

It's about jobs



Affordable housing is about strengthening jobs for Colorado's hardworking families

The workforce in Colorado is as diverse as the landscape, and yet many of the jobs our workers hold do not pay enough to afford the median priced home. Many of Colorado's firefighters, law enforcement personnel, educators, retailers and healthcare providers are forced to "drive 'til they qualify" in order to house their families—and that places a genuine strain on our workforce. The Colorado Division of Housing states that "affordable housing is about providing housing in proximity to places of work to ensure that people who provide the necessary services have a place to live that is accessible." In order for our community to have jobs and housing balance, the people in our workforce need to live near their job.

A recent statewide Blue Ribbon Panel on Housing Report states that housing close to jobs is good for Colorado businesses. Shorter employee commute times translate into lower rates of absenteeism, less traffic congestion on the roads and less pollution.

According to statistics cited by Housing Colorado, rents in our state rank 41st in the nation in terms of affordability.¹ Renter incomes increased by 1% between 2000 and 2004, while rents increased 14%, utilities 60%, and the consumer price index in the Denver Metro area increased 13%. Only eight of the top 25 high-growth jobs in Colorado pay a wage high enough to afford the statewide average rent.²

While Colorado's economy continues to rebound and employers are looking to retain and expand their workforce, wages continue to lag far behind the cost of housing. Many employers have difficulty paying higher wages, yet need their workforce in order to stay in business.³

"Colorado's future depends on our ability to bring good jobs to our state. One of the biggest barriers to attracting new businesses is the lack of affordable housing close to employment centers or public transit. The Colorado Housing Investment Fund will go a long way toward changing that." – Colorado Speaker of the House Andrew Romanoff



Colorado Housing
Investment Fund Coalition

Footnote Sources

¹ National Low Income Housing Coalition, “Out of Reach 2004” www.nlihc.org/oor/table9.htm

² Colorado Department of Labor.

³ Colorado Department of Labor.



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