



# POPULATION BRIEF

## Trends in the Western U.S.

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### Colorado

The State of Colorado has experienced substantial population growth in recent decades. As shown in Table 1, the number of residents in the state grew from 2,889,964 in 1980 to 5,029,196 in 2010, an increase of 74 percent. This percentage increase was the fifth fastest in the western region and ninth fastest in the entire nation. In the decade from 2000 to 2010, Colorado's population grew by 727,935 people, an increase of 16.9 percent.

Population trends varied extensively in different parts of the state. In 16 counties, the population more than doubled in the 30 years from 1980 to 2010 and in six of these counties (Archuleta, Douglas, Eagle, Elbert, Park, and Summit) the population more than tripled. In Douglas County, the population grew from 25,153 in 1980 to 285,465 in 2010, an increase of 1,034.9 percent. By percent, Douglas County was the fastest growing county in the entire western region. The counties with the most extensive increase in the number of residents include El Paso County (312,839), Arapahoe County (278,383) and Douglas County (260,312). All of these counties are in the urbanized Front Range. From 2000 to 2010, the largest percentage increase was in Douglas County (62.4 percent) and Weld County (39.7 percent). The most extensive numerical increases were in Douglas County (109,699) and El Paso County (105,334). At the other extreme, 17 Colorado counties had population declines in the decade from 2000 to 2010, and 12 counties had smaller populations in 2010 than in 1980 (Table 1). All of these counties with declining populations over the 30-year period were nonmetropolitan.

The Colorado population has always been heavily concentrated in the urbanized Front Range. Figure 1 shows that more than 80 percent of the state's residents live in the 16 county Front Range that includes the Fort Collins, Greeley, Boulder, Denver-Aurora, Colorado Springs, and Pueblo Metropolitan Areas. The proportion of the state's population living on the Front Range has increased slightly from 81.5 percent in 1980 to 83.4 percent in 2010. Of the remaining Colorado residents, 3.2 percent lived in nonmetropolitan counties east of the Rocky

Mountains and the remaining 13.4 percent lived in nonmetropolitan counties in the western portion of the state in 2010. For our comparison purposes, the western nonmetropolitan region also includes the Grand Junction Metropolitan Area (Mesa County). The proportion of residents living in the eastern nonmetropolitan counties has been in steady decline. The reasons for this are apparent in an examination of Figure 2. This graph shows that from 2000 to 2010, the Front Range Metropolitan counties grew by 17.8 percent, the western nonmetropolitan counties grew by 16.6 percent, while the eastern nonmetropolitan counties actually had a population decline. In the 30 years from 1980 to 2010, the Front Range Metropolitan counties grew by 78 percent, the western nonmetropolitan counties grew by 77.7 percent, while the eastern nonmetropolitan counties grew by only 4.4 percent. In the western nonmetropolitan counties, population growth was especially significant in high amenity mountain counties such as Archuleta, Eagle and Summit.

#### Racial/Ethnic Composition of the Colorado Population

Table 2 indicates that 70 percent of the residents of Colorado in 2010 were White. In recent decades, Colorado's population has become much more racially and ethnically diverse. Figure 3 shows that the minority population in Colorado has steadily increased from 17.3 percent in 1980 to 30 percent in 2010. By far the largest minority group in Colorado is Hispanics who comprised 20.7 percent of all Colorado residents in 2010. Hispanics comprise a majority of the population in Costilla and Conejos Counties and over 40 percent of residents in six additional counties. On the other hand, in 12 counties more than 90 percent of the population is White.

#### Educational Attainment in Colorado

Nearly 90 percent (88.9) persons 25 years of age and older in Colorado have at least a high school degree, while 35.5 percent of adults have a college degree. While six western states have a higher proportion of residents who have completed high school, the percentage of

persons who have completed college is greater in Colorado than in any other western state. In 28 counties, the proportion of adults with high school degrees surpasses 90 percent. Yet, in eight counties, less than 80 percent have a high school degree. In three Colorado counties (Pitkin, Boulder and Douglas) more than one-half of adults have a college degree; while in 22 counties, less than 20 percent of adults are college graduates.

Educational attainment varies significantly for different segments of the population. Differences are especially significant by race/ethnicity. While over 90 percent of White, Black, Asian, and Native American residents have completed high school, this proportion is only 69 percent for Hispanics. Similarly, over 40 percent of White and Asian adults are college graduates, compared to 14.1 percent for Hispanics (Figure 4). Figure 5 also shows that metro residents (40.2 percent) are much more likely to be college graduates than nonmetro residents (27.4 percent).

#### Income and Poverty in Colorado

The median household income in Colorado in 2009 was \$55,735 (Table 3). Only four states in the western region had higher median household incomes than Colorado. Incomes varied widely by county. The median household income in Douglas County was \$100,447, while in three other counties (Broomfield, Elbert and Eagle) median household incomes were more than \$70,000. In contrast, in three Colorado counties (Conejos, Crowley and Costilla) the median household income is less than \$30,000. The median household income in Costilla County is less than one-fourth as much as the median household income in Douglas County. Table 3 also shows that 12.6 percent of Colorado residents were living in poverty in 2009. Poverty levels were lower than Colorado in five western states. Again, there were substantial differences in poverty rates by county. Only 3.3 percent of the residents of Douglas County were living in poverty, and poverty rates were less than 10 percent in 15 additional counties. On the other hand, more than 50 percent of the residents of Crowley County were living in poverty and

poverty rates exceeded 30 percent in Bent and Saguache Counties. Table 3 also shows that the median value of owner-occupied home in Colorado was \$234,100 in 2009. These values ranged from \$717,700 in Pitkin County to \$67,300 in Baca County.


Incomes and poverty levels also varied widely for people with different characteristics. Figure 6A show that while the median household income was \$63,102 for Asians and \$59,124 for Whites, it was only \$36,582 for Hispanics. Similarly, Figure 6B shows that while 8.4 percent of the White residents of Colorado were living in poverty, the poverty rate was 24.3 percent for Blacks. Figures 7A and 7B shows that incomes were higher and poverty rates lower for metro as opposed to nonmetro residents. 

Figure 3. Racial/Ethnic Composition of the Colorado Population (Percent), 1980-2010

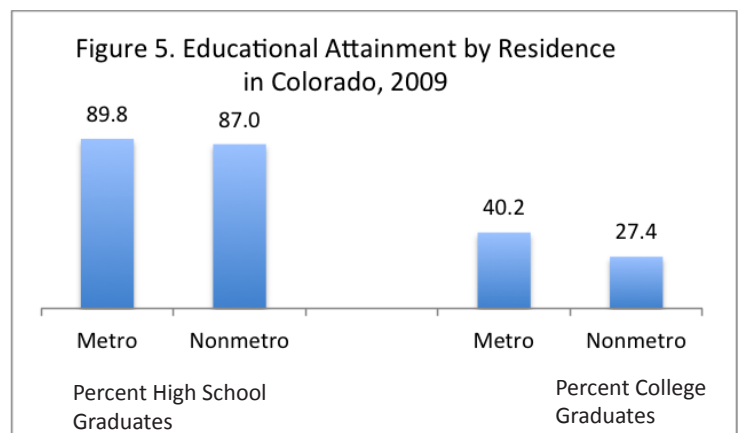
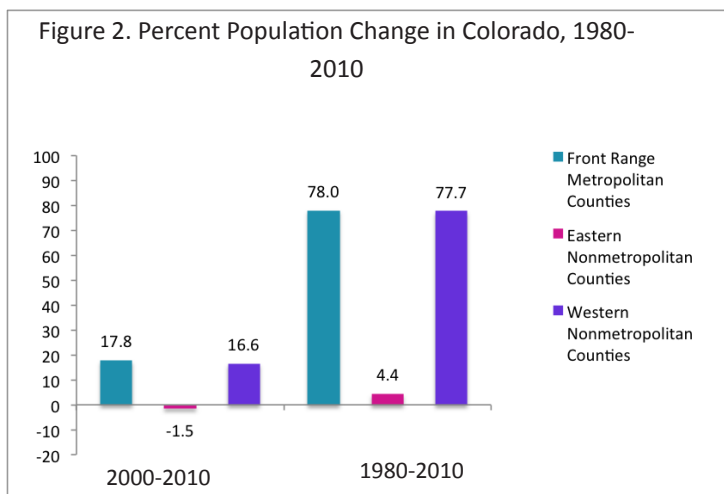
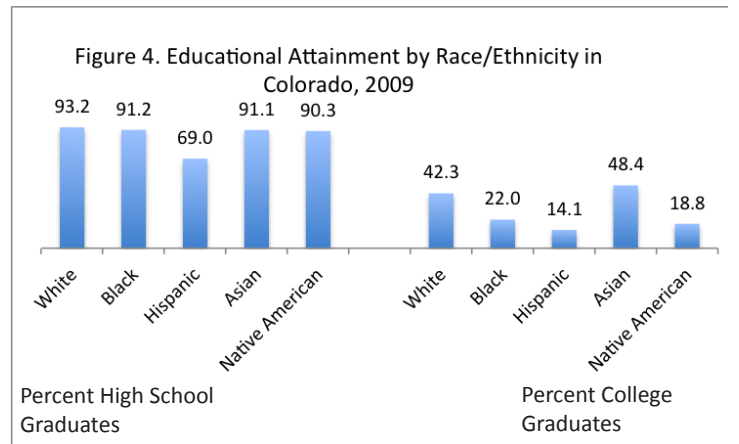
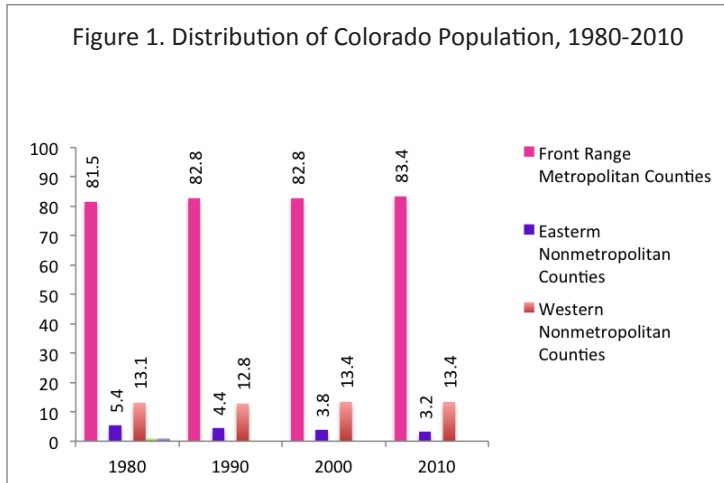
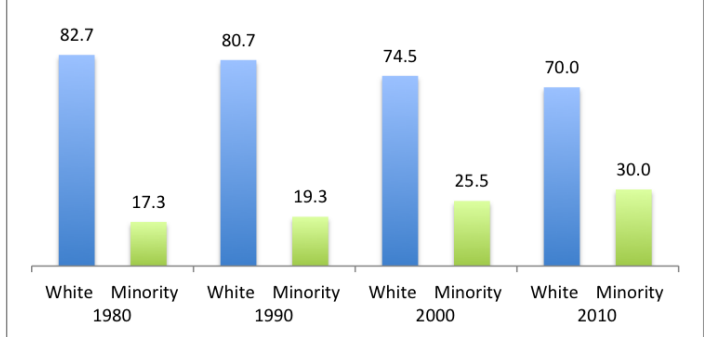


Figure 6A. Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity in Colorado, 2009

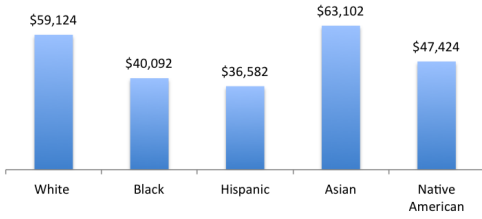


Figure 6B. Percent of Persons in Poverty by Race/Ethnicity in Colorado, 2009

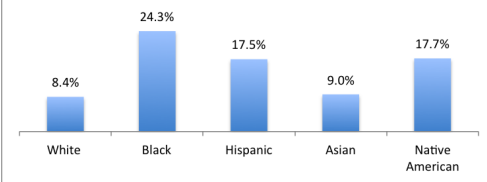


Table 1. Population Change in Colorado Counties, 1980-2010

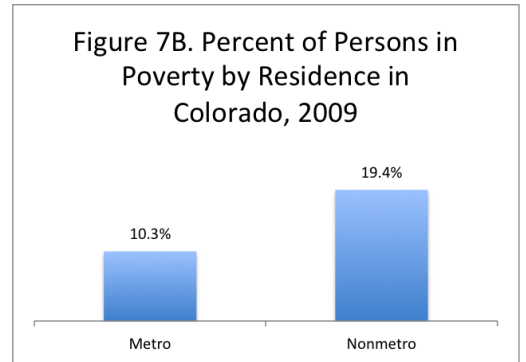
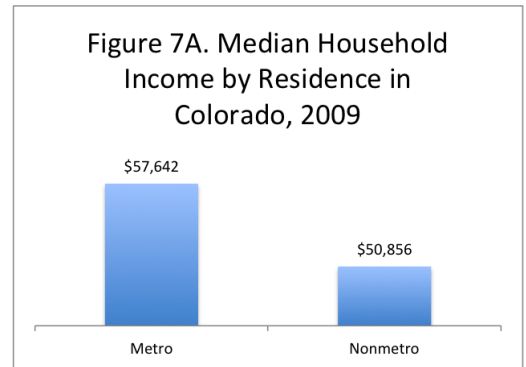
County	Population				Change			
	1980	1990	2000	2010	2000 - 2010		1980 - 2010	
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Adams	245,944	265,038	363,857	441,603	77,746	21.4	195,659	79.6
Alamosa	11,799	13,617	14,966	15,445	479	3.2	3,646	30.9
Arapahoe	293,621	391,511	487,967	572,003	84,036	17.2	278,382	94.8
Archuleta	3,664	5,345	9,898	12,084	2,186	22.1	8,420	229.8
Baca	5,419	4,556	4,517	3,788	-729	-16.1	-1,631	-30.1
Bent	5,945	5,048	5,998	6,499	501	8.4	554	9.3
Boulder	189,625	225,339	291,288	294,567	3,279	1.1	104,942	55.3
Broomfield	-	-	-	55,889	55,889	-	55,889	-
Chaffee	13,227	12,684	16,242	17,809	1,567	9.6	4,582	34.6
Cheyenne	2,153	2,397	2,231	1,836	-395	-17.7	-317	-14.7
Clear Creek	7,308	7,619	9,322	9,088	-234	-2.5	1,780	24.4
Conejos	7,794	7,453	8,400	8,256	-144	-1.7	462	5.9
Costilla	3,071	3,190	3,663	3,524	-139	-3.8	453	14.8
Crowley	2,988	3,946	5,518	5,823	305	5.5	2,835	94.9
Custer	1,528	1,926	3,503	4,255	752	21.5	2,727	178.5
Delta	21,225	20,980	27,834	30,952	3,118	11.2	9,727	45.8
Denver	492,365	467,610	554,636	600,158	45,522	8.2	107,793	21.9
Dolores	1,658	1,504	1,844	2,064	220	11.9	406	24.5
Douglas	25,153	60,391	175,766	285,465	109,699	62.4	260,312	1,034.9
Eagle	13,320	21,928	41,659	52,197	10,538	25.3	38,877	291.9
Elbert	6,850	9,646	19,872	23,086	3,214	16.2	16,236	237.0
El Paso	309,424	397,014	516,929	622,263	105,334	20.4	312,839	101.1
Fremont	28,676	32,273	46,145	46,824	679	1.5	18,148	63.3
Garfield	22,514	29,974	43,791	56,389	12,598	28.8	33,875	150.5
Gilpin	2,441	3,070	4,757	5,441	684	14.4	3,000	122.9
Grand	7,475	7,966	12,442	14,843	2,401	19.3	7,368	98.6
Gunnison	10,689	10,273	13,956	15,324	1,368	9.8	4,635	43.4
Hinsdale	408	467	790	843	53	6.7	435	106.6
Huerfano	6,440	6,009	7,862	6,711	-1,151	-14.6	271	4.2
Jackson	1,863	1,605	1,577	1,394	-183	-11.6	-469	-25.2
Jefferson	371,753	438,430	527,056	534,543	7,487	1.4	162,790	43.8
Kiowa	1,936	1,688	1,622	1,398	-224	-13.8	-538	-27.8
Kit Carson	7,599	7,140	8,011	8,270	259	3.2	671	8.8
Lake	8,830	6,007	7,812	7,310	-502	-6.4	-1,520	-17.2
La Plata	27,424	32,284	43,941	51,334	7,393	16.8	23,910	87.2
Larimer	149,184	186,136	251,494	299,630	48,136	19.1	150,446	100.8
Las Animas	14,897	13,765	15,207	15,507	300	2.0	610	4.1
Lincoln	4,663	4,529	6,087	5,467	-620	-10.2	804	17.2
Logan	19,800	17,567	20,504	22,709	2,205	10.8	2,909	14.7
Mesa	81,530	93,145	116,255	146,723	30,468	26.2	65,193	80.0
Mineral	804	558	831	712	-119	-14.3	-92	-11.4
Moffat	13,133	11,357	13,184	13,795	611	4.6	662	5.0
Montezuma	16,510	18,672	23,830	25,535	1,705	7.2	9,025	54.7
Montrose	24,352	24,423	33,432	41,276	7,844	23.5	16,924	69.5
Morgan	22,513	21,939	27,171	28,159	988	3.6	5,646	25.1
Otero	22,567	20,185	20,311	18,831	-1,480	-7.3	-3,736	-16.6
Ouray	1,925	2,295	3,742	4,436	694	18.5	2,511	130.4
Park	5,333	7,174	14,523	16,206	1,683	11.6	10,873	203.9
Phillips	4,542	4,189	4,480	4,442	-38	-0.8	-100	-2.2
Pitkin	10,338	12,661	14,872	17,148	2,276	15.3	6,810	64.8
Prowers	13,070	13,347	14,483	12,551	-1,932	-13.3	-519	-4.0
Pueblo	125,972	123,051	141,472	159,063	17,591	12.4	33,091	26.3
Rio Grande	10,511	10,770	12,413	11,982	-431	-3.5	1,471	14.0
Rio Blanco	6,255	5,972	5,986	6,666	680	11.4	411	6.6
Routt	13,404	14,088	19,690	23,509	3,819	19.4	10,105	75.4
Saguache	3,935	4,619	5,917	6,108	191	3.2	2,173	55.2
San Juan	833	745	558	699	141	24.0	-134	-16.1
San Miguel	3,192	3,653	6,594	7,359	765	11.6	4,167	130.5
Sedgwick	3,266	2,690	2,747	2,379	-368	-13.4	-887	-27.2
Summit	8,848	12,881	23,548	27,994	4,446	18.9	19,146	216.4
Teller	8,034	12,468	20,555	23,350	2,795	13.6	15,316	190.6
Washington	5,304	4,812	4,926	4,814	-112	-2.3	-490	-9.2
Weld	123,438	131,821	180,936	252,825	71,889	39.7	129,387	104.8
Yuma	9,682	8,954	9,841	10,043	202	2.1	361	3.7
State Total	2,889,964	3,294,394	4,301,261	5,029,196	727,935	16.9	2,139,232	74.0

Table 2. Percentage of Population by Race/Ethnicity for Colorado Counties, 2010

County	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American
Adams	53.2	3.1	38.0	3.6	1.3
Alamosa	49.6	1.1	46.0	1.0	2.8
Arapahoe	63.2	10.2	18.4	5.1	0.8
Archuleta	78.2	0.3	17.8	0.7	1.9
Baca	87.7	0.6	9.2	0.2	1.3
Bent	59.0	7.6	30.5	1.0	2.4
Boulder	79.4	0.9	13.3	4.1	0.6
Broomfield	79.4	1.1	11.1	6.1	0.6
Chaffee	86.6	1.5	9.4	0.6	1.1
Cheyenne	88.1	0.4	9.7	0.6	0.7
Clear Creek	92.1	0.6	4.7	0.6	0.8
Conejos	41.8	0.3	56.0	0.3	2.2
Costilla	30.8	0.7	66.0	1.0	3.0
Crowley	57.9	9.6	29.0	1.0	2.4
Custer	92.0	1.0	4.7	0.4	0.7
Delta	83.0	0.5	14.0	0.5	1.0
Denver	52.2	10.2	31.8	3.4	1.4
Dolores	90.9	0.2	4.0	0.1	2.9
Douglas	85.2	1.2	7.5	3.8	0.4
Eagle	67.3	0.7	30.1	1.0	0.7
Elbert	91.0	0.7	5.3	0.7	0.7
El Paso	72.0	6.2	15.1	2.7	1.0
Fremont	80.4	3.9	12.3	0.6	1.7
Garfield	68.8	0.7	28.3	0.7	1.1
Gilpin	90.9	0.5	4.9	1.4	0.8
Grand	89.7	0.4	7.5	0.8	0.5
Gunnison	89.1	0.3	8.2	0.7	1.4
Hinsdale	93.2	0.4	2.8	0.4	1.1
Huerfano	61.9	0.5	35.3	0.4	3.2
Jackson	87.4	0.0	10.8	0.1	1.2
Jefferson	79.9	1.1	14.3	2.6	0.9
Kiowa	93.3	0.3	5.6	0.0	0.5
Kit Carson	76.4	2.7	19.0	0.4	0.7
Lake	58.2	0.4	39.1	0.5	1.3
La Plata	80.3	0.4	11.8	0.6	5.8
Larimer	84.5	0.8	10.6	1.9	0.7
Las Animas	54.2	1.4	41.6	0.7	2.4
Lincoln	79.5	5.3	12.5	0.8	0.9
Logan	78.2	4.0	15.6	0.6	1.2
Mesa	83.1	0.6	13.3	0.8	1.1
Mineral	95.2	0.3	2.9	0.1	0.6
Moffat	82.7	0.3	14.4	0.6	0.9
Montezuma	75.1	0.2	11.0	0.5	12.2
Montrose	77.5	0.4	19.7	0.6	1.1
Morgan	61.7	2.9	33.8	0.5	0.8
Otero	56.5	0.8	40.3	0.8	1.8
Ouray	93.4	0.2	4.4	0.6	0.4
Park	91.6	0.4	4.8	0.6	0.9
Phillips	79.4	0.4	18.7	0.6	0.5
Pitkin	87.9	0.5	9.1	1.2	0.3
Prowers	62.7	0.5	35.2	0.3	0.9
Pueblo	54.1	2.0	41.4	0.8	1.9
Rio Blanco	86.3	0.8	10.0	0.3	0.9
Rio Grande	55.1	0.4	42.4	0.4	1.8
Routt	90.6	0.4	6.8	0.6	0.5
Saguache	56.4	0.2	40.1	0.8	1.9
San Juan	85.1	0.0	12.0	1.1	0.3
San Miguel	88.5	0.4	8.6	0.7	0.8
Sedgwick	85.6	0.3	12.1	0.7	0.4
Summit	82.7	0.8	14.2	1.0	0.3
Teller	90.6	0.5	5.5	0.7	0.9
Washington	89.4	0.0	8.5	0.2	0.1
Weld	67.6	1.0	28.4	1.2	1.1
Yuma	77.9	0.2	20.8	0.2	0.5
State Total	70.0	4.0	20.7	2.8	1.1

Table 3. Economic Conditions and Education for Colorado Counties, 2009

County	Median Household Income	Percent of Persons in Poverty	Median Value of Owner-Occupied Homes	Percent of Persons 25+ with High School Degree	Percent of Persons 25+ with College Degree
Adams	\$53,779	13.3	\$198,600	81.0	20.0
Alamosa	\$35,960	22.2	\$135,300	83.7	26.6
Arapahoe	\$56,099	12.3	\$233,400	90.1	38.2
Archuleta	\$46,013	12.9	\$297,600	90.8	35.1
Baca	\$32,660	18.3	\$67,300	84.6	17.1
Bent	\$30,890	37.2	\$68,000	81.4	14.5
Boulder	\$63,757	12.9	\$350,600	93.4	56.6
Broomfield	\$77,606	4.9	\$258,000	95.4	41.9
Chaffee	\$42,602	12.0	\$239,600	90.9	29.5
Cheyenne	\$42,026	13.4	\$81,700	88.0	20.7
Clear Creek	\$64,241	8.1	\$281,900	95.0	40.3
Conejos	\$29,594	24.5	\$102,800	79.9	17.3
Costilla	\$24,758	27.4	\$103,000	73.8	17.1
Crowley	\$29,104	53.0	\$79,600	72.9	14.6
Custer	\$45,898	13.9	\$228,000	93.9	29.6
Delta	\$41,528	13.9	\$186,900	84.5	18.7
Denver	\$46,693	18.8	\$236,700	83.3	39.3
Dolores	\$43,248	12.4	\$121,100	85.0	13.9
Douglas	\$100,447	3.3	\$339,800	97.3	53.5
Eagle	\$74,220	8.0	\$490,400	87.4	47.0
Elbert	\$77,123	5.4	\$335,500	95.4	27.5
El Paso	\$55,621	11.5	\$211,900	92.3	34.9
Fremont	\$39,714	18.1	\$152,200	79.7	16.6
Garfield	\$62,716	8.6	\$334,700	86.4	25.0
Gilpin	\$59,632	7.3	\$286,700	95.6	36.5
Grand	\$58,209	8.5	\$257,700	94.2	27.3
Gunnison	\$45,711	13.4	\$320,800	93.2	44.1
Hinsdale	\$48,372	11.2	\$360,000	98.7	20.7
Huerfano	\$30,176	26.9	\$119,900	84.2	23.2
Jackson	\$41,337	15.0	\$144,100	91.8	22.3
Jefferson	\$66,059	8.1	\$257,800	92.6	38.4
Kiowa	\$36,931	14.8	\$68,800	88.6	19.9
Kit Carson	\$40,677	15.4	\$97,500	82.0	13.2
Lake	\$43,935	13.8	\$171,600	80.6	20.0
La Plata	\$56,610	11.6	\$329,100	93.5	41.6
Larimer	\$56,281	14.7	\$243,300	93.3	41.4
Las Animas	\$36,575	18.5	\$131,200	83.3	18.9
Lincoln	\$37,439	16.7	\$103,300	82.3	15.9
Logan	\$39,953	17.0	\$116,800	85.6	17.7
Mesa	\$52,290	11.8	\$209,400	88.7	24.7
Mineral	\$43,172	10.5	\$230,400	97.5	33.5
Moffat	\$54,615	10.1	\$163,900	88.5	14.7
Montezuma	\$40,859	16.9	\$183,500	86.6	24.4
Montrose	\$48,108	12.8	\$188,600	84.8	20.3
Morgan	\$41,441	14.4	\$135,800	77.4	14.4
Otero	\$30,373	23.6	\$90,300	79.9	16.1
Ouray	\$59,810	8.5	\$394,900	93.2	39.9
Park	\$61,127	9.1	\$241,300	92.9	31.4
Phillips	\$40,178	12.4	\$96,800	80.4	15.0
Pitkin	\$69,352	6.5	\$717,700	95.5	59.1
Prowers	\$33,646	23.1	\$76,300	79.1	17.0
Pueblo	\$39,016	16.9	\$138,100	85.0	21.0
Rio Blanco	\$59,017	7.7	\$186,300	92.2	25.7
Rio Grande	\$37,993	17.0	\$130,100	80.3	20.6
Routt	\$64,892	6.4	\$417,100	96.6	46.9
Saguache	\$28,866	30.1	\$112,300	73.1	19.0
San Juan	\$38,253	13.5	\$290,500	95.5	45.2
San Miguel	\$60,115	10.7	\$500,800	93.9	45.9
Sedgwick	\$35,336	15.5	\$81,900	81.4	13.8
Summit	\$65,952	8.7	\$450,700	94.5	48.9
Teller	\$53,928	8.2	\$224,800	93.7	31.7
Washington	\$40,778	12.1	\$99,900	83.9	17.2
Weld	\$54,578	14.8	\$198,200	83.7	25.8
Yuma	\$42,813	13.3	\$104,300	81.5	19.0
State Total	\$55,735	12.6	\$234,100	88.9	35.5



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About the WRDC

The Western Rural Development Center (WRDC) is one of four regional centers competitively funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture to strengthen the capacity of local citizens to guide the future of their rural communities. Each of the four Centers link the research and extension capacity of regional land-grant universities with local decision-makers to enhance rural prosperity, create thriving communities, and support a sustainable and competitive agricultural system.

The WRDC is hosted by Utah State University and receives financial support from Cooperative Extension, and the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station. Additional one-time financial support provided by Colorado State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Extension, Montana State University Extension, New Mexico State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Extension, Oregon State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Extension, Colorado State University Extension, University of Alaska Fairbanks Agricultural Experiment Station and Extension, University of Arizona Agricultural Experiment Station and Extension, University of California Agricultural Experiment Station and Extension, University of Hawaii Extension, University of Wyoming Agricultural Experiment Station and Extension, and Washington State University Extension.