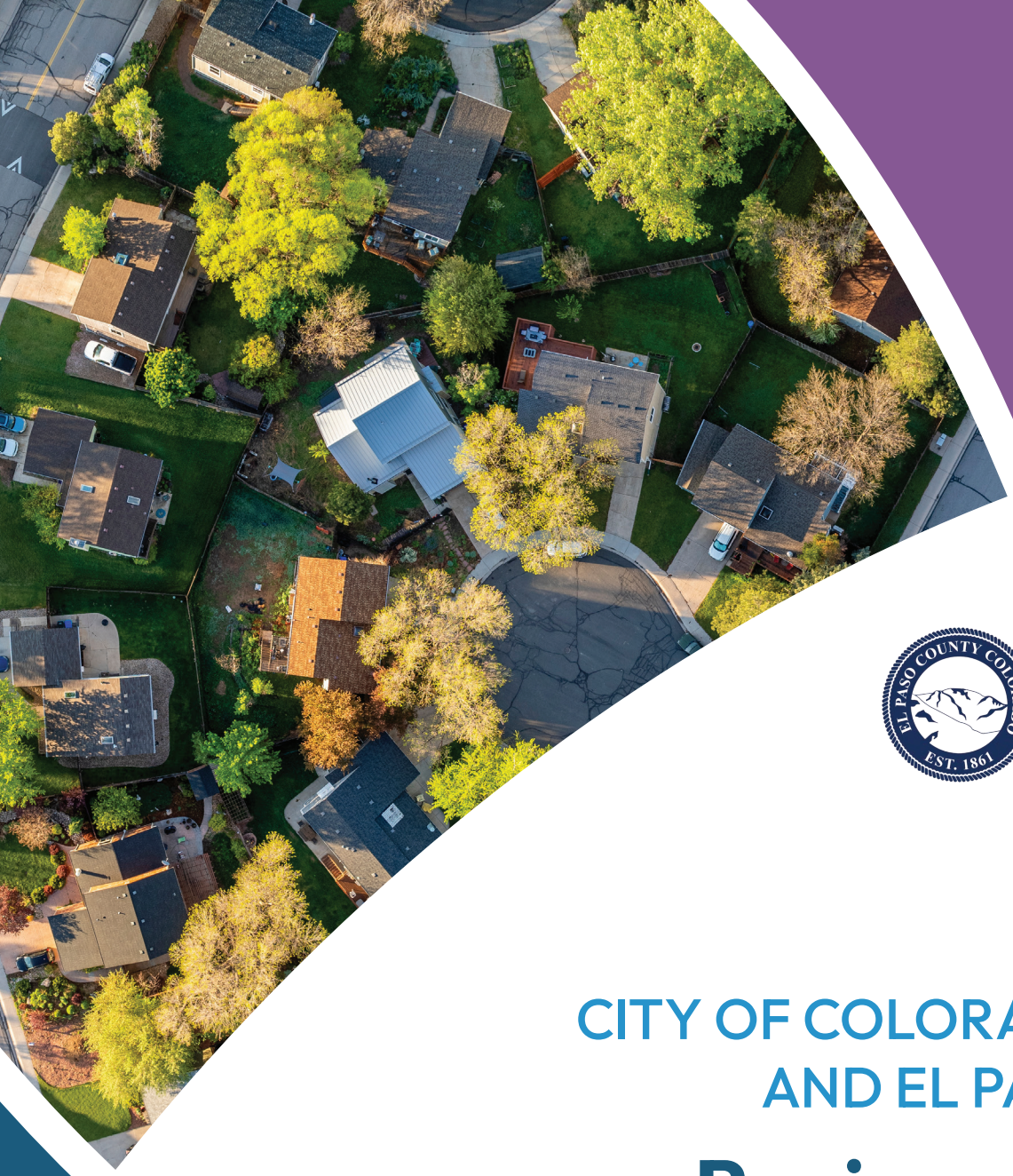

CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS
AND EL PASO COUNTY

Regional Housing Needs Assessment

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Executive Summary

The *Colorado Springs and El Paso County Regional Housing Needs Assessment* provides a comprehensive analysis of current and future housing needs within the city limits of Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County. Conducted in compliance with Colorado Senate Bill 24-174, the assessment integrates quantitative data with extensive community engagement to evaluate housing challenges, gaps, and opportunities. The report also addresses other municipalities across El Paso County to support compliance with SB 24-174. These findings are intended to inform local policy, guide resource allocation, and support a more balanced housing market.

Demographic and Economic Trends

Colorado Springs and El Paso County are in the midst of a transformative period of growth, driven by population increases, shifting household dynamics, and a diversifying economy. Together, the city and unincorporated areas now account for ***over 90%*** of the county's total population of 744,153. El Paso County has also emerged as one of the fastest-growing counties in Colorado. While Colorado Springs remains the regional employment hub for region, unincorporated communities have played an increasingly prominent role in the county's growth, attracting residents drawn to larger lot sizes and suburban or exurban character.

Demographics – As of 2023, there were 286,044 households throughout El Paso County. However, this likely understates actual household numbers, as it does not reflect individuals doubling up with others due to cost or availability constraints. At the same time, average households have become both smaller and older, reinforcing demand for smaller, more flexible housing options. Over the next decade, population growth will *be increasingly concentrated in older age cohorts,* with major implications for accessibility, supportive housing, and aging in place as the region's population projects to exceed more than one million residents by 2050.

Household Income – The 2023 median household income in El Paso County was $87,470[1]. However, income growth has stalled among renters in unincorporated El Paso County, suggesting that affordability pressures remain acute even in areas traditionally seen as more attainable. Educational attainment and incomes have both increased across the region, trends that coincided with declines in the poverty rate. While these developments could reflect improving economic opportunity, they may also signal displacement of lower-income households.

Total Households

El Paso County	Colorado Springs	Unincorporated El Paso County
286,044	199,504	68,062

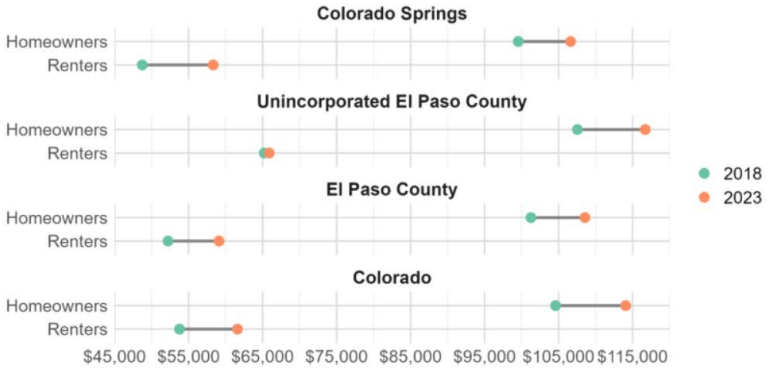
Average Household Size

El Paso County	Colorado Springs	Unincorporated El Paso County
2.5	2.4	2.8

Median Age

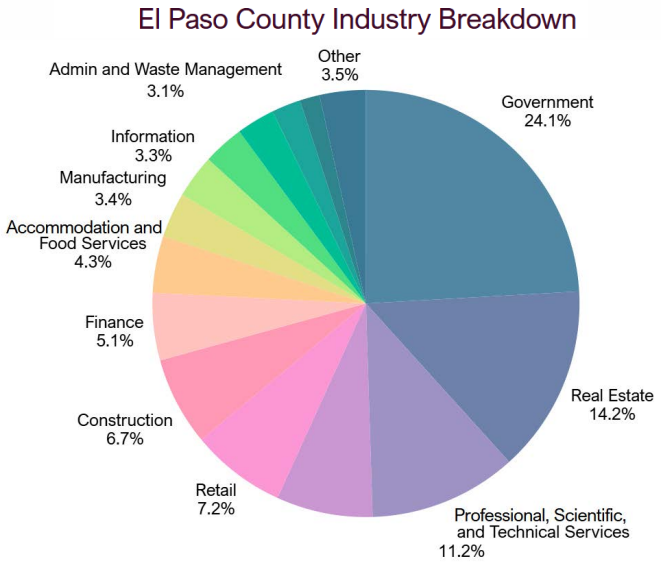
El Paso County	Colorado Springs	Unincorporated El Paso County
35	35.6	33.6

Median Household Income by Tenure



[1] Five-year American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

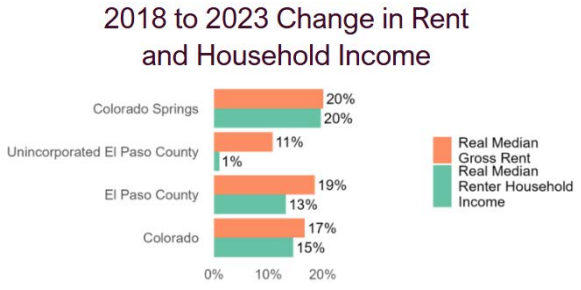
Regional Economy – The region's economic base is both diverse and evolving, with wide variation in wages across industries. Government remains the largest contributor to the local economy by gross regional product, driven in large part by the presence of multiple military installations, including Fort Carson, Peterson and Schriever Space Force Bases, and the Air Force Academy. Alongside Health Care, this sector is expected to expand over the next decade, reshaping workforce needs and housing demand.



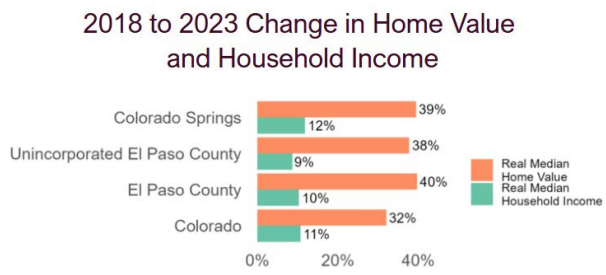
Housing Inventory and Market Trends

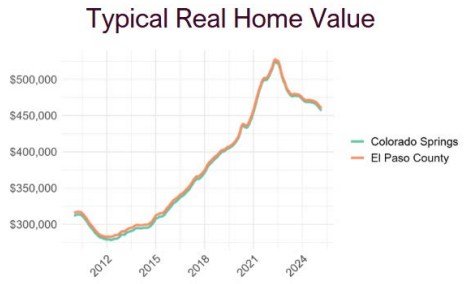
The most recent data indicates that El Paso County contains 309,992 housing units. Housing stock mostly consists of single-family detached homes, which account for 67% of all units. However, recent development activity suggests housing stock is gradually diversifying. Between 2022 and 2024, 68% of the nearly 11,000 new units in Colorado Springs and 28% of the over 4,400 units in unincorporated El Paso County were attached (duplex, triplex, townhomes) or multifamily housing.

Rental Housing – Affordability (not paying more than 30% of gross income towards housing) remains a key concern across the region, with market dynamics differing between Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County. *Average asking rents countywide are $1,825,* though this varies widely based on location and unit size. In 2023, the median renter in Colorado Springs *earned $4,155 less than* the annual income needed to afford the median-priced rental without exceeding 30% of household income. In unincorporated El Paso County, the shortfall was even greater at *$9,300.* To highlight one example, a four-bedroom single family home (including utilities) in Colorado Springs rents for approximately $2,690 per month and $3,202 per month in unincorporated El Paso County. Rent growth has also outpaced renter income gains.



Owner-Occupied Housing – Homeownership has become increasingly out of reach for many households in El Paso County, as home values continue to far outpace income growth. From 2018 to 2023, real home values in El Paso County rose at nearly four times the rate of household income growth. This rapid appreciation has contributed significantly to household wealth accumulation, further widening the gap between owners and renters. In 2024, the typical countywide median-income home price of about $460,000 requires an annual household income of more than $150,000 to meet the standard of affordability. At current interest rates, financing a $460,000 home translates into monthly mortgage payments exceeding $2,800—placing homeownership well beyond reach for the average household in either Colorado Springs or unincorporated El Paso County.

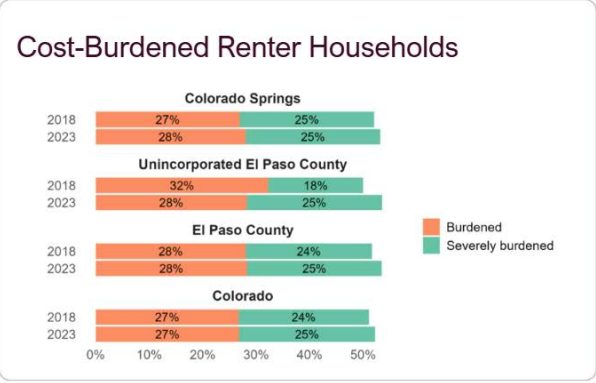


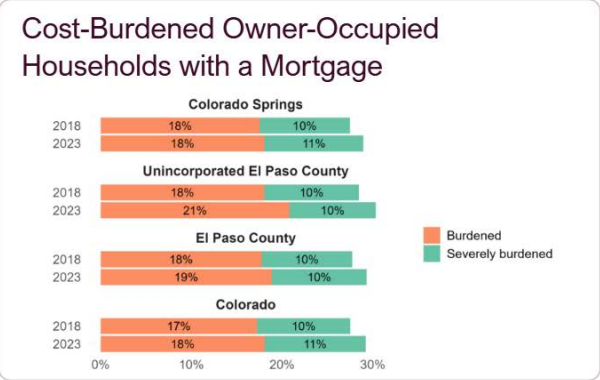


Home Sales – Roughly 10,000 homes sold across the county in 2024, with about 60% of sales occurring in Colorado Springs and approximately 30% in unincorporated areas. The number of home sales represented about 4% of the total housing inventory that year, lower than the target turnover rate of 5% to 7%. Investor activity remains widespread, further limiting opportunities for prospective buyers.

Housing Challenges and Gaps

Significant challenges face communities across El Paso County. Households spending more than 30% of their income on rent and utilities are considered **cost burdened**, while those spending more than 50% are considered **severely cost burdened**. The current housing shortfall, coupled with the cost of construction, and regulatory barriers, limit pose significant challenges to closing the housing supply gap across El Paso County.





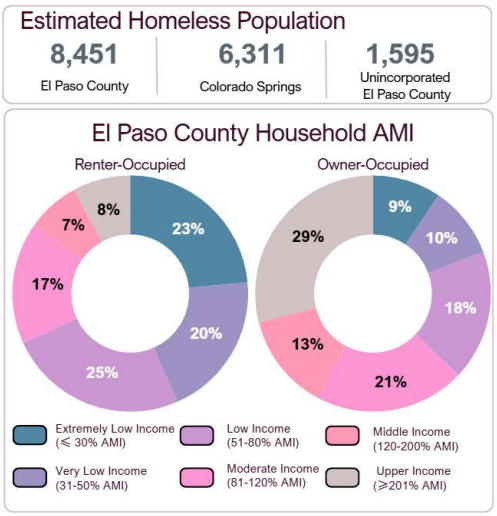
Housing Cost Burden – Housing affordability affects a significant share of the population. *Over half of renters* in both Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County were cost burdened, spending more than 30% of income on rent and utilities. Among homeowners, *nearly one in three* are cost burdened, with higher rates among younger owners. These age dynamics likely reflect elevated prices and mortgage rates. Household incomes of $75,000 serves as a notable inflection point regarding cost burden – across the region, *roughly 60% of households* earning less than $75,000 were cost burdened.

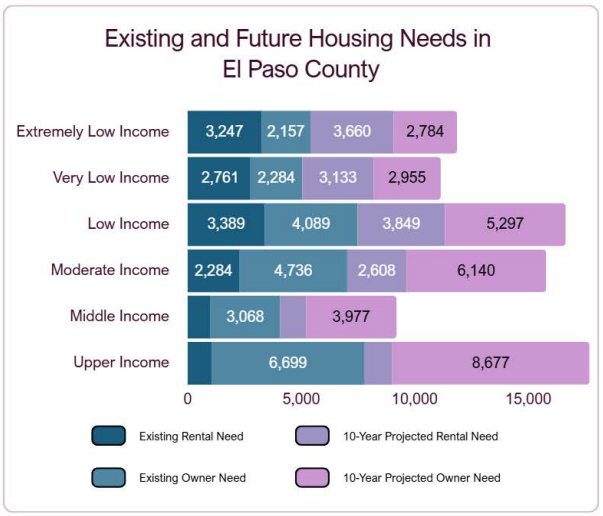
Housing Demand – To meet current demand, Colorado Springs requires over *27,000 additional housing units*, while unincorporated El Paso County requires *over 7,000 new units.* These deficits span all income levels and both rental and ownership markets, indicating broad-based shortages that limit housing choice and exacerbate affordability challenges. By 2035, Colorado Springs will need to add more *than 60,000 total housing units* to accommodate existing needs and projected growth, while unincorporated areas will *require over 18,000 total housing units.* El Paso County communities face significant housing shortfalls relative to existing demand, especially for low-income households. As of 2023, Colorado Springs had *eight low-income jobs for every suitably affordable housing unit,* underscoring a structural mismatch between where low-wage workers are employed and where they can afford to live.

Homelessness – Multiple data sources point to a large and complex homelessness challenge in El Paso County. While the 2024 Point-in-Time count identified just over 1,100 individuals experiencing homelessness, broader administrative records place the true figure much higher, *ranging from 5,178 in the federally funded homelessness system to 8,451 individuals self-reporting homelessness through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*

applications. An additional 3,925 residents across the county are estimated to be at high risk of homelessness due to severe housing cost burdens (when housing costs exceed 50% of a household's total income). These totals reflect a regional issue that spans age groups and household types. *Nearly one in four people experiencing homelessness are under the age of 18, including both unaccompanied youth and children within families.*

Supportive Housing – Only 12% of those exiting the homelessness system transition into permanent housing—underscoring the system's limited capacity to create stable outcomes, particularly for single adults. Based on evidence-based assumptions, the region faces an immediate need for more than *2,800 total supportive housing units,* which combine affordable housing with on-site support services, such as healthcare, substance use counseling, job training, and other life-improving services.





Construction Costs – The cost of building new housing poses a significant barrier to increasing the supply of affordable and workforce housing. High land prices, high interest rates, escalating building material and infrastructure costs, and labor shortages, has made it increasingly difficult for developers to deliver units at attainable price points. State construction defects laws have also been widely acknowledged as a deterrent to building for-sale multifamily housing, limiting supply and driving up costs in that segment of the market. Affordable housing projects face additional cost burdens, with estimates suggesting that total development costs have increased by *approximately 30%* in recent years due to additional financing complexities, regulatory compliance requirements, and design standards tied to public funding. According to the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA), the average per-unit cost of developing an affordable housing unit in Colorado has risen to roughly $519,000 in 2025.

Regulatory Barriers – Regulatory barriers remain a significant constraint: Colorado Springs reserves *the majority of its residential land for single-family zoning, limiting opportunities for multi-family development.* Similarly, unincorporated El Paso County has limited capacity for multifamily or mixed-use development under its current zoning framework. Strict dimensional standards, underutilized by-right development, and infrastructure costs further constrain housing production at affordable levels. Recent state legislation, including new requirements to allow accessory dwelling units and increased density near transit reduce these barriers on the market to expand housing options, but their implementation will require careful alignment with local priorities.

Rental Assistance and Housing Instability – Among renter households earning below 50% of the area median income, just 11% in Colorado Springs and 8% in unincorporated El Paso County receive U.S. Department of Housing And Urban Development (HUD)-administered rental assistance in contrast to the statewide coverage rate of 17%, suggesting low-income households in the region are underserved. While these programs offer critical support, limited coverage leaves many households exposed to housing instability and at risk of displacement. Displacement risk, or the potential for individuals and households to be involuntarily forced to move from their homes or neighborhoods due to external pressures, remains highest in southeastern Colorado Springs, reflecting the area's high concentration of vulnerable populations—including lower-income, overcrowded, and cost-burdened households—and older housing stock.

Policy and Program Recommendations

To address the region's current and future housing needs, this assessment identifies potential strategies to increase housing production to serve all income levels, with a recommendation to consider these tools with community stakeholders as part of developing housing action plans, both as individual jurisdictions and as part of a broader regional strategy.

Funding Sources – Comprehensive financing mechanisms and targeted incentives remain among the most effective tools for stimulating housing production across affordability levels. Financial support provided by local, state, and federal sources can attract investment to underserved areas and support affordable housing to a greater extent than private investment can achieve on its own.

Regulatory Tools – Housing development occurs within a highly regulated environment, including land use, site, and building codes as well as administrative processes. While these regulations played a much-needed role to promote public health, safety, and wellness, they also shape local housing and real estate markets. Continued updates to land use regulations can increase housing availability and types and promote a high quality of life for all residents across the community.

Direct Support and Partnerships – Collaboration will likely be necessary to successfully develop a full range of housing across the socio-economic spectrum. No single sector – private, public, and non-profit – can meet a community's housing needs alone, and effective solutions rely on the combined efforts of local government, private developers, non-profit organizations, and institutions. Through collaborative efforts, communities can create scalable housing solutions that reflect shared responsibility and mutual benefit.

Preservation and Management – Preserving and managing existing affordable housing ensures that homes remain available and in good condition for future generations, and is critical, as many residents face the risk of losing their homes due to market forces or a long-term lack of investment. Additionally, rental assistance and foreclosure prevention programs play a crucial role in supporting households at risk of displacement.

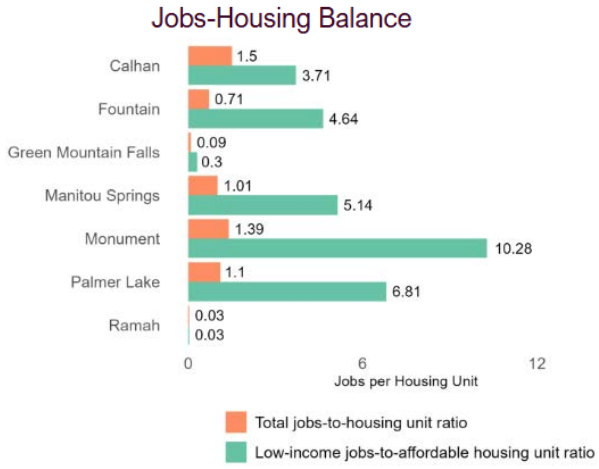
Community Housing Programs – Numerous supportive housing programs including direct services and programming can help individuals and families access, maintain, and remain stable in their homes. These programs are often the most immediate tools for communities to meet the needs of their most vulnerable residents, whether through supportive housing for homeless individuals, programs to reduce displacement, and renter and homeowner assistance services.

Housing Dynamics and Needs in Other Municipalities

Beyond Colorado Springs and the unincorporated areas of El Paso County, other municipalities across the region exhibit a wide range of housing conditions, shaped by divergent patterns of growth, economic change, and demographic shifts. Altogether, the seven municipalities require over 1,000 new rental units and more than 2,600 ownership units by 2035, with need spanning all income levels.

Fountain and Monument have absorbed the majority of population and household growth within El Paso County over the past two decades, while smaller communities like Calhan, Ramah, and Green Mountain Falls have experienced decline or stagnation. Household incomes and housing markets have followed similarly varied trajectories: Palmer Lake and Green Mountain Falls posted strong income gains, while incomes in Calhan and Manitou Springs declined. Rents and home values have risen sharply in several areas, with Palmer Lake and Green Mountain Falls reporting *rent increases above 50%,* despite limited new construction. Across nearly all communities, renters face greater economic vulnerability than owners, with a *large share earning below 80% AMI* and limited access to affordable housing types. In communities like Fountain, Calhan, and Manitou Springs, these pressures are particularly acute and indicate growing risk of displacement among low-income renters and long-term residents.

The data also reveal persistent mismatches between jobs and housing, particularly for lower-wage workers. Most outlying municipalities have *far more low-income jobs than units affordable to those workers,* suggesting that many are forced to choose between commuting from elsewhere or shouldering unsustainable housing costs in order to live locally. Fountain and Manitou Springs, in particular, face steep shortages of both rental and for-sale housing, driven by commuter demand, tourism pressures, and limited inventory. Smaller communities face their own challenges: aging populations, accessibility needs, and reliance on mobile homes as a key source of affordability.



Introduction

The City of Colorado Springs and the surrounding unincorporated areas of El Paso County are undergoing significant transformation. As Colorado's second-largest city and a hub of military, aerospace, technology, and health care employment, Colorado Springs continues to attract a diverse and growing population. From its early days as a health resort and military training center to its current status as a rapidly expanding metro area, the city has long balanced growth pressures with a strong sense of community identity and connection to the natural landscape. Meanwhile, the unincorporated areas surrounding the city, ranging from suburban neighborhoods to more rural communities, are absorbing a growing share of new residents and development, each with distinct infrastructure and land use considerations.

The region's increasing popularity has intensified long-standing housing challenges. Demand has outpaced supply, and the combination of elevated prices, limited rental options, and uneven income growth has made housing less accessible for many residents. The COVID-19 pandemic brought a wave of in-migration from higher-cost regions, further straining the housing market. Concurrently, elevated interest rates have dampened turnover and made homeownership even less attainable, especially for first-time buyers. New construction has not kept pace with the needs of the local workforce, and communities across both Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County are experiencing the ripple effects: cost burdens, longer commutes, overcrowding, and housing insecurity. The result is a housing market that, like those in many rapidly growing communities nationwide, no longer adequately serves existing residents or those seeking to make the region their home.

In response, the Colorado Springs and El Paso County Regional Housing Needs Assessment was commissioned by the City of Colorado Springs, with El Paso County serving as a project partner. Matrix Design Group, Inc., in partnership with Data-Driven Economic Strategies (together, the Matrix team), was retained to conduct the assessment in compliance with Colorado Senate Bill 24-174. Passed in 2024, this legislation requires growing communities with populations over 1,000 to conduct housing needs assessments and align future land use planning with projected housing demand across income levels. SB 24-174 is part of a broader state effort to address Colorado's housing shortage through coordinated, data-informed planning that connects housing production to job growth, affordability, and population trends. Moreover, more than a decade has passed since the region last undertook a formal housing needs assessment, and the region's housing conditions have changed dramatically

in that time. This project is a top priority for the City and reflects the regions commitment to advancing solutions that support balanced growth and address long-term housing needs as the region continues to grow.

As the region continues to grow and change, understanding the full scope of its housing challenges is essential to effective planning. This assessment provides a comprehensive picture of existing conditions and future housing needs across Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County. It evaluates demographic and economic trends, examines the condition and composition of the existing housing stock, and analyzes key market pressures shaping access and affordability. It also quantifies housing demand and identifies current and anticipated shortfalls by income level and tenure. Grounded in a rigorous, data-driven methodology and informed by stakeholder input, the findings provide a foundation for locally tailored policy responses and investment strategies that address both immediate needs and long-term priorities.

Methodology

This assessment draws on a mix of quantitative data sources, qualitative input, and established planning benchmarks to evaluate current conditions and forecast future needs across Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County. The methodology conforms with the housing needs assessment guidelines outlined by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), while also supporting local planning efforts with context-specific insights.

For comparative purposes, data for El Paso County overall, including both incorporated and unincorporated areas, and for Colorado statewide are presented alongside the Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County estimates where available. This comparative approach provides critical context, allowing local housing trends to be evaluated against broader regional and state patterns. It also highlights where local conditions diverge, helping to prioritize needs and shape appropriately scaled policy responses.

Geographic terminology is used consistently throughout the report. In all figures and tables, “Colorado Springs" refers specifically to the municipal boundaries of the city. "Unincorporated El Paso County" includes all census-designated places and outlying communities outside municipal limits, including (but not limited to) the Air Force Academy, Black Forest, Cascade-Chipita Park, Cimarron Hills, Ellicott, Fort Carson, Gleneagle, Peyton, Rock Creek Park, Security-Widefield, Stratmoor, and Woodmoor. "El Paso County" refers to the entire county, including both incorporated and unincorporated areas. The incorporated municipalities of El Paso County include the Cities of Colorado Springs, Fountain, and Manitou Springs, and Towns of Calhan, Green Mountain Falls, Monument, Palmer Lake, and Ramah.

This assessment leverages a wide range of federal, state, local, and proprietary data sources to develop a comprehensive understanding of housing conditions, affordability, and needs. In all cases, the most current data were used; however, reference years vary depending on the source. Similarly, separate estimates for Colorado Springs, unincorporated El Paso County, El Paso County, and Colorado are not available from every source.

Key data sources include:

- *American Community Survey (ACS):* Administered by the U.S. Census Bureau, the ACS is a foundational source of demographic, social, economic, and housing data at multiple geographic levels. Estimates are developed using probability sampling and statistical weighting to ensure representativeness across communities. This assessment primarily uses the 2023 five-year ACS, which covers the period from 2019 to 2023, while incorporating data from the 2018 five-year ACS (2014–2018) to provide a longitudinal view of local trends. Importantly, ACS data are not merely reported as standalone descriptive statistics. Rather, the estimates serve as inputs for many of the analyses presented in this report. Figures such as housing gaps and affordability shortfalls were derived by integrating ACS estimates with other sources and applying additional methods. For unincorporated El Paso County, where ACS data are not reported separately, values were estimated by subtracting the combined totals for incorporated places from the countywide figures. While statistically valid, ACS estimates for small geographies may carry wide margins of error and should be interpreted with appropriate caution.
- *Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS):* The Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) consists of individual-level survey responses from the ACS, enabling the creation of custom cross-tabulations that are not available in published ACS summary tables. For this study, the PUMS data were used to analyze military housing demand, senior housing needs, cost-burden across several AMI tiers, and utility costs by bedroom size for renter-occupied units.
- *State Demography Office (SDO):* Historical and current estimates of total households, population, housing units, and average household size, along with county-level household and population projections through 2033, were provided by the SDO. These estimates were also used to adjust ACS population and household counts for consistency across data sources and to reflect the most current totals.
- *Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS):* Local labor force and employment data were supplied by the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) and the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), both published by the BLS.
- *Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE):* Long-term employment projections for the Colorado Springs Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) were furnished by the CDLE.
- *Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA):* Regional Economic Accounts data were used to assess gross regional product (GRP) by sector for El Paso County. GRP measures the total value added by all industries in the region and serves as a key indicator of the size and economic productivity of the local economy.
- *Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD):* Commuting flow data was used to evaluate the relationship between jobs and housing across geographies, based on estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau's LEHD program.
- *Colorado Secretary of State:* The *Business Entities in Colorado* database was used to analyze commercial activity in Colorado Springs and El Paso County, specifically business closures.

- *Pikes Peak Regional Building Department (PPRBD):* Permitting data were used to estimate recent, ongoing, and future residential construction activity. The records were geocoded to differentiate between incorporated and unincorporated permits.
- *Zillow:*
  - *Zillow Observed Rent Index (ZORI):* This proprietary metric measures changes in asking rents over time across the full rental market, not just professionally managed multifamily units. By capturing listings from a wide range of landlords and housing types, ZORI offers a broad and timely measure of rental market trends.
  - *Zillow Home Value Index (ZHVI):* Serving as the ownership counterpart to ZORI, ZHVI tracks changes in the estimated value of typical homes across the market over time.
  - *Zillow Rental Listings:* Zillow's rental market overview data provided a snapshot of asking rents by unit type across the rental market. These data offer additional context on price variation not captured by index-based measures such as ZORI.
- *HUD Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Database:* Data on Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) properties were used to assess the inventory of income-restricted units.
- *US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development – Rural Housing Service:* Data on the number and location of active rural multifamily housing units within the study area were provided by this source.
- *HUD Multifamily Assistance Database:* This proprietary PolicyMap database was used to identify the location and characteristics of HUD-assisted multifamily properties with project-based subsidies. The database combines information from multiple HUD sources, including Section 8 contract records, and efforts were made to avoid duplication with other subsidized housing datasets used in this assessment.
- *HUD Picture of Subsidized Households:* Unlike other subsidized housing datasets that focus primarily on unit counts, this source provides insight into household characteristics, occupancy rates, and subsidy coverage for public housing and voucher programs.
- *AirDNA:* Proprietary short-term rental (STR) data, including active listings, are available from this source. AirDNA submarkets do not align perfectly with municipal or census-designated place boundaries.
- *El Paso County Assessor:* Parcel-level data were used to analyze recent sales activity and identify investor-owned properties. Parcels were assigned to municipalities or unincorporated areas
- *Pikes Peak Association of REALTORS® (PPAR):* Median days on the market (DOM) data were used to assess current market conditions.
- *Colorado Department of Revenue:* Taxable sales data were used to compute changes in sales tax revenue over time.

- *Colorado EnviroScreen:* Developed by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), Colorado EnviroScreen is a screening tool that identifies communities that may face higher environmental health risks due to the cumulative impact of pollution, socioeconomic vulnerability, and health disparities. The composite measure is available at the census tract level.
- *Colorado Department of Local Affairs Mobile Home Park Oversight Program:* This statewide registry of mobile home parks provides data on park ownership, location, and regulatory compliance.
- *City of Colorado Springs:* The city's GIS team furnished zoning layers and incorporated city boundary data to support the analysis of land use, development potential, and jurisdictional context.
- *HUD Point-in-Time (PIT) Count:* The annual PIT count, conducted in accordance with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines, provided a snapshot of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness in El Paso County.
- *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):* SNAP application data include a self-reported indicator of homelessness, allowing for a broader estimate of individuals experiencing housing instability. These figures were used to supplement PIT count data and to better approximate the scale of homelessness and risk across El Paso County.
- *McKinney-Vento Program:* Data collected through local school districts under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act were used to estimate the number of students experiencing homelessness. These data helped capture family and youth homelessness not always visible in other datasets.
- *Homeless Management Information System (HMIS):* The Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA) and State of Homelessness reports were used to further evaluate patterns of homelessness, including rates of exit to permanent housing.

In addition to standard analysis, this assessment used advanced statistical techniques to generate composite measures that capture broader patterns not readily apparent from any single variable. The Shannon Diversity Index was applied to assess housing stock diversity, producing a single score that reflects the mix of housing types within a given area. This allows for easy comparison across neighborhoods in terms of how varied or homogenous their housing options are. Similarly, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used to estimate displacement risk, combining multiple correlated indicators, such as cost burden, overcrowding, and other indicators, into a novel index that highlights where vulnerable populations may be at greatest risk of being priced out. These composite measures help distill complex information into intuitive formats, supporting more targeted and effective decision-making.

As mentioned above, a key requirement of SB 24-174 is to identify existing and future housing gaps. This assessment approaches that task by determining the number of units needed to alleviate overcrowding, achieve healthy vacancy rates, and accommodate a segment of the in-commuting workforce. These figures are intended to serve as directional estimates, grounded in available data and standardized assumptions. As with any model-based analysis, results are contingent on methodological choices and underlying data quality. The estimates presented should be interpreted as ballpark figures that help clarify the scale and structure of need, rather than precise totals.

Community engagement played a critical role in shaping this housing needs assessment. To ensure that the findings reflect the lived experiences of residents the insights of key local stakeholders, the Matrix team developed and deployed a comprehensive 33-question community questionnaire covering housing conditions, affordability, barriers to mobility, and neighborhood preferences. In addition to survey outreach, Matrix facilitated targeted stakeholder sessions on March 18 and 19, 2025, bringing together military representatives, elected officials, housing providers, housing advisory groups, and land use and planning experts. These meetings surfaced critical insights into housing challenges and opportunities from those directly involved in shaping the region's future. Resident workshops have also been scheduled to gather additional input from community members across El Paso County, ensuring that a broad range of voices inform the assessment's findings and recommendations.

Demographic Trends

Demographic Trends Overview

- El Paso County is expected to grow from 744,153 residents to 867,404 (+16.6%) by 2035 and over 1 million by 2050, a 35% increase in total. Most of this growth will be fueled by older adults.
- From 2010-2023, unincorporated El Paso County grew at a faster rate than the City of Colorado Springs (24% vs 16%, respectively) due to the availability of land and rising cost of housing within the city.
- The average household size (2.5 people) and the share of family households (67%) has remained generally steady across El Paso County. The age distribution of households is roughly the same across the region, but there is a higher share of children under 19 residing in unincorporated El Paso County, while a larger share of young adults (ages 25-34) lives in the City of Colorado Springs.
- From 2018-2023, median age has increased from approximately 34 to 35 across all El Paso County.

Key Takeaways

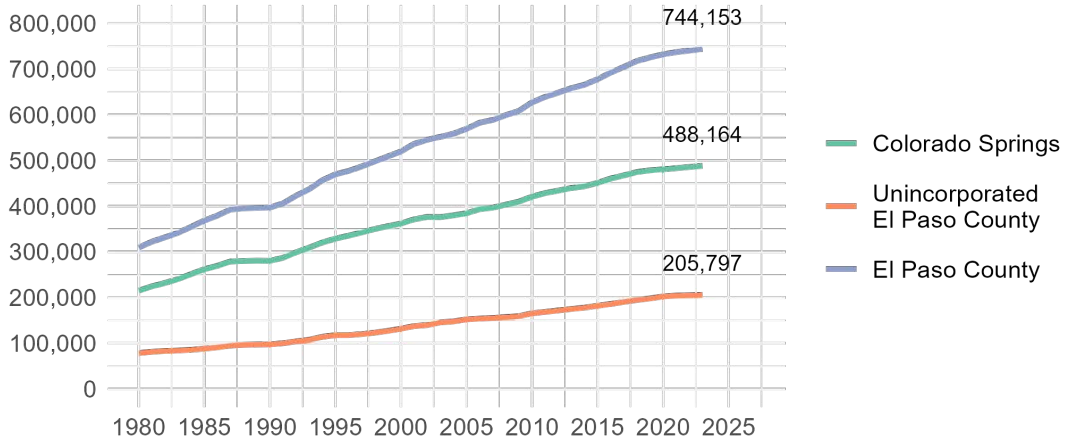
- Taken together, these demographic trends point to increasing demand for both family-oriented housing and accessible senior-friendly homes.
- Investments in accessible and supportive senior housing will be essential to promoting older adults' independence, well-being, and ability to age comfortably in their communities
- As more households settle beyond city limits, the implications extend beyond housing, affecting transportation networks, school capacity, utility infrastructure, and the fiscal responsibilities of both city and county governments.

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of how Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County have evolved over time in terms of population, household composition, age structure, racial and ethnic diversity, educational attainment, and homeownership patterns. Overall, the data highlights the distinct yet interrelated roles that both areas play in shaping the region's growth. Colorado Springs continues to serve as the county's population and economic center, but unincorporated El Paso County has emerged as a major engine of suburban and exurban development. Household growth, age distribution, and family composition trends point to increasing demand for both family-oriented housing and accessible senior-friendly homes. Although educational attainment is rising across all geographies, disparities in homeownership, household type, and income levels reveal the complex interplay between land use patterns and access to opportunity. These demographic dynamics provide a foundation for understanding housing demand and the future shape of residential development in the region.

Population and Households

Figure 1 displays population growth trends in Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County from 1980 to 2023, illustrating their central roles in driving regional growth. Over this period, Colorado Springs added *more than 270,000 residents* as its population reached *488,164*, while unincorporated El Paso County's population expanded *from 78,451 to 205,797*. Although Colorado Springs remains the county's population anchor, the city's growth rate has gradually slowed since 2000, even as absolute gains continued. Unincorporated El Paso County, meanwhile, has seen consistent and sustained population increases, particularly in recent decades, signaling its emergence as a major contributor to the county's overall growth. This trend may be attributed in part to the availability of developable land outside city limits, as well as the rising cost of housing within Colorado Springs. As population growth spreads beyond the city, unincorporated areas face increasing pressure to accommodate new residents while maintaining infrastructure, services, and a coherent development pattern. The diverging growth trajectories of these two areas raise important questions about land use, annexation, and long-term planning across urban and unincorporated boundaries.

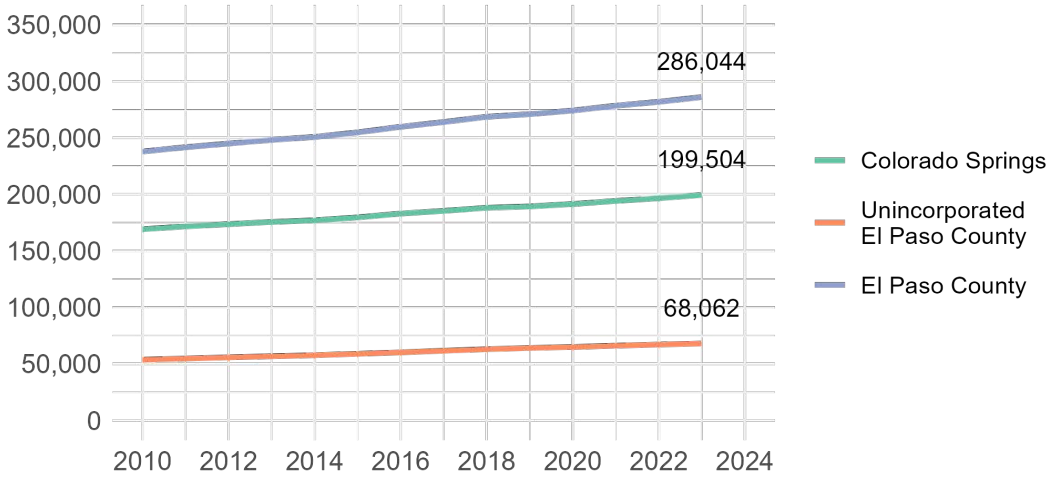
Figure 1. Population Trends in Colorado Springs, Unincorporated El Paso County, and El Paso County, 1980-2023



Source: State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.

Figure 2 tracks the growth in household counts from 2010 to 2023, offering a complementary view of how regional population gains have translated into increased housing demand. During this period, Colorado Springs added *more than 30,000 households,* while unincorporated El Paso County added *over 14,000,* accounting for a sizable share of the countywide increase. Although the city continues to accommodate most households, the steady growth in unincorporated areas reflects not only population increases, but also shifting residential development patterns, with more households forming outside municipal boundaries. These shifts likely stem from a mix of housing supply constraints in Colorado Springs and ongoing suburban expansion into surrounding areas. As more households settle beyond city limits, the implications extend beyond housing, affecting transportation networks, school capacity, utility infrastructure, and the fiscal responsibilities of both city and county governments. Monitoring household growth alongside population trends is essential to ensure that housing policy, land use planning, and public investment keep pace with changing residential patterns across the region.

Figure 2. Number of Households in Colorado Springs, Unincorporated El Paso County, and El Paso County, 2010-2023

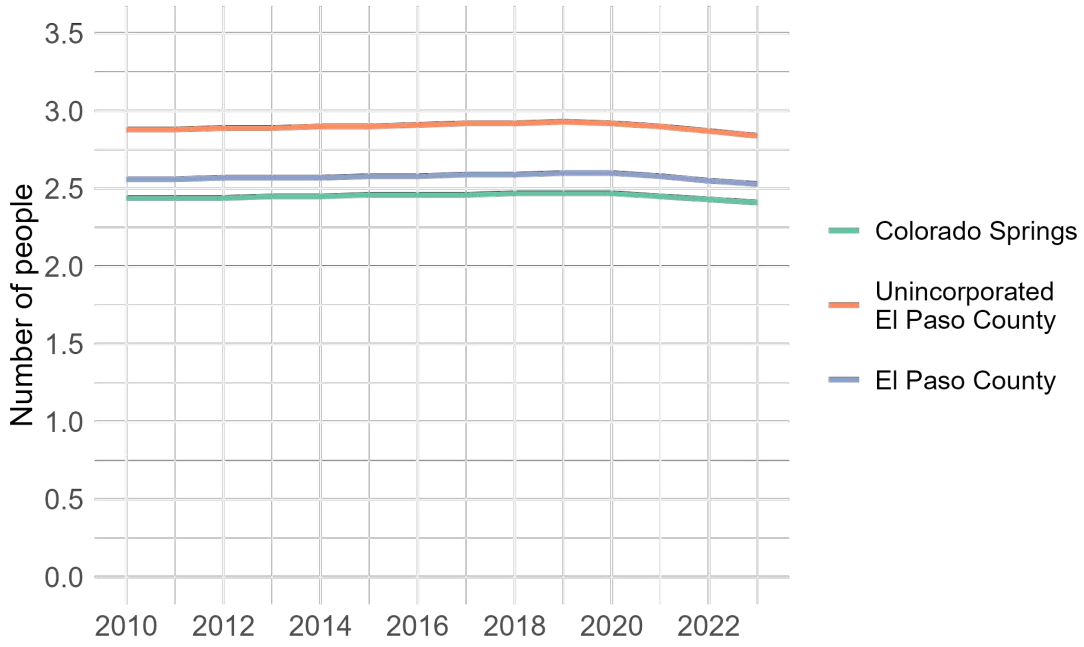


Source: State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.

Household Size and Composition

Figure 3 presents average household size data for Colorado Springs, unincorporated El Paso County, and the county overall, illustrating only modest changes over time, despite broader demographic shifts. In Colorado Springs, the average household size held steady at *approximately 2.4 people* from 2010 to 2023. Unincorporated El Paso County has consistently had larger households, though the average declined slightly *from 2.9 to 2.8 people* over the same period. This suggests that outside city limits, family households, multigenerational living, and homeownership are more common. At the county level, household size decreased from 2.6 to 2.5 persons. Given declines in birth and marriage rates, it is reasonable to expect that households will become smaller over time, a development that will have significant implications for future housing needs, particularly in terms of unit size and design.

Figure 3. Average Household Size by Region, 2010-2023

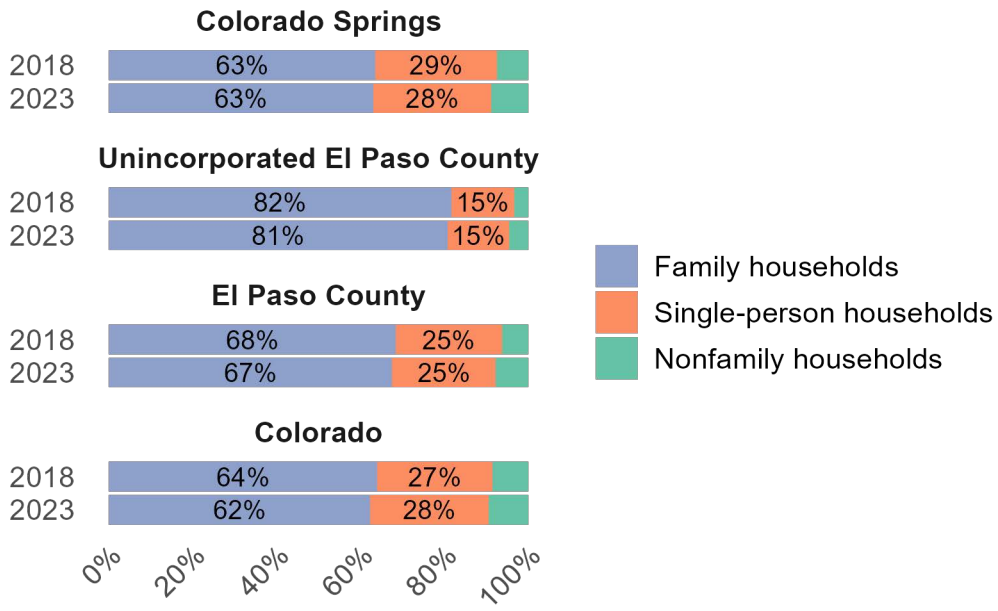


Source: State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.

Similarly, the composition of the region's households has remained relatively stable in recent years (see Figure 4). Between the 2018 and 2023 ACS periods, the share of family households—defined as those in which the householder is related to at least one other occupant—largely held steady. In Colorado Springs, the share of family households remained constant at *63%*, while unincorporated El Paso County and the county overall experienced a slight decline in family households as a share of all households. These shifts, albeit minimal in magnitude, may reflect the broader demographic trends referenced previously, such as delayed marriage and lower birth rates among younger generations.

Regional differences in household composition, however, were more pronounced. In unincorporated El Paso County, family households in 2023 accounted for *81% of all households*, eclipsing Colorado Springs' share by *18 percent*. Conversely, single-person households in 2023 were more common in Colorado Springs (28%) and statewide (28%) than in unincorporated El Paso County, where they accounted for just 15% of households. Shared housing arrangements among unrelated individuals, such as roommates, were most prevalent statewide and in Colorado Springs, but relatively rare in unincorporated areas. These differences suggest that the county's unincorporated communities maintain a more traditional household structure, likely shaped by larger housing units, suburban and rural development patterns, and higher rates of homeownership.

Figure 4. Breakdown of Households by Type, 2018 and 2023

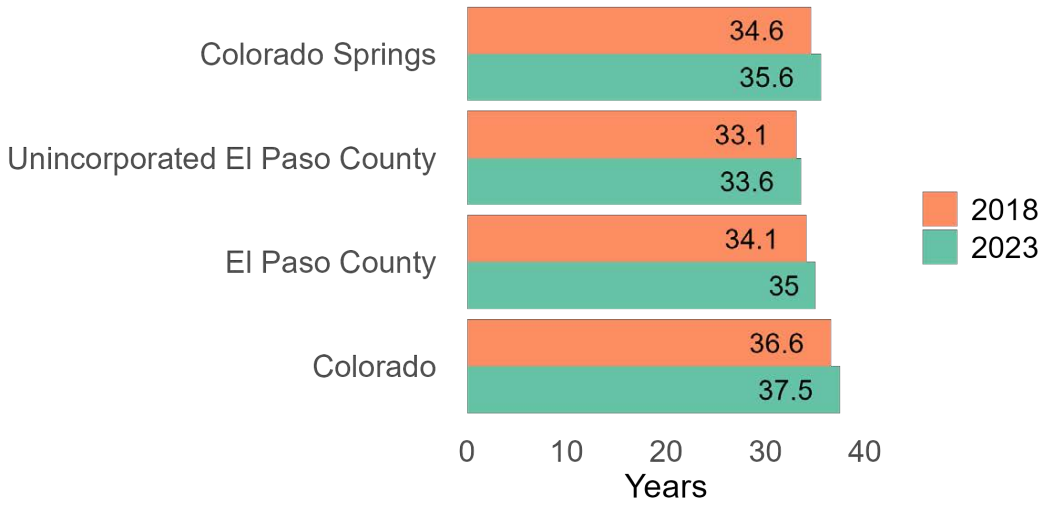


Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Family households are defined as those in which the householder is related to at least one other occupant by birth, marriage, or adoption. Nonfamily households primarily consist of roommates and unmarried partners. The 2018 values represent five-year estimates covering the period from 2014 to 2018, while the 2023 values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Population Characteristics

The region has aged measurably in recent years, as demonstrated by the median age estimates presented in Figure 5. Between 2018 and 2023, the median age in Colorado Springs rose *from 34.6 to 35.6 years*, nearly matching the countywide increase. Although unincorporated El Paso County also experienced population aging during this period, it remained younger than surrounding communities, with a median age of *just under 34 years*. Unincorporated El Paso County's relative youth aligns with its high share of active-duty military and family households, which are more likely to include children. Colorado's statewide median age has been slightly higher than local figures, growing *from 36.6 to 37.5 years* over the same period. This increase suggests that population aging is not exclusive to El Paso County but rather the result of broader drivers, such as declining birth rates, delayed family formation, and the continued aging of baby boomers. While the incremental nature of these demographic changes might limit immediate impacts, the upward trajectory signals ongoing challenges related to housing and service provision that will need to be addressed proactively as the regional population continues to age.

Figure 5. Median Population Age by Region, 2018 and 2023



Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: The 2018 values represent five-year estimates covering the period from 2014 to 2018, while the 2023 values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Table 1 details the age distribution in Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County, revealing key differences in the demographic makeup of the two areas. Unincorporated El Paso County has a notably higher share of children and teens: *29% of its population* was aged 19 and under, compared to *24%* for Colorado Springs. The city, on the other hand, has a greater concentration of residents aged 25 to 34, consistent with its role as a regional employment and services hub, which helps attract young professionals and early-career adults. The 65-and-over range made up a proportionally larger share of Colorado Springs' population, with nearly *71,600 seniors* living in the city. The more urban setting of Colorado Springs likely contributes to its larger senior population, offering greater access to healthcare and aging-related services. While Colorado Springs will increasingly need to prioritize housing options that facilitate aging in place, unincorporated El Paso County's younger age profile indicates strong demand for schools, parks, and family-oriented housing.

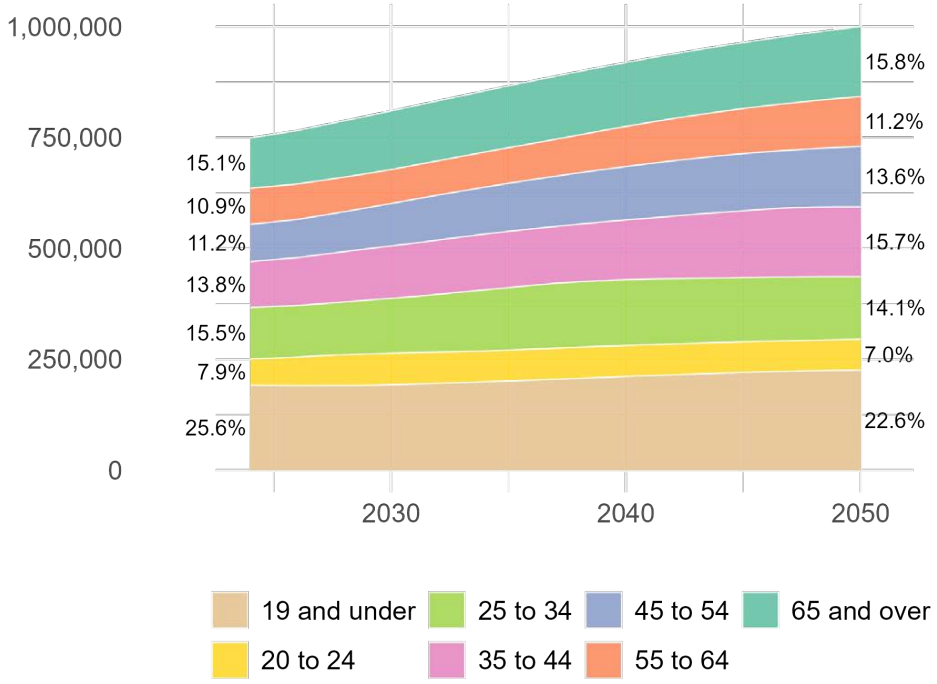
Table 1. Population Age Distribution in Colorado Springs and Unincorporated El Paso County, 2023

Age Range	Colorado Springs		Unincorporated El Paso County	
19 and under	119,360	24%	60,552	29%
20 to 24	36,894	8%	17,547	9%
25 to 34	83,566	17%	28,648	14%
35 to 44	67,009	14%	26,652	13%
45 to 54	54,787	11%	22,240	11%
55 to 64	54,960	11%	25,331	12%
65 and over	71,587	15%	24,826	12%
Total	488,164	100%	205,797	100%

Source: State Demography Office; Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Population by age estimates were derived from the 2023 five-year ACS and then proportionally scaled to match total population figures published by the Colorado State Demography Office.

Figure 6 presents population projections for El Paso County, revealing that the county is expected to surpass *one million residents* by 2050. This estimate represents a *35% increase* from 2023. Notably, this growth will be driven by adults aged 35 and older, with residents 65 and over comprising the largest age group currently and projected to remain so through 2050. In contrast, the population of residents aged 34 and under is expected to decline modestly. The projections reinforce the fact that the region's population is aging, with profound implications for housing, transportation, and health care systems. As demand increases for senior-friendly housing, the region will need to plan proactively to accommodate a growing population of older adults while balancing the needs of all age groups.

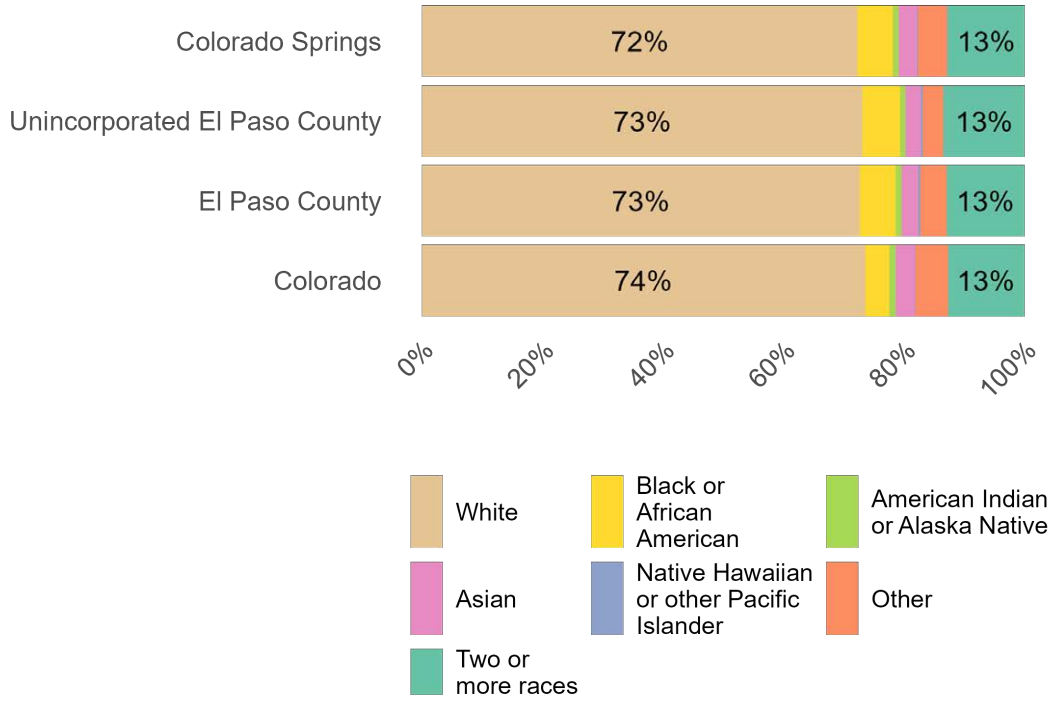
Figure 6. El Paso County Population Projections by Age, 2024-2050



Source: State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: City-level projections are not available from the Colorado State Demography Office (SDO). While it is technically possible to infer city-level projections from countywide forecasts, doing so is not recommended in the case of Colorado Springs due to the city's potential for future annexation. Annexation could significantly alter municipal boundaries and shift both population and housing growth into areas that are currently unincorporated. In addition to affecting the geographic distribution of growth, annexation could also change the demographic profile of the city by introducing areas with different income levels, household sizes, or age compositions. As a result, any allocation of county-level projections to the city would carry substantial uncertainty. This analysis therefore presents only the official countywide projections published by SDO.

Across the region, the racial makeup of the population is highly similar (see Figure 7). In 2023, white residents represented between 72% and 74% of the population across all four geographies. Minor differences do exist, however. For example, the share of residents identifying as Black or African American is slightly higher in Colorado Springs and El Paso County compared to the statewide average. This is notable considering that national research has shown that Black households tend to purchase homes later in life than their white counterparts, even when controlling for income, often due to historic disparities in intergenerational wealth, credit access, and discriminatory lending practices.[2]

Figure 7. Population Racial Makeup by Region, 2023

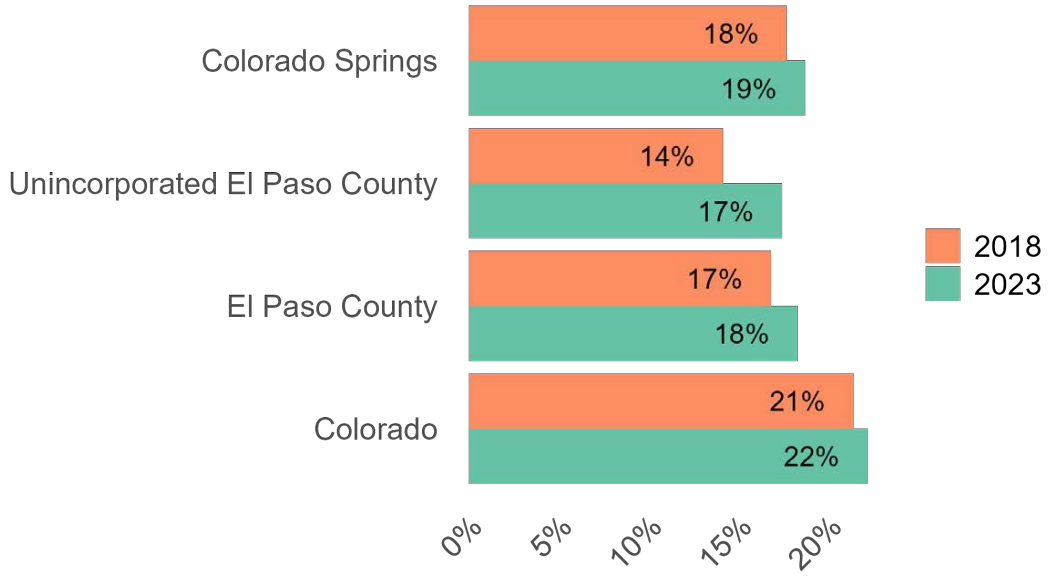


Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: In U.S. Census and ACS data, *Hispanic or Latino* is classified as an ethnicity, not a race. Individuals identifying as Hispanic may be of any race. Values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

[2] Ellen, Ingrid Gould, and Samuel Dastrup. *Homeownership and the American Dream*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute, April 2021. Available at: https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/96221/homeownership_and_the_american_dream_0.pdf

Figure 8 presents data on the Hispanic or Latino share of the population, illustrating gradual but meaningful growth across most geographies. From 2018 to 2023, Colorado Springs' and El Paso County's Hispanic populations both increased by one percentage point, reaching 19% and 18%, respectively. Growth was more dramatic in unincorporated El Paso County, where 17% of residents identified as Hispanic or Latino as of 2023, suggesting a diversification of the population outside the urban core. Despite this growth, the region overall remains somewhat less ethnically diverse than the state, where 22% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino. The state-level estimate is heavily influenced by the relatively high concentration of Hispanic or Latino residents in the Denver metro area and other Front Range communities.

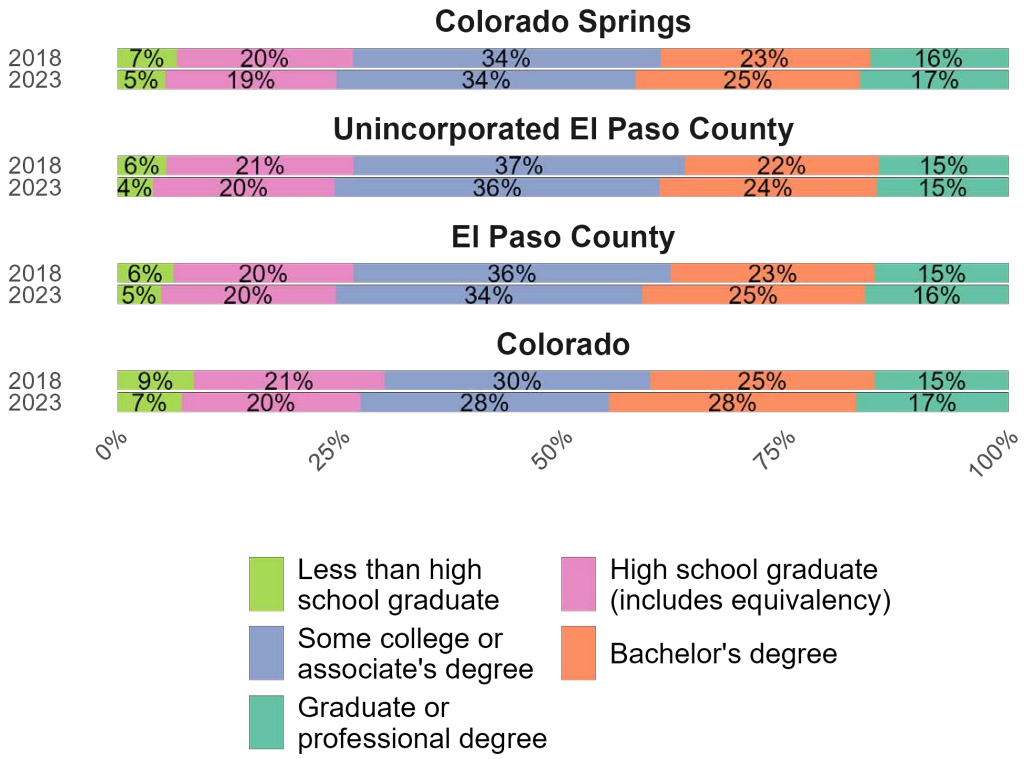
Figure 8. Hispanic or Latino Share of the Population, 2018 and 2023



Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: The 2018 values represent five-year estimates covering the period from 2014 to 2018, while the 2023 values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

As Figure 9 shows, gains in educational attainment have been observed across the board in recent years. In 2023, *42% of Colorado Springs residents held a bachelor's degree or higher,* representing a slight increase from 2018. Educational attainment was somewhat lower in unincorporated El Paso County, where *39% had earned at least a bachelor's degree.* Statewide, 45% of Colorado residents held a bachelor's degree or higher as of 2023, marking a notable increase from 2018. This rise in educational attainment has been fueled in part by the steady in-migration of college-educated workers, particularly to the Denver metro area, which continues to attract a highly skilled workforce. These trends have important implications for regional workforce development, housing affordability, and economic competitiveness. As higher education levels often correlate with higher earnings potential, communities with lower graduation rates may face greater challenges in attracting certain types of high-wage jobs or knowledge-based industries. At the same time, rising levels of educational attainment underscore the need for continued investment in diverse housing options to meet the preferences and budgets of highly educated households, who may have a stronger preference for homes near major employment and educational centers.

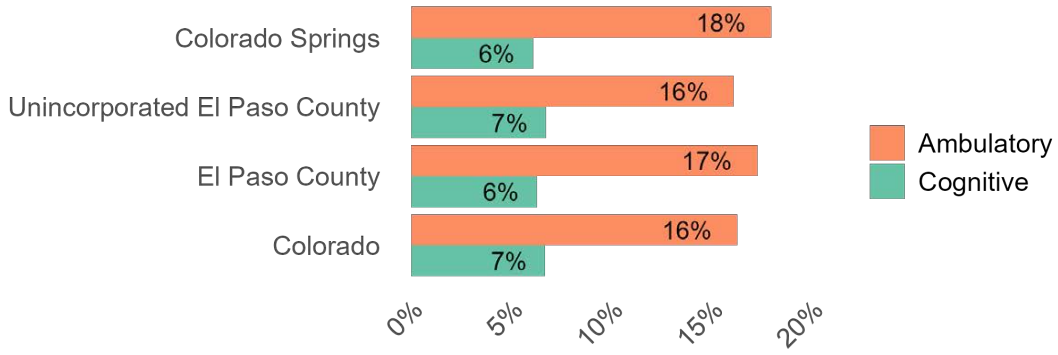
Figure 9. Educational Attainment by Region, 2018 and 2023



Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Rates are for the 25-years-and-over population. The 2018 values represent five-year estimates covering the period from 2014 to 2018, while the 2023 values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Figure 10presents disability rates among residents aged 65 and over, with a specific focus on ambulatory and cognitive challenges faced by older adults across the region. In 2023, *18% of Colorado Springs seniors*—equal to an *estimated 12,886 residents*—reported experiencing an ambulatory disability, defined as having serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs. Additionally, *6%* reported experiencing a cognitive disability, suggesting that *about 4,300 seniors* encountered difficulties with memory, concentration, or decision-making. Colorado Springs' disability rates were comparable to those observed in unincorporated El Paso County, El Paso County overall, and statewide, indicating a relatively similar need for homes featuring accessibility improvements, such as barrier-free entrances, grab bars, wider doorways, and other universal design elements, across the region. Furthermore, the prevalence of cognitive disabilities underscores the importance of expanding senior housing options, including memory care facilities, assisted living communities, and other supportive housing models designed to address both physical limitations and cognitive impairments. As the senior population continues to grow, proactive investments in accessible and supportive senior housing will be essential to promoting older adults' independence, well-being, and ability to age comfortably in their communities.

Figure 10. Disability Rates among 65-Years-and-Over Population by Region, 2023

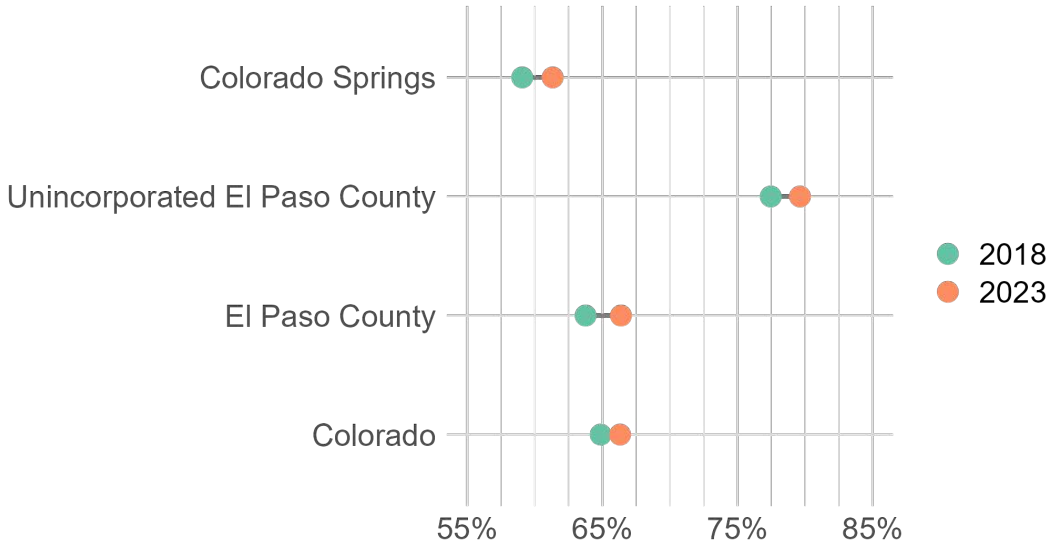


Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: An ambulatory disability refers to a mobility limitation resulting from a physical condition, injury, illness, or age. A cognitive disability refers to a physical, mental, or emotional condition that negatively impacts a person's ability to concentrate, remember, or make decisions. Values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Tenure

Figure 11 presents homeownership rates across Colorado Springs, unincorporated El Paso County, El Paso County overall, and the state, offering valuable insight into tenure patterns and recent shifts in the housing market. As of 2023, ***61% of households*** in Colorado Springs owned their homes, a considerably lower share than in unincorporated El Paso County (***80%***), El Paso County overall (***66%***), and the state of Colorado (***66%***). These disparities underscore how geography, land use, and housing typologies influence access to homeownership. From 2018 to 2023, ownership rates in all four areas increased modestly, a somewhat unexpected trend given the mounting affordability challenges posed by rising interest rates, limited inventory, and elevated home prices. However, because these estimates are derived from the five-year ACS, which covers the period from 2019 to 2023, it is likely that much of the increase was shaped by conditions early in the period, when historically low mortgage rates and strong demand spurred a wave of homebuying. The significantly higher ownership rate in unincorporated El Paso County likely reflects a development pattern dominated by single-family housing, larger lot sizes, and a stronger orientation toward family households. As homeownership continues to serve as a cornerstone of household stability and wealth accumulation, these patterns carry important implications for generational opportunity and the trajectory of growth across the region.

Figure 11. Homeownership Rate by Region, 2018 and 2023



Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Households, rather than individuals, are the unit of analysis. The 2018 values represent five-year estimates covering the period from 2014 to 2018, while the 2023 values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Economic Trends

Overview

This chapter explores how household financial conditions, labor market dynamics, and the structure of the regional economy have evolved in recent years—developments with significant implications for current and future housing needs.

- From 2018 to 2023, inflation-adjusted incomes rose steadily across El Paso County from $79,250 to $87,470 (+10.4%), driven by a recovering labor market and in-migration of higher-earning households. These gains applied to homeowners across the region, as well as renters within the city. However, the median renter income in El Paso County remained fairly stagnant, increasing to $65,900.
- 41% of renting households in the City of Colorado Springs earn less than $50,000, while only 18% of homeowners in the city earn under $50,000.
- Colorado Springs' poverty rate ($25,701 in the 2018 ACS and $31,500 in the 2023 ACS) fell by over three percentage points to 9.3%.
- Of El Paso County's total Gross Regional Product (GRP) of nearly $52 billion in 2023, the largest employment sector included Government and Government Enterprises ($12.5 billion), reflecting the county's significant military presence.
- From 2015-2022, the net number of in-commuters to the City of Colorado Springs rose from 25,076 to 29,262, underscoring the City's continuing importance as a regional employment hub. Growing housing affordability challenges can prompt workers to reside in nearby communities where housing costs are typically lower.

Key Takeaways

- In Colorado Springs, median household income remained lower than surrounding areas, reflecting its higher proportion of single-person households, individuals employed in lower-wage service industries, and students.
- Income gains were particularly strong among homeowners, while renter incomes lagged, especially in unincorporated areas, revealing widening disparities in housing access and financial security.
- In areas experiencing rapid income growth and rising housing costs, declining poverty rates could partly reflect patterns of displacement, as lower-income households are priced out and replaced by more affluent residents.
- As cost pressures mount within Colorado Springs, some households may be choosing longer commutes in exchange for more attainable housing options elsewhere along the Front Range.

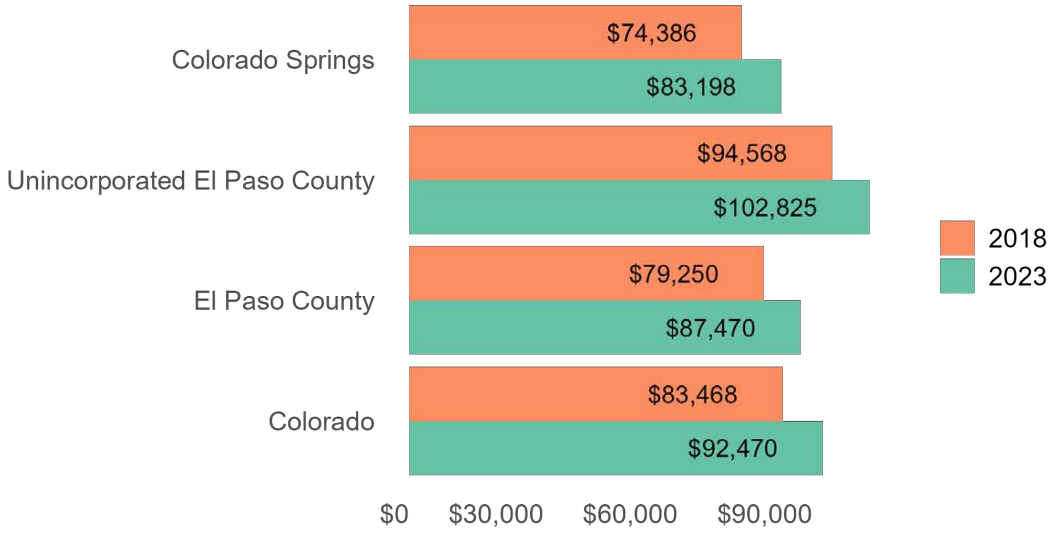
Introduction

From 2018 to 2023, incomes rose steadily across Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County, driven by a recovering labor market and in-migration of higher-earning households. These gains were particularly strong among homeowners, while renter incomes, especially in unincorporated areas, lagged behind, revealing widening disparities in housing access and financial security. Poverty rates, labor force participation, and unemployment trends, as well as current and projected employment by sector, highlight both economic resilience and emerging risks. Taken together, the data provide insight into which groups are most vulnerable to affordability challenges, where job growth is likely to occur, and how changing economic conditions may shape demand for different housing types across the region.

Household Income and Poverty

The financial position of households improved between 2018 and 2023 in both Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County, with gains that were broadly consistent across the region (see Figure 12). In Colorado Springs, real median household income rose *from $74,386 to $83,198* during this period, while in unincorporated El Paso County, it grew *from $94,568 to $102,825*. These changes closely mirror trends at the county and state levels, signaling widespread improvement in household earnings and underlying economic conditions. Several factors likely contributed to this growth, including a steady labor market recovery and the in-migration of working-age households and remote workers. In Colorado Springs, median household income remained lower than surrounding areas, reflecting its higher proportion single-person households, individuals employed in lower-wage service industries, and students.

Figure 12. Real Median Household Income by Region, 2018 and 2023

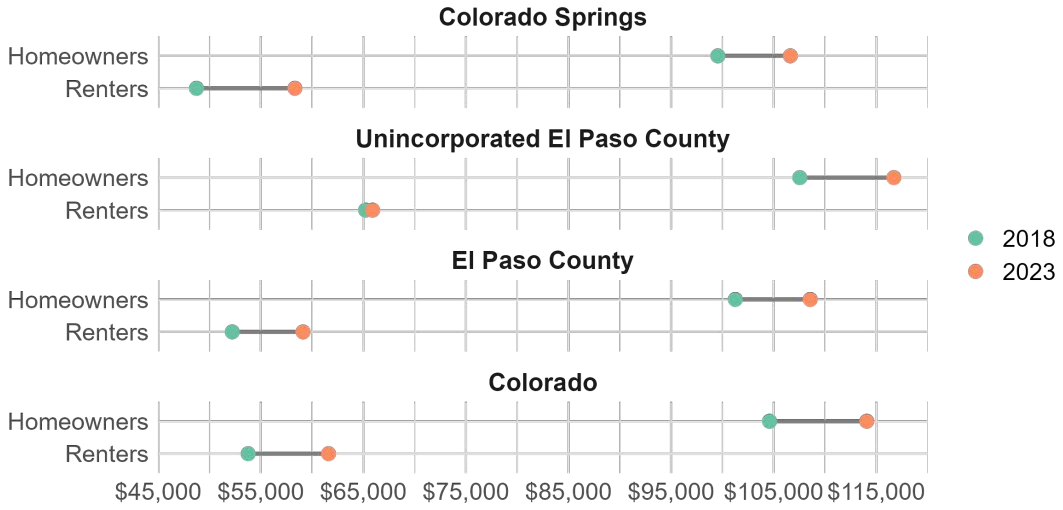


Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Values are adjusted for inflation to constant 2023 dollars. The 2018 values represent five-year estimates covering the period from 2014 to 2018, while the 2023 values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Figure 13 provides a closer look at income trends by housing tenure, showing meaningful growth in homeowner income across both Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County that widened homeowners' financial advantage over renters. From 2018 to 2023, real median household income among homeowners in Colorado Springs increased *from $99,556 to $106,625*. Although the gains outpaced inflation, incomes generally remained below countywide and statewide levels. In unincorporated El Paso County, homeowner income rose *from $107,543 to $116,716*. These findings are evidence of the continued appeal of homeownership, particularly in suburban and exurban areas, for middle- and upper-income households who can afford down payments, qualify for mortgages, and compete in a tight housing market. Rising incomes among homeowners may also reflect the economic profile of those entering the market in recent years, as elevated prices and interest rates limit access to higher-income buyers and dual-income households.

In contrast, the income gains enjoyed by Colorado Springs renters have not extended to their counterparts in unincorporated El Paso County. From 2018 to 2023, real median renter income in Colorado Springs grew *from $48,733 to $58,325*, a notable increase that aligns with broader countywide and statewide improvements. In unincorporated El Paso County, however, median renter income remained essentially stagnant over the same timeframe, reaching *$65,900* in 2023. This trend could indicate limited turnover or a constrained rental market, where fewer new, and potentially higher-income, renters are entering. Combined with a lack of affordable rental options, these conditions may contribute to growing disparities in housing access and financial stability between renters and homeowners.

Figure 13. Real Median Household Income by Tenure and Region, 2018 and 2023



Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Values are adjusted for inflation to constant 2023 dollars. The 2018 values represent five-year estimates covering the period from 2014 to 2018, while the 2023 values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Table 2 presents the distribution of household income by tenure in Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County, illustrating the strong relationship between income and homeownership. Renters, who accounted for *39% of Colorado Springs' 199,504 total households*, are overrepresented in the lowest income brackets. *More than 10,500 renter households* earned less than $20,000 annually, compared to just *6,631 owner-occupied households*. Even in the $20,000 to $34,999 and the $35,000 to $49,999 range, renters outnumbered owners by a sizeable margin. Conversely, high-income households were overwhelmingly homeowners: *over 36,000 owner-occupied households* earned more than $150,000, dwarfing the *6,080 renter households* in the same income range. This stark disparity is evidence of the advantage that higher-income households have in accessing and sustaining homeownership.

Table 2. Household Income Distribution by Tenure in Colorado Springs and Unincorporated El Paso County, 2023

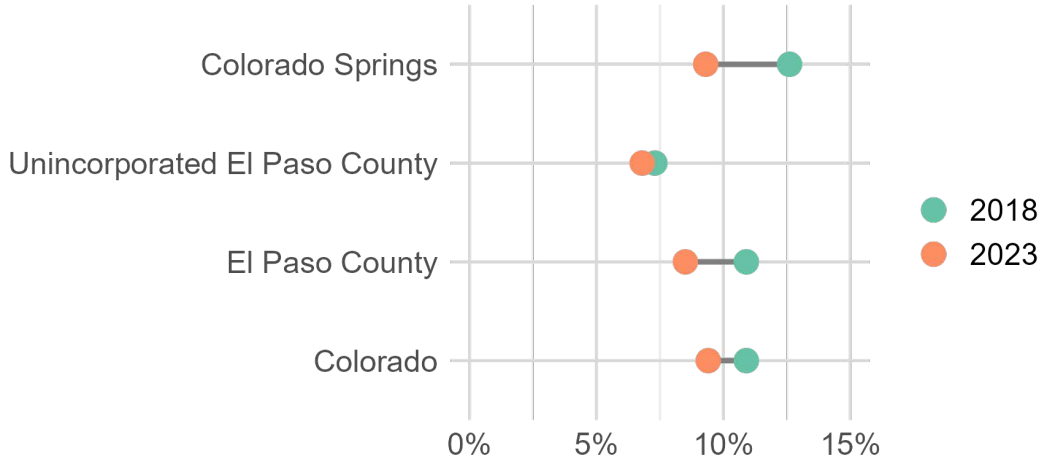
Household Income	Colorado Springs		Unincorporated El Paso County	
	Renters	Homeowners	Renters	Homeowners
Less than $20,000	10,565	6,631	1,416	2,466
$20,000 to $34,999	10,065	7,034	1,715	2,823
$35,000 to $49,999	11,670	9,028	2,064	3,287
$50,000 to $74,999	16,840	18,433	2,732	7,372
$75,000 to $99,999	11,129	16,087	2,304	6,979
$100,000 to $149,999	10,805	28,796	2,046	12,474
$150,000 or more	6,080	36,342	1,588	18,794
Total	77,154	122,350	13,867	54,195

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely due to rounding. Estimates of households by income bracket were derived from the 2023 five-year ACS and then proportionally scaled to match total household figures published by the Colorado State Demography Office.

Similar dynamics were observed in unincorporated El Paso County. Despite making up only *one-in-five households* overall, renters represented *37% of households* earning below $35,000, a sign of the economic vulnerabilities that this demographic disproportionately faces. These disparities have critical implications for housing stability, especially during periods of inflation or rising rents, when lower-income renters are more likely to face cost burdens, eviction risk, or overcrowding. The sharp divide between renter and owner incomes is also indicative of the long-standing barriers to homeownership for lower-income households, including limited savings for down payments, credit constraints, and the mismatch between housing costs and wage growth.

Figure 14 presents changes in individual poverty rates between 2018 and 2023, showing a general downward trend across all geographies. Colorado Springs' poverty rate fell by *over three percentage points to 9.3%*, while unincorporated El Paso County's declined *from 7.3% to 6.8%*. Consistent with the household income data presented previously, poverty has become significantly less prevalent in much of the state and region. Falling poverty rates typically coincide with improvements in household income and labor market conditions. Nonetheless, even with the decline in the relative size of this vulnerable population, thousands of residents continue to live below the poverty threshold. Individuals living in poverty often face significant challenges related to housing, transportation, health care, and food security, making it imperative for efforts to focus on creating pathways toward economic stability and opportunity.

Figure 14. Individual Poverty Rate by Region, 2018 and 2023



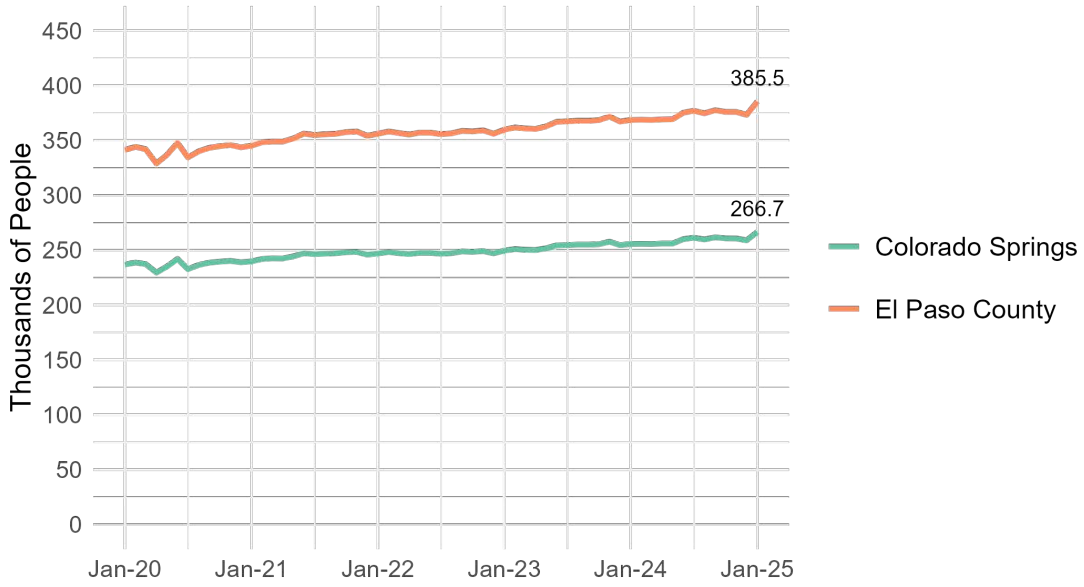
Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Individual poverty status is based on family income relative to federal poverty thresholds, which vary by family size and composition. For reference, the poverty threshold for a family of four was $25,701 in the 2018 ACS and $31,500 in the 2023 ACS. The 2018 values represent five-year estimates covering the period from 2014 to 2018, while the 2023 values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

While poverty statistics may point to progress, they also raise questions about the underlying dynamics. In areas experiencing rapid income growth and rising housing costs, declining poverty rates could partly reflect patterns of displacement, as lower-income households are priced out and replaced by more affluent residents. This possibility underscores the need to interpret poverty trends alongside changes in housing affordability and demographic shifts. It is also worth noting that ACS data may not fully capture people experiencing homelessness, who are often missed in household-based surveys. This selection bias could lead to an underestimation of the true scale of poverty. As such, continued efforts to expand affordable housing options and social support remain critical to addressing the needs of economically vulnerable residents, even as headline poverty rates decline.

Labor Market Conditions

Figure 15 captures long-term labor market participation trends, displaying monthly labor force estimates for Colorado Springs and El Paso County from January 2020 to January 2025. The labor force, as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, includes individuals aged 16 and over who are either employed or actively seeking work, excluding members of the Armed Forces and those in institutionalized settings such as prisons or long-term care facilities. Both Colorado Springs and El Paso County experienced a sharp drop in labor force size during the early months of the COVID-19 crisis, as many individuals exited the workforce due to job losses, health concerns, or caregiving responsibilities. Since then, labor force participation has gradually recovered. As of January 2025, Colorado Springs' labor force totaled *just over 266,700 people*, accounting for *approximately 69% of the countywide labor force*. This steady growth likely reflects broader population gains and continued economic recovery. However, structural factors, such as an aging population, may slow labor force expansion in the long term, particularly if older adults retire faster than younger workers enter the labor market.

Figure 15. Labor Force Size by Region, January 2020-January 2025

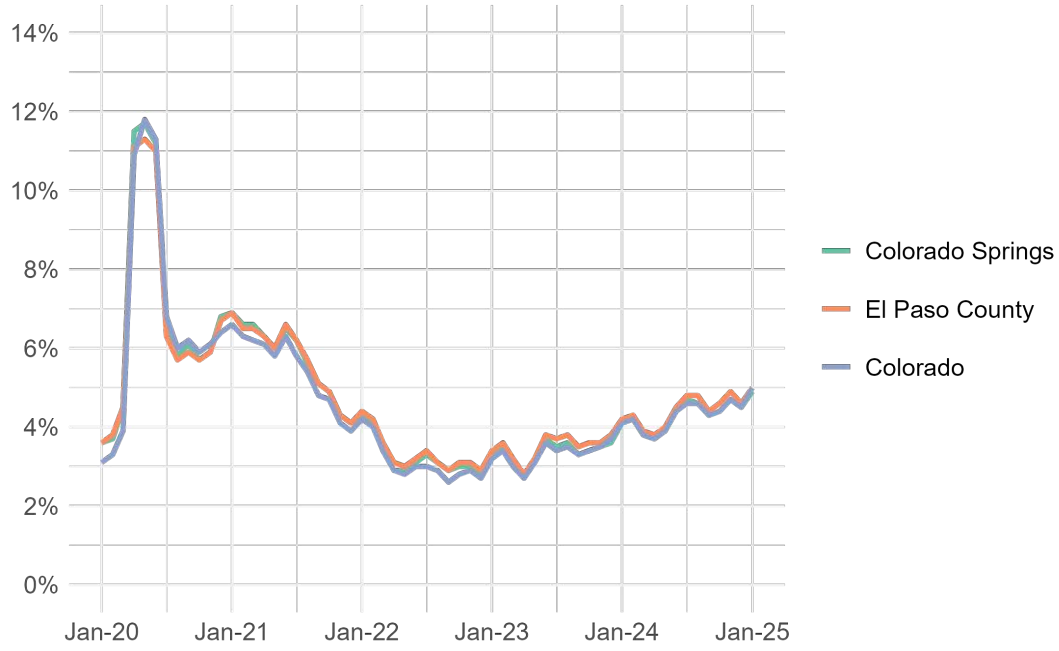


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: The labor force includes all civilian, non-institutionalized individuals aged 16 and over who are either employed or actively seeking employment. It excludes members of the armed forces and people in institutional settings such as prisons, nursing homes, or long-term care facilities. Labor force levels shown are not seasonally adjusted.

Figure 16 tracks monthly unemployment rates from January 2020 through January 2025, capturing major shifts in labor market conditions across Colorado Springs, El Paso County, and the state. All three geographies saw unemployment reach *nearly 12%* during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, reflecting the widespread business closures and economic disruption that followed the initial outbreak. However, joblessness declined rapidly in the months that followed, and by 2022 and 2023, unemployment had stabilized *between 2% and 4% (similar to other regions within Colorado)*, signaling a strong labor market rebound and, in some cases, labor shortages. In 2024, however, unemployment began trending upward again, generally *exceeding 4%* across the board. As of January 2025, the rate stood at *4.9%* in Colorado Springs and *5.0%* in both El Paso County and Colorado overall.

These recent increases may point to softening in the labor market, possibly linked to slowing economic growth, high interest rates, or shifts in employer demand. While unemployment remains low by historical standards, the upward trend is worth monitoring, particularly given the impact it may have on household financial stability and housing demand. Even slight increases in joblessness can strain lower-income households and expose vulnerabilities in sectors with high turnover or seasonal employment. Continued attention to workforce development and access to stable employment will be critical to maintaining economic resilience as broader market conditions evolve.

Figure 16. Unemployment Rate by Region, January 2020-January 2025



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Unemployment rates shown pertain to the civilian non-institutional population aged 16 and over and are not seasonally adjusted.

Table 3 presents 2023 employment and earnings data for El Paso County from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), offering insight into the structure of the regional economy (see Table 3). Health Care and Social Assistance is the county's largest sector, employing *over 51,100 workers* at an *average annual earnings level of $64,723*. This reflects the essential role the health sector plays in both public service delivery and employment generation. Several other sectors—including Accommodation and Food Services, Professional, Scientific, and Technical services, Retail Trade, and Educational Services—also represent major sources of employment, supporting a combined *129,225 jobs*. These sectors encompass a wide range of occupations, from service and retail positions to high-skilled professional roles, illustrating the diverse nature of El Paso County's workforce. However, many jobs in El Paso County's major sectors fall on the lower end of the wage spectrum, meaning that workers typically require two incomes to meet basic housing costs.

While many of the county's largest employment sectors offer modest wages, several industries stand out for their high earnings potential. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services paid an *average of $117,659 annually*, while workers in the Management of Companies and Enterprises sector received the highest annual earnings, *on average, at $194,546*. The utilities sector also offers strong compensation, with *average earnings of $107,614*. These figures highlight the income disparities that exist across industries and point to the advantages held by workers in specialized or capital-intensive sectors. The presence of high-wage employment opportunities is critical for driving regional income growth, but it also raises important questions about accessibility, particularly for residents without the education or credentials needed to enter these fields. As El Paso County continues to grow, aligning workforce development efforts with industry needs and ensuring adequate housing options for lower-wage workers will be key to supporting a balanced and inclusive economy.

Table 3. Employment and Wage Levels by Sector in El Paso County, 2023

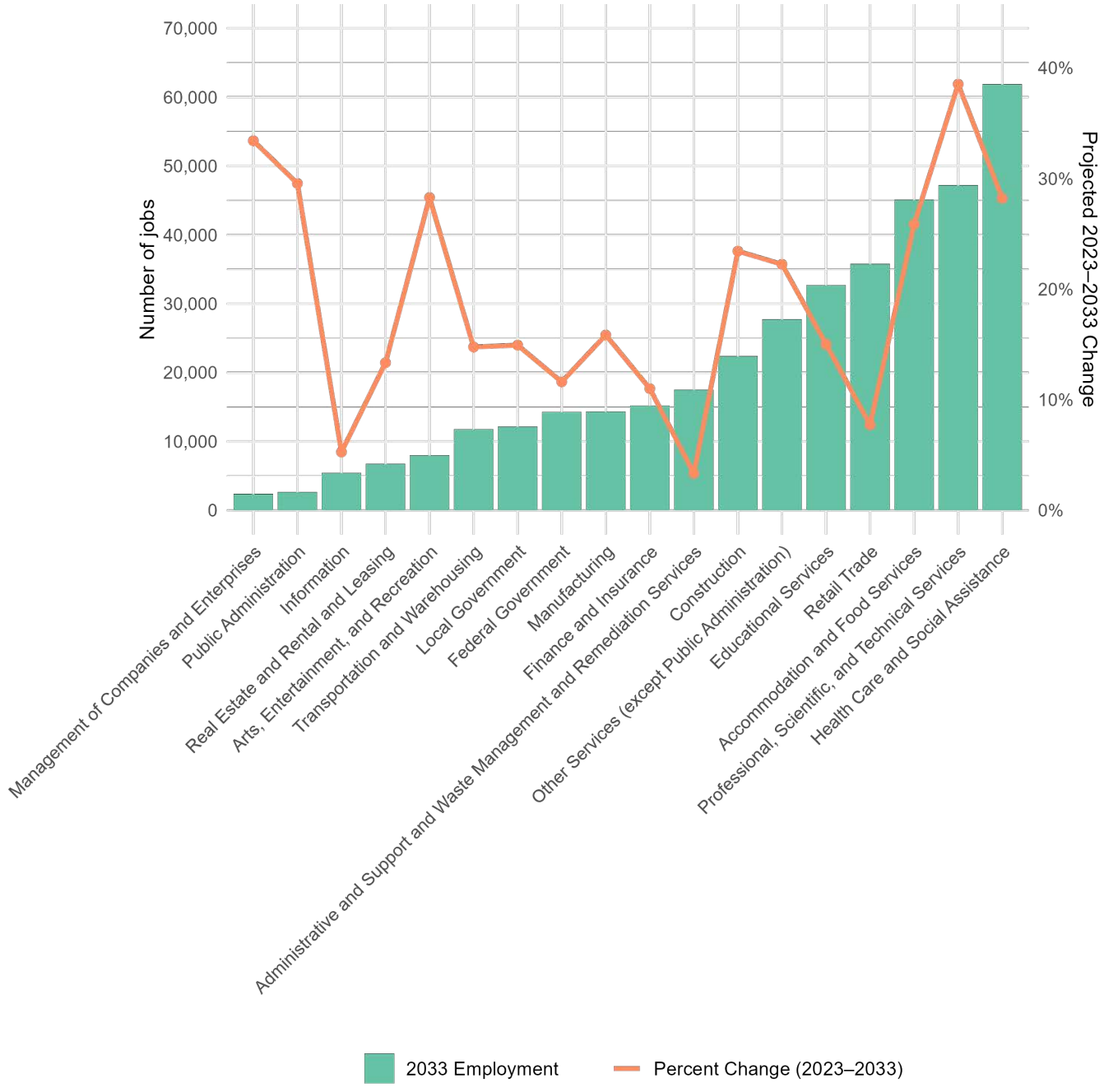
Sector	Total Employment		Avg. Annual Earnings
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,728	0.6%	$194,546
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	61	0.0%	$161,982
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	33,734	11.0%	$117,659
Utilities	2,529	0.8%	$107,614
Information	5,504	1.8%	$88,695
Finance and Insurance	13,582	4.4%	$88,493
Public Administration	15,149	4.9%	$86,686
Wholesale Trade	6,660	2.2%	$86,111
Manufacturing	12,129	3.9%	$76,136
Construction	17,868	5.8%	$69,869
Health Care and Social Assistance	51,132	16.6%	$64,723
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	5,406	1.8%	$58,394
Unclassified	131	0.0%	$57,450
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	11,889	3.9%	$56,058
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	16,669	5.4%	$52,614
Educational Services	28,478	9.3%	$47,379
Transportation and Warehousing	11,172	3.6%	$46,248
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	426	0.1%	$41,555
Retail Trade	32,497	10.6%	$40,838
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	6,197	2.0%	$28,989
Accommodation and Food Services	34,516	11.2%	$28,570

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Annual average earnings are in current (2023) dollars. Employment figures reflect workplace location, not the worker's place of residence. Data include both full- and part-time jobs reported by employers covered under Unemployment Insurance. Self-employed and informal workers are excluded, as are active-duty military personnel. QCEW wage data include regular hourly or salaried pay, overtime, bonuses, commissions, tips, severance, and back wages. Employer-paid benefits such as health insurance, retirement plan contributions, unemployment insurance, workers' compensation premiums, and other non-cash fringe benefits are excluded. Weekly average wage figures were adjusted to reflect annual totals.

Whereas the previous table focused exclusively on current employment dynamics in El Paso County, Figure 17 displays projected 2033 employment by industry for the Colorado Springs Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which encompasses El Paso and Teller counties. Additionally, the figure illustrates the relative change in employment by industry from 2023 to 2033. Health Care and Social Assistance is projected to remain the region's largest employment sector, supporting *over 61,800 jobs* by 2033—a *28% increase* from 2023. This growth reflects both demographic shifts, including an aging population, and rising demand for medical and supportive care services.

The most rapidly growing sector, however, is expected to be Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, with employment anticipated to increase by *nearly 40%*. The sector's projected *47,212 jobs* will position it among the region's top employment drivers. This surge likely stems from the region's increasing attractiveness to defense contractors, tech firms, and remote-ready knowledge sector employers. Accommodation and Food Services is also set to expand rapidly, reaching *over 45,100 jobs*, in part due to ongoing population growth and tourism-related activity. In contrast, more modest growth is expected in sectors such as Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services, Retail Trade, and Information. These slower-growing industries may face long-term automation risks, shifting consumer habits, or structural consolidation. The trends are indicative of a continued shift toward high-skill, service-oriented employment in the Colorado Springs region, with implications for workforce training, infrastructure, and housing demand across the MSA.

Figure 17. Projected Employment by Sector in the Colorado Springs Metropolitan Statistical Area, 2033

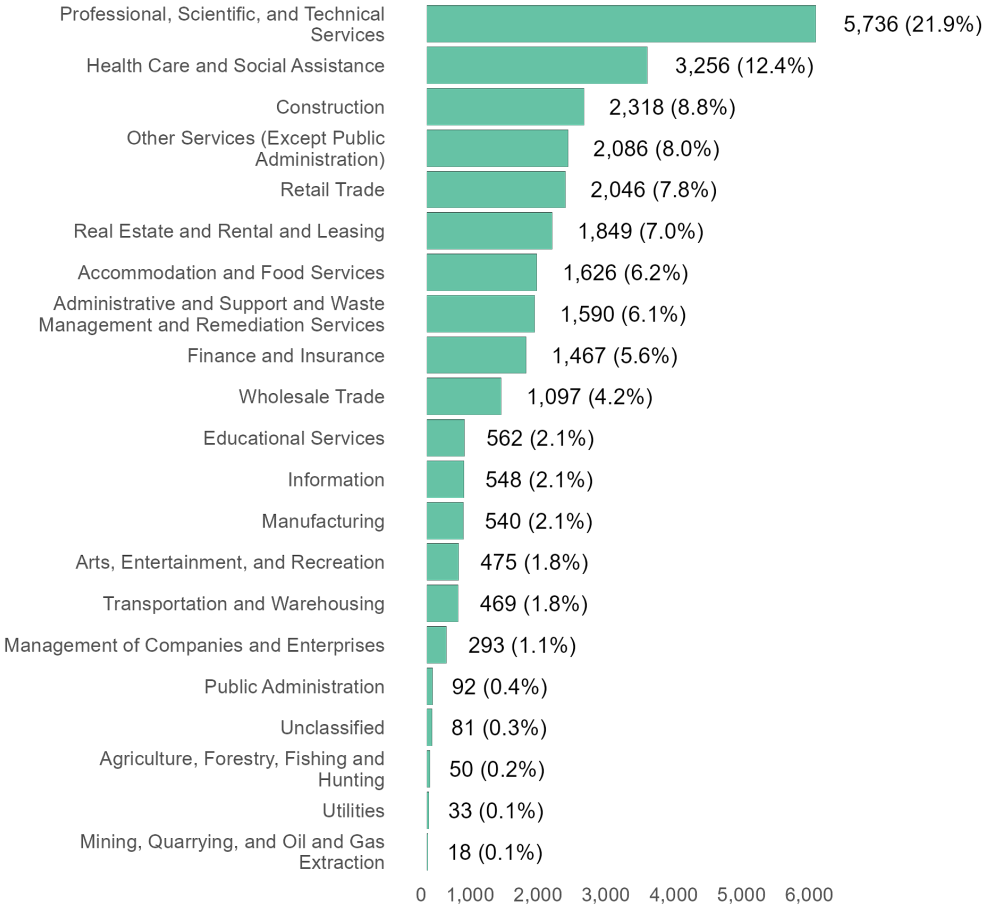


Source: Colorado Department of Labor and Employment; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: The Colorado Springs Metropolitan Statistical Area encompasses both El Paso and Teller Counties. More geographically granular data are unavailable.

Economic Composition and Market Dynamics

Data from the 2023 annual QCEW, shown in Figure 18, reveal the distribution of business establishments across sectors in El Paso County, offering additional perspective on the structure and diversity of the local economy. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services has the highest number of establishments, *totaling 5,736*, reinforcing the sector's role as a significant source of high-wage employment. Health Care and Social Assistance followed with *3,256 establishments*, reinforcing its status as a core employment sector in the region. Construction (*2,318*), Retail Trade (*2,046*), and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (*1,849*) also account for substantial shares of local businesses. Overall, this distribution further highlights the dual nature of El Paso County's economy: it is both opportunity-rich for high-skilled professionals and heavily reliant on service-oriented industries that employ larger numbers of lower- to middle-income workers.

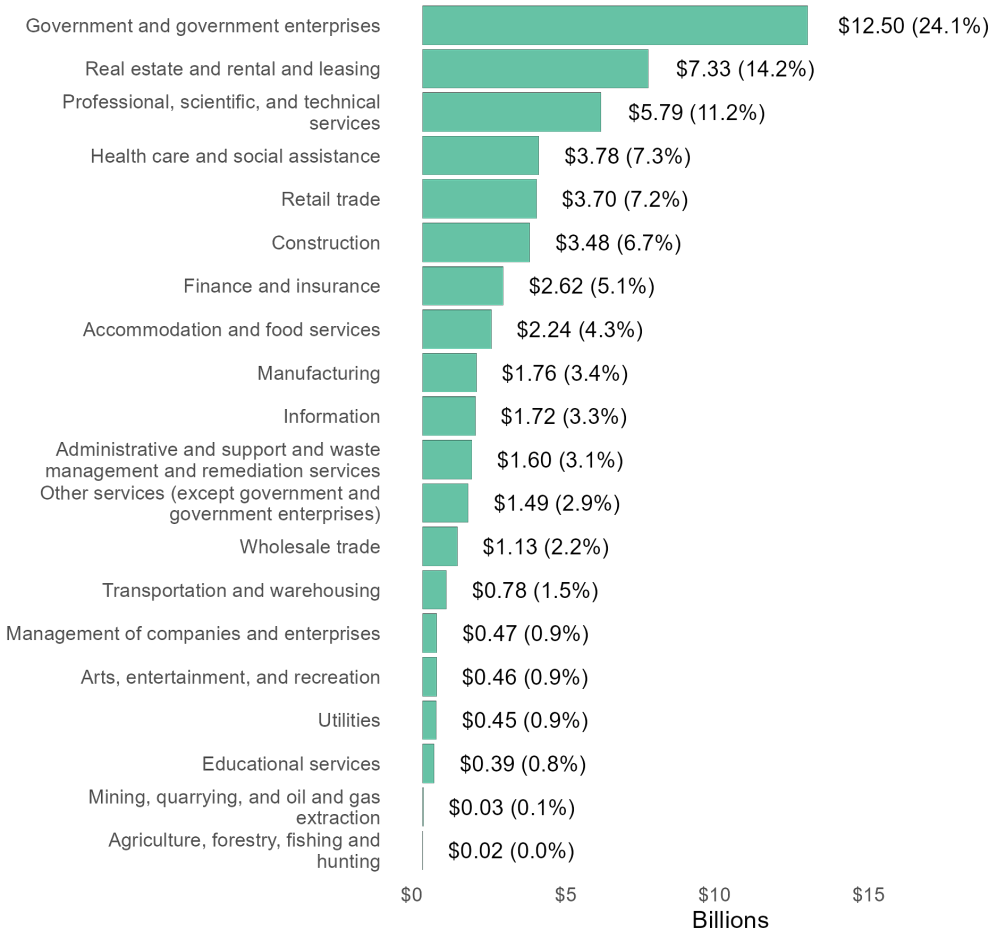
Figure 18. Number of Private-Sector Establishments in El Paso County, 2023



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Data pertain to businesses with at least one employee covered by unemployment insurance laws. Sole proprietors and single-member LLCs without employees are excluded, as are independent contractors, gig workers, and businesses that are registered with the Secretary of State but are not actively operating or employing staff.

Figure 19 provides a snapshot of the estimated contribution of major sectors to El Paso County's GRP, the subnational analogue to gross domestic product (GDP). According to data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the county's total GRP reached *approximately $52 billion* in 2023. Government and Government Enterprises accounted for the largest share at *$12.5 billion*, reflecting the county's status as home to significant military and public-sector employment. Real Estate and Rental and Leasing was the second-largest contributor at *$7.33 billion*, while Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services followed closely at *$5.79 billion*, highlighting the growing role of high-skill, knowledge-based industries in driving economic output. Health Care and Social Assistance and Retail Trade also played major roles, contributing *$3.8 billion* and *$3.7 billion*, respectively. These figures illustrate that while the county's economy is diversified, much of its value creation is concentrated in a handful of sectors. Although some of these sectors, like real estate and government, are less sensitive to short-term market fluctuations, others may be more vulnerable to changes in demand or labor supply, including construction and manufacturing, which are cyclical in nature and closely tied to broader economic conditions.

Figure 19. Sector Contributions to El Paso County Gross Regional Product, 2023



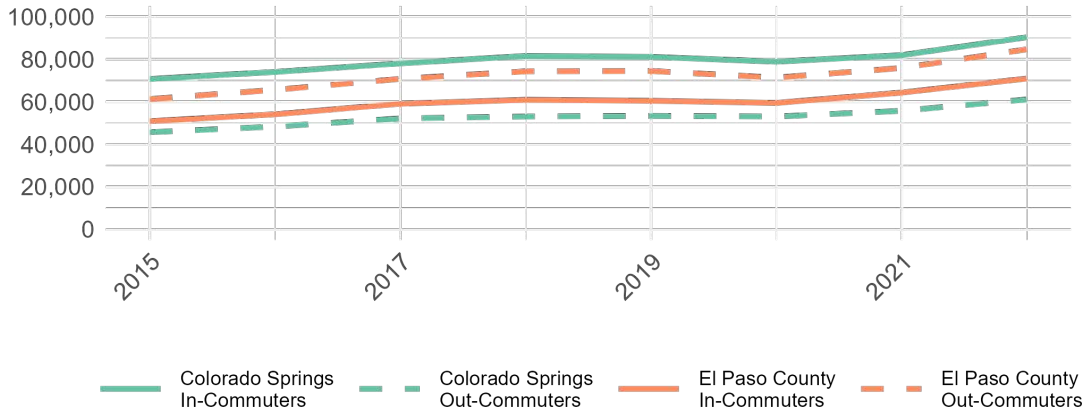
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis Regional Economic Accounts; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Gross Regional Product (GRP) is the total market value of all final goods and services produced within the region and serves as a measure of local economic output. Values are in current (2023) dollars.

Commuting Patterns

Figure 20 provides data on commuting inflows and outflows for both Colorado Springs and El Paso County from 2015 to 2022, revealing important shifts in regional commuting patterns. Over this period, Colorado Springs experienced substantial growth in both in-commuters—that is, workers residing elsewhere but employed within city limits—and out-commuters, who live in the city but work outside it. The number of in-commuters rose sharply, *from 70,749 in 2015 to 90,382 in 2022*, while out-commuters increased *from 45,673 to 61,118*. Although both flows expanded significantly, Colorado Springs' large in-commuter population underscores its increasing importance as a regional employment hub. Growing housing affordability challenges can also prompt workers to reside in nearby communities where home prices and rents are lower. As cost pressures mount within Colorado Springs, some households may be choosing longer commutes in exchange for more attainable housing options elsewhere along the Front Range.

Over the same period, El Paso County's in-commuter and out-commuter populations each grew by *about 40%*. In 2022, *approximately 71,000 El Paso County workers* resided beyond county limits, whereas *about 84,700 county residents* traveled to nearby counties for work. Remote or hybrid work patterns and job availability in surrounding metropolitan areas like Denver may be encouraging El Paso County residents to search for work opportunities elsewhere. These commuting dynamics have significant implications for transportation infrastructure, regional housing strategies, and the economic interconnectedness of Colorado Springs with surrounding areas.

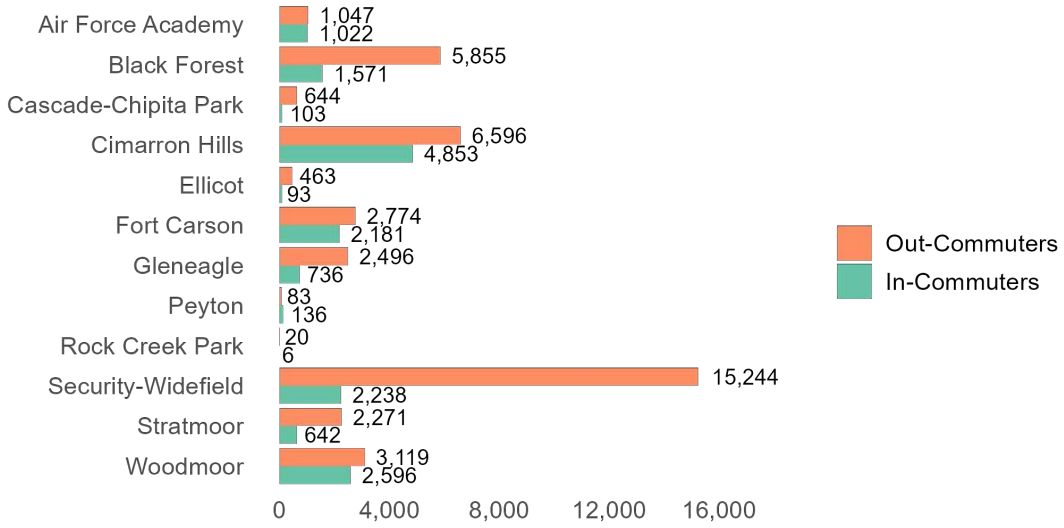
Figure 20. Commuting Inflow and Outflow Trends for Colorado Springs and El Paso County, 2015 to 2022



Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: *In-commuters* are workers who live outside the area but commute in for work. *Out-commuters* are residents who live in the area but commute elsewhere for employment. These patterns help illustrate the local balance between housing and jobs.

Commuting patterns in census-designated places (CDPs) within unincorporated El Paso County reveal a markedly different dynamic than that observed in Colorado Springs (see Figure 21). In 2022, these 12 communities, which encompass more than half of unincorporated El Paso County's population, collectively had *over twice as many* out-commuters as in-commuters, consistent with their role as predominantly residential areas rather than employment centers. The imbalance was particularly pronounced in Security-Widefield and Black Forest, two of the largest unincorporated CDPs. Black Forest had *nearly 6,000 out-commuters*, while only *about 1,570 workers* traveled into the area for work. Similarly, in Security-Widefield, *more than 15,000 residents* commuted out for work, vastly outnumbering the *2,238 inbound workers*. These geographic patterns suggest that unincorporated El Paso County households are highly dependent on employment opportunities in Colorado Springs and surrounding urban centers.

Figure 21. Commuting Inflow and Outflow for Census-Designated Places in Unincorporated El Paso County, 2022

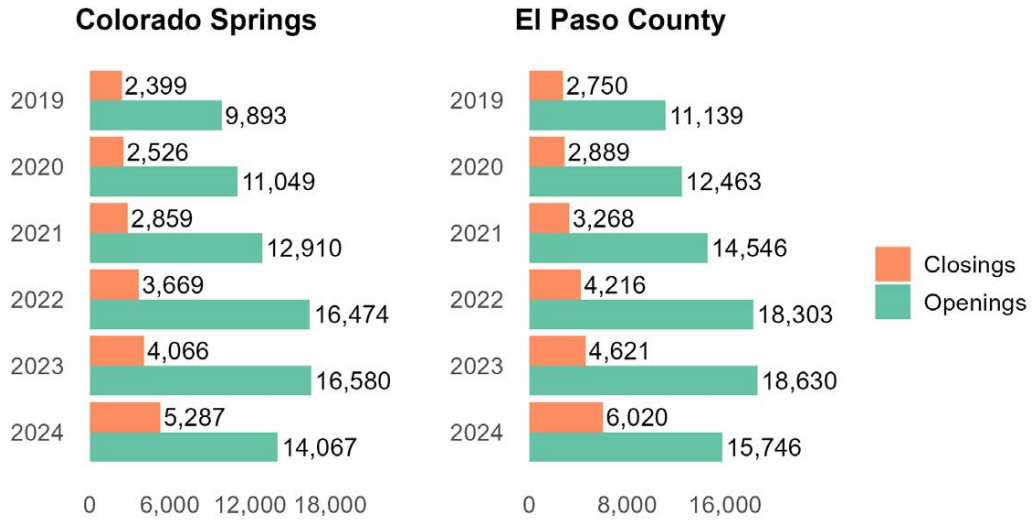


Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: *In-commuters* are workers who live outside the area but commute in for work. *Out-commuters* are residents who live in the area but commute elsewhere for employment. These patterns help illustrate the local balance between housing and jobs.

Commercial Vitality

Figure 22 tracks business openings and closures over time. In 2024, Colorado Springs saw 14,067 business formations and 5,287 closures, yielding an open-to-close ratio of approximately 2.7 to 1. This exceeded the statewide ratio of 2.1 business openings per closure. Although new business formation remains strong throughout the region, the number of closures has generally increased over time. In previous years, four or more businesses typically opened for every one that closed. The city's 2024 closure rate was approximately 3.2%. Outside Colorado Springs, 733 businesses formed while 1,669 closed, indicating that maintaining business operations may be more challenging outside the urban core. Rising closure rates and higher turnover are indicators of commercial instability, which the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) recognizes as a contributing factor to displacement risk. These patterns may indicate mounting pressures on both commercial and residential markets, with potential consequences for housing affordability and neighborhood continuity.

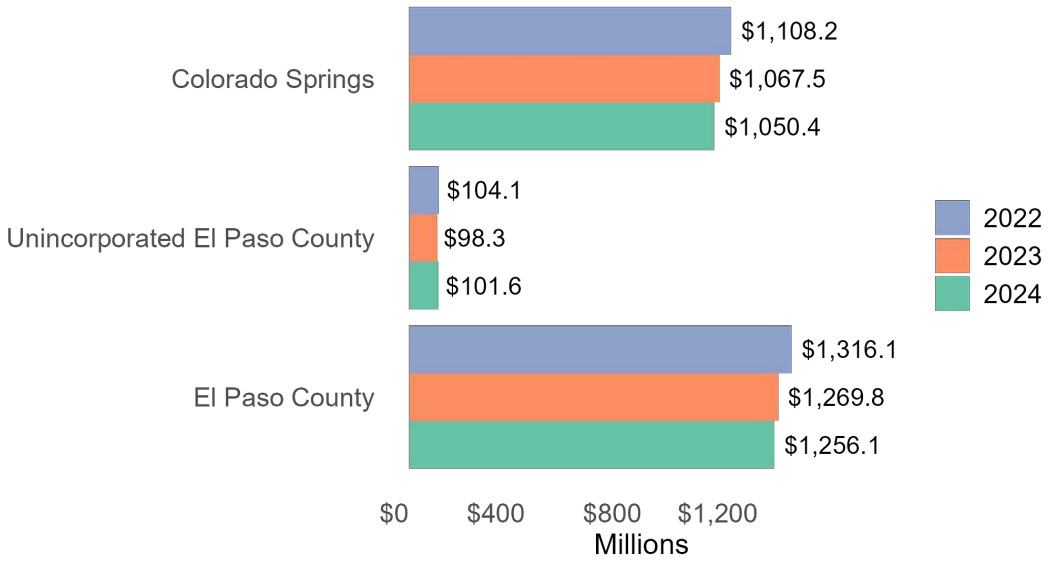
Figure 22. Business Closures and Openings by Region, 2019-2024



Source: Colorado Secretary of State *Business Entities in Colorado*; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Business opening and closure counts are based on filings with the Colorado Secretary of State and include all entity types, regardless of size, industry, or operational status. Many entities are registered but never become active or employ workers, making these counts appear higher than establishment counts in labor market datasets like QCEW, which include only businesses with at least one employee. The high turnover also reflects administrative clean-up, short-lived or project-based entities, routine restructuring, and Colorado's large volume of filings driven by low formation barriers and its popularity for registered agents.

Figure 23 presents trends in combined local and state sales tax revenue for Colorado Springs, Unincorporated El Paso County, and the county as a whole from 2022 to 2024, with all figures adjusted for inflation to 2024 dollars. Although DOLA identifies rising sales and use tax revenue as a potential indicator of displacement risk, it is important to note that sales tax growth alone does not cause displacement. Rather, rising sales tax revenues result from increased consumer spending, higher prices, or broader economic expansion—factors that can coincide with rising housing costs and cost-of-living pressures that disproportionately affect low- and moderate-income households. In Colorado Springs, inflation-adjusted sales tax revenue has declined slightly in recent years but remains substantial, totaling *approximately $1.05 billion in 2024*. In Unincorporated El Paso County, revenue decreased *from $104 million in 2022 to $98.3 million in 2023*, before rebounding modestly to *$101.6 million in 2024*. Countywide, total sales tax revenue followed a similar trajectory, falling from $1.32 billion in 2022 to $1.27 billion in 2023 and $1.26 billion in 2024. These patterns suggest a relatively stable retail base despite broader economic fluctuations, but they also underscore the need to monitor cost pressures that can contribute to displacement, particularly in areas experiencing rapid growth or shifting commercial activity.

Figure 23. Real Sales Tax Revenue Generated in Colorado Springs and Unincorporated El Paso County, 2022-2024



Source: Colorado Department of Revenue; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Values are adjusted for inflation to constant 2024 dollars.

Housing Inventory

Housing Inventory Overview

This chapter examines how the region's housing stock has changed and expanded over time, focusing on growth patterns, housing types, and spatial disparities in residential development.

- From 2010 to 2023, housing across El Paso County rose from 253,716 to 309,992 units (+ 22.2%). Colorado Springs added over 36,000 homes, reaching 216,476 total units (+ 20%), while unincorporated El Paso County grew even faster, increasing its housing stock by 28% from 57,214 to 73,384 units.
- Single family housing dominates both Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County. In Colorado Springs, 61% of units are detached single-family, 14% are attached or small multifamily (e.g., townhomes, duplexes), and 18% are large multi-family buildings (10+ units). Unincorporated El Paso County is even more single-family oriented, with 82% of units detached and very limited multifamily options.
- From 2022–2024, Colorado Springs issued 10,768 permits, in contrast to a total of 4,468 in unincorporated El Paso County during this period. About 32% were single-family detached, compared to 72% in unincorporated El Paso County.
- Colorado Springs has a median housing age of 1986 (similar to El Paso County and the state of Colorado), reflecting an aging housing stock that necessitates reinvestment. Homes are newer in unincorporated El Paso County, with a median year of 1995.
- From 2016 to 2019, vacancy rates stayed below 5% in Colorado Springs and El Paso County, indicating tight housing markets, but by 2023 they rose to 7–8% due partly to new multifamily construction and short-term rentals.

Key Takeaways

- A legacy of low-density, single-family development has limited housing diversity and affordability.
- Expanding the mix of housing types, especially in lower-density areas, could improve affordability, availability, and options for varied household needs.
- Balancing new construction with reinvestment in older homes is key to sustaining housing quality and affordability and mitigating displacement.

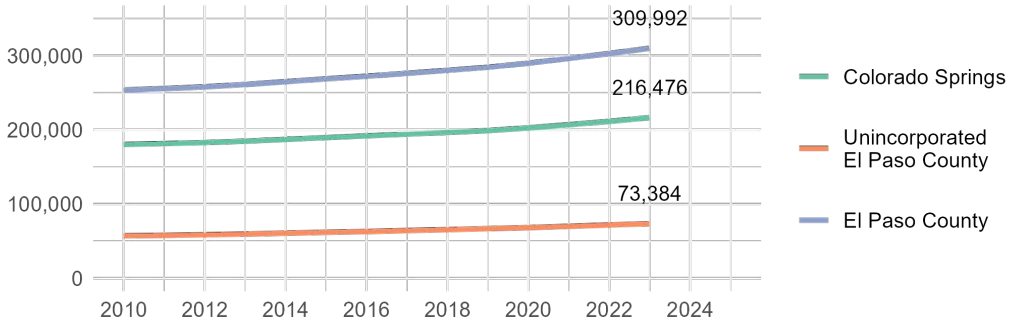
Introduction

Between 2010 and 2023, both Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County added *tens of thousands of new housing units*, but the overall rate of development slowed compared to previous periods. Further, the types and distribution of housing vary significantly by geography. Colorado Springs offers a more diverse housing mix, including multifamily and "missing middle" options, while unincorporated areas remain dominated by single-family detached homes. Additional analysis explores housing age, permitting trends, and the geographic footprint of subsidized housing. Collectively, the findings paint a comprehensive picture of where and how the region is growing from a development standpoint.

Development Patterns and Diversity

Figure 24 illustrates growth in the total number of housing units between 2010 and 2023 across Colorado Springs, unincorporated El Paso County, and the county overall. Over this period, Colorado Springs added *more than 36,000 homes* as its inventory expanded to *216,476 total dwelling units*. Unincorporated El Paso County also experienced substantial growth, with its inventory rising *from 57,214 units in 2010 to 73,384 in 2023*. This *28 percent increase* outpaced the city's rate of housing growth, an indication of both the rising appeal of suburban and exurban living and the potential development constraints within city limits. Countywide, the total number of housing units increased *from 253,716 to 309,992*, with both incorporated and unincorporated areas contributing meaningfully to this expansion. These trends highlight sustained demand for new housing across the region and point to shifting development pressures that extend beyond the urban core.

Figure 24. Housing Unit Growth in Colorado Springs, Unincorporated El Paso County, and El Paso County, 2010-2023



Source: State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Counts include occupied and vacant units.

Table 4 presents the composition of housing unit types across Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County, revealing distinct differences in development patterns between the two areas. In Colorado Springs, *61% of units were single-family detached homes, while an additional 14% fell into the category often referred to as the "missing middle,"* including single-family attached units such as townhomes and rowhomes, as well as small multifamily buildings with two to four units (i.e., duplexes, triplexes, and quadruplexes). These housing types have historically been underrepresented in local zoning and housing production, despite their role in supporting affordability and neighborhood-scale density. State construction defects laws have been widely acknowledged as a deterrent to building for-sale multifamily housing, limiting supply and driving up costs in that segment of the market. Larger multifamily structures are also prevalent in the city: *18% of units were in buildings with 10 or more units.* Mobile homes and other unit types accounted for the remaining two percent of the stock. Among renters, 25% are occupied single-family detached homes, while less than half lived in large multifamily buildings with 10 or more units, suggesting the rental housing stock is more dispersed and less dense than in other large cities. In Denver, for example, 64% of renter households reside in such buildings. By contrast, 94% of homeowners lived in some form of single-family housing, highlighting the scarcity of condominiums or other attached for-sale housing types. These patterns are the product of longstanding development preferences that have prioritized low-density, single-family housing, limiting options for households seeking smaller, more affordable units or diverse living arrangements.

Table 4. Housing Stock Composition in Colorado Springs, 2023

Housing Unit Type	All Units		Renter-occupied Units		Owner-occupied Units	
Single family, detached	131,658	61%	19,523	25%	103,780	85%
Single family, attached	17,913	8%	5,536	7%	10,861	9%
Multifamily, 2-4 units	12,310	6%	9,330	12%	1,811	1%
Multifamily, 5-9 units	11,255	5%	8,961	12%	1,267	1%
Multifamily, 10 or more units	38,372	18%	32,719	42%	1,259	1%
Mobile home or other	4,969	2%	1,084	1%	3,372	3%
Total	216,476	100%	77,154	100%	122,350	100%

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely due to rounding. Estimates of housing units by type were derived from the 2023 five-year ACS and then proportionally scaled to match total housing unit figures published by the Colorado State Demography Office. "All Units" includes vacant units, which is why the total exceeds the combined count of "renter-occupied" and "owner-occupied" units.

Unincorporated El Paso County's housing stock is significantly less diverse, with single-family detached housing making up *82% of units* (see Table 5). Although its stock of single-family attached units is proportionally similar in size to that of Colorado Springs, the overall housing mix features far fewer multifamily units. The limited presence of denser housing types is the result of the area's suburban and rural development patterns, which often favor large-lot, single-family construction over compact, multifamily design. Mobile homes are more common in unincorporated areas, suggesting a greater reliance on naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) to meet affordability needs. Among renter-occupied units, *72%* were either single-family attached or detached homes—substantially higher than in Colorado Springs—while just *10%* were part of duplexes, triplexes, or quadplexes. As expected, the area's owner-occupied housing stock is even more skewed toward lower-density housing types, with virtually no representation from condominiums or other multifamily forms. The homogeneity of unincorporated El Paso County's housing stock limits the availability of diverse, attainable options and may constrain efforts to address housing needs across different income levels and household types.

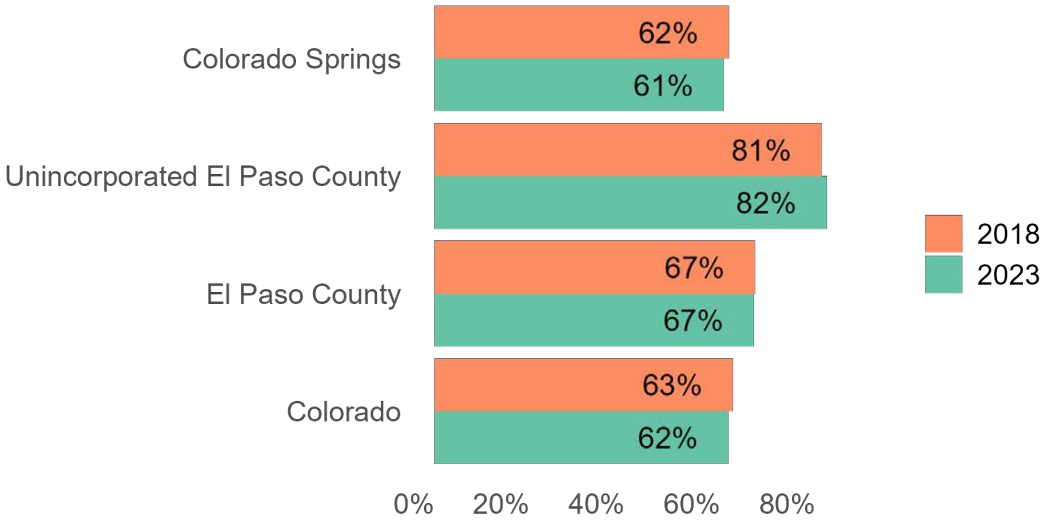
Table 5. Housing Stock Composition in Unincorporated El Paso County, 2023

Housing Unit Type	All Units		Renter-occupied Units		Owner-occupied Units	
Single family, detached	60,435	82%	6,284	45%	50,473	93%
Single family, attached	5,367	7%	3,681	27%	1,138	2%
Multifamily, 2-4 units	1,668	2%	1,348	10%	110	0%
Multifamily, 5-9 units	452	1%	418	3%	21	0%
Multifamily, 10 or more units	1,659	2%	1,268	9%	54	0%
Mobile home or other	3,803	5%	867	6%	2,398	4%
Total	73,384	100%	13,867	100%	54,195	100%

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely due to rounding. Estimates of housing units by type were derived from the 2023 five-year ACS and then proportionally scaled to match total housing unit figures published by the Colorado State Demography Office. "All Units" includes vacant units, which is why the total exceeds the combined count of "renter-occupied" and "owner-occupied" units.

Figure 25 tracks the share of single-family detached homes within the total housing stock from 2018 to 2023, showing that, despite ongoing development activity, the overall composition of the built environment did not change meaningfully. In 2023, single-family detached units made up *approximately 61%* of Colorado Springs' housing stock, a share nearly identical to that of the state overall. This similarity likely stems from the fact that many of Colorado's largest population centers, particularly along the Front Range, have market forces, development patterns, and housing mixes that closely resemble those of Colorado Springs. El Paso County overall, by contrast, has a higher share of detached single-family homes, driven primarily by the housing composition of unincorporated areas, where such units are overwhelmingly dominant. These geographic differences underscore how local land use patterns and development preferences continue to shape housing form, reinforcing the prevailing composition of the housing stock despite steady unit growth.

Figure 25. Single-Family Detached Homes as a Share of Overall Housing Stock by Region, 2018 and 2023



Source: Five-Year American Community Survey
Note: The 2018 values represent five-year estimates covering the period from 2014 to 2018, while the 2023 values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Figure 26 maps housing diversity at the census tract level across El Paso County using the Shannon index, a statistical measure that captures the mix of housing unit types within each tract. Darker shades indicate higher diversity areas, where a range of housing forms coexist, while lighter areas suggest a predominance of one housing type (usually single-family detached homes). A census tract is a small, relatively permanent statistical subdivision of a county, designed by the U.S. Census Bureau to represent neighborhoods or areas with roughly 1,200 to 8,000 residents (typically around 4,000). In Colorado Springs, *several tracts exhibit relatively high diversity, especially in older neighborhoods and near employment centers* where zoning enables a broader mix of residential uses. Outside city limits, however, housing diversity is considerably lower, consistent with more restrictive zoning frameworks and development patterns dominated by single-family homes. The map illustrates the impact of local land use policy on the composition of the built environment and identifies areas where opportunities exist to expand available housing options. Promoting a greater mix of housing types, particularly in less diverse, lower-density areas, could help improve affordability, accommodate a wider range of household types, and support more inclusive patterns of growth.

Figure 26. Housing Stock Diversity by Census Tract, 2023

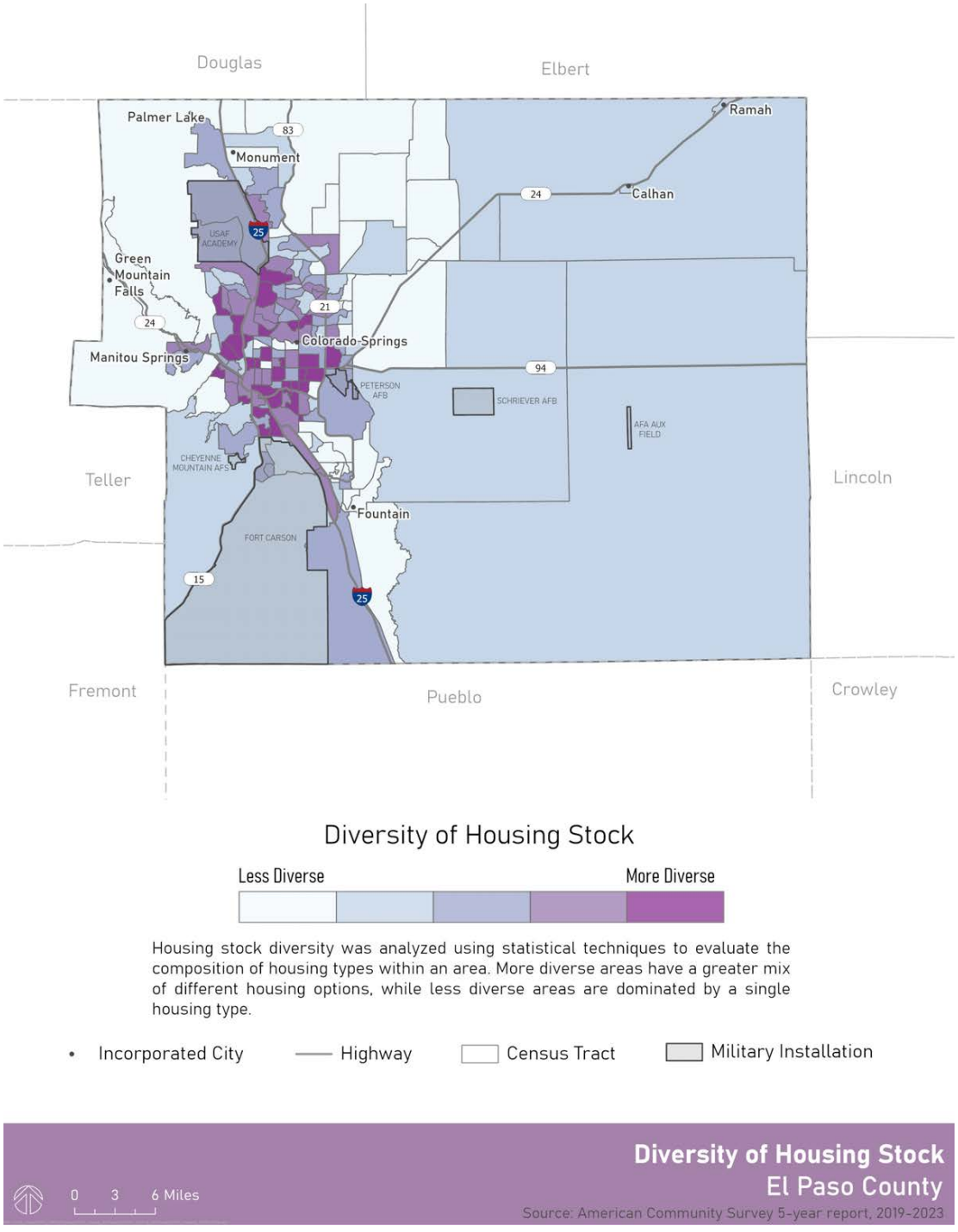
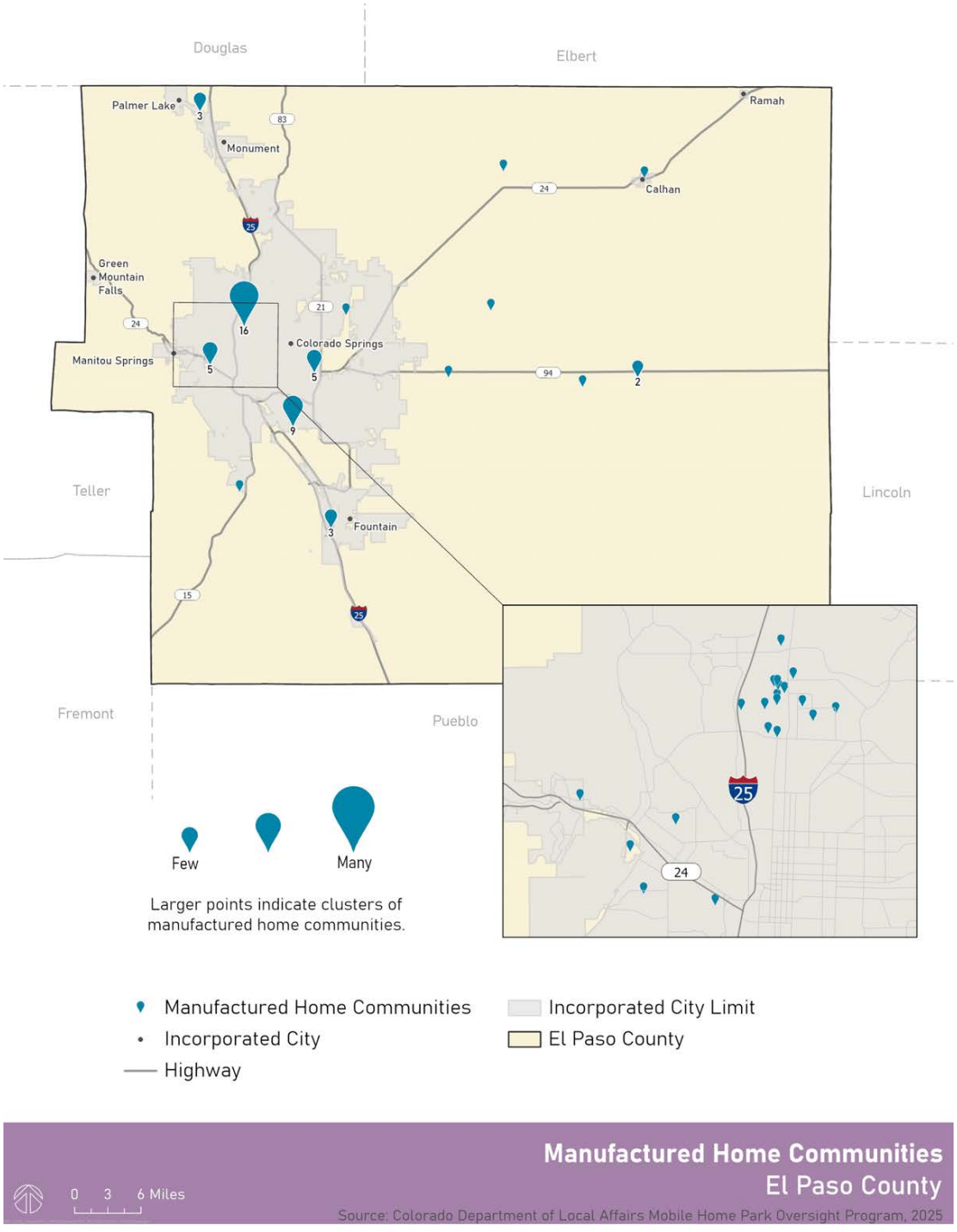


Figure 27 illustrates the distribution and clustering of manufactured home communities across El Paso County, providing insight into an important component of the region's naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) stock. Manufactured housing offers lower-income households an entry point into homeownership or a stable rental option, often without the benefit of formal subsidies. These communities are scattered throughout both incorporated and unincorporated areas, with the largest clusters concentrated along the I-25 corridor in western Colorado Springs. The inset map zooms in on this area, showing a dense concentration of manufactured home parks near key transportation routes and within proximity to employment and services. This spatial pattern also likely reflects historic land use policies and zoning allowances. Because manufactured home communities serve as a key source of NOAH, especially for households priced out of site-built homes, identifying where they are located can support targeted preservation efforts and inform broader affordability strategies.

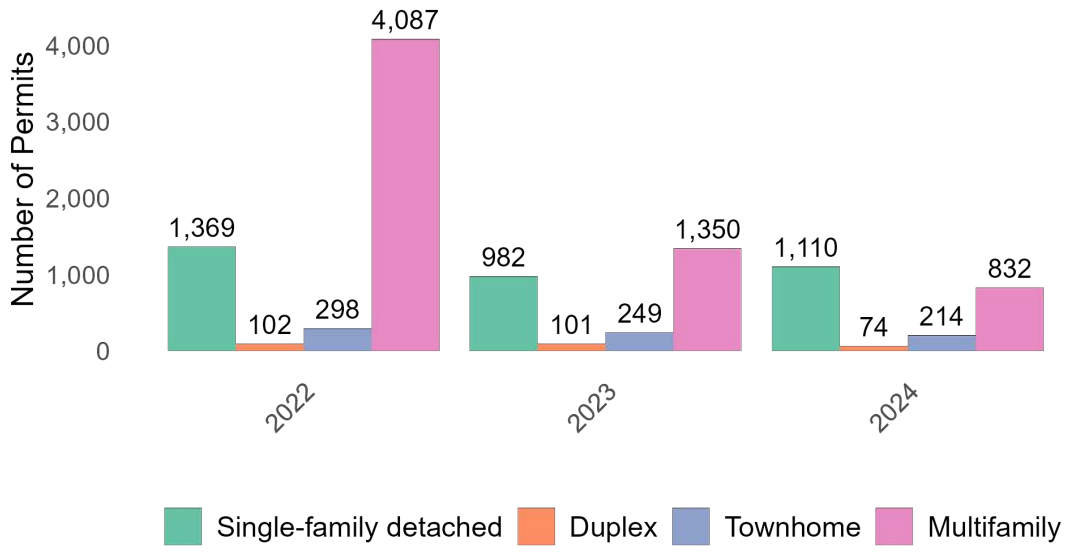
Figure 27. Mobile Home Community Distribution in El Paso County, 2025



From 2022 to 2024, nearly 11,000 new units were permitted in Colorado Springs, with a majority of the new development set to come in the form of attached or multifamily housing.

Figure 28 provides insight into the volume and composition of new housing units permitted in Colorado Springs from 2022 through 2024, offering a snapshot of the city's housing pipeline. Annually, the number of permitted units ranged from *2,230 to 5,856,* with activity peaking in 2022 before falling off in subsequent years. This decline is likely tied to rising interest rates, elevated construction costs, and economic uncertainty that have collectively dampened new development across much of the country. Over the three-year period, *single-family detached units accounted for approximately 32%* of all permitted units, far lower than their share of the overall housing stock. This suggests the city's housing stock is poised to diversify in the coming years, although the shift is not yet reflected in ACS data, which lag behind recent permitting activity. However, "missing middle" housing production continues to lag behind other housing types. *For every townhome permit issued, between four and five single-family detached permits were issued*. Multifamily units were permitted at an even higher rate relative to townhomes, and duplexes were issued the fewest permits of all.

Figure 28. Housing Units Permitted in Colorado Springs, 2022-2024

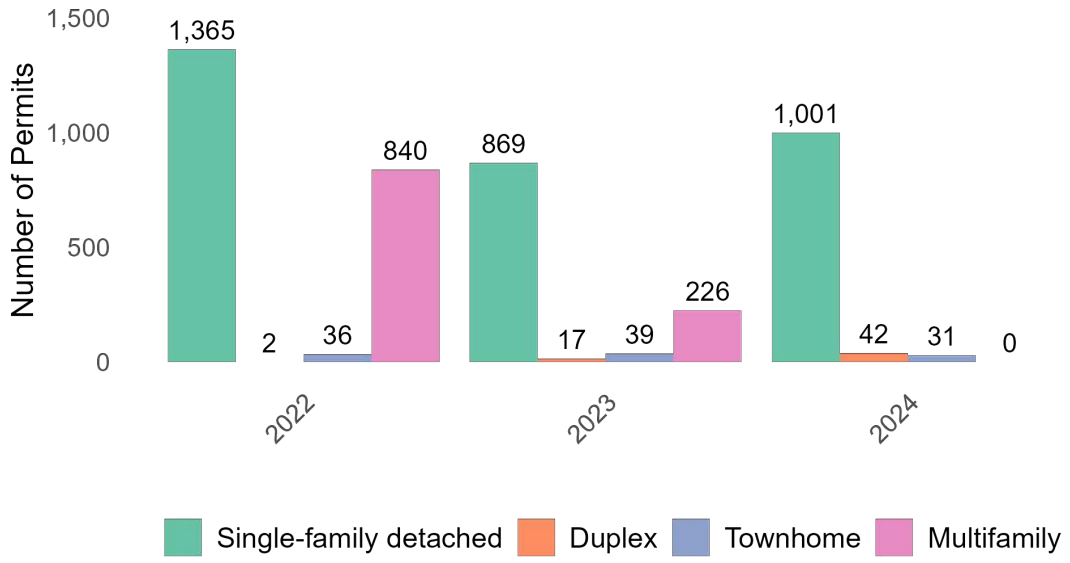


Source: Pikes Peak Regional Building Department; Matrix Design Group, Inc.

Over 4,400 units are currently in unincorporated El Paso County's housing pipeline.

Figure 29 displays trends in permitting activity in unincorporated El Paso County from 2022 to 2024, reinforcing the finding that the area's development pattern is more heavily oriented toward single-family construction than Colorado Springs. Over this period, a total of *4,468 units* were permitted, of which *72% were single-family detached homes.* As such, although the area's housing stock is also set to diversify, lower density housing types will remain predominant, making these communities more suitable for homeowners and families than other household types. The recent contraction in new construction, which mirrors broader economic headwinds, signals potential slowdowns in future housing delivery. In a market where demand continues to outpace supply, reduced permitting activity, especially of more attainable housing types, could adversely affect affordability and long-term growth.

Figure 29. Housing Units Permitted in Unincorporated El Paso County, 2022-2024



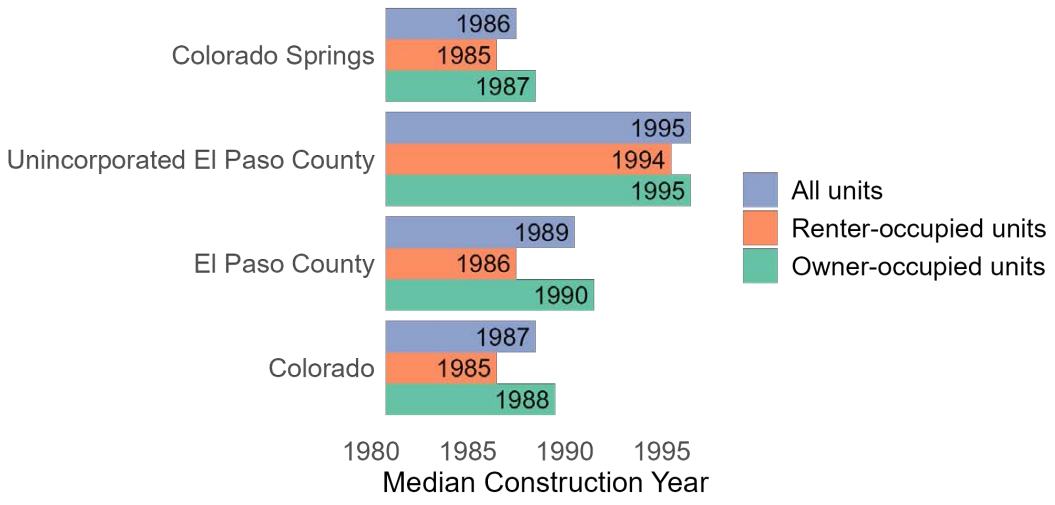
Source: Pikes Peak Regional Building Department; Matrix Design Group, Inc.

Housing Stock Age

The upkeep associated with older housing stock can strain household budgets and reduce long-term housing stability.

The median year of construction for occupied housing units provides a measure of housing stock age across geographies and tenure types (see Figure 30). In Colorado Springs, among all unit types, the median home was built in the *mid-1980s*, closely aligning with the statewide median and pointing to a maturing housing inventory that may require increasing levels of maintenance, renovation, or reinvestment. By contrast, the housing stock in unincorporated El Paso County is notably newer, with a *median construction year of 1995* across all units. This pattern holds across both renter- and owner-occupied housing and contributes to the slightly younger profile of the county's housing stock overall. The more recent vintage of unincorporated homes likely stems from ongoing residential expansion in suburban and exurban areas, where much of the region's greenfield development has occurred over the past two decades. These age differences have practical implications: newer homes tend to require less immediate capital investment for repairs or efficiency upgrades, while older homes may present affordability challenges related to deferred maintenance, aging infrastructure, or outdated design. As the region continues to grow, maintaining a balance between new construction and reinvestment in older housing will be critical to supporting long-term housing quality and affordability.

Figure 30. Median Housing Unit Age by Tenure and Region, 2023



Source: Five-Year American Community Survey
Note: Values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Table 6 presents the age distribution of the total housing stock, offering a broader view of long-term development trends across Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County. In Colorado Springs, nearly *one-quarter (23%) of all housing units were built before 1970*, a notable share given not only the aforementioned challenges associated with aging structures but also the correlation between older housing stock and displacement pressures, particularly in lower-income neighborhoods. Residential development in the city was relatively consistent from the 1970s through the 2000s, but construction activity slowed significantly in the 2010s, when just *12% of homes were built*.

Much of this slowdown can be attributed to the lasting impacts of the Great Recession, which severely curtailed new home construction and led to the loss of small and mid-sized builders, reduced housing investment, and tightened credit markets. The result was a prolonged period of underbuilding that extended well beyond the formal end of the recession. Since 2020, only *2% of the city's housing stock* has been added, an especially modest share given ongoing population growth. More recent factors have compounded this trend, including pandemic-related supply chain disruptions, labor shortages, inflation, and sharp increases in both interest rates and construction material costs, all of which have further constrained new housing production.

In unincorporated El Paso County, the housing stock is newer overall, with just *12% of homes predating 1970*. The 2000s marked the area's most active period of residential development, accounting for *23% of all units*. Although development also decelerated in unincorporated areas in the 2010s, the pace of building still exceeded that of Colorado Springs. As a result, unincorporated El Paso County's housing stock may be less vulnerable to disrepair, displacement, and affordability loss than that of the urban core.

Table 6. Age Distribution of Total Housing Stock in Colorado Springs and Unincorporated El Paso County, 2023

Year Built	Colorado Springs		Unincorporated El Paso County	
Pre-1970	50,336	23%	9,112	12%
1970s	36,271	17%	10,123	14%
1980s	37,787	17%	10,222	14%
1990s	30,730	14%	13,017	18%
2000s	32,162	15%	16,565	23%
2010s	25,146	12%	12,646	17%
2020s	4,044	2%	1,699	2%
Total	216,476	100%	73,384	100%

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey
Note: Totals may not sum precisely due to rounding. Figures include both occupied and vacant units. Estimates of housing units by age were derived from the 2023 five-year ACS and proportionally scaled to align with total housing unit counts published by the Colorado State Demography Office.

Subsidized Housing Stock

Just two percent of Colorado Springs' housing stock is subsidized, leaving many low-income households with few affordable options as housing costs climb.

Table 7 presents the distribution of subsidized housing across Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County, underscoring both the limited scale and uneven spatial distribution of income-restricted units. In Colorado Springs, *5,031 units, equivalent to just 2% of the city's total housing stock*, are designated as subsidized. Nearly *two-thirds of these* were developed under the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, a key federal initiative that incentivizes private developers to build or preserve affordable rental housing by offering tax credits. The remaining *1,700+ units in the city* are primarily supported through U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs, including Public Housing and an array of other project-based assistance programs, including Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance, Section 202 housing for the elderly, and Section 811 housing for persons with disabilities. These developments are typically managed by private or nonprofit owners under long-term subsidy contracts and serve some of the city's most economically vulnerable populations.

Table 7. Federally Subsidized Housing Inventory in Colorado Springs and El Paso County

Program	Colorado Springs		Unincorporated El Paso County		El Paso County	
LIHTC	3,319	66%	548	100%	3,959	68%
HUD Public Housing	704	14%	0	0%	744	13%
HUD Multifamily	908	18%	0	0%	942	16%
USDA Rural Development	0	0%	0	0%	51	1%
Two or more programs	100	2%	0	0%	100	2%
Total	5,031	100%	548	100%	5,796	100%

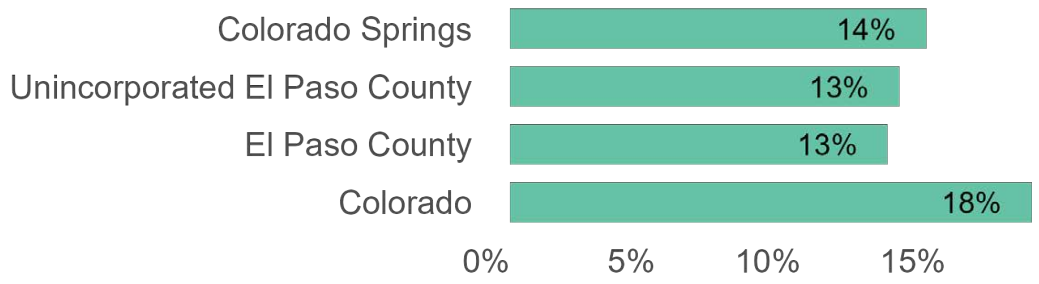
Source: PolicyMap HUD Multifamily Database; HUD LIHTC Database; USDA Rural Development Rural Housing Service

Note: Totals may not sum precisely due to rounding. Subsidized housing unit counts reflect project-based assistance only and exclude tenant-based programs such as Housing Choice Vouchers. HUD Multifamily refers to privately owned developments receiving federal project-based subsidies, such as Section 8 Project-Based Rental Assistance, Section 202, and Section 811. Public Housing refers to government-owned and managed properties. While some properties may receive funding from multiple programs (e.g., a LIHTC property with Section 8), efforts were made to avoid duplication.

By comparison, unincorporated El Paso County contains just *548 LIHTC units*, representing *less than one percent of the overall housing stock*, with no reported HUD Public Housing or HUD Multifamily properties. The dearth of project-based subsidies in unincorporated El Paso County reflects broader challenges in siting subsidized housing in lower-density, suburban, or exurban areas, where infrastructure costs may be higher, land use regulations more restrictive, and community resistance more pronounced. Altogether, El Paso County has *5,796 subsidized housing units out of nearly 310,000 total units*, equal to a countywide subsidized housing rate of *less than two percent*. Given the region's growing affordability pressures and rising housing cost burdens, the relatively small footprint of subsidized housing has significant implications. Without expansion of income-restricted supply, especially in areas beyond city limits, low-income households may face longer commutes, reduced housing choice, and heightened risk of displacement as market-rate rents continue to rise.

The extent to which Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) properties contribute to the region's supply of affordable rental housing is illustrated in Figure 31. For this analysis, affordable rental units are defined as those with gross rents affordable to households earning up to 60% of the area median income (AMI), a widely accepted benchmark for LIHTC program eligibility and an important threshold in evaluating housing access for low- to moderate-income renters. The data show that *LIHTC units account for just 14%* of the affordable rental inventory in Colorado Springs and *13%* in both unincorporated El Paso County and the county overall. By contrast, LIHTC developments represent *18%* of affordable rental units statewide. This suggests that the Colorado Springs region is relatively underserved by LIHTC-supported housing, even though its affordability challenges are comparable to or greater than those experienced elsewhere. The underrepresentation of LIHTC units may point to gaps in development financing, land availability, or local policy support that could be addressed through targeted housing strategies to expand deeply affordable options for cost-burdened renters.

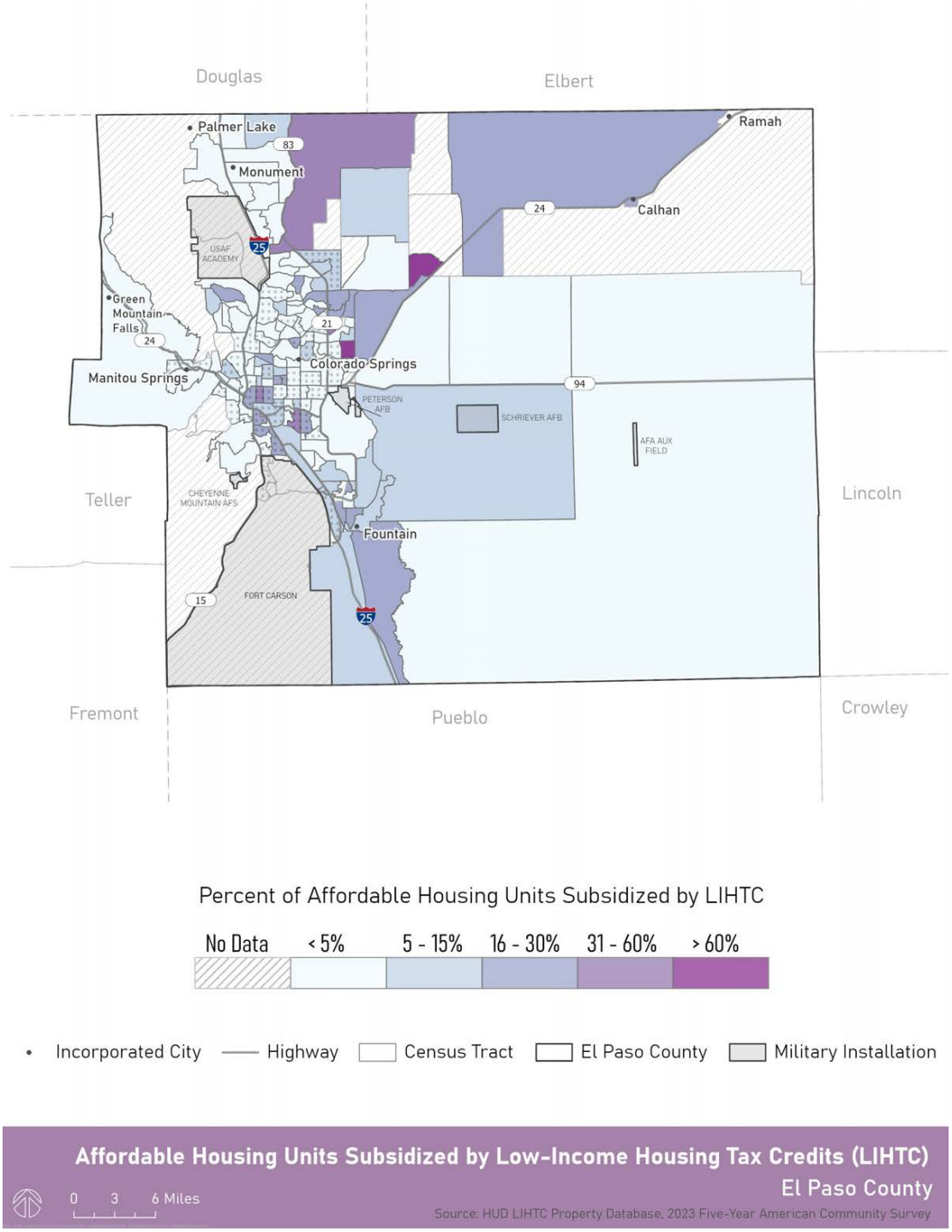
Figure 31. LIHTC Units as a Share of Affordable Rental Housing Stock



Source: HUD LIHTC Database; Five-Year American Community Survey
Note: Affordable rental units were defined as those that would not cause a household earning below 60% AMI to be cost burdened. Due to the absence of household size data, this analysis approximates AMI tiers using HUD's published FY 2023 median family income (MFI) for the area ($105,100).

Figure 32 maps the share of affordable rental units, defined here as those affordable to households earning up to 60% of AMI, that are subsidized by the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program across census tracts in El Paso County. Darker tracts on the map represent areas where LIHTC units make up a larger share of the affordable inventory, indicating a heavier reliance on this form of federal assistance. In contrast, lighter tracts with low LIHTC coverage may contain more naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH), such as older or smaller rental units, or may benefit from alternative subsidies like housing vouchers or public housing. The map shows that many of the tracts with higher LIHTC concentration are located on the urban fringe, particularly to the north and south of Colorado Springs, rather than in the city's core. This pattern may result from zoning constraints, land availability and cost pressures, or other factors that often incentivize housing in peripheral areas (such as the ability to build housing at scale, macro-economic trends, federal/state transportation investments, etc.). For policymakers, this spatial distribution pinpoints not only where income-restricted units are concentrated but also where gaps in subsidy coverage may exist, suggesting opportunities for strategic preservation efforts or targeted investment in underserved neighborhoods.

Figure 32. LIHTC Units as a Share of Affordable Rental Stock by Census Tract

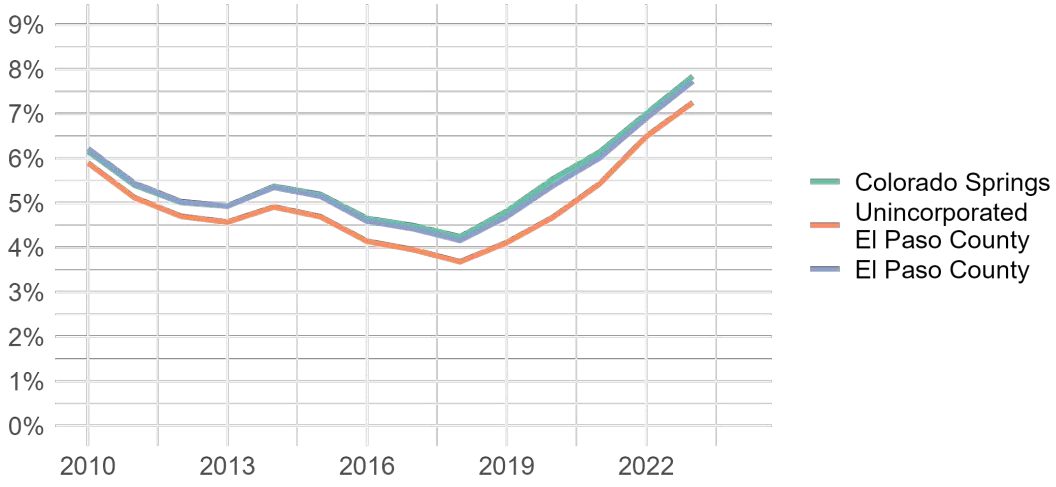


Vacancies and Short-Term Rentals

Vacancy rate trends from 2010 to 2023 (for all unit types) illustrate important shifts in market conditions over time (see Figure 33). From 2016 through 2019, vacancy rates in the three areas remained consistently *below 5%*, a level typically associated with tight housing markets and limited availability. Since then, however, vacancies have steadily increased, in part due to new multifamily construction. By 2023, the vacancy rate had risen to *between 7% and 8%* across the region. Historically, unincorporated El Paso County has tended to have slightly lower vacancy rates, likely due to its more limited housing supply and lower turnover. While rising vacancies might signal reduced demand or improved availability, they do not necessarily indicate an absence of housing need. Elevated vacancy rates can also result from an increase in the number of short-term rentals or second homes that sit unoccupied for much of the year, as well as a mismatch between the type and cost of available units and what local residents can afford. In some cases, homes may also sit vacant due to physical disrepair, abandonment, or other barriers to occupancy.

Vacancy rates can rise for various reasons, including an increase in the number of short-term rentals or second homes

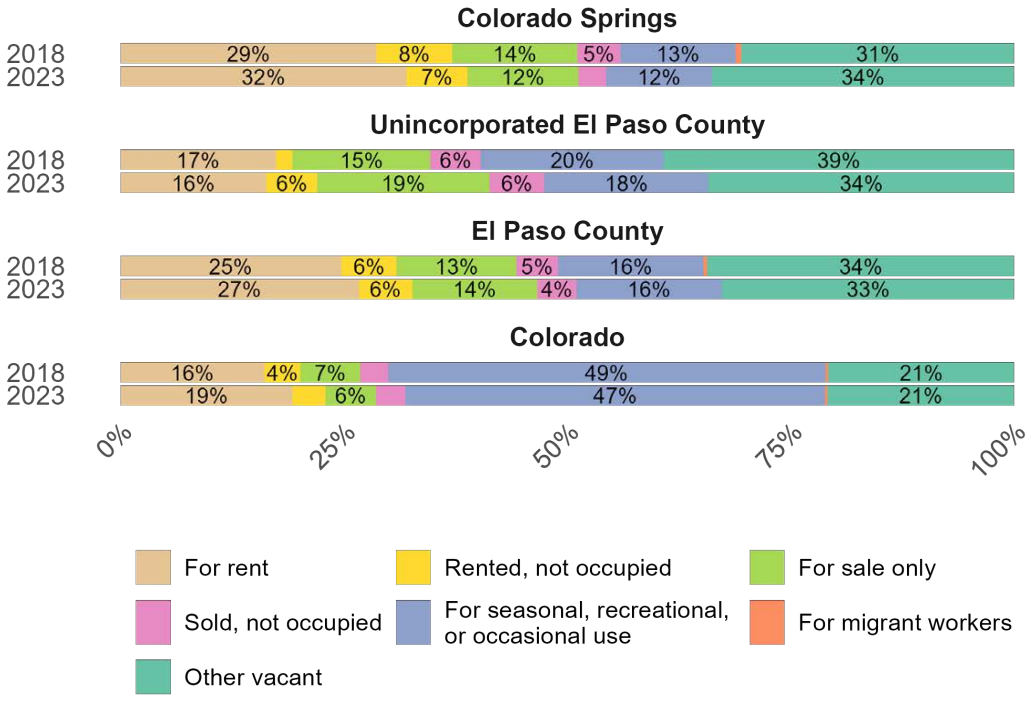
Figure 33. Vacancy Rates in Colorado Springs, Unincorporated El Paso County, and El Paso County, 2010-2023



Source: State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.

Figure 34 provides data on the composition of vacant housing units across the region. In both Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County, *less than half of vacant homes* were listed for rent or for sale in 2023, implying that headline vacancy rates may overstate the availability of housing. In Colorado Springs, a growing share of units fell into the "Other Vacant" category (which may include units held for personal or occasional use) in 2023. This category, as defined by the ACS, includes homes that are vacant due to legal proceedings, repairs, owner uncertainty, or unknown reasons—conditions that often point to disuse, abandonment, or other problematic conditions. Second homes and vacation properties accounted for a modest share of vacancies in both areas were more prevalent in unincorporated El Paso County. Still, these vacancies are significantly more common at the state level, likely due to the concentration of seasonal and recreational housing in mountain resort communities such as Aspen, Vail, and Steamboat Springs.

Figure 34. Composition of Housing Vacancies by Region, 2018 and 2023



Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: The 2018 values represent five-year estimates covering the period from 2014 to 2018, while the 2023 values reflect data from 2019 to 2023. The "other vacant" category includes units that are not currently for sale or rent and do not fall into other standard vacancy categories; it may include units held for personal or occasional use, those under repair, and potentially abandoned or uninhabitable properties.

Short-term rentals (STRs) represent another residential property use that can impact overall housing availability and occupancy. While the Colorado Springs region has fewer STRs than might be expected for a metro area of its size—especially when compared to statewide figures reflected in Figure 34—research shows that even modest levels of STR activity can contribute to reduced housing availability and place upward pressure on rents, particularly in markets already grappling with affordability challenges.

The City has permitted STRs for nearly 8 years, and several databases track their activity. Preliminary estimates indicate that there are between 1,300 and 2,400 active STR units in the local market. In response, the City Planning Department and the City Auditor's Office are working together to enhance monitoring and strengthen compliance efforts in this segment.

Housing Market Trends

Housing Market Trends Overview

- Since 2015, inflation-adjusted rents across El Paso County have risen sharply, peaking in 2021 before leveling off and modestly declining.
- As of March 2025, average rents are around $1,800, requiring household incomes of about $80K to be considered affordable, far above the median renter income of $59K. Rents are highest in unincorporated areas dominated by larger single-family homes (often $2,000+), and lower in the city where multifamily units are more common.
- Rents throughout El Paso County grew faster than incomes with the average affordability gap rising from $2,079 to $5,241 annually. The greatest strain is in unincorporated areas, where renter incomes barely grew (1%) while rents rose 11%, pushing the shortfall from $2,661 to $9,300.
- Home values in El Paso County have risen nearly 47% since 2010, reaching an average of about $460K in 2025. A typical mortgage payment now exceeds $2,800, requiring an income of $150K+, far above the median household incomes of $80K in Colorado Springs and $113K countywide.
- El Paso County recorded 9,904 total home sales in 2024. Single-family home sales dominated the market, making up 95% of sales countywide.
- In El Paso County, median household income rose by 10% from 2018 to 2023, while real home values surged by around 40%.
- In 2023, about 72% of El Paso County homeowners had a mortgage, with monthly homeownership costs (including mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, and utilities) around $2,000 per month, compared to almost $600 for those without a mortgage.

Key Takeaways

- Despite recent price declines from their average peak of approximately $550,000 in 2022 , for-sale housing remains out of reach for many, especially first-time buyers.
- Rising home values without matching income growth limit access to ownership, widen renter–owner wealth gaps, strain the rental market, and deepen long-term economic disparities.
- The predominance of single-family homes limits market choice, heightens affordability challenges, and creates homeownership barriers, particularly for low-income buyers and renters.

Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of current conditions in both the rental and ownership markets across Colorado Springs and El Paso County. Drawing on multiple data sources, it tracks how prices, affordability, and turnover vary across geographies and housing types. While rent growth has moderated from its peak, real rents remain elevated and significantly outpace what many renters can afford, particularly in unincorporated areas where incomes have stagnated. The analysis also uncovers notable geographic differences, with higher rents and home prices in northern and unincorporated zip codes, driven in part by newer construction and a dominance of single-family housing. The data also highlight underlying structural issues: a widening affordability gap, limited turnover among owner-occupied homes, and increasing investor activity, all of which restrict access to stable and affordable housing. The result is a market in which affordability challenges remain widespread as renters and prospective buyers navigate limited options, rising costs, and heightened competition.

Rental Market

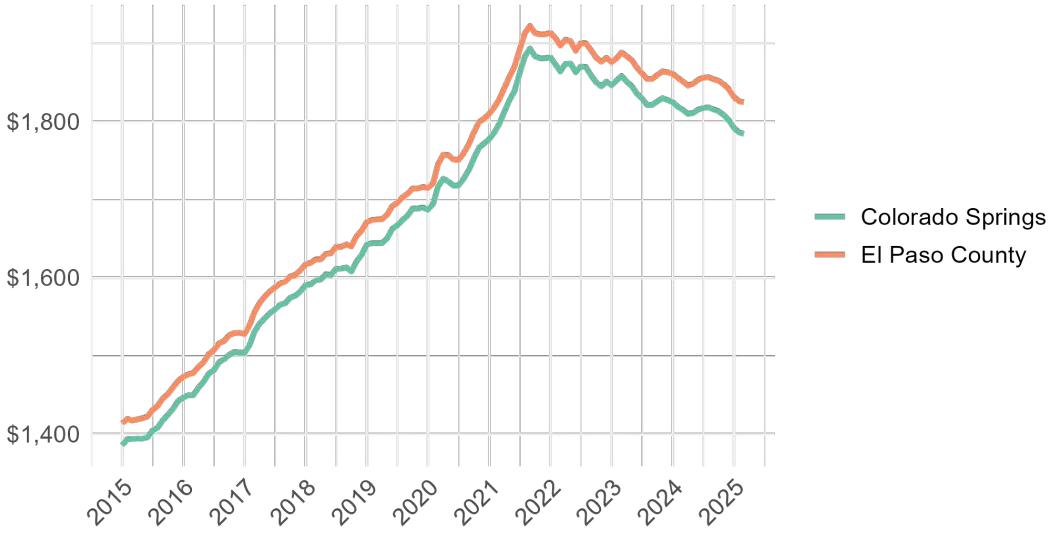
From 2015 to 2025, inflation-adjusted rents soared by 29% in Colorado Springs, outpacing inflation over the same time period.

Figure 35 presents the Zillow Observed Rent Index (ZORI) for Colorado Springs and El Paso County from January 2015 through March 2025, offering a comprehensive view of rent trends over the past decade. ZORI is a proprietary metric developed by Zillow that tracks changes in asking rents across the entire rental market, not just multifamily properties or professionally managed units. Unlike more limited datasets, ZORI captures listings from both large-scale landlords and smaller "mom and pop" owners, encompassing all housing types, including single-family rentals, townhomes, and multifamily units. Importantly, ZORI is neither a median nor mean; instead, it is a rent index designed to measure price trends over time based on similar units, which makes it especially useful for capturing consistent market movement while avoiding distortions from shifts in the rental mix. When adjusted for inflation, rents in both Colorado Springs and El Paso County were *below $1,500 in early 2015*. However, a sharp rise in rents occurred through 2021, with real rent levels peaking in September of that year at *$1,922 for El Paso County* and *$1,893 for Colorado Springs*. Thereafter, rents plateaued, before entering a period of modest decline. As of March 2025, the ZORI stood at *$1,825 in El Paso County* and *$1,784 in Colorado Springs*. The city's lower rents are due to its higher proportion of multifamily units, which tend to rent for less than single-family homes.

Despite the recent stabilization in the region's rental market, rents remain well above what many households can afford. Applying the conventional 30% of income affordability threshold and factoring in average utility costs, a household would need to earn *$80,313 in El Paso County* and *$78,693 in Colorado Springs* to comfortably afford the current ZORI-level rent.[3] Yet according to the most recent ACS data (2019–2023), the median renter earns only *$59,119 in the county* and *$58,325 in the city*. Even assuming recent wage growth, this still represents a significant affordability gap. At the current minimum wage of $14.81, a worker would need to work *over 100 hours per week* to afford the typical rental, further underscoring the mounting pressure on renters in general and the lower-income workforce in particular.

[3] Utility costs of $182.98 for rentals were estimated using Five-Year 2023 Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Matrix filtered the data to include only renter households in the region and calculated average monthly utility expenditures, including electricity, gas, water, and other fuels. These estimates were then adjusted to 2025 dollars using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Fuels and Utilities for U.S. Cities, published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Figure 35. Typical Real Asking Rent in Colorado Springs and El Paso County, Jan. 2015-Mar. 2025



Source: Zillow Observed Rent Index; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Matrix adjusted all historical rent values for inflation using the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Each month's values were adjusted to March 2025 dollars. Rent values are based on Zillow's Observed Rent Index (ZORI), which estimates typical asking rents across a given geography, and are seasonally adjusted. ZORI is not a simple average or median. Instead, it is constructed from a filtered subset of rental listings, specifically those falling between the 35th and 65th percentile of the rental price distribution. This trimming helps remove extreme values and outliers. Zillow then applies a smoothed, repeat-rent framework, which tracks rent changes for the same properties over time while reducing short-term volatility. Properties with more consistent and complete listing histories are given more weight in the analysis. As a result, ZORI offers a stable, representative indicator of typical market rents over time. Utilities are excluded from ZORI.

The zip code-level map in Figure 36 presents the Zillow Observed Rent Index (ZORI) for March 2025, illustrating how market rents vary geospatially across the region. Brown-shaded areas represent zip codes with higher rents, while blue-shaded areas indicate lower rent levels. The map also indicates zip codes where a majority of land is unincorporated. The data suggest that rents tend to be highest in unincorporated areas, where housing is predominantly single-family and rental inventory is more limited; in these areas, ZORI values often *exceed $2,000 per month* (excluding utilities). In contrast, rents are generally lower in incorporated Colorado Springs, where a greater share of the housing stock consists of multifamily units. Many city zip codes report ZORI values *below $1,700*, demonstrating the moderating influence of apartment supply on average rental prices. This geographic disparity illustrates the impact of a diversified rental housing stock on affordability.

Figure 36. Typical Asking Rent by Zip Code, March 2025

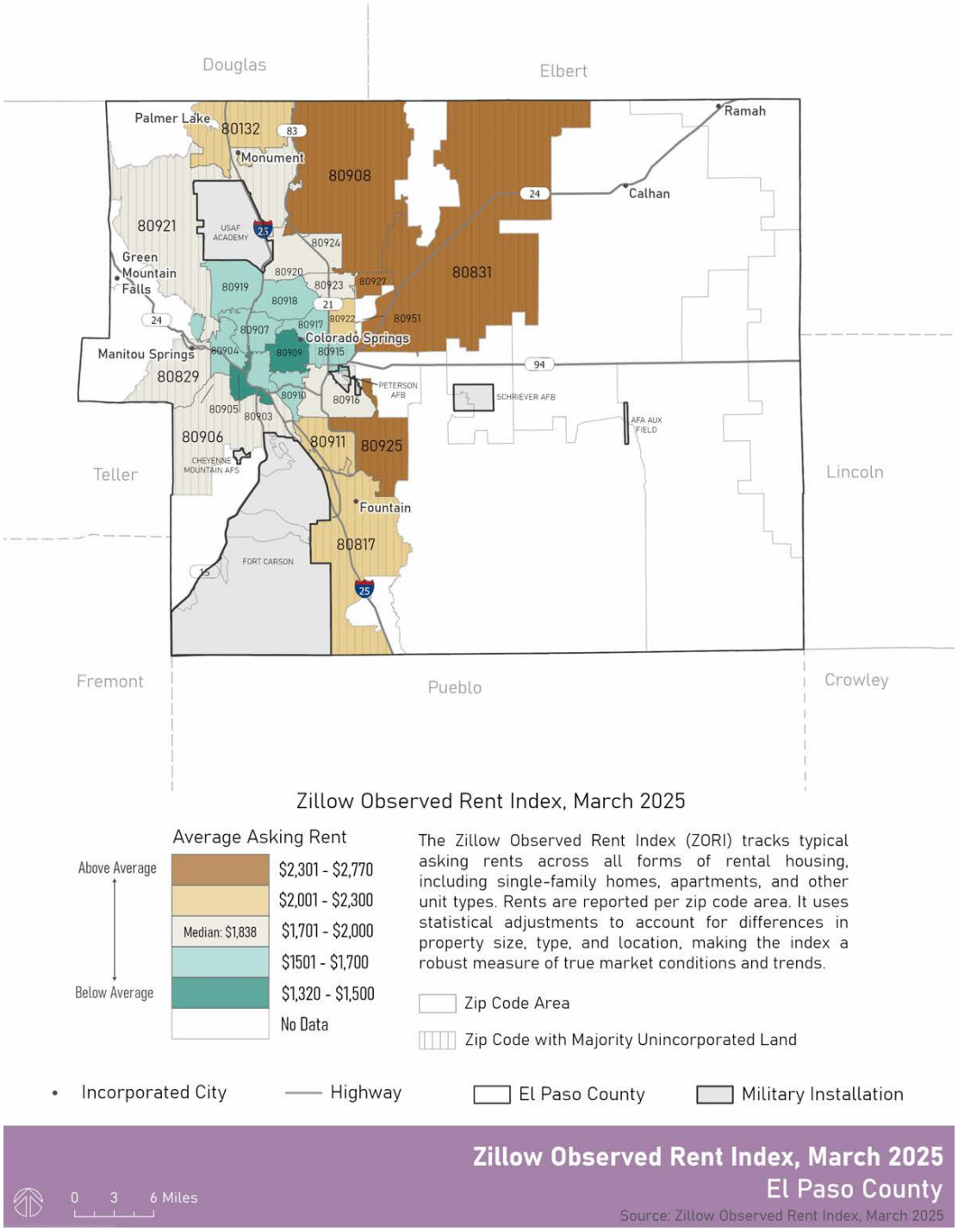


Table 8 provides another snapshot of the current rental market, displaying average gross rents across all forms of rental housing as of April 2025 for both Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County. Across most unit types, average rents are slightly higher in unincorporated areas, likely due to both the predominance of larger homes and newer construction in those communities. Studios and one-bedroom units, which are more prevalent in downtown Colorado Springs, are generally the most affordable options, with rents typically ranging *from $1,000 to $1,300*. Two-bedroom units tend to rent for *around $1,900*, meaning a household would need to earn *over $75,000 annually* to afford one without becoming cost burdened under the 30% rent-to-income rule. For three-bedroom homes, which typically *exceed $2,500 in rent*, the required income rises to *over $100,000*, placing these units out of reach for most working families. The most dramatic difference appears among units with four or more bedrooms: in Colorado Springs, average rent is *$2,690*, compared to *$3,202* in unincorporated El Paso County. These figures are a testament to the steep cost of renting family-sized housing and the growing challenges faced by larger households trying to secure affordable options in either market.

Larger, family-sized units routinely rent for more than $2,500, burdening the typical household in the area

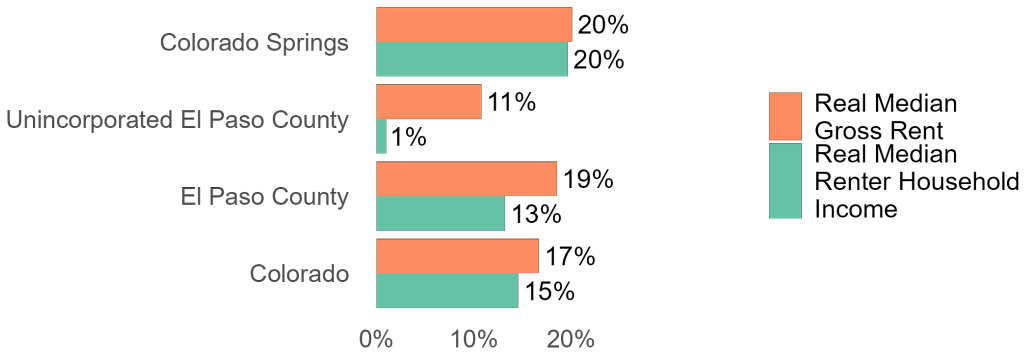
Table 8. Rental Affordability in Colorado Springs and Unincorporated El Paso County, April 2025

Unit Type	Colorado Springs		Unincorporated El Paso County	
	Average Gross Rent	Required Income	Average Gross Rent	Required Income
Studio	$1,000	$40,000	$1,150	$45,985
One bedroom	$1,111	$44,435	$1,286	$51,440
Two bedrooms	$1,893	$75,711	$1,884	$75,355
Three bedrooms	$2,519	$100,778	$2,566	$102,637
Four or more bedrooms	$2,690	$107,586	$3,202	$128,088

Source: Zillow; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: *Average gross rent* includes utility costs, which were estimated for the region using the 2023 Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) and then adjusted for inflation to 2025 dollars. Utility costs were estimated separately by unit size.

Figure 37 compares the percent change in inflation-adjusted median gross rent and renter household income between 2018 and 2023, revealing notable geographic disparities in affordability trends. In Colorado Springs, renter incomes and rents both *increased by about 20%*, suggesting that, while housing costs rose substantially, the typical renter was able to keep pace, at least in aggregate. By contrast, renters in unincorporated El Paso County experienced a growing affordability gap: while real median gross rent *rose by 11%*, renter incomes *grew by just 1%*, on average. This divergence indicates a more economically vulnerable renter base in unincorporated areas, where new rental housing is often scarce and turnover limited. It may also reflect demographic stagnation, such as aging in place or fewer higher-income renters entering the market. At the county and state levels, rent increases similarly outstripped income growth, though the gap was smaller than in unincorporated El Paso County. The findings suggest targeted affordability strategies are needed to mitigate the mounting challenges facing suburban and exurban renters.

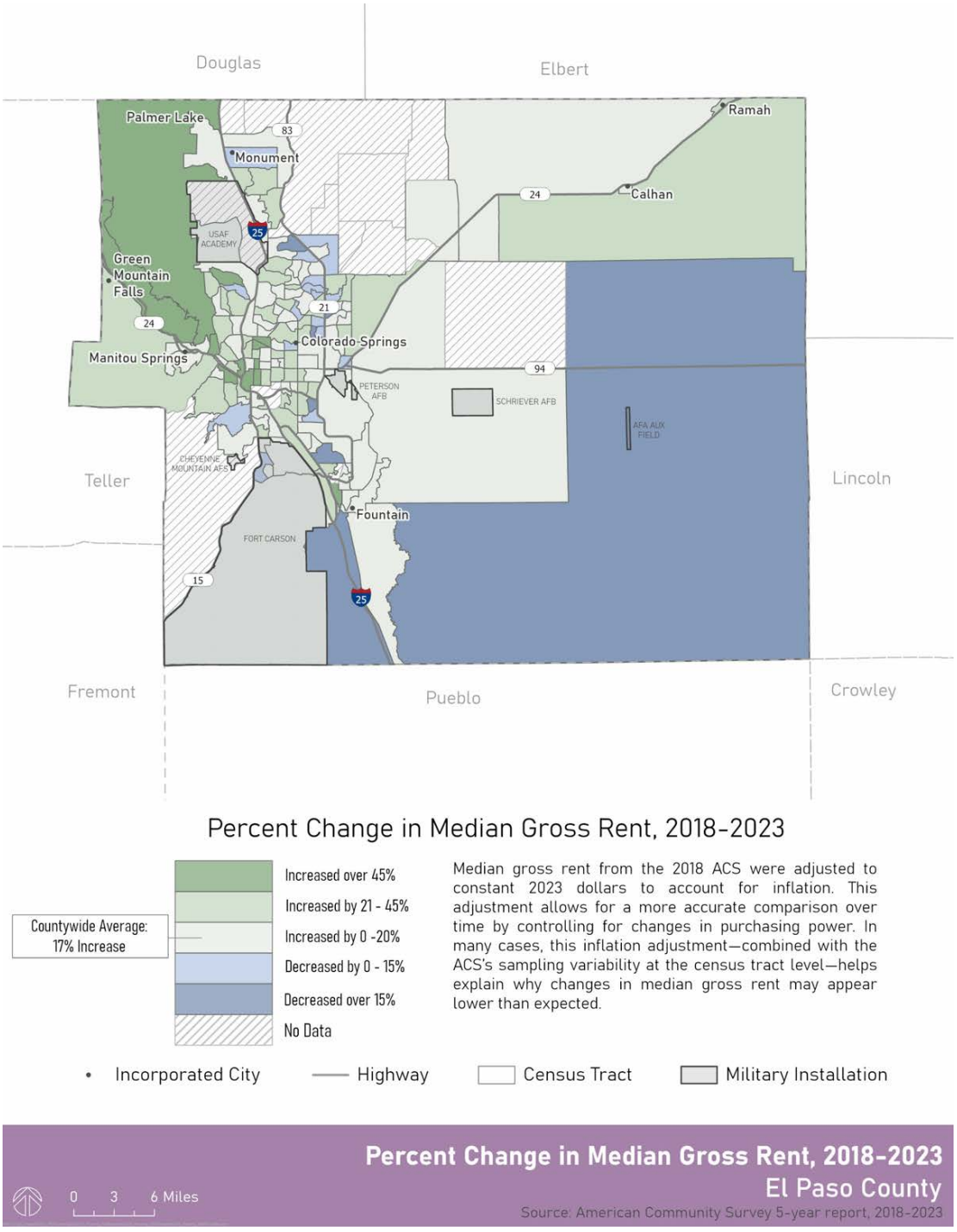
Figure 37. 2018 to 2023 Relative Change in Real Median Gross Rent and Real Median Renter Household Income by Region



Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Values reflect relative change from 2014-2018 and 2019-2023 periods.

Rent increases varied widely across El Paso County from 2018 to 2023, with some areas experiencing far sharper growth than others (see Figure 38). *Thirty-three of the 152 census tracts with available data saw real rent growth of 30% or more,* signaling a significant erosion in renters' purchasing power. The most dramatic increases occurred in the county's northwestern tracts, where limited rental inventory and a predominance of single-family development may have restricted supply and contributed to faster price escalation. It is important to interpret these patterns cautiously in tracts with limited rental stock, typically more rural areas—where small sample sizes in the ACS can introduce greater statistical uncertainty. Nonetheless, the findings underscore a broader concern: rapidly rising rents heighten the risk of cost burden, displacement, and housing instability, particularly for lower-income households that are already financially distressed.

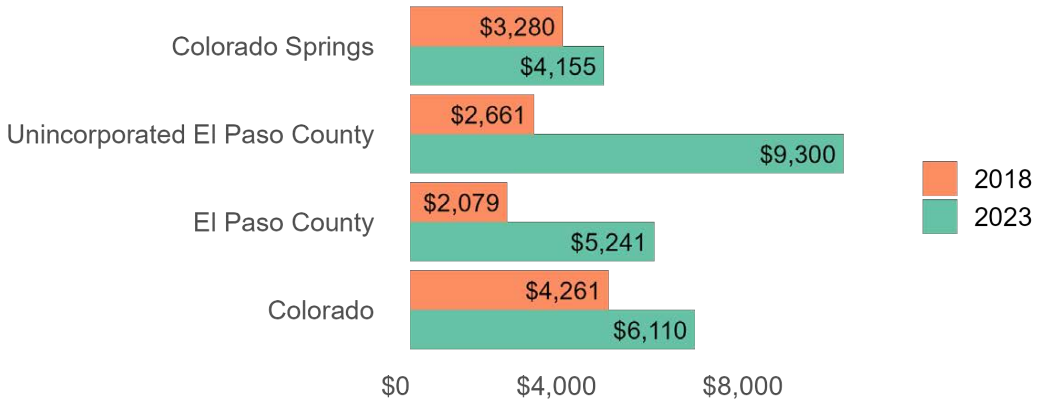
Figure 38. Relative Change in Median Gross Rent by Census Tract, 2018 to 2023



The median rental affordability gap in Colorado Springs increased by 27% from 2018 to 2023, but in unincorporated El Paso County, it surged by nearly 250% over the same period

The growing gap between renter incomes and the income needed to afford median gross rent, based on the standard that housing costs should not exceed 30% of income, is depicted in Figure 39. This widening affordability gap signals increased strain on renter households. In 2018, the median renter in Colorado Springs earned *$3,280 less per year than the required income* to afford the typical rental unit; by 2023, that gap had *grown to $4,155*. At the median rent level, the median renter household would spend approximately 32% of its income on housing, narrowly exceeding the standard affordability threshold. In unincorporated El Paso County, the shortfall has become even more pronounced over time, rising *from $2,661 to $9,300*—a more than threefold increase over a relatively short period. These trends suggest that rent growth has consistently outpaced income growth, particularly in areas where new rental development is limited or where homeownership alternatives are scarce. Affordability challenges are not confined to any one locality or region within Colorado, as evidenced by the fact that similar gaps persisted at the state level.

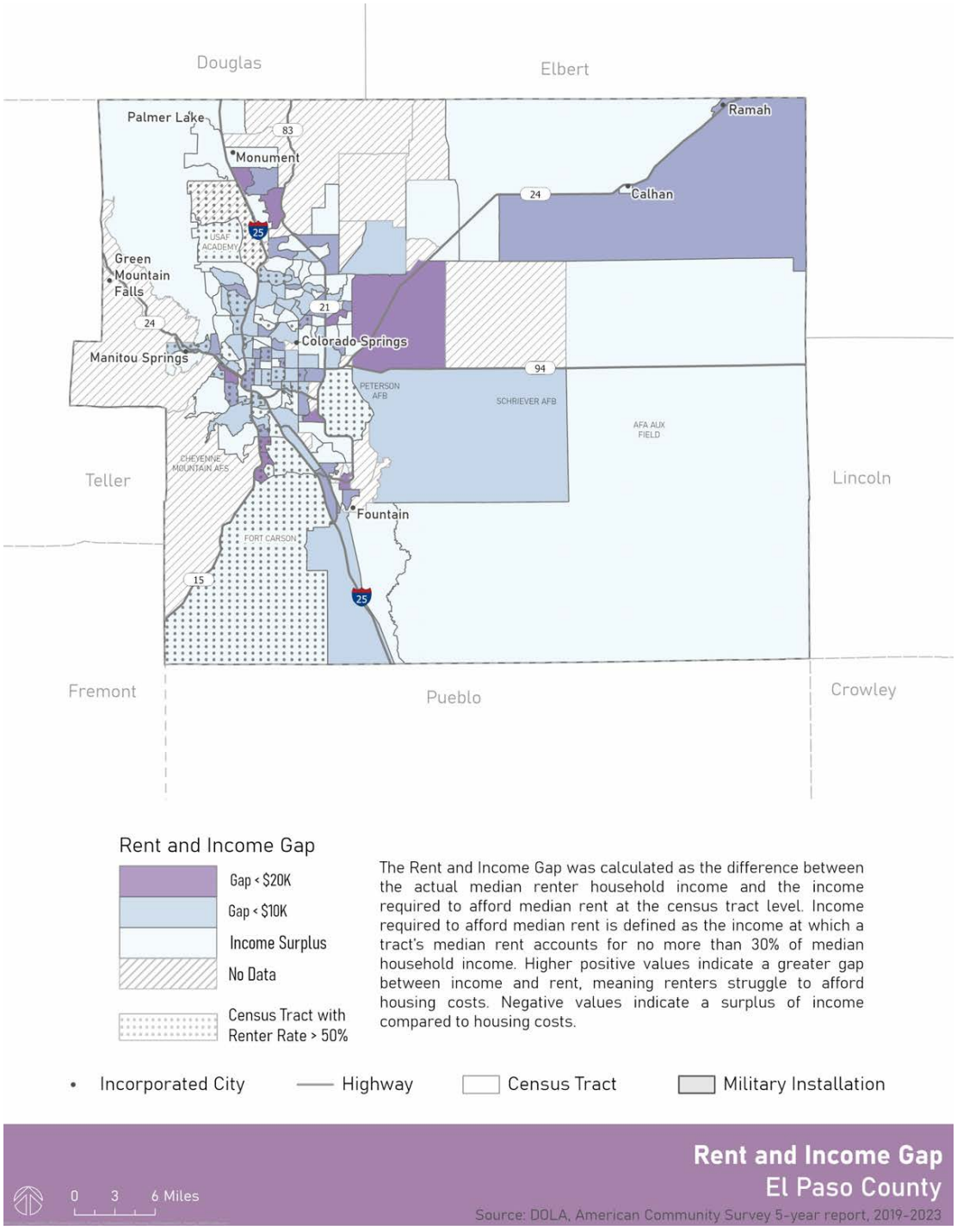
Figure 39. Gap between Income Required to Afford Median Gross Rent and Median Renter Annual Household Income by Region, 2018 and 2023



Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Larger gaps indicate more severe affordability challenges. Required income calculations are based on the widely accepted standard that gross rent (which includes utilities) should represent no more than 30% of household income. The 2018 values represent five-year estimates covering the period from 2014 to 2018, while the 2023 values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

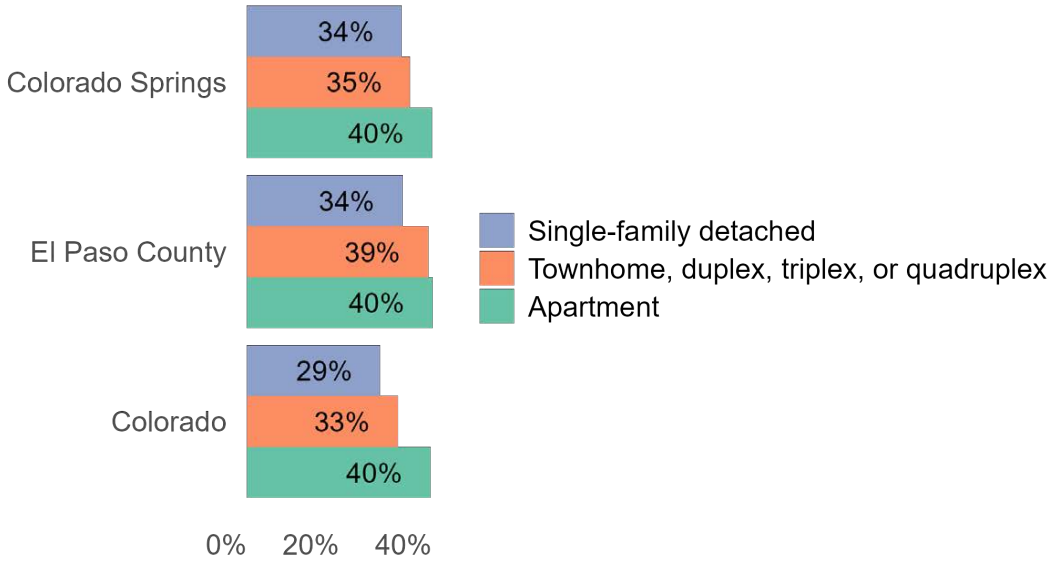
A comparison of the income required to afford median gross rent with actual median renter household income reveals a widespread affordability gap across much of El Paso County (see Figure 40). Based on the widely accepted standard that housing costs should not exceed 30% of household income, *renters in 85 of the 148 tracts with available data generally did not earn enough to afford the typical rental*. In many cases, the shortfall was significant, ranging *from $10,000 to over $50,000 annually*. These disparities were especially acute in the eastern portion of Colorado Springs and neighboring areas. The gaps are evidence of the challenges faced by moderate- and lower-income renters, many of whom have been priced out of their own neighborhoods. This dynamic can fuel a range of consequences, including elevated cost burdens, heightened risk of displacement, and longer or more burdensome commutes as households seek affordable options farther from job centers. Contributing factors likely include rising demand, stagnant wage growth for many occupations, limited rental production in some neighborhoods, and an overall shortage of housing that meets both the financial and spatial needs of local residents.

Figure 40. Gap between Income Required to Afford Median Gross Rent and Actual Median Renter Household Income by Census Tract, 2023



Turnover rates can provide key insight into household stability and neighborhood dynamics. Figure 41 displays the share of renters who moved into their homes within the past year. Single-family detached units had the lowest turnover rate, consistent with the notion that these homes often attract longer-term tenants, such as families seeking more space or stability. However, likely due to El Paso County's large active-duty population, its single-family and missing-middle (i.e., townhome, duplex, triplex or quadruplex) turnover rates were significantly higher than in the state overall. Across geographies, tenant mobility was significantly higher in larger multifamily settings, with *40% of renters in apartments* reporting a move within the past year. The findings have implications for community cohesion, school continuity, and the long-term effectiveness of rental housing as a stable option for households.

Figure 41. Rental Turnover Rates by Unit Type in Colorado Springs and El Paso County



Source: One-Year Public Use Microdata Sample
Note: Data were pooled from the 2021, 2022, and 2023 One-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) to increase sample size and improve the reliability of estimates for Colorado Springs and El Paso County. This methodology allows for more robust analysis of subgroups. The PUMS data cannot be used to generate reliable estimates for unincorporated El Paso County.

Homeownership Market

Across the region, real home values have increased dramatically in recent years. Figure 42 presents trends in the Zillow Home Value Index (ZHVI) for Colorado Springs and El Paso County from 2010 through March 2025, with all figures adjusted for inflation to March 2025 dollars. ZHVI reflects the typical home value in a given market based on a proprietary estimate from Zillow that draws on observed listing and sales data across all housing types. It is not a median or average, but rather a smoothed measure meant to represent the price of a "typical" home. The measure correlates strongly with median sales prices and assessed values but has the benefit of being available over a longer time series, making it especially useful for tracking changes in market conditions over time. Even accounting for inflation, home values in the region rose by *nearly 47%* over this 15-year period. The early years of the dataset reflect lingering effects of the housing crash, with real values remaining relatively flat or depressed through the early 2010s. Since then, Colorado Springs and El Paso County have seen sustained price growth, driven by strong demand, low interest rates, and constrained housing supply. Real home values peaked in mid-2022 at *more than $520,000* before retreating somewhat as interest rates surged and market activity cooled. As of March 2025, the typical home in Colorado Springs is valued at *just under $457,000*, while the countywide figure stood slightly higher at *just over $460,000*.

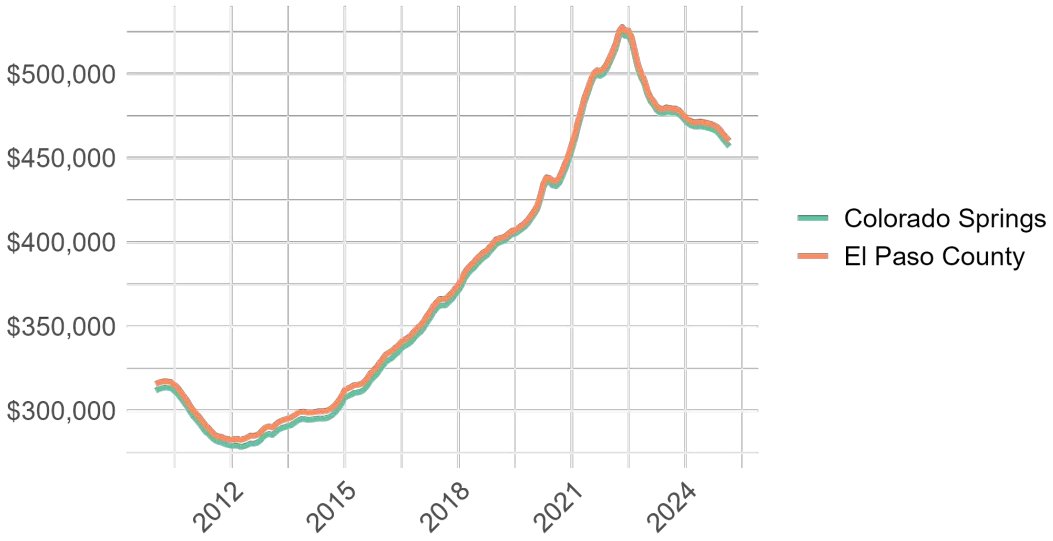
Since 2010, the typical home's inflation-adjusted value has appreciated by 47% in Colorado Springs.

Assuming a 7% interest rate, 30-year fixed-rate loan, and 20% down payment, the mortgage payment for a home sold at the typical value in Colorado Springs and El Paso County is *over $2,800*. Of course, homeowners face several costs besides the mortgage payment, including insurance, property taxes, HOA fees, utilities, and maintenance expenses, all of which can add several hundred dollars per month to the cost of homeownership. For this reason, affordability for a home purchase is typically evaluated using the rule that a home's sale price should represent no more than three times household income – a standard used by HUD and many housing studies, even if individual lenders may approve borrowers with higher debt-to-income ratios. To afford the typical home in the region, a household needs to earn *over $150,000*. For context, the most recent data (five-year 2023 ACS) for the City of Colorado Springs indicate that *real median household income is just over $80,000*. Furthermore, the FY 2025 *area median income (AMI) of $112,500* for family households in the Colorado Springs HUD Metro FMR Area (which includes the entirety of El Paso County) represents just *74% of the sum required to afford the typical home*.[4] The wide

[4] It is important to note that ACS median household income reflects the midpoint for all households within a given geography (in this case, the City of Colorado Springs) and is based on survey responses collected over a five-year period. In contrast, HUD AMI estimates are derived from ACS data but adjusted forward to reflect current conditions, using factors such as employment trends and inflation adjustments. While AMI offers a more up-to-date snapshot of regional income, it is calculated across broader metro areas and may not fully capture local variations between individual cities, suburbs, and unincorporated communities. Technically, AMI is adjusted for household size, but for simplicity and consistency, this analysis uses HUD's median family income (MFI) estimate for a four-person household as the standard reference point.

affordability gap suggests that even after modest recent declines in home prices, for-sale housing remains largely unattainable for many buyers, particularly those seeking to become first-time homeowners.

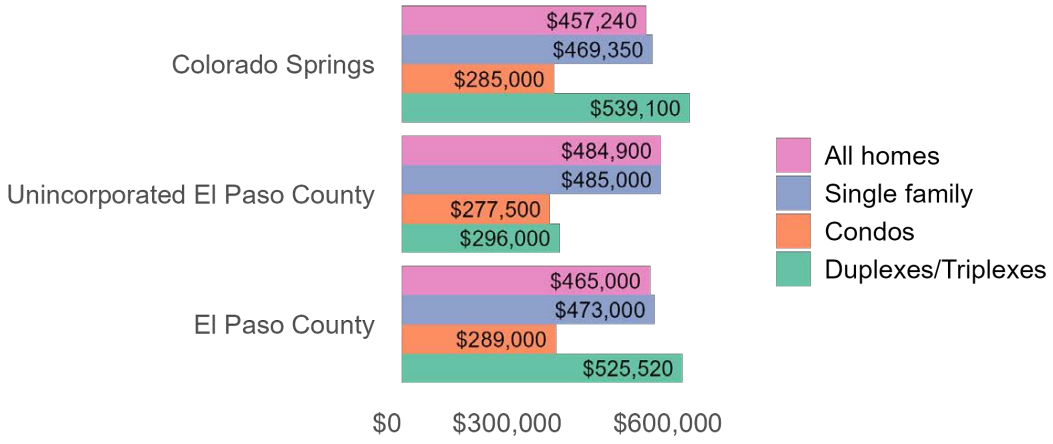
Figure 42. Typical Real Home Values in Colorado Springs and El Paso County, January 2010-March 2025



Source: Zillow Observed Home Value Index; Matrix Design Group
Note: Matrix adjusted all historical home values for inflation using the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Each month's values were adjusted to March 2025 dollars. Home values are based on Zillow's Home Value Index (ZHVI), which estimates typical home values across a given geography, and are seasonally adjusted. ZHVI is not a simple average or median. Instead, it is constructed from a filtered subset of home value estimates, specifically those falling between the 35th and 65th percentile of the home value distribution. This trimming helps remove extreme values and outliers. Zillow then applies a smoothed, repeat-valuation framework, weighting properties by the consistency and quality of their underlying data. As a result, ZHVI offers a stable, representative indicator of typical home values over time.

Figure 43 displays actual sale price data by unit type. The median sale price in Colorado Springs was *just over $457,000*, with single-family detached homes selling for *$469,350*, condominiums for *$285,000*, and duplexes or triplexes for *$539,100*. It is important to note that duplexes and triplexes include two or three separate housing units, so while the total sale price may be higher than that of a single-family home, the price per unit is typically lower. For most unit types, countywide prices exceeded those in the city. In unincorporated El Paso County, the median price for a detached home was *about $16,000 higher* than in Colorado Springs at *$485,000*, possibly due to the prevalence of newer construction and larger lot sizes in outlying areas. The comparatively low median sale price for duplexes and triplexes in unincorporated El Paso County likely reflects the limitations of a small sample size rather than a reliable indicator of market conditions. These unit types are relatively rare in unincorporated areas, and a handful of lower-priced transactions can skew the median downward. Additionally, some properties classified as duplexes may be older or located in less developed parts of the county, further pulling the median below typical levels. As such, the apparent affordability advantage should be interpreted with caution, particularly when comparing across geographies with larger and more diverse housing inventories.

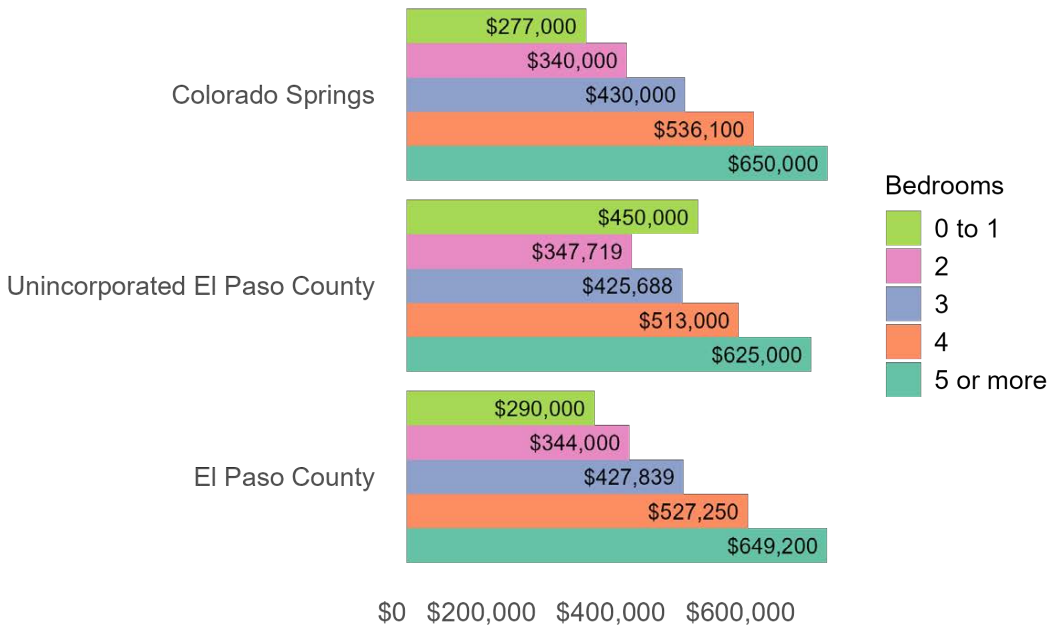
Figure 43. Median Sale Price by Home Type and Region, 2024



Source: El Paso County Assessor's Parcel Data; Matrix Design Group
Note: The sales data pertain only to arm's-length transactions, defined as transfers between willing buyers and sellers under typical market conditions. Unlike MLS-based datasets, Assessor's parcel datasets include both agent-listed and For Sale by Owner (FSBO) sales, providing a more complete view of the residential market. Notably, duplexes and triplexes include two or three separate housing units, so while the total sale price may be higher than that of a single-family home, the price per unit is typically lower. Additionally, the "All Homes" category incorporates sales of manufactured housing alongside other residential property types. Manufactured homes are captured by the "All Homes" category.

As expected, increases in bedroom count generally correspond with higher home prices (see Figure 44). Across the three geographies, meaningful differences emerged at the margins. In Colorado Springs, units with three or more bedrooms were more expensive than in unincorporated El Paso County and the county overall. For example, median prices for four-and five+-bedroom units were *$536,100 and $650,000 in the city*, respectively, compared to *$513,000 and $625,000 in unincorporated El Paso County*. These figures suggest that larger homes within the city may command a premium due to location, amenities, or access to services. *Conversely, the unusually high price for small units in unincorporated areas likely stems from limited sales activity and the relative scarcity of smaller homes in rural areas.* In these cases, even a handful of high-priced transactions can significantly skew the median upward, making it less representative of typical market conditions. Other confounding factors—such as variations in neighborhood setting, home quality, or land value—may also contribute to the observed price differences and should be considered when interpreting these results.

Figure 44. Median Sale Price by Bedroom Count and Region, 2024



Source: El Paso County Assessor's Parcel Data; Matrix Design Group
Note: The sales data pertain only to arm's-length transactions, defined as transfers between willing buyers and sellers under typical market conditions. Unlike MLS-based datasets, Assessor's parcel datasets include both agent-listed and For Sale by Owner (FSBO) sales, providing a more complete view of the residential market.

Figure 45 presents 2024 median home sale prices by zip code across El Paso County. Not surprisingly, significant variation exists across different parts of the region. Some of the lowest median prices were observed in southern and southeastern Colorado Springs, with zip codes *80910 and 80916 posting medians of $350,000 and $360,000*, respectively. Similarly, more rural areas like *80832 ($280,000)* and *80864 ($400,000)* reported lower prices compared to countywide levels. By contrast, higher-income areas on the city's north side and in outlying communities commanded much higher median prices. Zip codes such as *80921 ($775,000), 80924 ($695,000), and 80132 ($700,000)* reported some of the highest medians in the county, reflecting the prevalence of newer, larger homes and strong school districts in those areas. Several foothill and mountain-adjacent zip codes, including *80919 ($599,000) and 80829 ($583,000),* also posted elevated prices, consistent with buyer demand for homes near recreational amenities.

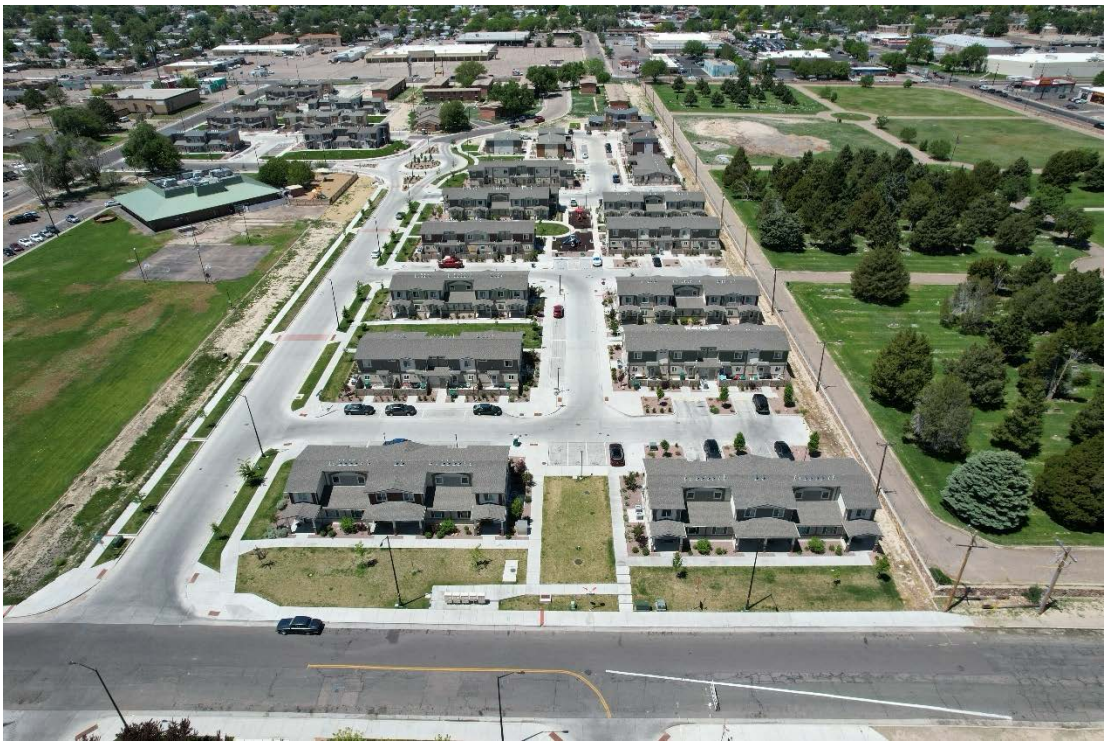
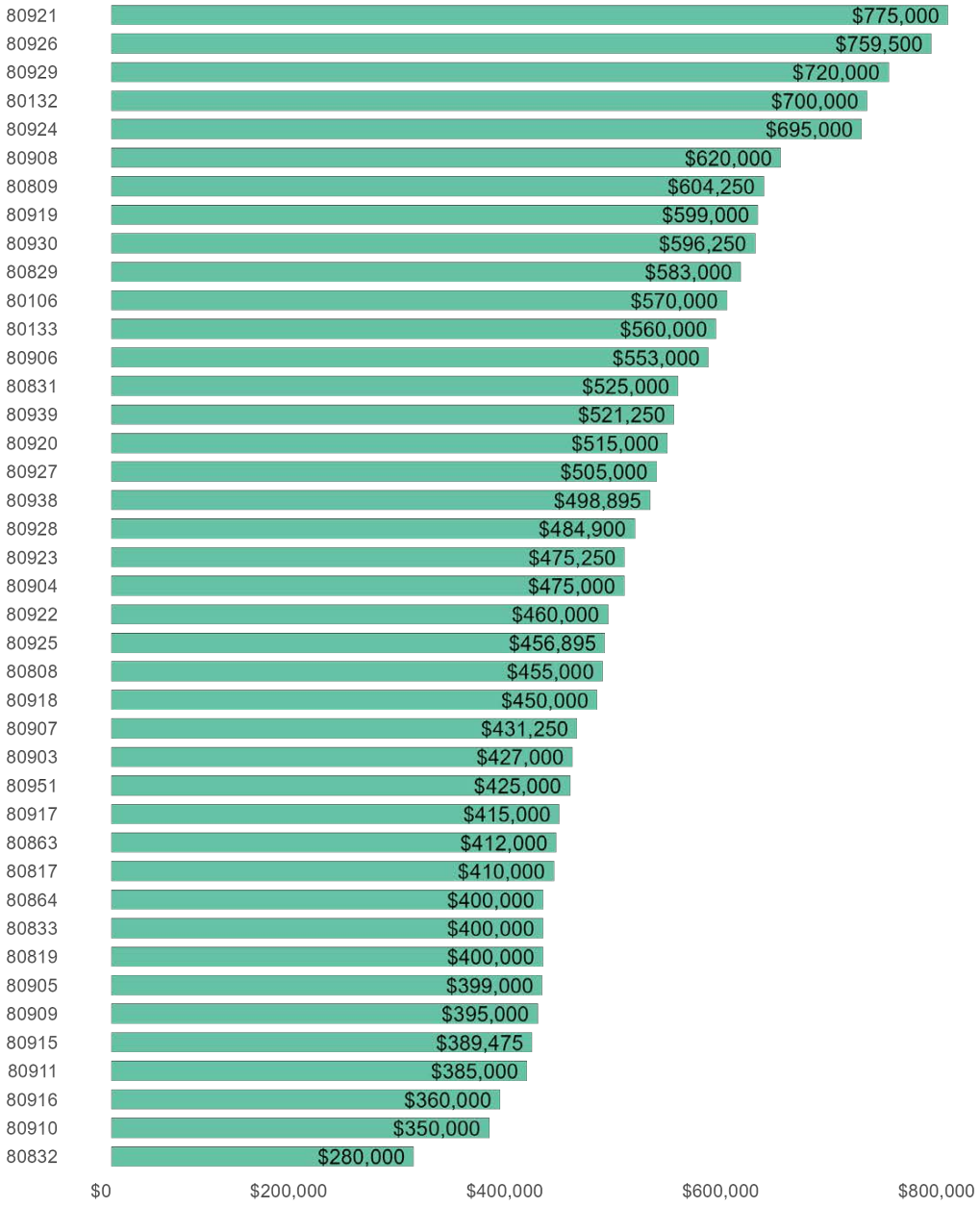


Figure 45. Median Sale Price by Zip Code, 2024

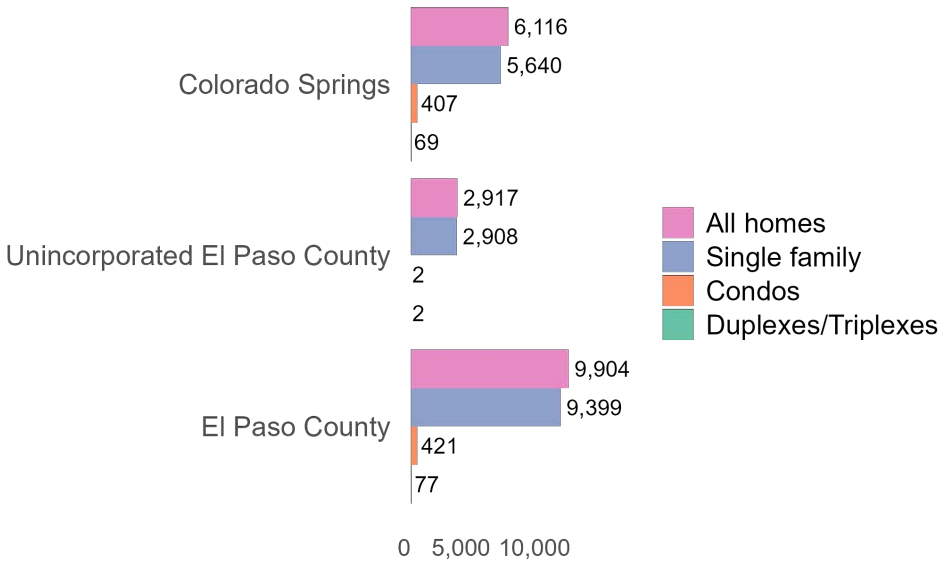


Source: El Paso County Assessor's Parcel Data; Matrix Design Group
Note: The sales data pertain only to arm's-length transactions, defined as transfers between willing buyers and sellers under typical market conditions. Unlike MLS-based datasets, Assessor's parcel datasets include both agent-listed and For Sale by Owner (FSBO) sales, providing a more complete view of the residential market.

Countywide in 2024, between 4% and 5% of the total housing inventory was sold, depending on unit type

Figure 46 presents residential home sales recorded in 2025 across Colorado Springs, unincorporated El Paso County, and the county as a whole. These sales are based on Assessor's data and reflect the date each transaction was officially recorded with the county, which may differ from the closing date. Accordingly, the figures do not match those from MLS data. Non-arm's length transactions, such as transfers between family members or affiliated parties, are excluded to better capture market activity. *In total, 9,904 home sales were recorded across El Paso County in 2024 including 6,116 in Colorado Springs and 2,917 in unincorporated areas.* The overwhelming majority of transactions involved single-family homes, including both detached units and townhomes. *These units accounted for 92% of all sales in Colorado Springs, nearly 100% in unincorporated El Paso County, and 95% countywide,* potentially reflecting both buyer preferences and prevailing development patterns. Higher interest rates likely suppressed sales activity by deterring homeowners who purchased their homes under more favorable terms from entering the market.

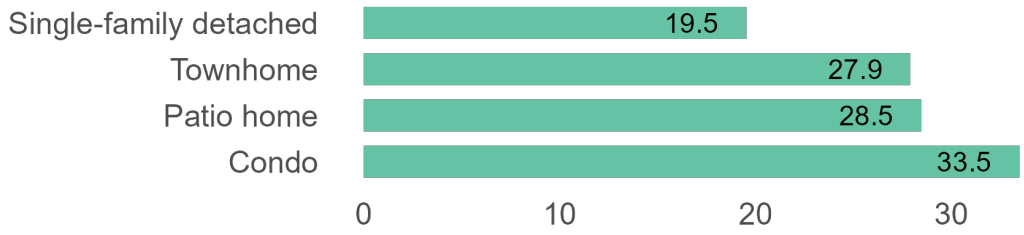
Figure 46. Number of Sales by Home Type and Region, 2024



Source: El Paso County Assessor's Parcel Data; Matrix Design Group
Note: The sales data pertain only to arm's-length transactions, defined as transfers between willing buyers and sellers under typical market conditions. Unlike MLS-based datasets, Assessor's parcel datasets include both agent-listed and For Sale by Owner (FSBO) sales, providing a more complete view of the residential market. However, parcel data only capture transactions once the deed is officially recorded with the county and so may lag MLS records, which record sales at the time of closing.

Median days on market (DOM) in 2024 varied notably by home type, as shown in Figure 47, with data sourced from the Pikes Peak Association of Realtors® (PPAR). Unlike assessor records, which classify properties for tax purposes, PPAR categorizes homes based on listing type and excludes certain property types—most notably duplexes. In 2024, single-family detached homes sold most quickly, with a *median DOM just under 20 days*. By comparison, townhomes and patio homes both had *median DOMs of around 28 days*, while condominiums remained on the market the longest at *33.5 days*. These figures suggest that buyer demand remains strongest for detached homes, while attached and smaller-unit housing types are experiencing a somewhat slower pace of sales. Although the market remains fast-moving by historical standards, it has clearly cooled from the low point of 2022, when median DOM across most unit types dipped below 10 days. The longer time on market, particularly for condos and townhomes, may signal that these segments are trending toward a more buyer-friendly environment, with less competition and greater opportunity for negotiation.

Figure 47. Median Days on the Market by Home Type Across El Paso County, 2024



Source: Pikes Peak Association of REALTORS®; Matrix Design Group

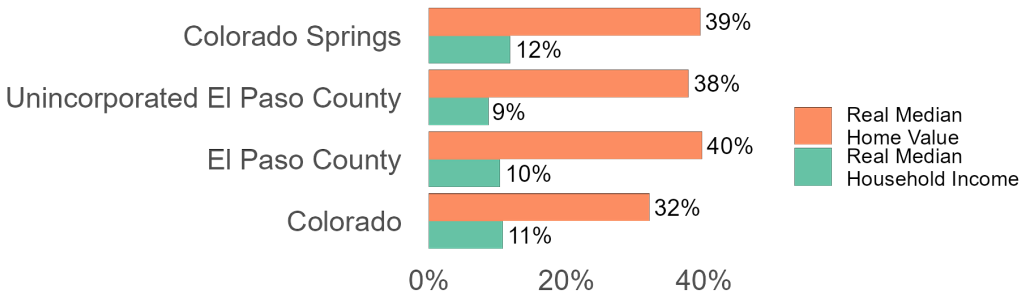
Between November 2024 and January 2025, denoting areas where investor activity has been most pronounced.[5] In Colorado Springs*, investors were responsible for approximately 34% of all residential property purchases* in Colorado Springs during this period and *49% in unincorporated El Paso County.* Though limited, these findings offer a snapshot into the County's housing market and they raise concerns about competition in the housing market, particularly for first-time or moderate-income homebuyers who may be outbid by cash-rich investors. As investors absorb a growing share of available inventory, often by converting entry-

[5] The analysis draws on assessor records and applies a widely used approach for identifying likely investor-owned properties based on ownership and mailing address patterns. Parcels were limited to residential land use types and classified as either owner-occupied or investor-owned based on owner mailing address information and naming conventions. Where the owner's mailing address matched the parcel address, parcels were assumed to be owner-occupied; discrepancies, out-of-state addresses, or business identifiers indicated investor ownership. Business identifiers included a comprehensive set of terms commonly associated with institutional or investment ownership, including Association, Co., Company, Corp., Corporation, Corporate Trust, Corporate Trustee, Fund, Group, Holdings, Homes, Inc., Incorporated, Investments, Joint Venture, Land Trust, LLC, Management, Partners, Properties, Realty, Trust, and Ventures. This method provides a practical and widely accepted way to distinguish investor-owned properties without requiring direct disclosure.

level homes into rentals, they may limit pathways to homeownership, drive up prices, and undermine long-term neighborhood stability. Due to the limited timeframe of this snapshot, additional analysis may prove useful to determine overall longer-term trends across the community.

Figure 48 illustrates the growing disconnect between housing prices and local earning power by comparing the percent change in real median home value and household income from 2018 to 2023. In Colorado Springs*, median household income rose by just 12% over this period, while real home values surged by nearly 40%,* creating substantial barriers to entry for prospective buyers, including those looking to downsize. Similar dynamics unfolded across the rest of El Paso County, including unincorporated areas. At the state level, home value growth was somewhat more tempered, suggesting that markets with higher baseline prices (e.g., Boulder, Denver, and mountain resort communities) saw slower appreciation in relative terms. These trends have significant implications for housing access and affordability. Rising home values in the absence of corresponding income gains limit access to homeownership, exacerbate wealth gaps between renters and owners, and push more households into an already strained rental market. Over time, these patterns can entrench economic disparities and reduce mobility for lower- and moderate-income residents seeking to build wealth through homeownership.

Figure 48. 2018 to 2023 Relative Change in Real Median Home Value and Real Median Household Income by Region

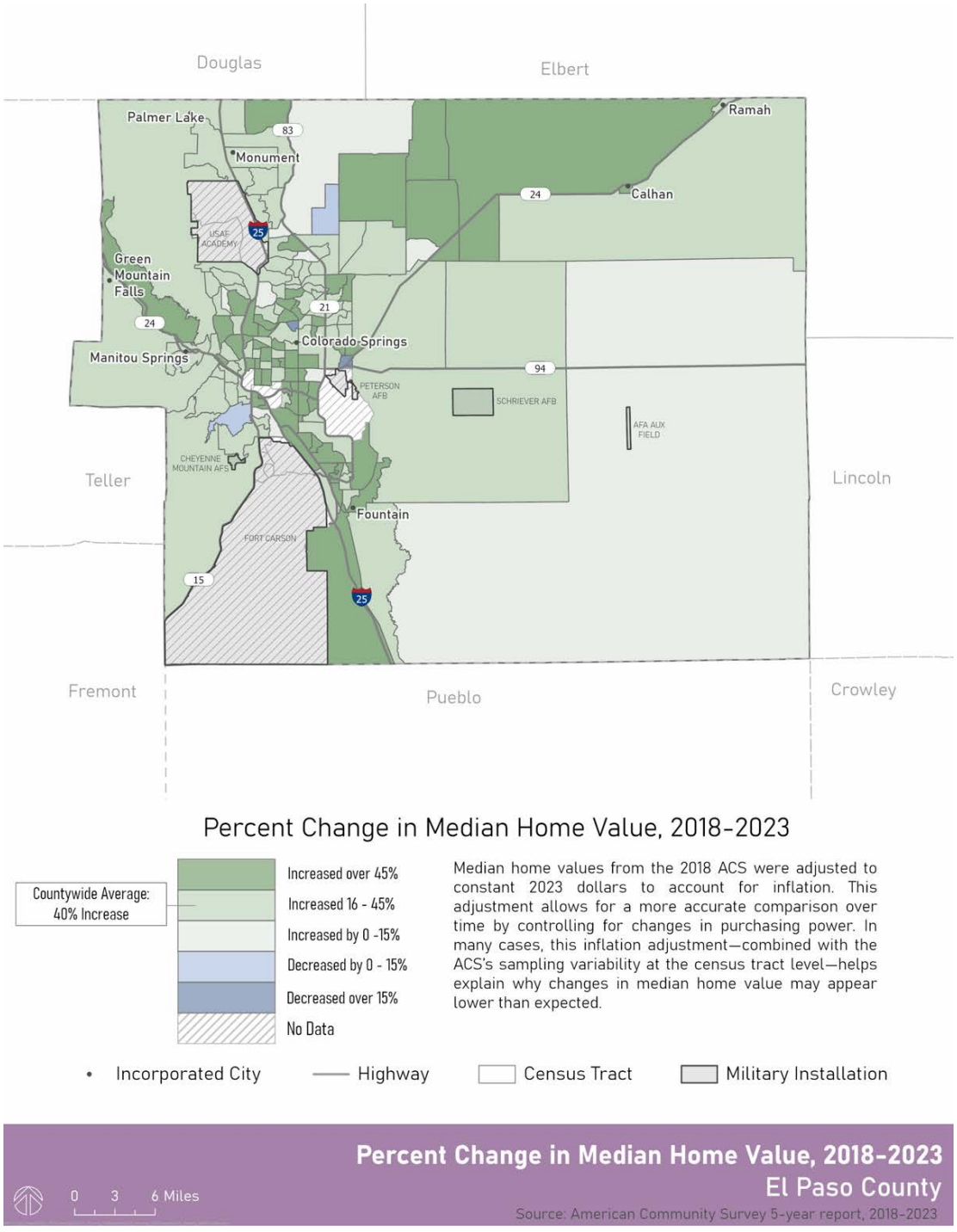


Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.

The map in Figure 49 displays census tract-level estimates of the relative change in real median home values across El Paso County over time, based on five-year 2018 and 2023 ACS estimates. A limitation inherent to 2023 five-year ACS data is that it includes values from as early as 2019, when home values were considerably lower. Nonetheless, the map reveals a dramatic escalation in home values across the region. In *43 of the county's 156 tracts with sufficient data, real median home values increased by 50% or more*, underscoring the intensity of appreciation even after controlling for inflation. The change in nominal (current dollar) terms would be even more pronounced, especially given the elevated inflation rates experienced in 2021 and 2022. The rapid increase in home values resulted from a confluence of factors, including sustained population and employment growth, constrained housing supply, rising construction costs, and increased national trends in investor activity.[6] The widespread nature of appreciation sheds light on both the wealth gains for existing homeowners and the growing affordability challenges for prospective buyers (including new and current owners).

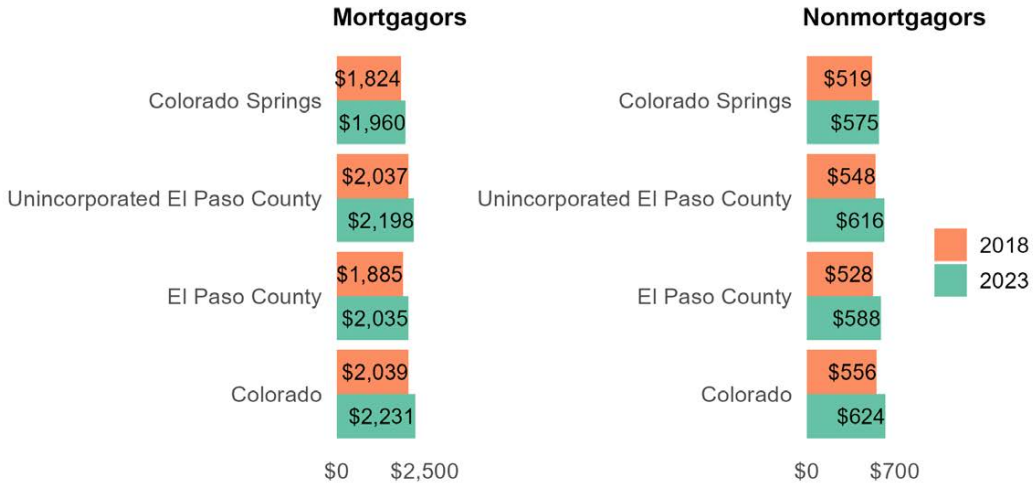
[6] According to a Redfin analysis of county records, investor market share has increased from approximately 7% in 2000 to 17% in 2025.

Figure 49. Relative Change in Median Home Value by Census Tract, 2018 to 2023



In 2023, *71% of Colorado Springs homeowners had a mortgage*, compared to *74% in unincorporated El Paso County*. Statewide, 70% of homeowners were mortgaged. The relatively high rate of mortgaged homeowners in unincorporated El Paso County reflects the region's higher share of younger households and prevalence of newer development. As Figure 50 shows, among those with a mortgage, median monthly homeownership costs, including mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, and utilities, reached *$1,960 in Colorado Springs and $2,198 in unincorporated El Paso County in 2023*. While these figures remained below the statewide median, they still represented a significant monthly expense, particularly for moderate-income households. For homeowners without a mortgage, typical costs were far lower, equaling *$575 in Colorado Springs and $616 in unincorporated areas*. It is important to note that these figures pertain to all current homeowners, including those who purchased their homes many years ago when housing prices were significantly lower. Among newer homeowners, monthly costs are significantly higher, as evidenced by the housing market data presented previously.

Figure 50. Real Median Monthly Homeownership Costs by Region, 2018 and 2023

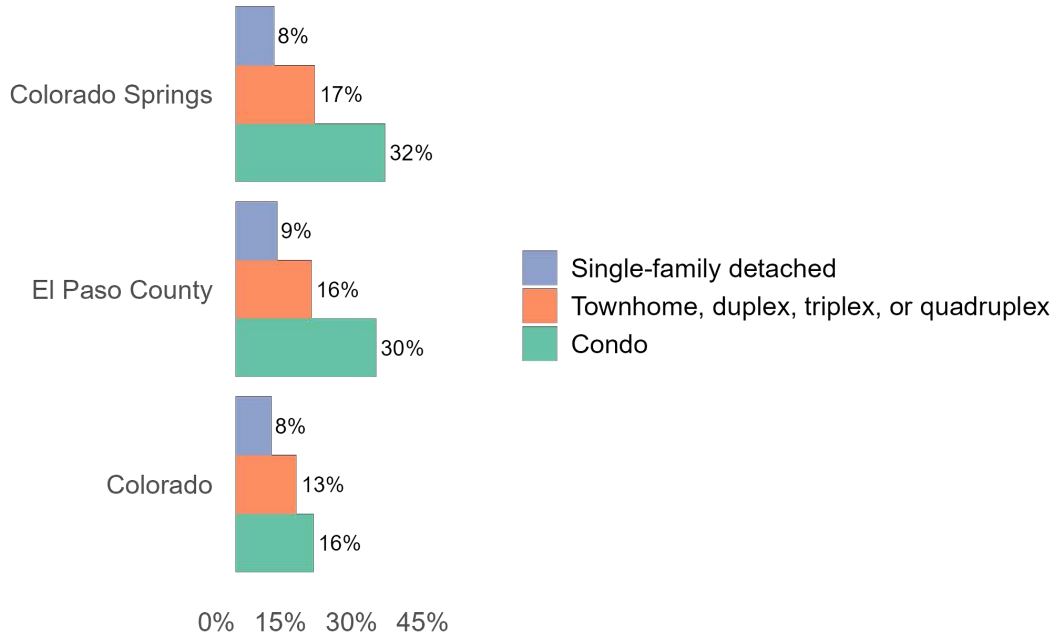


Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Total ownership costs include the sum of payments for mortgages (both first and second), real estate taxes, insurance on the property, utilities (electricity, gas, water, and sewer), and, where applicable, monthly condominium fees, homeowners association (HOA) fees, and mobile home costs.

Homeownership costs are significantly higher for recent buyers, who face elevated home prices, interest rates, and monthly payments compared to long-time owners.

Homeowner turnover rates offer insight into residential mobility and housing market fluidity. In Colorado Springs, just *eight percent of owners in single-family detached homes* moved into their current residence within the past year, compared to *17% among medium-density housing types*, including townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, and quadruplexes (see Figure 51). Turnover was even higher among condominium owners, with *32%* having moved in during the past year. This doubled the statewide rate of 16%, whereas other housing types switched hands at relatively similar rates across geographies. These trends suggest that smaller or more moderately priced housing types are more likely to turn over, potentially due to higher demand from first-time buyers, downsizers, or investors. Countywide patterns closely mirrored those observed in the city. The relatively low turnover among detached single-family homes, which dominate the ownership stock, limits inventory for would-be buyers and constrains housing availability. Higher interest rates further exacerbate this dynamic, discouraging existing homeowners from selling and locking them into their current mortgages. This stagnation contributes to tight for-sale inventory, elevated prices, and reduced mobility for both current and prospective homeowners.

Figure 51. Homeowner Turnover Rates by Unit Type in Colorado Springs and El Paso County



Source: One-Year Public Use Microdata Sample; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Data were pooled from the 2021, 2022, and 2023 One-Year Public Use Microdata Sample to increase sample size and improve the reliability of estimates. This methodology allows for more robust analysis of subgroups. The PUMS data cannot be used to generate reliable estimates for unincorporated El Paso County.

Housing Problems

Housing Problems Overview

- In 2023, 53% of El Paso County renters (including 2/3 of senior renters and three in ten homeowners) were considered either "cost burdened" (spending >30% of gross income on housing) or "severely cost burdened" (spending >50% of gross income on housing) due to high housing cost, up one percent overall from 2018.
- Across both renters and homeowners, households earning less than $75,000 were far more likely to be cost burdened, affecting approximately 80%of renters and 55% of homeowners.
- Based on a variety of data sources, an estimated 8,451 individuals in El Paso County have indicated they are homeless, an additional 3,925 residents are at high risk of becoming homeless due to severe housing cost burdens.
- Over three-quarters of El Paso County senior households are considered "over-housed". While this may be by choice in many cases, this points to an opportunity for more widely available downsizing options throughout the region.
- Ten percent of El Paso County households earning less than 50% AMI live in federally-subsidized housing units, compared to the statewide rate of 17%.

Key Takeaways

- The persistence of severely burdened rates is concerning, as these households often face heightened risks of housing instability, eviction, and difficulty meeting other basic needs such as transportation, food, and healthcare.
- This poses broader risks to not only individual household stability, but overall community well-being by making it harder to live near jobs, limiting household spending power, and straining employer recruitment.
- The region's most economically vulnerable residents are particularly disadvantaged in finding federally supported housing. Possible explanations include limited local allocations of vouchers, a shortage of project-based developments, or barriers to expanding new subsidized housing.

Introduction

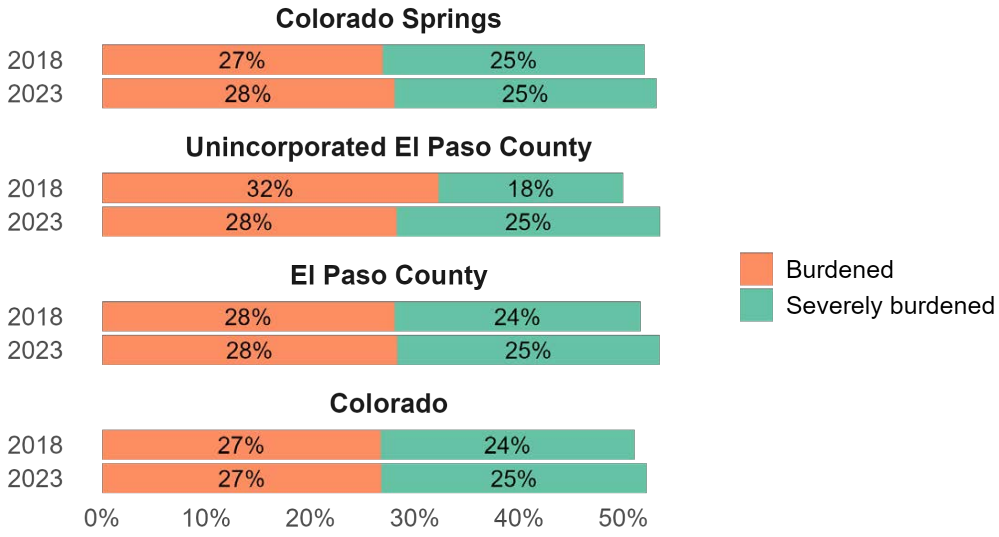
This chapter examines key housing challenges facing residents of Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County, with a focus on affordability, housing quality, and displacement risk. Drawing on a range of indicators, including cost-burdened rates, overcrowding, substandard conditions, and access to subsidized housing, the analysis highlights the extent to which residents across all tenures, income levels, and household types experience housing-related stress. Renters face particularly acute challenges, with a majority paying more than 30% of their income toward housing, while many lower-income homeowners also struggle with rising costs. Additional sections explore disparities by age, income, and geography; highlight the presence of housing quality deficiencies in both urban and rural areas; and assess vulnerability to displacement using composite risk indices.

Cost-Burdened Renters

Figure 52 presents cost-burden data for renters across Colorado Springs, unincorporated El Paso County, and the broader region. Between 2018 and 2023, the share of renter households considered "burdened" (spending 30% to 49.9% of income on rent) or "severely burdened" (spending 50% or more) increased slightly across all areas. In 2023, 28% of renters in Colorado Springs were cost burdened, with an additional 25% categorized as "severely" cost burdened, spending more than half of their income on housing. Nearly identical patterns were observed in unincorporated El Paso County, El Paso County overall, and at the state level, underscoring the widespread nature of renter affordability challenges. These consistently high cost-burdened rates suggest that rising rents have outpaced income growth, particularly for lower- and moderate-income renters. The persistence of elevated severely burdened rates is especially concerning, as households allocating such a large portion of income to housing often face heightened risks of housing instability, eviction, and difficulty meeting other basic needs such as transportation, food, and healthcare.

Over half of renters in Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County spend more than 30% of income on rent

Figure 52. Cost-Burdened Rates among Renter Households by Region, 2018 and 2023

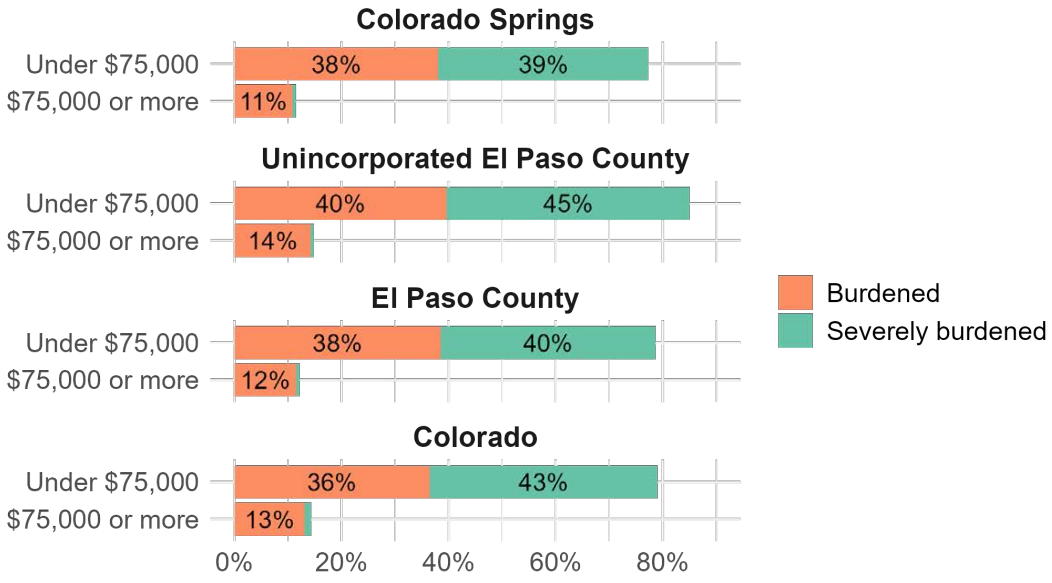


Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: "Burdened" households spent from 30% to 49.9% of household income on gross rent, compared to 50% or more for "severely burdened" households. The 2018 values represent five-year estimates covering the period from 2014 to 2018, while the 2023 values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Figure 53 illustrates that renter housing affordability challenges are highly dependent upon income. Renter households earning under $75,000 were significantly more likely than their higher-earning counterparts to face cost burdens, with roughly *four out of five households spending more than 30% of their income on rent* across the region and state. Conditions were most acute in unincorporated El Paso County, where *85% of lower- and moderate-income renters were classified as burdened or severely burdened*, suggesting a severe shortage of appropriately priced rental options in those areas. In contrast, higher-income renters (i.e., those earning $75,000 or more) experienced far lower levels of housing stress, with only about *15% classified as cost burdened*. While these households may be choosing to allocate more of their income to rent for location or lifestyle reasons, they typically do so without sacrificing basic needs. For lower-income renters, however, cost burdens often translate into tradeoffs in other essential areas, posing broader risks to household stability and community well-being. These disparities further highlight the need for policies that target the development and preservation of affordable rental housing.

In Colorado Springs, about four-in-five renters who earn less than $75,000 annually are cost-burdened, but the rate in unincorporated areas is even higher

Figure 53. Cost-Burdened Rates among Renter Households by Income Level, 2023

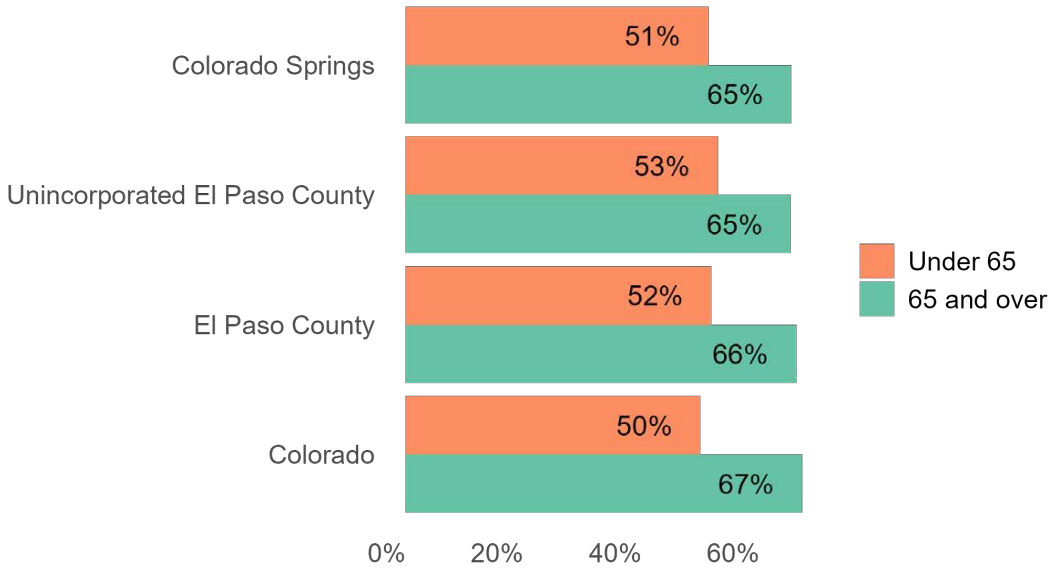


Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: "Burdened" households spent from 30% to 49.9% of household income on gross rent, compared to 50% or more for "severely burdened" households. Values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Seniors are uniquely disadvantaged in the rental market, with about two-in-three classified as cost burdened

Figure 54 measures cost-burden disparities between senior and non-senior renter households. Across all geographies, renter households headed by individuals aged 65 and over were more likely to be cost burdened than their younger counterparts. In Colorado Springs, unincorporated El Paso County, and the broader region, *approximately two-thirds of senior* renters spent more than 30% of their income on housing. The age disparity in cost-burdened rates is likely the result of seniors' fixed or limited incomes, which often do not keep pace with rising rents, especially in areas with few affordable units or senior-specific housing options. The findings point to the need for expanded senior-specific affordable rental and supportive housing options, particularly in suburban and rural areas where access to services may already be limited.

Figure 54. Cost-Burdened Rates among Renter Households by Householder Age, 2023

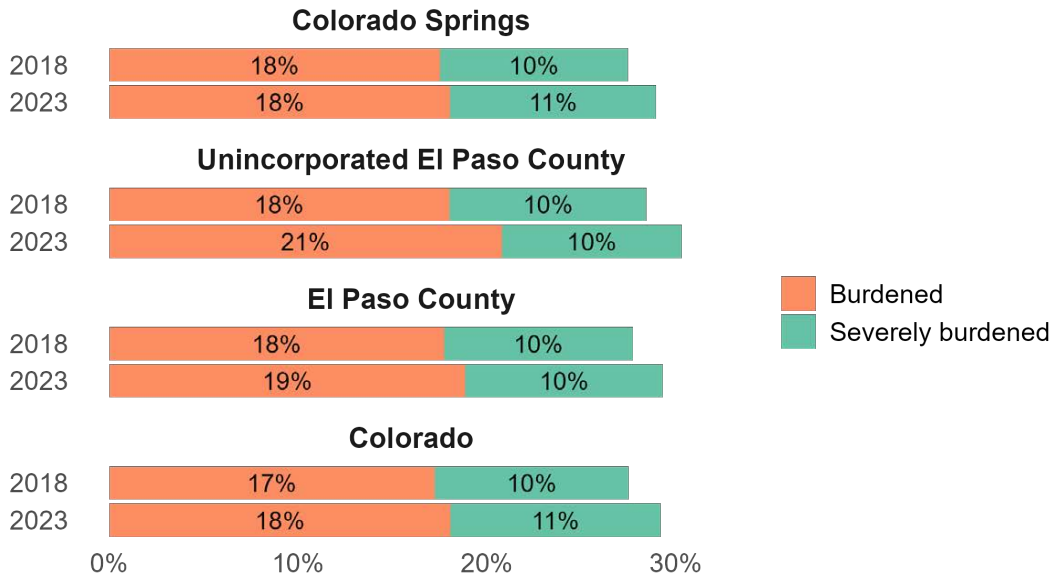


Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Households were considered cost burdened if gross rent represented 30% or more of household income. Values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Cost-Burdened Homeowners

Figure 55 presents the share of owner-occupied households with a mortgage that were burdened or severely burdened by total ownership costs, including the mortgage, property taxes, insurance, utilities, and other fees. Across Colorado Springs, unincorporated El Paso County, El Paso County overall, and Colorado, cost-burdened rates increased modestly from 2018 to 2023, *rising to approximately 30%*. The pace was not proportionate to the significant rise in home prices and mortgage interest rates that occurred over the same period. Several factors help explain the apparent disconnect. Many long-time homeowners are insulated from current market conditions due to the fixed-rate nature of their mortgages, which stabilizes monthly housing costs over time. Additionally, newer buyers who purchased during the pandemic likely did so at historically low interest rates, while others who entered the market more recently tend to have higher incomes and wealth levels, due in part to strict price-to-income ratio requirements that limit financial overextension. These dynamics introduce a selection bias: Only households that meet stringent credit and income criteria are able to purchase homes, which helps contain overall cost-burdened rates among mortgaged owners. It is also important to note that the 2023 five-year ACS includes data from 2019 and 2020, when both interest rates and home prices were relatively low. As such, the full effect of more recent home price and interest rate increases may not be captured by these estimates.

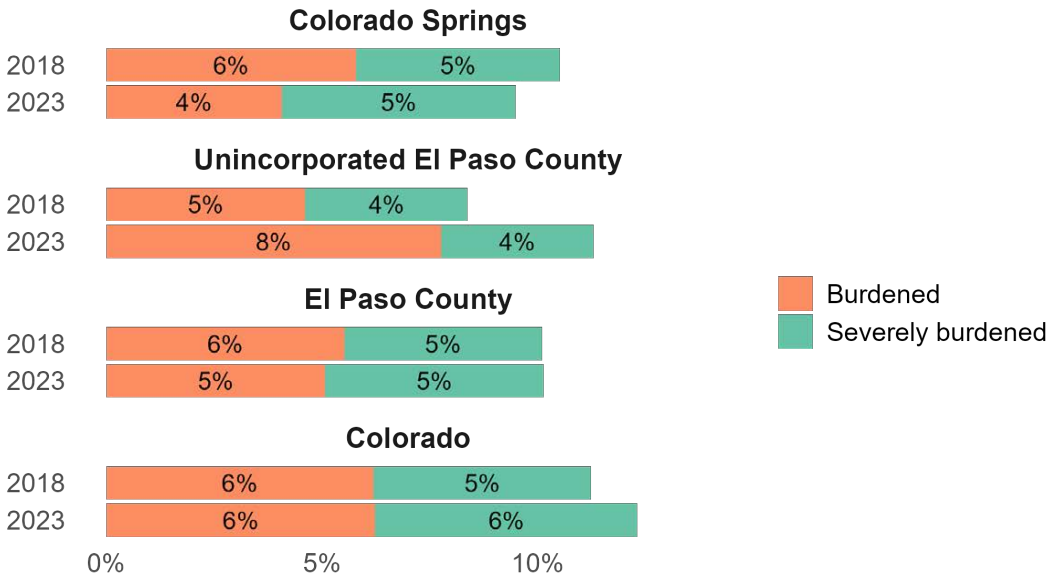
Figure 55. Cost-Burdened Rates among Owner-Occupied Households with a Mortgage, 2018 and 2023



Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: "Burdened" households spent from 30% to 49.9% of household income on total ownership costs, compared to 50% or more for "severely burdened" households. The 2018 values represent five-year estimates covering the period from 2014 to 2018, while the 2023 values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

The affordability landscape is markedly different for homeowners without a mortgage (see Figure 56). Predictably, these homeowners are significantly less likely than their mortgaged counterparts to spend more than 30% of their income on housing. In 2023, *9% of such households in Colorado Springs* were cost burdened, compared to *10% across El Paso County* and *12% in unincorporated El Paso County and statewide*. The figures have barely shifted over time, which may reflect the relative financial stability of this group or statistical limitations in the underlying data. While only a small share of homeowners without a mortgage face housing-related financial stress, they still represent a meaningful segment of the population, many of whom are older adults living on fixed incomes. Even without a mortgage, these residents can face affordability pressures from rising property taxes, insurance premiums, and maintenance costs, underscoring the importance of housing policy that accounts for the full spectrum of housing-related expenses.

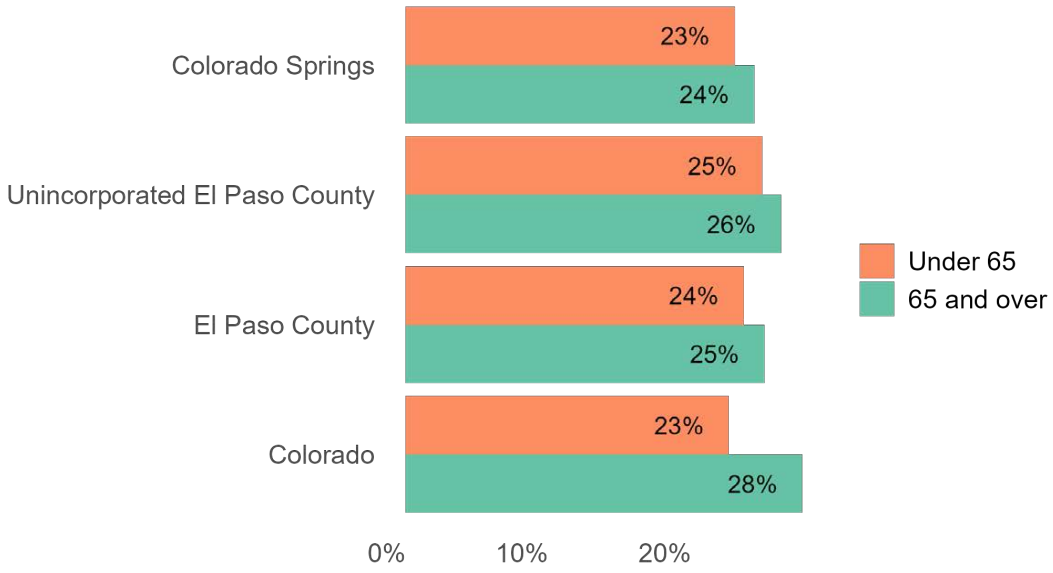
Figure 56. Cost-Burdened Rates among Owner-Occupied Households without a Mortgage, 2018 and 2023



Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: "Burdened" households spent from 30% to 49.9% of household income on total ownership costs, compared to 50% or more for "severely burdened" households. The 2018 values represent five-year estimates covering the period from 2014 to 2018, while the 2023 values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Figure 57 presents 2023 cost-burden data for owner-occupied households, distinguishing between those headed by individuals under age 65 and those 65 and older. Across all geographies, younger homeowners were generally less likely to be cost burdened, though the differences in financial strain were minimal at the local level. In Colorado Springs, *23% of homeowners under age 65* spent more than 30% of their income on housing, just one percentage point lower than the cost-burdened rate among *those aged 65 and older*. Notably, 29% of all Colorado Springs owner-occupied households were headed by seniors. In unincorporated El Paso County, cost-burdened rates were similar. Statewide, the gap between senior and non-senior cost-burdened rates was more pronounced, likely due to the soaring home prices that other parts of Colorado have seen in recent years. The age disparity in cost-burden rates is likely the result of a confluence of factors, including higher household incomes and labor force participation among younger homeowners, as well as greater access to financing tools such as down payment assistance. In contrast, many older homeowners live on fixed incomes, and even if they own their homes outright, rising property taxes, insurance, and maintenance costs can contribute to financial strain. The age disparity in cost-burden rates highlights how both market timing and income stability influence long-term housing affordability.

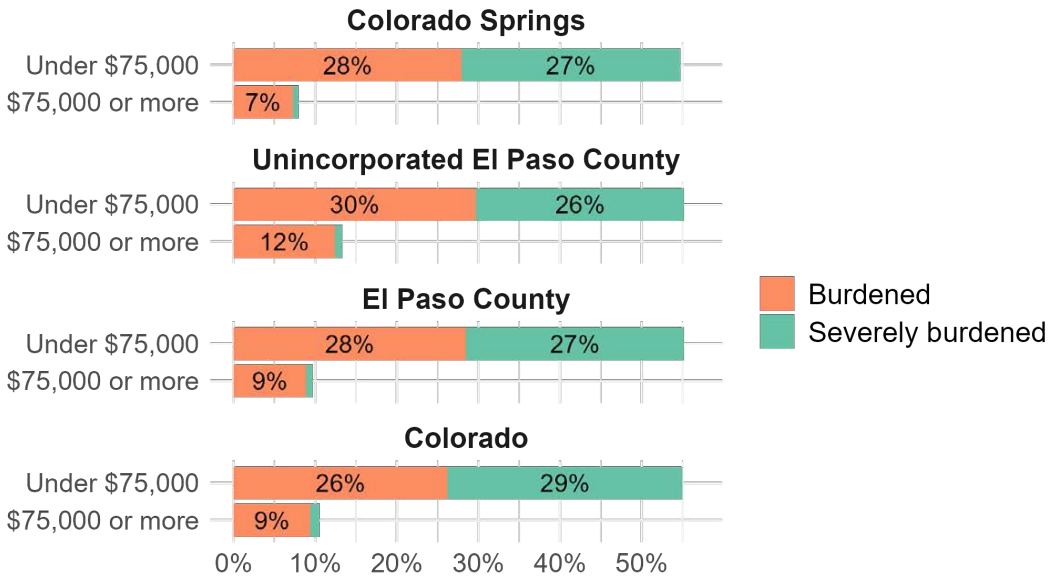
Figure 57. Cost-Burdened Rates among Owner-Occupied Households by Householder Age, 2023



Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Households were considered cost burdened if total ownership costs represented 30% or more of household income. Values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Figure 58 shows a clear relationship between income and housing cost burden among homeowners across the region. In 2023, *55% or more of homeowners earning under $75,000 were cost burdened* in Colorado Springs, unincorporated El Paso County, El Paso County overall, and statewide, underscoring the intense financial pressure faced by lower-income homeowners. These households often lack the resources to absorb rising insurance premiums, utility costs, and unexpected repairs, leaving them especially vulnerable to increased homeownership expenses. By contrast, the cost-burdened rate among higher-income homeowners was substantially lower, falling *below 10% in most areas*. Unincorporated El Paso County was a partial exception, with nearly *15% of higher-income homeowners* experiencing housing strain, perhaps due to newer, higher-cost homes that demand more substantial monthly outlays. The data point to a persistent equity gap in the homeownership experience: Wealthier households are better positioned to benefit from the long-term financial advantages of owning, whereas lower-income owners are more likely to face ongoing affordability risks that can compromise housing stability and limit opportunities for wealth building.

Figure 58. Cost-Burdened Rates among Owner-Occupied Households by Income Level, 2023



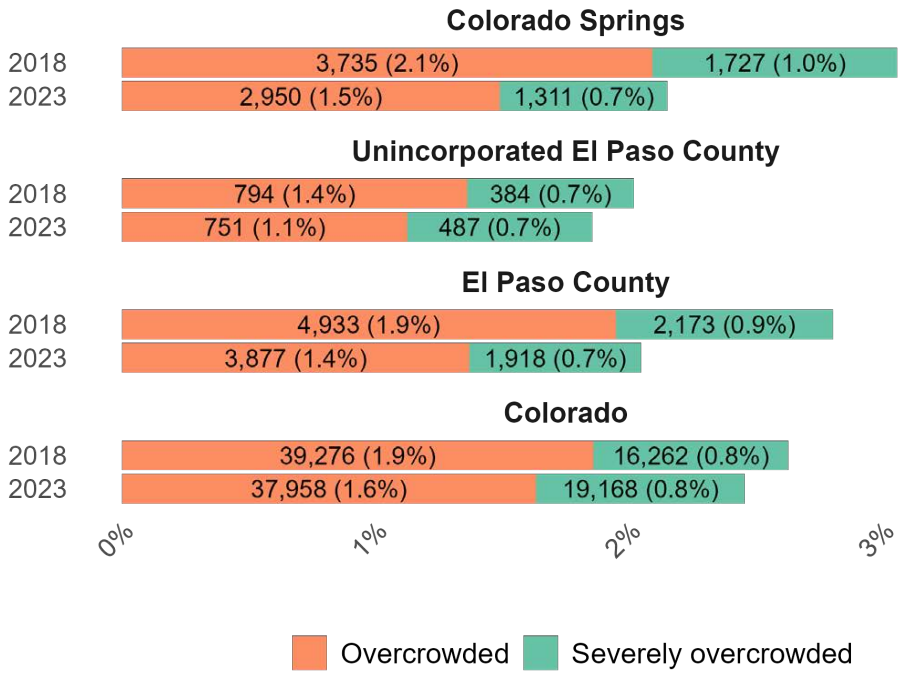
Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: "Burdened" households spent from 30% to 49.9% of household income on total ownership costs, compared to 50% or more for "severely burdened" households. Values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Overcrowding

Figure 59 displays data on household overcrowding, a condition defined by the U.S. Census as having more than one occupant per room. In 2023, *1.5% of households (2,950 total) in Colorado Springs* were considered overcrowded, with 1.01 to 1.5 occupants per room, while an additional *0.7%* (1,311 total) had 1.51 or more occupants per room, meeting the definition of severely overcrowded. In unincorporated El Paso County overcrowding was notably less common than in Colorado Springs and the county more broadly. This may be due to unincorporated areas' larger average unit sizes, lower housing density, and greater reliance on single-family development. Statewide, overcrowding occurred at a higher incidence, likely due to the elevated rates seen in more expensive, higher-demand markets, such as the Denver metro area and mountain resort communities, where lower-wage workers often double up to meet housing costs. Encouragingly, overcrowding rates have declined both regionally and statewide over time, but continued monitoring is critical to ensure that affordability challenges do not push more households into inadequate or crowded housing situations. Overcrowded living conditions are linked to a host of negative outcomes, including diminished academic performance among children, strained interpersonal relationships, poor mental and physical health, and accelerated wear and tear on housing units.[7]

[7] For example, see Goux, D., & Maurin, E. (2005). The effect of overcrowded housing on children's performance at school. *Journal of Public Economics*, 89(5–6), 797–819; Solari, C. D., & Mare, R. D. (2012). Housing crowding effects on children's wellbeing. Social Science Research, 41(2), 464–476.

Figure 59. Overcrowding Rates by Region, 2018 and 2023



Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: "Overcrowded" households have between 1.01 and 1.50 occupants per room. "Severely overcrowded" households have 1.51 or more occupants per room. The 2018 values represent five-year estimates covering the period from 2014 to 2018, while the 2023 values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Homelessness

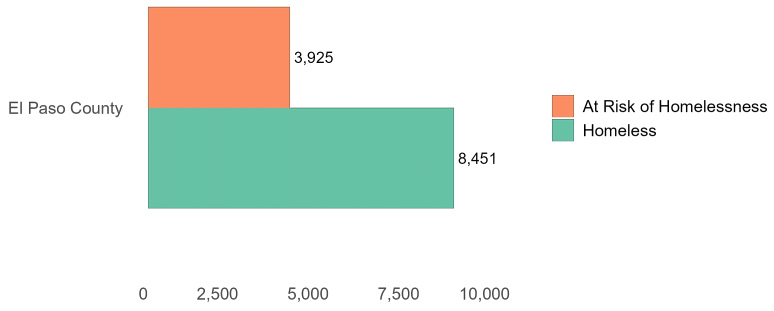
Note: for additional detailed analysis and discussion, please see Appendix A – Homelessness Analysis

Multiple data sources offer insight into the scale of homelessness in El Paso County, though each has limitations. The most recent 2025 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count recorded 1,745 individuals experiencing homelessness in the Colorado Springs Continuum of Care, a substantial 52% increase from 1,146 individuals in 2024.[8] This snapshot method is widely understood to undercount the true population. Conducted annually by the Pikes Peak Continuums of Care, the PIT count relies on outreach teams, shelter records, and volunteers to tally individuals experiencing homelessness over the course of one winter night, an approach that misses many who are unsheltered, temporarily doubled up, or otherwise hidden. Based on additional research supported by Data-Driven Economic Strategies, broader administrative datasets provide higher estimates: the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) recorded 5,178 individuals accessing federally funded homelessness programs over a 12-month period, while a more inclusive version of the HMIS that incorporates outreach and prevention services reported 6,846 individuals. Self-reported data from Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applications suggests an even higher total. *On average in 2024, 8,451 individuals (representing 6,912 households) were experiencing homelessness at any given point in time.* Notably, the SNAP data show that *homelessness increased by 144% between 2019 and 2024.* Student data collected under the McKinney-Vento Act identified 1,614 homeless youth in county schools, most of whom would be excluded from PIT methodology due to their precarious but mostly sheltered living arrangements. Each dataset captures different segments of the homeless population, and together they point to a significantly larger and more complex crisis than any single source reveals on its own.

[8] This rise is largely attributable to an increase in volunteers who count homeless individuals from approximately 25 in 2024 to 125 in 2025. In addition, there were expanded outreach efforts by the local Homeless Union, which successfully reached more unsheltered individuals.

Figure 60 reveals that while an *estimated 8,451 individuals in El Paso County have indicated they are homeless, an additional 3,925 residents are at high risk* of becoming homeless due to severe housing cost burdens. The estimate of those at risk of homelessness was developed by applying nationally established probabilities of homelessness—originally derived from PIT-based research—to the number of severely cost-burdened households in El Paso County. Specifically, the literature finds that 0.25% of cost-burdened households and 0.50% of severely cost-burdened households experience homelessness each year, with probabilities halved for homeowners. Because these rates are based on PIT counts, they likely understate the true scale of need. They were therefore adjusted using the more comprehensive SNAP-based count of homelessness.

Figure 60. Estimated Homeless and At-Risk Populations in El Paso County

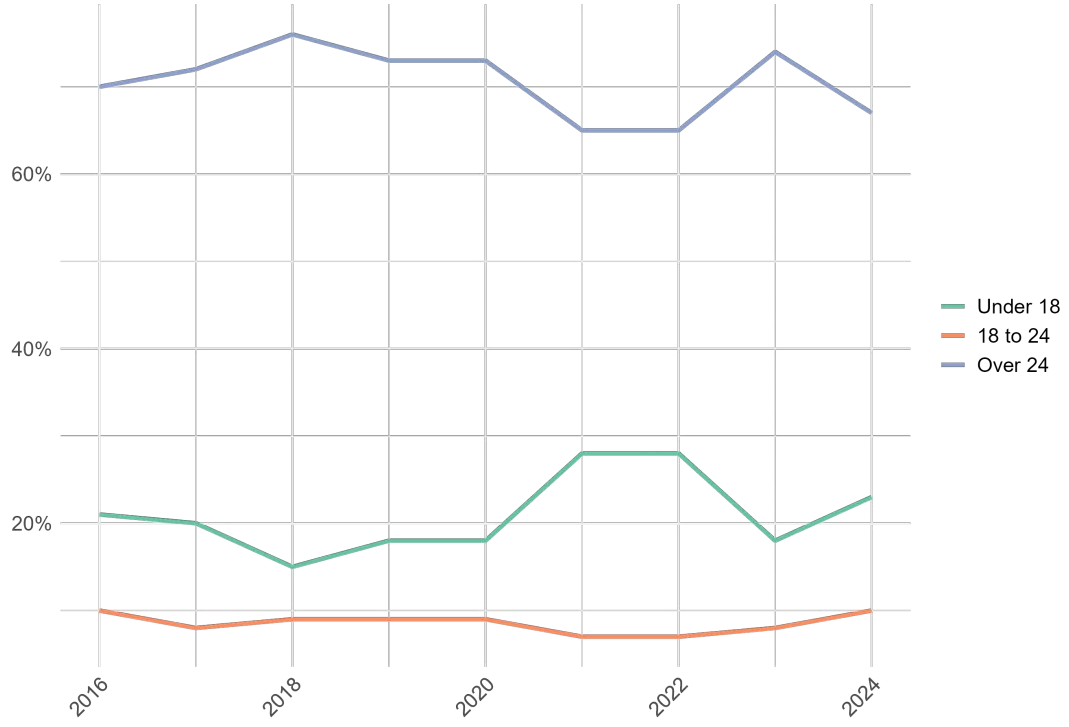


Source: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Five-Year American Community Survey; Data-Driven Economic Strategies; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: The estimated number of individuals experiencing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness are based on their share of below 50% AMI households.

Experiencing homelessness during childhood can disrupt education, increase exposure to trauma, and negatively affect physical and mental health

Figure 61 shows the age composition of El Paso County's homeless population from 2016 to 2024 based on PIT counts. The distribution has remained relatively stable over time, with only minor year-to-year fluctuations. As of 2024, *individuals under 18 made up 23% of the homeless population,* while young adults ages 18 to 24 accounted for 10%. The majority (67%) were adults over the age of 24. Data on the 55-years-and-older population specifically are only available for 2023 and 2024, with these groups representing 22% and 18% of those experiencing homelessness, respectively. These figures suggest that homelessness in the region is not concentrated within a single age group, but spans across the life course. The fact that nearly one in four people experiencing homelessness is a child (and, as noted previously, likely undercounted) underscores the need for family- and school-based interventions. For working-age and older populations, homelessness is indicative of ongoing challenges related to economic stability, housing affordability, and service access.

Figure 61. Age Composition of El Paso County Homeless Population, 2016-2024

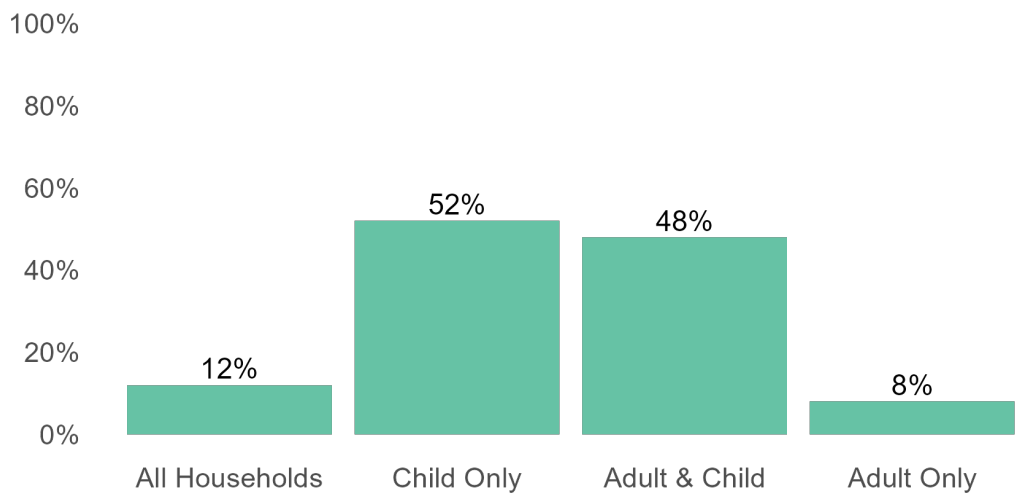


Source: HUD Point in Time Count; Data-Driven Economic Strategies; Matrix Design Group, Inc.

As Figure 62 shows, *only 12% of all households exiting the homelessness response system in El Paso County were documented to have transitioned into permanent housing according to the HMIS report* —a figure that underscores the limited reach of successful housing placements. Outcomes varied widely by household type. Among those who secured permanent housing, 52% were child-only households and 48% were households with both adults and children, while just 8% were adult-only households. Even among those who did transition into stable housing, sustainability remained a challenge: 12% returned to homelessness within six months. These disparities point to systemic gaps in how housing resources are targeted and highlight the need for more tailored interventions, particularly for single adults who face the lowest rates of permanent housing placement and the highest risk of cycling back into homelessness.

Without sufficient affordable housing options and supportive services, individuals and families remain stuck in temporary shelters or unsheltered situations. Strengthening the pipeline to stable housing is essential to reducing chronic homelessness and ensuring that emergency interventions lead to lasting outcomes.

Figure 62. Share of El Paso County Homeless Households Exiting to Permanent Housing by Type, 2024

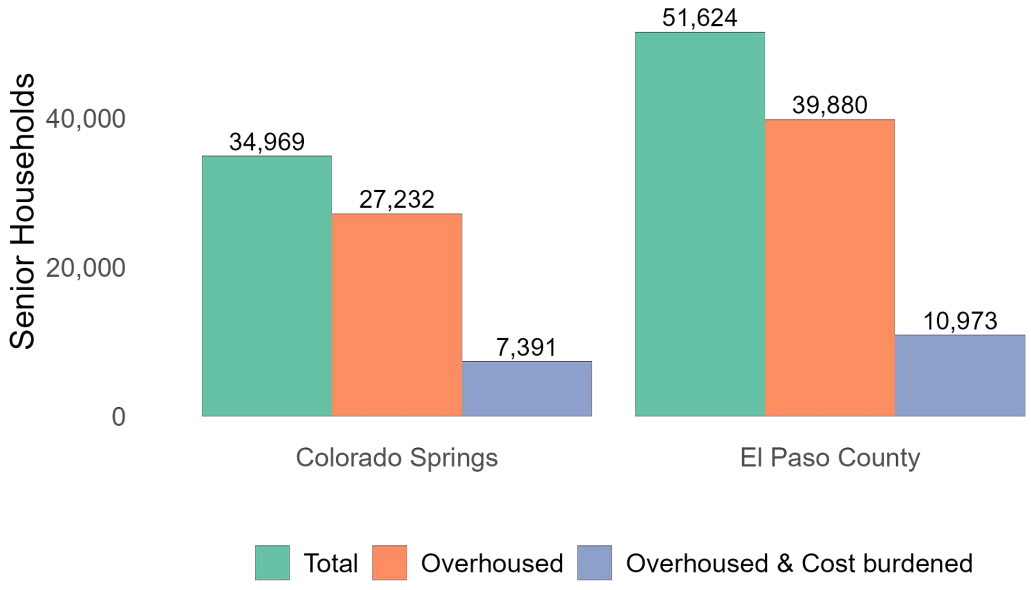


Source: HUD Longitudinal Systems Analysis; Data-Driven Economic Strategies; Matrix Design Group, Inc.

Senior Housing Mobility Challenges

Rapid real estate appreciation, combined with higher interest rates, limits mobility in the housing market, especially among seniors and other groups living on fixed or limited incomes. Seniors who are both overhoused and cost burdened represent a population that would be more likely to downsize if affordable, appropriately sized options were more widely available. Consistent with HUD definitions, a senior household is considered overhoused if a single older adult lives in a unit with two or more bedrooms, or if a two-person senior household occupies a unit with three or more bedrooms. A substantial share of senior households in both Colorado Springs and El Paso County appear to be overhoused, meaning they occupy more space than is typically needed based on household size (see Figure 63). In Colorado Springs, *27,232 of the city's 34,969 senior households (nearly 78%) were overhoused.* Among that subset of senior households, 27% were cost burdened. In El Paso County overall, a similar proportion of senior homeowners were considered overhoused and cost-burdened. The findings suggest a misalignment between the financial and spatial needs of older adults and the housing options currently available in the market.

Figure 63. Overhousing and Cost Burden Prevalence Among Senior Households

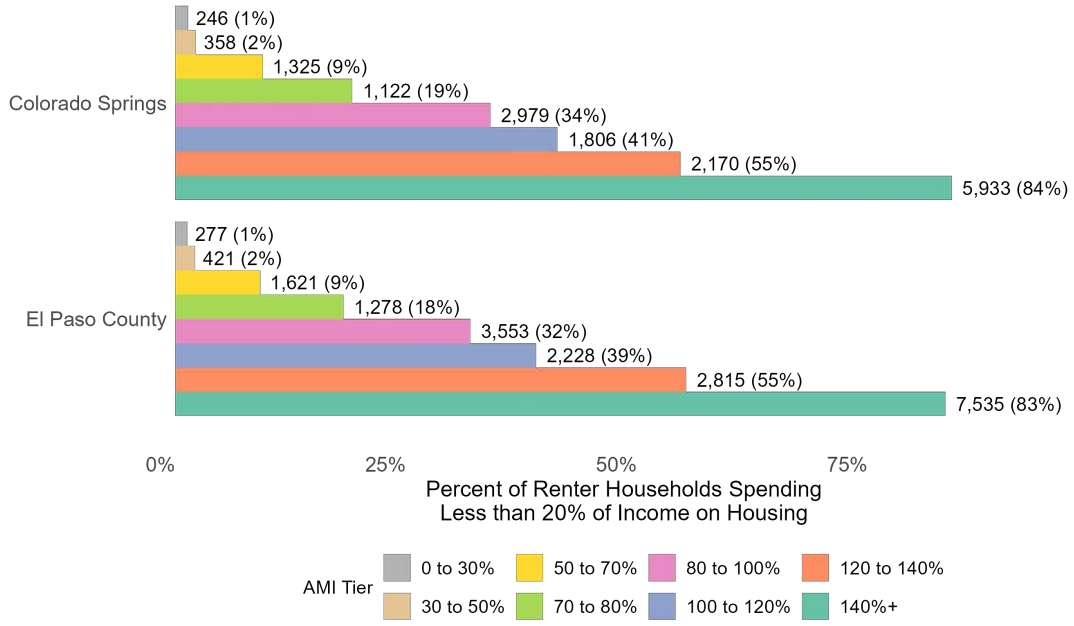


Source: Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: The Public Use Microdata Sample cannot be used to generate reliable estimates for unincorporated El Paso County.

Income-Unit Mismatch in the Rental Market

Figure 64 focuses on a critical dynamic in the local rental market: the extent to which higher-income households occupy units that would typically be considered affordable to lower-income renters. The figure displays the share of renters in both Colorado Springs and El Paso County who spent less than 20% of their household income on rent, a phenomenon often referred to as "renting down." Among households earning below 50% of AMI, renting down is exceedingly rare, an indication of the limited availability of truly affordable options for those with the greatest need. However, as income levels rise, the prevalence of renting down increases sharply. *More than half of renters* earning between 120% and 140% of AMI spent less than 20% of their income on housing, and that share climbs to *over 80%* among households earning above 140% of AMI. The findings suggest that many higher-income renters are occupying units that might otherwise serve lower-income households, contributing to affordability challenges and reducing the availability of lower-cost rentals for those who need them most. This dynamic further illustrates the importance of income-targeted housing strategies and preservation efforts, particularly the expansion and protection of income-restricted units to ensure that affordable housing remains accessible to those with the greatest financial need.

Figure 64. Prevalence of "Renting Down" By AMI Level in Colorado Springs and El Paso County, 2023



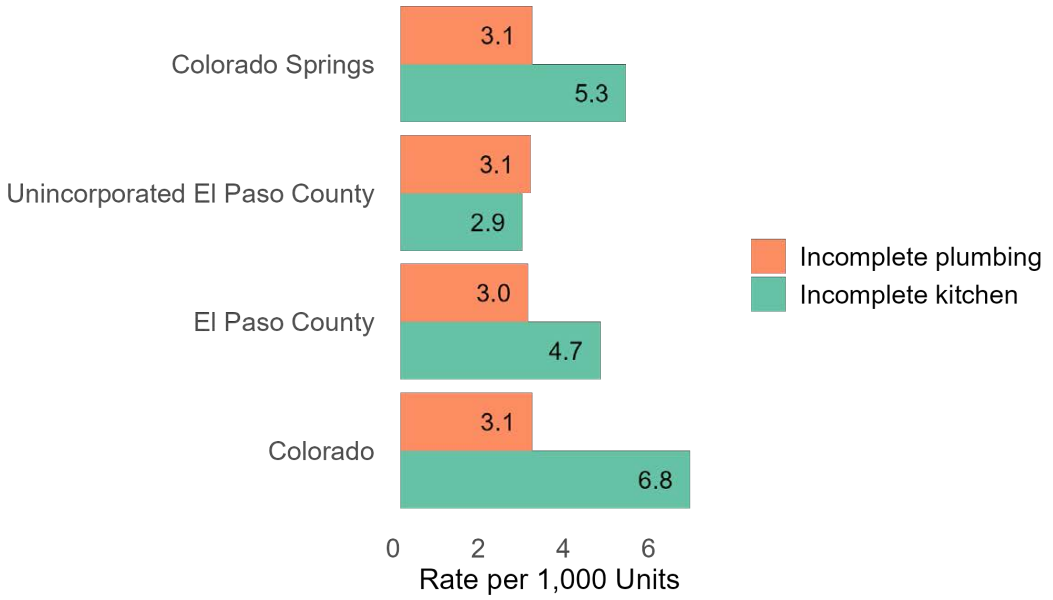
Source: Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: The Public Use Microdata Sample cannot be used to generate reliable estimates for unincorporated El Paso County. Due to data limitations, HUD's published FY 2023 median family income (MFI) for the area ($105,100) serves as a substitute for AMI. Values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Substandard Housing

Substandard housing units impact a small but notable share of housing units across the region, raising concerns about resident health, safety, and quality of life

Figure 65 offers insight into the incidence of incomplete plumbing and kitchen facilities—widely recognized as the standard measure of substandard housing conditions. Regionally and statewide, *approximately three out of every 1,000 housing units* lacked complete plumbing facilities, indicating relatively low but still notable levels of deficiency. There was more geographic variation in the rate of incomplete kitchen facilities. In Colorado Springs, *5.3 units per 1,000* lacked complete kitchens, a far higher rate than that seen in unincorporated El Paso County *(2.9 per 1,000).* Statewide, incomplete kitchen facilities were even more prevalent, impacting about seven out of every 1,000 units. Although these figures may appear modest, incomplete kitchen and plumbing facilities can compromise health, hygiene, and basic quality of life. Tracking these indicators remains essential for identifying properties in need of rehabilitation and for informing code enforcement and housing assistance efforts.

Figure 65. Substandard Housing Rates by Region, 2023

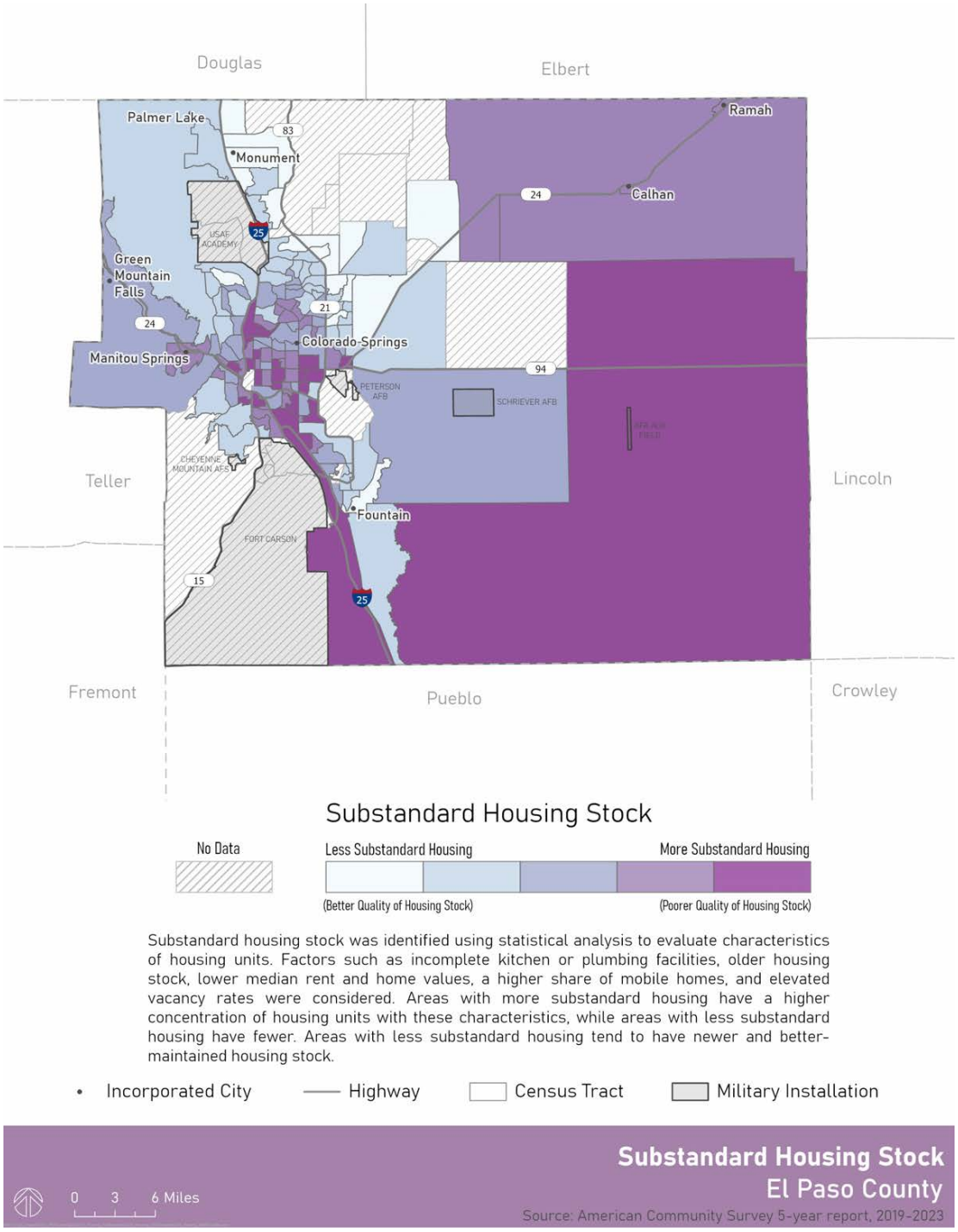


Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Figure 66 visualizes the prevalence of substandard housing across El Paso County. The census-tract level was constructed using principal components analysis (PCA), a statistical method that combines multiple related variables into a single index that captures the overall pattern across data points. In this case, the index integrates a range of housing quality indicators: the share of homes classified by the ACS as "Other Vacant" (which often signals abandonment or disrepair), the rate of incomplete kitchen and plumbing facilities, median rent and home value (as a proxy for reinvestment), the prevalence of mobile homes (which are more vulnerable to deterioration), and the median age of housing units.

Darker tracts on the map indicate areas with a higher concentration of potential housing quality issues. While some of the most acute needs are found in older urban neighborhoods, substandard conditions are not confined to the city core. In fact, several tracts in unincorporated El Paso County also register high on the index, challenging the perception that poor housing quality is strictly an urban issue. By pinpointing these areas, the index can serve as a practical tool for policymakers and local governments seeking to prioritize code enforcement, rehabilitation funding, or infrastructure improvements in communities with the greatest need.

Figure 66. Prevalence of Substandard Housing by Census Tract, 2023

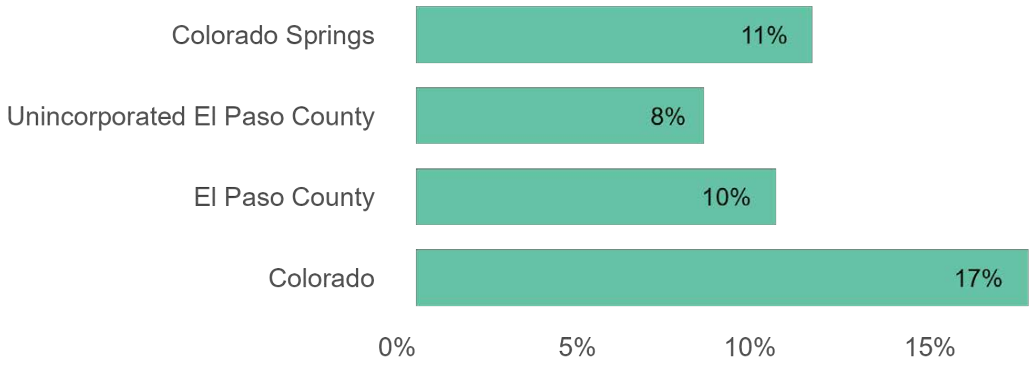


Underserved Low-Income Households

In the Colorado Springs region, subsidized housing coverage rates are low compared to the rest of the state

A relatively small share of low-income renters in the Colorado Springs region live in subsidized housing, illustrating the limited reach of federal assistance programs in meeting local affordability needs. These programs include Public Housing, Housing Choice Vouchers (tenant-based Section 8), Project-Based Section 8, and other legacy HUD rental assistance programs (see Figure 67). Among renter households earning less than 50% of AMI, just *11% in Colorado Springs* lived in subsidized units, compared to *8% in unincorporated El Paso County* and *10% across the county overall*. This stands in contrast to the statewide rate of 17%, suggesting the region's most economically vulnerable residents are particularly disadvantaged in finding federally supported housing. Possible explanations include limited local allocations of vouchers, a shortage of project-based developments, or barriers to expanding new subsidized housing. The implications are significant: Without access to stable, income-restricted units, many low-income households must turn to an increasingly expensive and competitive private rental market, heightening risks of cost burden, overcrowding, or displacement.

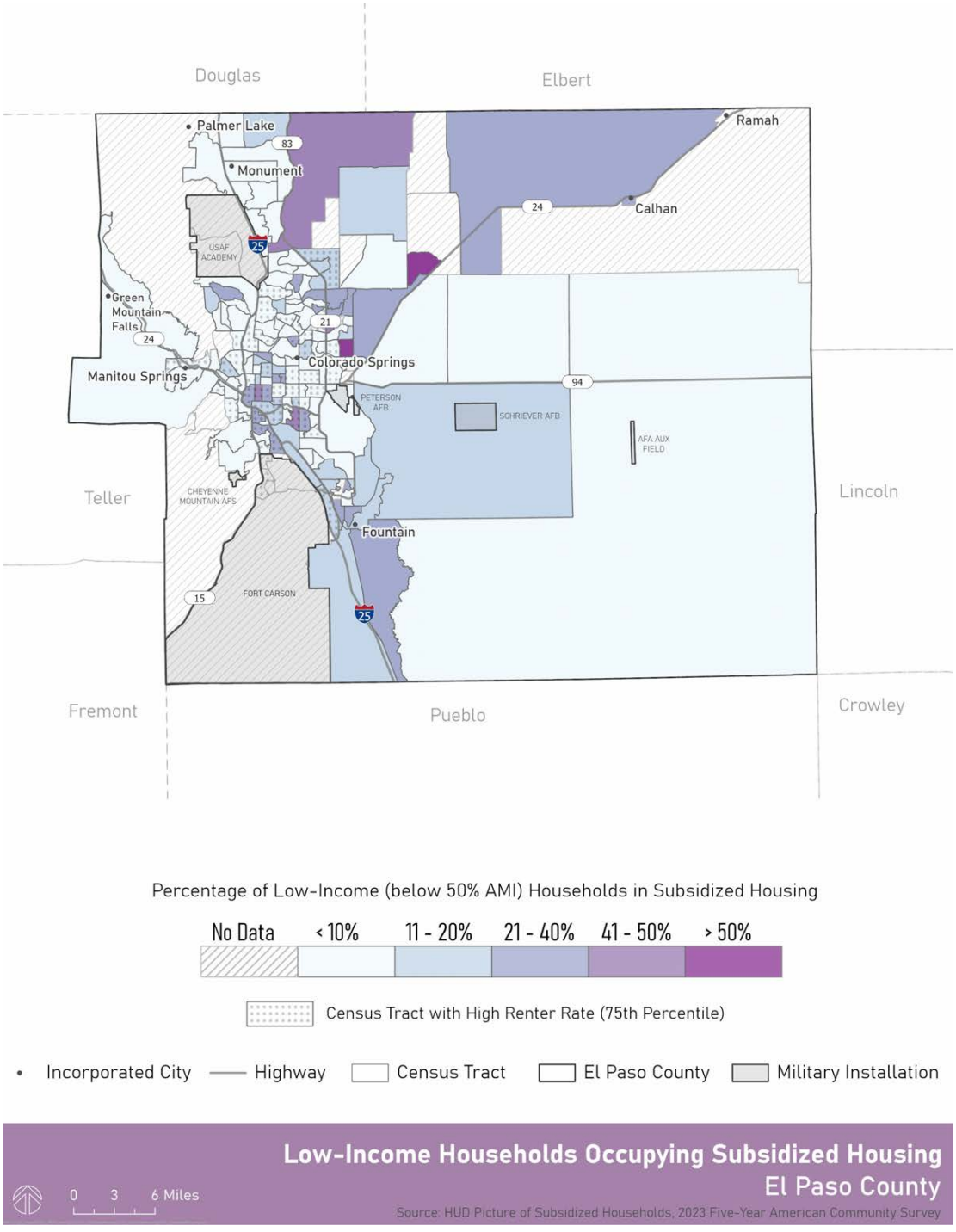
Figure 67. Federally Subsidized Housing Coverage Rates among Below 50% AMI Renter Households by Region



Source: HUD Picture of Subsidized Households; Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Data pertain to households receiving HUD-administered rental assistance, including Public Housing, Housing Choice Vouchers (tenant-based Section 8), Project-Based Section 8, and other legacy programs. Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) units are excluded unless they also receive HUD rental subsidies. Due to data limitations, HUD's published FY 2023 median family income (MFI) for the area ($105,100) serves as a substitute for AMI.

Figure 68 displays the share of renter households earning below 50% AMI who live in subsidized housing across census tracts in El Paso County. This map provides a valuable lens into where deeply affordable housing is—and is not—reaching the lowest-income renters. Importantly, the map also denotes areas with higher concentrations of below-50% AMI households, helping contextualize coverage rates by showing where the need is most substantial. For example, while some tracts display relatively high coverage rates, these often correspond to areas with few low-income renters, which reduces the practical significance of the coverage rate. In contrast, *many neighborhoods within Colorado Springs fall below the citywide coverage rate of 11%*, despite hosting significantly larger populations of low-income renters. This disparity suggests that many communities with substantial need remain underserved by the current distribution of subsidized housing.

Figure 68. Federally Subsidized Housing Coverage Rates among Below 50% AMI Renter Households by Census Tract



Displacement Risk

Table 9 introduces a set of core displacement risk metrics for Colorado Springs, unincorporated El Paso County, and the county as a whole, following guidelines established by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA). These demographic, socioeconomic, and housing indicators serve as correlates of displacement risk, in that they are associated with, but do not directly cause, displacement pressures. The measures include, among others, the percent of the population with a disability, the share of overcrowded households, the relative size of the racial or ethnic minority population, and the percentage of housing stock built before 1970. Considered together, these indicators provide a comprehensive view of a community's vulnerability to displacement under difficult market conditions.

Table 9. Key Displacement Risk Metrics for Colorado Springs and Unincorporated El Paso County, 2023

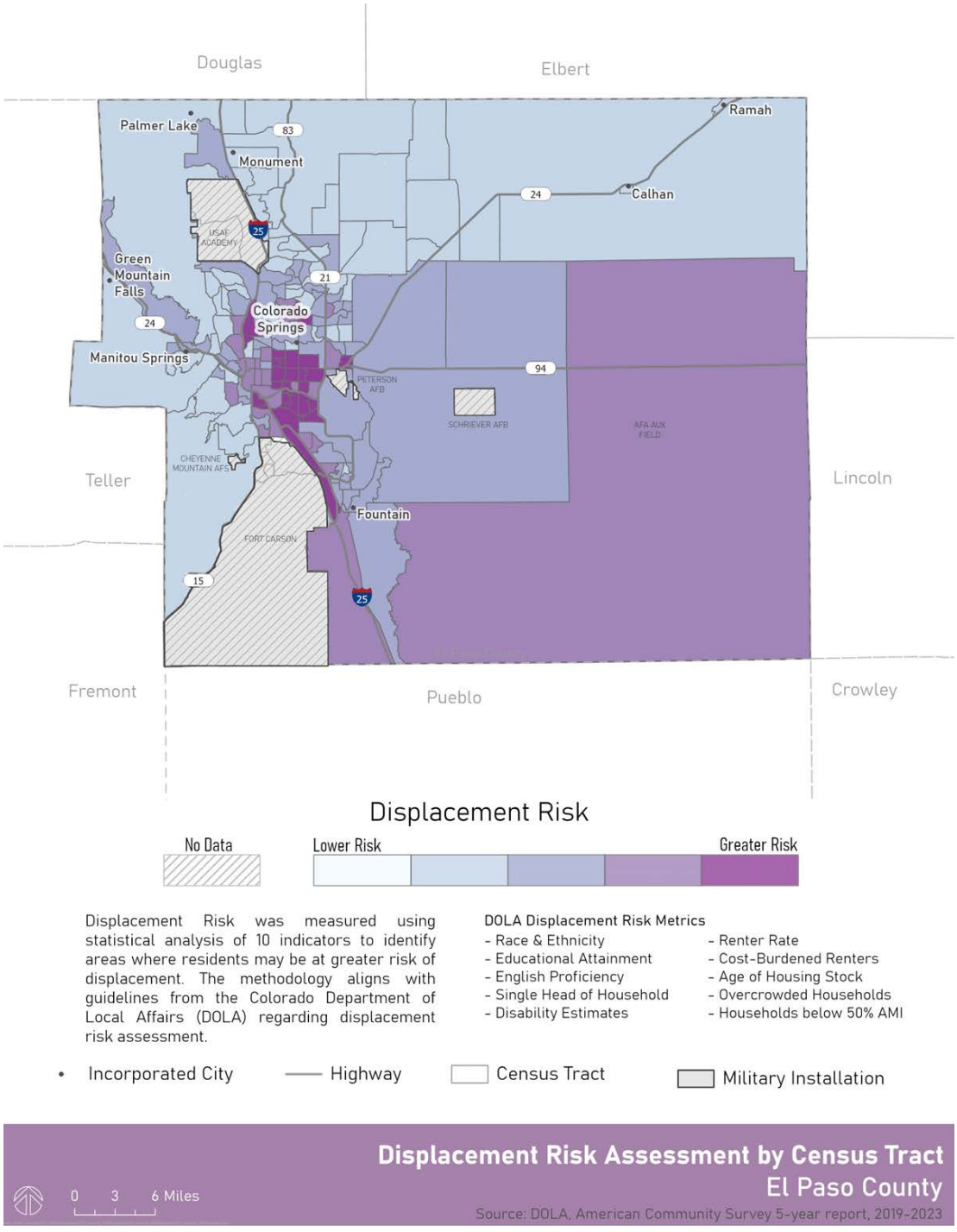
Metric (%)	Colorado Springs	Unincorporated El Paso County	El Paso County
Population with a Disability	13%	11%	13%
Overcrowded Households	2%	2%	2%
Racial or Ethnic Minority Population	34%	33%	34%
Housing Stock Built Before 1970	23%	12%	21%
Population with Limited English-Speaking Ability	1%	1%	1%
Single-Parent-Led-Households	8%	7%	8%
25-and-Over Population without a High School Diploma or Equivalent	5%	4%	5%
Cost-Burdened Households	67%	65%	67%
Renter Households	39%	20%	34%
Below 30% AMI Households	15%	10%	14%
Below 50% AMI Households	29%	22%	27%
Below 80% AMI Households	50%	40%	48%

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Due to data limitations, HUD's published FY 2023 median family income (MFI) for the area ($105,100) serves as a substitute for AMI. Values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Figure 69 presents a census tract-level map of housing displacement risk across El Paso County, providing a data-driven view of where residents may be most vulnerable to housing instability. The index combines a range of socioeconomic and housing-related indicators that the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) has identified as increasing the likelihood of displacement. Rather than focusing on any single variable, the index synthesizes multiple overlapping risk factors into a single measure using principal components analysis—a statistical method that uncovers patterns across complex datasets.

The results show that displacement risk is elevated in several tracts within Colorado Springs, particularly in southeastern neighborhoods where multiple socioeconomic vulnerabilities intersect. Areas beyond the city's outskirts, particularly in more rural or exurban parts of the county, generally exhibit lower displacement risk. Communities such as Monument generally have socioeconomically stable populations, higher homeownership rates, and newer housing stock. Note that displacement risk is also shown to be high in the tract that contains the Air Force Academy cadet area based on the data itself; however, the actual displacement risk for the cadets should be considered low.

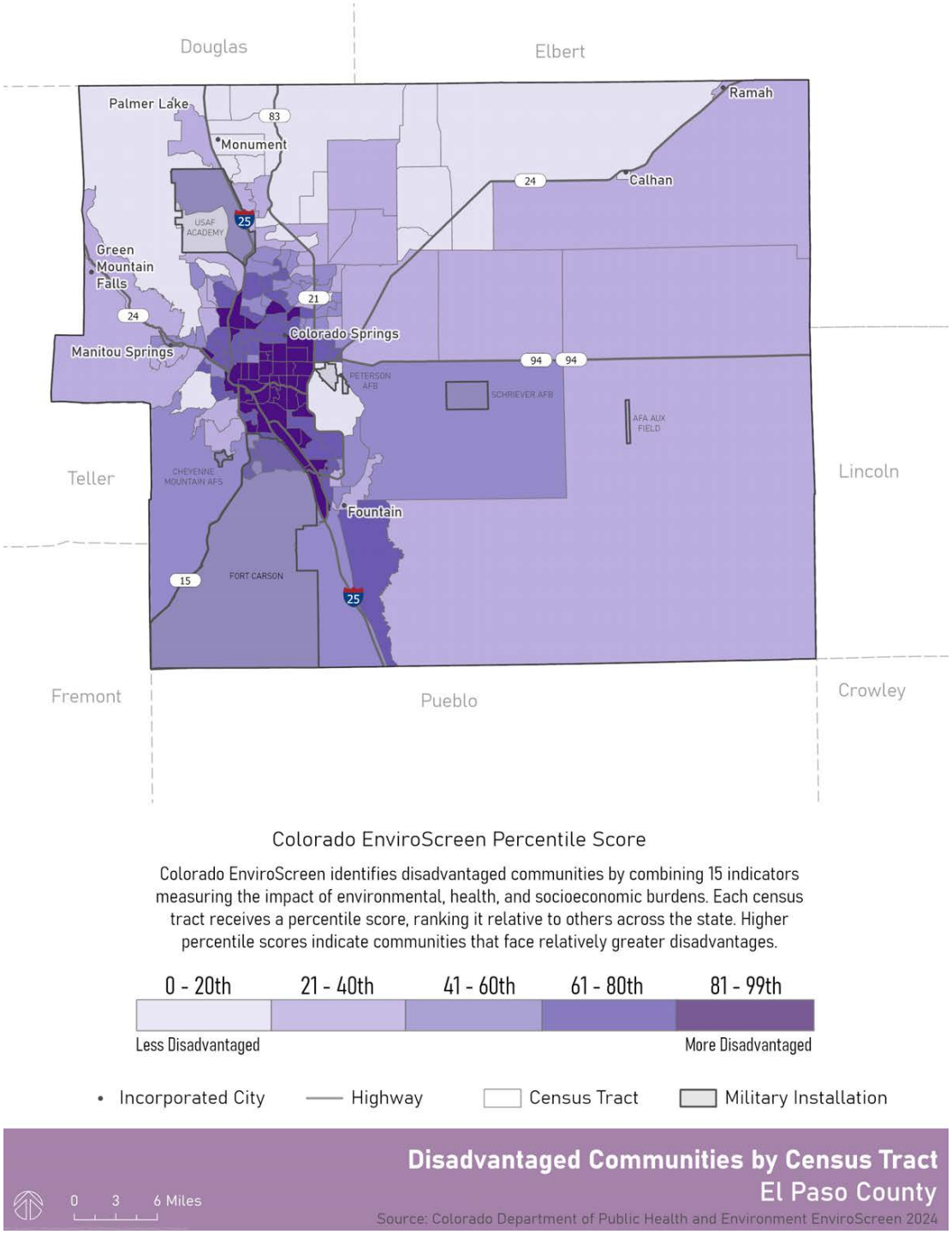
Figure 69. Displacement Risk by Census Tract, 2023



Disadvantaged Communities

Figure 70 displays the Colorado EnviroScreen percentile score by census tract, offering an alternative but complementary view of vulnerability compared to the displacement risk index. While the latter index focuses on socioeconomic and housing-related factors that predispose households to involuntary displacement—such as cost burden, overcrowding, and aging housing stock—EnviroScreen integrates environmental and health-related exposures alongside socioeconomic stressors. These include air and water quality, proximity to hazardous sites, and prevalence of chronic health conditions, among others. As a result, the EnviroScreen map reveals slightly different spatial patterns. Nonetheless, both indices indicate that the core neighborhoods of Colorado Springs face heightened risk levels. The contrast between these two indices highlights how vulnerability is multidimensional: Some communities may face elevated displacement pressures due to economic insecurity and housing stress, while others are more at risk due to environmental factors. Together, these tools provide a more holistic understanding of neighborhood-level need and can guide investments aimed at advancing both housing stability and improved environmental conditions.

Figure 70. Environmental and Social Vulnerability Score by Census Tract



Current and Projected Housing Needs

Current and Projected Housing Needs Overview

- Between 2018 and 2023, the number of low-income jobs per affordable unit nearly doubled across El Paso County, from 4.3 jobs per affordable unit to 8 jobs per affordable unit .
- Renters make up the majority of low-income households in Colorado Springs, with about 61% of households earning below 30% of AMI. Although homeownership makes up about 80% of unincorporated El Paso County, renters are overrepresented at lower incomes, with 37% of households below 50% AMI.
- Colorado Springs faced a shortfall of 27,712 housing units, including 15,937 owner units and 11,775 rental units, compared to 7,585 housing units in unincorporated El Paso County that include 6,041 owner units and 1,545 rental units.
- Over the next decade, Colorado Springs will need about 60,000 new housing units (35,000 ownership, 24,000 rental), with more than half affordable to households earning ≤80% of AMI. Unincorporated El Paso County will require about 18,600 units (14,700 ownership, 3,800 rental), 40% of which should be affordable.
- In 2023, El Paso County required approximately 22,570 housing units for its active-duty population (7% of total housing), with Colorado Springs accounting for 12,756 units (6% of the city's stock).
- In Colorado Springs, BAH for service members with dependents ranges from $2,160–$2,919, and $1,692–$2,592 without dependents. Average four-bedroom rents are $2,556 in the city and $3,042 countywide, often exceeding BAH for most ranks. In unincorporated areas, rents surpass 95% of the maximum BAH.

Key Takeaways

- There is a widening disconnect between job creation and the housing supply affordable to the workforce earning under $35,000 annually.
- Lower-income households are disproportionately renters, underscoring the need to expand and support rental housing options at appropriate price points.
- Military housing allowances often fall short of local housing costs, especially for family-sized units, leaving many service members—particularly lower- and mid-ranking personnel—unable to fully cover rent or mortgage without supplementing their pay.

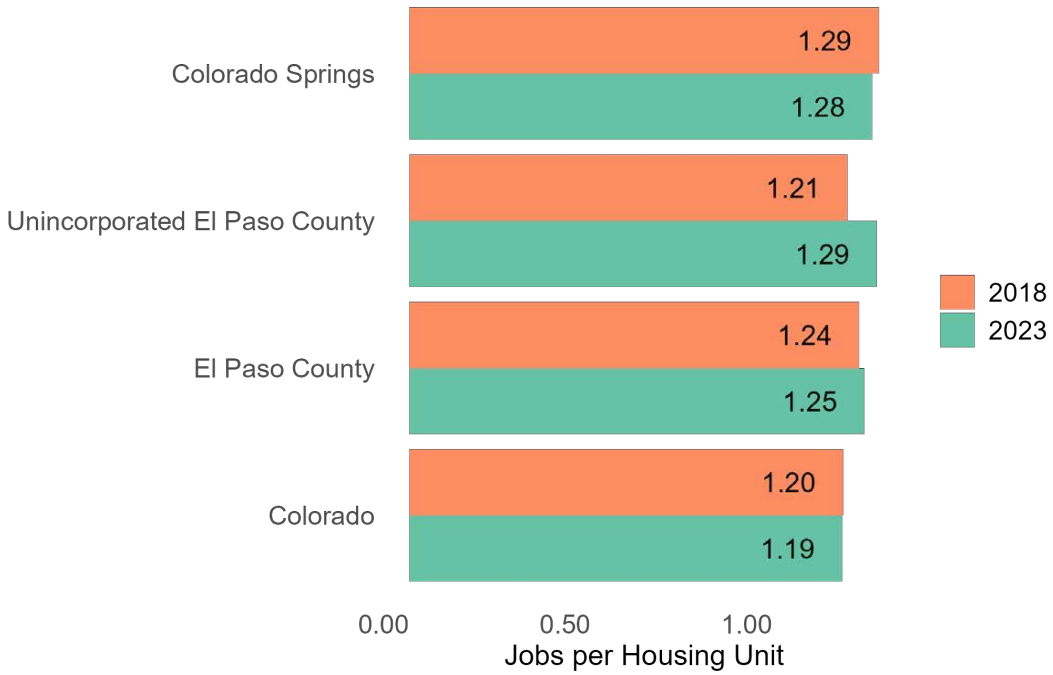
Introduction

This chapter assesses whether the current housing supply in Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County is adequate to meet existing demand and estimates how many additional units will be needed over the next decade by income level and tenure. It also explores the relationship between housing availability and job growth, with particular attention to the mismatch between the region's affordable housing stock and its base of low-wage employment. Importantly, the section addresses housing needs among special populations, including residents with mobility limitations and active-duty military households. In addition, it introduces the concept of a healthy housing inventory—defined as the number of units needed not only to meet current demand but to maintain adequate vacancy, support household mobility, and accommodate a portion of the region's commuting workforce. These findings clarify where housing gaps are most severe, who is affected, and what types of units are most urgently needed to promote a more balanced housing market.

Jobs-Housing Balance

Figure 71 presents data on the number of jobs per housing unit, offering a lens into how well the region's housing supply has kept pace with employment growth. As of 2023, Colorado Springs, El Paso County, and its unincorporated areas each had *approximately 1.3 jobs per housing unit*. This ratio exceeded the statewide average, indicating less housing availability per job in the Colorado Springs region than in Colorado overall. Within Colorado Springs, the ratio has remained stable since 2018, implying that housing units and jobs have increased at comparable rates. In unincorporated El Paso County, however, the ratio increased *from 1.2 to 1.3*, signaling either accelerated job growth or lagging housing production. Rising jobs-to-housing ratios are a sign of mounting housing demand and may also lead to affordability pressures, workforce displacement, and longer commutes as workers struggle to find housing near jobs. As such, continued efforts to expand the housing supply, particularly in proximity to job centers, are critical to not only economic development but also quality of life.

Figure 71. Jobs-to-Housing Ratio by Region, 2018 and 2023

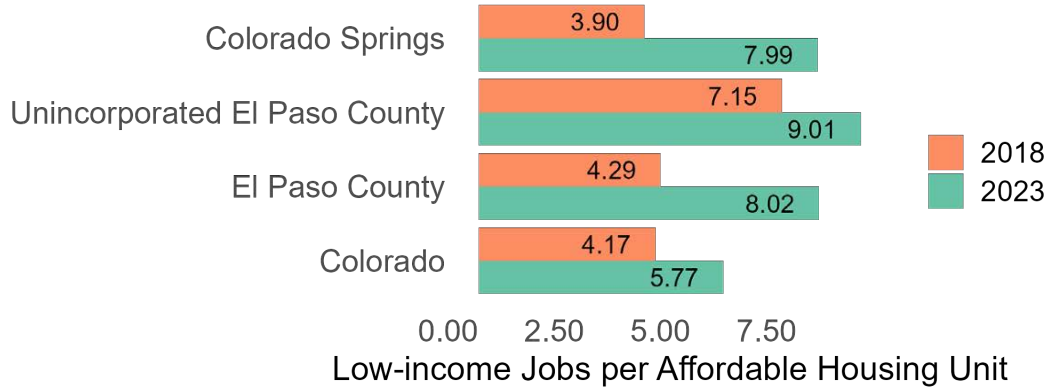


Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: The 2018 values represent five-year estimates covering the period from 2014 to 2018, while the 2023 values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Colorado Springs has eight low-income jobs per housing unit, and the imbalance in unincorporated El Paso County is similarly stark

Building on the broader jobs-to-housing dynamic, Figure 72 focuses specifically on the ratio of low-income jobs—defined here as positions paying less than $35,000 annually—to housing units affordable to those workers. Affordable units are defined as those with rents that do not exceed 30% of income for renters or sale prices below three times income for homeowners. The data reveal a sharp increase in the number of low-income jobs per affordable unit between 2018 and 2023, particularly in Colorado Springs, where the ratio *more than doubled from 3.9 to approximately 8*. In unincorporated El Paso County, the ratio also rose, *from 7.2 to about 9*, suggesting a widening disconnect between job creation and the supply of housing affordable to the workforce earning under $35,000 annually. These ratios now far exceed the statewide average of 5.8, which itself includes high-cost resort communities with chronic housing shortages for service workers. The disparity suggests the Colorado Springs region faces an acute shortage of affordable housing options for the region's low-wage workforce, likely contributing to intensified competition for lower-cost units, upward pressure on rents, and a growing risk of displacement. Without intervention, these conditions may erode economic mobility and limit employers' ability to attract and retain essential workers.

Figure 72. Low-Income Jobs-to-Affordable Housing Ratio by Region, 2018 and 2023



Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: For the purposes of this analysis, a low-income job is defined as one with annual earnings below $35,000. An affordable housing unit is defined based on standard affordability benchmarks: for renters, gross rent must not exceed 30% of household income; for homeowners, the purchase price must not exceed three times annual household income. The 2018 values represent five-year estimates covering the period from 2014 to 2018, while the 2023 values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Accessible/Visitable Housing Needs

Table 10 summarizes the estimated number of housing units needed to accommodate residents with mobility limitations across Colorado Springs, unincorporated El Paso County, and the county as a whole. The analysis focuses specifically on individuals with ambulatory disabilities—that is, those who report serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs. To account for the fact that not every person with a mobility impairment requires a separate unit, such as those living with partners or caregivers, the estimate divides the total population with ambulatory disabilities by 1.1. A small vacancy buffer is also included to account for units that need to remain available at any given time. Based on this approach, Colorado Springs would require *approximately 23,345 accessible units*, compared to *7,833 in unincorporated El Paso County*, and *33,059 countywide*. This equates to about *11% of the total housing stock*, underscoring the share of homes that ideally should meet accessibility or visitability standards. While this estimate provides a useful baseline, it should be interpreted conservatively, as disability rates reported in the American Community Survey may undercount the true level of need, particularly for individuals with more severe impairments or those living in institutional settings not captured by the survey. The 11% benchmark offers a critical reference point for future planning and policy decisions, especially as the population continues to age and the demand for accessible housing grows. Meeting this need will require a combination of new construction and retrofitting efforts, with features such as step-free entrances, wider doorways and hallways, grab bars in bathrooms, and other modifications that improve mobility and independence.

Table 10. Accessible/Visitable Housing Units Needed by Region, 2023

Region	Units Currently Required	Percent of Total Housing Stock
Colorado Springs	23,345	11%
Unincorporated El Paso County	7,833	11%
El Paso County	33,059	11%

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Accessible and visitable housing unit needs were estimated based on the population with an ambulatory disability. To translate the number of individuals into unit needs, it was assumed that an average of 1.1 persons with a disability would share each accessible unit, recognizing that some individuals live with family members or caregivers. To ensure a healthy level of availability and account for typical vacancy rates, a five percent vacancy buffer was applied. This methodology provides a realistic estimate of the number of accessible and visitable units needed to meet community needs without assuming full occupancy at all times. Values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Supportive Housing Needs

To estimate the number of supportive housing units needed (permanent affordable housing paired with voluntary, on-site support services), the Matrix team applied evidence-based assumptions to local counts of people experiencing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness. Research suggests *that roughly 30% of individuals who are homeless require permanent supportive housing* due to chronic conditions, disabilities, or other barriers that prevent them from achieving housing stability without intensive services.[9] Among those at risk of homelessness, a smaller but meaningful share (approximately 7%) are likely to need supportive housing to avoid entering homelessness, particularly individuals exiting institutions, living with disabilities, or experiencing severe instability. Based on these assumptions, there is a need for *approximately 2,810 supportive housing units* across El Paso County, including 1,893 for currently homeless individuals and 205 for those at risk (see Table 11), with 275 needed for at-risk individuals. For planning purposes, supportive housing should account for about 1% of the housing stock across all El Paso County jurisdictions. As of 2024 there are approximately 803 supportive housing units across the county for a net need of 2,007 permanent supportive units county-wide.

Table 11. Supportive Housing Units Needed by Region,

Region	Units Currently Required	Percent of Total Housing Stock
Colorado Springs	2,098	1%
Unincorporated El Paso County	531	1%
El Paso County	2,810	1%

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Supportive housing needs estimates are based on national research indicating that approximately 30% of individuals experiencing homelessness require permanent supportive housing due to chronic conditions, disabilities, or other barriers to housing stability. For the population at risk of homelessness, a 7% need factor was applied based on national estimates of individuals with complex behavioral health needs, disabling conditions, or institutional discharge histories who are likely to require supportive housing to avoid becoming homeless. These assumptions are grounded in studies from HUD and other sources. In order to meet state reporting requirements, the required units shown for Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County are based solely on the overall proportionality of population across the county as a whole and is not intended to reflect areas of specific geographic need, which are regional in nature.

[9] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. *The 2023 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress: Part 1 – Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness*. December 2023. Available at: https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2023-AHAR-Part-1.pdf

Military Housing Demand

Given the region's large and longstanding military presence, understanding military housing needs is essential for planning efforts in the Colorado Springs area. Military housing needs were estimated using ACS data on the active-duty population living in households, which includes those residing in both privatized on-base housing and off-base units in the private market. Group quarters such as barracks are excluded from the estimate. In theory, all active-duty personnel categorized as residing within Colorado Springs city limits should be living off base, since the ACS assigns individuals based on place of residence rather than duty station. For the countywide estimate, Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data were used to explicitly exclude individuals living in group quarters. To account for the fact that not every service member requires their own housing unit since multiple service members cohabitate, the estimate assumes 1.1 service members per unit is the ideal ratio, while accounting for a vacancy buffer. As shown in Table 12, Colorado Springs required *approximately 12,756 housing units* in 2023 to accommodate its active-duty population, equal to *about 6 percent of the city's housing stock*. Countywide, an estimated *22,570 units* were needed, accounting for *roughly 7 percent of total housing*. These figures may shift over time depending on changes in deployment levels, force size, or global military activity.

Table 12. Non-Group Quarters Military Housing Unit Need for Colorado Springs and El Paso County, 2023

Region	Units Currently Required	Percent of Total Housing Stock
Colorado Springs	12,756	6%
El Paso County	22,570	7%

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Public Use Microdata Sample; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Military housing unit needs were estimated based on the Armed Forces population and encompass both off-base and privatized on-base units; barracks are excluded. To avoid overstating demand, the El Paso County total was adjusted to exclude the approximately 33% of military members residing in group quarters, such as barracks, who do not generate independent housing needs. This percentage was derived from the 2023 five-year Public Use Microdata Sample. No adjustment was applied to the estimate for Colorado Springs, as there are no military barracks located within the city limits. To translate the number of individuals into unit needs, it was assumed that an average of 1.1 military members would share each unit, reflecting the presence of dual-military households and military members living with dependents. To ensure a healthy level of availability and account for typical vacancy rates, a five percent vacancy buffer was applied. This methodology provides a realistic estimate of the number of housing units needed to accommodate the military population without always assuming full occupancy. The Public Use Microdata Sample cannot be used to generate reliable estimates for unincorporated El Paso County. Values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Service members living off base receive a monthly Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), a federal housing subsidy intended to cover 95% of the cost of rent and utilities. As shown in For service members *with dependents, BAH ranges from $2,160 to $2,919* in the Colorado Springs region, depending on rank. Their counterparts *without dependents receive between*

$1,692 and $2,592. Particularly for lower-ranking personnel seeking family-sized rentals, the allowance often falls short.

Table 13. Local Basic Housing Allowance

Rank (Enlisted/Officer)	E1/ O1	E2/ O2	E3/ O3	E4/ O4	E5/ O5	E6/ O6	E7/ O7+	E8/ -
With Dependents	$2,160 $2,355	$2,160 $2,379	$2,160 $2,562	$2,160 $2,745	$2,340 $2,871	$2,382 $2,898	$2,445 $2,919	$2,517 $2,919
Without Dependents	$1,692 $1,977	$1,692 $2,283	$1,692 $2,367	$1,692 $2,442	$1,875 $2,478	$1,995 $2,547	$2,166 $2,592	$2,355 $2,592

Source: Defense Travel Management Office (travel.dod.mil); 80918 used a reference ZIP code

As of April 2025, the average gross rent for a four-bedroom unit requires a BAH payment of *$2,556 in Colorado Springs* and *$3,042 across El Paso County*. The Colorado Springs sum exceeds the with-dependent BAH for most enlisted ranks, making it difficult for military families to secure appropriately sized housing without using base pay to supplement housing costs. In unincorporated areas, where the average four-bedroom rent exceeds 95% of the maximum BAH available to any rank, the challenge is even more acute. For most ranks, particularly junior and mid-grade enlisted personnel, BAH also falls well below the monthly cost of a mortgage at current interest rates, making homeownership difficult and often forcing households to compete in the already tight rental market. Even high-ranking officers receiving the maximum BAH may find that it does not fully cover mortgage costs.

Note: For additional detailed and analysis, please see Appendix B – Military Housing Analysis

Existing Gaps

Table 14 displays the distribution of Colorado Springs households by area median income (AMI) level, offering insight into the city's income profile and tenure patterns. Understanding a community's AMI distribution helps align housing policy with current and projected demand, promoting a balanced housing market across all income levels. Of Colorado Springs' *nearly 200,000 total households*, a plurality—*over 41,000*—earned between 51% and 80% of AMI, roughly between $52,550 and $84,080. These low-income households represent a key segment of demand in both the rental and ownership markets. *Over 30,200 households* earned below 30% of AMI, and about *61% were renters*, highlighting the challenges these households face in accessing homeownership. Similarly, among households earning between 31% and 50% of AMI, *55% rented their homes*. As AMI level increases, the tenure distribution shifts more heavily toward homeowners, illustrating the strong relationship between housing tenure and income. This disparity highlights the importance of tailoring housing strategies to income-specific needs, particularly by increasing rental options for lower-income households and expanding attainable homeownership opportunities.

Table 14. Households by AMI Tier in Colorado Springs, 2023

AMI Tier	Total Households		Owner-Occupied Households		Renter-Occupied Households	
Extremely Low Income (≤ 30% AMI)	30,285	15%	11,868	10%	18,417	24%
Very Low Income (31-50% AMI)	28,304	14%	12,704	10%	15,600	20%
Low Income (51-80% AMI)	41,561	21%	22,396	18%	19,165	25%
Moderate Income (81-120% AMI)	38,019	19%	25,287	21%	12,732	17%
Middle Income (120% AMI-200% AMI)	21,916	11%	16,326	13%	5,590	7%
Upper Income (201%+ AMI)	39,419	20%	33,769	28%	5,650	7%
Total Households	199,504	100%	122,350	100%	77,154	100%

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely because of rounding. Due to data limitations, this analysis approximates AMI tiers using HUD's published FY 2023 median family income (MFI) for the area ($105,100). Estimates of households by income bracket were derived from the 2023 five-year ACS and then proportionally scaled to match total household figures published by the Colorado State Demography Office.

The income distribution of households in unincorporated El Paso County reflects the area's strong homeownership orientation but also reveals important disparities across income levels (see Table 15). Of the *68,062 total households*, *54,195 were owner-occupied*—far exceeding Colorado Springs' ownership rate. Yet among the *14,803 households* earning below 50% of AMI, renters were overrepresented, accounting for *37% of these lower-income households*. At higher AMI levels, homeowners outnumbered renters by a wider margin than observed in the overall homeowner-renter split. These dynamics highlight the importance of supporting rental housing options for lower-income households, even in areas typically associated with homeownership.

Table 15. Households by AMI Tier in Unincorporated El Paso County, 2023

AMI Tier	Total Households		Owner-Occupied Households		Renter-Occupied Households	
Extremely Low Income (≤ 30% AMI)	7,362	11%	4,612	9%	2,750	20%
Very Low Income (31-50% AMI)	7,441	11%	4,715	9%	2,725	20%
Low Income (51-80% AMI)	12,446	18%	9,155	17%	3,291	24%
Moderate Income (81-120% AMI)	13,497	20%	10,961	20%	2,536	18%
Middle Income (120% AMI-200% AMI)	8,378	12%	7,289	13%	1,089	8%
Upper Income (201%+ AMI)	18,938	28%	17,463	32%	1,475	11%
Total Households	68,062	100%	54,195	100%	13,867	100%

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely because of rounding. Due to data limitations, this analysis approximates AMI tiers using HUD's published FY 2023 median family income (MFI) for the area ($105,100). Estimates of households by income bracket were derived from the 2023 five-year ACS and then proportionally scaled to match total household figures published by the Colorado State Demography Office.

Table 16 presents estimates of Colorado Springs' current housing shortfall as of 2023. These figures quantify the number of units needed to correct existing market imbalances and are based on several key factors. First, they account for overcrowding, using a ratio of 0.5 units for every overcrowded household. Second, they include additional units required to achieve healthy vacancy rates—2% for for-sale housing and 5% for rentals—to improve mobility and ease upward pressure on prices. Finally, they incorporate commuting dynamics by estimating how many households would relocate into or out of Colorado Springs if housing availability were better aligned with demand. The results reveal that Colorado Springs faced a shortfall of *27,712 housing units*, including *15,937 owner units* and *11,775 rental units*, with need distributed across income levels based on the city's existing AMI profile. Note that this estimate accounts for the fact that an estimated 12,974 vacant units were unavailable for occupancy at the time of data collection, typically because they were occupied by the owners or tenants on a seasonal, recreational, or occasional basis.

Table 16. Existing Housing Shortfall in Colorado Springs, 2023

AMI Tier	Total Units		Owner Units		Renter Units	
Extremely Low Income (≤ 30% AMI)	4,357	16%	1,546	10%	2,811	24%
Very Low Income (31-50% AMI)	4,036	15%	1,655	10%	2,381	20%
Low Income (51-80% AMI)	5,842	21%	2,917	18%	2,925	25%
Moderate Income (81-120% AMI)	5,237	19%	3,294	21%	1,943	17%
Middle Income (120% AMI to 200% AMI)	2,979	11%	2,126	13%	853	7%
Upper Income (201%+ AMI)	5,261	19%	4,399	28%	862	7%
Current Units Needed	27,712	100%	15,937	100%	11,775	100%

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely because of rounding. Due to data limitations, this analysis approximates AMI tiers using HUD's published median family income (MFI) for the area ($105,100). Overall housing need was estimated by accounting for three key factors: housing units needed to accommodate net commuting patterns (i.e., households likely to relocate if housing were available), additional units required to achieve healthy vacancy rates (2% for ownership and 5% for rental), and units needed to alleviate overcrowding, based on a ratio of 0.5 units per overcrowded household. Consistent with DOLA guidelines, the total estimated need was then distributed across AMI tiers according to the existing income distribution of households in Colorado Springs.

These findings point to a housing market that remains significantly undersupplied across both rental and ownership segments. In the for-sale market, most of the unmet need fell above 50% of AMI, underscoring the lack of attainable homeownership options for working- and middle-income households. On the rental side, the greatest shortages were concentrated below 80% of

AMI, highlighting continued affordability challenges for lower-income renters. Without sufficient intervention, these imbalances contribute to overcrowding, reduced housing choice, and workforce retention issues. Addressing the shortfall will require a comprehensive approach that increases production at a range of price points while prioritizing both affordable rentals and attainable homeownership.

While Colorado Springs accounts for the majority of the region's housing activity, unincorporated El Paso County also faced a substantial shortfall of available homes (see Table 17). Based on the same methodology used in the Colorado Springs analysis, the total estimated need in unincorporated areas was *7,585 housing units*, including *6,041 for-sale units* and *1,545 rental units*. Recall that these figures reflect the number of units required to relieve overcrowding, maintain healthy vacancy rates, and better accommodate commuting households. Importantly, the nearly 1,200 units listed for sale or rent are not reflected in the estimates. Although the overall need was lower than in the urban core, it is evident that housing pressures extend beyond city boundaries.

Table 17. Existing Housing Shortfall in Unincorporated El Paso County, 2023

AMI Tier	Total Units		Owner Units		Renter Units	
Extremely Low Income (≤ 30% AMI)	821	11%	515	9%	307	20%
Very Low Income (31-50% AMI)	829	11%	526	9%	304	20%
Low Income (51-80% AMI)	1,388	18%	1,021	17%	367	24%
Moderate Income (81-120% AMI)	1,504	20%	1,222	20%	282	18%
Middle Income (120% AMI-200% AMI)	933	12%	812	13%	121	8%
Upper Income (201%+ AMI)	2,110	28%	1,946	32%	164	11%
Current Units Needed	7,585	100%	6,041	100%	1,545	100%

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely because of rounding. Due to data limitations, this analysis approximates AMI tiers using HUD's published median family income (MFI) for the area ($105,100). Overall housing need was estimated by accounting for three key factors: housing units needed to accommodate net commuting patterns (i.e., households likely to relocate if housing were available), additional units required to achieve healthy vacancy rates (2% for ownership and 5% for rental), and units needed to alleviate overcrowding, based on a ratio of 0.5 units per overcrowded household. Consistent with DOLA guidelines, the total estimated need was then distributed across AMI tiers according to the existing income distribution of households.

The for-sale shortfall was most pronounced among households earning between 50% and 120% of area median income, with *more than 2,200 additional units needed* in this income band. This indicates a clear gap in ownership opportunities for middle-income households, many of whom were priced out of the current market despite earning above traditional affordability thresholds. On the rental side, the total need was more modest but still significant. The largest share of required rental units fell within the 51% to 80% AMI range, highlighting the limited availability of moderately priced rental housing. Reducing these gaps will require targeted efforts to increase supply in both ownership and rental markets, particularly in parts of the county where demand is growing but options remain limited.

Colorado Springs and unincorporated El Paso County require over 35,000 housing units to meet current demand

Housing Gap Sensitivity Analysis

The existing housing gaps described previously assume that 40 percent of in-commuters would choose to live in the community if affordable housing were available. Reducing this assumption to 25 percent (the low end of what is typically considered within range) still shows substantial unmet housing need. In Colorado Springs, the more conservative commuter scenario yields an estimated need of 14,505 units. When paired with the upper-end estimate of 27,712 units, the resulting range aligns closely with recent findings from the Common Sense Institute. For unincorporated El Paso County, the lower-end estimate indicates a need for approximately 2,036 units.

Table 18 presents the estimated healthy housing inventory needed in Colorado Springs by AMI tier and tenure, illustrating the scale and structure of housing necessary to meet existing demand. Put simply, the estimates represent the number of housing units required to adequately serve existing residents, accommodate a share of the commuting workforce, and provide sufficient vacancies to support household mobility and market stability. The methodology accounts for latent household formation—that is, individuals who are currently living with others due to economic or housing constraints but who would form their own households under more balanced market conditions. According to the table, Colorado Springs needs *over 231,000 total units*, including both occupied units and those vacant and ready for rent or sale, to maintain a housing market that functions efficiently and responsively. About half of this inventory would need to be affordable to households earning 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) or less, indicating an acute need for affordable rental and homeownership options.

Table 18. Colorado Springs Healthy Inventory of Occupied and Market-Ready Vacant Units, 2023

AMI Tier	Total Units		Owner Units		Renter Units	
Extremely Low Income (≤ 30% AMI)	35,438	15%	13,522	10%	21,916	24%
Very Low Income (31-50% AMI)	33,039	14%	14,475	10%	18,564	20%
Low Income (51-80% AMI)	48,323	21%	25,517	18%	22,806	25%
Moderate Income (81-120% AMI)	43,962	19%	28,812	21%	15,150	17%
Middle Income (120% AMI-200% AMI)	25,253	11%	18,601	13%	6,652	7%
Upper Income (201%+ AMI)	45,199	20%	38,476	28%	6,723	7%
Total Units	231,214	100%	139,404	100%	91,810	100%

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely due to rounding. *Healthy housing inventory* refers to the number of housing units needed not only to house existing residents but also to maintain adequate vacancy rates, support household mobility, and accommodate a portion of the area's commuting workforce. Estimates are not simply the sum of total households and existing needs because there were an estimated 3,998 units listed for rent or sale; other vacancies are not reflected in the estimates as those units were unavailable for occupancy. Due to the absence of household size data, this analysis approximates AMI tiers using HUD's published FY 2023 median family income (MFI) for the area ($105,100).

In an ideal scenario, unincorporated El Paso County's housing stock would total *over 76,800 units* (see Table 19). Recall that this sum accounts for not just current occupancy levels but also commuting patterns and the vacancies needed to support normal turnover and market flexibility. Of these, *more than 60,800* should be for-sale or owner-occupied homes, consistent with the area's predominantly single-family development pattern. Establishing and maintaining this level of inventory is critical to preserving housing stability in a part of the county that has seen significant growth but continues to face supply constraints, especially for lower-cost ownership options.

Table 19. Unincorporated El Paso County Healthy Inventory of Occupied and Market-Ready Vacant Units, 2023

AMI Tier	Total Units		Owner Units		Renter Units	
Extremely Low Income (≤ 30% AMI)	8,345	11%	5,181	9%	3,164	20%
Very Low Income (31-50% AMI)	8,432	11%	5,297	9%	3,135	20%
Low Income (51-80% AMI)	14,070	18%	10,284	17%	3,786	24%
Moderate Income (81-120% AMI)	15,229	20%	12,312	20%	2,917	18%
Middle Income (120% AMI-200% AMI)	9,440	12%	8,187	13%	1,253	8%
Upper Income (201%+ AMI)	21,312	28%	19,615	32%	1,697	11%
Total Units	76,828	100%	60,876	100%	15,952	100%

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely due to rounding. *Healthy housing inventory* refers to the number of housing units needed not only to meet current demand but also to maintain adequate vacancy rates, support household mobility, and accommodate a portion of the area's commuting workforce. Estimates are not simply the sum of total households and existing needs because there were an estimated 1,181 units listed for rent or sale; other vacancies are not reflected in the estimates as those units were unavailable for occupancy. Due to the absence of household size data, this analysis approximates AMI tiers using HUD's published FY 2023 median family income (MFI) for the area ($105,100).

Future Gaps

Table 20 presents Colorado Springs' projected housing needs over the next 10 years, offering a combined view of both current shortfalls and anticipated future demand. Consistent with DOLA guidelines, the projections leverage the State Demography Office's countywide household forecasts and allocate housing needs to Colorado Springs based on the city's share of regional employment. The findings indicate that the city will require *approximately 60,034 additional housing units* over the next decade to achieve a healthy, responsive housing market. This includes *more than 35,000 ownership units* and *roughly 24,000 rental units*, with demand dispersed across a range of household types. Importantly, over half of the total need—*more than 30,000 units*—must be affordable to households earning 80% of AMI or less. The forecasted shortfall through 2035 remains consistent, for an estimated total need of 47,000 units by 2035.

Table 20. 10-Year Projected Housing Needs in Colorado Springs

AMI Tier	Total Units		Owner Units		Renter Units	
Extremely Low Income (≤ 30% AMI)	9,297	15%	3,446	10%	5,852	24%
Very Low Income (31-50% AMI)	8,645	14%	3,688	10%	4,957	20%
Low Income (51-80% AMI)	12,591	21%	6,502	18%	6,089	25%
Moderate Income (81-120% AMI)	11,387	19%	7,341	21%	4,045	17%
Middle Income (120% AMI-200% AMI)	6,515	11%	4,739	13%	1,776	7%
Upper Income (201%+ AMI)	11,599	19%	9,804	28%	1,795	7%
Projected Units Needed	60,034	100%	35,520	100%	24,514	100%

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely due to rounding. Due to data limitations, this analysis approximates AMI tiers using HUD's published median family income (MFI) for the area ($105,100). Consistent with DOLA guidelines, future housing needs were allocated across subareas based on each location's share of current jobs. The total projected need was then distributed across AMI and tenure categories based on the existing breakdown of households in Colorado Springs.

Similarly, significant housing production is required to both meet current demand and accommodate future growth in unincorporated El Paso County (see Table 21). The ten-year projections reveal a need for *18,571 units* over the next ten years. About *14,700 of those units* should be available for purchase, while the remaining *approximately 3,800* should be rentals. Although unincorporated El Paso County's housing needs are heavily weighted toward homeownership, a substantial share (*about 40%*) of the new housing stock must be affordable to households earning 80% of AMI or less. Meeting this need will require more than traditional single-family development patterns; it will demand creative funding strategies, regional partnerships, and supportive land use policies to expand affordable options for lower-income residents while preserving the area's character and quality of life.

Table 21. 10-Year Projected Housing Needs in Unincorporated El Paso County

AMI Tier	Total Units		Owner Units		Renter Units	
Extremely Low Income (≤ 30% AMI)	2,016	11%	1,254	9%	762	20%
Very Low Income (31-50% AMI)	2,036	11%	1,282	9%	755	20%
Low Income (51-80% AMI)	3,400	18%	2,489	17%	911	24%
Moderate Income (81-120% AMI)	3,681	20%	2,979	20%	702	18%
Middle Income (120% AMI-200% AMI)	2,282	12%	1,981	13%	301	8%
Upper Income (201%+ AMI)	5,155	28%	4,747	32%	408	11%
Projected Units Needed	18,571	100%	14,733	100%	3,839	100%

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely due to rounding. Due to the absence of household size data, this analysis approximates AMI tiers using HUD's published median family income (MFI) for the area ($105,100). Consistent with DOLA guidelines, future housing needs were allocated across subareas based on each location's share of current jobs. The total projected need was then distributed across AMI and tenure categories based on the existing breakdown of households in Unincorporated El Paso County.

Community & Stakeholder Engagement

Community and Stakeholder Engagement Overview

- Numerous community stakeholders provided their feedback on regional housing needs. This qualitative feedback supplemented the quantitative data findings of this assessment and will help to frame the potential policy and program recommendations.
- Stakeholders included for-profit and non-profit housing providers, municipal community development professionals, military leaders, elected officials, and advocacy groups.

Key Takeaways

- Stakeholders discussed many issues related to meeting housing needs in the region. Common themes included rising infrastructure and land costs, permitting timelines, jobs-housing balance, the need for greater housing diversity across income levels.
- Residents noted affordability challenges and generally expressed support for affordable housing and the use of development incentives, zoning modifications, and regulatory changes to enable a range of diverse and attainable housing types.

Introduction

Over the course of this project, numerous stakeholders and community members provided their feedback on housing needs, challenges, and opportunities. This qualitative feedback served as an important supplement to the quantitative data findings of the needs assessment and helped to frame the policy and program recommendations found in this report.

Stakeholder Engagements

Nonprofits, local governments, and private sector housing providers were invited to provide their input regarding housing challenges, needs, and opportunities in El Paso County and Colorado Springs. The stakeholder engagements were held on March 18th and 19th, 2025, and included regional housing providers, land use representatives, military representatives, elected officials, and advocacy groups.

Housing Providers: The meeting with housing providers from El Paso County brought together both market-rate and affordable housing developers. Participants highlighted that *high land and infrastructure costs*, along with *permitting delays* and *impact fees,* make it difficult to produce new homes affordable to median-income households. Nonprofits, including Habitat for Humanity, face challenges in acquiring and developing land, even when it is donated, due to high metro district fees and legal barriers. Rising property taxes and insurance costs are putting low-income homeowners at risk of displacement. *Funding limitations* were universally cited as a major barrier, with stakeholders calling for more local control over state-allocated resources and flexible funding mechanisms. The group also discussed the impacts of public opposition, slow rezoning, and excessive state mandates on affordability. Multifamily operators raised concerns about rising operational costs and evictions, while some providers noted the importance of partnerships with local agencies and nonprofits. Tariffs were flagged as a growing threat to construction affordability. Stakeholders encouraged local governments to advocate for *greater control* over zoning and funding and expressed interest in ongoing policy discussions.

Land Use Stakeholders: Land use stakeholders convened to discuss housing development, regulations, infrastructure, and partnerships. The group included planners, developers, and public figures. They noted a slowdown in the multifamily housing market and stressed the need for more condominiums, townhomes, and single-story homes for seniors. Single-family home construction had increased, but multifamily starts were at their lowest in years. Infill development, supported by Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) funding, was identified as crucial, but public opposition and regulatory barriers, such as high fees, inconsistent codes, and recent state level energy requirements remain significant challenges. The need for public education on density and housing policy was emphasized. County land codes are being updated as undertaken by the City of Colorado Springs in recent years. Water, energy, and infrastructure constraints were discussed as critical to sustainable development. Partnerships with school districts and workforce development programs were highlighted, as was the need to address the needs of households who earn too much to qualify for subsidies but still struggle to afford market-rate housing. *Manufactured homes* and *accessory dwelling units (ADUs)* were identified as important affordable housing solutions.

Military Stakeholders: Military stakeholders, including representatives from the Air Force Academy, Peterson AFB, Schriever SFB, and Fort Carson, met to discuss housing issues affecting military personnel and families. At the Air Force Academy, high housing costs and poor quality have limited options for younger families, while at Peterson AFB, fluctuating demand has driven up rents. Schriever's transition to a Space Force installation has increased demand, with many personnel buying homes outside the area. Additionally, recruiting civilian workers is challenging when local housing costs are out of reach. The Air Force Academy faces an aging workforce and similar recruitment challenges, *especially as they relate to younger employees.* Fort Carson and Peterson AFB report fewer issues, with online resources and housing referral programs helping personnel find suitable homes. Planned demolitions and renovations will reduce housing units at the Air Force Academy and Fort Carson, with no immediate plans for replacement. The group noted that the shortage of mid-sized, affordable homes is a national issue, and that the perception of a housing crisis often differs between leadership and lower-ranking personnel. Fort Carson's needs assessment projects a modest deficit by 2028, with most issues attributed to financial management rather than affordability.

Elected Officials: Elected officials from across the region convened to discuss housing and community development priorities. They emphasized the need for a balanced approach to growth, supporting both affordable and market-rate housing. Officials highlighted the importance of *updating land use codes, streamlining permitting processes, and investing in infrastructure* to support new development. Concerns were raised about the impact of state mandates on local control, and the need for flexible funding to address unique community needs. Officials also discussed strategies to address homelessness, support first-time homebuyers, and preserve existing affordable housing stock. Collaboration between jurisdictions and with private sector partners was identified as critical for success. The group expressed interest in ongoing engagement to inform policy and funding decisions.

Advocacy Groups: These groups identified the high cost of housing as a significant barrier to *attracting and retaining talent,* particularly for entry-level and mid-career workers. Employers noted that housing affordability directly impacts recruitment, employee turnover, and the region's overall economic competitiveness. Workforce stakeholders stressed the need for a broader range of housing options, both rental and for-sale, at various price points. They also highlighted the importance of transit access, childcare, and other supportive services that enable workers to live near their jobs. Collaboration with local governments and developers emerged as a critical driver in advancing workforce housing needs.

Service providers within these advocacy groups emphasized the growing demand for supportive housing*, especially for seniors, people with disabilities, and those exiting homelessness.* They reported challenges in navigating complex funding streams, coordinating services, and addressing gaps in mental health and addiction treatment. The importance of wraparound services and effective case management was underscored, along with the need for more flexible funding to support innovative housing solutions. Partnerships with local governments, healthcare systems, and faith-based organizations were cited as valuable in expanding both housing options and support services.

Community Questionnaire

The community questionnaire was disseminated from April to July 2025, generating over 1,900 responses residents across Colorado Springs and El Paso County have participated, providing feedback on a variety of issues related to housing development. The questionnaire asks about support for affordable housing production generally, affordable housing development incentives, and zoning and regulatory changes to enable new and diverse housing types, among other community preferences. The feedback has generally been supportive of affordable housing development and related efforts, with *upwards of 60% of residents* expressing at least moderate support for such endeavors.

In addition, the survey asks about housing needs, challenges, and barriers, including affordability, physical condition, and preferred typologies. Respondents noted that affordability is the biggest challenge, with nearly 40% reporting they are housing cost burdened, and an additional 20% reporting they are severely housing cost burdened. It is apparent that housing affordability and availability are primary concerns for El Paso County residents, and that a majority of residents support regulatory changes, increased funding, and increased programming to address these issues.

Note: Full Community Questionnaire results are included in Appendix C.

Housing Resources

An essential component of understanding and addressing a community's housing needs is a thorough evaluation of the resources available to support the development, preservation, and accessibility of affordable housing. This section identifies the financial, institutional, and community-based resources that can be leveraged to meet the housing challenges identified in this needs assessment. Specifically, it contains an overview of current housing assistance programs, organizations involved in developing and managing affordable housing, local funding resources, homelessness prevention efforts, and the availability of public and institutional land for development.

Housing Resources Overview

- A broad spectrum of El Paso County housing resources and programs are supported by state and federal funding. These include emergency support, first-time homebuyer assistance, housing education programs, direct subsidies, as well as various resources for those with disabilities, essential workers (such as first-responders, educators, and healthcare workers).
- Local funding plays a critical role in addressing affordable housing needs by supporting the production, preservation, and accessibility of housing for low- and moderate-income households.
- A vital network of nonprofit organizations provides housing support for low-income individuals and families, as well as offering an array of supportive services including financial counseling, renter education, food banks, and vocational and skills training, among others.

Key Takeaways

- Current funding for rental assistance, homebuyer and homeowner support, subsidized housing, homelessness prevention, and other supportive housing assistance programming is not sufficient for meeting current and future demand.
- Continued partnerships with local, regional, and state organizations and service providers can bolster local government efforts.

Housing Assistance Programs

Colorado Springs offers a range of housing assistance programs aimed at renters, prospective homebuyers, and homeowners. These programs are funded by federal sources such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) grants, and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), as well as state funding sources including the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA), Proposition 123, and the Colorado Housing Assistance Corporation (CHAC). In addition, local funding sources provide critical support for housing initiatives in El Paso County. This subsection outlines rental assistance, homebuyer support, and homeowner support programs, including data on their effectiveness and current capabilities.

Rental Assistance Programs

Rental assistance programs include temporary rental assistance grants; Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA), an emergency rental assistance program that provides financial aid to low- and moderate-income renters; and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), which focus on rapid rehousing and homelessness prevention. Colorado Springs also offers resources for renters including renter's rights workshops, and provides funds to organizations that provide rental search assistance and connections to legal services.

Homebuyer Support Programs

For homebuyers, programs administered by the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA) offer down payment assistance, fixed-rate mortgage options, and specialized programs for veterans and individuals with disabilities. Additionally, the Colorado Housing Assistance Corporation (CHAC) provides counseling and financial support for households earning up to 80% of the area median income (AMI). El Paso County currently offers a down payment assistance program that offers down payment and closing cost assistance, as well as grant assistance for residents who work in education, healthcare, or are first responders, veterans, or active military. This program has supported over 2,800 families in the region.

Homeowner Support Programs

Homeowners benefit from programs such as the statewide Single Family Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation Program, which provides funding for repairs and improvements to owner occupied residences, as well as ADU repair and construction. Furthermore, the City and County has partnered with Brothers Redevelopment to offer Owner Occupant Rehabilitation, including home improvements such as energy efficiency upgrades, roof and window replacements, and plumbing and electrical improvements. The Home Modification Tax Credit Program offers up to $5,000 in state tax credits for retrofitting homes to accommodate disabilities. The city also connects homeowners to programs to assist with winterization, home modification and repair, and housing counseling.

Household Benefit

In Colorado Springs, over 2,100 households are currently estimated to be assisted through voucher and rental assistance programs in 2023, including those managed by the Colorado Springs Housing Authority and other local partners.[10] This figure reflects the number of households benefiting from federal, state, and local funding sources, such as the HOME Investment Partnerships Program and Emergency Rental Assistance Program. Additionally, according to Colorado Public Radio, local partners received $850,000 in federal grants in 2024 to support homelessness prevention, eviction assistance, rapid rehousing, and shelter services for vulnerable populations.

Despite these efforts, *funding is not sufficient to meet the full demand.* For example, according to Colorado Public Radio, the city receives approximately $5.2 million annually from HUD for affordable housing and community needs, but estimates indicate that $9.1 million would be needed to match the purchasing power of 2020 funding levels, highlighting a significant gap due to inflation, rising housing costs, and uncertainty regarding future federal funding availability.

Subsidized Housing Availability

As validated by the results of this study*, there are not enough income-restricted or subsidized housing units* to adequately serve all low- and moderate-income residents in Colorado Springs and El Paso County. While rental assistance programs help alleviate some housing challenges, they do not reduce the overall shortage of affordable housing supply. Although shelter beds and supportive housing units have increased in recent years, these expansions have not kept pace with the broader demand for permanent affordable housing.

Effectiveness of Housing Assistance Programming

In terms of effectiveness, local organizations such as Catholic Charities offer rental assistance, case management, and transitional housing, but their reach is limited by eligibility requirements and funding constraints. The city's efforts to develop an online housing dashboard may improve transparency and help guide future investments, but the impact of such initiatives remains to be seen. While current programs provide essential support to many households, they are not able to fully address the scale of the housing crisis in Colorado Springs and El Paso County.

Affordable Housing Organizations

Affordable housing in El Paso County is supported by a diverse network of organizations that manage existing units, develop new housing, and provide essential support services. These entities play critical roles in addressing housing affordability challenges, but gaps in capacity, collaboration, and resources continue to hinder progress. This subsection provides an overview of the organizations involved, and identified potential gaps in capacity, collaboration, and resources.

[10] Housing & Community Vitality 2023 Annual Report, City of Colorado Springs

Management, Development, and Service Organizations

Key organizations involved in developing and managing rental affordable housing include the Colorado Springs Housing Authority, which oversees income-restricted housing and administers federal programs like Housing Choice (Section 8) Vouchers. Nonprofits such as Greccio Housing, Partners in Housing, The Independence Center, Silver Key Senior Services, Homeward Pikes Peak, We Fortify, and Volunteers of America Colorado provide housing support for low-income individuals and families. Most of these organizations also offer an array of supportive services including financial counseling, renter education, food banks, and vocational and skills training, among others. On the home ownership side, Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity and the Rocky Mountain Community Land Trust (RMCLT) ensure long-term affordability through a 99-year lease model that prevents displacement while offering functional ownership for residents.

Gaps in Capacity

Affordable housing management, development, and service organizations are resource-constrained and are struggling to meet the demand and need for their services. Gaps in funding and capacity have led to a significant shortage of affordable housing in Colorado Springs and El Paso County. As this study reveals, rising housing costs outpace wages, making it difficult for essential workers and moderate-income households to afford rent or homeownership. Extremely low-income households face the greatest shortages, often resulting in severe cost burdens or overcrowding.

Long wait times for housing choice vouchers and an overall lower prevalence of vouchers and subsidized housing in COS further limit access to affordable housing. Family homelessness is also on the rise, and while shelters currently have capacity, continued growth could eventually overwhelm available resources. Additionally, high construction costs, inflation, and community opposition hinder new development. *Without increased funding, streamlined processes, and preservation efforts, the affordable housing gap could continue to grow, placing greater strain on vulnerable populations.*

Local Funding Resources

Local funding plays a critical role in addressing affordable housing needs by supporting the production, preservation, and accessibility of housing for low- and moderate-income households. This subsection examines the types of local financial resources available—including local allocations, housing trust funds, and other revenue sources—and evaluates the effectiveness of their utilization. Understanding the use, impact, and leveraging potential of local investments is key to identifying opportunities for expanding housing resources and maximizing the effectiveness of public dollars.

Local Funding Availability for Affordable Housing

The City of Colorado Springs primarily focuses on urban affordable housing development through a combination of federal, state, and local programs. Among these are Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), which fund preservation projects, prevention, and neighborhood improvements. The HOME Investment Partnerships Program further supports the development of affordable rental housing for low-income families and individuals and provides a tenant based rental assistance (TBRA) program. The City and Colorado Springs Utilities administer a fee rebate program that rebates a percentage of development incurred costs for affordable housing and the City offers a Sales and Use Tax refund for City sales and use tax for affordable housing.

Additionally, the city has opted into the state's Proposition 123 program, which offers funding for affordable housing development, including land banking and gap financing for developers. Affordable housing efforts in Colorado Springs prioritize units for households earning 0 to 60% of the area median income (AMI), with a particular focus on serving special needs populations including seniors, those experiencing homelessness, and individuals with disabilities.

In contrast, unincorporated El Paso County concentrates on addressing the housing needs of rural and suburban communities. The El Paso County Housing Trust Fund serves as a self-sustaining resource that supports affordable housing without relying on local, state, or federal tax dollars. Funded internally, it provides both revolving loans, where repaid funds are reinvested, and direct support for a wide range of projects, including new development, preservation, homeownership programs, and housing for individuals with special needs. The fund emphasizes creative, locally tailored solutions that address the housing challenges across the county.

Both jurisdictions benefit from shared state and federal resources. The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV, formerly Section 8) program is administered locally to help low-income households rent or purchase homes. While Colorado Springs has opted in for Proposition 123 , El Paso County has not opted into this program.

Utilization and Impact of Local Funds

Local funding has been strategically deployed to maximize housing investments in the region. The El Paso County Housing Trust Fund serves as a self-sustained matching capital program to secure larger federal grants. In recent years, sunset funding, such as COVID-19 relief allocations, has supported both immediate housing needs and longer-term solutions. These investments have yielded measurable results, including expanded shelter capacity. Funds have been directed toward priority areas such as new construction, preservation of existing units, and homelessness prevention services.

The local funding approaches have successfully attracted supplementary resources through multiple channels. Matching requirements in Colorado Springs and El Paso County have fostered collaboration among local government, housing authorities, developers, and nonprofits, leveraging diverse funding sources to expand affordable housing projects. This approach encourages stakeholders to pool resources and coordinate efforts, resulting in increased participation and more effective housing solutions. Partnerships with housing organizations have developed innovative financing models that stretch public dollars further. By providing crucial gap financing, local funds have enabled developers to access state and

federal tax credits that might otherwise be inaccessible due to match requirements. While these strategies have unlocked affordable housing units, ongoing challenges like an aging housing stock and elevated rental and homebuying costs demonstrate the need for sustained investment and creative solutions to meet the region's housing demands.

Resources for Homelessness Prevention

Preventing and addressing homelessness requires a coordinated network of emergency, transitional, and long-term housing options, as well as supportive services that meet the complex needs of individuals and families experiencing housing instability. This subsection, related to but conducted separately from the Homelessness Analysis performed by DDES (Appendix A) evaluates the availability and effectiveness of local homelessness prevention resources, including shelter capacity, permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, and outreach programs. It also explores whether specialized services are accessible for vulnerable populations such as chronically homeless individuals, families with children, and those with mental health or substance abuse challenges. By identifying existing gaps and strengths, this analysis informs strategies to enhance the local response to homelessness and promote pathways to stable, permanent housing.

Current Resources

The Springs Rescue Mission (SRM) operates a nine-acre campus with 450 shelter beds (which can expand to 600 in poor weather), making it the region's largest low-barrier shelter provider. Countywide, the total number of shelter beds rose from 792 in 2020 to 976 in 2024.[11] Although notable, this increase has not kept pace with the rising incidence of homelessness. As a result, significant gaps remain, especially for families and other vulnerable groups in need of family-specific shelters and transitional housing programs.

In response to these growing gaps, a broad network of organizations in El Paso County have stepped up to provide homelessness prevention services. Catholic Charities of Central Colorado operates one of the most comprehensive prevention programs in the region, offering emergency rental assistance, utility aid, and case management to households at imminent risk of eviction. Faith-based nonprofits like Mercy's Gate and Westside CARES also play a critical role, distributing emergency funds to cover rent, mortgage, and utility arrears before a household reaches crisis. Meanwhile, Family Promise of Colorado Springs focuses specifically on families with children, providing prevention funding, emergency shelter, and long-term stabilization support to help parents and children avoid or quickly exit homelessness.

[11] Pikes Peak Continuum of Care Housing Inventory Count https://www.pikespeakcoc.org/resources-reports#pit/hic

These efforts are complemented by a patchwork of government-supported programs, including eviction mediation services, legal aid through Colorado Legal Services, and rental assistance programs like the state-run Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) to which households can apply directly. The City of Colorado Springs and El Paso County coordinate closely with nonprofit partners to distribute federal Community Development Block Grants (CBDG) and Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds, respectively, which are used for one-time emergency assistance to prevent housing loss. Mental health and substance use services offered by Diversus Health, Homeward Pikes Peak, and others also serve a preventive role by addressing underlying challenges that can lead to housing instability. Yet even with this ecosystem of support, providers consistently report that demand outpaces available resources, particularly for family-specific shelters and transitional housing programs, where supply remains scarce.

As the number of individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness continues to grow, the need for a dual strategy becomes more urgent: one that not only expands emergency and transitional housing options but also invests in upstream interventions that prevent eviction, support income stability, and address behavioral health needs. The coordinated efforts underway in El Paso County represent an essential foundation, but additional funding and program capacity will be required to close the gap between growing demand and limited availability.

Effectiveness of Homelessness Prevention Programs and Identified Gaps

Homelessness prevention efforts in Colorado Springs have shown measurable impact, particularly through rapid rehousing initiatives and targeted outreach. The Pikes Peak Continuum of Care (PPCoC) has implemented a coordinated, problem-oriented approach that connects individuals experiencing homelessness with essential services and housing resources. This approach contributed to a reported 40% reduction in chronic homelessness between 2023 and 2024, with the number of chronically unhoused individuals falling from 470 to 282, according to the PiT Survey.[12] This decline highlights the effectiveness of sustained cross-

[12] It is important to note, however, that these figures are based on Point-in-Time (PIT) count data, which likely understate the true extent of homelessness due to methodological limitations such as reliance on volunteers, exclusion of unsheltered individuals not

agency collaboration and data-driven outreach strategies. Additionally, in the absence of rapid rehousing programs funded through the federal Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program, growth in overall homelessness would have likely been more severe, as fewer individuals and families would have had access to the short-term assistance needed to quickly exit homelessness and stabilize in permanent housing.

Critical gaps in service provision remain, however. Services are scattered, making it difficult for individuals to access them, and data collection is limited and not fully comprehensive. Though the city plans to improve data collection efforts under its 2025 Homelessness Response Action Plan, it is difficult to estimate the true number of homeless individuals due to *"invisible homelessness,"* a term that encompasses individuals who are experiencing housing instability but are not always visible on the streets or in shelters. This includes individuals living in their cars, in extended-stay motels, or temporarily living with relatives or friends. Notably, many cases of "invisible homelessness" are not captured by conventional data sources, further leading to an underrepresentation of the true scope of family homelessness.

Another important consideration is the rising number of families experiencing homelessness and the persistent challenges in accurately measuring this population. According to the Pikes Peak Continuum of Care (PPCoC), data on homeless families are often incomplete or underreported, largely due to fears that disclosing their housing status could lead to the removal of their children. This misperception persists despite the fact that, in Colorado, homelessness alone is not grounds for child removal. As a result, many families avoid seeking assistance, making it more difficult for providers to identify needs and deliver support effectively.

Specialized Resources for High-Need Populations

Specialized resources for high-need populations are available but often insufficient. For chronically homeless individuals, the Colorado Springs Police Department (CSPD) Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) and the Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD) Homeless Outreach Program (HOP) provide targeted outreach. The 2025 Homelessness Response Action Plan expands HOT from six to eight officers and adds fire prevention for encampments. Families face significant challenges due to limited dedicated shelter space, exacerbating the 12% increase in homeless families within the PPCoC network. This could be countered through more investment in prevention, according to housing and homelessness advocates. For those dealing with mental health or substance abuse issues, SRM's campus includes health services, but the city seeks stronger partnerships with behavioral health providers under the 2025 plan.

encountered during the count, and the inherent difficulty of capturing transient populations in a single-night snapshot.

Public and Institutionally Owned Land

Public and Institutionally Owned Land Overview

- Public and institutionally owned land can be a powerful strategy for expanding affordable housing, especially in communities where developable land is limited or costly.

Key Takeaways

- Identifying, marketing, and selling/donating public and institutional land for housing can greatly increase the feasibility of affordable housing development, and can allow local governments to direct growth as they see fit.

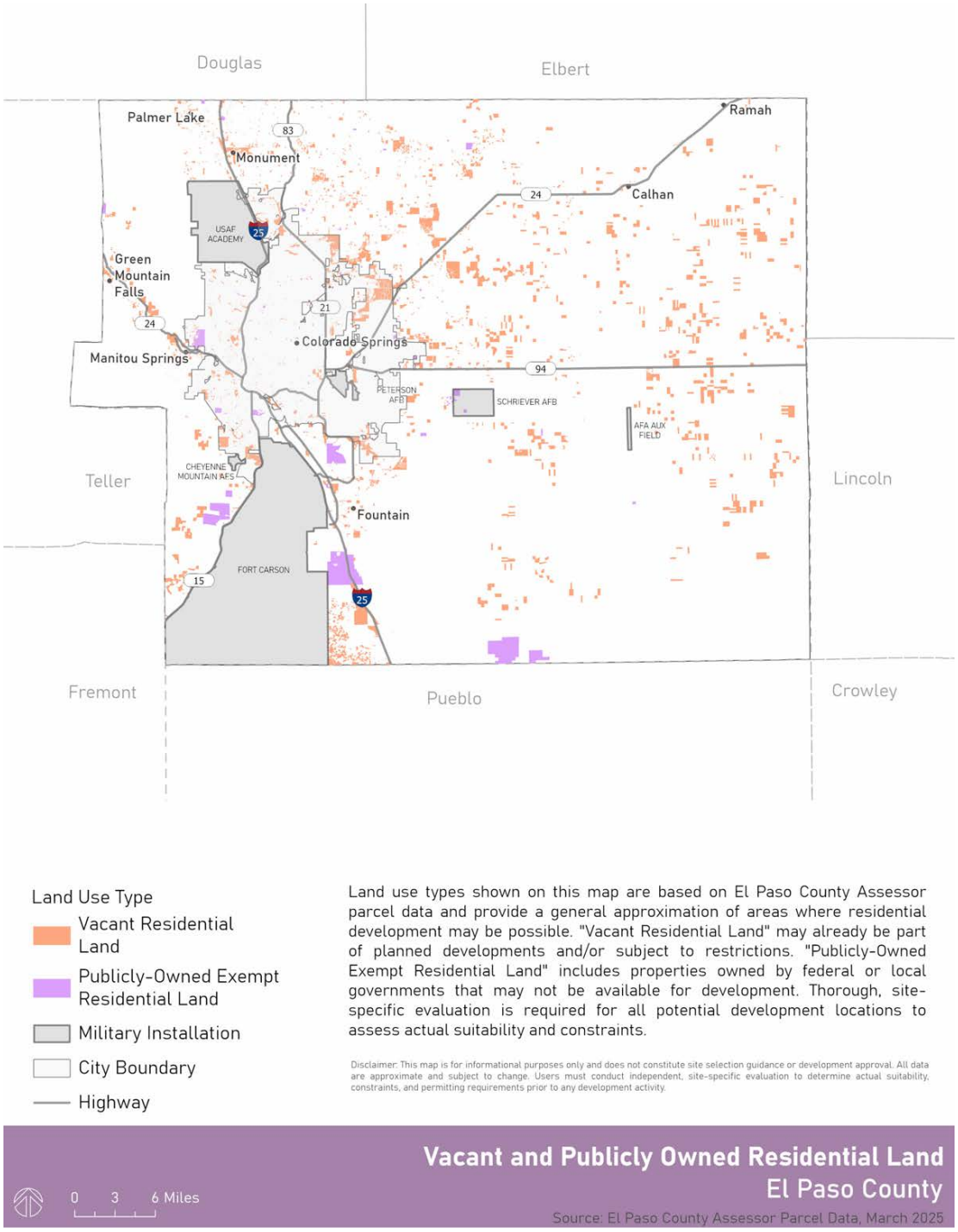
Identifying and utilizing public and institutionally owned land can be a powerful strategy for expanding affordable housing, especially in communities where developable land is limited or costly. This subsection explores the availability, ownership, and development potential of land held by local governments, school districts, universities, hospitals, military bases, and other public or institutional entities. It assesses the suitability of these parcels for residential use based on zoning, infrastructure access, and location, while also examining opportunities for partnerships that can help unlock their housing potential.

Available Public and Institutional Land for Housing Development

Colorado Springs and El Paso County possess significant publicly and institutionally owned land that could be repurposed for housing development. The City of Colorado Springs maintains multiple parcels, including vacant lots and former municipal sites, listed on its Development Tracker, with some currently underutilized. Local school districts, such as Colorado Springs School District 11, have in the past also identified surplus land that could be redeveloped for housing. Additionally, the Colorado State Land Board and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) control parcels in the region, some of which are being considered for affordable housing partnerships. Large plots of federally owned land also exist as part of the five major military bases in El Paso County, which offers potential for workforce housing.

Figure 73 identifies publicly owned, tax-exempt residential land such as properties held by local governments or housing authorities, along with vacant residential parcels. These land types represent important opportunities for meeting the region's future housing needs, particularly as demand continues to outpace supply. Vacant residential land is primarily concentrated in northeastern Colorado Springs but also extends into adjacent unincorporated areas, where developable sites may be more abundant. In contrast, tax-exempt publicly owned residential parcels are more common in areas bordering Fort Carson, where they are situated near existing infrastructure and residential neighborhoods. Though land available for private development is much more abundant, these publicly controlled sites may offer especially promising opportunities for affordable or mixed-income development, as they can potentially reduce land acquisition costs and support public-sector planning goals.

Figure 73. Vacant and Publicly Owned Residential Land in El Paso County



Suitability of Parcels

The suitability of these parcels for residential use varies based on zoning, infrastructure, and location. Many city-owned lots are already zoned for mixed-use or residential development, while institutional properties like school district land may require variances or rezonings to accommodate residential development, which adds to project costs and timelines. In addition, infrastructure availability significantly impacts feasibility, as remote parcels often lack immediate water and sewer connections. Location also plays a critical role: Central city-owned parcels are highly desirable due to proximity to transit and employment centers, while peripheral state-owned lands may present transportation accessibility challenges for future residents.

Partnership Opportunities

Partnership opportunities have emerged to maximize the housing potential of these public assets. The City of Colorado Springs has explored public-private partnerships (P3s) for affordable housing on one of its only remaining vacant municipally owned parcels. The Atrium at Austin Bluffs project, a 54-unit housing complex serving seniors was supported by the city and built through collaboration with non-profit Greccio, and private developer. At the state level, the Land Use Initiative encourages collaboration between local governments and state agencies to convert underused public land into housing. Institutional landowners, including UCHealth hospitals and the University of Colorado Springs (UCCS), have also identified surplus properties that could support workforce housing developments.

Housing Development Challenges and Opportunities

Housing Development Challenges Overview

- Affordable housing development in Colorado Springs is very costly, averaging $433K per unit, often exceeding the $460K median resale price. With rents around $1,800 (over 30% of median renter income) many middle-income households remain renters.
- In unincorporated areas, multifamily and mixed-use housing is largely restricted. Similarly, most of the residential land in Colorado Springs is zoned for single-family use, limiting missing-middle and higher-density options and constraining the housing supply.
- Recent state laws (HB 1152, HB 1313) now require local governments to allow ADUs and higher-density housing near transit, creating new opportunities, while construction-defect reforms aim to spur more multifamily development.
- Lack of water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure limits housing growth in the County, raising costs and deterring development. Colorado Springs addresses these with a user-pay system (70–100% cost recovery) to fund new infrastructure, preventing burdens on existing taxpayers.
- Colorado Springs has committed to producing 758 new affordable units annually under Proposition 123.
- According to the community questionnaire, around 65% support program expansion and roughly 60% back zoning changes, but localized opposition remains, with 20–25% of residents prioritizing neighborhood character or opposing nearby affordable housing.

Key Takeaways

- Rising construction costs and high rents are squeezing the market, leaving lower-income households facing the greatest affordability pressures as competition for limited rentals intensifies.
- Streamlining approvals, reducing development fees, and modernizing permitting processes could expand housing options and affordability across the region.
- Prioritizing investments along major corridors and transit areas can lower development costs, expand housing options, and support affordability.
- A region-wide housing education initiative using bilingual tools, mobile outreach, hotlines, and community partnerships can improve access for underserved populations, reduce application errors, and build support for affordable housing by highlighting successes and dispelling misconceptions.

Introduction

Understanding the barriers and opportunities associated with housing development is critical to identifying actionable strategies that expand housing options and meet community needs. This section explores the multifaceted challenges and opportunities influencing housing production, with a focus on factors such as development costs, regulatory frameworks, infrastructure capacity, and community sentiment. It is heavily informed by qualitative insights gathered through local knowledge, planning documents, and stakeholder input.

Development Costs

The cost of developing new housing is one of the most significant factors influencing the availability and affordability of homes in a community. This subsection examines the various components that contribute to overall development expenses, including the price of land, construction materials, labor, infrastructure improvements, and regulatory compliance. Understanding these costs is essential to evaluating the financial feasibility of housing projects, particularly for affordable or workforce housing, and can help determine the required level of subsidy to enable such projects. This analysis also explores the gap between what it costs to build housing and what local households can realistically afford to pay, whether through rent or homeownership, as well as available incentives or subsidies to help build affordable housing.

The High Cost of Housing Development

Colorado Springs is experiencing significant challenges in housing development and affordability, driven by rising costs for land, labor, materials, and infrastructure. These factors, coupled with income limitations and a growing population, have created an affordability gap that leaves many residents struggling to access adequate housing. 2024 estimates from the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA) reflect an average per-unit cost of roughly $433,000 for the development of affordable housing, with the average cost per square foot reaching $410 (including permanent supportive housing units). Over the past several years, rising material costs (particularly for lumber, cement, and steel) and high interest rates, combined with construction labor shortages, have significantly driven up the overall expense for new housing projects. Infrastructure expenditures such as utility connections, road improvements, and community facilities further add to these costs, creating a stark disparity between the cost of developing housing and what residents can afford to pay, pushing more developers away from affordable development and toward market-rate and luxury development, which are more profitable.

Affordability Gaps

As reported in this study, the median Colorado Springs home sold for nearly $460,000 in 2024. The high costs associated with new construction often align with or exceed resale prices for existing homes, placing significant strain on working- and middle-income buyers. For many households, particularly those earning between 80% and 120% of the area median income (AMI), these prices are prohibitive, resulting in many households choosing to continue renting; as increasing numbers of middle-income households remain in the rental market, competition for available units intensifies, reducing the supply of affordable rentals and placing even greater pressure on lower-income renters.

Relatedly, *the typical monthly rent in the region is approximately $1,800.* At these rent levels, housing costs account for more than 30% of income for the median renter household, even before utilities are included. This affordability gap is even more severe for lower-income renters, particularly those earning below 80% of AMI, who face the greatest shortages of appropriately priced rental units. Despite recent stabilization in the rental market, rents remain well above what many households can reasonably afford, suggesting that the persistent pressure on lower-income renters across the region has not abated.

Available Incentives and Subsidies

To address development challenges, Colorado Springs and El Paso County have implemented a range of targeted incentives, subsidies, and programs to reduce costs and encourage affordable housing construction. The Colorado Springs Housing Authority and Fountain Housing Authority both administer Housing Choice Vouchers and offer tax credit partnerships, which eliminate property taxes for the LIHTC property for fees in lieu to the housing authority. The Colorado Springs Housing Authority also maintains age-restricted senior housing and public housing. Additionally, Colorado Springs has introduced a fee rebate program for affordable housing development, offers expedited permitting processes, sales and use tax refunds for affordable housing development, and provides financial support for both new construction and the preservation of existing affordable units. Colorado Springs prioritizes projects that serve low-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities, and has expanded zoning allowances to include accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and other flexible housing types. Furthermore, Colorado Springs supports innovative building methods, such as modular and panelized construction, to help lower development costs and speed up project timelines.

El Paso County has taken complementary steps by partnering with developers to build new affordable housing communities, such as Silver Key Apartments and Paloma Gardens, which provide much-needed homes for low-income seniors. To further assist residents, El Paso County has launched an online affordable housing locator tool, making it easier for individuals and families to find available subsidized units throughout the area. These specific strategies aim to remove barriers, incentivize new development, and ensure a broader range of affordable housing options for residents across the region.

However, current levels of incentives and subsidies have proven inadequate at facilitating the production of affordable and workforce housing. Additional incentives and subsidies are needed to further lower the cost of production and enable housing; the subsection on

Funding Sources, contained within the *Policy and Program Recommendations*, section further outlines potential additions.

Regulatory Environment

Local land use policies play a critical role in shaping the pace, type, and affordability of housing development. This subsection explores how zoning regulations, subdivision requirements, and permitting processes influence the ability to build new housing, as well as opportunities to streamline the development process, and the impact of statewide requirements on housing construction. Identifying regulatory barriers, such as restrictive zoning, lengthy review procedures, or unclear approval pathways, is essential for understanding why housing projects may stall or fail to materialize altogether.

Regulatory and Procedural Impacts on Housing Development

Housing development in Colorado Springs and El Paso County is shaped by a complex interplay of zoning regulations, subdivision rules, permitting processes, and statewide requirements. These factors collectively influence the pace, cost, and type of housing that can be built in the county. In unincorporated El Paso County, *only two districts currently allow multiple dwelling units,* and there are still strict limitations on density and form. Mixed-use zoning is currently not permitted in any zoning district in the unincorporated county.

Relatedly, Colorado Springs currently has ten residential zones and six mixed-use zones, each with specific dimensional standards such as building height, setbacks, and minimum lot sizes. *These regulations are often structured in ways that permit and facilitate single-family housing more readily than other housing types for new development in the city. ,* That said, 83% of existing residential land in the city is zoned for single-family use. This artificial market constraint limits missing middle housing options (such as duplexes, townhomes, and cottage courts), throught many areas of the city, limiting housing options for a wide range of households and income levels.

Opportunities to Streamline Development

For affordable and workforce housing developers, navigating the permitting and development process can be particularly challenging. Although existing systems and processes compare favorably to those of other jurisdictions, *housing developers have noted that regulatory delays greatly increase project costs and create uncertainty around timelines,* which can deter investment in much-needed housing solutions. By streamlining the permitting and review process, particularly for affordable and workforce housing developments, these projects can be brought to market quicker, allowing a developer to see a quicker return on investment and providing increased housing options for the city's residents. Strategies for streamlining development include expanding the types of development that can be approved by-right, expediting review and permitting timelines, further digitizing permitting, licensing, and code management systems, and removing other burdensome regulatory hurdles, such as strict development standards and parking requirements. Furthermore, local developers have noted that high impact, permitting, and review fees add greatly to a project's cost, significantly reducing the viability of projects, particularly those with affordable units. These strategies are addressed in greater detail in the subsection on, contained within the *Policy and* Program Recommendations section.

The Impact of Statewide Requirements

Statewide requirements also play a significant role in shaping housing construction across El Paso County. Historically, construction defects litigation has discouraged multifamily developments like condominiums due to liability concerns. However, recent legislative reforms aim to reduce these barriers by limiting frivolous lawsuits and encouraging more diverse housing options.

Additionally, new state mandates such as HB 1152 and HB 1313 require local governments to adopt zoning regulations that promote gentle increases in density through allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in more places, as well as other policies that enable higher-density housing near transit areas.

Infrastructure and Its Role in Housing Development

The availability and condition of community infrastructure, including roads, water, sewer systems, and utilities, play a critical role in shaping housing construction in El Paso County and Colorado Springs. As the county continues to rapidly grow, the ability of its infrastructure to support new residential development has become a central factor in addressing housing needs. This subsection explores the impact of current infrastructure constraints on housing development and identifies areas where increased infrastructure investment is needed to facilitate growth.

Infrastructure Concerns

Numerous local developers have noted that a lack of adequate infrastructure, such as water and sewer connections, is a barrier to construction, especially in the more rural areas of El Paso County. Upgrading or installing new infrastructure connections creates an additional cost to developers that greatly reduces project viability.

Similarly, inadequate transportation options have constrained where new development can occur. Developers prefer building housing near transit or major corridors, because it ensures residents can easily access employment centers, schools, healthcare, and other essential services. Areas without reliable transportation options are simply less attractive to both developers and future residents. Furthermore, in areas with established transportation options, developers are less likely to need to invest in new roads, utilities, and transit connections, all of which significantly increase a project's cost. Investing in expanding the current transportation network is crucial for attracting and maintaining residential development.

As a way to alleviate some concerns within the city, Colorado Springs applies a cost recovery user-pay framework to capital infrastructure for new development, as outlined in PlanCOS policies. For services and infrastructure that primarily benefit new residents or property owners, the city targets a high-cost recovery level, typically between 70% and 100%. This means that those who directly benefit from new infrastructure, such as roads and utilities, are expected to pay most or all of the associated costs through development fees or other mechanisms. This approach ensures that the financial burden is not shifted to existing taxpayers and follows the principle that government should not subsidize services that are similar to those available in the private sector. The city may apply lower cost recovery levels for infrastructure or services that provide broad community-wide benefits or are considered public goods. This policy guides how Colorado Springs manages growth and ensures that new development pays its fair share for necessary infrastructure.

Infrastructure Investments

Infrastructure plays a major role in meeting the growing housing needs of El Paso County. As the region continues to expand, the condition and availability of infrastructure such as roads, water, sewer, and utilities have become increasingly important in supporting new housing development. These gaps place a disproportionate burden on low- and moderate-income households, further undermining housing affordability and stability. Without access to reliable infrastructure, the cost of developing or maintaining homes in these areas rises significantly, often requiring additional investments in water, sewer, or road improvements just to make a project viable. For renters and homeowners, this can translate into higher housing costs, utility bills, and maintenance expenses.

To make measurable progress, infrastructure investments should be prioritized in areas where gaps are most limiting housing growth, particularly major thoroughfares and transit corridors. Reducing development costs by focusing on fee and permitting structures can help, especially for projects aligned with existing infrastructure plans.

The existing user-pay fee framework within COS plays an important role in addressing infrastructure-related affordability challenges. By allocating the costs of new roads, utilities, and other essential infrastructure to those who directly benefit from new development, the city helps prevent these expenses from being unfairly shifted onto low- and moderate-income households. This approach also provides developers with clearer expectations regarding project costs, making it easier to plan and invest in new housing. The framework promotes more predictable growth, supporting both housing affordability and the strategic expansion of neighborhoods where infrastructure can best accommodate additional homes.

Community Sentiment

Community support for, or resistance to, housing development can make or break a project. This subsection examines public attitudes toward new housing initiatives, particularly when it comes to affordable or higher-density housing. Understanding local sentiment helps identify potential barriers rooted in perception, misinformation, or competing priorities, as well as opportunities to build trust and increase support.

Community Attitudes Toward Affordable Housing

Colorado Springs faces a critical and growing need for affordable housing, driven by rapid and continuous population growth, housing supply deficits, and economic pressures. Addressing this challenge requires a comprehensive understanding of the community's attitudes toward affordable housing, as well as opportunities to foster greater support through education and engagement. Like everywhere else, residents of El Paso County and Colorado Springs express a range of both support and resistance toward affordable housing development, as well as development more broadly.

The community's commitment to addressing housing needs has been demonstrated by several recent initiatives, including Colorado Springs' decision to opt into Proposition 123, which provides funding opportunities for affordable housing development. Related to Prop 123, *the city, with the partnership of developers and nonprofits, must produce 758 units of affordable housing/year through new construction, preservation, or naturally occurring affordable housing*. which is supported by partnerships with for-profit and non-profit developers. Significant recent projects like Bentley Commons (168 new units), InterQuest Ridge (240 new units) and Paloma Gardens (75 new units) highlight the community's progress in addressing housing needs. Support for these initiatives was reflected in the community survey, with nearly 65% of respondents stating they support the expansion of affordable housing programs, and over 60% of respondents stating they at least somewhat support changes in current zoning regulations to enable a wider range of housing types.

Despite these efforts and a growing number of residents who support new housing development, localized opposition exists, particularly among local homeowners concerned about zoning changes that increase neighborhood density, and residents concerned about the location or provision of affordable housing. Initial feedback from the community survey reflects this feedback, with roughly 25% of residents stating that maintaining neighborhood character is more important than adding new housing, and around 20% of residents opposing changes in zoning to enable a wider range of residential developments. Additionally, around 20% of residents oppose affordable housing expansion in all neighborhoods, while around 15% of residents support affordable housing elsewhere, but not in their neighborhoods specifically.

Housing Education for Communities

A region-wide education initiative can help bridge housing resource gaps by providing accessible, easy-to-understand information for underserved populations. Such efforts would improve accessibility, enhance understanding, and reduce errors in housing applications, all while leveraging existing infrastructure and resources to support underserved populations without adding additional burdens or costs.

Local governments may take a more active role in alleviating concerns that new housing will lower property values, increase crime, or change neighborhood character, as well as highlighting success stories like Bentley Commons and Paloma Gardens that show the benefits brought to El Paso County residents. Local governments could also showcase stories about how new affordable and workforce housing has enabled teachers, police, and other essential workers to live in the communities they serve. Public forums and workshops can further address concerns by explaining zoning changes and demonstrating how affordable housing enhances community stability and helps current residents.

Other local organizations can also play a role in these efforts by amplifying resident voices to educate the public about the benefits of affordable housing, while addressing stigmas associated with such housing.

Education initiatives could use bilingual visual tools, such as pictograms and short explainer videos, distributed through text messages, social media platforms like WhatsApp and YouTube, and local television programming. Mobile-first outreach could be a priority, ensuring that residents receive automated reminders for housing events and easy-to-follow video tutorials on important topics, like how to complete a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) application. Additionally, a voice-recorded hotline offering pre-recorded FAQs in both English and Spanish would further support residents in navigating housing processes.

Policy and Program Recommendations

Policy and Program Recommendations Overview

- This section outlines potential policies and programs that can be considered to address the housing needs of El Paso County and the city of Colorado Springs, based on the data and findings of this assessment, with a focus on actionable strategies for local governments.
- Using the data found in this report and the tools described in this section, local governments should develop individualized and well-coordinated actional plans to address specific and shared challenges.

Introduction

Using the data provided in this HNA, El Paso County, the City of Colorado Springs, and the other municipalities throughout the county should identify strategies individually and in cooperation with each other to address the ongoing housing needs of its residents. *The concepts outlined below provide a potential framework to develop one or more Housing Action Plans across the region.*

In many cases, local jurisdictions have put some of these strategies into use, but they are included here to increase awareness among the public, share best practices across jurisdictions, and identify opportunities to improve their effectiveness among community leaders. As communities across El Paso County tailor their own specific approach to implementing some or all of the tools listed below, it will support ongoing efforts to address the housing needs across the region's socio-economic spectrum, mitigate displacement risk, and support diverse and sustainable housing options.

Funding Sources

Comprehensive financing mechanisms and targeted incentives remain among the most effective tools for stimulating housing production across affordability levels. Given the exceptionally high costs of housing construction, local developers report that even market-rate projects can be difficult to deliver profitably. Expanding flexible financing options—such as local subsidies, tax incentives, and low-cost lending—can significantly improve project feasibility. Similarly, development incentives like density bonuses, fee waivers, and expedited permitting can help reduce per-unit costs. However, in cases where fees are waived, those costs are typically absorbed by the city's general fund or passed on elsewhere, raising the need for transparent, equitable cost-sharing mechanisms.

Funding is vital for project success; financial support from the public sector can improve the viability of affordable and workforce housing developments. Capital provided by local, state, and federal sources (as summarized below) can attract investment to underserved areas and support affordable housing to a greater extent than private investment can achieve on its own. State and federal funding sources – often guided at the local level – provide advantages by reducing reliance on local funding sources, preserving those funds for other initiatives. Local governments can publish state and federal funding opportunities for potential affordable housing to increase their reach across the region.

Local Funding Opportunities

A diverse range of local financial support and other incentives provide a broad toolkit for community consideration:

- *Low-interest loans* provide a continuous stream of funding for eligible projects making them attractive to other investors. As loans are repaid, the money is reloaned to new projects, creating a cycle of funding. For example, the El Paso County Housing Authority's Housing Trust Fund offers revolving loans of up to $500,000 to develop and preserve housing, as well as homeownership, homelessness support, and special needs housing efforts. Low-interest loans are particularly helpful for mixed-income projects with market-rate and affordable units. Eligibility criteria should be carefully structured so as not to exclude smaller or non-profit developers. In addition to the upfront investment, this approach requires ongoing administrative support and places the burden of default risk on local governments.
- *Tax abatement/exemptions* reduce or eliminate ongoing property tax costs, improving a project's return on investment and offer long-term financial relief. Abatements are typically temporary, while exemptions provide a permanent exclusion from taxes. However, the impact of these tools varies by jurisdiction. In areas like El Paso County, where property tax rates are relatively low, the financial benefit may be limited and may need to be paired with other forms of support to meaningfully improve project feasibility. Additionally, these strategies reduce local tax revenues and must be carefully balanced against fiscal constraints, particularly in TABOR-constrained environments.

  Signed into law in 2023 and taking effect in 2025, HB 23-1184 expands eligibility for property tax exemptions to encourage affordable housing development, raising income thresholds and extending eligibility to nonprofit providers, community land trusts, and affordable homeownership developers.

- *Tax deferral* allows projects to delay property tax payments, improving short-term cash flow. This is particularly beneficial for large-scale projects with long development timelines or during economic downturns when liquidity is critical. However, this approach postpones revenue for local jurisdictions, which may strain budgets and affect the delivery of public services.
- *Tax increment financing (TIF)* is a public financing method typically used for redevelopment, infrastructure, and other community-improvement projects. TIF allows a local government to use the increased property tax revenue generated by new development within a district (that would otherwise not exist) to fund improvements within the same area. TIF funds are permitted in specifically designated Urban Renewal Authority (URA) areas, as well as Downtown Development Authority (DDA) areas. Currently, Colorado Springs has two DDAs; one in the historic downtown core, and the other in the Old Colorado City. TIF funds can provide targeted investments to finance affordable housing development, housing rehabilitation and preservation, and new infrastructure to support affordable housing, among other uses.
- *Linkage fees* generate dedicated funding for affordable and workforce housing. Typically charged on a per-square-foot basis for new commercial, industrial, and office developments, these fees are collected into a housing trust fund and used to support income-restricted housing construction, preservation, or rehabilitation. However, it is important to note that linkage fees represent a transfer of cost, which—if not carefully calibrated—can affect the feasibility of market-rate development. To ensure fairness and effectiveness, jurisdictions should regularly review fee levels in light of changing market conditions, inflation, and political considerations. Exemptions can also be crafted for specific uses, such as residential developments with affordable units, schools, government facilities, places of worship, or industries targeted for economic development.
- *Direct grants and subsidies* may include up front capital without repayment obligations to offset a range of development costs, including predevelopment costs, construction, and supportive services. Ongoing operational subsidies (covering the difference between operating costs and rental income for affordable housing developments), provide direct financial assistance to eligible projects. Subsidies can be expensive for a local jurisdiction and require significant government resources to administer and monitor effectively.

State Funding Opportunities

Statewide funding sources, including those from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), are particularly well-suited to addressing the affordable housing challenges facing Colorado Springs and unincorporated areas of El Paso County. These programs, many of them newly established, reflect the state's intensified commitment to expanding housing access and affordability. By strategically leveraging these resources, local jurisdictions can support new housing across income levels and lay the groundwork for long-term community resilience and economic growth. Specific state-level programs including:

- *Housing Development Grant and Loan Fund Expansion* – The Housing Development Grant Fund (HDGF) and Housing Development Loan Fund (HDLF), administered by the Colorado Division of Housing (DOH), present significant opportunities for communities to enhance their affordable housing initiatives. While both El Paso County and the City of Colorado Springs currently utilize this tool, there is potential for strategic expansion to further address growing housing needs across urban, suburban, and rural areas.

Utilizing State Funding HDGF and HDLF

Communities could leverage the HDGF to convert vacant commercial properties into affordable housing units, a cost-effective adaptive reuse strategy that aligns with the fund's eligible uses. HDGF funding can also be used to improve data collection on local housing conditions and trends, enabling informed decision-making for future projects.

Additionally, the HDLF could be utilized more extensively to support large-scale affordable housing developments through low-interest loans, addressing the increasing demand for rental units.

Targeting workforce housing projects near job centers or military installations would further support essential workers struggling with rising living costs. Expanding HDGF resources for foreclosure prevention and emergency rental assistance would help stabilize vulnerable households during economic downturns. Local jurisdictions and housing providers should combine HDGF resources with other state funding programs, such as Proposition 123's Affordable Housing Financing Fund and the Transformational Affordable Housing Grant Program.

- *Proposition 123: State Affordable Housing Fund* – In 2022, Colorado voters approved Proposition 123, creating the State Affordable Housing Fund (SAHF), intended to significantly boost affordable housing across the state. Funded by allocating 0.1% of existing state tax revenue, the SAHF is expected to generate up to $300 million annually. These funds are accessible to local governments, nonprofits, community land trusts, and private developers.
- To qualify for funding, jurisdictions must pledge to increase their affordable housing inventory by 3% annually over a three-year period. Thus far Colorado Springs has opted into Proposition 123; in doing so, the city, with the partnership of developers and nonprofits, must produce 758 units of affordable housing/year through new construction, preservation, or naturally occurring affordable housing.

  Participating in this initiative unlocks substantial funding opportunities for initiatives such as land acquisition, rental and homeownership assistance, homelessness case management, and streamlining zoning and permitting processes to accelerate housing development.

  However, the challenge of achieving the program's annual 3% growth targets may limit its effectiveness without sustained local coordination, resource alignment, and policy support.
- *Affordable Housing Tax Credit (AHTC)* – Colorado's AHTC functions similarly to the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), and it can be paired with the federal credit to help finance the construction or rehabilitation of affordable rental housing. To be eligible, projects must meet income and rent restrictions, serving households earning 60% AMI or less. State credits for this program have been increased significantly from 2024 to 2031, including new transit-oriented community credits.
- *Middle-Income Housing Tax Credit (MIHTC)* – Launching in 2025, the Colorado Middle-Income Housing Tax Credit (MIHTC) program is aimed at supporting rental housing development for households earning between 80% and 140% of AMI. These households

typically earn too much to qualify for programs like LIHTC or AHTC yet still face significant difficulty affording market-rate rents. The MIHTC program will provide $5 million annually in 2025 and 2026, increasing to $10 million annually for the following three years. To ensure long-term affordability, all housing funded through MIHTC will be subject to a minimum 15-year affordability period, helping to address the growing needs of Colorado's middle-income renters.

- *Creation of Supportive Housing Program* – This program, administered by DOLA, expands efforts to address homelessness and housing instability. This program provides grants and loans to nonprofit organizations, housing authorities, and private developers to develop supportive housing that integrates wraparound services, such as mental health care, case management, and employment assistance, for the region's most vulnerable populations.

While these funds support a wide range of initiatives and programing, they can potentially be used to develop new supportive housing units or rehabilitate existing structures to serve individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk of chronic housing instability. The Creation of Supportive Housing Program aligns with these local priorities by offering targeted funding for projects that address chronic homelessness and long-term housing instability.

Local Supportive Housing Implementation Efforts

Colorado Springs already utilizes permanent supportive housing (PSH) as a key strategy as outlined in its 2025-2030 Homelessness Response Action Plan, which emphasizes the importance of combining stable housing with critical support services. Recent successes in reducing homelessness in the region, driven by investments in housing-first approaches, demonstrate the effectiveness of integrating housing with services.

In addition, $2.7 million was allocated by Pikes Peak Continuum of Care (PPCoC) in fiscal year 2024, providing opportunities for jurisdictions like Colorado Springs and El Paso County to expand their supportive housing capacity.

To maximize this opportunity, local communities can collaborate with experienced nonprofit developers, public housing authorities, and service providers to apply for funding through this program. Additionally, they can integrate this funding with other resources such as Proposition 123's Affordable Housing Financing Fund (specifically for Colorado Springs) or HUD funding to create a comprehensive approach to supportive housing development.

Federal Funding Opportunities

Numerous federal programs support housing development, which are often administered at the state or local level. These opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- The *Low-Income Housing Tax Credit* (LIHTC) incentivizes financing to rehabilitate or construct very low and low-income rental housing. A project must set aside a minimum percentage of units to be affordable to very low and low- income renters for at least 30 years in exchange for a reduction in federal tax liability over ten consecutive years. There are non-competitive credits (4 percent) meant to subsidize 30% of the low-income unit costs and competitive credits (9 percent) meant to subsidize 70% of the low-income unit costs. Competitive credits are often awarded to developments with a higher percentage of set-aside low-income units. They are also often reserved for more pressing projects that address housing for specific vulnerable groups such as homeless individuals or people with special needs.

- The *HOME Investment Partnerships Program* (HOME) is the largest federal block grant designed exclusively to create and maintain affordable housing. Administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), HOME provides grants to states and localities to fund housing initiatives including building, buying, and rehabilitating affordable housing for rent or homeownership. In addition, the program can be used to provide direct rental assistance to low- income people. This program is implemented through the City of Colorado Spring's Housing and Homelessness Response Department.
- The *Community Development Block Grant* (CDBG) HUD program provides annual grants to states, cities, and counties to support a wide range of community development activities, including housing initiatives, particularly for low- and moderate-income individuals and households. This program is administered through the City of Colorado Spring's Housing and Homelessness Response Department and the El Paso County Economic Development Department. CDBG funds can support a wide range of housing activities, such as housing rehabilitation, homeownership assistance, site acquisition and predevelopment activities, and infrastructure improvements. However, the funds cannot be used directly for new housing construction. This program mandates that at least 70% of CDBG funds be used for activities that support the low- and moderate-income population; the program's flexibility and emphasis on lower-income populations makes it well-suited for promoting affordable housing projects.
- *Private Activity Bonds* – Private Activity Bonds (PABs) are tax-exempt municipal bonds that enable state and local governments to leverage private capital for public benefit projects, with affordable housing comprising over 90% of PAB utilization nationwide. States receive their federal allocation and subdivide it between state agencies (50%) and local governments (50%), typically using population-based formulas. The most powerful aspect of PAB financing for affordable housing lies in its automatic qualification for 4% Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) when bonds finance at least 50% of project development costs, resulting in PABs being used as the primary vehicle for accessing these credits.
- The *Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program* is a HUD program that allows CDBG recipients to leverage their annual grant allocations for flexible financing for economic development, infrastructure, and housing projects. Housing-related activities that can qualify include housing rehabilitation and repair.
- The *Emergency Solutions Grant Program* (ESG) is a HUD program that awards cities, counties, territories, and states grants to assist people with obtaining and maintaining permanent housing. The program funds various eligible activities, including outreach to those experiencing homelessness, homelessness prevention efforts, rapid re-housing assistance, improving emergency shelter conditions, and implementing Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS).
- *Pathways to Removing Obstacles to Housing* (PRO Housing) is an annual federal HUD grant to support communities that are working to remove barriers to affordable housing production and preservation. Grants of up to $10 million can be awarded to local governments for actions to further develop and implement housing policy plans, improve housing strategies, and facilitate housing production and preservation. The grant can fund amendments to current policies and codes, education and outreach activities, and demonstration projects, among other related activities. County governments, municipal governments, and metropolitan planning organizations are among those eligible to apply.

Regulatory Tools

Housing development occurs within a highly regulated environment, including land use, site development, and building codes as well as local administrative processes. While these regulations play a much-needed role to promote public health, safety, and wellness, they also profoundly shape local housing and real estate markets. Continued updates to local land use regulations can increase the quantity and types of housing available and promote a high quality of life for all residents across the demographic and economic spectrum found throughout the community.

Land Use and Zoning

Zoning regulations determine the types of uses that can be built and where, directly influencing the affordability and availability of housing options. There are a wide range of opportunities to support a broader range of housing types through updates to zoning and land use policies in Colorado Springs and across El Paso County communities. The adoption of the Unified Development Code in Colorado Springs in 2023 has a significant step forward in expanding the regulatory space for housing, particularly compared to the previous framework.

- *Targeted Upzoning:* To align growth with infrastructure and accessibility, communities can consider targeted upzoning near downtown cores, along key transportation corridors, and other primary activity nodes, such as commercial, healthcare, and education facilities. Providing additional housing in these areas can reduce car dependency, lower household transportation costs, and support more walkable, livable neighborhoods to meet daily needs. Notably, growth should be directed in areas where infrastructure can accommodate increased development, and future infrastructure investments should be targeted toward targeted growth corridors. Existing residential units (especially those with historic significance) should be preserved to the greatest extent possible; new development should instead be targeted toward vacant and infill lots as much as possible.

- *Expanded Housing Options:* As mentioned previously, Colorado Springs' zoning code heavily favors single-family housing, with 83% of residential land designated for such use. Along similar lines, unincorporated El Paso County zoning favors single-family housing, with higher-density residential options permitted in only a few areas, partly due to reliance on well and septic systems that require larger lot sizes.

  Regardless of location, artificial market constraints imposed in single-family zones limit housing options for households across the economic spectrum. Non-single family residential options are limited, disallowing low-density multi-family (often referred to as "missing middle") housing options such as duplexes, townhomes, and cottage courts. Broadening the range of allowable housing types, particularly near existing infrastructure able to support additional housing, can improve affordability, increases property rights, reduces development pressure on rural land, and expands housing options for a wider range of residents.

- *Mixed-use and Transit-Oriented Development:* Expanding mixed-use zoning, such as the recently established Mixed-Use (MX) zone district, can foster vibrant, walkable, transit supportive development by integrating residential, commercial, and civic uses within the same area. This approach allows residents to live closer to jobs, shops, restaurants, and services, reducing commute times for all residents and promoting local economic activity. Mixed-use development, especially in underutilized activity nodes in both urban and rural areas, can help communities accommodate future growth and attract new investments into aging or underperforming districts.

  In locations served by transit, transit-oriented zoning can also encourage development in areas served by public transportation, improving residents' access to essential goods and services and supporting local businesses. In addition, such a policy supports walking, cycling, promoting efficient land use and reducing car congestion.

Mixed-use and transit-oriented developments may be eligible for a density bonus and lowered or removed minimum parking requirements due to the potential they have to reduce conventional road traffic impacts. Other elements may include (but not be limited to) orienting housing toward the street or transit stops, including bike parking and repair stations, and providing robust crosswalks, landscaping, public art, lighting, accessibility features, street furniture, and sidewalks to create high-quality

- *Senior Housing Incentives:* Given that seniors across El Paso County are more likely to be cost-burdened than other age groups, the wide range of tools described in this section (such as density bonuses, reduced parking requirements reflecting lower car ownership among seniors, and requiring accessible design/universal design features to support aging in place) can directly support this age demographic. In return for these incentives, senior housing development should be age-restricted for senior citizens and targeted near public transit and other essential services to improve accessibility.
- *Supporting ADU Development:* Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) refer to ancillary or secondary living units that exist either within the same structure, or on the same lot, as a primary dwelling unit. ADUs—often called "garage apartments," "mother-in-law suites," or "carriage houses"—can take several forms, including attached units connected to the primary residence, detached standalone units, and garage conversions that repurpose existing garage space into livable housing.

  ADUs provide flexible and relatively low-cost housing options for renters, seniors, and extended families. They also offer property owners an opportunity to generate rental income, which can support long-term affordability and financial resilience. El Paso County communities can encourage ADU development by removing the need for special permits and lengthy approvals, providing clear standards for attached and detached ADUs, eliminating barriers such as owner-occupancy and excessive parking requirements, and streamlining the permitting process with expedited reviews and pre-approved designs. Municipalities may also provide public education and technical support to help residents navigate the process.

Density Bonuses: Density bonuses are a commonly used tool that local governments provide to affordable and workforce housing projects. When local regulations limit the number of units that can be built on a property, a density bonus can make an otherwise infeasible project financially viable. Density bonuses provide additional rent from bonus units, reduced rents of set-aside affordable units, and the increased number of units increases the value of the property, improving project viability. In addition, targeted density bonuses promote sustainable, efficient land use, and can help local governments with urban development goals, such as transit-oriented development, without the need to up-zone. Though density bonuses can take a variety of forms, *a sliding scale density bonus,* where the bonus varies based on the percentage or number of units set aside as affordable and the level of affordability, meaning larger density bonuses are granted to projects providing lower levels of affordability.

Colorado Springs offers a density bonus program that grants additional building height and density in exchange for affordable housing. Projects can receive bonus points based on the percentage of affordable units provided. For example, a development that designates 10% of their total units as affordable may qualify for one additional story, while higher percentages can earn greater bonuses. Other potential community goals such as green building design or historic preservation can also contribute to bonus eligibility.

Peer Community Example

Tampa, FL – Like Colorado Springs, Tampa is experiencing rapid population growth, strong in-migration, and rising housing costs that have outpaced local income growth. Tampa also has a significant military presence, a diversifying economy, and faces state-level constraints that limit local housing policy flexibility, such as Florida's preemption laws and Colorado's TABOR.

Tampa is currently considering a sliding scale density bonus based on the percentage of affordable units in a project. If a developer sets aside a portion of affordable units, they are eligible for a density bonus of up to 100% of the underlying density.

Tampa is also considering several other density bonuses to bolster other urban development goals, such as transit-oriented development (TOD) and mixed-use development bonuses. The city allows bonuses to combine and stack up to a bonus ceiling as identified for each future land use category.

% Aff. Units	<50% AMI	50-80% AMI	80-120% AMI
5%	36%	26%	10%
10%	60%	46%	20%
15%	100%	76%	30%
20%	100%	100%	40%
25%	100%	100%	50%

El Paso County-Specific Zoning Recommendations

- *Modernize and Expand Mobile/Manufactured Home Park Options:* The county's Mobile Home Park-Rural (MHP-R) zoning district, intended for areas not served by central sewage facilities, can be restrictive: the minimum parcel size is 35 acres, and density is limited to 1 dwelling unit per 2.5 acres, though clustering is encouraged if standards are met. El Paso County can modernize its Mobile Home Park-Rural (MHP-R) zoning by reducing the 35-acre minimum parcel size and allowing increased density, especially near key transportation corridors and essential services. Expanding allowed housing types to include tiny and modular homes, streamlining approval processes, and updating infrastructure standards would encourage more affordable, flexible manufactured housing options through lower costs and sped up construction, all while preserving rural character. The County could encourage more permanent modular and manufactured homes by educating the public about the quality and benefits of modular and manufactured homes to help address misconceptions, reducing financial barriers, and encouraging adoption over traditional mobile homes.
- *Adaptive Reuse/Rezoning of Obsolete or Underutilized Properties:* El Paso County does not currently have a streamlined process or flexible approaches to support adaptive reuse of obsolete or underutilized properties for residential or mixed-use purposes. To address this, the county could establish clear guidelines and expedited permitting for adaptive reuse projects, and offer technical assistance for converting vacant commercial or institutional buildings into housing or mixed-use developments, where appropriate. This would encourage revitalization and make better use of existing structures and infrastructure. In addition, the county could support owner-initiated efforts to rezone underused or vacant parcels to further facilitate their redevelopment.

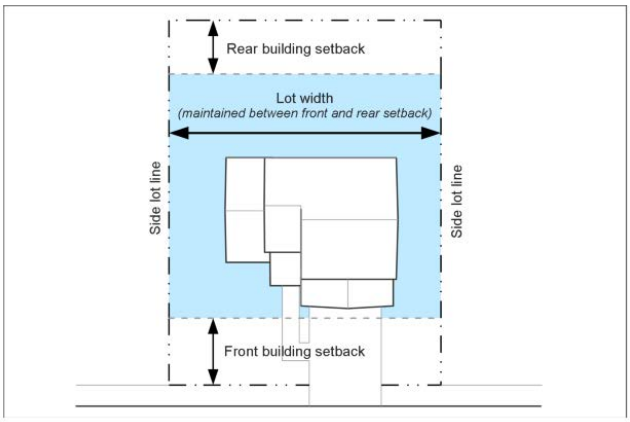
Development Standards

Updating development standards can expand housing options and improve project feasibility, especially in areas facing land constraints. Tools such as reduced setbacks, lot area reductions, and increased lot coverage increase efficient land use without dramatically altering neighborhood character.

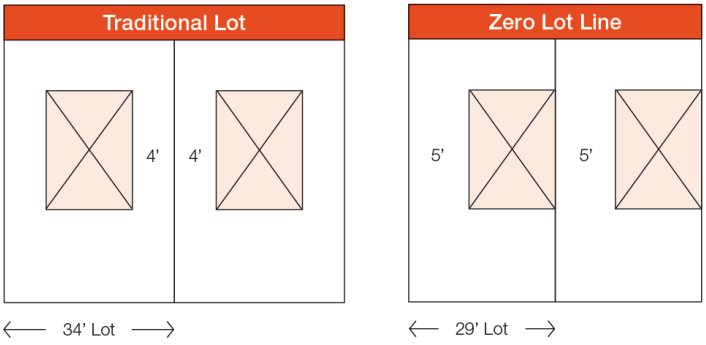
Reduced Setbacks

Zero lot line provisions, which allow homes to be built up to the edge of a property line, can maximize usable space on smaller lots and support compact, walkable neighborhoods. Modifications to street design standards can lower infrastructure costs and free up additional land for housing.

In Colorado Springs, the recently adopted Unified Development Code (UDC) has begun to apply several of these strategies—particularly within newly created flex zone districts. The City allows one foot side yard setbacks in all three R-Flex zone districts, with a required total of both side setbacks of at least six feet. Furthermore, the City allows zero foot setbacks for attached housing types. By enabling homes to be built directly or almost directly on the property line, more units can be produced per acre, which helps lower housing costs and supports affordable development. Looking ahead, similar modifications in established neighborhoods could further expand housing opportunities.



Source: City of Colorado Springs



Source: Trico Homes

Peer Community Examples:

Wichita, KS – recent zoning updates allow side setbacks as low as three feet for small-lot single-family and townhouse developments, down from the previous six feet (a 50% reduction). Rear setbacks for these types have been reduced from 20 feet to 10 feet (a 50% reduction).

Aurora, CO – Aurora has reduced side setbacks for small-lot single-family zones from 5 feet to 3 feet (a 40% reduction) and rear setbacks from 20 feet to 10 feet (a 50% reduction) for attached and small-lot housing.

Lot Area Reduction

Lot area minimums specify the smallest allowable land area on which a building or structure can be constructed. *These regulations often prevent the development of affordable single-family housing.* Lot area reductions utilize smaller parcels of land for housing, reducing land costs per unit, in turn enabling affordable housing options.

Source: City of Colorado Springs

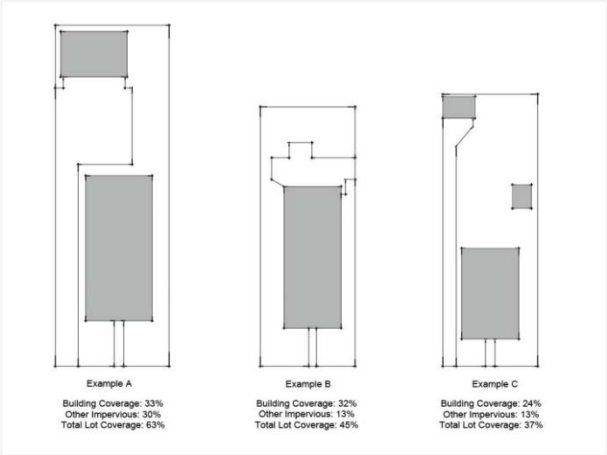
Lot Coverage Increase

Peer Community Examples:

Boise, ID – Boise recently decreased the minimum lot size from 5,000 to 3,500 square feet (a 30% decrease), allowing more homes to be built on the same amount of land. This reform directly reduces the land cost for each home, making it possible to build smaller, less expensive homes and increasing affordable housing supply.

Albuquerque, NM – Albuquerque's zoning code enables development on smaller lots in select zones, which supports the construction of affordable single-family and multifamily homes. In single-family residential zones (R-1A), the minimum lot size is 3,500 square feet. For townhomes and other allowable attached housing types, the minimum is 2,200 square feet. Manufactured homes require at least 2,500 square feet, while multifamily developments must meet a minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet. Smaller lots mean lower land acquisition costs, making it feasible to produce homes at lower price points.

Lot coverage increases the percentage of a lot that can be covered by buildings, beyond what is typically permitted under existing zoning regulations. Lot coverage refers specifically to the portion of a lot occupied by buildings, distinct from floor area ratio (FAR), which regulates total building density across all floors relative to lot size, and impervious surface ratio (ISR), which includes all impervious surfaces such as buildings, driveways, sidewalks, and patios. this improves project efficiency and viability.



Source: City of Durham, North Carolina

Peer Community Examples:

Boise, ID – Boise's updated code increases the allowable lot coverage in higher-density residential zones. This means that, in these zones, the total floor area of residential structures (excluding below-grade space) can occupy up to 70% of the lot. As a result, developers can build larger or more numerous units on each lot, spreading land and infrastructure costs across more homes and making affordable housing projects more financially viable. Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) have a separate limit in which they are capped at either 700 square feet or 10% of the lot size, whichever is less.

Albuquerque, NM – Albuquerque's zoning allows for higher lot coverage, particularly regarding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). The city's updated regulations allow ADUs to cover up to 25% of the combined area of the side and rear yard.

Parking Reductions

Parking requirements increase the cost of housing due to increased land and construction costs (particularly for structured parking). *In many cases, the amount of required parking goes beyond what the market demands*. Reducing the amount of land required to support parking can improve walkability, access to transit, and reduce vehicular traffic when combined with thoughtful design. Parking reductions can also make adaptive re-use easier, as older buildings

Peer Community Examples

Reno, NV – Activity Centers and Transit Proximity: Boise's zoning code allows multifamily projects within designated "Activity Centers" or within a quarter mile of a transit stop to reduce their parking requirements by 20 to 30%. This reduction reflects lower car dependency levels in these areas. Reductions within activity centers or within transit proximity could stack on top of existing affordable housing parking reductions. Developers may also request further reductions by demonstrating that the proposed project will generate less parking demand (for example, senior or supportive housing).

Overland Park, KS

Shared Parking Reductions: Overland Park's code allows for shared parking reductions for mixed-use developments. The required number of parking spaces is calculated based on the different peak demand times for each use, such as residential, retail, and office. For example, residential parking demand is highest overnight, while retail and office demand peaks during the day. This method enables multiple developments to share the same parking supply, significantly reducing the total number of spaces required for a project. Such a shared parking arrangement can be utilized by affordable housing developments to lower the cost of construction, while maintaining an adequate level of parking.

Demand Reduction Amenities: If a development provides parking below the typical minimums, it must offer demand reduction amenities. These can include bike storage, carshare spaces, or enhanced pedestrian connections. Within some specific districts of the city, parking requirements range from 1.33 spaces per studio unit to 2 spaces per unit for larger apartments. Projects can provide parking at the lower end of these ranges if they incorporate shared parking or demand reduction features.

Location-Based Adjustments: Parking requirements can be further reduced based on location. Areas with lower auto ownership rates (as measured by census data) or closer proximity to transit may qualify for lower parking minimums within a specified range, such as one to two spaces per unit in certain districts.

To receive this benefit, as well as a density bonus and any other development incentives, the property must be deed-restricted and dedicate a certain number of units as affordable for at least 20 years.

often have insufficient space to meet current parking requirements. The City of Colorado Springs already allows up to a 40% parking reduction for affordable housing projects, but additional reductions could be considered for projects that meet development goals, including those that serve lower AMI levels, mixed-use developments, or transit-oriented nodes.

Street Design Modifications

Strict development standards, including street design requirements, can be a barrier to affordable housing by increasing development costs, reducing buildable land, and reducing design flexibility. Street design modifications, can also improve neighborhood walkability. Enabling more affordable modes of transportation, such as walking, cycling, and transit, is an especially effective way to make housing more affordable. Street design modifications may include reduced minimum lane and right-of-way widths, alternative turn-a-round designs other than cul-de-sacs, such as hammerhead and Y-shaped turn-a-rounds, and the use of one-way streets.

Source: City of Pueblo, Colorado

Peer Community Examples:

Boise's modern zoning code streamlines permitting and allows for flexibility in street design, such as narrower streets or alternative turnaround designs. Albuquerque's development manual permits modifications to standard street widths and turnaround requirements for affordable housing projects.

Administrative Processes

Expedited Review and Permitting

Local, state, and federal funding cycles have strict deadlines, and delays can result in the loss of project financing. Consistent and expedited timelines keep projects on track and get housing on the ground sooner, enabling affordable housing construction by giving affordable developments priority over market-rate developments.

As local governments conduct regular assessments of zoning codes, building permits, project review, and land entitlement processes, it will help to eliminate barriers to housing development. El Paso County communities may expand the types of development allowed by right and increase the use of administrative review for select project types, such as "missing middle" housing, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), mixed-use or transit-oriented developments, and projects located in high-priority housing areas. Identifying specific barriers or inefficiencies in the current process and determining whether additional project types could be shifted from public hearing to administrative review without compromising public input or regulatory standards may have several positive impacts. For example, this may reduce development review and permit timelines, improve consistency of development processes and eliminate the need for public meetings, or reduce the potential for opposition to delay projects that are consistent with local plans and codes. Expanding the use of preliminary reviews and outlining clear sets of exceptions approvable by local government staff may also limit the need for variances and additional reviews. Furthermore, jurisdictions can publish pre-approved design plans, with zoning and code approval, to reduce the timeline, financial burden, and uncertainty typically associated with small-scale residential projects.

Fee Relief

Peer Community Example – Reno, NV

Reno offers priority review timelines for projects dedicating at least 20% of units for people earning 0 to 60% AMI, in which such projects are given precedence over market-rate projects. The city utilizes dedicated review teams, with cross-departmental staff who can concurrently address zoning, environmental, and safety reviews, and aim to complete all reviews within 90 days for designated affordable projects. This typically shaves 30 to 45 days off typical approval timelines.

To receive this benefit, as well as a density bonus and any other development incentives, the property must be deed-restricted and dedicate a certain number of units as affordable for at least 20 years.

As impact fees, permitting charges, and other administrative costs accumulate, they may significantly drive up project expenses, undermining financial feasibility and often limiting the scale of housing development. The impacts on affordable housing are particularly acute, as these projects already operate on narrow financial margins and are less able to absorb additional costs without increased subsidies or reduced affordability targets. Providing fee exemptions or reductions for affordable housing is one way that local governments can reduce costs and accelerate permitting. One strategy is to implement a sliding scale for fees, where projects that accommodate higher levels of affordability or contain a higher proportion of affordable units receive greater fee reductions. This approach ensures that financial incentivization scales with the public benefit provided while maintaining some level of cost recovery for the jurisdiction. While both Colorado Springs and El Paso County should ensure

that any reduction in impact fees does not compromise service levels or infrastructure investment, it is worth noting that the region already has some of the lowest impact and related development fees in the state. This comparatively low fee environment can make targeted exemptions or reductions more feasible without severely straining local budgets, especially if tied to projects that clearly advance affordable housing goals.

Expanding Fee Relief in Colorado Springs

Colorado Springs currently offers a *Multifamily Affordable and Attainable Rental Housing Fee Rebate Program* that provides rebates on certain development charges for projects where all units are reserved for residents earning up to 120% AMI, including development review fees. While this initiative serves as a sound foundation, the city could expand its fee relief strategy in several ways to further support affordable housing.

The program could be expanded beyond multifamily rentals with additional funding to include affordable homeownership and modular or factory-built housing. This would encourage a broader range of affordable housing solutions, benefiting families and first-time buyers.

Expanding Fee Relief for El Paso County

Simple & Transparent Criteria: Offer partial or full fee waivers for projects that guarantee a certain percentage of units affordable to households generally, or related to a specific AMI (e.g. 80% of AMI). Alternatively, the County could consider a flat percentage reduction (such as 25–50%) for qualifying projects, making the process straightforward for developers and county staff.

Upfront Rebates: Rather than only waiving fees, consider a rebate program where developers pay fees up front and receive a rebate after project completion and affordability verification.

Direct Support and Partnerships

Collaboration will likely be necessary to successfully develop a full range of housing across the socio-economic spectrum. No single sector – private, public, and non-profit – can meet a community's housing needs alone, and effective solutions rely on the combined efforts of local government, private developers, non-profit organizations, and major employers and institutions. Through collaborative efforts, communities can create more coordinated, sustainable, and scalable housing solutions that reflect shared responsibility and mutual benefit.

Regional Coordination

A regional housing council or advisory or task force can pool resources, establish future partnerships, and foster coordination and collaboration. This kind of organization could align stakeholders and track progress through public dashboards, coordinate data-sharing (shelter capacity, eviction trends, subsidized unit availability), advocate for policy reforms such as adaptive reuse incentives, and counter NIMBY opposition or misinformation with transparent community engagement and success stories both locally and from comparable markets. By implementing these strategies, the community can create a scalable, collaborative housing ecosystem, one that meets military personnel, workforce, and low-income needs while ensuring long-term affordability.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance is a highly practical and low-cost method to facilitate affordable housing development, particularly for small-scale projects by shortening timelines and bringing units to market sooner through local efforts. Technical assistance services may provide:

- *Clarity regarding available incentives and project feasibility* to help applicants explore options and outcomes before significantly investing in a project.
- *Various resources, such as manuals on compatibility, design guides, concurrency/fees, the development process, and a schedule of impact fees* compiles information in an accessible manner to streamline and support housing development.
- *Pre-approved construction plans* can streamline the approval process by granting applicants by-right administrative approval.

- *Design guides* such as building materials, dimensions, and other aesthetic choices, and can reduce the potential for revisions to meet specific local requirements.
- *Information about local, state, and federal sources of financial assistance* to design, construct, and preserve affordable housing.
- *A publicly available inventory of developable or publicly owned parcels* suitable for affordable housing development, with key information such as assessed value, gross area, and existing infrastructure connections.
- *Neighborhood meeting support* by empowering local government to contribute their technical expertise and experience working and communicating with the community to mediate conversations around new development.
- *Qualified buyers and renters* for designated affordable units to minimize vacancies and support project viability This also benefits residents in finding housing in a timely manner.

Case Studies

Pre-approved Plans in Spokane, WA

Spokane, Washington provides a Pre-Approved Housing Plan Catalog that offers pre-vetted designs for duplexes, townhouses, triplexes, and fourplexes. These design types require only site-specific engineering reviews, and customizations are permitted if they adhere to zoning height and setback rules. Approved in 2023, the program reduces permitting timelines from months to weeks and greatly reduces architectural costs.

Building a Toolkit, South Bend, Indiana

The city of South Bend, Indiana created the Build South Bend Toolkit, aimed at helping residents who are interested in becoming small-scale developers. The toolkit provides information on how to source properties, procure necessary permits, and more. Among other resources, the toolkit contains a pro forma template, financing resources, pre-approved housing plans, and links to educational workshops.

Redevelopment

Underutilized land presents key opportunities for infill and redevelopment. Paired with increased collaboration among local governments, employers, and nonprofit partners, these and other sites could support a broader mix of attainable and workforce housing options, including through employer-assisted housing initiatives that help connect workers to nearby housing.

Converting underutilized or vacant commercial or light industrial parcels to residential uses can increase housing opportunities while revitalizing areas that are currently neglected. This may also include supporting owner-initiated rezoning and/or exploring possibilities to convert underutilized or vacant agricultural land to residential. Local governments can identify adaptive reuse opportunities to attract developer interest in concert with financial, regulatory support, and/or technical assistance.

Along similar lines, underutilized public land, both developed and undeveloped, may be available for infill development. When possible, providing publicly owned land at low or no cost for affordable housing can not only improve project feasibility be reducing land costs, but also allow local governments to guide affordable housing development according to their vision for communities.

Locally, the Pikes Peak Real Estate Foundation (PPREF) strategically leverages real estate donations to address affordable housing challenges in the Colorado Springs region. When PPREF receives land donations, the organization typically either directly develops affordable housing projects, sells the land with proceeds directed toward housing initiatives, or uses the land for land banking to support future affordable housing efforts.

Peer Community Examples: Raleigh, NC and Omaha, NE

Raleigh's land disposition initiative is a cornerstone of the city's comprehensive affordable housing strategy. The city's program focuses on selling city-owned parcels at nominal cost to qualified developers committed to creating affordable housing options, and the program targets developments serving households at or below 80% AMI, with some units designated for households earning as little as 60% AMI. Since 2016, Raleigh has contributed approximately 20 sites at minimal cost for affordable housing development, producing more than 700 affordable units.

Omaha, Nebraska has implemented a strategic program to convert vacant, underutilized city-owned lots into affordable housing through extremely low-cost land transfers to local developers. The program specifically targets local affordable housing developers and offers the sale of lots for as little as one dollar. Importantly, the program has accountability measures, such as requirements to begin construction within two years and substantially complete construction within 42 months, to ensure the subsidized land is used to address immediate housing needs.

Institutional Partnerships

Local governments can also promote institutional partnerships with institutional partners, including military installations, school districts, and other major employers and institutions. This can be done through a variety of means, including tax incentives, matching funds, or grants to employers if they invest in workforce housing solutions or participate in rental assistance programs. These efforts can benefit employers as well as workers, as improved access to housing can enhance recruitment and retention by reducing the burdens of long commutes and housing insecurity.

Military – Opportunities for partnerships with local military bases can help to address critical off-base housing shortages and workforce retention challenges facing junior enlisted personnel and civilian employees. Successful programs like the Army's Residential Communities Initiative (RCI) has unlocked significant reinvestment into military housing on its installations. Along similar lines, a military housing task force could facilitate land-use coordination and housing development near bases while ensuring compatibility with military operations. Organizations such as Homes for All Veterans highlight how surplus land can be repurposed for transitional housing.

Essential Community Organizations – Workforce housing initiatives help to ensure that the employees of vital community services, such as healthcare, education, and public safety can afford to live in the communities they serve throughout El Paso County. Along these lines, Harrison School District 2 is currently working to provide affordable teacher housing. In doing so, the school district worked with WeFortify, a local nonprofit, to develop housing on underutilized school district property.

Faith-based – programs like Sacred Spaces, Affordable Homes and Faith & Housing have demonstrated how churches can partner with nonprofits to convert underused land into affordable units. Several local faith-based community development corporations have already completed meaningful work in this area, such as Solid Rock Development (Solid Rock Christian Center) Corporation and Greccio Housing (with Woodmen Valley Heights).

Preservation and Management

Preserving existing affordable housing ensures that homes remain available and in good condition for future generations, and is critical, as many residents face the risk of losing their homes due to market forces or long-term disinvestment. Additionally, rental assistance and foreclosure prevention programs play a crucial role in supporting households at risk of displacement, helping to stabilize families in vulnerable situations. Equally important is effectively managing newly developed affordable housing, ensuring that these units remain accessible to the right residents and are properly maintained over time.

Housing Preservation

As housing costs rise and older, naturally affordable units are lost to neglect, demolition, or market forces, preservation ensures that lower-income households can continue to live in neighborhoods where they have established roots. *Purchasing deed restrictions can maintain long-term affordability,* preventing speculative price increases and enabling working families, seniors, and others to remain in their homes even as surrounding property values climb.

Rehabilitation assistance is another critical component of preservation. Many affordable homes, particularly older ones, face issues related to health, safety, and energy efficiency. Without support, landlords or low-income homeowners may not be able to make necessary repairs, which can lead to the loss of viable housing stock or displacement due to uninhabitable conditions. Local governments can offer landlords and low-income homeowners grants or low-interest or forgivable loans to help with critical repairs, weatherization, or code compliance, provided the property remains affordable for a set period. By *investing in rehabilitation,* public programs not only preserve the physical integrity of homes but also increase energy efficiency, lowering utility costs, and promote healthier and safer living conditions.

Offering property tax abatements to landlords or homeowners who agree to maintain their units as affordable for a set number of years in exchange for keeping rents or resale prices at or below affordability thresholds can provide property owners predictable and reduced tax burdens. This encourages participation from naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) providers and long-term homeowners who may otherwise be pressured to sell due to rising tax assessments.

Rental Assistance and Foreclosure Prevention

Rental assistance and foreclosure prevention programs are critical safety nets for households facing economic hardship, unexpected job loss, or rising housing costs. *Without timely support, families can quickly fall behind* on rent or mortgage payments, triggering a chain reaction that may lead to eviction, foreclosure, and long-term housing instability.

Vouchers for short-term emergency rental and utility assistance can assist households experiencing sudden financial hardship, including job loss, medical emergencies, or domestic violence. This type of program could cover rent and utility arrears, as well as a few months of future payments to prevent eviction, with streamlined eligibility and fast processing through collaboration with community-based organizations or housing agencies. Similarly, local government or other organizations can provide *zero-interest or deferred-payment loans* for

homeowners at risk of foreclosure due to temporary income loss or other economic hardships could cover missed mortgage payments and allow homeowners time to get back on their feet, with repayment structured over time.

Lastly, local governments can identify, or provide other resources to educate and support residents experiencing eviction and housing insecurity. Such resources may include financial and legal advisory services, mediation services in cases of landlord disputes, and case management services.

These programs help residents to bridge temporary financial gaps, allowing people to stay in their homes while they recover or stabilize their income, which ultimately help protect neighborhood stability and help preserve the existing affordable housing stock by avoiding vacancy and deterioration.

Affordable Housing Management

Regulating and managing affordable housing is essential to ensuring that these units serve the populations they are intended to support over the long term. Local governments can establish clear eligibility criteria for occupants, including income thresholds by household size, updated annually. For affordable housing developments that are granted incentives, such as density bonuses, fee waivers, or expedited permitting, it is important to establish minimum terms of affordability, and minimum percentages of designated affordable units, sorted by level of affordability. Notably, *incentives could be provided on a sliding scale,* in which increased incentives would be provided for developments that accommodate lower levels of affordability. Table 22. Suggested Set-aside of Affordable Units by Level of Affordability to Qualify for Incentives illustrates a notional required percentage of affordable units by level of affordability for a development to qualify for development incentives; only by setting aside such a portion of deed-restricted affordable units is a development eligible for any regulatory or financial incentives as specified by the City or County.

Table 22. Suggested Set-aside of Affordable Units by Level of Affordability to Qualify for Incentives

Level of Affordability	Minimum Required Percentage
120% or less of AMI	20%
At least half at 80% or less of AMI, the remainder at 120% or less of AMI	10%
80% or less of AMI	7.5%
50% or less of AMI	5%

Importantly, designated affordable units should be of the same construction and design quality as other units within the project, and should have design standards that ensure compatibility with the surrounding area. Such units should be kept in good condition, with penalties or a revocation of development incentives imposed on developers that fail to meet maintenance standards.

If management incentives are used, local governments should *establish a monitoring and compliance framework* to ensure adherence to agreed-upon terms and conditions of affordability, construction, and maintenance. Such a process could include providing letters of compliance, which outline the number, type, and quality of affordable units, along with copies of the leases for the affordable units. In addition, local governments can employ on-site monitoring after the first Certificate of Occupancy, and every few years thereafter, in which units are inspected to ensure continued maintenance.

In cases of non-compliance, local governments may consider a range of enforcement measures, such as *requiring a development to pay a fee-in-lieu* to the housing trust fund or general fund until the unit(s) are compliant, or temporarily withholding certain approvals or permits until compliance is achieved.

By ensuring affordable housing developments remain in accordance with the agreed upon rules and standards through monitoring for compliance, and levying punishment in cases of non-compliance, a *local government can ensure that designated units remain well-maintained and affordable* throughout the entire term of affordability.

Community Housing Programs

Supportive housing programs include direct services and programming that can help individuals and families access, maintain, and remain stable in their homes. These programs are often the most immediate tools communities have to meet the needs of their most vulnerable residents, whether through supportive housing for homeless individuals, programs that aim to reduce displacement, and renter and homeowner assistance services. This subsection explores the extent to which existing programs could be expanded or improved to more effectively address local challenges, and whether new initiatives could fill critical gaps.

Housing Partners

Colorado Springs and El Paso County are served by a strong network of organizations focused on affordable housing. Partners in Housing provides transitional housing and supportive services for families experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Greccio Housing manages nearly 1,000 affordable rental units across Colorado Springs, El Paso County, and a bordering county, offering residents stable homes and access to supportive services and educational opportunities. The Rocky Mountain Community Land Trust creates affordable homeownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income households through a community land trust model that preserves long-term affordability.

The Colorado Springs Housing Authority administers federal Housing Choice Vouchers and manages public housing properties for low-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities. Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity builds and rehabilitates affordable homes in partnership with low-income families, supporting both homeownership and home repair programs. Other major partners include The Independence Center, which focuses on accessible housing and services for people with disabilities; Silver Key Senior Services, which provides affordable senior housing and home assistance; and Volunteers of America, which offers supportive housing and resources for senior populations.

Supportive Housing Programs

Supportive housing programs in Colorado Springs, such as those offered by organizations like Ithaka Housing and Homeward Pikes Peak, play a critical role in addressing homelessness and supporting vulnerable populations. These programs provide transitional or permanent housing, case management, and resources for families, single men, seniors, and individuals.

Local supportive housing providers serve a wide range of individuals, including seniors, families in crisis, and those exiting incarceration or homelessness, by offering safe, affordable housing and individualized support. Programs also offer permanent supportive housing, with comprehensive onsite services such as case management, mental health care, employment support, and independent living skills training.

Given that the level of need often outpaces the capacity of supporting housing programs and providers, expanding supportive housing can increase the number of available units, enhance access to wraparound services, and ensure that the most vulnerable residents, such as those with disabling conditions, behavioral health needs, or histories of homelessness, can obtain and maintain stable housing. Additional options could include increased funding, broader eligibility, and more integrated behavioral health and case management services, all of which are essential for long-term housing stability and successful transitions out of homelessness.

Displacement Mitigation Programs

Similarly, displacement mitigation programs are essential for community stability and housing security and are necessary in Colorado Springs. The city already offers renter rights workshops and collaborates with organizations like Colorado Legal Services and The Justice Center to educate tenants about their rights and provide legal assistance to help prevent evictions and violations of tenant rights. However, expanding these programs can reduce the risk of displacement for both current and future residents.

Homeowner and Renter Assistance Programs

Expanding housing programs such as rental assistance, rehabilitation and renovation initiatives, and first-time homebuyer assistance would help ensure the essential workers of El Paso County can afford to live near their jobs, and it necessary to help maintain the local workforce.

Rehabilitation and renovation initiatives can improve the quality of existing housing stock and preserve historic housing stock and naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH). Maintaining and expanding local partnerships, such as the Homeowner Rehab Program in partnership with Brothers Redevelopment and El Paso County Economic Development, remains essential.

First-time homebuyer assistance programs from the City and County support the local workforce by helping low- and moderate-income earners access stable, long-term housing and build equity. Programs like El Paso County's Pikes Peak Down Payment Assistance initiative have improve homeownership access and ease affordability challenges for working families.

SB 24-174 Data for El Paso County Municipalities

Introduction

As required by SB 24-174, this section provides a detailed analysis of housing needs across El Paso County's municipalities beyond Colorado Springs, examining how local demographic, economic, and development patterns influence housing demand and affordability. The housing landscape in these communities is shaped by a complex mix of demographic change, economic shifts, and uneven patterns of growth. While some municipalities have experienced rapid expansion and rising incomes, others face stagnant or declining populations, aging residents, and limited new development. These divergent trends have created a wide range of housing needs, from growing demand for affordable rentals in workforce hubs like Fountain to accessibility and aging-in-place challenges in smaller towns such as Ramah. This analysis presents key housing, demographic, and economic indicators for each of the seven municipalities, offering a clearer view of how local conditions are evolving and where targeted strategies may be most needed.

Note: Individual municipality data summary sheets are included in Appendix D of this document.

Population and Demographics

Population growth has occurred unevenly across El Paso County's municipalities (see Table 23. Population Change in Other Municipalities Over Time). *Fountain and Monument accounted for the vast majority of population gains* over the 20-year period. The City of Fountain grew from 17,681 residents in 2003 to 30,191 in 2023, an increase of more than 70%. Monument's population more than tripled over the same period, rising from 3,471 to 11,014. By contrast, several smaller towns—Calhan, Green Mountain Falls, Manitou Springs, and Ramah—experienced population decline over the past decade. Palmer Lake saw modest growth, but its population remains well below those of Fountain and Monument. These trends suggest that residential expansion in the county's outlying areas has been highly concentrated in these two communities.

Table 23. Population Change in Other Municipalities Over Time

Municipality	Total Population			Percent Change	
	2003	2013	2023	2003-2013	2013-2023
Calhan	844	792	762	-6%	-4%
Fountain	17,681	27,607	30,191	56%	9%
Green Mountain Falls	685	820	642	20%	-22%
Manitou Springs	4,871	5,062	4,846	4%	-4%
Monument	3,471	6,860	11,014	98%	61%
Palmer Lake	2,215	2,495	2,650	13%	6%
Ramah	119	124	110	4%	-11%

Source: State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.

The age of the population varies notably from community to community (see Table 24). Fountain is the youngest municipality, with a median age of *31.1 and 31% of the population aged 19 and under*. Similarly, reflecting the prevalence of families with children, the age of the median Monument resident was 38. Conversely, Ramah's median age was 61.1, highlighting its more elderly population. Median ages in Calhan, Green Mountain Falls, Manitou Springs, and Palmer Lake ranged from *40.7 to 49.4,* indicating a more balanced demographic profile. Across all municipalities, including those with younger populations, residents aged 65 and over make up a substantial share of the population.

Even in younger communities, the sizable share of residents aged 65 and over underscores the importance of planning for an aging population countywide.

Table 24. Population by Age in Other Municipalities, 2023

Age Range	Calhan	Fountain	Green Mountain Falls	Manitou Springs	Monument	Palmer Lake	Ramah
19 & under	221	9,241	104	924	3,418	403	6
20-24	61	2,307	19	218	720	173	0
25-34	85	5,507	147	722	944	371	9
35-44	63	5,315	46	575	1,392	294	10
45-54	105	3,116	170	815	1,956	221	14
55-64	57	2,558	71	722	1,111	654	23
65 & over	170	2,146	86	869	1,472	534	48
Total	762	30,191	642	4,846	11,014	2,650	110
Median Age	40.7	31.1	46.4	44.9	38.0	49.4	61.1

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Population by age estimates were derived from the 2023 five-year ACS and then proportionally scaled to match total population figures published by the Colorado State Demography Office.

Rapid growth in Monument and Fountain signals strong demand for suburban homeownership

From 2013 to 2023, total households increased in some municipalities in El Paso County while declining in others, signaling divergent patterns of residential demand and development (see Table 25). Monument experienced the most substantial growth, with the number of households rising from 2,272 to 4,124. This *82% increase* reflects the town's emergence as a key destination for families seeking homeownership opportunities. Fountain also saw continued household growth*, adding nearly 900 households* over the decade to reach 10,152 in 2023. More modest gains occurred in Palmer Lake, which added just over 100 households. In contrast, Green Mountain Falls, Manitou Springs, Calhan, and Ramah all experienced declines in total households, with the largest relative loss occurring in Green Mountain Falls. These trends suggest that while select communities are absorbing a growing share of regional household growth, others may be facing barriers to housing development or declining appeal as year-round residential destinations.

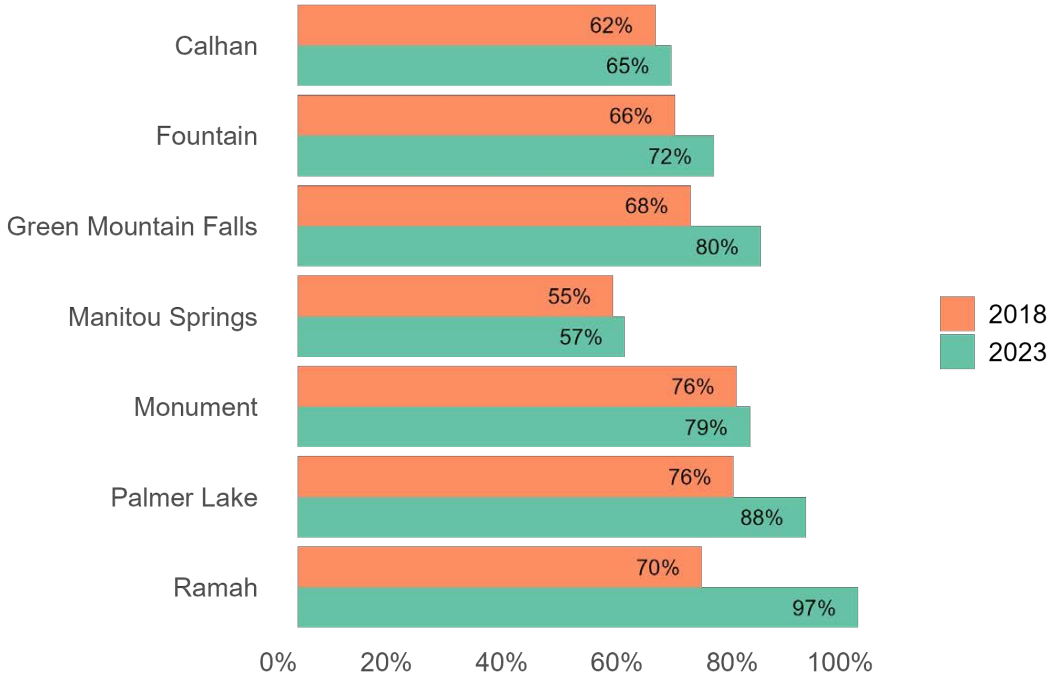
Table 25. Number of Households in El Paso County Municipalities Over Time

Municipality	Total Households		Percent Change
	2013	2023	
Calhan	314	302	-4%
Fountain	9,283	10,152	9%
Green Mountain Falls	399	322	-19%
Manitou Springs	2,534	2,445	-4%
Monument	2,272	4,124	82%
Palmer Lake	993	1,095	10%
Ramah	56	51	-9%

Source: State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.

Figure 74 presents homeownership rates for 2018 and 2023, showing a general increase in ownership across municipalities in El Paso County over the period. Homeownership is nearly universal in Ramah, where *97% of households* owned their homes, followed by Palmer Lake at *88%.* Monument and Green Mountain Falls also exhibit high ownership rates, with 2023 estimates of *79% and 80%,* respectively. Fountain, the largest municipality, saw its rate rise to *72%.* In contrast, Manitou Springs had the lowest homeownership rate in the region at just 57%. This comparatively low rate may reflect the city's limited availability of owner-occupied units and appeal as a destination for short-term rentals and seasonal residences—factors that can constrain ownership opportunities and inflate housing costs.

Figure 74. Homeownership Rates in El Paso County Municipalities, 2018 and 2023

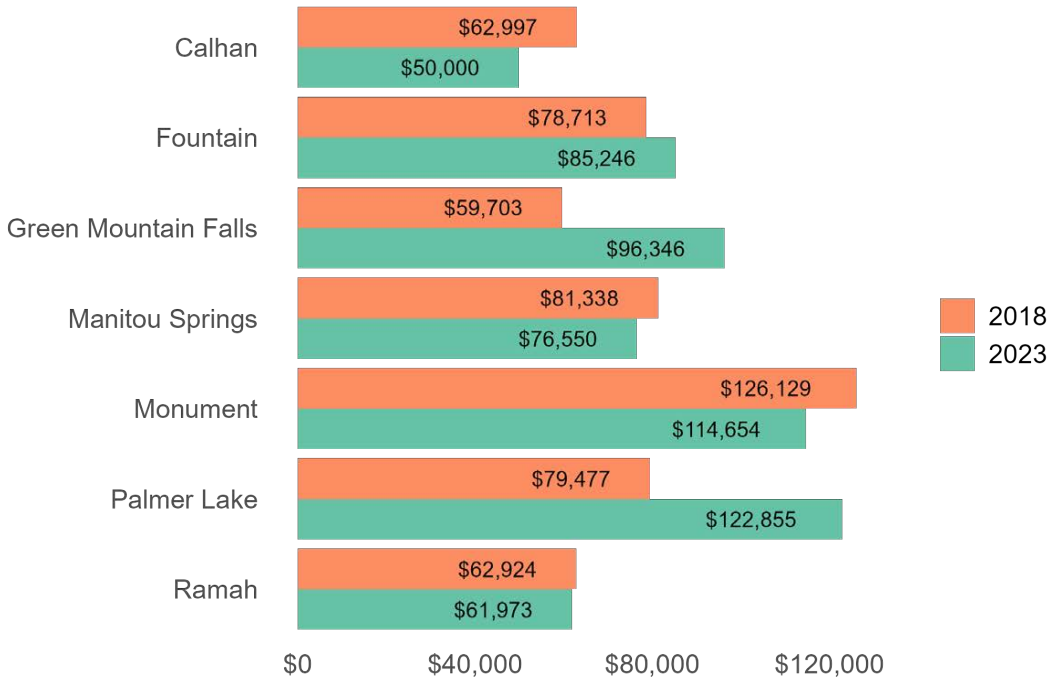


Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Households, rather than individuals, are the unit of analysis. The 2018 values represent five-year estimates covering the period from 2014 to 2018, while the 2023 values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Economic Profile

The median household income estimates presented in Figure 75 reveal divergent economic trajectories across El Paso County's municipalities over the past several years. Incomes fell materially in Calhan, Manitou Springs, and Monument. These declines could be, in part, the result of shifting household composition, including an aging population more reliant on fixed or lower incomes. In Ramah, income levels remained largely unchanged, while all other communities saw meaningful gains. Palmer Lake experienced the largest increase, with median income rising *from $79,477 in 2018 to $122,855* in 2023. Green Mountain Falls also posted strong growth, with its median income rising by 61% over the same period. Fountain's income gains were more modest but still notable, increasing from *$78,713 to $85,246.* It is important to note that while these income increases are likely due, in part, to growing prosperity, they may also result from displacement of lower-income households.

Figure 75. Median Household Income in El Paso County Municipalities, 2018 and 2023

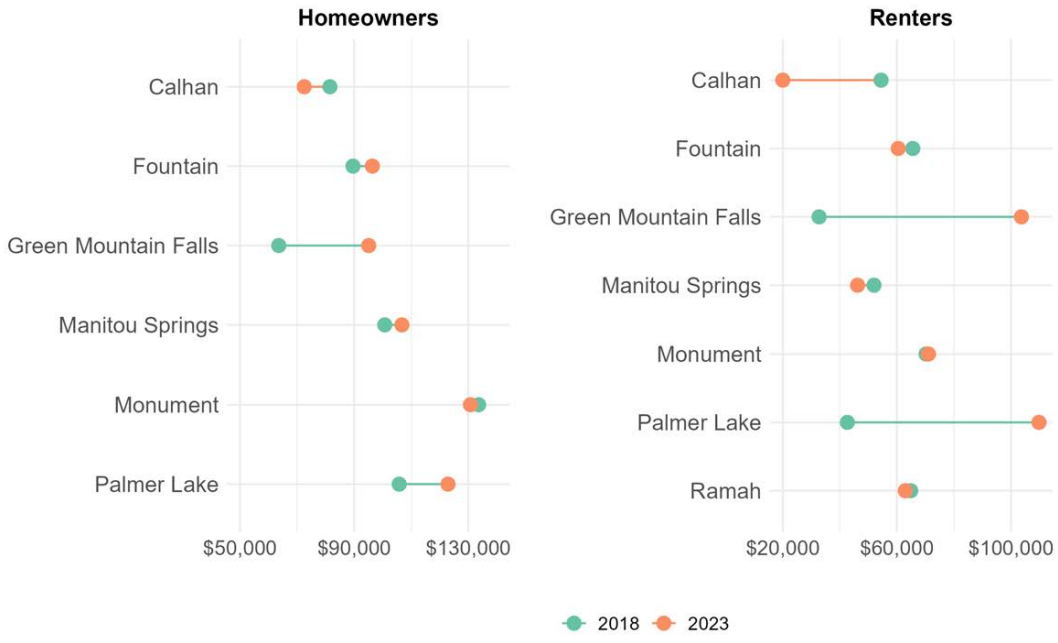


Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Values are adjusted for inflation to constant 2023 dollars. The 2018 values represent five-year estimates covering the period from 2014 to 2018, while the 2023 values reflect data from 2019 to 2023. Due to data suppression in later ACS releases, Ramah's 2023 value uses the 2016-2020 five-year estimate, adjusted to real 2023 dollars.

Renters consistently earn far less than owners, underscoring disparities in housing stability and economic opportunity

As Figure 76 demonstrates, a significant income gap exists between renters and homeowners across the seven municipalities. In every community except Green Mountain Falls, homeowners reported substantially higher incomes than renters, with the disparity *exceeding $50,000* in Calhan, Monument, and Manitou Springs. In larger communities such as Manitou Springs, Fountain, and Monument, renter incomes remained flat or declined slightly from 2018 to 2023 despite overall market changes. The most pronounced year-over-year shifts in renter income occurred in Palmer Lake, Green Mountain Falls, and Calhan, though these swings should be interpreted with caution due to small household counts. Taken together, the data reinforce a consistent regional pattern: homeowners tend to have greater financial resources than renters, a dynamic that carries implications for housing stability and access to opportunity.

Figure 76. Median Household Income by Tenure in El Paso County Municipalities, 2018 and 2023



Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Values are adjusted for inflation to constant 2023 dollars. The 2018 values represent five-year estimates covering the period from 2014 to 2018, while the 2023 values reflect data from 2019 to 2023. Due to data suppression, an estimate of homeowner income is unavailable for Ramah.

Table 26 provides data on resident employment by sector as of 2023, regardless of where individuals work. Industries are arranged in ascending order based on countywide median earnings data from the most recent ACS. Educational Services is the most common industry among residents, *with 22% employed in the field.* This sector is especially prominent in Manitou Springs. The next most common industries are Professional, Scientific, and Management, and Administrative and Waste Management Services *(13%)* and Retail Trade *(11%),* reflecting a mix of white-collar and service-oriented jobs. Notably, Calhan stands out for its strong representation in the Construction sector, which employs 18% of its working residents, nearly doubling the regional average. Community size, location, and proximity to major employment centers all play a role in shaping employment opportunities across the region.

Employment patterns vary widely across El Paso County, shaped by industry mix, community size, and proximity to major job centers

Table 26. Resident Civilian Employment by Sector in El Paso County Municipalities, 2023

Sector	Calhan	Fountain	Green Mountain Falls	Manitou Springs	Monument	Palmer Lake	Ramah
Public Administration	21	1,068	46	43	308	103	3
Information	2	201	0	54	255	32	0
Professional, Scientific, and Management, and Administrative and Waste Management Services	14	1,508	73	385	776	147	5
Manufacturing	21	611	5	112	251	137	6
Finance and Insurance, and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	10	501	11	240	611	110	10
Wholesale Trade	2	176	17	15	9	98	0
Construction	40	1,360	13	223	314	78	1
Transportation and Warehousing, and Utilities	17	977	26	119	248	124	8
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, and Mining	12	86	25	0	31	5	3
Educational Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance	36	2,643	99	883	1,223	264	11
Other Services, Except Public Administration	10	888	83	91	287	41	5
Retail Trade	30	1,757	14	242	339	90	9
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, and Accommodation and Food Services	10	880	71	325	694	238	0
Total	225	12,656	483	2,732	5,346	1,467	61

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Sectors are sorted in ascending order based on median earnings for El Paso County as reported in the 2019–2023 ACS five-year estimates. Estimates are based on workers' place of residence, regardless of where they are employed.

Table 27 presents data on the local workforce by sector as of 2023, regardless of where workers live, offering insight into the employment base within each municipality. The size of the workforce varies widely, from just two workers in Ramah to 7,516 in Fountain. As with resident employment patterns, Educational Services features prominently in many communities, especially Calhan, where *43% of the workforce was employed in this sector.* Calhan is also notably reliant on Retail Trade, which accounts for *20% of local jobs,* highlighting the limited industry mix in smaller towns. Education remains a leading sector in other municipalities as well, likely reflecting the residential character of these communities and the presence of local schools. In Manitou Springs, 20% of the workforce is employed in Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, and Accommodation and Food Services, a comparatively high rate that underscores the city's role as a tourism and hospitality hub within the region. These patterns have important implications for housing needs, as many lower-wage workers in education, retail, and hospitality may be commuting into communities where housing is limited, unaffordable, or mismatched with their income.

In many smaller communities, local jobs are concentrated in education, retail, and tourism—sectors often associated with lower wages and higher housing barriers for workers

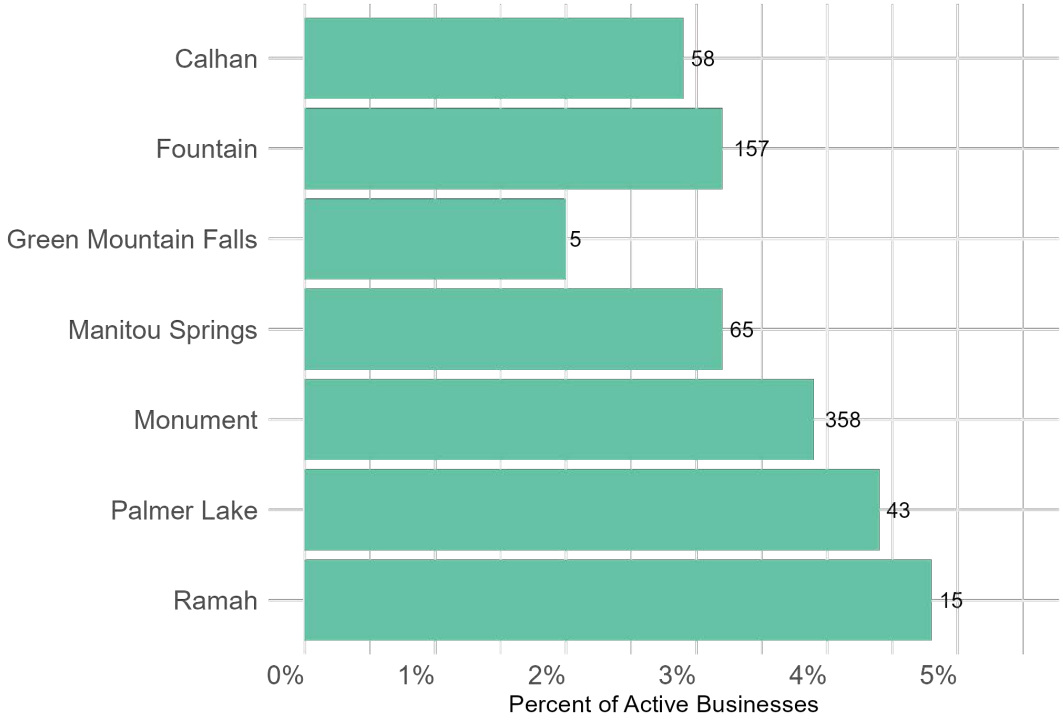
Table 27. Civilian Jobs by Sector in El Paso County Municipalities, 2023

Sector	Calhan	Fountain	Green Mountain Falls	Manitou Springs	Monument	Palmer Lake	Ramah
Public Administration	3	224	—	46	235	92	—
Information	51	66	—	49	151	21	—
Professional, Scientific, and Management, and Administrative and Waste Management Services	9	796	—	386	980	92	—
Manufacturing	0	531	—	53	822	177	—
Finance and Insurance, and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	35	328	—	174	333	80	—
Wholesale Trade	0	104	—	67	124	175	—
Construction	22	531	—	51	293	70	—
Transportation and Warehousing, and Utilities	21	517	—	157	129	117	—
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, and Mining	0	93	—	46	0	19	—
Educational Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance	171	1828	—	776	876	149	—
Other Services, Except Public Administration	3	453	—	81	318	46	—
Retail Trade	81	1196	—	204	702	49	—
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, and Accommodation and Food Services	2	849	—	515	725	152	—
Total	398	7,516	46	2,605	5,688	1,239	2

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Data for Green Mountain Falls and Ramah are unavailable from the ACS due to sample size limitations. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, Green Mountain Falls was the site of seven jobs in Goods Producing industries; two in Trade, Transportation, and Utilities industries, and the remainder in other industries; a similar breakdown was unavailable for Ramah. Sectors are sorted in ascending order based on median earnings for El Paso County as reported in the 2019–2023 ACS five-year estimates. Estimates are based on location of employment, regardless of where workers reside.

Figure 77 illustrates how business closures varied across communities in 2024, shedding light on localized economic pressures that may contribute to displacement. Closure rates varied notably by community, ranging *from just 2% in Green Mountain Falls to nearly 5% in Ramah.* In more commercially active areas, such as Fountain and Monument, closure rates were *3.2% and 3.9%,* respectively, translating to 157 closed businesses in Fountain and 358 in Monument. While some level of business turnover is expected, elevated closure rates may signal economic stress, reduced consumer demand, or rising operating costs, all of which can contribute to neighborhood instability and displacement pressures for both residents and small business owners.

Figure 77. Business Closures in El Paso County Municipalities, 2024



Source: Colorado Secretary of State Business Entities in Colorado
Note: Business closure counts and rates are based on filings with the Colorado Secretary of State and include all entity types, regardless of size, industry, or operational status. This dataset captures administratively or voluntarily dissolved entities, revoked registrations, mergers, and withdrawals, many of which may never have had employees. As a result, closure counts appear inflated compared to establishment counts from labor market datasets such as QCEW, which only include businesses with at least one employee covered by unemployment insurance laws. Several other factors contribute to the high number of closures, including administrative clean-up, the dissolution of short-lived entities formed for temporary projects or side ventures, routine business restructuring, and Colorado's large base of business registrations driven by low formation barriers and the state's popularity as a hub for registered agents.

Table 28 presents inflation-adjusted annual sales tax revenue from 2022 to 2024, expressed in constant 2024 dollars. In 2024, the highest revenue totals were generated in *Fountain ($52.9 million), Monument ($37.1 million), and Manitou Springs ($10 million),* reflecting these communities' larger commercial bases and consumer activity. By contrast, Calhan, Green Mountain Falls, Palmer Lake, and Ramah each collected $3 million or less, underscoring their more limited retail footprints. The largest revenue decline occurred in Calhan, where collections fell by 20% over the period. Elsewhere, year-over-year changes were relatively modest. As mentioned previously, because sales tax revenue is closely tied to local spending, especially in retail and hospitality sectors, sharp increases can signal rising commercial activity that may correlate with displacement pressure, particularly in communities experiencing tourism growth or redevelopment.

Table 28. Real Sales Tax Revenue, 2022-2024

Municipality	Total Sales Tax Revenue			Percent Change, 2022-2024
	2022	2023	2024	
Calhan	$2,314,527	$2,036,668	$1,852,315	-20%
Fountain	$52,157,806	$50,974,436	$51,893,830	-1%
Green Mountain Falls	$693,850	$633,447	$641,197	-8%
Manitou Springs	$9,824,094	$10,128,899	$10,022,416	2%
Monument	$35,897,419	$37,271,607	$37,115,995	3%
Palmer Lake	$2,810,899	$2,723,427	$2,557,457	-9%
Ramah	$109,781	$158,318	$114,916	5%

Source: Colorado Department of Revenue; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Values are adjusted for inflation to constant 2024 dollars.

Sales tax trends highlight stark differences in local economic activity, with tourism and retail hubs like Fountain and Manitou Springs far outpacing smaller towns in revenue generation

Housing Stock and Market

Table 29 presents data on housing stock composition across El Paso County municipalities, revealing wide variation in both scale and structure. The size of the housing stock ranged from *63 units in Ramah to 10,648 units in Fountain.* Across the region, the housing stock is heavily oriented toward single-family detached homes, especially in Green Mountain Falls and Palmer Lake, where these homes accounted for 95% and 89% of the respective stocks. Multifamily buildings with 10 or more units were confined to just three communities—Fountain, Manitou Springs, and Monument—where a combined total of 1,353 such units accounted for roughly 7% of the aggregate housing stock. Mobile homes are also a notable component of the housing landscape, particularly in smaller towns such as Ramah and Calhan. "Missing middle housing types," including townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, and quadruplexes, are most common in Calhan, Fountain, Manitou Springs, and Monument, composing between 11% and 16% of their stocks. The limited housing diversity in these communities may constrain options for renters, seniors, and smaller households.

Table 29. Housing Stock and Diversity in El Paso County Municipalities, 2023

Housing Unit Type	Calhan	Fountain	Green Mountain Falls	Manitou Springs	Monument	Palmer Lake	Ramah
Single family, detached	235	8,563	528	1,820	3,524	1,066	47
Single family, attached	0	604	6	149	455	64	0
Multifamily, 2-4 units	43	573	7	279	121	0	0
Multifamily, 5-9 units	1	26	14	107	49	0	0
Multifamily, 10 or more units	0	624	0	296	433	0	0
Mobile home or other	57	258	0	46	80	70	16
Total	336	10,648	556	2,697	4,662	1,200	63

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Estimates pertain to occupied and unoccupied units, including 30 units within Green Mountain that fall within Teller County. Totals may not sum precisely due to rounding. Estimates of housing units by type were derived from the 2023 five-year ACS and then proportionally scaled to match total housing unit figures published by the Colorado State Demography Office.

Across these seven communities, the renter-occupied housing stock consisted of 5,058 units, with the largest supply existing in Fountain (see Table 30). Single-family detached homes made up *44% of the rental housing stock* across these municipalities, a notably lower share than in the overall market. This figure reflects the broader diversity of structure types in the rental sector, particularly in communities with denser or older housing patterns. Monument and Manitou Springs had the lowest shares of single-family detached rentals, driven by their relatively high proportions of multifamily units in larger buildings. Smaller-scale multifamily housing also plays a significant role in several communities, with units in duplexes, triplexes, and quadruplexes accounting for 35% of rentals in Calhan and 19% in both Fountain and Manitou Springs. In Calhan, mobile homes remain a meaningful component of the rental supply, representing 11% of the inventory and offering an important source of lower cost housing in an otherwise limited market.

Table 30. Composition of Renter-Occupied Housing Stock in El Paso County Municipalities, 2023

Housing Unit Type	Calhan	Fountain	Green Mountain Falls	Manitou Springs	Monument	Palmer Lake	Ramah
Single family, detached	56	1,302	37	380	361	101	2
Single family, attached	0	325	6	104	50	18	0
Multifamily, 2-4 units	37	530	7	200	110	0	0
Multifamily, 5-9 units	1	26	13	42	45	0	0
Multifamily, 10 or more units	0	540	0	284	320	0	0
Mobile home or other	12	92	0	47	0	10	0
Total	106	2,815	63	1,057	886	129	2

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely due to rounding. Estimates of housing units by type were derived from the 2023 five-year ACS and then proportionally scaled to match total housing unit figures published by the Colorado State Demography Office.

As expected, single-family detached homes are the most common type of owner-occupied housing, *making up 91% of the housing stock* across the seven municipalities (see Table 31). This dominance reflects longstanding development patterns in these communities, where homeownership has historically centered on standalone homes with larger lots. Monument has a more varied ownership stock than its peers, with single-family attached homes accounting for 11% of owner-occupied units. This pattern likely reflects recent suburban-style infill and the introduction of higher-density subdivisions intended to accommodate population growth. Calhan and Ramah, by contrast, continue to rely heavily on mobile homes, underscoring the importance of this naturally occurring affordable housing type in smaller towns. The scale of the ownership market varies considerably, with just 49 owner-occupied units in Ramah compared to more than 7,300 in Fountain, highlighting the disparate planning and infrastructure needs facing these communities.

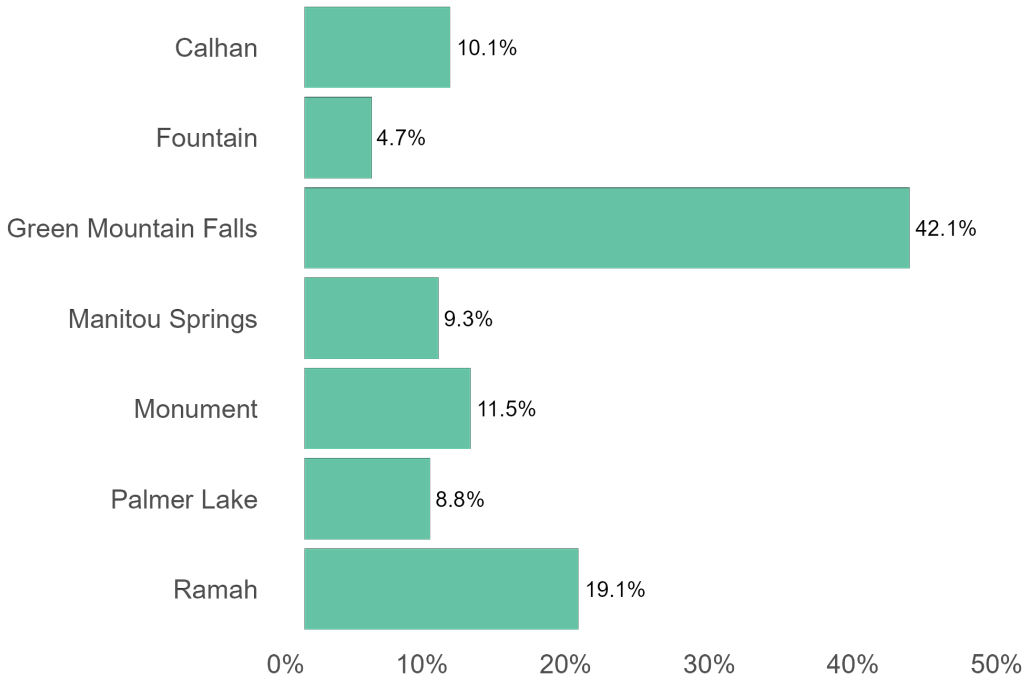
Table 31. Composition of Owner-Occupied Housing Stock in El Paso County Municipalities, 2023

Housing Unit Type	Calhan	Fountain	Green Mountain Falls	Manitou Springs	Monument	Palmer Lake	Ramah
Single family, detached	176	6,808	259	1,226	2,811	865	36
Single family, attached	0	279	0	49	353	44	0
Multifamily, 2-4 units	0	44	0	86	0	0	0
Multifamily, 5-9 units	0	0	0	7	0	0	0
Multifamily, 10 or more units	0	37	0	21	0	0	0
Mobile home or other	20	169	0	0	74	57	13
Total	196	7,337	259	1,389	3,238	966	49

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely due to rounding. Estimates of housing units by type were derived from the 2023 five-year ACS and then proportionally scaled to match total housing unit figures published by the Colorado State Demography Office.

Vacancy rates vary widely across the region (see Figure 78). *Fountain had the lowest vacancy rate at 4.7%,* indicating a tight housing market with limited availability for prospective renters or buyers. Vacancy rates were modest in Palmer Lake (8.8%), Manitou Springs (9.3%), Calhan (10.1%), and Monument (11.5%), while the highest rates were observed in Ramah (19.1%) and Green Mountain Falls (42.1%). As mentioned previously, elevated vacancy rates often reflect the presence of a sizeable number of short-term rentals and underutilized units, such as seasonal or recreational homes.

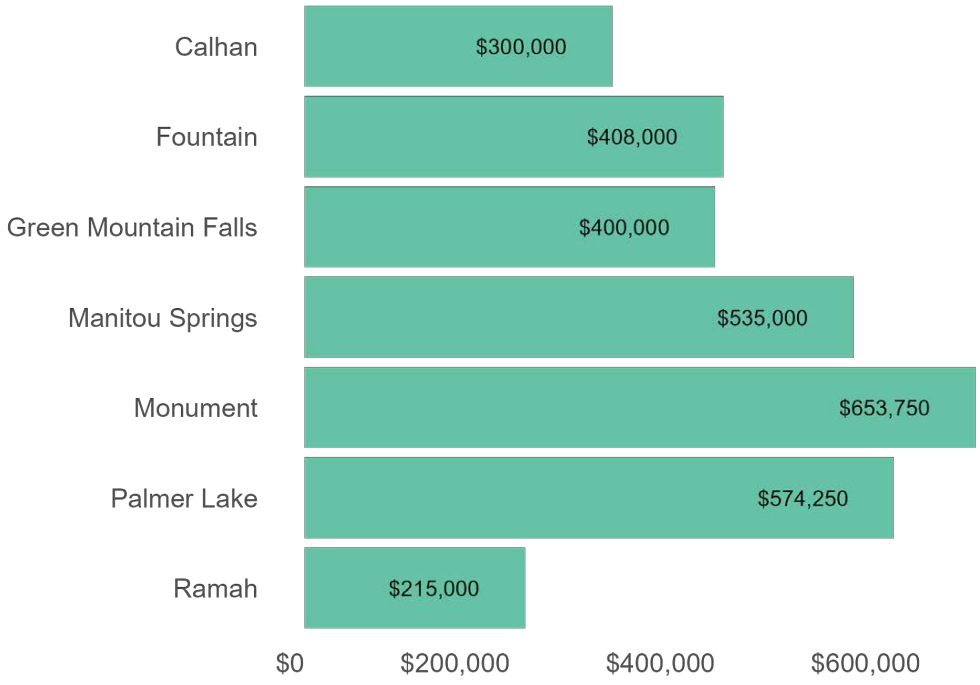
Figure 78. Vacancy Rates in El Paso County Municipalities, 2023



Source: State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.

There is substantial variation in home prices across El Paso County's municipalities (see Figure 79). In 2024, *Monument had the highest median sale price at $653,750,* followed by Palmer Lake ($574,250) and Manitou Springs ($535,000), reflecting higher housing demand, limited inventory, and proximity to natural and recreational amenities. Green Mountain Falls ($400,000) and Fountain ($408,000) reported similar median prices, while Calhan remained more affordable at $300,000. Ramah had the lowest median sale price in the region ($215,000), though its small and less active housing market may limit the reliability of that figure. The wide range in median prices underscores both the diversity of local housing markets and the barriers that rising home values may pose for first-time buyers and lower-income households, particularly in higher-cost areas like Monument and Palmer Lake.

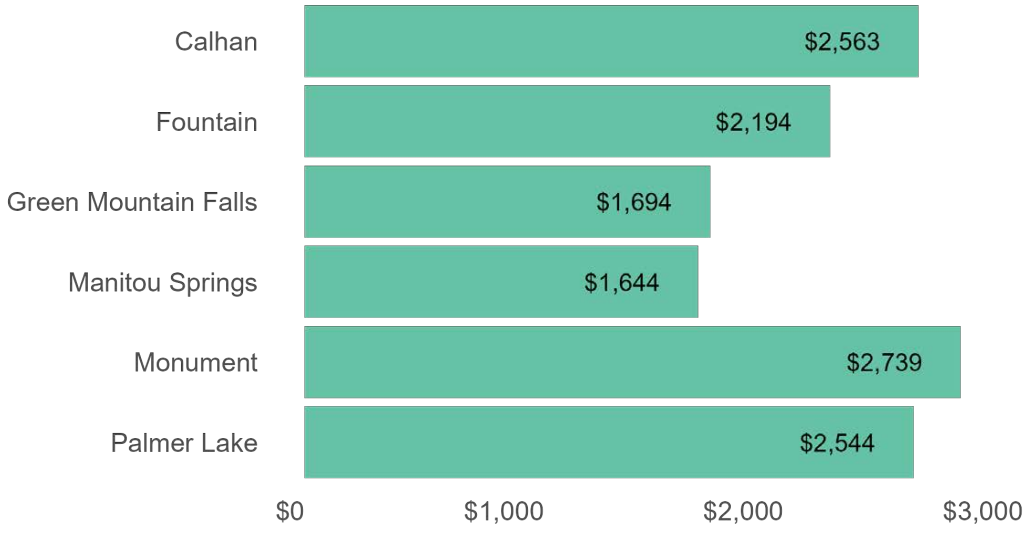
Figure 79. Median Sale Price in El Paso County Municipalities, 2024



Source: El Paso County Assessor's Parcel Data; Matrix Design Group
Note: The sales data pertain only to arm's-length transactions, defined as transfers between willing buyers and sellers under typical market conditions. Unlike MLS-based datasets, Assessor's parcel datasets include both agent-listed and For Sale by Owner (FSBO) sales, providing a more complete view of the residential market.

Figure 80 illustrates the range of average gross rents (including utilities) across El Paso County's communities as of May 2025. Monument reported the highest average rent at $2,739 per month, while Calhan ($2,563) and Palmer Lake ($2,544) were not far behind. Fountain's average rent came in at $2,194, compared to $1,694 in Green Mountain Falls and $1,644 in Manitou Springs. Based on the standard that housing should consume no more than 30% of household income, *the annual income needed to afford the typical unit ranges from $65,778 in Manitou Springs to $109,578 in Monument.*

Figure 80. Average Gross Rent in El Paso County Municipalities, May 2025



Source: Zillow; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Rental data were unavailable for Ramah. Average gross rent includes utility costs, which were estimated for the region using the 2023 Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) and then adjusted for inflation to 2025 dollars.

While rising home values have boosted homeowner equity across the region, renters face growing affordability challenges and limited paths to ownership

Across the region, home values have appreciated significantly in recent years, often outpacing growth in rents over the same period (see Table 32). Home values rose significantly in most areas, with the *largest increases observed in Fountain (42%), Palmer Lake (37%), Monument (36%), and Calhan (36%).* Manitou Springs and Green Mountain Falls saw more modest home value growth of 28% and 14%, respectively. Rent trends were more mixed, though this variability may be partly attributable to small sample sizes in these communities, which can lead to greater year-to-year fluctuations in survey-based estimates. Palmer Lake and Green Mountain Falls experienced *sharp rent increases of 61% and 53%,* suggesting rising demand in the rental market. Fountain also saw rents rise (9%), while rent growth in Manitou Springs and Monument was essentially flat. Notably, Calhan was the only community where rents declined, falling by 20% despite a substantial concurrent increase in home values. These trends have important implications for wealth building, as rising home values can significantly increase equity for existing homeowners, while renters may face growing barriers to entering the ownership market.

Table 32. 2018 to 2023 Relative Change in Real Median Home Value and Real Median Gross Rent in El Paso County Municipalities

Municipality	Change in Median Home Value	Change in Median Gross Rent
Calhan	36%	-20%
Fountain	42%	9%
Green Mountain Falls	14%	53%
Manitou Springs	28%	3%
Monument	36%	0%
Palmer Lake	37%	61%

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Due to sample size limitations, estimates are unavailable for Ramah.

Displacement Risk Assessment

Table 33 presents a set of displacement risk indicators drawn from the ACS, offering a snapshot of the vulnerability of the various communities in El Paso County to housing instability and involuntary displacement. *Higher values for any of the listed metrics are associated with greater risk*. The indicators capture a range of demographic, socioeconomic, and housing characteristics that research has consistently linked to displacement pressure. These include the share of households that are low-income, cost-burdened, or renter-occupied, as well as populations with limited educational attainment, single-parent households, residents with disabilities, and those with limited English proficiency. The age of the housing stock and the prevalence of overcrowded units also contribute to risk, as older or crowded homes may be more susceptible to disinvestment or redevelopment. Collectively, these metrics provide a composite view of displacement risk across communities, highlighting where targeted policy interventions may be most needed.

Table 33. Displacement Risk Assessment for El Paso County Municipalities, 2023

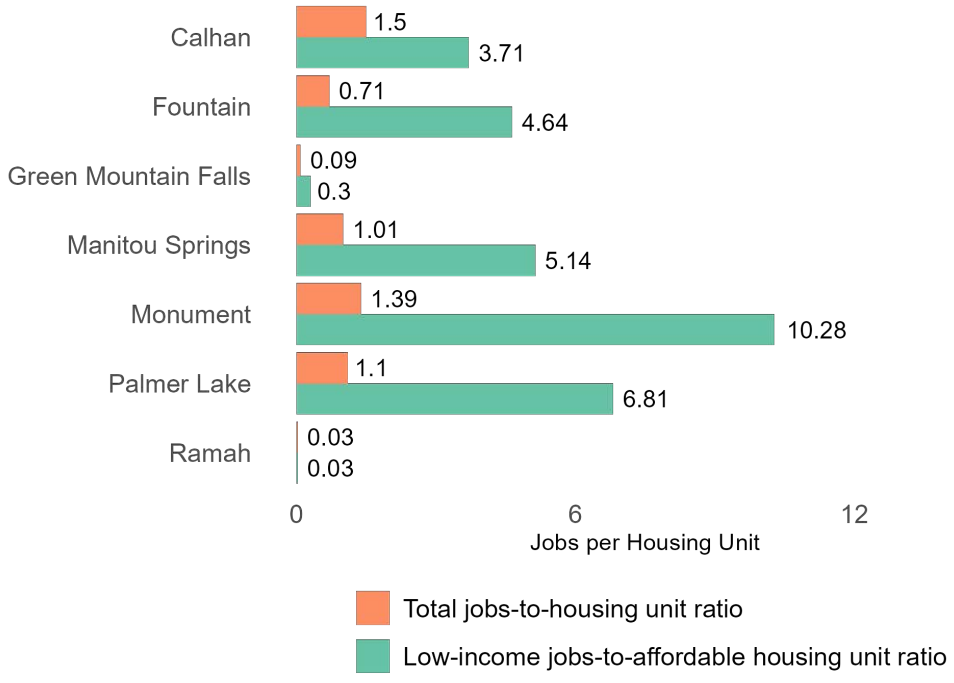
Metric (%)	Calhan	Fountain	Green Mountain Falls	Manitou Springs	Monument	Palmer Lake	Ramah
Population with a Disability	15%	11%	13%	13%	11%	19%	13%
Overcrowded Households	0%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Racial or Ethnic Minority Population	14%	34%	34%	34%	44%	19%	12%
Housing Stock Built Before 1970	38%	24%	23%	21%	13%	69%	68%
Population with Limited English-Speaking Ability	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Single-Parent-Led-Households	17%	7%	8%	8%	8%	0%	3%
25-and-Over Population without a High School	7%	7%	5%	5%	5%	2%	3%
Cost-Burdened Households	53%	67%	67%	67%	73%	71%	66%
Renter Households	35%	34%	39%	34%	28%	20%	43%
Below 30% AMI Households	36%	15%	15%	14%	15%	21%	24%
Below 50% AMI Households	51%	27%	29%	27%	28%	29%	33%
Below 80% AMI Households	67%	45%	50%	48%	49%	48%	54%

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Due to data limitations, HUD's published FY 2023 median family income (MFI) for the area ($105,100) serves as a substitute for AMI. Values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Housing Needs

Figure 81 presents the ratio of low-income jobs to low-income housing units alongside the total jobs-to-housing units ratio, offering insight into the balance between employment opportunities and available housing, particularly for lower-wage workers. In most communities, low-income job ratios far exceeded the number of units affordable to those workers, highlighting a mismatch between workforce needs and local housing supply. *Monument faces the most pronounced imbalance,* with 10.3 low-income jobs per low-income unit and 1.4 total jobs per housing unit, suggesting a strong demand for affordable housing options. Similar patterns were observed in Palmer Lake (6.8 and 1.1), Manitou Springs (5.1 and 1.0), and Fountain (4.6 and 0.7). Calhan also exhibits a significant gap, with 3.7 low-income jobs per low-income unit despite a higher overall jobs-to-housing ratio of 1.5. In contrast, Green Mountain Falls and Ramah had very low ratios across the board, reflecting limited employment bases and small housing stocks. For context, a balanced market should have slightly more than one job per housing unit.

Figure 81. Jobs-Housing Balance in El Paso County Municipalities, 2023



Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: For the purposes of this analysis, a low-income job is defined as one with annual earnings below $35,000. An affordable housing unit is defined based on standard affordability benchmarks: for renters, gross rent must not exceed 30% of household income; for homeowners, the purchase price must not exceed three times annual household income.

Table 34 presents estimates of the total number of accessible or visitable housing units needed across the seven communities, based on the number of residents with ambulatory disabilities. The analysis assumes that 1.1 units are needed for every individual with an ambulatory disability—an adjustment that accounts for the potential clustering of individuals with mobility challenges within the same household, as well as the need for some accessible units to remain vacant in order to ensure availability when needed. These figures represent total demand rather than an existing shortfall and offer a benchmark for what a fully inclusive housing stock would provide. *Altogether, the estimated need across the region is 1,886 units,* with the largest number in Fountain (1,411 units) due to its population size. As a share of the total housing stock, need is highest in Ramah, where 43% of units should ideally be accessible or visitable. In most of the remaining communities, the recommended share ranges from 10% to 14%, underscoring the widespread and often underappreciated importance of accessibility in housing planning.

Table 34. Accessible/Visitable Housing Units Needed in El Paso County Municipalities, 2023

Municipality	Units Currently Required	Percent of Total Housing Stock
Calhan	47	14%
Fountain	1,411	13%
Green Mountain Falls	55	10%
Manitou Springs	159	6%
Monument	18	0%
Palmer Lake	169	14%
Ramah	27	43%

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Accessible and visitable housing unit needs were estimated based on the population with an ambulatory disability. To translate the number of individuals into unit needs, it was assumed that an average of 1.1 persons with a disability would share each accessible unit, recognizing that some individuals live with family members or caregivers. To ensure a healthy level of availability and account for typical vacancy rates, a five percent vacancy buffer was applied. This methodology provides a realistic estimate of the number of accessible and visitable units needed to meet community needs without assuming full occupancy at all times. Values reflect data from 2019 to 2023.

Across these seven municipalities in El Paso County, the homeless population is estimated at *544 individuals,* with an additional 256 people considered at risk of homelessness due to low incomes and severe housing cost burden (see Figure 82). These figures reflect proportional allocations of the countywide SNAP-based estimate of homelessness, using each jurisdiction's share of the low-income population as the basis for distribution. Fountain accounts for the largest share, with an estimated 309 individuals experiencing homelessness, followed by Monument with 105 and Manitou Springs with 87. These estimates provide a more detailed picture of need outside Colorado Springs and help inform supportive housing strategies across smaller jurisdictions where the homeless population may be less visible.

Supportive housing is a critical need in every community, offering long-term stability for residents facing chronic health and housing challenges

As Table 35 illustrates, the seven municipalities have a *combined need for approximately 181 supportive housing units,* with 103 of those needed in Fountain alone. In smaller communities like Calhan and Ramah, supportive housing would need to account for up to two percent of the total housing stock to meet estimated needs. These unit counts are grounded in an evidence-based methodology that assumes 30% of the homeless population (typically those with chronic health conditions, disabilities, or other long-term barriers to housing stability) will require permanent supportive housing. Among those at risk of homelessness, 7% are expected to have similar needs, particularly individuals exiting institutions or facing severe instability. This approach reflects national research on the intersection of homelessness and service needs, and is intended to guide resource allocation toward long-term, service-enriched housing solutions for the most vulnerable residents.

Table 35. Supportive Housing Units Needed in El Paso County Municipalities

Region	Units Currently Required	Percent of Total Housing Stock
Calhan	5	2%
Fountain	103	1%
Green Mountain Falls	3	1%
Manitou Springs	29	1%
Monument	35	1%
Palmer Lake	5	0%
Ramah	1	2%

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Supportive housing needs estimates are based on national research indicating that approximately 30% of individuals experiencing homelessness require permanent supportive housing due to chronic conditions, disabilities, or other barriers to housing stability. For the population at risk of homelessness, a 7% need factor was applied based on national estimates of individuals with complex behavioral health needs, disabling conditions, or institutional discharge histories who are likely to require supportive housing to avoid becoming homeless. These assumptions are grounded in studies from HUD and other reputable sources.

As Table 36 shows, renter income levels vary considerably across the region, with heavy concentrations of low-income household existing in several communities. In Fountain, which features the largest rental market, more than a quarter of renter households earned less than 30% of the area median income (AMI), while an additional 43% fell between 31% and 80% AMI. In total, *nearly 70% of Fountain's renters were low income,* illustrating the city's acute need for affordable rental housing. The dynamics are similar in Manitou Springs, where *83% earned below 80% AMI, including 38% in the extremely low-income category.* The city's high proportion of low-income renters results from its reliance on low-wage tourism jobs. In Calhan, renters are even more challenged, with 65% earning less than 30% AMI. By contrast, the income mix in Green Mountain Falls, Monument, and Palmer Lake was more balanced, with fewer households clustered at the lowest income levels. This suggests that while some communities face widespread economic hardship among renters, others are home to a broader range of income groups.

Table 36. Renter-Occupied Households by AMI Tier in El Paso County Municipalities, 2023

AMI Tier	Calhan	Fountain	Green Mountain Falls	Manitou Springs	Monument	Palmer Lake	Ramah
Extremely Low Income (≤ 30% AMI)	69	725	14	405	168	10	0
Very Low Income (31-50% AMI)	12	515	10	204	156	8	0
Low Income (51-80% AMI)	8	694	0	268	216	9	0
Moderate Income (81-120% AMI)	12	500	10	93	111	45	1
Middle Income (120% AMI-200% AMI)	1	182	10	34	73	29	1
Upper Income (201%+ AMI)	4	199	17	53	162	27	0
Total Households	106	2,815	60	1,057	886	128	2

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely because of rounding. Due to data limitations, this analysis approximates AMI tiers using HUD's published FY 2023 median family income (MFI) for the area ($105,100). Estimates of households by income bracket were derived from the 2023 five-year ACS and then proportionally scaled to match total household figures published by the Colorado State Demography Office.

Owner-occupied households across the region tend to have significantly higher incomes than renters, with many concentrated at the top of the income distribution (see Table 37). *In Monument and Manitou Springs, 42% and 35% of homeowners, respectively, earned more than 200% AMI,* consistent with these communities' higher property values. Fountain's income distribution is relatively heterogeneous, with a more even mix of households across the AMI tiers. Incomes were more modest in smaller and more rural areas like Calhan, Ramah, and Green Mountain Falls, where lower-income homeowners (i.e., below 80% AMI) made up a larger share of the ownership base. These households may include long-term residents who purchased homes when prices were lower, as well as fixed-income retirees.

Table 37. Owner-Occupied Households by AMI Tier in El Paso County Municipalities, 2023

AMI Tier	Calhan	Fountain	Green Mountain Falls	Manitou Springs	Monument	Palmer Lake	Ramah
Extremely Low Income (≤ 30% AMI)	34	701	53	140	288	69	24
Very Low Income (31-50% AMI)	38	929	14	63	364	43	6
Low Income (51-80% AMI)	40	1,445	56	245	332	134	5
Moderate Income (81-120% AMI)	41	1,783	26	301	536	277	6
Middle Income (120% AMI-200% AMI)	17	983	18	151	359	160	5
Upper Income (201%+ AMI)	25	1,494	82	489	1,360	283	3
Total	195	7,335	249	1,389	3,239	966	49

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely because of rounding. Due to data limitations, this analysis approximates AMI tiers using HUD's published FY 2023 median family income (MFI) for the area ($105,100). Estimates of households by income bracket were derived from the 2023 five-year ACS and then proportionally scaled to match total household figures published by the Colorado State Demography Office.

In 2023, the region faced *a shortfall of 428 rental units* (see Table 38). This estimate represents the number of units needed to accommodate in-commuters, alleviate overcrowding, and support a healthier vacancy rate. Most of that need is concentrated in just two places: Fountain, which required 138 additional units, and Manitou Springs, which needed 159. The shortage is especially acute at the lower end of the income spectrum, with 71% of the total need tied to households earning less than 80% of the area median income. Expanding access to deeply and moderately affordable rentals will be essential to improving housing stability for the region's most economically vulnerable residents.

Table 38. Existing Rental Housing Needs in El Paso County Municipalities, 2023

AMI Tier	Calhan	Fountain	Green Mountain Falls	Manitou Springs	Monument	Palmer Lake	Ramah
Extremely Low Income (≤ 30% AMI)	13	36	1	61	16	2	0
Very Low Income (31-50% AMI)	3	25	1	31	15	1	0
Low Income (51-80% AMI)	1	34	0	40	20	2	0
Moderate Income (81-120% AMI)	3	24	1	14	10	7	0
Middle Income (120% AMI-200% AMI)	0	9	1	5	7	5	0
Upper Income (201%+ AMI)	1	10	1	8	16	4	0
Current Units Needed	21	138	5	159	84	21	0

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely because of rounding. Due to data limitations, this analysis approximates AMI tiers using HUD's published median family income (MFI) for the area ($105,100). Overall housing need was estimated by accounting for three key factors: housing units needed to accommodate net commuting patterns (i.e., households likely to relocate if housing were available), additional units required to achieve healthy vacancy rates (2% for ownership and 5% for rental), and units needed to alleviate overcrowding, based on a ratio of 0.5 units per overcrowded household. Consistent with DOLA guidelines, the total estimated need was then distributed across AMI tiers according to the existing income distribution of households.

The region's ownership market also shows clear signs of strain, *with an estimated need for 1,054 additional for-sale units as of 2023* (see Table 39). Fountain and Monument accounted for the majority of that demand (755 units combined) due to both tight inventory and steady pressure from in-commuting households seeking to live closer to work. While some of the need was for higher-end homes, roughly two-thirds of the shortfall was in the low- to middle-income range. About a third of the needed units should be priced for households earning below 80% of area median income (AMI), and another third for those earning between 81% and 200% AMI. This split reflects the reality that ownership opportunities are limited not just for lower-income families, but also for moderate-income households who increasingly find themselves priced out of the market.

Table 39. Existing Owner Housing Needs in El Paso County Municipalities, 2023

AMI Tier	Calhan	Fountain	Green Mountain Falls	Manitou Springs	Monument	Palmer Lake	Ramah
Extremely Low Income (≤ 30% AMI)	4	25	-1	15	44	10	-1
Very Low Income (31-50% AMI)	4	33	0	6	55	6	-1
Low Income (51-80% AMI)	4	53	-1	25	50	20	0
Moderate Income (81-120% AMI)	4	65	-1	32	81	40	-1
Middle Income (120% AMI-200% AMI)	1	35	0	16	54	24	0
Upper Income (201%+ AMI)	3	54	-2	52	206	41	0
Current Units Needed	20	265	-5	146	490	141	-3

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely because of rounding. Due to data limitations, this analysis approximates AMI tiers using HUD's published median family income (MFI) for the area ($105,100). Overall housing need was estimated by accounting for three key factors: housing units needed to accommodate net commuting patterns (i.e., households likely to relocate if housing were available), additional units required to achieve healthy vacancy rates (2% for ownership and 5% for rental), and units needed to alleviate overcrowding, based on a ratio of 0.5 units per overcrowded household. Consistent with DOLA guidelines, the total estimated need was then distributed across AMI tiers according to the existing income distribution of households.

Over the next 10 years, the seven communities will collectively require an estimated 1,023 rental units to close the existing shortfall and meet future demand (see Table 40). Of that total, 293 units should be affordable to households earning below 30% of the area median income (AMI), and another 420 units are needed for those earning between 31% and 80% AMI. These figures account for both current unmet demand and anticipated household growth, with projected demand allocated to each community based on its share of regional employment and current AMI distribution. The bulk of the need—roughly 940 units—is concentrated in Fountain, Manitou Springs, and Monument, where larger workforce populations are expected to drive continued rental demand.

Table 40. 10-Year Projected Rental Housing Needs in El Paso County Municipalities

AMI Tier	Calhan	Fountain	Green Mountain Falls	Manitou Springs	Monument	Palmer Lake	Ramah
Extremely Low Income (≤ 30% AMI)	24	105	1	115	45	3	0
Very Low Income (31-50% AMI)	5	74	1	58	42	2	0
Low Income (51-80% AMI)	2	100	0	76	57	3	0
Moderate Income (81-120% AMI)	5	71	1	26	29	13	0
Middle Income (120% AMI-200% AMI)	0	26	1	10	20	9	0
Upper Income (201%+ AMI)	2	29	1	15	44	8	0
Current Units Needed	38	404	6	300	236	39	0

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely because of rounding. Due to data limitations, this analysis approximates AMI tiers using HUD's published median family income (MFI) for the area ($105,100). Overall housing need was estimated by accounting for three key factors: housing units needed to accommodate net commuting patterns (i.e., households likely to relocate if housing were available), additional units required to achieve healthy vacancy rates (2% for ownership and 5% for rental), and units needed to alleviate overcrowding, based on a ratio of 0.5 units per overcrowded household. Consistent with DOLA guidelines, the total estimated need was then distributed across AMI tiers according to the existing income distribution of households.

To close existing gaps and accommodate future growth over the next decade, the region will *require an estimated 2,612 additional owner-occupied units* (see Table 41). The need spans the full income spectrum, with 905 units required for households earning below 80% of the area median income (AMI) and a similarly large number (881 units) needed for those earning between 121% and 200% AMI. Another 825 units are needed for households earning above 200% AMI, reflecting ongoing demand from higher-income buyers. Monument and Manitou Springs alone account for 967 of the region's ownership needs, driven by their relatively high levels of projected growth and existing housing pressure. Unlike the rental market, where need is concentrated at the lower end, projected ownership demand is more evenly distributed across income tiers, pointing to broader challenges with affordability and availability throughout the market.

Table 41. 10-Year Projected Owner Housing Needs in El Paso County Municipalities

AMI Tier	Calhan	Fountain	Green Mountain Falls	Manitou Springs	Monument	Palmer Lake	Ramah
Extremely Low Income (≤ 30% AMI)	9	89	0	33	92	19	-1
Very Low Income (31-50% AMI)	10	118	0	14	116	12	-1
Low Income (51-80% AMI)	10	185	0	57	105	38	0
Moderate Income (81-120% AMI)	11	228	-1	71	170	78	-1
Middle Income (120% AMI-200% AMI)	4	125	0	36	114	46	0
Upper Income (201%+ AMI)	7	191	-1	115	433	80	0
Current Units Needed	51	937	-2	326	1,030	273	-3

Source: Five-Year American Community Survey; State Demography Office; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely because of rounding. Due to data limitations, this analysis approximates AMI tiers using HUD's published median family income (MFI) for the area ($105,100). Overall housing need was estimated by accounting for three key factors: housing units needed to accommodate net commuting patterns (i.e., households likely to relocate if housing were available), additional units required to achieve healthy vacancy rates (2% for ownership and 5% for rental), and units needed to alleviate overcrowding, based on a ratio of 0.5 units per overcrowded household. Consistent with DOLA guidelines, the total estimated need was then distributed across AMI tiers according to the existing income distribution of households.

Appendix A – Homelessness Analysis

HOMELESSNESS ANALYSIS FOR EL PASO COUNTY
COLORADO SPRINGS HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Background – Measuring Homelessness

Homelessness in El Paso County[1]—including the surrounding unincorporated areas of the County and the City of Colorado Springs—reflects a complex and persistent challenge with significant social and economic consequences. Homelessness is often hidden, fluid, and defined differently across systems. Although there is keen awareness of the "homeless problem" across the United States, the magnitude of the challenge is extremely difficult to accurately measure because homeless individuals inherently do not have a consistent residence and therefore contact mechanism. But this should not overshadow the reality and gravity of this humanitarian crisis, particularly for the adults and children experiencing homelessness.

A national study using administrative data from homelessness service providers estimated annual counts to be 2.5 to 10.2 times greater than PIT counts.

For these reasons, single-source counts like the Point-In-Time (PIT) significantly underrepresent its true scale. Changes in PIT count methodologies—such as variations in volunteer participation, weather conditions, or survey coverage—can significantly affect year-to-year trends, making it difficult to distinguish true changes in homelessness from changes in data collection. Thus, it is not surprising that a 2022 study estimated that the number of unique individuals experiencing homelessness over a three-year period is at least 3.5 times higher than the PIT snapshot.[2] Another national study using administrative data from homeless service providers in nine U.S. jurisdictions estimated annual counts (from other sources) to be 2.5 to 10.2 times higher than PIT counts.[3]

This study looked at various sources to try and obtain a more accurate picture of the level of homelessness in the El Paso County region. Combining multiple data sources—such as PIT, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), McKinney-Vento, and service provider data—offers a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of who is experiencing homelessness across the county. In pulling data from these other sources (see Appendix A), it is evident that El Paso County's PIT count does not fully represent the number of homeless as is well documented in various national studies. The region's 2024 PIT count showed 1,146 homeless individuals. Yet, according to the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), a federally mandated database in which service providers collect and report individuals who access homelessness services, El Paso County had 5,178 individuals who were documented as homeless from October 2023 to September 2024. Comparatively, on average in 2024, at any given point in time, approximately 6,912 *households* self-reported homelessness on SNAP applications (Appendix B). This translates to 8,451 *individuals* according to that SNAP data far surpassing the estimated count from PIT (resulting in a 1 to 7.37 ratio of 2024 PIT to SNAP in terms of homelessness count – not unlike national studies). It is important to

[1] The regional Housing Needs Assessment includes the incorporated and unincorporated areas of El Paso County and the City of Colorado Springs. For this reason, "El Paso County" will be used in this report to represent the entire catchment area and simplify language.

[2] https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10511482.2024.2306607

[3] https://homelesslaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/HUD-PIT-report2017.pdf
https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12037263/

note that individuals/households who apply for SNAP do not receive any additional benefits or automatic enrollment in SNAP if they do self-identify as homeless. Thus, we assume there is no "incentive" to declare homelessness.

The most recent 2025 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count recorded 1,745 individuals experiencing homelessness in the Colorado Springs Continuum of Care, a substantial 52% increase from 1,146 individuals in 2024. This rise is largely attributable to an increase in volunteers who count homeless individuals from approximately 25 in 2024 to 125 in 2025. In addition, there were expanded outreach efforts by the local Homeless Union, which successfully reached more unsheltered individuals. While PIT counts continue to underrepresent the total population experiencing homelessness—especially children and those in hidden or transient situations—the higher 2025 count reinforces our analysis that the PIT methodology captures only a fraction of the true number of residents experiencing homelessness.

"These (higher homelessness) numbers are validating to service providers. It is more consistent with our observations and independent numbers of people whom we serve."
-Beth Roalstad, CEO at Homeward Pikes Peak

Youth homelessness is also difficult to estimate. While only 269 individuals under 18 were recorded in the 2024 PIT count, broader data from the McKinney-Vento numbers (school data with student housing information) showed that 1,614 students in El Paso County school districts were experiencing homelessness (Appendix C).[4] This includes children staying in motels or doubled up with other families—conditions that are both precarious and excluded from PIT methodology. Furthermore, according to the SNAP estimates, 1,008 homeless *households* indicated having children (with 621 having one child, 246 having two, and 141 having between three and seven children).

It is noteworthy that two data sources, PIT and SNAP, show trends moving in opposite directions. As Appendix D visually shows, there has been a decline in the number of homeless counted via PIT from 2016 to 2024 (down from 1,302 to 1,146 – or a 12% decline). In that 2024 PIT count, 23% of the region's homeless were children (Appendix E) further highlighting the depth of the humanitarian crisis. Zephyr Smith, Data & Analytics Manager with ChangeLine (formerly Community Health Partnership), shared that some of the difference in trends with PIT and SNAP numbers is related to social trust: "When implementing the census approach to the PIT, we require respondents to consent to being counted. They have to have a high level of trust in the enumerator to give us that. Less trust is necessary to check a box on a SNAP application, especially given that those applications are probably done with online or paper forms. We know that social trust in recent years is down broadly. By nature, that impacts the PIT counts more than the SNAP time series." By contrast, SNAP estimates show an increase in the number of homeless households from 2019 (2,834) to 2024 (6,912) - or a 144% increase. The deviation in the trends is telling in and of itself. This underscores the false sense of exactitude in the numbers presented by any of the sources. For example, in January 2024, the (PIT) number 1,146 sounds precise, but so does 8,451 from the SNAP data. As such, all numbers have to be used with caution although it can generally be said that PIT is perhaps the most challenged of the data sources not only because it is one point in time, but also because all other sources point to significantly higher homeless counts (in the approximate range of 5,200 to 8,500).

PIT showed a 12% decline from 2016 to 2024 while SNAP estimates show a 144% increase.

While all numbers have to be used with caution, PIT is perhaps the most challenged because it is one point in time and all other sources point to significantly higher counts.

For the purposes of this study, SNAP counts are used in the ratio calculations (of SNAP to PIT homeless counts: 7.4 to 1). One of the main reasons SNAP was chosen is because the counts are averages taken over the course of the

[4] These numbers are collected during the Student October Count and Student End of Year Collection: https://www.cde.state.co.us/studentsupport/homeless_data

year and therefore are more reliable than a one-time count. Additionally, SNAP counts of homelessness are self-defined and self-identified, so the SNAP definition of homelessness is much more comprehensive than what is captured in PIT. Furthermore, it is important to note that even the higher (SNAP) estimates are unlikely to capture all homeless individuals and/or households because not all homeless people seek out nutritional assistance. Community experts have shared that the broader SNAP numbers are more in line with what they see on the frontlines. Beth Roalstad, Chief Executive Officer at Homeward Pikes Peak, shares that "These numbers are validating to the service providers. It is more consistent with our observations and independent numbers of people whom we serve. In addition, we have had 300+ and as high as 700 names on the Coordinated Entry list for individuals, families and Veterans who are actively seeking housing solutions. While these numbers are much larger than what has been commonly relied upon, the PIT annual data, this more comprehensive data will help us work together to plan better housing and serves to meet the very diverse needs of our community." Although no source is going to be 100% reliable due to the hidden nature of homelessness and the challenges in measuring it, this study did compare various sources and their methodologies and moved forward knowing their limitations.

Transitioning Into Permanent Housing

Exiting homelessness into stable housing remains a significant barrier. According to the 2024 Longitudinal System Analysis (LSA) report[5] for the region, only 12% (about 380) of the 3,143 households exiting[6] the homelessness response system are known to have secured permanent housing. Meanwhile, 61% (about 1,905 households) exited to unknown destinations and 27% (about 858 households) are known to have exited to temporary destinations. Disparities by household type are stark: only 8% of adult-only households are known to have exited to permanent housing, compared to 48% of households with adults and children and 52% of child-only households (Appendix F). Moreover, just among those who are known to have achieved permanent housing, 12% returned to homelessness within six months. Given that the vast majority of those who exit the homelessness system leave to unknown destinations, it is likely the percentages of returns are also undercounted, further emphasizing the instability and uncertainty of tracking homelessness. These revolving-door outcomes not only reduce the effectiveness of public investment in housing interventions, they also increase long-term service costs while reducing economic (worker) productivity.

People At-Risk of Housing Instability

One study found that those that were homeless with a severe mental illness used an average of $40,500 in services a year (compared to $16,200 average once housed).

In order to provide a more complete understanding of the housing crisis, it is critical to examine who is at high risk of becoming homeless. A review of national and local literature[7] identifies root causes that include the lack of affordable housing, rising rents, non-livable wages, unemployment, mental and behavioral health needs, and systemic inequities. The financial cost of these systemic vulnerabilities is immense—both for individuals and for the wider community. In fact, one study found that people who were homeless with a severe mental illness used an average of $40,500 in services per year (compared to $16,200 on average once housed).[8] Once you include lost labor force participation, underachievement in schools,

[5] This report covers the period from October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024: https://www.ppchp.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/CO-504-LSA-2024-print_all.pdf

[6] Individuals experiencing homelessness exit the system to many destinations. Permanent destinations include: rental/ownership with or without subsidy or living with family and friends. Temporary destinations include but are not limited to hospitalization, incarceration, or the streets. In the 2024 LSA, 61% of all households exited to unknown destinations.

[7] https://endhomelessness.org/overview/#what_causes_homelessness; https://nlihc.org/gap; https://endhomelessness.org/income-isnt-keeping-up-with-housing-costs/; https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2024-AHAR-Part-1.pdf

[8] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/45436351_The_Cost_of_Homelessness_A_Perspective_from_the_United_States

and higher reliance on public assistance and crisis services over time, these costs increase dramatically in the long run.[9]

Those "at risk" of homelessness often face severe housing cost burdens, unstable or overcrowded living conditions, and limited access to affordable housing. While renters make up the majority of this population, some low-income homeowners—especially seniors, people behind on mortgage payments, or those living in substandard housing—also face significant vulnerability to housing loss.[10] All of these at-risk populations pose an economic threat to the region, as housing instability is associated with higher public spending on emergency services, lower workforce participation, and long-term costs to health and education systems.

In El Paso County, indicators of poverty and housing burden offer additional insight into risk levels. 51,100 students—or 40% of all public K–12 students in El Paso County—qualified for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) during the 2024–2025 school year.[11] This figure reflects widespread household financial insecurity. It is likely that other U.S. communities have even higher proportions of children on FRPL programs given that El Paso County poverty rates are lower than U.S. rates in terms of the total percentage of residents who are at or below the federal poverty level (see Table 1).

Table 1: 2023 Federal Poverty Level (FPL)

	El Paso County	U.S.
% people at FPL or below	7.00%	12.50%

Note: FPL in 2023 was $14,580 for an individual and $30,000 for a family of four.

Measuring Housing Instability in the El Paso County Region

To better understand the scale of housing vulnerability in the region and inform proactive intervention strategies, we started by looking at income data as measured by the Area Median Income, or AMI. Specifically, we looked at the proportion and number of households that are *extremely* low-income, or ELI (0-30% of AMI), and *very* low-income, or VLI (31-50% of AMI).[12] We used these AMI tiers to estimate the risk of homelessness because households in these income brackets face the highest rates of housing cost burden and are most vulnerable to housing instability.[13] We then juxtaposed those lower-income households to regional data on the proportion of renters who are "cost-burdened" or "severely cost-burdened."

Households are considered "cost-burdened" if they spend more than 30% of their income on housing and as "severely cost-burdened" if they spend more than 50% of their income on housing. Based on data from the City of Colorado Springs Housing and Homelessness Response[14], 90% of extremely low-income (ELI) renter households were "cost-burdened" with 82% of the cost-burdened group being "severely cost-burdened." For very low-income (VLI) households, 76% were "cost-burdened" with 50% of those cost-burdened households also qualifying as "severely cost-burdened." We applied those cost-burdened and severely cost-burdened rates to estimate how

[9] https://hpri.usc.edu/homeless_research/homelessness-and-employment/

[10] https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/reports/files/Harvard_JCHS_Housing_Americas_Older_Adults_2023.pdfhttps://www.coloradocoalition.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/COAffordableHousingCrisis_StrategicInvestmentReport_CCH_2023.pdf

[11] Colorado Department of Education: 2024-25 Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility by LEA: https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/pupilcurrent

[12] We used the Matrix Design Group, Inc. AMI tier breakdown, which is based on the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates. We also compared these figures to the AMI breakdown from the ACS 1-Year Estimates and found the results to be similar.

[13] https://inclusionaryhousing.org/designing-a-policy/onsite-development/income-targeting/; https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/gap/Gap-Report_2022.pdf?

[14] https://epc-assets.elpasoco.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/Housing-Our-Future_Housing-Needs-Chart_2024-1.pdf

many households in each income tier face financial strain due to housing costs. All calculations were at the (El Paso County) level because that is the geography in which this data was available (for 2023).

To convert these housing strain indicators into (homelessness) risk projections, we used estimated probabilities of homelessness based on a large study that included 381 communities.[15] This study found that the expected homelessness rate quickly increases once median rental costs exceed 30% of median income. The study, conducted by experts at Boston University and the University of Pennsylvania (under the auspices of Zillow Research), provided a statistical link between homelessness and the U.S. government's definition of a housing cost burden. Specifically, homelessness increases by approximately 0.25% across a population for "cost-burdened households" and approximately 0.50% for "severely cost-burdened households." Since there is data available for the number of households in this study region that fall into these categories, it was possible to estimate the probable increase in homelessness due to high housing costs as they relate to total household income.

To account for research indicating that low-income homeowners are half as likely as low-income renters to experience homelessness[16], we reduced the homeowner probabilities of homelessness by half (0.125% for "cost burdened" households and 0.25% for "severely cost burdened" households, respectively). Finally, as established above, PIT counts are severely undercounted, and therefore, the probabilities of homelessness (which are based on PIT counts) are also likely undercounted. To account for this, we applied a local SNAP to PIT ratio of 7.37 to 1 from El Paso County, ensuring our estimates better reflect the full scope of risk. Together, these methods offer a grounded, conservative estimate of those currently at high risk of becoming homeless in the region due to housing cost burdens.

1,551 households (3,925 individuals) currently have a high probability of becoming homeless in El Paso County due to housing cost burden.

After all calculations described above, this methodology resulted in 1,551 additional households—or 3,925 individuals—who have a high probability of becoming homeless in El Paso County due to housing cost burden. A summary table is provided below.

[15] https://projecteuclid.org/journals/annals-of-applied-statistics/volume-15/issue-2/Inflection-points-in-community-level-homeless-rates/10.1214/20-AOAS1414.full and https://www.weforum.org/stories/2019/01/here-s-a-way-of-predicting-when-homelessness-is-likely-to-rise/

[16] https://nlihc.org/resource/pandemic-widens-housing-security-disparities
https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/renters-are-more-likely-homeowners-struggle-paying-basic-needs

Table 2: Applied Risk of Homelessness in El Paso County Based on AMI Tiers									
Income Tier % AMI (Extremely Low-Income	Type of HH	# HH	# of HHS that are "cost-burdened"	# of HHs that are "severely cost-burdened"	TOTAL # of HHs that are "cost-burdened" and "severely cost-burdened"	Applied Risk of Becoming Homeless (Households)	Applied Risk of Becoming Homeless (Individ)	Total HHs (with SNAP to PIT ratio)	Total Individ (with SNAP to PIT ratio)
0-30%	Owner	17,789	2,882	13,128	16,010	36	92	**268**	**679**
0-30%	Renter	22,558	3,654	16,648	20,302	92	234	**681**	**1,722**
Income Tier % AMI (Very Low-Income	Type of HH	# HH	# of HHs that are "cost-burdened"	# of HHs that are "severely cost-burdened"	TOTAL # of HHs that are "cost-burdened" and "severely cost-burdened"	Applied Risk of Becoming Homeless (Households)	Applied Risk of Becoming Homeless (Individ)	Total HHs (with SNAP to PIT ratio)	Total Individ (with SNAP to PIT ratio)
31-50%	Owner	18,877	7,173	7,173	14,346	27	68	**198**	**502**
31-50%	Renter	19,230	7,307	7,307	14,615	55	139	**404**	**1022**
				TOTAL	**65,274**	**211**	**533**	**1,551**	**3,925**

This estimate is informative because it helps explain the sharp rise in homelessness observed in El Paso County, the state, and nation in recent years[17]—trends that are increasingly visible in unsheltered populations and encampments. Indeed, the prevalence of homelessness now defines many (high-cost-of-housing) U.S. cities such as San Francisco, Seattle, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Denver, Dallas, Miami, and others.[18] This analysis also helps explain the increasing pressure on shelters, hospitals, schools, and emergency services. And as those pressures mount, there is an implicit and sizable opportunity cost. When limited resources are channeled to (barely) meet the increasing and acute needs of the homeless population, dollars are foregone that could be used to invest in long-term solutions both for the homeless population and society at large.

When limited resources are channeled to (barely) meet the increasing and acute needs of the homeless population, dollars are foregone that could be used to invest in long-term solutions both for the homeless populations and society at large.

Key Recommendations for Addressing Homelessness

El Paso County and the City of Colorado Springs have taken active steps to address homelessness through a range of housing and support initiatives. The El Paso County Housing Trust Fund finances affordable housing development and rehabilitation, with an emphasis on solutions tailored to local needs, including down payment assistance and home repair programs for low-income residents.[19] Meanwhile, Colorado Springs' 2025 Homelessness Response Action Plan identifies key strategies such as expanding shelter access, launching employment initiatives like WorkCOS to provide jobs to unhoused individuals, and investing in permanent

[17] https://gazette.com/news/homelessness/new-study-suggests-numbers-of-homeless-in-colorado-springs-and-statewide-much-larger-than-thought/article_cc78c59d-e981-4640-b8d0-718044423a86.html
[18] https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/slideshows/cities-with-the-largest-homeless-populations-in-the-u-s?onepage
[19] https://admin.elpasoco.com/economic-development/housing-programs/housing-resources/

supportive housing and wraparound services.[20] A number of recent efforts in Colorado Springs aim to both increase the availability of affordable housing and provide targeted support for individuals and families as they transition from homelessness to long-term stability. For example, Catholic Charities[21] is converting the former Helen Hunt Elementary School into 24 transitional housing units specifically for families at risk of homelessness, helping them move out of crisis, toward stability, and with access to a variety of wraparound services. The Commons[22], operated by Homeward Pikes Peak, is moving forward with Phase 2 to provide 42 units of housing to individuals, families, and veterans. The project also provides on-site case management, health care, and recovery services—critical for individuals with complex needs who are exiting homelessness. Bentley Commons[23]—a partnership between Greccio Housing, Partners in Housing, and Rocky Mountain Community Land Trust—is expanding to include nearly 200 affordable units across income tiers as low as 30% AMI, supporting both those in transitional stages and those ready for long-term housing. TESSA is also growing its Rapid Rehousing program[24], which provides short-term rental assistance and support services to survivors of domestic violence, helping them secure and maintain stable, permanent housing. Together, these projects illustrate a coordinated effort to meet people where they are in the housing continuum and support upward mobility into safe, affordable, and permanent homes.

While Housing First remains a topic of debate in some policy and community circles, a growing body of national research highlights its effectiveness in improving housing outcomes for individuals experiencing homelessness. Housing First programs[25] prioritize rapid placement into permanent housing without preconditions, such as sobriety or participation in treatment, and offer voluntary supportive services tailored to individual needs. A systematic review of 26 studies[26] found that Housing First approaches reduced homelessness by 88% and increased housing stability by 41% compared to traditional "Treatment First" models that require participants to meet certain behavioral or health benchmarks before receiving housing. This meta-analysis, which examined interventions across multiple cities, also found that voluntary case management paired with housing leads to significant reductions in the use of emergency services, shelters, and hospitals—translating into long-term public cost savings. While concerns persist about accountability, neighborhood impact, and service engagement, these findings suggest that Housing First can be a highly effective tool, especially for individuals with complex needs. As such Housing First warrants continued evaluation alongside other strategies within a broader affordable and attainable housing continuum.

Despite these proven outcomes, future funding remains uncertain posing a significant threat to local and national progress on homelessness prevention. In 2024, El Paso County invested about $1.4 million through targeted programs such as the Community Services Block Grant, Community Investment Fund, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Children, Youth & Family Services[27]. These funds support key local partners—including the ones highlighted above—in delivering rent assistance, transitional housing, and recovery and employment programs. However, anticipated depletion of federal Emergency Housing Voucher funds by 2026[28] and ongoing federal budget shortfalls already forced the Colorado Springs Housing Authority to pause new enrollments in the

[20] https://coloradosprings.gov/housing-help-and-resources
[21] https://www.ccharitiescc.org/hunt-family-housing-capital-campaign/
[22] https://homewardpp.org/what-we-do/housing/the-commons/
[23] https://www.greccio.org/bentley-commons
[24] https://www.tessacs.org/housing-first/
[25] https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/Housing-First-Evidence.pdf
[26] https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8513528/
[27] El Paso County, Department of Human Services, 2024 Responsible Homelessness Prevention
[28] https://apnews.com/article/trump-congress-housing-voucher-assistance-funding-cuts-26f9a716af6731e3c6445015488bab3a

Housing Choice Voucher program[29]. Sustaining and scaling effective interventions will require consistent, bipartisan investment to avoid increased system strain and rising long-term societal costs.

Taken together, these findings illustrate that homelessness is not only a humanitarian crisis; it is an economic one tied to the rapid rise in housing costs. Addressing it effectively will require a multifaceted approach that includes expanding affordable housing supply, bolstering rental assistance and retention efforts, and investing in programs that support youth and families before they fall into homelessness. These actions are not only socially responsible but also fiscally prudent, as preventing and resolving homelessness can significantly reduce public costs in healthcare, criminal justice, and social services while strengthening local economic resilience.

In terms of tactics to increase affordable housing, communities that are ahead, a) think "outside the box" with new forms of construction such as 3-D printed homes provided by the Colorado startup, VeroTouch[30], and scalable modular homes, and b) often pursue an all-of-the-above approach with re-zoning; new, creative, and various construction methodologies; public-private partnerships with builders and key employers; tax incentives; and program's such as the Pikes Peak Down Payment Assistance (PPDPA) Program provided by El Paso County. Indeed, such programs can make a difference in the prevention of homelessness.

Conclusion

This analysis confirms that high housing costs are indeed a precursor to homelessness. Although limited by the inherent challenges of measuring homelessness, this study can serve as a predictive model of additional homelessness within a region due to high housing costs. No doubt, homelessness is a highly complex issue with many determinants beyond the scope of this study. However, the analyses provide a conservative but still sobering estimate that at least 4,000 additional people in El Paso County (including the City of Colorado Springs and the unincorporated parts of the county) may well become homeless due to rapidly escalating housing costs. While social service organizations, including nonprofits, can try and prepare for increased regional homelessness, it would be more humane and financially prudent to prevent homelessness through preemptive affordable housing solutions. As aforementioned, it is more cost effective to address the underlying causes of homelessness with proactive solutions than it is to try and mitigate homelessness once it has occurred.

This portion of the Colorado Springs Housing Needs Assessment was conducted by Data-Driven Economic Strategies (Tatiana Bailey, Ph.D., and Kathryn Zenoni, M.S.Ed.). DDES is extremely thankful to all the individuals and organizations that contributed information and general feedback for this portion of the (HNA) report.

[29] https://www.koaa.com/news/covering-colorado/colorado-springs-housing-authority-pauses-section-8-hcv-assistance

[30] https://verotouch.com/

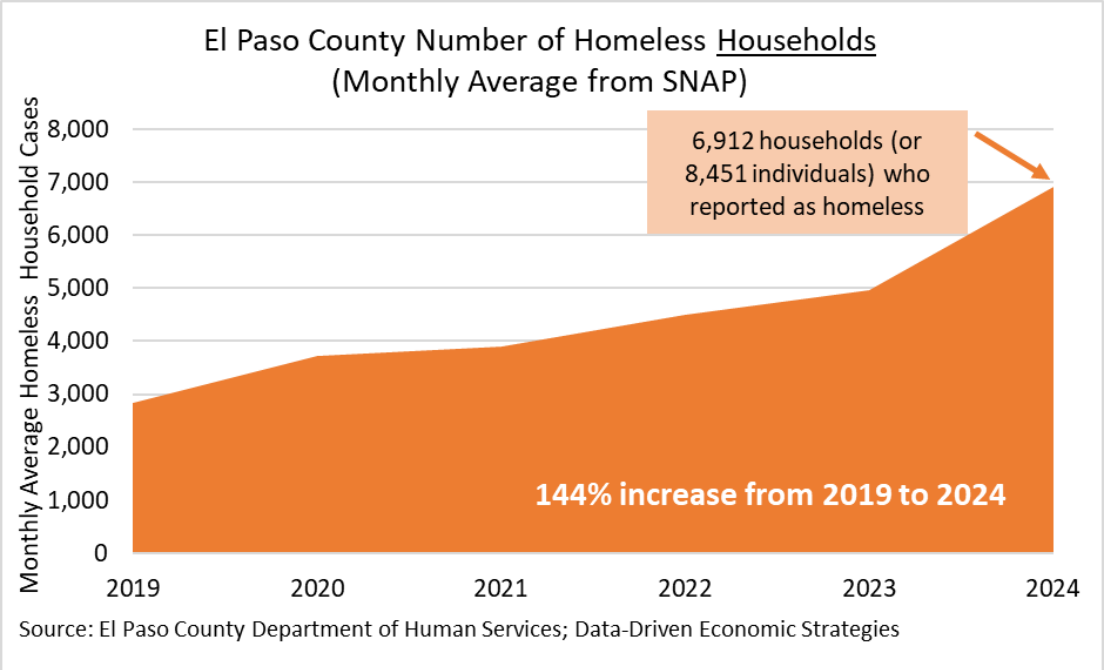
APPENDICES

Appendix A

Table 3: Different Sources for Homelessness Counts in El Paso County

Source	Time Frame	Metric	Number	Methodology
Point-In-Time	One night in January 2024	Total Number of Homeless Individuals	1,146	Annual, one-night census of sheltered and unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness, conducted by local Continuums of Care using shelter data, outreach teams, and volunteers.
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) State of Homelessness	10/01/23-09/30/24	Total Number of Homeless Individuals	6,846	Uses a broader data set from HMIS, including individuals who engage with Coordinated Entry, Street Outreach, Supportive Services, and Homelessness Prevention programs in addition to shelter and housing programs. This more inclusive approach captures a wider spectrum of people experiencing homelessness or at-risk, including those who may not receive housing services but engage with providers for meals, case management, or referrals.
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Longitudinal Systems Analysis	10/01/23-09/30/24	Total Number of Homeless Individuals	5,178	Aggregates data from homeless service providers throughout the year to track the number, characteristics, and service usage of individuals who access federally prioritized housing interventions. It includes only clients who enroll in Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, or Permanent Housing programs (the interventions most directly funded and tracked by the federal government). Data is self-reported by clients and confirmed by service providers. Individuals who interact with other types of services—such as street outreach or supportive services—are excluded from the LSA dataset.
McKinney-Vento	2023-2024 School Year: Student October Count and Student End of Year Collection	Total Number of Homeless Students	1,614	Identifies homeless students through school district liaisons who collect data on children and youth lacking fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including those who are doubled up, in motels, shelters, or unsheltered setting.
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program	2024 Monthly-Average Cases	Total Number of Homeless Individuals	8,451	Uses self-reported data (not a required field) from individuals and families who indicate they are experiencing homelessness when applying for or recertifying Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.

Appendix B

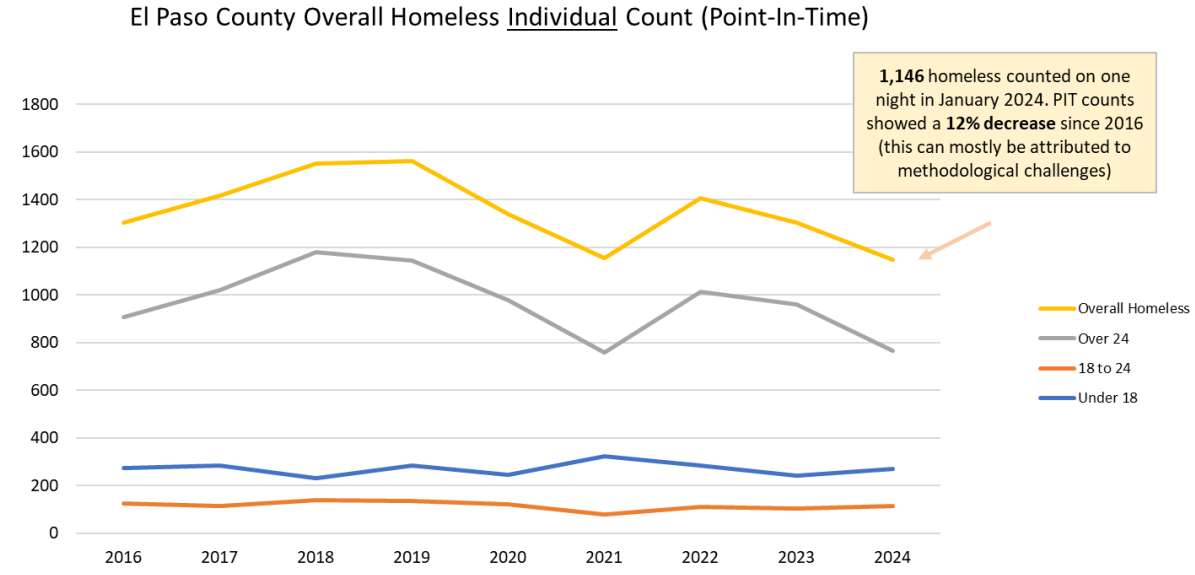

El Paso County Number of Homeless Households
(Monthly Average from SNAP)
Monthly Average Homeless Household Cases
8,000
7,000
6,000
5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000
0
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
6,912 households (or 8,451 individuals) who reported as homeless
144% increase from 2019 to 2024
Source: El Paso County Department of Human Services; Data-Driven Economic Strategies

Appendix C

Table 4: El Paso County: McKinney-Vento Data (2023-2024 School Year)			
District Name	PK-12 Total	PK-12 Total Homeless Count	Percentage Homeless
Hanover 28	271	27	10.0%
Fountain 8	7,885	305	3.9%
Colorado Springs 11	22,744	592	2.6%
Education reEnvisioned BOCES	7,114	178	2.5%
Harrison 2	12,386	90	0.7%
Cheyenne Mountain 12	3,739	27	0.7%
District 49	25,799	185	0.7%
Academy 20	26,607	180	0.7%
Widefield 3	9,377	30	0.3%
Big Sandy 100J	328	*	
Calhan RJ-1	436	*	
Manitou Springs 14	1,238	*	
Ellicott 22	990	*	
Peyton 23 Jt	605	*	
Lewis-Palmer 38	6,545	*	
Edison 54 JT	74	*	
Miami/Yoder 60 JT	406	*	
Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind	160	*	
Total	**126,704**	**1,614**	**2.5%**

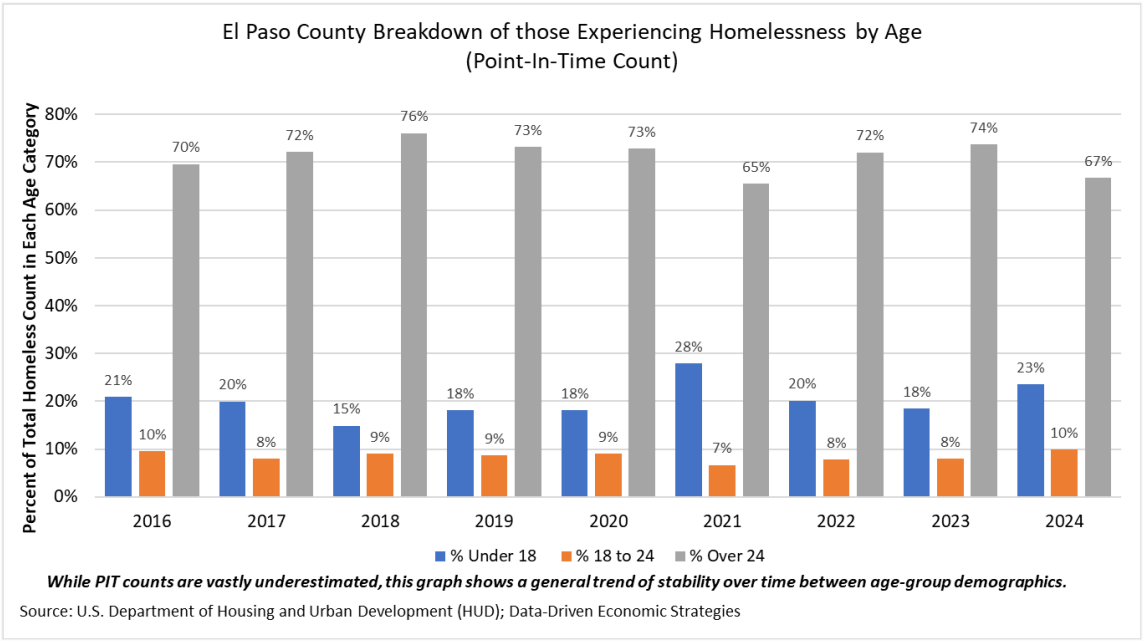
*Cells with astricts indicated a suppressed count to protect student privacy.

Appendix D



Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); Data-Driven Economic Strategies

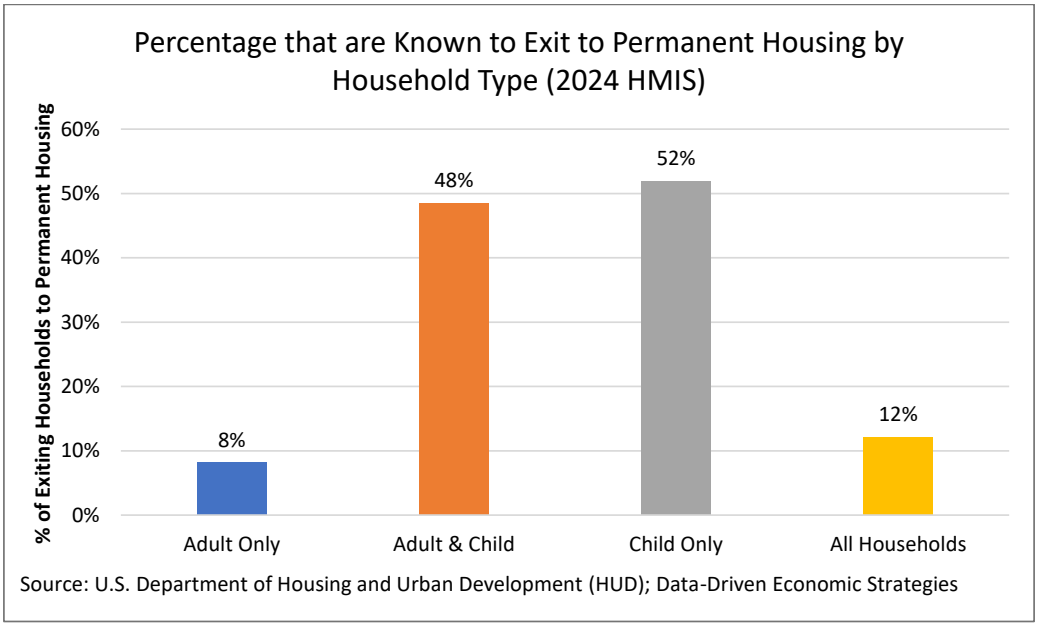
Appendix E



While PIT counts are vastly underestimated, this graph shows a general trend of stability over time between age-group demographics.

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); Data-Driven Economic Strategies

Appendix F



Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); Data-Driven Economic Strategies

Data-Driven Economic Strategies

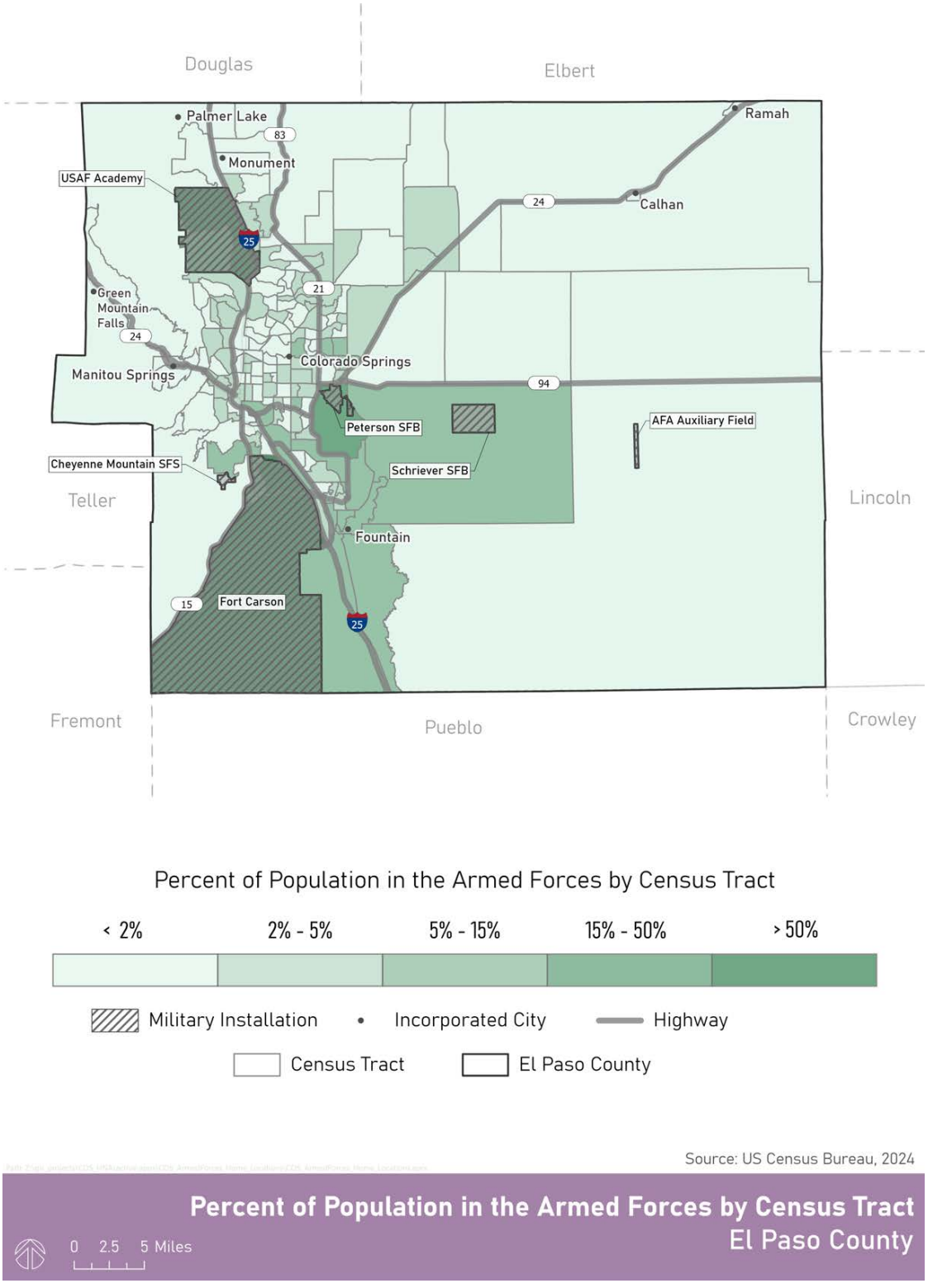
Appendix B – Military Housing Analysis

The housing patterns of military and defense-affiliated households provide critical insight into how El Paso County's economy and housing market interact with the region's largest employment sector. While both active-duty personnel and DoD civilians generally enjoy relatively high household incomes and strong overall housing stability, they are not without challenges. Many benefit from access to single-family housing, attainable homeownership, and military allowances that offset housing costs; yet, others—particularly larger families or those seeking proximity to installations—face limited affordable options close to their workplaces. These pressures contribute to longer commute times for some households and highlight spatial mismatches between where military personnel and civilian employees work and where suitable housing exists. Drive-time analyses further illustrate housing availability and affordability near major installations, identifying where supply constraints most affect military readiness and workforce accessibility. The findings suggest that while military-affiliated households are generally well positioned in the market, continued attention to housing affordability, proximity, and unit diversity remains essential to sustaining the region's defense workforce and operational effectiveness.

The geographic distribution of El Paso County's military labor force is shown in Figure 82. Data are presented for the county's census tracts, each of which typically contains several thousand residents. As expected, the highest concentrations occur in the southern part of the county near Fort Carson and in the north near the U.S. Air Force Academy. In some cases, more than half of the labor force is employed in the Armed Forces, highlighting defense's critical role in the local economy.

According to the latest ACS, an ***estimated 34,817 members of the Armed Forces lived in El Paso County***—about 82% of Colorado's total. This estimate includes individuals living in both housing units and group quarters and excludes Reservists and National Guard members who did not report the Armed Forces as their primary employment. Countywide, 6% of the labor force was employed in the Armed Forces, including 13,192 residing within Colorado Springs city limits. While military personnel are concentrated near major installations, they are present to varying degrees throughout the county, illustrating the deep integration of defense employment into the regional economy and housing market.

Figure 82. Distribution of Active-Duty Population by Census Tract, 2023

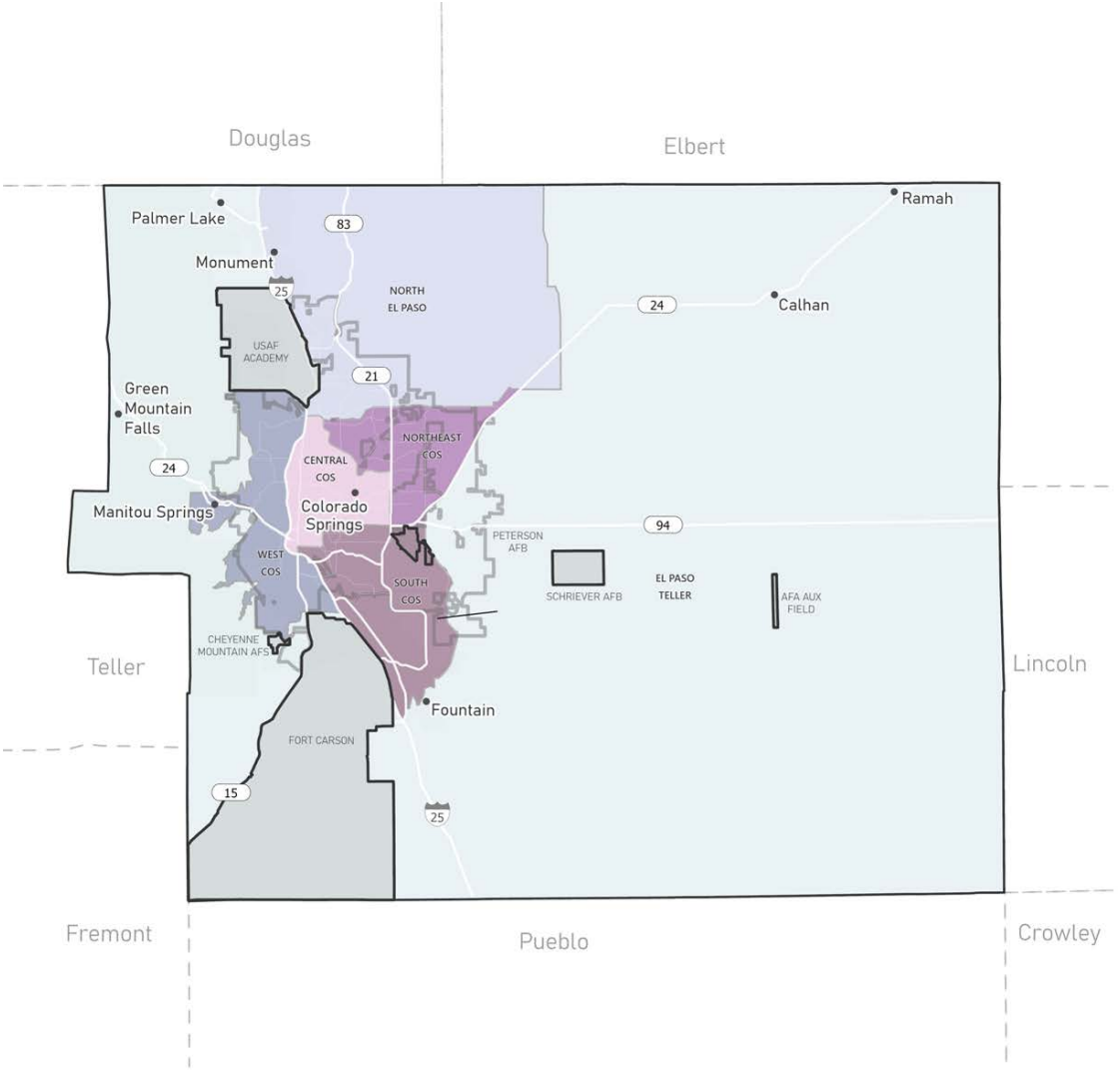


To better understand the demographic and housing characteristics of military households, this analysis relies on data from the Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) of the ACS. PUMS data provide individual and household-level responses, enabling ***custom tabulations not available in standard ACS summary tables.*** Matrix applied person-level and household-level weights, depending on the unit of analysis, to ensure results are representative of the broader population. Because PUMS data are released with confidentiality protections, geographic identifiers are limited to Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs), which are contiguous statistical areas containing at least 100,000 residents. Notably, PUMAs ***do not align perfectly with county or municipal boundaries.***

As shown in Figure 83, this study analyzes six PUMAs that collectively encompass El Paso County. Five of these—South Colorado Springs, West Colorado Springs, Central Colorado Springs, Northeast Colorado Springs, and North El Paso—fall entirely within county boundaries. The sixth, El Paso–Teller, spans both counties; because approximately 76% of its population resides in El Paso County, estimates from this area were proportionally adjusted to reflect that share. Only one PUMA (Central Colorado Springs) lies completely within the boundaries of the City of Colorado Springs. The six PUMAs were aggregated to form a region referred to as the ***Greater Colorado Springs Area.***

This analysis focuses on individuals and households living in non–group quarters housing, which includes both privatized on-base housing and off-base housing occupied by military personnel and their families. Despite its geographic limitations, the PUMS remains the most detailed publicly available source for examining population, labor force, and housing patterns among active-duty and military-affiliated households—a critical lens in a region where the military exerts a defining influence on both the housing market and the broader local economy.

Figure 83. Public Use Microdata Area Boundaries



Active-duty households throughout the region show a ***clear preference*** for single-family housing. Of the 20,397 active-duty households in 2023, ***71% occupied either single-family detached or attached units, such as townhomes*** (see Table 42). South Colorado Springs contained the largest number of active-duty households (5,653 in total), with 74% living in single-family homes. By comparison, 13% of active-duty households lived in small multifamily structures with two to nine units—housing types often associated with the "missing middle"—while 15% resided in larger multifamily buildings with ten or more units, such as apartment complexes. Overall, the data indicate a strong preference for lower-density housing, consistent with the family orientation and household composition typical of the region's military population.

Table 42. Physical Characteristics of Housing Units Occupied by Active-Duty Households, 2023

Unit Type	Greater COS		EP-Teller		N El Paso		NE COS		C COS		W COS		S COS	
Single-family, detached	11,245	55%	1,880	48%	2,070	74%	2,149	60%	1,186	69%	811	29%	3,149	56%
Single-family, attached	3,300	16%	1,611	41%	97	3%	103	3%	143	8%	346	13%	1,000	18%
Multifamily 2–9 units	2,727	13%	346	9%	232	8%	498	14%	338	20%	856	31%	457	8%
Multifamily 10+ units	3,018	15%	16	0%	411	15%	828	23%	41	2%	745	27%	977	17%
Mobile home	97	0%	27	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	70	1%
Boat/RV/van	10	0%	10	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	20,397	100%	3,890	100%	2,810	100%	3,578	100%	1,708	100%	2,758	100%	5,653	100%

Source: Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely because of rounding. Households with at least one member serving in the Armed Forces were included in the analysis.

DoD civilian households exhibit an even stronger preference for single-family housing than their active-duty counterparts. Across the Greater Colorado Springs Area, ***86% of the 7,020 households with a DoD civilian resided in single-family detached homes,*** while an additional 4% lived in single-family attached units such as townhomes. The remaining 10% lived almost exclusively in multifamily housing. DoD civilian households were most concentrated in North El Paso (2,100 households), where the balance of single-family and multifamily housing closely resembled regional figures. The higher prevalence of single-family housing among DoD civilians is not unexpected, as these households tend to relocate less frequently and are less reliant on rental housing than active-duty households.

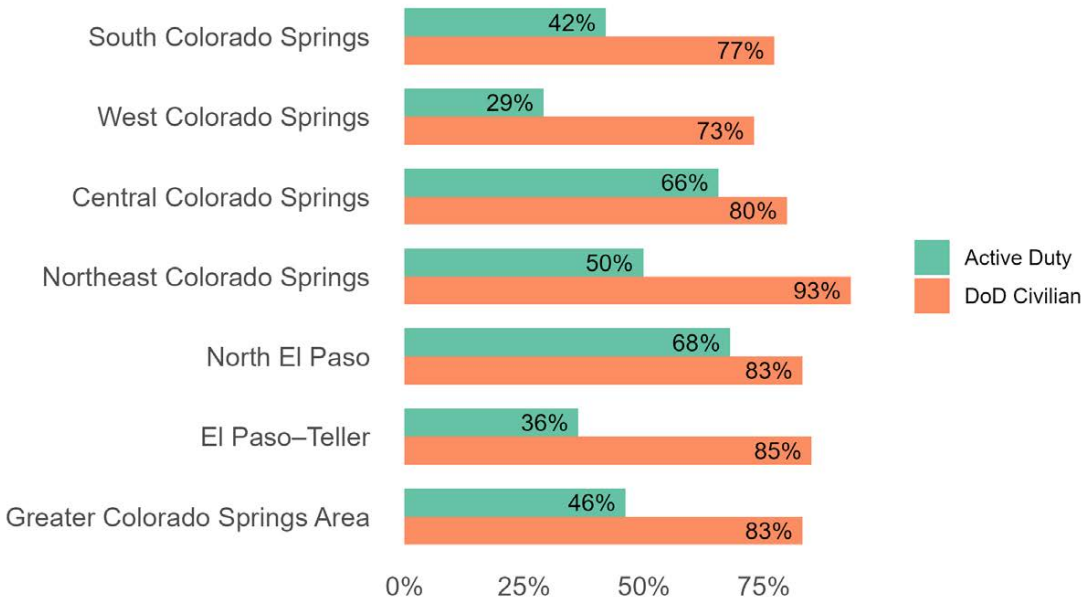
Table 43. Physical Characteristics of Housing Units Occupied by DoD Civilian Households, 2023

Unit Type	Greater COS		EP-Teller		N El Paso		NE COS		C COS		W COS		S COS	
Single-family, detached	6,055	86%	469	85%	1,879	89%	1,618	97%	416	68%	548	69%	1,125	86%
Single-family, attached	310	4%	35	6%	48	2%	44	3%	57	9%	93	12%	33	3%
Multifamily 2–9 units	204	3%	23	4%	50	2%	0	0%	60	10%	32	4%	39	3%
Multifamily 10+ units	432	6%	14	2%	113	5%	0	0%	76	12%	116	15%	113	9%
Mobile home	18	0%	8	2%	10	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Boat/RV/van	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	7,020	100%	550	100%	2,100	100%	1,662	100%	609	100%	789	100%	1,310	100%

Source: Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Totals may not sum precisely because of rounding. Households with at least one member employed as DoD civilian were included in the analysis.

Homeownership patterns among active-duty and DoD civilian households differ markedly across the Greater Colorado Springs Area, reinforcing earlier findings about housing choice. As Figure 84 shows, the homeownership rate among ***active-duty households averaged 46%, compared with 76% among DoD civilian households.*** Ownership among active-duty households ranged from 29% in West Colorado Springs to 68% in North El Paso, with Central Colorado Springs also exhibiting a relatively high rate (66%). These differences highlight the transient nature of active-duty assignments, which limit opportunities for long-term tenure and asset accumulation. In contrast, higher ownership rates among DoD civilians, who tend to remain in the region longer and experience more stable employment, support stronger prospects for wealth building and housing market stability. The contrast suggests that while active-duty households contribute significantly to housing demand, DoD civilians are far more likely to establish lasting roots and accumulate equity over time.

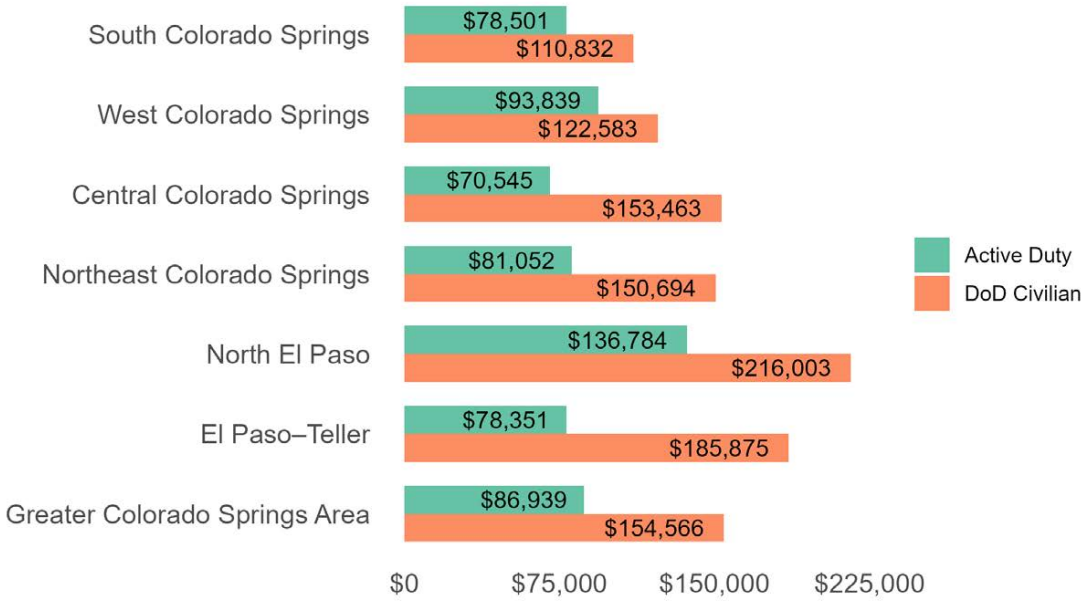
Figure 84. Homeownership Rate for Active-Duty and DoD Civilian Households, 2023



Source: Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample; Matrix Design Group, Inc.

As Figure 85 shows, household incomes vary considerably between active-duty and DoD civilian households across the Greater Colorado Springs Area, though these figures are not directly comparable due to differences in how income is reported. Based on 2023 PUMS data, median income was approximately ***$86,949 for active-duty households and $154,566 for DoD civilian households.*** Incomes were highest in North El Paso, where they typically exceeded $136,000 for active-duty households and $216,000 for DoD civilians. In Central and South Colorado Springs, incomes were generally more modest. Because the ACS excludes noncash military benefits—most notably the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) and Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS)—reported active-duty incomes understate total compensation. These allowances can add tens of thousands of dollars annually to household resources; for example, BAH typically covers about 95% of housing costs, with the remainder paid out of pocket. When these benefits are considered, the economic position of active-duty households is substantially stronger than ACS-reported income suggests, though still limited by frequent relocation and a reduced ability to accumulate housing equity relative to DoD civilian households.

Figure 85. Median Household Income for Active-Duty and DoD Civilian Households, 2023



Source: Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Household income reported in the ACS and PUMS excludes noncash military benefits, such as the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) and Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS). As a result, income figures for active-duty households may understate total economic resources relative to those received through military compensation.

The income distribution among active-duty households presented in Table 44 reveals wide variation in reported earnings. Importantly, the figures include income from all household members such as working spouses. In 2023, ***approximately 42%*** of active-duty households reported annual incomes of $100,000 or more, including 7% earning $200,000 or more. The share of higher-income households ranged from 35% in El Paso–Teller to 70% in North El Paso, where senior personnel and dual-income households are more common. At the lower end of the spectrum, a small number of households reported incomes below $25,000. Because the ACS measures actual cash income received during the past 12 months, such low figures may represent partial-year earnings, rather than full-year compensation. Moreover, as mentioned previously, ACS income excludes noncash military benefits such as BAH and BAS. Even with these benefits excluded, the income distribution suggests that active-duty households are relatively well positioned to afford local housing costs, and their true purchasing power is likely higher than reported ACS figures indicate.

Table 44. Household Income Distribution for Active-Duty Households, 2023

Income Level	Greater COS		EP-Teller		N El Paso		NE COS		C COS		W COS		S COS	
< $25k	853	4%	104	3%	9	0%	199	6%	24	1%	221	8%	296	5%
$25–49k	2,981	15%	797	20%	197	7%	431	12%	299	18%	388	14%	869	15%
$50–74k	4,656	23%	976	25%	241	9%	939	26%	571	33%	411	15%	1,518	27%
$75–99k	3,348	16%	645	17%	383	14%	555	16%	80	5%	521	19%	1,164	21%
$100–149k	4,888	24%	990	25%	865	31%	871	24%	395	23%	669	24%	1,098	19%
$150–199k	2,148	11%	201	5%	653	23%	254	7%	320	19%	254	9%	466	8%
$200k+	1,524	7%	178	5%	462	16%	329	9%	19	1%	294	11%	242	4%
Total	20,397	100%	3,890	100%	2,810	100%	3,578	100%	1,708	100%	2,758	100%	5,653	100%

Source: Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Household income reported in the ACS and PUMS excludes noncash military benefits, such as the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) and Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS). As a result, income figures for active-duty households may understate total economic resources relative to those received through military compensation.

The relatively high income levels among DoD civilian households, as presented in Table 45, are indicative of more stable employment and longer residence in the region. Across the Greater Colorado Springs Area, ***approximately 80% of DoD civilian households earned $100,000 or more in 2023,*** indicating strong overall earning power within this segment of the defense workforce. The share of households that reached this income threshold was somewhat lower in South Colorado Springs (58%) and West Colorado Springs (62%), where the housing stock and occupational mix tend to be more varied. In contrast, households earning $100,000 or more were nearly universal in El Paso–Teller and North El Paso, suggesting that higher-ranking civilian personnel and dual-income households are predominant in these areas. Collectively, these patterns point to a DoD civilian population that is financially well positioned to compete in the local housing market, contributing to stronger ownership rates and long-term residential stability

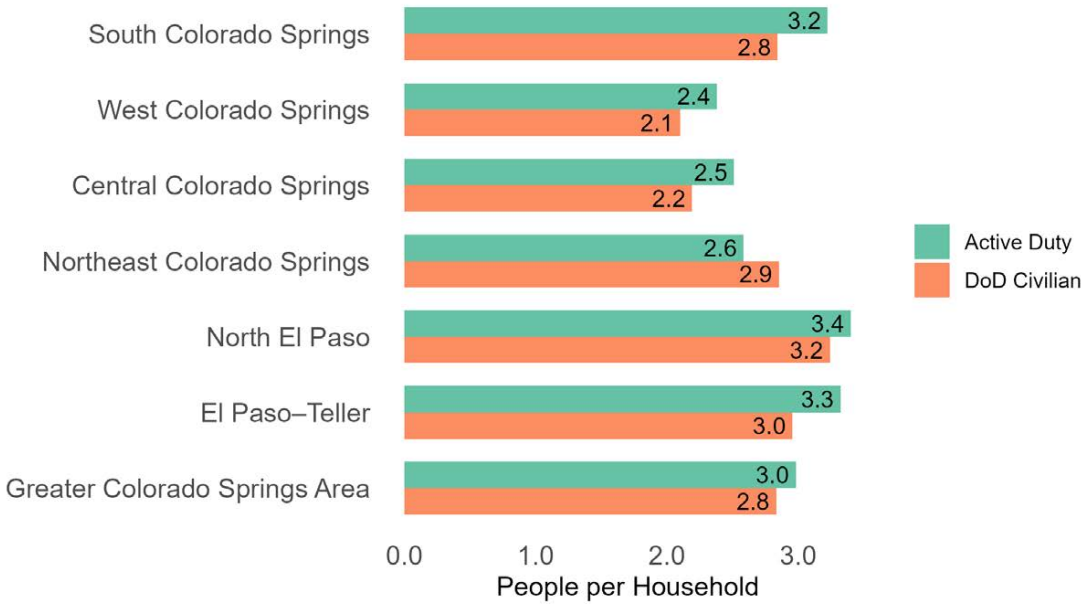
Table 45. Household Income Distribution for DoD Civilian Households, 2023

Income Level	Greater COS		EP-Teller		N El Paso		NE COS		C COS		W COS		S COS	
< $25k	164	2%	0	0%	12	1%	0	0%	18	3%	9	1%	125	10%
$25–49k	366	5%	14	2%	0	0%	69	4%	100	16%	66	8%	117	9%
$50–74k	448	6%	7	1%	101	5%	30	2%	0	0%	78	10%	232	18%
$75–99k	441	6%	34	6%	11	1%	171	10%	0	0%	145	18%	80	6%
$100–149k	1,886	27%	113	21%	401	19%	533	32%	180	30%	213	27%	446	34%
$150–199k	1,318	19%	152	28%	400	19%	393	24%	141	23%	61	8%	171	13%
$200k+	2,397	34%	230	42%	1,175	56%	466	28%	170	28%	217	28%	139	11%
Total	7,020	100%	550	100%	2,100	100%	1,662	100%	609	100%	789	100%	1,310	100%

Source: Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample; Matrix Design Group, Inc.

Average household size is similar among active-duty and DoD civilian households across El Paso County, suggesting comparable family structures and housing needs (see Figure 86). Countywide, the average active-duty household included ***3.0 people, slightly higher than 2.8-person average among DoD civilian households.*** Household sizes were generally smaller in West and Central Colorado Springs, averaging 2.4 and 2.5 people for active-duty households and 2.1 and 2.2 for DoD civilians, respectively. This pattern is influenced by the prevalence of smaller rental units near installations that house single service members or couples without children. In contrast, households in North El Paso were typically larger, with both groups averaging more than three persons per household, consistent with higher incomes and a greater share of family-oriented, owner-occupied housing. These findings reveal that both active-duty and DoD civilian households primarily require family-sized housing units, emphasizing the importance of maintaining an adequate supply of larger homes to meet military-related housing demand.

Figure 86. Average Household Size for Active-Duty and DoD Civilian Households, 2023



Source: Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample; Matrix Design Group, Inc.

Household size among active-duty households in the Greater Colorado Springs Area shows a balanced distribution between smaller and larger family structures (see Table 46Table 47). One-person households accounted for approximately 15% of all active-duty households—roughly equal to the share of those with five or more people (about 3,000 households each). The remaining 70% of households contained two to four members. Larger households were especially common in North El Paso, where those with four or more members represented nearly half of all active-duty households.

Table 46. Household Size Distribution for Active-Duty Households, 2023

People per Household	Greater COS		EP-Teller		N El Paso		NE COS		C COS		W COS		S COS	
One	3,070	15%	210	5%	360	13%	800	22%	264	15%	615	22%	821	15%
Two	6,204	30%	924	24%	562	20%	1,419	40%	648	38%	1,132	41%	1,519	27%
Three	4,106	20%	1,091	28%	503	18%	392	11%	514	30%	492	18%	1,114	20%
Four	4,016	20%	1,030	26%	850	30%	654	18%	222	13%	381	14%	879	16%
Five or more	3,001	15%	635	16%	535	19%	313	9%	60	4%	138	5%	1,320	23%
Total	20,397	100%	3,890	100%	2,810	100%	3,578	100%	1,708	100%	2,758	100%	5,653	100%

Source: Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample; Matrix Design Group, Inc.

Among DoD civilian households, 55% contained one or two people, consistent with the older age profile and longer local tenure of civilian employees (see Table 47). Smaller households are more common near installations, while larger, family-oriented households tend to reside in suburban owner-occupied areas. These findings indicate sustained demand for smaller ownership and moderate-density housing, balanced by ongoing need for family-sized homes.

Table 47. Household Size Distribution for DoD Civilian Households, 2023

People per Household	Greater COS		EP-Teller		N El Paso		NE COS		C COS		W COS		S COS	
One	912	13%	49	9%	59	3%	287	17%	82	13%	222	28%	213	16%
Two	2,970	42%	197	36%	768	37%	601	36%	379	62%	402	51%	623	48%
Three	971	14%	111	20%	462	22%	212	13%	97	16%	44	6%	45	3%
Four	1,190	17%	122	22%	424	20%	270	16%	51	8%	105	13%	218	17%
Five or more	977	14%	71	13%	387	18%	292	18%	0	0%	16	2%	211	16%
Total	7,020	100%	550	100%	2,100	100%	1,662	100%	609	100%	789	100%	1,310	100%

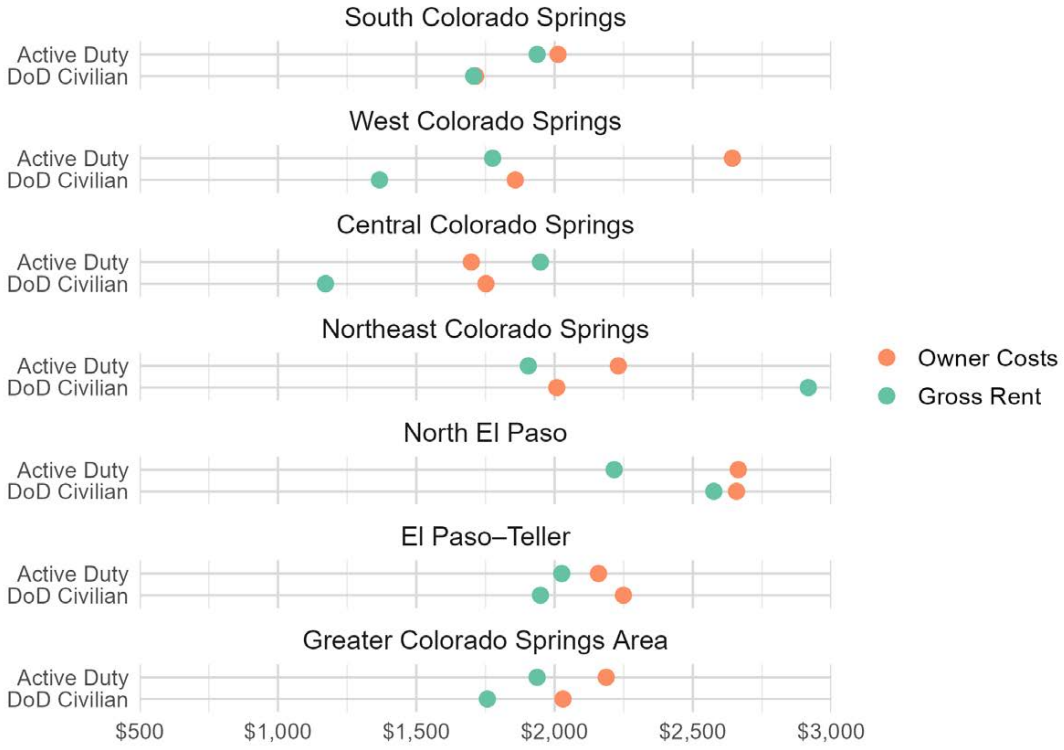
Source: Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample; Matrix Design Group, Inc.

Across the region, rental costs were somewhat higher for active-duty households. Active-duty renters paid a median gross rent ***of $1,937, about $180 more than DoD civilians.*** This difference likely stems from a greater need for larger units to accommodate families and the limited availability of on-base or subsidized housing, which can push active-duty renters into higher-priced segments of the market. Rents were particularly elevated in Northeast Colorado Springs, where DoD civilians paid an average of $2,917, likely due to higher purchasing power and a concentration in newer, higher-end developments. North El Paso was another high-cost area, with median rents of $2,215 for active-duty renters and $2,576 for DoD civilians. The lowest rents were observed in South, West, and Central Colorado Springs, where older housing stock, more multifamily options, and proximity to installations help moderate costs.

Figure 87 presents both median selected monthly owner costs and median gross rent for both active-duty and DoD civilian households. Compared with active-duty households, DoD civilians tend to have lower homeownership costs, owing to ***longer residence in the area*** and ***the opportunity to buy when interest rates and home prices were lower.*** Across the Greater Colorado Springs Area, median monthly costs were ***$2,030 for DoD civilians and $2,187 for active-duty homeowners***. These figures are based on 2019–2023 PUMS data and therefore capture a period when mortgage rates and home prices were relatively low; they also represent all homeowners, not just recent buyers. Ownership costs were highest in North El Paso, exceeding $2,600 for both groups, and lowest in Central Colorado Springs, where median monthly costs were roughly $1,700. In West Colorado Springs, costs diverged sharply: DoD civilians typically paid $1,858 per month, nearly $800 less than active-duty homeowners. This wide gap illustrates how purchase timing and tenure length influence housing affordability.

Across the region, rental costs were somewhat higher for active-duty households. Active-duty renters paid a median gross rent ***of $1,937, about $180 more than DoD civilians.*** This difference likely stems from a greater need for larger units to accommodate families and the limited availability of on-base or subsidized housing, which can push active-duty renters into higher-priced segments of the market. Rents were particularly elevated in Northeast Colorado Springs, where DoD civilians paid an average of $2,917, likely due to higher purchasing power and a concentration in newer, higher-end developments. North El Paso was another high-cost area, with median rents of $2,215 for active-duty renters and $2,576 for DoD civilians. The lowest rents were observed in South, West, and Central Colorado Springs, where older housing stock, more multifamily options, and proximity to installations help moderate costs.

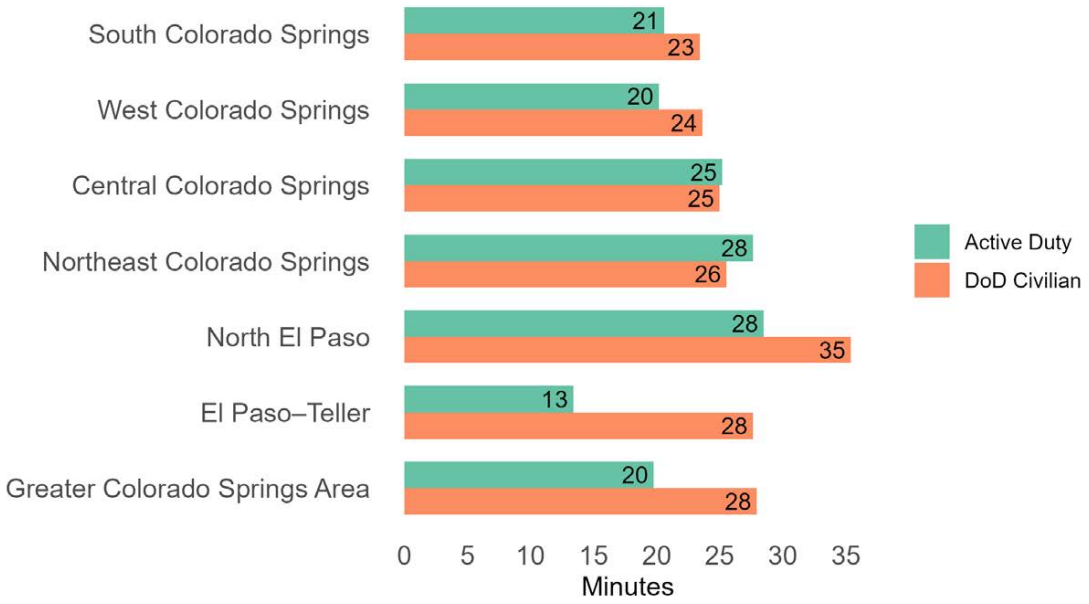
Figure 87. Median Monthly Ownership Costs and Gross Rent for Active-Duty and DoD Civilian Households, 2023



Source: Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Owner costs are the ACS measure of selected monthly owner costs, which include mortgage payments, real estate taxes, property insurance, utilities, and, where applicable, condominium or mobile home fees. Gross rent refers to the total monthly cost paid by renters, combining contract rent (the amount agreed to or paid for the unit) and the estimated average monthly cost of utilities and fuels (such as electricity, gas, water, and sewer) if they are not included in rent.

Average commute times differ notably between active-duty and DoD civilian households across the Greater Colorado Springs Area, highlighting contrasts in workplace location and housing choice. As Figure 88. Average Commute Time for Active-Duty and DoD Civilian Households, 2023 shows, DoD civilians reported an ***average commute of 28 minutes, about eight minutes longer than the 20-minute average for active-duty personnel.*** The shorter commutes among active-duty households are expected, as many live on or near installations such as Fort Carson and the Air Force Academy, where proximity is critical for ***operational readiness and daily reporting requirements.*** Commute times for active-duty personnel ranged from 13 minutes in El Paso–Teller to 28 minutes in Northeast Colorado Springs and North El Paso, while DoD civilian commutes ranged from 23 minutes in South Colorado Springs to 35 minutes in North El Paso. Although these averages are not unusually high by national standards, longer travel times may indicate limited availability of affordable or suitable housing near key employment centers, particularly in the northern part of the county. From a readiness perspective, maintaining accessible, proximate housing options for both active-duty and civilian defense personnel is essential to reduce travel burdens, support retention, and sustain operational efficiency.

Figure 88. Average Commute Time for Active-Duty and DoD Civilian Households, 2023



Source: Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Personnel, rather than households, are the unit of analysis.

Commute time data show that most active-duty personnel live ***relatively close*** to their place of work. Nearly 40% reported reaching work in less than 15 minutes, a figure that excludes those living in barracks but includes individuals in privatized on-base housing (see Table 48). Another 34% reported commutes of 15 to 29 minutes, while just over one-quarter traveled 30 minutes or more. Longer commutes among this group may stem from limited availability or affordability of suitable housing near installations, prompting some households to live farther away in search of more options or better value. The region's sizeable share of longer commutes may indicate that a subset of larger active-duty households is struggling to find affordable, family-sized housing near installations, reinforcing the conclusion that demand for housing close to bases continues to outpace supply and underscoring the need to expand attainable rental and ownership options within a reasonable distance of military employment centers.

Table 48. Commute Time Distribution for Active-Duty Households, 2023

Commute Time	Greater COS		EP-Teller		N El Paso		NE COS		C COS		W COS		S COS	
<15 min	11,795	39%	7,793	68%	226	8%	644	16%	320	18%	624	22%	2,188	31%
15–29 min	10,246	34%	2,707	24%	1,059	37%	1,054	27%	601	33%	1,460	52%	3,365	47%
30–44 min	6,646	22%	628	5%	1,229	43%	2,012	51%	848	47%	626	22%	1,303	18%
45–59 min	965	3%	185	2%	343	12%	186	5%	43	2%	80	3%	128	2%
60+ min	373	1%	151	1%	0	0%	52	1%	0	0%	37	1%	133	2%
Total	30,025	100%	11,464	100%	2,857	100%	3,948	100%	1,812	100%	2,827	100%	7,117	100%

Source: Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Personnel, rather than households, are the unit of analysis.

DoD civilian households generally ***experience longer commute times*** than their active-duty counterparts, due in part to broader residential choices and fewer constraints on proximity to installations. Only 19% of DoD civilians reported commutes of less than 15 minutes, while a majority (52%) traveled between 15 and 29 minutes (see Table 49). About 27% commuted 30 to 44 minutes, and 12% traveled 45 minutes or more, with longer commutes most common among those living in El Paso–Teller and North El Paso. These geographic patterns imply that DoD civilians are more likely to reside in suburban or exurban areas, where homeownership opportunities and larger housing options are more readily available, though often at the cost of longer travel times. The prevalence of extended commutes underscores the importance of balancing housing affordability and accessibility, as increasing distance from employment centers can affect work–life balance, recruitment and retention, and overall transportation efficiency across the defense workforce.

Table 49. Commute Time Distribution for DoD Civilian Households, 2023

Commute Time	Greater COS		EP-Teller		N El Paso		NE COS		C COS		W COS		S COS	
<15 min	670	10%	117	20%	90	4%	135	8%	54	10%	140	18%	134	9%
15–29 min	3,648	52%	227	39%	788	38%	871	54%	327	61%	379	49%	1,056	74%
30–44 min	1,852	27%	113	19%	763	37%	578	36%	59	11%	168	22%	171	12%
45–59 min	495	7%	67	11%	279	14%	13	1%	62	12%	74	10%	0	0%
60+ min	319	5%	58	10%	131	6%	13	1%	35	7%	14	2%	68	5%
Total	6,983	100%	581	100%	2,051	100%	1,610	100%	537	100%	775	100%	1,429	100%

Source: Five-Year Public Use Microdata Sample; Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Note: Personnel, rather than households, are the unit of analysis.

To further understand the relationship between housing availability and military readiness, Matrix conducted a drive-time analysis from the region's five major installations: Fort Carson, Cheyenne Mountain Space Force Station, the U.S. Air Force Academy, Peterson Space Force Base, and Schriever Space Force Base. The analysis identifies the number of available housing units, including those vacant for rent and vacant for sale, located within 15- and 30-minute drive times of each installation (see Figure 89 to Figure 93). Using five-year ACS data at the census tract level provides a robust, geographically detailed view of housing supply patterns while smoothing out short-term fluctuations in vacancy rates and local market conditions. This approach offers an extended snapshot in time, allowing for meaningful comparison across installations and a clearer understanding of how housing accessibility varies within the Greater Colorado Springs Area.

Figure 89. Fort Carson Drive-Time Analysis

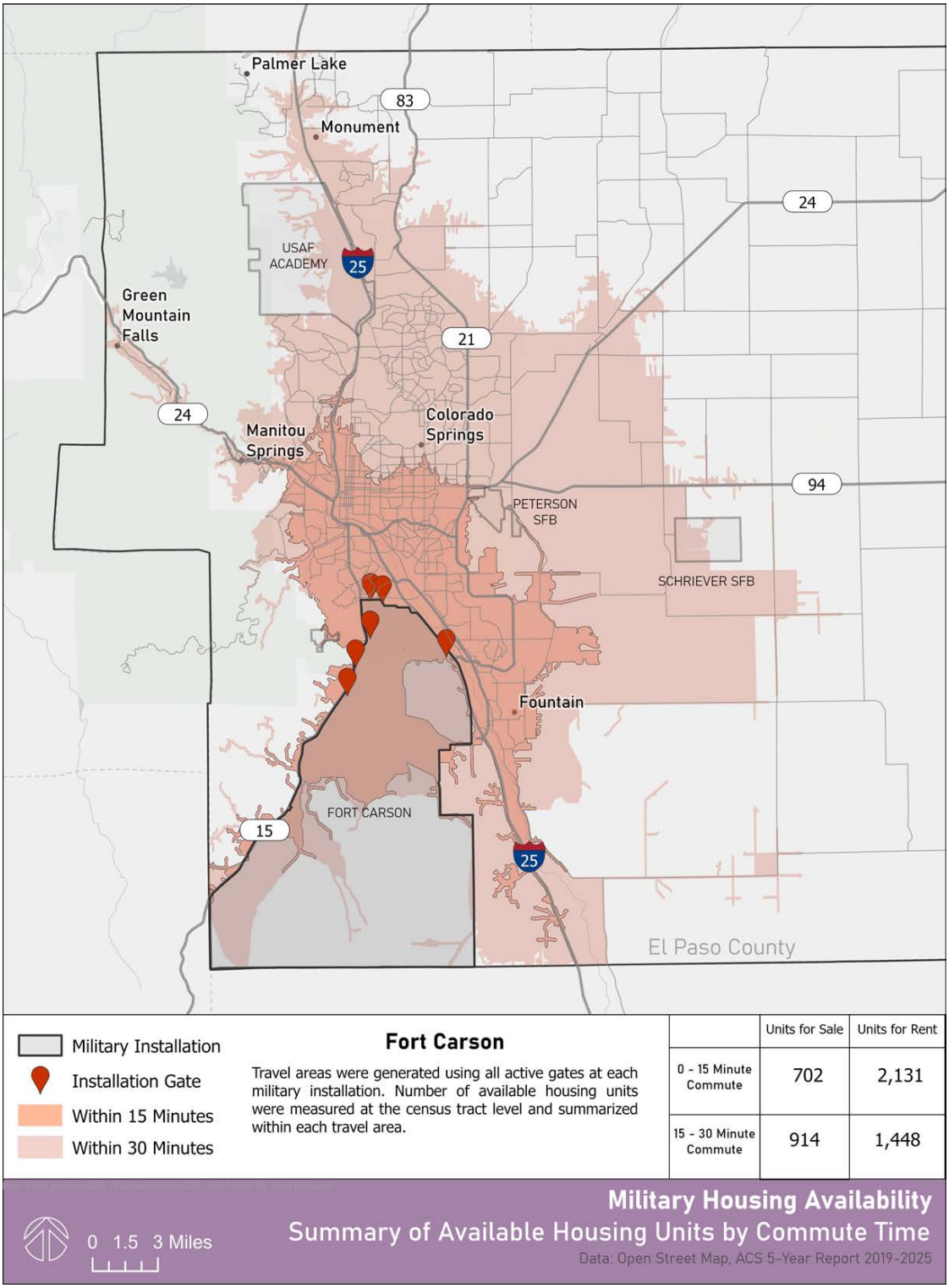


Figure 90. Cheyenne Mountain Space Force Station Drive-Time Analysis

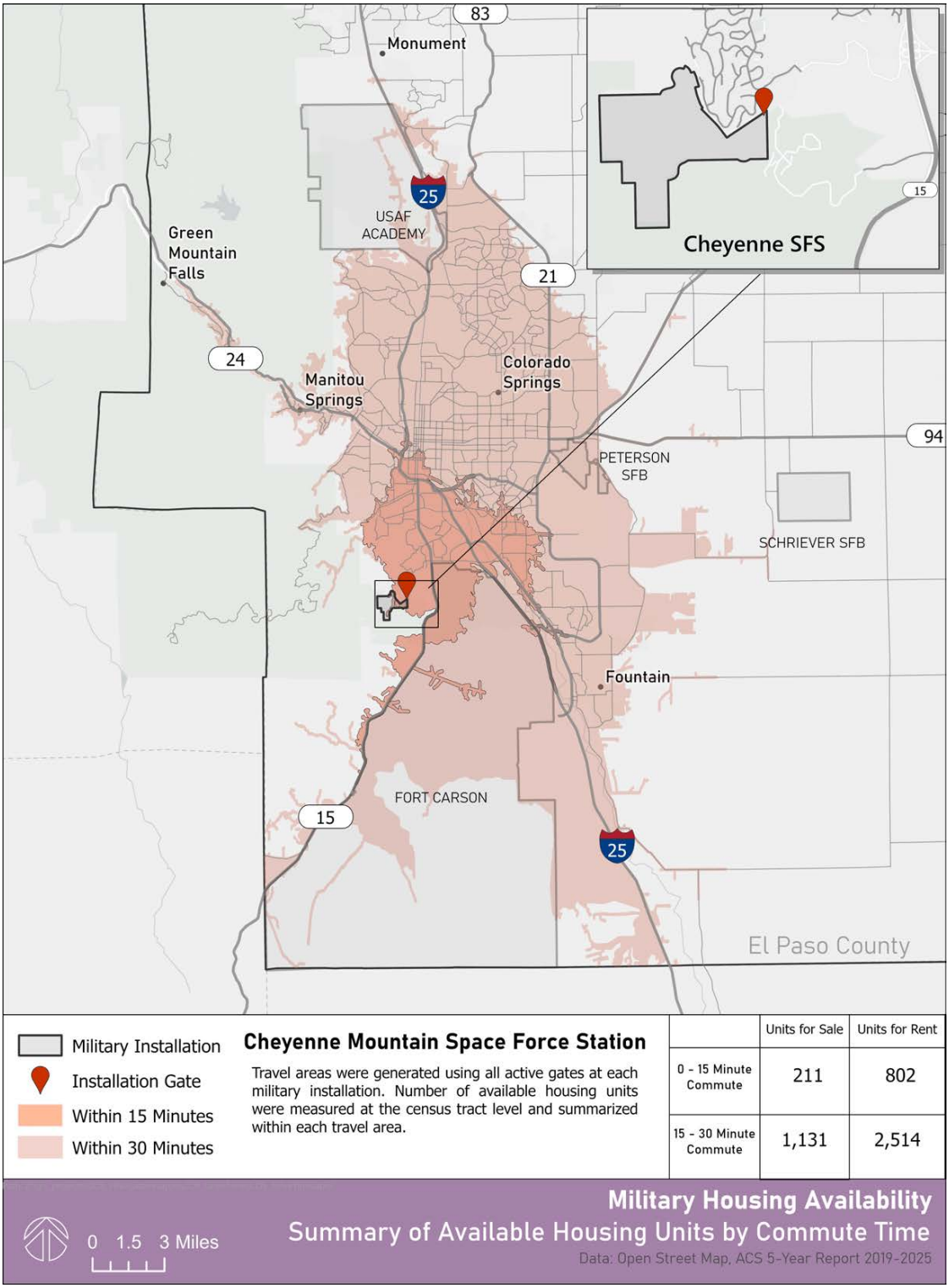


Figure 91. U.S. Air Force Academy Drive-Time Analysis

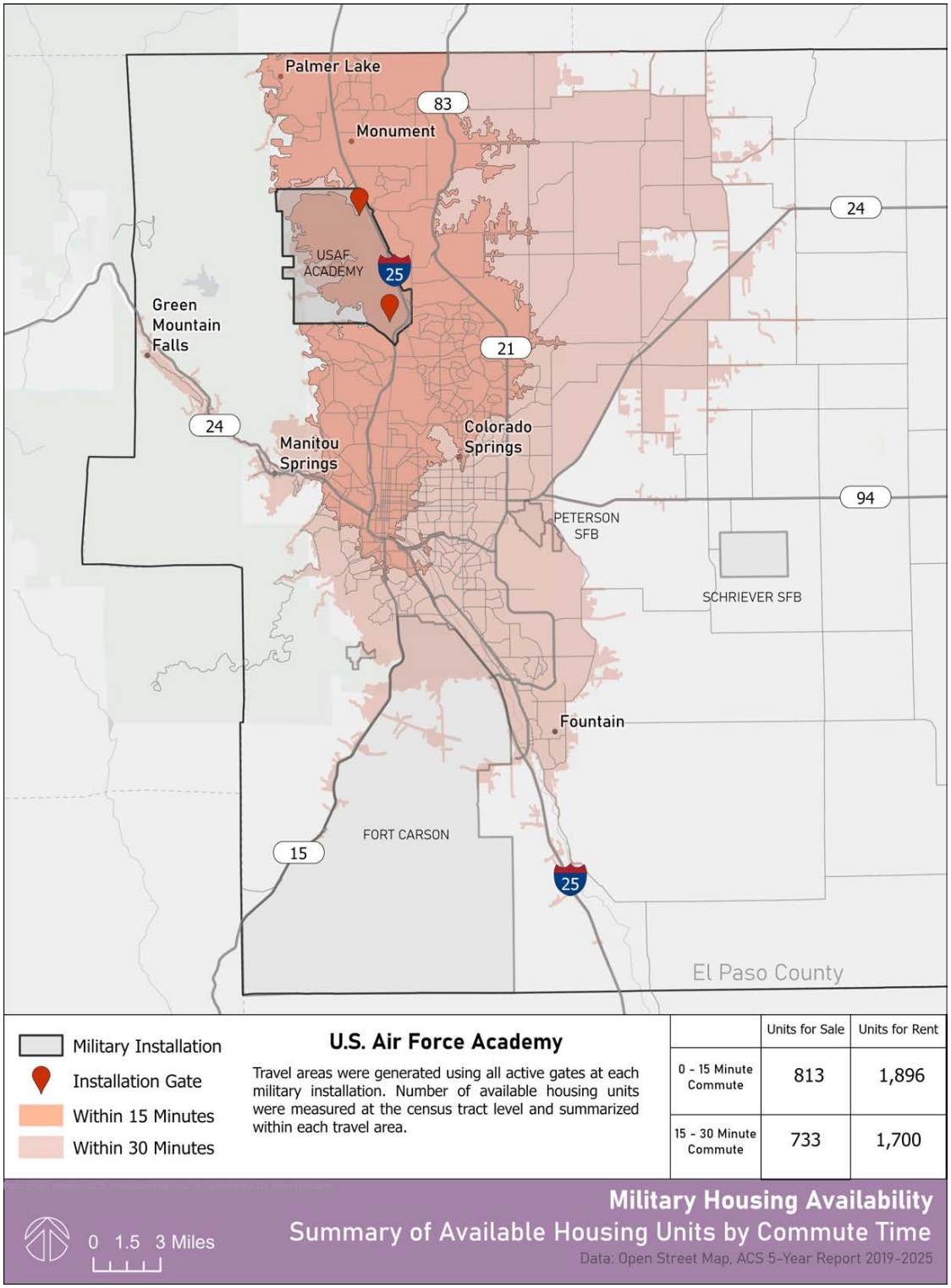


Figure 92. Schriever Space Force Base Drive-Time Analysis

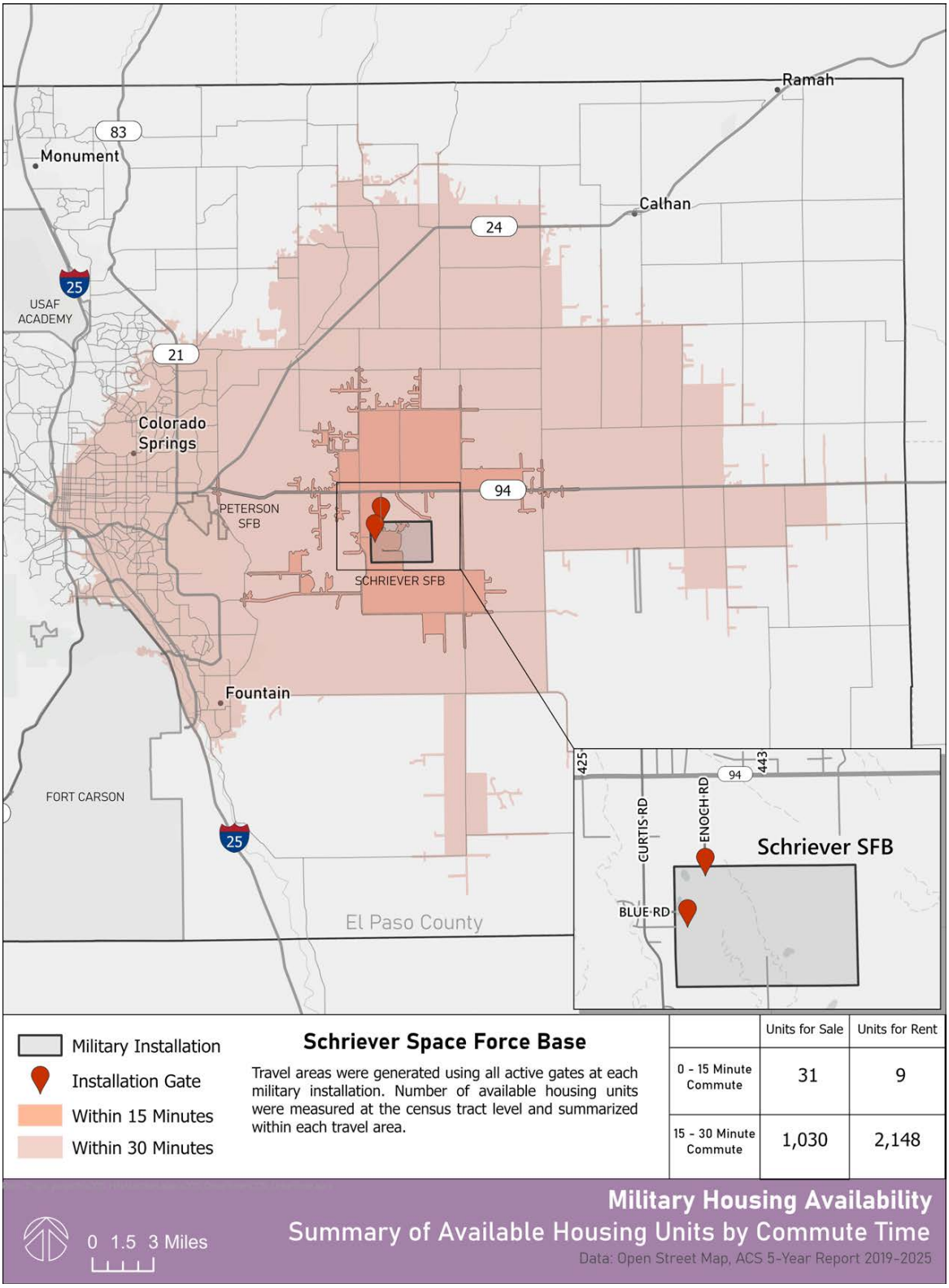
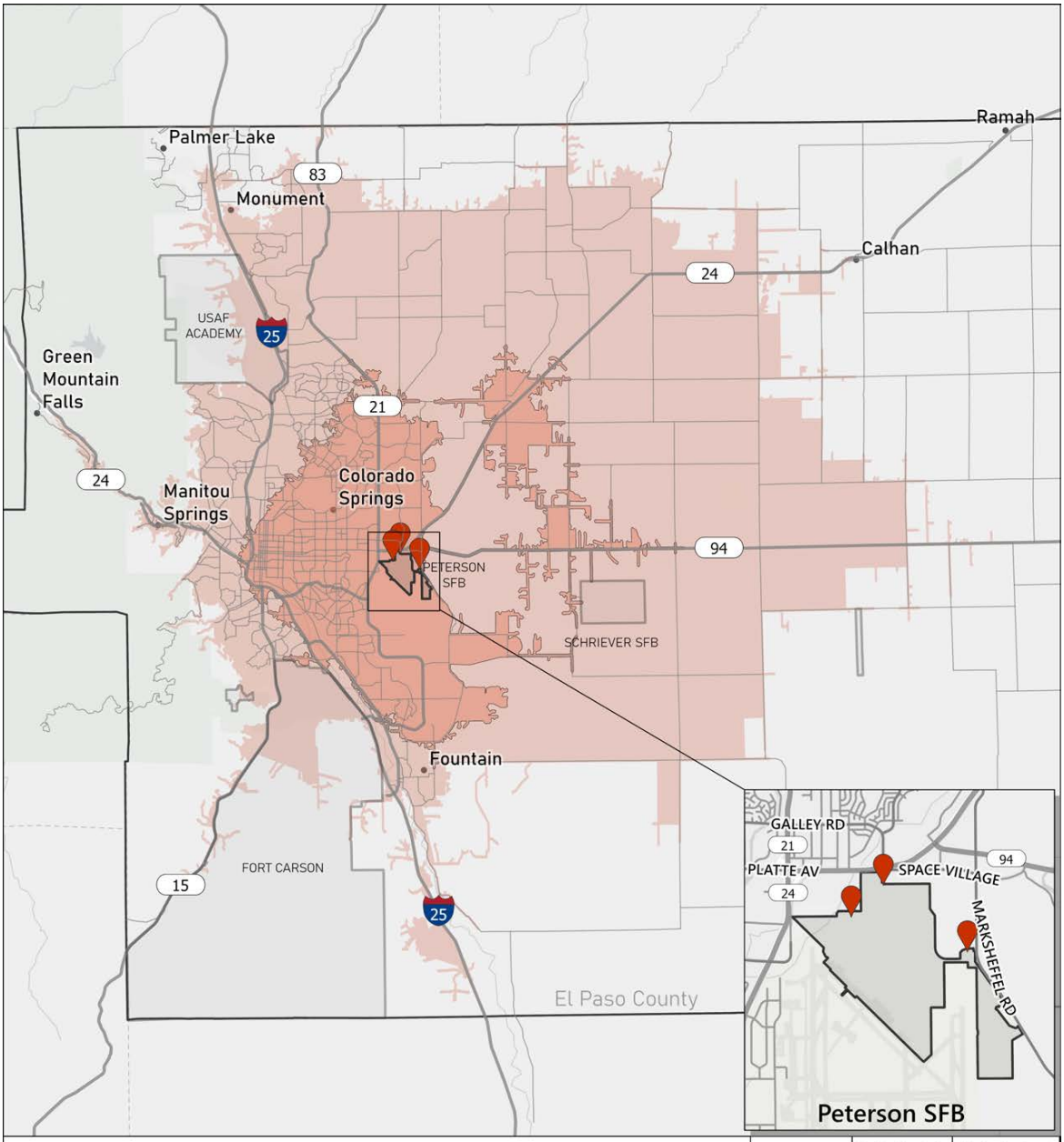
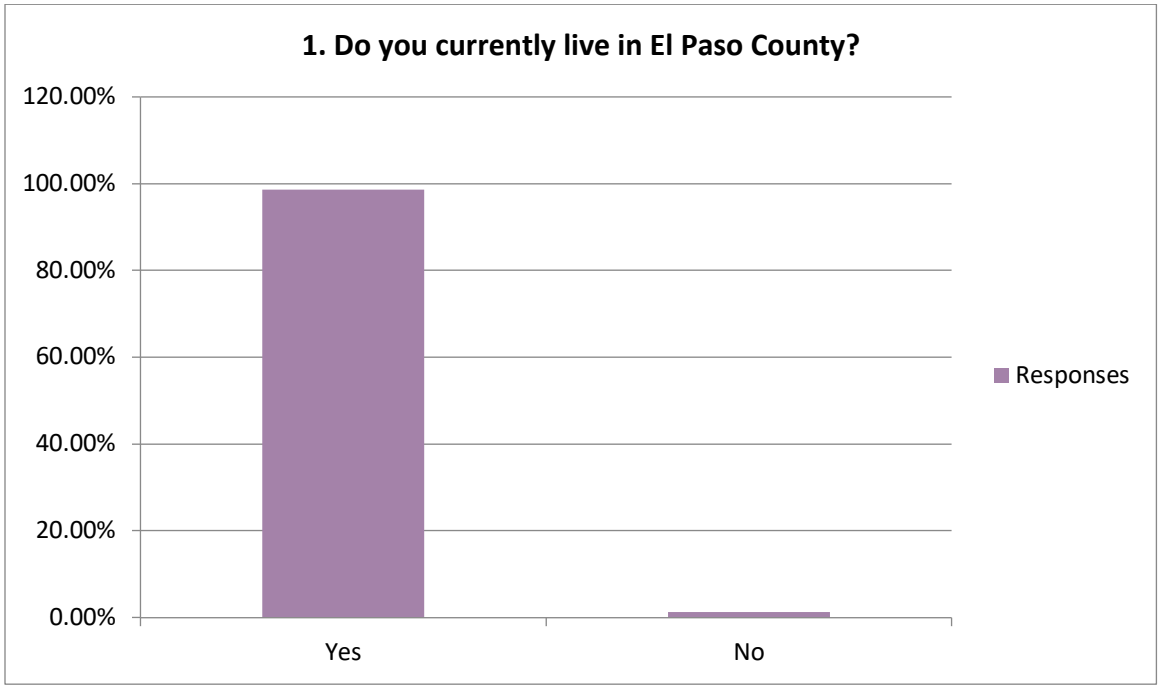


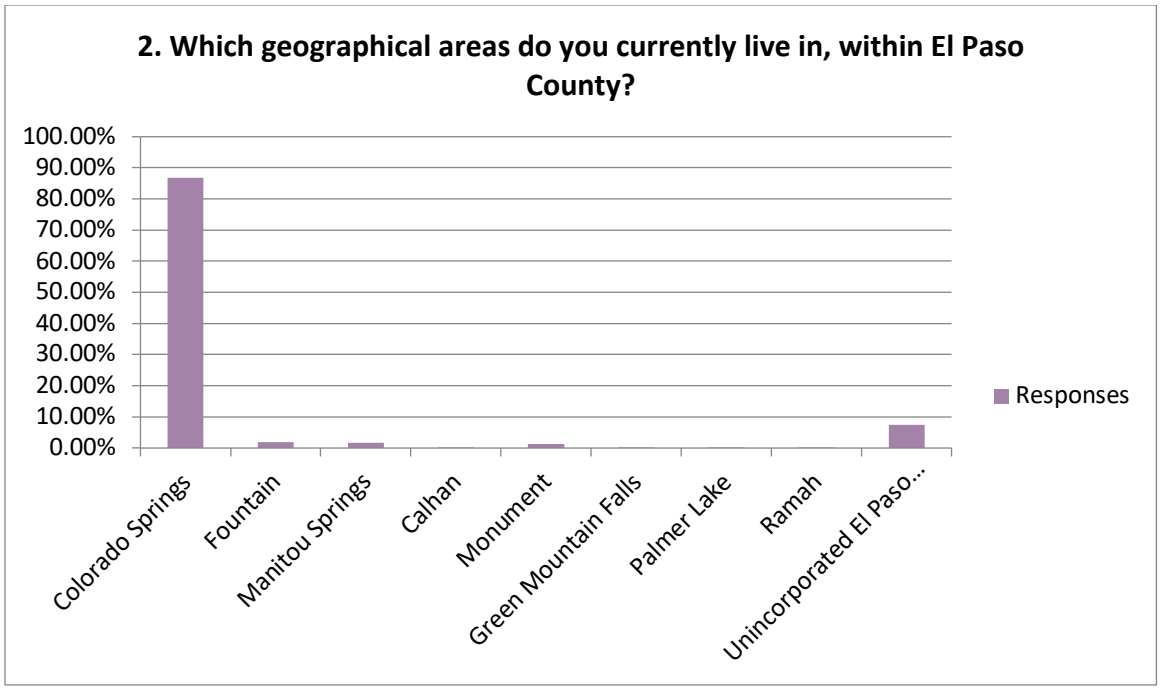
Figure 93. Peterson Space Force Base Drive-Time Analysis

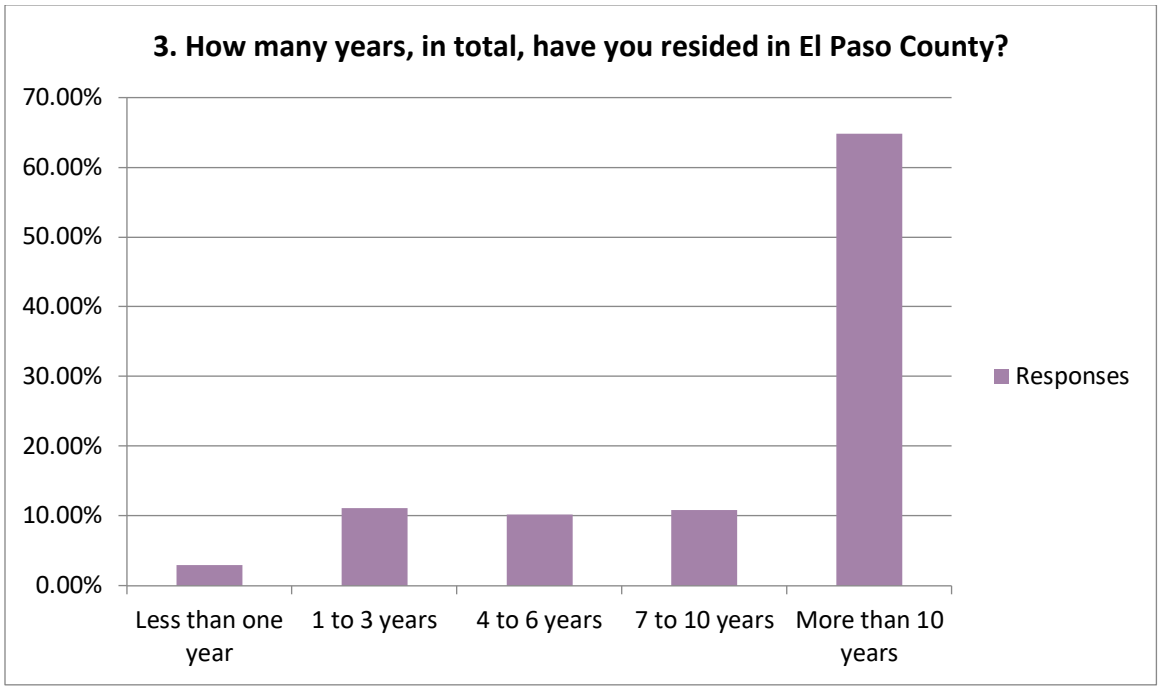


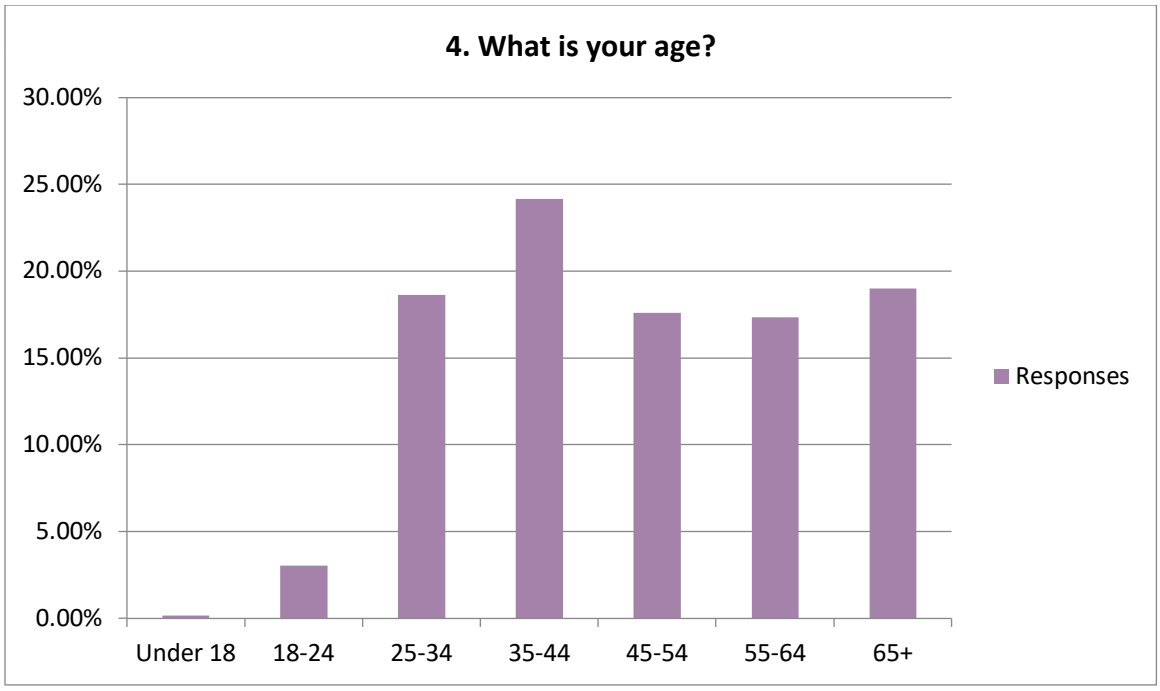
	Units for Sale	Units for Rent
0 - 15 Minute Commute	843	2,003
15 - 30 Minute Commute	852	1,568

Appendix C – Community Questionnaire Results

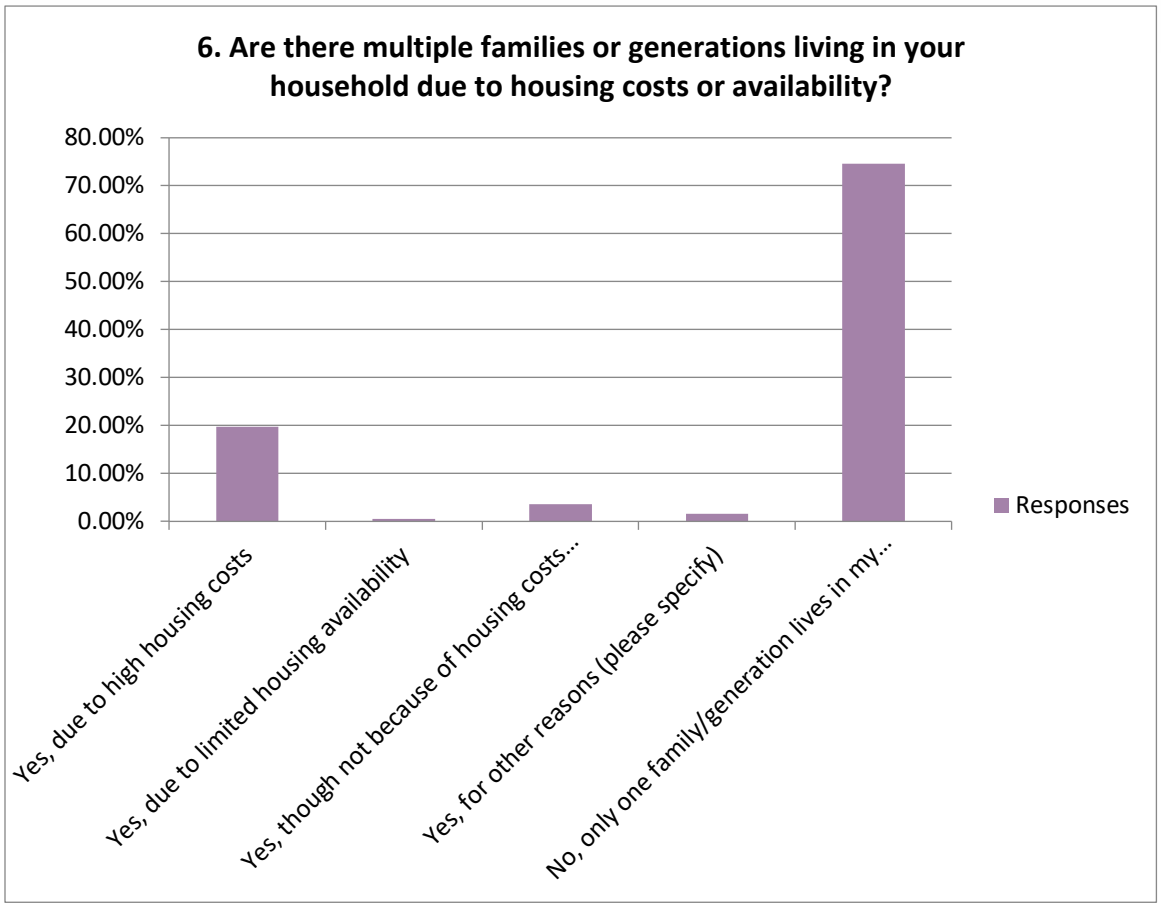


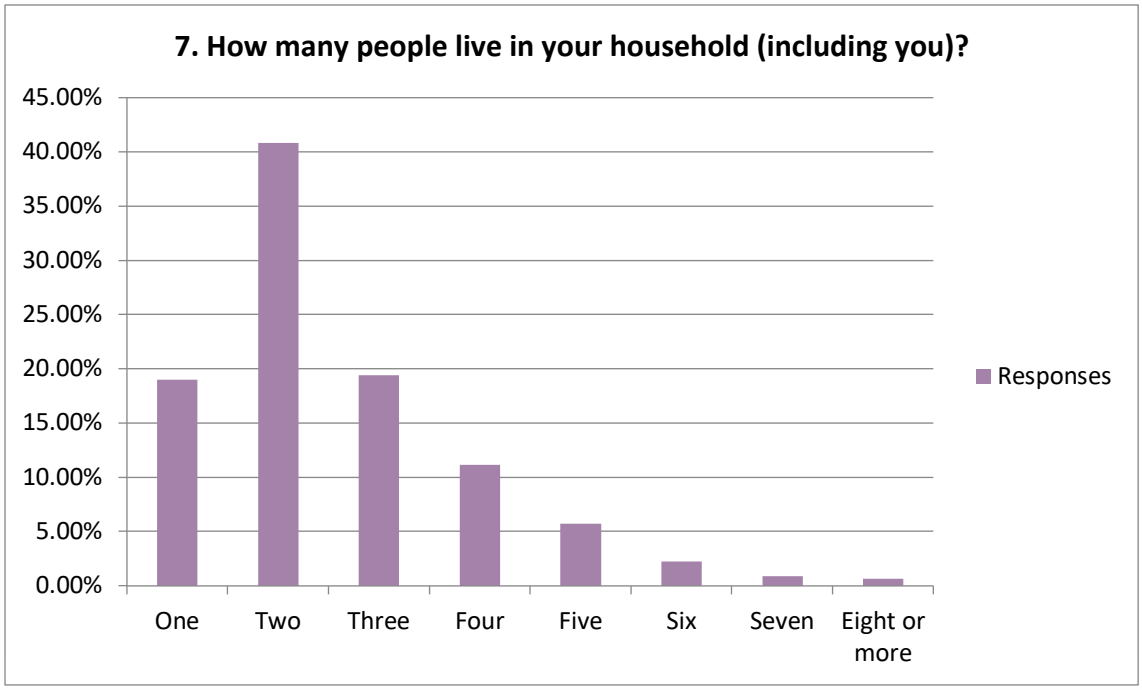

2. Which geographical areas do you currently live in, within El Paso County?
100.00%
90.00%
80.00%
70.00%
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
Colorado Springs
Fountain
Manitou Springs
Calhan
Monument
Green Mountain Falls
Palmer Lake
Ramah
Unincorporated El Paso...
Responses

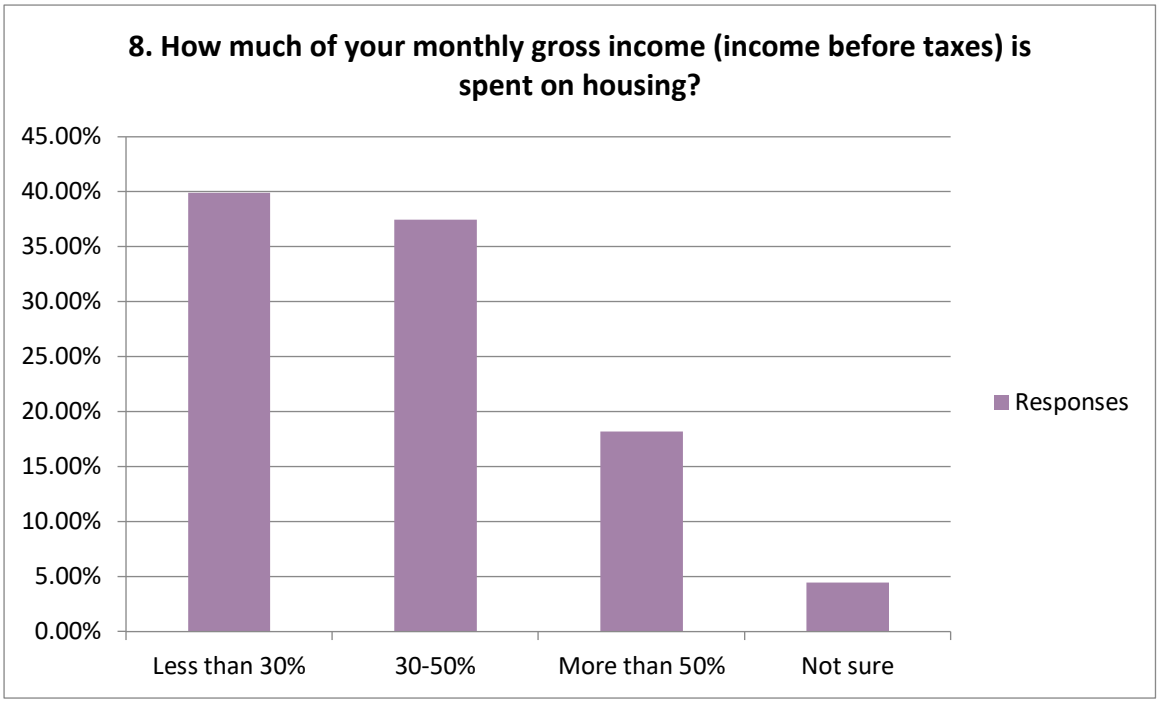

3. How many years, in total, have you resided in El Paso County?
70.00%
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
Less than one year
1 to 3 years
4 to 6 years
7 to 10 years
More than 10 years
Responses

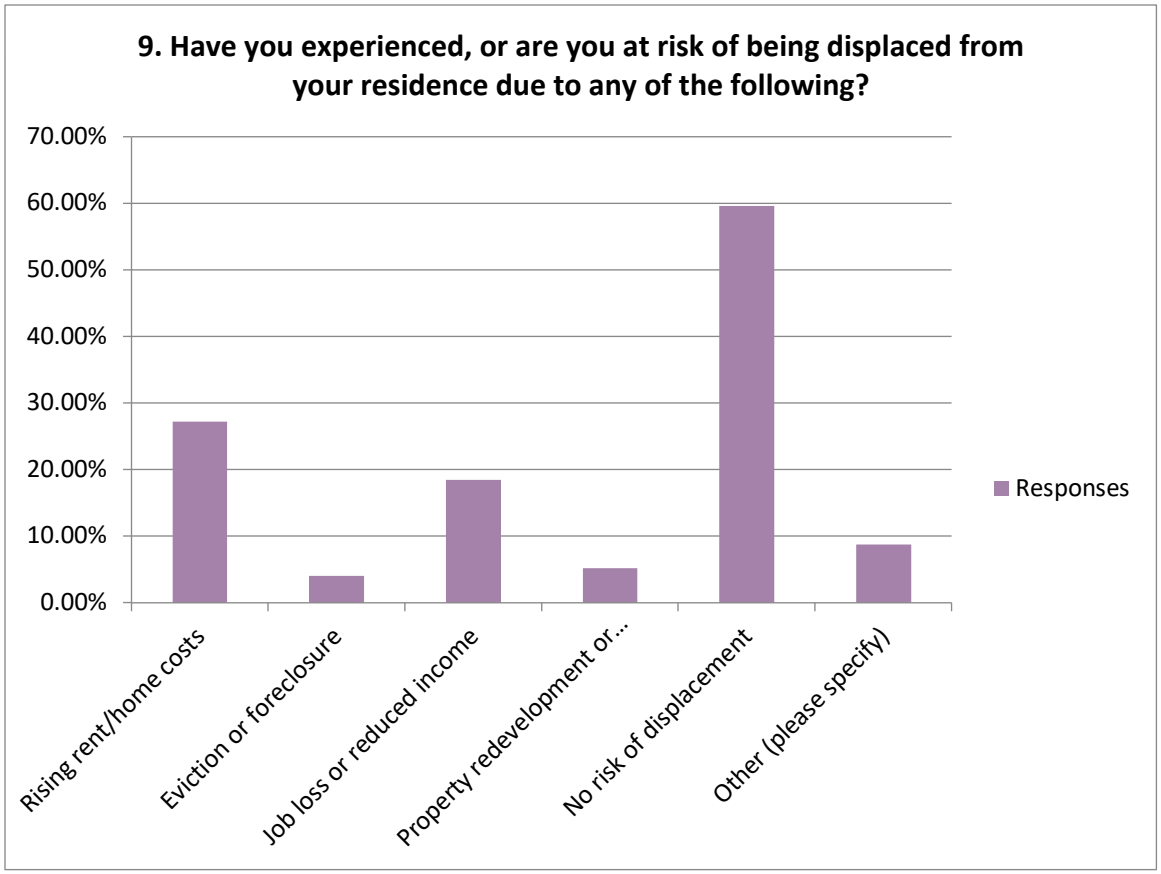

4. What is your age?
30.00%
25.00%
20.00%
15.00%
10.00%
5.00%
0.00%
Under 18
18-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65+
Responses

5. How much has your entire household earned from all sources of pre-tax income (e.g., salaries, retirement income, transfer payments such as supplemental income from the government, rental income, and any other sources of income)?
20.00%
18.00%
16.00%
14.00%
12.00%
10.00%
8.00%
6.00%
4.00%
2.00%
0.00%
Less than $30,390
$30,391 to $50,650
$50,651 to $81,040
$81,041 to $101,300
$101,301 to $121,560
$121,560 to $151,950
$151,951 to $182,340
$182,341 to $202,600
More than $202,601
Not sure
Prefer not to answer
Responses


6. Are there multiple families or generations living in your household due to housing costs or availability?
80.00%
70.00%
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
Yes, due to high housing costs
Yes, due to limited housing availability
Yes, though not because of housing costs...
Yes, for other reasons (please specify)
No, only one family/generation lives in my...
Responses


7. How many people live in your household (including you)?
45.00%
40.00%
35.00%
30.00%
25.00%
20.00%
15.00%
10.00%
5.00%
0.00%
One
Two
Three
Four
Five
Six
Seven
Eight or more
Responses


8. How much of your monthly gross income (income before taxes) is spent on housing?
45.00%
40.00%
35.00%
30.00%
25.00%
20.00%
15.00%
10.00%
5.00%
0.00%
Less than 30%
30-50%
More than 50%
Not sure
Responses



Other: 161 Responses – Summary/General Themes

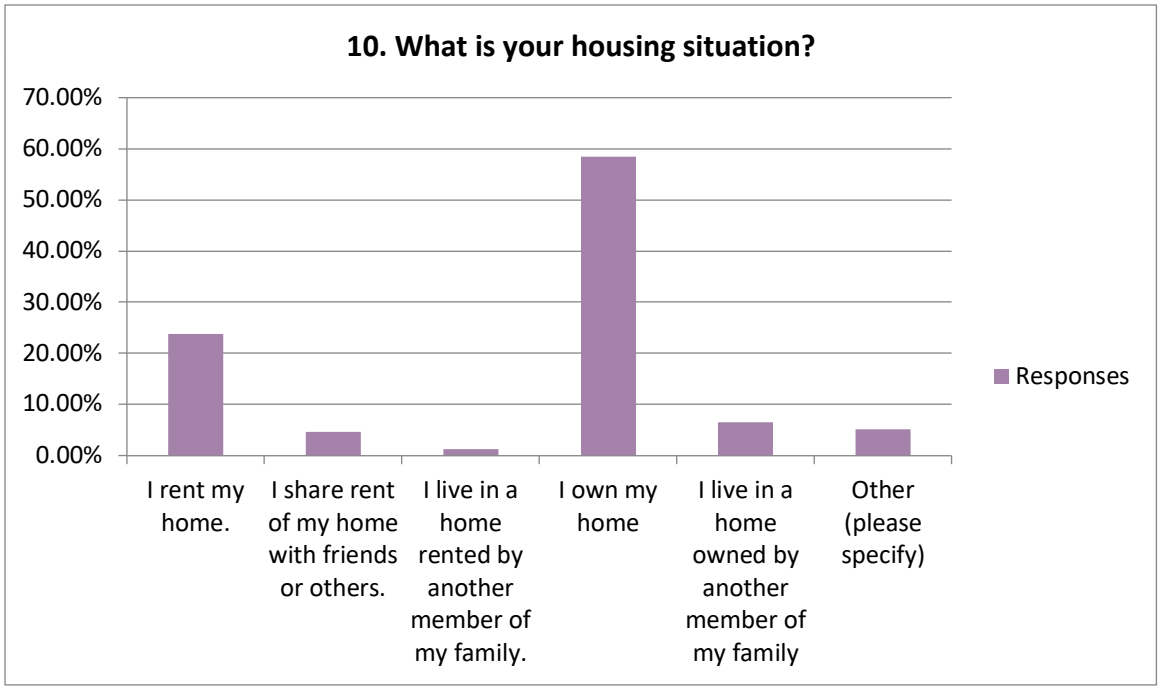
1. Rising property taxes and insurance are a major threat to housing stability.
Many respondents cited escalating costs in taxes and insurance as the primary reason they may no longer be able to afford their homes.

2. Fixed or limited incomes make residents especially vulnerable.
Seniors, people with disabilities, and those on fixed incomes reported being at high risk of displacement due to rising living expenses.

3. Job loss or income instability is a common concern.
Numerous comments mentioned that a single job loss or reduction in income could quickly lead to housing insecurity or homelessness.

4. Renters face instability due to landlord decisions and market pressures.
Several respondents noted being displaced or at risk because landlords are selling properties or raising rents beyond affordability.

5. Health issues and aging are increasing housing vulnerability.
Respondents shared that declining health, aging, and the need for accessible housing are making it harder to remain in their current homes.



Other: 97 Responses – Summary/General Themes

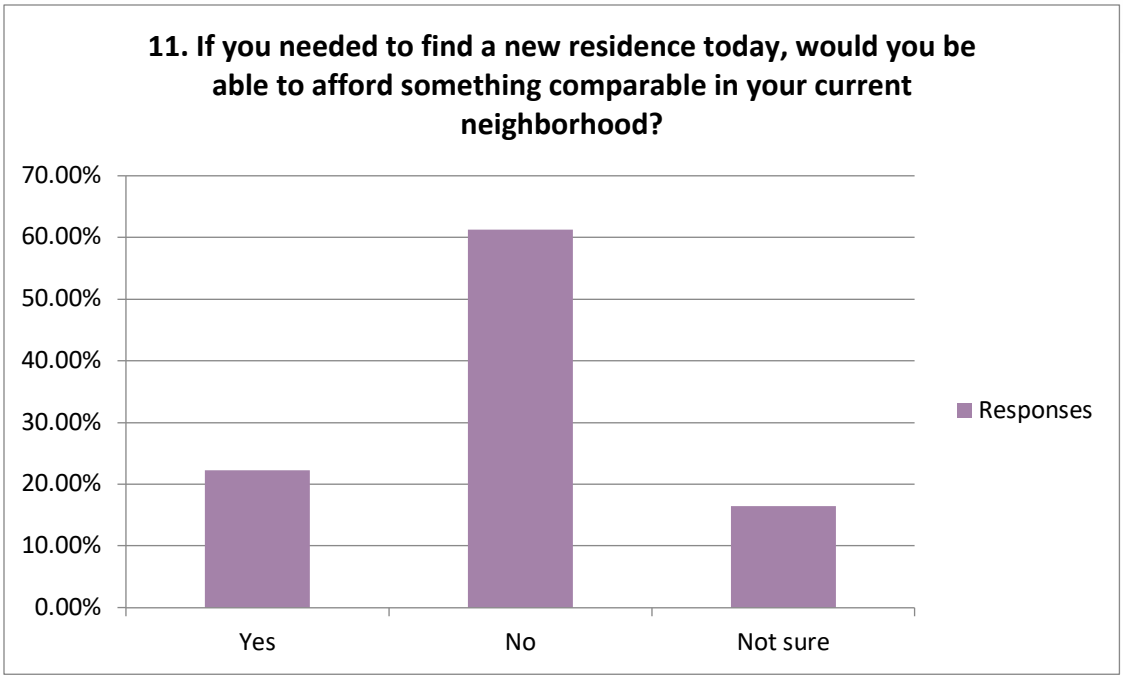
1. Many respondents rent apartments or rooms.
A large portion of participants reported living in rented apartments, shared housing, or rooms in private homes.

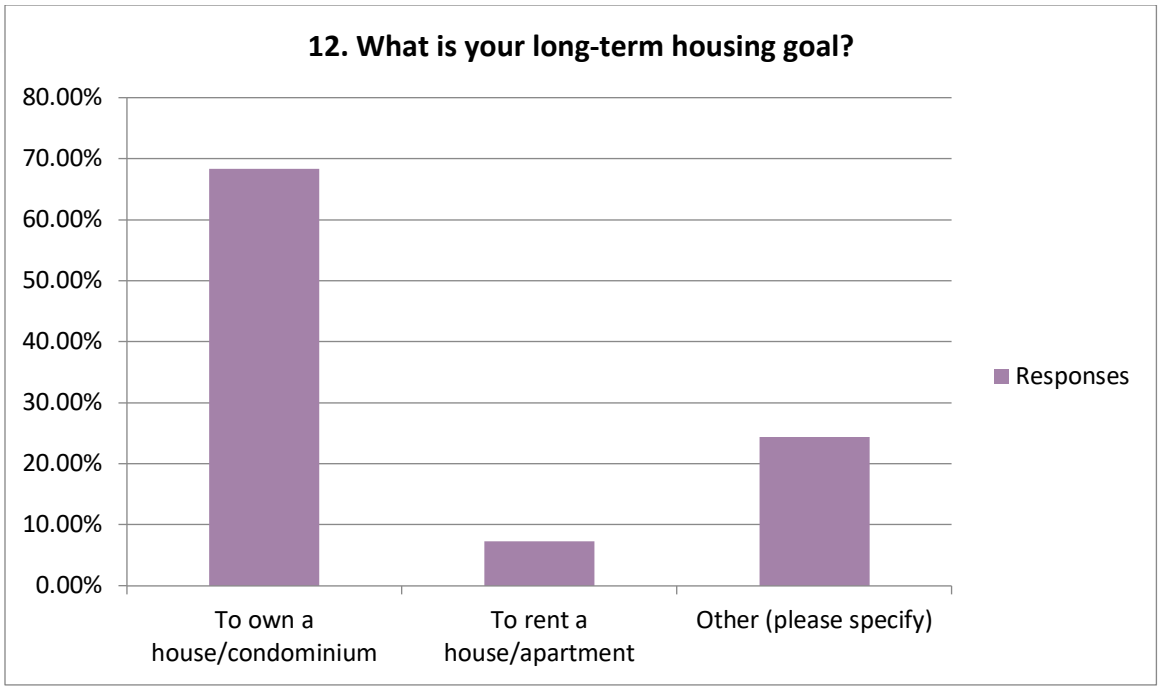
2. A significant number of people are experiencing homelessness or housing instability.
Several individuals indicated they are currently homeless, living in vehicles, hotels, or couch surfing with friends or family.

3. Mobile and manufactured homes are a common housing type.
Numerous comments mentioned living in mobile homes, often with the added burden of paying lot rent in addition to housing costs.

4. Some residents own homes but rely on renting out rooms to afford them.
Homeowners frequently reported supplementing their income by renting out parts of their homes to remain financially stable.

5. Multigenerational and co-owned housing is prevalent.
Many people live with extended family or co-own homes with relatives due to affordability challenges and caregiving needs.


11. If you needed to find a new residence today, would you be able to afford something comparable in your current neighborhood?
70.00%
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
Yes
No
Not sure
Responses



Other : 439 Responses – Summary/General Themes

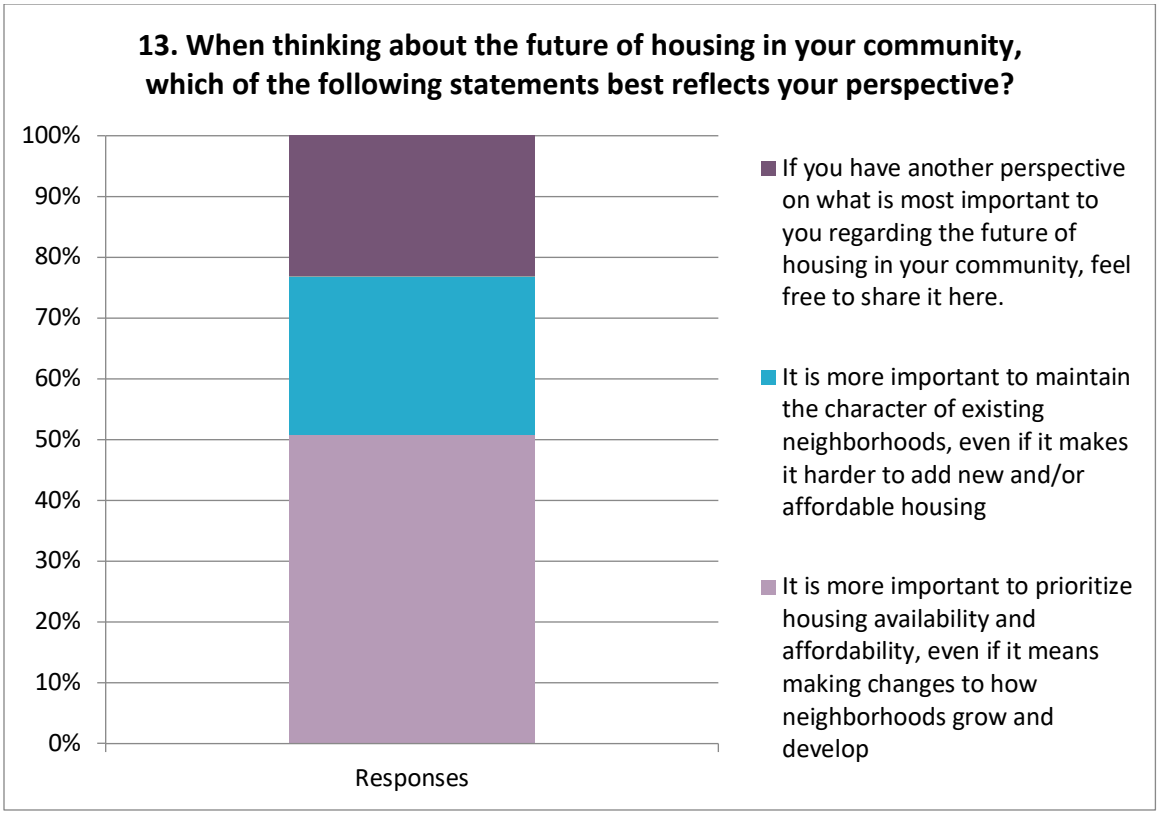
1. Desire to Stay in Current Home
A large majority of respondents expressed a strong desire to remain in their current homes long-term, often using phrases like "stay put," "age in place," or "until death."

2. Paying Off Mortgage
Many individuals mentioned paying off their mortgage as a key long-term goal, aiming for financial security and freedom from housing debt.

3. Affordability Concerns
Rising costs—especially property taxes, insurance, and utilities—were frequently cited as barriers to staying in their homes or achieving housing stability.

4. Downsizing and Retirement Planning
A significant number of respondents are planning to downsize, move to retirement communities, or find more manageable housing as they age.

5. Leaving Colorado or Colorado Springs
A notable portion of responses indicated plans or desires to leave the area due to high costs, political dissatisfaction, or declining quality of life.



418 Responses – Summary/General Themes

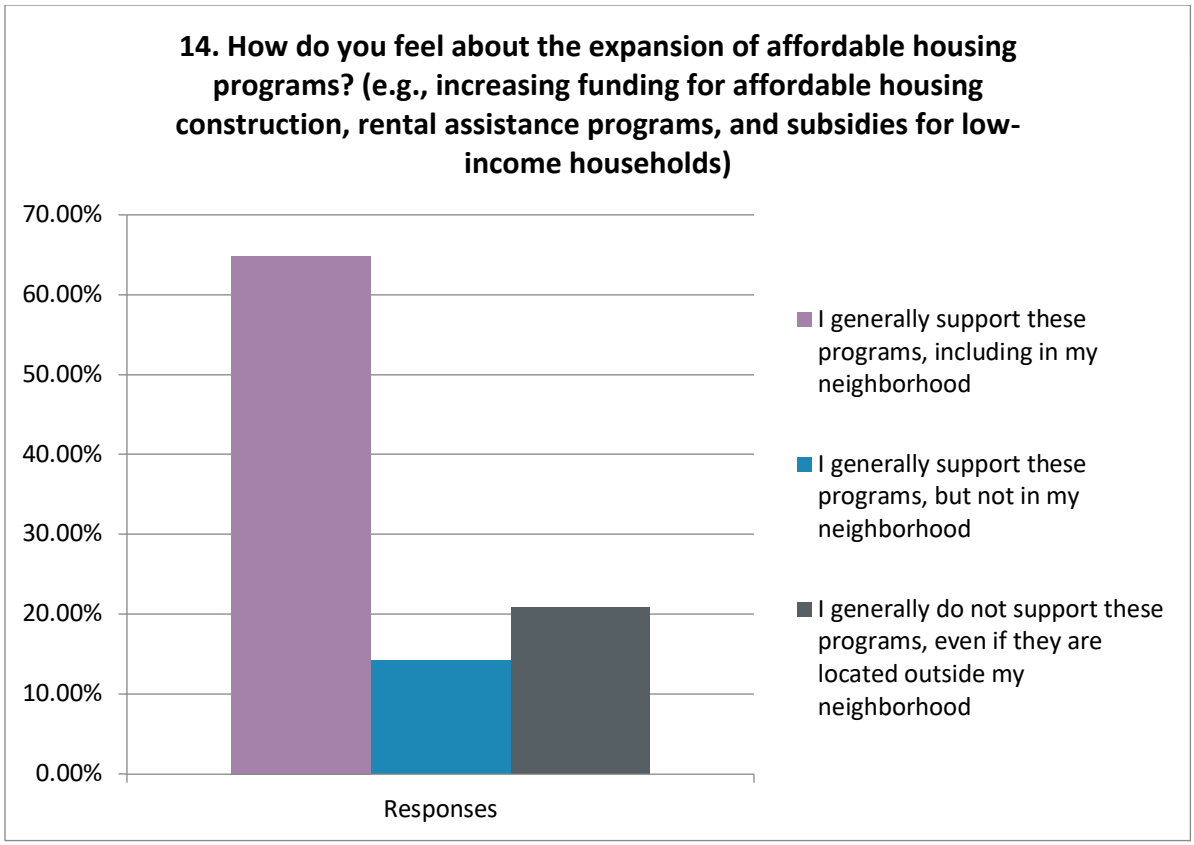
1. Affordability is the Top Concern
Respondents overwhelmingly emphasized the need for affordable housing, especially for seniors, low-income families, and people with disabilities.

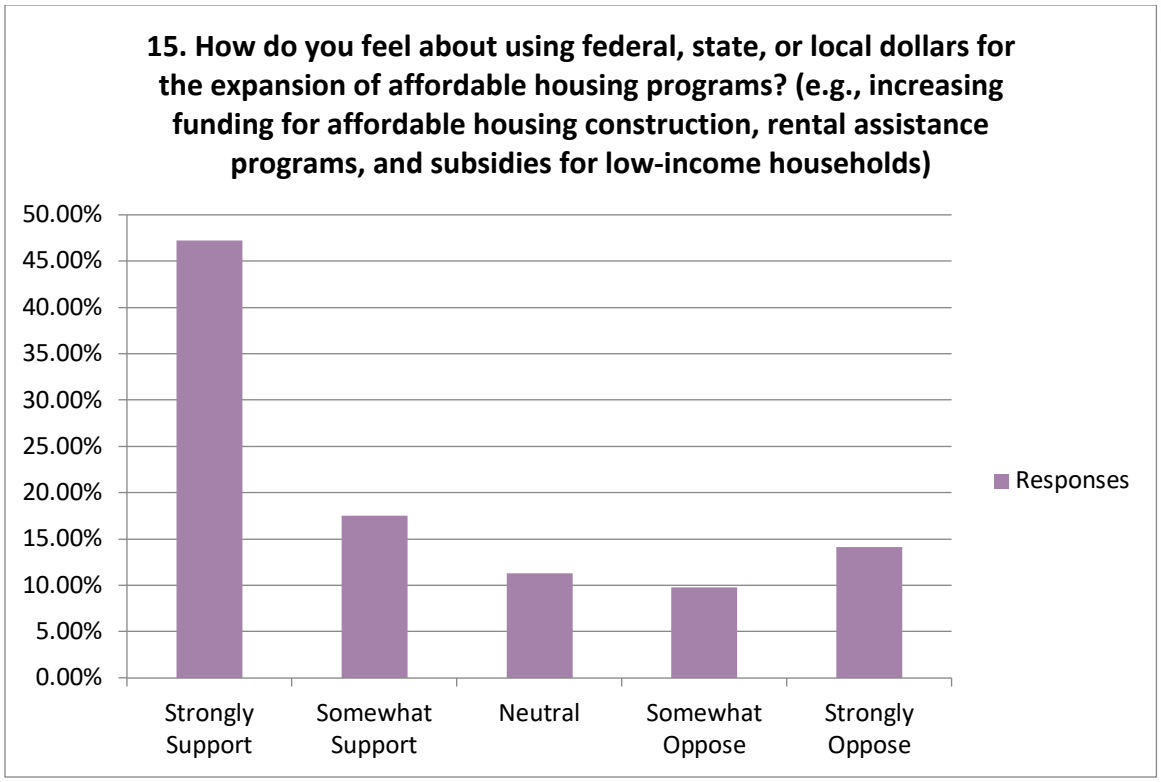
2. Preserving Neighborhood Character
Many participants expressed a desire to maintain the character of existing neighborhoods while still allowing for growth and development.

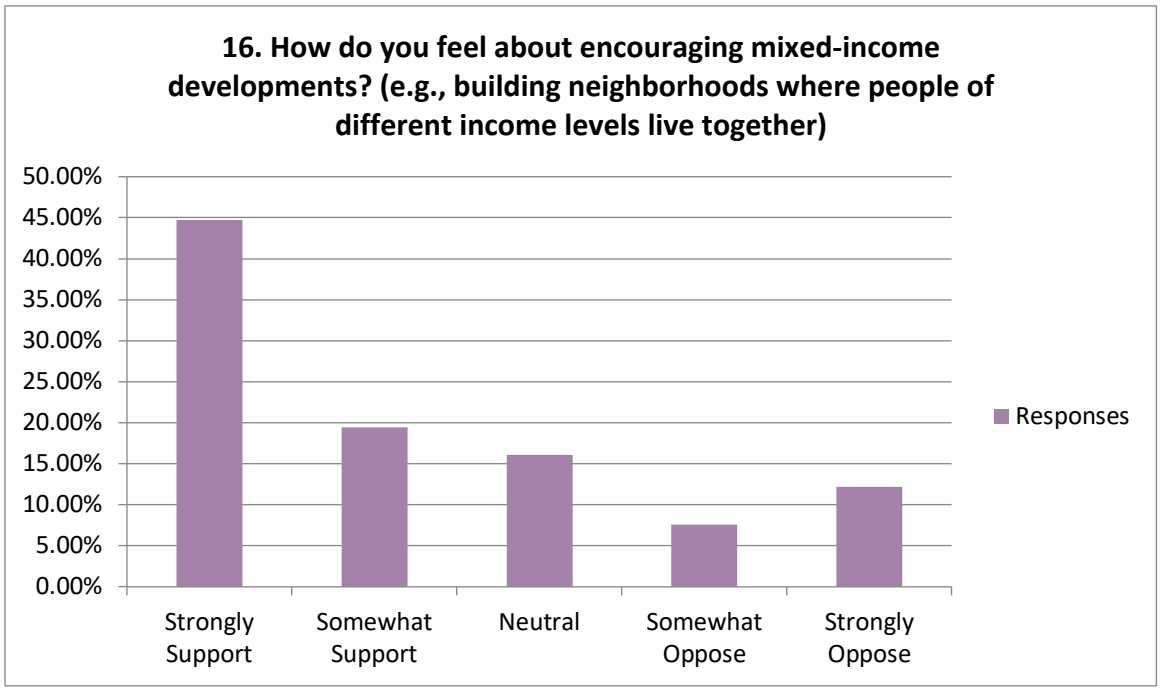
3. Opposition to Overdevelopment
There is strong concern about overbuilding, especially large apartment complexes, and the strain it places on infrastructure, traffic, and natural resources.

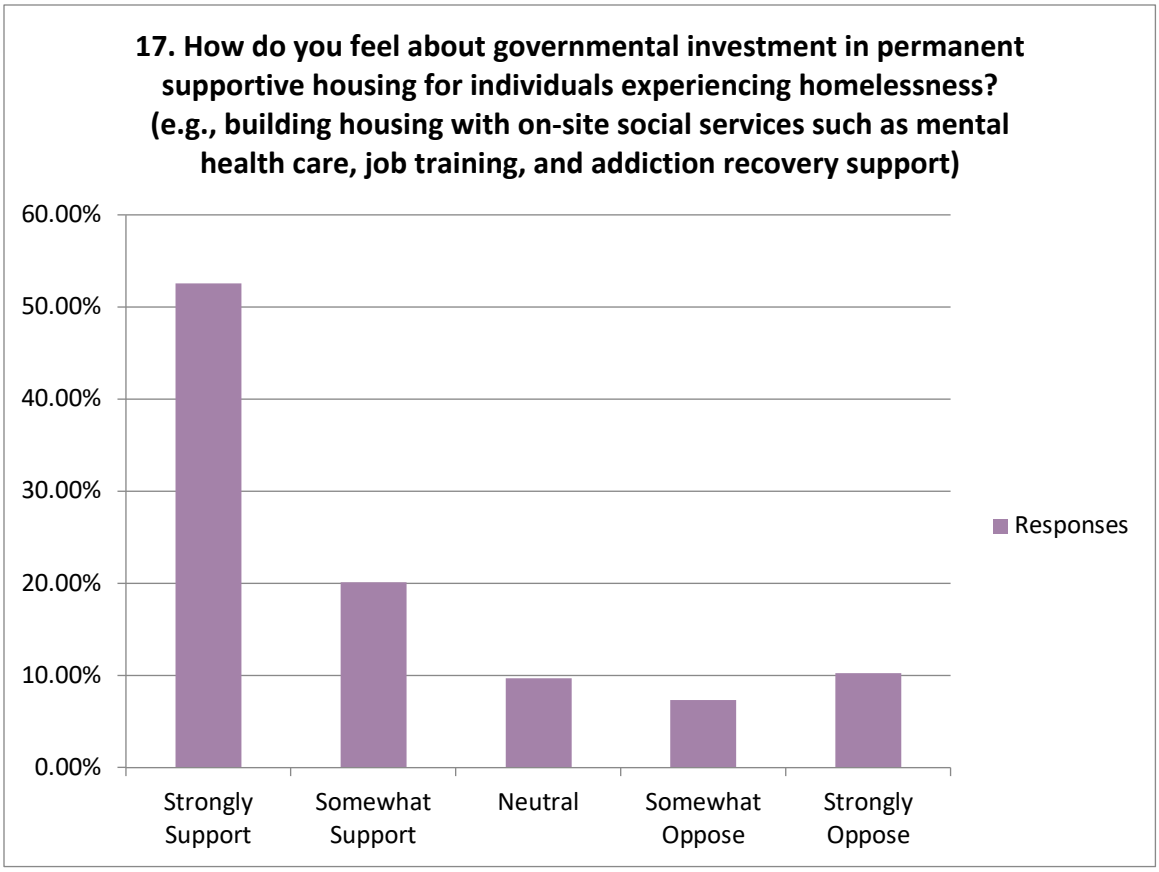
4. Support for Infill and Mixed-Use Development
Several responses advocated for infill development, adaptive reuse of existing buildings, and walkable, mixed-use communities.

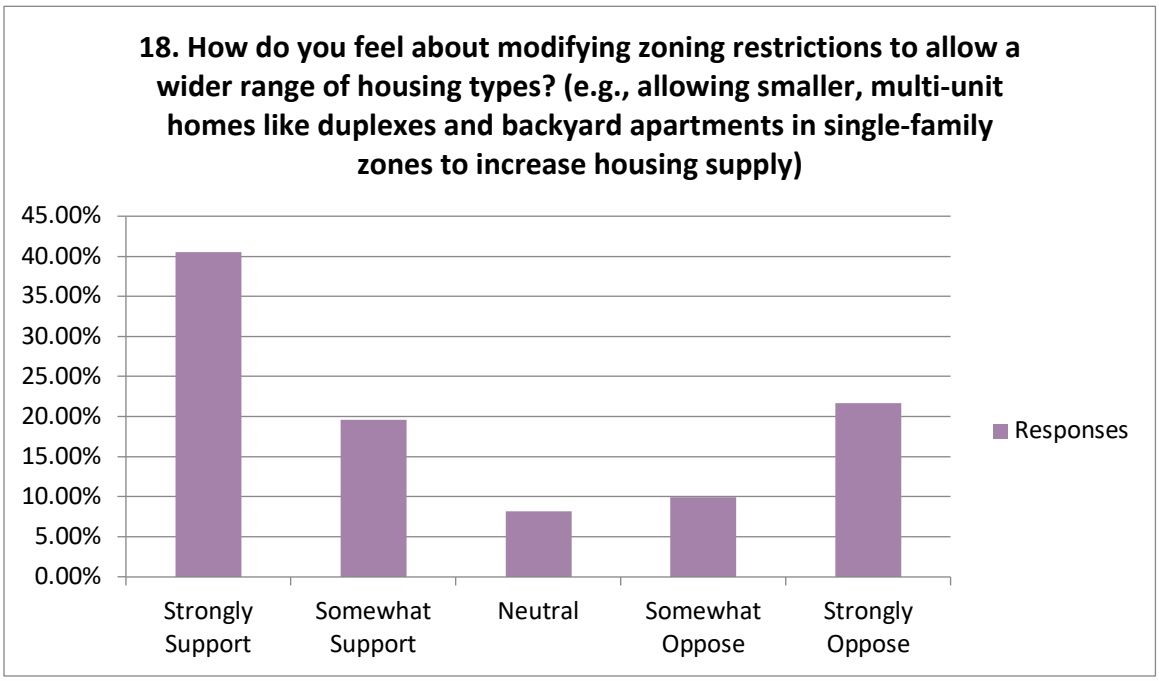
5. Distrust in Government and Developers
A recurring theme was distrust of city government and developers, with concerns about corruption, lack of transparency, and prioritizing profit over community needs.

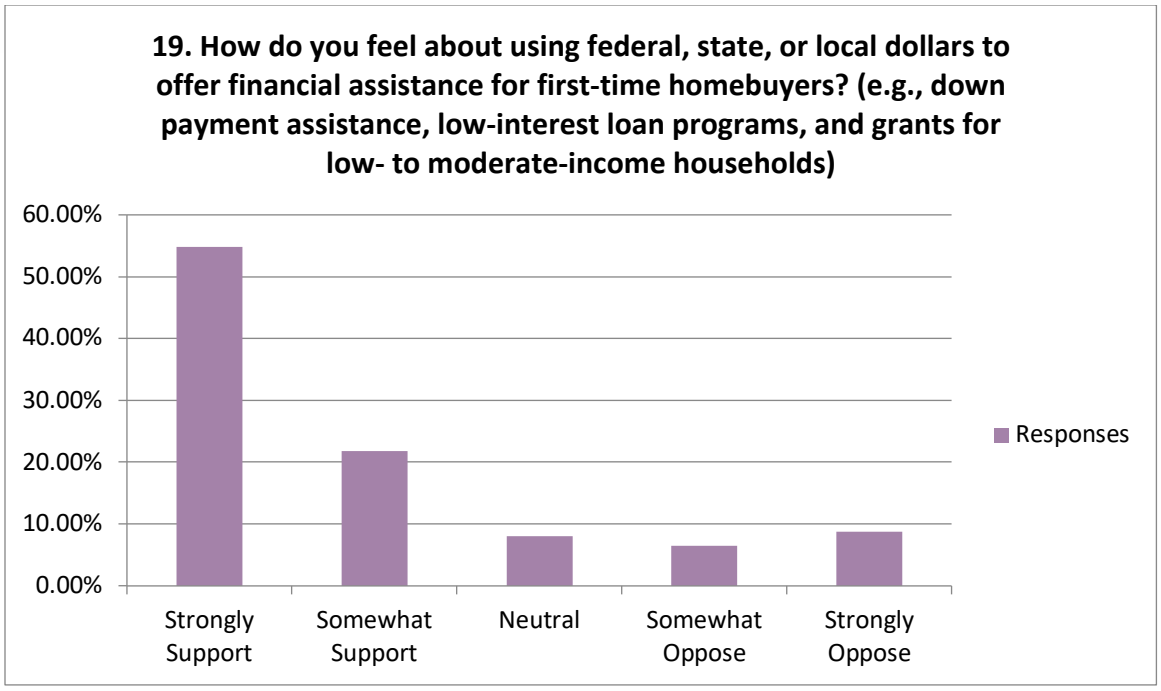

14. How do you feel about the expansion of affordable housing programs? (e.g., increasing funding for affordable housing construction, rental assistance programs, and subsidies for low-income households)
70.00%
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
Responses
I generally support these programs, including in my neighborhood
I generally support these programs, but not in my neighborhood
I generally do not support these programs, even if they are located outside my neighborhood

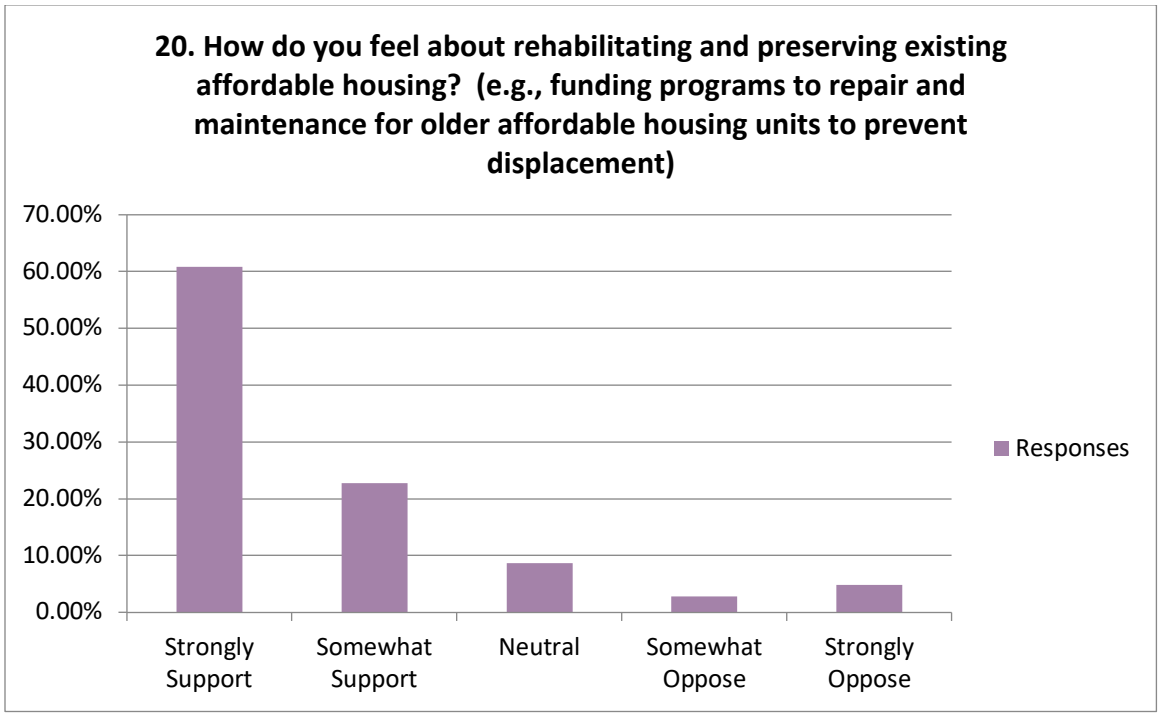

15. How do you feel about using federal, state, or local dollars for the expansion of affordable housing programs? (e.g., increasing funding for affordable housing construction, rental assistance programs, and subsidies for low-income households)
50.00%
45.00%
40.00%
35.00%
30.00%
25.00%
20.00%
15.00%
10.00%
5.00%
0.00%
Strongly Support
Somewhat Support
Neutral
Somewhat Oppose
Strongly Oppose
Responses


16. How do you feel about encouraging mixed-income developments? (e.g., building neighborhoods where people of different income levels live together)
50.00%
45.00%
40.00%
35.00%
30.00%
25.00%
20.00%
15.00%
10.00%
5.00%
0.00%
Strongly Support
Somewhat Support
Neutral
Somewhat Oppose
Strongly Oppose
Responses


17. How do you feel about governmental investment in permanent supportive housing for individuals experiencing homelessness? (e.g., building housing with on-site social services such as mental health care, job training, and addiction recovery support)
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
Strongly Support
Somewhat Support
Neutral
Somewhat Oppose
Strongly Oppose
Responses


18. How do you feel about modifying zoning restrictions to allow a wider range of housing types? (e.g., allowing smaller, multi-unit homes like duplexes and backyard apartments in single-family zones to increase housing supply)
45.00%
40.00%
35.00%
30.00%
25.00%
20.00%
15.00%
10.00%
5.00%
0.00%
Strongly Support
Somewhat Support
Neutral
Somewhat Oppose
Strongly Oppose
Responses


19. How do you feel about using federal, state, or local dollars to offer financial assistance for first-time homebuyers? (e.g., down payment assistance, low-interest loan programs, and grants for low- to moderate-income households)
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
Strongly Support
Somewhat Support
Neutral
Somewhat Oppose
Strongly Oppose
Responses


20. How do you feel about rehabilitating and preserving existing affordable housing? (e.g., funding programs to repair and maintenance for older affordable housing units to prevent displacement)
70.00%
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
Strongly Support
Somewhat Support
Neutral
Somewhat Oppose
Strongly Oppose
Responses

21. Do you have any thoughts or concerns about how affordable housing programs are developed or implemented - whether in your neighborhood or elsewhere? Please share any ideas you have for how these programs could better serve your community or improve overall housing access.

Responses: 1,311 Responses

Affordability Is a Major Concern
Many respondents emphasized that what is labeled "affordable housing" is still unaffordable for most working individuals and families.

Support for Mixed-Income and Mixed-Use Development
There is strong support for integrating affordable housing into existing neighborhoods, provided it is well-maintained and thoughtfully planned.

Desire for Homeownership Opportunities
Respondents want more pathways to homeownership, especially for first-time buyers, rather than just rental options.

Frustration with Developers and Government Oversight
Many expressed distrust toward developers and city officials, citing concerns about corruption, poor planning, and prioritizing profit over people.

Need for Infrastructure and Services
Concerns were raised about inadequate infrastructure (roads, schools, water) to support new housing developments.

Zoning and Density Debates
Opinions were divided on zoning changes and increased density, with some advocating for infill and ADUs, while others feared neighborhood degradation.

Homelessness and Supportive Housing
There was widespread concern about homelessness, with many calling for more supportive housing and wraparound services.

Middle-Income Households Are Being Squeezed
A recurring theme was that middle-income earners are often ineligible for assistance but still struggle to afford housing.

Calls for Rent Control and Regulation
Many respondents advocated for rent caps, better tenant protections, and regulation of corporate landlords and short-term rentals.

Equity and Inclusion
Several responses emphasized the importance of equitable access to housing across all demographics, including seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities.

22. If you are currently renting your home/residence, do you plan to buy a home/residence in your current city within the near future?	
Response Category	**Percent Responses**
Yes, I plan to buy a home/residence within the next year in the city I am renting	7%
Yes, I am hoping to buy, but it will take several years	4%
No, I intend to keep renting in my current city	12%
No, I plan to buy in a different city/region	6%
Not sure / Might buy eventually	7%
No response / Not applicable	64%

23. Why do you choose to live in your community? (Check all that apply)	
Reason for Living in Community	**Percent Responses**
I grew up here and...	22%
To live near family or friends	32%
To be close to work	28%
Affordability of housing	21%
Quality of housing	29%
Access to job opportunities	13%
Quality of schools	18%
Access to amenities (parks...)	39%
Safe neighborhoods	40%
Other (please specify)	23%

Responses: 417 Responses

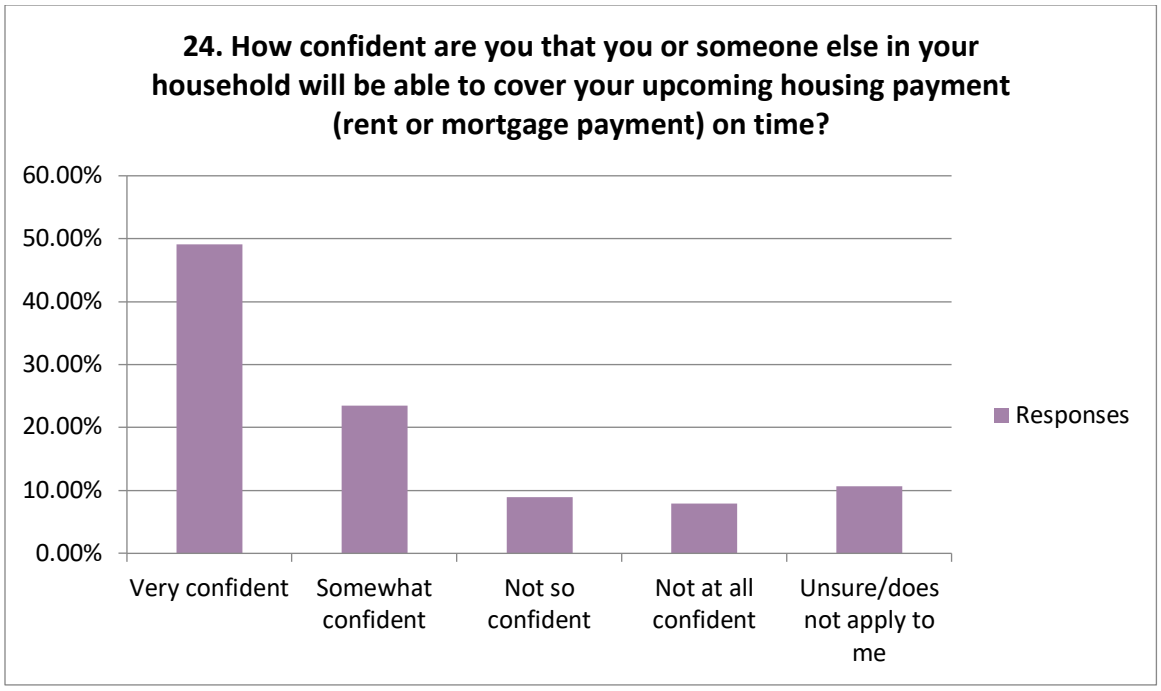
1. Affordability Is a Major Driver and Barrier
Many respondents mentioned they live where they do because it was what they could afford at the time. A significant number also expressed that they cannot afford to move, even if they want to, due to rising housing costs, rent, or being locked into a favorable mortgage rate.

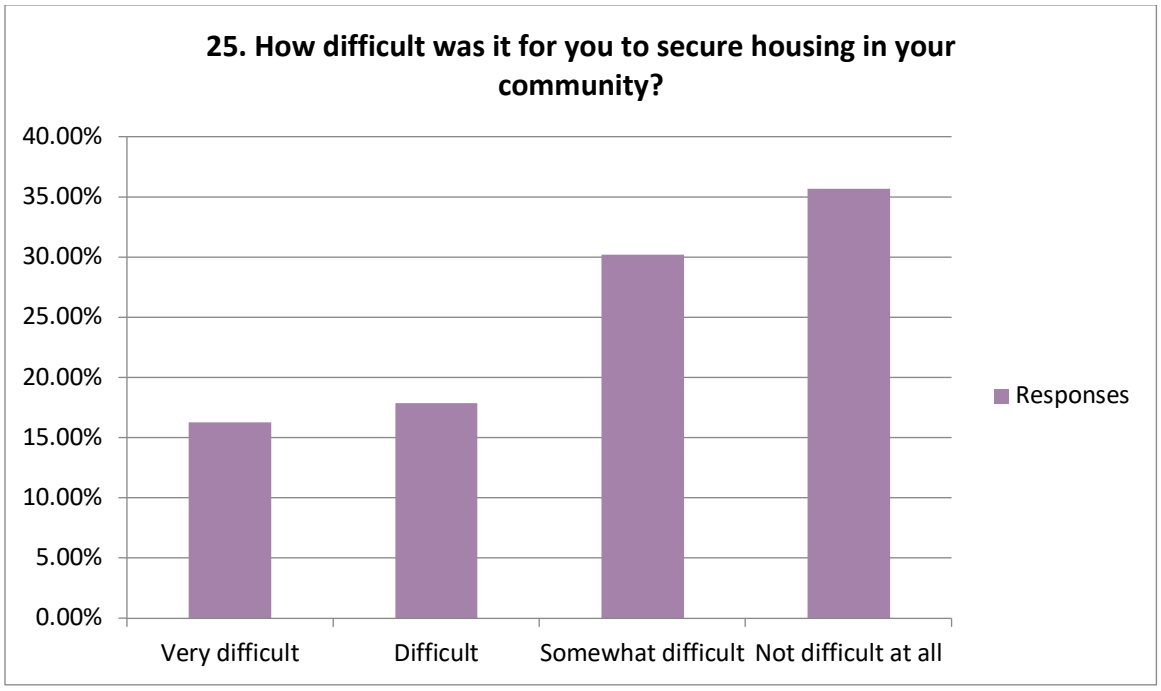
2. Proximity to Nature and Outdoor Recreation Is Highly Valued
Access to the mountains, trails, parks, and open space was one of the most frequently cited reasons for choosing or staying in a neighborhood. People appreciate the natural beauty and outdoor lifestyle that Colorado Springs offers.

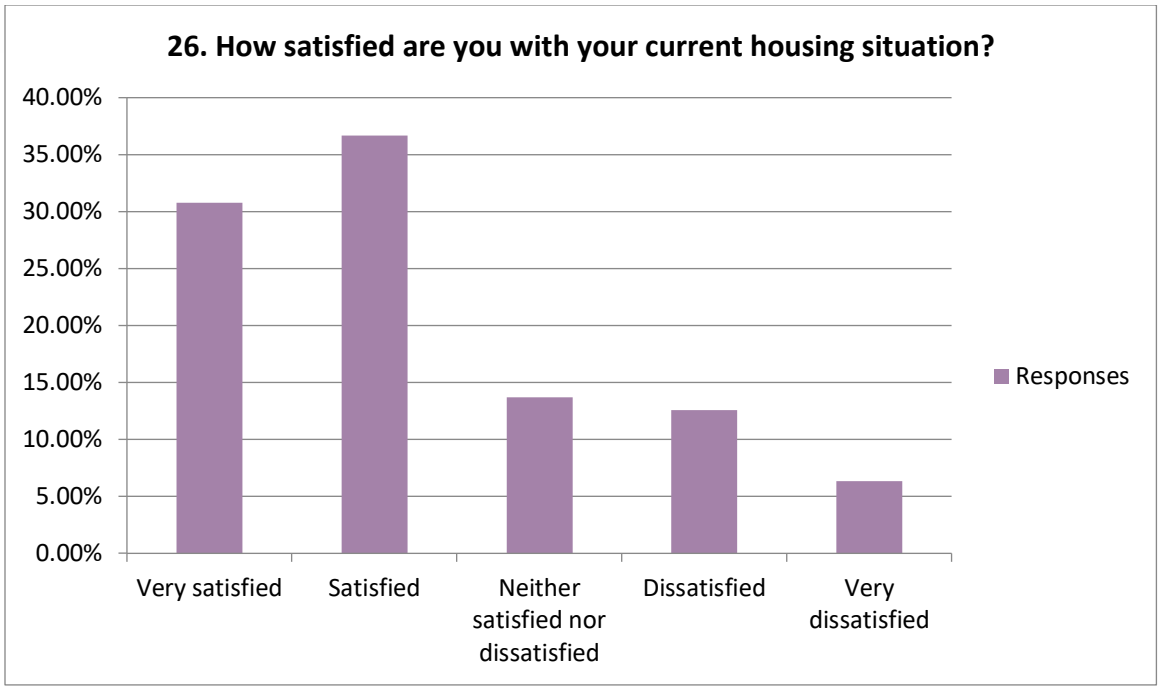
3. Community and Neighborhood Character Matter
Respondents emphasized the importance of community feel, walkability, quiet neighborhoods, and diverse, well-maintained areas. Many chose their location based on the sense of safety, friendliness, and aesthetics.

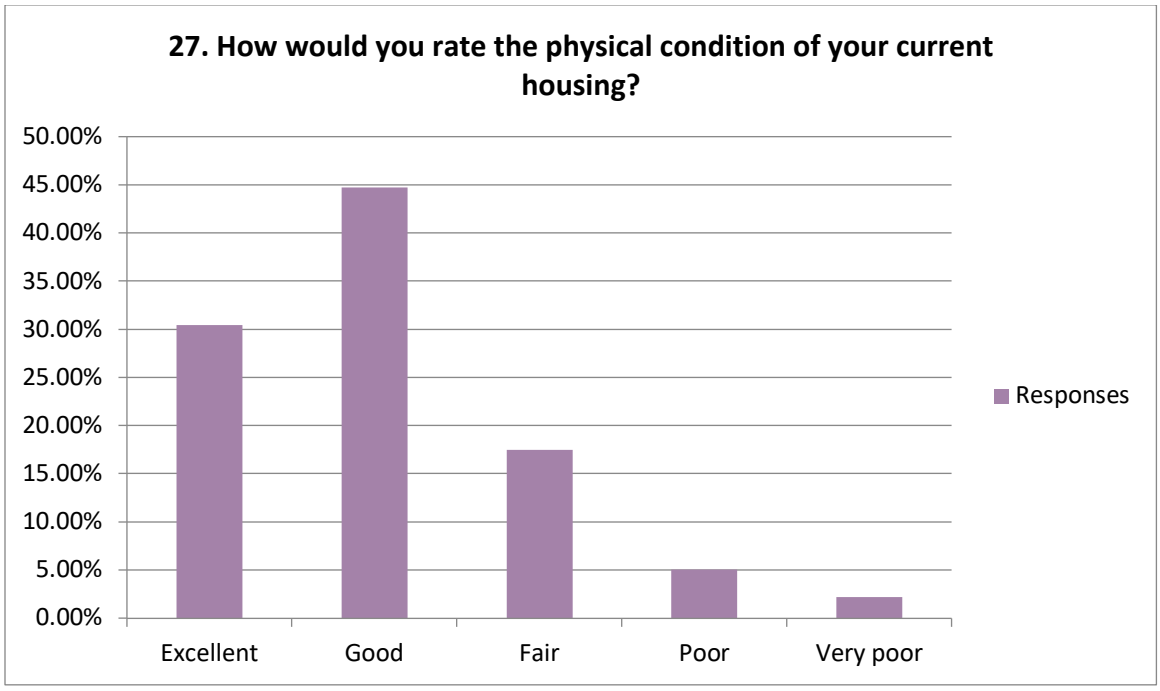
4. Frustration with Overdevelopment and Declining Quality of Life
There is a recurring concern about overdevelopment, increased traffic, loss of green space, and rising crime. Some residents feel their neighborhoods have changed for the worse and are considering leaving.

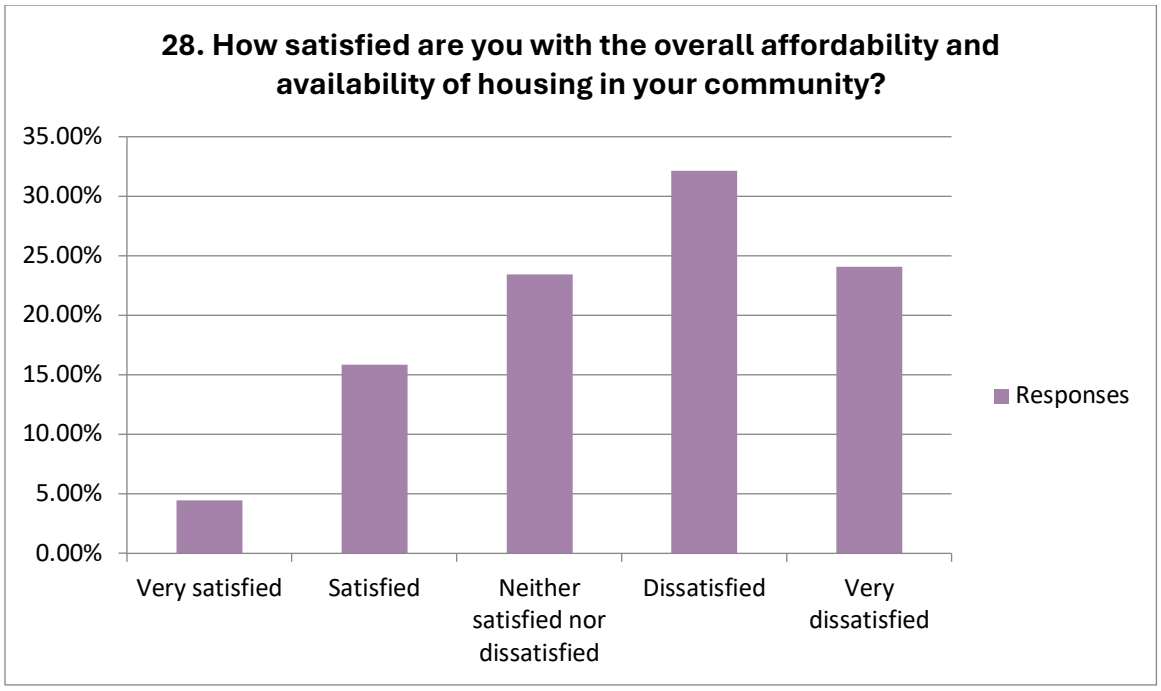
5. Life Circumstances and Family Needs Influence Housing Choices
Several people mentioned living where they do because of family obligations, such as caring for elderly relatives, co-parenting, or being close to schools or jobs. Others noted they were "stuck" due to divorce, disability, or lack of other options.

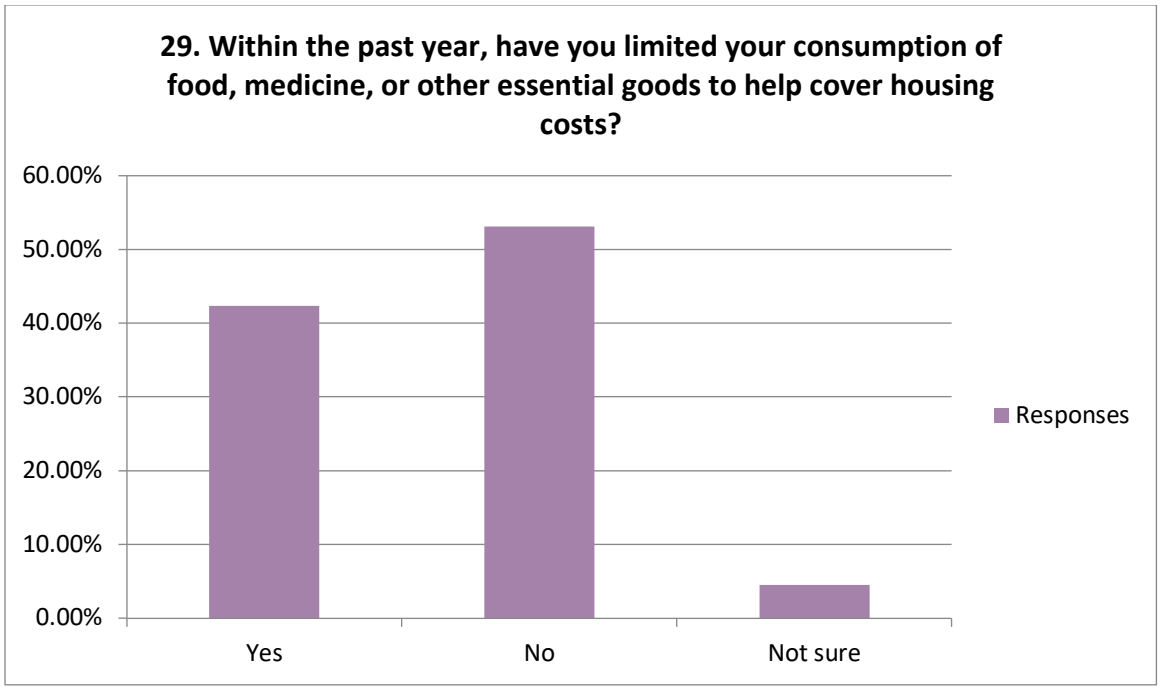

24. How confident are you that you or someone else in your household will be able to cover your upcoming housing payment (rent or mortgage payment) on time?
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
Very confident
Somewhat confident
Not so confident
Not at all confident
Unsure/does not apply to me
Responses


25. How difficult was it for you to secure housing in your community?
40.00%
35.00%
30.00%
25.00%
20.00%
15.00%
10.00%
5.00%
0.00%
Very difficult
Difficult
Somewhat difficult
Not difficult at all
Responses


26. How satisfied are you with your current housing situation?
40.00%
35.00%
30.00%
25.00%
20.00%
15.00%
10.00%
5.00%
0.00%
Very satisfied
Satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Responses


27. How would you rate the physical condition of your current housing?
50.00%
45.00%
40.00%
35.00%
30.00%
25.00%
20.00%
15.00%
10.00%
5.00%
0.00%
Excellent
Good
Fair
Poor
Very poor
Responses


28. How satisfied are you with the overall affordability and availability of housing in your community?
35.00%
30.00%
25.00%
20.00%
15.00%
10.00%
5.00%
0.00%
Very satisfied
Satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Responses


29. Within the past year, have you limited your consumption of food, medicine, or other essential goods to help cover housing costs?
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
Yes
No
Not sure
Responses

30. What do you see as your community's most pressing housing issues? Please rank in order your top 5 most pressing housing issues.	
Housing Issue	**% Ranking First**
There is inadequate senior housing	15%
Younger people cannot afford to buy homes	33%
Rent is unaffordable	27%
There is inadequate workforce housing	2%
There are too many short-term rentals (Airbnb, VRBO, etc.)	4%
Single-family homes are in short supply	4%
There are not enough apartments	0%
Not enough affordable townhomes or condos	3%
The cost of utility services is too high	6%
Affordable homes are far from work, school, or retail centers	3%
No currently pressing issues	3%

31. Are there other pressing housing issues?

Responses: 324 – Summary/General Themes

1. Housing affordability is the most urgent concern.
Residents overwhelmingly stated that both rent and home prices are unaffordable, especially for working families, seniors, and people with disabilities. Many shared that they are cost-burdened or unable to find housing that fits their income.

2. Wages are not keeping up with the cost of living.
A recurring theme was that local wages, especially outside of defense-related jobs, do not support the cost of housing, utilities, insurance, and other basic needs. This mismatch is forcing people to live with family, delay homeownership, or consider leaving the area.

3. Overdevelopment and poor planning are major frustrations.
Many respondents criticized the rapid construction of high-density housing without adequate infrastructure, green space, or transportation. Some feel this is degrading neighborhood character and increasing traffic, crime, and environmental strain.

4. There is a lack of diverse and accessible housing options.
People called for more small homes, single-level homes for seniors, and housing for people with disabilities. Others noted that affordable housing is often located in areas with limited services, poor transit, or safety concerns.

5. Distrust in local government and developers is high.
Numerous comments reflected a belief that city leaders prioritize developers over residents, with concerns about transparency, accountability, and decisions that seem disconnected from community needs.

32. What type of housing do you feel best fits your household's needs?	
Housing Type	**% of Responses**
Single-family home (standalone home)	67%
Townhome or duplex	7%
Apartment	4%
Condominium (an owned apartment, duplex, or townhome)	5%
Senior living facility	1%
Multi-generational housing (e.g., ADU/basement, converted garage, or backyard unit)	13%
Other (please specify)	3%

Responses: 50 Responses – Summary/Common Themes

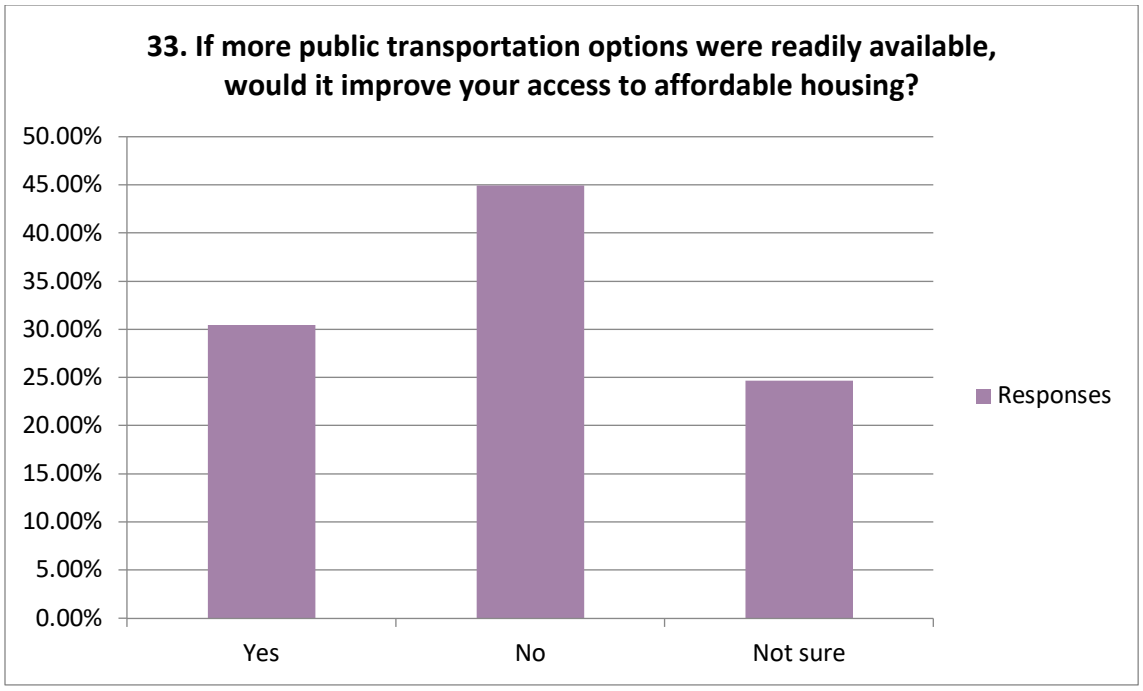
1. Single-family homes are the most preferred housing type.
Many respondents currently live in or desire single-family homes, though some anticipate needing different options as they age.

2. There is strong interest in diverse and flexible housing options.
Respondents expressed openness to townhomes, mobile homes, ADUs, cottages, and one-level homes to meet changing needs.

3. Affordability is a major concern across all housing types.
Rising costs of rent, insurance, and HOA fees make many housing options unattainable, even when they are technically available.

4. Multigenerational and community-based living is valued.
Many people support housing that accommodates extended families or shared living, especially when thoughtfully designed.

5. Quality of life features are important in housing decisions.
Respondents emphasized the need for outdoor space, pet-friendliness, safety, and accessibility—especially for seniors and low-income individuals.


33. If more public transportation options were readily available, would it improve your access to affordable housing?
50.00%
45.00%
40.00%
35.00%
30.00%
25.00%
20.00%
15.00%
10.00%
5.00%
0.00%
Yes
No
Not sure
Responses

34. Do you have any additional comments or feedback? If so, please feel free to do so here

Responses: 614 – Summary/Common Themes

1. Housing affordability is a widespread and urgent concern.
Many residents shared that rising housing costs, rent, insurance, and property taxes are making it increasingly difficult to live in Colorado Springs.

2. Residents are frustrated with unchecked development and sprawl.
There is strong opposition to overbuilding, especially of high-density apartments, without adequate infrastructure, green space, or community input.

3. Public trust in local government and developers is low.
Numerous comments expressed skepticism that city leaders are listening to residents, with concerns about favoritism toward developers and lack of transparency.

4. There is a strong call for more diverse and accessible housing options.
People want smaller homes, senior housing, ADUs, and multi-generational options that are affordable and integrated into existing neighborhoods.

5. Transportation and housing are deeply connected.
Many respondents emphasized the need for improved public transit, walkability, and bike infrastructure to support housing access and reduce car dependency.

6. Residents want to preserve neighborhood character and open space.
There is concern that new development is eroding the identity of established neighborhoods and harming the natural environment.

7. Homelessness and housing insecurity are top-of-mind.
Respondents called for compassionate, long-term solutions to support unhoused individuals and prevent more people from falling into homelessness.

8. Infrastructure and services are not keeping pace with growth.
People cited strained roads, schools, emergency services, and utilities as reasons to slow development and focus on maintaining what already exists.

9. Many feel stuck or priced out of homeownership.
Even middle-income earners and long-time residents reported being unable to move, upgrade, or buy due to high prices and limited inventory.

10. There is a desire for action, not just surveys.
While many appreciated the opportunity to share feedback, they urged city leaders to act on the data and implement meaningful, community-driven solutions.

Appendix D – El Paso County Municipality Summary Pages

Key Facts and Figures - Town of Calhan

Colorado Springs and El Paso County Regional Housing Needs Assessment
December 2025

Total Population (2023)

762 -4% since 2013

Total Households (2023)

302 -4% since 2013

Homeownership Rate (2023)

65% +3% since 2018

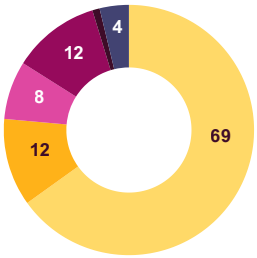
Median Household Income (2023)

$50,000 -13k since 2018

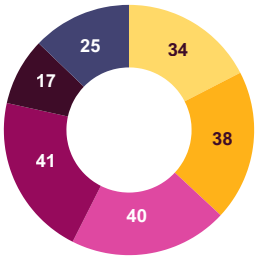
Housing Stock (2023)

336 Units

Renter Household AMI (2023)



Owner Household AMI (2023)



- Extremely Low Income (⩽ 30% AMI)
- Very Low Income (31-50% AMI)
- Low Income (51-80% AMI)
- Moderate Income (81-120% AMI)
- Middle Income (120-200% AMI)
- Upper Income (⩾201% AMI)

Existing and Projected Housing Needs

Key Metrics

- No. 1 employment sector is **Construction**
- Median age of **40.7**
- Housing stock mainly consists of single-family detached homes, 2-4 multifamily units, and mobile homes
- Significant **decrease** of over **$30k** in renter income since 2018
- About **84%** of renters are low income
- Median home sale price of **$300,000, up 36%** since 2018
- Average gross rent of **$2,563, down 20%** since 2018

Key Facts and Figures - City of Fountain

Colorado Springs and El Paso County Regional Housing Needs Assessment
December 2025

Total Population (2023)

30,191 +9% since 2013

Total Households (2023)

10,152 +9% since 2013

Homeownership Rate (2023)

72% +6% since 2018

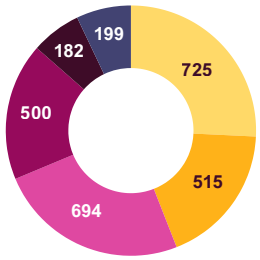
Median Household Income (2023)

$85,246 +$6.5k since 2018

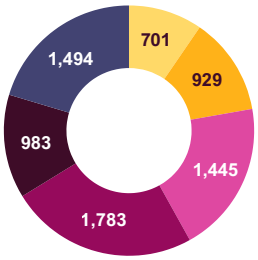
Housing Stock (2023)

10,648 Units

Renter Household AMI (2023)



Owner Household AMI (2023)



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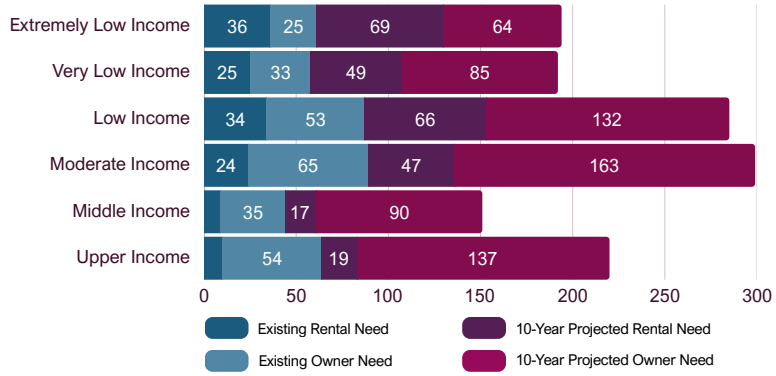
Existing and Projected Housing Needs



Key Metrics

- No. 1 employment sector is **Educational Services**
- Median age of **31.1**
- Low vacancy rate of **4.7%**, suggesting a tight housing market
- Nearly **70%** of renters are low income
- Around **309** homeless individuals and an additional **144** at-risk
- Median home sale price of **$408,000, up 42%** since 2018
- Average gross rent of **$2,194, up 9%** since 2018

Key Facts and Figures - Town of Green Mountain Falls

Colorado Springs and El Paso County Regional Housing Needs Assessment
December 2025

Total Population (2023)

642 -22% since 2013

Total Households (2023)

322 -19% since 2013

Homeownership Rate (2023)

80% +12% since 2018

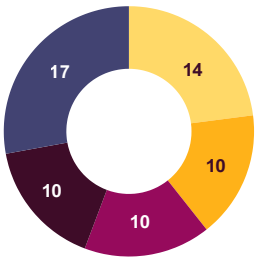
Median Household Income (2023)

$96,346 +36.5k since 2018

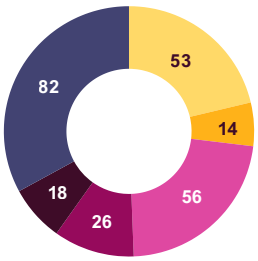
Housing Stock (2023)

556 Units

Renter Household AMI (2023)



Owner Household AMI (2023)



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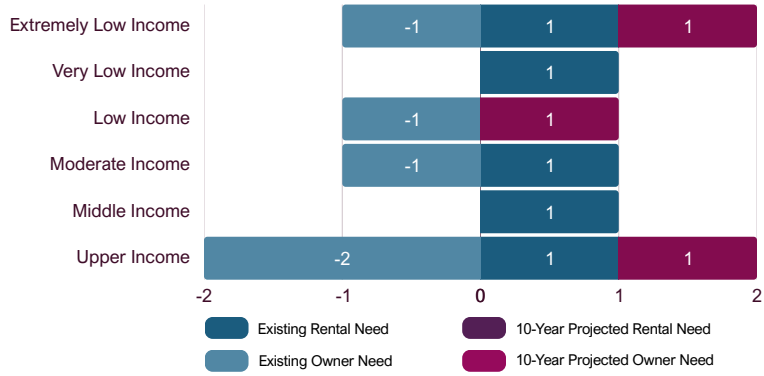
Existing and Projected Housing Needs



Key Metrics

- No. 1 employment sector is **Educational Services**
- Median age of **46.4**
- Substantial **increase** of around **$75k** in renter income since 2018
- Housing stock is **95%** single-family detached homes, and **100%** of owner-occupied housing stock
- High vacancy rate of **42.1%**
- Median home sale price of **$400,000, up 14%** since 2018
- Average gross rent of **$1,694, up 53%** since 2018

Key Facts and Figures - City of Manitou Springs

Colorado Springs and El Paso County Regional Housing Needs Assessment
December 2025

Total Population (2023)

4,846 -4% since 2013

Total Households (2023)

2,445 -4% since 2013

Homeownership Rate (2023)

57% +2% since 2018

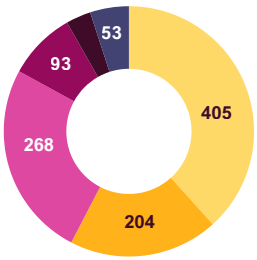
Median Household Income (2023)

$76,550 -5k since 2018

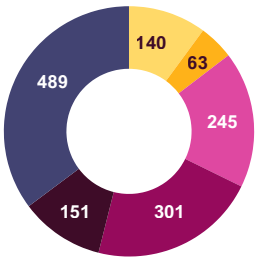
Housing Stock (2023)

2,697 Units

Renter Household AMI (2023)



Owner Household AMI (2023)



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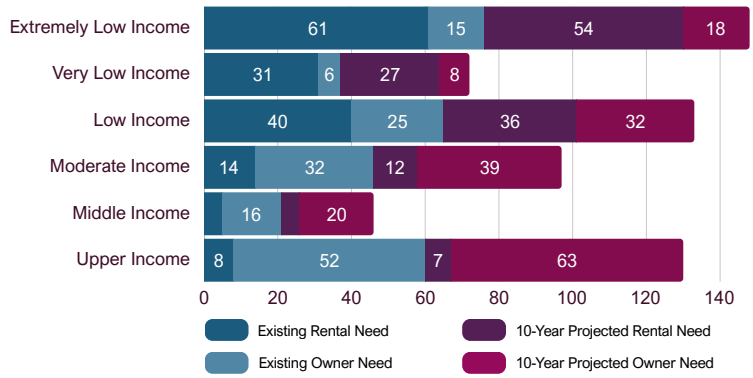
Existing and Projected Housing Needs



Key Metrics

- No. 1 employment sector is **Educational Services**
- Median age of **44.9**
- Rental housing stock composed of significant amount of multi-family housing
- About **83%** of renters are low income, while **35%** of owners are upper income
- Median home sale price of **$535,000, up 28%** since 2018
- Average gross rent of **$1,644, up 3%** since 2018

Key Facts and Figures - Town of Monument

Colorado Springs and El Paso County Regional Housing Needs Assessment
December 2025

Total Population (2023)

11,014 ↑ +61% since 2013

Total Households (2023)

4,124 ↑ +82% since 2013

Homeownership Rate (2023)

79% ↑ +3% since 2018

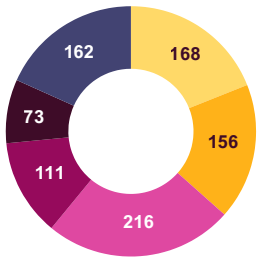
Median Household Income (2023)

$114,654 ↓ -11.5k since 2018

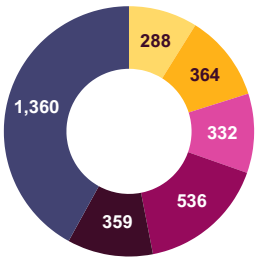
Housing Stock (2023)

4,662 Units

Renter Household AMI (2023)



Owner Household AMI (2023)



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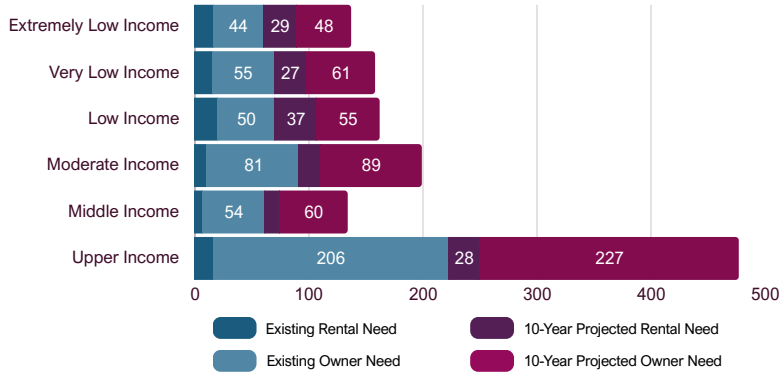
Existing and Projected Housing Needs



Key Metrics

- No. 1 employment sector is **Educational Services**
- Median age of **38**
- Large imbalance between workforce needs and housing supply: **10.3** low-income jobs per low-income unit, **1.4** total jobs per unit, indicating a strong demand for affordable housing
- About **42%** of owner-occupied households are upper income
- Median home sale price of **$653,750, up 36%** since 2018
- Average gross rent of **$2,739**, remained stable since 2018

Key Facts and Figures - Town of Palmer Lake

Colorado Springs and El Paso County Regional Housing Needs Assessment
December 2025

Total Population (2023)

2,650 +6% since 2013

Total Households (2023)

1,095 +10% since 2013

Homeownership Rate (2023)

88% +12% since 2018

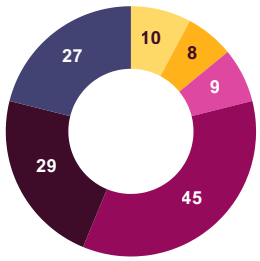
Median Household Income (2023)

$122,855 +43.5k since 2018

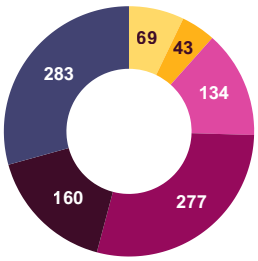
Housing Stock (2023)

1,200 Units

Renter Household AMI (2023)



Owner Household AMI (2023)



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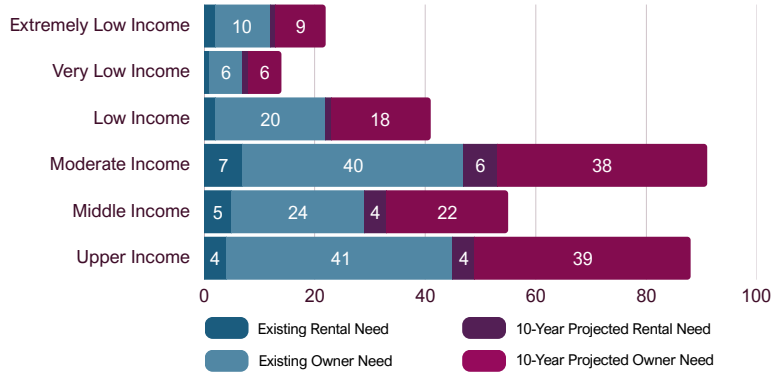
Existing and Projected Housing Needs



Key Metrics

- No. 1 employment sector is **Educational Services**
- Median age of **49.4**
- Substantial **increase** of around **$70k** in renter income since 2018
- Housing stock is **89%** single-family detached homes, and lacks multifamily homes entirely
- Moderate income and higher make up around **75%** of both renter and owner households
- Median home sale price of **$574,250, up 37%** since 2018
- Average gross rent of **$2,544, up 61%** since 2018

Key Facts and Figures - Town of Ramah

Colorado Springs and El Paso County Regional Housing Needs Assessment
December 2025

Total Population (2023)

110 -11% since 2013

Total Households (2023)

51 -9% since 2013

Homeownership Rate (2023)

97% +27% since 2018

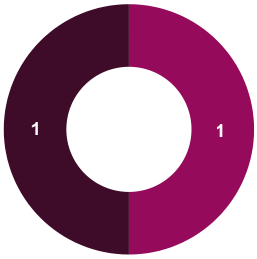
Median Household Income (2023)

$61,973 -1k since 2018

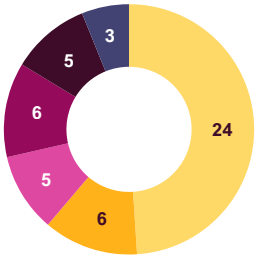
Housing Stock (2023)

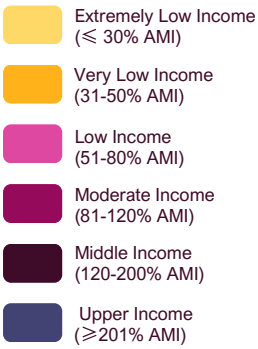
63 Units

Renter Household AMI (2023)



Owner Household AMI (2023)





Existing and Projected Housing Needs

Key Metrics

- No. 1 employment sector is **Educational Services**
- Older median age of **61.1**
- Housing stock only comprised of single-family detached homes and mobile homes
- Around **71%** of owner-occupied households are low income
- Lower median home sale price of **$215,000**
- Ramah requires about **27 units** (**43%** of total housing stock) for accessible/visitable housing

EL PASO COUNTY COLORADO
EST. 1861

COLORADO SPRINGS
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Matrix