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AFFORDABLE HOUSING REMAINS OUT OF REACH IN COLORADO FOR LOW-WAGE WORKERS

DENVER, CO-- Full-time workers need to earn \$36.79 per hour to afford a modest, two-bedroom apartment at Fair Market Rent in Colorado. This is Colorado's "2025 Housing Wage" according to [*Out of Reach*](#), a report published today by the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC). *Out of Reach*, released annually, documents the gulf between wages and what people need to earn to afford their rent. The report routinely shows that affordable rental homes remain out of reach for millions of low-wage workers and their families. The report's "housing wage" is an estimate of the hourly wage full-time workers must earn to afford a rental home at U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Fair Market Rent without spending more than 30% of their incomes.

Colorado is the 10th least affordable state in the country--a slight improvement from 2024, when the state ranked as the 8th least affordable. The most expensive areas in 2025 include Summit County, Eagle County, Pitkin County, Denver/Aurora/Lakewood Metro Statistical Area (MSA), and Boulder MSA. The report reveals that, even in the areas with the least expensive rentals, moderate to low-income tenants still cannot afford the cost of rent.

Colorado's 2025 minimum wage of \$14.81 is 73% higher than it was just a decade ago (\$8.54 in 2015) but still cannot keep up with the state's rising housing costs. And, earning higher minimum wages alone cannot solve the housing affordability crisis for many households in the state. For someone who earns minimum wage, they would need to work 82 hours per week, equivalent to working 2.1 full-time jobs, to afford a modest one-bedroom apartment. For a two-bedroom apartment, it requires 99 hours per week or 2.5 full-time jobs.

According to Cathy Alderman, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless' Chief Communications and Public Policy Officer, "In 2025, a Coloradan can work over 80 hours a week and still not afford a one-bedroom rental in Colorado. Although thousands of people work to emerge from homelessness each year, even more fall into it because there simply isn't enough affordable housing." Alderman continued, "Investing

strategically in deeply affordable housing for those with the greatest need is the only path to making Colorado affordable for everyone who works and lives here.”

The affordability crisis affects more than just minimum wage earners. Common occupations in Colorado like home health and personal care aides, office clerks, and heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers provide a median wage lower than the wage needed to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment. And the impacts are not equal to all workers. Nationally, the median wage of a white worker is just 30 cents less than the Housing Wage for a one-bedroom apartment, while the median wage of Black workers falls \$6.31 short and the median wage of Latino workers falls \$7.39 short.

Despite urgent housing affordability challenges and economic uncertainty, the future of federal housing assistance is at risk. Current federal budget proposals threaten significant cuts to housing assistance programs and the loss of thousands of housing vouchers. The president’s budget request for FY 2026 proposes a devastating 44% cut to HUD’s overall funding, which would eliminate rental assistance programs, consolidate five key programs into a single, restrictive State Rental Assistance Block Grant, and impose a two-year time limit on assistance. The Trump Administration is also expected to pursue harmful regulations that would make it more difficult for families to obtain and maintain HUD assistance, including burdensome work reporting requirements.

“Housing is more than just a shelter; it is foundational to well-being and dignity” said NLIHC President and CEO Renee Willis. “This year’s Out of Reach report shows that, despite economic gains for some, low-income renters continue to face impossible choices between paying rent and meeting basic needs. Cutting federal housing investments would only deepen the crisis. Congress must protect and expand housing programs that ensure stability, opportunity, and a pathway out of poverty for millions of renters.”

For additional information and to download the report, visit: <http://www.nlihc.org/oor>

About the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless

The mission of the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless is to work collaboratively toward the prevention of homelessness and the creation of lasting solutions for people experiencing and at-risk of homelessness throughout Colorado. The Coalition advocates for and provides a continuum of housing and a variety of services to improve the health, well-being and stability of those it serves. Since its founding, the organization has earned state and national recognition for its integrated healthcare, housing, and service programs. The Coalition’s comprehensive approach addresses the causes of homelessness, as well as the consequences, offering critical assistance to over 22,000 individuals and families each year. Learn more at www.coloradocoalition.org.

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