

# Policies to Advance Health, Well-being and Equity in 2021

The year 2020 may be in our rear view, but its impacts will last far beyond the page turn of the calendar. There has been much talk of “going back to normal.” At The Colorado Health Foundation, we believe that we can't simply “go back to normal” when that left health and well-being out of reach for many of us.

Policymakers throughout Colorado must work toward a new normal, a better normal, and a more equitable normal. The agenda below provides a roadmap to do just that.

- **Extend the public health emergency declaration through the end of the calendar year** to support thorough planning and successful execution of these strategies and set practical expectations for the general public.
- **Pass additional federal COVID-19 economic relief** that maximizes state flexibility to address the areas of greatest need and targets assistance to small businesses owned by people of color.
- **Protect and extend existing emergency benefits increases** for federal food assistance programs through the duration of the public health emergency.
- **Increase the ability of our federal food assistance programs** to maximize access to produce and directs funding to local growers.
- **Implement permanent benefit increases in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** to offset rising food costs.
- **Implement reforms to immigration policies** that create a pathway to citizenship.
- **Allow and provide technical support for the use of SNAP benefits online** for independent, small and direct market operators.
- Strengthen protections for renters that **support housing stability, including extending eviction moratoriums and providing financial relief for renters.**
- **Reverse regulatory changes** that have weakened equity in health care safety nets, including recent revisions to the “public charge” rule and nondiscrimination protections.
- **Make telehealth flexibilities for physical and behavioral health services** created during the public health emergency permanent.
- Reinstatement of the farm wage survey of H-2A workers to **ensure pay equity for agricultural workers.**
- **Reverse regulatory changes that have weakened the safety net for housing**, including U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) recent “mixed-status” rule and the weakening of nondiscrimination protections among providers of services to people experiencing homelessness.
- **Expand HUD Section 8 voucher programs** to help keep more people housed.
- Grant the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) the flexibility to work with states on **turning regulatory rule changes made during the public health emergency into permanent policy changes.**

