



## Listening Tour Synthesis of Ideas

### Listening & Learning to be Informed & Poised to Act Quickly

In March and April of 2021, CO Governor Polis, in collaboration with State Treasurer Young, State House & Senate Leadership and legislators from both sides of the aisle convened a series of meetings to hear directly from Coloradans from across the State's diverse communities, industries and areas of interest.

The state leaders had a simple yet ambitious goal: Listen to and learn from thousands of Coloradans with unique perspectives and expertise to inform and help focus the use of state and federal stimulus funds.

---

*April 23, 2021 Report from the Build Back Stronger  
Listening Tour held March 28<sup>th</sup> – April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021*

---



## Report Contents

Introduction & Report Overview .....	2
The Report .....	3
Meeting Notes .....	3
Addenda .....	3
Themes & Ideas.....	4
Recovery & Stimulus .....	4
Systemic Transformation .....	4
Budget & Programmatic Gaps .....	4
The Listening Tour.....	5
Regional Meetings .....	5
Audience Specific Meetings .....	5
What We Heard .....	6
Meeting Summaries.....	6
Addendum A: OSPB Presentation .....	21



## Introduction & Report Overview

In April of 2021, as Colorado state leaders continued their work to craft a stimulus bill as part of the economic recovery and officials in Washington, D.C. worked on the details of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), a significant challenge was unfolding: How to maximize the impact of those funds. As part of preparing for that challenge, CO Governor Polis, in collaboration with State Treasurer Young, State House & Senate Leadership and legislators from both sides of the aisle convened a series of meetings to hear directly from Coloradans from across the State's diverse communities, industries and areas of interest. The state leaders had a simple yet ambitious goal: Listen to and learn from thousands of Coloradans with unique perspectives and expertise to inform and help focus the use of state and federal stimulus funds.

The Build Back Stronger (BBS) listening tour was designed to gather this input and to help state leaders prioritize spending of the approximately \$3.9bn in ARPA funds over which the state has a level of discretion (within federal guidelines). Build Back Stronger listening sessions were scheduled across seven geographical regions and ten additional audience or topic specific sessions were held. To support the independent facilitation of the listening sessions, the Office of the Governor partnered with the Keystone Policy Center, to manage and facilitate the sessions.

The listening sessions were conducted via Zoom with options for dialing in by phone and to watch live-streams of the sessions on multiple online platforms including YouTube and Facebook. Each session included welcoming remarks from state leaders including the Governor, Treasurer and state legislators followed by a presentation on state and federal stimulus packages by leaders from the Colorado Office of State Planning and Budget (OSPb) (See Addendum A for the presentation). Following the presentations, the majority of the time in each session was dedicated to listening and learning from attendees who were split into multiple smaller breakout groups.

During the breakout sessions, participants offered their thoughts on three questions:

- *What is one big idea you think could contribute the most to the economic recovery?*
- *What are the top 3 investments you think should be prioritized and how do you see them leveraging Colorado's (or regional) unique contexts to support economic recovery?*
- *If we maximize our use of federal + state programs and Colorado's assets, what should the world look like for Coloradans in 2-5 years and beyond?*

These questions were selected and designed to help state leaders understand, from each participant's and each group's perspectives, how to leverage the stimulus funds to spur the recovery, what types of bigger system level changes were sought by the public and the aspirational vision of the future Coloradans have and believe progress toward reaching can be made by strategically investing the funds.

## The Report

This report is a synthesis and summary of the ideas generated during the BBS listening sessions and a collection of ideas submitted. The report does not attempt to make recommendations, to score or conduct any type of assessment of any individual idea. To the extent possible, this report does offer the perspective of the independent team who facilitated the breakout sessions on the dominant themes, specific ideas offered and hopes for Colorado's economic recovery and future. To the extent possible, an overview of themes and ideas is offered for each listening session and for the tour as a whole.

## Meeting Notes

To provide maximum transparency, the notes from each listening session are available in a separate Addendum B. While the notes have been subject to an abbreviated proofread, they are otherwise raw and unedited to maintain integrity of the accuracy and completeness of information being shared directly with state leaders and all Coloradans. To respect privacy, personally identifying information is not included.

## Addenda

In addition to the opportunity to participate in the BBS listening sessions, participants and members of the public were invited to submit written comments via email. More than 20 individuals and organizations submitted ideas that ranged from short emails with a list of ideas or questions to formal organizational letters and reports. All of those are available separately as Addendum C.

## Themes & Ideas

Throughout the BBS Listening Tour, there were topics, ideas and aspirations for the future that were raised so frequently and with such similarity in both the perceived current problem or shortfall and the desired end state such as the availability and accessibility of childcare that it is appropriate to identify them as themes. Similarly, there were specific ideas that emerged in multiple if not most sessions in various forms that it is appropriate to highlight those in this report. All ideas raised are captured in the notes contained in Addendum B and submitted comments and letters in Addendum C.

While the conversations during the listening sessions were informal and participants were not asked to label or categorize their ideas, throughout the nearly 20 sessions and in briefings with state leaders, the facilitators found that the ideas and recommendations fell into three general categories:

### Recovery & Stimulus

A number of ideas and needs were identified specifically aimed at jump-starting the economy in regions, specific industries and the state as a whole. These ideas ranged from incentives to employers for hiring or rehiring and a wide variety of infrastructure construction projects to promotion of Colorado's conference centers, tourism destinations and restaurants and direct relief to families and individuals struggling to meet financial challenges or find employment.

### Systemic Transformation

In discussions of the once-in-a-generation nature of the funds, many participants shared ideas about utilizing some portion of the funds to make investments to transform systems or address challenges that state budgets have not been able to adequately tackle. These ideas included a comprehensive transformation of education from early childhood through K-12 and higher education to making major investments in multi-modal transportation and to significant investment to relieve Colorado's housing crunch particularly to address affordable housing and disparities in home ownership.

### Budget & Programmatic Gaps

A number of ideas were raised that spoke primarily to the value of certain programs but the need to more fully fund or expand the programs. Numerous participants raised concerns about the ability to adequately fund a variety of programs ranging from behavioral and mental health to community economic transitions, transportation infrastructure and supports for homeless populations and transitions.

Throughout all conversations and categories noted above, participants raised the issues of equity and expanded opportunity. Some ideas raised like targeting childcare supports to lower income and working poor urban and rural communities alike or targeting hiring incentives to communities hardest hit were specific to addressing equity and opportunity. Other consistent input from participants provided strong desires for state leaders to consider these issues in every investment of stimulus funds and to ensure spending narrows the inequities whenever and wherever possible.

Within each of the above, participants identified opportunities (and needs) for investments of three types:

## Things

From building roads to improving the condition of heavily trafficked parks, building childcare facilities and affordable housing to the state's agricultural supply chain system and regional water treatment facilities, participants saw significant need for some funds to be used for capital expenses, construction and hard asset acquisition or development.

## Systems

Participants recognized that many of the issues needing investment or transformation require addressing underlying systems. Discussions ranged from how schools educate children to how funds for housing or start-up businesses are allocated and managed and bigger system change like in healthcare, mental health and the support of homeless transition services.

## People

At the heart of every conversation were people and the need to make both direct and indirect investments in our people. Ideas ranged from job training or upskilling and access to education to substance abuse counseling, access to healthcare, destigmatizing mental health and providing direct support to Coloradans who have been historically marginalized and those who were hit particularly hard by the economic downturn during the pandemic.

## The Listening Tour

### Regional Meetings

- Pueblo & Southern Colorado
- Western Slope
- Northern Colorado
- Denver Metro North
- Denver Metro South
- Colorado Springs
- Eastern Plains

### Audience Specific Meetings

- ❖ Events, Dining & Tourism
- ❖ African American Community
- ❖ Workforce
- ❖ Clean Energy & Conservation
- ❖ Local Governments
- ❖ Quality of Life
- ❖ Latino Community
- ❖ Rural & Agricultural
- ❖ Healthcare, Human Services & Behavioral Health
- ❖ Asian American & Pacific Islander

## What We Heard

Among the dominant themes with recurrence across most if not all meetings were the following:

- Consumer Confidence: Coloradans & Tourism
- Job creation & Business growth: Biz incentives, Job skill training
- Transportation: Roads, rail, multi-modal
- Water: Storage, treatment, usage
- Broadband: Education & business
- Affordable Housing including workforce housing. More inventory, less red tape
- Early Childhood Education & Childcare: Physical facilities + personnel
- K-12 Education: Teaching profession, Learning Loss, Facilities
- Higher Ed: College access, adult upskilling/reskilling
- Behavioral Health & Mental Health
- Support for Small Businesses: Technology, grants, pooling of support services
- Clean Energy Economy: Infrastructure/utility & businesses
- Agricultural Industry: Supply chain, farm ownership
- Environmental: Restoring heavily used lands, expanding metro parks/trails
- Equity: In targeting of all spending, especially education, small biz, childcare

While most ideas identified the challenge and offered generally high-level solutions, participants did also offer specific areas in need of investment and some specific program ideas. Below are some of the specific ideas offered that generated substantive support in the group discussions.

- Consumer Confidence
  - Local & national PR Campaign about CO's business status (open)
  - Direct investment in Main Street revitalizations
  - Full, ready access to WiFi for remote learning, working etc. in our key corridors
- Jobs
  - Incentives for employers to hire & partner w/re-skilling entities in lower income areas
  - Clean energy jobs & incentives
  - Use tuition free certifications as eco devo tool – tech, manufacturing, CDL licenses
  - Strong, targeted support for small biz & rehiring incentives
- Transportation
  - Front range rail investment
  - I-25, particularly in Pikes Peak/CO Springs Region

- Education
  - Facility Upgrades
  - Tuition free Higher Ed for 2-3yrs in future jobs, light manufacturing, entrepreneurship
  - Targeted support of community colleges & other providers of credentials, certificates
  - FAFSA completion support
  - Expanded access to ECE/child care - state developed facilities, fast tracked licensing
- Housing
  - Expanded access and inventory of affordable housing
  - Targeted programs to increase home ownership
  - Transitional housing as foundation for security, independence
  - Workforce housing as key component to continued business growth
- Environment
  - Conservation Corps to rebuild
  - Improved fire mitigation
- Equity
  - Targeted investments in housing, transitions in lower income urban & rural
  - Startup funds, education improvements, access to tech in underserved communities
  - Major investment in homeless transition supports
- Tourism
  - National PR to visitors, event planners, corporate
  - Pooling of resources to support smaller towns
- Economic Development
  - Workforce training – major effort in partnership w/biz leaders, higher ed
  - Small business lending, grants and access to financing for start-up and growth
  - Education: Childcare, K-12 & Higher Ed
  - Partnerships with 4yr IHEs & Community Colleges to foster business creation, start-up
  - Community transitions (coal, mining)
  - Targeted support and relief for unemployment insurance
  - Support for 1 industry towns f/tourism to all in eco devo & expansion
  - Strategic investment in ag supply chain including processing, manufacturing & transportation
- Clean Energy
  - Invest in EV infrastructure
  - Clean Energy grid & infrastructure



## Meeting Summaries

The following provides a high-level summary of the conversations and ideas from each of the BBS Listening Tour meetings. With 125+ participants in all sessions and many with closer to 200, there was often limited time for each specific idea. As noted earlier, the intention of the listening sessions and this report are not to score or identify consensus but rather to capture as many ideas as possible and, to the extent practical and accurate, highlight where there were common themes across meetings or even across the multiple breakout groups in each meeting. Where ideas are highlighted below does not imply unanimity of support or even consensus but rather that the idea(s) were surfaced by multiple participants in multiple groups.

## Pueblo & Southern Colorado Regional Meeting

### *Dominant Themes*

Themes common across groups included:

- Transportation
- Broadband Access
- Parks & Outdoor Space
- Job Training & Upskilling
- Daycare/Childcare
- Education

### *Region Specific Issues & Ideas*

In addition to issues that applied statewide, regional issues included:

- Local trails and parks;
- Local transportation systems including electric vehicle charging, public transportation & Hwy 12;
- Workforce housing
- Fire mitigation

### *Vision of the Future*

In describing the future if Colorado's leaders maximize the use stimulus funds, participants said:

- State and nation is saying "Why is Pueblo so far ahead!?!?!"
- Frontline rail north and south from Trinidad to Fort Collins to reduce traffic on I-25;
- A Data Center in Southern Colorado, housing development and more jobs;
- Secure our water future. Infrastructure, educating our public;
- Less separation between communities in Colorado – a more statewide approach;
- More equitable funding across the state in general. No matter where you sit on diversity scale, you have a living wage and access to health care;
- Everything covered in art;
- Food supply chains – state offsetting expenditures during food shortages and distribution.

## Western Slope Regional Meeting

### *Dominant Themes*

Themes common across groups included:

- Workforce Training & Recruitment;
- Affordable Housing
- Mental Health Supports
- Broadband Access
- Education

### *Region Specific Issues & Ideas*

In addition to issues that applied statewide, regional issues included:

- Agricultural supply chain and infrastructure;
- Funding for non-profits and community organizations;
- Small business supports;
- Aviation workforce for regional airports;
- Community health centers.

### *Vision of the Future*

In describing the future if Colorado's leaders maximize the use stimulus funds, participants said:

- All Coloradans will have the opportunity to upgrade skills, participate in the evolving economy by accessing job skill training – adult basic ed, technical skills;
- Well skilled workforce meeting the needs of small business and providing new jobs;
- Every single person has access to the services they need (telehealth, education);
- People would be living successfully, housing would be affordable;
- Be on a pathway to equity.

## Northern Colorado Regional Meeting

### *Dominant Themes*

Themes common across groups included:

- Broadband Infrastructure;
- Childcare & Afterschool Programs;
- Roads & Transportation;
- Job skills and Upskilling;
- Housing.

### *Region Specific Issues & Ideas*

In addition to issues that applied statewide, regional issues included:

- Higher Education Access & Enrollment;
- Business incubation & startup supports;
- Land & water conservation, use

### *Vision of the Future*

In describing the future if Colorado's leaders maximize the use stimulus funds, participants said:

- Public lands and mountains are vibrant and not overrun;

- New businesses will be community's lifeblood – but help support the businesses that cannot operate because of restrictions (event centers, etc.) to help bridge the gap;
- Direct payments to citizens to spend at local small businesses;
- Colorado is positioned to succeed in future;
- Economic prosperity through higher education.

## Denver Metro North Regional Meeting

### *Dominant Themes*

Themes common across groups included:

- Construction Projects
- Transportation + Public Transit
- Higher Education
- State Worker Supports
- K-12 Education
- Housing
- Parks & Environment
- Mental & Behavioral Health

### *Region Specific Issues & Ideas*

In addition to issues that applied statewide, regional issues included:

- Support for farmers, including next generation and younger farmers;
- Support for non-profits and charitable food infrastructure;
- Clean energy industry & infrastructure;
- Workforce development and skill training;
- Technology in government offices.

### *Vision of the Future*

In describing the future if Colorado's leaders maximize the use stimulus funds, participants said:

- If we get this right, we will have a generation who are truly engaged locally and nationally. People who are able to pursue their passions – whether that's public transit to work a job or the resources to start their own biz instead of leaving for CA or elsewhere;
- Kids have opportunities within their own community to work, live, and play post graduation; they can get livable wages and affordable housing, and jobs in line with passions;
- CO will be on the leading edge of health, economic sufficiency and real equity in these and in issue like food insecurity;
- There is a competition on this continent for best place to live. It's real and we can compete. We can make this the best place to live FOR ALL people. Crushing it in education. Our children will grow to be powerful. Business will come here;
- If we get it right with education, that will be the key to everything. Our kids will be able to compete, to lead and we will attract national and global biz here.

## Denver Metro South Regional Meeting

### *Dominant Themes*

Themes common across groups included:

- Education
- Childcare
- Small Business Support
- Mental Health
- Transportation

### *Region Specific Issues & Ideas*

In addition to issues that applied statewide, regional issues included:

- Mental health programs and access in schools;
- Address childcare deserts;
- Broadband equitable access;
- Workforce housing access;
- Rewarding frontline workers;
- Apprenticeship and skilled trade education.

### *Vision of the Future*

In describing the future if Colorado's leaders maximize the use stimulus funds, participants said:

- A Colorado where everybody who wants to get to work can get a good job. Pay off the debts we are creating. You're able to get to the mountains, state parks, open spaces locally. Good quality of life
- Building back better is dismantling systemic racism which is not just police brutality: it's vaccine equity, education, environmental, access to health,
- A more fair, just, equitable CO where people have good paying jobs, can own a house (which you can pass to your family), education... A CO where people feel they are welcome.
- A CO that truly emulates our belief affordable housing, sustainable energy, climate, healthcare,
- Climate of civility, care and concern for people in our state. I'm grateful that incidents of prejudice have been few for me but I'm very aware that has not always been the case across the state. We now hear whispers of some of that. What is each of our role in utilizing resources in building the future for all Coloradans.
- No empty store fronts, more affordable housing, talent pipeline

## Colorado Springs Regional Meeting

### *Dominant Themes*

Themes common across groups included:

- Small Business Support
- Transportation
- Broadband
- Mental Health
- Education

### *Region Specific Issues & Ideas*

In addition to issues that applied statewide, regional issues included:

- Job training support including older adults & all adult re-skilling;
- Light rail on front range;
- I-25 & other roads South of CO Springs;
- Support for creative class;
- Housing – workforce and affordable, lower income;
- Tourism
- Outdoor spaces and gathering facilities.

### *Vision of the Future*

In describing the future if Colorado’s leaders maximize the use stimulus funds, participants said:

- Without education we can’t have any of this. It is so important to take a moment and debrief what we learned, that so many systems didn’t work and need to reinvent and embrace all opportunities we have to educate.
- People have access to healthcare, people have access to the things they need, people can travel around. We can go enjoy outdoors and get into transit that will take us places.
- We will have made meaningful progress addressing root causes of inequities.

## **Eastern Plains Regional Meeting**

### *Dominant Themes*

Themes common across groups included:

- Infrastructure including water
- Childcare
- Housing
- Broadband

### *Region Specific Issues & Ideas*

In addition to issues that applied statewide, regional issues included:

- Rural hospital and care facilities;
- Support for English Language Learners;
- Agricultural infrastructure including processing, transportation;
- Rural education centers & extensions for upskilling;
- Energy production diversification.

### *Vision of the Future*

In describing the future if Colorado’s leaders maximize the use stimulus funds, participants said:

- Businesses open, new ones coming and streets busy with residents, tourists, deliveries, kids riding bikes and people walking along the streets. Highways without potholes! Grocery store shelves full!
- More equitable scenario where families all decent housing, knew where their next meal was coming from, can afford childcare, can afford to be educated, earn a living wage and climb out of poverty.
- State would be inclusive and collaborative. Tear down walls and supposed divisions.
- Erasing equity gaps in education, housing, health care and among different diverse populations and regions of Colorado.

## Events, Dining & Tourism Meeting

### *Dominant Themes*

Themes common across groups included:

- Consumer Confidence
- Transportation
- Technology & Broadband
- Public Lands Maintenance

### *Region Specific Issues & Ideas*

In addition to issues that applied statewide, sector or community issues included:

- One industry town economic diversification;
- Funding to service workers;
- Housing for service industry, especially in tourist towns;
- Small business resource pool & marketing

### *Vision of the Future*

In describing the future if Colorado's leaders maximize the use stimulus funds, participants said:

- The state will be a leader in using technology – digital leaders for the future.
- Exceeding pre-pandemic numbers – build back quickly, but that is sustainable for our communities and a net positive.
- High level of market share that we have ever had!
- The most inclusive state – staffing, visitation, DEI efforts. This should be an important framework as we think about our recovery and position ourselves for the future.
- Sustainable efforts to be more diverse and more connected – diversity, ebikes available, managing our public lands and forests better. Create sustainable use and visits. We can then better manage increased use as well as prepare for what the future brings (next pandemic, etc.)
- Rebuild out creative economy – support arts community – work/art housing, address homeless and housing issues. Uplifting out arts culture to be included in conversations in our communities

## African American Community Meeting

### *Dominant Themes*

Themes common across groups included:

- Healthcare
- Home Ownership
- Higher Education Affordability

### *Region Specific Issues & Ideas*

In addition to issues that applied statewide, sector or community issues included:

- Compensation for frontline workers;
- Equitable access to high quality education;
- Small & startup business support;
- Support for black owned businesses, non-profits and faith based organizations;
- Justice reform;
- Rehiring & job skill training incentives.

### *Vision of the Future*

In describing the future if Colorado's leaders maximize the use stimulus funds, participants said:

- Wealth gap will have narrowed
- We would really know and be able to pinpoint where those inequities and name things like systemic racism
- We would start to see thriving communities, we will see community cohesion, less isolation. Overall, our communities would be thriving
- Wealth gap will have been narrowed on its way to elimination. Homeownership gap narrowed. Housing cost burdens will be stabilized especially for renters. Incarceration gap and inequities addressed.

## Workforce Meeting

### *Dominant Themes*

Themes common across groups included:

- Housing
- Education
- Childcare
- Mental Health
- Higher Education

### *Region Specific Issues & Ideas*

In addition to issues that applied statewide, sector or community issues included:

- Work Based Learning & On the Job Training program expansion;
- Inclusion of 50 & up population in job training;
- Conservation Corps
- Regenerative Agriculture
- Public Lands Conservation
- Return to work infrastructure (childcare, transportation, skill training)
- Outdoor recreation economy
- Marketing, PSAs and public relations campaigns
- Just transitions and economic transition supports

### *Vision of the Future*

In describing the future if Colorado's leaders maximize the use stimulus funds, participants said:

- We will have a robust, talented & locally built talent workforce through training, upskilling
- We would be importing less talent and maximizing our talent
- Every business is thriving, less age battles, sector battles, workforce is strong
- In 5yrs, a successful program will have varied sources of training, we need to make more investments into local communities & orgs that can make sure we reach all demographics, communities.
- We will have a talent pipeline from areas of CO for all Coloradans
- We will have recognized how much the economy & workforce has shifted – instead of talking, we will have made the move to support those industries and that workforce. We're a place people want to come to start a biz and people here have talent

## Clean Energy & Conservation Meeting

### *Dominant Themes*

Themes common across groups included:

- Clean Energy Industry & Infrastructure
- Utility Infrastructure
- Transportation & Transit Systems
- Regenerative Agriculture

### *Region Specific Issues & Ideas*

In addition to issues that applied statewide, sector or community issues included:

- State Park expansion, maintenance;
- Private land conservation;
- Human – Animal conflict mitigation
- Recreational infrastructure;
- Fire Mitigation & Forest Health;
- Wildlife Management
- Green Building Incentives

### *Vision of the Future*

In describing the future if Colorado’s leaders maximize the use stimulus funds, participants said:

- Regenerative economy on local production of food, renewable energy, and shared prosperity on a healthy planet
- Thriving and sustainable
- Wildlife friendly
- Fulfilling the goals of Colorado climate plan
- Biodiversity – statewide recreation and conservation plan and statewide water plan
- People centered not capitol centered
- Healthy lands, air and water; thriving people and resilient communities.
- increased climate resiliency with healthy rivers and wildfire mitigation
- Climate resilience - protecting our natural ecosystems, creating healthy, vibrant communities.
- Working with institutions to become carbon neutral by 2030

## Local Governments Meeting

### *Dominant Themes*

Themes common across groups included:

- Infrastructure
- Childcare
- Mental & Behavioral Health
- Education
- Broadband

### *Region Specific Issues & Ideas*

In addition to issues that applied statewide, sector or community issues included:

- Public land management including forest management;



- Rental assistance programs;
- Expansion of definition of “infrastructure” beyond roads, bridges & transportation;
- Funding of capital projects;
- Housing inventory and affordable housing;
- Job training and skill development for jobs of today and future;
- Maintenance and repair of outdoor spaces;
- Law enforcement and mental health partnerships and training.

### *Vision of the Future*

In describing the future if Colorado’s leaders maximize the use stimulus funds, participants said:

- We won’t have people in jail because of substance abuse or behavioral health. Children won’t be in school so frustrated they become violent b/c they will be getting the treatment they need. It’s infrastructure – but it’s mental health infrastructure – so we are not criminalizing and keeping people held back or limited.
- We will have reduced barriers so all Coloradans can truly access their basic needs.
- No matter how money is spent, we need to make sure our laws are not barriers to what we want to accomplish or make it too difficult to work through
- Upskilling, reskilling and next-skilling. It needs to be for a lifetime. Needs to not require people to stop earning while learning.
- Broadband no matter where you live, what your income

## Quality of Life Meeting

### *Dominant Themes*

Themes common across groups included:

- Affordable Housing
- Education (and access equity)
- Mental Health / Behavioral Health
- Transportation
- Childcare
- Infrastructure

### *Region Specific Issues & Ideas*

In addition to issues that applied statewide, sector or community issues included:

- Substance abuse treatment and transition support;
- Mental health, victim services;
- Small business supports including agricultural;
- Workforce development and job training;

### *Vision of the Future*

In describing the future if Colorado’s leaders maximize the use stimulus funds, participants said:

- We will look back and see that we combined our efforts to lift all people up and it was not a zero sum game
- We would see an absence of the pain and suffering we see today, the giant lines at food banks
- We would see real movement of the needle on the key measures on things like affordable housing

- When urban and rural Colorado all feel relevant, tended to
- Young people are not leaving rural areas for cities for more opportunities.
- The housing funding talks about targeting downtown and urban areas. We should look at opportunities beyond those and not just perpetuate the legacy of redlining. If we do this right, not just more housing, we'll have it in the right places.

## Latino Community Meeting

### *Dominant Themes*

Themes common across groups included:

- Education
- Mental Health
- Childcare
- Technology Access & Knowledge

### *Region Specific Issues & Ideas*

In addition to issues that applied statewide, sector or community issues included:

- Support for Spanish speaking entrepreneurs accessing programs, supports;
- Education including K-12 and higher ed access supports;
- Support of local non-profits and community organizations closest to community;
- Childcare – cost, access, availability;
- Higher ed affordability, FAFSA, preparation;
- Support for MWOB.

### *Vision of the Future*

In describing the future if Colorado's leaders maximize the use stimulus funds, participants said:

- A community where Latinx thrive and are valued
- More Latinx students in higher ed, with degrees, with less debt, with basic access to education and to broadband services in rural areas, and leaving higher ed feeling hopeful and successful
- An equitable and healthy community where we are all accepted
- A Colorado of solidarity and justice

## Rural & Agricultural Meeting

### *Dominant Themes*

Themes common across groups included:

- Rural & Small Town Capital Projects
- Transportation including Rural Highways
- Broadband (Last Mile included)
- Workforce Development
- Targeted Economic Development Initiatives
- Rural Healthcare
- Mental Health

### *Region Specific Issues & Ideas*

In addition to issues that applied statewide, sector or community issues included:

- Agricultural Infrastructure
- Farm Industry Education & Job Training
- Support of rural education extension programs
- Food Systems & Supply Chain Supports
- Farm & Ranch Product Supply Chain

#### *Vision of the Future*

In describing the future if Colorado's leaders maximize the use stimulus funds, participants said:

- Rural economies would be vibrant
- Higher capture of dollars staying in our rural communities & it would be more inclusive and accessible for all Coloradans
- Colorado has to promote an image of an Ag friendly state that has its arms open to our Livestock and Farm Commodity industries. Building capacity and streamlining Farm to Market and Wholesale distribution and retail distribution in every sector of Agriculture.
- Connected community - where people can live and work anywhere!
- Colorado has to promote an image of an Ag friendly state that has its arms open to our Livestock and Farm Commodity industries. Building capacity and streamlining Farm to Market and Wholesale distribution and retail distribution in every sector of Agriculture.

## Healthcare, Human Services & Behavioral Health Meeting

### *Dominant Themes*

Themes common across groups included:

- Mental Health
- Workforce Recruitment, Training
- Broadband
- State Infrastructure
- Substance Abuse & Behavioral Health

### *Region Specific Issues & Ideas*

In addition to issues that applied statewide, sector or community issues included:

- Assisted living alternatives;
- Addressing social determinants of health;
- Healthcare workforce diversification;
- Rural healthcare infrastructure;
- Food insecurity and food support infrastructure;
- Breaking down barriers between physical, mental and behavioral health providers.

### *Vision of the Future*

In describing the future if Colorado's leaders maximize the use stimulus funds, participants said:

- We will see high quality early childcare that empowers parents, pays ECE teachers as professionals they are. Our children are well cared for.
- Our systems will have shifted f/compliance/policing to a healing state & approach.
- From mental health perspective, next time we have a crisis, we will be better ready to serve & support all.

- We will have fundamental mental health literacy and it will be accepted and understood – people would know they.
- We will have a holistic approach to health where Doc collaborates w/therapist & engages nutritionist & the psychiatrist... and insurance should be an enabler, not a roadblock.
- Come back to a system that is better prepared and provides what folks really need when we face an emergency.
- Build expansion opportunities across the state that incentivize people that go into areas where we don't have staff needs met – scholarship programs, loan forgiveness programs. Opportunity to build capacity so we can treat people who need it the most.
- Rural communities and people have access to quality of care in rural communities and life expectancy.
- More equitable outcomes no matter where you are in Colorado.
- Increased access to early childhood services, affordable housing, ample access to healthy food!!

## Asian American & Pacific Islander Meeting

### *Dominant Themes*

Themes common across groups included:

- Education
- Small Business Support
- Infrastructure

### *Region Specific Issues & Ideas*

In addition to issues that applied statewide, sector or community issues included:

- Address language barriers to accessing public and private services;
- Direct support for AAPI businesses and entrepreneurs;
- Language Justice & Cultural Competence;
- Fair treatment of AAPI immigrants, first generation in grant programs.

### *Vision of the Future*

*Time did not allow this discussion.*

## Chambers of Commerce & Economic Development Councils

### *Dominant Themes*

Themes common across groups included:

- Affordable & Workforce Housing
- Job Training
- Education: Pre-K – Higher Ed
- Transportation
- Broadband

### *Region Specific Issues & Ideas*

In addition to issues that applied statewide, sector or community issues included:

- Technology access;
- Childcare;
- Tourism, Consumer Confidence;

- PPP to support upskilling, reskilling;
- Expansion of government procurement focus on small and MWOBs;
- Green energy development;
- Just transitions and community economic transition;
- Alignment of education with future of work;
- Backfilling the Unemployment fund;
- Sustainable tourism;
- Small farm, ranch, ag support;
- Rural incentives and jump start expansion.

#### *Vision of the Future*

- Spreading wealth and prosperity out of I-25 corridor and not just to tourism-based economies. Broadband is one avenue we have for small communities.
- Trend towards not just blurring lines but eliminating lines between education and work. Employers need to get more engaged in the education system at all levels and the education system needs to consider themselves as a pipeline. Engagement needs to be made easier for employers to work with HS students. Incentives and better ed across state level to get employers to open-up to these types of programs.
- Colorado will have the most robust and competitive economy in the country. Measured by traditional metrics and from an equity lens that ensures our bottom quartiles are brought along and not left behind.
- Build back beautifully, with a continued emphasis on affordable housing.
- Infusion into education to help close any gaps caused by the pandemic and ensure those students are not left behind.

**OVERVIEW OF THE FEDERAL STIMULUS PACKAGE**

American Rescue Plan Act Overview		
	Program	Funding (in \$B)
Aid to Individuals	Stimulus checks	\$6.74
	Unemployment Benefits	\$2.60
	Child Tax Credit	\$2.00
	Housing/Rental/Utility	\$0.47
	Additional Programs	Vary
Aid to Businesses	Program	Funding (in \$B)
	Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)	\$7.25 nationally
	Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) funding	\$0.20
	Restaurant Revitalization	\$0.52
	Business New Hire/Retention Tax Credit	\$0.19
	Program	Funding (in \$B)
	National vaccination	\$1.10
COVID Related Relief	State and Local Governments	\$6.19
	Education, mostly public K-12 Schools	\$1.64

- Funds from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 are distributed in the following ways:
  - Directly to households and businesses
  - Direct funding to specific State & Local programs
  - Aid to State & Local governments
- The State of Colorado should receive about \$3.9 billion for public health, economic relief and recovery for households and businesses, revenue backfill, and infrastructure.

**WHAT AREAS ARE GETTING DIRECT RESOURCES IN FED RELIEF?**

**H.R. 133 \$14B to Colorado**  
*preliminary estimates*

- \$2.9 billion in stimulus checks
- \$4.5 billion in PPP
- \$1.5 billion in unemployment
- \$440 million for housing/utility
- \$400 million hiring/retention tax credit
- \$400 million nutrition benefits

**American Rescue Plan \$27B to CO**  
*preliminary estimates*

- \$6.7 billion in stimulus checks
- \$2.6 billion in unemployment \$300/week through September
- **\$2.3 billion to local governments**
- \$2 billion in child tax credit expansion
- \$520 million for restaurants and venues
- \$500 million in child care
- \$470 million for housing/utility

---

## WHAT AREAS ARE WE MISSING?

- The State’s efforts are intended to complement the direct Federal spending and fill in the gaps when necessary to build a stronger recovery tailored to our local needs
- Our overarching goals:
  - Add stimulus to create jobs, attract and grow businesses, and meet our workforce challenges
  - Make transformative investments that position Colorado to succeed and lead to a brighter future
  - Provide relief to those in need where direct federal funds may leave gaps
  - Prioritize one-time spending to avoid outyear costs that we can’t afford

---

## POSSIBLE STIMULUS PROPOSALS

- Supporting Small Business
  - Provide loan and technical support programs, partnering with Small Business Development Centers and Local/Regional Economic Development Centers, to help small businesses across the state, including those that are minority and women owned and rurally located, and to those that were most severely impacted by capacity restrictions during the pandemic.
- Rural Hospital Investments
  - Help rural hospitals transform service offerings and affordability capabilities that can stimulate local economies long term
- Aligning Education with the Jobs of the Future
  - Pay for the cost of attendance for Coloradans pursuing CTE credentials that lead to good paying jobs and fill critical workforce needs (e.g., healthcare, welding, early childhood education, mental health, etc.)
- Climate Equity Building Investments
  - Investments in clean energy, energy efficiency, health and quality of life building upgrades to communities most disproportionately impacted by economic, social and environmental factors, particularly low-income and communities of color

## ALLOWABLE USES OF FEDERAL FUNDS

The ARP limits the aid to state and local governments to the following allowable uses:

- To respond to the pandemic or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses, and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality;
- For premium pay to eligible workers performing essential work (as determined by each recipient government) during the pandemic, providing up to \$13 per hour above regular wages;
- For the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue due to the pandemic (relative to revenues collected in the most recent full fiscal year prior to the emergency);
- To make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure;
- Funds may not be used to offset tax cuts made since March 3, 2021