



# ARAPAHOE COUNTY

## PUBLIC HEALTH

Community Health Assessment Update and Discussion  
Arapahoe County Board of Commissioners  
April 2024



# Agenda

- Purpose and process
- Health equity as the foundation
- Timeline
- Key Findings
- Next Steps



# What is a Health Assessment?

## Public Health Act of 2008

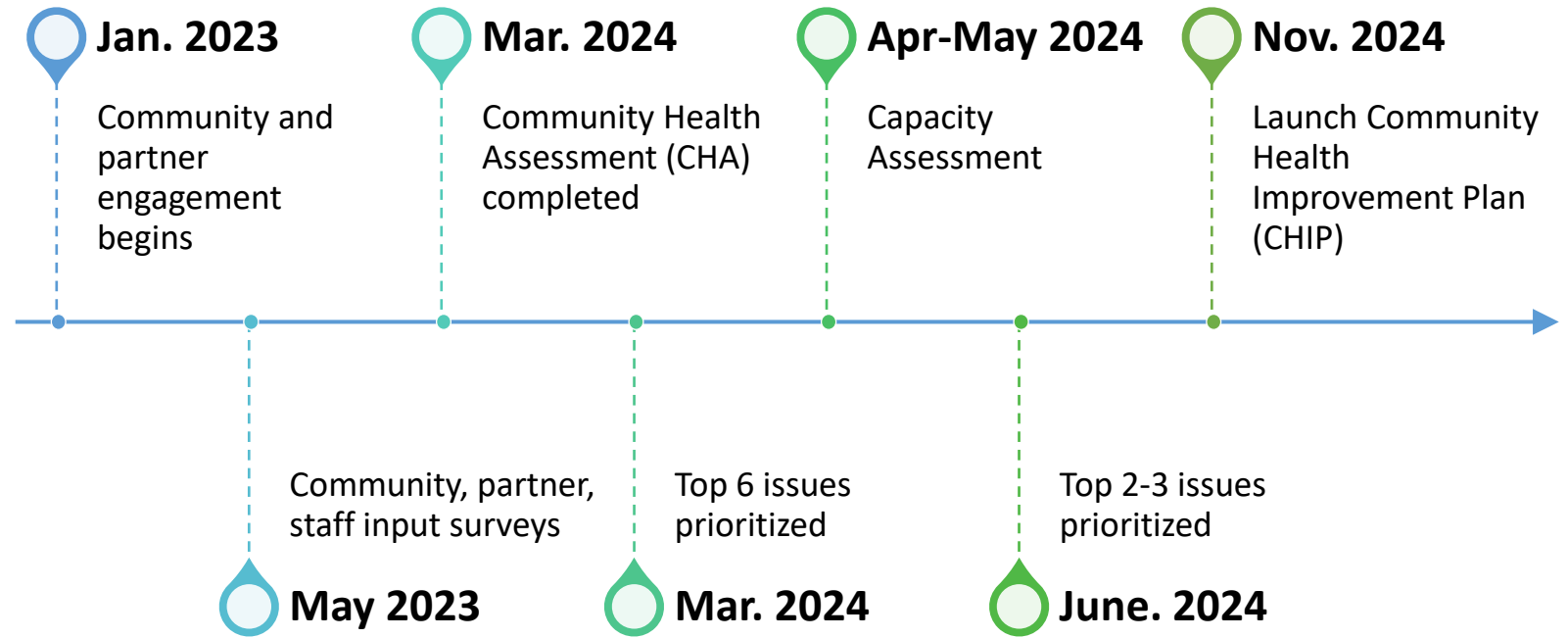
- 5-year assessment and planning cycle at state and local levels
- Goal: Increase availability and quality of public health services and improve health outcomes
- Result: A strategic plan for the entire community whereby local public health system partners collectively address priority areas
- Public Health Director Role: Direct the completion of a community health assessment
- Local Board of Health Role: Approve the local public health plan
- Board of County Commissioner Role: Share insight on community strengths, needs, and priorities; consider policy solutions to improve health

# Benefits of a Health Assessment

- Assess and monitor Population Health
- Use data to **determine the root causes of health disparities and inequities**
- Collaborate and facilitate **data sharing** with partners
- Use **innovative technologies**, data collection methods, and data sets
- **Interpret and communicate data** to diverse audiences
- Analyze and disaggregate data (e.g., by race) to **track issues and inform equitable action**
- **Engage community members** as experts and key partners



# Milestones and products



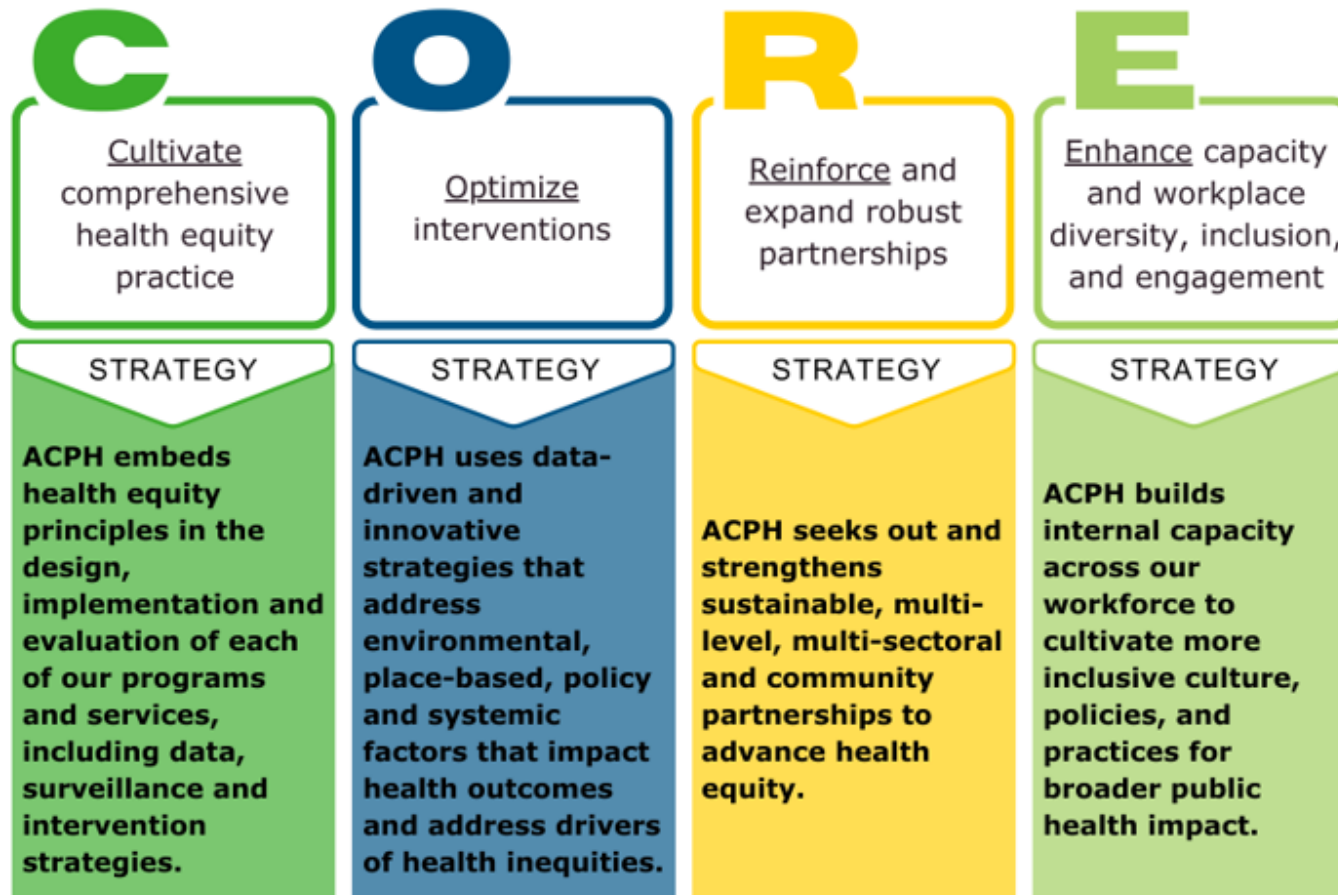
# CORE Goals



## Arapahoe County Public Health Aligning Strategic Goals

*Emphasizing Accountability, Innovation, Workforce and Community*

CDC's CORE Commitment to Health Equity.



ACPH tailored the CDC's CORE Commitment to Health Equity to elevate and describe Public Health's vision of equity as a primary and foundational driver of all department work.

**CORE** centers around four key strategic priorities, which guide our work.

# Community Engagement Survey Methodology & Participation

To ensure comprehensive community engagement, a multifaceted approach was used.



Geographical data helped to identify communities that might require tailored support



Deliberate efforts to involve individuals affected by current public health concerns



Actively sought out underrepresented communities, recognizing the importance of their experiences in shaping our understanding of community health

**Survey was open  
July – Dec 2023**

**Total respondents: 1,018**

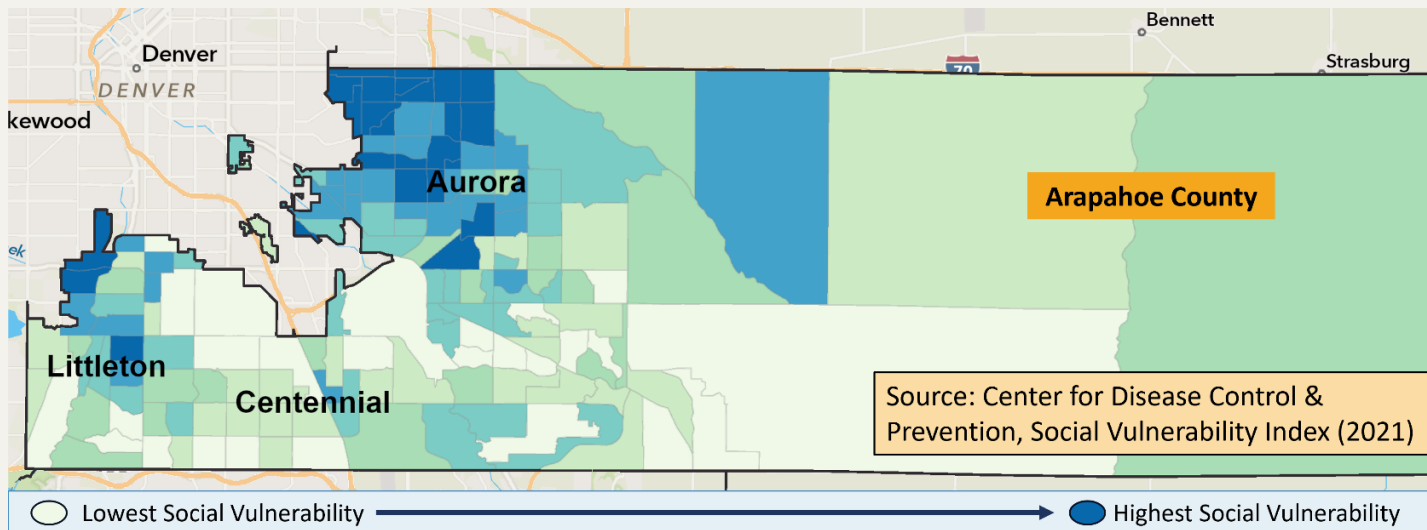
Residents: 686

Partners: 113

Arapahoe County Staff: 215

BOH/BOCC members: 7

# Methodology



CHA data were compiled from a variety of sources and include:

- Primary Data
- Secondary Data
- Quantitative Data
- Qualitative Data

To capture a broad range of voices we:

- Identified **current health concerns** and reached out to those most affected.
- Sought input from **historically underrepresented and oppressed communities**.
- Engaged **regions in the county with the highest vulnerability** using the CDC Social Vulnerability Index



## Key needs identified through surveys

- Safe and affordable housing
- Healthy, accessible, and affordable foods
- Physical and mental safety
- Access to behavioral health services and resources
- Resources to help those experiencing homelessness
- Increased access points to county services

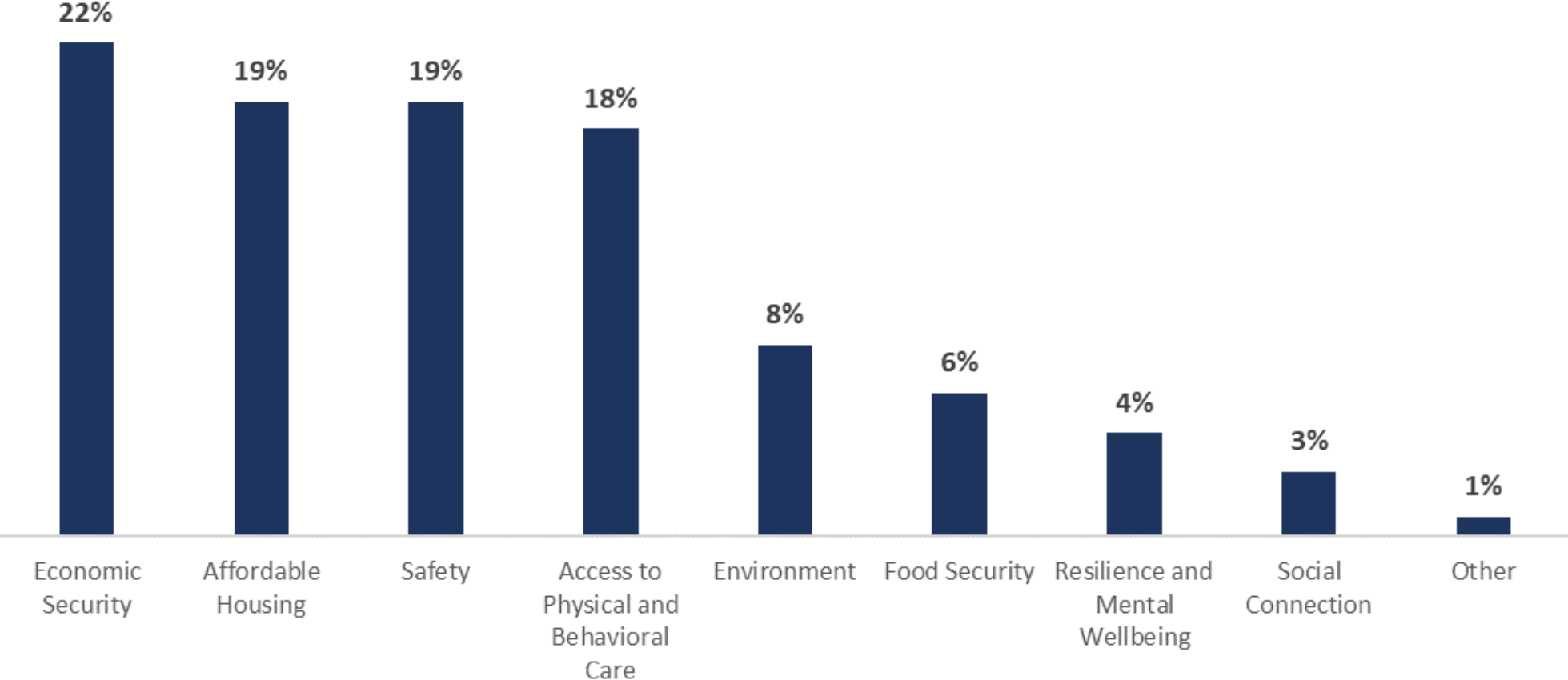
## Top health-related issues identified

- Access to physical and behavioral care
- Affordable housing
- Safety
- Economic security
- Environment
- Food security

# Survey Question:

The last time we asked the community about wellbeing, these issues were identified as the most urgent. To understand how you feel today, please rank the following topics by urgency.

Distribution of Most Urgent Health Topic for Arapahoe County  
(What Is The Most Urgent Health Problem In Your Community?)



# **CHA Findings by Topic Area**

- **Economic Security**
- **Health and Housing**
- **Safety and Health**
- **Access to Physical and Behavioral Care**
- **Environment and Health**
- **Food and Health**

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a brown gift bag with a green ribbon. The bag is positioned over a silver tray containing several Indian sweets (laddus) and a glass of coffee. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the tray and the hand holding it.

# Economic Security and Health

*We'd like "Help getting sustainable jobs that pay enough to cover rent, food, other expenses. Training programs to help with training to get into better jobs.."*

*Source: ACPH Community Engagement Process, 2023*

# Economic Security and Health

One in five people in Arapahoe County making less than \$25,000 a year reported poor mental health

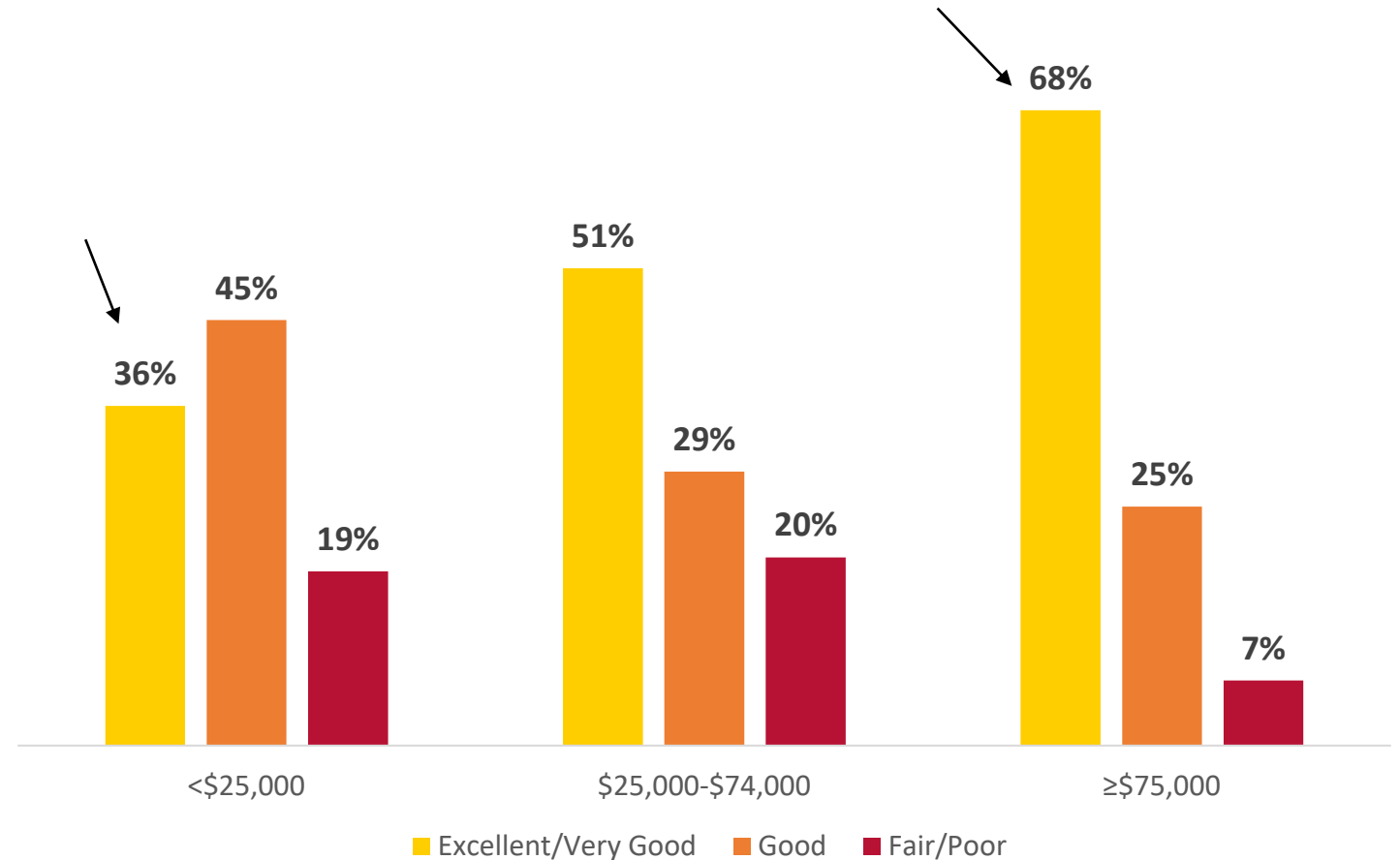
## 4 in 10

people in Arapahoe County earning less than \$25,000 annually (36.1%) describe their health as excellent or very good, in 2022.

## 7 in 10

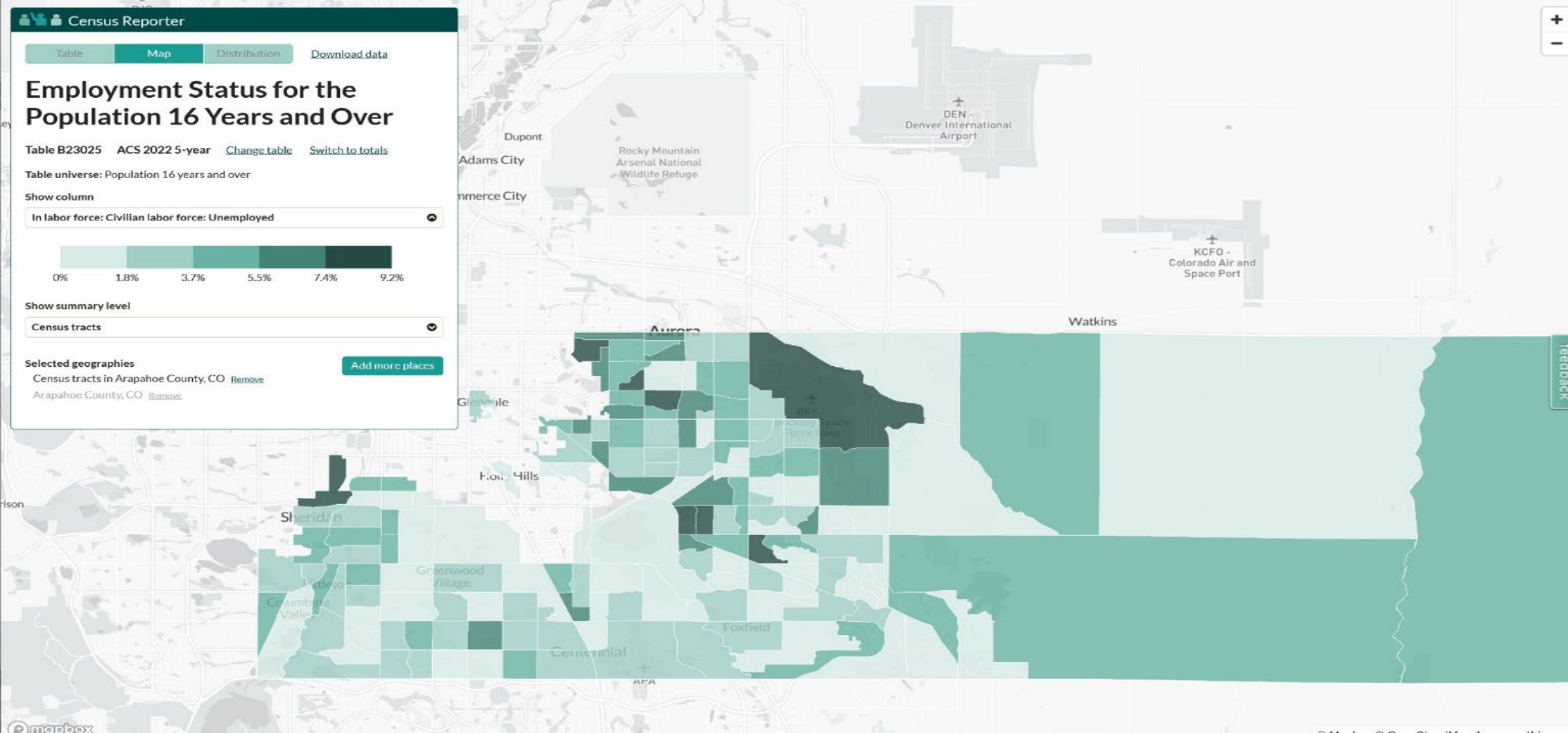
of those in Arapahoe County with an annual income of \$75,000 or more report excellent or very good health, in 2022.

Self-Reported General Health Status by Household Income, Arapahoe County, 2022





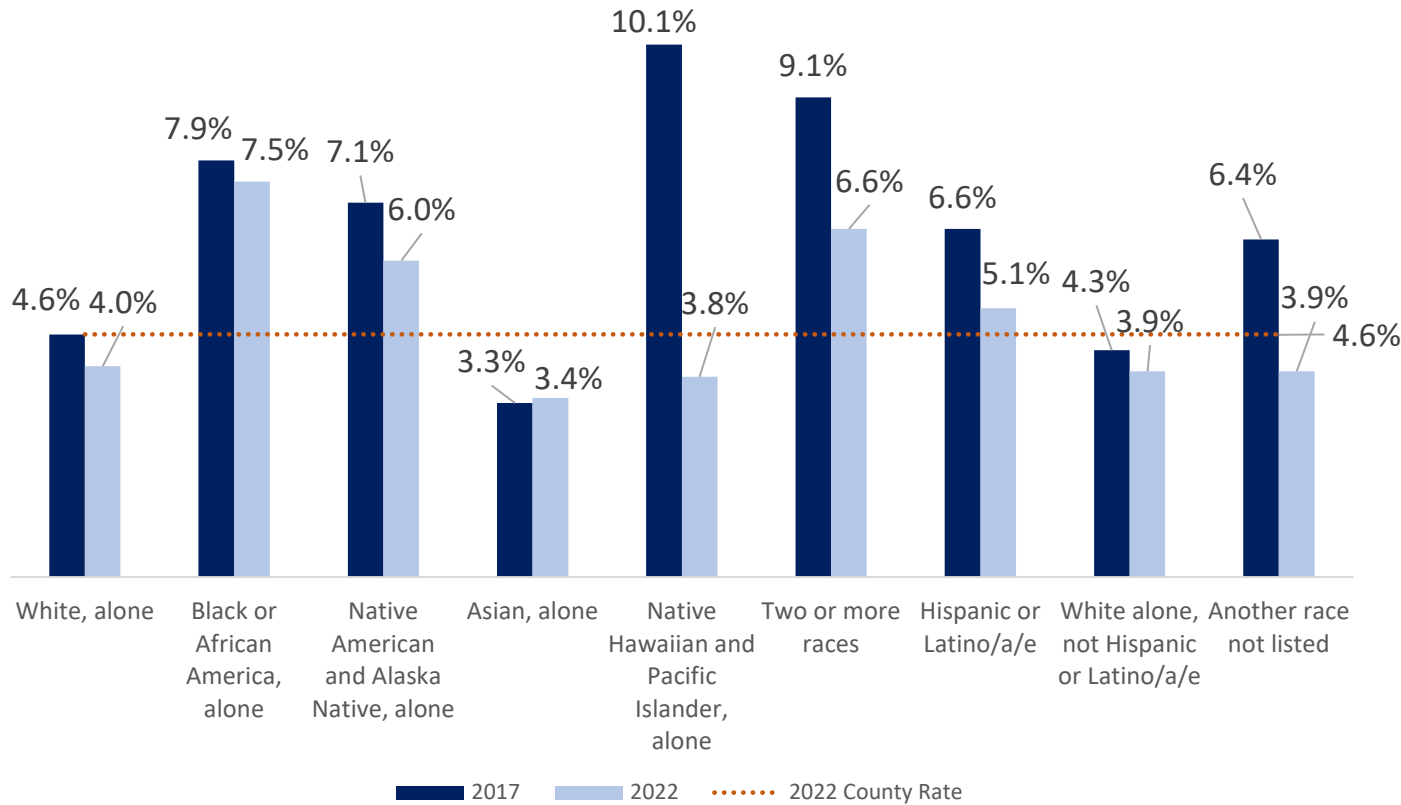
# Employment Status for the Population 16 years and over, 2022 5-year



# Economic Security and Health

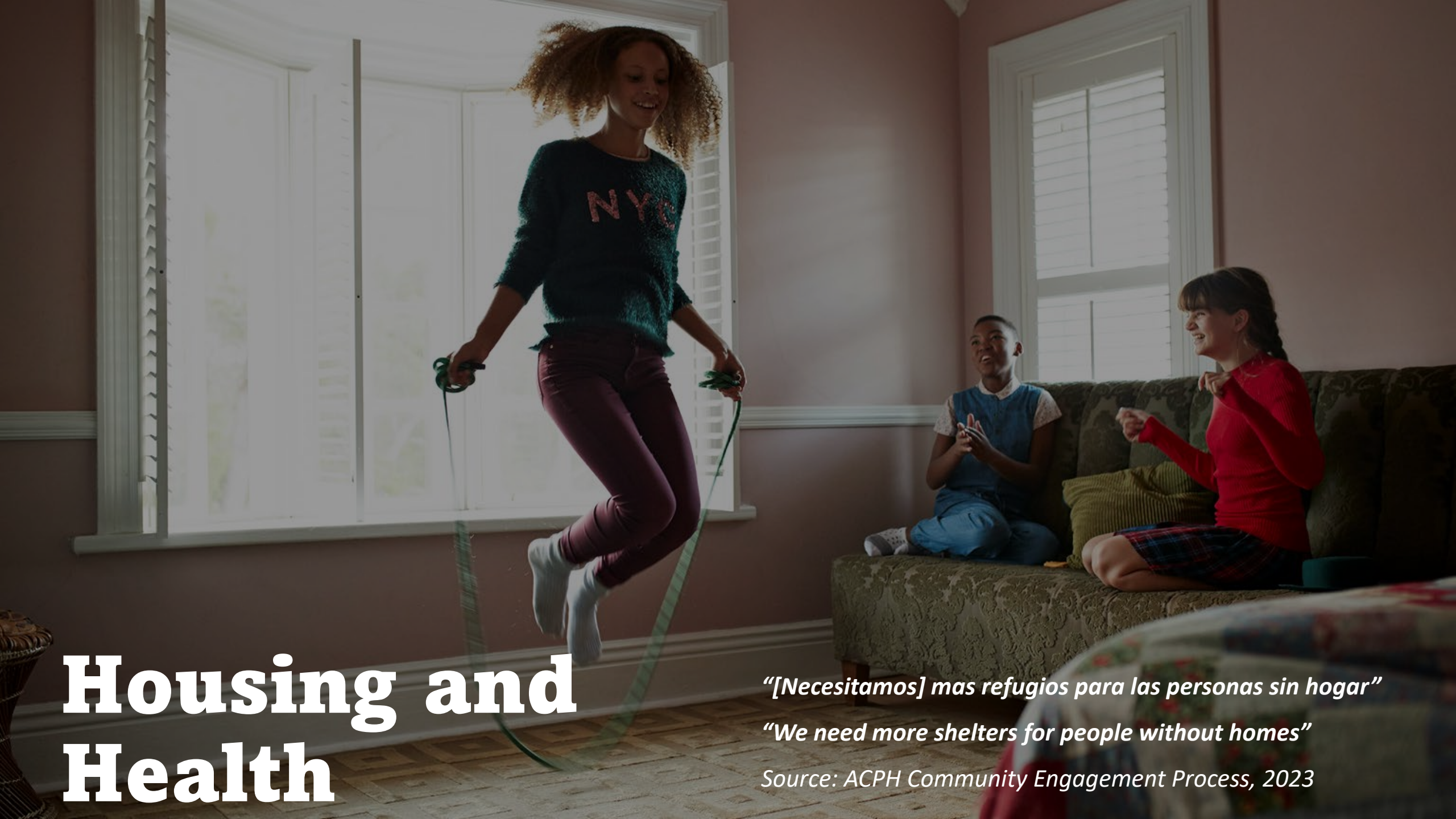
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Unemployment Rate by Race/Ethnicity, Arapahoe County, 2017 & 2022



- Disparities in stable employment can be seen by race and other characteristics.
- The general unemployment rate has decreased in 2022. yet, it was highest for African Americans/Black Arapahoe County community members.
- In the disability community, the unemployment rate was nearly 11% (10.9%).





# Housing and Health

*“[Necesitamos] mas refugios para las personas sin hogar”*

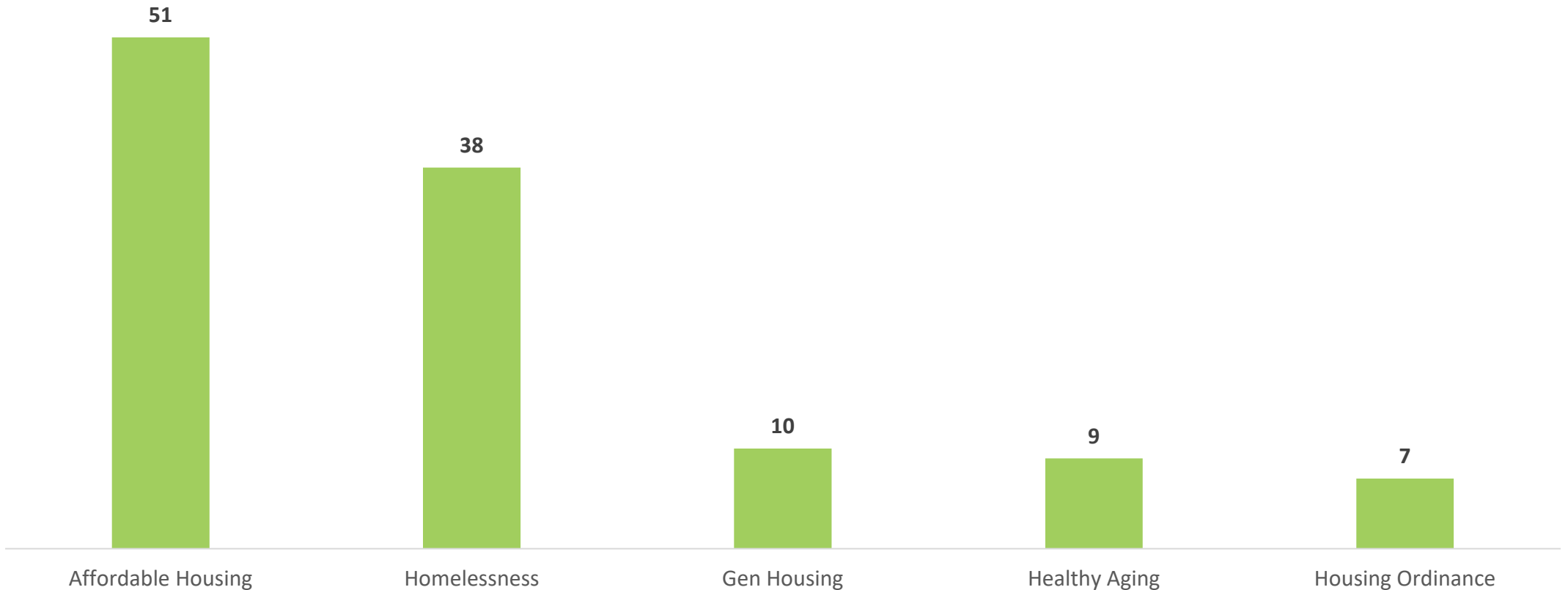
*“We need more shelters for people without homes”*

*Source: ACPH Community Engagement Process, 2023*



## Survey Question:

Tell us what services or resources you would like to see added or improved in your community: Housing



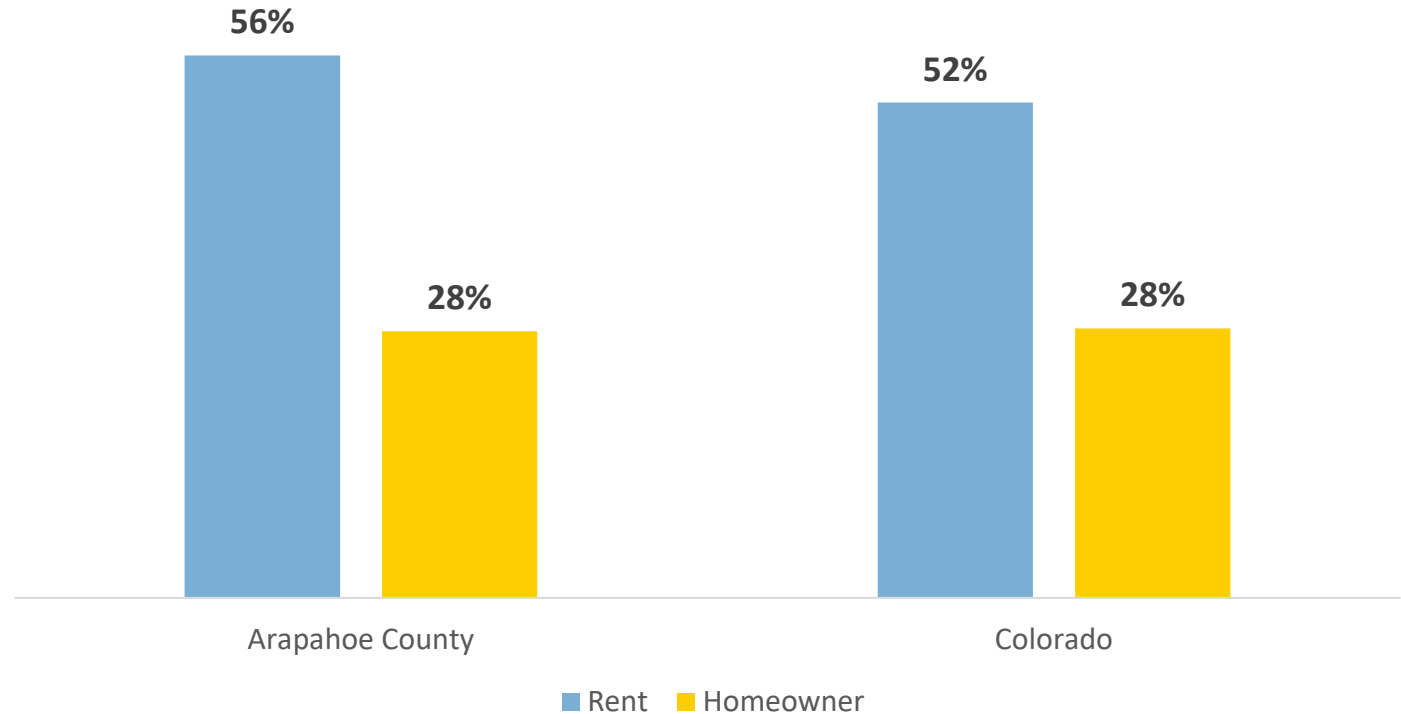
# Housing and Health

The increase in rent (28%) is outpacing the increase in wages (22%)

**56%**  
of renters in Arapahoe County and nearly one in three homeowners were paying 30% or more on housing, in 2022.

**23.6%**  
increase in median home sale price in January 2024, compared to January 2021.

Renters and Home Owners Paying 30% or More of Income on Housing, 2022

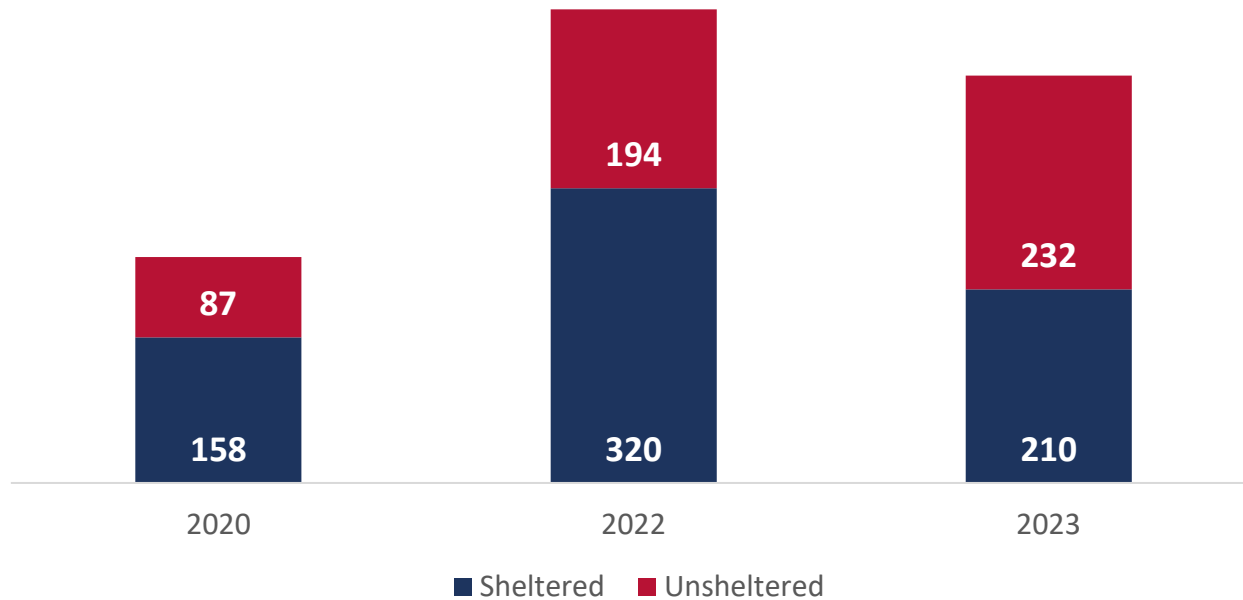


- In June 2023, the national median sale price for the typical starter home was \$243,000 — up more than 45% from before the pandemic.



# Housing and Health

Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness by Type, Arapahoe County



## Self-reported conditions and barriers to housing

**27%** Physically Disabling Condition

**30%** Mental Health Concern

**22%** Chronic Health Condition

**31%** Substance Use

Since 2015, most people (88%) who shared previous address information in HMIS report a last permanent address in Colorado, disrupting the misconception that people are moving from out of state and becoming homeless

› Homelessness is a multifaceted issue, and its complexity arises from a web of factors, including economic instability, lack of affordable housing, and in some cases, issues like mental health and substance use.

› In Arapahoe County, there was nearly two times the number of people experiencing homelessness in 2023 (442) compared to 2020 (245), with 52% of those experiencing unsheltered homelessness.





# Safety and Health

*“Para vivir una vida sana y feliz, es necesario que nuestra comunidad sea segura, para educar a nuestros hijos por que ellos son el futuro para nuestra comunidad.”*

*“To live a happy and healthy life, we need our community to be safe, to educate our children because they are the future of our community.”*

*Source: ACPH Community Engagement Process, 2023*

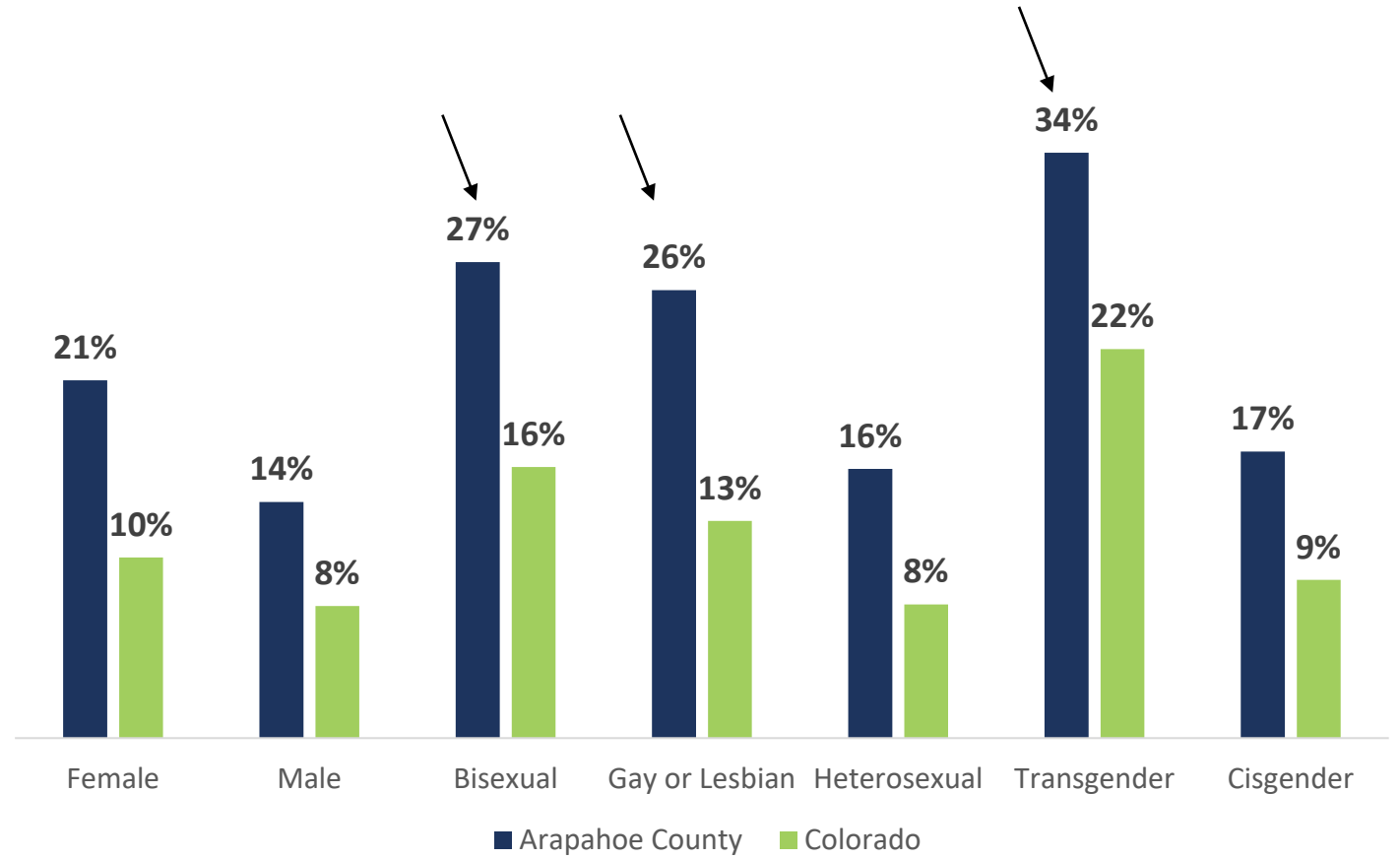
# School Safety and Health

**84%**  
of Arapahoe County students report feeling safe at school.

**1 in 6**  
students reported having been absent one or more days in the past month due to feeling unsafe (17%).

In Arapahoe County, LGBTQIA+ students more often reported missing school due to feelings of unsafety.

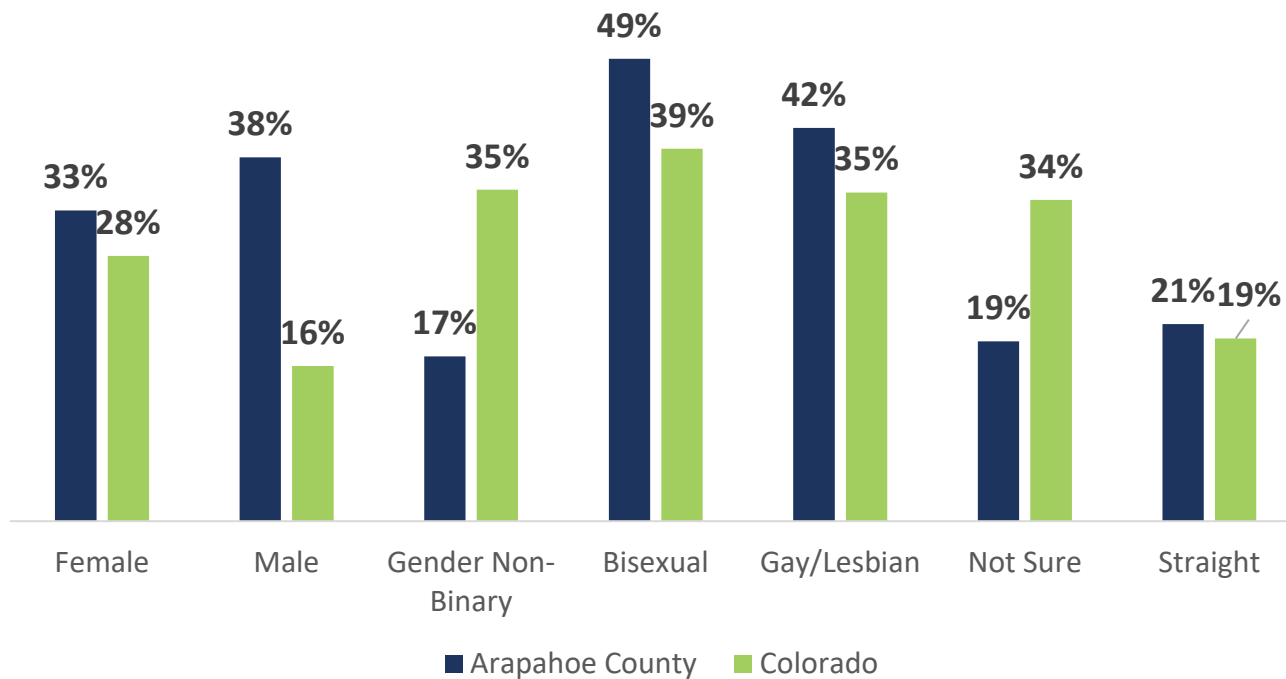
High School Students Who Reported Missing School Due to Feelings of Unsafety by Sex and Sexual Orientation, 2021



# Intimate Relationships and Health

The majority of deaths due to domestic violence in 2022 were caused by firearms

Percent of High School Students Who Had Been Controlled or Emotionally Hurt by Someone they Dated, by Sex and Sexual Orientation, 2021



- In 2021, Colorado had an all-time high number of domestic violence fatalities (DVF) since 2017. The number for 2022 was higher—there were 94 DVF in 62 cases.
- Of the 94 people who died due to domestic violence, 86% of were caused by firearms.
- In 2021, approximately 8% of high school-aged students in Arapahoe County reported being physically hurt by someone they were dating.



# Firearms and Health

In 2022, 37% of Colorado and 29% of Arapahoe County residents reported keeping a gun at home

**59%**

of suicide deaths occurred with a firearm in Arapahoe County, in 2022.

**37**

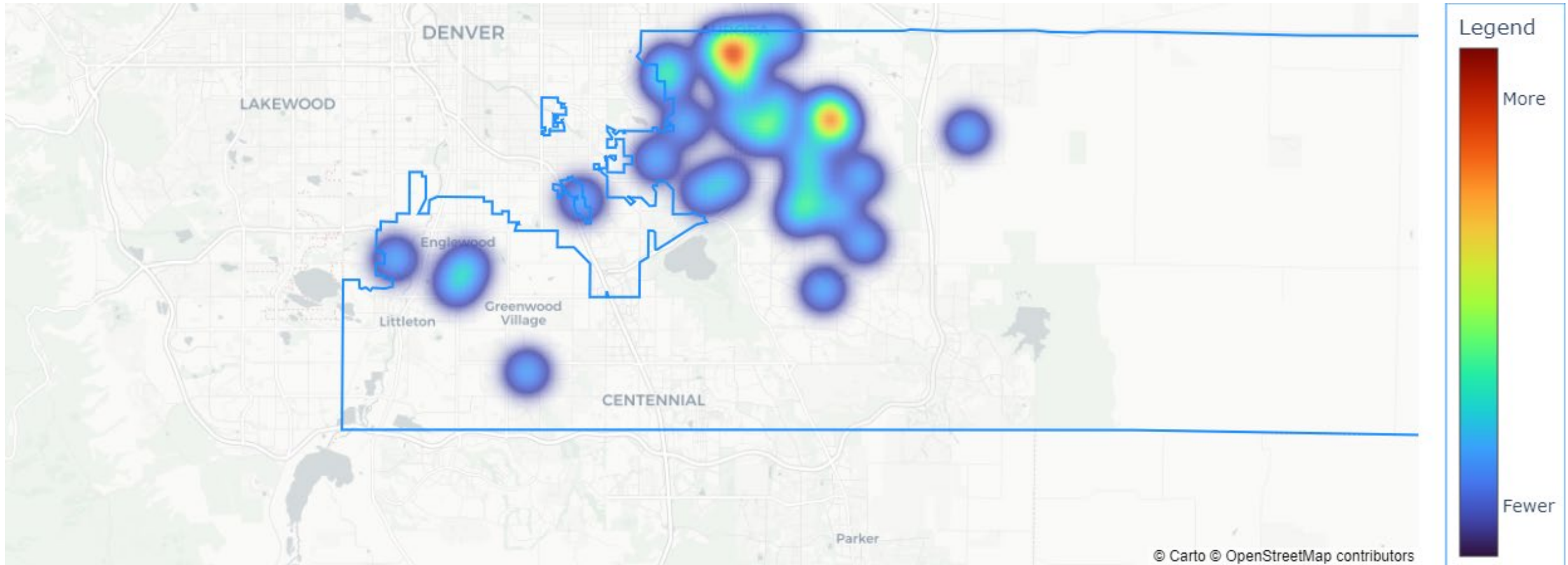
youths between the of 1-17 died in Arapahoe County due to firearm-related homicide, between 2000 and 2022.

- In Colorado, firearms are the leading cause of death associated with suicide, community violence, domestic violence, and targeted mass shootings.
- Prevention, education, treatment, and rehabilitation stand as pillars that enhance public safety.





## Youth Firearm Homicide Deaths, Youth Ages 1-17 Years, Arapahoe County, 2000-2022 (n = 37)





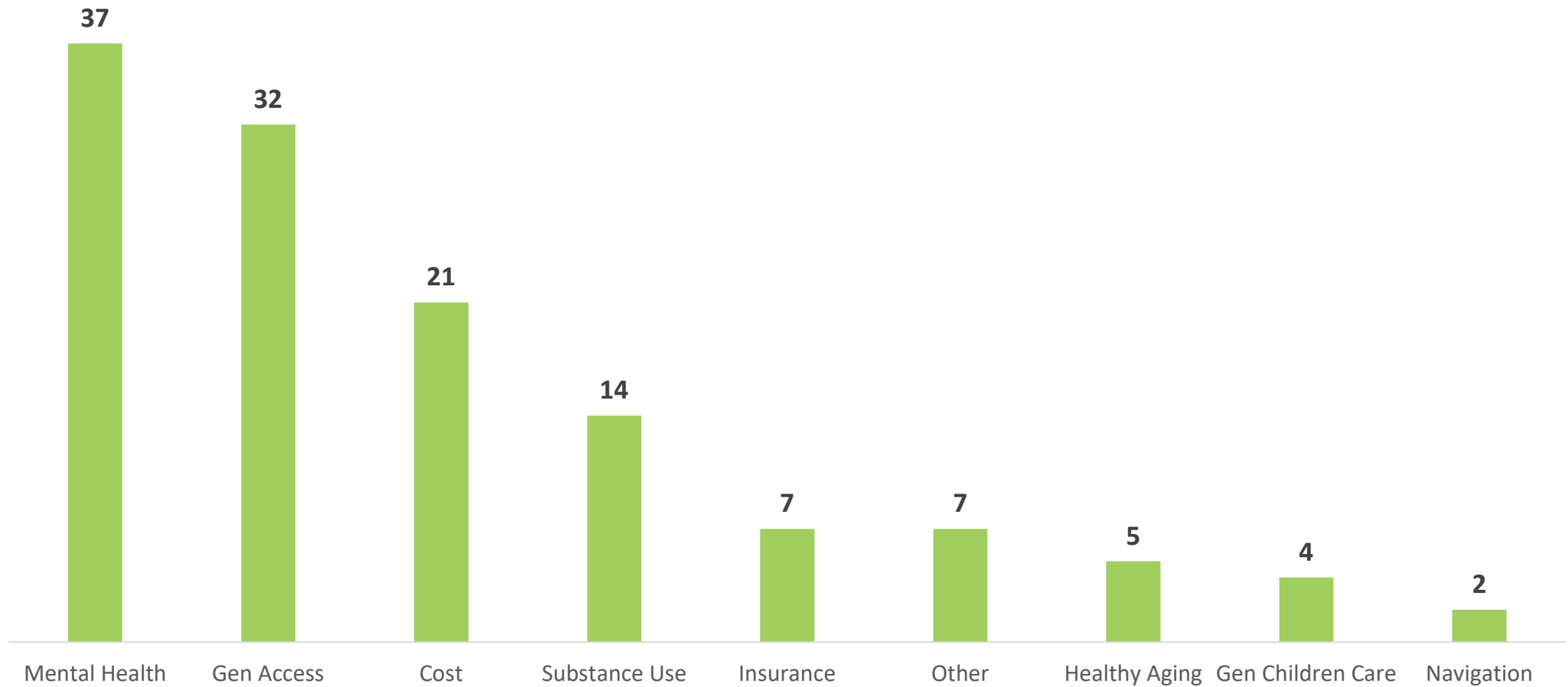


# Access to Physical and Behavioral Care

*“As a type 1 diabetic, it concerns me how many people are at a loss if they can’t afford insulin, usually due to losing insurance. A \$35 copay is fine unless you don’t have insurance. It would be nice to have a way to connect people with lifesaving health care without it being an ER visit.”*

*Source: ACPH Community Engagement Process, 2023*

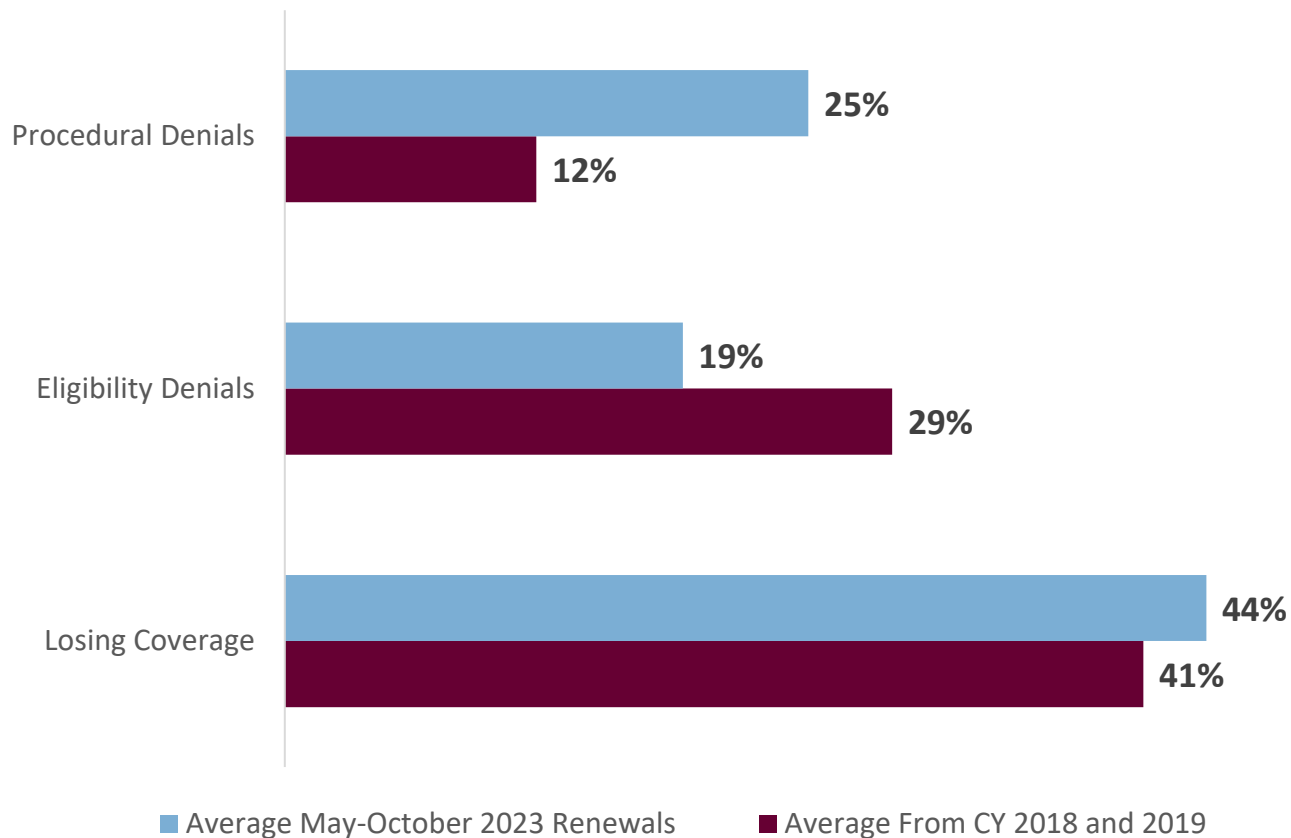
# Tell us what services or resources you would like to see added or improved in your community: Access to Care



# Coverage and Health

Failure to complete the renewal process is the most common reason for procedure denials

Renewals, Calendar Year 2018 and 2019, and May-October 2023\*, Colorado



- The PHE (Public Health Emergency) Unwinding disenrollment percentage of 44% is within 3% point of the 41% pre-pandemic rate.
- The bars on top show the average PHE Unwind procedural denial rate (25%), after the 90-day reconsideration period. This is about double historic norms.
- The middle bars illustrate current denials due to income and other criteria.



# Cost and Health

**18%**

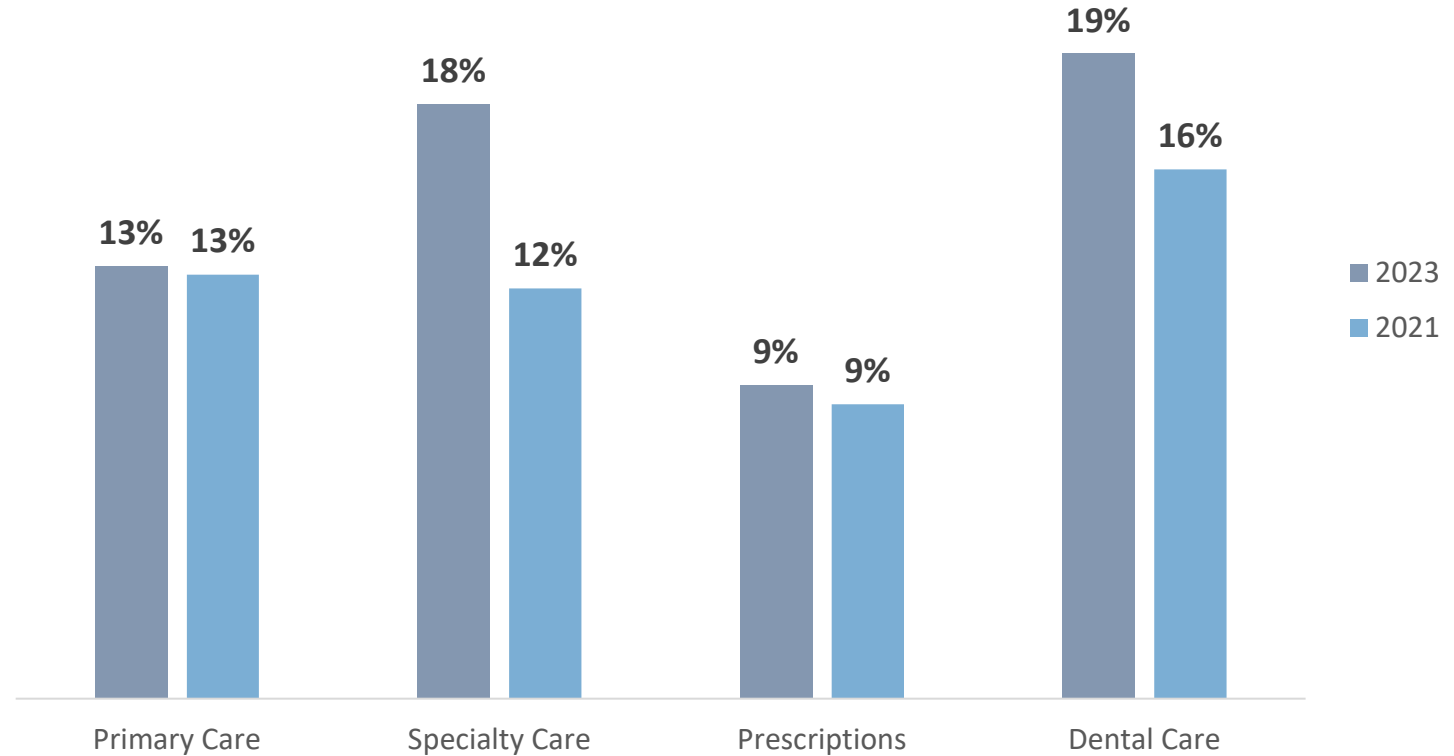
of Arapahoe residents reported not receiving specialty care due to cost concerns in 2023, an increase from 12% in 2021.

**72%**

of Arapahoe County adults had dental insurance in 2022, and 67% had a dental visit in the past year.

In 2023, nearly 1 in 3 people in Arapahoe County reported receiving a surprise medical bill

Percent of People Who Did Not Access Care Due to Cost By Type, Arapahoe County



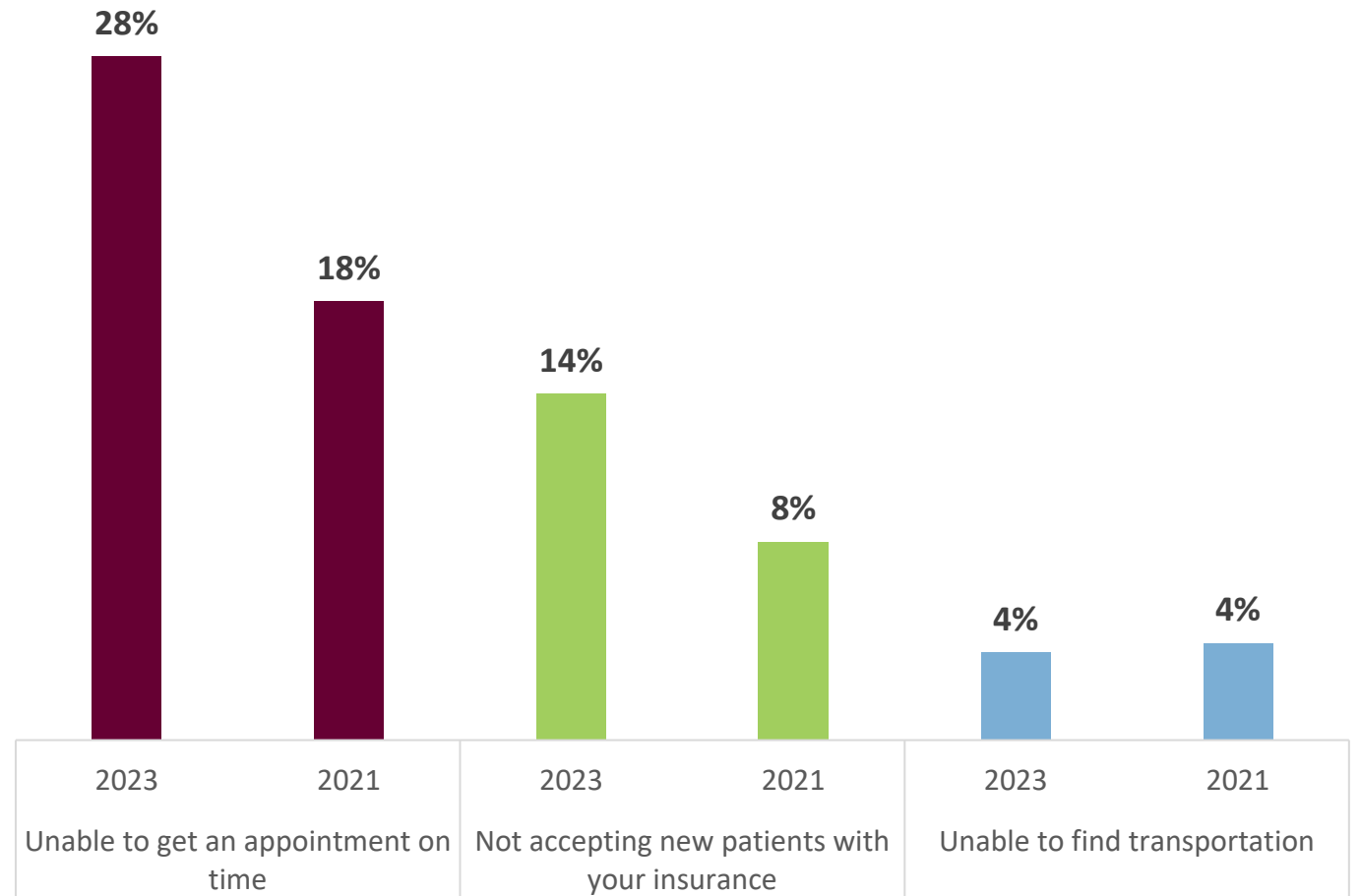
# Access and Health

Reported transportation barriers to care did not improve or worsen in 2023 compared to 2021

**15%**  
of people needed mental health services but did not receive them, and 62% of people cited unavailability as the reason, in 2023.

- In 2023, more people in Arapahoe County reported not being able to access an appointment with a doctor's office/clinic on time than in 2021.

Reported barriers to Access by Year, Arapahoe County, 2021 and 2023



# Immunizations and Health

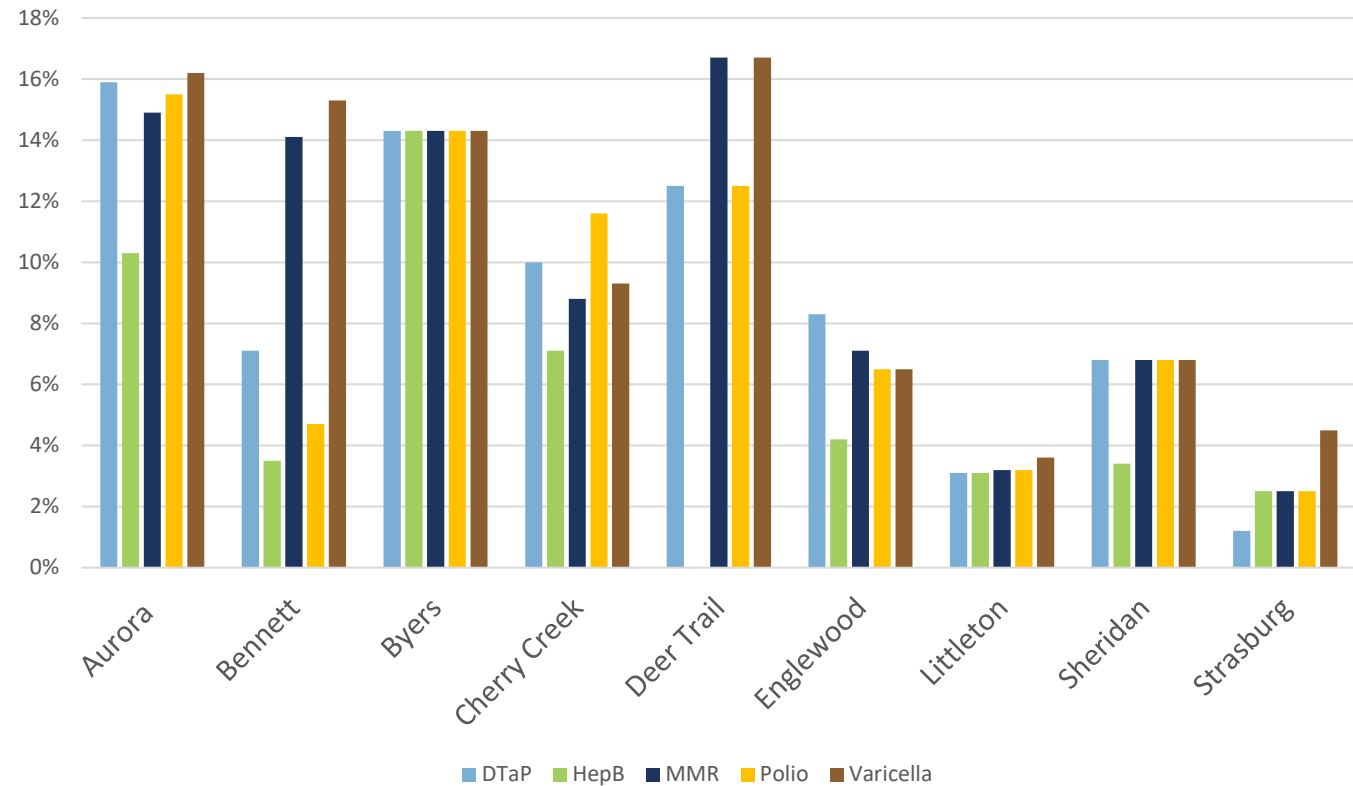
**86.8%**

of kindergartners were vaccinated against measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) in 2022.

- In the 2022–23 school year, nearly half of school districts reported over 90% of kindergartners protected with all DTaP, HepB, MMR, Polio, and Varicella vaccines; other districts reported 90% or higher vaccination outcomes in some vaccines but not all.

Decreasing vaccination rates may increase the risks of the reemergence of preventable diseases

Percentage of Kindergartners Without Complete Vaccination by Vaccine in Arapahoe County School Districts, School Year 2022-2023





# Environment and Health

*“[I would like to see] more environmental programs to support clean air and water such as affordable composting services and support in removing turf and replacing with native plants, especially in unincorporated areas...”*

*Source: ACPH Community Engagement Process, 2023*

# Environment and Heat and Water

Youth, older adults, people experiencing homelessness, the outdoor workforce, and other vulnerable populations are at the highest risk for extreme heat days.

**2.3**

degrees, with most warming in fall, is the average warming temperature in Arapahoe County.

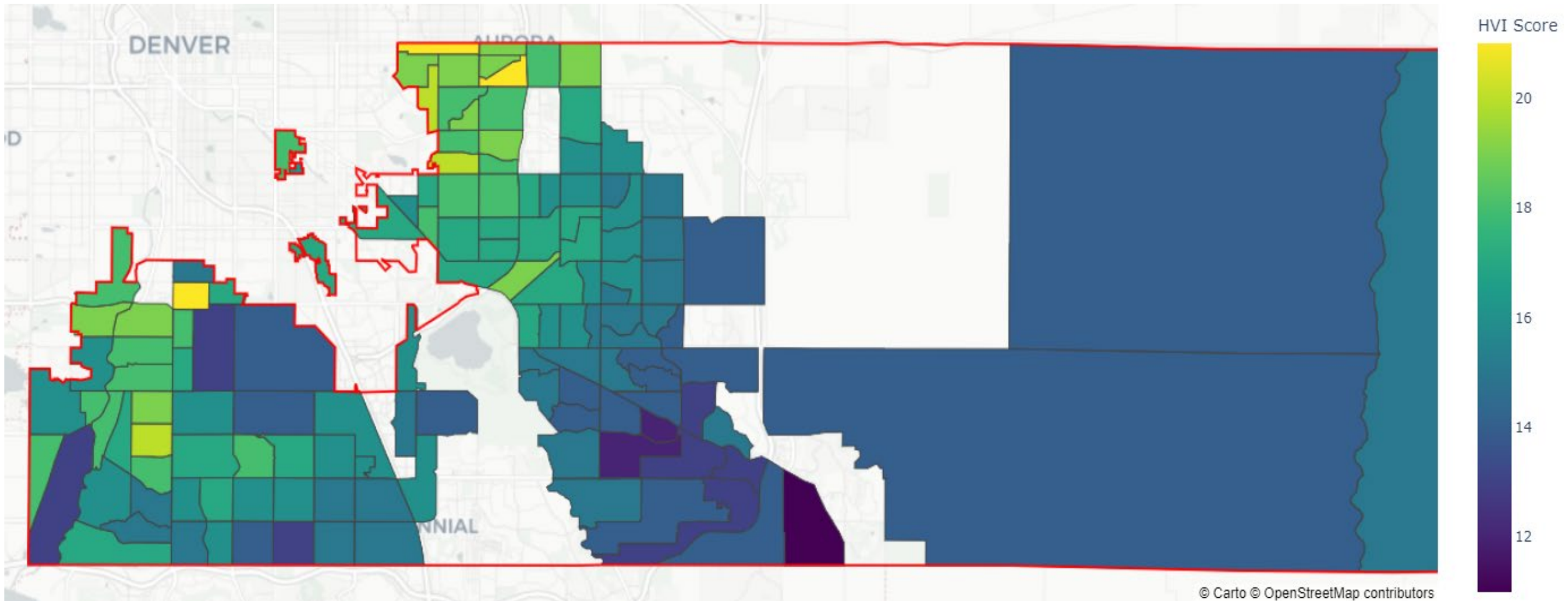
- According to the Heat Vulnerability Index, Arapahoe County census tracts had a mean score of 16.2 compared to 17.5 nationally, with a higher number indicating greater vulnerability.
- The most vulnerable tracts are in northwest Aurora, by Hampden Avenue and South Broadway.
- More than 75% of Arapahoe County residents are served by Aurora Water and Denver Water, which rely on the Colorado River for approximately 25% and 50%, respectively, for their water supply.







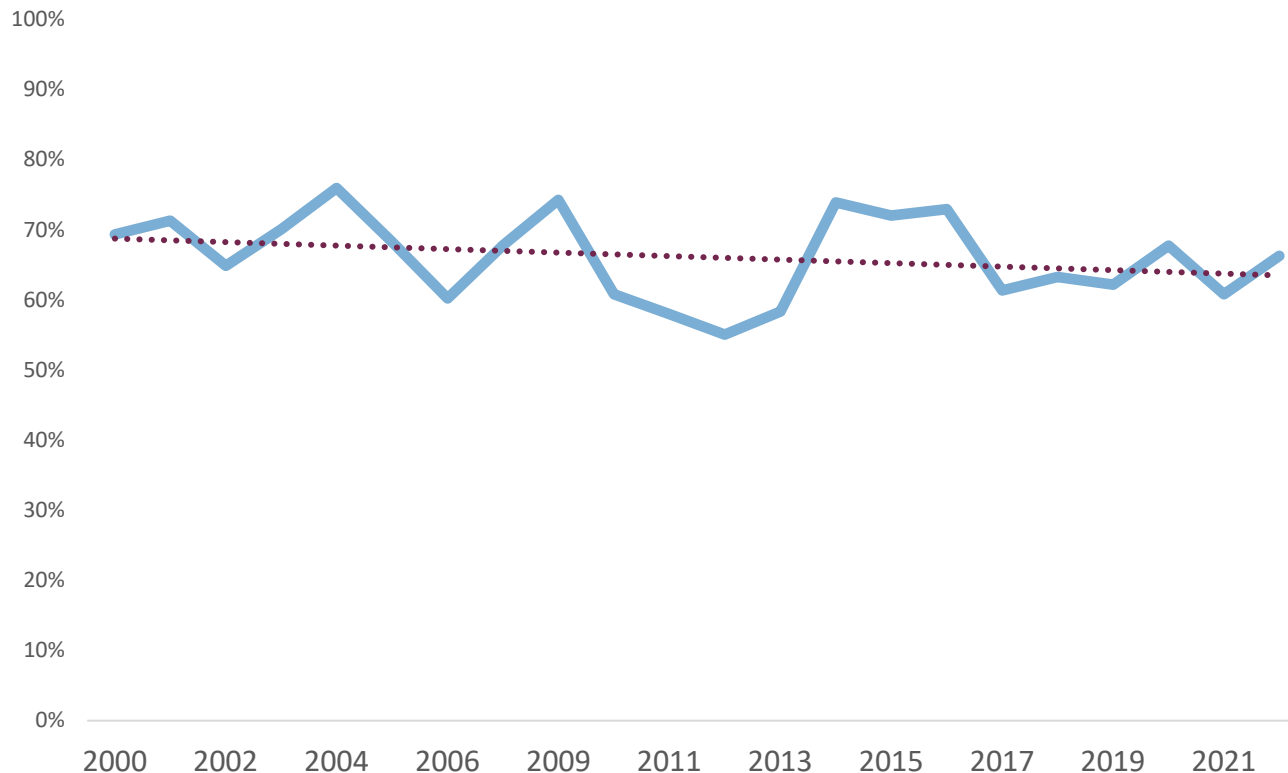
## Arapahoe County Heat Vulnerability by Census Tract



# Environment and Air Quality

Air quality in Colorado has been steadily decreasing over the past few decades.

Percentage of Days with Good Air Quality, Arapahoe County, 2000-2022



- Poor air quality contributes to many adverse health outcomes, including respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease, and cancer.
- In 2020, the EPA designated the Denver Metro Area/ Front Range as a “serious” nonattainment area for ozone. The area was reclassified as “severe” in 2022.



# Environment and Open Spaces

Community members expressed the desire for environmental programs to promote environmentally conscious practices.

**~13,000**

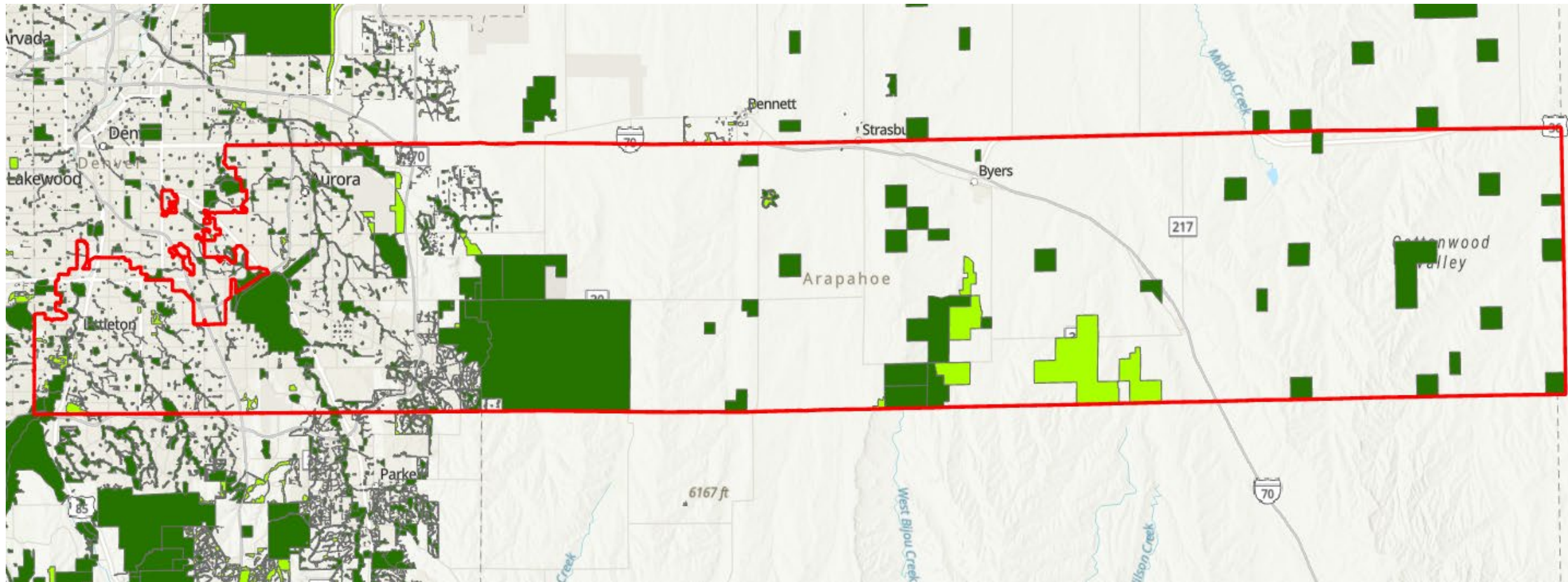
acres of open space have  
been added to Arapahoe  
County since 2014.

- Open spaces, including both undeveloped natural areas and human-constructed environments (parks, greenways, etc.), are vital to good health and well-being.
- Depression and anxiety are 33% and 44% higher, respectively, in areas with the least amount of green space, compared to those who live in the greenest areas.
- Residents in our municipalities have varying accessibility to green spaces.





## Open Space, Arapahoe County





# Food and Health

*“I am healthier when I can access healthier food”*

*Source: ACPH Community Engagement Process, 2023*

# Food and Health

**11%**

price increase on food occurred nationally in 2022, a steep increase compared to previous years (a 3.5% increase in 2020 and 2021).

**16%**

high school aged youths reported facing hunger exceeding the state of Colorado's rate of 12.4% in 2021.

Food-insecure older adults are 53% more likely to report a heart attack and 52% more likely to develop asthma.

- Surges in food prices disproportionately affected the households with the lowest incomes. In 2022, American households in the lowest income range spent over 30% of their household income on food, while the highest-income households spent only 8%.
- Households with children, particularly those led by single mothers, face a higher likelihood of food insecurity—more than three times that observed in households with married couples and children.



# Food and Health

Food insecurity persists in Arapahoe County, disproportionately impacting low-income and marginalized communities

**39%**

increase in the number of Arapahoe County families that applied and received SNAP benefits was seen from 2019-2022.

**\$7.4 M**

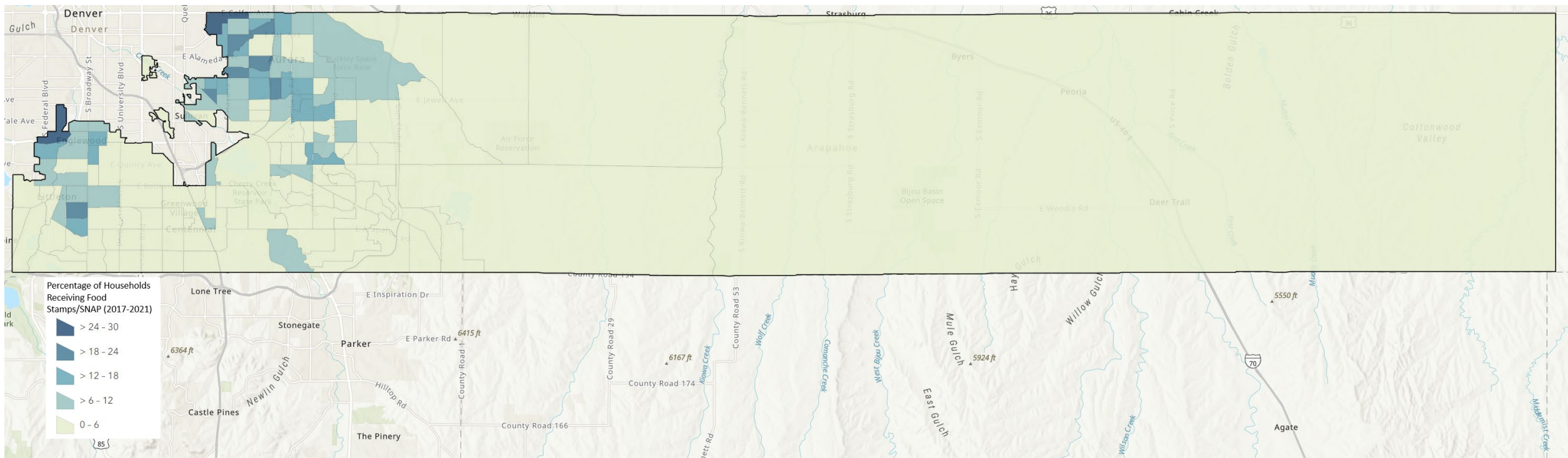
from WIC purchases in Arapahoe County grocery stores occurred in 2022.

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and WIC are vital federal aid programs for nutritious food, but not all people who need assistance qualify. Other factors, such as immigration status or certain income criteria, may exclude individuals, underscoring the necessity for a comprehensive approach to address food insecurity in communities.
- SNAP assistance issued in 2022 in Arapahoe County totaled \$14.4 million.
- In 2023, the number of Arapahoe County WIC participants exceeded the 2019 average, reversing the 2022 downward trend.





## Percentage of Households Receiving SNAP Benefits, Arapahoe County, 2017-2021





# Your Insights

- Did anything surprise you? How does this or doesn't this align with what you are hearing from constituents?
- Is there anything you'd like to understand better/explore further?
- Where do you see opportunities for alignment with the Arapahoe County Strategic Plan?
- Do you see opportunities to engage your constituents around these issues?

# **Next: May 15 meeting of the Arapahoe County Commissioners with the Arapahoe County Board of Health**

Focus: Opportunities, challenges, and momentum to tackle the top issue areas and inform the selection of Community Health Improvement Plan final priorities

# Follow up questions?

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Partnerships, Planning & Community Health Promotion Division

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*Hablo Español*

# Key Takeaways

Comparison of priority issues impacting wellbeing by recipient

| Recipient | 1 <sup>st</sup>    | 2 <sup>nd</sup>    | 3 <sup>rd</sup>   | 4 <sup>th</sup>    | 5 <sup>th</sup> |
|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Resident  | Access to Care     | Safety             | Economic Security | Affordable Housing | Environment     |
| Partners  | Affordable Housing | Economic Security  | Safety            | Access to Care     | Mental Health   |
| AC Staff  | Economic Security  | Affordable Housing | Safety            | Access to Care     | Mental Health   |