



CO LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce Board Members

AJ Shaikh – Board Chair (Incoming)
(He/Him/His)

Community Banks of Colorado

Jim Smith – Board Chair (Outgoing)
(He/Him/His)

Universal Lending

Chris Senesi – Vice Chair (He/Him/His)
WSP

Todd Wagar – Treasurer (He/Him/His)
Goosehead Insurance - Schermacher Agency

Lexi Aguilar – Secretary (She/Her/Hers)
Dish Network

Ellen Trachman – Government Affairs
(She/Her/Hers)

Trachman Law Center

**Connie DiCenso – Marketing &
Communications (Incoming)**
(She/Her/Hers)

Tree Ring Digital

**Chris Gallegos – Marketing &
Communications (Outgoing) (He/Him/His)**

Kaiser Permanente Thrive

Scott Brizard – Events (He/Him/His)
Retired from AT&T

Julie Reiman (She/Her/Hers)
Charter Communications

William Colgan (He/Him/His)
Patch Management Services

Eric Mindykowski (He/Him/His)
The MMS Companies

The CO LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce that the board of directors elected Abdul-Jabbar (AJ) Shaikh as the new board chair. AJ starts his term as board chair effective January 1, 2021 and succeeds Jim Smith, who served as board chair since 2018 and has served with the CO LGBTQ Chamber since 2011.

AJ Shaikh has an extensive background working with businesses of every kind throughout his career in business banking. Most recently, his time has been spent on the SBA side of banking, including serving as an appointed advisor with the Minority Business Office. AJ has served on the board since 2016, “Four years ago, I was *voluntold* to get involved with the chamber from a banking mentor. It’s been an absolute honor and privilege getting to know each and every one of you. I am deeply honored to be elected as the new board chair and look forward to working with my board colleagues to move the CO LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce mission forward. I want to thank the CO LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors for its confidence in me to serve as board chair, and I am especially thankful for Jim Smith, his years of leadership, dedicated passion, and countless volunteer hours.”

Together with its board of directors, staff, and stakeholders, the Chamber continues to expand and make a positive difference in Colorado. Shaikh says “the Chamber is always evolving and strives to be the premier organization promoting and advocating for the inclusion of LGBTQ+ owned businesses in Colorado.”

The CO LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce was originally called the Colorado Business Council and was founded in 1992, an extremely turbulent year for Colorado’s LGBTQ community. That was the year Colorado voters approved Amendment 2, whose backers portrayed it as outlawing “special rights” for the LGBTQ community. The measure’s passage provoked outrage nationwide and led to Colorado being branded the “hate state.” Because LGBTQ business owners wanted to assert their existence and needed to know who their straight allies were in the face of the discriminatory Amendment 2, the organization changed its name to better reflect its membership.

About the CO LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce:

Our Mission: *Championing the success and economic impact of the LGBTQ+ business community to promote, connect, and advance commerce, diversity and equality for all.*

Our Vision: *To connect and strengthen Colorado through LGBTQ+ and allied businesses.*

