



# LARIMER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

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## 2023-2024

### **VISION**

Larimer County is a great place to be; an innovative community to live, work and play for everyone.

### **MISSION**

Larimer County government upholds and advances the community's health, safety, well-being and quality of life.



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# LARIMER COUNTY OVERVIEW

According to the 2020 census, Larimer County, located in north central Colorado has a population of 362,533 making it the 7th most populous of Colorado's 64 counties while also being the 9th largest in landmass.

The county extends to the Continental Divide and includes several mountain communities and Rocky Mountain National Park. The county encompasses 2,640 square miles that include some of the finest irrigated farmland in the state, as well as vast stretches of scenic ranch lands, forests, and high mountain peaks. Over 50% of Larimer County is publicly owned, most of which is land within Roosevelt National Forest and Rocky Mountain National Park.





In addition to these federal lands, Colorado State Parks and Wildlife, and Larimer County Parks and Open Spaces combine to provide a wide spectrum of recreational opportunities that are enjoyed by both residents and visitors.

The county has experienced significant population growth over the past few decades, more than doubling its population in the last 50 years, with 19% increases in the last two 10-year periods. The incorporated cities in the county are Ft. Collins and Loveland. Additionally, there are three towns (Estes Park, Timnath, and Wellington) in Larimer County. Three other towns --- Berthoud, Johnstown and Windsor – are located on the eastern Larimer County line in both Larimer and neighboring Weld County. The two remaining communities, Red Feather Lakes and LaPorte are unincorporated areas recognized as census areas.

Larimer County is also home to the state's only land-grant university, Colorado State University. CSU's Fort Collins campus has a student population of nearly 30,000 resulting in the population increasing significantly during the academic calendar year.

Larimer County is one of the largest and most innovative employers in Northern Colorado, with over 2000 full-time employees at locations spread geographically across the county, and hundreds of services provided to the community. The 2023 Larimer County budget is \$671 million with a total net operating budget of \$372 million.



# LARIMER COUNTY STRUCTURE

Counties in Colorado are a constitutional subdivision of state government. Their boundaries, which are outlined in Colorado State Statute, were drawn by the General Assembly. Initially, counties were created to carry out the programs and policies of the state. These functions have grown over the years to encompass many policy and operational areas not contemplated 100 years ago. Counties can exercise only those powers specifically expressed in statute or the constitution.

## COUNTY REPONSIBILITIES

Under state statute, counties are responsible for law enforcement, which includes supporting the court's system and the district attorney function as well as providing jail facilities through the sheriff. Counties are also responsible for administering and carrying out virtually all programs overseen by the Colorado Department of Human Services. Counties may provide health services, although their ability to do so depends on the resources available. Counties are responsible for road and bridge construction, maintenance, and repair. Finally, they control land use in their unincorporated areas.

Counties have a vast number of other responsibilities, ranging from weed control to restaurant inspection, all of which are traced to state legislation. In specific instances, such as liquor licensing, the operation of landfills, and pest control, counties and the state have co-authority. Additional responsibilities are delegated to other county elected officials, such as the treasurer, assessor, coroner, clerk and recorder, district attorney, surveyor, and sheriff.

## COUNTY POWERS

Counties have the power to incur debt, enter into contracts, and receive grants and gifts. Counties can incur either revenue debt (based solely upon a specified revenue stream) or general obligation debt, which constitutes a general obligation of the local government to repay the debt. Some counties also enter into lease-purchase arrangements (as an alternative to debt financing) to build major facilities such as justice centers. (Source: Colorado Counties, Inc. – CCI).

For most purposes, Larimer County acts through its Board of County Commissioners [BOCC]. The three-member board acts, by a majority vote of a quorum present, to adopt ordinances in those limited areas for which specific authority has been given by the Colorado State Legislature, and to adopt resolutions to conduct all of its other business.

# BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



## JOHN KEFALAS

District I



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## KRISTIN STEPHENS

District II



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## JODY SHADDUCK-MCNALLY

District III



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The Board of County Commissioners [BOCC] performs legislative, executive and quasi-judicial functions. The Board serves as the legislative, policy-making, and administrative body governing the unincorporated areas of Larimer County.



# LARIMER COUNTY LEADERSHIP

## COUNTY MANAGER

The BOCC appoints a county manager to carry out the policy directions of the board and to supervise and coordinate the work of the staff in the departments that fall under direct control of the board. Except for the County Attorney, the County Manager will have line authority over all county divisions under the BOCC.

## OTHER COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS

The other constitutional officers elected to four-year terms are the Assessor, Clerk and Recorder, Coroner, District Attorney, Sheriff, Surveyor, and Treasurer. Constitutionally and statutorily, they are independent of each other and from the County Commissioners. Their powers and duties are prescribed by state statute. The County Commissioners have no direct authority over the other elected officials in the county except that commissioners approve budgets for all other elected officials' departments.

As Duly Elected Officials representing community members of Larimer County, the non-BOCC Larimer County Elected Officials are entitled to the autonomous expression of their opinions and views. However, the Board of County Commissioners encourages the other Larimer County Elected Officials to communicate their feedback to the BOCC on any legislation that may impact how those offices conduct business.



# LARIMER COUNTY'S OTHER ELECTED OFFICIALS

ASSESSOR



**BOB OVERBECK**

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CLERK & RECORDER



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CORONER



**STEPHEN HANKS**

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DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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TREASURER & PUBLIC TRUSTEE



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SHERIFF



**JOHN FEYEN**

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SURVEYOR



**TOM DONNELLY**

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# LARIMER COUNTY'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Larimer County will add value to the lives of our community members today and in the future by:



Being good stewards of public resources



Promoting innovation, adaptability and committing to continuous improvement



Providing consistent quality customer service



Empowering people to take responsibility



Cultivating inclusive and collaborative partnerships



Being a fulfilling, enjoyable and inclusive place to work









# LEGISLATIVE AGENDA PURPOSE & OVERVIEW

Larimer County's Legislative Affairs Program is made up of three major components: The Legislative Agenda, Legislative Priorities, and the Legislative Review Process as established in the internal Legislative Program Guide.

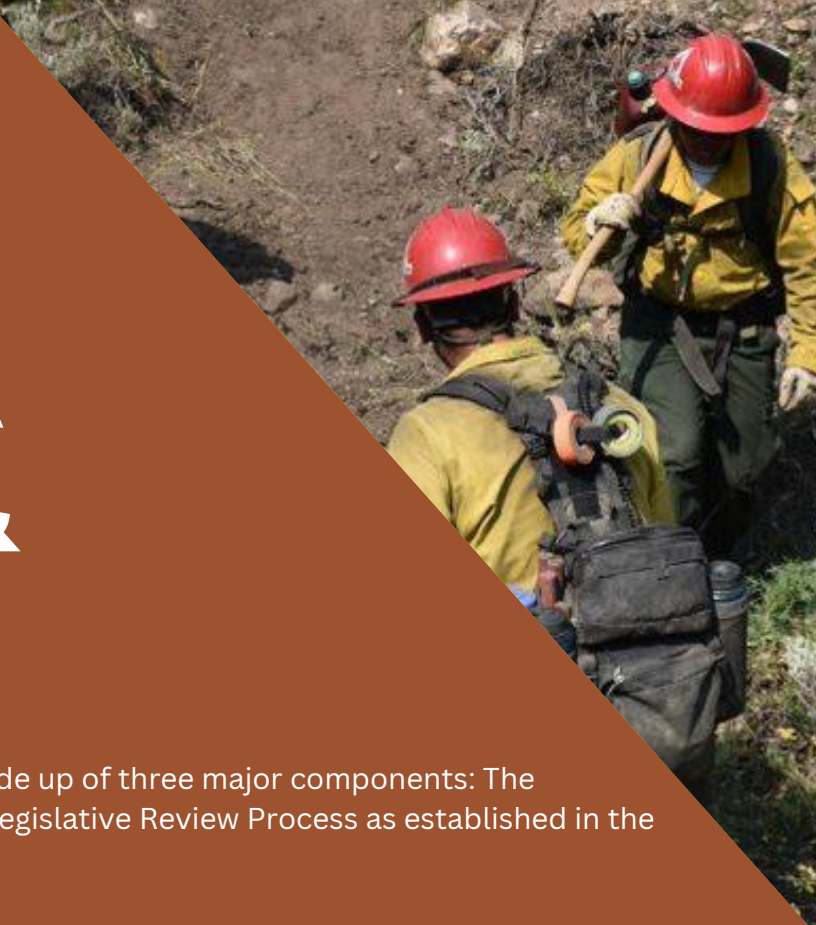
The **Legislative Agenda** is an official document of the Larimer County Board of Commissioners intended to express the types of legislative initiatives the county would be likely to support or oppose. The Legislative Agenda was created by the Board of County Commissioners and Larimer County Subject Matter Experts and was formally adopted on November 21st, 2023.

The Agenda will be revised and readopted yearly prior to the Colorado General Assembly's legislative session and provides the foundation for the county's legislative program. The Legislative Agenda informs our legislative priorities and assists staff across departments as they are engaging in legislative analysis and advocacy.

Larimer County's **Legislative Priorities** are directly related to specific proposed, pending or active legislation in a given session. The county can advance legislation in alignment with the Legislative Agenda, and can also take formal stances of advocacy on legislation coming from other entities that county subject matter experts have determined would impact the ability of the county to serve its residents or to achieve objectives laid out in the county's Strategic and Comprehensive Plans. (Further information on Legislative Priorities is in the following section regarding the Legislative Review Process.)

The Legislative Agenda is not meant to be prescriptive. A policy statement suggesting support or opposition on a given topic should be interpreted as nuanced because in an organization as large as Larimer County there are often competing viewpoints amongst departments, and sometimes even the Board of Commissioners.

Since legislation impacts multiple departments and topics, it is often important to refer to more than one section of this document while considering the potential impacts, and thus the county position on any proposed legislation. Please reach out to the BOCC and/or the Legislative Coordinator for confirmation on the county's position.





# LEGISLATIVE REVIEW PROCESS

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If introduced or proposed legislation has been identified as having a significant impact on the county by staff, a commissioner, legislative membership organization, or community partners, or if a third party has requested support from either the entire Board of Larimer County Commissioners or an individual commissioner, the BOCC will follow the legislative position evaluation process for determining the appropriate actions to be taken.

Larimer County holds active membership in three legislative partner organizations: ***Colorado Counties Incorporated (CCI)***, ***Counties and Commissioners Acting Together (CCAT)*** and ***Colorado Communities for Climate Action (CC4CA)***. The BOCC will rely on input from those organizations as they navigate the legislative process and will also use their voices in those organizations to advocate for their legislative positions.

Any legislative issue submitted by county staff and vetted by the BOCC as a legislative priority, or placed on a legislative membership organization's legislative agenda (CCI, CCAT or CC4CA) is considered to be legislation that Larimer County has taken an official position.

Once an existing or proposed piece of legislation has successfully gone through the legislative review process, it becomes an official Larimer County Legislative Priority and the BOCC and staff can work to advance the county position.





# LOCAL FLEXIBILITY

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The phrase “local control” has traditionally been used to refer to the power-tension dynamic between the state government and counties and municipalities. Unfortunately, this phrase implies the source of the tension is rooted in power. Larimer County instead advocates for **local flexibility**, which emphasizes that state requirements often undermine county government's ability to be flexible in responding to the unique needs of our community.

Oftentimes, although well intended, state laws can erode our ability to innovate, or can negatively impact programs that have demonstrated success. Larimer County will consistently advocate for increased local flexibility that allows us to continue to implement successful programs and will oppose measures that impede those efforts.

Local elected officials are often the closest and most responsive to their community members. We strongly support the concept of true home rule power and authority for counties consistent with those given to municipalities.

**Local Flexibility is a running theme throughout the varying topics in the legislative agenda. When a policy statement relates specifically to local flexibility, it will be marked as such: (*Local Flex.*).**









# COUNTY BUDGET, STATE LEGISLATION & PROPERTY TAXES

Larimer County recognizes that it is an administrative arm of the state and a partner in providing critical services to our residents. This partnership requires sufficient funding from the state when mandates resulting from changes to new state law are created. The county's ability to absorb cost increases due to mandates has been constrained in recent years by inflationary pressures on goods, contracted services, and employee wages and benefits.

Often, the changes to state law that create significant cost mandates on the county are issues that the BOCC philosophically supports, but that begin to compound constraints on our budget, impacting other services. Examples of recent mandates passed on to the county in recent years include those related to body-worn cameras for law enforcement officers, which require not only equipment and contracts for cameras but staff to review and track video footage and storage space for video files; changes to liability for law enforcement; and rules related to restrictive housing and behavioral health services for inmates, which have added more than \$5 million in annual costs combined since 2020.

Larimer County's ability to absorb cost increases for mandates passed down from the state could be made more difficult by constraints on property tax revenues, which are the county's sole significant discretionary funding source. At a time when the county needs to provide pay increases of between 5% and 10% annually to retain staff, and contract costs are rising at similar rates above inflation, pegging a limit on property tax growth to the Consumer Price Index becomes problematic.

Larimer County, like all other local governments, has the ability to temporarily or permanently reduce property tax rates depending on conditions, and has done so three times since 2016.

**Policy statements that are connected to county budget impacts of state legislation are marked: *(Budget)*.**





In order to preserve maximum financial flexibility at the local level, Larimer County:

1. Opposes state and federal requirements to increase county-level programming or services without appropriating the funding necessary for their implementation.
2. Supports legislation preventing the transfer of agricultural land from an existing Urban Renewal Authority (URA) into a new URA without explicit county approval.
3. Opposes efforts to weaken the collaborative tax increment financing structure created by Senate Bill 15-1348 when URAs are created or substantially modified.
4. Opposes statewide limits on property tax revenue growth, especially those that create a cap on revenue growth, or that require Counties to reduce property values or assessment rates. Should the State consider broad changes to property tax laws, such as assessment rates, classifications, and others, the County strongly urges those proposals:
  - a. Prioritize the ability of local governments to reduce property taxes based on conditions and demands of residents in their local communities.
  - b. Take into account the impact on Assessors' and Treasurers' offices, and seek their input on implementation when considering new property classifications
  - c. Exempt value changes related to oil and gas extraction and new construction from any revenue caps
  - d. Retain the ability of governing boards to exceed any revenue increase cap, as was included in SB 23-303.
5. Supports legislation exempting new property tax revenue originating from expiring Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts from counting toward any state mandated property tax revenue caps.



# CLIMATE, ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP & SUSTAINABILITY

Larimer County’s Climate, Environmental Stewardship, and Sustainability Policy will ensure that the county operates in a manner consistent with mitigating human-caused effects on climate and adapting to our changing climate, environmental stewardship, and sustainable operations and decision-making today and into the future. This policy is reflective of community values, current scientific findings and methods, and is in alignment with the work of the county’s Internal Climate and Sustainability Action Plan, the Climate Smart and Future Ready Initiative, and the Colorado Communities for Climate Action (CC4CA) policy statement.

To these ends, the County:

- 1.Supports prioritizing human health and the environment in a manner that is inclusive of economic and social equity priorities that prioritize policies that focus on equity and involve underrepresented community sectors in decision-making and action.
- 2.Supports the reduction of negative environmental impacts with the understanding that clean air, water, and land benefit our regional economy and our community.
- 3.Supports preservation and protection of public natural resources that balance short and long-term economic, agricultural, environmental, and community needs and recognizes the importance of locally driven and designed programs.
- 4.Supports reduction of transportation sector emissions by creation of additional transportation options and integrated land use and transportation planning.
- 5.Supports solid waste diversion best practices that foster a circular economy, and emerging technologies for managing waste.
- 6.Supports prioritizing energy sources that are the most economically sound and least carbon intensive, including local renewable sources, distributed energy production and self-contained energy systems.
- 7.Supports regional collaboration between local governments, public-private partnerships, non-governmental entities, and academic institutions to advance local climate mitigation and adaptation, sustainability, and resilience.
- 8.Supports legislation that provides funding and financial incentives that enable the development and deployment of pollution reduction, conservation, and resilient actions.

**Since Larimer County’s climate and sustainability efforts impact all areas of county policy, there are additional climate-related policy statements throughout this document that are indicated with the following designation: *(Climate)*.**







## BROADBAND

Larimer County’s vision for expansion of high-speed fiber optic broadband is through partnerships (with Fort Collins Connexion, Loveland Pulse, Platte River Power Authority, Estes Park Trailblazer, and Poudre Valley Rural Electric Association), allowing Larimer County to be one of the most connected areas in the country serving not only urban, but sub-urban and rural populations. It is Larimer County's goal to explore and foster available options for broadband services in all communities, and to accomplish the vision “gig speed for everyone”.

To these ends, the County:

1. Supports legislation that allows right of entry access for publicly owned broadband utility providers to multi-family housing units, multi-tenant commercial buildings, mobile parks and manufactured housing communities.
2. Supports legislation that expands and protects municipal broadband networks currently operated by municipal broadband utilities.
3. Supports legislation that prioritizes reliable, scalable, and future-proof broadband solutions built solely on fiber optic cable installation.
4. Supports legislation that provides options of equitable access to service and supports long-term digital equity initiatives.
5. Supports legislation to expand broadband into growth management areas, rural areas, and unincorporated areas of the county.
6. Supports maintaining local franchising authority to preserve local governments’ ability to negotiate in the public interest for cable channel space, institutional networks and public education and government (PEG) programming, and to charge franchise and PEG fees to support local programming and compensate for the use of rights-of-way. ***(Local Flex.)***
7. Supports allowing communities to offer and/or partner to offer high speed internet, Wi-Fi and other enhanced telecommunication services to residents, schools, academic institutions, and businesses.
8. Opposes infringement on community owned broadband providers ability to compete in the broadband marketplace.
9. Opposes legislation that would prohibit local governments from owning, managing, or directly providing broadband service. ***(Local Flex.)***

## BUILDING & CODE COMPLIANCE

Larimer County maintains a safe and desirable community for residents through the adoption and enforcement of building and land use codes. Adopted codes ensure that new construction and alterations are safe and healthy for people, while also supporting community resiliency and sustainability goals.



To these ends, the County:

1. Supports adoption of building and other related codes at the local level (rather than statewide), including addition of local amendments needed to safeguard public health and safety by regulating building construction, structural strength, sanitation, light, ventilation and energy conservation. **(Local Flex.)**
2. Opposes state requirements to adopt codes rather than providing funding, training and support to local governments to adopt and administer updated codes. **(Budget)**
3. Supports local flexibility and regulation of Building Department staff, including qualifications of building inspectors performing specialized inspections (e.g., plumbing, electrical, mechanical). **(Local Flex.)**
4. Supports protection of consumer interests through policies that ensure building contractors are licensed, experienced and insured.
5. Supports policies and programs that improve mitigation and adaptation to climate change through codes that promote energy efficiency, renewable energy generation, building electrification and electric vehicle use. **(Climate)**
6. Supports protection of public health and safety through adoption of robust, science-based wildfire hazard mitigation codes. **(Climate)**
7. Supports legislation that enables access to a greater variety of compliance tools and mechanisms for county code enforcement staff.
8. Supports policies that protect the County's interests with regard to short-term rentals, such as health and safety, housing affordability, and preserving the residential quality of neighborhoods. **(Local Flex.)**

## COMMUNITY JUSTICE ALTERNATIVES

Larimer County's Community Justice Alternatives service area oversees the Alternative Sentencing Department and Community Corrections. The programs provide programming and services that emphasize nontraditional forms of incarceration focused on accountability, community safety, rehabilitation, and reentry while also providing support for the victims of crime.

To these ends, the County:

1. Supports legislation that affords greater protections to victims of crime.
2. Supports legislation that enhances and expands restorative justice best practices.
3. Supports nontraditional forms of incarceration that focus on habilitation, reentry and reduced recidivism using evidence based practices
4. Opposes measures that decrease bed capacity for juvenile offenders that are charged with committing violent crimes. **(Local Flex.)**
5. Supports measures for the creation of sustainable sober living and peer support programs for justice involved individuals.

## COMMUNITY JUSTICE ALTERNATIVES CONT...

6. Supports measures to increase funding and opportunities for jurisdictions to create and sustain problem solving courts.
7. Supports legislation for programs and funding that fosters medication assisted treatment to address populations with substance use disorders including ease of access to life saving medications.
8. Supports justice initiatives and programs that focus on improved mental health services and treatment for justice involved individuals.
9. Opposes initiatives that have the possibility to compromise public safety.
10. Supports programs and initiatives to allow for training and education specific to staff working in alternatives to incarceration programs. (De-escalation training, crisis training, etc that is very easy to obtain at low to no cost as a sworn officer, but is challenging for non-sworn staff to attend.)
11. Supports vicarious trauma training specific to staff working in alternatives to incarceration programs.
12. Supports legislation that funds collective data sharing between community justice stakeholders and community partners.
13. Supports efforts to address competency in the criminal justice system that include restoration and connections to community resources while ensuring public safety.
14. Supports local control of criminal justice programming and public safety initiatives and opposes unfunded mandates that create barriers to successful local programming.  
*(Local Flex.)*
15. Opposes measures that create criminal justice programs without adequate funding.  
*(Budget)*



## DATA SHARING & OPEN RECORDS

The County is the collector and keeper of hundreds of datasets and recorded information and is legally bound and responsible for responding to Open Record requests. The County supports transparency and reasonable open data access.

To these ends, the County:

1. Supports clear requirements that allow for reasonable requests and timeframes to provide information that is legally available.
2. Opposes mandates that include unrealistic timeframes and requests that require additional staff time with no means to recover costs. *(Budget)*
3. Supports cybersecurity efforts that protect the County, consumers, and community owned infrastructure.
4. Supports efforts to improve data sharing with state agencies through appropriate system integration and interoperability to improve data integrity and services to our residents.

## ECONOMIC & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Larimer County actively supports economic and business development through a multifaceted approach that includes fostering a business-friendly environment, providing access to a skilled workforce, and actively promoting business retention, expansion, and attraction efforts across regional collaborators, ensuring the sustained growth and diversification of its economic base.

To these ends, the County:

1. Supports small business development activities, including but not limited to under represented business owners.
2. Supports the expansion of Work Based Learning initiatives (WBL), an earn to learn model including internships, on-the-job training, and apprenticeship expansion that benefits businesses in their pursuit of a skilled workforce and to support employee retention and workforce attraction.
3. Supports collaboration efforts that align regional partnerships across northern Colorado, to work closely with local economic development agencies, business associations, chambers of commerce and other industry and partner leaders to create a supportive ecosystem for businesses.
4. Supports business retention, expansion, and attraction services that establish support for existing businesses, helping them expand and thrive while investing in attraction efforts to external businesses looking to establish a presence in the area.
5. Supports unique communities across Larimer County to build a robust business ecosystem in an effort to create a diverse and resilient economy able to better withstand unforeseen challenges.



## EMERGENCY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Larimer County is committed to providing exceptional services to safeguard the public and the environment as well as promoting economic stability through robust public safety and emergency management programs. The county's Comprehensive Plan calls for us to become more resilient to future natural and human-caused disaster events.

To these ends, the County:

1. Supports proactive measures to mitigate the risks associated with both natural and human-caused hazards, both within and around Larimer County.
2. Supports local government authority to improve public safety and emergency management programs beyond state or federal requirements.
3. Supports efforts to increase resiliency in our communities through education, social capital building, technical assistance, planning and implementation.
4. Supports state efforts to create state-level disaster funds to assist local communities during and after disasters.
5. Supports state and federal partnerships that improve county outcomes toward mitigation and resilience through reducing fuels, ensuring forest health, and protection and restoration of local watersheds. *(Climate)*
6. Opposes state and federal requirements to increase emergency management programs and services without appropriating the funding necessary for their implementation. *(Budget)*
7. Opposes requirements for local governments to implement specific vendor or consultant solutions with state-level oversight without specifically engaging county stakeholders. *(Local Flex.)*

## HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT

The Larimer County Department of Health and Environment (LCDHE) works to provide everyone in Larimer County the opportunity for a healthy life. A strong public health infrastructure and policies that promote the social and economic wellbeing of its residents are essential for a healthy community. LCDHE supports policies that promote health equity and remove barriers where everyone has access to healthy choices and a healthy environment.

To these ends, the County:

1. Supports policies that sustain and appropriately increase high quality public health infrastructure including trained personnel and data systems.
2. Supports policies that provide more flexible state-level funding to LPHAs, as well as mechanisms for increased federal funding through state departments.
3. Supports legislation aimed at improving our region's ozone attainment status as the EPA moves our area from serious to a severe nonattainment area, including reduction of greenhouse gasses and air polluting emissions. *(Climate)*

4. Supports legislation to increase funding for disease prevention activities and support policies that aid in the County's ability to carry out disease mitigation activities.
5. Supports legislation that addresses issues of health equity by removing barriers that limit access to optimal health including lack of transportation, childcare expenses, and language access. **(Climate)**
6. Supports evidence-informed policies, strategies, and programs that increase routine childhood vaccines.
7. Supports the establishment of incentives and programming for healthcare workforce recruitment and retention, such as loan forgiveness or tax credits.
8. Supports the establishment of a robust public health workforce data collection and monitoring system.
9. Supports legislation that emphasizes on-site wastewater treatment advancements, groundwater protection, and funding assistance for repair of small on-site systems. **(Climate)**
10. Supports legislation that advances providing the same protections to environmental hazards to all people, and equal access in the development of policies and regulations that contribute to a healthy environment.

## HOUSING

Larimer County recognizes the growing need for affordable, quality housing to be available to all its residents. The County identifies the region's top housing needs to be 1.) additional units 2.) starter homes for middle income earners 3.) increase of diverse housing options 4.) expansion of housing resources for older adults, mobile home park residents, unhoused individuals and families, and people with disabilities. The County works to address these priorities through regional coordination, land use code reform, and funding towards expansion of housing resources to unincorporated Larimer County.

To these ends, the County:

1. Supports legislation to protect vulnerable renters, including a statewide Just Cause Eviction policy.
2. Support initiatives that preserve current existing housing stock and minimize displacement of residents living in communities threatened by redevelopment or changes in ownership.
3. Supports policies to update and expand the Mobile Home Park Act to increase accountability from park ownership, address resident livability issues, and explore lot-rent stabilization strategies.
4. Supports policy and funding to increase Colorado's affordable housing stock and increase the presence of diverse housing options attainable across all income ranges.



# LARIMER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

## HOUSING CONT...

5. Supports policy to expand and improve the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program to strengthen the success found in public-private partnerships to create more affordable housing units.
6. Supports policies that recognize the unique housing needs among older adults and encourages livable communities for all ages. This includes efforts to evaluate the Senior Property Tax Exemption (a/k/a Senior Homestead Exemption) to better reflect the current housing market and realities faced by older adult homeowners trying to age in place.
7. Supports statewide efforts to promote efficient and sustainable land use development that aligns with climate, air quality, and water conservation and efficiency goals to use less energy and reduce sprawl and advance smart growth.
8. Supports and aligns with state efforts to establish processes that are quick and efficient to reduce paperwork, project costs, and time burdens for housing development and services.
9. Supports legislation reforming Proposition 123 that highlights the uniqueness of regions across the state and recognizes that the needs in rural, rural resort, and unincorporated areas call for additional flexibility and funding to meet housing goals.  
*(Local Flex.)*
10. Supports policy and funding for regional strategy efforts to effectively and comprehensively address homelessness through coordinated, community-based programming and supportive services.
11. Supports policies that encourage an array of housing types (ADUs, farmsteads, extended family dwellings, etc) and do not create rigid occupancy limits which create barriers to non-traditional living arrangements.
12. Supports policy that provides local government priority for purchasing and preserving affordable housing. *(Local Flex.)*
13. Supports legislation and funding to sustain eviction prevention programming and coordinated court representation for underrepresented renters.



## HUMAN SERVICES

Larimer County's Human Services Department seeks to be responsive and provide timely resources in partnership with our community so that individuals and families are healthy, supported, and safe. In Larimer County, the Department of Human Services is structured differently in that our Single Entry Point (Medicaid service waivers), our local Long Term Care Ombudsman program, and our local Area Agency on Aging are all managed by the same department. Our services truly cover the entire lifespan for Larimer County residents. There are several global legislative themes that have equal impact across all aspects of Human Services.

To these ends, the County:

1. Supports legislation that provides adequate and sustained funding to administer programs, services, and support to individuals and families. We would oppose any reduction in funding as most of our programs are already underallocated. **(Budget)**
2. Supports legislation that maintains local flexibility in the administration of all programming, providing and promoting flexibility in policy and administration that supports local departments in being timely and responsive to their community's needs. **(Local Flex.)**
3. Supports increased, secure, and safe data sharing amongst various systems and qualified partners. This data sharing would allow for analysis and program changes to create better programs and more positive outcomes for individuals and families to thrive.
4. Supports legislation that increases standards across local government programming to increase inclusivity and diversity. For example, modernizing technology systems to recognize gender fluidity; aligning program standards for services for undocumented individuals; and promoting racial equity throughout the public assistance program areas where available to still meet federal requirements.

## AGING & ADULT SERVICES

Larimer County's Aging and Adult Services division offers a variety of services to older adults and people with disabilities. These services include but are not limited to: home-delivered meals, chore assistance, determining financial eligibility for Long Term Care Medicaid, and assessment and case management for low-income community members who are older and living with a disability. The Adult Protective Services team receives reports of mistreatment or neglect of at-risk adults who are unable to advocate for themselves and works with community members whose situations may not rise to the level of APS investigation. The Prevention team provides education about community resources that may help with their unique situations. Lastly, the Aging and Adult Services department is proud to have an Aid to the Needy Disabled Navigator, who helps older or disabled community members navigate the complex application process for Social Security benefits.



## AGING & ADULT SERVICES CONT...

To these ends, the County:

1. Supports legislation which provides adequate and sustained funding in alignment with the 2022-2023 CDHS Adult Protective Services workload study, the workload study produced by SB22-235, and that supports the administration of the programs at the local level in alignment with a growing aging population.
2. Supports legislation to increase accessibility to services while preserving and promoting an individual's right to choose services (person-centered) that best fit their unique needs while focusing on prevention as much as possible.

## CHILD CARE & EARLY CHILDHOOD

Larimer County is committed to providing quality child care assistance to eligible families in order to support their efforts towards financial security and self-sufficiency. The Colorado Child Care Assistance Program provides access for eligible families to reduced cost child care assistance at licensed child care facilities or qualified, unlicensed providers. Additionally, the department supports the implementation of the Universal Preschool Colorado (UPK) program and other early childhood services, such as family support programs, Head Start / Early Head Start, and early intervention for infants and toddlers.

To these ends, the County:

1. Supports legislation to increase the number of options and access to, quality and affordable child care providers particularly those serving low income families and those offering extended hours of operation.
2. Supports legislation that approaches early childhood from a prevention and early intervention lens to improve each child's quality of life and reduce interactions in other public service areas like child welfare and public assistance.
3. Supports legislation to increase access to early childhood mental health, special needs respite, and other specialized services for higher needs families at the local level.
4. Supports legislation that provides additional support, resources, and educational opportunities to in-home childcare providers.
5. Support regulations that streamline requirements and reduce the complexity and cost of childcare services, including licensing and educational requirements, when those mandates are not clearly benefiting the health and safety of children and the community.
6. Support workforce development in the early care and education field, including scholarships, training programs, simplified credentialing processes and other retention and recruitment strategies.

## CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Larimer County child welfare and juvenile justice programming works to assess the risk and safety of children and youth and provide support to families through the provision of early intervention, prevention, and trauma-informed services. This includes in-home family services, kinship care, foster care, adoption, and case management and services for juvenile justice-involved youth.

To these ends, the County:

1. Supports legislation which provides adequate and sustained funding in alignment with the 2022-2023 workload study and funding methodology work as a result of SB22-235.
2. Supports legislation to increase the well-being and safety of children while maintaining family connections and supporting children to thrive within their family unit.
3. Supports legislation that promotes collaboration, services, and access to resources across multiple systems that supports the whole individual or family well-being, while promoting personal empowerment.
4. Supports legislation to reduce barriers to access services that enhance quality of life in the short and long-term.
5. Supports legislation to reduce or eliminate legislative redundancy or duplication of effort for counties and systems.
6. Supports legislation to create a comprehensive system of behavioral health care for children and youth that addresses the higher acuity needs for those with complex medical and behavioral health conditions.

## PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Through the administration of many social safety-net/public assistance programs, we seek to provide opportunities for all members of our community to be healthy and self-sufficient by processing timely and accurate benefits and providing applicable resource materials. We offer a variety of benefits (including food, cash, medical, child care, and other specialized programs) to assist individuals and families in our community.

To these ends, the County:

1. Supports legislation that provides adequate and sustained funding in alignment with the 2022-2023 workload study SB22-235 and that supports the administration of the programs at the local level. Ensuring that the funding supports a system change in the perception of the work as being crucial safety/economic security case management rather than transactional/administrative in nature.
2. Supports legislation to reduce client and staff burden by aligning program rules, streamlining processes, and promoting cross-program functionality throughout the various public assistance programs.
3. Supports policies to minimize the “cliff effect” and bolster the safety net for individuals and families in basic human needs, transportation, housing, medical, and food with fiscal resources to support these services, while also incentivizing personal empowerment and meaningful engagement in the workforce.



## MARIJUANA

Larimer County has adopted regulations for retail marijuana establishments that require state and local licenses for those establishments and confine them to the C - Commercial and I - Industrial zoning districts. Ensuring that marijuana use and sales are properly regulated to protect public health and safety is a priority of the County.

To these ends, the County:

1. Supports communities' ability to raise necessary funds to maintain public safety and enforce laws related to marijuana and intoxicating hemp and related products.
2. Supports additional state marijuana and intoxicating hemp enforcement resources, especially for field enforcement.
3. Supports further development of laws and regulations to stop the proliferation of gray- and black-market marijuana.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

Larimer County is committed to providing the community the benefits that come from conserved lands including protection of wildlife habitat, scenic viewsheds, community separators, agriculture, nature-based and culturally-affirming recreation opportunities, and buffers to existing conserved lands. County residents and visitors enjoy improved health, a higher quality of life, and a greater sense of community because of the quality and extent of conserved lands, open spaces, parks and trails.

To these ends, the County:

1. Supports legislation that increases funding and incentives for land conservation. **(Climate)**
2. Supports increased funding for maintenance and development of public nature-based, culturally-affirming, recreation infrastructure.
3. Support sustaining lands with high ecological value through a combination of land use planning tools that meet conservation goals in adopted plans. **(Climate)**
4. Supports protections and incentives to maintain and enhance riparian and river health, water quality, and watershed health. **(Climate)**
5. Supports legislation that reinforces and funds best land stewardship practices to enhance ecological conditions including forest health, pollinator habitats, and watershed health. **(Climate)**
6. Supports legislation and funding for science-based best practices in the management of noxious weeds and aquatic nuisance species for overall ecosystem health outcomes.
7. Supports legislation that provides annual operational funds to support Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships in addition to project specific grant funding.
8. Supports legislation for maintaining or enhancing programs and tax incentives/other funding sources for voluntary land conservation and natural climate solutions to preserve working farms and ranches. **(Climate)**

## OIL & GAS

While oil and gas production is relatively limited within Larimer County, production in adjacent communities and throughout the region results in significant air quality and public health impacts for our residents. Local regulation of oil and gas facilities and the ability to hold local operators accountable help the County protect public health and safety, natural resources, and air and water quality.

To these ends, the County:

1. Supports local authority to regulate oil and gas operations as granted through Senate Bill 19-181, which includes the ability to regulate the siting of new development and surface impacts. **(Local Flex.)**
2. Supports scientific studies that evaluate impacts of oil and gas operations on human health, the environment and property values. **(Climate)**
3. Supports air pollution monitoring, emission characterization and modeling studies to better understand the contributions of the oil and gas industry to air pollution, including ozone. **(Climate)**

## PLANNING & LAND USE

Larimer County's Comprehensive Plan establishes an overarching framework for policies and decisions related to land use, development, housing, infrastructure environmental stewardship, and social and economic health. The County values intentional, context-sensitive land use planning that preserves rural character and natural resources while directing growth into urbanized areas.

To these ends, the County:

1. Supports standardization of annexation policy and requirements for contiguous properties and enclaves within urban growth areas, including tools for counties to require properties and right-of-ways to be annexed into municipalities under certain conditions.
2. Supports policies that encourage urban-scale development within Urban Growth Areas and rural-level development in unincorporated areas of counties.
3. Supports programs and policies that direct growth away from hazardous areas (wildfire, flood), sensitive natural features, prime agricultural land, and areas of high conservation value.
4. Supports requirements for comprehensive land use planning that organizes and directs growth to areas with adequate public facilities and in alignment with community vision, policies and goals.
5. Supports policies, standards or programs that require the analysis of public health, sustainability and social equity in land use planning and regulation. **(Climate)**
6. Supports local governments' authority to determine zoning, development review, code compliance, building and inspection standards, procedures and timelines. **(Local Flex.)**



## PLANNING & LAND USE CONT...

7. Supports policies, programs and incentives that encourage regional cooperation in land use, transportation planning, utility and water resource planning and fostering sustainable development.
8. Supports policies that encourage or require intergovernmental agreements between municipalities and counties to establish urban growth boundaries and establish annexation policy.
9. Supports legislation that gives local governments the authority to hold water providers accountable to delivering water based upon prior commitments in local development review applications. **(Local Flex.)**
10. Supports options for conserving water resources needed for sustainable agricultural uses and infrastructure adaptations. **(Climate)**
11. Supports retaining and/or increasing local authority related to the siting, design and regulation of wireless telecommunication facilities, including both small cell and macro sites. **(Local Flex.)**
12. Supports the ability of counties to require and charge fees for business licensing, including for home occupation businesses. **(Local Flex.)**

## RISK MANAGEMENT

The County's Risk Management program is designed to minimize harm to the physical, human, fiscal, and environmental resources while minimizing the cost of risk to Larimer County.

To these ends, the County:

1. Opposes any measures to remove or restrict the applicability of the Schedule Rating provision of the Colorado Workers' Compensation Act.
2. Supports maintaining coverage of "mental impairment," including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), as it is currently defined in Colorado Workers' Compensation Act, which allows for each claim to be evaluated on its merits.
3. Supports measures to implement reasonable liability caps for law enforcement as a way to ensure the future insurability of the County, while continuing to affirm residents' abilities to rectify civil rights violations.
4. Supports measures to adopt the 6th Edition of the AMA Guidelines under the Colorado Workers Compensation Act, which would provide a reliable, repeatable framework for assessing permanent impairments sustained by employees who have been injured on the job.

## SALES & USE TAX

Larimer County has a .8% voter-approved sales and use tax. The tax is dedicated to supporting behavioral health, natural resources, the jail, and the county fairgrounds. The sales tax is collected by the state and remitted to the County, whereas use tax is collected directly by Larimer County.

To these ends, the County:

1. Supports allowing counties to opt out of sales tax exemptions to maintain local control over the local tax base. **(Local Flex.)**
2. Opposes mandates that increase counties' cost of administering sales tax.
3. Supports allocating sufficient State resources to the Department of Revenue enforcement, audit, and local government divisions to ensure efficient administration and enforcement of county sales tax. **(Budget)**
4. Supports continuing to give counties a voice in sales tax policy changes, as their needs may differ from those of the Department of Revenue. **(Local Flex.)**

## SOLID WASTE, WASTE DIVERSION & LANDFILL

On December 19, 2018, the Larimer County Planning Commission adopted the 2018 Solid Waste Infrastructure Master Plan (SWIMP), which includes various recommendations for infrastructure and facility improvements, education, licensing and other program elements to provide solid waste services within Larimer County and increase material diversion from landfill disposal. The SWIMP also established a landfill diversion goal of 40% to be achieved by 2025.

To these ends, the County;

1. Supports legislation that requires manufacturers of packaging materials and paper products to participate and be responsible for the recycling of these materials. **(Climate)**
2. Supports legislation to study and recommend policies to divert organic materials from landfills and into a hierarchy of beneficial uses. **(Climate)**
3. Opposes banning organic materials from the landfill until viable alternatives to manage the organic materials have been established.
4. Supports legislation to combine the Front Range Waste Diversion and Recycling Resources Economic Opportunity Grant Programs into one program.
5. Supports legislation to impose a Solid Waste User Fee on users of disposal facilities to support the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment Solid Waste Program, Diversion and Recycling Grant Programs.
6. Opposes legislation to increase the Solid Waste User Fee without placing a cap on the total amount collected and the allowable uses of the fund.

## TRANSPORTATION, ROAD & BRIDGE

The Larimer County Transportation department is tasked with providing and maintaining a safe, effective transportation network allowing for the efficient movement and mobility of residents and goods and services utilizing various modes of transportation. We strive to accomplish these goals through good long range planning, prudent design, timely and proper maintenance and appropriate levels of funding.

To these ends, the County:

1. Supports legislation that minimizes or eliminates the requirement for share-back of Road & Bridge mill levy revenue with municipalities. **(Budget)**
2. Supports legislation that increases revenue to the Highway Users Tax Fund if an equitable portion of new revenues is returned to the counties.
3. Supports legislation that allows counties to form “master” public improvement districts (PIDs) for purposes of maintenance, repair and rehabilitation of public subdivision roads, sidewalks, stormwater drainage and related infrastructure and that would allow neighborhoods to join an established master PID through an inclusion petition process demonstrating majority support from the owners of property in the inclusion area. **(Local Flex.)**
4. Supports legislation that strengthens the County’s ability to require utility owners located in public right-of-way (ROW) to relocate their infrastructure within an agreed upon time schedule and implements disincentives when that schedule is not met. **(Local Flex.)**
5. Supports legislation that gives counties more authority/oversight over how public right-of-way is annexed by municipalities. **(Local Flex.)**
6. Supports legislation that reduces the current high cost of obtaining the training required to qualify for a Commercial Drivers License therefore making it a reasonable option for low income and underprivileged applicants.
7. Opposes legislation that further restricts the ability for individuals to qualify for and achieve a Commercial Drivers License.
8. Opposes legislation that mandates counties approve/accept specific construction practices/methods for the installation of utility infrastructure or that limits the County’s authority over the efficient use of right-of-way for public, private and utility interests. **(Local Flex.)**
9. Supports policies and programs that encourage alternative and multiple modes of transportation through infrastructure improvements, transportation demand management, and supporting initiatives. **(Climate)**
10. Supports collaboration between state, regional, and local entities to develop a more efficient, connected trail, transit, rail and multi-modal transportation system. **(Climate)**



## VETERANS SERVICES

Larimer County demonstrates unwavering support for our Veterans Services Office by providing necessary resources, funding, and personnel, enabling it to effectively serve our veterans and family members. We understand the importance of this office in fulfilling our commitment to those who have served our nation.

To these ends, Larimer County:

1. Supports efforts to enhance local Veterans Services Offices (VSO), dedicated to providing support for veterans, including assistance with benefits claims and providing priority of service for employment and training opportunities through the public workforce system, to honor those veterans and their family members who have served our nation.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Larimer County actively supports the existing public workforce system, initiated under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) federal legislation. WIOA ensures a design that incorporates an inclusive and diverse economy where all residents can contribute and access the resources and opportunities to connect to the labor market while aligning with the business community and their skilled workforce needs.

To these ends, the County:

1. Supports protecting the existing investments to the public workforce system to connect workers to employment and training services that help them acquire the skills needed for the jobs of the future.
2. Promotes partnerships, and funding expansion and enhancements to ensure service alignment with industry and business needs while exploring non-WIOA funding to broaden service delivery where WIOA is not designed to support.
3. Opposes federal legislation that threatens the public workforce system by requiring state-merit staff to provide direct services at a regional level.
4. Encourages the continuity and expansion of the Larimer County Conservation Corps (LCCC) to aid in the upskilling of climate related workers, while supporting regional efforts associated with fire and flood mitigation, watershed restoration, trail expansion and restoration, and water and carbon reduction activities.





# GET IN TOUCH




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Document prepared by Larimer County Public Affairs in conjunction with Larimer County Department Heads and subject matter experts.

**Approved by the Larimer County Board of Commissioners  
on November 21, 2023.**



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