UCCS Economic Forum

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
COLORADO SPRINGS

25th Annual Economic Update

UCCS Economic Forum

2021-22

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Forum Founding Partner

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In late 2021, the firm transitioned ownership from Ron Chernak to Rob Amerine (CBI and M&AMI) who is now President. Prior to joining the firm in 2013, Rob owned and worked in various types of businesses and leadership positions. As part of the firm's future growth strategy, Rob formed a strategic partnership with Cornerstone Business Services (Green Bay, WI) to further support clients in Colorado and neighboring states. This partnership will help maximize value for business owners and organizations seeking a sale, exit strategy, or targeted acquisition.

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The FBB Group, Ltd.® Founding Partner of the UCCS Economic Forum

Ent Credit Union is honored to continue its support of the UCCS Economic Forum, which provides vital local and national economic data. It remains a valued resource for area businesses (including those owned by our members) and public officials as they strategically plan for the future.

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Welcome from the University

Venkat Reddy, Ph.D.
Chancellor, University of Colorado Colorado Springs

Welcome to the 2021-22 UCCS Economic Forum publication!

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us have been anxious to know what's next — and how we respond to it. How do we stay the course, even as challenges seem to spring up from nowhere?

2022 has been no different. Inflation, a tight housing market and the Great Recession have real impact on the lives of many. But the key to navigating these challenges lies in good information: accurate data, rigorous economic assessments and keen insights into the challenges and opportunities we will face down the line. As our world changes, the UCCS Economic Forum becomes more important than ever before to our region's ability to respond.

For the 25th year running, I am pleased that the Economic Forum will inform our business and governmental decisions with insightful and forward-looking economic data. We are proud to be a trusted partner of so many in our region, and I am grateful to the many donors and talented individuals who make this program possible each year.

Allow me to express my gratitude to our amazing faculty, staff and students who showed extraordinary courage as we navigated the pandemic over the last two years. At UCCS, we build the workforce of the future — and we strive to transform the lives of all those around us for the better. In doing so, we fuel the success of our community, our region, our state and our world. Thank you for being part of this critical work.

Karen S. Markel, Ph.D.
Dean, UCCS College of Business and Administration

With fortitude and stick-to-itiveness our campus and our city has pressed forward despite the challenges and uncertainty we face economically, culturally, and logistically. Our campus has returned to in-person classes and events and students have remained agile and have adapted to new learning modalities. This fall, we look forward to welcoming new undergraduate students to our Bachelor of Science in Business 8-week online degree completer program, designed to offer an expedited way for degree-seeking students to complete their undergraduate degree.

2022 brings promise, but forecasting the next year, and even the next few months, is challenging. That is why we turn to our experts to provide insights during times of economic uncertainty.

As we continue to navigate the nuances of our post-pandemic world with innovation, creativity, and teamwork, we look to the work that the College of Business through the UCCS Economic Forum has done to provide us with in-depth insights to the economic status of our region and nation, and for an orientation in regard to what we might expect to see later this year.

The 25th Annual UCCS Economic Forum publication serves as a comprehensive resource to help inform and guide local businesses through newly presented economic challenges. We are confident this report will provide timely and valuable economic insights to all those determining the direction of business and government.

This report is not possible without the commitment and expertise from UCCS Economic Forum staff, Dr. Tatiana Bailey and Rebecca Wilder. Thank you for delivering another robust analysis of the economic conditions in the region. We are also grateful to our community partners for their ongoing support of this program.

The College of Business serves as a resource in shaping the future of business in the Pikes Peak Region and one of our core values is to connect students, alumni, local businesses and organizations and the broader community. The **UCCS Economic Forum in the College of Business** is integral to accomplishing this mission. Thank you for your support.

About the UCCS Economic Forum

The UCCS Economic Forum provides businesses and other organizations in Colorado Springs with unbiased information that assesses economic conditions in the region. The Forum analyzes and reports on broad national indicators such as GDP and consumer sentiment, as well as local labor market information, real estate activity and construction, military employment and expenditures, tourism, sales and use taxes, and other metrics. The indicators provide a picture of the economy and the region's quality of life, answering the questions of "how are we doing" and "where are we going." No single indicator can provide a complete picture of the economy or the quality of life of our citizenry. Examined collectively, however, economic and quality of life indicators provide a picture of the region's economic health, the welfare and educational attainment of the people who live and work here, and the progress of businesses and organizations that operate here. The Forum provides this information to help business leaders, government officials and others make more informed decisions with the greater goal of assisting in economic development efforts.

To learn more about the Forum you can contact Tatiana Bailey, Director, UCCS Economic Forum at (719) 255-3661 or at tbailey6@uccs.edu.

**Tatiana Bailey,
Ph.D.**
Director, UCCS
Economic Forum
Research Faculty,
UCCS

Tatiana Bailey holds a Master's degree in Economics and a Doctorate in Public Health, both from the University of Michigan. Since obtaining her doctorate, she has taught micro and macroeconomics as well as health economics and policy at the University of Michigan and Walsh College.

Tatiana has worked in the health care and economic development fields. In the health care arena, she has focused on programs that aim to increase access and quality while reducing costs, particularly for at-risk populations. She also does presentations to audiences who wish to be better informed about the general framework of the health care system in the U.S. In the economic development field, she has focused upon economic growth through workforce development initiatives. Under the leadership of the Forum and in collaboration with the community, Tatiana and Rebecca spearheaded the Workforce Asset Map (or WAM), a community-wide initiative targeted in the short-term to engaging and assisting local workers, and in the long-term, closing the skills gap. Details are on page 29. As Director of the UCCS Economic Forum, Tatiana serves as a national, state and local economics resource to businesses and government. Her focus during the pandemic was to integrate public health and economic data and assist the region's leaders with strategic decision making. Throughout the year, Tatiana writes articles and does weekly television updates to keep the region informed on economic data and what it means to them.

Rebecca Wilder
Assistant Program
Director, UCCS
Economic Forum

Rebecca Wilder joined the UCCS College of Business staff as a part-time Research Assistant for the UCCS Economic Forum in May 2014 while finishing her Master's degree in Business Administration through UCCS. She joined the full-time UCCS College of Business staff as the Assistant Data Analyst for the Forum in June 2015 after her graduation in May. She earned a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Taylor University in Indiana.

Rebecca taught for 11.5 years, primarily at the middle school level in math and science. She also worked for Wachovia Securities for five years where she became very familiar with research, analysis and compilation of data. Her love of numbers, organizational skills and background in education give her a unique understanding of what is currently offered and what is needed for young people to be successful, contributing members of our region.

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Executive Summary

Employment

During 2021 and thus far into 2022, the U.S. economy has been healing from the seismic pandemic disruption. To be sure, many parts of the world are still struggling with COVID infections and lockdowns, but within the U.S., the pandemic does appear to be moving to endemic status, although public health experts warn that mutations and variants may still turn virulent and we should keep our guard up. It is heartening, however, to see hospitalizations and deaths at persistently low levels even if infection rates remain high. This has directly translated to normalizing levels of interaction and consumption in the economy. In fact, stimulative fiscal and monetary policy has arguably overheated the economy while supply chain and long-standing labor shortages have virtually guaranteed that inflation and volatility will be with us for at least another year. There is now heightened concern about a possible recession that could again be global and perhaps not as short-lived as the one induced by the pandemic. The good news is that the Colorado Springs region and the state of Colorado as a whole both seem poised to continue to outperform the nation—or at a minimum, be less vulnerable to a hard economic downturn.

♦ The national, seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 3.6 percent in March 2022, decreasing from 6.0 percent in March 2021. Most of the improvement in employment levels were precisely in the industries that were hardest hit during the pandemic: leisure and hospitality, education and health services, and retail trade. There have also been large gains in the professional and business services category.

♦ The El Paso County not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in March 2022 stood at 3.7 percent. El Paso County's unemployment rate has been a bit higher due to the greater number of people looking for work, which is a good thing. Most of the gains in the region have been similar to the national scenario described above. The growth in professional and business services employment was occurring prior to the pandemic due mostly to organic, higher-skilled business expansions. Transportation and warehousing and construction are also two industries with high growth rates.

♦ The Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) for El Paso County indicated total employment decreased by 2.9 percent, or 8,093 jobs, in 2020. Our region needs approximately 5,600 new jobs in order to match population growth.

♦ More recent data from the QCEW indicates that El Paso County had 11,904 more jobs from 2020 Q3 to 2021 Q3, however from 2019 Q3 to 2021 Q3 there were just 3,101 more jobs. Prior to the pandemic, El Paso County had stellar growth in new jobs surpassing the threshold of 5,600 new jobs needed to match population growth in every year from 2013 to 2019.

Specific Sectors & Employment

Eight of the twenty-one industry sectors in **El Paso County** saw job gains in 2020. The most significant gains were in:

♦ health care and social assistance (1,155 jobs)

♦ professional and technical services (1,275)

♦ public administration (542)

♦ finance and insurance (210)

♦ transportation and warehousing (178)

The strong showing in health care and social assistance combined with professional and technical services represented 68.0 percent of total job gains in the county. Job losses took place in thirteen sectors. The most notable losses occurred in accommodation and food services (-5,155 jobs).

In **Teller County**, which is part of the Colorado Springs metropolitan statistical area (MSA), total employment decreased by 6.6 percent, or 492 jobs, in 2020. The top five industries in terms of total employment according to the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) data for 2020 were accommodation and food services (1,313 total jobs), retail trade (1,022), health care and social assistance (681), public administration (576), and arts, entertainment and recreation (473). Seven of the twenty-one sectors saw job gains in 2020. The greatest gains were reported in retail trade (24 jobs gained), administrative and waste services (21), health care and social assistance (19), and professional and technical services (19). The most significant job losses were in and accommodation and food services (-283 jobs) and arts, entertainment and recreation (-176).

Regional Wages

Average wages from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) across all categories increased in El Paso County from $52,624 in 2019 to $56,576 in 2020, or up 7.5 percent.

♦ The average wage in El Paso County remains low compared to Colorado as a whole and was 15.1 percent below the state average of $66,612 in 2020.

♦ Average wages in Teller County increased 8.1 percent in 2020 to $44,876, but the average wage was 32.6 percent below the state average.

Per Capita Personal Income

Per capita personal income increased in El Paso County. This measure is calculated by taking the total income in a region and dividing by the number of people, including children. This metric includes not only net earnings, but also personal dividend and interest income, rental income and transfer payments by government sources. El Paso County per capita personal income increased 6.5 percent to $54,151 in 2020 over the 2019 level of $50,845.

♦ At the 2020 level, per capita personal income in El Paso County was 8.9 percent below the U.S. average and 15.5 percent below the Colorado average.

♦ It is important to remember that all "per capita" values will be pulled down by our lower median age since a lower median age inherently means more children will be counted in the denominator of the calculation. For this reason, per capita personal income is not necessarily the best indicator of standard of living in our region.

The Forum forecasts per capita personal income in 2021 in El Paso County will increase at a rate of 7.5 percent, while Colorado saw an actual increase of 7.8 percent which was a little higher than the U.S. (7.2%) in 2021.

Residential Real Estate

Residential real estate continues to boom in the region, state and nation mostly due to the shortage in housing that has been accumulating since the Great Recession. Housing experts say there is a shortage of approximately 6.5 million units in the U.S., and similar estimates by the Forum for the region suggest an analogous shortage of roughly 12,000 units. Highlights in the residential real estate market include:

♦ In 2021, there were 4,912 single-family permits issued in the Pikes Peak region. This is a decrease of just 5 permits (down 0.1%) compared to 2020. The Forum expects approximately 5,010 single-family permits to be issued in the region in 2022.

♦ In 2021, multi-family permits for 319 projects and 4,267 units were pulled. Multi-family permits are expected to add 5,800 units in 2022.

♦ Average, monthly rents for apartments in 2021 were $1,433 per month in the Colorado Springs MSA. By comparison, average rents in Denver in 2021 were $1,648.

♦ Home sales in the Pikes Peak region were 18,159 in 2021 and are projected to be 18,522 in 2022.

♦ The average sales price of a home, new or existing, is expected to increase to $546,255 in the Pikes Peak region in 2022, an 11.0 percent increase from $492,122 in 2021.

Introduction

- The median price of a new or existing single-family home in the Pikes Peak region is expected to increase 13.0 percent to $500,590 in 2022 compared to $443,000 in 2021. As a point of reference, the median home price in the U.S. was almost 13 percent lower in 2021 at $392,925.

- Foreclosures continue to decline in the region. Annual foreclosures decreased 48.8 percent in 2021 to 144. The average number of foreclosures per month in 2021 was 12, while they were much higher at 441 per month in 2009. The Forum projects there will be 540 foreclosures in all of 2022.

Commercial Real Estate

Certain subsectors within commercial real estate are still experiencing a great level of uncertainly mostly due to the pandemic. Highlights for the city of Colorado Springs include:

- Commercial office vacancy rates increased to 9.8 percent at the end of 2021 from 8.3 percent at the end of 2020.

- The industrial vacancy rate increased to 4.3 percent at the end of 2021 from 3.7 percent at the end of 2020.

- Retail vacancy rates decreased to 4.9 percent at the end of 2021 from 5.8 percent at the end of 2020.

- Medical office vacancy rates increased to 9.4 percent at the end of 2021 from 6.8 percent at the end of 2020.

Sales and Use Tax

Sales and use tax proved to be quite resilient during the pandemic due to monetary and fiscal policy that kept most household and business balance sheets solvent. Regional highlights include:

- City sales and use tax collections increased 24.1 percent or $44,900,000 from $186.3 million in 2020 to $231.2 million in 2021. If these nominal sales tax figures are adjusted for both consumer price inflation and population increases, sales and use tax collections were up 16.4 percent. This indicates that tax revenues are exceeding population growth.

- Sales and use tax collections are expected to increase 4.8 percent in 2022 in nominal terms according to Forum estimates. This translates to a 3.8 percent decrease in the real value of sales and use tax collections compared to 2021.

Education

- In fiscal year 2021, Colorado spent $13,130 per pupil in elementary and secondary schools, while the U.S. average was $14,243 per pupil (7.8% lower in Colorado).

- From 2003 through 2019 (most recent data available), 4th and 8th grade students in Colorado public schools outscored the nation in mathematics and language arts.

- In 2021, the Colorado junior average SAT score was 1011, and 4 of the 17 school districts in the Colorado Springs MSA surpassed this state average. The U.S. mean was 1060 using the scores provided by the College Board.

- In 2021, 10 of the 17 school districts in the Colorado Springs MSA exceeded the state of Colorado's average high school graduation rate of 81.7 percent. The U.S. high school graduation rate in 2019 (most recent data available) was 86.0 percent. Eight of our local 17 school districts reached or surpassed this national graduation rate in 2019.

- The Colorado Concurrent Enrollment Program Act, passed in 2009, allows students to be simultaneously enrolled in high school as well as in one or more postsecondary courses at an institution of higher education. All districts within the Colorado Springs MSA participate in these programs and had a total of 2,804 students enrolled concurrently in the 2019-20 school year.

- In the city of Colorado Springs in 2019 (most recent data available), 34.1 percent of the population ages 25 and over had some college or an associate degree, while in the U.S. it was 28.6 percent of that population. For those with a bachelor's degree or higher and ages 25 and older, the city of Colorado Springs (40.3%) again had a higher percentage than the U.S. (33.1%).

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Legacy Bank	Visit Colorado Springs

Acknowledgments

Thank you to all Forum partners for their support! The UCCS Economic Forum is self-sustaining and would not exist without the commitment of community organizations.

A special thanks to all of our partners who helped organize the signature annual event. We want to also thank individuals who gave their time and expertise as speakers.

To all of the Forum partners, attendees and other supporters, we wish you continued success in the coming year.

🌐 BIG PICTURE INDICATORS

ACTUAL, ESTIMATED AND FORECAST PERCENT CHANGE IN KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS: U.S., COLORADO AND EL PASO COUNTY

		United States			Colorado			El Paso County		
		2020	2021	2022*	2020	2021	2022*	2020	2021*	2022*
		Actual	Actual	Forecast	Actual	Actual	Forecast	Actual	Estimate	Forecast
1	Population	**0.7**	**0.1**	0.6	**0.9**	**0.5**	0.8	**1.4**	1.4	1.2
2	Unemployment Rate (NSA)	**8.1**	**5.4**	3.7	**6.9**	**5.4**	3.7	**6.9**	**5.6**	3.8
3	Real GDP/GSP/GMP[1]	**-3.4**	**5.7**	2.7	**-3.0**	**5.8**	3.1	**-0.1**	6.0	3.2
4	Non-Agricultural Employment	**-5.8**	**2.8**	3.6	**-5.2**	**3.6**	3.4	**-2.6**	3.9	3.8
5	Total Wage & Salary Income	**1.2**	**9.4**	8.5	**2.3**	**9.7**	8.3	**4.5**	9.5	8.4
6	Consumer Price Index (CPI)[2]	**1.2**	**4.7**	7.0	**2.0**	**3.5**	7.2	N/A	N/A	N/A
7	Per Capita Personal Income	**6.1**	**7.2**	2.5	**4.8**	**7.8**	2.7	**6.5**	7.5	2.6
8	Single-Family Housing Permits[3]	**14.5**	**13.7**	3.0	**17.5**	**3.8**	9.0	**25.0**	**-0.1**	2.0

Sources: Colorado Office of State Planning and Budgeting, March 2022 Revenue Forecast; Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis; Colorado Department of Local Affairs, State Demography Office; Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Industry Employment Projections; National Association of Home Builders; The Conference Board; Wells Fargo; UCCS Economic Forum
[1]GMP is for the Colorado Springs MSA so it includes both El Paso and Teller counties. GDP/GSP/GMP are inflation adjusted to 2012 dollars.
[2]Colorado CPI is actually the Denver/Boulder/Greeley CPI.
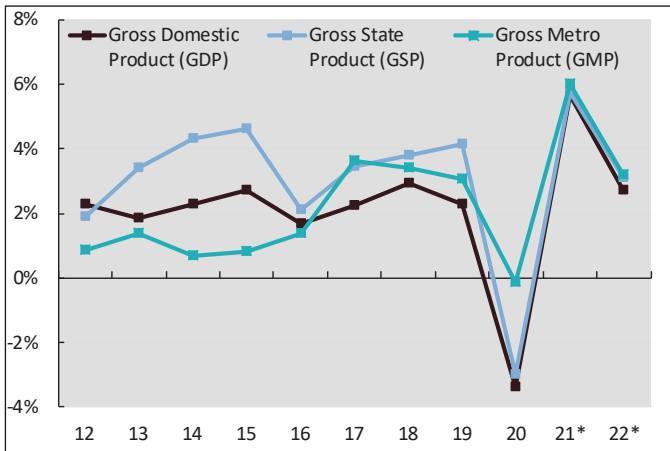[3]Includes single-family detached and townhome units.
*Estimate/projection
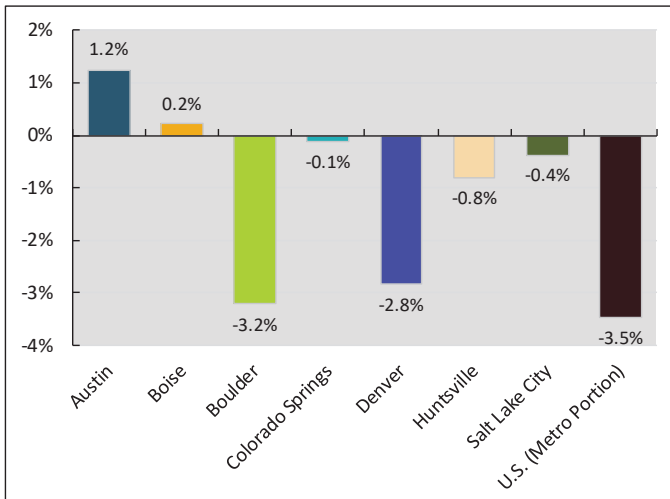**Bold numbers are actuals.**

⊕ BIG PICTURE INDICATORS

Growth in Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Gross State Product (GSP) and Gross Metropolitan Product (GMP)
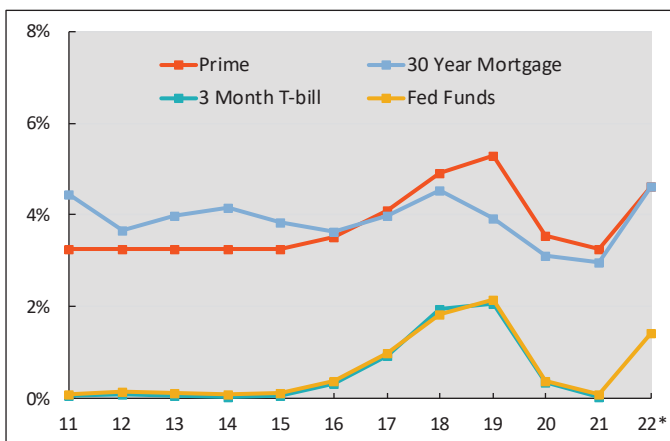

2019-20 Percent Change in Real GMP

Note: Military data is included in GMP. Real GMP is adjusted for regional price differences (RPP).

Key Interest Rates

*2021 GDP and GSP are final, while GMP is an estimate. GDP, GSP and GMP for 2022 are forecasts. All projections are from the Forum with input from various sources (see p. 11 notes). Key Interest Rates are from Wells Fargo.
Sources: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis; Colorado Office of State Planning and Budgeting; Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; IHS Global Insight (USA), Inc.

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

Gross domestic product (GDP) is one of the primary indicators used to gauge the health of the nation's economy. GDP is the monetary value of all finished goods and services produced within a country's border in a specific time period, usually a year. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis also measures gross state product (GSP) and gross metropolitan product (GMP), which are state and local equivalent measures of GDP.

Interest rates are the cost of financing and the reward on investments. Low interest rates typically encourage borrowing, which is why low interest rates are considered stimulative to the economy as a whole. Low interest rates also encourage the investment of buying a home.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Based on the real GDP series from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, growth in real GDP contracted by 3.4 percent in 2020 versus a 2.3 percent increase in 2019. The economy grew by 5.7 percent in 2021. Projections for 2022 suggest real GDP will grow by 2.7 percent. These Forum estimates are a bit more conservative than mainstream forecasts mostly due to the persistently low levels of labor participation, higher imports than exports, significant inflation headwinds, increasing interest rates, geopolitical threats in Europe, and persistently high stock market volatility and instability.

Colorado's real GSP contracted by 3.0 percent in 2020, which is less than the national decline of 3.5 percent. Due to the pandemic, most of the decline occurred in the services-related industries such as travel, hotels and motels, restaurants, and retail.

In 2021, Colorado's GSP increased by 5.8 percent, which is slightly higher than the U.S. GDP growth rate discussed above (5.7%). It is important to note that during 2021, the state and region continued to have higher-than-national growth rates despite the presence of a large hospitality sector.
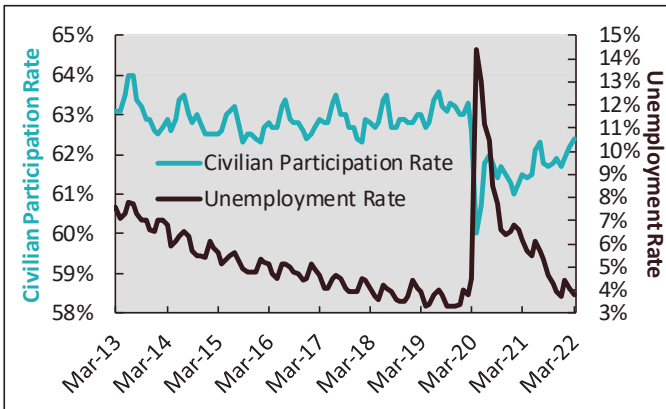
At this juncture in early 2022, it appears that Colorado will continue to outperform the nation during 2022 due to its high percentage of professional workers who are highly educated. Colorado also has a higher-than-average labor participation rate. Both of these factors have enabled the state to recover more quickly than most regions post pandemic. Likewise, Colorado has a strong Department of Defense presence as well as a strong technology sector, both of which fared well during the pandemic. Hence, estimates are for GSP to grow by a larger percentage in Colorado (3.1%) than the U.S. in 2022.

The 2020 local measure of GDP, known as gross metropolitan product (GMP), had a real contraction of just 0.1 percent following real growth of 3.1 percent in 2019. This data lags significantly and 2021 GMP will not be available until late 2022. It is likely that local GMP will again have outperformed the nation in 2021 due to the strong retention of and rebound in lost jobs as a result of the pandemic. The Forum projects that final GMP will grow slightly more than the state (6.0%) in 2021 and continue to grow at a slightly better rate (3.2%) than the U.S. in 2022.

The prime interest rate, which is the interest rate used by banks to lend to customers and businesses, was 3.25 percent in 2021, the Fed funds rate was at 0.08 percent, and the 30-year mortgage rate was 2.95 percent. The Federal Reserve has indicated that it will increase interest rates during 2022 and 2023 to help tame inflation. The 2022 forecast is 4.63 percent for the prime rate, 1.42 percent for the Fed funds rate, and 4.62 for the 30-year mortgage rate.

🌐 BIG PICTURE INDICATORS

U.S. Civilian Participation & Unemployment Rates (NSA)

Per Capita Personal Income

Note: The 2021 EPC per capita personal income is a forecast by the UCCS Economic Forum.
*Colorado Office of State Planning and Budgeting and UCCS Economic Forum forecasts
Sources: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Approximately two-thirds of the American economy is driven by consumer spending. Consumer sentiment is highly correlated to how much individuals are willing to spend. Hence, an understanding of consumer confidence in the economy and expected spending patterns over the next twelve months are essential to effective planning for most businesses. Consumer sentiment measures confidence using 1966 as the base year (1966=100). The personal savings rate measures the percent of income put into savings, and it is inversely correlated with consumer sentiment. Higher savings rates often indicate that individuals are not as confident about spending any extra money they have, but those saved dollars do create consumption capacity for the future.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Consumer confidence significantly fell in 2021 (average of 77.6) from historically high levels in 2020 (average of 81.5). Due to the inflationary pressures and the Ukrainian crisis, consumer confidence has fallen further to 65.2 as of April 2022. Levels have not been this low since The Great Recession (November 2008). Inflation expectations are at the highest levels seen since 1981 and correlated to that, expectations for personal finances are the

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

The civilian participation rate measures the percentage of the working population that considers themselves active members of the workforce. A higher civilian participation rate is good because it increases U.S. productivity, GDP and the tax base, while reducing transfer payments such as unemployment and welfare.
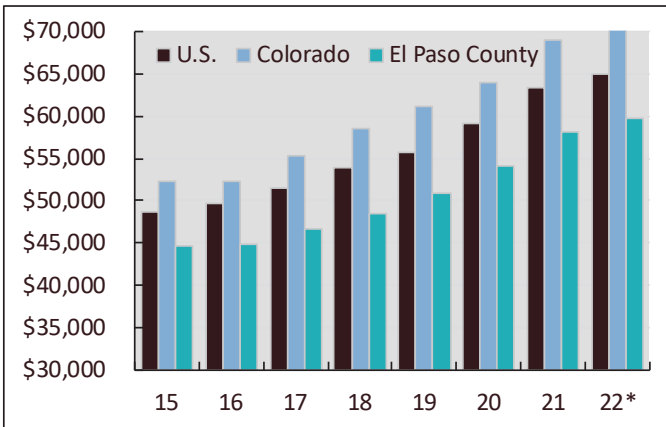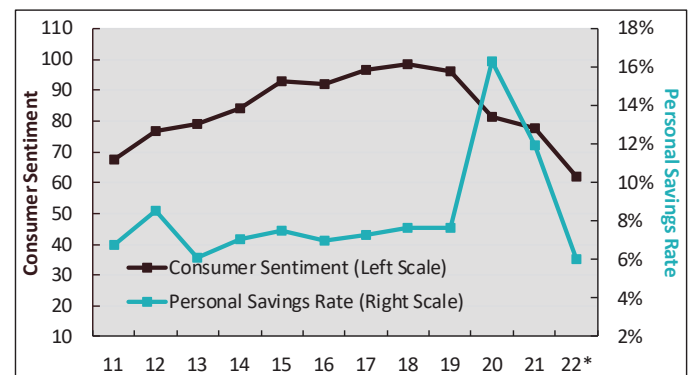
Per capita personal income is measured by taking the total income in a region or country and dividing by the total population. Amounts are calculated before taxes and are not adjusted for inflation. This metric is not the "average income" for individuals since the calculation includes children and non-working individuals. The measure can be pulled down by a large dependency ratio (e.g. a high proportion of children and other dependents). Our lower per capita income can partially be explained by our lower median age (see table on page 15).

HOW ARE WE DOING?

The civilian participation rate has been declining since the Great Recession and has fallen further due to the 2020 pandemic. As of March 2022, the rate was at 62.4 percent. During 2021 it averaged 61.7 percent, and prior to the Great Recession, it was approximately 66 percent. Typically during a recession, labor participation rates do not fall. However, during the pandemic, the already low rates fell even further. There are many reasons for this and most are structural challenges that will likely hinder U.S. economic growth in the long run. These reasons include the skills gap, which is tied to insufficient information about and education/training for today's employer needs, an increasing number of self-employed individuals or "gig" workers who may not be part of the formal workforce, the high cost of childcare and shortage of providers, and a fewer absolute number of workers due to lower immigration and declining birth rates that started in the 1970s.

U.S. per capita personal income grew by 6.1 percent in 2020, and Colorado's per capita personal income grew by 4.8 percent. Local per capita personal income grew 6.5 percent to $54,151 in 2020. For 2021, Colorado's per capita personal income grew 7.8 percent, and the Forum is forecasting a 7.5 percent increase locally. For 2022, forecasted growth is 2.5 percent for the U.S., 2.7 percent for Colorado, and 2.6 percent for El Paso County.

Consumer Sentiment and Personal Savings Rate
Baseline index =100 (1966)

*UCCS Economic Forum forecasts
Sources: University of Michigan; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

lowest seen since the surveys began in 1941. The Forum projects consumer confidence will likely remain low in 2022 at 62.0 due to the aforementioned headwinds.

In 2021, the personal savings rate was 11.9 percent. The projected, personal savings rate for 2022 is 6.0 percent.

⊕ BIG PICTURE INDICATORS

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The manufacturing index, also called the purchasing managers index (PMI®), is a leading economic indicator measuring the relative health of the manufacturing sector. The manufacturing index is based on five major indicators: new orders, inventory levels, production, supplier deliveries and the employment environment. A manufacturing index of more than 50 represents expansion of the manufacturing sector compared to the previous month. A reading under 50 represents a contraction, while a reading at 50 indicates no change.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

As of March 2022, the PMI® for the seven states that comprise the Kansas City Federal Reserve region was 87.0, and for the nation it was 57.1. For all of 2021, the average PMI® was 75.9 for our Kansas City region and 60.6 for the U.S. The high levels are typically correlated with expansionary economic times. However, the shortage of intermediate and final goods is skewing the survey results to appear more positive than they are primarily through the subcomponents of the index that include increased prices, backlogs of orders and new export orders. Basically, this means that there is significant demand for manufactured goods, and that is indeed reflected in the positive index, but suppliers are not able to readily fill orders or find the workforce they need.
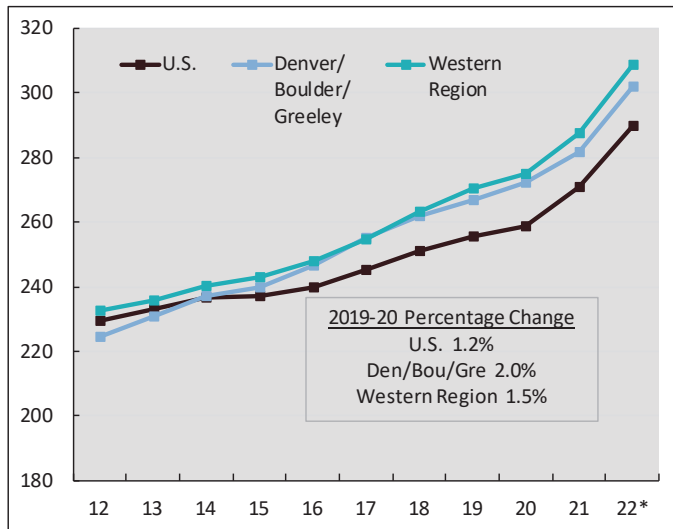
Manufacturing Indices
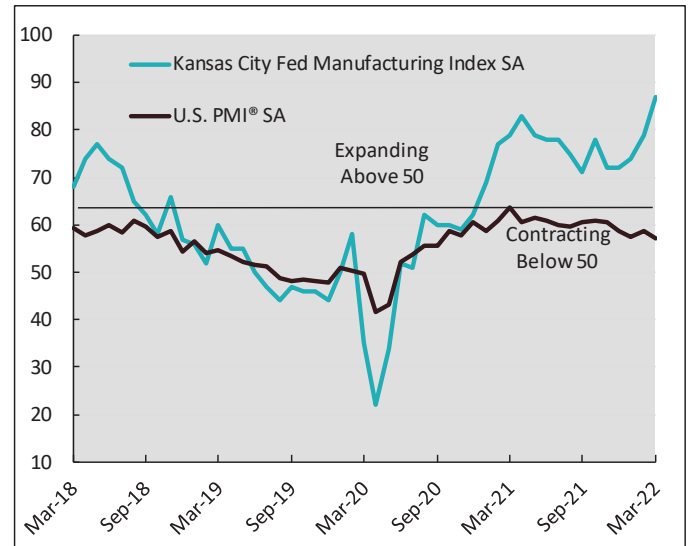
March 2022	
Kansas City Fed Manufacturing Index SA	*U.S. PMI® SA*
87.0	57.1

Sources: Institute of Supply Management®; Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City

The Western Region, Denver/Boulder/Greeley and U.S. Consumer Price Indices (CPI) for all Urban Consumers (1982-1984=100)

2019-20 Percentage Change
U.S. 1.2%
Den/Bou/Gre 2.0%
Western Region 1.5%

*Colorado Office of State Planning and Budgeting and UCCS Economic Forum forecasts
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

U.S. Consumer Price Index - March 2022		
	All items	**Less food & energy**
Change from Feb. 2022 (SA)	1.2%	0.3%
Last 12-months (NSA)	8.5%	6.5%

Note: The Federal Reserve has a target inflation rate of 2.0%.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The consumer price index (CPI) measures the average price change (inflation) for a basket of goods and services selected by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The CPI measures the period-to-period loss of purchasing power of a dollar caused by rising prices. The CPI is often used to compute real wages, income and wealth to help determine whether consumer purchasing power and household wealth are increasing, decreasing, or remaining constant in "real" terms.

The Fed prefers a CPI increase of around 2.0 percent. Although lower prices are desirable, prices that rise too slowly or even fall can have negative effects on the economy if consumers and businesses delay their consumption and investment (thinking prices will fall further) and by making loans more expensive to service (banks receive fewer dollars on fixed rate loans when low inflation expectations are built into loans they make today). Conversely, prices that rise too quickly are characteristic of an "overheated" economy typically caused by low unemployment rates and higher wages. This is one of the triggers for the Fed to increase interest rates.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

The U.S. urban CPI rose 4.7 percent in 2021 after increasing 1.2 percent in 2020. U.S. inflation is expected to be 7.0 percent in 2022 according to the Colorado Office of State Planning and Budgeting.

The Denver/Boulder/Greeley CPI rose 3.5 percent in 2021 after increasing 2.0 percent in 2020. Inflation is expected to be 7.2 percent in 2022 for the Denver/Boulder/Greeley CPI. As a point of reference, the entire western region had an inflation rate of 4.5 percent in 2021, which was higher than the Colorado rate. In past years, the Western region has typically had a higher price index because of California, although the Denver/Boulder region is quickly reaching the high Western price levels.

DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS

Projected Population Change: 2020 to 2050

	< -1,000		-1,000 to 0		1 to 5,000		5,001 to 20,000
	20,001 to 50,000		50,001 to 200,000		> 200,000		
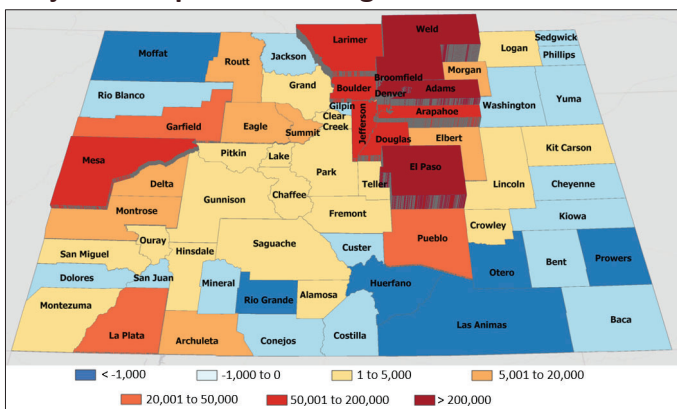
Population Estimates

	2020	**2050**
El Paso County	731,641	994,141
Colorado	5,782,915	7,564,742

El Paso County Annual Population Projections by Age Group

*Colorado Department of Local Affairs, State Demography Office estimates
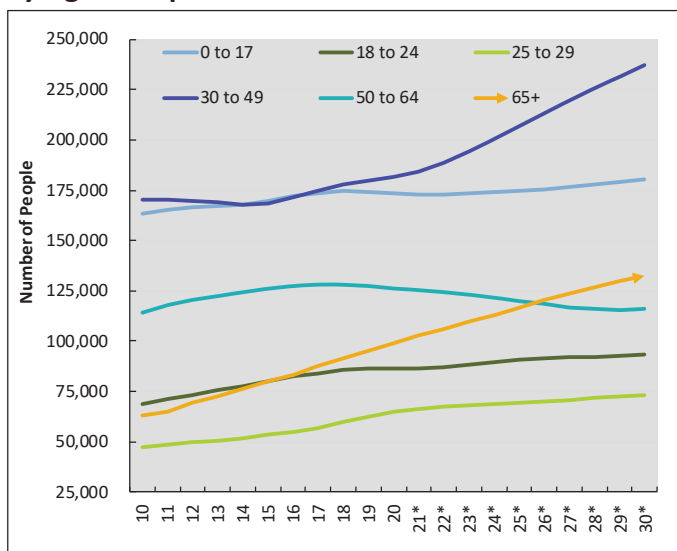Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs, State Demography Office

2020 Components of Population Change

	Percent of Population Change from Births minus Deaths	**Percent of Population Change from Net Migration**
Colorado Springs MSA	64.4%	35.6%
Colorado	43.0%	57.0%

Colorado Department of Local Affairs, State Demography estimates
Source: Colorado Department of Local Affairs, State Demography Office

2020 Median Age

El Paso County	*United States*
32.9	38.6

Sources: Colorado State Demography Office; U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

Population growth is important because it influences the labor market, education and other infrastructure needs, the tax base, the future planning and conservation of resources, as well as the health of the economy in general. Understanding population trends helps government officials, businesses and others plan for the future. Population estimates are used for planning and evaluation, state revenue sharing, and distribution of funds by public and private agencies.

Population changes come from natural increase (births minus deaths) and from net in-migration (or out-migration). The sum of these components is the change in population. Identifying trends in these indicators helps project future changes in the region's population, the workforce, and the proportion of the population that is dependent on the workforce, such as children and the non-working elderly. Knowing these trends helps us understand all of these groups' respective impacts on the economy.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

El Paso County's population grew 0.8 percent in 2020 to 731,641 residents according to the Colorado State Demography Office. It is projected to grow by an additional 2,867 residents in 2021 (0.9% growth rate) and another 4,563 residents in 2022 (1.2% growth rate). The Forum is closely watching the Colorado State Demography Office's forecasts because we believe population growth may be notably higher. Growth estimates are lower than the county's growth rate from 1990 to 2000 (3.1%) and also lower than they were from 2000 to 2010 (2.1%). The State Demography Office is forecasting lower growth rates for both El Paso County and the state as a whole. They believe that lower international immigration and lower birth rates that began in the 1970s are now significantly reducing population growth rates. This is indeed a national phenomenon and one that will require innovative strategies to ensure a sufficient number of workers such that businesses can continue to operate and grow.

The Colorado State Demography Office states that El Paso County is projected to be one of five counties in the state to have a population increase of at least 200,000 between 2020 and 2050 as can be seen on the map. This means El Paso County will have nearly a million people by 2050. Regional and state estimates by the State Demography Office have been revised lower because of the aforementioned demographic factors. The Forum is not quite as conservative in its estimates. Building permits, demand for housing and rental absorption rates are all indicating that a significant number of people continue to move to the Colorado Springs region. The State Demography Office acknowledges this and agrees that regional data may be revised.

The second graph shows the projected population increases by age cohort. The region is well positioned to have economic growth if the increasing number of younger cohorts stay in the region and are properly trained for the in-demand occupations.

The natural increase (births minus deaths) in the El Paso County population was estimated to be 4,011 in 2020 and net in-migration was 2,133. Projections from the State Demography Office for 2021 have births increasing slightly, along with a projected slight increase for in-migration for 2021 (2,867) as well as a larger increase for 2022 (4,563).

The bottom table shows that in 2020, the local median age was 32.9 years old, whereas it was 38.6 years old in the U.S.

👥 EMPLOYMENT & WAGE INDICATORS

The Unemployment Rate in El Paso County, Colorado and the U.S. (NSA)
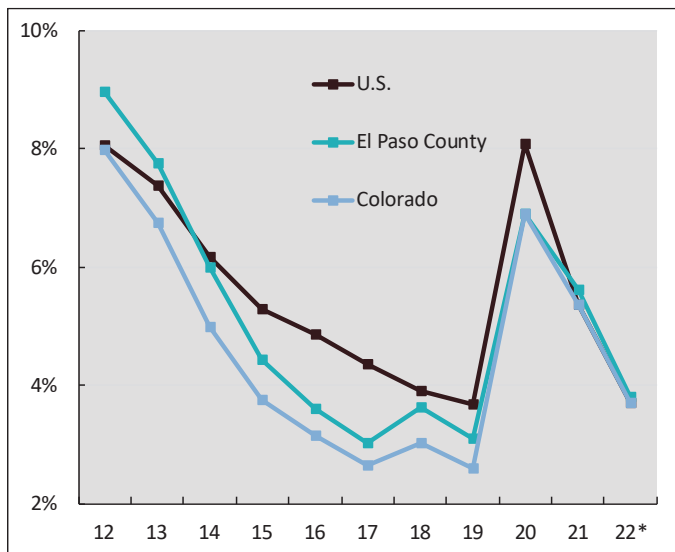
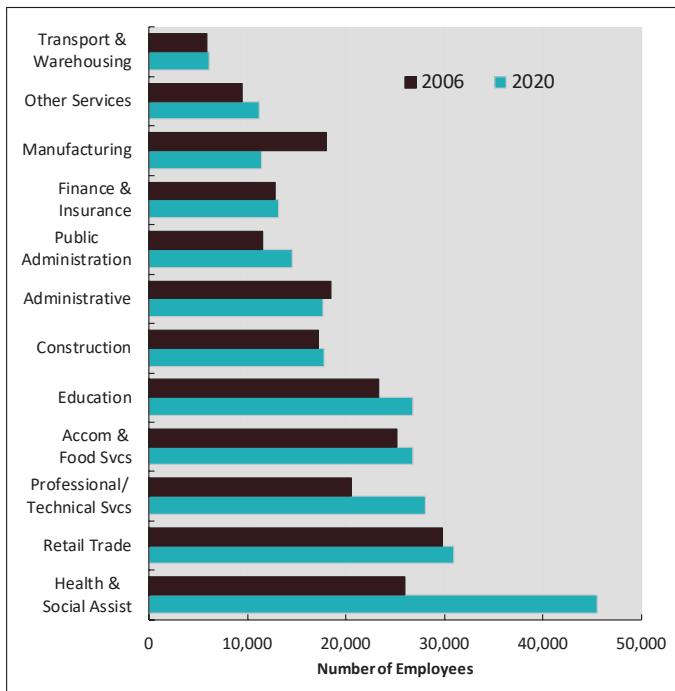| 2021 Q3 for All Private Industries		
El Paso County Average Annual Wage	*Colorado Average Annual Wage*	*United States Average Annual Wage*
$57,564	$68,952	$65,156
Colorado wages were 5.8% higher than the U.S., while El Paso County wages were 16.5% lower than Colorado and 11.7% lower than the U.S. in 2021 Q3.		

El Paso County Employment in Selected Sectors for 2006 and 2020

*CO Office of State Planning and Budgeting and UCCS Economic Forum forecasts
Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW); UCCS Economic Forum

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

The number and types of jobs available and filled is perhaps the most important indicator of economic health and sustainability in a given community. While the presence of large, profitable companies in a community is a positive thing, approximately 50 percent of private sector employment emanates from small businesses (defined as 500 employees or less). This means that entrepreneurial, start-up companies are central to regional economic prosperity. Likewise, a healthy number of small companies usually means economic diversity, which is also of paramount importance since it is risky for a region to be too dependent on one or a few employers (e.g. oil and gas industry or the military).

The unemployment rate represents the percentage of people who are actively looking for work in the past four weeks who do not have jobs. There will always be some unemployment due to seasonal factors, workers between jobs, recent graduates looking for work and other causes. The optimal scenario is one where unemployment for individuals is temporary, there are enough jobs for job-seeking individuals, and there are enough skilled workers for businesses to fulfill their production needs.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

The U.S. unemployment rate for all of 2020 was 8.1 percent and fell to 5.4 percent in 2021. Colorado's unemployment rate fell from 6.9 percent in 2020 to 5.4 percent in 2021. For El Paso County, the rate moved from 6.9 percent in 2020 to 5.6 percent in 2021 (all data not seasonally adjusted).

As if the two years of the pandemic did not cause enough uncertainty, we now have geopolitical instability due to Russia's invasion of the Ukraine. In addition, the sheer size of the disruption caused by the pandemic shutdowns created ongoing supply chain challenges that have resulted in persistent inflation. The low labor supply, which was already compromised prior to 2020, is now even lower. This trend will continue due to more self-employed individuals, more labor turnover, less international immigration, and most importantly, a demographic transition that yields a declining number of working-age individuals. An economic slowdown typically pushes unemployment rates higher if it occurs.

The Colorado Office of State Planning and Budgeting projects the state unemployment rate will average 3.7 percent in 2022. The Forum projects El Paso County unemployment will average 3.8 percent in 2022.

The Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) total employment in the county for 2020 showed a net decline of 8,093 jobs due to the pandemic. However, the most recent QCEW data comparing 2019 Q3 to 2021 Q3 shows an increase of 3,101 jobs indicating the region is on the path to positive job growth post-pandemic. As a point of reference, page 18 shows that the "ideal" number of new jobs needed in El Paso County to match population growth is approximately 5,600 per year.

In 2021 Q3, El Paso County wages in private industries were a full 7.0 percent higher than 2020 Q3. State wages went up 7.5 percent in the same time period, and the U.S. increased 7.2 percent. However, as the table in the middle of the page shows, regional wages are still significantly below both the state and nation. The next page shows annual data for 2020.

The bottom graph shows that in El Paso County, the sectors with the greatest increase in terms of employment have been health and social assistance, professional and technical services, education, and public administration.

EMPLOYMENT & WAGE INDICATORS

Private* Industry Employment and Annual Pay in 2020				
	El Paso County Percentage of Total Employment (Number of Employees)	El Paso County Average Annual Pay	% Difference EPC to CO Annual Pay	% Difference EPC to U.S.** Annual Pay
Total, All Private Industries	**224,448**	**$55,675**	**-17.4%**	**-13.3%**
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	0.2% of total employment (533 employees)	$46,049	9.6%	15.8%
Utilities (not CSU)	0.2% (474)	$128,687	12.1%	9.8%
Construction	7.9% (17,678)	$61,669	-9.6%	-8.4%
Manufacturing	5.1% (11,416)	$65,854	-14.7%	-10.3%
Wholesale Trade	2.6% (5,812)	$74,606	-20.6%	-11.4%
Retail Trade	13.7% (30,659)	$35,718	-3.6%	-2.8%
Transportation & Warehousing	2.6% (5,793)	$45,418	-23.0%	-17.9%
Information	2.3% (5,199)	$85,153	-31.0%	-37.5%
Finance & Insurance	5.9% (13,146)	$82,997	-25.8%	-31.7%
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	2.1% (4,824)	$50,154	-23.5%	-23.1%
Professional & Technical Services	12.4% (27,921)	$98,633	-7.1%	-8.0%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0.6% (1,318)	$186,002	22.1%	40.5%
Administrative & Waste Services	7.9% (17,686)	$44,061	-9.7%	-5.2%
Educational Services	1.6% (3,624)	$40,546	-15.8%	-29.1%
Health Care & Social Assistance	16.2% (36,445)	$50,268	-10.3%	-8.7%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	1.8% (4,058)	$26,538	-38.3%	-41.9%
Accommodation & Food Services	11.9% (26,669)	$22,508	-12.0%	-1.2%
Other Services (incl. nonprofits)	5.0% (11,132)	$47,605	4.3%	8.0%

*Average pay in these tables does NOT include government workers. Also, mining and unclassified industry groups were excluded, which had a combined total of 60 employees in 2020.
**U.S. private annual pay is for all U.S. locations (urban and rural).
Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages; UCCS Economic Forum

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

The Colorado Springs region has grown in population and has become more economically diverse. Competitive salaries are an important part of attracting and retaining labor, which is critical to business growth. In the past twenty to thirty years, technology has rapidly changed the labor landscape. Skills have been highly specialized and skewed towards proficiency in today's technologies. Across the nation, employers state that it is difficult for them to find employees with the exact skills they need. Hence, it will be important for post-secondary training and education to pivot towards those skills and be nimble enough to accommodate new training needs. Likewise, it will be important for employers to be competitive with wages in order to attract and retain the best talent. All of this is critical for robust, local economic growth.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Across the nation and in El Paso County, wages have proven to be very "sticky," meaning they have been slow to respond to the pressures of low unemployment. This has been particularly disadvantageous for our region because we started at a baseline of lower average pay many years ago. It is also likely that the high number of retired military in the region pulls down wages. Many of those retirees are relatively young, have pensions, and can consult for incremental income. Similarly, military spouses have often had many breaks in their career path and that can depress wages. Lastly, the region has a high hospitality sector, and those jobs typically have lower wages. As the table above shows, across all private industries, which excludes government, El Paso County average pay was 13.3 percent lower than the U.S. average pay and 17.4 percent lower than Colorado average pay in 2020. It remains to be seen whether the wage pressures brought on by the pandemic and the shrinking pool of workers overall will help close the wage gap between the Colorado Springs region, the state and the nation (as shown on the previous page).

EMPLOYMENT & WAGE INDICATORS

Colorado Springs MSA: March 2022		
Top Job Titles/ *(Risk of Automation*)*	*# of Job Postings*	*Market Salary*
Registered Nurses (L)	1,077	$61,080
Software Developers, Applications (L)	1,065	$98,291
Computer Systems Engineers/Architects (L)	663	$96,234
Managers (L)	630	$71,358
Sales Reps, Wholesale & Mfg (M)	594	$44,335
Retail Salespersons (H)	577	$26,397
Customer Service Reps (M)	453	$28,801
Maintenance & Repair Workers (M)	402	$33,295
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers (L)	381	$34,880
Information Security Analysts (L)	334	$98,547
Colorado Springs MSA, March 2022 **TOTAL Job Openings: 28,498** **TOTAL Unemployed: 13,704** **Workers Available per Job Opening: 0.48**		

*Risk of Automation: L = Low Risk; M = Medium Risk; H = High Risk
Sources: The Conference Board® Burning Glass® Help Wanted Online™ via Pikes Peak Workforce Center and CO Department of Labor and Employment; CO Department of Labor and Employment, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW); UCCS Economic Forum

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

The Forum tracks the types of jobs that are in highest demand. This can help inform job seekers but also the relevant training institutions such as community colleges, industry training programs, and four-year universities.

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

The military has been a part of the local economy since World War II. Approximately 60,000 military and civilian workers are employed by this sector at either the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA), Peterson, Schriever or Fort Carson.
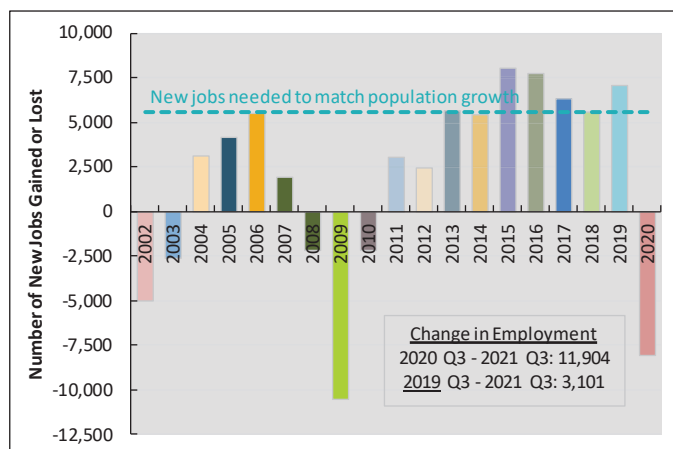
HOW ARE WE DOING?

Total military and civilian employment decreased in 2020 at Schriever and Peterson, while it increased at Fort Carson and USAFA. If employment changes at all the military installations were combined, there was a 0.1 percent drop in total military employment compared to 2019. Of note, Schriever included 5,008 civilian employees, and Fort Carson included 7,372 civilian employees in 2020.

When comparing 2020 to 2019, Schriever's economic impact increased to $927 million (up 20.9%), Fort Carson's impact stayed flat at $2.37 billion, and USAFA's impact decreased to $917 million (down 15.5%). There were significant issues with measuring Peterson's economic impact and for that reason it was kept at 2019 levels ($1.33 billion). Combined, the economic impact was estimated for these installations to be relatively flat comparing 2020 to 2019 with a 0.1 percent decline in economic impact (down $8 million).

Just prior to Donald Trump leaving office, his administration announced that Space Command would be moved to Huntsville, Alabama. Although Colorado state and local leadership is trying to reverse the decision, it is anyone's guess whether a reversal is at all possible. Previous estimates showed that having Space Command in Colorado Springs would generate an estimated $500 million to $1 billion in military construction and approximately 1,500 new jobs.

El Paso County New Jobs

Sources: Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Quarterly Census

HOW ARE WE DOING?

As the table shows, the most highly demanded jobs represent a mixture of skill sets and educational/training levels. Some are professional jobs requiring four-year degrees and other ones require little training or short-term certifications. It is important to note that the top ten to twenty job postings are quite static month to month, meaning that there is regional opportunity to ramp up the relevant training programs in order to meet business labor needs. According to QCEW data, there were 8,093 fewer jobs in 2020 in El Paso County. However, as mentioned on page 16, the region is on a path to positive job growth as of 2021 Q3.

Military Employment in El Paso County
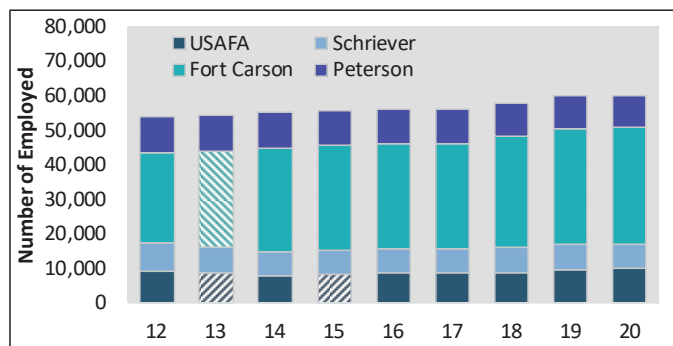
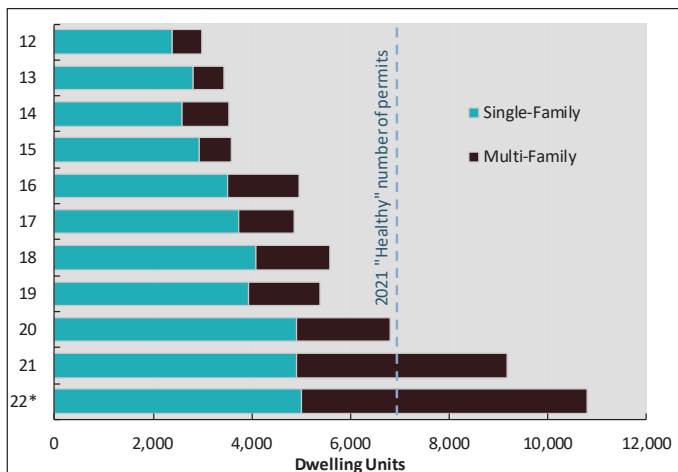## Military Expenditures in El Paso County ($ millions)
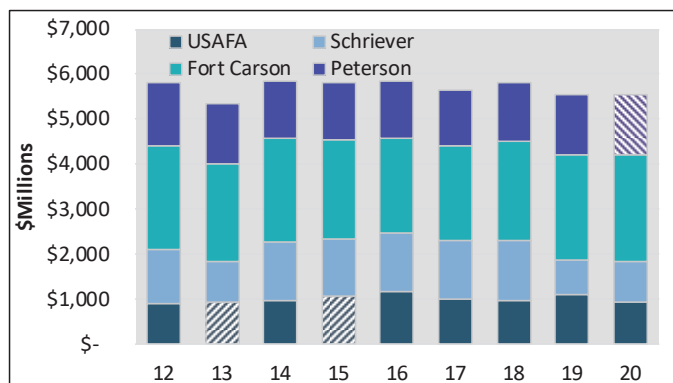
NOTE: Shaded data indicate UCCS Economic Forum estimates.
Sources: Colorado Springs Chamber & EDC; Respective military installations

🔑 REAL ESTATE INDICATORS

Residential Building Permits (Dwelling Units)

Value of Construction ($ millions)

*UCCS Economic Forum forecasts
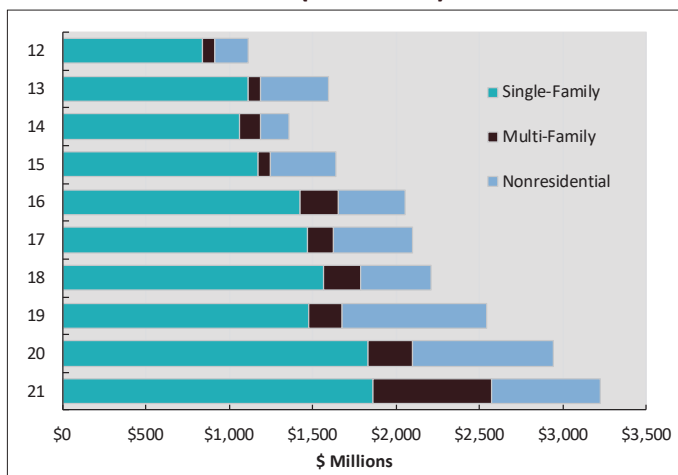Source: Pikes Peak Regional Building Department

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

Residential building permits reflect the general demand for housing and also the type of housing that local residents prefer. If there is natural population growth and in-migration, there will be demand for new homes, especially if consumer preferences lean towards new construction. El Paso County has had an average population growth rate over the last 10 years of 1.6 percent. If trends persist, it is likely that demand for residential building permits will continue, especially with the historically low mortgage rates made lower by the Federal Reserve at the beginning of the pandemic-induced recession.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Single-family residential building stayed fairly flat from 2020 to 2021. There were 4,912 single-family permits during 2021, which was a 0.1 percent decrease from the 4,917 permits in 2020. After discussion with local builders, the Forum is projecting a 2.0 percent increase in single-family residential permits during 2022.

After nearly nonexistent multi-family home building in 2009 and 2010, permits for this type of housing have taken off in recent years. In 2010, there were only permits for 88 units issued in Colorado Springs. In 2021, there were permits issued for 4,267 multi-family dwelling units, indicating the strength in the local economy and housing in general. Several local multi-family investors have stated that demand and absorption is still high most likely because there was an undersupply of apartments previously, especially downtown. The Forum is forecasting 5,010 single-family permits and 5,800 multi-family permits for 2022.

Estimates from the Forum have suggested that in 2021 for the population size of Colorado Springs, 7,000 single and multi-family building permits for the year is a healthy equilibrium. This is significantly below the 9,179 permits that were issued in 2021. During the pandemic, national residential housing experts estimated that the U.S. has an undersupply of homes in vicinity of 6.5 million homes. A similar analysis by the Forum shows a local supply shortage of 12,350 units with a unit being either a single or multi-family dwelling. The value of nonresidential construction was $649.7 million in 2021 whereas it was $846.5 million in 2020, a decline of 23.3 percent.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

A negative indicator for the housing market is an increasing foreclosure rate. Foreclosures are normally used by economists as a lagging indicator since they tend to peak just about the time an economic recovery commences.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

There were 144 foreclosures in 2021, a decrease of 48.8 percent from 2020 when foreclosures were already low at 281. Foreclosures likely stayed low during the 2020 pandemic year because there was a foreclosure moratorium as part of the Federal stimulus plan. It is likely that foreclosures will again increase during 2022 once that moratorium is lifted. For this reason, the Forum anticipates there will be 540 foreclosures in 2022. This number of foreclosures would still be low by historic standards.

It is notable that the average number of foreclosures prior to the recession (2005-2007) was 233 per month. By contrast, the average number of foreclosures in 2021 was 12 per month. In the early part of 2022, foreclosures in El Paso County have indeed crept up, and the persistently high levels of inflation may exacerbate this. Given the low baseline, however, at this juncture it does not appear that a foreclosure wave is looming.
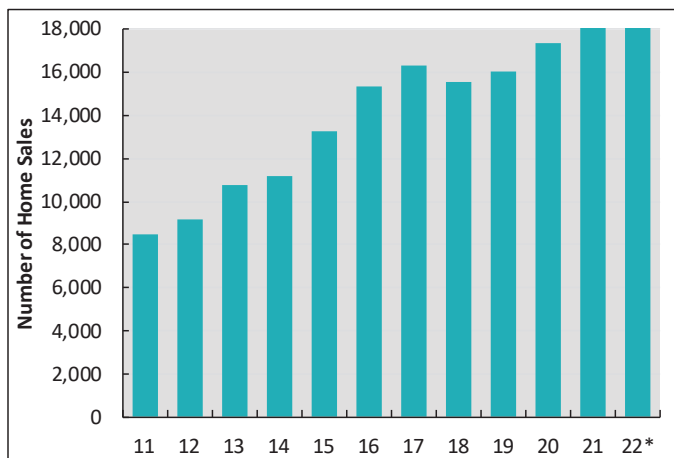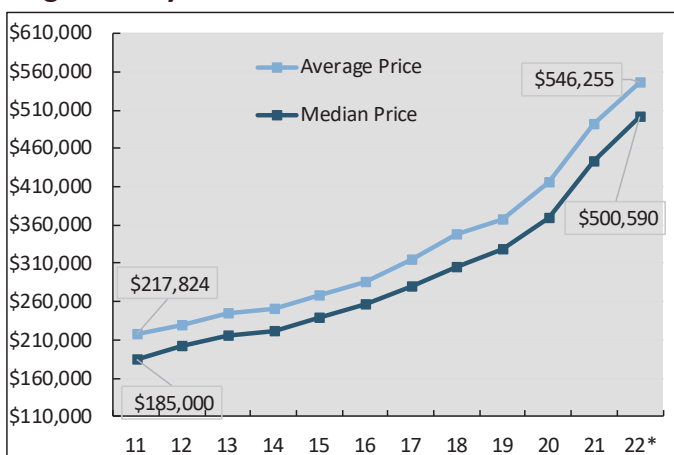
Foreclosures in El Paso County
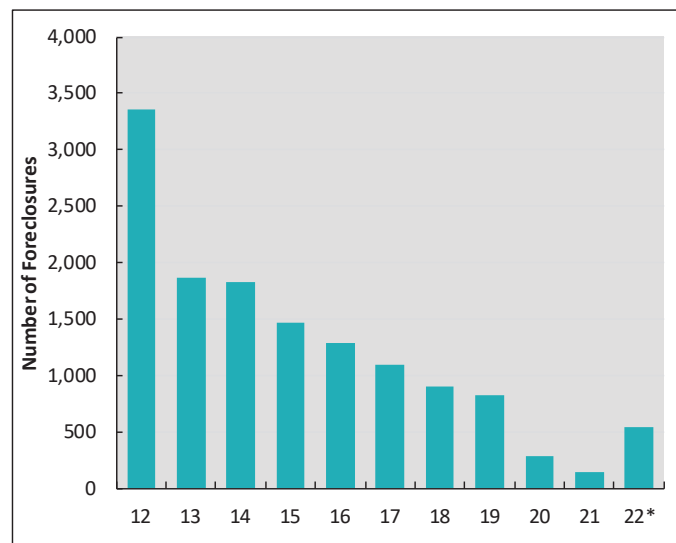
*UCCS Economic Forum forecasts
Source: El Paso County Public Trustee

REAL ESTATE INDICATORS

Pikes Peak Region Single-Family Home Sales

Pikes Peak Region Mean and Median Prices of Single-Family Homes Sold

Note: Data is for new and existing homes. Median price calculated by the UCCS Economic Forum off of monthly data from Pikes Peak Association of REALTORS®.
*Forecasts by UCCS Economic Forum with input from Cherri Fischer, Michelle Blessing, Chad Thurber, and Zillow.
Source: Pikes Peak REALTORS® Services Corp. (RSC)

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

Home sales are an indicator of vitality in the local real estate market. Home values are one of the indicators of the wealth of the community. Home owners want to see an increase in the value of one of their largest assets. Home valuation forms the basis of local residential property taxes. Property taxes, in turn, are used to support public schools in the area.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

In the Pikes Peak region, sales for new and existing single-family homes were 18,159 in 2021, up 4.7 percent (822 more sales than in 2020). The Forum forecasts home sales will modestly increase in 2022 up by 2.0 percent. Interest rate hikes have commenced due to the extraordinary inflation we are experiencing across the nation and that is also being felt in other countries that are trading partners. These interest rate increases will likely dampen demand for both new and existing homes. Unfortunately, many first time home buyers will be priced out of the housing market altogether with these higher rates since monthly mortgage payments are directly correlated to the interest rate. However, if indeed the housing market cools somewhat, that may slow down the rapid rate of home price appreciation.

The average home sales price in the Pikes Peak region was $492,122 in 2021, up 18.4 percent from $415,796 in 2020. The Forum is projecting an average home price of $546,255 in 2022 (up 11.0%). The increase in sales particularly for new homes emanates from historically low mortgage rates, an increase in population, (often cash) investors who are hedging against inflation and a possible stock market bubble burst, and a desire for more space. Those who can afford it are investing in real estate. For comparative purposes, the table below shows housing price data for Colorado Springs, Denver, Boise and the U.S.

2021 Q4 Median Home Price				
Location:	Colorado Springs	Denver	Boise	United States
Price:	$442,700	$617,600	$473,800	$361,700
1-year % Change:	19.2% increase	20.5% increase	24.3% increase	14.6% increase
MSA Rank:	30	13	27	n/a

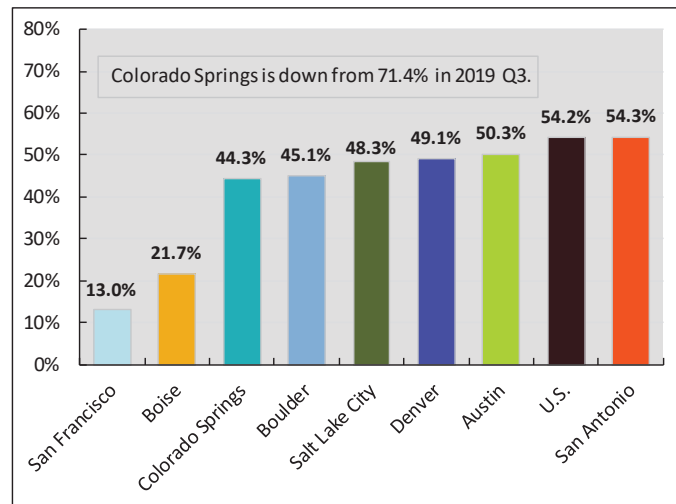Source: National Association of REALTORS®

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Housing affordability is a major consideration for individuals and families when they think about moving to the region or staying in the region. The National Association of Home Builders and Wells Fargo measure housing opportunity by looking at the percentage of median-priced homes sold that a family earning the local median income could afford.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

The housing opportunity index (HOI) for 2021 Q4 for Colorado Springs showed that 44.3 percent of homes sold in the region are affordable to the households that earn the median income. For the U.S., 54.2 percent of the median-priced homes sold were affordable for families earning the national median income. Affordability in the region has deteriorated rapidly. The HOI in 2019 Q3 was 71.4. Unprecedently low supply of existing homes is one of the primary reasons along with the other reasons mentioned on the previous page.
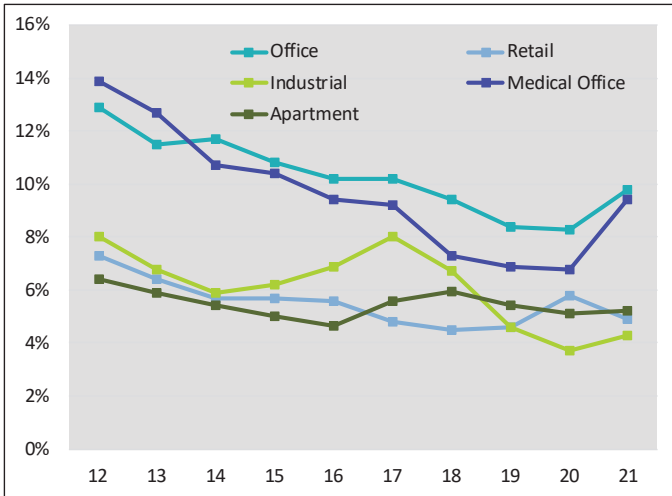
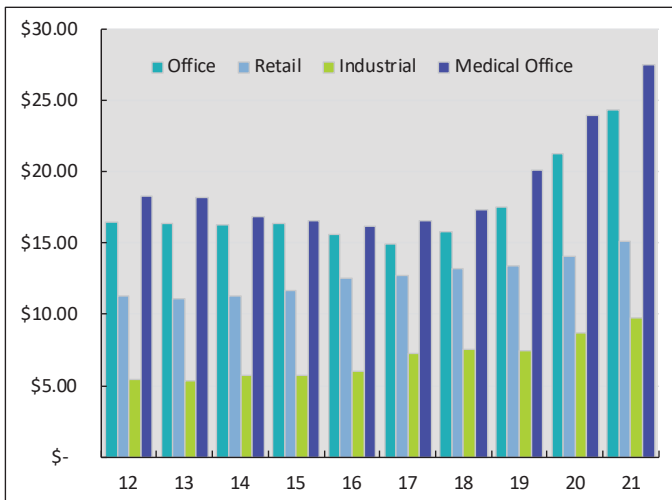## 2021 Q4 Housing Opportunity Index

Sources: National Association of Home Builders; Wells Fargo

🔑 REAL ESTATE INDICATORS

Colorado Springs Vacancy Rates for Apartment, Office, Retail, Industrial and Medical Spaces**

Colorado Springs Asking Rents for Office, Retail, Industrial and Medical Spaces**

Vacancy Rates and Rents (per Sq. Ft. NNN*)		
Property Type	**2020****	**2021****
Office	8.3% ($21.26)	9.8% ($24.37)
Retail	5.8% ($14.09)	4.9% ($15.11)
Industrial	3.7% ($8.67)	4.3% ($9.72)
Medical Office	6.8% ($23.95)	9.4% ($27.54)
Apartment	5.1% ($1,251.99)	5.2% ($1,432.54)

*NNN stands for triple net lease, which means that the tenant is responsible for net real estate taxes on the leased assets, net building insurance and net common area maintenance. Apartment data is rent per month and not per square foot.
**Commercial data is for the last day of they year, while apartment data is an average of the whole year.
Sources: CoStar Group™; Olive Real Estate Group, Inc.; Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Ron L. Throupe, Ph.D. of The Daniels College of Business at the University of Denver & Jennifer L. Von Stroh

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

Vacancy rates are a key indicator of economic activity. Declining vacancy rates put upward pressure on lease rates. Low vacancy rates reduce location choices for businesses. The availability of adequate and affordable commercial space allows existing companies to expand and helps attract new companies to the area. This may be particularly relevant for Colorado Springs given the high lease rates in the Denver metropolitan area.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Vacancy rates in 2021 increased or stayed fairly stable in all categories except retail space. Compared to 2020, medical office space vacancies increased significantly (from 6.8% to 9.4%), industrial space increased (3.7% to 4.3%), office space increased (8.3% to 9.8%), and retail space decreased (5.8% to 4.9%). Apartment vacancies increased slightly from 5.1 percent to 5.2 percent.

Construction of commercial real estate space has slowed significantly as a result of the pandemic. Office space, in particular, has lower levels of investment mostly due to the uncertainty of remote and hybrid work. Most experts are waiting to see exactly how much work remains remote in the waning months of the pandemic. Experts such as Nicholas Bloom from Stanford University state that approximately 25 percent of work moving forward will be remote, although other forecasters say it could be as high as 45 percent. For these reasons, construction has been modest and this is helping moderate any drastic increases in vacancies.

The retail market has been surprisingly resilient given the marked increase in e-commerce during the pandemic. That is mostly because the retail subsector was already undergoing much consolidation and transformation prior to the pandemic.

Industrial space has been the big winner of the pandemic as last-mile and larger distribution centers have been needed to accommodate the rapid acceleration of online retail. Industrial space also includes the increasingly popular "flex space" that includes mixed uses of space such as retail or office space in the front of a building with warehousing and distribution centers in the back of a building.

The multi-family market continues to expand, and that is largely due to the aforementioned shortage in housing in general that was discussed on page 19. In 2021, the average apartment in Colorado Springs cost $1,433 per month to lease.

The end-of-year lease rates for each property type are listed in the bottom left table. It is important to note that these are averages for all class types and do not take into account the quality of space. The table below shows comparative lease rates between Colorado Springs and Denver.

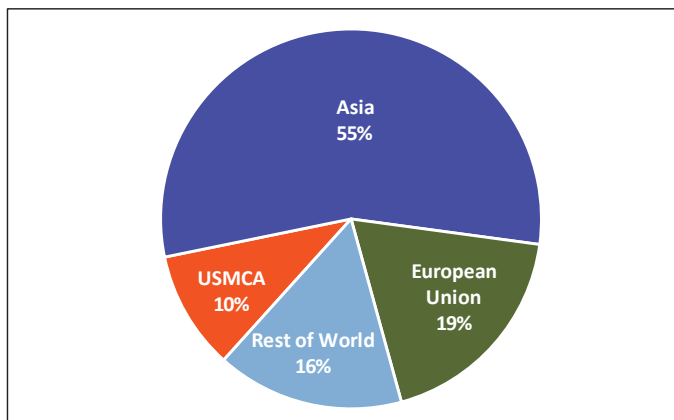| 2021** Comparative Rents per Square Foot*			
Property Type	**Colorado Springs**	**Denver**	**% Difference**
Office	$24.37	$32.92	-26.0%
Retail	$15.11	$22.42	-32.6%
Industrial	$9.72	$8.24	18.0%
Medical Office	$27.54	$25.14	9.5%
Apartment	$1,432.54	$1,647.79	-13.1%

See notes and source information to the left.

2020 Colorado Exports to Selected Destinations
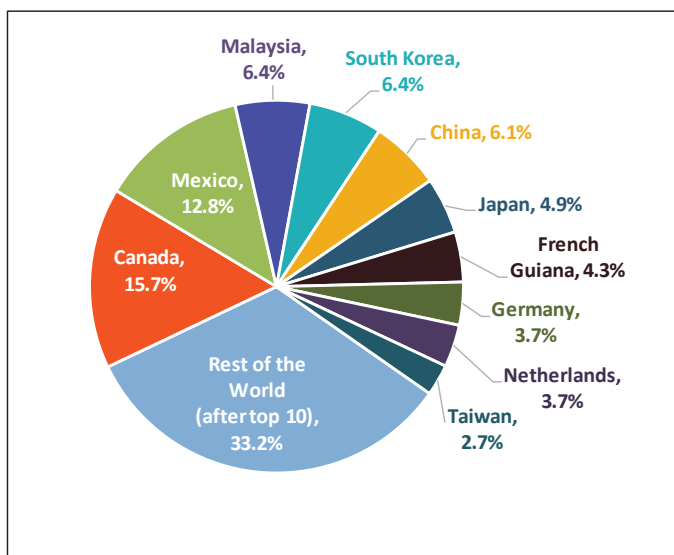
2020 Colorado Springs MSA Exports

Note: All calculations are in U.S. dollars.
Source: Office of Trade and Economic Analysis, International Trade Administration

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

One indicator of the state and local competitiveness in a global economy is the ability to export goods and services. A higher level of export activity translates into more jobs in the state and local region and more income and wealth. Economies that expect to compete in today's global economy need to grow export activity.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

As the graph shows, just over one-fourth of Colorado exports go to Canada and Mexico. Approximately another quarter go to primarily Asian countries including South Korea, China, Malaysia, Japan, and Taiwan. Approximately 12 percent of Colorado exports go to the Netherlands, Germany and French Guiana. The remaining third goes to the rest of the world. In 2020, it is notable that 6.9 percent of the U.S. GDP emanated from export activity, whereas in Colorado, only 2.2 percent of GSP emanated from export activity. Hence, Colorado is not as export dependent as other states, which can be favorable if there are international trade disputes but unfavorable if Colorado is losing out on potential export revenue. The pandemic created significant supply disruptions, and the lower dependency on exports in some ways is favorable to Colorado, at least in the short run.

Nine of 31 manufacturing categories in Colorado increased exports in 2020. The largest dollar gains were in computer & electronic products, $262 million (up 14.6%); transportation equipment, $126 million (25.8%); nonmetallic mineral products, $122 million (116.9%); food manufactures, $62 million (3.9%); and plastics & rubber products, $16 million (7.6%). Significant export declines took place in minerals & ores, -$121 million (-73.9%); machinery, except electrical, -$115 million (-11.4%); and commodities, -$67 million (-13.0%).

The second graph to the left shows that Colorado Springs exports are more heavily skewed towards Asia at 55 percent of all exports in 2020. Exports only made up 2.5 percent of GMP in 2020 in Colorado Springs. Canada and Mexico have a lower percentage of exports coming from Colorado Springs at 10 percent. From 2008 to 2020, Colorado Springs exports declined 49.3 percent. However, in the last four years, export activity has been increasing (by 4.2% in 2017, another 3.8% in 2018, 1.6% in 2019, and 13.3% in 2020.)

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

Retail sales are finished goods and services sold to consumers and businesses. Traditionally, retail sales follow the general trends in the economy, meaning if there is economic expansion occurring, retail sales typically are growing as well. E-commerce is the buying and selling of goods and services via the internet. E-commerce sales can occur between consumers and businesses although some e-commerce is business-to-business or consumer-to-consumer.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

The pandemic caused a large portion of retail sales to move online. Prior to the pandemic, about 13 percent of total retail sales were online, and during 2020, that proportion jumped to almost 20 percent. By the end of 2021, e-commerce sales had increased 14.2 percent. It is likely that the pandemic will cause permanent changes in the way individuals shop, even for groceries. E-commerce has entrenched itself into buying patterns, and the Forum projects a continued increase in online buying. Several social media platforms are increasing their abilities to have users buy products directly from advertisers using their platforms. Older demographic groups have also increased their comfort levels with online shopping during the

## E-Commerce versus Retail Sales Growth in the U.S.
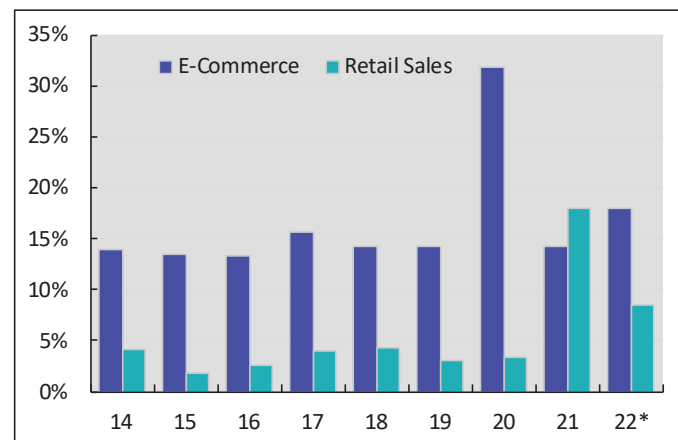
*UCCS Economic Forum forecasts with input from Statista and Wells Fargo
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce

pandemic. The Forum projects a further increase in e-commerce sales in 2022 of 18.0 percent, and those estimates are largely from Statista and Wells Fargo.

SALES & TAX INDICATORS

Colorado Springs Sales and Use Tax Collections (Nominal in actual $ millions. Real indexed for inflation: 2001=100 and adjusted for population growth)
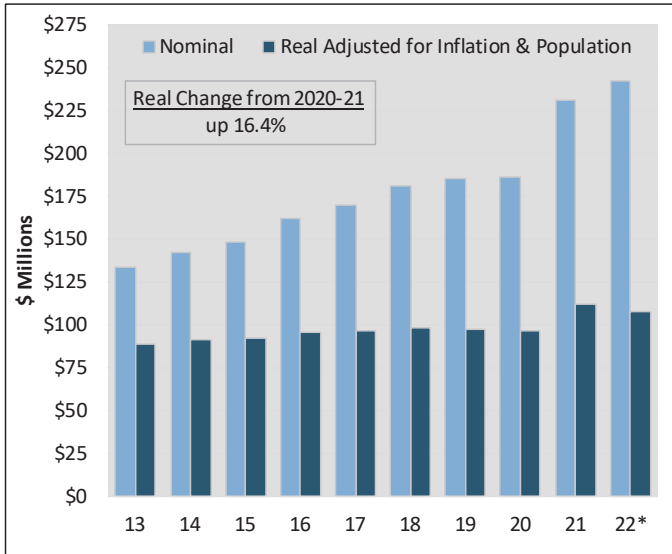
*City of Colorado Springs forecast
Sources: City of Colorado Springs; UCCS Economic Forum

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

City sales and use tax revenues are used for municipal operations by the city of Colorado Springs for such purposes as law enforcement, fire protection, street repair and park maintenance. It is critical that these revenues increase along with community growth in order for the city to provide necessary services.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

City sales and use tax collections were $231.2 million in 2021 (nominal dollars). This is $44.9 million more than collections in 2020 (up 24.1%). This was a pleasant surprise given the severity of the economic shock inflicted by the pandemic. There are various reasons that local revenues were not negatively impacted: robust construction (building materials), related purchases of durable goods like furniture, and online retail and grocery purchases. The sales and use tax collections for 2022 are expected to increase by 4.8 percent to $242.1 million. Most of the increase will be driven by the same categories as 2021, although there will likely be more of an increase in revenues from services as the pandemic continues to abate.

If we account for inflation and population increases, "real" sales and use tax collections increased by 16.4 percent in 2021.

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

The Forum tracks registrations for new vehicles purchased directly from dealers. Since vehicles are a relatively large purchase for most households, tracking new sales and registration helps gauge the consumer confidence and economic health in a given area. Lodger's and automobile rental tax collections are also a way of gauging the robustness of the tourism sector.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

The State of Colorado changed sources for new vehicle registration information in 2018. For this reason, the trend data can only go back to June of 2018. In 2021, there were an average of 2,342 new vehicle registrations per month. Registrations for luxury utility vehicles has increased 46.9 percent from 2019 to 2021. This is an important metric because it serves as a proxy for local consumer confidence. Individuals and households typically buy luxury goods only when they are confident about their financial standing and the economy in general.

In Colorado Springs, lodger's and automobile rental taxes (LART) increased from $4,530,057 in 2020 to $8,518,960 in 2021, an 88.1 percent increase. The City of Colorado Springs projects a 5.0 percent increase (to $8,944,908) for 2022.

In terms of national hotel occupancy, PricewaterhouseCoopers forecasts that occupancy rates will reach 61.7 percent in 2022 up from 57.1 percent in 2021. The higher 2022 rate would still be 4.3 percentage points lower than 2019 occupancy rates, which averaged 66 percent.

It is worth noting that hotels are projected to have a high level of disruption beyond the pandemic mostly due to the explosive growth of short-term rentals of primarily private properties made available through virtual platforms like Airbnb.

New Vehicle Registrations in El Paso County
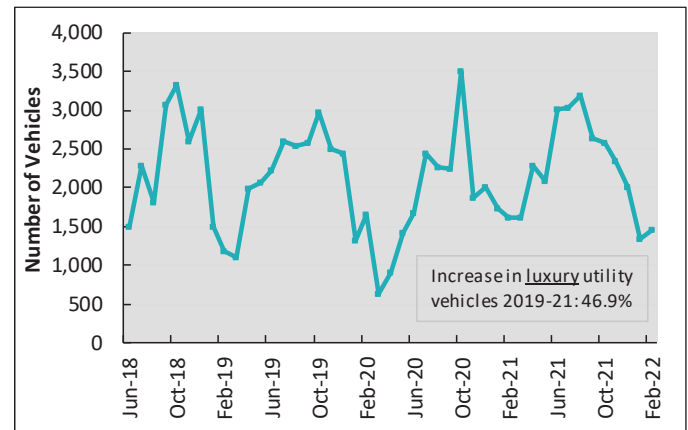
Lodger's and Automobile Tax Collections ($000s)
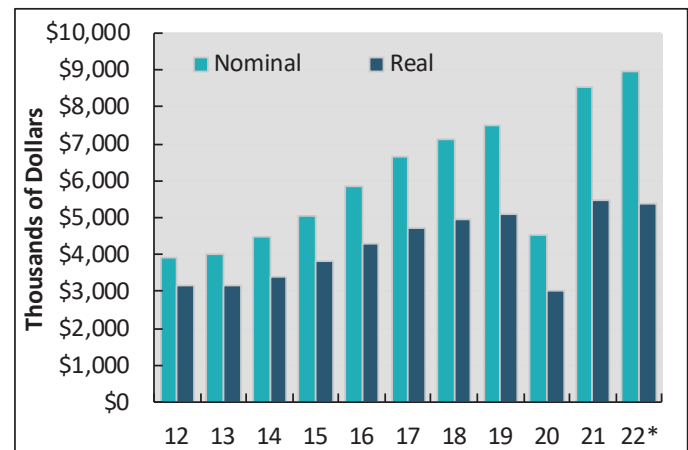
*City of Colorado Springs forecasts
Sources: Colorado Interactive LLC; City of Colorado Springs Finance Department, Sales Tax Division; UCCS Economic Forum

EDUCATION INDICATORS

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

The amount a region spends on educating its future workforce is critical in terms of sustainable economic growth. Although there are certainly other factors at play, sufficient funding to provide high quality, mass education is one of the most important variables in educational and life outcomes.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

The top table shows that per pupil spending varies greatly by school district. Average per pupil spending ranges from a high of $16,871 in the Cripple Creek-Victor school district to a low of $9,000 in the Ellicott school district. Per pupil spending can be higher in smaller districts because they cannot reap the economies of scale in purchasing materials as can the larger school districts.

Comparing Colorado to the U.S. per pupil expenditures, the middle graph is telling. In 1982, our state spent on average $232 more per student than the national average. By 2019, Colorado spent $2,138 less per student than the national average. The average *starting* teacher salary in 2019-20 for Colorado was $35,292 (ranked #48), and for the U.S. it was $41,163. That year, the overall average teacher salary in Colorado was $58,432 (ranked #30), while in the U.S. it was $66,496. The pay discrepancy helps explain the more acute teacher shortages in Colorado.

Our future workforce is being constrained by the high cost of higher education. For publicly-funded institutions, the bar chart at the bottom shows that U.S. students are paying, on average, less than half of the total costs of tuition, while in the state of Colorado, students are paying about 67 percent of total tuition costs. According to data from the Federal Reserve, 55 percent of college attendees now take on student debt. Nationwide, there is $1.75 trillion outstanding in student loan debt, which is about $40 billion more than U.S. auto loan debt. About 46 million Americans have student debt, and 11.1 percent were more than 90 days delinquent before the pandemic hit, although the moratorium of payments kept that level steady. The suspension in student payments is set to expire on August 31, 2022.

Delinquency and default rates are largely due to the low graduation rate. Only 62 percent of students who enter college graduate within six years. Another factor is that a degree no longer guarantees a higher paying job due to the rapid technological changes and shifting labor market.

2019-20 K-12 Enrollment and Per Pupil Spending

| School District	County	Pupil Enrollment	Per Pupil Spending
Cripple Creek-Victor RE-1	Teller	367	$16,871
Hanover 28	El Paso	258	$16,064
Miami-Yoder 60 JT	El Paso	288	$14,924
Colorado Springs 11	El Paso	26,040	$12,631
Edison 54 JT	El Paso	243	$12,457
Manitou Springs 14	El Paso	1,441	$12,167
Calhan RJ-1	El Paso	471	$12,073
Harrison 2	El Paso	11,543	$11,803
Peyton 23 JT	El Paso	626	$11,106
Fountain 8	El Paso	8,529	$10,959
Woodland Park RE-2	Teller	2,284	$10,902
Widefield 3	El Paso	9,669	$10,018
Cheyenne Mountain 12	El Paso	5,309	$9,958
Academy 20	El Paso	26,603	$9,709
Lewis-Palmer 38	El Paso	6,756	$9,575
Falcon 49	El Paso	23,890	$9,157
Ellicott 22	El Paso	1,142	$9,000

Source: Colorado K-12 Financial Transparency

K-12 Per Pupil Expenditures: Colorado versus National Average
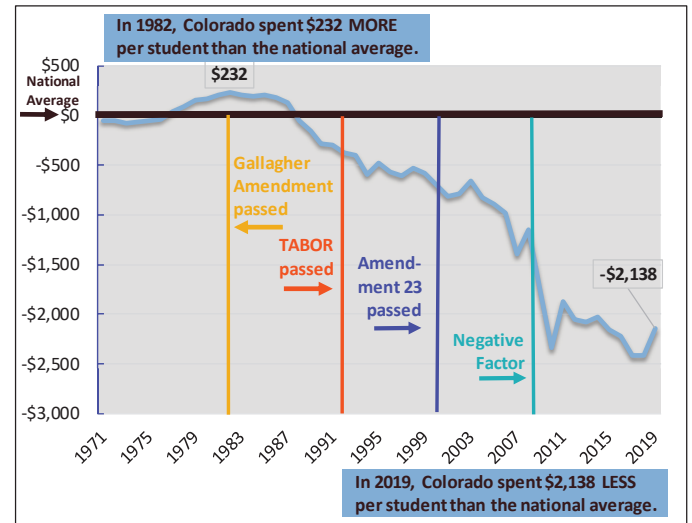
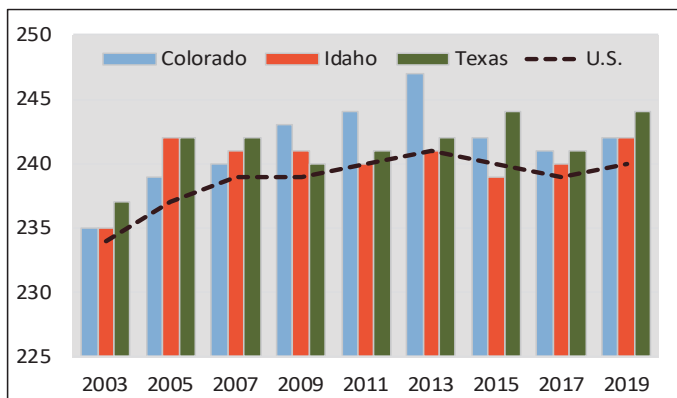Sources: National Center for Education Statistics; Great Education Colorado

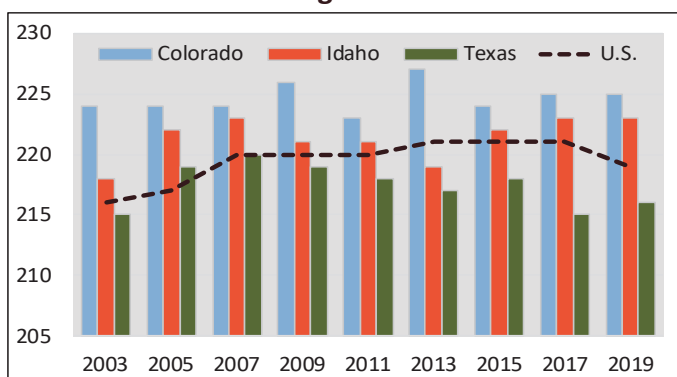## Student-Paid Portion of Higher Education Tuition at Public Institutions in 2020
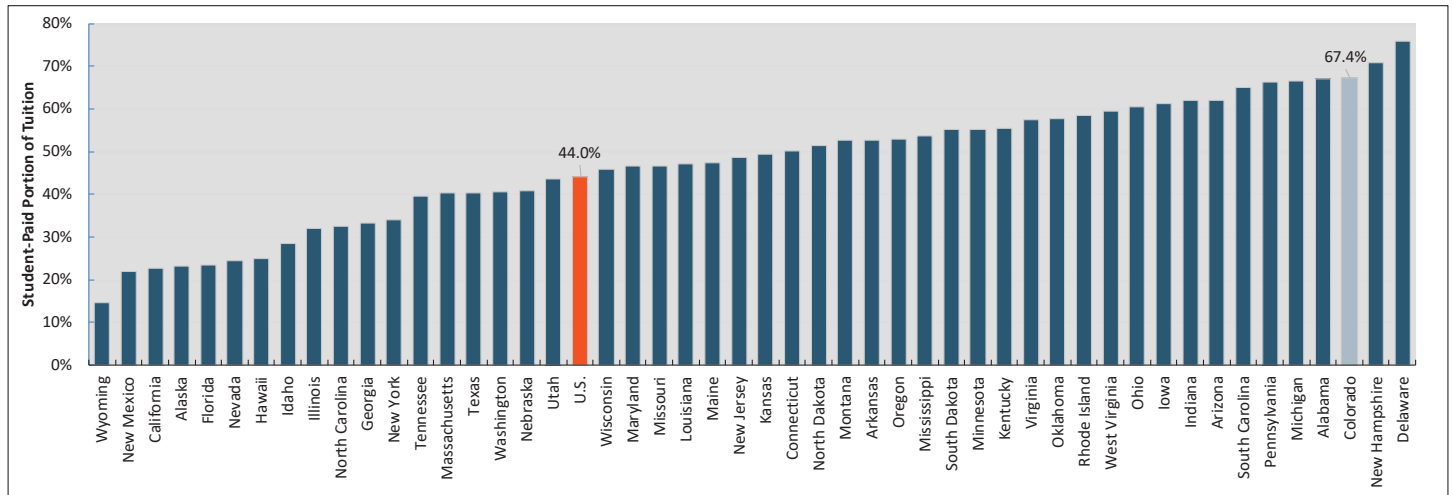
Source: 2020 SHEF Report, State Higher Education Executive Officers

NAEP 4th Grade Mathematics

NAEP 4th Grade Reading

Source for all test scores on this page: U.S. Department of Education, National

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

DUE TO THE PANDEMIC, TESTING WAS POSTPONED FROM 2021 TO 2022, WHICH IS WHY THESE METRICS ARE DATED. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests can be used in later grades to assess student learning compared to the U.S. and other states. This is useful information for gauging whether Colorado students are progressing through the K-12 system in a way that prepares them for entering the workforce or pursuing higher education.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

The dashed lines on the graphs show the national averages. Colorado 8th graders in public schools average consistently higher scores than the U.S. average for public and private school students. As the graph shows, in 8th grade math skills, Colorado students outperformed both Idaho and Texas until 2019 when Idaho led. In 8th grade reading skills, Colorado students perform significantly better than Texas, but just ahead of Idaho.

It is again important to point out that for Colorado 8th graders, math scores were on an upward trajectory from 2005 to 2011, but then declined and plateaued. In reading, scores for Colorado 8th graders have been moving up and down. The trends in Colorado 8th grade NAEP scores in both reading and math are similar to national outcomes.

The data on the table to the right has been updated for 2020-21 and shows the average spending per pupil for Colorado, Idaho, Texas and the U.S. As the data shows, Colorado spent more per pupil than Idaho and Texas, however, all three states rank quite low compared to the U.S. It is interesting to note that despite the lower per pupil spending, NAEP scores (graphs above) show that Colorado outperformed the U.S. in reading and math assessments.
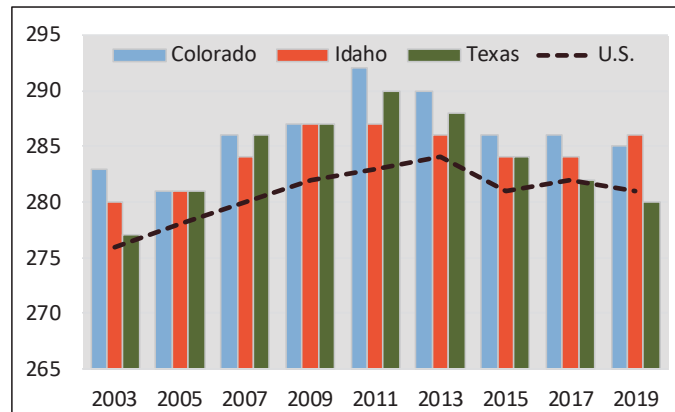
WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

DUE TO THE PANDEMIC, TESTING WAS POSTPONED FROM 2021 TO 2022, WHICH IS WHY THESE METRICS ARE DATED. Typically, every two years, representative samples of students in public schools in each state are tested using the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to compile state scores in mathematics and reading, among other subjects. Students from both public and private schools are assessed to compile the national score. The NAEP is one of three valid estimates of U.S. national academic performance, and it allows us to compare students across the nation over time.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

The dashed lines on the graphs show the national averages. Colorado 4th graders in public schools consistently score higher than students in public and private schools across the U.S. in both math and reading. Compared to Texas in 2019, Colorado scored a little lower in math but much higher in reading. Compared to Idaho, Colorado scored the same in math but a little higher in reading.

It is important to note that for both Colorado and the U.S., math scores have fallen since 2013 after a consistently upward trend. From 2003 to 2007 across the U.S., there were increases in 4th grade reading scores, although they have been level since then.

NAEP 8th Grade Mathematics

NAEP 8th Grade Reading
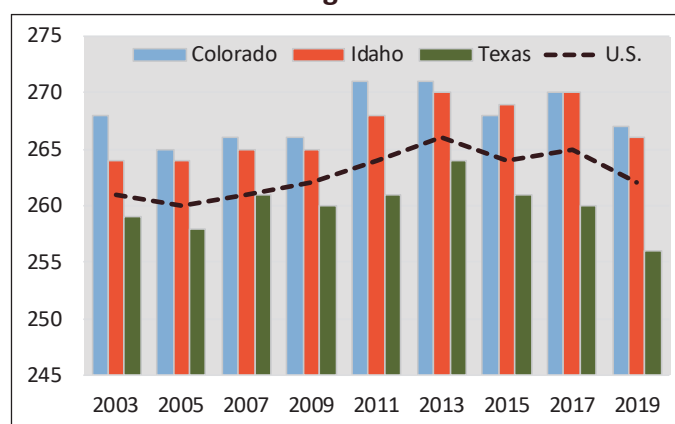
2020-21 Average per Pupil Spending	
Colorado (25th)	**$13,130**
Idaho (50th)	$7,833
Texas (38th)	$11,108
United States	$14,243

Source: National Education Association

EDUCATION INDICATORS

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

During the spring of 2015, Colorado began administering the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) in mathematics and English language arts. These new, computer-based assessments incorporate the Common Core State Standards but also contain "unique to Colorado" standards. Because of these changes, a new baseline is being established so only the latest results from testing are shown here for the school districts in the Colorado Springs MSA. While these tests lend a uniform source of information on how proficient Colorado students are at meeting the standards, it is critical to remember that these tests do not represent the whole picture of student learning.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

DUE TO PANDEMIC DISRUPTION, THERE WAS LOW PARTICIPATION IN CMAS DURING 2021, SO ALL DATA IS STILL FROM 2019. Overall, 4th graders did better on English language arts than mathematics testing in the 2018-19 school year. For 4th grade mathematics, results range from 21 percent meeting or exceeding expectations in Cripple Creek-Victor to 59 percent in Cheyenne Mountain. For 4th grade English language arts, results range from 26 percent meeting or exceeding expectations in Cripple Creek-Victor to 74 percent in Cheyenne Mountain.

2019 CMAS: 8th Grade Mathematics
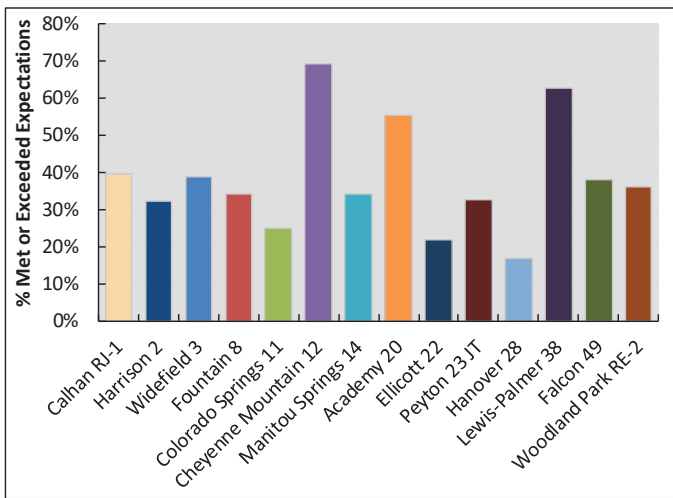
2019 CMAS: 8th Grade English Language Arts

Note: Some districts' scores are not available due to the small number of students.
Source for all CMAS information: Colorado Department of Education

2019 CMAS: 4th Grade Mathematics

2019 CMAS: 4th Grade English Language Arts

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

The new Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) tests are also administered in higher grades. While these tests lend a uniform source of information on how proficient Colorado students are at meeting the standards, it is critical to remember that these tests do not represent the whole picture of student learning.
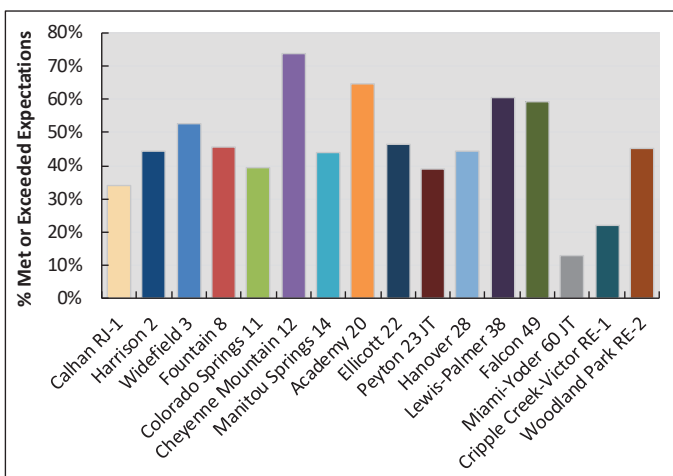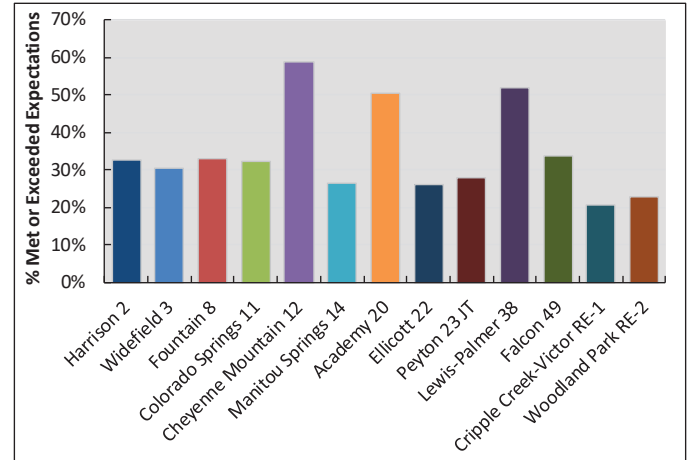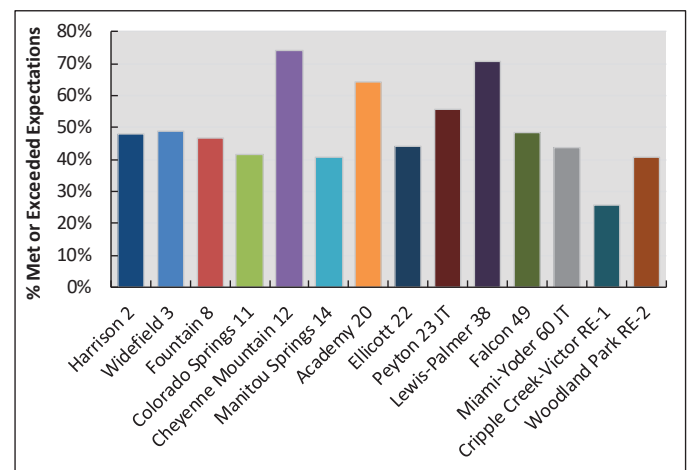
HOW ARE WE DOING?

DUE TO PANDEMIC DISRUPTION, THERE WAS LOW PARTICIPATION IN CMAS DURING 2021, SO ALL DATA IS STILL FROM 2019. The same trend of higher English language arts scores than math scores seen in 4th graders holds true for 8th graders. It is also true that there is great variation between school districts. For 8th grade math, results range from 17 percent meeting or exceeding expectations in Hanover to 69 percent in Cheyenne Mountain. For 8th grade English language arts, scores range from 13 percent meeting or exceeding expectations in Miami-Yoder to 74 percent in Cheyenne Mountain.

Although these tests do not present the whole picture of student learning, the high deviation in scores provides important information about the disparity in school outcomes by region.

Starting in 2019, all 8th graders took the same math test whereas in previous years, advanced students who were in algebra or geometry took the CMAS test that corresponded to the higher grade level. Having all 8th graders take the same math test now, including the advanced students, would skew the math scores upwards.

EDUCATION INDICATORS

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Academic performance of high school students is an important indicator of the knowledge base of the future workforce. In our highly specialized economy this is especially significant. In 2017, all high school juniors began taking the SAT instead of the ACT because this college entrance exam is more closely aligned with Colorado Academic Standards and provides free test preparation services for all students. A perfect score is 1600 (not including the optional essay).

HOW ARE WE DOING?

DUE TO PANDEMIC DISRUPTION, NOT ALL STUDENTS TOOK THE SAT IN 2021. The state had a 79.5% participation rate, and Colorado Springs average 81.1%. In 2021, the Colorado Department of Education reported that Colorado juniors had an average SAT score of 1011. The juniors in Cheyenne Mountain D12 (1169), Manitou Springs D14 (1070) Academy D20 (1084), and Lewis-Palmer D38 (1122) all had average SAT scores higher than the state average.

In 2021, the U.S. mean SAT score was 1060 according to the scores provided by the College Board. Colorado contributes to this downward bias in SAT results by requiring that all high school juniors take the SAT, not just those who are college bound. Any other students from other grades, including seniors, are not included in the Colorado composite SAT results. Hence, only juniors' SAT scores are measured in the Colorado averages.
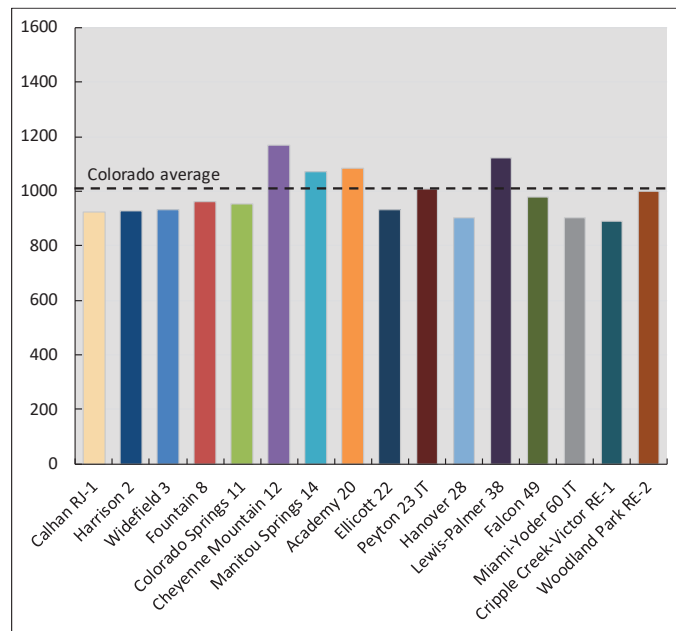
WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

Dropout rates are indicators of possible future societal costs from underemployment or unemployment and low earning potential. In a global economy, a skilled workforce is a requirement for personal and societal success. Today, a high school degree is a bare minimum requirement for virtually any job in the U.S. Providing a quality education to all racial and ethnic groups is important to our economic well-being because of the high demand for skilled workers, but also because racial/ethnic minorities are comprising an increasing proportion of the U.S. population.
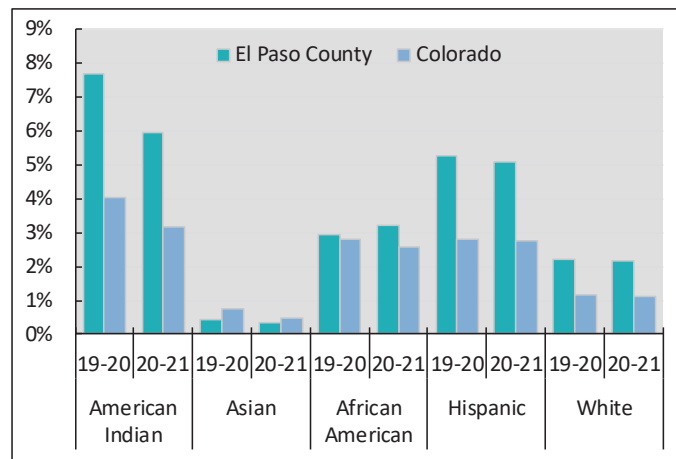
HOW ARE WE DOING?

Dropout rates in El Paso County (3.1%) were higher than Colorado (1.8%) in 2021. In El Paso County, dropout rates had started to decline slightly in 2018 but jumped to their highest level in 2020. 2021 was only slightly better for the region. In the state of Colorado, dropout rates have had a downward trend since 2010.

Dropout rates in El Paso County are highest among American Indian and Hispanic students. However, rates for all racial/ethnic groups except African American declined in 2021, with the largest drop seen in American Indians (from 7.7% to 5.9%). Dropout rates are lowest among Asian and White students, which is consistent with national trends. In El Paso County in 2021, the lowest drop out rate was for Asian students (0.3%), whereas the highest dropout rate was for American Indians (5.9%).

According to a study by the Brookings Institute, 80 percent of incarcerated male adults in the U.S. in 2014 were high school dropouts. From an earnings perspective, the median earnings for someone who had not completed high school was $25,876 in 2019 according to the Census Bureau. By contrast, a high school graduate earned $31,956 and an individual with a bachelor's degree earned $56,344.

High School Junior SAT Scores in Colorado Springs MSA, 2021

Note: Scores for Edison 54 JT were not available due to the small number of students.
Source: Colorado Department of Education

Grade 7 through 12 Dropout Rates
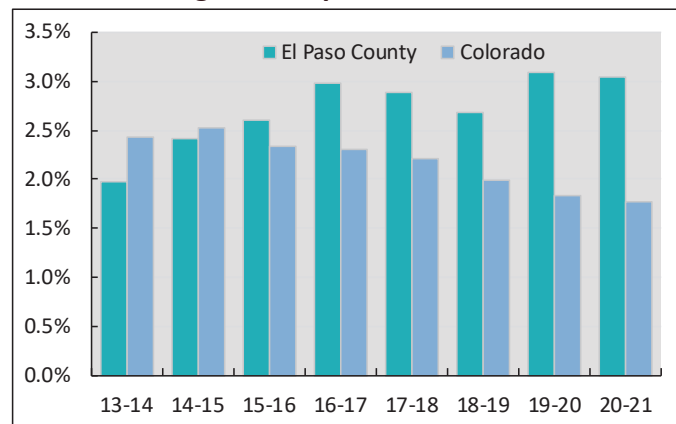
Note: The information above the racial/ethnic groups represent 2019-20 and 2020-21.
Source: Colorado Department of Education

EDUCATION INDICATORS

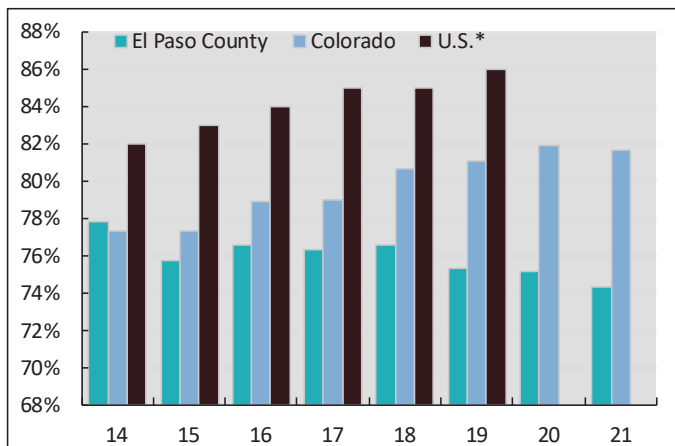## High School Graduation Rates

Legend: El Paso County, Colorado, U.S.*

*Estimate based on state data collected by the U.S. Department of Education; U.S. data lags.
Sources: Colorado Department of Education; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

A skilled workforce is essential for an economy to be competitive in world markets. Completion of high school is the minimal requirement to obtain needed skills in the 21st century. Low high school graduation rates are an indicator of possible future societal costs from underemployment or unemployment and low earning potential.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

In 2010, the formula for calculating high school graduation rates in Colorado was changed to include only those students who graduate in four years to align with calculations made by other states. The El Paso County graduation rate had a high of 81.7 percent in 2013. Part of the decline seen in 2014 and 2015 is due to the addition of a group of students in online schools who take longer than four years to graduate. In 2021, Colorado's graduation rate (81.7%) was higher than the overall rate for El Paso County (74.3%); however, ten of the fifteen El Paso County school districts had higher graduation rates than the state.
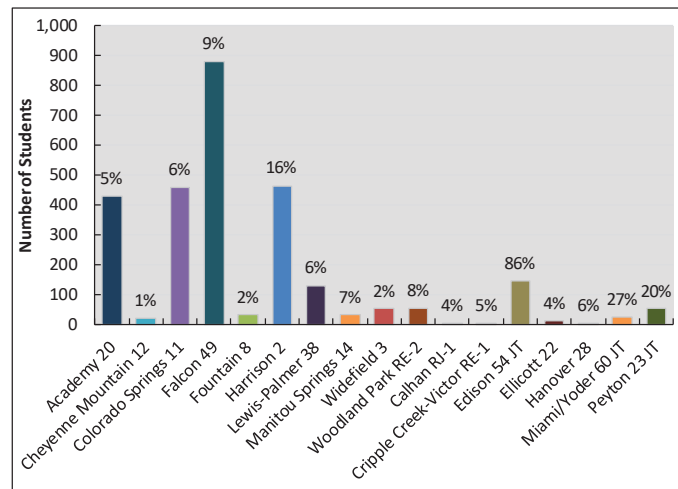
WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Concurrent or dual enrollment gives high school students the opportunity to earn postsecondary school credit by taking college or certificate program courses or course work related to an apprenticeship program or internship. Concurrent enrollment provides many benefits, including increased readiness for college coursework, reduced time to graduate with a postsecondary degree or certificate, and reduced tuition costs.

Districts use per pupil revenue to pay the tuition for the postsecondary courses at the resident community college.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Participation in concurrent enrollment programs has seen sustained increases, with 40,098 students participating statewide in 2019-20 (up 16% from the previous year). Across the state, 98 percent of school districts and 91 percent of high schools offer concurrent enrollment programs. In the Colorado Springs MSA, 2,804 students participated in concurrent enrollment programs in the 2019-20 school year with all districts having these programs.

Students in Concurrent Programs in 2019-20

Note: Labels show the percentage of high school students in each district in concurrent enrollment programs.
Source: Colorado Department of Education, Legislative Reports

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

With a population of over 731,000 and a demand for skilled labor, El Paso County needs quality public higher education institutions in order to have economic growth and vitality. Higher education enrollments are an indicator of the future supply of qualified workers. Having various, local institutions of higher learning including UCCS, Colorado College, Pikes Peak Community College, the U.S. Air Force Academy and other smaller, local training institutions is an asset given current and future workforce needs.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Enrollment at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) decreased from 11,747 in 2020 to 11,394 students in the fall of 2021 (down 3.0%). Since 2006, enrollment at UCCS has grown 51.0 percent (7,547 to 11,394).

Pikes Peak Community College (PPCC) enrollment decreased by 3.6 percent to 12,053 in 2021 from 12,506 in 2020. Enrollment is up 14.5 percent since 2006 (10,526 to 12,053) at PPCC.

Enrollment at Public Institutions of Higher Learning in El Paso County

Legend: Pikes Peak Community College, University of Colorado Colorado Springs
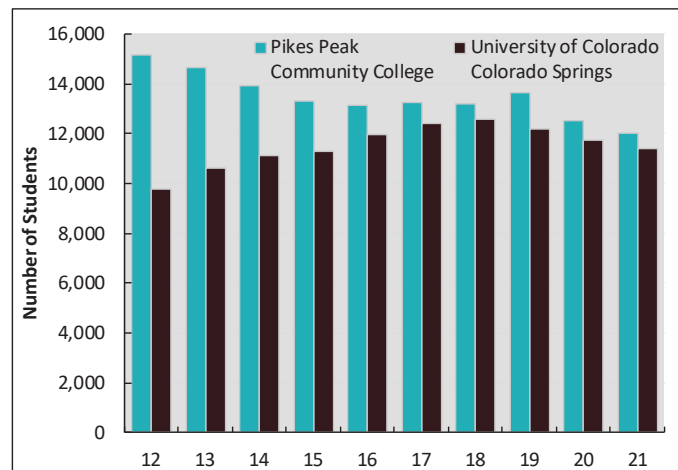
Sources: Institutional Effectiveness Office at Pikes Peak Community College; UCCS Institutional Research

EDUCATION INDICATORS

Population with Some College or an Associate Degree in 2019

Legend: Colorado Springs (city), Colorado, United States

Ages 18-24: 45.9%, 42.0%, 43.4%
Ages 25+: 34.1%, 28.7%, 28.6%

Population with Bachelor's Degree or Higher in 2019

Legend: Colorado Springs (city), Colorado, United States

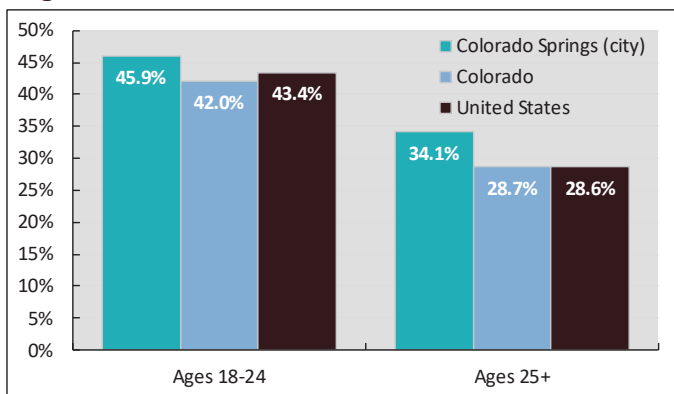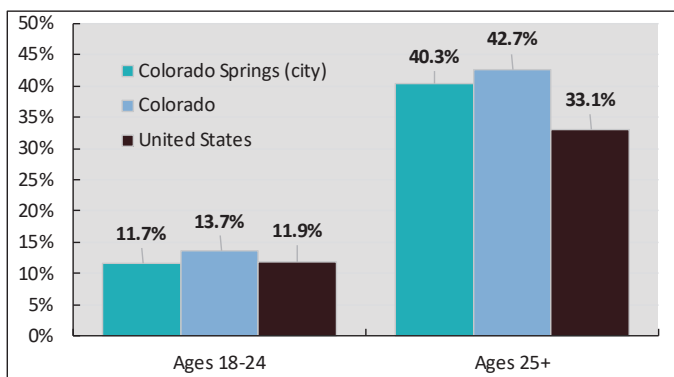Ages 18-24: 11.7%, 13.7%, 11.9%
Ages 25+: 40.3%, 42.7%, 33.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-year estimates

Peer State Educational Rankings

Highest % of Associate Degree or College-Experienced Adults		Highest % of Bachelor's Degree Holders	
1	*Colorado*	1	Massachusetts
2	Utah	2	*Colorado*
3	Washington	3	Maryland
4	Minnesota	4	New Jersey
5	Oregon	5	Connecticut

Source: "Most & Least Educated States in America" *WalletHub,* February 14, 2022.

WORKFORCE ASSET MAP COLORADO SPRINGS

wam.uccs.edu
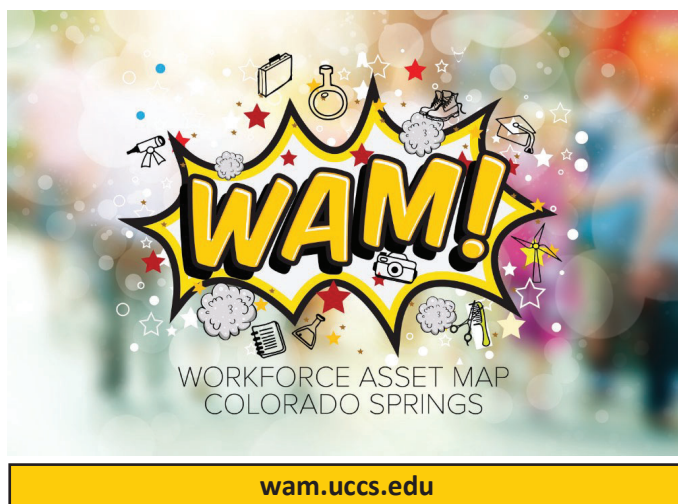
WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

The higher educational attainment of a populace is important because well-trained individuals are necessary for business growth and overall economic growth. Seventy-five percent of jobs in the state required some form of postsecondary education in 2021 according to the Colorado Talent Pipeline Report. This puts Colorado third in the nation in terms of postsecondary educational requirements.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

DUE TO THE PANDEMIC, THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU COULD NOT COMPLETE THE COLLECTION OF THEIR 2020 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY, WHICH IS WHY 2019 DATA IS IN THIS REPORT. In 2019, Colorado Springs had 34.1 percent of its population ages 25 and older with some college or an associate degree, which is significantly higher than the state (28.7%) and the U.S. (28.6%). Given that many current and projected high-demand jobs are considered "middle skill" jobs, some technical training or an associate degree can be helpful in fulfilling local business needs and providing a livable wage for workers. Tracking the highly demanded jobs in the region (page 18) is important because job postings give us tailored information about workforce needs and the corresponding training programs that should be present in our community.

In 2019, Colorado Springs had 40.3 percent of its population ages 25 and older attaining a bachelor's degree or higher, which is comparable to the state (42.7%) and significantly higher than the U.S. (33.1%).

According to a 2022 WalletHub analysis that used U.S. Census Bureau and National Center for Education statistics, Colorado ranks number two in the nation for the highest percentage of bachelor's degree holders and number one in the nation for the highest percentage of associate degree holders or college-experienced adults. The tables to the left show the top five states in each category.

To help address the local workforce shortage and skills gap, the UCCS Economic Forum led a group of workforce-related organizations in Colorado Springs to form *WAM*, the Workforce Asset Map. The mission statement for *WAM* is in the box below. Various other communities across the country have reached out to the Forum to try and replicate the website for their own communities.

WAM is intended to be a "one-stop" resource for job seekers, employers and students where they can access all available workforce-related resources. This includes links to organizations and other sources of information related to looking for a job; finding qualified workers; building internships and apprenticeships; obtaining occupational supply and demand data; finding entry-level, mid-career, and experienced average salary levels; and finding current, available training programs including number of graduates by occupational group. Veteran-specific programs are easily found with a 🇺🇸 symbol.

I am a...
STUDENT | JOB SEEKER | EMPLOYER
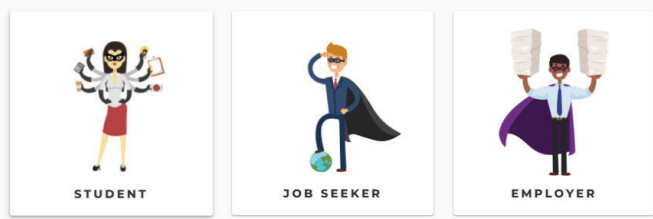
QUALITY OF LIFE, TOURISM AND OTHER INDICATORS

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

As a city grows, increased traffic leads to congestion, longer travel times, and more pollution. Although roadway improvements can alleviate some congestion, it may not be the total solution. Communities interested in quality of life and mobility will seek alternatives to relieve traffic congestion including expanding and improving public transit, better location planning, more telecommuting, and walking and biking infrastructure.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Previously, the Forum used the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey to obtain commuting time information. However, with the difficulty in 2020 with Census data collection, this data is not available. Instead, for 2021, this data source is the INRIX Global Traffic Scorecard. "Time Lost in Congestion" is the total number of hours lost in congestion during peak commute periods compared to free-flow conditions. "Speed in Last Mile to Downtown" is the speed at which a driver can expect to travel into the central business district during peak hours.

Measurements of Congestion

	Time Lost in Congestion	Speed in Last Mile to Downtown
Boise	7 hours	18 mph
Colorado Springs	8 hours	21 mph
Denver	40 hours	16 mph
Salt Lake City	10 hours	24 mph
U.S.	36 hours	Not Available

Source: 2021 INRIX Global Traffic Scorecard

It seems likely that the pandemic will permanently change work-from-home patterns. Many large employers across the nation have announced that employees can partially or fully work from home post pandemic. This may not impact daily commute time, but will impact total monthly travel time, productivity, and carbon emissions.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Air service can have a profound impact on the local economy, particularly on air-dependent industries. The travel and tourism industry is heavily dependent on quality air service. Companies also need convenient and efficient service in order to maximize productivity and minimize travel time. Company location and expansion decisions are impacted by local air service.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Total enplanements at the Colorado Springs Airport were 935,952 in 2021, which is up from 363,843 in 2020 and 841,059 in 2019: an increase of 157.2 percent and 11.3 percent respectively. The pandemic negatively impacted airline travel mostly because it is more difficult to physically distance in smaller spaces. In terms of airplane travel, businesses also virtually halted work-related travel, and this too hurt airlines, airports, and hospitality. In the future, the airline industry may look very different. Business travel makes up approximately 12 percent of total airplane travel, but 75 percent of airline revenue. This is a seismic disruption that could result in higher leisure fares if businesses do permanently curtain travel. The good news for the Colorado Springs Airport is enplanements are up even compared to pre-pandemic levels.

Airport officials forecast that enplanements will be around 1,029,900 in 2022 (up 10.0%) and 1,055,665 in 2023 (up another 2.5%).

During 2020, Southwest Airlines announced they would be offering flights out of the Colorado Springs Airport. Those flights are direct flights to Denver, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Dallas and Chicago. The addition of Southwest has contributed to the increase in enplanements, and the airport leadership is looking to increase the number of offerings.

The business park at the airport has 900 acres and is experiencing tremendous growth. There are three Amazon facilities including a last mile distribution center, a 3.7 million sq. ft. fulfillment center, and a 280,000 sq. ft. sortation center. Total employment by these three facilities totals more than 5,000 employees. Aerospace

Colorado Springs Airport Enplanements (000s)
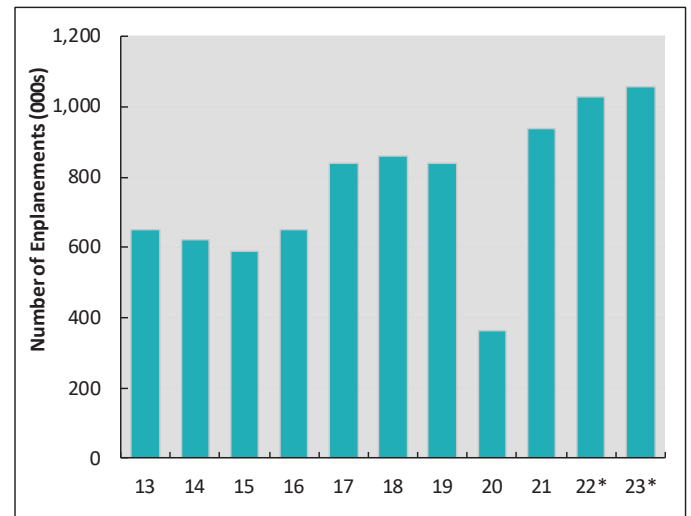
*Colorado Springs Airport forecasts
Source: Colorado Springs Airport

Current Direct Routes—Look before you book!

The Colorado Springs Airport now has direct flights to Atlanta (starting August 9), Chicago (O'Hare & Midway), Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW & Love Field), Denver (connections cost to cost & worldwide), Houston, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Orlando (seasonal), Phoenix, and Salt Lake City.

Corporation is building a 90,000 sq. ft. research and development facility, and Flywheel Capital has constructed a 50,000 sq. ft., Class A speculative office building, and the airport's first hotel product, Residence Inn, will begin construction in May 2022.

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

The hotel and lodging industry uses two primary mechanisms to gauge how their sector is performing. Hotel occupancy is one major indicator, and it simply measures the percentage of rooms that are occupied out of the total number of rooms available. The other indicator is "RevPAR," or revenue per available room, which is the occupancy rate multiplied by the average room rate. RevPAR is a measurement tool that is used to analyze the impact of changes in occupancy and average daily rate on hotel revenues, as well as to assess the overall health of the market.

All compiled statistics are from voluntary surveys. Communication with the source reveals there is somewhat of a selection bias in this information because larger hotels more typically participate in the survey, which means smaller lodging establishments are not as well represented. Also, the Broadmoor Hotel and the Cheyenne Mountain Resort are not included in the hotel category because they are "resorts," as opposed to hotels.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Tourism from within and outside the state contributes greatly to local employment. Although not all hospitality activity is from travelers, a large portion of that activity is from tourists, especially during the summer months. Local tourism had been growing significantly prior to the pandemic. In 2004, the average hotel occupancy rate was 59.3 percent whereas it was 70 percent in 2019. Colorado Springs occupancy rates held up better than the Colorado-wide rates during the pandemic.

From 2020 to 2021, hotel lodging in Colorado Springs increased from 50.0 percent to 64.1 percent as measured by the occupancy rates. For the entire state of Colorado, occupancy rates increased from 44.0 percent to 57.9 percent. Hotel occupancy is forecasted to be 68.0 percent locally and 63.0 percent Colorado wide in 2022.

RevPAR increased in Colorado Springs from $51.19 in 2020 to $83.58 in 2021. RevPAR also increased in Colorado from $58.64 to $89.22 in 2021. In 2022, RevPAR is forecasted to be $92 in Colorado Springs and $104 across Colorado.

Colorado and Colorado Springs Hotel Occupancy
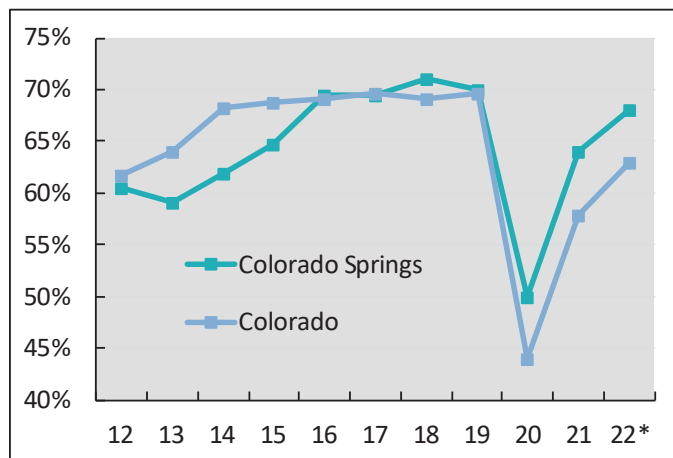
Colorado and Colorado Springs RevPAR Trends
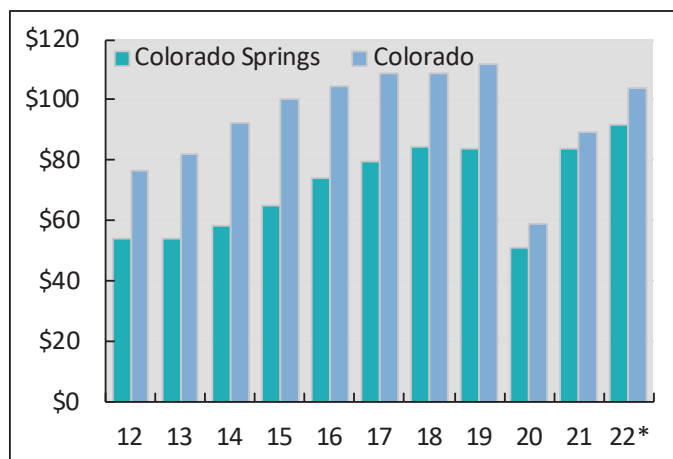
*Robert S. Benton & Associates, Inc. forecasts
Source: Colorado Hotel and Lodging Association, Rocky Mountain Lodging Report

City* Park Acres per 1,000 Residents in 2021

*Parkland includes city, county, metro, state and federal acres within city limits.
Source: The Trust for Public Land, 2021 City Park Facts Report

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Open space, trails and parkland provide important areas for recreation and leisure activity, support natural habitat, and enhance the visual appeal of the region. Open space has a significant impact on the quality of life and health in the area. The beauty and attraction of the region is enhanced by parks and open space available for public use.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

The entire Pikes Peak region is blessed with beautiful views and natural, scenic areas. Together, the city and county managed 27,033 acres of open space and parkland or 36.6 acres per 1,000 residents in 2021. Managing this many acres of parks, open space and trails is a heavy fiscal responsibility for the county and city, but increased tourism is favorable for local businesses and for the associated tax receipts. The city of Colorado Springs has 19,178 acres of parkland and open space under management. El Paso County manages 7,856 acres of trails and open space. Parkland and open space has increased 90.3 percent since 2000.

The graph shows that compared to other cities and to the U.S. median, Colorado Springs has a high number of acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. In 2021, Colorado Springs had 22.8 acres per 1,000 residents, significantly higher than the U.S. median of the 99 cities studied (13.1 per 1,000) and higher than all but one of the comparison cities.

QUALITY OF LIFE, TOURISM AND OTHER INDICATORS

Carbon Monoxide

Particulate Matter

Ozone Trends in El Paso County

Sulfur Dioxide

Note: 2012 saw a change in EPA standards for particulate matter. 2007 and 2015 saw changes in EPA standards for ozone.
Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
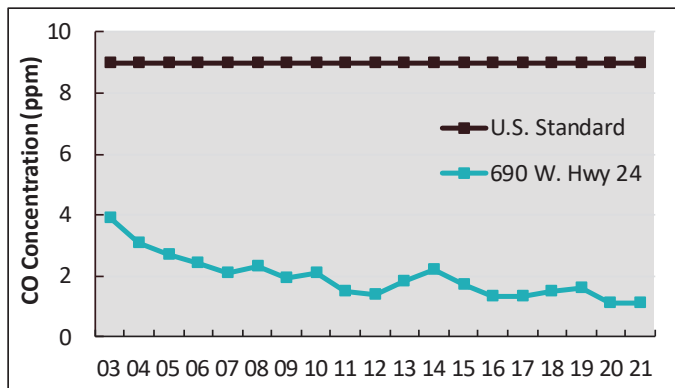
WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

Air and water quality are fundamental to community health, the environment and the economy. There is growing concern over the interdependence between the health of the environment and the economy. Many people move to Colorado to enjoy sunny days, clean air, and overall healthy living. While there is no overall index of environmental health, carbon monoxide, particulate concentrations and ozone levels provide an indication of air quality. There are various components to measuring water quality, which are further discussed below.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Carbon monoxide levels have been falling mostly due to tighter emission standards over the years, as well as the technology of newer cars that aim to adhere to the lower emission standards. As older cars are replaced by newer ones, this trend should continue. The rapid uptake of electric vehicles will also reduce carbon emissions. Population growth will likely (negatively) impact this metric, but that could also be mitigated if the region invests in a more robust public transportation system or there is persistently more work from home. Currently, there is a state-sponsored study on building a "Front Range Rail" system that would connect Denver and Colorado Springs. For 2021, Colorado Springs had a carbon monoxide concentration of 1.1 parts per million (ppm), well below the U.S. maximum standard of 9.0 ppm.
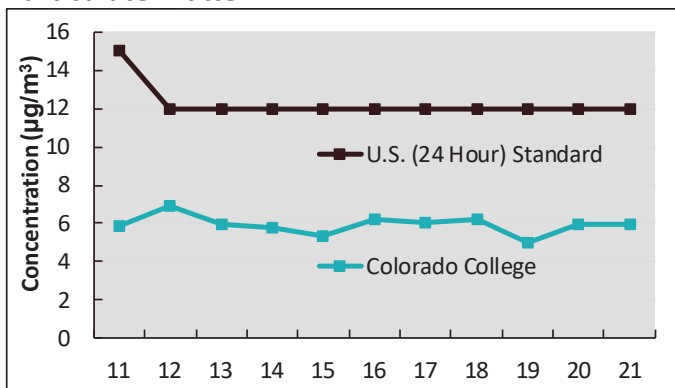
According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), particulate matter is a complex mixture of extremely small particles and liquid droplets that get into the air. Once inhaled, these particles can affect the heart and lungs and cause serious health effects. The "haze" associated with pollution is due to particulate matter. The threshold for the U.S. standard in particulate matter changed in 2012 to an annual standard of 12 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu g/m^3$). Even with the lower threshold, our region still has relatively clean air and is well below the EPA-set standard at 6.0 $\mu g/m^3$ in 2021.
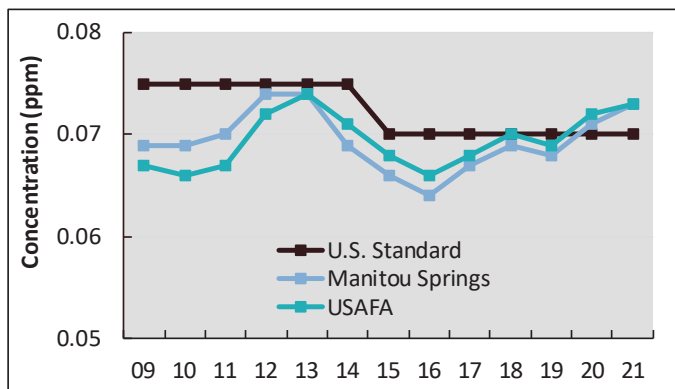
Ozone is a toxic gas not directly emitted into the air, but formed by a reaction of volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides in the presence of heat and sunlight. Volatile organic compounds are emitted by motor vehicles, chemical plants, refineries and other types of factories. Local ozone level readings were on an upward trend from 2010 to 2013, most likely due to a variety of factors including the forest fires and increased vehicle use. While our region's ozone levels decreased from 2013 to 2016, the readings have been increasing since then and reached the standard in 2018 at the U.S. Air Force Academy (0.070 ppm). After a slightly better level in 2019, our region exceeded this new U.S. standard in 2020 and continued to increase in 2021 (0.073 ppm). Note that the national standard for ozone dropped to 0.070 ppm in 2015.
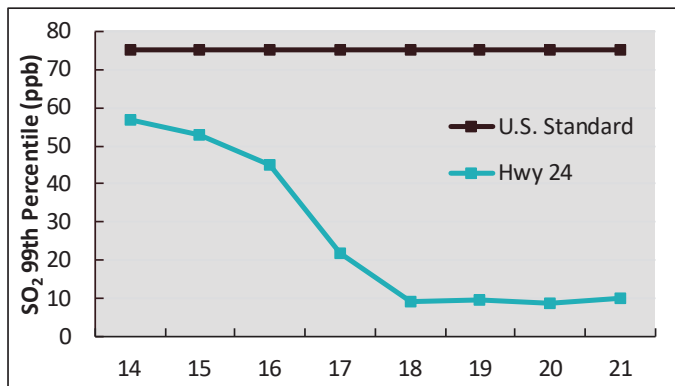
Sulfur dioxide is yet another measure of air quality. About 99 percent of sulfur dioxide in the air emanates from human sources primarily from the burning of fossil fuels. It is considered a toxic substance and is harmful to the health of all living organisms. It impacts humans mostly through inhalation and absorption into the soil. Our region fares well in this metric at 10.1 ppm in 2021, although increasing traffic congestion could negatively impact sulfur dioxide measures in the future.

Overall, our region has good water. Colorado Springs Utilities continuously tests our local water sources taking more than 12,000 samples per year and running more than 9,000 tests per month. The 2021 water quality report can be found at:
https://www.csu.org/Documents/2021WaterQualityReport.pdf.

QUALITY OF LIFE, TOURISM AND OTHER INDICATORS

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

Violent and property crimes result in the loss of life and property. Fighting crime is expensive and uses valuable community resources. Crime affects the business climate, as well as individual perceptions of the quality of life in the community. The graphs show peer comparisons to Colorado Springs MSA. The two comparison MSAs also fall between 500,000 to 999,999.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

From 2010 to 2020, the number of violent crimes per 100,000 inhabitants increased by 5.2 percent in the Colorado Springs MSA according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation even as the population increased by 126,105 (up 20.1%). During that same ten-year period, property crimes per 100,000 inhabitants decreased by 18.0 percent in the Colorado Springs MSA.

While the graph shows data for several MSAs and for cities with similar population to the Colorado Springs MSA, the FBI strongly cautions against simplistic comparisons (see note below).

The table below shows that both the city of Colorado Springs and the entire MSA have fewer sworn police officers per 10,000 than the average for cities with a population of 500,000 to 999,000.
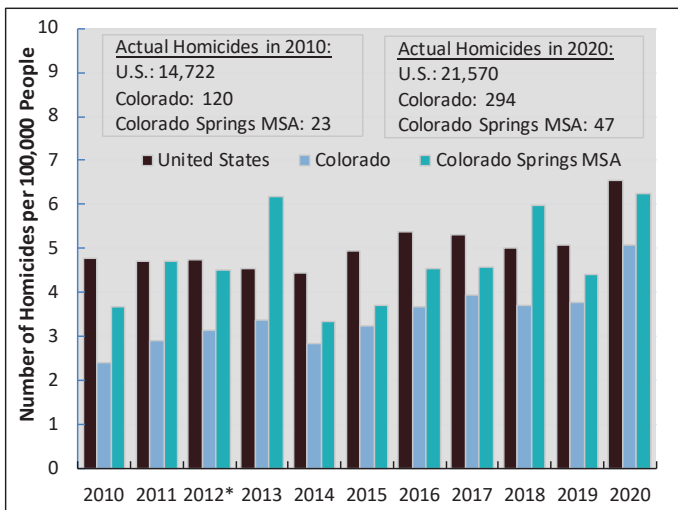
Sworn Police Officers per 10,000 Inhabitants in 2020

City of Colorado Springs	14.9
Colorado Springs MSA	7.4
Cities with Population 500,000-999,999	23.2

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Report

Note: "Each year when Crime in the United States is published, some entities use reported figures to compile rankings of cities and counties. These rough rankings provide no insight into the numerous variables that mold crime in a particular town, city, county, state, or region. Consequently, they lead to simplistic and/or incomplete analyses that often create misleading perceptions adversely affecting communities and their residents. Valid assessments are possible only with careful study and analysis of the range of unique conditions affecting each local law enforcement jurisdiction. The data user is, therefore, cautioned against comparing statistical data of individual reporting units from cities, metropolitan areas, states, or colleges or universities solely on the basis of their population coverage or student enrollment."
- Federal Bureau of Investigation

Homicides per 100,000 Inhabitants

Actual Homicides in 2010:
U.S.: 14,722
Colorado: 120
Colorado Springs MSA: 23

Actual Homicides in 2020:
U.S.: 21,570
Colorado: 294
Colorado Springs MSA: 47

*2012 data for the Colorado Springs MSA is from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Report

Violent Crimes per 100,000 Inhabitants
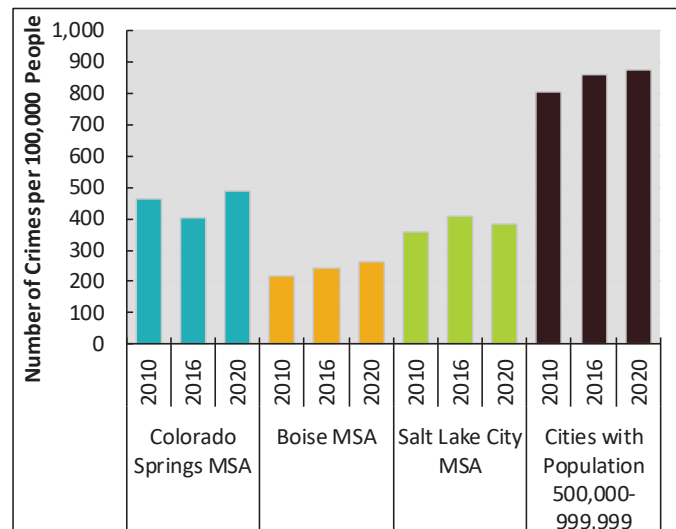
Property Crimes per 100,000 Inhabitants
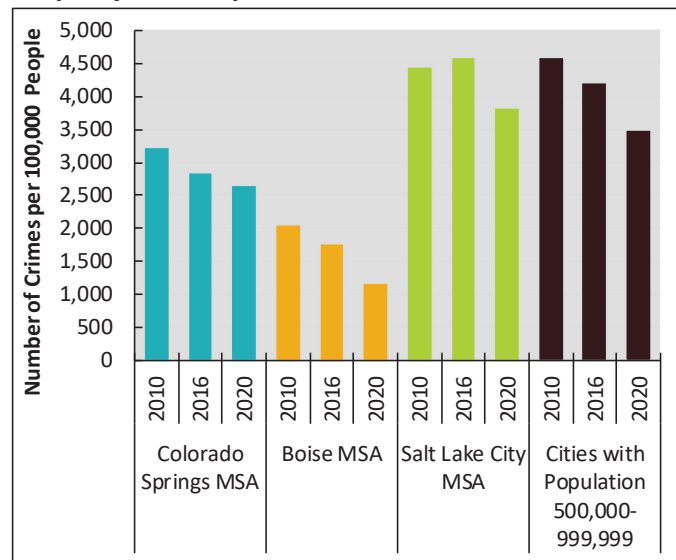
Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Report

Homicides are a subcategory under violent crimes. The Colorado Springs MSA has been below the U.S. average homicides per 100,000 except in 2011, 2013 and 2018. Our region has had a higher homicide rate than the state since 2010. Please note that the FBI strongly cautions against simplistic comparisons.

The World Bank tracks homicide per 100,000 people. As seen in the table below, the U.S. rate of 5.0 per 100,000 was well above other developed nations in 2018, which is the most recent year data is available.

2018 Mortality Rates due to Homicide per 100,000 Population

Canada	Germany	Italy	Japan	United States
1.8	1.0	0.6	0.3	5.0

Source: UN Office on Drug and Crime's International Homicide Statistics database through The World Bank and World Population Review

QUALITY OF LIFE, TOURISM AND OTHER INDICATORS

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

Most people would agree that the indicators that are of greatest importance in terms of quality of life are related to health status. The World Health Organization defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease." Life expectancy, causes of death, death rates and access to health care are often-used metrics to at least partially assess overall health. These metrics are discussed below.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Colorado expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2013. From September 2013 to July 2021, an additional 811,850 people had acquired medical insurance across the state, a 104 percent increase in that eight year span. The peak year was 2017, and since then, Medicaid enrollment had been declining until 2020-21, when it increased by 25 percent, or 300,000 people. It is likely that Medicaid enrollment increased during the pandemic because such a large proportion of workers lost health insurance. It is also possible that individuals who did not have health insurance prior to the pandemic, but who qualified for Medicaid, decided to sign up due to fears of contracting COVID-19.

In aggregate, Medicaid enrollees represented 27 percent, or more than 1 in 4, of the total population of Colorado in 2021. The costs have also been high. More Coloradans enrolled in Medicaid after the ACA expansion than what was originally anticipated. Expansion costs were $1.6 billion in the first two years but were anticipated to be $1.2 billion (Colorado Health Institute). Conversely, some studies have also shown economic benefits mostly due to new health care jobs (Colorado Health Foundation). In FY 2021-22, the state spent $13.3 billion for Medicaid and CHIP (or Medicaid for children).

In the Colorado Springs MSA in 2021, there were 200,402 people enrolled in Medicaid including all adults and children who were either already enrolled in Medicaid or became enrolled via the ACA expansion. This translates to 26 percent of the total population or roughly 1 in 4 people. Of the 200,402 Colorado Springs MSA residents enrolled in Medicaid, 79,535 (or 40%) were children.

Unfortunately, suicide rates for youth ages 10-19 are alarmingly higher in our region than in the state of Colorado and the U.S., as the table to the right shows. El Paso County had a youth suicide rate of 23.9 in 2020, higher than the rate in the state of Colorado (14.0) and over triple the national rate (6.7). Results for the Centers for Disease Control and

Total Colorado Medicaid Enrollment

Uninsured rate in CO went from 15.8% in 2011 to 6.6% in 2021.

783,420 | 1,595,270 | Up 104%
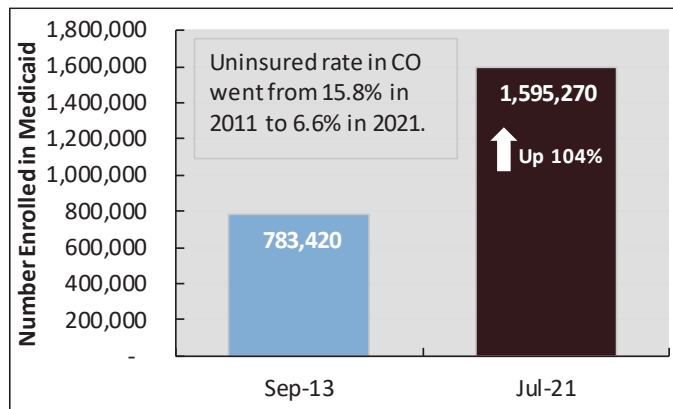
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation; Colorado Health Institute

Suicide Rates per 100,000 in 2020

	Youth (Ages 10-19)	All Ages (Age Adjusted*)
El Paso County	23.9	27.7
Colorado	14.0	21.5
United States	6.7	13.5

*Age-adjusted rates make a fairer comparison between locations with different age distributions.
Sources: Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics; UCCS Economic Forum

Prevention's *High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey* for 2021 have not been released, therefore the data presented below is still for 2019. In 2019, 18.8 percent of U.S. high school students had thought seriously about attempting suicide, up from 17 percent in 2017. The number of U.S. high school students who attempted suicide also increased in 2019 (8.9%) compared to 2017 (7.4%). Colorado had the same percentage of students who seriously considered suicide (18.8%) but had a lower percentage of actually attempts (13.7%) in 2019.

The smaller tables below show the age-adjusted mortality rates and life expectancy for El Paso County, Colorado and the U.S. Our state fares well, although El Paso County's mortality rates are higher than the state and national levels. The larger table shows the top leading causes of death, which can help identify preventable deaths in El Paso County, such as those related to unhealthy lifestyles, accidents, and poor mental health. Unintended injuries include car accidents, drug overdoses, falls and other accidents.

2020 Mortality Rates (deaths per 100,000)	
El Paso County	860.9
Colorado	754.2
United States	835.4

2020 Life Expectancy (in years)	
El Paso County	77.7
Colorado	78.9
United States	77.0

Sources: Centers for Disease Control & Prevention; Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Top 5 Leading Causes of Death by Age in El Paso County, 2020

Age <1	Ages 1-14	Ages 15-24
1. Perinatal Period Conditions	1. Suicide	1. Unintentional Injuries
2. Congenital Anomalies	2. Homicide/Legal Intervention	2. Suicide
3. Unintentional Injuries	3. Unintentional Injuries	3. Homicide/Legal Intervention
4. Heart disease	*Numbers were too small to rank additional causes of death*	4. Influenza & pneumonia
Numbers were too small to rank additional causes of death		*Numbers were too small to rank additional causes of death*

Ages 25-44	Ages 45-64	Ages 65+
1. Unintentional Injuries	1. Malignant Neoplasms	1. Heart Disease
2. Suicide	2. Heart Disease	2. Malignant Neoplasms
3. Malignant Neoplasms	3. Unintentional Injuries	3. COVID-19
4. Homicide/Legal Intervention	4. COVID-19	4. Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases
5. Heart Disease	5. Chronic Liver Disease & Cirrhosis	5. Cerebrovascular Diseases

Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Vital Statistics Program

⛰️ QUALITY OF LIFE, TOURISM AND OTHER INDICATORS

City Comparisons

Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)	Austin, TX	Boulder, CO	Colorado Springs, CO	Denver, CO	Huntsville, AL	Salt Lake City, UT	United States*
Average unemployment rate (2021)	4.1%	4.4%	5.6%	5.5%	2.6%	2.8%	5.3%
Percent change in real GMP (2019-20)	1.2%	-3.2%	-0.1%	-2.8%	-0.8%	-0.4%	-3.5%
Average wage and salary disbursements (2020)	$72,670	$77,260	$58,813	$74,831	$65,796	$62,514	$66,423
Percent of the population 25 years and over with an associate degree or higher (2019)	52.6%	71.1%	50.9%	53.3%	49.2%	45.4%	43.7%
Percent of the population 25 years and over with a bachelor's degree or higher (2019)	46.2%	64.8%	39.2%	45.8%	40.2%	36.5%	35.2%

*All United States metrics are for the metro portion of the U.S. population, except for the average unemployment rate which is for the total U.S. population only.
Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-year estimates

WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?

The Forum looks at several metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) to provide a relative measure of how the Colorado Springs MSA compares with other metropolitan regions in the U.S. The MSAs included in this analysis are cities that compete directly with the Colorado Springs MSA for jobs. The table provides comparisons of unemployment rates, wages and salaries, and educational attainment. Please note that due to differences in data availability, the year for each metric may vary.
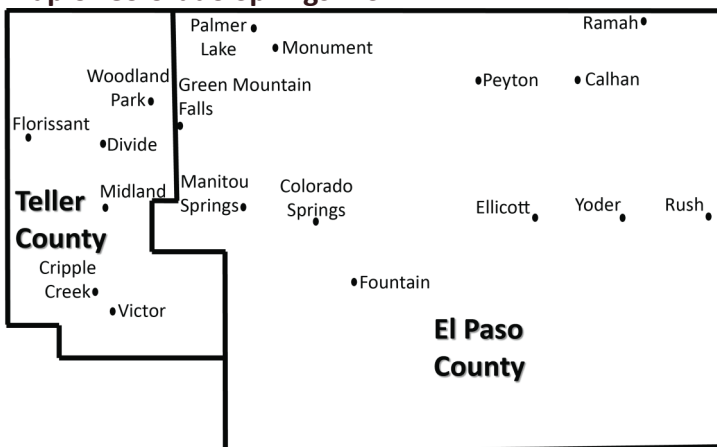
HOW ARE WE DOING?

In 2021, the Colorado Springs MSA (5.6%) and Denver MSA (5.5%) unemployment rates were slightly higher than the nation (5.3%) and were higher than the other comparison cities. The Huntsville and Salt Lake City MSAs had the lowest unemployment rates of all the comparison cities. The higher state and local unemployment rates are primarily due to higher labor participation (e.g., more people actively looking for work). This is a good reason to have a slightly higher unemployment rate as it means more available workers for businesses.

In 2020, Colorado Springs significantly outperformed the nation in terms of "real," or inflation-adjusted, gross metropolitan product (GMP) with a contraction of 0.1 percent versus the U.S. city average that declined 3.5 percent. Data for GMP lags over a year.

The wage and salary disbursements in the table are the monetary remuneration made to all employees, including bonuses, commissions and other incentive payments. In 2020, the wage and salary disbursements averaged $66,423 in the U.S. metros, while they were $58,813 in the Colorado Springs MSA. Regional wage and salary disbursements are 11.5 percent lower than the U.S.

As mentioned on page 29, American Community Survey data for 2020 was not released due to collection problems during the pandemic. Hence, data for educational attainment is from 2019. With respect to educational attainment, the average percentage of the population ages 25 and over with an associate degree or higher for the U.S. metros for 2019 was 43.7 percent, while it was much higher in the Colorado Springs MSA at 50.9 percent. The percent of the U.S. metro population with a bachelor's degree or higher was 35.2 percent in 2019. For the Colorado Springs MSA, that average was significantly higher at 39.2 percent. As a whole, the state of Colorado has a considerably higher educational attainment rate than the U.S. average, an important asset for both long-term growth as well as the recovery from the 2020 pandemic. The higher the level of education, the greater the labor participation rate and the more likely it is that the workforce is comprised of qualified labor.

Forum partners receive a monthly economic dashboard of key metrics with commentary. For more information on becoming a Forum partner, please contact Tatiana Bailey at tbailey6@uccs.edu or Rebecca Wilder at rwilder2@uccs.edu.

Map of Colorado Springs MSA

UCCS by the facts

- The fall student enrollment in 2021 was 11,394.
- The student-to-faculty ratio is 16:1.
- About 23 percent of UCCS students are first generation students.
- Nearly 1 in 5 students is military affiliated.
- UCCS students come from all 50 states and 82 different nations.
- The UCCS average student loan debt is about one-third less than the national average.
- There are 53 bachelor's degrees, 24 master's degrees, and 8 Ph.D. programs.
- There are six academic colleges: College of Business; College of Education; College of Engineering and Applied Science; Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences; College of Letters, Arts & Sciences; and School of Public Affairs.
- Founded in 1965 at the foot of Pikes Peak in response to community and business needs, UCCS is one of four campuses in the University of Colorado system.

UCCS kudos

- Expanding its footprint with the new Ent Center for the Arts, Mountain Lion Park and Fieldhouse, UCCS Downtown, and the William J. Hybl Sports Medicine and Performance Center
- 73% of UCCS students received financial aid in 2021.
- Among the fastest growing college campuses in the state
- Ranked fifth among large public institutions on the Military Friendly® Schools list
- One of the nation's most sustainable higher education institutions, according to the Princeton Review Green College Honor Roll and the Sierra Club's official magazine
- Contributes about $600 million each year in economic impact in El Paso County alone
- Accrediting agencies: North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, The Higher Learning Commission, AACSB International, Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, and National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

UCCS College of Business and the Graduate School of Business Administration

The College of Business was established along with the University of Colorado Colorado Springs in 1965. The College awards the Bachelor of Science in Business, the Bachelor of Innovation™ in Business Administration, the Master of Business Administration, the Master of Science in Accounting, and the Executive Doctor of Business Administration degrees.

All degree programs are accredited by AACSB International—the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. This represents the highest standard of achievement for business schools worldwide. The College of Business is nationally ranked by *U.S. News and World Report*.

Our internationally-recognized doctoral faculty is known for innovative thinking, skilled teaching, and relevant research. A distinctive focus on business ethics complements the knowledge and technical skills our students gain. Employers seek our graduates for their ability to immediately apply classroom learning to real-world business challenges.

The UCCS College of Business is proud of its partnership with the local business community. These relationships are essential in infusing current business practices into the classroom. The College connects to the community in a variety of ways, including the UCCS Economic Forum, the UCCS Career Networking Night, UCCS Executive Education programs, and the Daniels Fund Ethics Initiative Collegiate Program at UCCS. Get information about alumni, executive education, working with interns, or hiring graduates by visiting business.uccs.edu.

Contact: College of Business

(719) 255-3777

2021-22 UCCS ECONOMIC FORUM PARTNERS

PLATINUM

Bank of America
Ent Credit Union
The FBB Group, Ltd.
University of Colorado Colorado Springs

GOLD

Community College of Aurora
Pikes Peak Workforce Center

MEDIA

The Colorado Springs Business Journal
FOX21 NEWS RIGHT NOW
The Gazette

SILVER

BiggsKofford Certified Public Accountants	Gold Hill Mesa
Catalyst Campus for Technology & Innovation	Land Title Guarantee Company
City of Colorado Springs	Nor'wood
Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce & EDC	Pikes Peak Council of Governments
Community Banks of Colorado	Pikes Peak Association of REALTORS®
Crescent Real Estate LLC	Pikes Peak Community College
The Eastern Colorado Bank	T. Rowe Price
El Paso County	Vantage Homes
FirstBank	Vectra Bank

SUSTAINING

ADD STAFF, Inc.	Nunn Construction
The Apartment Association of Southern Colorado	Olive Real Estate Group, Inc.
Blazer Electric Supply Co.	The Patterson Group
Bryan Constructions	Pikes Peak Small Business Development Center
City of Fountain	Rocky Mountain PBS
Classic Companies	Salzman Real Estate Services, Ltd.
Colorado Springs Airport	Southern Colorado Commercial Brokers
Downtown Partnership of Colorado Springs	Sparks Willson, P.C.
dpiX, LLC	START Real Estate
Financial Planning Association of Southern Colorado	TBK Bank
Housing & Building Association of Colorado Springs	TMR Direct
Independent Financial	UCHealth Memorial Hospital
Integrity Bank and Trust	University of Colorado Denver Executive MBA Program
Kimberley Sherwood	U.S. Bank
Legacy Bank	Visit Colorado Springs

UCCS

Economic Forum

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
COLORADO SPRINGS

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