

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 26, 2021

CONTACT:

Communications & Digital Manager Kristina Gaffny, 303.866.4867

Communications Director Jarrett Freedman, 301.351.4737



**Colorado General
Assembly Democrats**



**JOINT RELEASE: Garcia, Garnett Appoint Experts to ARPA Affordable
Housing and Behavioral Health Subpanels**

DENVER, CO – Senate President Leroy Garcia and Speaker Alec Garnett on Friday appointed subject matter experts and representatives of local governments and nonprofits to the subpanels advising the task forces established under [HB21-1329](#) and [SB21-137](#), legislation which set aside \$850 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds for housing and behavioral health.

The subpanels will work with the task forces to craft and examine policies to make housing more affordable, expand opportunities to build wealth through homeownership, address homelessness and improve access to mental health and substance use disorder services.

“As we work to address the housing crisis and improve the delivery of care for Coloradans with behavioral health needs, we need the expertise necessary to get to where we want to go,” said Senate President Leroy Garcia (D-Pueblo). “The individuals we’ve appointed bring a wealth of knowledge to the table and will help us decipher how best to spend federal funds to support our efforts in the most efficient, meaningful and deliberate way possible. With this diverse team of experts, we will be able to make smart and thoughtful investments into our state as we continue to meet the needs of our communities and build a Colorado that works for everyone.”

“This broad and diverse group of people will help craft recommendations for how Colorado can use federal funds to make housing more affordable and improve access to behavioral health,” said Speaker Alec Garnett (D-Denver). “The experts I’ve appointed represent diverse communities, local governments

and nonprofits across our state and have extensive experience working in housing and behavioral health. The investments we'll make in these areas will not only grow our economy, they'll help Colorado build back stronger, recover more equitably, and start to address some of the most pressing issues facing our communities."

During the 2021 legislative session, lawmakers worked collaboratively with Governor Polis to develop and advance the Colorado Comeback [Roadmap](#) to Building Back Stronger, which envisions investing nearly \$1 billion in American Rescue Plan Act funds to make housing more affordable and improve Colorado's behavioral health system. HB21-1329 sets aside \$400 million of ARPA funds for future housing efforts, and SB21-137 sets aside \$450 million of ARPA funds for future behavioral health investments.

Under resolutions approved by the Executive Committee in June, the [behavioral health](#) and [housing](#) subpanels will consist of experts selected by the Speaker, President, and House and Senate Minority Leaders. The resolutions specify areas of expertise for each appointment.

The following individuals were appointed to the Affordable Housing Transformational Task Force Subpanel:

- Chair, Brian Rossbert, Executive Director of Housing Colorado, an appointment by the president representing a nonprofit advocacy group with an expertise on low and moderate income housing issues;
- Vice-Chair, Cathy Alderman, Chief Communications & Public Policy Officer of Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, an appointment by the speaker with expertise in homelessness, administering support to homeless individuals, or other relevant experience related to homelessness and continuum of care
- Steven Cordova, Executive Director of the Tri-County Housing Authority (Bent, Crowley, Otero), an appointment by the speaker representing a local housing authority;
- Kinsey Hasstedt, State & Local Policy Director, Enterprise Community Partners, an appointment by the speaker with expertise in nonprofit housing development;
- Appointments by the speaker representing local governments:
 - Tamara Pogue, Summit County Commissioner
 - Adam Paul, Mayor of the City of Lakewood
- Tawny Peyton, Executive Director of Rocky Mountain Home Association, an appointment by the speaker representing an organization focused on the deployment of factory-built housing;
- Aaron Miripol, President & CEO of Urban Land Conservancy, an appointment by the president representing a land trust;

- Roberto Rey, Associate State Director of AARP Colorado, an appointment by the president with knowledge of developing affordable, accessible, integrated housing for people who are aging or have disabilities;
- Wanda Harrison, Director of Residential Services at the Second Chance Center, an appointment by the president with expertise in homelessness, experience administering support to homeless individuals, or other relevant experience related to homelessness and continuum of care; and
- Eric Leveridge, Strategic Research Analyst at Colorado Jobs with Justice, an appointment by the president representing workers.

The following individuals were appointed to the Behavioral Health Transformational Task Force Subpanel:

- Chair, Vincent Atchity, President & CEO of Mental Health Colorado, an appointment by the speaker representing a statewide organization that develops and advocates for mental health policy;
- Vice-Chair, Dr. Lesley Brooks, Chief of Addiction Medicine at SummitStone Health Partners, an appointment by the president representing behavioral health practitioners or providers;
- Candie Burnham, Executive Director of Atlantis Community, Inc., an appointment by the speaker representing individuals, either patients or caregivers, with lived experience navigating the behavioral health care system;
- Appointments by the speaker representing community-based organizations representing communities that experience disproportionate health impacts:
 - Nadine Bridges, Executive Director of One Colorado
 - Ana Vizoso, Director of Behavioral Health at Servicios de La Raza, Inc.
 - Lorez Meinhold, Executive Director of Caring for Denver Foundation
 - Harry Budisidharta, Executive Director of the Asian Pacific Development Center
- Beauclarine Thomas, Legislative & Policy Advocate of Colorado Municipal League, an appointment by the speaker representing a local government representing a municipality;
- Heidi Williams, Director of Opioid Response Unit in the Department of Law, an appointment by the speaker representing the Department of Law, the Judicial Branch, or a member of the judiciary;
- Lisa Ravielle, Executive Director of Harm Reduction Action Center, an appointment by the president with knowledge of evidence-based harm reduction strategies;
- Meghan Baker, Facilities Team Leader Attorney at Disability Law Colorado, an appointment by the president representing a disability advocacy or policy organization;

- Terri Hurst, Policy Coordinator at Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition, an appointment by the president with expertise in the needs of the criminal justice population;
- José Esquibel, Associate Director of the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention, an appointment by the president from the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention;
- Dr. Patrick Fox, an American Psychiatric Association Assembly Representative for the Colorado Psychiatric Society, an appointment by the president representing behavioral health practitioners or providers;
- Heather Hankins, Chief Behavioral Health Officer at Health Solutions, an appointment by the president representing behavioral health practitioners or providers;
- Colleen Casper, Executive Director of Colorado Nurses Association, an appointment by the president representing the behavioral health needs of frontline and low-income workers; and
- Dr. Christian Thurstone, Medical Director of the Substance Abuse Treatment, Education and Prevention program at Denver Health, an appointment by the president representing a hospital that has demonstrated experience working with the behavioral health community or treating patients with complex behavioral health needs.

The task forces will convene in early August for organizational meetings. The subpanels will then begin meeting to analyze and discuss policies for consideration by the task forces. The task forces will start convening regularly during the late fall to discuss policies and ultimately approve recommendations that will be included in a final report and sent to the legislature and Governor. The timelines for taskforce and sub-advisory panel meetings are flexible and intended to serve as a guideline.

ARPA task force appointed 7-26-2021.pdf

