

## **Gov. Polis Provides COVID-19 Update, Launches Energize CO Gap Fund Application & Special Evictions Prevention Task Force**

DENVER - Gov. Polis today provided an update on the state's response to COVID-19 and announced the Special Evictions Prevention Task Force, as well as the Gap Fund application.

“Coloradans are resilient and will lead the nation in rebuilding our economy,” said Governor Jared Polis. “The Energize Gap Fund provides a key resource for Colorado small businesses. During this challenging time, we will continue doing everything we can to help hardworking Coloradans, which is why we’re bringing a diverse set of voices together to look at housing solutions and are providing additional support for small businesses across our state.”

Governor Polis was joined by bill sponsors Senators Jeff Bridges and Faith Winter, along with Kent Thiry, Co-Chair of Energize Colorado, to announce the upcoming launch of the Gap Fund application. The application will go live on Monday, August 31. This fund will provide more than \$25 million in small business loans and grants to boost small businesses that are the economic engines throughout the state. Sole proprietors, businesses and nonprofits with less than 25 full-time employees can apply for up to a \$15,000 grant and a \$20,000 loan for a possible combined total of \$35,000 in financial assistance.

“Colorado small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and supporting them is critical for our state’s recovery,” said Rep. Mary Young, D-Greeley, House sponsor of the legislation. “I’ve heard from so many hardworking Coloradans in Greeley and in Weld County who need just a little help to make it through this crisis. That’s why we worked quickly to pass bipartisan legislation that set aside

\$20 million to help small businesses that have been left behind, with a focus on women, veteran or minority-owned businesses and those in rural areas. Small business owners who may need assistance should reach out to Energize Colorado for guidance, or to apply for the grant program.”

Awards will be provided in phases rather than first-come, first served to ensure equal access. Preference will be given to underserved small businesses including majority-owned by minority, women or veterans, those located in rural areas of the state, and businesses that have not been successful in pursuing and/or receiving funds from other federal, state and local assistance programs such as the Paycheck Protection Program.

“Small business owners are struggling to keep up and our communities are losing beloved staples at an alarming rate due to the economic impacts of COVID,” said Sen. Faith Winter, D-Westminster. “We’ve worked to ensure the application process is easy and accessible in order to provide immediate relief to small employers who need it most.”

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“The COVID pandemic has devastated our small business in Colorado and many of them didn’t qualify for PPP so we stepped up as a State to fill the gap with a unanimous bill to create a \$25 million grant program. Applications open Monday, go to [energizecolorado.com](https://energizecolorado.com) to apply and we will continue working for the strong

Colorado comeback,” said Senator Jeff Bridges, D-Greenwood Village.

In June, Gov. Polis signed [SB20-222](#), Use CARES Act Money Small Business Grant Program creating this grant program for small businesses. Senators Bridges and Winter and Representatives Mary Young and Perry Will were sponsors of the legislation. [Learn more about the fund.](#)

Governor Polis also announced a new temporary task force within the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) to examine housing instability due to COVID-19 in Colorado. The Special Eviction Prevention Task Force will work in partnership with the Division of Housing’s Strategic Housing Working Group. The task force will present its findings and recommendations to the Executive Director of DOLA and to the Governor within 30 days of its first meeting. Read the [Executive Order.](#)

"The Department of Local Affairs continues to focus on Colorado's housing needs statewide. This task force will allow for our work to go hand in hand with short and long term housing solutions," said DOLA's Executive Director, Rick. M. Garcia.

"The need to look at the relationships between landlord and tenants as well as the possible increases in eviction filings due to the pandemic is what the task force plans to do over the next 45 days."

The Task Force is composed of ten individuals that represent a variety of perspectives and backgrounds from the housing and development space, and will work in partnership with the Department of Local Affairs’ Division of Housing, the Strategic Housing Working Group, and the Governor’s office.

- Chris Romer of Denver, Colorado, appointed;
- Skippy Leigh Upton Mesirov of Aspen, Colorado, appointed;
- Andrew Feinstein of Denver, Colorado, appointed;
- Rebecca Friend of Boulder, Colorado, appointed;
- Ty L. Coleman of Alamosa, Colorado, appointed;

- Jennifer Kermode of Gunnison, Colorado, appointed;
- Jennifer Linda Rodgers of Denver, Colorado, appointed;
- Beatriz Gonzalez of Broomfield, Colorado, appointed;
- Paul Newell of Greenwood Village, Colorado, appointed;
- Leanne Denise Wheeler of Aurora, Colorado, appointed.

Today Governor Polis also announced that indoor visitation would be allowed in long-term care facilities such as nursing homes, under certain conditions. [Draft guidelines](#) have been released today, and CDPHE is accepting public comments until Friday, at 5pm.

The Governor also extended an [Executive Order](#) allowing food trucks to operate at Colorado's rest areas to support the movement of commercial vehicle activities.

View the news conference on the [Governor's Facebook page](#).