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NEW GAP REPORT: DEFICIT OF OVER 136,000 AFFORDABLE AND AVAILABLE RENTAL UNITS FOR EXTREMELY LOW-INCOME RENTERS IN COLORADO, MAKING IT THE 7TH LEAST AFFORDABLE STATE IN THE COUNTRY

[The Gap Report](#), shared by the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) and published today by the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) finds a national shortage of 7.2 million affordable and available rental homes for extremely low-income renter households – those with incomes at or below the poverty level or 30% of their area median income (AMI), whichever is greater – resulting in just 35 affordable and available rental homes for every 100 extremely low-income renter households nationwide.

[Here in Colorado](#), the 7th least affordable state, things are even more dire than the national landscape. There are only 27 affordable and available rental homes for every 100 households with extremely low incomes. Facing a shortage in Colorado of 136,324 affordable and available rental homes, 76% of these renters are severely housing cost-burdened, spending more than half of their income on housing. In the Denver Metro area, the numbers fall even further: There are only 24 affordable and available units available for every 100 households with extremely low incomes seeking housing. Cost-burdened households are more at risk of falling into the cycle of homelessness and being forced to access costly and limited emergency services. These findings come amidst ongoing attacks on housing resources and programs from the federal government under the Trump Administration.

Cathy Alderman, Chief Communications and Public Policy Officer for the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless added, “Coloradans of nearly all income levels are experiencing difficulties with access to affordable housing, and the circumstances continue to be most dire for those with the lowest incomes. While the state has made investments and policy changes in housing over the last few years since the COVID pandemic, not enough is being done to ensure those investments and programs reach our lowest-income households. Measures that prioritize upper-middle- or middle-class housing will not resolve the housing crisis and will continue to make the homelessness crisis worse. To meaningfully address the homelessness and housing crisis, affordable housing efforts, particularly those utilizing public funds or benefits, must be centered on those most in need—those with the lowest earnings.”

The Coalition’s report [Colorado’s Affordable Housing Crisis: It’s Time for Strategic Investments](#) dives more into the issue at hand.

[Eighty-four percent of Coloradans report](#) that the cost of housing is an extremely or very serious problem, but the rental market varies greatly across income levels. For those making 100% of AMI, there is a 1:1 ratio—100 units for every 100 searching for affordable and available housing.

These housing gaps aren’t just felt in urban areas but across the state in our rural resort and rural counties as well. [In Denver in 2025](#), a one-person household at 30% AMI earned \$29,430 per year while an individual with 100%

AMI earned \$98,100. For Summit County, a one-person household earning \$27,930 is at 30% AMI and \$93,100 at 100% AMI. In Otero, those numbers are \$21,420 for 30% and \$71,400 for 100% AMI

Even for those at 80% AMI (\$78,480 in Denver), there are 89 affordable and available units for every 100 individuals seeking housing. Not a 1:1 ratio, but much improved than circumstances for those living at 30% AMI. Individuals at 80% AMI are considered “low income” by some standards and in some proposed legislative measures.

While most of these numbers are marginally improved from the 2024 state of play, marginal improvements will not solve the crisis. The private market, without subsidy, is unable to provide an adequate supply of housing affordable to the lowest-income renters. What extremely low-income renters can afford to pay for rent does not cover the development and operating costs of new housing and is often insufficient to provide an incentive for landlords to maintain older housing. The result is a systemic shortage of affordable housing for extremely low-income renters impacting nearly every community, including in Colorado. Subsidies are needed to produce new affordable housing, preserve existing affordable housing, or cover the difference between what the lowest-income renters can afford to pay and market rents.

With unpredictable policies shifting often at the Federal level and huge budget deficits at the local, state, and federal levels, lawmakers in Colorado have opportunities in the 2026 session to support homelessness programs and housing policies that can counter these unsustainable conditions. Some key legislation supported by the Coalition this session includes:

- [HB26-1015](#): Colorado Homeless Contribution Tax Credit Extension
- [HB26-1202](#): Strategy to Reduce & Prevent Homelessness
- [HB26-1001](#): Housing Developments on Qualifying Properties
- [HB26-1066](#): Tax Exemptions Low Income Rental Property Development

“The findings from The Gap Report show that no state or major metropolitan area has an adequate supply of affordable and available homes for extremely low-income renters,” said NLIHC President and CEO Renee M. Willis, “It is a sad fact that only one in four households who qualify for housing assistance receive it. When renters are housing cost-burdened, they cannot afford to cover other basic necessities such as food, healthcare, transportation, or childcare. Congress has the solutions to increase housing affordability across the country. They must support robust housing assistance programs that can alleviate the housing crisis and ensure the wellbeing of millions of the lowest-income renters.”

Relevant Gap Report graphs and charts are [located here](#).

More information about *The Gap* is available by visiting: <https://nlihc.org/gap>

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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.

About NLIHC

The National Low Income Housing Coalition is dedicated to achieving racially and socially equitable public policy that ensures people with the lowest incomes have quality homes that are accessible and affordable in communities of their choice. Founded in 1974 by Cushing N. Dolbeare, NLIHC educates, organizes, and advocates to ensure decent, affordable housing for everyone. Our goals are to preserve existing federally assisted homes and housing resources, expand the supply of low-income housing, and establish housing stability as the primary purpose of federal low-income housing policy.