



Pulse Poll deep dive shows widespread concerns about economic healthcare and mental health challenges

While political challenges and the high costs of living, housing and healthcare emerged as the primary concerns for residents statewide in the 2025 Colorado Health Foundation (CHF) Pulse Poll, a closer look at specific demographic responses reveals many Coloradans face challenges that far exceed the statewide average, according to newly released findings from CHF.

A bipartisan team of researchers collected responses from 2,333 Coloradans between April 19 and May 18, 2025 for the sixth annual CHF poll that included oversamples of Black/African-American, American Indian/Alaska Native and Asian-American Coloradans, as well as residents of Morgan County, CO.

Phase I results, released in July, highlighted Coloradans' deep appreciation for the state's natural beauty, outdoor activities, and sense of community. However, for the first time in the survey's history, respondents' top concern wasn't economic. Rather, 32% pointed to government and politics as the leading challenge facing the state, with concerns about cost of living and housing not far behind. In a follow-up question posing key issues, respondents identified the rising cost of living, housing and healthcare as the top three issues facing the state. Worry about cost for all three key topics dramatically increased during the pandemic and has remained consistently high over the past two years.

In addition, despite the dramatic rise in concern about government and politics, most respondents reported feeling a lack of agency to improve their communities through civic activities, such as publicly expressing support for social causes or candidates, speaking at public meetings of local government or communicating directly with policymakers. A notable exception was volunteering with organizations working on causes they care about, which more respondents viewed as an effective way to engage.

Deep dive reveals a cross-section of Coloradans dealing with a magnified level of concerns and economic pain

While all of the major categories remain troublesome topics, a closer look into demographic groups, as defined by location, age, race, ethnicity, income, political affiliation and experiences with mental health strain, reveals even more acute pains across a diverse range of groups and issues.

Younger people (age 18-29), unemployed residents or people living on lower incomes, renters, people without health insurance, American Indian/Alaska Native, LGBTQ+ individuals, residents of Pueblo County are experiencing disproportionate financial impacts, as well as mental health challenges. People in each of these groups reported facing at least three of six financial challenges in the past 12 months, ranging from postponing medical, dental or mental health care, work hours or wages were reduced, were forced to skip meals due to finances, or was laid off. People in most other subgroups reported experiencing two or fewer.

There are sizable demographic differences in the frequency with which financial challenges are experienced.

Q23. In the last 12 months, have you experienced any of the following?

Financial Challenges	Number of Challenges Experienced		
	0 of 6	1-2 of 6	3+ of 6
Postponed medical care	Ages 75+	Rural Democrats	Unemployed
Postponed dental care	No Mental Health Strain	Morgan County	HH Income <\$30,000
Postponed mental health care	Douglas County	Interviewed in Spanish	Renters
Had work hours cut back or wages reduced	Ages 65+	Caregivers	Uninsured
Skipped meals because you couldn't afford food	College-Educated Men	Asian/Pacific Islander	American Indian/ Alaska Native
Been laid off	Retired	Liberal Democrats	Democrats w/Mental Health Strain
	Men Ages 50+	Rural Independents	LGBTQ+
	Republicans Ages 50+	Liberal	Pueblo County
	Rural Republicans	Adams County	
	Republican Men	Black/African American	
		Eastern Plains Region	



“Any one of these issues is challenging enough on its own, but when you combine these factors — particularly within some of our state’s most burdened communities — the needs and opportunities for support become even more urgent,” said CHF Portfolio Director Maribel Cifuentes. “The intersection of these challenges is often where CHF and our community partners can make the greatest impact — by advancing access, quality and affordability in housing, healthcare and economic opportunity, as well as centering the voices of those most deeply affected, we can provide needed supports for Coloradans most at risk.”

Making Sacrifices Due to Rising Costs

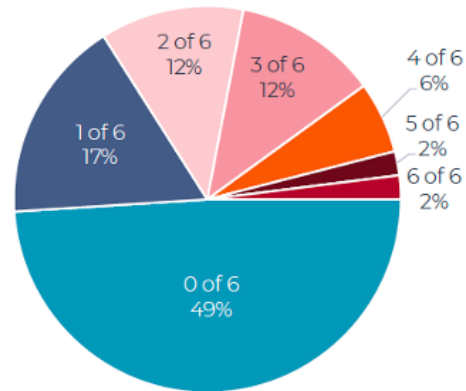
For the first time since the pandemic, Pulse Poll results reflected a modest decline in the number of respondents reporting that they’ve had to make significant sacrifices to pay the bills, identify as worse off financially, or say that they are really struggling financially. At the same time, there was a slight decrease in the number of people who say they are living comfortably with increasing savings or are better off financially than they were a year ago.

Just over half of the respondents reported experiencing financial challenges in the past year, and more than one in five Coloradans reported experiencing three or more of the six challenges presented to them in the poll.

Nearly half of Coloradans have not experienced financial challenges; nearly one in five have experienced at least three of the challenges listed.

Q23. In the last 12 months, have you experienced any of the following?

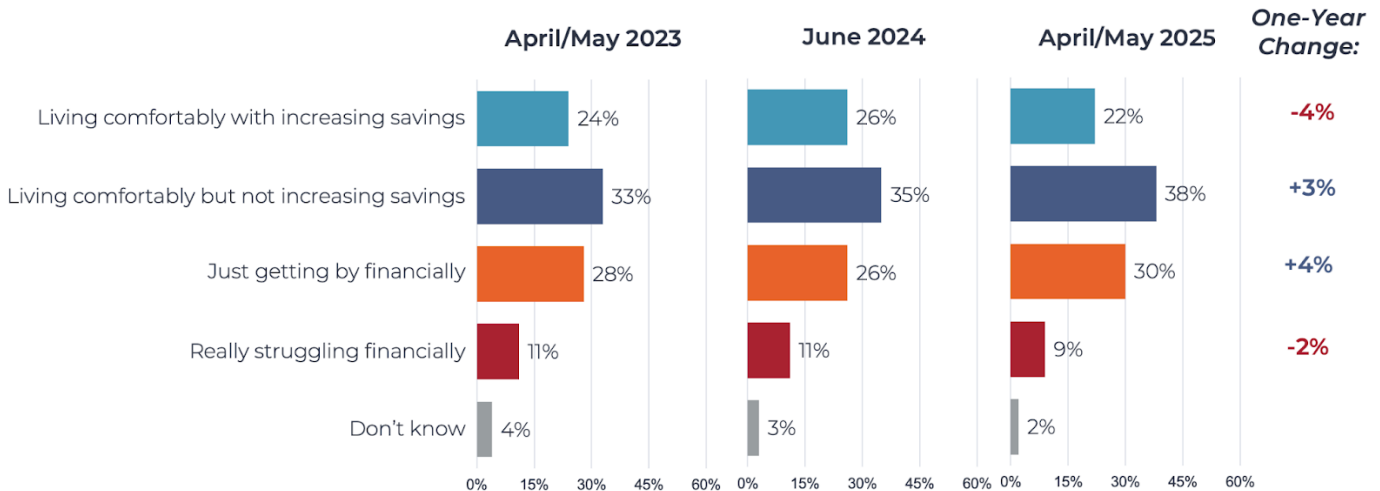
Financial Challenges
Postponed medical care
Postponed dental care
Postponed mental health care
Had work hours cut back or wages reduced
Skipped meals because you couldn't afford food
Been laid off



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Fewer than one-quarter of Coloradans report living comfortably with increasing savings.

Q17. Which of the following best describes your financial situation:

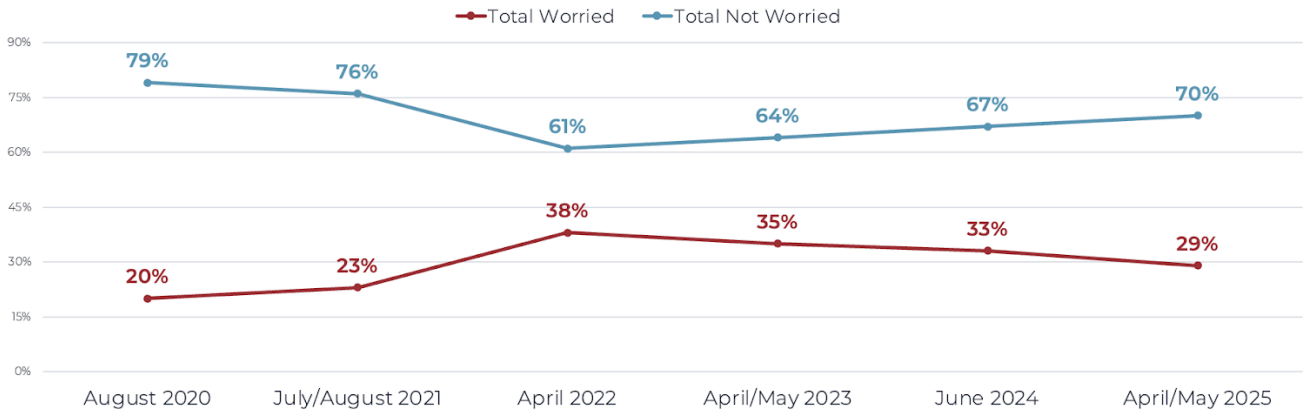


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Among those challenges, food insecurity remains a significant issue for many Coloradans, with rates notably higher among several demographic groups—including Black, Latino, and American Indian and Alaska Native residents.

Nearly one-third are worried about affording enough food to feed themselves and their family.

Q22. Thinking ahead over the next year, how worried are you that you might not always be able to afford enough food to feed yourself and your family:



Black, Latino, and American Indian and Alaska Native Coloradans are more likely to be worried about food insecurity than are white or AAPI Coloradans.

Q22. Thinking ahead over the next year, how worried are you that you might not always be able to afford enough food to feed yourself and your family.

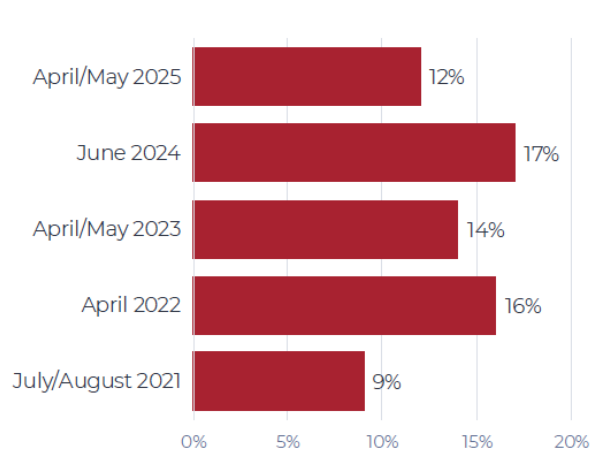
Demographic Group	Total Worried	Total Not Worried	Don't Know
All	29%	70%	1%
Race/Ethnicity			
Asian/Pacific Islander	25%	75%	0%
Black/African American	37%	60%	2%
Hispanic/Latino	41%	59%	0%
American Indian/Alaska Native	38%	62%	0%
White	22%	77%	1%
Household Income			
<\$30,000	69%	25%	6%
\$30,000-\$50,000	49%	49%	2%
\$50,000-\$75,000	31%	68%	1%
\$75,000-\$100,000	30%	70%	1%
\$100,000-\$150,000	26%	74%	0%
\$150,000+	12%	87%	1%



Roughly one in ten Coloradans report skipping meals due to affordability challenges—a figure that varies significantly by income level and across certain demographic groups.

Approximately one in ten say they have skipped meals because they couldn't afford food.

Q23a. In the last 12 months, have you experienced any of the following? Skipped meals because you couldn't afford food (% Yes)



Demographic Group	% Yes
Race/Ethnicity	
Asian/Pacific Islander	15%
Black/African American	18%
Hispanic/Latino	18%
American Indian/Alaska Native	8%
White	7%
Household Income	
<\$30,000	40%
\$30,000-\$50,000	21%
\$50,000-\$75,000	17%
\$75,000-\$100,000	12%
\$100,000-\$150,000	5%
\$150,000+	5%



Where you live matters

While the top issues remained relatively consistent across the state, there were some notable regional variations in the issues reported as top concerns or challenges facing the state.

There are some notable regional variations in issue concerns.

Q15. Please consider the following issues that some people suggest are problems facing Colorado. Please indicate whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem for residents of Colorado.

(% Extremely/Very Serious Problem)

Problem	All	Region				
		Eastern Plains	Colorado Springs	Larimer/Weld	Denver Metro	Western Slope
The rising cost of living	89%	73%	84%	90%	91%	89%
The cost of housing	84%	59%	84%	86%	84%	84%
The cost of healthcare	75%	94%	71%	81%	72%	78%
Homelessness	74%	76%	74%	68%	77%	67%
Drug overdoses	65%	92%	71%	68%	63%	58%
Mental health	59%	58%	63%	50%	59%	60%
Jobs and the economy	58%	70%	58%	61%	57%	59%
Wildfires or other natural disasters	56%	18%	56%	47%	59%	57%
Crime, in general	55%	87%	72%	44%	53%	52%
Drug and alcohol abuse	52%	42%	63%	42%	52%	53%
Climate change	51%	40%	36%	56%	55%	46%
Illegal immigration	49%	90%	62%	40%	46%	52%
Restrictions on reproductive rights	43%	66%	28%	56%	43%	39%
Hunger	41%	51%	34%	32%	44%	43%
Gun violence	41%	14%	33%	36%	47%	34%
Mistreatment of immigrants	37%	16%	38%	34%	39%	31%
Police violence and misconduct	29%	19%	19%	34%	30%	27%
Racial bias and discrimination	27%	17%	28%	24%	29%	23%
Crime, in your neighborhood	24%	8%	28%	11%	30%	12%



Split Sample

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Interestingly, residents of urban communities expressed greater concern about wildfires, while suburban and rural respondents were more focused on crime. Concerns about crime in general (55%) was more than double the 24% who reported concerns about crime in their own neighborhoods.

Other key topics with significant differences between urban, suburban and rural residents included climate change, illegal immigration and mistreatment of immigrants, racial bias and discrimination, and gun violence.

Notably, urban residents express more concern about wildfire, while suburban and rural ones are more concerned about crime.

Q15. Please consider the following issues that some people suggest are problems facing Colorado. Please indicate whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem for residents of Colorado.

(% Extremely/Very Serious Problem)

Problem	All	Urbanicity		
		Urban	Suburban	Rural
The rising cost of living	89%	90%	88%	89%
The cost of housing	84%	84%	85%	81%
The cost of healthcare	75%	74%	73%	80%
Homelessness	74%	77%	75%	64%
Drug overdoses	65%	62%	69%	69%
Mental health	59%	62%	54%	55%
Jobs and the economy	58%	61%	51%	62%
Wildfires or other natural disasters	56%	62%	48%	46%
Crime, in general	55%	48%	66%	62%
Drug and alcohol abuse	52%	54%	51%	49%
Climate change	51%	61%	42%	37%
Illegal immigration	49%	39%	58%	65%
Restrictions on reproductive rights	43%	48%	35%	38%
Hunger	41%	45%	33%	43%
Gun violence	41%	49%	33%	26%
Mistreatment of immigrants	37%	44%	30%	23%
Police violence and misconduct	29%	31%	27%	25%
Racial bias and discrimination	27%	33%	19%	18%
Crime, in your neighborhood	24%	30%	18%	17%



Split Sample

Respondents in Morgan County, CO (a population oversampled in this year’s survey) shared a drastically different list of top issues, led by healthcare costs and followed by drug overdoses, illegal immigration and crime, in general.

In addition, nearly three in four respondents (73%) on the Eastern Plains view the cost of living as an extremely serious or very serious problem, compared to nearly nine of 10 Coloradans (89%).

Partisan concerns vary drastically

When looking at the top issues across partisan lines, the biggest gaps were centered around climate change, immigration, crime and reproductive rights – all with 45% or higher differentials between Democrats and Republicans.

Climate change, immigration, and reproductive rights are the most divisive issues along partisan lines.

Q15. Please consider the following issues that some people suggest are problems facing Colorado. Please indicate whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem for residents of Colorado.

(% Extremely/Very Serious Problem)

Problem	All	Party			Dem-Rep. Diff.
		Democrats	Independents	Republicans	
The rising cost of living	89%	92%	91%	83%	+9%
The cost of housing	84%	84%	86%	80%	+4%
The cost of healthcare	75%	84%	74%	58%	+26%
Homelessness	74%	76%	72%	74%	+2%
Drug overdoses	65%	59%	60%	77%	-18%
Mental health	59%	64%	57%	57%	+7%
Jobs and the economy	58%	65%	60%	47%	+18%
Wildfires or other natural disasters	56%	73%	51%	46%	+27%
Crime, in general	55%	34%	51%	84%	-50%
Drug and alcohol abuse	52%	55%	48%	58%	-3%
Climate change	51%	85%	53%	8%	+77%
Illegal immigration	49%	23%	43%	89%	-66%
Restrictions on reproductive rights	43%	63%	42%	18%	+45%
Hunger	41%	50%	40%	27%	+23%
Gun violence	41%	65%	35%	20%	+45%
Mistreatment of immigrants	37%	63%	35%	7%	+56%
Police violence and misconduct	29%	46%	25%	13%	+33%
Racial bias and discrimination	27%	47%	23%	9%	+38%
Crime, in your neighborhood	24%	23%	20%	36%	-13%



Split Sample

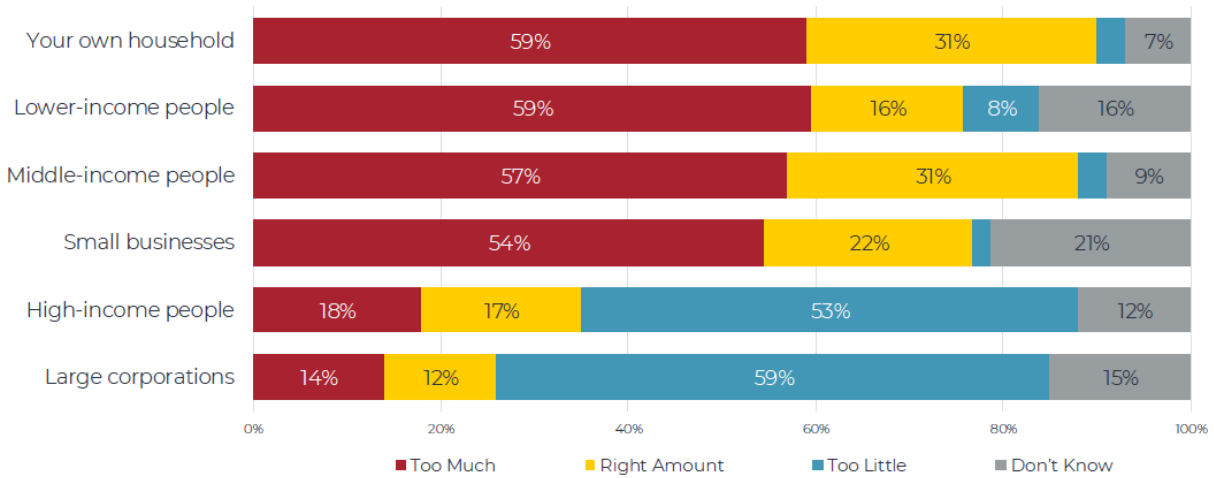
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Taxes and where the money goes

When asked about taxes, Coloradans believe that lower- and middle-income individuals, small businesses, and their own households are paying too much, while high-income earners and large corporations are paying too little.

Majorities agree that high-income people and large corporations pay too little in taxes in Colorado.

Q27. Here is a list of several different types of people and groups that pay state and local taxes in Colorado. Please indicate whether you think that category of taxpayers currently pays too much, the right amount, or too little in state and local taxes.

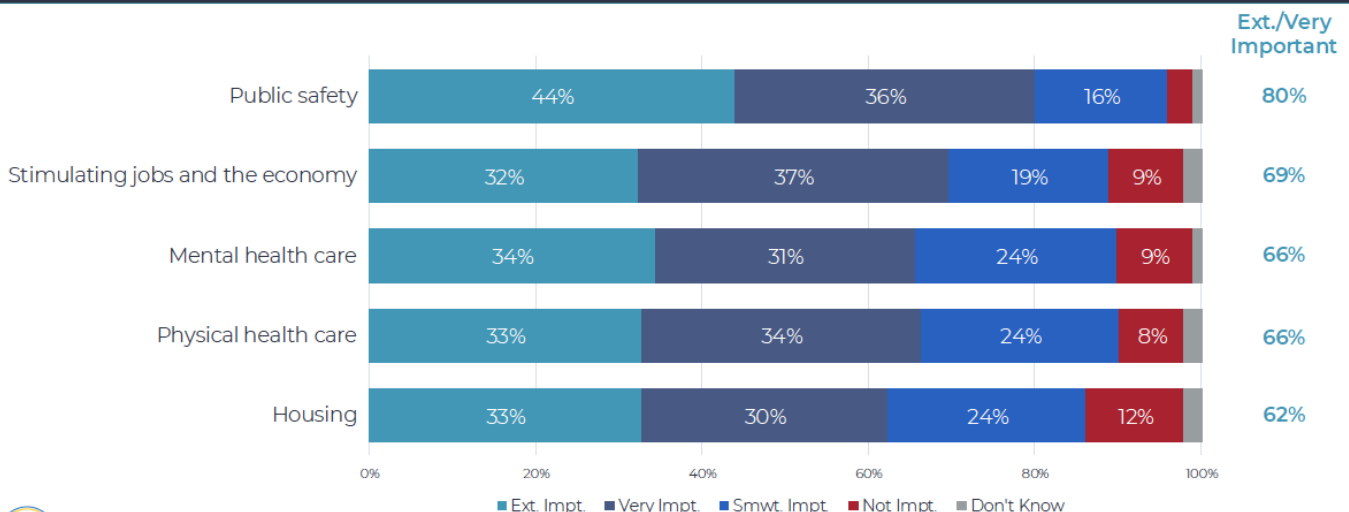


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Overall, Coloradans feel that it's extremely important for their tax dollars to be directed to critical services like public safety (80%), stimulating jobs and the economy (69%), health care (67%), mental health (65%) and housing (63%).

Voters place the highest priority on using taxes to fund public safety services.

Q28. Here is a list of public services that are funded by state and local taxes in Colorado. For each, please indicate how important it is to you that your tax dollars be directed to that service: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important.



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Democrats, Independents, and Republicans have similar support for directing taxes to public safety, while support from Republicans and Independents drops for services such as healthcare, mental health and housing.

Coloradans across partisan lines place the greatest importance on public safety; Democrats and independents rate every other priority more highly than do Republicans.
 Q28. Here is a list of public services that are funded by state and local taxes in Colorado. For each, please indicate how important it is to you that your tax dollars be directed to that service: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important.
 (% Extremely/Very Important)

Public Service	All	Party			Dem-Rep. Diff.
		Democrats	Independents	Republicans	
Public safety	80%	80%	79%	80%	0%
Stimulating jobs and the economy	69%	80%	66%	64%	+16%
Mental health care	66%	85%	64%	49%	+36%
Physical health care	66%	87%	65%	46%	+41%
Housing	62%	85%	61%	38%	+47%



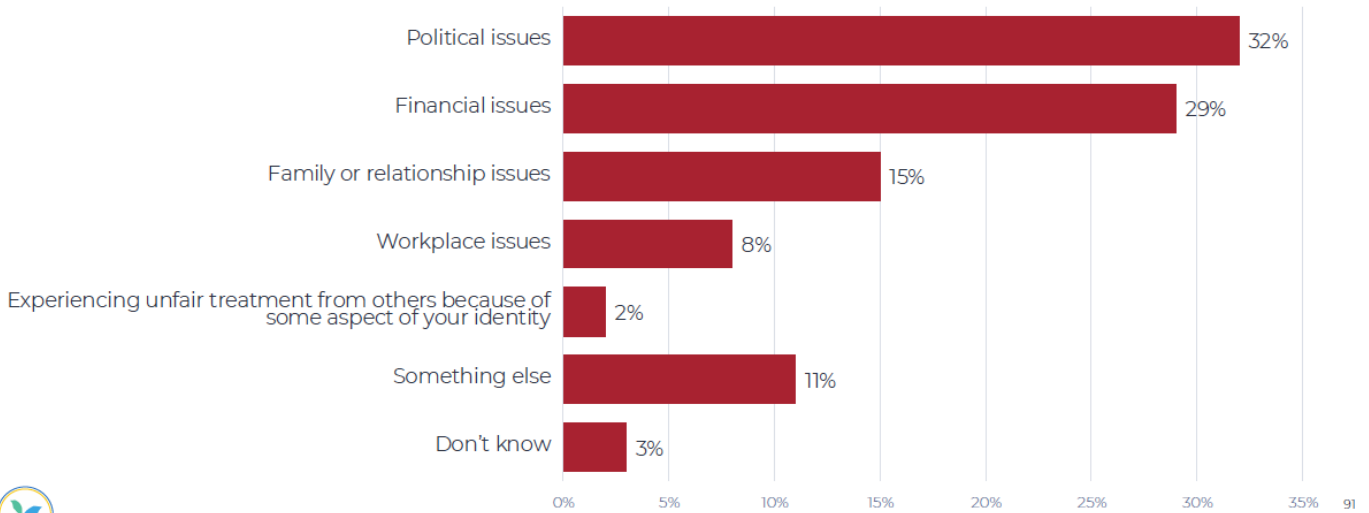
Mental health strain triggered by political and financial concerns

Staying at the forefront, 56% of Coloradans reported experiencing mental health strain—such as anxiety, depression, loneliness, or stress—in the past year, a figure that has remained steady since 2022. Of those respondents, 32% identified political issues as the primary contributor to their strain, with financial issues a close second at 29%. Both factors were cited at roughly twice the rate of the next highest contributor, family or relationship issues.

These findings align with the state’s top concerns around government, politics, and rising costs, showing little variation across party affiliations in the reasons cited.

Political and financial issues have contributed the most to mental health strain.

Q26. And which of the following contributes the most to your mental health strain:
(Open-ended; Asked only of those who have experienced mental health strain; n=1,298)



Partisan differences in causes of mental health strain are minimal.

Q26. And which of the following contributes the most to your mental health strain:
(Open-ended; Asked only of those who have experienced mental health strain; n=1,298)

Mental Health Strain Contributor	All	Party		
		Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Political issues	32%	34%	34%	27%
Financial issues	29%	30%	26%	31%
Family or relationship issues	15%	15%	12%	19%
Workplace issues	8%	8%	9%	8%
Experiencing unfair treatment from others because of some aspect of your identity	2%	1%	3%	3%




Pulse Poll findings also showed that women were more likely to point to political pressures and family issues while men were more likely to say their mental health strain is due to financial issues. Black Coloradans and seniors cited politics as their top mental health strain contributor while American Indian and Latino residents pointed to financial concerns.

There was also a significant difference between those who are financially comfortable but experiencing mental health strain (41% point to politics, 13% finances) versus those struggling financially (49% say strain is due to finances; 22% politics).

People who have experienced mental health strain are more likely to report having faced various kinds of financial hardship.
 % Experiencing Each Type of Financial Hardship

Type of Financial Hardship	Among All Coloradans	Among Experienced Mental Health Strain
Finances have gotten worse year-to-date	39%	47%
Struggling financially	38%	44%
Worried about losing health insurance	38%	46%
Postponed dental care	33%	45%
Postponed medical care	30%	44%
Worried about losing home	30%	39%
Worried about affording food	29%	37%
To afford housing, cut back on or go without other needs, like food or health care	25%	36%
To afford housing, worked multiple jobs, or more than you wanted to	25%	31%
To afford housing, avoided asking your landlord to address problems	25%	30%
To afford housing, took on on high-interest debt like credit card balances or payday loans	22%	28%
Postponed mental health care	21%	35%
To afford housing, fell behind on other bills or payments	21%	30%
Had work hours cut back or wages reduced	19%	25%
To afford housing, stayed in housing that was not right for you	18%	25%
To afford housing, sold property or important assets, like a car, that you would have liked to keep	14%	19%
Skipped meals because you couldn't afford food	12%	19%
Been laid off	8%	10%

 *Asked of Renters Only 99

Those experiencing mental health strain report greater concerns than the average respondent across a broad range of issues—including mental health, climate change, and the treatment of immigrants. While the data clearly show a connection between mental health strain and the challenges respondents face, it remains unclear if the challenges contribute to mental health strain or arise as individuals work to address it.

Coloradans who report experiencing mental health strain express more concern about a range of issues – notably mental health, climate change, and mistreatment of immigrants.

Q15. Please consider the following issues that some people suggest are problems facing Colorado. Please indicate whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem for residents of Colorado.

(% Extremely/Very Serious Problem)

Problem	All	Mental Health Strain	
		Experienced	Has Not Experienced
The rising cost of living	89%	95%	83%
The cost of housing	84%	86%	81%
The cost of healthcare	75%	79%	68%
Homelessness	74%	74%	74%
Drug overdoses	65%	65%	66%
Mental health	59%	66%	51%
Jobs and the economy	58%	62%	53%
Wildfires or other natural disasters	56%	63%	50%
Crime, in general	55%	48%	67%
Drug and alcohol abuse	52%	51%	56%
Climate change	51%	58%	41%
Illegal immigration	49%	40%	63%
Restrictions on reproductive rights	43%	46%	38%
Hunger	41%	46%	35%
Gun violence	41%	47%	34%
Mistreatment of immigrants	37%	44%	29%
Police violence and misconduct	29%	34%	21%
Racial bias and discrimination	27%	34%	20%
Crime, in your neighborhood	24%	22%	28%



Split Sample

Civic Engagement

Asked about specific activities people could take to improve their community and whether respondents view the activities as effective, a majority deemed most of the options as ineffective with the exception of "volunteering with organizations working on the social causes you care about," cited by 37% of the respondents. Volunteering was noted as more effective among African-American (56%), American-Indian (47%) and urban (42%) respondents, while suburban residents expressed more value in public expressions of support for causes. Democrats were far more likely to rate the activities as effective than Republicans or Independents.

Democrats are more likely to view these activities as impactful than are independents or Republicans.

Q16. Here is a list of ways Coloradans can improve their community. Please indicate how effective you think this kind of activity is at improving your community, using a scale of one to seven, where "one" means very ineffective and "seven" means very effective. You may choose any number from one to seven.

(% 6-7 (Very Effective))

Activity	All	Party			Dem-Rep. Diff.
		Democrats	Independents	Republicans	
Volunteering with organizations working on the social causes you care about	37%	47%	40%	24%	+23%
Communicating directly with policymakers	24%	32%	23%	17%	+15%
Speaking at public meetings of local government	21%	29%	18%	14%	+15%
*Publicly expressing your support for social causes	20%	29%	17%	12%	+17%
Stating your own opinion about social or political issues openly, even in settings where others may have opposing views	17%	22%	14%	13%	+9%
Publicly expressing your support for political candidates	14%	21%	10%	14%	+7%
*Publicly expressing your support for social causes on social media	12%	20%	9%	5%	+15%



*Split Sample

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For those on the Eastern Plains, all of the activities were rated less likely to be effective.

Eastern Plains residents are less likely rate many of these activities as effective.

Q16. Here is a list of ways Coloradans can improve their community. Please indicate how effective you think this kind of activity is at improving your community, using a scale of one to seven, where "one" means very ineffective and "seven" means very effective. You may choose any number from one to seven.

(% 6-7 (Very Effective))

Activity	All	Region				
		Eastern Plains	Colorado Springs	Larimer/Weld	Denver Metro	Western Slope
Volunteering with organizations working on the social causes you care about	37%	14%	38%	39%	39%	33%
Communicating directly with policymakers	24%	18%	24%	25%	26%	23%
Speaking at public meetings of local government	21%	19%	18%	26%	22%	14%
*Publicly expressing your support for social causes	20%	19%	25%	31%	18%	10%
Stating your own opinion about social or political issues openly, even in settings where others may have opposing views	17%	7%	13%	23%	17%	13%
Publicly expressing your support for political candidates	14%	5%	15%	11%	15%	12%
*Publicly expressing your support for social causes on social media	12%	6%	9%	10%	13%	16%



*Split Sample

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“The Pulse Poll data reflects the wide range of challenges Coloradans face in their pursuit of good health and well-being — as well as how they’re thinking about and approaching solutions to those concerns,” said Scott Downes, portfolio director at The Colorado Health Foundation. “We’re encouraged by the effectiveness of so many community partners across Colorado, who are speaking up and taking action to improve their communities. We’ll continue to learn from the Pulse Poll findings, amplify the voices of Coloradans, and put these insights into action with individuals, organizations, and communities to advance health equity and racial justice.”

Additional insights and interviews are available with research experts, Colorado Health Foundation leaders, local community organizations and impacted Coloradans. [Contact our team](#) to learn more.

About the Pulse Poll 2025

The 2025 Pulse Poll was conducted by telephone and online from April 19 – May 18, 2025 among a random representative sample of 2,333 adults age 18 and older living in Colorado including oversamples of Black/African-American, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Asian American Coloradans, as well as residents of Morgan County. The margin of sampling error for the full sample is +/-3.07% at the 95% confidence interval. For results based on subgroups, the margin of sampling error is higher.

About Our Phased Release

This year, we’re releasing the findings from The Colorado Health Foundation Pulse Poll in three phases, and we’re providing a variety of options to engage with

the data that interests you most. We will start in July with a focused release on what Coloradans named as the top issues facing the state, followed by a full deep-dive release in August and a Spanish-language release with additional information on Hispanic and Latino respondents in September.

TYPE

Blog

POST DATE

Aug 12, 2025

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