

COLORADO RESILIENCY FRAMEWORK  
IMPLEMENTATION

# ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

2023



COLORADO



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# Colorado Resiliency Framework

Annual Progress Report 2023



## Looking Back on 2023

In 2023, we celebrated and acknowledged a decade of resiliency in Colorado.

While Colorado has overcome challenges, we have been recognized as a state that is forward-leaning. After the 2013 Floods that caused severe damage in our state, Colorado's leaders recognized the need to prioritize resilience. They created the Colorado Resiliency Office, and later, developed the first Colorado Resiliency Framework.

In 2023, we as a state yet again experienced a lot of challenges, and also a lot of opportunities. As we are in a time of unprecedented federal funding and historic investments, the State has been working with local communities to navigate opportunities and secure as many dollars as possible to not only address the challenges of today, but to anticipate and adapt to the changing conditions we have yet to face.

Strengthening resilience requires collaboration among agencies, levels of government, and different aspects of a community. It takes all of us working together, across systems and across sectors. Every day at the State, this type of collaboration is happening as we continue to make progress implementing strategies identified in our Colorado Resiliency Framework. This report shows our progress.

We are now on the home stretch of the five-year cycle of 2020 Colorado Resiliency Framework. And while it is hard to believe that time has moved this quickly, this does not mean that this work is over. As aptly quoted by the New Jersey Interagency Council on Climate Resilience, “resilience is not an end-state, but a dynamic state-of-being that will grow more difficult to attain as climate continues to change. Resilience is not about the physical ability to change and adapt, but about people and their quality of life. It is perseverance with grace, strength in the face of adversity and hardship, resourcefulness to leverage what is available, and faith in the road that lies ahead.” We are proud of the work done in 2023. We will keep persevering as a State, collaborating to adapt to a changing future.

Questions about this report? [Contact Shayle Sabo](#), Resiliency Program Manager at the Colorado Resiliency Office in the Department of Local Affairs.

## **The Role of DOLA in Community-led Resilience**

The Colorado Resiliency Office (CRO) is positioned within the Department of Local Affairs' Division of Local Government (DOLA-DLG). This Division provides strategic expertise, advocacy, and funding to strengthen Colorado communities. The CRO facilitates State agency partners to institutionalize resiliency into State plans and operations, and provides technical assistance to local governments per the [Colorado Revised Statute 24-32-122](#). For more information about CRO, [visit the Colorado Resiliency Office website](#).

## Resiliency Defined

The ability of communities to rebound, positively adapt to, or thrive amidst changing conditions or challenges - including human-caused and natural disasters - and to maintain quality of life, healthy growth, durable systems, economic vitality, and conservation of resources for present and future generations

Colorado House Bill 18-1394

## Background on the Colorado Resiliency Framework

Ten years ago, Colorado chose to invest in and prioritize resilience by establishing the Colorado Resiliency Office. In 2015, Colorado released the first Colorado Resiliency Framework (Framework). Not only was this the first document of its kind in our state, but in the nation. Since our state had experienced the aforementioned floods in 2013, the first Framework reflected this, heavily emphasizing strategies for resilient recovery efforts. The

Framework is updated every five years to stay relevant and to adapt to changing conditions.

Amidst the challenging environment of 2020, the Colorado Resiliency Office and partners adapted to conditions and were able to successfully update the Framework while also addressing challenges associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic and the emerging virtual world.

The Framework is grounded in a holistic approach, identifying and addressing emerging challenges and new opportunities for Colorado across six key sectors. The sectors include Community, Economic, Health and Social, Housing, Infrastructure, and Watersheds and Natural Resources. Strengthening resiliency cannot happen in a silo, and we need strategies that span sectors and to understand how they interact

## Colorado Resiliency Framework Vision and Themes

The vision for the Framework is that “Colorado creatively implements forward-thinking solutions that are sustainable and resilient to changing conditions and result in strong, equitable communities that can adapt to and thrive in the face of adversity.”

The Framework achieves this vision through six Priority Implementation Areas.

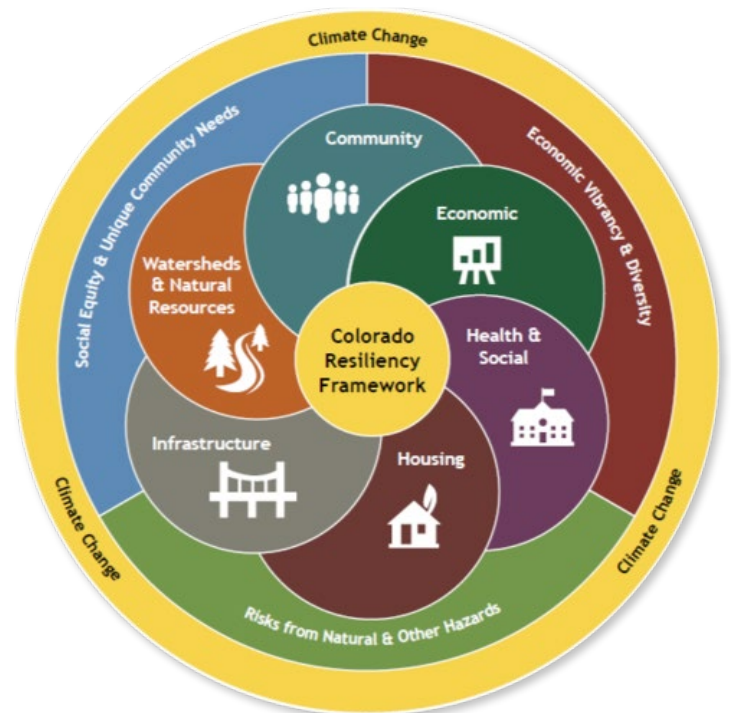
- Agriculture and Food Security

- Buildings and Infrastructure Sustainability
- Climate and Natural Hazards Resiliency
- Community Capacity
- Future-Ready Economy and Workforce
- Housing Attainability

Twenty-nine strategies were developed and evaluated in these priority areas. These strategies were tested against four primary themes:

1. Understanding Risks from Natural and Other Hazards (Environment)
2. Addressing Social Inequities and Unique Community Needs (People and Community)
3. Pursuing Economic Diversity and Vibrancy (Economy)
4. Adapting to our Changing Climate

The fourth primary theme is highlighted as the overall primary theme of the Framework: “Adapting to our Changing Climate.” This theme was elevated as climate change was identified as the single greatest threat to our state’s resilience. Climate change affects every part of the community and makes existing community problems and natural disasters worse. The State prioritizes and has built capacity for addressing both climate mitigation and climate adaptation through collaboration and interagency coordination. This was further increased in 2023 with the establishment of the Governor’s Office of Climate Preparedness and the [release of the first Climate Preparedness Roadmap](#) which provides a deep dive into climate adaptation understandings and actions for the state. The Office of Climate Preparedness and Climate Preparedness Roadmap will serve to more deeply inform and coordinate with the Colorado Resiliency Office and Resiliency Framework from a climate adaptation perspective.



The purpose of these strategies is to reduce risk and vulnerabilities of our state while also being adaptive to changing environmental, social, and economic conditions. By implementing these strategies, the State can better support local communities in becoming resilient.

## Colorado Resiliency Working Group and Implementation Strategy

The responsibility to strengthen the resilience of our state spans across all agencies. Therefore, while the Colorado Resiliency Office (CRO) helps coordinate agency partners for resiliency needs, the Colorado Resiliency Working Group (CRWG) oversees the Framework's overall stewardship and implementation. This team leads and coordinates resilience activities across State agencies.

To achieve the goals and strategies identified in key areas to strengthen our state's resiliency, six Priority Implementation Teams (PITs) were established. These teams were established to lead the implementation of the Framework strategies. The PITs are collaborative entities that include agency representatives and experts from across the State. It is the work of these teams and associated collaborative efforts that make up the progress discussed in this report.

Please note that the State does operate on a fiscal year basis that begins July 1st of each year. This report mainly covers the calendar year 2023. However, some information and data may reflect the fiscal year calendars from July 2022 to June 2024. This is especially true for reporting grant or policy outcomes.

# Colorado Resiliency Framework Progress and Accomplishments in 2023

## Overarching Strategies

While there are six specific Priority Implementation Areas identified in the Framework, there are also two overarching priorities that span across all six areas. These two priorities were identified as being core to the success of the CRWG in general.

**1. Establish a Statewide Resilient and Sustainable Community/Regional Program.**

Facilitate coordination across jurisdictions on resiliency and sustainability issues. Develop and manage a program for communities to take concrete steps to improve their resilience and sustainability performance.

The CRO continues to modify the State-wide resiliency program to better reflect this overarching strategy. The CRO is working with the agency partners in the CRWG to roll out the “Resilient Colorado Communities” program. State agencies are partners in this program to improve service delivery, technical assistance, funding, and coordination.

It has four key tracks:

- Climate Change and Local Resilience
- Pre-Recovery and Recovery
- Rural Prosperity
- State Resiliency Operations

**2. Attract and Leverage Funding Opportunities.** Integrate resiliency criteria into State competitive grant programs and investments. Secure additional resources and investments to implement resiliency solutions.

We are currently experiencing historic federal funding opportunities for resilience and climate adaptation. This year, the CRO [hosted and recorded a webinar](#) for State agencies on how best to incorporate the [State-defined Resiliency Criteria](#) into their community-facing competitive grant programs, especially as many federal opportunities are being managed at the State level. Additionally, collaborative efforts



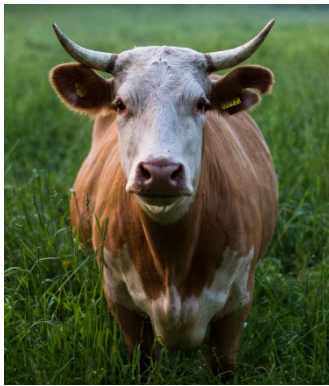
to improve funding navigation for local communities continued to be bolstered this year, including State agencies working together to host [10 Regional Infrastructure Development Summits](#). Lastly, the State continues to find ways to strengthen resilience funding opportunities such as the [Climate Resilience Challenge](#) created through the [Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance Fund](#) (EIAF) program. This program encourages communities to “think big” when it comes to climate adaptation and mitigation projects (see more details on both the Summits and the Climate Resilience Challenge later on in this report).



## AGRICULTURE & FOOD SECURITY (AF)

Cultivate a robust state and local food system, from agriculture distribution & consumption.

### Agriculture & Food Security



The intersection of community development, food systems, environmental considerations, and sustainability is extremely evident in the area of Agriculture and Food Security. The balance of food availability and accessibility, environmental preservation and restoration, and livability of our state takes a great deal of collaboration across a diverse range of stakeholders. The goal of the Agriculture and Food Security Priority Implementation Area aims to develop a strong state and local food system, from farming, to distribution and consumption.



### Spotlight

This year, the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) hired an Agriculture Emergency Coordinator to create an emergency management program within the Animal Health Division of their agency. The Agriculture Emergency Coordinator quickly worked with local communities to host emergency response exercises. This helped improve local emergency management planning. Three table-top exercises were held to focus on evaluating large animals during a wildfire in Pueblo, Larimer and Weld Counties, and Montrose County. In addition, the program hosted two Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) trainings on food emergencies and food security for local emergency managers. This new emergency management program will build relationships in rural, agricultural communities in Colorado. It

will also work with other agencies such as the CRO, the Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM), the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Office of Climate Preparedness and Disaster Recovery (CPO) to support emergency response and recovery efforts statewide.



## Legislative, Policy, and Funding Progress

This year, [HB22-1008](#) addressing food accessibility passed in the legislature, which establishes the [Community Food Access Program](#), a \$10 million per year tax

credit program for small food retailers and small family farms to purchase equipment to increase access to, or lower prices for, healthy food in low income and low access areas. In addition to reducing the price of healthy food for low-income Colorado community members, this program also builds capacity in local communities to promote comprehensive responses to local food access and farm and nutrition issues. Applicants must show a plan for responsible environmental stewardship, including by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.



## Climate Adaptation Highlights

As is evident in the above legislative update for this priority area, as well as the progress identified related to the following strategies for resiliency action, it is clear that sustainable and resilient agriculture is key to Colorado's future. The State's work this year in expanding food access with a focus on underserved communities, and increasing climate-smart agricultural practices, will help communities and farmers to adapt to the changing climate change while still ensuring healthy foods for Coloradans. The CPO's Climate Preparedness Roadmap places an emphasis on agriculture and provides next-step actions the

state will take to support agricultural producers in navigating climate impacts given the assessment that multiple climate risks overlay key agricultural producing areas of the state.

## Agriculture & Food Security Strategies

**AF1. Promote and Protect Working Lands**

**AF2. Advance Regenerative Farming Practices**

**AF3. Support Innovation and New Markets**

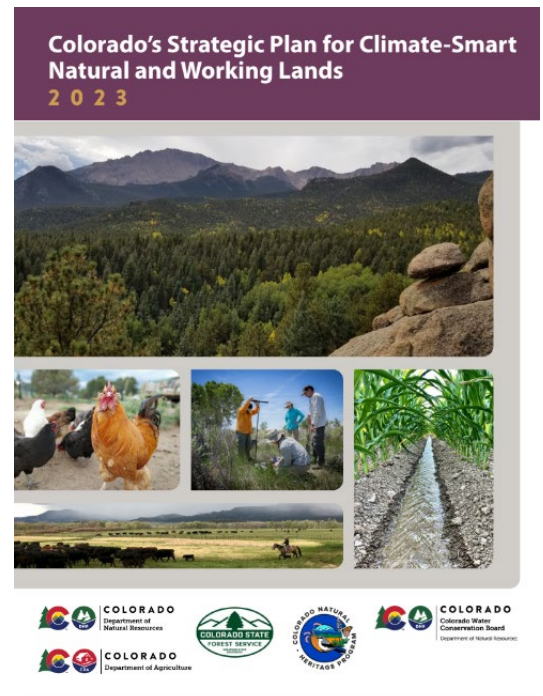
**AF4. Bolster Next Generation Farm and Agricultural Workers**

**AF5. Integrate Food and Agriculture in Local Planning**

### Priority Strategy Implementation Progress

Colorado agencies continued to make progress toward each of these strategy areas. Highlights include:

- In 2023, the State released Colorado’s first ever [Strategic Plan for Climate-Smart Natural and Working Lands](#). Many State agencies - including the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), CDA, the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), and the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) - worked together on this plan. The plan identifies priority actions across Colorado’s landscapes to reduce emissions, increase carbon sequestration, and make Colorado more resilient to climate change. One of the primary strategies outlined in this plan is the conservation and protection of natural and working lands. Protecting farms, ranches,



forests, and natural lands from being converted to higher-intensity development can increase carbon sequestration, mitigate natural disasters, reduce erosion, reduce air pollution, and generally support communities that rely on these lands for food, fiber, and livelihood.

- CDA remains a leader in regenerative agriculture. They have continued to grow their soil health program, including developing a market premium for “climate-smart” commodities for crops grown under healthy soil practices. This includes a market study that will be completed in the winter of 2024, and enrolling 300 new farmers and ranchers in CDA’s soil health program.
- A near-term action for the Colorado Greenhouse Gas Pollution Reduction Roadmap (see more on this in the Climate and Natural Hazards Priority Implementation Area below) includes extending existing tax incentives for beetle-killed wood to all wood products sourced in Colorado to incentivize and diversify alternative uses for wood products, supporting a market strategy for wood in our state.



## BUILDINGS & INFRASTRUCTURE SUSTAINABILITY (BI)

Reimagine and modernize Colorado's built environment to be both climate and hazard resilient and environmentally sustainable.

### Buildings & Infrastructure Sustainability



The federal government has made significant investments in infrastructure through the Infrastructure Investments and Job Act (IIJA), as well as the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), creating a unique chance to improve our nation's infrastructure. Colorado also created an additional pool of funding through the [Local Match Program](#) (LOMA), making local governments more competitive in pursuing federal dollars and embracing progressive and innovative technology and projects in our state. Our goal in this priority area is to reimagine

and modernize Colorado's built environment to be both climate and hazard resilient, and be environmentally sustainable. In addition to funding coordination and navigation, Colorado agencies continue to collaborate in the intersection of climate adaptation and mitigation, the built environment, and incorporating resiliency design and principles.



#### Spotlight

The CRO in the Department of Local Affairs' Division of Local Government (DOLA-DLG) supported a state-wide application for the Department of Energy (DOE) funding for Energy Improvements in Rural and Remote Areas (ERA). This funding is flexible to broad energy improvements (i.e., not just microgrids) for communities with less than 5,000 people.

The CRO conducted broad outreach to both local governments and the Grid Resilience distribution list to solicit project proposals. It was determined a State-led application to this Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) would be most competitive, specifically to support lower-capacity communities. The State selected the City of La Junta, Pitkin County, and San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative. They were chosen because of their project scope, budget, and meeting the State’s threshold for socioeconomic or climate vulnerability. In addition to supporting the application process, DOLA-DLG provided matching funds on behalf of San Luis Valley Rural Electric Association and City of La Junta from the State’s IJA matching fund. This eased the burden the sub applicants needed to meet in order to qualify for funding. The CRO submitted a concept paper for this \$10 million grant opportunity in April 2023, which was encouraged for a full application. In August 2023, the final application was submitted, and has yet to hear back from DOE.



## Legislative, Policy, and Funding Progress

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The [Microgrids for Community Resilience Grant Program](#) was created last year. The program is administered by the CRO within DOLA-DLG with support from the Colorado Energy Office (CEO). In July, eight planning awards were given to support developing community microgrid assets in rural Colorado. In the later part of 2023 applications for construction and planning grants were received and will be awarded in early 2024.

The science-based targets for reducing greenhouse gas pollution established in 2019 were updated this year. These targets aim to reduce pollution below 2005 levels. These targets are important for this Priority Implementation Area because buildings and electricity account for 30% of Colorado emissions:

- 26% by 2025
- 50% by 2030
- 65% by 2035
- 75% by 2040
- 90% by 2045
- 100% by 2050



Furthermore, Colorado’s population is increasing, leading to greater demands on land use (see more information and details on this in the Housing Attainability Priority Area of this report).

In the fall of 2023, multiple State agencies were working on inventorying State programs that support [Executive Order D 2023 014](#), which aims to identify opportunities to advance this priority for our state.



## Climate Adaptation Highlights

To support and empower local communities in their plan for climate adaptation the CRO, CEO, and other State agencies again collaborated to provide the educational [Climate and Future Adaptations Webinar Series](#). This year, the series reflected the overall themes of the Framework, including [Current Opportunities and Future Progress](#), [Social Equity and Community Collaboration](#), and [Risk Reduction and Innovative Technology in the Built Environment](#), the latter emphasizing mitigation strategies to reduce risk and promote climate adaptation strategies as well as innovative infrastructure including microgrids.

### Buildings & Infrastructure Sustainability Strategies

**BI1. Integrate Resiliency into Infrastructure Funding**

**BI2. Improve Infrastructure and Land Use Coordination**

**BI3. Establish Model Climate Infrastructure Standards**

**BI4. Ensure Climate-Resilient Critical Infrastructure**

**BI5. Promote Adaptive Reuse and Retrofitting**

## Priority Strategy Implementation Progress

Colorado agencies continued to make progress toward each of these strategy areas. Highlights include:

- Colorado is pursuing funding associated with the [Promoting Resilient Operatives for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation Program \(PROTECT\)](#) established by IIJA. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has proactively developed and utilized a resilience assessment for projects that identifies project elements that will reduce annualized risks. Projects pursued through PROTECT



must undergo this resilience assessment to meet Colorado resiliency standards and goals.

- In addition to development of this resilience risk assessment process, this year, CDOT also improved training programs for conducting this risk assessment to build capacity within the agency to evaluate projects and ensure resiliency.
- Program managers from agencies receiving federal funding from IIJA, including the CEO and CDOT, attended 10 Regional Infrastructure Development Summits to provide direct technical assistance to local communities seeking funding for local and regional infrastructure projects (see Community Capacity Priority Implementation Area for more information).
- [Strong Communities \(HB22-1304\)](#) incentivizes the adoption of transformational practices, programs, and policies that support sustainable development patterns and affordable housing into the future. DOLA's Division of Local Government (DOLA-DLG), the CEO, and CDOT collaboratively manage two grant programs. One is for local planning and the other is for affordable housing infrastructure. The infrastructure grants will fund local government projects for infrastructure associated with the development of community benefit-driven infill affordable housing that meets critical housing needs as identified by the local government. The program further incentivizes key resiliency measures such as age-friendly and accessible design, investment to remedy inequities in the built environment, onsite childcare, commercial conversion, fully integrating transit and walkability, and renewable energy.
- DOLA-DLG's Community Development Office (CDO) is updating Template [Land Development Codes](#). These codes are for smaller to mid-sized counties and municipalities as an optional development code. The template codes will reflect best practices to support Colorado communities (e.g., avoiding and mitigating hazards and promoting affordable housing and sustainable development patterns).
- CEO and DOLA jointly oversee the State's Energy Code Board. The Board's task, mandated by the [Building Greenhouse Gas Emissions Law \(HB22-1362\)](#), is to create model energy codes to be adopted by local governments. On June 1, 2023, The Energy Code Board published the [Colorado Model Electric Ready and Solar Ready Code](#). This code has requirements for new residential and commercial buildings. They must have wiring for future appliance electrification, future electric vehicle (EV) charging, and future on-site solar energy systems. This code and the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) serve as Colorado's minimum energy code. It must then be

adopted any time a local government adopts or updates any of their building codes between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2026. This code will become Colorado's minimum energy code beginning July 1, 2026.



## CLIMATE & NATURAL HAZARD RESILIENCY (CN)

Reduce Colorado's risk from climate change and natural hazards through integrated land use, ecosystem, and natural resource planning, management, and investment.

### Climate & Natural Hazards



Addressing impacts of climate change is elevated as the overarching Framework theme through which all priority strategies are assessed. It is imperative that we consider the impacts of climate change which is a force multiplier for existing community stressors, as well as risk from natural hazards. The goal of the Climate and Natural Hazards Priority Implementation Area aims to lower Colorado's risk from climate change and natural hazards. This is done through integrated land use, ecosystem, and natural resource planning, management, and investment. Achieving

this requires collaboration and coordination across many different areas including natural resources, community development, emergency management, and many others.



#### Spotlight

After demonstrating success in 2023, The [Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action Program](#) (COSWAP) was permanently funded in the 2023 legislative session. A highlight from this program includes the story of the Indian Creek Property Owners Association that utilized the funding to train mitigation volunteers. The volunteer group of over 60 members were hosted by the Indian Creek POA donning the name the North Florissant, Colorado (NoFloCo)

Fire Mitigation Posse. Utilizing the Colorado Fire Camp training facility located in Chaffee County, NoFloCO traveled from Teller County throughout 2022 and 2023 to receive training. More details on this story and other inspiring community projects as a result of this program [can be found on the DNR COSWAP website](#).

**COSWAP allows for immediate ability to utilize skills**

“This course has only strengthened my view on the importance of mitigating fire risk and how the entire community needs to be aware of the need to mitigate. Our role as NoFloCo should be to help mitigate properties of those who can’t for themselves or who just need help. It should also be to educate and spread the word on the importance as it applies to the entire community.”

Mark Waldo, trainee from Florissant



## Legislative, Policy, and Funding Progress

2023 was another year of forward leaning progress, particularly as it relates to addressing climate and identifying ways to reduce risk. Some highlights include:

- This year saw the roll out of the [Wildfire Ready Watersheds Program](#), created in 2021 by [SB21-240](#). The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) was directed to assess how vulnerable Colorado’s water resources, communities, and critical infrastructure are to post-wildfire impacts. They were also asked to advance a program to help communities plan and carry out strategies to reduce these impacts. This program includes the Wildfire Ready Watersheds Grant Program, which focuses on the development of Wildfire Ready Watershed action plans and implementation of projects designed to mitigate post wildfire impacts. In 2023, the legislature provided \$10 million to fund the first cycle of the program. They awarded a total of \$1 million.
- The legislature also passed [SB23-005](#). It supports forestry mitigation in several ways:



- Directing the CSFS to develop career materials for high school guidance counselors
- Creating the Timber, Forest Health, and Wildfire Mitigation Industries Workforce Development Program in the CSFS to provide cost-share for industry internships
- Funding expansion and establishment of forestry and wildfire mitigation programs at community colleges
- DOLA-DLG launched the [Climate Resilience Challenge](#) (CRC) in August 2023. It is a first-of-its-kind initiative from the EIAF. The first round of the CRC set aside \$20 million for local government plans and projects that address climate mitigation, adaptation, and equity. In the first round of funding, DOLA-DLG received \$30 million of requests, with [awardees announced in November 2023](#) (those that begin with “CRC” are part of the Climate Resilience Challenge).



## Climate Adaptation Highlights

While implementing strategies to promote climate adaptation is central to the work of the Climate and Natural Hazards PIT, there are some activities from this year to specifically highlight:

- The new Governor’s Office of Climate Preparedness and Disaster Recovery worked across agencies, including with the CRWG to help develop state level actions included in the [Colorado Climate Preparedness Roadmap](#). This Roadmap was released on December 1, 2023, and provides a detailed climate risk assessment and statewide policy roadmap to guide the state in adapting to climate change.

### Yampa Valley Housing Authority Brown Ranch Geothermal Infrastructure

“Thanks to the support of DOLA and funding from the Climate Resilience Challenge, YVHA will be able to construct a community geothermal grid to provide heating and cooling to the first 400-480 homes at Brown Ranch. This system is anticipated to reduce residents’ energy bills by 52% while reducing onsite greenhouse gas emissions by a similar margin. Geothermal truly is the intersection of affordability and sustainability. We are grateful to the State of Colorado for investing in the infrastructure to make this project possible.”

- Emily Katzman, Development Project Manager

- The C&NH PIT also helped with the aforementioned Colorado Strategic Plan for Climate-Smart Natural and Working Lands. While motivated by sequestering more carbon in Colorado’s natural and working lands, the strategic plan identifies the adaptation co-benefits of climate-smart land management and creates a framework for monitoring progress on priority actions.

## Climate & Natural Hazard Resiliency Strategies

**CN1. Align Climate Change Data, Metrics, and Standards**

**CN2. Resilient Watershed-Based Management and Best Practices Planning and Project Identification**

**CN3. Integrate Forest Health and Wildfire Risk into Land Use and Development Processes to Reduce Wildfire Risk and Exposure**

**CN4. Build Local Capacity, Resources, and Incentives to Implement Resiliency Projects**

### Priority Strategy Implementation Progress

Colorado agencies continued to make progress toward each of these strategy areas. Highlights include:

- This year included an update to the [Colorado Water Plan](#). It included several standard climate projection scenarios. The climate scenarios used in the Water Plan update were consulted during the development of the forthcoming Climate Change in Colorado Report by the CWCB and the Colorado Climate Center (CCC). The report provides the latest climate projections for our state and should form the basis for climate scenarios and modeling across State agencies. The report will be published in January 2024.
- 2023 saw several initiatives aimed at reducing wildfire risk, including the new [Wildfire Resiliency Code Board](#) recently established by the Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC). This diverse board is charged with reducing the risk of wildfires to people and property through the development of statewide codes and standards. Furthermore, the [Wildfire Ready Watersheds Program](#) is supporting local capacity by

emphasizing local stakeholder-driven processes using State funding. Additionally, the CSFS hired several staff this year to facilitate local updates of Community Wildfire Protection Plans.



## COMMUNITY CAPACITY (CC)

Empower Colorado communities to improve local resilience, equity, and capacity.

### Community Capacity

A strong, resilient state begins at the local level. In our state we have a diversity of communities with a wide range of needs, goals, and priorities. The goal of the State in this space is to empower Colorado communities to improve local resilience, equity, and capacity. This is done by providing technical assistance, tools, and information, which lead to fostering a root culture of resilience from the grassroots level across our state.



### Spotlight

The State and local communities are working together to improve inclusive community engagement. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), CDOT, and the Safe Routes Partnership co-created a pilot training series to help build local capacity and support implementation of the [Colorado Community Engagement Toolkit](#). Representatives from Boulder and Pueblo counties participated in the four-part discussion based training. The training focused on reflecting on partnerships, planning engagement activities, troubleshooting, and sharing with peers. After completing the training, each county



was able to apply a stipend up to \$5,000 towards implementation of a community engagement project.



## Legislative, Policy, and Funding Progress

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A lot of activity was happening within the Community Capacity Priority Implementation Area when it comes to legislative progress, policy, and funding. Highlights include:

- In May 2023, a new environmental justice definition for disproportionately impacted communities was established. This definition, which was included in [HB23-1233](#) continues to define disproportionately impacted communities at the census block group scale. This definition [can be found on the Colorado Enviroscreen website](#).
- The [Community Access to Electric Bicycles Grant Program](#), which was passed last year, launched in 2023. This program is now taking applications for funding available to Tribal governments, local governments, and non-profit and community-based organizations to create programs that give e-bikes to low and moderate-income Coloradans. This helps more people who qualify get e-bikes and reduces GHG emissions while improving health in communities.



## Climate Adaptation Highlights

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A key highlight for the Community Capacity Priority Implementation Area is the work of the State Interagency Extreme Heat Task Force. This task force is a subgroup of the CRWG. This was created as a result of a request from local communities to identify proactive planning efforts to address the impacts of increasing extreme temperatures. The State also hosted an Extreme Heat Learning Circle in December 2022, which was open to all local agencies to discuss approaches to mitigating, preparing for, and responding to extreme heat events. This year, in collaboration with capstone students from the Masters of the Environment, School of Planning, and the School of Public Health programs at the University of Colorado Boulder, [a framework of recommended actions](#) was developed to support State and local efforts to address extreme heat. These efforts were highlighted in the Colorado Climate Preparedness Roadmap, as well as [Enhanced State Hazard Mitigation Plan \(E-SHMP\)](#) as

part of a broader mitigation action to craft a framework to support local governments in their extreme heat planning.

## Community Capacity Strategies

**CC1. Integrate Equity into Resilience Planning and Actions**

**CC2. Develop and Deploy Community Engagement and Civic Capacity Tools**

**CC3. Strengthen Local Planning and Peer Networks**

### Priority Strategy Implementation Progress

Colorado agencies continued to make progress toward each of these strategy areas. Highlights include:

- The CEO and multiple State agencies collaborated to hold listening sessions across Colorado. They wanted to hear from residents to understand their priorities, concerns, and ideas related to climate change, air quality, and clean energy. The listening sessions will inform the [Greenhouse Gas Pollution Reduction Roadmap 2.0](#). In the early summer of 2023, meetings were held at different locations across the state and virtually. Language interpretation was provided to ensure more inclusion and diverse representation of Colorado community members in this planning process.
- The State and regional Councils of Government (COGs) collaborated to hire and embed [Regional Grant Navigators](#) into regions to increase the capacity of local communities to identify and pursue funding opportunities through IIJA.
- Additionally, DOLA, the State Recovery Office, State agencies administering federal funds, and other partners collaborated to host 10 hybrid [Regional Infrastructure Development Summits](#) in the spring of 2023. Local communities had opportunities to connect directly with program managers, ask questions, and receive guidance on federal funding opportunities.
- DOLA-DLG continued funding navigation support for local governments this year with the monthly Local Government Coordination Call and associated [Pathways to Recovery and Resiliency Funding Webinar Series](#). This call shares critical updates from DOLA, the

State Recovery Office, and other State agency partners. It also raises awareness of state and federal funding opportunities highlighted in the [Local Community Funding Guide](#) as well as best practices and guidance on applying for funds.

- DOLA-DLG’s Strong Communities Infrastructure grant program (see more in the Buildings and Infrastructure Sustainability PIT update above) incentivizes communities to address inequities in the built environment through investments in infrastructure for affordable housing development. One of the core objectives of the program is to fix past and ongoing inequities in housing choice, so grant applicants are evaluated on their stakeholder engagement strategy. The program provided a [guidance document](#) to help grant applicants plan for inclusive community engagement. The program also supports local community capacity through making certain staff expenses eligible, especially around community engagement needed to champion development projects and land use strategy adoption.
- The CRO launched Camp Resilience, a one day workshop intended to help communities create a framework integrating resilience into all operations and projects. The first workshop held on the west slope had 30 participants from five communities.





## FUTURE-READY ECONOMY & WORKFORCE (EW)

Fortify Colorado's workforce to support a future-ready, regenerative, circular economy.

### Future-Ready Economy and Workforce



Colorado continues to be a state where people want to live, work, and play. The number of people in our state continues to increase, which helps our economy but also creates challenges. We aim to strike a balance between cultivating opportunities for entrepreneurship, investing in upcoming generations of the workforce, a changing work environment following the COVID-19 Pandemic, and ensuring that our workforce communities have access to

affordable living and services such as childcare. The goal of the Future-Ready Economy and Workforce Priority Implementation Area is to fortify Colorado's workforce to support a future-ready, regenerative, circular economy.

#### Spotlight



The [Rural Economic Development Initiative](#) (REDI) funded the Chaffee County Accelerator program that spurred economic development and resilience. The program provided 48 hours of group coaching, recruited 45 business mentors, made 60 mentor connections to local entrepreneurs, and hosted 5 events with 13 industry expert keynotes and attracted

more than 500 attendees. They built an access to capital program with numerous local banks, state level grant making entities, and recruited 12 local high-net-worth individuals to join the ArkAngels Investor Network, which is a network made up of local business mentors with expertise in establishing and growing a business in rural communities. Through those outputs, they achieved significant direct economic impact, including creating net new jobs, as well as retaining jobs. Additional investments were made in miscellaneous capital expenditures, including equipment, marketing assets, technology investments, and more. The success of this program is inspiring other rural communities to look at creating their own programs.



## Legislative, Policy, and Funding Progress

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In July 2023, the U.S. Department of Labor approved Colorado’s State Apprenticeship Agency. The goal of this agency is to expand access and equity in registered apprenticeship. In September 2023, Governor Polis signed [Executive Order D 2022 027](#) to promote work-based learning and registered apprenticeship in State government and the private sector. As of September 7th, 2023, 7 agencies had 12 programs either registered or in development. Currently, 13 apprentices are working in these programs. The Executive Order requires the State Apprenticeship Agency to add 100 new programs across Colorado in the public and private sector. As of October 2023, 24 new programs have been registered.

Additionally, since April 2023, when Governor Polis signed an [Executive Order](#) to promote skills-based hiring in State government, Colorado’s Department of Personnel and Administration (DPA) has been training State agencies on skills-based hiring practices. DPA has also created tracking mechanisms for State hiring to assess the impact of skills-based hiring efforts.



## Climate Adaptation Highlights

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To support future generations of agricultural workers and entrepreneurs, CDA continues to fund educational opportunities, internships, and school trips in Colorado educational systems and programs to promote agricultural workforce development. While this program is managed by CDA, this program is funded through the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE). Many of the businesses that participate



in this program are focused on sustainability and regenerative agriculture practices and cultivation of skills, which is imperative to the future of climate-smart agriculture.

## Future-Ready Economy and Workforce Strategies

**EW1. Expand Digital Equity, Access, and Preparedness**

**EW2. Advance Equitable Hiring and Modern Benefits**

**EW3. Develop Rural Economic Diversification Roadmaps and Strategies**

**EW4. Support Communities and Industries in Economic Transition**

### Priority Strategy Implementation Progress

Colorado agencies continued to make progress toward each of these strategy areas. Highlights include:

- The Office of the Future of Work (OFW) received almost \$900,000 in planning grant funds from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) in November of 2022. Planning funds have supported the creation of Colorado’s first Digital Access Plan. Data on the digital divide was gathered from over 5,000 Coloradans in 20 languages, and over 40 listening sessions were hosted. The funding was also used to deploy an asset mapping survey for organizations participating in digital inclusion efforts. This funding will also be used to support additional organizations that will be hosting public comment sessions early in 2024.
- This year, 16 regional teams finalized their community plans through the [COVID-19 Regional Resiliency and Recovery Roadmaps Program](#). This program was funded by the US Economic Development Administration (EDA), and spearheaded by the CRO in partnership with the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), CDLE, along with Community Builders. Many plans include ideas to diversify industries and strengthen current industries to vulnerability. At least half of the roadmaps prioritized strategies that create career pathways for future job opportunities. Implementation of these roadmaps are underway. [Check out an inspiring video](#) released by the CRO where participants share their experiences and hopes for what the future holds.

- The [REDI](#) Program wrapped up its \$5 million stimulus cycle. It helped different programs around the state that included the expansion of the heritage apple industry in Montezuma County, development of a business hub in Kit Carson County, and establishment of a Mexican-American kitchen in Montrose County.
- The Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) has made significant strides in promoting job quality through the publication of their [Job Quality Framework](#). To complement the framework, the CWDC provides free programs and help to Colorado businesses to measure and improve the quality of their jobs. Additionally, the CWDC provides support to local stakeholders and partners, such as workforce professionals, to engage in job quality efforts.



## HOUSING ATTAINABILITY (HA)

Increase supply of attainable housing throughout Colorado, including affordable housing options for workforce populations and those who most experience marginalizing.

### Housing Attainability



Colorado faces a challenge also experienced on the national level: affordable and attainable housing. This challenge was made more difficult due to the changing environment after the COVID-19 Pandemic. As a result, Colorado continues to seek solutions to reduce the cost of housing and to promote climate-ready and sustainable housing. The Housing Attainability Priority Implementation Area aims to increase the supply of attainable

housing throughout Colorado. This includes affordable housing options for workforce populations and community members who most experience marginalization.

### Spotlight



In only 22 months after the Marshall Fire and Straight Line Winds Event in 2021, a record breaking 70% of lots were permitted or under review, and 222 families have moved back home. Additionally with sizeable rebate incentives for Marshall Fire survivors from the CEO and Xcel Energy, 34% of permitted or built homes chose high performance building standards. In Superior and Louisville, Marshall Fire survivors are allowed to opt out of the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) 2021 standards, and yet one-third have chosen



to opt in. Boulder County already required higher standards including IECC 2021, therefore all of the permitted homes will be built to these standards and be eligible for some of these rebates if they wish to apply.

Last year, DOLA created the new [Housing Recovery Program](#) (HRP) and began accepting applications for forgivable or traditional loans and \$5,000 mitigation grants for wildfire home-hardening. As of December 2023, over 200 households have applied for funding to assist in rebuilding their homes. Over \$5M in loans have closed and another \$3M has been awarded and is going through the closing process. Of the combined \$8M, almost \$1.5M is loans for home-hardening measures and \$500K has been awarded in \$5K mitigation grants.



## Legislative, Policy, or Funding Progress

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Governor Polis has identified a Wildly Important Priority for Colorado: “[to] empower the building of more housing by removing artificial barriers, in order to ensure Coloradans of any budget can attain housing and that new development is aligned with climate and water conservation goal.” [See the Governor’s Dashboard](#). This means that we need affordable housing that can withstand future climate conditions and promote strategic growth.

To support this goal, Governor Polis signed [Executive Order D 2023 014](#). This order explains the goals for State government and how we can plan carefully for growth and development all over the state. Goals include incentivizing development patterns that align with climate and air quality goals, use less energy, conserve water, and require less infrastructure, discourage sprawl, incentivize affordable housing, and more. State agencies inventoried existing programs to support this order.

This year the Colorado legislature passed [HB23-1304](#), which made modifications to [Proposition 123](#). Proposition 123 was originally passed by Colorado voters in November 2022. Its purpose is to help communities increase affordable housing by 9% over three years. As of November 15, 2023, 202 jurisdictions in Colorado had successfully filed their commitment, which is 60% of all possible jurisdictions and 88% of the state’s population. OEDIT programs funded by Proposition 123 must also think about density, environmental sustainability, and mixed income housing. This will help strengthen community resilience across the state.



## Climate Adaptation Highlights

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DOLA's Division of Housing (DOLA-DOH), administers the [Transformational Affordable Housing Grant Program](#) (TAHG). The program helps applicants develop, create, or preserve affordable housing units in their communities. DOLA-DOH collaborated with CEO to develop energy efficiency standards for this program. In fiscal year 2023, DOLA-DOH made 18 awards to applicants who elected to utilize one or more of the following energy efficiency standards for their affordable housing projects:

- Zero Energy Ready Home (ZERH)
- Enterprise Green Communities (EGC)
- National Green Building Standard (NGBS)
- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)
- Highly Efficient All electric design

These awards are projected to produce 1,544 new energy efficient affordable housing units in the years to come. Energy efficiency outcomes provide not only lower greenhouse gas emissions, but also important climate adaptation co-benefits supporting buildings that are also generally better equipped to withstand climate impacts like extreme heat and wildfire.

The aforementioned [Housing Recovery Program](#) promotes rebuilding with high performance building standards. These standards are adopted by local communities and include voluntary sustainable building elements. The program goes beyond local code requirements, by incentivizing the use of fire-, wind-, and water-resistant building materials and energy efficiency measures. The Wind and Wildfire Home Protection Program is part of the HRP. It gives grants and loans to homeowners and rental-unit owners to “build back better” with non-combustible and fire-resistant building materials. When applying for the HRP, households are encouraged to also join CEO's Recovery and Electrification Program. This program offers funding for adding select energy efficient options that reduce natural gas use. It applies to households impacted by state- or federally-declared disasters from 2018 onwards.

## Housing Attainability Strategies

**HA1. Build Local Capacity for Developing Resilient Affordable Housing**

**HA2. Support Affordable Housing Siting and Development**

**HA3. Increase Housing Stability**

**HA4. Expand Residential Efficiency and Weatherization**

### Priority Strategy Implementation Progress

Colorado agencies continued to make progress toward each of these strategy areas. Highlights include:

- While the HRP was officially launched in December 2022, there are additional upcoming elements of this program that are exciting. First is that the Homeowner Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Program will be providing funding to Boulder County for the repair and or replacement of mobile homes that experienced damage from the Marshall Fire and Straight Lines Wind Event and have remaining recovery needs. Additionally the Temporary Rental Assistance Program will help Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) households in Louisville, Superior, and unincorporated Boulder County that were damaged or destroyed in this event. This grant program, which will be funded by the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery Funds (CDBG-DR) is intended to assist with the cost of Additional Living Expenses (ALE).
- DOLA and OEDIT collaboratively launched and administered Proposition 123 funds through new and existing programs. They also partnered to provide significant technical assistance to tribal and local governments statewide to help them meet the November 1, 2023, deadline to file a commitment. This would make development projects in their communities eligible to compete for Prop 123 funding. Overall, 202 local and tribal governments successfully filed commitments to increase their affordable housing by 3% annually or 9% over the next 3 years.
  - OEDIT, in partnership with CHFA, administers the Affordable Housing Finance Fund. It has 60% of the overall funding (\$96 million for 2023-24 and \$192

million for 2024-25 expected). New programs include: land banking, equity investment, concessionary debt, and modular and factory build finance. Scoring criteria for these programs consider three priorities from the statute which further impact resilience: considering density, environmental sustainability, and mixed income housing.

- The Affordable Housing Support Fund is managed by DOLA (\$64 million in 2023-24 and \$127.2 million expected in 2024-25). DOLA-DOH continues to administer affordable homeownership programs and programs serving persons experiencing homelessness. DOLA-DLG administers the Local Planning Capacity Grant Program.

## Looking to the Future and Next Steps

The work to strengthen the resiliency of our state is an ongoing journey. We will continue to come up against disruptions and work together collaboratively to find solutions that carry us forward. Some key activities for the next year include:



### Strengthening Interagency Action for Climate Adaptation

Our State continues to prioritize addressing the impacts of climate change. This too is an effort that cannot happen in isolation, and great interagency work is happening at the State, and is evident in some of the aforementioned plans and efforts. However, the standing up of the [Office of Climate Preparedness and Disaster Recovery](#) in the Governor's Office builds further capacity and support to further facilitate interagency connections for action. [Learn more about this on the Colorado Climate Action website](#) made public earlier this year.



### Colorado Resiliency Framework Update

We are now on the tail end of the 2020 Colorado Resiliency Framework. Starting next year, the CRO will initiate the process of the next five-year cycle update. The CRO will work closely with partner agencies in the CRWG to identify strategic actions and priorities for 2025-2030.

## Identifying Solutions for Flexible Resiliency Funding



Local communities received collaborative support to access federal funding opportunities. This includes opportunities to improve our climate adaptivity and strengthen infrastructure nationwide. We also piloted the Climate Resilience Challenge initiative through the existing EIAF. This was a way to incorporate resilience into existing programs. A key goal will be to continue to find solutions for flexible funding to support resilient projects across our state.



## Resilient Colorado Communities

The CRO keeps improving our programs to meet the changing needs of our communities. It is imperative that the State creates a system that allows for more effective and efficient technical assistance and resources to be available to local communities. This will ensure they can better integrate resilience into their programs, operations, and investments. The CRO is working to refine our Resilient Colorado Communities program that seeks to streamline local service delivery including pre- and post-disaster recovery, rural prosperity, climate resilience and adaptation, and coordination of State agency partners.

## Thank You!

The Colorado Resiliency Office extends much gratitude to all of the State agency representatives and members of the Colorado Resiliency Working Group for their contributions to this 2023 Annual Progress Report of the Colorado Resiliency Framework Implementation.

### Questions about this Report?

[Contact Shayle Sabo](#), Resiliency Program Manager, Colorado Resiliency Office.