

TOWARD A MORE COMPETITIVE COLORADO

2026



Metro Denver EDC

CONTENTS

- 04 About the Report
- 06 Executive Summary
- 08 Economic Vitality
- 12 Livability
- 14 Education
- 16 Innovation
- 18 Energy
- 20 Infrastructure
- 22 Health
- 24 Taxes
- 26 Summary
- 27 About the Metro Denver EDC



The Metro Denver EDC's Toward a More Competitive Colorado (TMCC) report is a longitudinal study of Colorado's competitive position as tracked by over 30 indicators that are grouped into eight major categories.

The data stretches back to 2000, providing a look at how Colorado's business environment has fared during economic growth and decline. TMCC provides data and trend lines for business leaders, economic developers, policy makers and communities to consider as they deliberate future strategies, policies and programs.



ABOUT THE REPORT

The 2026 *Toward a More Competitive Colorado* (TMCC) report outlines how Colorado measures up in 38 key indicators across eight sections: economic vitality, livability, education, innovation, energy, infrastructure, health, and taxes. The report highlights the indicators that define Colorado’s current competitiveness and identifies the areas that must be improved to ensure the state stays competitive in the future.

Each indicator presented ranks Colorado’s performance relative to the other 49 states, with an emphasis on how Colorado compares to 11 competitor states: *Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, North Carolina, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Washington*. The sections are broken out as follows:

ECONOMIC VITALITY

	Rank	Previous Year's Rank	Change	Data Year
Labor Force Participation	6	6	0	2024
Employment Growth	46	16	-30	2024
Unemployment Rate	38	28	-10	2024
Labor Shortage	3	27	24	2024
Personal Income	9	8	-1	2024
State GDP per Employee	11	11	0	2024

LIVABILITY

	Rank	Previous Year's Rank	Change	Data Year
Cost of Living	37	39	2	2023
Home Prices	42	43	1	2024
Home Price Growth	1	10	9	2024
Population Growth	16	16	0	2024
Net Migration	11	21	10	2023

EDUCATION

	Rank	Previous Year's Rank	Change	Data Year
Public Expenditure per Student	21	20	-1	2024
High School Graduation	40	38	-2	2022
Educational Attainment	2	2	0	2024
Home Grown Talent	46	46	0	2024
Science, Engineering, & Health Grad Students	19	18	-1	2023



INNOVATION

	Rank	Previous Year's Rank	Change	Data Year
Tech Employment	3	3	0	2024
Academic R&D	15	13	-2	2023
SBIR Grants	5	4	-1	2024
Proprietors	7	6	-1	2024
NASA Awards	8	7	-1	2023
Venture Capital	6	5	-1	2024

ENERGY

	Rank	Previous Year's Rank	Change	Data Year
Crude Oil Production	4	4	0	2024
Wind Generation	6	6	0	2024
Solar Generation	10	10	0	2024
Energy Capacity	28	29	1	2024

INFRASTRUCTURE

	Rank	Previous Year's Rank	Change	Data Year
Infrastructure Rank	11	12	1	2025
Public Transit	18	17	-1	2024
State Hwy Revenue	42	27	-15	2023

HEALTH

	Rank	Previous Year's Rank	Change	Data Year
Lowest Obesity Rate	1	1	0	2024
Physical Activity	1	2	1	2024
Health Rank	10	12	2	2024
Hospitalizations	8	8	0	2024
Health Insurance	25	28	3	2023

TAXES

	Rank	Previous Year's Rank	Change	Data Year
Overall Tax Climate	33	32	-1	2025
Corporate Taxes	20	10	-10	2025
Sales Taxes	39	38	-1	2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Across the 38 key indicators in the 2026 *Toward a More Competitive Colorado (TMCC)* report, Colorado improved in 10 rankings, declined in 16, and remained unchanged in 12. The state ranked #1 in three indicators, highlighting the state's strength for healthy lifestyle and livability, and ranked among the top five states in eight indicators spanning multiple categories. Colorado's overall performance is reflected in its 17 top 10 rankings compared with just four in the bottom 10, though the number of declining indicators highlights areas that warrant continued vigilance and improvement.

Colorado's economy is powered by a diversified industry base and a workforce that continually ranks among the nation's most educated and innovative. Key industry clusters such as Aerospace, Aviation, Bioscience, IT-Software, Energy and Natural Resources, and Financial Services define the state's reputation as a hub for high-tech companies and top-tier talent. Colorado ranked 3rd for tech worker concentration and 5th for SBIR/STTR grant funding, reinforcing its position as a leader in advanced industries and emerging technology.


Colorado's highly educated workforce remains one of its greatest strengths, with 47.8% of adults holding a four-year degree or higher—the second-highest rate in the nation for the third consecutive year. Yet the state continues to rank 46th for cultivating homegrown talent and lags national on-time high school graduation rates. Although labor shortages have eased, employment growth has stalled, and the state unemployment rate now exceeds the national average. Strengthening the state's talent pipeline and supporting job growth remain critical factors in meeting evolving industry and economic demands.

Preparing for future economic growth will require sustained investment in energy and public infrastructure. Colorado maintains top 10 rankings

for both renewable and non-renewable energy production and performs well on overall infrastructure rankings, yet it continues to lag in per-capita energy capacity, transportation usage, and highway spending. Strategic investments in new energy capacity and transportation infrastructure will be essential to supporting long-term growth and mobility.

Colorado faces persistent affordability challenges that threaten the state's competitiveness, even as some metrics show signs of recent improvement. Home prices in Metro Denver more than doubled between 2014 and 2024, and Colorado's cost of living has consistently placed it among the 15 most expensive states, reinforcing its standing as one of the nation's priciest places to live. While the state maintained a top 10 ranking for personal income growth, the elevated cost of living presents a persistent threat to Colorado's ability to attract and retain talent, while its comparatively high wage levels may also discourage corporate relocation or expansion activity in the state. Despite these challenges, Metro Denver now has the slowest home price appreciation in the nation, representing a meaningful shift from the rapid pace of growth in recent decades, signaling a modest easing in housing pressures and a relative improvement in cost of living.

Colorado's tax competitiveness continues to be an area of concern, and the state is at risk of falling further behind as competitor states move forward with tax reform. According to the Tax Foundation, Colorado's overall ranking slipped from 32nd to 33rd, continuing a downward trend for the state. Further declines in these rankings risk undermining Colorado's business-friendly reputation and have the potential to discourage continued investment in the state, if not addressed.



Colorado's economy is powered by a diverse set of industries and a workforce that consistently ranks among the most educated and innovative in the nation.

Even with its challenges, Colorado continues to attract new residents and businesses. Net migration improved from #35 in 2022 to #11 in 2024, and while population growth has slowed from its peak in the 2010s, the state still ranks 16th nationally. According to CBRE, Denver was among the top six markets for new headquarters between 2018 and 2024, adding 23 HQ relocations or expansions over that period. Colorado's exceptional quality of life remains a major draw, underscored by its #1 ranking for the lowest obesity rate for the third consecutive year and its rise from #2 to #1 in physical activity, reflecting Coloradans' strong engagement with outdoor recreation and the active lifestyle supported by the state's natural amenities.

Colorado's economy continues to be a compelling mix of core strengths, persistent challenges, and emerging opportunities. While workforce, innovation, and quality of life continue to be competitive advantages, recent shifts in tax climate and labor market performance, as well as ongoing affordability pressures, will require focused attention to maintain the state's competitive edge.

This report evaluates Colorado's 2025 economic performance, offering insights into the state's strengths, challenges, and key opportunities to strengthen the state's competitiveness.



ECONOMIC VITALITY

Colorado’s economic strength relies on a versatile and highly skilled labor force that aligns with the needs of the region. This section examines key metrics that illustrate the state’s workforce and economic performance in 2024, highlighting areas of strength as well as opportunities for improvement. While the state continues to outperform national averages in labor force participation, personal income, and GDP per employee, challenges such as slowing employment growth and rising unemployment point to the importance of continued investment in workforce development and strategic industry growth. Among the six indicators reviewed, Colorado kept its rank in two, declined in three, and improved in one, reflecting the complex dynamics of slowing economic growth and general economic uncertainty.

EMPLOYMENT

#6

Labor Force Participation — The percentage of adults aged 16 and over who are employed or looking for a job.

(Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024)

- Colorado had a labor force participation rate of 68.0% in 2024, a 0.2 percentage point decline from the previous year.
- Among Colorado’s top competitor states, Utah (#3) is the only state with a higher labor force participation rate.

#3

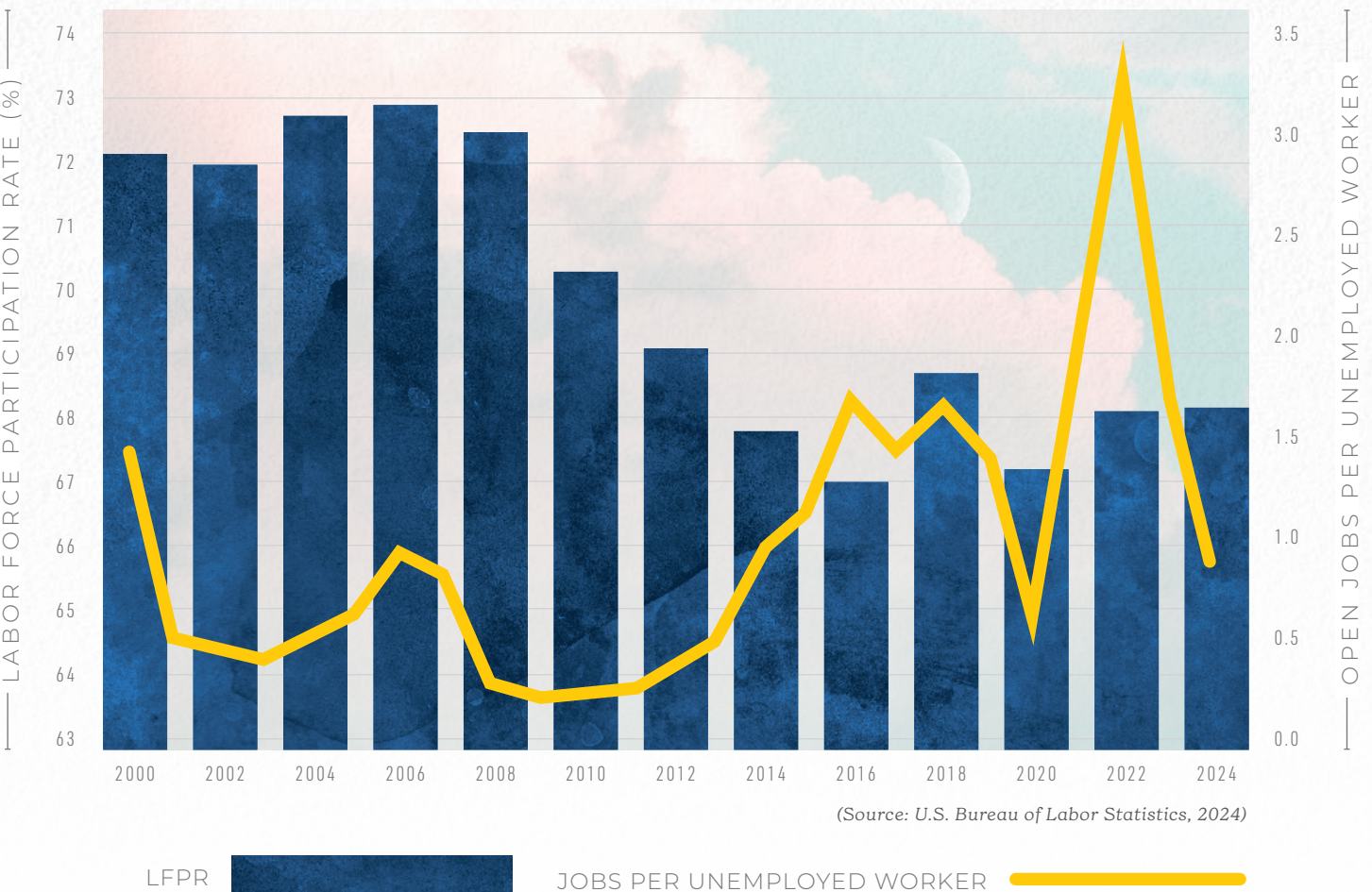
Labor Shortage — Measures the ratio of open jobs to unemployed workers.

(Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024)

- Across Colorado, there were 0.8 open jobs for every unemployed worker in 2024, down from 1.7 in 2023, indicating a shift from labor shortage to labor excess (1.0 = balanced labor supply and demand).
- California reported the highest labor excess in 2024, with 0.6 open jobs per unemployed person, while North Dakota and South Dakota reported the highest labor shortage with 2.5 open jobs per unemployed person.



COLORADO LABOR PARTICIPATION AND SHORTAGE



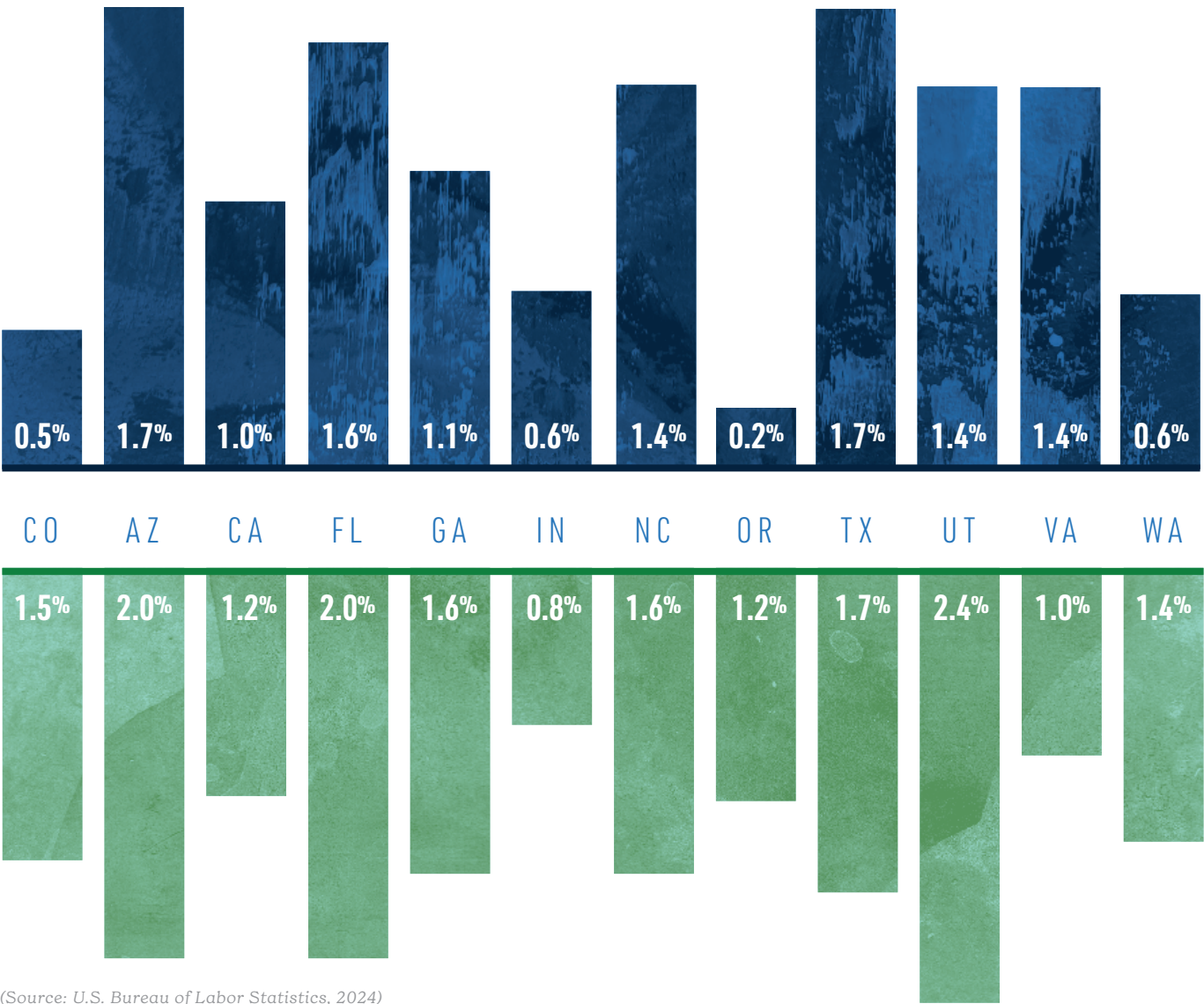
#38

Unemployment Rate — The percentage of the labor force that is looking for a job but does not have one.

(Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024)

- Colorado’s unemployment rate rose to 4.3% in 2024, up from a rate of 3.3% in 2023 and above the national rate of 4.0%.
- Colorado’s rank fell from #28 to #38 as a more pronounced labor market slowdown pushed the state’s unemployment rate up 1.0 percentage point, compared with a 0.4 percentage point increase nationally. Still, only five of the 50 states saw stable or declining unemployment rates between 2023 and 2024.

EMPLOYMENT GROWTH 2023-2024



(Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024)

10-YEAR AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH RATE

#46

Employment Growth — The rate of increase in the number of jobs in the state’s economy from 2023 to 2024.

(Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024)

- o Employment in Colorado grew by 0.5% in 2024, down from 2.4% growth in 2023. Colorado fell from #16 to #46 in this ranking, the steepest decline in ranking among all 38 indicators, and marking only the fourth time in the past 20 years that Colorado’s job growth fell below the national average.
- o Among competitor states, only Oregon had slower employment growth than Colorado between 2023 and 2024; however, Colorado is middle-of-the-pack for 10-year growth, between Utah (+2.4%) on the high end and Indiana (+0.8%) on the low end.



PRODUCTION & COMPENSATION

#9

Per-Capita Personal Income — The total compensation earned per person in Colorado. (Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2024)

- o Per-capita income in Colorado was \$83,055 in 2024, 3.6% higher than in 2023. Colorado workers earned nearly \$10,000 more than the national average.
- o Colorado’s per-capita personal income was higher than nine of the 11 competitor states, behind only California (\$86,232) and Washington (\$85,187).

#11

State GDP per Employee — The economic value that the average Colorado worker creates. (Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2024)

- o Colorado maintained its #11 ranking in 2024, reflecting the state’s consistently strong per-person productivity, which has placed it among the top 15 states for seven consecutive years.
- o Total output in the state grew by 4.6% over the year, the 34th largest increase among states nationally, while Colorado maintained its #4 ranking among competitor states.



LIVABILITY

Colorado’s exceptional quality of life remains a key factor in the state’s ability to attract and retain residents, combining economic opportunity with a lifestyle that offers abundant access to outdoor recreation, cultural amenities, and vibrant communities. Despite persistent challenges such as elevated housing costs and high cost of living, Colorado continues to draw newcomers. In 2023, increased net migration underscored the state’s enduring appeal as a desirable place to live. Colorado’s livability rankings improved in four of the five indicators and remained unchanged in one.

AFFORDABILITY

#37

Cost of Living — Regional price parities measure the differences in price levels across states, expressed as a percentage of the overall national price level. (Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2023)

- o Colorado’s prices were 1.4% higher than the national average in 2023, a decrease of 0.9 percentage points from 2022.
- o Four of the state’s top competitors – Florida (#40), Oregon (#43), Washington (#47), and California (#50) – have a higher cost of living than Colorado.

#42

Housing Prices — Measured by the median price of a single-family detached home in each state’s major metropolitan area. (Source: National Association of Realtors, 2024)

- o The median price of a single-family home in Metro Denver more than doubled from 2014 to 2024, rising from \$310,200 to \$657,300 over the period. Over the same period, national home prices rose from \$208,900 to \$412,500.
- o Only eight states had higher median home prices in 2024, including competitor states California (\$906,000) and Washington (\$797,500).

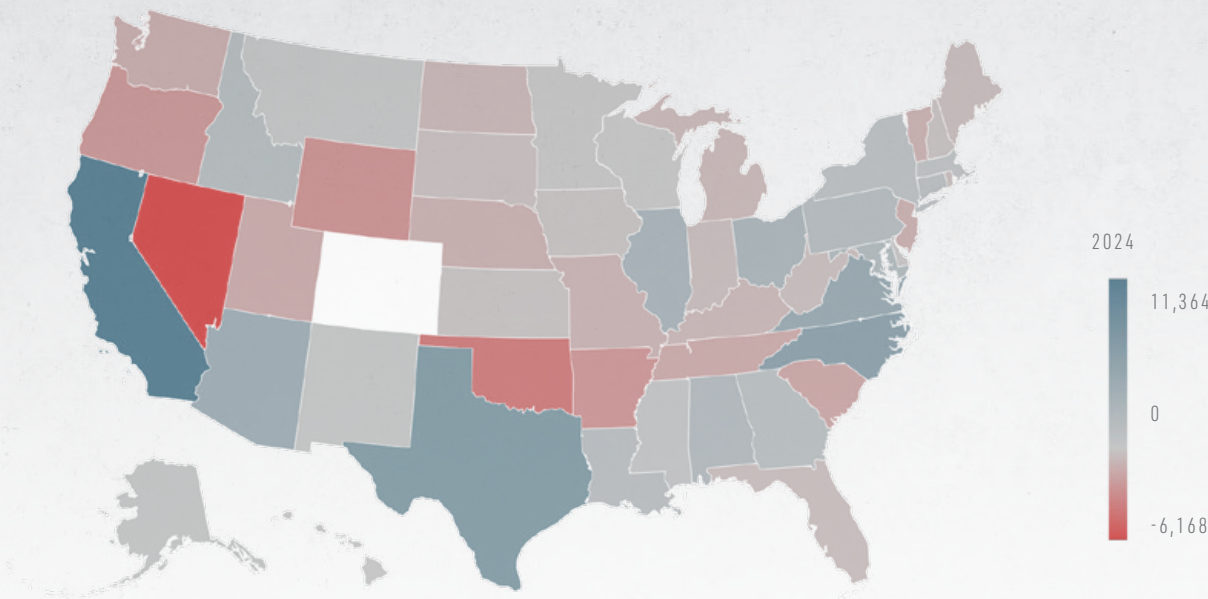
#11

Housing Price Growth — Measured by the year-over-year price change of single-family detached homes in each state’s major metropolitan area. (Source: National Association of Realtors, 2024)

- o Between 2023 and 2024, the median price for single-family homes in Metro Denver fell 0.6% after falling 1.4% the prior year. Colorado’s ranking moved from #10 in 2023 to #1 in 2024 for the most modest increase in home price growth over the year.
- o Among competitor states, Oregon (#43) reported 9.6% home price appreciation, while California (#41) reported an increase of 8.7% from 2023 to 2024.



COLORADO STATE-TO-STATE NET MIGRATION



(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024)

POPULATION

#16

Population Growth — The overall change in statewide population from year to year, including both net migration and natural increase. (Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2024)

- o Between 2023 and 2024, Colorado’s population increased 0.95%, or by more than 56,000 people, to a total statewide population of 5.9 million.
- o Among competitor states, Virginia (#19), Indiana (#30), California (#33), and Oregon (#42) had slower population growth compared to Colorado in 2024.

#11

Domestic Net Migration Flows — The number of people who move into Colorado each year minus the people who move out. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023)

- o After falling to #35 for net migration in 2022, Colorado climbed to #11 in 2023 as 211,000 residents left the state, but 267,000 new residents moved in, leading to a net increase of 21,300 residents.
- o Four states, New York, Louisiana, New Hampshire, and Alaska reported negative net migration in 2023.

EDUCATION

Colorado’s standing as a center for education and innovation is strengthened by leading institutions such as the University of Colorado Boulder, Colorado State University, and the University of Denver, which draw students from across the country and around the world. Colorado has ranked among the top four states for educational attainment, driven by the state’s ability to attract a highly educated workforce, for the past 20 years. However, persistent challenges in supporting Colorado’s home-grown talent indicate opportunities for improving high school graduation rates, expanding access to skills-based training programs, and increasing public expenditures per student. In the following five indicators, Colorado saw its rank decline in three and remained steady in two, reflecting strengths in higher education alongside areas where further investment is needed to enhance educational outcomes across K-12 levels.

K - 12 EDUCATION

#21

Public Expenditure per Student — Per student spending in public K-12 schools. (Source: National Education Association, 2024)

- Statewide, Colorado’s investment per K-12 student is slightly below the national average of \$17,367. Colorado spent \$17,319 per pupil in 2024, up 2.5% from the previous year.
- Of Colorado’s top 11 competitor states, only Washington (\$20,930), California (\$18,546), and Oregon (\$17,533) spend more per pupil.

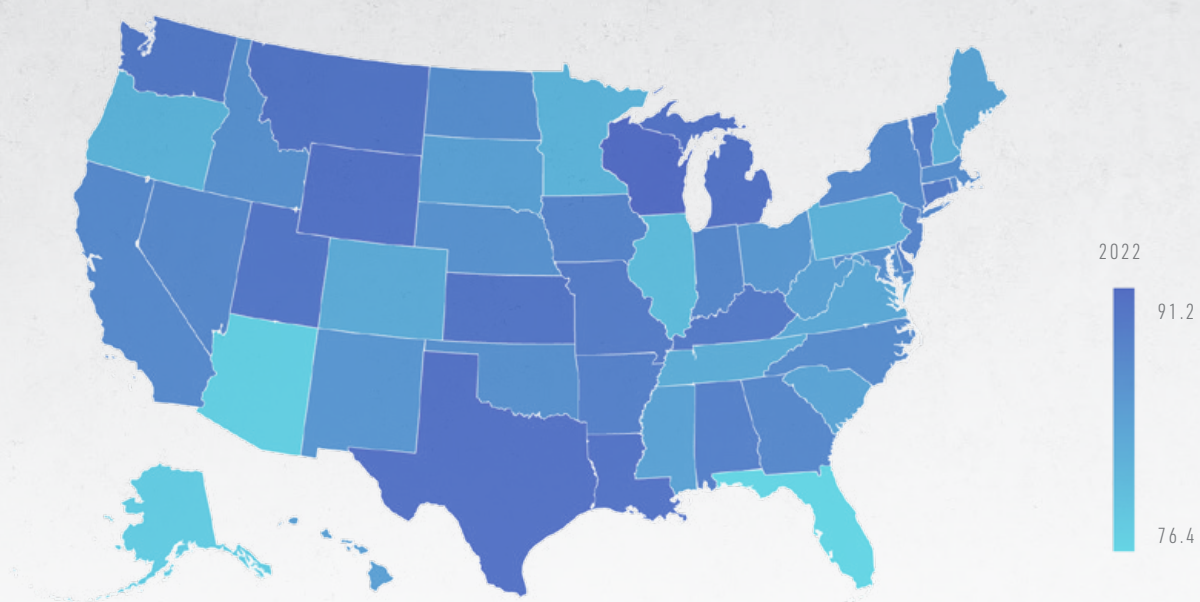
#40

High School Graduation — The public high school four-year, on-time, graduation rate. (Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2022)

- Colorado public schools graduate 82.3% of their students, compared to the national average of 86.6%.
- Colorado has ranked among the bottom 10 states for high school graduation rates over the past decade.



HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE BY STATE



(Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2022)

HIGHER EDUCATION

#2

Bachelor’s Degrees — The percentage of the population aged 25 and older with at least a bachelor’s degree. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024)

- 47.8% of Colorado adults have a bachelor’s degree or higher. Colorado has ranked in the top five among U.S. states for 23 consecutive years.
- Colorado ranks first among competitor states and exceeds its next closest competitor state (Virginia, 43.3%) by 4.5 percentage points.

#46

Home Grown Talent — The percentage of the population with a bachelor’s degree or higher that were born in their state of residence. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024)

- Just 22.7% of Colorado’s population with a bachelor’s degree or higher was born in the state. This ranking is driven by nearly 1.6 million Colorado residents with a bachelor’s degree or higher who moved into the state, compared to 457,000 born in Colorado.

#19

Science and Engineering Graduate Students — The number of science, engineering, and health graduate students per 1,000 individuals. (Source: National Science Foundation, 2023)

- Colorado has consistently ranked among the top 20 states for science, engineering, and health graduate students since 2000. In 2023, Colorado fell from #18 to #19.
- Colorado has the top 10 programs in Aerospace Engineering (CU Boulder), Petroleum Engineering (Colorado School of Mines), and Environmental Engineering (CU Boulder).

INNOVATION

Building a diversified and advanced economy in Colorado depends on strong public-private partnerships that drive innovation, opportunity, and sustainable growth. This collaborative environment makes the state an attractive place to launch and expand businesses, particularly in high-growth and advanced technology sectors such as aerospace, aviation, bioscience, quantum computing, and natural resources. Despite falling slightly in several indicators, Colorado remains a top state for innovation and continues to attract significant investment while maintaining a high concentration of tech talent. Among the seven categories in this section, Colorado maintained top 15 rankings across all innovation rankings, but declined in six indicators and remained unchanged in one.

HIGH TECH INDUSTRIES

#3

Tech Employment — The concentration of technology workers relative to total employment. (Source: *CompTIA, Cyberstates, 2024*)

- Colorado ranks #3 in the country for the highest concentration of tech workers, behind only Washington and Virginia.
- Colorado has ranked in the top five every year since CompTIA began producing its Cyberstates report in 2017.

#15

Academic R&D — Total science and engineering research and development spending at academic institutions per capita. (Source: *National Science Foundation, 2023*)

- Colorado has ranked in the top 20 states for academic R&D since 2000 and has the third-highest ranking among top competitor states, trailing only North Carolina (#10) and Utah (#13).

INVESTMENT & GROWTH

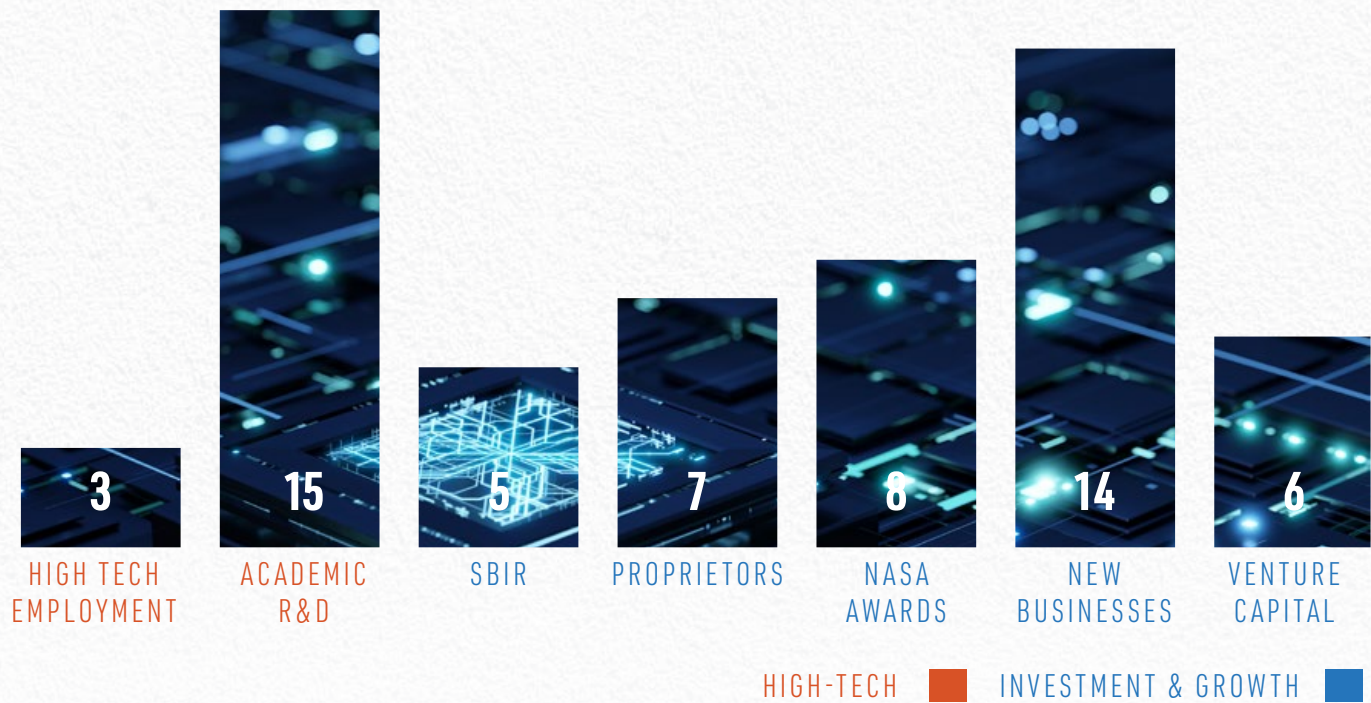
#5

Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Grants — U.S. Department of Commerce SBIR/STTR grant awards per worker. (Source: *U.S. Department of Commerce, 2024*)

- Nearly \$190 million in SBIR/STTR grants were awarded to Colorado businesses in 2024, ranking Colorado #6 for total award value and #5 for award value per worker.
- Colorado ranked among the top five states every year from 2000 to 2024 for small business investment per worker.
- Among competitor states, Colorado rose to #1 in 2024, up from #2 in 2023, surpassing Virginia for SBIR/STTR awards per employed person.



COLORADO INNOVATION RANKINGS



#7

Proprietors — Proprietors as a percentage of total employment. (Source: *U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2024*)

- Colorado ranked #7 in 2024 for the highest percentage of proprietors and has remained in the top 10 since 2000.
- Florida, Texas, and Georgia are the only competitor states with a higher percentage of proprietors.

#8

NASA Awards — NASA prime contract awards. (Source: *National Aeronautics and Space Administration, 2023*)

- In 2023, \$903 million was awarded in Colorado across 500 direct awards.
- Colorado's rank has fallen three years in a row after ranking in the top five each year from 2008-2020. Colorado has ranked in the top 10 since 2000.

#6

Venture Capital Investments — Venture capital disbursed per \$1,000 of State Gross Domestic Product (Source: *National Science Foundation, 2024*)

- Venture capital investments in Colorado totaled nearly \$5 billion in 2024, up from \$3.7 billion in 2023, but significantly lower than its record of almost \$11 billion in 2021.
- Since 2000, Colorado has ranked in the top 10 every year for venture capital investment as a proportion of state GDP.

ENERGY

Colorado's energy sector combines robust crude oil production with rapidly expanding renewable resources, positioning the state as a key player in the nation's energy landscape. The state has ranked in the top five for crude oil production, top 10 for wind generation, and top 15 for solar generation for the past five years. Despite these strengths, Colorado ranks 28th in per capita electricity generation capacity, highlighting opportunities to expand infrastructure and optimize energy distribution. Among the four indicators reviewed in this section, Colorado improved its ranking in one and maintained its top 10 rankings in three.

#4

Crude Oil Production — Total crude oil production. (Source: *Energy Information Administration, 2024*)

- Among the 32 states with material crude oil production in 2024, Colorado ranked #4, producing more than 170 million barrels. Colorado's ranking has remained 4th since improving from 5th in 2022.
- Among 11 competitor states, Colorado trails only Texas for total crude oil production.

#6

Wind Generation — Total wind energy net generation. (Source: *Energy Information Administration, 2024*)

- Among the 43 states that generated wind energy in 2024, Colorado ranked #6, producing more than 17,600 gigawatt hours of wind energy, or enough to power roughly 1.7 million households annually. Texas (#1) is Colorado's only competitor state with higher wind generation.
- Colorado's ranking has remained the same since 2022 after climbing rank in each of the prior three years. Colorado has consistently been in the top 10 for wind generation since 2005.

#10

Solar Generation — Total solar energy net generation. (Source: *Energy Information Administration, 2024*)

- Between 2023 and 2024, the amount of solar power generated throughout the state grew by nearly 37%. Since 2020, Colorado's solar power generation has more than tripled.
- Despite Colorado's rapid growth in solar power generation, the state ranks 9th among the top 11 competitor states, trailed by only Indiana, Oregon, and Washington.

#28

Energy Capacity — Per capita nameplate electricity generation capacity. (Source: *Energy Information Administration, 2024*)

- In 2024, Colorado ranked #28 for per capita electricity generation capacity, up one spot from 2023, with the ability to generate nearly 22,000 megawatts of electric power.
- Among competitor states, Colorado is middle-of-the pack, maintaining its #7 ranking in 2024 but improving from #10 in 2014.



In 2024, Colorado produced more than 17,600 gigawatt hours of wind energy—enough to power about 1.7 million households annually.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Sustainable infrastructure is foundational to Colorado’s long-term economic resilience, particularly as the state adapts to a population influx that has occurred over recent decades. While Colorado ranks competitively for overall infrastructure, the state is falling behind in indicators related to transportation, losing ground in ranking for both public transit usage and state highway investment. Of the three indicators included in this section, Colorado declined in two and improved in one.

#11

Overall Infrastructure Ranking — CNBC’s infrastructure ranking for Top States for Business evaluates each state’s transportation network, energy and water systems, broadband and computing capacity, market access, available development sites, and climate resiliency to assess how well its built environment can support modern economic growth. (Source: CNBC, 2025)

- Colorado ranked 11th for overall infrastructure in 2025, up one point from 2024. Among competitor states, Colorado fell two slots in 2025 to #6, with Utah and Indiana pulling ahead.

TRANSPORTATION

#18

Public Transit Usage — Percentage of workers who use public transit as their main mode of traveling to work. (Source: Census Bureau, 2024)

- 1.7% of Colorado workers commute using public transit, up from 1.6% in 2023 and well below the United States average of 3.7%. Colorado ranks 6th among the 11 competitor states for public transportation usage.

#42

State Highway Funds — Revenues used for state highways per person. (Source: Federal Highway Administration, 2023)

- Colorado fell from #27 in 2022 to #42 in 2023, with a decline in per-capita highway spending of 19.8%. Nationally, spending increased by 6.2%.
- Colorado’s per-capita investment in state highways is consistently below the national average and has fallen for the past two years. Among competitor states, Colorado’s ranked 11th in 2023, ahead of only Georgia.



HEALTH

Colorado regularly ranks as one of the healthiest states in the U.S., supported by a culture that prioritizes outdoor recreation, active living, and overall well-being. The state’s advantages include below-average smoking rates, above-average life expectancy, and expansive public lands that promote physical activity. Colorado ranked 1st in the nation in two of the four health indicators below, while challenges remain in health insurance coverage, where the state remains middle of the pack nationally. Of the five indicators in this section, Colorado improved in three and remained unchanged in two.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

#1

- Lowest Obesity Rate** — Lowest obesity prevalence in adults. (Source: Robert Woods Johnson Foundation, 2024)
- Only 25.0% of Coloradans qualify as obese, 9.0 percentage points lower than the national average of 34.0%.
 - Colorado has reported the lowest obesity rate among states every year since 2003, with the exception of 2021 when Colorado’s ranking fell to #2.

#1

- Physical Activity** — Percent of adults who participated in physical activity in the month prior to being surveyed. (Source: Kaiser State Health Facts, 2024)
- More than 84% of Colorado adults reported engaging in physical activity, 6.9 percentage points higher than the national average of 77.5%.
 - Colorado has been ranked #1 or #2 for physical activity since 2011.

MEDICAL CARE

#8

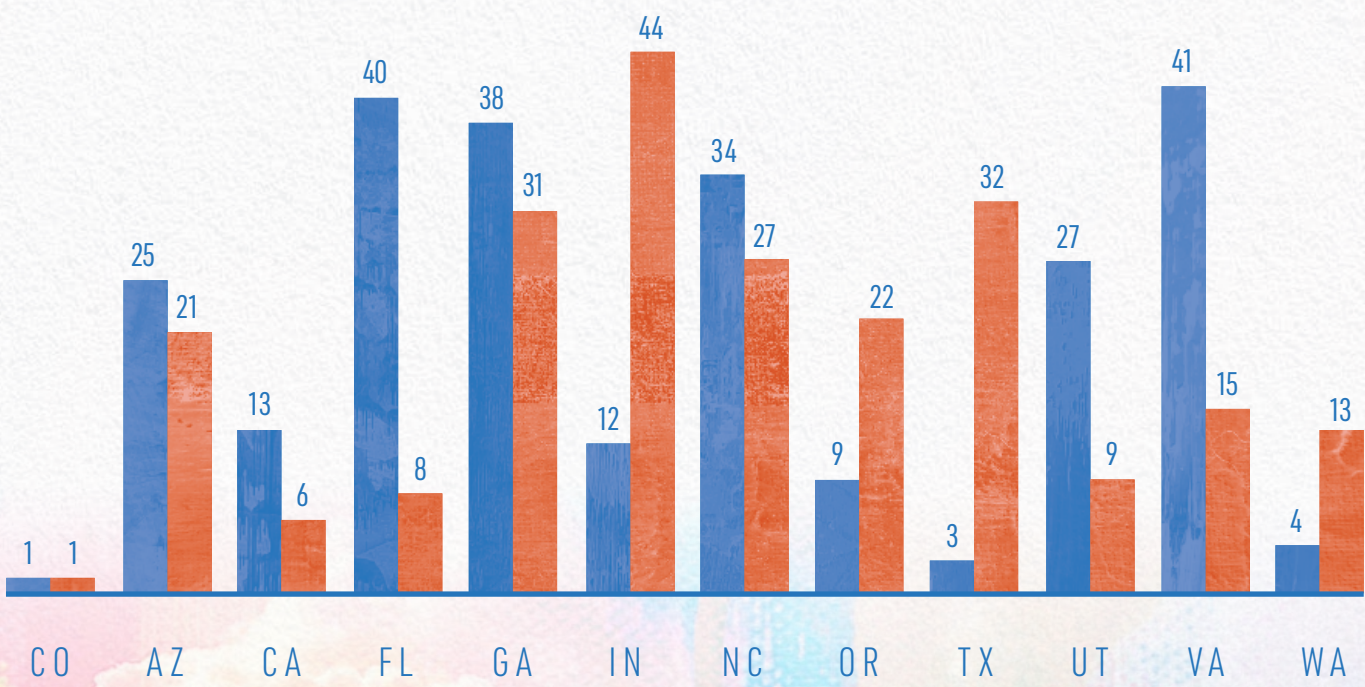
- Hospitalizations** — Hospitalizations per 1,000 population. (Source: KFF, 2023)
- Colorado reported 77 hospitalizations per 1,000 residents, approximately 20% lower than the national average of 96 hospitalizations.

#25

- Health Insurance** — The share of the population covered by health insurance. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023)
- More than 93% of Coloradans have health insurance, compared to the highest-ranked state, Massachusetts (97.4%) and the lowest-ranked state, Texas (83.7%).
 - Of Coloradans with health insurance, more than half are covered through their employer, while 20% are covered by Medicaid, 14% are covered by Medicare, and 9% are covered by other sources.

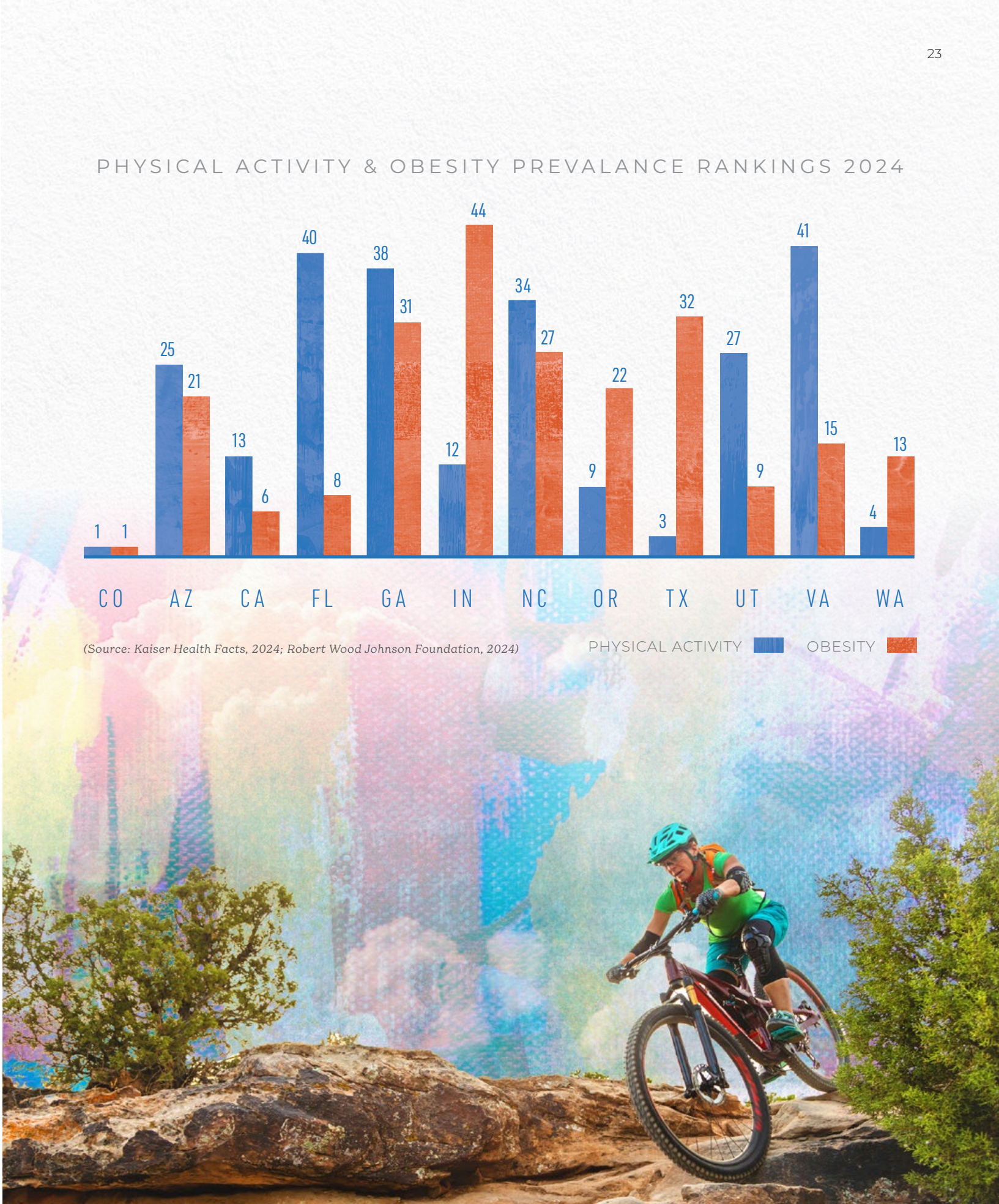


PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & OBESITY PREVALANCE RANKINGS 2024



(Source: Kaiser Health Facts, 2024; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2024)

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OBESITY



TAXES

Colorado’s relatively low corporate tax and individual income tax environment sets the foundation for Colorado’s ability to both attract new businesses and retain thriving local firms. Despite a continued lowering of state income tax rates, Colorado’s overall Tax Competitiveness Index declined one place to #33 as sales, property, and unemployment insurance tax rates continue to weigh on the state’s competitiveness.

#33

State Tax Competitiveness Index — Measures corporate, individual income, property, sales, and unemployment insurance taxes. A lower tax rate and simpler tax code are associated with better index scores.

(Source: The Tax Foundation, 2025)

- Colorado ranked #33 for overall tax climate in 2025, down one place from 2024. Colorado’s rank has seen a general downward trend since peaking at #10 in 2008.
- Among competitor states, Colorado ranked ahead of only Oregon (#35), Washington (#45), and California (#48).

#20

Corporate Taxes — Measures the income tax structure and rates within a state, according to the Tax Foundation. (Source: The Tax Foundation, 2025)

- Colorado fell from #10 to #20 in 2024, moving from #3 among competitor states to #8.
- While the corporate tax code features a single rate, a complicated and continually changing tax landscape increases the cost of compliance for businesses.

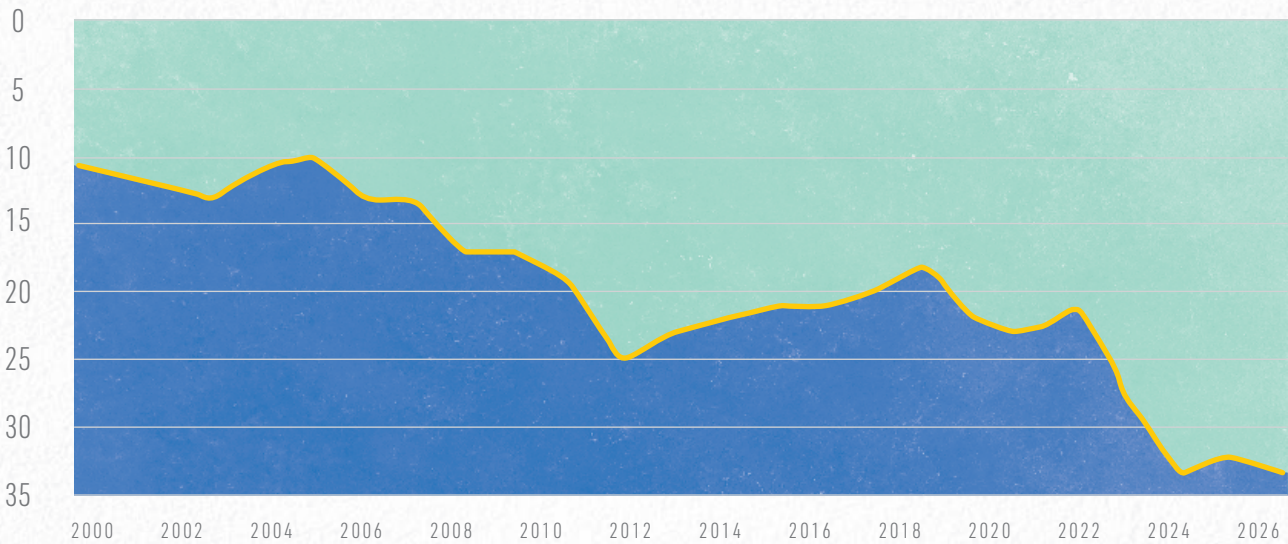
#39

Sales Taxes — Measures the sales tax structure and rates within a state, according to the Tax Foundation. (Source: The Tax Foundation, 2025)

- Colorado fell one spot, from #38 to #39 in 2025, maintaining a #8 ranking among competitor states.
- Colorado’s sales tax structure is one of the most complicated nationally, with multiple layers of state, county, and local rates that vary by jurisdiction, a wide range of exemptions and special provisions, and differing rules for industries such as hospitality, construction, and e-commerce.

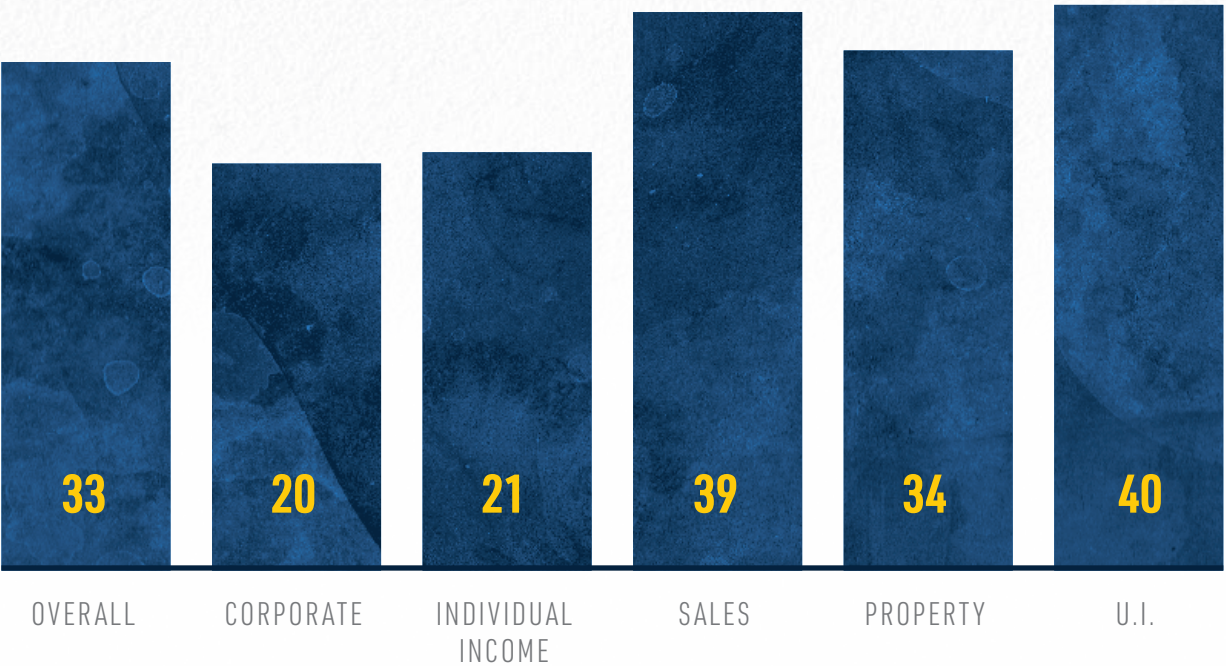


COLORADO’S OVERALL TAX CLIMATE RANKING



(Source: The Tax Foundation)

2025 STATE BUSINESS TAX RANKINGS BY COMPONENT



(Source: The Tax Foundation)

SUMMARY

		CO	AZ	CA	FL	GA	IN	NC	OR	TX	UT	VA	WA
ECONOMIC VITALITY	Labor Force Participation Rate	6	35	31	42	34	22	37	29	16	3	10	22
	Employment Growth	46	6	30	10	27	41	13	49	7	18	15	44
	Unemployment Rate	38	24	49	20	22	36	24	36	32	15	6	43
	Labor Shortage	3	19	1	19	33	9	33	19	5	19	45	5
	Personal Income	9	33	4	16	41	38	34	21	24	30	11	6
	SGDP per Employee	11	19	4	20	18	34	25	33	9	21	15	2
LIVABILITY	Cost of Living	37	36	50	40	27	19	23	43	30	25	35	47
	Home Prices	42	32	46	41	23	15	28	38	24	40	19	45
	Home Price Growth	1	9	41	32	4	18	13	43	2	23	25	39
	Population Growth	16	9	33	1	13	30	7	42	2	3	19	11
	Net Migration	11	5	50	2	6	7	3	38	1	36	9	35
EDUCATION	Public Expenditure per Student	21	46	17	32	36	39	35	20	47	48	24	13
	High School Graduation	40	47	22	48	19	19	24	-	2	8	39	9
	Bachelor's Degrees	2	28	15	25	21	42	18	16	27	13	6	10
	Home Grown Talent	46	48	25	49	35	12	34	42	26	23	40	37
	Science, Eng., & Health Grad Students	19	15	23	31	12	10	29	39	38	20	33	7
INNOVATION	High Tech Employment	3	13	7	19	14	37	12	10	10	8	2	1
	Academic R&D	15	33	16	45	21	23	10	34	30	13	32	29
	SBIR/STTR Grants	5	20	9	26	31	33	18	16	28	19	6	22
	Proprietors	7	25	17	2	5	48	32	28	4	21	33	46
	NASA Awards	8	13	1	7	26	14	34	38	5	15	6	9
	New Businesses	14	26	3	4	21	49	29	18	42	9	25	39
	Venture Capital Funding	6	13	1	18	25	23	9	26	16	10	20	7
	Crude Oil Production	4	31	7	24	-	22	-	-	1	9	32	-
ENERGY	Wind Generation	6	24	7	-	-	13	31	15	1	28	39	17
	Solar Generation	10	6	1	3	7	14	5	21	2	9	8	36
	Energy Capacity	28	18	43	34	27	20	29	21	14	39	31	25
INFRASTRUCTURE	Infrastructure Rank	11	3	25	16	4	6	11	14	26	9	2	26
	Public Transit Usage	18	23	10	21	22	34	30	13	25	16	11	7
	State Highway Funds	42	40	33	38	46	36	30	20	24	9	10	27
HEALTH	Lowest Obesity	1	21	6	8	31	44	27	22	32	9	15	13
	Physical Activity	1	25	13	40	34	38	12	9	41	3	27	4
	Health	10	33	26	31	38	36	30	19	40	6	15	7
	Hospitalizations	8	20	15	48	22	35	23	7	24	5	21	3
	Health Insurance	25	42	23	47	49	26	40	13	50	31	24	20
TAXES	Overall Tax Climate	33	14	48	5	18	10	13	35	7	15	30	45
	Corporate Tax Index	20	13	41	17	9	7	3	49	46	12	18	47
	Sales Tax Index	38	45	46	16	18	14	15	4	36	26	13	49

COLORADO IS BETTER COLORADO IS MORE THAN 15 PLACES BETTER COLORADO IS WORSE COLORADO IS MORE THAN 15 PLACES WORSE

ABOUT THE METRO DENVER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Often called a “center of influence,” the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation (EDC) was the nation’s first regional economic development organization.

From Pueblo to Fort Collins and Golden to Greeley, we represent the 12 counties that contribute to our robust economy and incredible culture. As the economic development function of the broader Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, the EDC serves the Colorado Front Range region, which represents over 84% of the state’s population and 86% of the state’s GDP.



Metro Denver EDC

1445 MARKET STREET | DENVER, CO 80202

METRODENVER.ORG | 303.620.8057 | INFO@METRODENVER.ORG