

Your Lasting Legacy

*A Guide to Endowments at the
University of Colorado*



University of Colorado
Boulder | Colorado Springs | Denver | Anschutz
ADVANCEMENT | CU FOUNDATION

Investing in the future: Why endowments matter at CU

Thank you for considering an endowment to support the University of Colorado.

An endowment is a fund that invests your gift to support what matters most to you at CU for decades to come, whether that's exceptional education, groundbreaking research, clinical care, community service or other priorities you value.

What is an endowment?

An endowment is a fund designed to support CU in perpetuity.



A donor creates an endowment to serve a particular purpose within the university.



The endowment is invested in the CU Foundation's Long Term Investment Pool. Each year, a percentage of its market value is distributed to the CU program specified by the donor.



Year after year, the endowment's distributions provide stable financial support for the intended program, ensuring ongoing progress and success.

Endowments that support CU benefit from careful stewardship and remain strong for generations. The University of Colorado Foundation, an institutionally related foundation and a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, invests and manages endowment funds. Together, CU and the CU Foundation ensure your gift is stewarded responsibly and fulfills your intentions, creating lasting impact for CU and the communities it serves.

At CU, thousands of individual endowments generate stable financial support for hundreds of people, places and programs across our campuses. These individual endowments are collectively known as the CU endowment.



University of Colorado endowments

What is an endowment?

An endowment is a fund designed to provide support for CU that lasts long into the future. Each endowment is invested prudently to maximize its long-term growth. Each year, a percentage of an endowment's market value is distributed to the CU program designated by the endowment's donor.

May donors direct how their endowment gifts are used?

Yes. When establishing a new endowment, donors decide how their gift will be used. At CU, endowments support scholarships for students, research initiatives, health and wellness programs, and other ways in which the university positively impacts the world. CU works closely with each donor to ensure their intentions align with the program they wish to support and comply with all applicable laws, regulations and university policies.

May CU spend endowment distributions in ways other than as directed by a donor?

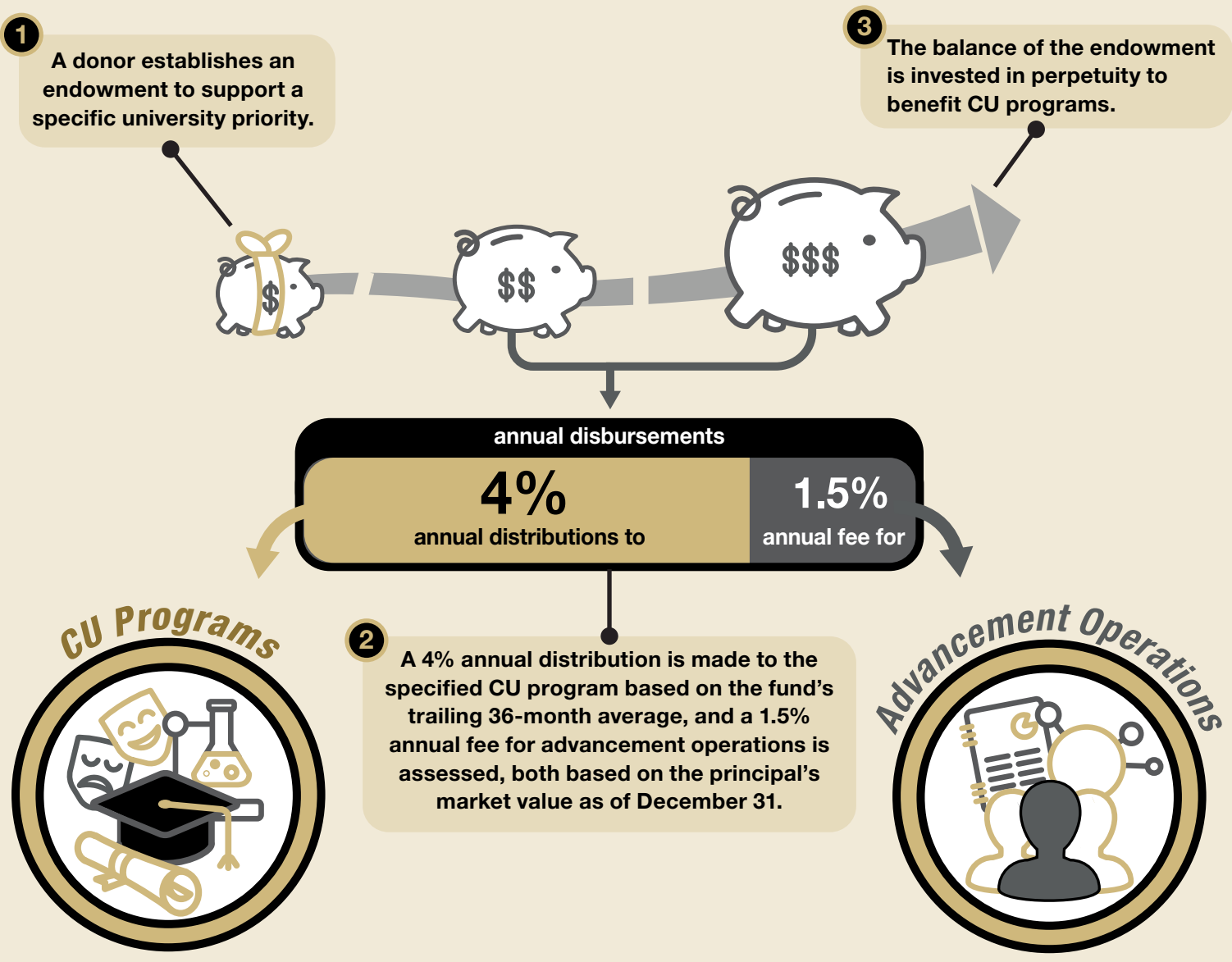
No. CU is legally obligated to honor the wishes of donors, as outlined in gift agreements. Endowment distributions cannot be spent for purposes other than those directed by the donor.

Will donors receive regular updates on the status of their endowments?

Yes. CU and the CU Foundation are committed to accountability and transparency. Toward the end of each calendar year, donors receive annual reports detailing the status of their individual endowments as of the end of the previous fiscal year. Additionally, the CU Foundation publishes quarterly reports on the investment performance of the CU endowment at giving.cu.edu/financials.

How do endowments benefit CU?

CU endowments are carefully managed to balance two goals: providing the maximum amount of current annual support for CU programs and maintaining value through long-term investments.





How does an endowment work?

How are endowment distributions calculated?

Endowment distributions are determined by calculating 4% of the endowment's trailing 36-month average fair market value as of December 31 of the year prior to the distribution. For endowments that have been invested for less than three years, the calculation is adjusted. In these cases, the distribution equals 4% of the endowment's trailing monthly average market value for the total number of months the endowment has been invested, measured as of December 31 of the preceding year.

When are distributions given to university programs?


Each year on July 1, the CU program that benefits from an individual endowment receives the distribution amount that was calculated as of December 31 of the previous year.

Is it possible that an endowment won't make a distribution?

Yes. There may be instances when an endowment does not make a distribution. Specifically, the Foundation will suspend distributions if a pure endowment's fair market value falls below 90% of its historic gift value.

Do endowments support advancement operations?

Yes. Endowments also play a role in supporting advancement operations. Since at least 1980, a commonly used funding model has been implemented to support CU's advancement activities. Revenue generated from assessments on endowments provides operating support for CU Advancement. Each endowment pays an annual advancement support assessment equal to 1.5% of the market value of the endowment, as calculated on December 31 of the previous year.



How CU invests endowments for growth and stability

Investment strategy for endowment funds

Each endowment's principal is invested in the CU Foundation's Long Term Investment Pool (LTIP) to generate earnings. The LTIP is structured to include a diversified portfolio of assets, aiming to balance growth and risk. Its holdings consist of public domestic and international equities, private capital, tangible assets such as real estate and commodities, inflation-protected securities and hedge funds.

Investment objectives and performance benchmarks

The LTIP is designed to achieve an average annual total return that exceeds a specified policy benchmark, net of investment management expenses, over a rolling five-year period. The benchmark itself is comprised of 80% MSCI All Country World Index and 20% Barclays Capital U.S. Aggregate Bond Index. Additionally, the LTIP aims to maintain a risk level, measured by standard deviation over a rolling five-year period, that is at or below the benchmark.

Diversification is a key principle of the LTIP's investment strategy. By spreading investments across a variety of asset classes, the portfolio is protected from significant detrimental impacts that could result from adverse or unexpected developments in any single asset class.

Benefits of pooled investment

Pooling endowments in the LTIP, rather than managing them individually, allows the Foundation to access a broader array of investment opportunities. This approach also provides greater efficiency, making it possible to manage a larger and more complex investment portfolio than would be feasible for individual endowments.

Management and oversight

The CU Foundation delegates the management of the LTIP's investment portfolio to an outsourced chief investment officer firm, Certy Partners OCIO. This firm operates in accordance with an investment policy statement, ensuring that investments are made responsibly and strategically. Oversight is provided by the CU Foundation's Investment Policy Committee and Board of Directors.

Additional information

For further details about the LTIP and the CU Foundation's investment policy statement, visit giving.cu.edu/financials.



Endowments in action at CU Boulder

Endowments make a difference every day at the University of Colorado. At the start of fiscal year 2026, more than 4,000 individual endowments benefited the university. From professorships that open new doors to programs that advance research, these stories show how endowed gifts turn a donor's vision into impact:

- Faculty and students have conducted research at the Spruce Gulch Reserve for almost 25 years. A recent gift of the reserve's land and an endowment to support ecological and academic work at the site will support current and future studies across the sciences, humanities and fine arts. giving.cu.edu/spruce-gulch
- CU sweethearts Donald and Karen Ringsby's love of art lives on in an endowed gift to the CU Art Museum. The couple specified that their contribution — the largest gift in the museum's history — be allocated at the discretion of the museum's director, allowing the flexibility to support the museum's changing needs over time. giving.cu.edu/ringsby
- Dale and Patricia Hatfield's establishment of the Hatfield Endowed Professorship in Space Policy & Law at CU Boulder creates a position that will drive teaching and research in the emerging field of space policy and law, with broad implications for national security, global communications, navigation, weather forecasting and international collaboration. giving.cu.edu/hatfield
- Longtime donors Jack and Jeannie Thompson have expanded their endowment, adding a vocal jazz degree option to the Thompson Jazz Studies Program in CU Boulder's College of Music. Their generosity builds on a decade of impact that has elevated the program to national recognition, attracted world-class artists and enriched the community with exceptional performances. giving.cu.edu/thompson



Endowments in action at CU Denver

Endowments make a difference every day at the University of Colorado. At the start of fiscal year 2026, more than 4,000 individual endowments benefited the university. From scholarships that open doors for students to programs that cultivate future leaders, these stories show how endowed gifts turn a donor's vision into impact:

- Frances Davison, a former middle school special education teacher, and her husband, Ross Davison, a former secondary earth science teacher, are longtime supporters of education. They recently pledged to create the Richard Keith Davison Endowed Education Scholarship Fund at CU Denver to honor their son, support teachers who are interested in serving students with differing abilities, and carry forward their legacy of service.
giving.cu.edu/davison
- CU Boulder alum Dr. Terry Larsen earned his doctor of education degree in 1984 — and now he's paying it forward. The Dr. Terry James Larsen Endowed Doctoral Education Fellowship Funds at CU Denver and CU Boulder will support doctoral students in education who demonstrate inclusive excellence, with a focus on developing future school leaders.
giving.cu.edu/larsen
- After an influential career in public administration spanning more than five decades, veteran CU Denver professor Dr. Mary Guy partnered with CU Denver's School of Public Affairs to create an enduring legacy. She has funded an endowed professorship and established the Dr. Mary E. Guy Distinguished Lecture Series, through which thought-leaders and scholars engage the community in meaningful conversations about today's most pressing governance issues. giving.cu.edu/mary-guy



Endowments in action at UCCS

Endowments make a difference every day at the University of Colorado. At the start of fiscal year 2026, more than 4,000 individual endowments benefited the university. From scholarships that open doors for students to programs that cultivate future leaders, these stories show how endowed gifts turn a donor's vision into impact:

- A gift from the Myron Stratton Home in Colorado Springs will provide vital childcare stipends for six scholars in the Karen Possehl Wayfinder Endowment program at UCCS. By easing childcare costs, the gift allows students who have experienced significant personal challenges to focus on their education and build brighter futures for their families.
giving.cu.edu/kpwe-scholarship
- After a long career deeply intertwined with public service, Barb Winter — an active member of UCCS's Chancellor's Leadership Class (CLC) board of directors for more than 18 years — established an endowment with the CLC in her name, a testament to her belief in directly supporting future leaders by removing financial barriers. giving.cu.edu/barb-winter



Endowments in action at CU Anschutz

Endowments make a difference every day at the University of Colorado. At the start of fiscal year 2026, more than 4,000 individual endowments benefited the university. Highlighting programs that advance research and medical care, these stories show how endowed gifts turn a donor's vision into impact:

- Joanne Posner-Mayer (PT'73) is honoring her roots and shaping the future of physical therapy through her visionary philanthropy. A trailblazer in the profession, Joanne has established the Joanne Posner-Mayer Endowed Chair in Physical Therapy, the program's first endowed chair, and created a scholarship to support students for generations to come. Inspired by her own transformative CU experience, her generosity is expanding opportunities for nontraditional students and empowering the next generation of physical therapists.
[***giving.cu.edu/posner-mayer***](https://giving.cu.edu/posner-mayer)
- Gary and Debbie Mandelbaum established a new endowed chair in melanoma research in memory of their son, Brandon. Made with the hope of accelerating discoveries and improving outcomes for patients facing melanoma, their gift supports inaugural chairholder Dr. Martin McCarter's groundbreaking work in melanoma care and immunotherapy.
[***giving.cu.edu/mandelbaum***](https://giving.cu.edu/mandelbaum)
- A gift to establish the Penny S. Burke Endowed Chair in Behavioral Neurology honors Timothy Burke's late wife's passion for memory disorders advocacy. The endowment will support a faculty chair in the Memory Disorders Clinic, advancing care and research for patients facing dementia, Parkinson's disease dementia and other cognitive disorders, and enhancing expertise in the essential but rare subspecialty of behavioral neurology.
[***giving.cu.edu/penny-burke***](https://giving.cu.edu/penny-burke)
- Lyda M. Ludeman, a steadfast proponent of women's health research, dreamed of one day funding an endowed chair. Through her namesake daughter, that dream has been fulfilled. In collaboration with the Ludeman Family Center for Women's Health Research, and through the work of inaugural chairholder, statistical geneticist Barbara Stranger, PhD, the Lyda M. Ludeman Endowed Chair in Bioinformatics seeks to better understand the genetic variations between sexes and their impact on disease. [***giving.cu.edu/ludeman-bioinformatics***](https://giving.cu.edu/ludeman-bioinformatics)

Your gift counts.

When you support the University of Colorado, you help students, faculty and staff meet tomorrow's challenges. CU prospers thanks to your generosity.

Learn more

If you'd like to know more about CU's endowments or how you can make a gift, call **303-541-1290** or visit [**giving.cu.edu**](https://giving.cu.edu).

For complete financial statements, visit [**giving.cu.edu/cufoundation**](https://giving.cu.edu/cufoundation)



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