

Meeting Minutes

LTSS Work Group — Steering Committee Orientation

Date: Tuesday, June 16, 2026
Time: 11:00 – 11:45 AM MT
Format: Virtual via Zoom
Prepared by: Confluence Policy and Strategy Group

ATTENDANCE

Steering Committee Members Present		
Amelia McKeon	Executive Director	Colorado Office of Public Guardianship
Amy Becerra	Chief Strategy Officer	Rocky Mountain Human Services
Bonnie Silva	Director, Office of Community Living	Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing
David Keller, MD, FAAP	Co-Chair, Legislative/Policy Committee	American Academy of Pediatrics, Colorado Chapter
Ellen Jensby	Senior Director, Public Policy and Operations	Alliance Colorado
Jarett Hughes	President and CEO	Leverage Colorado
Jose Torres-Vega	Policy Outreach Specialist	The Arc Adams County
Josh Winkler	Senior Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor	Office of the Governor, State of Colorado
Katie Wallat*	Legal Director	Colorado Center on Law and Policy
Kelly Erb Zager	Director of Policy and Advocacy	Colorado Rural Health Center
Megan Bowser	Executive Director	Family Voices Colorado
Julie Reiskin*	Co-Executive Director	Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition (CCDC)
Hillary Jorgensen*	Co-Executive Director	Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition (CCDC)
Emily Eelman*	Independent Consultant	Juniper Peak Consulting
Stephanie Ziegler*	Consultant	Equalliance
Facilitation Team		

Berrick Abramson	President	Confluence Policy & Strategy Group
Carrie Steele	Senior Partner	Confluence Policy & Strategy Group

**Indicates LTSS Work Group core administrative team in addition to steering committee member*

MEETING PURPOSE AND GOALS

This was the first gathering of the LTSS Work Group Steering Committee, convened as an orientation and introductory session. The meeting was not a working session; substantive work begins at the July 16 meeting.

Goals

- Ground Steering Committee members in the vision and purpose of the Work Group
- Conduct member introductions and share individual connections to LTSS work
- Surface initial perspectives on challenges and what success looks like

SUMMARY

1. Welcome, Housekeeping, and Level-Set

Berrick Abramson opened the meeting and established norms for the group, including introductions by name at first speaking, minimal use of chat given accessibility, and the practice of recording meetings for transparency and to accommodate those unable to attend live.

Abramson noted the launch of the Work Group website at <http://www.LTSSWorkGroup.org>, which will serve as the public repository for meeting dates, agendas, meeting materials, meeting minutes, and video recordings.

2. Work Group Vision and Structure

The LTSS Work Group is an effort to convene a serious, structured conversation outside any specific legislative session or budget cycle. The Work Group is charged with examining the full scope of Colorado's LTSS system — its structure, its costs, its operational challenges, and the real experiences of the people it is meant to serve.

The Work Group will bring together people with lived experience, subject matter experts, advocates, providers, and policymakers to work through the issues together with the goal of developing concrete, actionable recommendations for structural changes that are within the state's control and that are designed to make the system more sustainable.

The Work Group expects up to four subcommittees. Topics will be determined by the Steering Committee, and each subcommittee will include people with lived experience, advocates, providers, policy makers and individuals with subject matter expertise.

3. Member Introductions

Members introduced themselves and responded to one or more of three prompts: their connection to LTSS, the top challenges they see, and what success looks like if the Work Group gets it right. The following themes emerged across introductions:

a. The reactive cycle as a central problem

There was broad consensus that Colorado's LTSS system is caught in a reactive cycle. Members described a pattern in which the system moves from budget crisis to temporary fix and back again, with decisions driven by immediate constraints rather than long-term vision. Several members noted that this cycle makes it nearly impossible to evaluate the system as a whole or build durable solutions. The Work Group was described as a chance to step outside that cycle and think structurally.

b. Lack of trust in government

One member raised a lack of trust in government as a significant challenge noting that the state's PHE unwind and case management redesign only deepened the mistrust. Many members agreed that the lack of trust is directly impacting how the community is reacting to the many changes already taking place. A new administration and leadership were described as an opening to rebuild that relationship.

c. The system is built on an outdated framework

Multiple members observed that Colorado's LTSS waivers and program structures were written in a different era. They were designed post-institutionalization, for a different population profile, and before current technology and service models existed. The population has changed, values around disability and independence have changed, and what constitutes appropriate support has changed. The system, however, has largely not kept pace. Instead, changes have been layered on top, creating a system that is complex to operate and navigate. Members called to rethink what the system is designed to do, not only how it is administered.

d. Fiscal sustainability requires an honest system-level conversation

Several members addressed the fiscal dimension directly. The scale of LTSS spending relative to other state functions means that changes in this space have significant consequences for the rest of state government. Members expressed the need to confront difficult questions about who the system serves, what services it provides, and how those tradeoffs are made, without the pressure of a budget deadline.

e. Workforce, access, and geography are interconnected challenges

Members raised the workforce shortage as a barrier that cuts across service types and regions. Rural and frontier communities face compounded challenges: fewer providers, less service availability, and geographic barriers to access. Members emphasized that funding is not always the binding constraint. In some areas, there are simply no workers or services to fund. These issues require coordinated attention rather than isolated fixes.

f. The system must account for the full lifespan

Several members emphasized that LTSS policy too often focuses on working-age adults and misses important populations on either end. Children and youth with disabilities,

including those with complex medical needs, face service gaps that are distinct from adult LTSS challenges. Older adults and aging caregivers represent a growing and often underserved population. The Work Group was encouraged to be deliberate about ensuring its scope and recommendations address children, working-age adults, and older Coloradans alike.

g. Federal policy creates uncertainty and real constraints

Several members noted that federal decisions on funding streams, Medicaid program rules, and policy direction create constraints on what Colorado can accomplish independently. Members acknowledged that the Work Group cannot control or resolve those dynamics, but that its recommendations will need to be grounded in a realistic understanding of the federal context and built to hold up as that context continues to shift.

Upcoming Meetings

The LTSS Work Group Steering Committee will meet monthly on the third Thursday of each month, from 9am-11am MST. Dates for the subcommittees are tbd.

For meeting information, please visit www.LTSSworkgroup.org. Meetings are open to the public for observation and will be recorded and available on the website.

The LTSS Work Group is committed to hosting meetings that are inclusive and fully accessible to all attendees and presenters. If you have any specific accommodations requests, email carrie@confluencepsg.com or call 303-910-6169.

These minutes were prepared by Confluence Policy and Strategy Group and are intended to be a high-level overview rather than a verbatim transcript. Questions or comments can be sent to Carrie Steele, Senior Partner, Confluence PSG — carrie@confluencepsg.com.
