congregations attract visitors and volunteers to their neighborhoods who will likely spend money locally on hotels, transportation, or food. Catholic Church events that attract visitors include weddings, funerals, festivals, and other parish events. For each of these events, we make a conservative assumption, consistent with the current research literature, that 50% of the event attendees attend from out-of-town. Finally, we also include modest magnet effects of recreation facilities and green spaces that are connected to Catholic Churches in each of the three Dioceses.

Combining each of these categories, as the table below shows, we estimate the total economic “Magnet Effect” of the Catholic Church in Colorado to be just over \$31 million.

Annual Estimated Total Economic “Magnet Effects” of Catholic Church

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Weddings | \$3,961,264 |
| Funerals | \$11,242,365 |
| Festivals and Events | \$9,814,880 |
| Landmarks | \$5,892,413 |
| Recreation and Green Spaces | \$165,745 |
| Total Economic “Magnet Effects” | \$31,076,665 |

Part 3e: The Economic Impact of Catholic Schooling

The state of Colorado is home to 58 Catholic schools, with the majority of them within the Archdiocese of Denver. Not surprisingly, Archdiocesan enrollment accounts for around 85% of the total enrollment in the state’s Catholic schools.

Colorado Catholic Schools enroll 1.5% of total Colorado students in PK-12 schools. Approximately two-thirds of the nearly 15,000 students in Colorado Catholic schools attend PK-8 schools; the remaining students attend Catholic high schools. The Catholic Church serves children and families throughout the state with K-12 schools, childcare provided by Catholic parishes, and special education.

Current state law does not allow families to utilize their own property taxes to send their children to Catholic schools, thus families pay out of pocket. To estimate the economic benefit to the state of Colorado of the Catholic schools educating these nearly 15,000 students, we used the per-pupil spending (from state and local sources) allocated to the roughly 900,000 students in Colorado public schools. Per the Colorado state budget, we found an average estimated per pupil spending level of \$8,317. The straightforward computation we employ is simply a multiplication of the number of students in Catholic schools by this per pupil spending figure for approximately \$120 million in economic benefit.

Across the state, and particularly in Denver and Colorado Springs, we find that approximately one-fourth of the parishes offer childcare services. Based on prior research in this area, we estimate that each child receiving childcare from Catholic parishes results in a net economic benefit of \$7,168. We estimate that Catholic parishes provide childcare to nearly 2,400 Colorado children, resulting in a total benefit for the state of just over \$17 million.

Overall, through the operation of more than 50 Catholic elementary and high schools, the provision of childcare through parishes across the state, and through direct spending on student special education needs, the education work of the Catholic Church generates economic benefits estimated to be more than \$137 million.

Annual Estimated Total Economic Benefit of Catholic Education

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| Students in PK-12 Catholic Schools | \$120,232,312 |
| Childcare | \$17,052,044 |
| Reported Special Education Expenditures | \$157,000 |
| Total Benefit Education of Catholic Education | \$137,441,356 |

Part 3f: The Impact of Catholic Health Care Organizations

Outside of government, the Catholic Church is the largest provider of health care in the world. In the United States, the Catholic Church is the largest private provider of health care. In the 1990s, the Catholic Church operated more than 550 hospitals, many of which were established by orders of religious women. According to a *New York Times* piece in 2013, Catholic hospitals were providing nearly one in six hospital beds in the United States at that time. This number has grown since then.

The previously referenced 2016 report, *How Catholic Places Serve Civic Purposes: The Archdiocese of Philadelphia's Economic "Halo Effects"*, also highlights the importance of health care and hospitals to Catholic ministry. The report notes that Catholic health care developed in the early 1800s as a response to the needs of those in urban areas. In fact, according to the report, many Catholic hospitals and nursing homes originated in the mid-1800s, when religious sisters and nuns began to care for the sick and the poor.

In Colorado, the vast majority of the Catholic health care is provided by either Common Spirit Health, formerly known as Catholic Health Initiatives Network (CHI)—now known as Common Spirit Health—or the SCL Health Network, founded by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth in 1864. Common Spirit Health is one of the largest faith-based health care systems in the nation, serving eighteen states, including Colorado, at the current time. Common Spirit Health contributes approximately \$2.7 billion in total economic benefits. The SCL Health Network, on the other hand, has a more regional focus and serves the states of Colorado, Kansas, and Montana. SCL has an explicit focus on patients who are poor and vulnerable. SCL contributes approximately \$1.7 billion in total economic benefits.

Aggregating the work of both organizations, along with a smaller contribution from Bella Health, we estimate the total economic benefit of Catholic health care in Colorado to be over \$4.3 billion. With a contribution of well over \$4 billion, the sector is the largest contributor (by far) of those highlighted in this report, contributing approximately 90% of the total economic benefits accounted for here.

Annual Estimated Total Economic Benefit of Catholic Health Care

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| CHI Operating Expenses in CO | \$2,673,063,117 |
| SCL Operating Expenses in CO | \$1,655,789,474 |
| Bella Health Operating Budget | \$3,400,000 |
| Total Economic Benefit of Health Care | \$4,332,252,591 |

PART 4: SUMMARY OF OVERALL “HALO” EFFECT IN COLORADO

The Catholic Church in Colorado directly impacts the lives of many throughout the state. These benefits have been generally understood for quite some time; however, we can now quantify that impact. Through feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, providing quality education for PK-12 students, and offering compassionate healthcare, the Catholic Church contributes roughly \$4.8 billion in economic benefits to the state of Colorado.

Just as the 2016 *How Catholic Places Serve Civic Purposes* report sought to quantify the economic benefit of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, this report has done the same for the state of Colorado. The greatest area of economic contribution of the Catholic Church in Philadelphia is education, which is responsible for more than 60% of the \$4.2 billion in total contribution. The health care sector in Philadelphia comes in second, generating just over one-quarter of the total.

Here in Colorado, on the other hand, Catholic health care delivers the vast majority (90%) of the Catholic Church’s economic impact. The contribution of the education sector, while significant, pales in comparison to that realized in Philadelphia. This is due to the substantial contribution made by Catholic colleges and universities in Philadelphia and to the stronger presence of PK-12 Catholic schools within the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

However, while Catholic health care accounts for a large portion of the overall Catholic program impact on the state, \$472,456,611, is still a remarkable annual contribution of the Church to the Colorado economy. These impacts are distributed throughout the state in communities large and small with results improving the daily lives of all members of the community.

While the breakdown of the contributions varies across locations, the result is the same. The programs of the Catholic Church in Colorado generates numerous benefits to the citizens of Colorado, including more than **\$4.8 billion in demonstrable economic benefits.**

Annual Estimated Total Economic Benefit of the Catholic Church Programs in Colorado Approaches \$5 Billion

| Category | Estimated \$ Impact | % |
|--|------------------------|-----|
| Parish Programs | \$195,645,706 | 4% |
| Independent Catholic Organizations | \$34,873,491 | 1% |
| Diocesan Capital Campaigns | \$73,419,393 | 2% |
| “Magnet Effects” of Catholic Events | \$31,076,665 | 1% |
| Impact of Catholic Schooling | \$137,441,356 | 3% |
| Impact of Catholic Health Care | \$4,332,252,591 | 90% |
| Total Economic Effects of Catholic Church | \$4,804,709,202 | |

PART 5: APPENDIX OF REFERENCES

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*Cathedral of Saint Mary, Diocese of Colorado Springs (Dedicated on December 19, 1898)
Photo Courtesy of Jeffrey Beall, [CC BY-SA 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)*

PART 6: METHODOLOGY

The results of this report come from a sample of reporting parishes from all three state dioceses in 2019. We estimate the size of unreported parishes based on a subsample of Colorado Springs and Pueblo parishes to find that unreported parishes are on average 0.56 equivalents of reporting parishes. We adjust our estimates to account for this size difference. All non-parish-level data come from financial or end-of-year reports of each organization for their most recent available year or self-reported data from organization administrators. We do not include 2020 data when possible due to potential issues given COVID-19.

This report employs the previously published methodology of Cnann et al. (2013) in their *If you don't count it, it doesn't count: a pilot study in valuing urban congregations* and Tierney's (2016) *How Catholic Places Serve Civic Purposes: The Archdiocese of Philadelphia's Economic "Halo Effects."* Doing so allows us to produce comparable estimates across geographic locations and provides the transparency for others to reproduce the results.

A key feature of the estimates published here is a consistent conservative estimate of economic benefits. For example, we use \$8,317 for per pupil spending, a state average. If we used the total per-pupil formula funding for Denver County of \$9,400, where many Catholic schools are located, the benefit would have been closer to \$135.9 million. Similarly, we used a conservative the state's minimum wage of \$12/hr. to compute the economic benefit of volunteer hours. For magnet effects, we assume 50% of those attending are from out of town for an estimated benefit of \$30,910,920 while a more generous estimate of 80% out of town attendance would produce \$41,214,560.



Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Diocese of Pueblo (Dedicated April 10, 1913)

Photo Courtesy of the Gates Frontiers Fund Colorado Collection within the Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division



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