



October 10, 2023

Coloradans' Views on Major Issues Facing the State

KEY FINDINGS FROM PULSE:

The Colorado Health Foundation Poll 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Colorado Health Foundation, the bipartisan research team of FM3 Research (D) and New Bridge Strategy (R), in partnership with Castillo and Associates, conducted the **2023 Pulse: The 2023 Colorado Health Foundation Poll**, exploring Coloradans' attitudes toward a wide range of issues facing the state. This year's survey built on the findings of the annual surveys conducted beginning in 2020, continuing to cover the top issues facing the state, affordability and the cost of living, health care, housing and homelessness, as well as views on state government and its effectiveness.

The research found that **cost of living and cost of housing concerns continue to dominate among Coloradans**. Both issues are frequently volunteered as top-of-mind concerns and are viewed as “extremely” or “very serious” problems by 85% and 82% of Coloradans, respectively. Cost of living concerns dramatically rose during the pandemic and have plateaued, but their impact is very widely felt and shared by virtually every demographic group in the state.

Two in five Coloradans describe themselves as “really struggling” or “just getting by” financially, and a similar number say their financial situation has gotten worse in the past year. More than one-third worry about affording food in the coming year. Nearly one-third say they have worked multiple jobs or longer hours to afford housing in the past year, and more than four in five worry that their children will not be able to afford to live in Colorado. Of current renters who aspire to own a home someday, only two in five think it is likely that they will do so.

**“ In their own words...
The skyrocketing cost of everything from food, housing, health care, gas, college – which [has] a greater divide between the wealthy and people who aren't wealthy.**

Homelessness also ranks among Coloradan's top concerns and is interconnected with worries about the cost of living and the cost of housing. Seventy-nine percent of Coloradans say homelessness is an “extremely” or “very serious” problem, and more than one-quarter worry about losing their home in the coming year. Coloradans view a range of proposed policies intended to address housing affordability and homelessness as effective, including making it easier to enroll in supportive services, increasing low-income tax credits, making government investments in local economies that are struggling, and raising taxes on high-earners to support programs to address housing needs.

Amid these concerns, **Coloradans are divided in how they view the performance of state government**. Fifty-two percent are satisfied with how well state government works for them (although few are “very satisfied”), and 45% are dissatisfied. The greatest division in satisfaction falls along partisan lines, with 78% of Democrats indicating they are satisfied, compared to 57% of independents and 24% of Republicans. Coloradans widely view political polarization and a lack of compromise as challenges that keep them from being heard in state government – along with policymakers' limited understanding of their needs, the strong influence of lobbyists, and a lack of information on how Coloradans can engage in the policymaking process. Coloradans view a number of proposals to promote transparency, fiscal accountability, and nonpartisan informational resources for policymakers to be effective solutions for these challenges.

Other major issues explored in the survey included health care and mental health. **Two-thirds of Coloradans say that the cost of health care is an “extremely” or “very serious” problem**, and 37% are worried that someone in their household will be without insurance in the coming year – a concern that is especially acute among Black, Latino and Native American Coloradans. Two in five Coloradans have postponed medical and dental care in the past year, a majority of whom have done so for cost reasons or a lack of insurance coverage.



Over two-thirds of Coloradans also view mental health as a “very serious” problem facing the state. A majority have experienced mental health strain in the past year, and one-quarter of those who have say they postponed mental health care. Majorities of Coloradans across lines of race and ethnicity, income and partisan affiliation view a wide range of proposals to address mental health as effective.

Additional noteworthy trends that emerged in this year’s data include the following:

- There was a sizable increase in concern about **gun violence**, from 46% rating it an “extremely” or “very serious” problem in 2022 to 59% doing so this year.
- Concern about **crime** is also steadily rising, from 41% labeling it “very serious” in 2021 to 57% in 2022 and 61% in 2023.
- In contrast, the urgency of concern over **COVID-19** is markedly down. This year, less than one percent of Coloradans volunteered it as a top issue facing the state.
- Majority concern about **environmental issues**, including wildfires, natural disasters and climate change, persists.

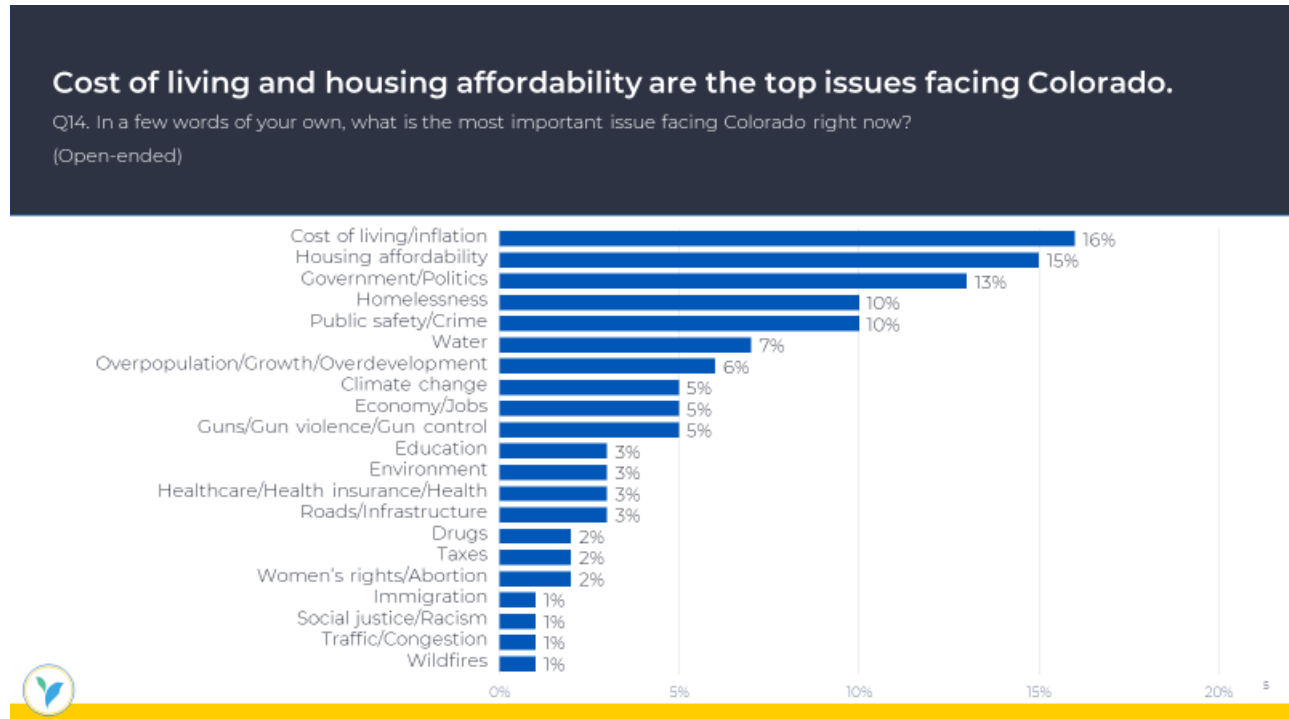


TOP CONCERNS

When asked, in their own words, to name the top issue facing the state, several concerns sand out: 16% of Coloradans name the cost of living and inflation is the top problem, followed by housing affordability (15%), and government and politics (13%). Homelessness (10%) and public safety (10%) are also frequently mentioned. These top-of-mind concerns have not changed greatly from those volunteered in the 2022 survey.

Figure 1: Most Important Issue Facing the State

In a few words of your own, what is the most important issue facing Colorado right now?



When asked to rank a series of potential problems facing the state in terms of seriousness, 85% of Coloradans label the rising cost of living an “extremely” or “very serious” problem and 82% say the same for the cost of housing, mirroring the top problems offered when Coloradans are asked to name the biggest issues facing the state. In addition, 79% rank homelessness as an “extremely” or “very serious” problem, and 69% say the same about the cost of health care and mental health.



Figures 2: Top Problems Facing the State

I'd like to read you some problems facing Colorado that people have mentioned. Please tell me whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem in Colorado.

PROBLEM	Total Ext/Very Serious
The rising cost of living	85%
The cost of housing	82%
Homelessness	79%
The cost of healthcare	69%
Mental health	69%
Drug overdoses	66%
Crime, in general	61%
Gun violence	59%
Drug and alcohol use	57%
Wildfires or other natural disasters	57%
Climate change	53%
Jobs and the economy	48%
Hunger	43%
Restrictions on reproductive rights	42%
Racial bias and discrimination	39%
Police violence and misconduct	35%
Illegal immigration	34%

The rising cost of living has held the top spot among problems facing the state since 2022, when evaluations of it as a “very serious” problem increased notably compared to 2021 (from 73% to 81% as shown in [Figure 3](#)). Strikingly, the cost of living rates as a top concern among Coloradans of all income levels.

Relative to 2022, ratings of gun violence as a “very serious” problem have increased the most, from 46% to 59%. Concern about gun violence is distinctly partisan, with 90% of Democrats saying it is at least “very serious,” compared to 59% of Independents and 33% of Republicans. Native American, Black and Latino Coloradans are also more likely than other racial and ethnic groups to say it is very serious (Figure 3). Women are also more likely to perceive gun violence to be “very serious” (68% compared to 49% of men) as are LGBTQ+ Coloradans (76% compared to 57% of non-LGBTQ+ Coloradans).



Figure 3: Top Problems Facing the State Over Time
Extremely/Very Serious Problem

Problem	2020	2021	2022	2023	Difference (2022-2023)
Gun violence	--	--	46%	59%	+13%
Homelessness	67%	72%	72%	79%	+7%
Mental health	55%	63%	63%	69%	+6%
Police violence and misconduct	38%	32%	30%	35%	+5%
Crime, in general	--	41%	57%	61%	+4%
Racial bias and discrimination	42%	43%	35%	39%	+4%
Hunger	39%	41%	40%	43%	+3%
The cost of health care	--	65%	67%	69%	+2%
Climate change	44%	52%	53%	53%	0%
Drug and alcohol use	45%	50%	58%	57%	-1%
Jobs and the economy	63%	44%	49%	48%	-1%
*The rising cost of living	63%	73%	88%	85%	-3%
The cost of housing	67%	82%	86%	82%	-4%
Illegal immigration	--	38%	--	34%	--

Some other notable distinctions by demographic groups in concern about major issues facing the state include:

- There is a much higher degree of concern about drug overdoses among Latino Coloradans (79% extremely/very serious) than among other racial and ethnic groups, and a far lower level of concern among Asian and Pacific Islander Coloradans (44%);
- There is greater concern about hunger among Latino Coloradans (61% extremely/very serious) as well as more concern about restrictions on reproductive rights (51%);
- While the top problems cut across partisan affiliation, Republicans are much more concerned about crime, jobs and the economy, and illegal immigration than are Democrats and independents, while Democrats are much more concerned about gun violence, climate change, hunger, restrictions on reproductive rights, and police violence than are others.
- Lower-income households tend to rank problems with cost-of-living implications more highly than higher-income households do, even though cost concerns are the top issue across income groups; low-income households also rank restrictions on reproductive rights, racial discrimination and bias, and drugs and alcohol use as bigger concerns than more affluent Coloradans do.
- Concern about the cost of living is particularly acute in the Eastern Plains and Larimer/Weld regions of the state.
- Majorities view wildfires and other natural disasters and climate change as “extremely” or “very serious” problems, but evaluations of seriousness are partisan – particularly for climate change – with majorities of Democrats and independents rating these as “very serious” problems in contrast with minorities of Republicans.
- LGBTQ+ Coloradans rank the cost of housing, the cost of health care, gun violence, wildfires and natural disasters, climate change, hunger, restrictions on reproductive rights, racial bias and discrimination and police violence and misconduct as more serious concerns than non-LGBTQ+ Coloradans do.



While only about one-third of Coloradans say racial bias and discrimination (39%) and police misconduct (35%) are extremely or very serious problems, the numbers are much higher among Black, Native American/Indigenous, and multiracial Coloradans (**Figure 4** below).

Figure 4: Top Problems Facing the State by Race/Ethnicity

Different racial and ethnic groups offer similar rankings of concern about the major issues facing Colorado.

Q15. I'd like to read you some problems facing Colorado that people have mentioned. Please tell me whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem in Colorado.

(% Extremely/Very Serious Problem)

Problem	All	Race/Ethnicity					
		Asian/ Pacific Islander	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Native American/ Indigenous	White	Multi racial
The rising cost of living	85%	87%	81%	91%	76%	83%	84%
The cost of housing	82%	83%	90%	89%	98%	82%	95%
Homelessness	79%	72%	83%	86%	92%	79%	84%
The cost of healthcare	69%	79%	71%	70%	48%	65%	58%
Mental health	69%	68%	79%	76%	86%	67%	78%
Drug overdoses	66%	44%	67%	79%	68%	62%	66%
Crime, in general	61%	51%	65%	77%	71%	55%	65%
Gun violence	59%	64%	77%	71%	78%	57%	65%
Drug and alcohol use	57%	41%	73%	67%	55%	53%	58%
Wildfires or other natural disasters	57%	59%	43%	50%	58%	62%	51%
Climate change	53%	60%	56%	52%	59%	53%	42%
Jobs and the economy	48%	46%	48%	55%	50%	45%	42%
Hunger	43%	51%	46%	61%	43%	40%	47%
Restrictions on reproductive rights	42%	45%	38%	51%	37%	41%	43%
Racial bias and discrimination	39%	47%	72%	51%	65%	35%	64%
Police violence and misconduct	35%	56%	62%	48%	69%	29%	49%
Illegal immigration	34%	20%	36%	26%	19%	34%	20%



Split Sample

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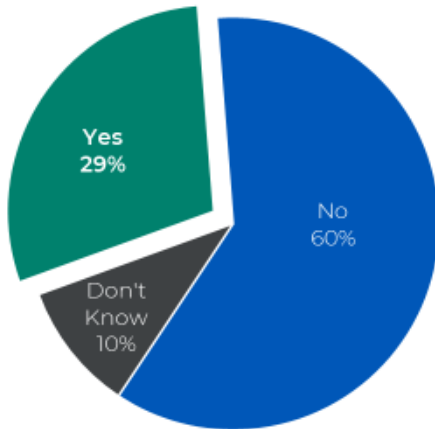
These groups, along with Hispanic/Latino Coloradans, are much more likely to say that they or someone they know have experienced unfair treatment because of their ethnicity when interacting with law enforcement (**Figure 5**). Twenty-nine percent of Coloradans overall report this kind of experience with unfair treatment, but 59% of Native American/Indigenous Coloradans, 56% of Black Coloradans, 46% of Multiracial Coloradans and 42% of Latino Coloradans say they or someone they know have had this experience.



Figure 5: Experiences with Unfair Treatment by Law Enforcement

More than one-quarter say they or someone they know have been treated unfairly when interacting with law enforcement because of their race and ethnicity.

Q19b. Please tell me whether you - or someone you know - have been treated unfairly in any of the following situations here in Colorado as a result of their race or ethnicity: When interacting with law enforcement.



Demographic Group	Yes
Race/Ethnicity	
Asian/Pacific Islander	35%
Black/African American	56%
Hispanic/Latino	42%
Native American/Indigenous	59%
White	25%
Multiracial	46%



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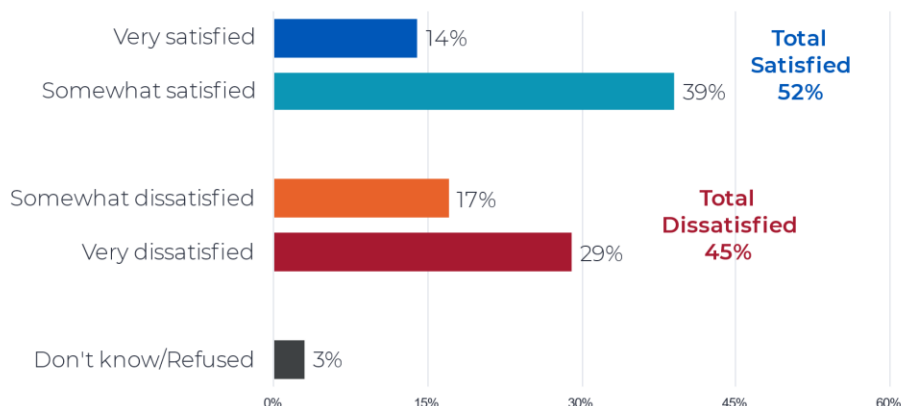
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STATE GOVERNMENT

When asked to identify the top problems facing the state, 13% of Coloradans mentioned government and politics. They are divided in their satisfaction with the job state government is doing in working well for people like them; 52% say they are satisfied (although only 14% are very satisfied) and 45% are dissatisfied (**Figure 6**). Levels of satisfaction tend to cut across major demographic and geographic groups; the greatest distinctions occur along partisan lines. Seventy-eight percent of Democrats are satisfied with state government's performance, as are 57% of independents, compared to only 24% of Republicans.

Figure 6: Satisfaction with State Government

Half of Coloradans say they are satisfied with how state government works for people like them, but few are “very satisfied.”

Q16. How satisfied are you with the state government in Colorado and how well it works for people like you?



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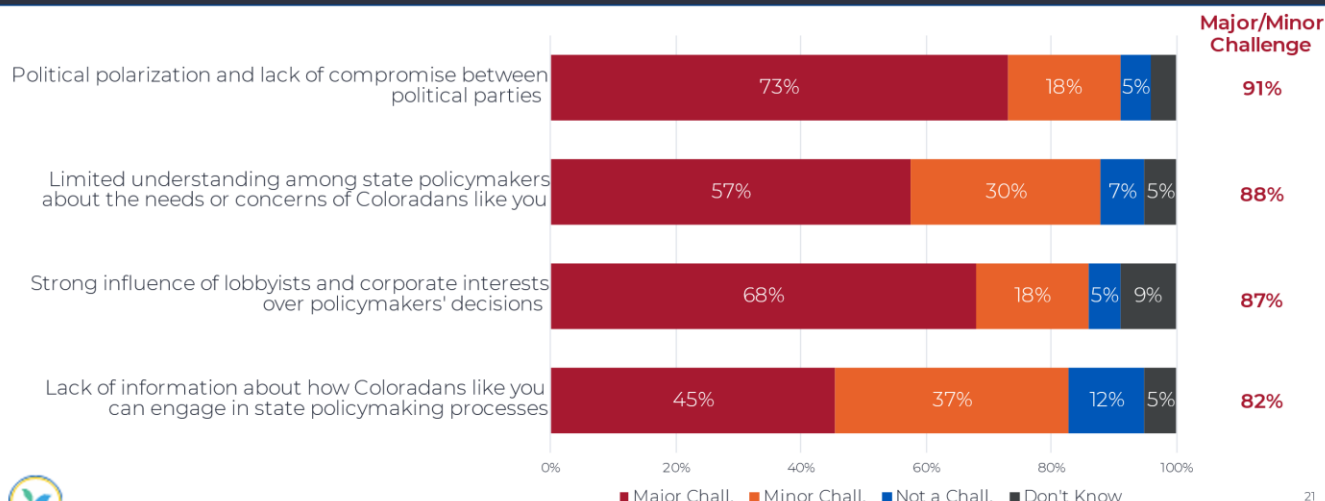
Political polarization and the influence of lobbyists are seen as the biggest challenges keeping Coloradans from having their voices heard in state government, with more than two-thirds of Coloradans rating these as major challenges. A majority also says that a limited understanding among state policymakers about the needs of Coloradans is a major challenge, and approximately two in five say that a lack of information on how Coloradans can engage in policymaking is a major challenge (**Figure 7**).



Figure 7: Challenges Facing Colorado State Government

Respondents view political polarization and the influence of lobbyists as major challenges preventing Coloradans like them from being heard by state government.

Q17. Here are some potential challenges that could keep Coloradans like you from being heard in state government. Please tell me whether you consider it to be a major challenge, a minor challenge, or not a challenge.



Higher-income Coloradans are more likely to say political polarization is a “major challenge” than lower-income Coloradans. In contrast, Coloradans with household incomes under \$30,000 are more likely than others to say that policymakers have a limited understanding of their needs and concerns, ranking this highest among the list of potential challenges.

Native American and Indigenous Coloradans were more likely to rate the influence of lobbyists and limited understanding of their experiences as “major challenges.” White Coloradans rate political polarization as a “major challenge” more frequently than Coloradans of other races and ethnicities do, while Black Coloradans rank it lower than others did.

As shown in **Figure 8**, both Independents and Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say that policymakers have a limited understanding of Coloradans like them and to see a lack of information on how to engage in policymaking as a “major challenge.”



Figure 8: Major Challenges Facing Colorado State Government by Party

Republicans and independents are more likely than Democrats to say that policymakers have a limited understanding of the needs of people like them.

Q17. Here are some potential challenges that could keep Coloradans like you from being heard in state government. Please tell me whether you consider it to be a major challenge, a minor challenge, or not a challenge.

(% Major Challenge)

Proposal	All	Party			Dem-Rep. Diff.
		Democrats	Independents	Republicans	
Political polarization and lack of compromise between political parties	73%	68%	74%	80%	-12%
Strong influence of lobbyists and corporate interests over policymakers' decisions	68%	65%	71%	69%	-4%
Limited understanding among state policymakers about the needs or concerns of Coloradans like you	57%	39%	58%	74%	-35%
Lack of information about how Coloradans like you can engage in state policymaking processes	45%	37%	43%	57%	-20%



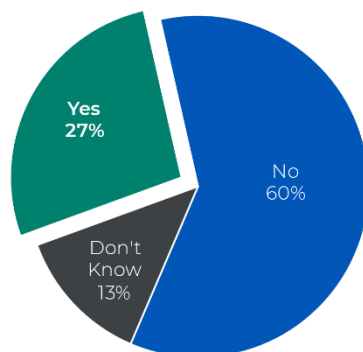
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More than one-quarter say they or someone they know have been treated unfairly when interacting with government agencies because of their race or ethnicity (**Figure 9**). This experience is more frequently reported by Native American/Indigenous Coloradans (63%), Multiracial Coloradans (58%) and Black Coloradans (50%). This experience was most common in the Pueblo region of the state, where 42% of Coloradans said they or someone they know have had this experience.

Figure 9: Experiences with Unfair Treatment by Government Agencies

More than one-quarter say they or someone they know have been treated unfairly because of their race and ethnicity when interacting with government agencies.

Q19e. Please tell me whether you- or someone you know - have been treated unfairly in any of the following situations here in Colorado as a result of their race or ethnicity: When interacting with government agencies or services.



Demographic Group	Yes
Race/Ethnicity	
Asian/Pacific Islander	26%
Black/African American	50%
Hispanic/Latino	33%
Native American/Indigenous	63%
White	24%
Multiracial	58%



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Coloradans view a range of proposed solutions aimed at improving how state policy decisions are made as effective (Figure 10). Requiring state policymakers to consider the long-term financial implications of their decisions and making information about how the public can participate and comment on policy decisions easily available are most commonly seen as effective solutions. However, only slightly smaller numbers say that requiring policymakers to regularly engage with community members, requiring policymakers to consider how their decisions affect different groups within the state, and increasing policymakers' access to nonpartisan analysis of issues are effective too.

Coloradans across all of the state's regions rank the solutions similarly. Pueblo residents are especially supportive of requiring state policymakers to consider the long-term impacts of their financial decisions (92%).

Democrats and Independents are more likely than Republicans to say that increasing access to nonpartisan information will be an effective solution (as shown in Figure 11 on the next page). However, voters across all partisan affiliations tend to rate the effectiveness of all solutions similarly.

Figure 10: Proposed Solutions to Improve State Government Decision-Making

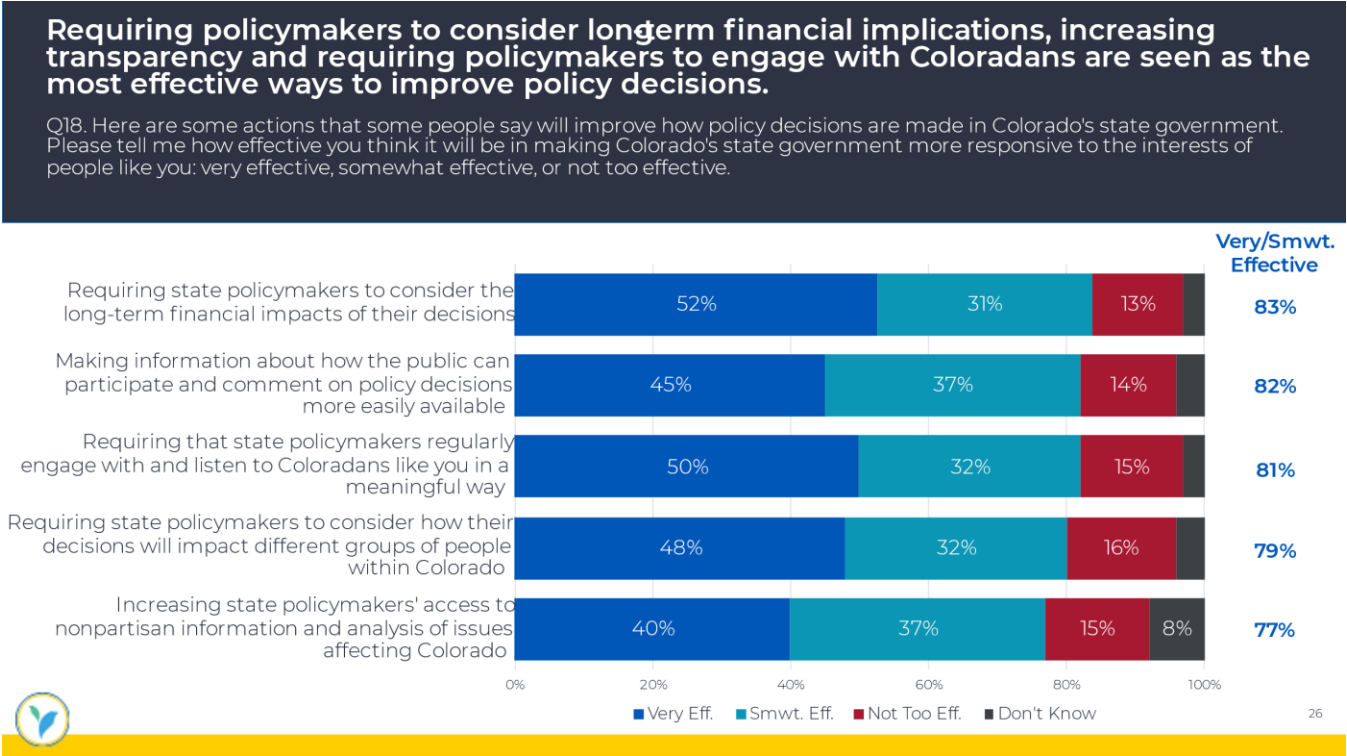


Figure 11: Proposed Solutions to Improve State Government Decision-Making by Party

Republicans are slightly less likely than independents and Democrats to say that increasing access to nonpartisan information will be effective.

Q18. Here are some actions that some people say will improve how policy decisions are made in Colorado's state government. Please tell me how effective you think it will be in making Colorado's state government more responsive to the interests of people like you: very effective, somewhat effective, or not too effective.

(% Very/Somewhat Effective)

Action	All	Party			Dem-Rep. Diff.
		Democrats	Independents	Republicans	
Requiring state policymakers to consider the long-term financial impacts of their decisions	83%	84%	86%	81%	+3%
Making information about how the public can participate and comment on policy decisions more easily available	82%	86%	84%	80%	+6%
Requiring that state policymakers regularly engage with and listen to Coloradans like you in a meaningful way	81%	87%	82%	80%	+7%
Requiring state policymakers to consider how their decisions will impact different groups of people within Colorado	79%	85%	81%	77%	+8%
Increasing state policymakers' access to nonpartisan information and analysis of issues affecting Colorado	77%	85%	81%	71%	+14%



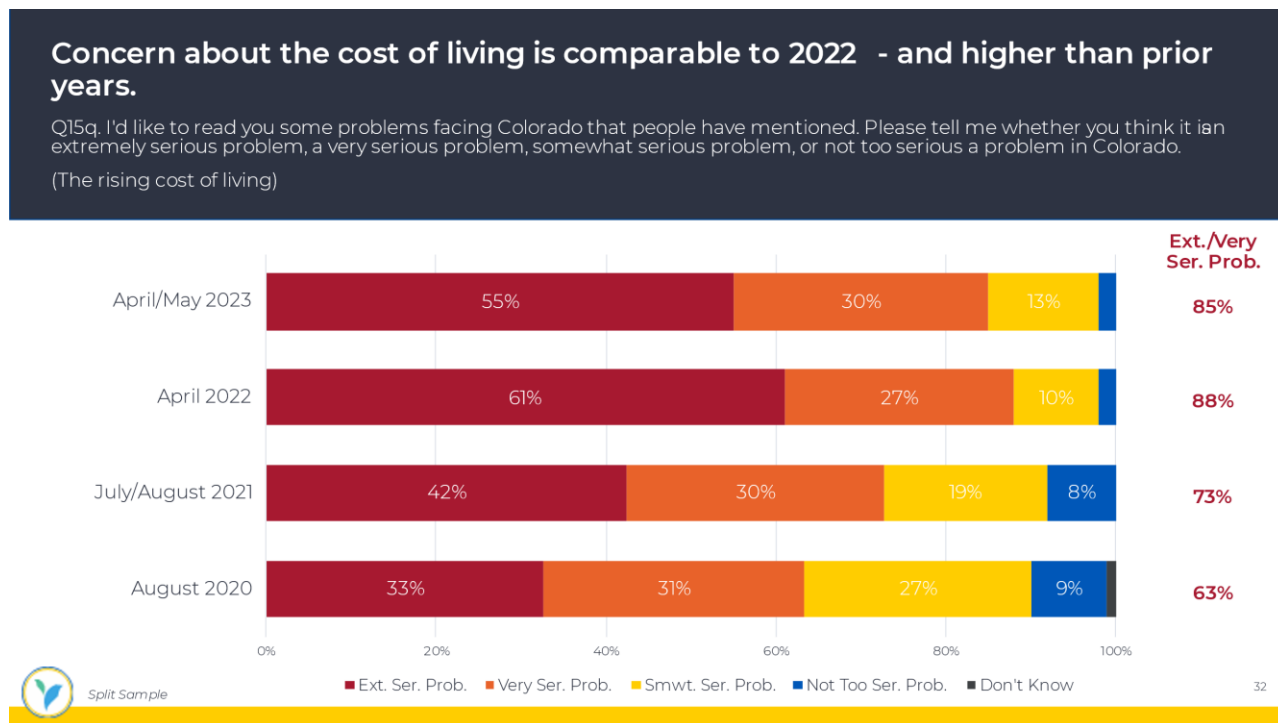
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THE COST OF LIVING, PERSONAL FINANCES, AND EMPLOYMENT

Over the past two years, Coloradans have consistently ranked the cost of living as the top problem facing the state. Eighty-five percent rated it as “extremely” or “very serious” this year, and 88% said the same in 2022. Strikingly, the cost of living rated among the most serious issue for Coloradans of all demographic, ideological and geographic backgrounds.

Figure 12: Seriousness of the Cost of Living over Time



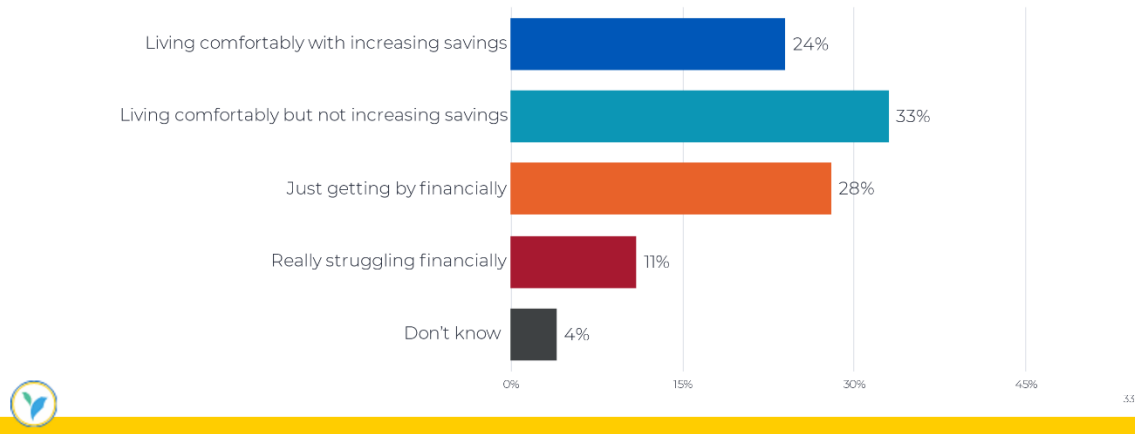
This concern about the cost of living is also reflected in Coloradans' evaluations of their overall financial circumstances. Only one-quarter of Coloradans describe themselves as “living comfortably and increasing their savings.” One-third say they are “living comfortably but not increasing their savings,” and nearly two in five are “just getting by” or “really struggling” financially (**Figure 13**).



Figure 13: Coloradans' Personal Financial Situation

Approximately half of Coloradans say they are living comfortably; nearly two in five are “really struggling” or just getting by.

Q20. Which of the following best describes your financial situation:



Unsurprisingly, Coloradans' evaluation of their personal financial situation is correlated with their household income, with lower-income households more likely to say they are “just getting by” or “really struggling” financially, and higher-income households more likely to say they’re “living comfortably” (Figure 14). Homeowners are also more likely to report being financially comfortable than are renters.

Figure 14: Coloradans' Personal Financial Situation by Household Income and

Renters and lower -income respondents are more likely to say they are just getting by or struggling financially.

Q20. Which of the following best describes your financial situation:

Financial Situation	All	Household Income						Residence	
		<\$30,000	\$30,000-\$50,000	\$50,000-\$75,000	\$75,000-\$100,000	\$100,000-\$150,000	\$150,000+	Home owners	Renters
Living comfortably with increasing savings	24%	5%	6%	11%	17%	29%	51%	30%	13%
Living comfortably but not increasing savings	33%	17%	22%	30%	37%	45%	40%	38%	26%
Just getting by financially	28%	38%	49%	45%	38%	22%	7%	22%	39%
Really struggling financially	11%	40%	22%	13%	8%	4%	0%	5%	20%
Don't know	4%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	2%	5%	1%

Homeownership Status

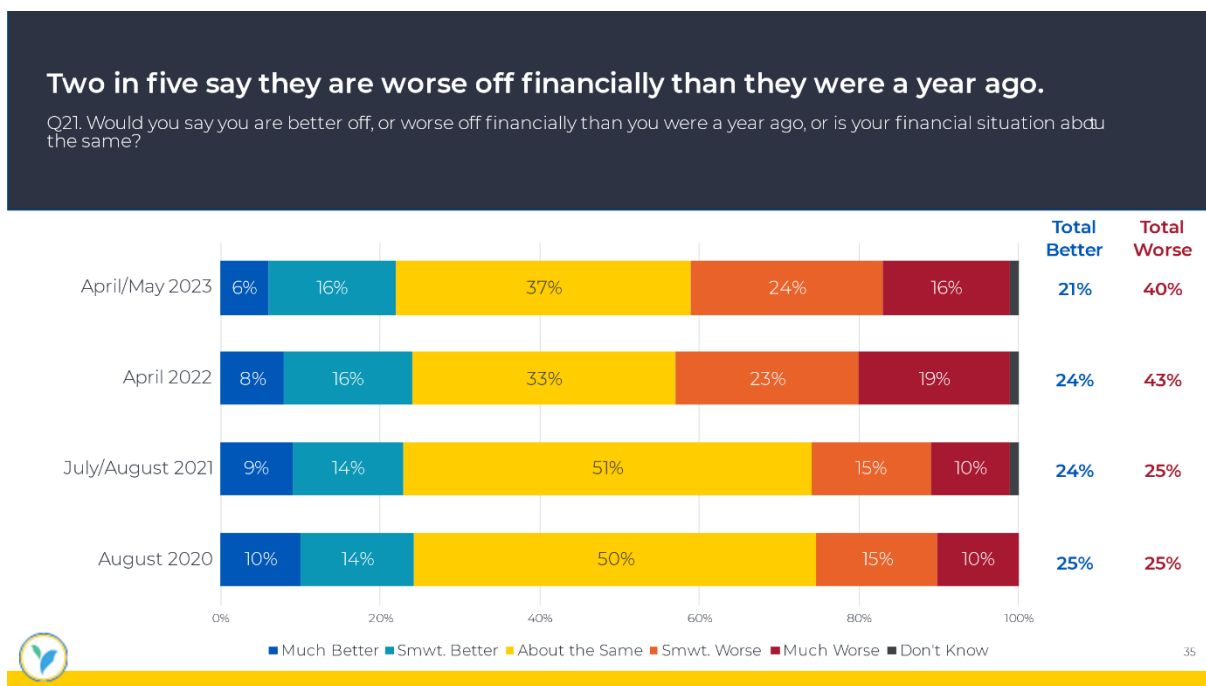


Additional notable demographic distinctions in Coloradans' self-evaluation of their financial circumstances include:

- Coloradans without a disability are slightly more likely to say their financial situation is comfortable than are those with a disability (63% “living comfortably” compared to 40% of those with a disability).
- Spanish-speaking Coloradans are more likely to say they are “just getting by” financially (44%) than are English-speaking Coloradans.
- Coloradans with at least a four-year college degree are more likely to be financially comfortable than those without a four-year college degree (73% compared to 46%).
- Two in five unemployed Coloradans are “really struggling” financially (41%) and 32% are “just getting by.”

Only one in five Coloradans say they are better off financially than they were a year ago. Thirty-seven percent say their financial situation has remained about the same, and 40% say it has gotten worse. As shown in **Figure 15**, there was a notable shift from 2021 to 2022, coinciding with increasing concerns about the cost of living, in which the number of Coloradans saying their financial situation had worsened nearly doubled. This pattern has remained consistent over the past year. Unemployed Coloradans and those with incomes below \$30,000 are particularly likely to say things have gotten worse (61% and 57%, respectively).

Figure 15: Personal Financial Situation Compared to the Prior Year



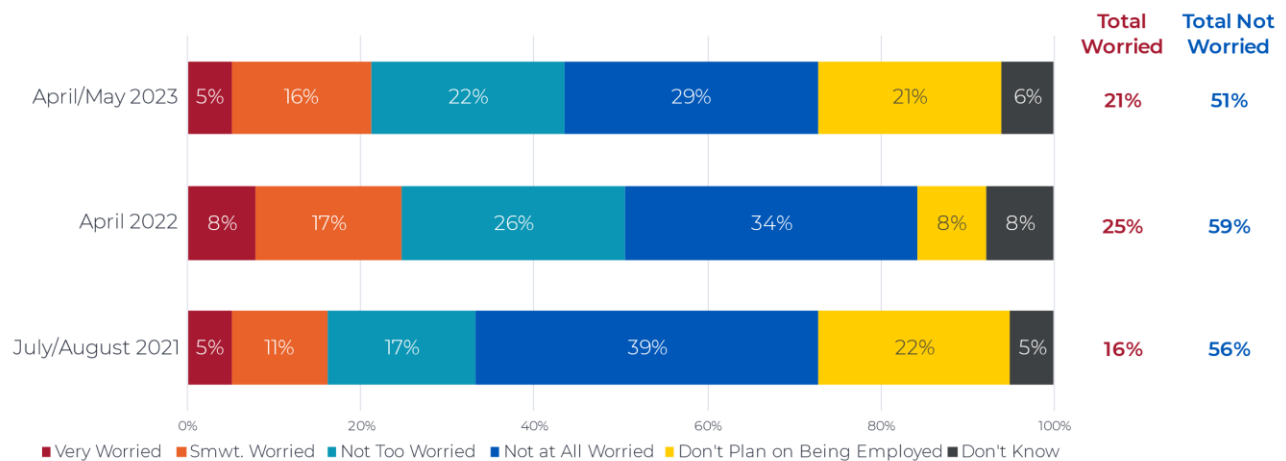
At the same time, only one in five Coloradans is worried about being unemployed over the next year (**Figure 16**) – although 21% say they don't plan on being employed in the next year, an increase relative to 2022 when only 8% indicated they didn't plan on being employed. Overall, half of Coloradans say they are not worried about their employment in the coming year. In general, Coloradans of color are more likely to worry about being unemployed than are white Coloradans (**Figure 17**).



Figure 16: Worry About Being Unemployed in the Coming Year

Most Coloradans are not worried about being unemployed in the next year.

Q25. Do you plan to be employed over the next year? (IF YES: How worried are you that you might not be employed over the next year:)



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Figure 17: Worry About Being Unemployed in the Coming Year by Ethnicity 2021-2023

Coloradans of color are more worried than White Coloradans about not being employed in the next year.

Q25. Do you plan to be employed over the next year? (IF YES: How worried are you that you might not be employed over the next year:)

(Total % Worried)

Demographic Group	2021	2022	2023	Difference 2022-2023
All	16%	25%	21%	-4%
Race/Ethnicity				
Asian/Pacific Islander	15%	27%	22%	-5%
Black/African American	16%	22%	24%	+2%
Hispanic/Latino	24%	27%	33%	+6%
Native American/Indigenous	17%	47%	28%	-19%
White	13%	24%	18%	-6%
All Multiracial	--	24%	17%	-7%



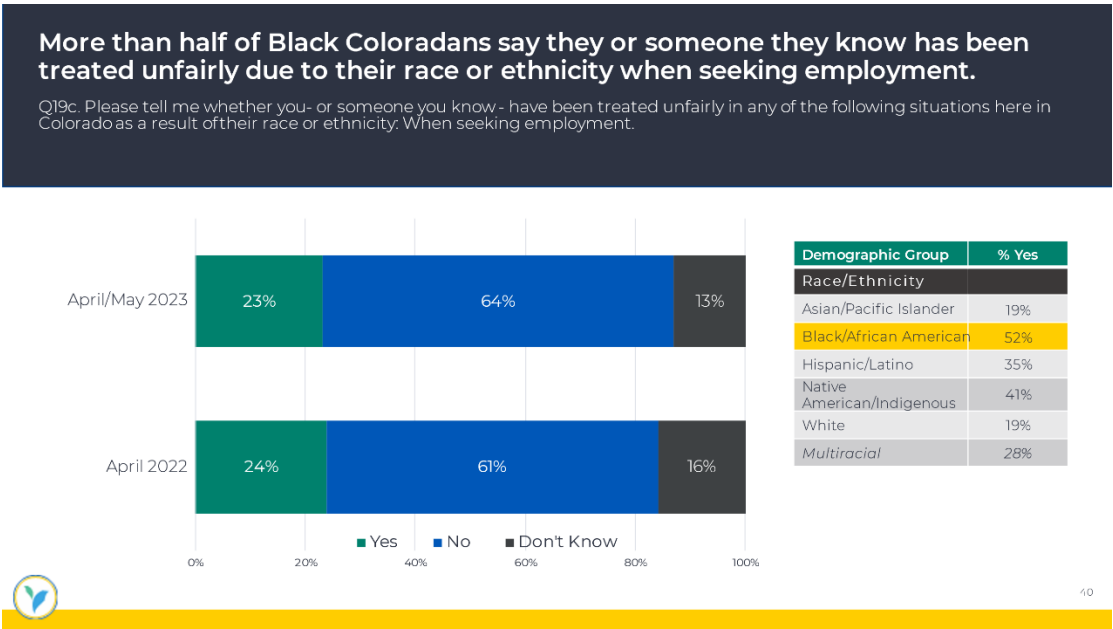
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Those most likely to worry about being unemployed in the coming year include those who took the survey in Spanish (40%), those without health insurance coverage (36%), immigrant Coloradans (35%), those with household incomes between \$30,000 and \$50,000 (34%), unemployed Coloradans (34%), Latino Coloradans (33%), those with teenage children (33%), and those living in the Eastern Plains (33%).

One-quarter of Coloradans say they or someone they know has been treated unfairly because of their race when seeking employment. This proportion is consistent with that observed in 2022. Notably, more than half of Black Coloradans say they or someone they know have had this experience (52%), as do 41% of Native American/Indigenous Coloradans and 35% of Latino Coloradans.

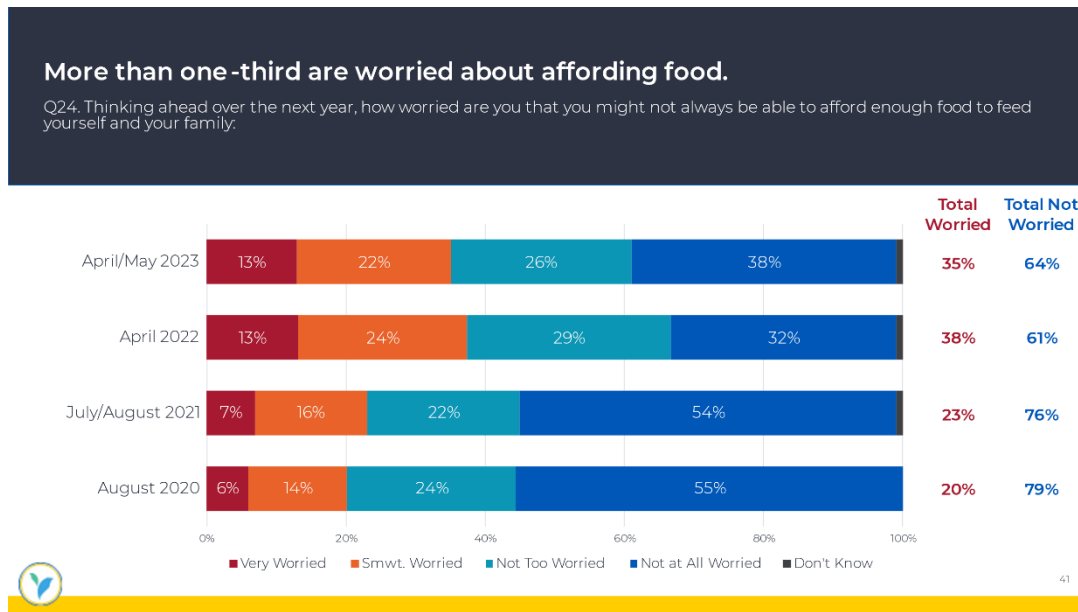
Figure 18: Unfair Treatment When Seeking Employment



Another rising cost concern is the worry about affording food. Since 2022, more than one-third of Coloradans have said they worry they won't always be able to afford food for themselves and their families in the coming year. This marked a distinct increase relative to 2020 and 2021, when less than one-quarter shared this worry (Figure 19).



Figure 19: Worry About Affording Food



While food insecurity impacts Coloradans of all demographic and geographic backgrounds, it is highly correlated with income. In fact, an outright majority of those with household incomes under \$50,000 indicate they are worried about affording food. Fifty-five percent of Native American/Indigenous Coloradans worry about affording food, as do 47% of Latino Coloradans – greater than the shares of Coloradans of other ethnicities. Additionally, those living in the Pueblo region of the state are most likely to say they are worried about affording food (55%). LGBTQ+ Coloradans (48%), those with a disability (49%), renters (51%), and unemployed Coloradans (52%) are also disproportionately likely to worry about affording food in the coming year.

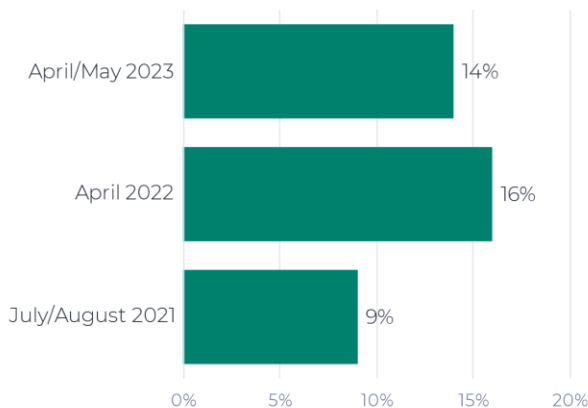
More than one in ten Coloradans (14%) report having skipped a meal because they couldn't afford food, and 40% of those with incomes under \$30,000 say they have done so. Additionally, 35% of Native American and Indigenous Coloradans say the same – more than Coloradans of other racial and ethnic backgrounds (**Figure 20**).



Figure 20: Experience of Food Insecurity

More than one in ten have skipped meals because they couldn't afford food.

Q26a. In the last 12 months, have you experienced any of the following: Skipped meals because you couldn't afford food? (% Yes)



Demographic Group	% Yes
Race/Ethnicity	
Asian/Pacific Islander	8%
Black/African American	22%
Hispanic/Latino	19%
Native American/Indigenous	35%
White	13%
Multiracial	28%
Household Income	
<\$30,000	40%
\$30,000-\$50,000	28%
\$50,000-\$75,000	24%
\$75,000-\$100,000	9%
\$100,000-\$150,000	5%
\$150,000+	5%



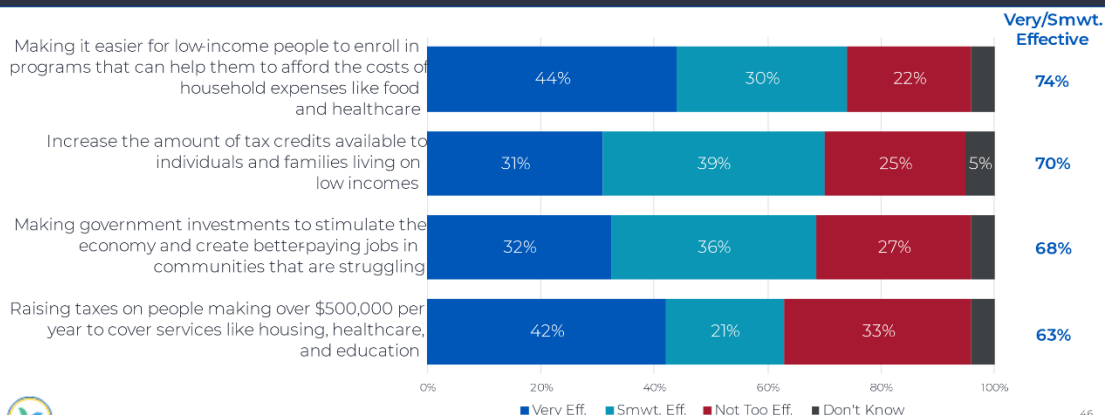
45

When asked to evaluate a series of solutions to address the rising cost of living in Colorado, Coloradans rate making it easier for low-income people to enroll in programs that can help them afford the costs of household expenses as most effective (74% “very” or “somewhat effective”). Seven in ten indicate that increasing tax credits for low-income families would be effective; 68% say the same for investments to stimulate the economy; and 63% say so about raising taxes on high earners to fund public services (Figure 21). Relative to 2022, Coloradans’ perception that investments in the economy would be effective has increased by nine points.

Figure 21: Effectiveness of Cost of Living Policy Solutions

Three-quarters say making it easier for low-income people to enroll in safety net programs will be effective in addressing the cost of living.

Q28. Here are some actions that some people say will address the rising cost of living in Colorado. Please tell me how effective you think it will be in helping Coloradans make ends meet: very effective, somewhat effective, or not too effective.

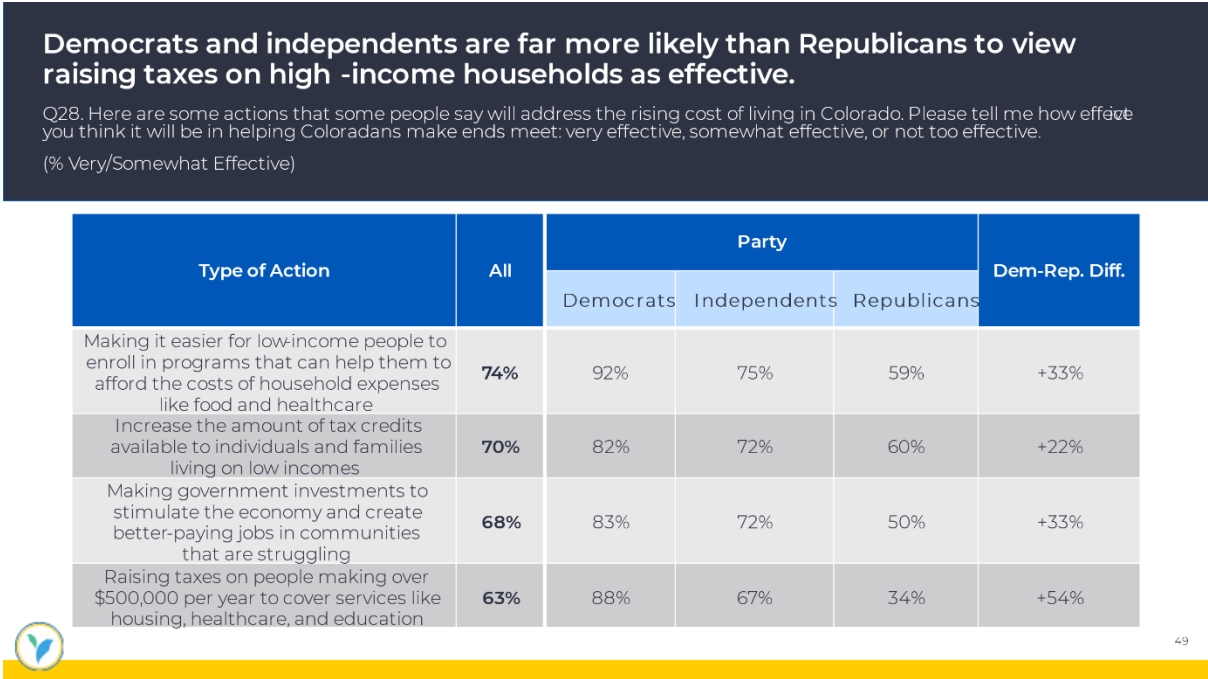


46



As shown in **Figure 22**, majorities of Coloradans of all partisan affiliations agree that making it easier to enroll in public benefit programs, increasing tax credits, and making investments that stimulate the economy are effective solutions to cost-of-living concerns. At the same, Democrats and independents are much more likely than Republicans to say these are effective solutions. There is a particularly stark partisan divide on the proposal to raise taxes on the state’s highest earners, which 88% of Democrats and 67% of independents say would be effective, compared to just 34% of Republicans.

Figure 22: Effectiveness of Cost of Living Policy Solutions by Party



HOUSING

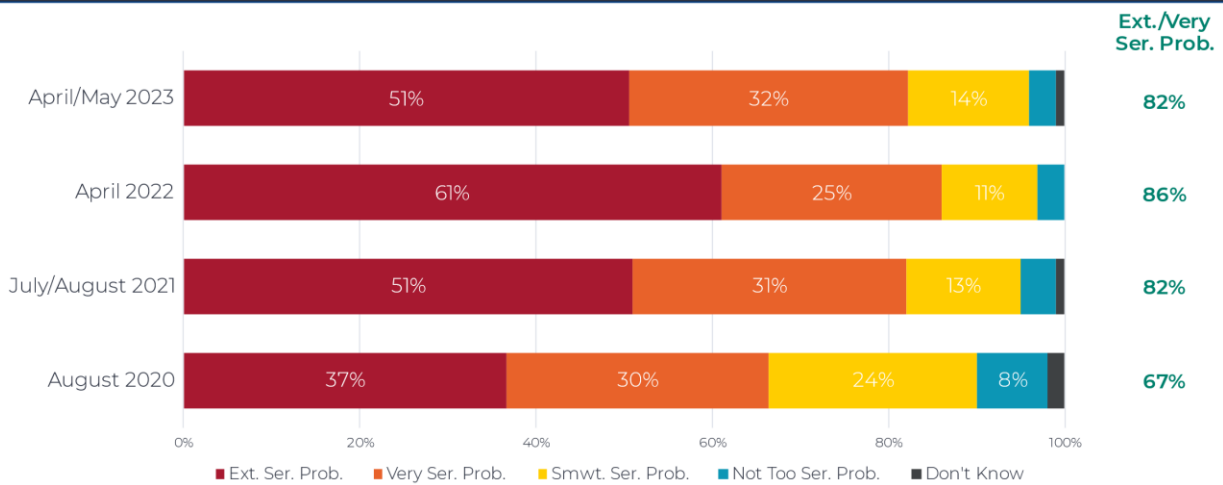
More than four in five Coloradans say the cost of housing is an “extremely” or “very serious” problem facing the state (82%); this perception has remained consistent since 2021 when it increased noticeably compared to 2020. This perception cuts across the state’s major geographic and demographic groups, including homeowners and renters, Coloradans of all income levels; and Coloradans of all ethnicities.

Figure 23: Seriousness of the Cost of Housing

Concern about the cost of housing has remained steady – and high – since 2021.

Q15j. I'd like to read you some problems facing Colorado that people have mentioned. Please tell me whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem in Colorado.

(The cost of housing)



52

With cost-of-living concerns largely driven by the cost of housing, more than four in five Colorado parents worry that their children won’t be able to afford to live in the state, and a majority is “very worried” (**Figure 24**). Broad majorities of Colorado parents of all income levels, races and ethnicities, and geographies share this concern for their children.

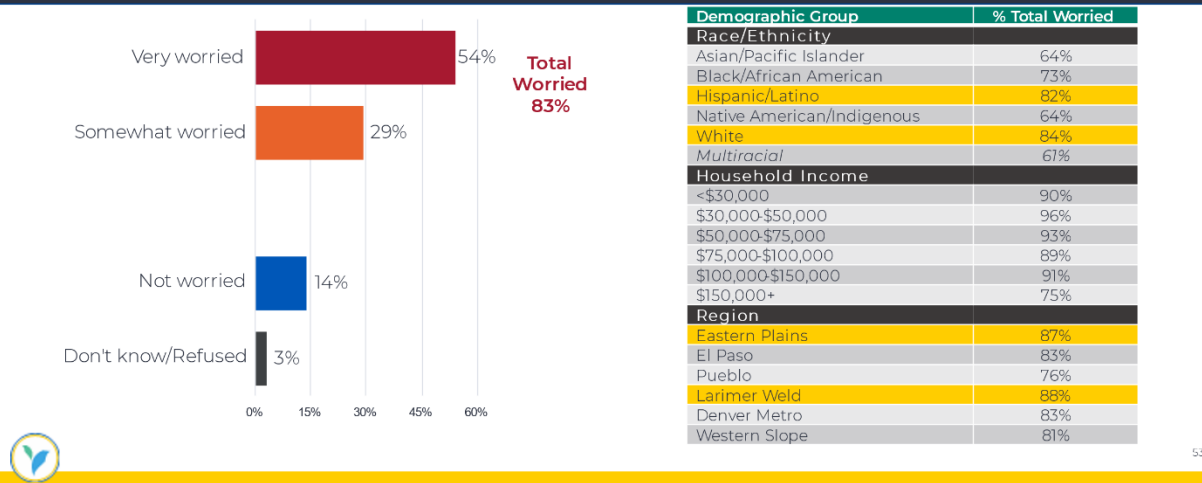


Figure 24: Worry About Future Generations Affording to Live in Colorado

Four in five parents worry about their children being able to afford to live in Colorado.

Q32. Are you worried about whether your children will be able to afford to live in Colorado in the future? (IF YES, ASK: Are you very worried or just somewhat?)

(Asked of Parents, n=699)



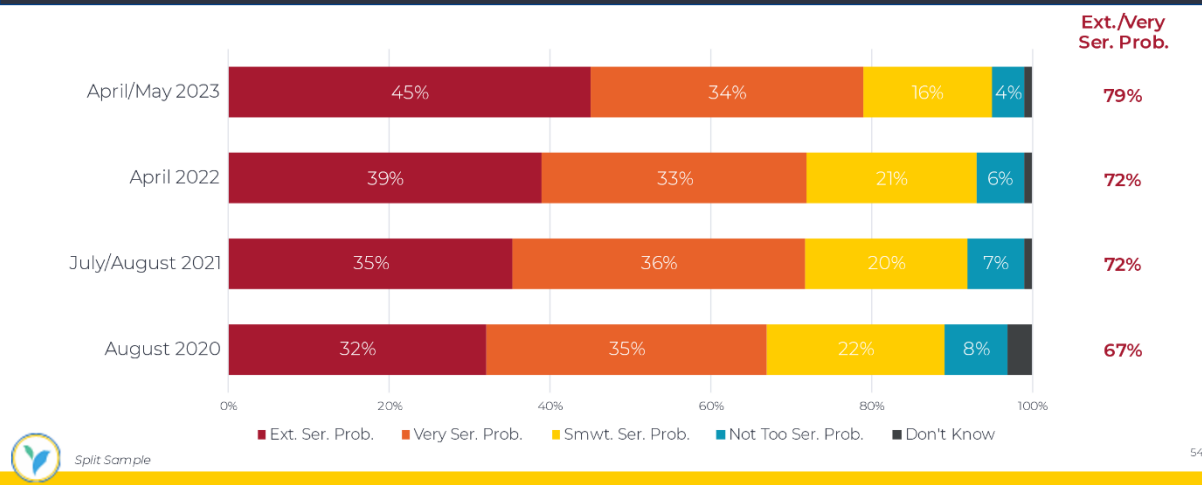
Concerns about homelessness have also remained consistent in recent years, but become even more intense over time, with the proportion saying it is an “extremely serious” problem growing. As with perceptions of the cost of housing, the sense that homelessness is a “very serious” problem cuts across the state’s regions and demographic groups.

Figure 25: Seriousness of Homelessness

Concerns about homelessness have steadily gained intensity.

Q15i. I'd like to read you some problems facing Colorado that people have mentioned. Please tell me whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem in Colorado.

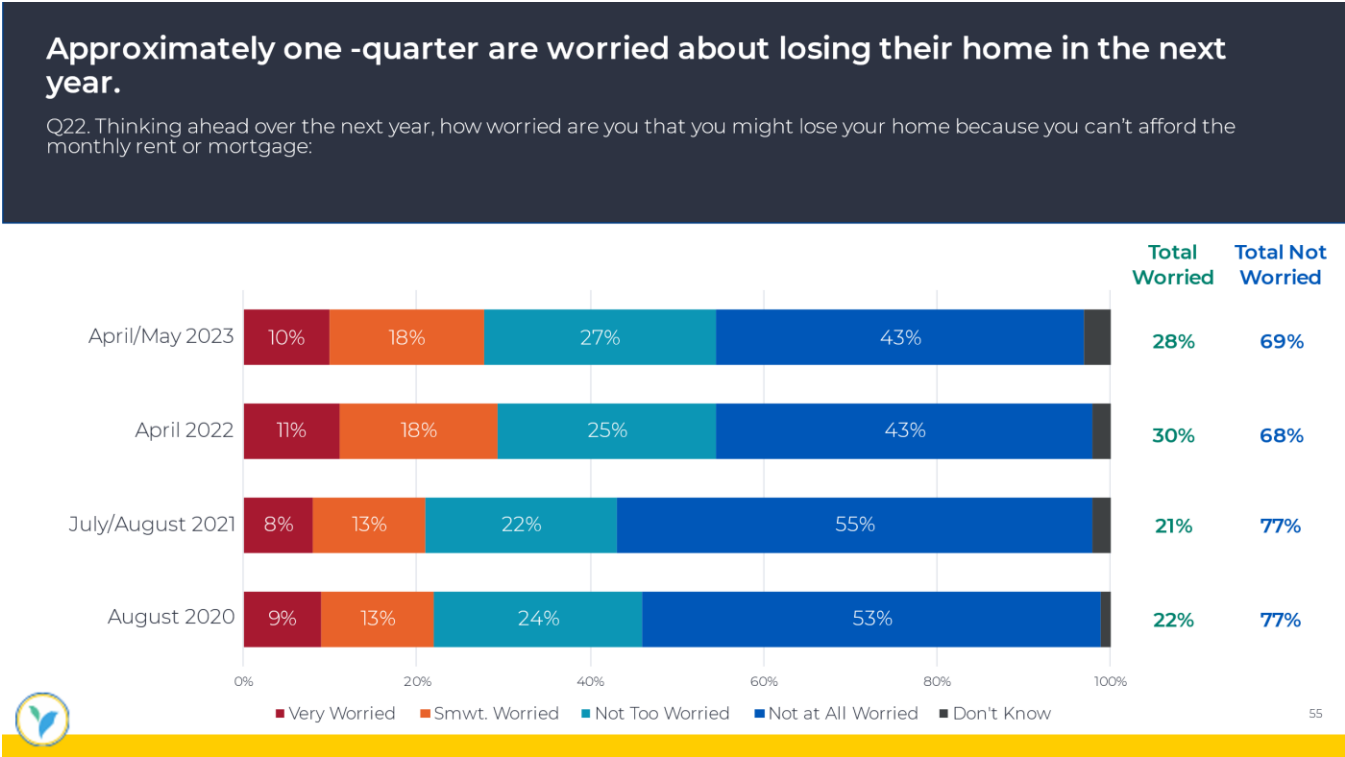
(Homelessness)



Consistent with 2022, more than one-quarter of Coloradans worry about losing their home in the coming year because they cannot afford the rent or mortgage, including one in ten who are “very worried” (Figure 26). Renters, particularly renters of color, are much more worried than homeowners (49% compared to 19%). The lowest-income Coloradans, Spanish-speakers, Black Coloradans and Native American/Indigenous Coloradans are also among the most worried about losing their home.

Forty-four percent of Coloradans rent from a management company, 18% from a friend or family member and 31% from a small property owner. Notably, it is those who rent from a friend or family member who express the greatest concern about losing their housing in the coming year (56%).

Figure 26: Worry About Loss of Housing



Nearly all renters surveyed indicate they aspire to own a home someday, but a plurality of those think it is unlikely to happen (Figure 27). Thirty-eight percent say they aspire to own a home and consider it “likely” that they will, while 47% say it is “unlikely.” The desire to own a home and perceived likelihood of doing so correlate with income; lower-income Coloradans are more likely to say they do not aspire to own a home, and if they do, to say it is unlikely to occur. A majority of renters with household incomes over \$100,000 see themselves as likely to own a home someday.

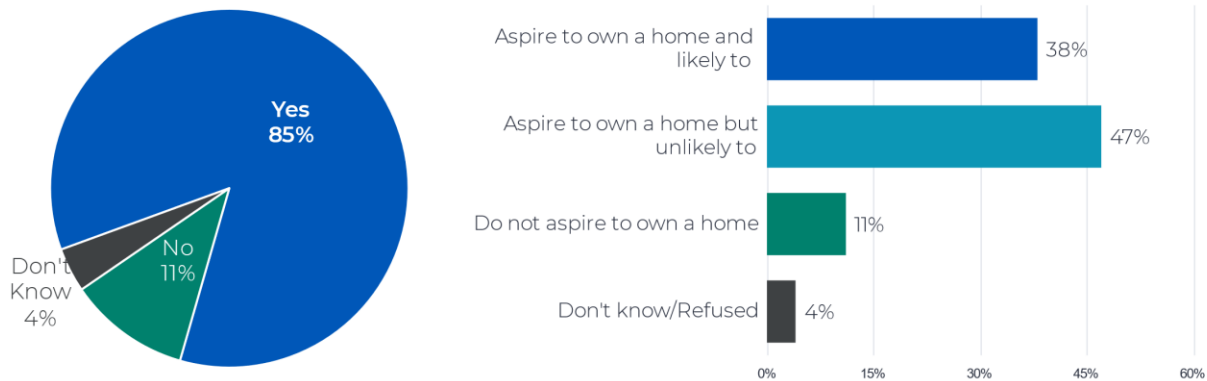


Figure 27: Desire to Own a Home in Colorado

Nearly all renters aspire to own a home some day, but most doubt they will be able to do so in Colorado.

Q31. Do you aspire to own a home someday? (IF YES: Do you think it is likely or unlikely that you will be able to purchase home in Colorado?)

(Asked of Only of Those Who Rent, n=584)



60

Nearly one-third of Coloradans say they work multiple jobs or more than they want in order to afford their rent or mortgage. More than one in 10 say they have moved because they couldn't afford housing costs, and a similar number say they have lived with a roommate or family members when they would have preferred not to. Renters and Coloradans with household incomes below \$50,000 are particularly likely to have taken each of these actions to afford housing; renters of color are especially likely to have had to work multiple jobs to afford housing.

Other notable demographic distinctions include:

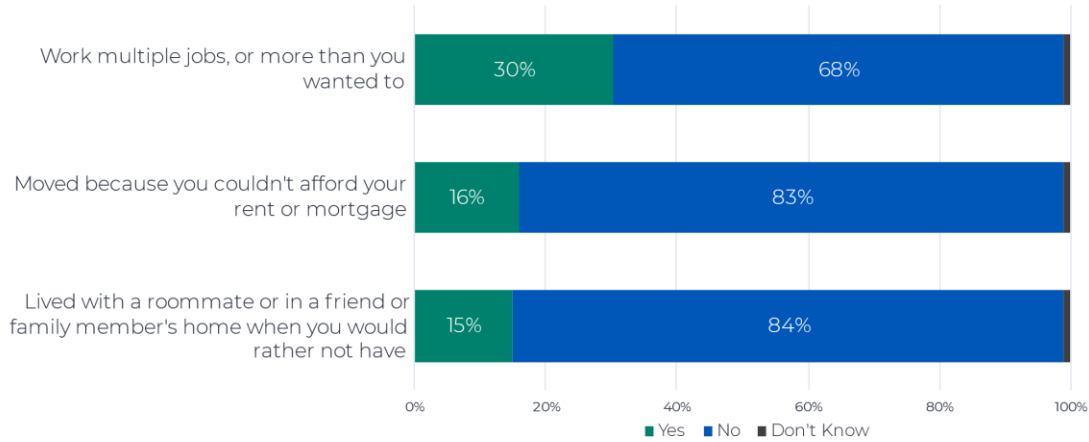
- Native American/Indigenous Coloradans are more likely than those of other racial and ethnic groups to have worked multiple jobs to afford rent or the mortgage (50%).
- LGBTQ+ Coloradans were more likely than non-LGBTQ+ Coloradans to have taken all of these actions to afford housing.
- Spanish speakers are more likely to have lived with a roommate or family and friends when they would have preferred not to (34%).



Figure 28: Actions Taken to Afford Housing

Nearly one-third of Coloradans say they've had to work multiple jobs to afford their rent or mortgage.

Q33. In order to pay your rent or your mortgage in the last year, have you had to do any of the following:



61

Figure 29: Actions Taken to Afford Housing by Household Income and Own/Rent

Renters are more likely than homeowners to have worked multiple jobs, moved, or lived with others in order to afford housing.

Q33. In order to pay your rent or your mortgage in the last year, have you had to do any of the following:

(Total Yes)

Action	All	Household Income						Residence	
		<\$30,000	\$30,000-\$50,000	\$50,000-\$75,000	\$75,000-\$100,000	\$100,000-\$150,000	\$150,000+	Home owners	Renters
Work multiple jobs, or more than you wanted to	30%	38%	47%	38%	34%	29%	17%	23%	45%
Moved because you couldn't afford your rent or mortgage	16%	36%	29%	19%	13%	11%	7%	8%	26%
Lived with a roommate or in a friend or family member's home when you would rather not have	15%	32%	31%	19%	18%	7%	7%	6%	34%



63

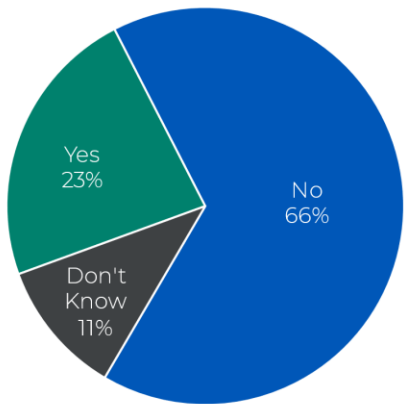


Nearly one-quarter (23%) say they or someone they know has been treated unfairly when trying to rent or buy a place to live because of their race or ethnicity. Native American/Indigenous Coloradans, Black Coloradans and Hispanic/Latino Coloradans were especially likely to have encountered this treatment or to know someone who has.

Figure 30: Experience with Unfair Treatment When Renting/Purchasing a Home

Nearly one-quarter say or someone they know has been treated unfairly when trying to rent or purchase a home because of their race or ethnicity.

Q19a. Please tell me whether you- or someone you know - have been treated unfairly in any of the following situations here in Colorado as a result of their race or ethnicity: When trying to rent or purchase a place to live.



Demographic Group	Yes
Race/Ethnicity	
Asian/Pacific Islander	22%
Black/African American	46%
Hispanic/Latino	37%
Native American/Indigenous	63%
White	19%
Multiracial	42%



64

When asked about a series of proposed solutions to the state’s housing challenges, Coloradans expressed broad confidence that all of them would be effective. They perceived reducing property taxes and ensuring landlords cannot raise rents too quickly as the most effective solutions. In addition, two-thirds or more said it would be effective to change zoning laws to incentivize transit-oriented development, require developers to build housing for low-income people, increase investments in homelessness prevention, speed up permitting, and make it harder for landlords to evict tenants who have not violated any terms of their lease (Figure 31).

Coloradans across the state believe these policies would be effective, as do those of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Coloradans of all political parties view most of these policies as effective, although Democrats and Independents are more likely to say so. The greatest gaps by party relate to increasing investments in preventing homelessness and requiring developers to build affordable housing; just under half of Republicans think these would be effective solutions.



Figure 31: Solutions to Colorado's Housing Costs

Coloradans view reducing property taxes and ensuring landlords cannot raise rents too quickly as the most effective policy actions to address housing costs.

Q34. Here are some actions that some people say will address rising housing costs in Colorado. Please tell me how effectively you think it will be in making housing more affordable: very effective, somewhat effective, or not too effective.

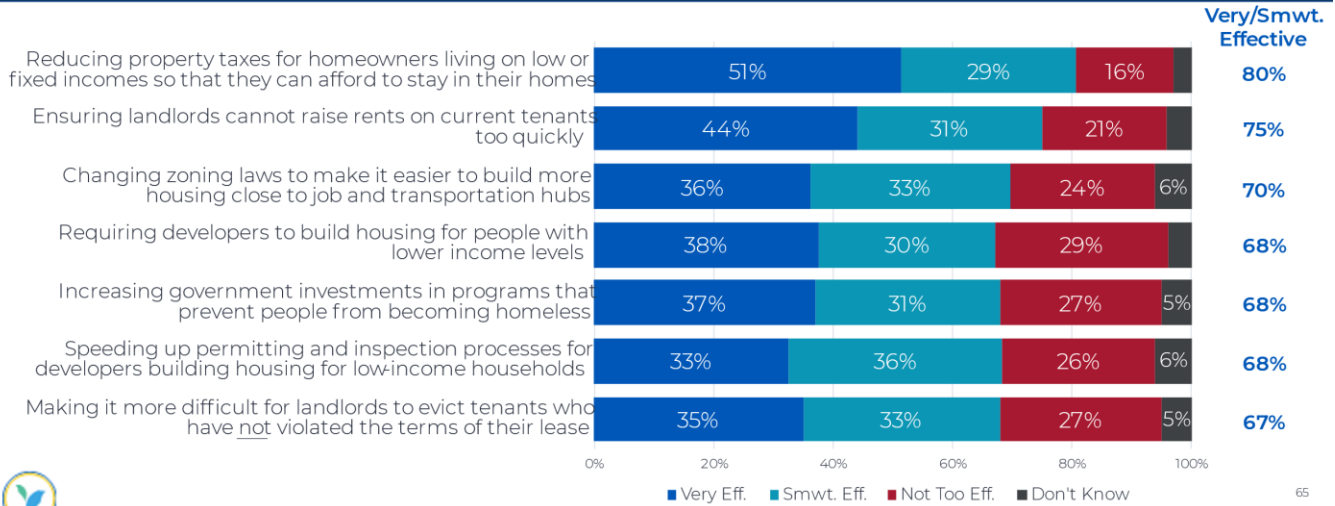


Figure 32: Solutions to Colorado's Housing Costs by Party

Democrats are much more likely to view government investments in preventing homelessness and requiring developers to build housing for people with lower incomes as effective.

Q34. Here are some actions that some people say will address rising housing costs in Colorado. Please tell me how effectively you think it will be in making housing more affordable: very effective, somewhat effective, or not too effective.

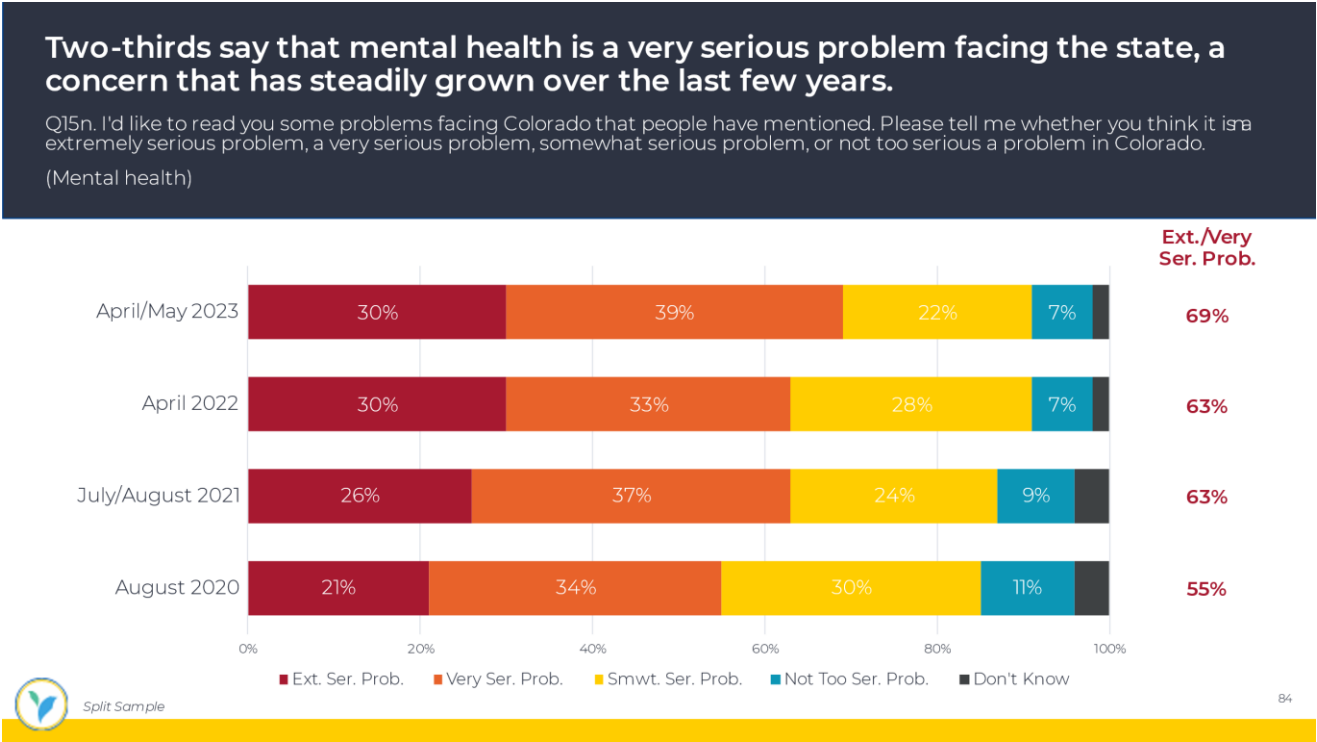
(% Very/Somewhat Effective)

Action	All	Party			Dem-Rep. Diff.
		Democrats	Independents	Republicans	
Reducing property taxes for homeowners living on low or fixed incomes so that they can afford to stay in their homes	80%	89%	81%	76%	+13%
Ensuring landlords cannot raise rents on current tenants too quickly	75%	89%	76%	63%	+26%
Changing zoning laws to make it easier to build more housing close to job and transportation hubs	70%	84%	69%	59%	+25%
Requiring developers to build housing for people with lower income levels	68%	86%	69%	49%	+37%
Increasing government investments in programs that prevent people from becoming homeless	68%	87%	70%	46%	+41%
Speeding up permitting and inspection processes for developers building housing for low-income households	68%	79%	69%	60%	+19%
Making it more difficult for landlords to evict tenants who have not violated the terms of their lease	67%	79%	70%	57%	+22%

HEALTH CARE AND MENTAL HEALTH

Upwards of two-thirds of Coloradans say that mental health is a “very serious” problem facing the state, a concern that has steadily grown over the last few years (Figure 33). BTQ+ Coloradans (85%), those who are financially struggling (82%), Coloradans with household incomes under \$50,000 (79%) and Black Coloradans (79%) are among the most likely to say mental health is a “very serious” problem.

Figure 33: Seriousness of Mental Health



A majority of Coloradans have experienced mental health strain (57%). As shown in Figure 34 on the next page, LGBTQ+ Coloradans, Native American Coloradans, those living with family or friends, unemployed Coloradans, those with very low household incomes and women under age 50 expressed the greatest incidence of mental health strain.

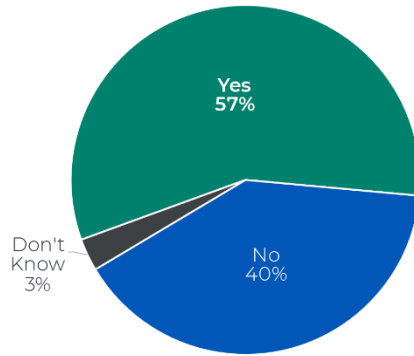
Among those who have experienced mental health strain, a large number say they've spoken with a family member or friend (73%); two in five have spoken to a health care provider and one-third have spoken to someone with a similar experience. More than one in ten have not spoken with anyone about their experience. Those with household incomes under \$30,000 (24%), Black Coloradans (23%), and those 50 and over (19%) were among the most likely to not have spoken with anyone about the mental health strain they'd experienced.



Figure 34: Experiences with Mental Health Strain

Most say they've experienced mental health strain in the last year.

Q35. In the last year, have you experienced mental health strain such as anxiety, depression, loneliness, or stress?



Demographic Groups Most Likely to Have Experienced Mental Health Strain	
LGBTQ+ Coloradans	90%
Native American/Indigenous	85%
Those living with a family member or friend	80%
Unemployed Coloradans	80%
Household incomes under \$30,000	79%
Women ages 18-49	78%



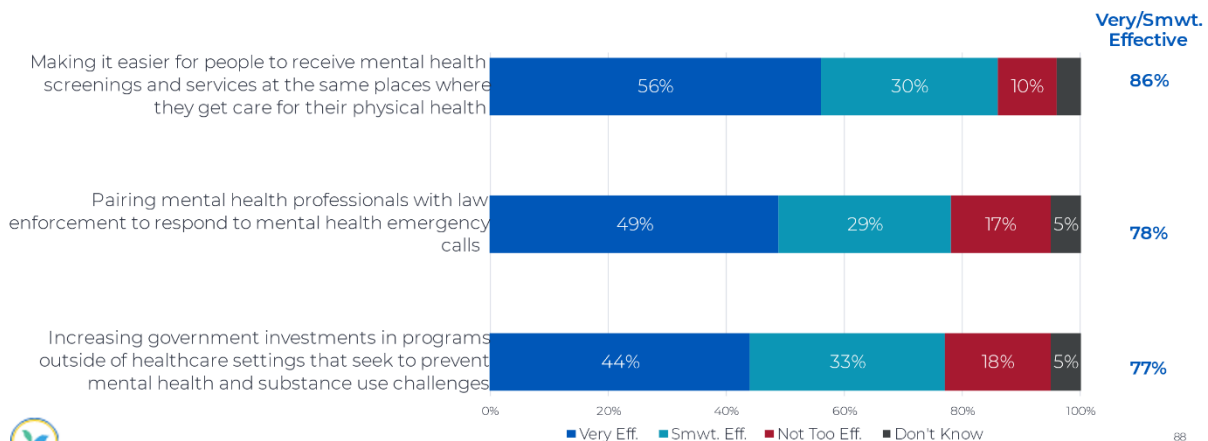
85

Coloradans see a broad range of proposed solutions to the mental health crisis as effective. As shown in **Figure 35**, 86% say that making it easier to get mental health screenings when getting physical health checks would be effective; 78% say pairing mental health professionals with law enforcement to respond to mental health emergencies would be effective; and 77% say the same about increasing investments in programs that address mental health outside of health care settings specifically aimed at preventing mental health.

Figure 35: Solutions to Colorado's Mental Health Crisis

Coloradans say that making it easier to receive mental health services in the same places as other healthcare would be most effective at improving mental health.

Q37. Here are some actions that some people say will improve mental health or healthcare in Colorado. Please tell me how effective you think it will be in improving mental health or healthcare: very effective, somewhat effective, or not too effective.



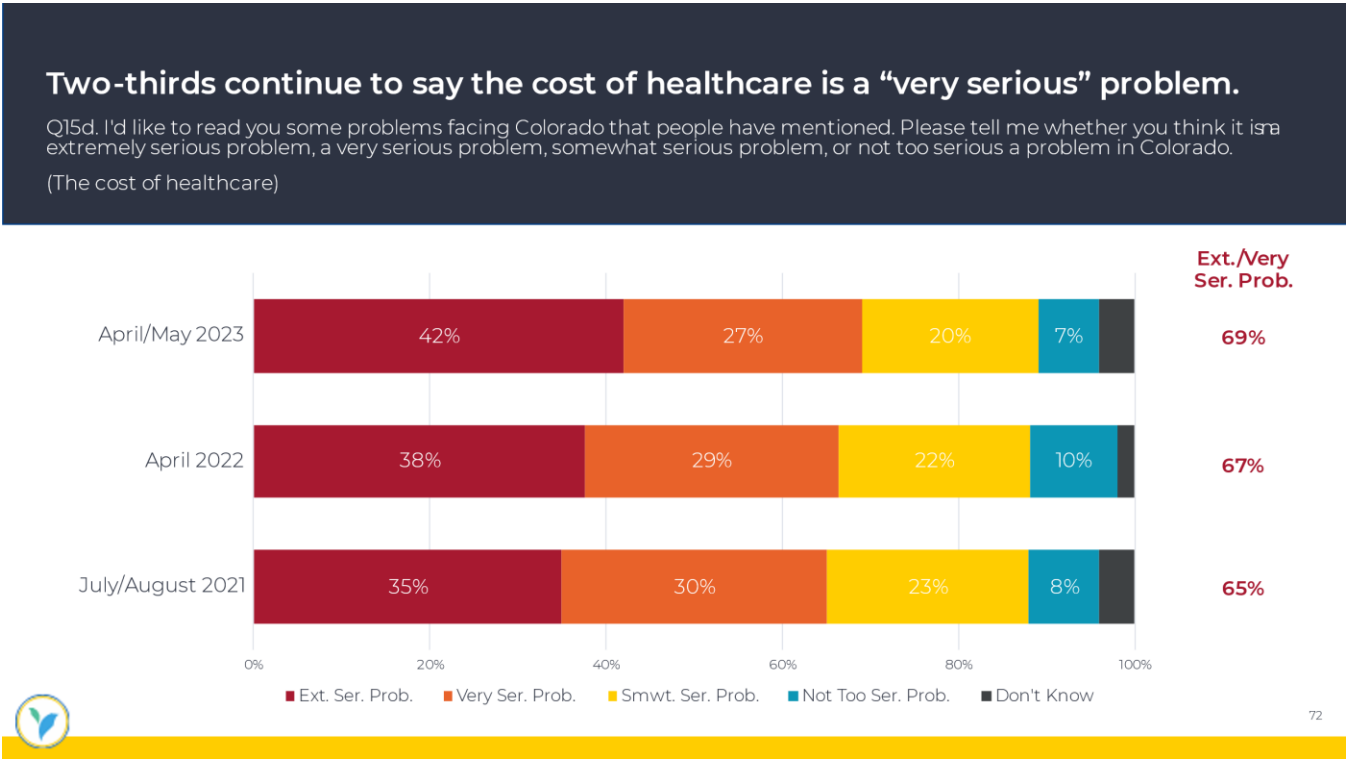
88



Coloradans of all racial and ethnic groups, income levels, and partisan affiliations see these proposals as effective, although, as with other policy proposals, Republicans are less likely than Democrats and Independents to agree.

Since 2021, two-thirds of Coloradans have consistently indicated that the cost of health care is a very serious problem. Coloradans relying on their spouse’s insurance (82%), living in Larimer/Weld area (80%), Asian and Pacific Islanders (79%), LGBTQ+ Coloradans (76%), those earning between \$30,000 and \$75,000 (75%), Democrats (75%), women (74%) – particularly those without a college degree (80%), and immigrant Coloradans (74%) are most likely to say the cost of health care is a “very serious” problem.

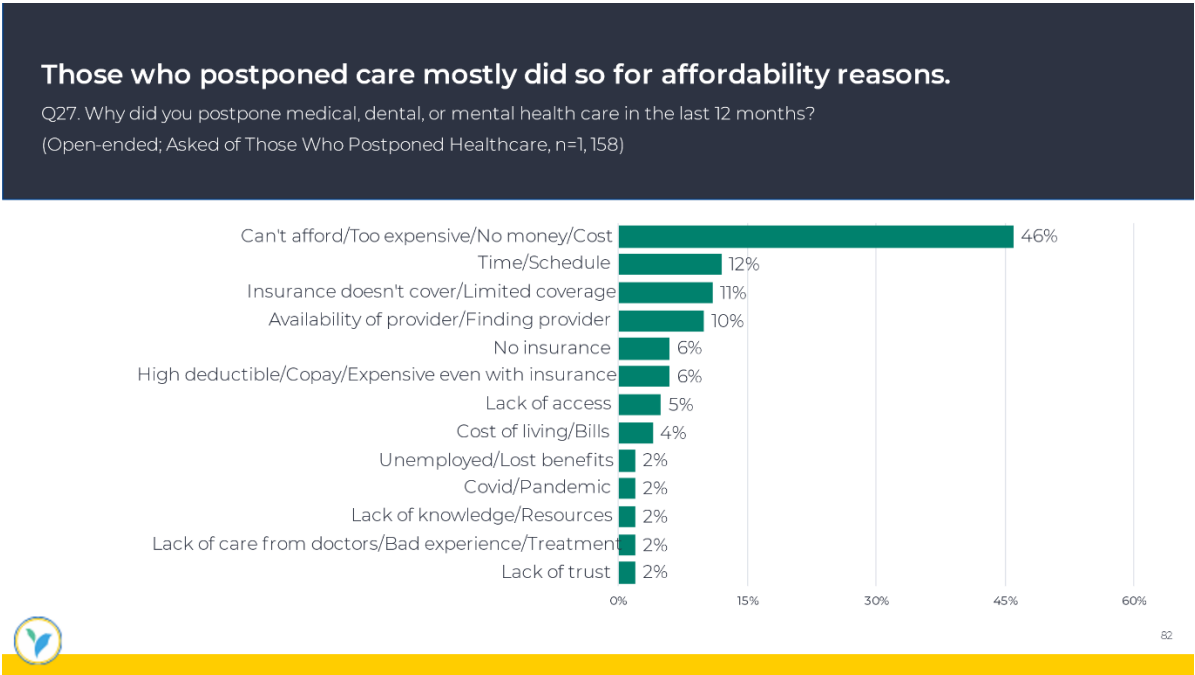
Figure 36: Seriousness of the Cost of Health Care



As shown in **Figure 37**, nearly two-in-five Coloradans have postponed medical or dental care in the past year (38%); a share that is in line with prior years (45% in 2022 and 39% in 2021). One-quarter say they’ve postponed mental health care in the past year, even though, as mentioned before, 57% have experienced mental health strain. Affordability concerns drive nearly half of the cases in which Coloradans postponed care (46%), meaning that fully 17% of Coloradans have postponed care in the past year because they couldn’t afford it. In fact, 70% of Coloradans who said they were “financially struggling” said they’d postponed care in the past year, as had 50% of those who said they were “just getting by”. Other common reasons for postponing care included scheduling conflicts, lack of insurance coverage, and unavailability of providers.

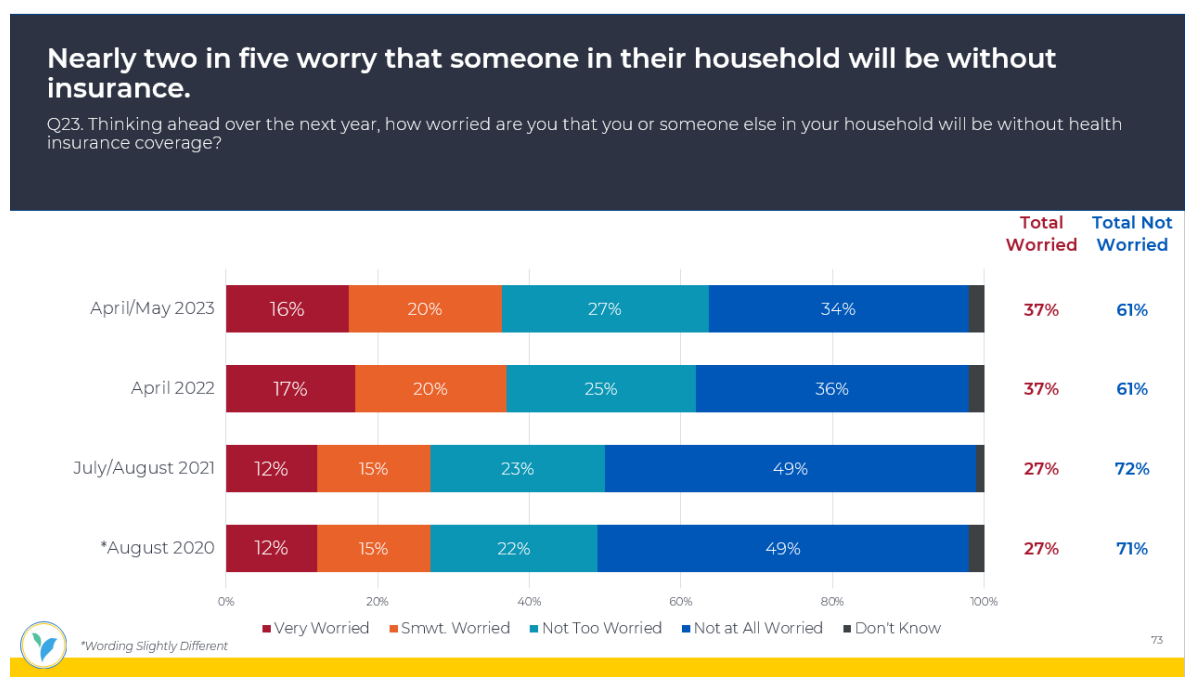


Figure 37: Reason for Postponing Care



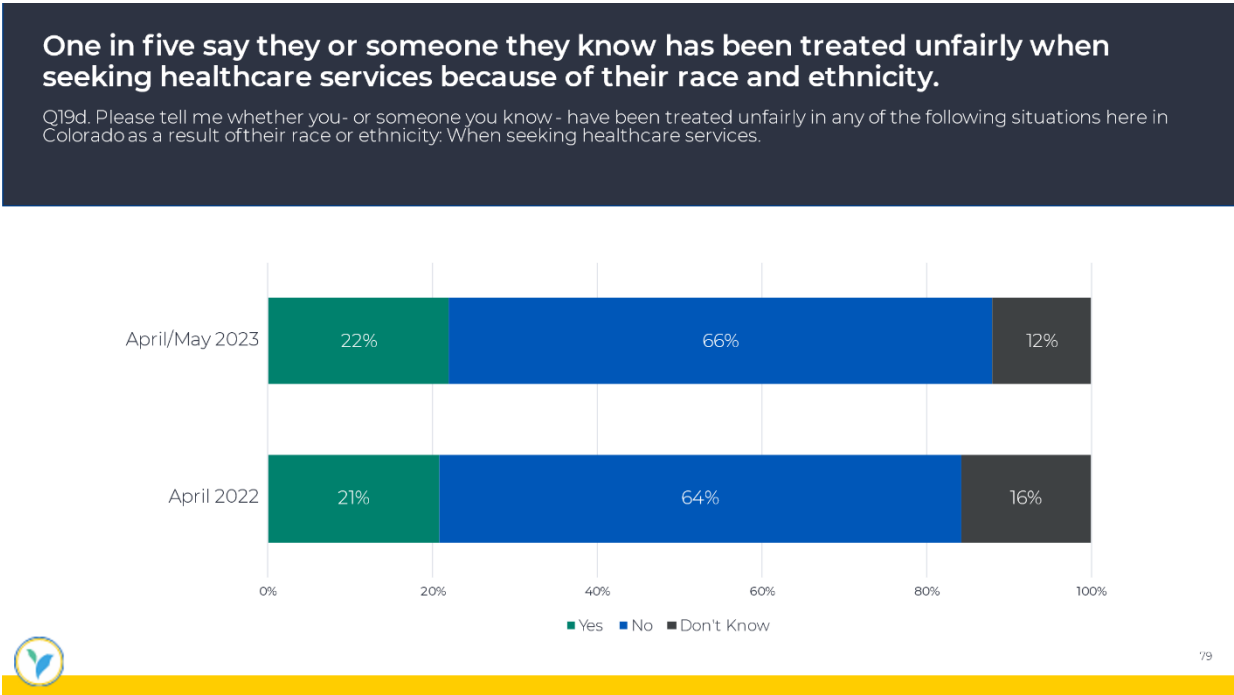
More than one-third of Coloradans worry about losing health insurance coverage in the coming year. Native American, Latino and multiracial Coloradans, those without health insurance currently, renters of color, those with incomes under \$30,000, unemployed Coloradans, and Spanish speakers were among the most likely to express this concern. Relative to 2022, those with incomes under \$30,000 are increasingly worried, with their degree of concern rising by 11 points since last year (Figure 38).

Figure 38: Worry About Losing Health Insurance Coverage



One in five say they or someone they know have experienced unfair treatment because of their race or ethnicity when seeking health care services (Figure 39). Native American (46%) and Black Coloradans (44%) are twice as likely as others to have had this experience or to know someone who has.

Figure 39: Unfair Treatment in Seeking Health Care Services



APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

The 2023 Pulse Poll was conducted by telephone and online from April 8-May 3, 2023, among a random representative sample of 2,639 adults aged 18 and older living in the state of Colorado. The sample included both landline (879) and cellular telephone (347) interviews, as well as 1,413 online interviews (participants were invited via email, text messages, and postcard to participate online). Sampling and weighting were managed by Marketing Systems Group (MSG), and interviewing was conducted by GSK Research in close collaboration with the bipartisan research team of FM3 Research (D) and New Bridge Strategy (R).

The survey was funded by The Colorado Health Foundation (CHF), and FM3 and NBS researchers jointly led the survey design and analysis with frequent consultation with the CHF team. The survey included up to 48 questions, depending on the respondents' answers, with an average length for telephone respondents of 20 minutes and for online respondents of 16 minutes. Telephone interviews were administered in both English and Spanish.

The sampling and screening procedures were based on Address-Based Sampling (ABS), with a random sample of residential addresses in Colorado generated by MSG and drawing from the United States Postal Service Delivery Sequence File (DSF). Residents of Pueblo County were oversampled. In order to increase the sampling of Black/African American, Native American/Indigenous, and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) adults, the base sample was supplemented with interviews in households identified on the state's voter file as containing at least one resident of those ethnicities. Sampled households were matched to public and commercial databases for landline phones, wireless phones and email addresses through MSG and Anchor Computing. Online interviews were obtained from emailed invitations, text messages and postcards with a URL mailed to a sampling of households for whom no other contact information was available. In addition, to obtain additional interviews among Indigenous/Native American adults, 144 online interviews were completed with adults contacted through CHF partner organizations.

All respondents were screened to verify that they resided in Colorado. For the phone interviews, individual respondents were selected by asking for the youngest adult male or female currently at home based on a random rotation. Online interviews were conducted with the qualifying adult who answered the invitation.

A multi-stage weighting design was applied to ensure an accurate representation of the Colorado adult population. The sample was weighted to account for the multiple sources used to obtain additional responses among targeted communities of color. Demographic adjustments were applied to the sample to account for systematic non-response along known population parameters, including gender, age, race, educational attainment, income, voter registration status and partisanship, and region. Weighting parameters were based on estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau 2022 Current Population Survey and the Colorado Secretary of State's voter registration files.

The margin of sampling error, including the design effect, for the full sample is plus or minus 2.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval. For results based on subgroups, the margin of sampling error may be higher. Sample sizes and margins of sampling error for subgroups are available by request. Note that sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error in this or any other public opinion poll. Some percentages may not sum to 100% because of rounding.



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