EMPOWERED

CALL FOR ENTRY

COLORADO BABY MURAL

Grand Junction
Colorado

COLORADO BABY

GARY COMMUNITY VENTURES

OVERVIEW

Empowered, Ltd. Consulting, in partnership with Colorado Baby and Gary Community Ventures' Childcare Storytelling Initiative, invites muralists to submit qualifications for a community mural to be installed on the building of **Colorado Baby** in Grand Junction.

This mural celebrates the childcare providers, families, and children of Mesa County and the broader Grand Junction community.

We are seeking an artist or artist team whose vision captures the feel of Mesa County — rooted in the landscape and working life of the Western Slope, while messaging a more supported, equitable future for every child and family presented by a community mural.

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

Colorado Baby is a beloved, family-owned boutique and natural parenting store located on Main Street in downtown Grand Junction, Colorado. Founded by Megan and Alberto Alfaro, this highly rated local shop specializes in eco-friendly baby gear, maternity wear, high-quality children's clothing, and educational toys (including Montessori-style options).

Beyond retail, the store operates as a community hub for local parents, offering a play area for little ones and educational classes. These classes (available in-store and virtually) range from labor skills and childbirth education to breastfeeding and cloth diapering. Learn more: https://www.coloradobabyonline.com

Empowered, Ltd. is a Colorado-based, mission-driven consulting group working at the intersection of the arts, education, nonprofits, and community impact. Grounded in culturally responsive project management, Empowered partners with organizations and communities to design strategy, steward partnerships, and build programs that create measurable, community-rooted change. The team's work spans organizational development, grants strategy, policy and advocacy, and community-engaged storytelling—including co-authoring Colorado's first Arts Policy Framework in partnership with the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts.

What sets Empowered apart is its belief that lasting impact requires more than deliverables. Every engagement is approached as a relationship—one that centers community voice, uplifts local talent, and ensures the people are empowered to be the change they wish to see. Learn more: www.empowered-people.com

Gary Community Ventures is a philanthropic organization that intends to utilize all of its resources by 2035 to transform systems and build wealth for children and families in Colorado. Founded by Sam and Nancy Gary in 1976, the foundation employs catalytic grantmaking, impact investments, policy, advocacy, and new ventures to achieve its mission.

Gary Community Ventures' Childcare Storytelling Initiative aims to highlight the impact of child care on Coloradans through various forms of content creation, journalism, data collection, and community engagement. This effort seeks to explore how child care challenges affect all residents, not just parents. The initiative aims to do that by creating compelling stories capable of engaging priority audiences frequently missed by discussions of the issues facing our child care system, including Coloradans without children, those over the age of 50, as well as fathers and male caretakers. They fund projects like Empowered's Made Possible Community Murals that demonstrate innovative strategies for story collection, production, distribution, and measurement to foster public awareness. Learn more: www.garycommunity.org

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY MURAL

Over the past several months, members of the Mesa County community have shared their child care stories with the Empowered team. This mural will celebrate the childcare providers, families, and children of Mesa County and the broader Grand Junction community. Rooted in real stories from local providers and parents, it honors the people who make early childhood care possible — and makes visible a system that too often goes unseen.

Emerging themes from their stories include:

1. Childcare Is Community Infrastructure
Childcare is the unseen foundation that holds everything else up. When parents can work, local businesses thrive — from ranches and oil fields to hospitals and schools. We want the community to recognize childcare not as a private family concern, but as essential community good that everyone depends on, whether they have children or not.

2. The Village We Build Together
Many families in Mesa County and rural Colorado are far from extended family. Formal childcare has become the new village — the neighbors, grandparents, and community that make daily life possible. This theme honors the idea that when family is far, community must step in.

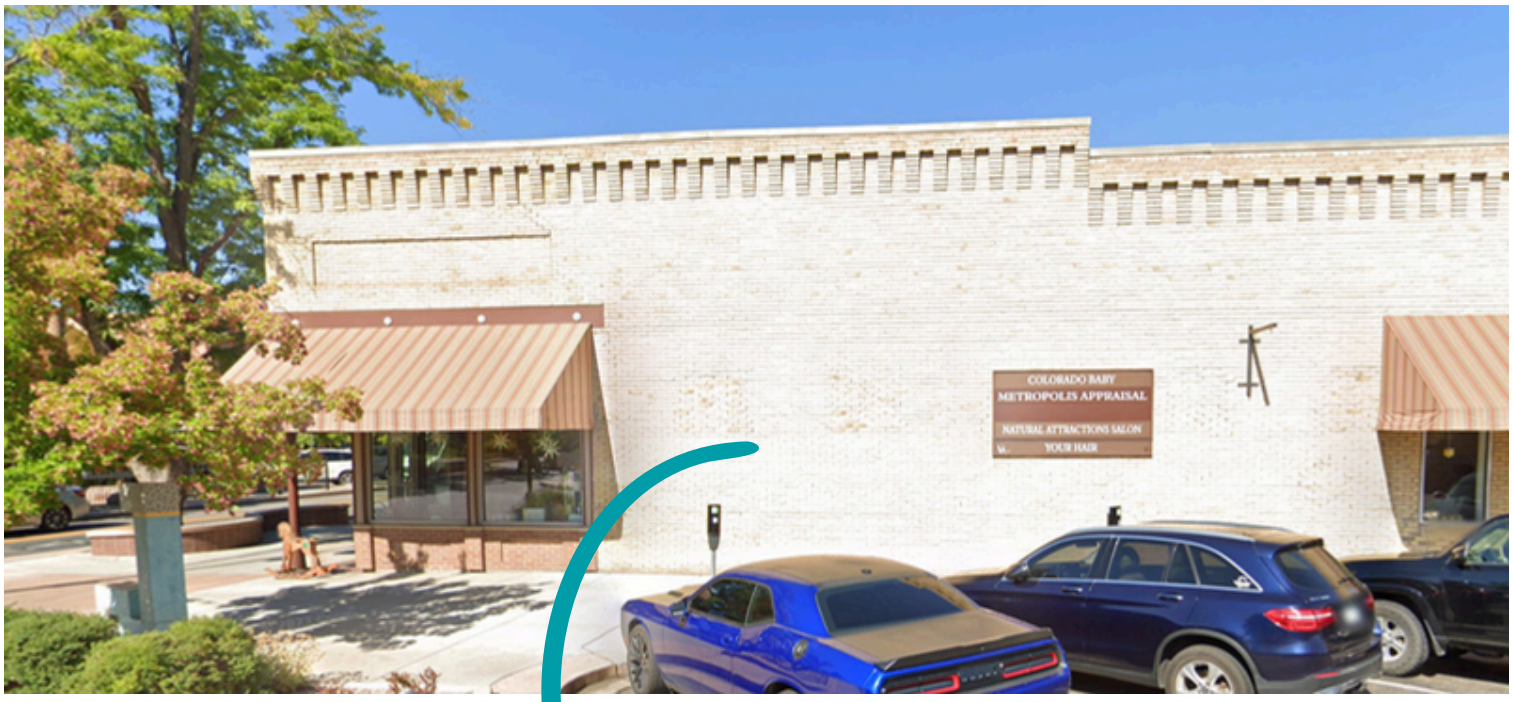
3. The Professionals Behind the Children
Childcare workers are early childhood educators — not babysitters. Many have spent decades developing expertise, navigating complex regulations, and shaping children's social, emotional, and intellectual growth. Their work deserves recognition, respect, and fair compensation equal to its impact.

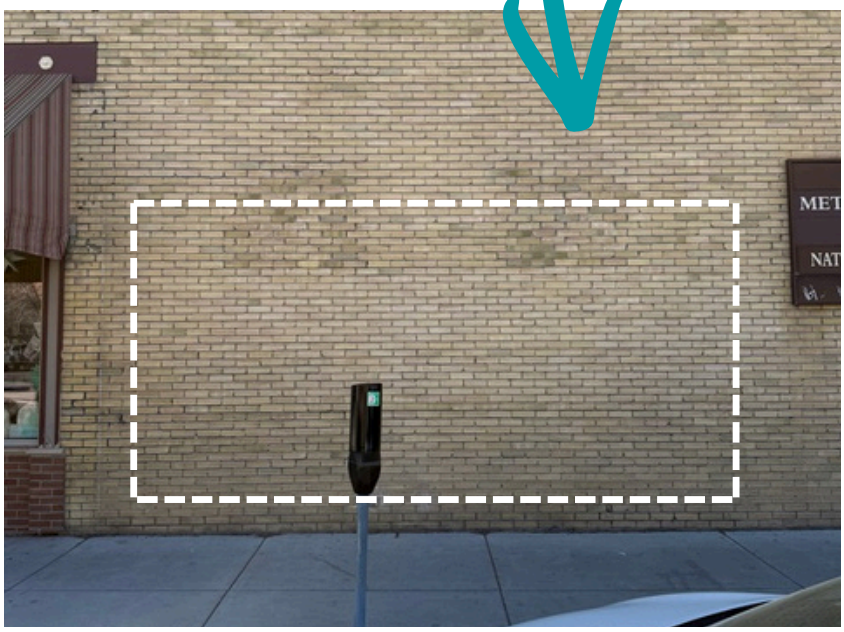
4. Big Dreams in Small Places
Rural identity — ranching, wide skies, love of the land — coexists with ambition, learning, and possibility. Children and families in small, remote communities deserve access to quality early learning.

5. The Lasting Impact of Early Care
The children sitting in circle time today become the nurses, teachers, and community leaders of tomorrow. Quality early childhood education changes the arc of lives — measurably and permanently. This is work whose rewards often arrive years or decades later, seen in the faces of adults who return to say: you changed my life.

6. Resilience, Sacrifice & Joy
Despite low wages, systemic underfunding, long waitlists, and staffing shortages, providers keep showing up — out of love for children and commitment to community. This line of work holds both truths: the very real hardship of this work, and the deep, daily joy found in children's faces, milestones, and growth.

LOCATION & SITE DETAILS





Mural location: East side of Colorado Baby. Mural will be on a metal wall attached the brick.

560 Main St.,
Grand Junction, CO 81501

COLORADO BABY

COMPENSATION

Compensation is tied to the final wall dimensions. Based on the current identified wall, the package is:

- Mural production: $4,206 (calculated at $30 per square foot)
- $500 design fee paid to the selected artist(s), which includes an initial 50-minute virtual design meeting and up to three (3) revisions

TIMELINE

Mural production is scheduled for September 2026. Exact installation dates will be confirmed with the selected artist. Key milestones:

- Submissions open: June 9, 2026
- Submissions close: July 9, 2026
- Artist Selection Review: July 13-17, 2026
- Artist Selection Finalist Interviews: July 20-24, 2026
- Artist notification: July 29, 2026
- Artist Mock-up: August 24, 2026
- Design meeting & revisions: August 3 - September 9, 2026
- Mural installation: September 2026 (exact dates TBD)
- Grand opening & unveiling celebration: September 2026 (exact dates TBD)

ARTIST EXPECTATIONS

The selected artist(s) will be expected to:

- Participate in an initial 50-minute virtual design meeting with the project team
- Incorporate community-refined themes into the mural concept
- Provide up to three (3) design revisions before final approval
- Complete mural installation on-site in September 2026 (exact dates TBD)
- Participate in a artist interview for a short film regarding the community mural project and engagement opportunities throughout the process
- Attend the unveiling celebration and participate in a community conversation as a speaker/panelist regarding the community mural and project (exact dates, times, location TBD)

SELECTION COMMITTEE

Submissions will be reviewed by a committee represented by Colorado Baby, Empowered, Gary Community Ventures, and members of the community cohort. The Selection Committee will:

- Begin reviewing all call for submissions starting July 13-17, 2026.
- Jury all submissions to select the top 3 artist/artist team and narrow down finalists.
- The selection committee will announce the selected artist/artist team by July 29, 2026.

SUBMIT

HOW TO SUBMIT

Interested Artists and artist teams are invited to submit their application using the following link: https://bit.ly/GJMural

Artists will be asked the following questions:

- Name and Contact Information
- Level of Mural Experience + Past Work Examples
- Artist Biography, Website, & Social Media Handles
- Ties to Grand Junction
- Vision for the Mural
- Why you should be selected?
- Submit for a Background Check
- Provide two References

WEBINAR

The Empowered team will be hosting a webinar for the Call for Submission on **Tuesday, June 30 at 5:00 PM** to provide an overview on the call for submission and answer any questions you may have regarding the application. Use the following link to register: **https://bit.ly/GJMuralZoom**