

Community Statement in Support of STAR Community Advisory Committee

Launched in June of 2020, STAR is a program envisioned and initiated by community groups and individuals that serves as a direct alternative to policing in Denver. Since its launch, the community that created STAR has struggled through disrespectful behavior, racism, and gate-keeping to maintain involvement and community control of the program. Tensions have increased in recent months, punctuated by the last STAR Community Advisory Committee (SCAC) meeting on July 27.

The community representatives on the SCAC are essential to ensure that STAR operates in a way that is accountable to the most vulnerable in our community. The SCAC is intended to serve as a venue for the community to discuss concerns, make suggestions, and guide the program as it continues to expand.

The behavior of Denver Department of Public Health and Environment (DDPHE) staff at the July 2022 SCAC meeting towards community representatives was unacceptable. Unilateral decisions were made to shut down the meeting when BIPOC committee members were expressing their frustrations with the continued gatekeeping and lack of transparency in decision making. The decision to abruptly end the meeting is the most recent action in a continued pattern of disrespect and hostility that DDPHE staff have shown SCAC members and the community as a whole. By ending the monthly SCAC meeting, they effectively silenced the voices of the community by disrupting one of the only routes that community members have to make their concerns known.

Community representatives on the committee have been continually dismissed and tokenized in a manner that demonstrates not just a lack of commitment from city officials to work in true collaboration with the community, but outright hostility to true partnership. It is unacceptable how community members have been treated. We demand increased community control of the STAR program in a way that ensures marginalized voices are heard. The undersigned organizations, groups, and community leaders support the SCAC and demand the community representatives take an expanded role in leading the committee, and that the city commit to shared governance. Their voices and decisions must be central to STAR governance and decision-making processes, or the STAR program will never be fully realized as a true alternative to policing in Denver.

Organizations / Groups

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| Black Sex Workers of Colorado | Denver Alliance for Street Health Response (DASHR) | Muslim Family Services |
| Bring Our Neighbors Home | Denver Democratic Socialists of America | Mutual Aid Monday |
| Celestial Alegria | Denver Justice Project | Mi Familia Vota |
| Colorado Cross Disability Coalition | Denver Task Force to Reimagine Policing | New Era Colorado |
| Comrade Cooperative | Elevat(Ed) | Showing Up for Racial Justice Denver |
| Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition | FACEIT | Swing By Street Supply |
| Colorado Public Health Association | Globeville Elyria-Swansea Coalition | Southern Colorado Black & Pink |
| Colorado Public Health Association Health Equity Coalition | Greater Denver Interfaith Alliance | Terrance Roberts for Mayor |
| Colorado Jobs With Justice | Harm Reduction Action Center | Womxn of the Mountain |
| Community Justice Services, LLC | INSPIRE | Youth Empowerment Agency |
| Deaf Overcoming Violence through Empowerment (DOVE) | Latino Community Foundation of Colorado | |
| | Museo De Las Americas | |



Individuals

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Alexander Landau | Jamie Billings | Meredith McCanse |
| Alexandra Male | Jamie Thompson | Nicole Burke |
| Alexandra Runne | Jay Morse | Michael Miller |
| Alexis Matter | Jennifer Dillon, BONH | Michael Reiser |
| Alyssa G | Jess Wiederholt | Miguel Salvador student at MSU Denver |
| Amanda Knight | Jesse Leaneagh | Miss Jessica Swindon |
| Andrea Vander- Fertgus | Jessie Broom, BONH | Molly Greene- Fergusson |
| Andrew Neely | Joanne McLain | Morgan Schmehl |
| Ashley Hussein, Community Member | John Williams | Ms. Shannon McCrocklin |
| Bianca Acosta | Jordan Simundson | Natalie Hayes |
| Bobbie Meadows | Joseph Mayall | Nate Stone |
| Briana Steen RN | Joseph Zemek | Neil Rudis |
| Caden Werner | Josh Frost, community member | Nicole Burke |
| Carol Briggs | Judith Marquez | Priscila Omilion, procurement specialist |
| Carrie Murphy | Julia Schuster | Q Phan |
| Ceiturin Thomas | Justin Morgan | Rachel Sims, MBA |
| Charity Lehn | Karla Olivas | Raven Brown |
| Charlene Tortorice | Katara Burrola | Roshan Bliss |
| Christina Adamoli | Kate Crowe | Salvador Gonzalez |
| Christina Ortiz | Katie Blakey | Sarah Budisavljevic, LSW |
| Ciara Kowalczyk | Kathryn Ardoin | Sarah Tanous |
| Corinne Espinoza | Keivan Perkins | Savanna Hanson |
| Danielle Ferguson | Kenya Stoute | SB Ford |
| Dave Robinson | Kezia Lozano | Sean Brundrett |
| David Harrison | Kimberly Morse, Community Member | Shannon Bucci |
| Dana Ensing | Kristen Molsness | Shelby N. Gonzales |
| Denver born and raised (Anonymous) | Kristy Koopman | Skye O'Toole, Denver DSA Membership Chair |
| Elia Trucks | Kory Thomas, Co- founder of Core Capacities LLC | Stephanie Caulk |
| Elisabeth Anderson | Lauren Gutierrez | Steven Hernandez |
| Elise Silva | Lani Rush | Steve Peiker |
| Gwendolyn Eden | Liam Donevan | Trena Moya |
| Gillian Grant | Lindsay Bendell | Trish DeCoster |
| Hannah Higgins | Luke Parrott | Trudy Gygi |
| Heidi Vielhaber | Magdalen Thulson | Will Barnette |
| Helen Nguyen | Maggie | |
| Holly Bise | Marrton Dormish, Minister | |
| Jaclyn Keluche | | |
| Jacob Bartel | | |
| James Edwards's | | |

“STAR has the potential to be truly liberatory, but only with full community control centering those most impacted by oppressive systems. I am deeply disappointed, while also incredibly unsurprised, by this hostile behavior from Denver's city government officials, especially after their incessant insistence they truly want the community “involved.” This is yet another example of the Denver government not desiring true feedback or accountability from community but rather preferring a rubber stamp from sycophants. Again, I am deeply disappointed and not at all surprised.”

“The shutting down of the meeting is a **slap in the face to Denverites** who really need this program. “

“I attended the July 27th SCAC Meeting as an interested observer and was appalled by how community members on the Advisory Committee were treated by the DDPHE meeting facilitator. (Their) dismissive attitude and bizarre decision to abruptly end the meeting due to “swearing” made it abundantly clear that **no effective community involvement can take place with (them) at the table.**”

“Denver Department of Public Health and Environment (DDPHE) staff who were behaving in such a discriminatory way should be admonished for their disrespectful behavior and should also be required to complete **anti-bias and anti-racism training.**”

“Community input is paramount to good public health. It must be listened to, respected, and trusted.”

“STAR should be housed in the community, and run by community members and organizations, STAR is not a law enforcement invention or program, that's the point of creating it, an alternative response.”