



# Phil Weiser

FOR COLORADO



## The Colorado Blueprint

*Updated May 16, 2026*

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## A LETTER FROM ATTORNEY GENERAL PHIL WEISER

My fellow Coloradans,

Each of us who have come to Colorado have our own story. Mine is an only-in-America one—a first-generation American, raised by a family that survived the worst of times yet remained focused on a better future, and moved to Colorado to raise a family in a thriving and supportive community. That story of resilience—and my family’s love of America—drives my commitment to serve others.

We are living in challenging times—rising dysfunction in Washington, rising demonization towards others, and rising incivility in our politics—that lead many to question our future. I believe in the promise of America—and that Colorado will continue to be a shining light for how a government “of the people, by the people, and for the people” can and should work.

In Colorado, we have the opportunity to work together to keep our state as a place where we all can and want to stay, and where our kids can build a future for themselves and their families. That’s why I’m running to be your next governor. And here I have set out our *Colorado Blueprint* for how we *fight for our kids’ future and the state we all love*.

Our *Colorado Blueprint* was developed by listening and engaging with hundreds of Coloradans—people who I listened to in community meetings around our state, those who served on policy teams, and leaders throughout Colorado. This grassroots plan shows not only my vision for *what* I will do as your Governor, but *how* I will do it—by listening, collaborating, and taking action.

In this Blueprint, I lay out my continued commitment to **fight this White House and federal government for its unlawful attacks on Colorado**—abusing government agencies for political retaliation, withholding critical federal dollars to coerce states to adopt Trump’s policies, illegally firing critical federal workers, unlawfully punishing our state for our voting laws, or sending federal troops into American cities. I’ve led that fight as your attorney general, and I will continue it as your next governor.

And fighting back is just part of what our next governor must do—I am running for governor to drive forward and solve the issues facing Colorado. Our Blueprint does that by **charting our course for Colorado’s future, for us, and for our kids**—making our state more affordable to live in; ensuring jobs, health care and a quality education are

available to all; and protecting our land, air, and water. Our Colorado Blueprint lays out my comprehensive vision for how we can build a state in which all can live in and our children can see themselves having a future here.

To meet the challenges of this moment, I need your engagement and partnership. Our *Colorado Blueprint* is the product of much listening and reflection on what is working and what we can do better. To build on this foundation, I want your suggestions on what *you* want to see done by your next governor. To let me know your ideas, please submit them at <http://philforcolorado.com/suggestions>.

Together, we have important work ahead, setting Colorado for the future we want and deserve. Thank you for being a part of building our future together.

Phil

## PHIL WEISER'S COLORADO BLUEPRINT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Colorado's rights, freedoms, and liberties are under attack by a federal government and White House that continues to act like it is above the law—using government agencies for political retaliation; withholding critical federal dollars to coerce states to adopt Trump's policies; illegally firing critical federal workers; and unlawfully punishing our state for our voting laws. As governor, I'll continue to stand up for Colorado from any lawless Administration that acts illegally and harms our state.

### Our Rights and Freedoms

As attorney general, I have stood up to the Trump Administration every time it has acted unlawfully and harmed Coloradans. As governor, I will:

- **Protect federal funding**—fight back when Washington illegally withholds money meant for public safety, research, and community needs.
- **Stand up for democracy**—defend Colorado's gold-standard voting laws against political power plays and retaliation by the White House.
- **Fight illegal and dangerous actions** to federalize the Colorado National Guard or send the military into Colorado.
- **Defend reproductive rights**—including Amendment 79 and against any attacks on our laws protecting the right to choose.
- **Protect LGBTQ+ Coloradans**—defend access to gender-affirming care, enforce civil rights protections, and confront rising hate.
- **Guard our public lands**—stop any federal effort to sell them off to the highest bidder.
- **Provide critical climate actions and protections of our land, air, and water** as the federal government abandons its role in this crucial area.
- Enforce state laws to **prevent the federal government from coercing state and local law enforcement** to conduct immigration enforcement activities and that bar sales of government facilities for ICE detention centers.
- **Defend fair representation** — take action to ensure Colorado doesn't stand idly by when other states break democratic norms through extreme off-cycle gerrymandering to stack the deck in their favor in Congress.

At this moment, it is not enough to stand up against the Trump Administration, we also must chart a path for our future—with a comprehensive and grassroots driven plan to make Colorado more affordable; ensure jobs and a quality education are available to all; and protect our land, air, and water. Here's what I'll do as your next governor to advance our state so we have a livable, affordable Colorado for all.

## Affordable Homes and Communities

All Coloradans deserve a safe, affordable place to call home. Yet too many families are forced to choose between housing and essentials like childcare or healthcare. As governor, I will:

- **Boost homes Coloradans can afford, increasing attainable owner-occupied homes by 40,000**, closing the current gap on the shortfall on such homes by 50%.
- **Speed up permitting and partner with local governments to lower fees** for affordable homes available for sale under \$600,000.
- **Cut red tape** to streamline state processes.
- **Expand down payment assistance to support first-time homebuyers**—especially essential workers like teachers, nurses, and first responders.
- **Protect renters** from unfair practices and keep affordable units available.
- **Ensure that out-of-state corporate investors** don't mistreat Colorado families.
- **Ban algorithmic price collusion** by corporate landlords.
- **Promote innovation & skilled trades**: modular housing, apprenticeships, and workforce training.

## Jobs and the Economy

It's time to reinvigorate Colorado's economy and create good-paying jobs across our state. As governor, partnering with business and labor, I will:

- **Recharge our business environment by:**
  - **Promoting our state** - to any and all who will listen - as an ideal place to start and grow a business and for employees to raise their families.
  - **Fueling innovation and growth** in our key sectors from small business to tech to agriculture with creative incentives.
  - **Expanding access to capital for new and growing businesses**, including with grants and microloans.
  - **Bringing businesses and workers together** to solve challenges to our competitiveness.
  - **Growing economic hubs** from Denver to rural towns ready for new investment.
- **Simplify by:**
  - **Reviewing all regulations**, based on costs and benefits, and removing unnecessary burdens.
  - **Streamlining processes** for those getting started and working hard to grow.

- **Appointing a Chief Innovation Officer** to bring new ideas and efficiencies into state government.
- **Launching a Business Navigator** to guide entrepreneurs through starting and scaling a business.
- **Invest in:**
  - **Our workforce**, expanding job training, apprenticeships, and career pathways aligned with employer and worker needs.
  - **Housing, childcare and health care**, helping workers live near their jobs.
  - **Infrastructure**, improving transportation, broadband, and public safety.
  - **Our land, air and water**, keeping our communities safe and thriving.

See more about my approach [here](#) and what small businesses and start ups need [here](#).

### Workforce Development

A good job and living wage are key to a good life. Yet our unemployment rate is too high, and many need more training. As governor, I will:

- **Champion a Colorado Earn-and-Learn Promise** to expand pathways into good-paying jobs, including apprenticeships and other work-based learning opportunities.
- **Launch ColoradoCorps**—a service program for careers in education, law enforcement, nursing, counseling, and fire fighting.
- **Scale the Pay-It-Forward Fund** to provide zero-interest loans and living stipends for training programs that deliver opportunities.
- **Empower students** with work-based learning, credentials, or college credit before graduation.

### Education

Every student in Colorado deserves a world-class education. As governor, I will:

- **Support teachers** with livable wages so they don't need multiple jobs to live where they work.
- **Promote down payment assistance** so teachers can afford to live where they teach.
- **Stand strong for public schools and against privatizing** or profiting off of our public schools.
- **Lower the cost of college** so students don't face crushing debt.
- **Support and work to expand Universal Preschool** to give kids a strong start and save parents money.

### Early Childhood

We must safeguard kids' early childhood health, well-being, and care. As governor, I will:

- **Preserve funding for prenatal and early childhood** programs that work in Colorado.
- **Coordinate the state's strategy for early childhood mental health**, aligning initiatives and resources across agencies and external partners
- **Integrate funding and services** to make childcare easier for families to afford and access.
- **Launch a Childcare Solutions Fund** to invest in local childcare solutions
- **Streamline permitting and regulatory processes statewide** to build a model that keeps kids safe and simplifies processes for providers to deliver care.

### Rural Development

Too many in rural Colorado feel unheard and undervalued at the State Capitol. As governor, I will:

- **Guarantee rural voices** meaningful input in policy development.
- **Reject one-size-fits-all plans**—regulations must work for all, not just the Front Range.
- **Appoint a Director of Rural Affairs** giving rural Colorado a cabinet-level go-to resource.
- **Develop a rural economic plan** to attract and grow businesses to every part of our state.
- **Finish full broadband buildout** so every home and business has reliable Internet.
- **Develop and support innovations to address food deserts** due to grocery store closures.

### Public Safety

Every Coloradan deserves to feel safe in their homes, schools, communities, and places of worship. As governor, I will:

- **Support recruitment and investment in police and sheriffs**—we need to fund law enforcement, expand and modernize law enforcement training, and support mental health resources for officers and all first responders.
- **Sign, support, and defend responsible gun safety laws**—that will save lives and protect children.
- **Strengthen the Office of Gun Violence Prevention** to expand outreach and prevention and promote gun safety.
- **Invest in co-responders**—so addiction and mental health crises are met with compassion and treatment, and law enforcement officers are freed up for incidents that threaten public safety.

- **Ensure that access to bail and justice** is based on public safety risks, not how much money you have.
- **Keep tackling the opioid and addiction crisis**—advancing prevention, treatment, and life-saving harm reduction like naloxone access as well as ensuring accountability for trafficking.
- **Establish a Governor's Office of Safe Communities**, driving data-driven policies and advancing crime science solutions.
- **Invest in youth interventions** to prevent crimes and the school-to-prison pipeline.

## Healthcare

Every Coloradan should have accessible quality health care for the lowest cost. As governor, I will follow our [Healthy Colorado Plan](#) to:

- **Establish “Primary Care for All”**, *a systemwide mandate to move us from our current “sick care” system to a true “health care” system*, focusing on value-based care tied to prevention and healthy outcomes, aligning physical, mental and behavioral health for “whole person” care, and launching “Hope”, our youth mental health mentoring initiative.
- **Focus on “Best care, best price”**, *expanding ways for Coloradans to afford and access care*, optimizing the purchasing power of public employee health plans to add new groups, building on the “Colorado Option” to provide more affordable insurance coverage options for individuals and families, and reducing drug costs.
- **Create a “Health Consumer Pact”**, *a commitment to protect and empower health care consumers and public health*, challenging consolidation causing increased prices, curbing surprise billing, protecting families from medical debt, stopping drug price collusion, preserving caps on lifesaving medications like insulin, and enhancing our public health infrastructure.
- **Rebuild our workforce, with stronger training programs and spearheading ColoradoCorps**, a service program for young adults.
- **Launch a Health Care Stabilization and Innovation Task Force**, aligning stakeholders to protect care now impacted by federal cuts, including a Safety Net Stabilization initiative to ensure all eligible for Medicaid are enrolled.
- **Activate “Technology for Good”**, leveraging technology and establishing guidelines to advance new ideas to improve quality and access, and protect consumer data and information.

## Youth Mental Health

Every kid should be supported to build a successful future. As governor, I will:

- **Address the harms of social media** by:
  - **Getting kids off their phones**, including getting them outside so they can learn about what our public spaces have to offer, from health benefits to career opportunities.

- **Signing legislation holding social media companies accountable** for the harms they cause kids.
- **Ensure every kid has at least one mentor** and the support they need by:
  - Creating a **statewide mentorship program, called HOPE.**
  - **Increasing access to in school mental health** professionals and services, including in school screenings.
  - **Expanding mental health support** through promotion of telehealth and programs like [I Matter](#).
- **Create opportunities in community service** and beyond to build skills and hope for their future by:
  - **Establishing [ColoradoCorps](#)**, a public service program with the chance to learn skills and expand their worlds - in firefighting, teaching and beyond, and
  - **Investing in their education**, including career and technical training.

See more [here](#).

### Energy and Climate

A safe, affordable, and reliable energy supply is essential for Colorado's future. As Washington undermines protections, Colorado must lead the way. As governor, I will:

- **Meet Colorado's emission reduction goals** to do our part in fighting climate change.
- **Support solar & wind projects statewide**, partnering with local governments.
- **Expand battery storage adoption** for safe energy storage.
- **Establish a Geothermal Development Authority** to leverage statewide activities.
- **Lower winter costs for families** with a dedicated rate class for residential heat pumps.
- **Promote a just transition**, retraining workers for clean energy jobs, including geothermal drilling and promoting new economic opportunities across impacted communities.
- **Protect EV purchase incentives** and expand charging infrastructure in new builds.

### Our Land, Air, and Water

Colorado's land, air, and water are what make our state so special. But threats from Washington and rising environmental challenges mean we must step up and protect them.

- **Expand CDPHE's resources** to monitor air and water quality and take appropriate enforcement actions, including ones that advance environmental justice goals.

- **Fill the void left by federal agencies** by restoring protections the EPA has abandoned.
- **Fight back against federal land sell-offs**—our public lands belong to all of us.
- **Appoint a Chief Resilience Officer** to enhance resilience to climate change across the state—from wildfires, storms and costs, to energy grid impacts.
- **Support wildfire prevention** with local & tribal partners from clearing beetle-kill trees to lowering insurance costs for homeowners who mitigate risk.
- **Equip wildland firefighters** with the protective gear and technology they need.
- **Champion Colorado’s outdoor economy**—support recreation, hiking, rafting, hunting, fishing, and make it easier to start outdoor businesses.

### Safeguarding Our Water

Water is Colorado’s most precious natural resource, relied on for agriculture, outdoor recreation, and our future growth. As governor, I will:

- **Build trust and collaboration across water users** to find solutions that work best for our state.
- **Keep standing up for Colorado’s water rights** as part of Interstate Compacts.
- **Fund the Colorado Water Plan.**
- **Stop buy-and-dry schemes** that take water from rural communities for speculators’ profits.
- **Innovate to encourage conservation**, through reuse programs, voluntary crop shifts, lessening of irrigation needs, and smart storage programs.

### Livable Communities & Transportation

Coloradans deserve communities where it’s easy to get around, safe to raise kids, and healthy to live. As governor, I will:

- **Fix our roads** so Coloradans spend less on car repairs.
- **Cut congestion** to save time and reduce harmful emissions.
- **Expand public transit, biking, & walkability** so people have reliable options across the state.
- **Invest in safe streets** so kids can walk or bike to school safely.
- **Address airport health and quality-of-life impacts** on nearby neighborhoods and schools.
- **Commit to environmental justice** for families living near heavy traffic corridors.
- **Partner with local governments** to support community development goals.

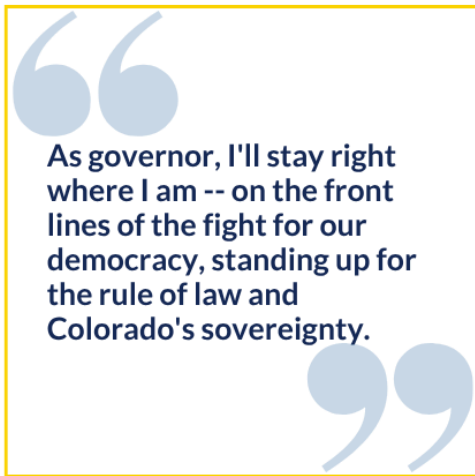
### Reimagining State Government

Government should be a partner, not a burden. As governor, I’ll make Colorado’s government more responsive, collaborative, and innovative. I will:

- **Ensure citizens get timely responses** when they reach out to government agencies.
- **Use technology to improve response times**, find efficiencies, and cut costs.
- **Lead a statewide conversation on updating constitutional restrictions** that hold us back from investing in our state and people.
- **Partner with the Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute Tribes**, respecting their sovereignty and working hand-in-hand with them as partners.
- **Work hand-in-hand with towns, cities, counties, and special districts** as partners with collaboration at front of mind in our work together.
- **Support smaller local governments with fewer resources** in accessing federal funding.

## OUR RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS: Defending Colorado and Our Rights

**As governor, I will champion a bold vision for Colorado’s future.** But as we look to the future, we cannot take our eye off the ongoing and pervasive threats of the present from the current federal administration—threats to our laws, our rights, and our sovereignty. As governor, I’ll stay right where I am—on the front lines of this fight for our democracy. That means continuing to do the hard work in pushing back on the Trump Administration’s constant barrage of illegal conduct and attacks on Coloradans’ rights.



As governor, I'll stay right where I am -- on the front lines of the fight for our democracy, standing up for the rule of law and Colorado's sovereignty.

When it comes to this fight, as I’ve said:

**“If you’re dealing with a lawless bully whose actions are harmful, there’s only one response. You stand your ground and fight,**

**and that’s what I’m doing.”**

Coloradans know what they’ll get from me—I will show up, listen, and deliver. I collaborate when there is a partner to work with, and I fight when Colorado’s interests are damaged or harmed. That’s what I’ve done as attorney general, and I’ll keep up that fight as governor.

### **Fighting Back Against Illegal Conduct by the Federal Government**

**In a series of one unlawful act after another, the White House and Cabinet members continue to act as though they are above the law.** Under the Trump Administration, Colorado has been targeted by the federal government aggressively and persistently. These illegal actions are done to punish their perceived opponents, and coerce state governments to bend to their will and policy positions. These unlawful tactics include:

- [Wielding federal grant dollars](#) as leverage to illegally coerce Colorado and other states to support Trump’s policies on issues such as gender affirming care, immigration, and diversity;

- Unlawfully and indiscriminately [firing federal U.S. National Parks Service, U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Bureau of Land Management workers](#) on whom Colorado relies for wildfire prevention and public lands management;
- Weaponizing [federal lawsuits and the U.S. Department of Justice against Colorado](#) and other states for enacting laws with which the Administration disagrees, and [threatening criminal prosecutions](#) of public officials if states do not repeal them;
- Illegally [canceling University of Colorado research grants](#) with no statutory or legal authority to do so; and
- Punishing Colorado for allowing voters the option to vote by mail, and using [relocating Colorado military installations](#) and jobs as a penalty.
- Threatening to [suspend and withhold critical SNAP benefits](#) from vulnerable Coloradans.
- Overreaching and seeking to [illegally undermine state sovereignty](#) in how it handles public safety and civil rights to the

detriment of all Colorado residents.

**As governor, I will continue to stand up for the rule of law and Colorado's sovereignty.** The people of Colorado can expect what they've always gotten from me—real action with results.

### **Holding the Federal Government Accountable**

During the first Trump Administration, I brought more than 30 lawsuits against the federal government to push back on illegal federal actions. In Trump's second term, I've brought [64 lawsuits to date](#). As attorney general, I am guided by the principle that I will always go to court to defend Colorado's rights when laws are being broken and Coloradans are harmed. As governor, I will continue Colorado's efforts to leverage the resources and expertise of the [Colorado Office of Federal Funds and Strategic Initiatives](#) to defend federal taxpayer dollars that belong to our state. In partnership with the Attorney General's Office, I will keep pushing back on federal overreach—that includes speaking out when the White House and Cabinet act above the law, holding the federal government accountable, and fighting daily to ensure the Trump Administration does not trample Coloradans' rights. **I will also ensure that Colorado's sovereignty is respected so that our state can continue to enact laws and policies**

that our citizens think are right for Colorado—rather than bowing to the Trump Administration’s desired policies and goals.

**Standing Up for Coloradans’ Rights**

As attorney general, I strongly supported passage of the [Reproductive Health Equity Act and Amendment 79](#)—and I [defended our reproductive rights laws in court](#) when opponents tried to overturn them. And [when anti-choice, out-of-state advocates tried to get a Colorado city to ban abortion facilities](#), I stood up for Colorado’s reproductive rights laws and the people who would be harmed. With the dangerous [Dobbs](#) decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, Colorado’s state-level protections for reproductive care are more important than ever. As governor, I will continue to defend our laws to ensure that reproductive care remains safe and available for all Coloradans.

“As governor, I will continue to defend our laws to ensure that reproductive care remains safe and available for all Coloradans.”

I also took action to defend LGBTQ Coloradans when their rights were under attack, including arguing at the U.S. Supreme Court to defend Colorado laws that protect them. As governor, I’ll keep standing up against the Trump Administration when it seeks to harm those who receive gender affirming care or stigmatize members of the LGBTQ community. I’ll never back away from protecting Coloradans when they are targeted for who they are.

**Defending Space Command Headquarters from Political Games**

When [Trump decided to move Space Command headquarters out of Colorado Springs](#), he said that a “big factor” in his decision was Colorado’s mail-in voting laws. Those who serve in our military and federal employees should never be pawns in a petty game of political reprisals. Moving Space Command headquarters out of our state is wrong for national defense, and heartless to [over one thousand Coloradans employed at Space Command HQ](#). These Coloradans are our neighbors—they’ve purchased homes, they’ve chosen schools for their kids, and they’ve made El Paso County their home. To throw their lives into uncertainty for political retribution by the President against Colorado—that’s beyond unfair to these Coloradans.

And it is especially appalling that President Trump cited Colorado’s

mail-in voting—a critical means of ensuring that the voice of *all* people can be heard—as his reason to move Space Command HQ because the U.S. Constitution authorizes Colorado, not the President, to make that decision. Decades of safe, secure, and accurate votes have been handled through mail-in voting in Colorado. **I'll defend our state's mail-in voting process just as I always have—as a safe, legal way for all people to access and cast their ballots.**

**Standing Up for the Colorado National Guard and Against Attempts to Politicize it by the Federal Government**

The federal government's calling up National Guard units and deploying them in our cities—over the objection of Governors—for purposes of domestic law enforcement is illegal and alarming. As the courts have begun to rule, these actions are unjustified and violate our Constitution. Yet the Trump White House continues to make threats to abuse military personnel for illegal purposes. As governor, like as attorney general, I will defend Colorado against any unlawful attempt by President Trump to deploy military troops against Colorado cities and our people. These federal actions are not only illegal, they are dangerous—military personnel are not trained to engage in law enforcement. Moreover, President Trump's actions harm those who wear

the uniform by taking them away from their families and lives for his political stunts.

**We Cannot Let Those Who Cheat Win and Control Congress**

A tactic that the President has demanded of his loyalists in states like Texas, Ohio, and Indiana is extreme mid-cycle partisan gerrymandering—a tactic in which politicians draw district lines to benefit themselves and their political party.

This is a cynical and dangerous power grab to rig the next election and control of Congress. Stacking the deck of congressional control is not how our democracy and elections are supposed to work.

I strongly oppose gerrymandering. In fact, I have gone to court to stop it from occurring in our state. Coloradans have a long history of stopping politicians from picking their own voters. And in these dangerous times, it's not enough for Colorado to stand against gerrymandering in our own state.

To protect our democracy, we must respond to underhanded tactics now taking place in states like Texas. We cannot stand idly by while our democracy is on the line. We must fight back to stop other states from using this dangerous tactic by removing any incentive for that cheating in the first

place by being ready and able to respond in kind.

**If this cheating by other states continues to advance, as appears likely, Colorado must be ready and willing to respond in kind. That's why I'll support a constitutional amendment allowing Colorado to do just that.**

For Colorado to counter President Trump's demands for state mid-decade gerrymandering to rig the elections in his favor, we must ask the voters to amend our state Constitution to add a narrow exception to Amendments Y and Z when these dirty tactics are employed. If an amendment is approved in fall 2026, the soonest new maps could be in place is for the 2028 election. Ideally, this step will not be necessary, but we must be ready to do our part to ensure that cheating does not pay off.

Once on the ballot, any such amendment must be approved by at least 55% of Colorado voters. This is a high threshold, and there are no

guarantees at the ballot box. Colorado voters could still say no. In the end, the choice belongs to them.

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Whether protecting Space Command HQ employees, defending our ballot and voting systems, or fighting other illegal acts, as governor, I will always push back and fight against those that try to bully Colorado and run roughshod over our laws. **And I will always defend Colorado and our citizens.**

## AFFORDABLE HOMES AND COMMUNITIES: Meeting Colorado's Housing Challenge

Good housing that people can afford should be available for all Coloradans. Owning a home is more than just having a place of your own; affordable first-time homeownership opportunities serve as a critical foundation for long-term financial stability. And for those not ready to own, affordable, safe, quality rentals should be available across the state. Yet Colorado [ranks 43rd in overall affordability and 48th in the nation in homeownership affordability](#). And our state is short of roughly [80,000 owner-occupied homes](#) priced between \$150,000 and \$500,000. That is unacceptable.

**No Coloradan should be forced to choose between paying for their home, groceries, or essentials like childcare, healthcare, or medications.** And Coloradans should not have to commute hours to live in a community with homes in their price range. While the state has increased its efforts on housing affordability in recent years, there is much more to be done.

**As governor, I will work to make housing in Colorado more affordable, safer, and better for all—for home buyers and for renters—in every part of the state. To achieve this, my goal is to increase the attainable owner-occupied housing supply by 40,000 units, closing the current gap by**

**50%, and materially decrease costs for 100,000 renters, currently spending half their income on housing, by 2035.**

To do this, my plan prioritizes new construction, preservation, enhanced trade education, lower building fees, renter protections, and downpayment support pathways to first time homeownership. To get there, here's what I will do:

1. **Speed Up Permitting Times and Cutting Costs**

Permitting delays and red-tape can delay homes from being delivered and drive up costs passed on to home buyers. As of February 2025, [only five local jurisdictions had adopted, or were in the process of adopting, fast track approval processes](#) necessary to opt into Proposition 123 funding (an affordable housing initiative approved by the voters). Through shared resources and coordination, we can do better. **I will partner with local governments to accelerate the approval time for housing development and permit approvals to best-in-country levels** to speed more housing units to completion and make them available immediately. And, importantly, I

**will work collaboratively with local governments, and push for legislation to offer incentives and partnerships to towns, cities, and counties to modernize land use, zoning, building requirements, and processes to support affordable housing development efforts.**

In what is a perverse incentive, permit fees and approval times for multi-million dollar homes are often the same as for homes we need most (such as workforce housing for law enforcement, teachers, and nurses). We must prioritize the type of housing stock we need now. **I will work with the legislature and sign into law new policies to incentivize local governments to lower building costs, lower fees, and guarantee quicker turnarounds for the housing we need most**—especially affordable rental housing units and reasonably-priced starter homes. Specifically, I will work with local governments to lower permitting fees for rent restricted affordable rentals (including Low Income Housing Tax Credit (“LIHTC”) projects and other state subsidized projects), and homes available for sale at more affordable prices below \$600,000, providing incentives for towns

and cities that take this critical step.

2. **Replace State-Level Red Tape and Redundancies with a Focused and Innovative Approach**

Too many uncoordinated state agencies, programs, rules, and regulations exist in the housing space. Overlapping and duplicative government efforts create redundancies and do not help tackle this problem. Rather, they cause confusion and unnecessary red tape that can slow delivery of new housing units. This is confusing and challenging to navigate for home buyers and home builders. As governor, **I will sign executive orders and push legislation to reform all state housing affordability efforts into a single, streamlined structure that is understandable and navigable by home buyers and home builders** so they can take advantage of the state’s housing incentives and so government processes on housing are streamlined and sped up.

An important part of this work will be to drive thoughtful planning into where and how we create new development—the more transit connected our homes are,

the more effective public transit is for the people of Colorado. As governor, I will push for simpler and swifter planning, zoning, and design decisions that prioritize housing connected to [public transit to support our multimodal transit system and plans](#). To ensure these efforts succeed, I **will stand up the role of Colorado’s first Chief Housing Officer, a cabinet-level official charged with simplifying and speeding all state processes, funding, and steps involved in the housing space.**

3. **Improve and Enhance the State’s Approach to Housing Funding**

To improve the state’s overall efforts in supporting more housing now, I **will establish a new Colorado Housing Innovation and Coordination Team, led by a Chief Housing Officer** and charged with coordinating a single access point for federal and state funding programs tied to housing. The Team will undertake a data-driven assessment of statewide needs and program efficacy and establish statewide goals with transparent quarterly reporting. This work will be coupled with my statewide initiative to review all

regulations [to assess efficiency and performance](#).

4. **Support First-time Home Buyers with Down Payment Assistance**

Construction alone isn’t enough to tackle this challenge. **While we need far more housing units built—that does little [if lower and middle income Coloradans cannot afford a down payment](#)** to buy their first home. As governor, I **will expand existing down payment assistance and other innovative financing and push legislation to create new tools for first time home buyers—especially those in essential professions like teaching, nursing, and law enforcement.** This will include expansion of existing programs, including those offered by the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority as well as exploring private sector and nonprofit avenues for new down payment assistance and financing programs. In addition, using the tools from [S.B. 25-167](#) for downpayment support for K-12 public school employees, I will partner with legislative leaders to pass similar legislation to develop a down payment assistance pool for other critical groups across the state—including those who

provide essential community services such as first responders, nurses, and childcare workers. My goal is to ensure that a down payment is no longer an impediment to any low- to middle-income family who wants to buy a home and can otherwise afford the monthly mortgage payment.

5. **Protect Affordable Rental Option and Renters**

Renters must be able to access good, safe, and affordable rental units. For many, rental housing can be an accessible pathway to economic mobility, offering both flexibility and stability to pursue job opportunities or education without the burden of unsustainable housing costs. And more affordable rental units in communities and neighborhoods enhance inclusivity and ensure that residents at varying income levels can access education, transportation, and employment opportunities. This leads to stronger, more integrated communities for everyone. Fortunately, efforts in recent years are [beginning to show progress in achieving more affordable rents](#) in metro Denver. More still must be done - and we cannot allow short term gains to

distract us from our long term commitment.

As governor, **I will ensure the rental market is fair and accessible—and that renters aren't taken advantage of.** That is why, as attorney general, I went after corporate landlords [that illegally colluded](#) to stop them from using unfair and illegal algorithms that harm renters and ones that used [false advertising and lack of appropriate disclosures](#) to lock tenants into mandatory junk fees. As governor, I will continue to fight to make sure that renters across Colorado are treated fairly and afforded equal opportunity to rent across the state. And, **I will push for legislation and funding to provide greater resources, support, and legal tools for people at risk of losing their homes due to eviction**—including access to attorneys so they know their rights, and support for alternative housing options to ensure they do not go unhoused.

One concerning trend is out-of-state investors buying up Colorado single-family homes and operating as irresponsible landlords. Responding to this concern, [other states have begun to evaluate reasonable](#)

oversight of such actors, ensuring that they are not treating tenants unfairly. As governor, I'll work to ensure that out-of-state corporate landlords that acquire Colorado properties do not mistreat consumers.

6. **Lower Housing Costs Through Innovation**

As governor, I will push the state government to accelerate housing innovation across the state. This will include new accountability metrics for all state housing initiatives, and data to share transparent, objective feedback on what works and what doesn't. We will employ this analysis on government initiatives as well as public-private partnerships across the state. With this data, coupled with visibility into best practices and creative ideas from other states, the state will roll out pilot programs to test innovations that promise to make home construction cheaper.

This will take many forms—as we will continue to test and learn. This could include giving local governments the support they need to deploy innovative technologies to speed plan review and permitting processes.

We will look to create and offer model pre-approval options for affordable housing designs or approaches, including more affordable modular and prefab construction that local governments can leverage. We will support innovative new housing construction technology efforts, including modular/prefab construction with state funding. As governor, **I will push for and sign new laws to provide economic incentives to spur more affordable ways to build, plan, and permit homes through innovation.** Through this work, I will make it a goal for Colorado to be first in the nation for innovation in new housing development.

7. **Encouraging More Skilled Labor in the Building Trades**

To lower costs and speed construction, we need more skilled workers able, trained, and willing to enter the building trades. I will direct my Cabinet to ensure the state's [workforce development training programs and initiatives](#) include incentives to train, attract, and retain skilled trade workers for home construction and the building trades. I will promote apprenticeship and “pre-apprenticeship” programs

like those run by [Buildstrong Academy](#) and [Colorado Mountain College](#), including ones that focus on innovative skills training beneficial for modular and off-site construction. Developing more modular home construction in Colorado by both [private developers](#) and non-profits like [Habitat for Humanity](#) remains in progress, but Colorado is not where we need to be.

**Encouraging more people to enter the trades will help address the housing affordability crisis, and enable good paying and stable jobs. As governor, I will push for greater financial assistance and incentive programs for building trades facing critical shortages across the state.**

#### 8. **Support for Rural Housing**

What works along the Front Range and in rural Colorado are often different. The building trades gap is particularly wide in rural Colorado even when land on which to build is abundant.

**From listening to rural leaders, I learned that one of rural Colorado’s challenges in addition to a shortage of housing is too few skilled building contractors in their**

**regions—meaning that qualified builders must travel long distances which in turn drives up costs. To make a dent in this problem, as attorney general, I launched the [Colorado Partnership for Education and Rural Revitalization](#) (“COPERR”), a partnership with Colorado community colleges in Lamar, Otero, Trinidad, and Pueblo. COPERR builds skills and housing simultaneously, creating opportunities for students to gain an education in the building trades while also providing new housing units for residents. As governor, I will expand this successful effort to all rural areas of the state—so we have better housing, lower costs and more affordability, and more skilled building trade professionals in rural communities.**

As governor, I will also work with rural communities to develop solutions tailored to their needs. This means developing ways for the state to support smaller affordable housing projects in smaller communities—whether through tailored funding pools, specified funding mechanisms or other approaches. By listening and collaborating with rural leaders, we will partner to innovate on solutions to address

unique needs in rural Colorado, including addressing “inverted housing markets” where it is cheaper to rehabilitate existing housing rather than build new homes. And I will ensure that state programs, like Proposition 123, work for all Colorado communities.

other time-based affordable housing programs, and naturally occurring affordable rental housing that comes to market. Improving the quality, transparency, and accessibility of this information will enable state and local leaders to proactively protect these homes.

9. **Safeguarding Affordable Housing Units We Already Have**

We cannot lose the affordable housing we already have. As governor, **I will defend and safeguard the affordable housing options already in place.** To do this, we will work with CHFA to significantly enhance the state’s records of affordable housing throughout the state, including those eligible for rolling off deed restrictions or

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Solving the housing affordability crisis in Colorado will not be simple, and it will not be done overnight. Addressing this core challenge for our state will require a creative effort by leaders who collaborate and think broadly. As governor, I will be laser-focused on developing collaborative housing solutions so people have a safe place to live that they can afford.

## JOBS AND ECONOMY: Reinvigorating Colorado's Economy

Colorado faces significant challenges—improving affordability, becoming a better place to build a business, and fostering a culture of collaboration and innovation across our public, private, and non-profit sectors.

Over the last 30 years, Colorado enjoyed a level of dynamism and growth that made us the envy of the United States. After the COVID pandemic, and now in particular, that level of growth is stalling. From 2013-2020, Colorado grew by roughly [42,000 people a year](#); from 2020-23, Colorado grew by only [6,000 people per year](#).

We have faced challenges before—including in the 1980s [when Governor Roy Romer and Mayor Federico Peña met the moment](#) and helped to lead us through those challenges. They brought vision, and the best and brightest talent, to lead in government and partner with business, workers, and community leaders. The assets we have today—from Denver International Airport to Major League Baseball—coupled with our natural beauty and lifestyle were game changers. I am honored that Governor Romer and Mayor Peña have [endorsed](#) me to be our next governor as the right person to lead our state in this moment.

In Colorado, we root for each other to succeed. Businesses in Colorado—both emerging companies and established ones—ask first, “how can I support you?” That mindset of “give first” is a powerful asset that we can build on as we enable great companies in emerging technologies like personalized medicine in biotech, quantum, water management, clean tech, renewable energy, AI, blockchain, and aerospace to grow in Colorado. As governor, I will be a partner, rolling up my sleeves and asking, “how can I support you?”

“We are ready and prepared to reinvigorate Colorado—as a vibrant economic hub with an environment statewide that makes it simple for businesses to start and grow, our business sectors to compete and thrive, workers to earn a good living, and talent to flourish.”

We are ready and prepared to reinvigorate Colorado—as a vibrant economic hub with an environment statewide that makes it simple for businesses to start and grow, our business sectors to compete and thrive, workers to earn a good living, and talent to flourish. That includes providing

critical support to small businesses for access to capital, mentorship, and technical assistance, particularly for those groups lacking in such resources because of their background. In Colorado, we must support and mentor first time entrepreneurs from historically underrepresented communities, including geographic, racial, ethnic and people with disabilities, to build a more inclusive economy.

### **Charging Our Colorado Economy**

As attorney general, I have led with a spirit of collaboration and innovation to solve problems. On addressing the opioid crisis, we listened, collaborated with others, and got results. We went to court and recovered almost \$900 million for our state, which we managed in a [nationally recognized](#), transparent, effective way, focused on solving the problem at hand with local leaders in charge, and metrics to show our [impact](#). Today, those funds are going to help communities recover, and synthetic opioid deaths have decreased by [28.5 percent from October 2023 to October 2024](#).

I will bring an entrepreneurial mindset to leading Colorado. I honed this approach as a [leader of Colorado's startup community](#). I founded [Silicon Flatirons](#), an entrepreneurial hub at CU Law School, [Startup Colorado](#), which began in Boulder and is now statewide, and the Blackstone Entrepreneurs Network (now

[BENColorado](#)). I also served as innovation and technology advisor to President Obama, spearheading the development of [Startup America](#), a push for broadband deployment, and growth in the technology and innovation sectors.

I've listened, and heard, that Colorado businesses are concerned that they face headwinds when working with the state government. This includes unresponsive state agencies and outdated regulatory barriers not updated or evaluated in decades. Dealing with the state government takes longer than it should, costing valuable time and resources. And there is not enough "can do" problem solving, like we accomplished with our [housing initiative for rural Colorado](#) out of the Attorney General's Office. The state must listen, learn, and work with Coloradans to meet the challenges we face, from meeting our workforce development skills gap to making housing more affordable to addressing drought and wildfires.

As attorney general, my work establishing a regulatory structure for Colorado's new Privacy Act demonstrates how I will lead on regulatory issues that impact the private sector—with a commitment to effective, smart oversight, and meaningful input from those [affected](#). Through this approach, we pursued regulations that were technically sound and developed through open dialogue with

stakeholders, shaped by public comment, and documented with clear, accessible explanations.

### **Recharging Our Economic Engine with Conditions to Succeed**

As governor, I will partner with business, labor, and community leaders to chart the course ahead for a thriving economy. To get there, here's my **5-point plan**:

1. **Collaborate, championing an environment that supports business and our workforce.** I will invite businesses and labor as partners to join teams to solve specific challenges and offer insights and strategies to foster a productive business environment to keep our state economy and workforce competitive;
2. **Maximize our leverage, winning where we have strength.** I will work with leaders to promote enhanced growth and innovation in key assets like technology and digital infrastructure, quantum computing, AI, outdoor recreation and tourism, agriculture and natural foods, health care and biomedical innovation, blockchain technologies, aerospace and defense, and energy;
3. **Cultivate the next Colorado innovation renaissance.** I will support the next startup and small business renaissance for those attracted by our collaborative culture, talent, innovative spirit, unique natural environment, and quality of life. I will work to expand access to resources and capital through small business grants and microloans, and streamline the process for those just getting started or working hard to grow, recognizing that companies founded by underrepresented groups often face a mentoring gap that can impede their ability to succeed. To help this effort, our new Chief Innovation Officer will make this initiative one of the top priorities, ensuring we bring cutting edge thinking into state government;
4. **Focus on ensuring our urban centers win.** A great state is only possible with great towns and cities. I will lead the state to provide new, creative incentives for economic development to grow urban economic hubs both in established job centers and in communities willing and able to support new growth. As governor, I will galvanize our leaders and coalitions to showcase various

assets, such as talent pipelines, available offices, manufacturing and research space, community connectedness, and the ability to move quickly. The leaders who attracted and created the [Elevate Quantum Tech Hub](#) and the [Grand Junction Business Incubator](#) are great examples of how private-public partnerships can build a winning coalition; and

5. **Simplify and remove unnecessary barriers [with the goal of making doing business easier](#).** I will direct the Cabinet and each state agency to undertake a comprehensive review of all regulations, based on costs and benefits, removing unnecessary or outdated burdens that serve no safety value.

And to help small business entrepreneurs, we will create a “Starting A Business Ecosystem Navigator”, an interactive, visual map of Colorado’s business ecosystem. The Navigator will highlight steps to start a business, and identify physical spaces, investors and banks, accelerators, and events to support new entrepreneurs as they start their ventures.

As attorney general, I enforce the state’s consumer protection and antitrust laws. My principle is that our economy is stronger—for business, workers, and consumers—when our markets are fair. For those companies that violate our laws, take advantage of consumers, and don’t treat their workers with respect and according to our laws—they must be held accountable. Equally important, our markets are stronger and fairer for companies which conduct business the right way and follow our laws when we hold companies engaged in wrongdoing accountable.

As governor, I will make sure that the Department of Regulatory Agencies’ consumer protection mission ensures that businesses that play by the rules aren’t at a disadvantage to those that don’t. Similarly, the Department of Labor and Employment will hold accountable businesses that treat their employees unlawfully—such as engaging in wage theft, misclassifying employees, threatening illegal retaliation against immigrant workers, or violating our worker protection laws. As governor, I will not tolerate those that harm workers by violating state’s labor laws, and I will stand with those companies that play by the rules and treat their employees fairly.

### **Supporting Workers and Fair Competition, and Protecting Consumers**



As governor, I will ensure that labor always has a seat at the table alongside business in rooms where public policy and decisions are made—because our economic prosperity relies on a strong and sound partnership between employers and employees collaborating together. And labor unions must be respected and protected in their right to organize and bargain for fair treatment and wages for their workforce.

### **Strategic Enablers for Our Economic Growth**

Business and economic growth don't happen in isolation. As governor, I will support key enablers that are necessary for our state to grow and create jobs.

**Infrastructure:** We must improve infrastructure for transportation and public transit options, energy, and technology. To attract and keep business in Colorado, we need

best-in-class digital and data systems within our energy grid and broadband infrastructure.

To reduce congestion for commuters to get to their workplaces, [our major corridors, roads, and bridges must be maintained and upgraded](#). And, we need more expansive and reliable public transit options.

**Workforce:** A strong, Colorado-based [workforce will fuel our economic growth](#).

I will work collaboratively with the labor and business communities to facilitate talent development and skill building, for incumbent workers, adults upskilling and reskilling, and our youth who are our next generation.

[Programs like ColoradoCorps](#) and my [Earn-and-Learn promise](#) will invigorate our homegrown talent pipeline. A statewide effort to publish clear data showing how education programs lead to employment outcomes will help Coloradans discern which investments lead to careers. And, we will ensure we enable our workforce by supporting [childcare access and affordability across Colorado](#).

**Public Safety:** I will champion bringing new resources, strategies, and training to: law enforcement to reenergize our officer talent and techniques; our

communities to prevent crime; and victims to preserve justice.

[Protecting our Natural Resources:](#)

Colorado's economy, especially our outdoor recreation businesses, depends

on protecting our land, air, and water. We will work with local leaders to spearhead critical efforts to support sustainability and sound conservation practices.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: Good Jobs for Coloradans

**A good job and a living wage is the foundation for a good life in Colorado.** My vision is to build a Colorado where every resident can choose from a range of affordable, respected pathways to good-paying jobs. Our kids should be able to envision a bright future here in the state where they are raised—a future we can make possible by ensuring Colorado is known for economic opportunity and good jobs.

**Today, the promise of a secure and fulfilling livelihood isn't available for all Coloradans.** [In Colorado, nearly 4 in 10 households struggle to afford basic needs.](#) Education and training are gateways to opportunity, and too few Coloradans are acquiring the necessary skills—in high school or beyond—to qualify for many open jobs that pay a livable wage. Against this backdrop, it's no surprise that many Coloradans feel left behind—and that the American Dream feels increasingly out of reach.

**Colorado employers are also struggling to find skilled workers to fuel growth.** Workforce shortages in critical sectors are holding back business expansion across the state. At the same time, the flow of new residents from other states has slowed dramatically. And many growing up here are unsure if they can stay here. Without a strong pipeline of skilled, homegrown

talent, employers—from healthcare and education to tech to construction trades—will face challenges meeting demand and sustaining growth.

**As governor, I will work to build Colorado's workforce so people can get the training they need to get good-paying jobs.** We will ensure that education and training programs offer affordable pathways for learners to gain the skills they need to thrive in high-demand industries and secure good-paying jobs. Achieving this will require collaboration between business, workers, and government—with employers and labor at the table to align talent development with real-world demand. By harnessing data and technology, we can guide students and job seekers to programs that align with their goals and circumstances—and are backed by clear evidence of success.

**Colorado builds on a history of workforce innovation, and we will create a win-win for Coloradans and our economy.** Together, we can build an economy that offers good-paying and accessible jobs for workers and ensures our kids see a future worth staying for.

**Abundant pathways to careers in Colorado**

**For too long, we sent a message that college is the only path to a good future—that thinking left too many families behind and too many jobs unfilled.** Whether through an apprenticeship, certificate, two-year degree, or four-year degree, Coloradans deserve training that leads to good jobs with family-sustaining wages. We'll invest in and celebrate every route that delivers a real paycheck and a livelihood.

My work as a founding board member of [CareerWise](#) demonstrated to me the power of apprenticeships to provide new paths into good jobs. This work can apply across sectors, with notable examples in skilled trades, education, and healthcare:

- Unions and associations in the skilled trades have proven the power of apprenticeships for decades. As an example, the [National Electrical Contractors Association \(“NECA”\)](#) and the [Local Union #68 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers \(“IBEW”\)](#) jointly sponsor apprenticeship programs for the electrical industry, training thousands of workers in a high-demand sector with living-wage jobs.
- [CareerWise supported Colorado Mountain College’s fast-growing rural teacher apprenticeship program](#) where participants earn

credentials without leaving their community.

- The Cherry Creek School District, in partnership with the Community College of Aurora, created a similar [teacher apprentice pathway through their Aspiring Educator program](#).
- Several healthcare providers, from large national systems to our critical safety net institutions, launched healthcare apprenticeship programs providing low-cost entry points into clinical careers.

In addition to apprenticeship models, businesses, associations, and nonprofits are investing in successful career exposure and training programs for our youth and adults:

- The Associated General Contractors and Housing & Building Association’s [Careers in Construction Colorado \(“CICC”\)](#) program exposes students to construction careers in nearly 100 high schools across the state.
- [CrossPurpose](#) and [ActivateWork](#) provide proven pathway programs to support adults moving into new careers and achieving economic mobility.
- [Emergent Campus](#) is working in rural parts of Colorado by building innovation hubs with rural-connected startups and

opportunities for remote work in a collaborative environment.

I will build on successful programs like these to ensure we have the scale, accessibility, and leadership to expand opportunity across multiple career pathways. That means bringing employers and labor to the table, strengthening the capacity of what's working, and empowering Coloradans with clear information and outcomes data—so they can discover, trust, and participate in programs that lead to real results.

**A Colorado Earn-and-Learn Promise**

The Colorado Earn-and-Learn Promise: A vision that every Coloradan has access to a living-wage job through various earn-and-learn programs supported by the state, our education institutions, nonprofit partners, and our collaborative business and labor communities.

**To build on our momentum and fight for a sustainable future for all Coloradans, I will champion a “Colorado Earn-and-Learn Promise”.** Earn-and-learn programs allow individuals to gain paid work experience while building valuable skills or credentials—leading to high completion

and job placement rates. My vision is that every Coloradan has access to a living-wage job through various earn-and-learn programs supported by the state, our education institutions, nonprofit partners, and our collaborative business and labor communities.

***The Colorado Earn-and-Learn Promise*** will be powered by a diverse set of policies and programs I will champion as governor:

- **ColoradoCorps:** I will launch a service program for young Coloradans that provides service-based work pathways into high-demand fields, such as teaching, law enforcement, firefighting, nursing, and counseling. This program is a long-term investment in the resilience of Colorado’s workforce, our youth, and our civic fabric.
- **Expand the statewide “Colorado Pay-It-Forward Fund”:** I will expand [Colorado’s program to offer zero-interest loans and living stipends](#) for high-ROI training—including earn-and-learn programs. Graduates—and often their employers—will repay principal only after earnings pass a set threshold. This shifts risk off learners and requires programs to keep a high bar for outcomes.

- **Support for school districts to successfully implement [H.B. 24-1364](#):** a new law guiding the state to empower all high school students with access to work-based learning, employer-validated credentials, or college credit before they graduate. To fulfill the promise of this career and college-connected learning, we must provide capacity, partnership, and resources to the high schools that will ultimately lead the charge for implementation.
- **Expanded investment & employer capacity for earn-and-learn programs:** Earn-and-learn only works if employers are active partners. I'll work to create an investment fund to expand employer capacity and provide incentives for more businesses to offer these training opportunities. To bolster this investment, the state must act as a true partner—streamlining processes and removing administrative barriers that make it harder for businesses and workers to participate.

**Our Public Community Colleges and Universities as Launchpads to Careers**

Today, [over 95% of top jobs require some credential or training beyond high](#)

[school](#). We must ensure our public colleges and universities are accessible, affordable, and high-quality launchpads to those good jobs. **The Colorado Community College System (“CCCS”) recognized this and recently launched a new [strategic plan](#) for all 13 CCCS colleges naming economic mobility as its north star—prioritizing student job placement as top priority in all program pathways.**

Underscoring this mandate, businesses need trained, work-ready talent. The Colorado Paradox is ending: Colorado has long relied on imported talent to meet certain workforce needs, but in-migration has fallen sharply. According to the U.S. Census, from 2020-2025, net domestic migration averaged just 6,645 people a year, 16% of the 2010s pace. We must do better to ensure our education institutions are adequately preparing Colorado learners to be the workforce engine for Colorado companies.

**CCCS is a model example of an engine for training and economic prosperity at scale.** The system serves over 125,000 students annually and is central to preparing Coloradans for successful careers. CCCS also enrolls the highest concentration of lower income, first-generation, and working learners.

As the economy changes, our state's academic programs must adapt to support new professional paths, skill demand from employers, and regional needs. Multiple community college presidents are already exemplifying an agile approach to offerings. Some are reviewing student job placement and wage outcomes as determinants of program renewal and development. Many are forging new business partnerships to ensure graduates have responsive programs that lead to high-quality jobs.

**As governor, I will partner with Colorado's community colleges and universities on a statewide challenge to highlight leading programs aligned with workforce needs.** The state must call on every postsecondary institution to review and identify opportunities to align programs with high-quality job opportunities. As a state, we will work with partners to offer transition grants, technical assistance, and incentives to help colleges conduct labor market analyses, sunset low-wage or low-demand programs, and create new, employer-informed pathways. In short, we must make sure we are training workers for today's and tomorrow's job opportunities such as healthcare, construction trades, renewable energy, quantum computing, and technology.



To offer the highest value for students and families, we must also shine a light on program outcomes. **Tax dollars spent on education should translate into clear opportunities, and students deserve transparent information about which programs lead to good careers and family-sustaining wages.** As governor, I will accelerate work and investment in the data systems and infrastructure needed to publish these outcomes in a way that is accessible, easy to understand, and actionable—helping Coloradans make informed choices about the pathways that are right for them.

### **Addressing the Rapid Growth of AI in the Workforce**

Our economy and the very nature of many jobs is evolving quickly. As governor, I'll help navigate the state through this period of transformation—understanding that

while AI can pose risks—that we can and should address particularly for our children and workers—it presents compelling opportunities too.

**While others wait to see how AI shakes out, Colorado will lead responsibly.** I will sign an executive order creating a team to focus on the opportunities and risks of AI led by employers, workers, and AI experts. This team will work across the state government and with business and education partners to define “AI readiness” for our workforce. As AI tools and use cases progress, we will identify and scale solutions that put our workers and businesses ahead of the curve. The group will gather inputs from national examples, leading AI thought leaders, and Colorado’s tech employers.

And, as governor, I’ll ensure that we develop AI literacy and support school districts, education institutions, and training programs working to meet this challenge. Together, we’ll make sure every Colorado student graduates fluent in tomorrow’s technology—ready to ethically shape the future.

**Restarting the State’s Relationship with the Labor and Business Communities as Partners to Drive Prosperity**

In the coming years, we have much to address on the workforce front: we must solve our teacher and nursing shortages

to restore the foundation of our care economy; we must dramatically increase the supply of talent with security clearances to fuel our aerospace and defense sector; we need more workers to help us keep up with construction demand, especially to keep pace with housing demand; and, we must support workers displaced through federal workforce cuts and industry shifts.

**For Colorado to be successful in the 21st century, we must build a first class workforce development system. That system must be built with the business community, labor, and educational institutions as full partners.** All must be prepared to invest in talent and have a seat at the table to help us design and implement a successful talent system for Colorado.



**Business, labor and education must all have a seat at the table to help design and implement the best talent system for Colorado.**

In terms of understanding our future needs, I am committed to building collaborative forums that invite business

and labor leaders to the table to help solve our challenges.

It is critical that we be responsive to the talent needs of Colorado—both current ones and future ones—and build solutions that can be implemented in partnership with business, labor, and educational institutions.

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As governor, I will fight for the next generation of workers in this

state—ensuring every young person in Colorado has a clear pathway to a secure and fulfilling future. Colorado has the ingredients to make this vision real: a creative and collaborative business and worker community, postsecondary partners dedicated to economic mobility, and leaders across the state committed to expanding affordable pathways to good jobs. Together, we can create an economy that delivers opportunity for today's workers and businesses and an inspiring career launchpad for the next generation.

## COLORADOCORPS: Building Colorado’s Next Generation of Leaders

### **Creating Opportunity Through Service and Workforce Development**

A vibrant Colorado is strengthened by healthy people, sustainable livelihoods, and connected communities.

Colorado currently faces a dual challenge: young people are struggling to find purpose and pathways into good jobs, and communities are facing critical workforce shortages. I have traveled the state and hear repeatedly from families: “Will my kids be able to build a future here in Colorado?” We must fight hard to ensure the answer is yes.



As governor, I will launch ColoradoCorps to expand access to vital service careers while cultivating a new generation of civic leaders.

**As governor, I will launch ColoradoCorps, a statewide service and workforce initiative designed to expand access to vital service careers while cultivating a new generation of civic leaders.**

ColoradoCorps will welcome a broad cross-section of young Coloradans—recent high school graduates, community college students, and college alumni—helping them step directly into living-wage careers while strengthening our state. Through this program participants will:

- **Serve in critical fields** such as teaching, law enforcement, nursing, counseling and fire fighting.
- **Train for lasting careers**, combining paid service with structured training, soft-skill development, and community engagement.
- **Earn credentials**—from college credit to industry-recognized certifications—that open doors to meaningful jobs.

### **Proven Success, Colorado Innovation**

**ColoradoCorps will unify and amplify existing programs like AmeriCorps, Serve Colorado’s Youth Mental Health Corps, and local career and technical education campuses.**

What makes ColoradoCorps different is its scale and coordination: employer accountability, credentialing outcomes that count statewide, and blended

funding streams that strengthen Colorado's own institutions.

This initiative will be sustained through partnerships among community colleges, employers, professional associations, and nonprofits—anchoring the program in Colorado's own capacity, not temporary funding cycles.

ColoradoCorps will be a triple win:

- For young adults: Clear, affordable, and supported pathways into in-demand jobs, while also building connection and belonging,
- For communities: Service members filling urgent needs, especially in rural and underserved areas.

- For the state: A stronger workforce and a renewed culture of civic connection.

### **My Commitment**

As attorney general, I fought for—and won—over \$184 million in AmeriCorps funding that was illegally withheld from Colorado. As governor, I will lead ColoradoCorps with the same determination.

**Our kids and young adults deserve every opportunity for healthy and successful lives. ColoradoCorps will help them build that future, right here in Colorado.**

## EDUCATION: Building the Foundation for Our Kids Future

Education is core to ensuring that kids and adults have the skills and knowledge to be successful and pursue a meaningful life and career. It also strengthens our civic fabric—building understanding, connection, community, and our democratic society. As an educator and the parent of a high school student and college student, I know full well the positive impact that education can deliver for our kids and our state.

Colorado has a commitment to deliver high-quality public K-12 education and options for postsecondary pathways for every child and young adult in the state.

**I stand firmly behind our public education system—and I will champion the teachers and staff that dedicate their lives to educate and inspire the next generation. I will also oppose any efforts to privatize our system of public education, such as introducing voucher programs.**

Together, we must face the barriers making it hard to navigate and access the education that Coloradans deserve. That means that we must ensure we have sufficient funding to support our schools. We also must support the teaching profession and strengthen more direct paths into it. And we must ensure postsecondary paths are affordable and yield the outcomes that learners and parents are investing in. Learners and families shouldn't have to

take on unrecoverable debt to receive a college degree. Nor should we allow “dead ends” from training programs. We can and will do better for our kids and young adults.

As governor, I will be a champion for our kids and for education at all levels so that all people have a chance to earn a quality education and receive the training and skills they need to be successful. And I will work hard on ways to pay our public school teachers more to ensure that they can stay in their chosen profession.

### *Investing in Colorado's K-12 Schools*

Last school year, [881,065 students](#) attended classes in Colorado public schools, learning core skills like writing, reading, and mathematics. We owe it to these students to ensure they receive a quality education in a supportive and safe environment which also provides options for those needing remedial help and tutoring. Unfortunately, the data shows that we have much to improve on—last school year, for students in grades 3 through 8, [56 percent and 66 percent of students did not meet grade-level expectations in English and Math](#), respectively. This shows we still have much more to do to improve student outcomes after the COVID-19 pandemic set learning back for students.

To have a quality K-12 educational system, the state must be committed to paying for it. The 2024 [elimination of the Budget Stabilization Factor](#)—a budget-balancing effort in which the state underpaid its voter-approved commitment to fund our schools—was a major hurdle cleared. That the Budget Stabilization Factor took years to pay off shows the challenges that our constitutional restrictions impose on funding the most essential needs. In addition, two recent adequacy studies found that Colorado’s education system is still underfunded by billions compared to the resources needed for students and schools. As we continue to look to the future, **we must ensure that future budgets are not balanced by cuts to K-12 education, and remain committed that the Budget Stabilization Factor never returns.**

And while I support the state seeking innovative concepts and models to educate students, **I will never support privatizing our schools or allowing profit-motives to undermine our kids’ education.** And I will support no bill from the legislature that does so. That’s why I firmly opposed [Amendment 80](#) which would have opened the door to vouchers and diverting limited public school funds to private entities.

### **Supporting Teachers**

To have a world class K-12 education system, we must be able to recruit and retain teachers. And, teachers should

be able to live in the communities where they teach. Yet, Colorado does not pay K-12 teachers enough to make a livable wage. Too many Colorado teachers make below \$50,000 per year—in a high-cost state like Colorado, that’s unacceptable. And it isn’t enough to cover mortgage payments, rents, and groceries. In rural school districts, it has been reported that [some average teacher salaries are less than \\$40,000 per year](#). This in turn leads to retention challenges, teachers lost to neighboring states with higher wages, and [teachers forced to take on second and third jobs](#) to make ends meet.

**To keep qualified teachers in the classroom, Colorado must do better to raise compensation and support for educators.** This requires a full slate of options—greater loan forgiveness options to reduce teacher student loan payments, supporting more public-private partnerships to build affordable teacher housing, promoting the state’s down payment assistance program for teachers, collaborating to build new solutions for benefits, and getting more dollars to school districts dedicated to raising teacher’s wages.

As a starting point, we should make entering the teaching profession both supported and affordable. K-12 and higher education leaders have collaborated to design innovative programs that can be replicated across the state, particularly in the areas with the highest need. As an example, new

teacher apprenticeship programs—like one through [Colorado Mountain College](#) and one through [Cherry Creek School District and the Community College of Aurora](#)—enable students to earn a degree through a work-based learning model. In these programs, teachers are paid apprentices in the classroom while also taking classes, gaining meaningful on-the-job experience for credit, and earning an income. Learners are gaining years of experience—up to 5x the classroom time of traditional student teaching programs—and are graduating with living-wage teaching jobs.

**For all teachers dedicated to educating our young people, we owe them a good standard of living in the communities they serve. As governor, I will make meeting this challenge a top priority.**

***Elevating the Voice and Expertise of our Education Leaders***

Some of the greatest knowledge about how we can improve education is held by leaders closest to schools and kids—in K-12, this knowledge comes from our teachers, school staff, administrators, and superintendents. In postsecondary education, faculty members, college and university staff, independent training providers, and student support organizations have unique perspectives on how best to support learners.

Colorado must bring more voices and insight from education leaders and parents to our statewide conversations on public policies that impact our K-12 schools, colleges, and universities. And, through more open dialogue and convening, we can share promising practices and models to adopt across different contexts. Such discussions could include, for example, what are the set of competencies and skills that students most need to develop, how to teach those competencies/skills most effectively, and how to teach technology literacy (including artificial intelligence skills) that will be necessary for our kids to succeed.

**As governor, I will create an “Education Think Tank” and invite education leaders to provide their input on public policies, elevate shared challenges, and share bright spots and solutions in service of students.** In combination with existing channels for feedback, we can amplify an active community conversation that leads to collaborative solutions.

I will also support programs to help teachers like existing ones offering down payment assistance and developing new supportive options for schools like offering roles to retired professionals for harder-to-fill jobs.

***Supporting Civics Education in the Classroom.***

Colorado values the role of civics education in the classroom which is a graduation requirement. With rising unawareness of how our government works and the importance of our civic values, this curriculum is more important than ever. As our country grapples with significant division and uncivil discourse, we must work together to [ensure Colorado kids fully understand our system of government, our rights, the engagement it takes to maintain it, and the importance of disagreeing respectfully](#). I come back to a quote from Benjamin Franklin when he was asked by citizens when exiting the Constitutional Convention what sort of government was created. He responded, “A republic, if you can keep it.” Let’s aspire to a Colorado where our residents are proactively engaged and working to “keep” our republic.

### **School Safety**

**Schools should be places where kids and young adults always feel safe.**

Safe places are essential not only to protect the well-being of young people, but to foster an environment where learning can flourish. That’s why it’s unacceptable that [9 percent of high school students report having not gone to school out of fear for their safety](#)—fear of harm either on school grounds or when getting to and from school. Whether school violence, bullying, gang activity, or illegal drug use—preventing these from occurring is essential to not only protecting student,

teacher, and staff safety, but also protecting the learning environment to allow kids to thrive and to gain the most from their education. In doing so, we will look to support and scale up programs like the [Cherry Creek Youth Leaders and School Support program](#) that engages students at risk for youth violence and shows them another path.

Greater focus and support for the recently created [Colorado Office of School Safety](#), and existing successful programs that prevent school violence like the [Safe2Tell](#) call line for anonymous tips, should be leveraged to ensure that all schools have the resources, information, and tools necessary to keep schools safe for learning.

### **Empowering Kids with Multiple Paths to Meaningful Careers**

My [jobs and workforce plan](#) is built on the principle that there are many paths to meaningful careers and living wage opportunities in Colorado—high school, career and technical education programs, short-course credentialing programs, community college and university degrees, and work-based learning programs.

**Our education system must celebrate and promote *all* paths to success and have a statewide strategy that supports these various postsecondary options with a coordinated approach.** An important

output will be to provide awareness and navigation so students and families can choose the best option for them. And as a system, we can design these postsecondary education options to be flexible, allowing for students to build upon their skills and “stack” experiences toward meaningful outcomes—whether that leads to credit for work, industry credentials, or a degree. As artificial intelligence impacts the nature of work, and the jobs of the future, having a more agile system of workforce skills development will be even more important.

To advance these efforts, we will [work collaboratively with the business community](#) in Colorado to ensure these paths lead to great jobs and careers here. **As governor, I will invite employers to partner in talent development, empowering them to signal their needs, co-design programs, and work more efficiently with our public system.**

### **Making and Keeping College and Postsecondary Credentials Affordable**

Colorado is known as one of the most educated states in the country, consistently [ranking as a top state](#) for the high number of Coloradans that have completed postsecondary education. This is both a credit to our state and a challenge to ensure that those that pursue college degrees and certificates are not saddled with lifelong

debt and crushing payments. State programs to support those with lower incomes to access higher education should be supported and bolstered—like the [Colorado Promise](#) program. This program provides a tax credit for out-of-pocket higher education expenses to students with lower family incomes. But with recent state budget challenges, this program must be protected to ensure it remains a path to success for those who can least afford higher education programs.

The state must continue to innovate to bring higher education opportunities within reach for all. **One innovation is college loan forgiveness for students that receive a Colorado degree or certificate who commit to certain public service and critical jobs—like nursing, law enforcement, fire-fighting, paramedics and emergency response, and medicine—in Colorado communities with higher workforce demands, particularly in rural parts of the state.** This innovation fits closely with our ColoradoCorps initiative, calling our young people to serve and supporting them in doing so.

And as students decide on academic programs to support their future careers, **the state must do more to ensure that students take on student debt with full information on whether they will be able to [afford future student loan payments](#).** Greater transparency into the cost of a college or postsecondary

education program alongside data on program outcomes and wage earning potential will provide students and families the information they need to make an informed decision for their future financial well-being.

### **Supporting Preschool and Early Education Opportunities**

In 2023, [Colorado's Universal Preschool Program](#) was launched—a major achievement for our state in which free part-time preschool is provided to 3- and 4-year olds. In the 2023-2024 school year, [roughly 70% of all 4-year olds were supported by the Universal Preschool Program](#). This critical program sets up young kids for success when they enter K-12, and it alleviates a core financial burden from parents, estimating a [savings of \\$6,100 per family](#). As successful as this program is, it has potential to do so much more.

Presently, the program [provides 15 hours per week](#) of funding towards a quality preschool for families. While this is a good start, the program should aim to provide funding for an entire school week—which provides not only more quality education for kids, but also needed stability for working parents. As governor, I will prioritize broadening the Universal Preschool Program providing greater support to working families.

And I will work with parents, preschool educators, and the Colorado Department of Early Childhood to ensure the program is responsive, flexible, and easy to navigate—and make any improvements to support the [program's efforts to provide A+ customer service](#).

## RURAL DEVELOPMENT: Supporting Rural Colorado and Our Agricultural Communities

**I've traveled Colorado extensively to listen to all people—including visiting each Colorado county multiple times.**

From seeing our state from corner to corner and listening to Coloradans, I've built strong relationships in rural communities, learned from people across our state, and deepened my appreciation for our independent, western way of life.

**I continue to hear a disturbing message from rural Coloradans—too many feel unheard and undervalued at the State Capitol.**

One common refrain is that they see our state imposing one-size-fits-all solutions that don't make sense in rural Colorado. We need to do better. As governor, I will ensure that rural Coloradans are partners in the policy-making process, have a voice on state boards and commissions, and are listened to and collaborated with.

### **Rural Outreach and Collaboration**

**As governor, I will continue to show up and listen in rural Colorado—just as I've done as attorney general.**

That's a pledge and a promise I'm proud to make: that I will be a public servant for *all* Colorado communities and I will always show up and listen. Showing up in rural Colorado consistently and

listening is how the Governor's Office and state government can fully understand rural needs and ways our state can support rural communities' ability to thrive.

Many rural community leaders have told me that state agencies are unresponsive to their individual needs or impose obstacles that rural communities cannot surmount—particularly rural towns and counties with less funding and staff resources. Colorado's regulations must work for all communities, not just those along the Front Range. And government agencies should always be responsive, approachable, and collaborative—that means responding to inquiries, prioritizing outreach, listening to communities when they have concerns or problems interfacing with state government, and providing support through best practice learning, collaborative guidance and where appropriate and possible, strategic investments. This is especially true for rural towns, cities, and counties that have fewer resources and staff to navigate complex bureaucratic processes within state agencies.

I believe that it's important to have a dedicated outreach partner within the Governor's Office as a go-to resource

for rural communities. This role will also interface with state agencies to improve their work with rural communities. As attorney general, I established a rural outreach director at our department—that was an important step to ensure we heard rural concerns and had a presence in rural issues and debates, and a value I will take with me to the Governor’s Office.

**As governor, I will sign an executive order on day 1 establishing a Director of Rural Affairs and Collaboration within the Governor’s Office—and making it a cabinet-level appointment. And to ensure this function remains a permanent fixture in state government, I will work with the legislature to codify it in state law.**



**We must reestablish the Director of Rural Affairs and Collaboration as a permanent, cabinet-level appointment.**

I will also ensure that rural Coloradans have a seat at the table when and where public policy is made—that includes ensuring that appointments to

state boards and commissions have strong rural voices in their memberships. And I will direct these boards and commissions to hold meetings and hear public input beyond the Denver metro area, in regions throughout the state so that they are accessible to rural communities and not just those who live within a short drive of the State Capitol.



**State boards and commissions must hold meetings and hear public input across all regions of the state so they are accessible to, and hear directly from, rural communities.**

**Prioritizing Rural Economic Development**

**Farming and ranching are key drivers of our economy, and supporting and partnering with rural communities is crucial for Colorado’s prosperity.** The state’s economic development efforts must prioritize rural communities as much as they do Front Range communities. As governor, I will sign an executive order directing the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade to develop an updated rural economic development

plan that identifies opportunities to incentivize businesses to locate in communities like Burlington, Lamar, Fort Morgan, Grand Junction, and Craig. These and other rural communities offer a high quality of life, along with other incentives to attract employees such as affordable housing, recreation opportunities, and a strong sense of community. Part of this effort will be a full inventory of state programs that benefit rural economic development, like the [Rural Jump Start Program](#), to determine what is successful and can be broadened and strengthened to provide greater support for rural businesses and jobs.

**To enhance rural Colorado’s competitiveness, it must have full connectivity. It is unacceptable in the 21st Century that some homes remain unconnected from the Internet.** I will prioritize marshaling the state’s resources and infrastructure to closing this final gap in achieving full, and reliable connectivity for all communities. As part of meeting this challenge, I will direct the Transportation Commission and Colorado Department of Transportation to reduce red-tape and bureaucratic obstacles that hinder the use of state highway system public rights-of-way to allow the installation of broadband.

**And, I will stand firmly against “buy and dry” tactics that drain water from rural communities and pipe it to new**

### **suburban housing developments.**

Water should never be a zero sum game—which too often comes at the expense of rural Colorado, costing farming jobs and agricultural community health. As governor, [I will fight any efforts by speculators that harm rural Colorado communities](#).

### **Rural Housing**

As attorney general, I launched a successful pilot program to increase good, safe, and affordable housing in rural Colorado. By partnering with Colorado higher education institutions in rural communities—Pueblo Community College, Lamar Community College, Trinidad State College, and Otero College—the Attorney General’s Office provided funding for academic programs that support students entering the building trades and for redevelopment of dilapidated housing structures with health hazards such as asbestos in need of remediation. This program—[the Colorado Partnership for Education and Rural Revitalization \(“COPERR”\)](#)—is a model of what the state can do to support students entering the trades in rural Colorado while also [providing new housing options in rural parts of the state](#). And as [I have committed](#), we must do better and implement Proposition 123 housing support in a manner that works for rural communities.

### **Supporting Rural Communities’ Access to Healthy, Local Food**

All Coloradans need and deserve access to healthy, local foods to thrive, but many communities—especially in rural areas and some inner city areas—live in [food deserts](#) or face the threat of becoming one as local [grocery stores](#) [close](#). As governor, I will support community-based and innovative solutions that help provide healthy, locally grown foods to market and ensure that communities can have access to them. Colorado has several promising initiatives and organizations exploring solutions like these, including the [San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition](#) which has developed community-led action plans for regional strategic food system revitalization in Alamosa County and the broader San Luis Valley, and [Ranch Foods Direct](#) which helps small farmers and artisanal food producers in Colorado sell their products directly to consumers. I will continue and expand state support for local food systems, such as the [Community Food Consortium](#) created by the Colorado Department of Agriculture’s Community Food Access Program which helps bring together small food retailers to address shared distribution and cost challenges. For urban areas, there is the need to both address food deserts and food insecurity, as organizations like [Food to Power](#) do.

### **Supporting and Highlighting our Rural Way of Life: Protecting and Championing the National Western Stockshow and the Colorado State Fair**

Highlighting our farming and ranching businesses is part of supporting these important industries. As governor, I will prioritize investments and partnerships with Colorado State University—such as [H.B. 15-1344](#)—to support, update, and maintain the National Western Center. These investments show the state’s pride in serving as home of the [National Western Stockshow](#), and they demonstrate the State of Colorado’s strong commitment to remain the home of the Stockshow for generations to come.

And as governor, I will be a champion to ensure the state government strongly supports the [Colorado State Fair](#), ensuring it is well resourced and its buildings and operational needs are fully maintained. And **I will always stand behind the bedrock principle that the State Fair remains a fixture in its rightful and proper home—the City of Pueblo.**

## PUBLIC SAFETY: Safe Communities for All

**All Coloradans should feel safe in their homes, communities, schools, and places of worship.** As governor, I will support Colorado’s law enforcement agencies in their critical role of keeping our state safe. That means investing in training, equipment, recruitment, and retention of peace officers and in community safety through local and state partnerships.

Colorado can and should be a leader in promoting safe communities. That means not tolerating crimes that harm community members, whether crimes motivated by hate, crimes that prey on vulnerable Coloradans, or crimes by organized groups that harm others.

To achieve this vision, we must:

- Prioritize better law enforcement support and coordination,
- Promote evidence based, data-driven public policies,
- Expand smart interventions to prevent crimes from occurring,
- Uphold the rights of and support for victims,
- Hold offenders accountable, and
- Prevent re-offending and re-incarceration.

Public safety must be a high priority for Colorado. And it will be.

### **Championing Responsible Gun Safety Laws**

**Too many Colorado communities know the pain of gun violence—including Colorado Springs, Aurora, Littleton, Boulder, and Evergreen.** To prevent more tragedies, Colorado has been a leader in enacting common sense gun safety laws that save lives—including [waiting periods](#) to purchase a firearm, [outlawing ghost guns](#), creating a new [red flag law](#), and [storage laws to keep guns secured from children](#). As attorney general, I fought for these policies, worked to implement them, and defended them in court. As governor, I will continue these efforts and will sign any responsible gun safety bill that will save lives and protect children, while also respecting and supporting Colorado sportsmen and responsible gun owners.

The Colorado Office of Gun Violence Prevention promises to play a key role in preventing firearm-related injuries and deaths. As governor, I will enhance this office’s role, resources, and services, aware that the federal government is failing to lead on this crucial priority. In particular, I will expand its messaging on gun violence and injury prevention and

resources especially to keep kids safe in schools.

One of my first priorities will be to support efforts to pursue those that attempt to purchase guns illegally—particularly domestic violence offenders and convicted felons. As governor, I will support police and sheriffs in pursuing these dangerous individuals and holding them accountable before more harm can be caused.

**Investing in Sound, Data-driven Public Safety Policies and Coordination**

Since the 2023 sunset repeal of the [Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice](#), Colorado has had no comparable entity or organization assume this role of providing nonpartisan criminal justice data to inform policymaking. This has set us back in having necessary data and research—which in turn leaves the policymaking process less informed to establish sound criminal justice and sentencing laws. An updated group must be established at the state level to provide the necessary information, data, and recommendations to support legislation that ensures that our criminal laws are fair, just, and effective.



I will establish an Office for Safe Communities to ensure coordination between and among state agencies, local DAs and law enforcement and advance data driven smart strategies.

As governor, I will also establish an Office for Safe Communities—to coordinate efforts between the Colorado Department of Public Safety, Office of Gun Violence Prevention, Department of Corrections, local district attorneys and law enforcement—to advance and coordinate data-driven and evidence-based strategies to improve public safety.

**Combatting Online Crimes that Harm Businesses and Children**

**Safe communities also means clamping down on illegal activity facilitated through online social media platforms.** With online platforms offering an anonymous way to sell goods stolen from people’s porches or retail stores, organized theft rings are operating more aggressively. These crimes harm businesses and they pose major safety risks to store customers and workers. As attorney general, I

pushed for [tougher laws](#) to stop online retail theft. As governor, I will push for greater investigation resources and stricter laws to stop these rings.

**Social media platforms can also pose major risks to children, offering an easy way to buy dangerous narcotics and other illegal products.** The proposed [S.B. 25-086](#) would have curbed these dangerous threats to kids. As governor, I will sign such a bill into law—because we need stronger protections for our kids and community safety.

### **Fighting the Addiction Crisis**

As attorney general, while visiting a rural county sheriff, I learned that over 90 percent of those in the county’s prison were addicted to opioids, and the county had no treatment options. To help address this, I worked to hold opioid companies accountable for fueling the addiction epidemic, **recovering nearly \$900 million for Colorado communities, and sent the money to local communities to decide how to invest it for new treatment, recovery, and prevention services.** And there is much more to do. As governor, I will push policies and practices that provide treatment for those struggling with addiction while also holding those who sell and distribute dangerous drugs accountable. This is a proven strategy to help rebuild lives and make communities safer.

**The state must also invest in co-responders and programs like Denver’s Support Team Assisted Response (“STAR”).** These innovative programs meet those struggling with addiction or mental health issues with greater compassion and services to help them towards treatment options. They also free up law enforcement officers to prioritize preventing and responding to serious crimes.

### **Supporting Recruitment and Retention Investments for Police and Sheriffs**

**To have safe communities, we need to fund law enforcement.** And more must be done to update and improve law enforcement training, which leads to safer interactions for both law enforcement officers and the public. As attorney general, I led a first-in-class redesigned law enforcement training curriculum—to improve law enforcement training for the first time in over 40 years. This training is [making an impact](#), and there is more to do. This support must be expanded so all current and aspiring law enforcement professionals have the tools they need to be successful—an assessment we need to make based upon partnerships with local law enforcement and active listening to best understand the needs on the ground. Part of this work may include better training and use of most appropriate resources to enable greater

streamlining and effective body camera review processes so that our law enforcement officers can spend more time out in our communities instead of behind a desk, while ensuring access to the objective camera data we need to fairly enforce our laws and hold all parties appropriately accountable.

“My commitment to improved law enforcement is pro-community, pro-law enforcement, and pro-results, ensuring that officers have sufficient resources, training, data-driven strategies, and effective coordination to succeed.”

**We also must support officers’ and sheriffs’ mental health.** As attorney general, I pushed for more tools to support law enforcement mental health needs because these investments are critical in protecting officers’ and sheriffs’ well-being, and in ensuring greater public safety. As governor, I will continue to make this program and other support for peace officers and all first responders a priority.

**Preventing Domestic Violence and Holding Abusers Accountable**

**No family should ever live under the threat of domestic violence.** As

attorney general, I worked for laws to keep domestic abusers from accessing firearms, and supported greater awareness to prevent partners and children from being victimized by their abusers. I also [sued the Trump Administration for unlawfully withholding critical funds to support victims](#). As governor, I will push for greater support systems and resources to help domestic violence victims get the help and safety they need, including through services provided by family justice centers—which I will work to ensure exist in every region of the state—and tougher laws to keep families from being harmed by domestic abusers. And in areas of the state lacking existing support and resources, I will partner to drive successful and collaborative response and support for victims.

**Wrap-Around Services and Reentry**

As many crimes are committed by individuals struggling with addiction, mental health challenges, poverty, and a lack of opportunity, we must focus on innovative programs that address these underlying challenges and not only step in to punish or incarcerate. This means that the state must partner with communities in a “bottom up” approach to identify gaps, provide resources, and coordinate responses. These responses include true [community-police engagement](#) as well as state support for wrap-around services to address trauma, housing, food support, and

community engagement like our new [ColoradoCorps](#) program.

In addition, Colorado can break down barriers to enable those coming out of the criminal justice system by focusing on training, entrepreneurship, and education during incarceration to reduce recidivism rates. [Colorado's current recidivism rate, at 45%, is well above the national average of 37%.](#) We can, and must, do better. My administration will be driven by data and the public's safety—focusing on programs shown to work, and thinking proactively based on research that shows that [inmates who participate in educational programs are 43% less likely to return to prison](#), thus making communities safer and reducing incarceration costs.

### **Ensuring our System of Justice Applies Equally and Fairly**

As governor, I will work to ensure our system of justice never treats people differently according to the amount of money they have, their ethnicity, or other inappropriate factors unrelated to risk to the public. A person's right to bail before trial, for example, should never be based on whether they can afford it or profiling based on ethnicity. Those charged with a crime who have not yet stood trial should receive bail if found to pose no threat to others and determined that they are not a risk to flee or reoffend. A system that treats two people accused of the same crime

differently simply based on the size of their wallet is not a just system. That's why as governor I'll support responsible bail reform legislation that ensures people aren't treated differently based on how much money a person has but instead on whether they pose a risk to public safety.

### **Youth Violence Prevention and Diversion**

There are rising signs of concern that many young people are absent from school, acting out at school, and showing signs of antisocial behavior. Rather than solely responding with punitive measures—giving rise to the “school-to-prison pipeline” issue—we need to develop early interventions like [the Lighthouse Program in Mesa County](#). This program identifies at-risk kids, provides mentoring (in partnership with Colorado Mesa University), family engagement support systems, and wrap-around services designed to increase positive outcomes and lessen the risk of future criminal and violent conduct. A similar [program recently launched in the Cherry Creek school district](#) is showing signs of success and promise as well. We must work with school leaders to support and scale programs like these across the state.

###

**Colorado is positioned to be one of the safest states in the nation, and a**

**leader in how we take public safety seriously and improve law enforcement.** Better coordination, more well-trained officers and sheriffs, a focus on crime science and data-driven policies, and an emphasis on evidence-based, smart interventions that prevent crimes in the first place will make our communities safer, and will lead to lower levels of incarceration. We

can do better in how our criminal justice system serves victims, treats defendants fairly, and operates in a smarter fashion. In Colorado, where collaboration and innovation are our brand, we can and we must do more in advancing public safety.

## HEALTH CARE: Affordable Health Care that Serves All

**All Coloradans should have access to quality health care they can afford no matter who they are or where they live.** Yet costs keep rising, forcing many Coloradans to make health care decisions based not on what they need, but on what they can afford. Moreover, access to care is not available to everyone, with specialist care even more limited.

We must answer this question in health care: how do we develop a better product that delivers more at less cost? To get there we need to optimize and leverage technology, our talent, and new ideas. To lower the total cost of care, and retain quality, we will pull every lever we have, and we'll find new ones.

The Affordable Care Act and COVID-era policies expanded health insurance coverage, reducing Colorado's [uninsured rate from nearly 16% in 2011 to 4.6% in 2023](#). Now, with federal cutbacks, people will lose their health care and uninsured rates and coverage costs will rise again—significantly. We know that families who don't have insurance often delay getting the care they need—instead resorting to care at costly emergency rooms, many taking on devastating medical debt. The cost of uncompensated care provided by hospitals and doctors is then spread

across all patients—driving up costs and insurance premiums for everyone.

As the federal government cuts its support, working families are finding it harder to keep and find quality health care. Preventable diseases like measles are becoming more prevalent. And costs are being driven up for families, health care delivery systems, and our state budget. [Rural and community-based hospitals and providers face closures, workforce shortages, service cuts, and insurer exits](#).

With Congress rolling back health care support, Colorado must make every dollar stretch and do more with less.

During COVID, we experimented and innovated, expanding telemedicine, strengthening public health, and improving behavioral health care. We worked together, including with other states, to find solutions. I will lead with that spirit to meet this moment.

See more [here](#) on my **Healthy Colorado Plan** resting on three strategic pillars: Primary Care for All; Best Care, Best Price; and our Health Consumer Pact.


**[Collaborating to Bolster our Health Care Assets](#)**

Colorado has to do more as the federal government steps away from promoting health care for all. I will continue to [fight federal cuts](#) in the courts, including [lawsuits](#) I've brought against Trump's U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Secretary Kennedy. We will build new, state-led strategies to protect critical programs, and protect, grow, and leverage local and regional expertise to fill the void left by the federal government.

And I will fight to sustain and leverage key investments made over the last decade—in behavioral health, maternal health, telehealth, our direct care workforce, public health, rural health, research and testing of alternative systems, and Connect for Health Colorado (our state-based Marketplace for individual insurance coverage) as well as our programs providing state funds to fill gaps in Medicaid coverage.

### **Creating A Path Forward**

As governor, I will issue an executive order standing up a **Health Care Stabilization and Innovation Task Force** of internal and external experts. This team will set immediate priorities, building on agency-level assessments of the impact of federal cuts on health systems, communities and people, and develop an actionable transparent plan to guide and inform nonpartisan and data-driven health policy and funding decisions.



**We must establish a Health Care Stabilization and Innovation Task Force to respond to federal cuts, set clear priorities, and deliver a transparent, data-driven plan to protect Colorado's health care.**

In addressing our health care challenges, we will take a **whole-of-government response** that brings together all stakeholders—providers, insurers, public health leaders, consumer groups, philanthropy, and researchers. We will leverage the state's economic power and oversight authorities as well as form alliances with others including other states and local governments. We will be consumer centric, foster competition, and stay focused—on improving quality and reducing the cost of care for people and families.

### **Leveraging And Coordinating State Leadership**

Today, health care is spread across four state agencies. While each has leaders with expertise who care deeply about peoples' health and play important roles, at times this has led to competing

interests, bureaucratic challenges, and a lack of coordination.

As governor, I will continue the work of prior administrations to spur better coordination, leveraging the **Health Care Cabinet**, an executive-level team spanning all agencies with health care responsibilities. This team will collaborate with the Task Force; streamline work with a bias to action and innovation including cabinet and governor’s office coordination; have a mandate to work seamlessly on recommended design changes and operate day-to-day more efficiently; work creatively with all leaders to respond to immediate destabilization risks; and lead on long-term transformation.

With this group, I will take on long-term complex challenges like:

- public and private insurance premiums rising faster than inflation,
- health benefit erosion,
- poor coordination and cost-shifting across health coverage programs and markets,
- demographic and public health threats (including an aging population, measles, gun violence, behavioral health challenges, and chronic disease),
- high-value cost-drivers (such as life-saving specialty drugs) and low-value cost-drivers (such as

direct-to-consumer drug advertising), and

- financing sources and priorities.

As governor, I will bring to Colorado other states’ successful innovations, such as those in Washington State, which streamlined its work with improved health outcomes through the [Washington State Health Care Authority](#).

### **Modernizing our Health Care Systems**

Colorado’s health care system must shift to lower cost and higher quality, and meet people where and how they live today—digitally, geographically, and demographically.

That means having a health care system that works for all ages. Older Coloradans and those with disabilities may require longer appointments and care coordination support. Younger people have grown up with technology, and young families often have two working parents. They come to health care with different expectations including access to their own health information and virtual care. We must embrace these as opportunities for new paths forward.

That means **leveraging emerging technologies** which show real promise in improving health care quality and access—from higher diagnostic accuracy to virtual care, and

**establishing guardrails** to ensure technology enhances, not replaces, human care and judgment, especially in areas like prior authorization and clinical decisionmaking.

As governor, I will support technological advances that can help ensure that doctors and other providers have the right data and evidence to make sound decisions and recommendations. We will support advancements like clinical shifts from in person to virtual care which will help the next generation of service delivery, including remote, in-home patient monitoring, digital therapeutics, and home delivery of prescriptions. We will align with others to advance care common today that will continue to evolve, such as hybrid virtual and in-person primary care models, over-the-counter birth control, and telehealth for behavioral health. In short, the health care market is changing and will continue to change, and we must capitalize on the most promising advances—always taking a patient-centered perspective.

As governor, I will leverage information technology to reduce administrative complexity across state and private systems; propose appropriate consumer protections; and improve transparency and coordination among health care stakeholders for better outcomes and public reporting. In conjunction with the Health Care Cabinet, [our newly](#)

[appointed Chief Innovation Officer will focus on this opportunity.](#)

We will look to **expand approaches, like Colorado’s “[Shop for Care](#)” tool, to provide patients with clear, accessible information on healthcare pricing**, enabling patients to make informed decisions and preventing unexpected costs.

We will **develop and use data to help us assess our investments**, like Oregon is doing for their kids with their [Child Well Being dashboard](#), a resource for policymakers and community leaders interested in investigating and improving the well-being of children in their state.

### **Focusing On A Smarter Health System for All**

As governor, I will push for a more efficient and affordable health care system:

- **At the family level**, we will ensure that consumers help guide prioritization and implementation decisions and have access to information to help them make informed decisions.
- **At the state level**, we will work to realign Medicaid, Child Health Plan Plus (“CHP+”), Connect for Health Colorado, and individual/small group/state employee markets to better serve people and manage costs.

- **At the health system level**, we will prioritize public health and value-based care, population health, chronic disease management, community health, social determinants of health, and make investments in innovative approaches for virtual care backed by systems and workforce development.
- **At the federal level**, we will pursue every available funding opportunity—including the [Rural Health Care Fund](#) or the Reentry Demonstration Opportunity Program—and continue to partner with like-minded states and regional collaborators.

**Ensuring Coverage For All Who Are Eligible under Public Programs like Medicaid**

In Colorado, approximately [1 in 4 people rely on Medicaid for their health coverage](#). When including CHP+, which supplements Medicaid gaps, nearly **40% of our children** are covered. Medicaid also supports **60% of people living in nursing homes** across our state, and in **some rural counties**, especially in the south, [2 in 5 people are enrolled in Medicaid](#).

Over the last year, the federal government has drastically cut funds for Medicaid, CHP+, and the Marketplace. In response, Colorado stepped up to ameliorate this harm—and we will need

to consider how to best continue to do so. As governor, I will keep fighting to prevent **rising uninsured rates, worsening health outcomes, and avoidable deaths**.

We can't afford to let our safety net unravel. To fight back, I will work tirelessly to **ensure every eligible Coloradan can enroll and stay enrolled in Medicaid and other critical public programs**. We must identify all drivers of Colorado's underperformance to date in maintaining coverage for eligible people and overcome them. We must address funding gaps, modernize our systems, and remove administrative red tape. That must include streamlining enrollment and meeting new federal rules without allowing them to be barriers to access.

We will **cover all children who are eligible under Medicaid and similar programs**. I will look for ways to support Colorado's progress of extending continuous coverage under Medicaid and CHP+ for young children, including the [recent expansion of continuous coverage from birth to age three](#). We will lay the groundwork for the future if the current federal Administration blocks this progress, and we will learn from other states that have expanded continuous coverage even further. Early investments in the health of our kids will reap benefits for them and all of us.



As governor, I will sign an executive order to comprehensively **examine the structure of our markets and investment priorities**. Today Colorado has different design features (health plans, provider networks, payment rules and rates, quality metrics, administrative structures, and IT systems) for each market (Medicaid, Medicare, and our state-based [Marketplace](#)—Connect for Health Colorado). Some states have aligned markets and operations, for example, by implementing the Children's Health Insurance Program through a Medicaid platform, by incentivizing health plan participation across markets, or benchmarking provider rates. Through these innovations, they achieved operational efficiencies as well as smoother coverage transitions. We will explore these and other innovative ideas. We will also build on and explore state and philanthropic options to subsidize coverage for families in need,

and support evidence-based services where federal support is falling short.

**Creating and Enhancing Behavioral and Mental Health Services**

Colorado is experiencing a **behavioral and mental health crisis, especially among young people**. As governor, I will work with the Colorado Behavioral Health Administration with a focus on access to care across all groups, provider workforce shortages, substance abuse disorder, and technology impacts on kids.

We will look to these findings as foundational to how we improve care through:

- continuing to increase the number and types of providers,
- creating a statewide **youth mentorship program**,
- expanding **co-response teams**, pairing clinicians and peer specialists with first responders in behavioral and mental health emergencies such as Denver's STAR program and Boulder's CARE program, and
- addressing stigma and prevention through public health campaigns and partnerships with schools, workplaces, and community organizations.

### Investing in Public Health

A strong state public health system is key to preventing illness, promoting wellness, and responding to community crises. We will:

- enhance **our own public health infrastructure** (ideally working with other states) to carry out the work created by gaps in the federal Centers for Disease Control (“CDC”) leadership;
- prioritize **population-level data collection** to replace information that would otherwise be lost from discontinued federal surveys, such as the [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System](#) and the [Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System](#);
- support **community-based prevention efforts** around mental health, substance abuse, chronic disease, gun violence, and maternal and child health; and
- build a **resilient public health infrastructure** that can respond rapidly to future emergencies while advancing long-term wellness.

### Creating More Pathways into Healthcare Professions

To meet growing demand and improve care access, we must **rebuild and expand Colorado’s healthcare workforce**. Promotion of the care

economy and its workforce will be a key pillar of my workforce development efforts. [See more here.](#)

As governor, I will strengthen workforce pathways into key talent needs, such as nursing, behavioral and mental health providers, and specialists, with targeted initiatives for rural and under-resourced areas; address root causes that prevent more people from entering and staying in health care professions: low wages, burnout, and lack of faculty and trainers; and partner with community colleges and private employers to identify and implement promising new models.

We will also re-build talent by spearheading [ColoradoCorps](#), a **service program for young adults** which will create paths for new talent into critical health care professions, taking lessons from others like those in Washington state who are expanding behavioral health access with certified peer support specialists, and tapping new ideas such as transitioning [Medicaid parents to be coaches and high school students as peer counselors to middle schoolers](#).

### Ensuring Patients are Treated Fairly

As governor, I will push for and sign legislation that provides responsible protections for patients and ensures that the health care market operates fairly for all. As attorney general, I fought against medical debt collectors—championing

[legislation](#) to clamp down on practices that drive patients into debt spirals and collections. To address undue consolidation, I [challenged](#) a monopolistic effort by US Anesthesia Partners to buy up smaller practices and drive up prices for consumers. And I worked to curb surprise billing, hitting

patients with unexpected charges on their medical bills without their knowledge at the start. As governor, I'll keep up this fight and champion policies that put patients first and help elevate those health care systems that treat their patients with honesty and transparency.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD: Fighting for Colorado Kids in the Early Years

Fighting for Colorado kids means safeguarding their early childhood health, well-being, and care. Investments in early childhood health, family wellness, and childcare are a public good that builds a foundation for our society and sets kids up to succeed in school.



**Providing the right start, early intervention, and early education programs for kids pays dividends downstream.** [Decades of research](#) shows that investments in early childhood strengthen academic achievement, reduce behavioral disorders and mental health challenges, improve lifelong health, and boost economic productivity. Economists have shown that the [return on investment for high-quality early childhood programs can be as high as 13%](#).

And we must have access to affordable childcare that is within reach for parents. The cost of childcare is simply too much—making families struggle with whether to remain in the workforce versus caring for their kids. **Childcare is critical infrastructure for Colorado—just as roads and bridges are important to get families to a workplace everyday, childcare is critical for supporting working families.**

As governor, I will fight to support early childhood health and family interventions that we know set kids up for a thriving future. I will tackle our childcare crisis—we owe it to Colorado families to make it cheaper and easier for them to find and afford quality care. This will require a focus on supply, coordination of different funding sources, and working toward a cohesive system across programs, agencies, providers, and regions.

### **Prioritizing Early Childhood Education**

The first five years of kids' lives are among the most crucial. Partners across Colorado—families, early childhood educators, public officials, and advocates—have developed a powerful plan for a path forward for Colorado kids in the [Early Childhood Colorado](#)

[Framework](#). It is clear what direction we should take; we must come together to develop the funding paths and strategies to get there.

**As governor, I will fight to protect funding and the success of the prenatal and early childhood programs that work in Colorado, particularly as we face substantial budget challenges as a state and cuts to federal healthcare funding. And I will advance creative ways to advocate for and identify future funding opportunities.**

Focusing on caregivers in policy and program design is also important; if we empower adults, we can foster environments where children can flourish. Therefore, Colorado must also support ongoing funding and accessibility for effective parent and caregiver-focused programs.

One example is the [Nurse Family Partnership](#). This evidence-based program partners low income, expecting mothers with a registered nurse for home visits. Nurses work with families to develop a relationship, build positive vision for their children, and offer tools to succeed.

Colorado needs both state leadership and a commitment to supporting bottom-up strategies that will meet our early childhood learning challenges. As governor, I will bring a sense of urgency

to this work and ensure we're coordinated across state agencies and with other partners to deliver for Colorado kids.

One critical area where the state must lead is infant and early childhood mental health. We need to make sure that all kids are developing and building positive connections. As part of my youth mental health agenda, I will prioritize this work, which too often is not a priority. As governor, I will ensure that Colorado develops strategies for evaluating where we are failing in this area and how we can do better.

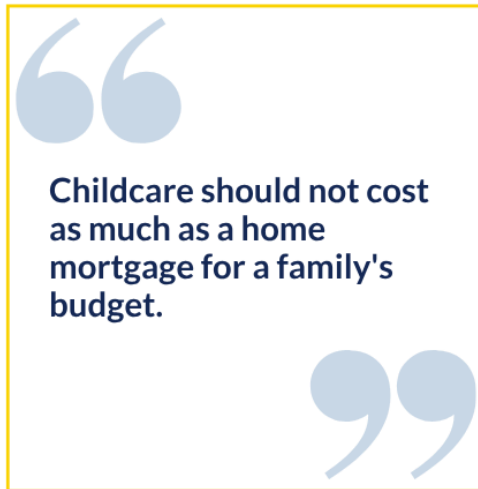
### **Colorado's Childcare Crisis**

**Colorado faces a childcare crisis.** Stated simply, there are not enough quality childcare options for working families. And where there are options, it's too expensive for a family budget.

**A family with two kids under 5 spends, on average, [38% of their annual incomes on childcare.](#)**

Childcare should not cost as much as a home mortgage for a family's budget. Where there are public funding supports, the landscape of programs and eligibility is fragmented. There are too many hoops to jump through to get financial support for families. And, even our public funding supports are limited. According to the Colorado Department of Early Childhood, there were nearly 7,500 families on a waitlist or impacted

by funding freezes in October 2025 based on funding deficiencies in the Child Care Assistance Program (“CCAP”).



**Access to quality childcare options is also a challenge; over [50% of Coloradans live in a childcare desert](#).**

In many regions, there simply aren't enough childcare spots for the kids who need them. Or, where there are seats, access isn't equitable. A costly model for providers, regulatory hurdles, and a lack of a sustainable childcare workforce contributes to this supply challenge.

Affordability and access to childcare forces many parents to leave the workforce because they can't afford care. [Executives Partnering to Invest in Children \(“EPIC”\) estimates that 10,200 mothers in Colorado are currently “sidelined from the labor force”](#) due to childcare challenges. **If these parents were able to return to the workforce,**

**it could generate an economic impact of nearly \$3.8 billion.**

**Unifying Childcare Services as an Effective, Transparent, and Responsive Statewide System**

Today, getting childcare is too hard for parents to navigate. And childcare providers are forced to navigate across a range of funding streams, programs, and regulations. Families are looking across multiple provider types and support programs to find the right care for their kids—and it's a much bigger challenge than it should be. That's why I will work to build a more integrated, easy-to-access childcare system.

As governor, I will direct the Colorado Department of Early Childhood to review recent external evaluations of the department and shape strategic priorities for the first 90 days, 6 months, and year. We'll also reengage parents and providers to learn what regulations and other challenges inhibit the development of more childcare options.

We should be able to make it simpler for families to find and apply for childcare options. With the aid of technology, imagine a future where parents can easily see eligibility for a range of funding opportunities and programs, or see the various childcare options in their communities. **As governor, I will establish a Chief Innovation Officer,**

**who will work to make that vision a reality for all Coloradans.**

***Creative Funding Solutions to Improve Childcare Affordability & Access Across the State***

The type of care kids in the infant to 5 age range need is expensive to deliver. And there are not adequate public resources to support our youngest children. I've listened to families who share that they are just trying to "make it until kindergarten" to get relief from the childcare cost burden. **We have to do better than that for these families.**

That's why as governor, I will lead a grassroots effort with the voters to highlight our restrictive state budget constraints under TABOR, explain how it prevents our state from making high value investments (ones that promise great returns to our state), and work collaboratively to build support for [investing in critical priorities like childcare](#).

**In the interim, Colorado needs to call on multiple funding partners to help us solve this challenge together.** I will partner with the General Assembly to develop and test a statewide funding tool like a Childcare Solutions Fund—a collaborative fund between the public sector, philanthropy, and business community to invest in local childcare solutions. Under this concept, contributions from the business

community and philanthropy could be matched by our state government. The fund could invest in programs and interventions across the state developed by local operators and partners to solve local needs. Funding could support interventions such as salary incentives for early childhood educators, small business operator support, or capital to support growth in supply or facilities projects. .

Two models show the promise of this approach and offer us inspiration in how we could make it a reality. First, [Colorado's Employer-Based Child Care Design Lab \("Design Lab"\)](#) has empowered employers to support childcare sites on or near their facilities. Second, the [Iowa Childcare Solutions Fund](#) matches what employers voluntarily invest. The funds have been used to respond to a range of community needs—from reopening closed childcare classrooms to incentivizing new supply.

**Colorado can also partner to reduce costs for childcare operators, many who are small business owners managing tight budgets and constraints.** The state can explore opt-in shared services for collective buying power, streamlining operations and reducing costs for accounting, insurance, benefits, and other operational functions. With small cost relief to operators, savings can be used to sustain the small business, increase

educator pay, or make it a bit easier to serve families.

### **Making Sense of State-level Regulations**

Regulations for childcare centers are essential. They safeguard children's health, ensure safe environments, and protect kids from harm. At the same time, just as in other areas of government, we have a responsibility to work with state leaders and childcare providers to regularly review these rules, making sure they achieve their core purpose: keeping children safe and making sure they don't create unnecessary barriers to providers offering key services. And we also must ensure that regulations that make sense in Denver aren't imposed on rural areas where they don't make sense.

**As governor, I will work hand-in-hand with providers, local leaders, and**

**community partners to streamline permitting and regulatory processes statewide.** Together, we can improve state regulations and build a model that keeps kids safe while also making it simpler for providers to open their doors and deliver the care Colorado families need.

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The childcare crisis is a daily struggle for parents, families, and employers across our state. When parents can't find affordable care, they can't work. When children miss out on early learning, we lose the chance to prepare them for a thriving future.

We owe it to families to do more. By investing in early childhood, we can lower costs, strengthen communities, and give every child the best start in life.

## YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH: Supporting Our Youth and Tackling the Mental Health Crisis

**At this time when kids are more disconnected from each other, their parents, their teachers, and their communities than ever before, it is critical that we lean into connection and solutions that address our youth mental health crisis.** The disconnection our youth are experiencing has long-term consequences for their well-being and success and must be addressed. Unfortunately, youth mental health support is under severe threat by the Trump Administration, with programs dedicated to young people's well-being being cut at an alarming rate. As attorney general, I faced this challenge head on and as governor, I will tackle this crisis at its root—focusing on connection, direction, and access to support young people all across our state.

### **Investing Resources Towards Youth Mental Health**

With the federal government slashing funding across the country, Colorado's youth-focused programs need even more support. As attorney general, my office partnered with Rocky Mountain Health Plans to launch the Healthy Youth/Strong Colorado Fund, providing \$5 million to youth empowerment and mental health programs across the state to support youth during the pandemic.

And in 2023, my office recovered nearly \$32 million dollars from JUUL, an e-cigarette company that marketed their products directly to kids, hooking another generation on nicotine. These funds went to support vaping education and prevention programs as well as programs and grants supporting youth mental health in 49 out of Colorado's 64 counties in Colorado—including another \$5 million in grants distributed just this summer. Most recently, [I went to court to protect federal grant funding for mental health professionals in Colorado schools and secured this funding](#). As governor, I will be strongly committed to continuing this work to support our kids' mental health.

### **Statewide Mentorship Opportunities**

**Right now, [less than 40% of Colorado teens are highly confident](#) that they have an adult other than a parent—like a teacher or relative—that they can go to with a serious issue—and the trend is going in the wrong direction.** A void of mentorship means we miss significant opportunities to build positive mindsets, and foster a sense of belonging. We need to do better—much better. And we will.

**On day one of my administration, I will galvanize the state in a mentorship campaign that improves connections for Colorado kids.** We will elevate promising strategies and provide tools to support new initiatives across the state. We will look to successful programs to emulate across the state. We can scale this work in multiple contexts: school settings, work-based learning and career pathways, and community-based programs.

I believe that Colorado can energize a new culture of connection and ensure that every Colorado kid can identify more than one adult mentor they can look to for guidance. Not only that, I believe we will dramatically improve a sense of belonging for students in their schools and broader communities. This will have a lasting impact for individuals, families, and the state.

“  
Every kid in Colorado should be able to identify multiple adult mentors they can talk to and rely on - and no kid should be at a loss to identify at least one  
”

**Mentors are essential to creating a**

**support system and building connections to adolescents along their individual paths.** As an educator and as attorney general, I have seen this work firsthand and have witnessed a change in young people who are part of the undergraduate and high school internship program I started at the Attorney General’s Office, and [in the ~80 summer fellows from all over Colorado who joined our campaign.](#)

**Mentors are critical to providing valuable guidance and support.** And they are much more than that. They are people who are present and take time to listen and connect to provide needed emotional support and guidance. I am committed to ensuring that every Colorado student has that connection and sense of support.

**The Challenge of Cell Phones and Social Media**

Kids spend nearly six hours on their phones a day, consuming content that is manufactured to isolate and keep them addicted to using these platforms. Study after study shows the damaging effects this has on kids. And it’s unacceptable. That is why as attorney general [I sued Meta](#), the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, for targeting kids and knowingly contributing to harming their mental health. And that’s why [I supported S.B. 25-086](#), state legislation to clamp down on big social media companies for failing to protect kids from illegal activities such as drug dealing,

illegal sale of firearms, sex trafficking, and sexual exploitation. And that's why, **as governor, I'll sign that bill into law.**

**We must also find ways to encourage kids to put down their cell phones.** As attorney general, I worked with schools to limit the use of cell phones in the classroom, providing grants and shaping policy that many districts have adopted. And I spearheaded [a bipartisan law to require every school district to have a policy](#) that prevents smartphones from interfering with learning. As governor, I will work with school districts to meet this challenge.

The [average American kid today spends between 4-7 minutes outside in unstructured play](#). That is [substantially less time per day outside than maximum security inmates](#). Yet researchers recommend kids get as much as 2-3 hours of unstructured time outside a day, as [studies show that kids who spend time in nature are less stressed, less aggressive, and have better immune systems](#).

**Colorado has special advantages** it can use to encourage kids to put down their phones and get outside in nature. And with so much nature to offer, we must make full use of these advantages.

As governor, I am committed to changing this. I will push for legislation to provide new opportunities for K-12 schools and school districts to partner with the outdoor recreation industry. This effort will provide greater outdoor

educational opportunities for K-12 students, allowing them to connect with nature, disconnect from their phones, and learn about all the state has to offer through its public lands—as well as exposing kids to future career paths in the outdoor industries available across our state. I hope to see every kid in Colorado spend at least two days outside in nature without their cell phones, learning what the natural world has to offer. **Every kid in Colorado should have the chance to experience Colorado's public lands and open spaces.**

“Colorado has amazing outdoor opportunities. We must ensure all Colorado kids have access to outdoor education - giving them ways to disconnect from their cell phones, time to connect with nature, and opportunities to learn about career paths with our public lands and outdoor industries.”

### **Making Support Services Accessible**

Sometimes kids need professional support from trained mental health professionals, and we must ensure they have the access they need for these services. As governor, I will focus on expanding school-based mental health professionals and working with school districts to ensure they have the

capacity to provide school-based mental health screenings for all kids. Because our kids need access to counselors, we should consider different potential strategies—including how licensing requirements operate in practice across the state—to enable more professionals to serve in such roles.

Not every community may have the mental health support services needed for each child. Initial in school screenings, coupled with virtual and telemedicine based mental health services that do not require kids to drive (or be driven) long distances to see a professional can help address this gap. As governor, I will champion legislation to make coverage available for virtual mental health services for kids. And I will push to allow for Medicaid billing of school-based mental health services for all Medicaid-enrolled students across the state.

### **Ensuring our Kids Have the Tools They Need**

**Kids should be comfortable saying when they aren't okay.** They must be helped to advocate for themselves to make sure they get the support they need and have the safety they deserve. As attorney general, I championed and improved the Safe2Tell program, an anonymous statewide reporting platform that provides a safe space for students to proactively report safety concerns about themselves, their friends, and their schools. And as governor, I will

work with educators to continue to improve our curriculum that helps kids develop relationship and resilience skills. Those skills include how to manage discomfort and distress; how to cultivate healthy coping mechanisms; how to handle conflict resolution; and develop tools and training for appropriately alerting adults and friends to serious concerns.

\* \* \*

To help our kids through this mental health crisis, we must act boldly and elevate this priority. As governor, I'll tirelessly work to provide our kids the confidence, skills, and relationships they need to build their futures.

## ENERGY AND CLIMATE: Leading Our Energy Future

A safe, affordable, and reliable energy supply and climate change resilience are deeply important to our state, jobs, and the environment. [As the Trump Administration denies climate change and undermines key protections](#), Colorado must lean in even more and continue to lead the shift to a clean energy future and achievement of our statewide emission reduction targets.

To do this, Colorado must find emission reductions wherever we can, across our economy. Through greening of the grid, evolution of our built environment, transition to commercial and personal electric vehicles and mass transit, and proactive forest management, Colorado must lead with innovation and collaboration. While doing so, we must mitigate the impacts of this transition, including addressing the impact of job losses on affected communities, ensuring a resilient electric grid, and keeping affordability front of mind. Without facing these issues head on, we put our economy, health, and future at risk.

We must drive the energy transition swiftly and responsibly to clean, cheaper energy sources—like wind, solar, geothermal, and other clean energy technologies as they develop. And we

must mitigate the impacts of this transition as we go. **As governor, I will pursue reliable, affordable, safe, and clean energy solutions—through innovation, a commitment to energy reliability, protecting jobs and affordability for Coloradans, and a commitment to data, science, and responsible decision-making.**

### **Greening the Grid Through Solar and Wind**

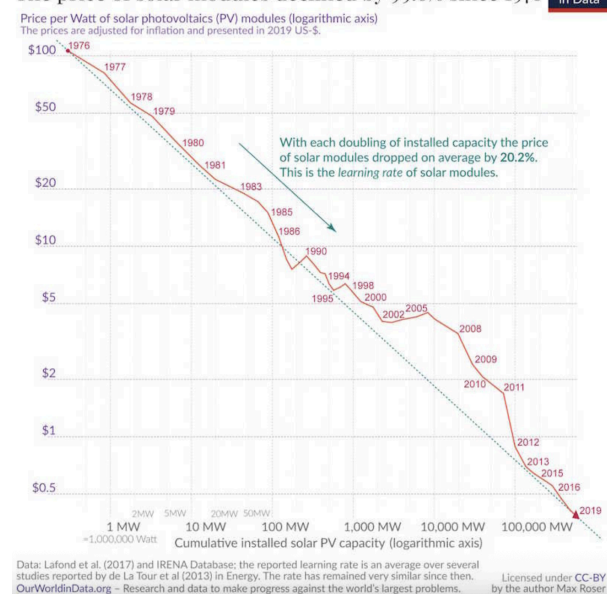
In Colorado, [we see sunny days more than two-thirds of the year](#). Colorado is also considered the [11th windiest state](#) in the nation. These features of our state—coupled with our open landscapes, commitment to the environment, and innovation mindset—position Colorado to be a national leader in solar and wind.

Renewable energy sources in Colorado, thanks primarily to [wind and solar, have more than tripled since 2010](#). And while in 2024 [90% of the new energy production added](#) across the United States came from renewable sources, we still have a ways to go—and the Trump Administration continues to push us hard in the wrong direction.

“  
Colorado sunshine and windiness, open landscapes and commitment to the environment make it ideally positioned to lead the nation in new solar and wind projects.”

To protect Colorado and ensure that we have abundant and affordable energy from clean energy sources, we must do more. **As governor, I will push to accelerate development of solar and wind projects across Colorado.** City and county land use governments play a significant role in siting solar and wind projects as well as the building and siting of transmission lines needed to connect solar and wind projects to the grid. Without relying on top-down mandates, I will push and support moving these efforts forward by engaging local governments and their communities to develop balanced paths to promote the timely, affordable, and beneficial growth of solar and wind energy, recognizing that these are currently the lowest cost sources of energy for our state.

The price of solar modules declined by 99.6% since 1976 Our World in Data



### Peak Power Focus and Batteries

To ensure our grid has the resilience to support the needs of all Coloradans, especially at peak times, **we must focus on development of smart grid protections with particular attention to expanding safe energy storage.**

Expanding safe energy storage is key to managing peak electricity demand and addressing the intermittency of renewables like wind and solar. Battery technology lets home and business owners store excess energy and use it when demand and, therefore, prices are high; the grid is under stress; or power goes out. For utilities, batteries balance demand, defer expensive upgrades, and reduce overall system costs. **I am committed to accelerating safe battery adoption for households and businesses by promoting innovative financing tools such as on-bill utility**

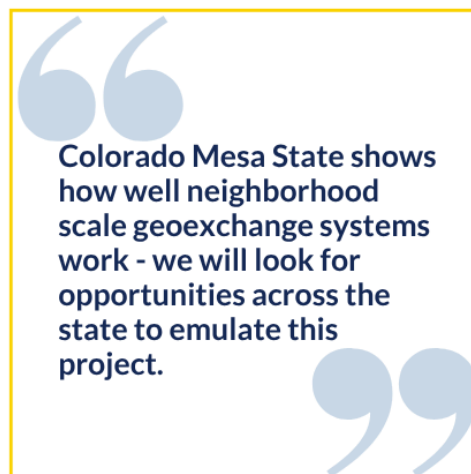
**financing, encouraging utilities to broaden battery use cases, and sharing value with customers.** I will prioritize low-income programs and target battery deployment support in high-need areas, such as communities at risk of wildfires or facing grid constraints.

As governor, I will also take innovative approaches to protecting peak needs such as the [Mountain Peak Power plant model](#), which was designed to enable nimble power generation using a peaking natural gas unit adjacent to its [battery storage](#). The Mountain Peak Power plant unit was also designed with fuel versatility to enable it to use hydrogen fuels if and when such fuels become commercially viable. We must support this kind of multifaceted, forward looking thinking.

### **Geothermal Energy as a New Frontier**

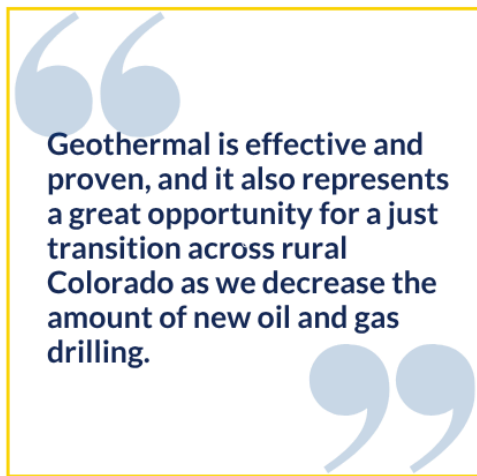
Geothermal, which covers many different technologies, represents a new frontier in reliable, dispatchable “always on” energy. [The Polis Administration](#) has rightfully leaned in to advance this technology. Whether considering the more proven geothermal for heating and cooling or the more nascent geothermal to generate energy, this type of energy must be promoted. **As governor, I will further Colorado’s leadership in geothermal energy through establishing a Geothermal Development Authority to coordinate and support activities across the**

**state and partner with local governments and private entities, streamline permitting, identify workforce opportunities, and facilitate further funding.**



Geothermal is most commonly known for individual residential heating and cooling. To further promote this use, **I will work with the Public Utilities Commission and utility providers to create a dedicated rate class for residential heat pump (geothermal) uses, with lower winter rates.** And geothermal can be used well beyond individual homes. For example, [Colorado Mesa University](#) installed a campus scale geothermal system to great success, and is an example to be emulated across the state. While retrofitting existing neighborhoods can be challenging, [creative thinking can enable it for homes, schools, and businesses](#) and we will identify opportunities to do just that.

Geothermal is not only an effective, renewable energy source, it also represents a [great opportunity for a just transition across rural Colorado](#) as we increasingly move away from traditional fuels. **As governor, I will promote and expand opportunities for rural oil and gas workers to receive training opportunities in geothermal drilling to promote and support both deep and shallow geothermal expansion.**



“Geothermal is effective and proven, and it also represents a great opportunity for a just transition across rural Colorado as we decrease the amount of new oil and gas drilling.”

**Electrification to Enable Long Term Progress**

**To enable our energy use to continue to be less carbon-intensive as our energy grid pulls from more renewable sources, we must focus on electrifying our homes, businesses, and transportation.** As governor, I will look for and support innovative opportunities to make this happen.

As governor, I will ensure that all options that make economic sense are on the table, including **continuing the state's EV purchase incentives as well as new programs to promote installation of charging infrastructure in new builds.** I will always [continue to fight in court for Colorado's share of federal EV infrastructure dollars](#). [Click here](#) for more of my thoughts on transportation more broadly. And we will develop opportunities to:

- Create a state-wide low-interest financing product with on-bill tracking and that avoids reliance on traditional credit scores to help homeowners—particularly in at-risk lower income communities—shift to cleaner electric technologies; and
- Deliver rebates directly to contractors to reduce upfront cost burdens on homeowners for electrification projects.

**Allocating Cost and Risk Associated with New Large Energy Loads**

Energy intensive industries which are experiencing high growth, such as data centers, will require innovative, thoughtful policies to enable Colorado to responsibly manage and plan for our energy needs and protect access to affordable energy—and to protect consumers from cost spikes. These industrial opportunities are important for the state, and should be promoted when

and where we can do so responsibly. To ensure that this development can proceed in a responsible manner, I will take a couple of approaches.

First, I will look at requiring public reporting of tariffs and contracts with utilities, energy usage, and water usage for all uses above a large load threshold. This effort could also include implementing appropriate protective measures like upfront deposits, long-term commitments from developers, direct cost recovery for infrastructure, demand/load flexibility, and enforceable requirements to protect ratepayers from stranded asset risks.

Second, we must look for opportunities to evaluate how new users can sponsor new forms of clean energy options to support increasing demand, ensuring that such development proceeds in a win-win fashion. One promising such option is **expedited approval processes for large load users that bring new clean power development to the table as part of their project and commit to flexibility in power usage**. This means projects that support their power needs through proposed, new, onsite wind, solar, geothermal, or other clean energy offsetting their energy needs go to the front of the line. And I will look to [learn from other states](#) and [regions](#) to make sure that Colorado is implementing innovative approaches along these lines in the most effective fashion.

### ***Innovating for the Future***

Energy development is not a static field. Work is being done on a wide range of potentially green energy sources and mitigation efforts all the time. I will promote and expand financing vehicles and opportunities, like the [Collective Clean Energy Fund](#), to support green energy projects and energy efficiency efforts by Colorado residents and businesses in support of our renewable energy targets.

Colorado is already a green energy technology hub. And we will continue to lean into our commitment to cleaner energy. Whether that is considering carbon capture and storage technologies, developing hydrogen sources, or considering other promising options, we will ensure that Colorado continues to drive innovation and be a leader for clean energy.

This work will not be cheap in the short term, but the faster we can address and mitigate climate change impacts and pivot to a 21st century energy economy, the more affordability we can generate for Colorado families. To do this, we will also need to be both thoughtful and innovative as we explore new funding sources. This means considering all options, including TABOR reform, cap and invest constructs, ensuring polluters pay their fair share and other approaches, but not jumping to the first solution that sounds expedient without

thinking through all of its consequences for Coloradans. Any funding solution we adopt must not be regressive or unduly increase short term costs for working families.

## OUR LAND, AIR, AND WATER: Protecting Our Environment from Climate Change

The devastating impacts of climate change pose major challenges for all of Colorado. As temperatures rise, storms get stronger, and droughts increase, we must continue to fight to [ensure that science drives our country's decision making](#). And we must be proactive and innovative to mitigate the impacts of climate change and build resilience across the state. The impacts of climate change are felt everywhere, and too often disproportionately impact those who are underserved and unheard. We see it in more forest fires that are harder to extinguish, a [resurgence of mountain pine bark beetle](#) infestations, threats to the aquatic ecosystems in our rivers, damage to our wildlife ranges, stronger storms, and extreme heat that challenges our industries with outdoor workforces (be that construction, agriculture, or outdoor recreation). I will face these challenges head on. We will advance critical measures to make communities more resilient to the costly and growing threats of climate change—including extreme heat, wildfires, floods, and droughts.

### **Protecting Public Health, People, and Wildlife**

As the federal government abdicates its responsibilities in the fight against rising temperatures and human-driven

changes to our climate systems, it's more important than ever for Colorado to lead and protect our land, air, water and wildlife.

As governor, I will recommit our state government to the shift of our energy needs to clean energy without shifting the costs to Coloradans already faced with high energy bills. [Click here for more of my thoughts on energy](#).

I will work hard to protect the fragile ecosystems and biodiversity that make Colorado beautiful and support our natural resiliency. This will include working with Land Trust organizations across the state to conserve private lands for the benefit of agriculture, ecosystems and future generations; coordinating with the US Forest Service to ensure elk range, migration, and calving areas are appropriately considered; and exploring the benefits beavers and other ecosystem engineering to protect, restore and support healthy, resilient ecosystems across public and private lands. I am committed to ensuring we work in tandem with local and regional leaders to bring forward smart protections for the range of wildlife that calls Colorado home.

I will issue an executive order creating a cabinet-level task force led by a Chief Resilience Officer and build on the work being done by the Colorado Resiliency Office. They will work closely with local leaders, businesses, and community organizations to develop innovative, actionable, and practical solutions to Colorado’s interconnected resilience challenges—including wildfire risk driving up insurance costs, storms impacting grid and infrastructure resilience, drought enhancing demand on our limited water supplies, loss of biodiversity making our ecosystems less resilient, and excessive heat threatening our outdoor workforce and air quality.

“I will name the state's first Chief Resilience Officer -- charged with developing solutions for the Colorado's interconnected climate change driven resilience challenges, from wildfire, to heat, to storms to air quality.”

**Protecting our Air and Water Quality**

Last year, Colorado’s Front Range experienced [40 days when air quality measurements exceeded federal standards](#). This past summer’s air was no better. And streams across the state [continue to struggle with contamination](#)

[and quality issues](#). Coloradans deserve better. Our state should lead the nation with the cleanest air and water, but instead we are [ranked 31st](#).

As governor, I will appoint people to air- and water-focused state boards and commissions that are responsive to communities impacted by polluters and prioritize sufficient resources to the Colorado Department of Health and Environment (“CDPHE”) to ensure it has what it needs to monitor and enforce our air and water quality regulations. Expanding and enhancing the resources and capabilities of CDPHE for effective air and water quality monitoring is critical to ensuring that the state can effectively enforce our laws and maintain acceptable quality air and water for all citizens across the state.

“We will fill the void currently left by the EPA to protect Colorado's air and water quality.”

In my first 100 days, I will direct CDPHE to undertake a comprehensive review of what environmental protections are

being disregarded as the federal Environmental Protection Agency abandons its role to protect our environmental quality, and determine where the state has a duty and the authority to step in to fill that void. As part of this effort, we will make sure the state continues to [protect our water quality regulations](#) and its nation-leading methane regulations—protecting our communities from this potent pollutant. I will also direct CDPHE to review its current processes and procedures, to identify where it can improve and be more responsive with stakeholders—both permit holders and environmental advocates—including improving its review times and decision-making process for permit applications.

As governor, I will ensure that risky ventures that put our environment at risk are not rubber stamped. As attorney general, I challenged one such scheme by leading other state attorneys general [in supporting Eagle County's lawsuit](#) before the U.S. Supreme Court to stop a dangerous plan concocted by an Utah

oil-and-gas company to build a new railroad line in Colorado to ship a quarter million barrels of waxy crude oil—daily—along the Colorado River. This placed an untenable risk on our state's most important drinking water source, potentially leading to spills, leaks, and rail spark-caused wildfires. As governor, I will stand firm against this and similar schemes that put our land, air, water and wildlife at risk.

And I will ensure the state provides the resources, support, and oversight necessary so that orphaned and low producing natural gas wells—which [produce disproportionately high levels of harmful methane](#) into our air—are properly and responsibly plugged and the adjacent land is reclaimed and restored to its natural state. This work is critical to protecting communities, as unplugged wells threaten community safety as well as further damage our climate. All of this work will be guided by what is best for Colorado in the long term, which includes environmental justice principles that must be respected and enforced.

## OPEN SPACE AND OUTDOOR REC: Preserving Colorado's Open Spaces and Outdoor Recreation

Colorado's great outdoors is what makes our state so unique. And we cannot take these critical landscapes for granted, especially when they are under threat. [Threats out of Washington, D.C. from Congress and the Trump Administration's U.S. Interior Secretary Doug Burgum](#) to sell our public lands to the highest bidder; threats from the impacts of droughts, floods, mudslides, loss of biodiversity and beetle infestations due to climate change; and [wanton firings of career staff at federal agencies like the U.S. Forest Service](#) by the Trump Administration—all pose a major risk to Colorado's treasured outdoors. And they risk harming our thriving outdoor recreation industry.

**As governor, I will fight to ensure that Colorado's forests and open spaces—federal and state—are cared for, defended, and well-managed for the benefit of the people of Colorado.** And I will champion our world class outdoor recreation and sportsman industries—river rafting, hiking, skiing, fishing, and hunting—so these thriving businesses continue to drive our state's economy and the economic vitality of our rural communities.

### *Defending our Public Lands*

[36 percent of Colorado is federal land](#) managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. And the [state owns and cares for 220,000 acres spanning 43 state parks](#)—enjoyed by over 18 million visitors each year. Colorado's forest landscapes are not just a beautiful aspect of our state. These forests serve as a critical role in fighting climate change, absorbing carbon and protecting the quality of our land, air, wildlife and water. And they are struggling—[with tree ranges contracting, and forests not regenerating](#) fast enough from impacts of fires, disease and infestations. We must step up.

As governor, I will ensure these lands are protected—both Colorado-owned parks, and federal lands—so they remain tourist-destination spots and wild spaces for our kids and grandkids. And I will partner with entities like [Great Outdoors Colorado](#) to acquire and protect more acres throughout the state with natural beauty that hold promise to be our next great state parks.

When plans were released out of Washington, D.C. to sell off our public lands to the highest bidder, I [stood against efforts by Trump's Interior](#)

[Secretary Doug Burgum and his plans to sell Colorado's treasured monuments, parks, and lands.](#) As governor, I will never stop fighting to stop the Trump White House and Interior Secretary Burgum—and anyone else—from robbing Coloradans of our public lands and auctioning them off to wealthy and out-of-state landowners. **Our public lands belong to all of us—and as governor I will fight each day to keep it that way.**

### ***Proactive Forest Management***

Colorado is gifted with expansive forests throughout much of our state. **With [65 percent of Colorado forests on federally-owned land](#), we must partner at all levels of government to protect our forest resources.** And with the Trump Administration's callous and illogical firings of federal employees at agencies that care for our forests' health, it's more important than ever for Colorado to step up its efforts. This is particularly true with the wanton firings of dedicated career employees at agencies like the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the National Park Service which was [reported to have suffered a 24 percent loss of permanent staff since January 2025](#). And I have learned that in many Colorado forests—like the White River National Forest and the Pike-San Isabel National Forest—that number may be as high as 40 percent. Now more than ever the state must be vigilant in

managing and protecting Colorado's forests. **As governor, I will work in partnership with federal forest management officials in our region as well as local, regional, and tribal leaders to actively manage our public forests and ensure they have the resources and care they need.**

Working collaboratively to invest in proven strategies—like removal of dead, diseased, and downed trees, slash removal, supporting wildlife, and strategically leveraging state resources to protect wildland health—will make Colorado a national leader in forest management, make our forests healthier, and drive our economy through enhanced outdoor recreation.

### ***Battling Wildfires***

The risk of wildfires is growing in our state. And [research shows that they are larger, more frequent, and more unpredictable](#). With hotter and drier Colorado weather due to climate change, a single out-of-control fire can destroy thousands of forest acres; put homes, communities, and water resources at dire risk; and cause major damage to our air quality. This requires a two-pronged approach of fighting climate change and improving conditions so fires do not burn as intensely. To do this, the state must play a greater role in working with landowners—both private and public—in supporting the clearing of dead and

diseased pine-beetle infested trees that allow fires to burn unchecked. The state should also step into a greater role, acting as a central point of contact for coordination and working collaboratively with local and regional officials, to drive wildfire prevention and not just wildfire response. And the state should innovate more to solve this problem—like working with property insurers to provide lower costs to those undertaking fire prevention efforts including for mountain community homes.

**A major part of this effort is providing full resources to Colorado’s wildland firefighters, so they have every tool and all equipment necessary to contain and extinguish fires. That includes access to [protective gear](#), and expanded use of [technology to deploy resources to catch wildfires at their outset](#).** And as part of my efforts to use technology to improve state government services, I will direct state agencies to seek new technological tools and systems that can improve the state’s ability to locate wildfires when they are most manageable so they can be extinguished before becoming the next major disaster in our state. This work is not only needed to ensure we avoid loss of life and property, but is also critical to the climate change fight. Forest fires C02 emissions can - [and sadly in California already have](#) - undermined much of the hard work being done to reduce emissions across

the economy. We cannot allow that to happen in Colorado.

### **Outdoor Recreation Economy**

**What makes Colorado so special—and what makes us distinctly Coloradan—is not just that our public lands, forests, rivers, and streams exist, but also that we can access and enjoy them.** Outdoor recreation in Colorado [employs over 400,000 people](#) across the state—12.5 percent of Colorado’s workforce. And, when coupled with the adjacent hospitality and travel industries necessary to enable it, the sector [contributes \\$36.5 billion to Colorado’s economy](#). It is a critical industry of our state and a particularly important economic driver for mountain and rural towns across Colorado and must be promoted. Colorado must continue to support events like the [Outside Festival](#) and the [Outside Summit](#)—designed to showcase the unique role played by nature and fostering new collaborations and opportunities in our outdoor spaces.

**As governor and as a hiker, I will champion Colorado’s outdoor recreation and sportsman industries—skiing, hunting, fishing, guiding, mountain biking.** With leadership from the Governor’s Office and [Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office](#), we must ensure that this industry grows, thrives, and remains the economic generator that it is. That

includes finding regulatory efficiencies to make it easier to stand up and operate a new outdoor recreation business—by eliminating redundant or unnecessary requirements on these businesses that serve little or no purpose. As part of my overall regulatory agenda, on day one I will issue an executive order that includes a top-to-bottom review of bureaucratic requirements on licensing, operations, and other government requirements that impact outdoor recreation businesses. That review will drive my efforts to eliminate unnecessary rules and regulations that serve no public safety, welfare, or health role and stifle [new businesses and their chance to succeed](#).

Much of our outdoor recreation industry can be supported—or hindered—by transportation routes and congestion. As governor, I will direct the Transportation Commission and the Colorado Department of Transportation (“CDOT”) to develop a strategy to incorporate outdoor recreation hubs, particularly along the Western Slope, in the state’s transportation planning documents that direct future infrastructure improvements. This outdoor recreation-focused transportation planning will lead to greater multimodal options—whether through additional Bustang stops, new routes, rail connections or high-occupancy vehicle lanes—for people to cleanly and swiftly reach ski-towns, destination rivers, and other outdoor attractions. **This**

**innovative effort will make our mountain communities and outdoor recreation opportunities more accessible and reduce congestion on key mountain corridors.**

### **Getting Kids Outside**

**The outdoors can also contribute to addressing the [youth mental health crisis](#) we are facing.** Unstructured time spent outside has been shown again and again to enhance resiliency, [promote health, and spread joy for our kids](#). As governor, I will work with the General Assembly to enact legislation to provide new opportunities for K-12 schools and school districts to partner with the outdoor recreation industry. This effort will provide greater outdoor educational opportunities for K-12 students, allowing them to connect with nature, disconnect from their phones, and learn about all the state has to offer through its public lands—as well as expose them to future career paths in the outdoor industries across our state.

### **Colorado Parks and Wildlife**

**To protect our great outdoors and support our outdoor recreation and sportsmen industries, I will work to improve and enhance the state’s partnerships and working relationships with all sectors of our outdoor economies.** Colorado Parks and Wildlife (“CPW”) is one of the most critical state agencies that serves our

citizens, our wildlife, and our outdoors—that’s why it is so important that the CPW board and staff do their critical work while also striving to improve CPW’s services, dialogue, and collaboration with environmental advocates, agricultural industries, and communities throughout the state. As governor, I will direct CPW to focus on successful regional collaborations like that of the [Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area](#) and look to promote and expand such collaborations.

CPW also has complex challenges and important duties laid before it—particularly by the voters’ mandate under [Proposition 114](#) to reintroduce wolves in Colorado. This work has and should always be guided by a commitment to implementing the voters’ will. And importantly, that must include responsibly reintroducing and managing a gray wolf population in our state, and doing so transparently, collaboratively, and honoring the voters’ directive for a fair system to make whole any ranchers whose livestock are harmed by reintroduced wolves.

As governor, these principles will be what guide us:

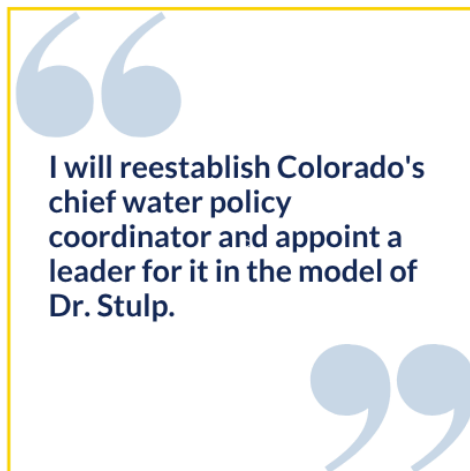
- Ensuring the voters’ directives are carried out—and that all stakeholders and impacted persons can expect transparency and genuine collaboration in how programs are managed;
- Adequate funding to ensure programs are responsibly operated and that compensation for stakeholder losses is fairly distributed when needed;
- Open dialogue with CPW and the governor’s Office will always exist to ensure that all parties and communities have a voice that is listened to and considered in CPW decision-making processes; and
- Ensuring Colorado’s open spaces are available and accessible.

## SAFEGUARDING OUR WATER: Preserving Colorado Water Resources

**Water is Colorado’s most precious natural resource.** It is a linchpin for our way of life, driving our economies and communities. We rely on it for agriculture, outdoor recreation, our future growth, and in our daily lives. How we manage and use our water should not be a zero-sum game—leaving some at an advantage to the detriment of others, especially those who live and work in rural Colorado.

### **Protecting our Water for our Future Prosperity**

**We need to make our state’s focus on water management a top priority—and I will do just that as our next governor.** To ensure we do so, I will reestablish the role of Colorado’s chief water policy coordinator. I will appoint a leader in the model of Dr. John Stulp, who most recently served in this role and was one of our state’s greatest public servants and water experts. The chief water policy coordinator will be given the authority and responsibility to work with all facets of state government, with a charge to be innovative and collaborative on how we thoughtfully manage our water needs, protections, and infrastructure.



This leader will work closely with me, my Cabinet, and other state government leaders to ensure that our state government stays focused on real world, practical solutions to our water challenges. And as part of this focus, we will create opportunities for robust, open and respectful dialogue with all stakeholders, including water users, geographic representatives, and political leaders. We will work diligently to build trust and work collaboratively to find the solutions that work best for our whole state.

**As attorney general, I have protected our scarce water resources for all of us, and defended them from those that attempt to take more than they are entitled to.** I fought back when other states tried to pull more water from

Colorado than permitted. I am now [fighting Nebraska in court](#) to prevent a canal plan to take northeast Colorado water from the South Platte River across state lines, and to stop Nebraska from seizing Colorado farmers' land by eminent domain to do it.

**As governor, I will keep standing up for Colorado's rights as we navigate compliance with Interstate Compacts and new negotiations.** As a state, we must retain full authority to administer and distribute our water in compliance with Interstate Compacts; and as governor, I'll keep doing just that. I will defend Colorado's water from any entity, including other states, attempting to take more than their fair share.

### **Meaningfully Funding our Water Infrastructure**

The Colorado Water Plan was a groundbreaking effort by Gov. Hickenlooper and former Agriculture Commissioner and Chief Water Policy Advisor John Stulp. It is a model for collaboration, and laid out our water future clearly. When released in 2015, [the Plan estimated Colorado's water funding needs to be up to \\$3 billion, at a pace of \\$100 million annually](#)—a daunting figure. In recent years, the General Assembly has made commendable progress in dedicating new streams of revenue to fund the Colorado Water Plan—specifically investing revenue from the legalization

of sports betting, [approved by voters in 2019](#) [Sports betting revenues are rising and exceeding earlier forecasts](#), and with it more dollars are supporting the Water Plan. But it is not nearly enough to meet the challenge.

“As governor, funding of the Colorado Water Plan at the scale it requires will be a top priority.”

When Colorado's budget benefited from significant federal stimulus grants, I [urged](#) the legislature to make a major investment in Colorado's water infrastructure by funding the Water Plan. I made this call [twice in 2021 and once more in 2023 to the Colorado River Drought Task Force](#). Each time, that call went unanswered. Now, we must recover from the current budget cuts caused by Congress passing H.R. 1 and its drastic cuts in federal funds that Colorado relies on. And as the budget recovers, we must make good on this commitment and meaningfully fund the Colorado Water Plan. An investment of major magnitude is needed to support water projects that increase the dependability of groundwater and

surface water supplies in all of Colorado’s river basins in the face of persistent drought, and can assist in wildfire resiliency. **As governor, I will make funding of the Colorado Water Plan at the scale it requires a top priority.**

**Stopping “Buy-and-Dry” Schemes That Devastate Rural Communities**

Too often, we see schemes pushed by speculators and out-of-state interests to take our water for their own profit—schemes that come at the expense of rural and agricultural communities’ jobs and economic prosperity.

When farmers and community leaders in Colorado’s San Luis Valley told me that Denver-area investors sought to divert the Valley’s water to a new metro-area suburban housing development, I [opposed this scheme from the start](#). I was the first elected official to take a stand against it. Like other so-called “buy-and-dry” schemes, this deal would devastate San Luis Valley farms, rural jobs, and the community’s way of life. I’m committed to ensuring this plan does not advance, even if that means heading to court. As governor, I will work hand-in-hand with rural counties when these financiers attempt to take their water. **I will stand firm and object to any buy-and-dry plan that harms rural communities and agricultural economies.**



**Dual Benefit Projects**

**Rather than zero-sum solutions like buy-and-dry schemes, we must focus on, and prioritize, win-win opportunities.** In practice, this means that we must prioritize those projects that provide multiple benefits. For example, to the extent that we encourage and support—not mandate—farmers to grow crops that require less water, we must find ways for them to sell these new crops for a profit. Such support could, for example, involve investment in local processing, or financial incentives for businesses that are creating new products or markets.

The [Rye Resurgence Project](#) is a great example of such a model. Rye uses 40% less water than other similar crops like barley or oats, which are traditional staples in the San Luis Valley.

Understandably, farmers will only switch to growing rye if they can sell it. And so these leaders built a market for Colorado rye by investing in marketing, branding, and personnel to build relationships between farmers and end-users like brewers, distillers, and bakers.

**I will promote the advancement of win-win projects across the state.** We can do that through prioritized state funds, endorsements for federal funding applications, and government support connecting project proponents with NGOs and private partners. And I will work with the federal government to think strategically about how to include initiatives that incentivize farmers to use water wisely into the next federal Farm Bill and other federal initiatives.

***Protecting our Rivers, Streams, and Watersheds from Pollution and Spills***

**We must protect our water quality just as we also protect its supply.** Streams and rivers must be free of pollutants, illegal discharges, and disastrous spills—to protect our drinking water sources and the wildlife and ecosystems that rely on clean water. I will direct our state leaders, including those at the Colorado Department of Health and the Environment (“CDPHE”), to fill the wide gaps created by federal leaders who [are abdicating their roles in protecting our water](#). We will stand

together in Colorado to protect our water quality.

Last year [I supported Eagle County’s lawsuit](#) to stop a dangerous plan by a Utah oil-and-gas company to build a new railroad line in Colorado to ship a quarter million barrels of waxy crude oil—daily—along the Colorado River, our state’s most important drinking water source. I [argued to the U.S. Supreme Court](#) that this project could lead to “leaks, spills, or rail car accidents” that would cause major damage to “the most critical water source for the state’s residential communities, and agricultural and outdoor recreation sectors.” As governor, I will stand firm to do all we can to prevent any such projects that pose unacceptable risks to Colorado streams and rivers. That includes supporting robust enforcement actions against those that deliberately disregard our laws and harm our environment and public health.

To ensure our water quality laws are followed and we have responsible and necessary enforcement and oversight, I will appoint qualified people to the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission that are attuned to and committed to protecting our waters from pollutants and spills—and who are responsive to the communities that are impacted by these risks. And I will also work to build up the capacity of CDPHE to engage in effective monitoring of water quality and to be able to act

quickly and effectively on permitting review decisions.

### **Conserving our Limited Water Resources**

**Climate change-induced drought has dwindled our water supply.** With hotter and drier summer months, snowpack in the mountains is melting far more rapidly. The signs are everywhere, with Lake Mead and Lake Powell [remaining at less than one-third of their total capacity](#). This underscores the climate change challenge that we must tackle, and how we must recognize and respond to the decreasing water supply it has wrought on our state.

**It is critical that Colorado innovate more to encourage greater conservation of our scarce water resources.** That includes water reuse programs, voluntary programs that incentivize crops that require less moisture, and encouraging homeowners to transition to lawns that require little or no irrigation. And to ensure we have more ability to provide “slack capacity” during increasing weather variability, we also need to invest in smart storage opportunities, like the [Terry Ranch Project](#) in Greeley.

Federal efforts must also be part of this solution. As governor, I will fully support and advocate for sound federal legislation to support water conservation—such as [S.154, the](#)

[Colorado River Basin System Conservation Extension Act](#). This commonsense legislation championed by Sen. Hickenlooper provides [compensation to Colorado producers that voluntarily and temporarily reduce their water use](#).

The conversations with the Colorado River Basin states remain crucial to the future of Colorado. As governor, I will ensure that we protect Colorado and work to implement win-win solutions that can point towards a sustainable future. Of the 5.3 million acre-feet of water used in Colorado annually, 4.8 million acre feet (over 90 percent) is used for agricultural purposes—underscoring how critical it is that agriculture be at the table for these discussions. Such solutions will also involve constructive engagement with the federal government. And such engagement must be grounded in an understanding of Colorado’s rights—and never come from a place of fear of fighting to protect them.

The conversations around the future of the Colorado River also require great sensitivity for affected communities on the Western Slope. Not only will I have a dedicated chief water policy coordinator, I will also have a dedicated Director of Rural Affairs and Collaboration, ensuring that such communities will have a seat at the table. Because of my sensitivity for the needs of the Western Slope, I ensured that when the water rights for

the two coal plants in Craig and Hayden were extended, they were only done so on the condition that those water rights

were not subject to transmountain diversions.

## LIVABLE COMMUNITIES AND TRANSPORTATION: 21st Century Transportation Serving All of Colorado

To preserve Colorado's quality of life for those who live here, attract tourists, and remain economically competitive—Colorado must have an affordable, fully multi-modal, customer-focused, and well maintained transportation network. And above all, our transportation network must prioritize safety as it moves people, goods, and information. This is not only critical for Colorado's long-term economic growth and for community health, it also impacts Coloradans' day-to-day commutes and well-being. As governor, I will ensure that Colorado's transportation network is not only preserved but also grows to match our modern needs.

### **Fixing Our Roads: Saving Commuters Money and Reducing Time Lost Sitting in Traffic**

**Congested roads cost Coloradans not only time but their hard-earned money.** Reports show that Coloradans [lose \\$11.4 billion per year](#) from their pocketbooks due to congested highways and deteriorating roads. In Denver, for example, sitting in traffic costs one driver [\\$1,675 per year, and 67 hours in lost time](#). And the average driver loses [\\$831 annually](#) on vehicle costs and maintenance due to poor road conditions. We must reduce

productivity-killing congestion and get Coloradans moving again. And we can't ignore how our eroding roadways take more out of Coloradans' wallets each year.

The recent closure of the [U.S. 50 Bridge connecting Montrose and Gunnison](#)—causing months of closures and choking access to the Town of Gunnison—shows how the loss of one bridge, highway, or road can disrupt daily lives and cause major impacts to a community. The Gunnison bridge closure underscores just how critical it is to maintain and take care of the transportation infrastructure we have. Recent [rankings](#) show Colorado's road quality is falling—a trend we must not allow to continue. We must capitalize on and leverage recent transportation funding accomplishments like H.B. 21-260 to ensure that our infrastructure is well-maintained, safe, and operational. As governor, I will ensure that road and bridge repair—including pothole filling, resurfacing, and new safety improvements—is a top priority.

### **A Robust Multimodal System**

**Colorado's transportation network cannot rely solely on cars.** For a state with our population and topography, we must prioritize moving people, not cars.

For our growing population, we must invest in all modes of transportation. Transit has tremendous benefits not only in congestion reduction but in cost savings to commuters, and in meeting our air quality goals and reducing air pollution. We must continue and expand innovations like the successful Bustang intercity bus service, bus rapid transit routes, dedicated transit and ride-sharing lanes, and rail connections along the Front Range and mountain communities to provide clean, affordable, and fully connected options. And we must do so in a way that captures the specific needs of each region and community.

“  
Transportation is not just about cars on the road. We must be nimble, multimodal and capture the needs of each region and community.  
”

Transit ridership has had challenges post-pandemic, with Regional Transportation District (“RTD”) ridership at almost [40% of pre-COVID levels](#). As governor, I will partner with RTD to work to bring ridership to capacity. We will see the fullest benefit in congestion reduction and air quality improvement

by investing in buses and trains. I will also push for greater connectivity between Bustang routes and RTD lines as well as support greater innovation and collaboration between rural transit agencies, RTD, and the Colorado Department of Transportation (“CDOT”) to provide full connectivity and more options for all Colorado commuters. As part of this, we will make sure we think through and support innovative last-mile solutions like car shares, free connectors, and strategically located bike rentals.

**And as the Trump Administration pulls back federal transit grants and other critical transportation funds, we must continue to push back.** That’s why I [sued U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy for unlawfully withholding transportation funds](#) by attaching coercive and illegal requirements on Colorado. But the state should also develop and deploy strategies to ensure Colorado’s rural transit agencies—those that rely on federal support the most—aren’t harmed. In the absence of federal leadership, the state must step up more to ensure rural transit agencies don’t backslide in transit services offered.

***Electrifying our Transportation System***

**The transportation sector nationally accounts for almost 30% of the United States’ greenhouse gas**

**emissions.** We must continue to shift our state’s transportation away from combustion technology towards clean, higher efficiency electric vehicles, both personal and commercial. My administration will do this both by continuing to [fight for the federal funding](#) we have been promised, but also through state purchase incentive programs.

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**Electrifying our transportation network is critical to mitigating emissions and climate impacts.**  
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But electric vehicles only work if the charging infrastructure exists to support them. To make sure that our state maintains and expands its charging infrastructure, I will partner with homebuilders to support in-home charging options, seek collaborative opportunities to promote businesses that provide office based charging stations, and work to expand charging opportunities at truck stops and bus depots across the state. In addition, I will coordinate with other states across the mountain west to make sure that our highways and cross border roads have

thoughtfully placed charging stations so that the western road trip is easily doable based upon today’s charging ranges. This will require collaboration and coordination with other Western governors to ensure charging infrastructure doesn’t stop at the Colorado border.

**Making Good on Commitments to Coloradans**

**Too many taxpayers have lost faith in government because it continues to fall short on its promises.** Boulder County taxpayers have been paying for a rail connection to Denver for years, yet [this rail line is still not a reality](#). It’s time to get shovels in the ground and deliver on this decades-old promise. As governor, I will prioritize and advance recent achievements to deliver this line. And I will push for greater support and collaboration between CDOT, RTD, and the Front Range Passenger Rail Authority to deliver on this commitment to the taxpayers.

**Safe and Walkable Streets and Neighborhoods**

**We must prioritize a transportation network that supports safe and walkable communities**—one in which traffic accidents are reduced, transit is incorporated in design planning, and people and children can safely walk, ride, or bike to work and school. We should build on and further advance

innovative design and planning concepts and funding, to build the roads we need that safely accommodate all modes of transportation—one that minimizes accidents and reduces injuries, improves and widens sidewalks and crossings, and advances safer streets in our communities.

**Protecting our Air Quality and Committing to Environmental Justice**

**We cannot ignore the impact that transportation has on our air, communities, and quality of life.** The [top source of emissions harming our air is transportation](#). Any path to clean air must include combating harmful tailpipe emissions that dirties our air. Colorado must continue its progress—investing in greater incentives for ride-shares, high-occupancy vehicle lanes, ensuring transportation planning principles incorporate clean options like biking and walking, and building new dedicated transit and bus lanes. And when the [federal government stepped back from supporting clean electric vehicles](#), I challenged the federal government, suing the Trump Administration for [illegally withholding electric vehicle grants from our state](#) and again when it moved to [illegally end electric vehicle sales and tailpipe emission reductions targets](#). With the positions being taken by the Trump Administration, Colorado must step up and lean in even more—by providing robust incentives to promote

emissions-free vehicles and EV charging stations throughout the state.

**People living near congested highways [suffer from greater health risks, including asthma and lung-related disease](#).** That’s one of many reasons why environmental justice principles should be paramount in transportation planning processes and decision-making. As governor, I will prioritize investments in air quality testing, mitigation, congestion reduction measures, and other strategies to protect the health and quality of life of those living near roads and highways.



This also includes homes and K-12 schools adjacent to small airports and flight paths. Residents living in communities surrounding local airports have pleaded to the federal government and state to help curb incessant airplane engine noise and harms from outdated and dangerous leaded fuels used by aircraft—[shown to result in high blood](#)

[lead levels in children who live near airports](#). I worked with the sponsors in writing and strongly support [H.B. 24-1235](#) to reduce airport impacts on communities. But that's not enough—we can and should do more to ensure these impacts are addressed—by updating state laws, supporting the regional airports' transition to unleaded fuels, and pushing Congress and the federal government which oversees aviation laws to swiftly address these harms. And the Colorado Division of Aeronautics must be more than a champion of the aviation industry, but also a partner to communities and people struggling with aviation impacts—working to assist in resolving conflicts and promoting safer airport operations that minimize impacts on peoples' quality of life.

### **Engaging People in a Planning Process That Works for All**

**Our transportation system must work for everyone and for all communities.** Part of sound planning is the principle that what works well for one community may not in another. An urban community's top need may be greater transit options, yet a rural community's top need may be wider highway shoulders for safety. We will follow this principle so that each community is supported to achieve its own needs and challenges. As governor, I will work *with* communities as partners to accomplish our goals.

But collaboration and planning doesn't end when a transportation project starts. Projects that cause construction-related impacts like road detours, sidewalk closures, noise, and traffic delays can severely harm businesses and neighborhoods adjacent to a project. This merits ongoing communication between CDOT and those impacted to minimize any such impacts during a project to ensure businesses can continue to thrive and people can get where they need to go.

**As governor, I will also ensure that Colorado's transportation planning relies on the bottom-up approach envisioned in our laws.** That means capitalizing on the expertise of people representing local communities, the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute Tribes, metropolitan planning organizations, transportation planning regions, and the Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee among others. These partners must have a strong voice and leadership role in crafting Colorado's transportation priorities. This open, public input-based, community-driven approach works best for prioritizing our limited infrastructure dollars. As governor, I will ensure all stakeholders are partners empowered in our decision-making processes.

### **Leveraging the Highway System to Achieve Broadband in Every Colorado Community**

Broadband continues to be unavailable in too many Colorado homes—with [100,000 locations still lacking adequate Internet service](#). In the 21st Century, it's unacceptable to have families

unconnected from reliable Internet service. As governor, I will reduce red tape or hurdles in the way of broadband infrastructure from reaching those who need it, including being placed safely in highway rights-of-way.

## REIMAGINING STATE GOVERNMENT: Partnering with Local Governments & Supporting Community Development

**For the state government to function effectively, it must work hand-in-hand with local government partners.** City, town, county, and special district elected officials all have the benefit of being closest to their communities and knowing their residents' issues and needs best. As governor, I will always listen to local communities' needs and concerns. And I will be a responsive partner for them.

**The principles that will guide my and all state work with local governments will be to listen, partner, and collaborate.**

### *Collaboration and Partnership*

**As part of my commitment on how the state will work with our local partners, on my first day in office, I will sign an executive order requiring that state government agencies always interact collaboratively and constructively with local government leaders, seek their input, and have meaningful dialogues *before* taking actions.** This executive order will be a commitment to partnership between state and local governments—and it will be a standard that will apply to all state departments, agencies, and the Governor's Office.

As attorney general, this is the approach I took when it came to investing the almost \$900 million in opioid settlement funds recovered from those that fueled the opioid epidemic. Partnering with local government elected officials, I worked hand-in-hand with local partners to develop a first-in-class framework to spend the opioid settlement funds. This outcome—recognized by [John Oliver](#) and the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health as a model for other states to follow—was reached through a bottom-up approach and a commitment to transparency and cooperation to invest these critical dollars to help the state recover from the opioid epidemic. That approach—one of dialogue, listening, partnership, and collaboration—is what I will always take in the Governor's Office. And I will require the same by all state agencies.

### *Supporting Local Government Needs and Helping with Local Fiscal Challenges*

**The state should marshal its efforts to ensure Colorado receives its fair share of federal funds from what our citizens pay in federal taxes.** Unfortunately, many local governments with smaller budgets and staff sizes are unable to pursue federal funding opportunities simply due to their

constrained resources and smaller staff. As governor, I will expand the mission of the [Colorado Office of Federal Funds and Strategic Initiatives](#) to support and assist local governments in identifying federal funds and pursuing those opportunities to support local needs.

“As governor, I will expand the mission of the Colorado Office of Federal Funds and Strategic Initiatives to help local governments identify and pursue federal funding opportunities to support local needs.”

“The state should not impose new costs at the local level without providing funds to meet the new obligations.”

**Equally important to supporting local governments in leveraging federal resources is preventing state-imposed unfunded mandates.**

For state laws to be implemented by local governments, the state should not impose new costs at the local level without providing sufficient funds for them to meet any new obligations and responsibilities. As governor, I will honor the state’s [legal obligation to not impose unfunded mandates on local governments](#). And I will have this principle front of mind when legislation is delivered to the Governor’s Office to be signed into law.

**Community Development**

**As governor, I will support and sign legislation that helps local governments provide the critical services they need for their communities.** This includes community investments like public safety resources and training; funding for safe, walkable streets so kids can get to school safely; reduced congestion and local transit options so people can get to work on time; and revitalizing downtown areas to attract businesses and employees to return to and enjoy their city centers and restaurants

**The state can and should play a role in supporting local governments’ efforts to build livable communities that serve their residents.** As governor, I will support legislation that advances these principles. And I will champion smart-growth policies—ensuring that our communities

have the tools and resources to grow and change to support their residents and neighborhoods while keeping the Colorado we love.

I will also partner with local governments on policies to support teachers, first responders, police, and firefighters—professionals that are core

to their communities. As part of that commitment, I will push and support meaningful policies to allow these professionals to be able to live in the communities they serve. I will also work to use the resources of the state to help build a talent pipeline for these crucial positions through our [ColoradoCorps](#).

## TRIBAL RELATIONS: Partnering with the Ute Mountain and Southern Ute Tribes

**The State must do better to meet its obligation to work and partner with the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute Tribes as the sovereign nations and partners that they are.** As governor, I will ensure that state agencies work with the Tribes as valued partners and co-equal entities.

As part of that commitment, as governor:

- On my first day in office, I will sign an executive order committing the state government Executive Branch to partnering with the Tribes. This includes directing that in all interactions with the Tribes and their representatives that state agencies and state employees respect and interact with them according to their sovereign nation status and with the priority this rightfully entails.

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On day one I will sign and executive order to partner with the Tribes.  
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- To ensure that Tribal matters are raised and considered at the highest levels of government and policy discussions, I will elevate the director of the Colorado Commission on Indian Affairs to Cabinet-level status.

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- I will sign an executive order that requires that all state agencies that have interactions or partner projects with the Tribes must utilize at least one dedicated and trained tribal liaison.
- I will fully support the implementation of [S.B. 22-150](#) by the Department of Public Safety and the Office of the Liaison for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives to reduce this violence and bring perpetrators to justice. And I will sign further legislation to build upon these efforts to curb the alarming violence against people of indigenous backgrounds.
- I will support the principles of [S.B. 25-061](#) regarding the sovereignty of the Tribes in how the General Assembly enacts laws. And I will not support any legislation that is vague in its application to Tribal entities or lands, or fails to respect and honor the Tribes' sovereignty.

## SERVING PEOPLE: A Government that Works for Coloradans

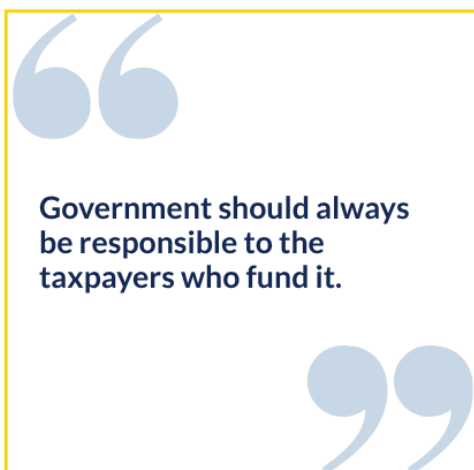
Colorado's state government is complex, managing services from health care and wildfire mitigation to air quality and snow plowing. Coloradans rely on it daily for basic needs, services, and safety. They have a right to expect good results.

As attorney general, I am the chief executive of the Department of Law, a large, multi-faceted state agency. I have also held senior leadership positions in non-profit, federal government, and higher education organizations. I have deep, wide ranging executive experience, and as AG, have a unique, comprehensive vantage point on all aspects of Colorado state government. As AG, I represent every state agency and the governor, Treasurer, and Secretary of State in all legal matters. And I serve as the state's top lawyer to defend our rights. I know the state workforce, how the state government operates, and the laws that govern it. As attorney general, I manage a budget of over \$100 million and a workforce of roughly 650 employees. And our department has—for all three cycles during my term—received the top engagement score of any department in state government. **I am prepared and ready for the work ahead to lead our state government as governor on day one.**

**As governor, I will drive top-level responsiveness, effectiveness, professionalism, fiscal discipline, transparency, and accountability across all aspects of the government—so taxpayers get the best value for their tax dollars.**

### **Making Government Responsive to the People**

All of us have known what it's like to not look forward to interacting with a government agency—whether bracing for an endless wait at the DMV for a driver's license renewal; expecting to be placed on hold for hours before being able to talk to a government official; waiting weeks or months to get authorizations required for a business; or reporting a road pothole and wondering whether a response will ever come back.



**Our state government should always be responsive to the taxpayers who fund it.** On day one as governor, I will sign an executive order directing that any taxpayer who calls, emails, or contacts an agency must receive a returned call or response within 48 hours. We will make citizen engagement with state government more efficient, improve response times, and find efficiencies. To make this a focus, I will sign an executive order establishing a team within the Governor’s Office dedicated to improving state operations and performance management .

The responsiveness of our state government to the people of Colorado is what Coloradans have a right to expect. To deliver on that promise, I will improve government performance through innovation and a focus on results.

**Required Regulatory Rule Reviews**

**Government regulations should be necessary, understandable, able to be complied with, transparent, and not excessive.** These principles guided the [Colorado Privacy Act rulemaking](#) that I led as attorney general. As governor, I will issue an executive order on day one requiring all Executive branch rulemakings to follow these principles. These principles include a commitment to listening, reflection, continuous improvement, and transparency.

As in any business, the state should consistently evaluate the effectiveness of its rules and update or eliminate outdated rules that are no longer useful. In 2012, Governor Hickenlooper issued [Executive Order D 2012-002](#), requiring all cabinet agencies to comprehensively review each and every one of their rules. The review included updating rules to make them more readable and understandable, reducing and eliminating regulatory burdens no longer necessary, and repealing rules that no longer served a useful purpose. On day one as governor, I will sign an executive order calling for a rigorous regulatory review and ensuring that Colorado’s regulations are done in a sensible manner where the benefits outweigh the costs.

**A State Workforce Rooted in Nonpartisan Professionalism**

**Colorado taxpayers deserve a high performing state government with top talent that is hired, trained, and retained based on quality.** As governor, I will ensure that government hiring practices prioritize merit, experience, and qualifications—not partisanship.

“  
**As governor, I will ensure that government hiring practices prioritize merit, experience, and qualifications - not partisanship.**  
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I will also be a committed partner with Colorado WINS, which represents the state’s classified workforce. In this partnership, the Governor’s Office will have a regular dialogue to exchange ideas on how best to support and grow qualified public servants and to make state employment a career path that is sought after and valued. This will include developing creative strategies on recruitment to under-staffed positions, a dialogue on how to ensure effective training strategies, and a commitment to learning from those employees on the front lines.

And as we build this top quality state workforce, I will be committed to ensuring the state’s workforce reflects the broad diversity of our state so that the full range of views is represented. This includes rural and urban voices, people of color, persons from the disabilities community, immigrants, and diverse viewpoints. Only by hearing from the full range of opinions, perspectives, and backgrounds can state government truly serve our people.

**Tackling Colorado’s Budget Challenges**

We are at a crossroads with our state budget. In the 2025 regular legislative session, the state had to make difficult reductions to ensure the state’s budget was balanced, a requirement in our state constitution. This included, for example, [delaying and cutting funds](#) for transportation and infrastructure projects, slashing the Revitalizing Main Street Program, and reducing funding for K-12 bullying prevention initiatives.

Unfortunately, these challenges were further exacerbated by reckless federal spending policies from Congress in H.R. 1—which contained tax policies and health care cuts that harm Colorado. This required significant program cuts to Colorado’s state budget through a [2025 special session](#) and subsequent executive actions, cuts that are expected to continue in the 2026 regular session. For the state’s budget to

recover and remain solvent and healthy, particularly during economic recessions, I will take added steps as governor.

- ***Procurement and Contracting Updates.*** To lead us through the difficult budget years to come, I will ensure that the state government is fiscally disciplined to get the best value for each and every taxpayer dollar. With the volume of state services and purchases, one core way to do this is through updating and streamlining procurement processes that leverage competitive bidding for the benefit of Colorado taxpayers.
- ***Program Evaluation and Responsiveness.*** To find efficiencies, I will direct state agencies to identify under-utilized programs and services as well as programs that are not delivering results, with the goal of redirecting scarce resources to services that are critical to Coloradans. With the charge to repurpose existing resources, a Program Evaluation and Responsiveness Team in the Governor's Office will lead the review and analysis of state programs, offices, and services for effectiveness. We will drive for smarter investments of taxpayer dollars by repurposing funds to

Coloradans' most pressing needs.

- ***Cracking Down on Fraud.*** As governor, I will work to ensure all taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and lawfully. To that end, I will promote and partner with the [Office of the State Auditor Fraud Hotline](#) and ensure any allegations of government fraud are fully investigated. And if violations are found, using the [Colorado False Claims Act](#)—which I wrote as attorney general and championed at the legislature—perpetrators will be held accountable and defrauded taxpayer monies returned.
- ***Updating Constitutional Restrictions on the Budget that Limit Responsible Saving and Investments in our Future.*** Efficiencies alone will not address the state's fiscal constraints. We have a balanced budget mandate in our state constitution that requires state leaders to be sound stewards of our finances. Current law dictated by TABOR imposes constraints on top of that requirement, creating unwise and unworkable conflicts. In bad economic years, we must make painful cuts that hurt our most vulnerable; yet, in good economic years, with higher revenue coming in, we're prevented from

saving or investing these surplus dollars for our future. It's time we fix these problems so we can invest in and plan responsibly for our future. As governor, I will work to build support, in a grassroots, bottom-up effort to change our constitutional limits on how we fund our core priorities and on how we are restricted from making critical investments for our future. We will consider and evaluate a range of options, such as allowing the state to keep and transparently invest excess dollars we collect in good economic times. By engaging voters in this bottom-up dialogue, we can identify the best possible changes for our future and build support for what the voters are most likely to accept. Unlike top-down approaches, this bottom-up strategy will best position us to develop the best approach at the ballot box.

- ***Protecting Colorado's General Fund Reserve for Tough Times.*** While the economy has had years of solid performance, the state must plan for future recessions. We must be ready to ensure critical state services and safety net programs continue during revenue downturns—particularly services for the most vulnerable and core

government functions like health care, K-12 education, and higher education. Best practices call for setting aside [reserves amounting to 2 months \(16.7 percent\) of annual expenses](#). The General Assembly and current Administration have made excellent strides in building up the current [General Fund reserve to 15 percent](#) prior to the recent special session. Now that the state is faced with Congress-induced budgetary pressures (and not from recession-caused revenue shortfalls), it's of even greater importance to resist the urge to balance the budget using critical reserve monies. As governor, I will stand firm against using reserve funds except at difficult economic times when people rely on government support the most.

### ***Ensuring Government Always Follows and Upholds Our Laws***

As your attorney general, my guiding principle has been to always uphold the rule of law. This means challenging those who act outside the law and hurt Colorado—with zero consideration of politics. That included [supporting a lawsuit against the Biden Administration](#) when it approved a project that could harm the Colorado River and Western Slope residents, and [suing the Trump](#)

[White House each time it, or Trump cabinet members, acted above the law.](#)

This is a core principle that I will stand for as governor. And I will hold the state government and its political subdivisions accountable to our laws as well—just as I did when my office went to the [Colorado Supreme Court court to stop Weld County from drawing new commission district lines](#) for its members—lines that unlawfully diluted the voting power of Greeley minority communities while using a process that was not transparent and violated state laws. I will always hold our state government to that same principle.

### **Innovation in State Government**

Colorado's government is tasked with leading the state through some of the most complex challenges facing residents, businesses, and organizations. That's why our state government must be creative, innovative, and change-minded.



As governor, **I will establish a Colorado Innovation Team, led by a Chief Innovation Officer, to deploy data-driven and responsive solutions to Colorado's most pressing issues.**

This work will start with a focus on housing affordability in collaboration with our new Chief Housing Officer and Housing Innovation and Coordination Officer. This team will work, in a variety of domains, to elevate collaborative solutions and break through institutional inertia with visible solutions. As governor, I will leverage creative and innovative thinking in state government to tackle our toughest challenges.