

# Home Economics

Summer 2015

[LiveAffordablyColorado.org](http://LiveAffordablyColorado.org)



**Two bedrooms. One bath.  
Zero groceries in the fridge.**

**A closer look at Colorado's housing crisis.**



## **Hardship is now living in too many homes.**

Every Coloradan deserves a place to call home. But unfortunately, that's not the reality for hundreds of thousands of people living in our state. Due to rising prices and lack of inventory, quality housing is simply out of reach for many Coloradans.

Because of this great need, and the impact on our communities when families don't have a place to call home, LiveAffordablyColorado.org was created. It aims to help share information and data that supports the development of quality housing options that meet a spectrum of needs in communities throughout our state.

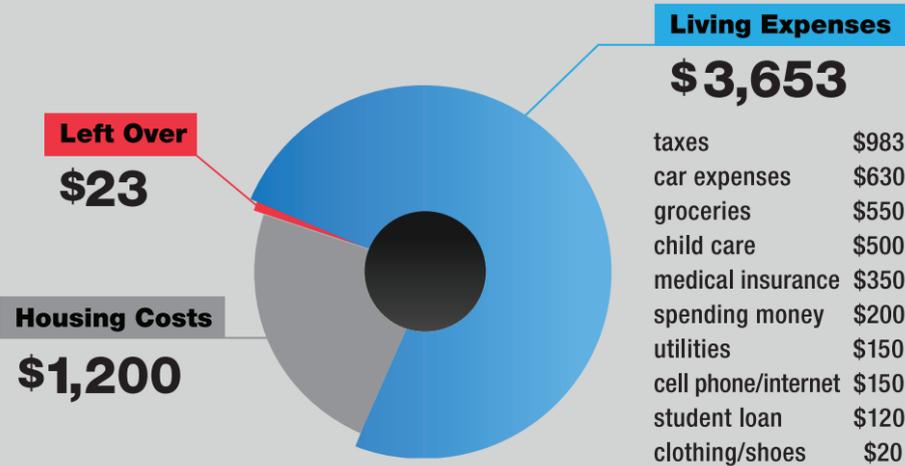
In this issue, we'll explore housing challenges across the state, real-life success stories from affordable housing residents, our current funding resources and ways you can make a difference.

Take a moment to learn more about housing issues in your area and the state, and find out how together, we can build a greater Colorado. When Coloradans have a place to call home, we all thrive.

# Snapshots of the Situation.

## What's left after housing costs for a family of four?

A family that earns an annual income of roughly \$59,000 and spends just 30% of their monthly income on housing lives on a very tight budget. If this family, like 25% of Colorado renters, spends more than 50% on housing, then essential living expenses have to be cut.

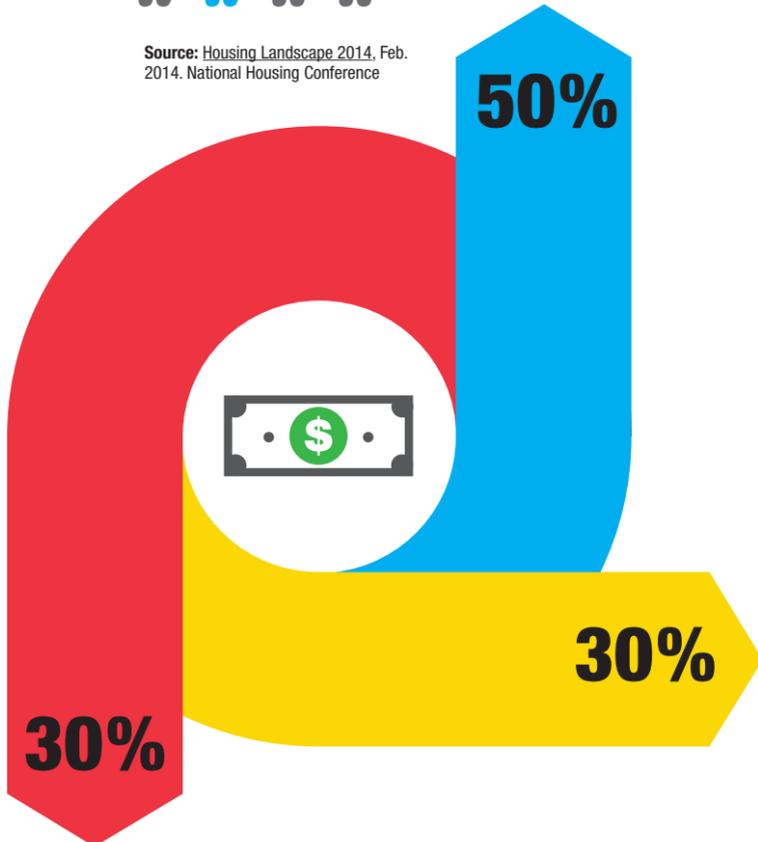


Source: [Regional Housing Alliance](#), December 2014. Sample budget based on housing counseling data



**One out of every four renters in Colorado pay more than 50% of their income on housing**

Source: [Housing Landscape 2014](#), Feb. 2014. National Housing Conference



**One out of every three children in Colorado live in a household with a high cost burden, spending more than 30% of their income on housing.**

Source: [Kids Count Data Center](#). Annie E. Casey Foundation



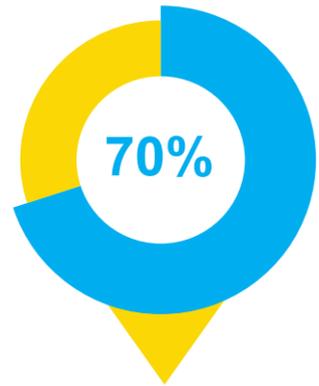
**Colorado households that spend more than 30% of their monthly income on housing account for \$2 billion less spending each year on consumer goods.**

Source: [Housing Affordability's Impact on Local Government Finance: An Adams County Case Study](#), Dec. 2014. The Piton Foundation and Colorado Futures Center at CSU



Source: [Out of Reach 2014: Colorado](#), Mar. 2014. National Low Income Housing Coalition

A salary of \$36,000 falls below the required \$36,623 annual earnings required to afford an average Colorado two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent and associated utilities without paying more than 30% of income on housing.



**> \$36,000**

Recent estimates from the Colorado Department of Labor show that over 70% of new jobs created in Colorado over the next 10 years will have starting annual salaries of less than \$36,000.

Source: [Driving a Vibrant Economy: Housing's Role in Colorado's Economic Success](#), Dec. 2014. The Piton Foundation and Colorado Futures Center at CSU

## economic impact



The one-year combined state and local economic impact of building and rehabilitating subsidized housing in Colorado include:

**\$113.1**

**MILLION IN LOCAL INCOME**

**\$20.9**

**MILLION IN TAXES AND OTHER REVENUES FOR ALL LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

**1,657**

**FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT JOBS**

Source: [Driving a Vibrant Economy: Housing's Role in Colorado's Economic Success](#), Dec. 2014. The Piton Foundation and Colorado Futures Center at CSU



# **True stories about finding a home that fits.**

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The cost of quality housing has become overwhelming for hundreds of thousands of Coloradans, including working families, service employees, seniors, veterans, disabled citizens, and at-risk populations. You'll find hope and transformation in these true stories of Coloradans who were determined to secure a sensibly-priced home that provides not just shelter, but peace of mind.

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# Affordable is the new beautiful.



“I was having trouble with dizziness from my medicine, and my son was worried I would fall. I really couldn’t keep up with all the maintenance and repair for my home, either. Now, I’m totally satisfied with my Senior Housing Options\* companion room. I’m a very happy person. There are so many flowers here, I’ve planted them and helped them grow and I really love that. The money part is really a factor for everyone. I’d tell people not to be afraid or too proud to ask for help - come and join in!”

*-Wynnies Robinson*

\*Senior Housing Options provides quality, affordable housing & caring supportive services for older adults in Colorado.



“We just had a baby when we began the Self-Help Housing Program in the San Luis Valley with CRHDC\*. Our favorite part is getting to know our neighbors and knowing what goes into a house. We know how to fix our own home now. Having the amount of space we have and a master bathroom is our favorite part of the house, along with the yard. We’ve never had a yard before.”

*-Justin and Ashley Salazar*

\*CRHDC provides sustainable and affordable housing, life-skills, and economic development opportunities to benefit low-to-moderate income households throughout Colorado.

“I worked with Jennifer at Tri-County Housing\* to get a loan to buy a house across the street from my mom and dad. Here, I can just walk right across the street and check in on them. The house gives me a purpose. I’m disabled, so I can’t work. This gives me something to do, like build some shelves. I finally got to move my tools in, after they were in storage for over a year and a half. I’m just hoping that other people can find the right avenues like I did. This is happiness.”

*-Robert Storm*

\*Tri-County Housing & Community Development Corporation serves people and communities through facilitation of quality affordable housing community projects.

“I have a family of six and we got into the first-time homebuyer program at NEWSED\*. Then we started saving for a home, and attending classes on how to manage our finances and build credit. Now we know how to maintain a home and manage our income. I see that my wife and boys feel happy, and everyone enjoys our home, especially my youngest son. He has a place to play in the backyard and he gets to run around.”

*-anonymous*

\*NEWSED is a nonprofit organization that is involved in community development and affordable housing, serving predominately the Chicano/Mexicano population.





# The Burden of Rent.

Rent burden is defined as spending more than 30% of household income on rent. In some cities across the state, the average cost of rent is more than 30% of monthly incomes. Are you able to afford to live in these cities? Are your family and friends able to afford this as well?

Area	Average weekly earnings*	Average rent of all apartment types*
Boulder	\$1,035	\$1,287
Colorado Springs	\$804	\$856
Denver Metro	\$994	\$1,145
Fort Collins-Loveland	\$778	\$1,210
Grand Junction	\$819	\$523
Greeley	\$877	\$869
Pueblo	\$668	\$585



\*as of Dec. 2014, all private jobs  
Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Colorado Division of Housing Rent Surveys (Q3, Q4 2014); US Census Bureau 2013 5 year estimates

# Home Squeeze Home.

Colorado is a great place to live and it's no wonder that we're one of the fastest growing states in the nation. Unfortunately, housing inventory is not keeping up with increased demand, especially housing that is affordably priced. States around the country, including Colorado, use a combination of state and federal programs to help offset construction costs and provide a range of housing options in their communities. However, Colorado lacks what many states have – a dedicated and permanent source of funding for housing development and preservation – which leaves limited resources at risk for further budget cuts.

## LEARN MORE ABOUT THE HOUSING ECONOMY IN COLORADO

Affordable housing isn't just a personal crisis; it impacts our economy. When households are paying more than 30% of their income on housing costs, they aren't able to contribute to local businesses by buying items like school supplies, clothes and other basic necessities. Households with high housing costs have a dampening economic effect on sales tax revenues, the major source of general fund revenues for municipalities.

- In Colorado, over 325,000 households are spending more than 30% of their income on rent.
- It is a gap that will take over 100 years to eliminate, and even longer as our population grows, based on current rates of affordable rental housing construction of 823 homes per year.

Source: Federal Rental Assistance Facts, Dec. 2012. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

- Of those 325,000 households, recent studies show that over 165,000 – 8% of all households in the state – are paying far more than 50% of their income on housing costs.

- If these households spent less on housing and more on items they need, local business statewide would receive \$2 billion in added consumer spending, and state and local governments in Colorado would collect an additional \$89 million in sales tax revenue that could support schools, transportation and public safety.

Source: Housing Affordability's Impact on Local Government Finance: An Adams County Case Study, Dec. 2014. The Piton Foundation and Colorado Futures Center at CSU

# Take the quiz and test your housing moxie.

1

## Can you spot the affordable housing?



**Q:** Which developments in these photos are examples of affordable housing in Colorado?

2

## How many hours would you work?



**Q:** As a minimum wage worker (\$8/hour) in Colorado, how many hours per week would you need to work in Colorado to afford the fair market value for a two-bedroom apartment?

3

## Where do our at-risk seniors end up living?



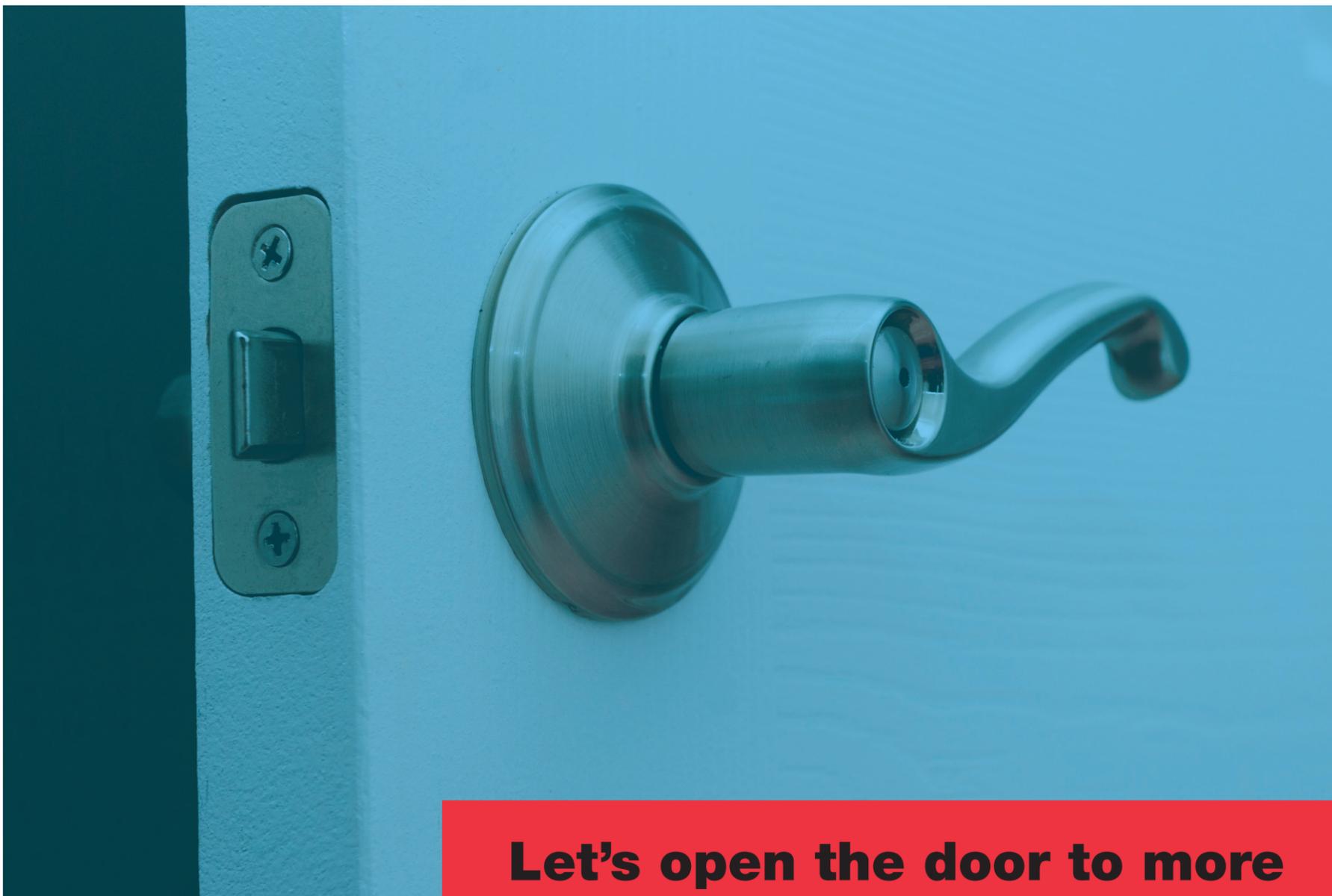
**Q:** True or false? When seniors with disabilities or long-term care needs don't have access to affordable housing, they are at risk of entering into an assisted living facility prematurely.

4

## Does Colorado's housing crisis affect our children?

**Q:** True or false? Poor housing quality is the most consistent and strongest predictor of emotional and behavioral problems in low-income children and youth.





**Let's open the door to more housing that makes sense.**

We invite you learn more, connect with others, and make a difference for all of us living in Colorado.

**1. Get to know the issue.**

Visit [LiveAffordablyColorado.org](http://LiveAffordablyColorado.org) and learn more about the impact affordable housing has in your community.

**2. Join our cause.**

Visit [LiveAffordablyColorado.org](http://LiveAffordablyColorado.org) and sign our online petition to support affordable housing.

**3. Contact your elected officials.**

Ask them to support funding for housing development that meets the needs of the entire community. Visit [VoteSmart.org](http://VoteSmart.org) to find your elected representatives.

**4. Share this newspaper.**

Knowledge is power, so spread the word with your network of friends and family. Affordable housing is an issue that affects us all, directly and indirectly.