

# WAGES AND WORKFORCE

## WHAT WE FOUND

More than half (55.6%) of Mesa County workers earn less than \$17.50 per hour, an essential wage for household stability.

Mesa County is projected to lose over a thousand jobs between 2020 and 2022 particularly in Accommodation and Food Services and Oil and Gas, but gain them back and more in industries such as Health Care, Construction, and Tech by 2029.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 01** Enroll workers with low-income jobs in benefits programs for which they are eligible but not yet enrolled--this can effectively raise a family's household wage by:
  - Up to \$3/hour (for most families)
  - Up to \$8/hour (for families most in need).
- 02** Health care, tech, and construction jobs pay good wages for the average family and are slated to grow. Drive engagement in training programs toward these fields to ensure the local workforce is ready to fill new positions.
- 03** Re-train people from waning industries to advancing industries (health care, tech, and construction) in order to appeal to industries that may be looking to relocate to Mesa County.
- 04** Develop a local training and education pipeline to meet the needs of key industries.
- 05** Provide more financial assistance and scholarships for local workers with low-income jobs to train up into higher paying positions.

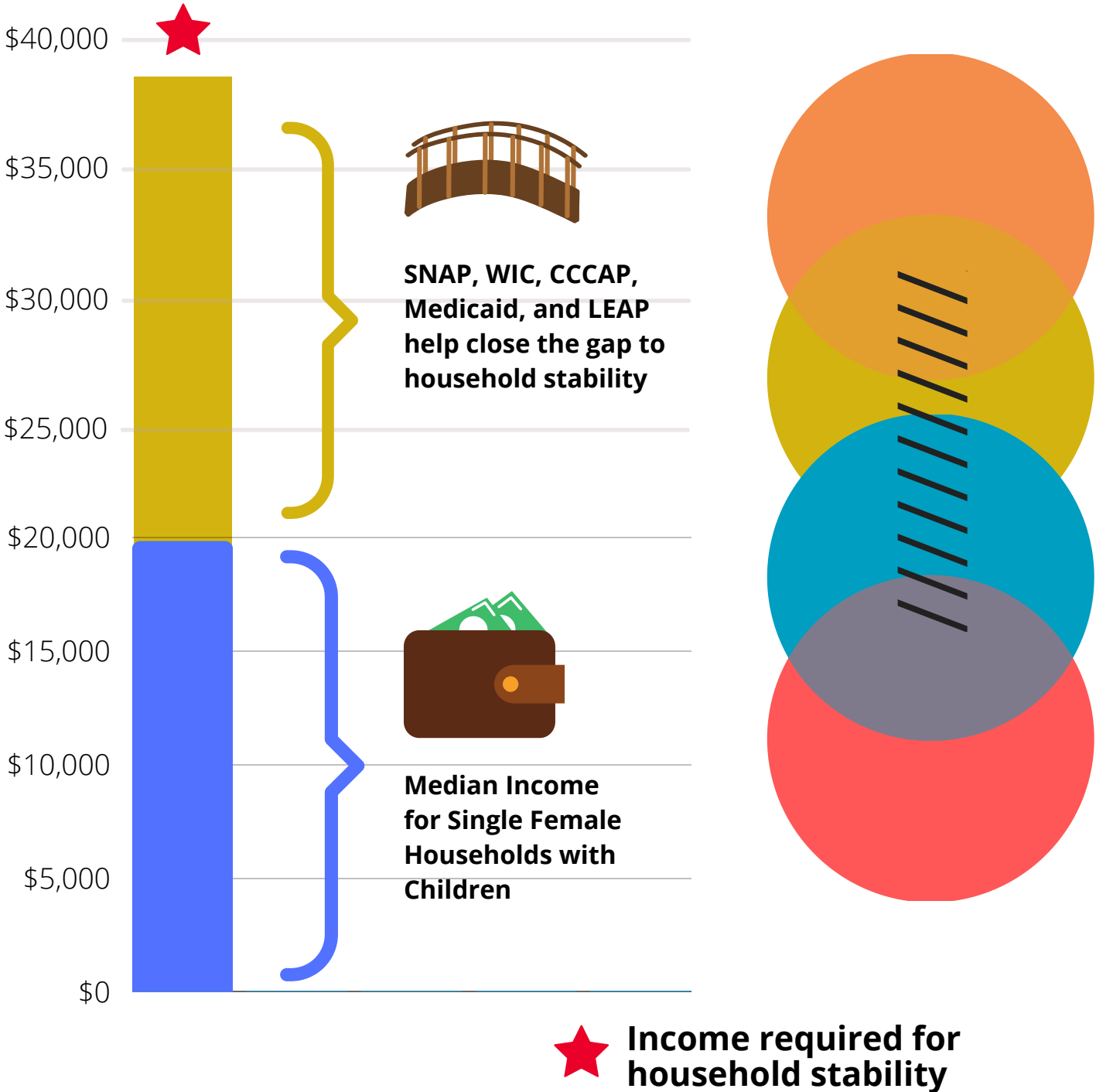
### AREAS OF IMPACT

- Economic Stability
- Education
- Social and Community Context



# ILLUSTRATING THE POINT

## GAP TO HOUSEHOLD STABILITY FOR MEDIAN SINGLE-FEMALE HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN

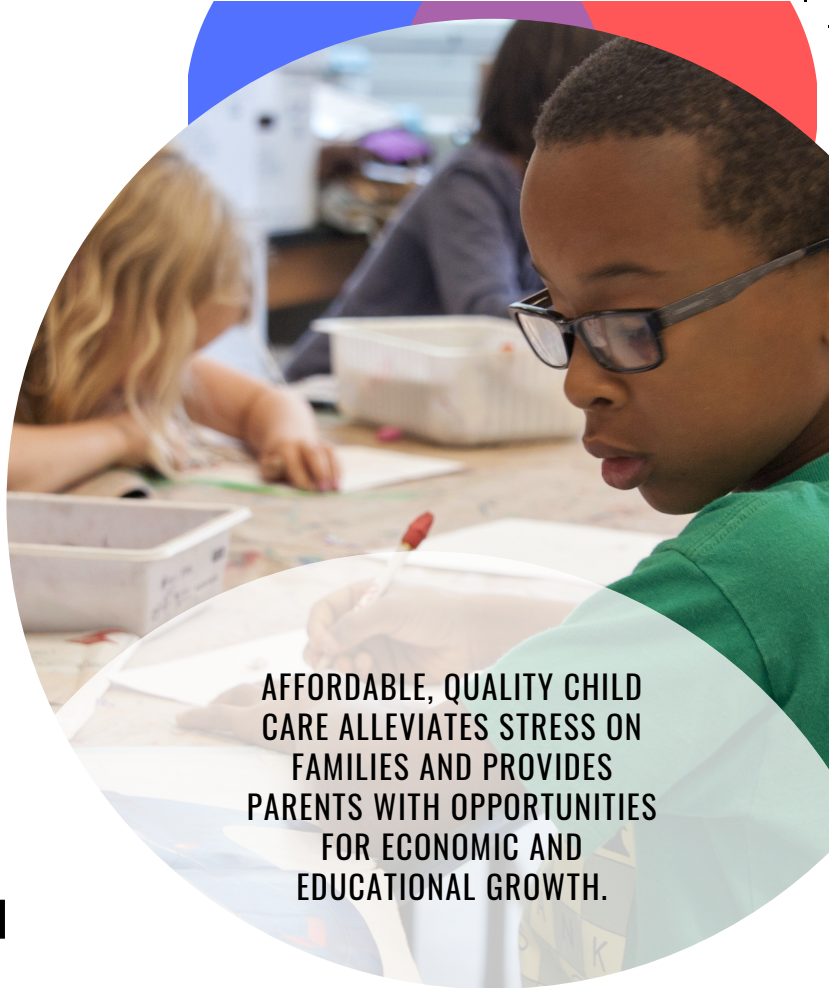


**BENEFITS CLOSE THE GAP TO HOUSEHOLD STABILITY FOR MEDIAN SINGLE FEMALE HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN**

# EARLY EDUCATION

## WHAT WE FOUND

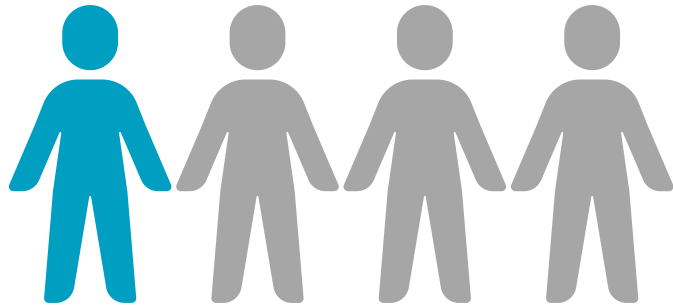
Kindergarten readiness varies by as much as 80% among different elementary schools in Mesa County. **Many students who are ready for kindergarten are struggling in later grades.**



AFFORDABLE, QUALITY CHILD CARE ALLEVIATES STRESS ON FAMILIES AND PROVIDES PARENTS WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL GROWTH.

LESS THAN

# 1 IN 4



4TH GRADERS ARE PROFICIENT IN MATH.

## APPROXIMATELY ONE-THIRD

OF MESA COUNTY 3RD GRADERS ARE PROFICIENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 01 Expand quality, licensed child care in communities with few care options.
- 02 Support existing child care facilities in achieving high quality ratings.

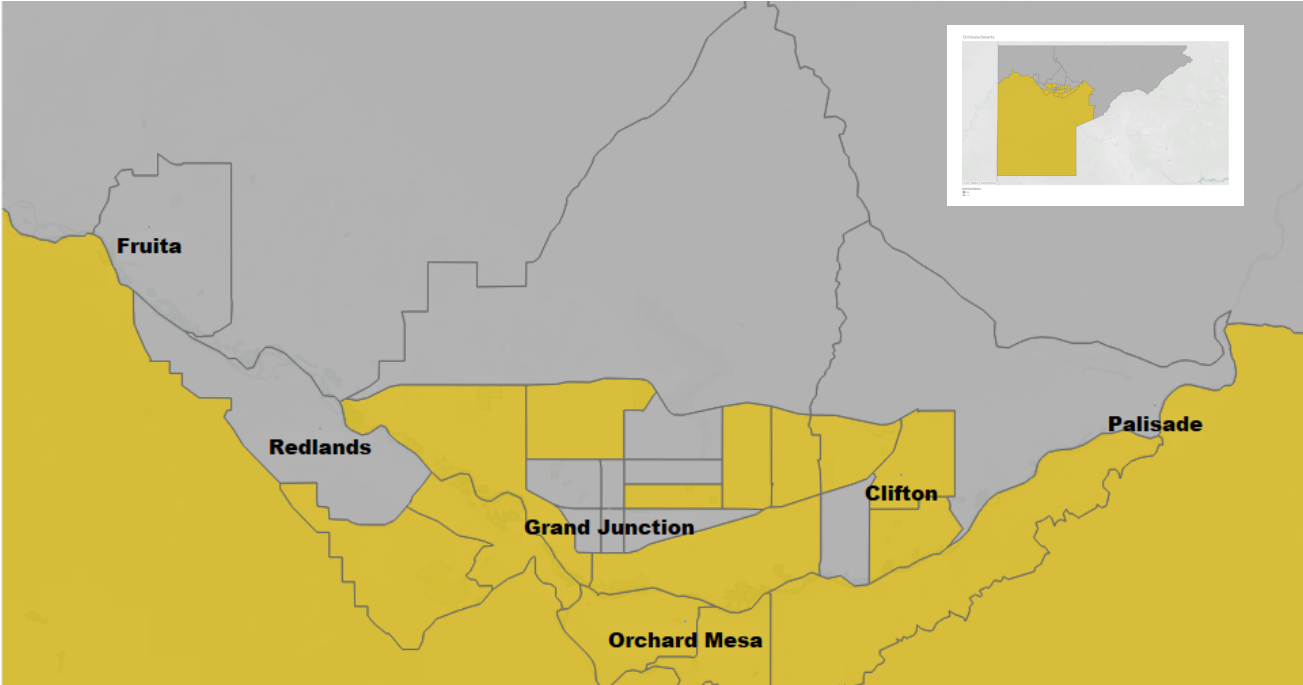
- 03 Make quality child care more affordable for families.
- 04 Support families and schools in improving elementary school reading and math proficiency.
- 05 Spend school dollars on activities and resources that lead to improved student outcomes, and a supportive learning environment.

## AREAS OF IMPACT

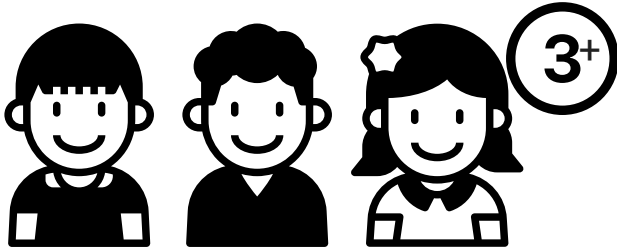
- Economic Stability
- Education
- Neighborhood and Built Environment
- 4- • Social and Community Context



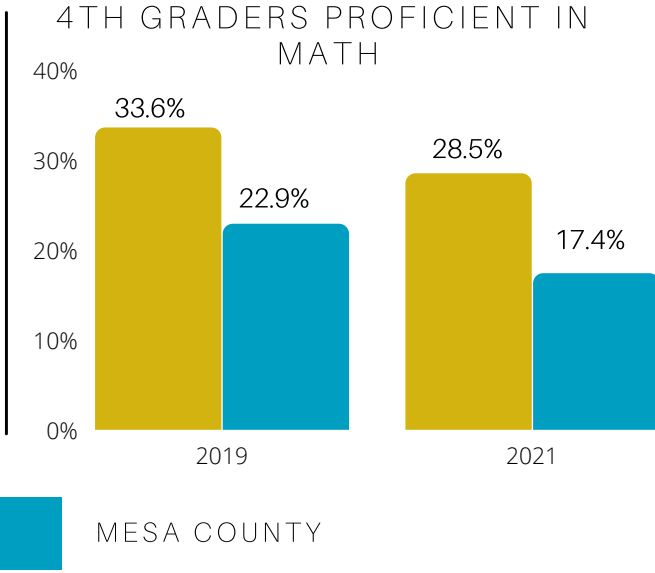
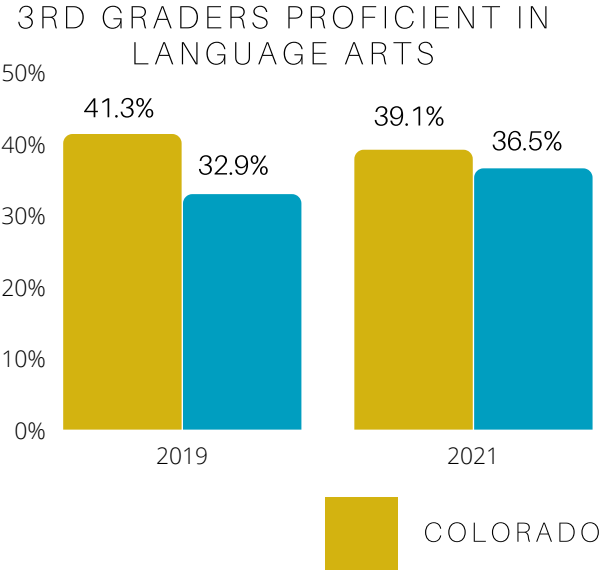
# ILLUSTRATING THE POINT



CHILD CARE DESERT BY CENSUS TRACT



A CHILD CARE DESERT IS AN AREA WITH MORE THAN THREE CHILDREN AGES 0-5 FOR EACH LICENSED CHILD CARE SPOT.





# HIGHER EDUCATION

## WHAT WE FOUND

Mesa County lacks sufficient practical experiences (like internships and clinical rotations) that allow students to apply classroom knowledge to real-world challenges.

Mesa County residents with a technical certificate, two-year degree, or four-year degree are significantly less likely to be living in poverty or unemployed than those who only have a high school diploma or didn't complete high school.



### AREAS OF IMPACT

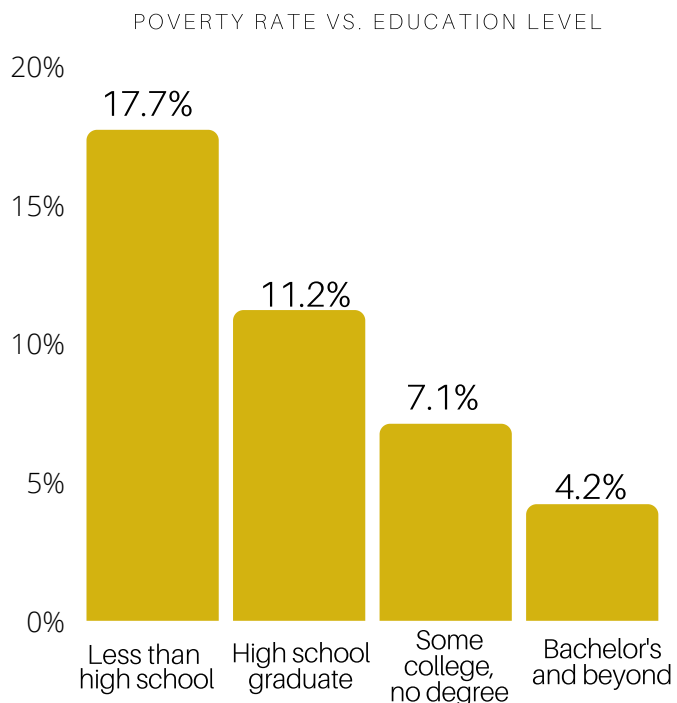
- Education
- Economic Stability

## RECOMMENDATIONS

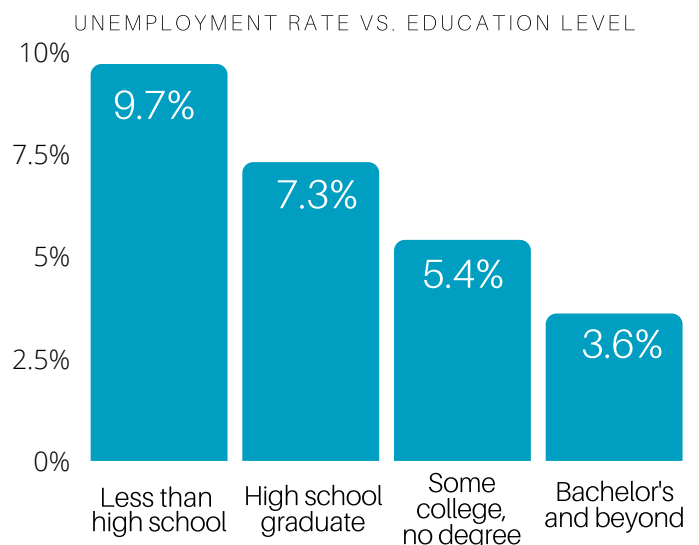
- 01** Encourage four-year high school graduation and support students who do not finish in four years, so they eventually achieve graduation.
- 02** Expand high school student engagement in higher education concurrent enrollment opportunities.

- 03** Work with local employers to provide internships and practical experiences for students.
- 04** Support individuals in seeking better opportunities by participating in flexible, stacked educational programs. Engage students in the training pipeline to build upon their experience and grow into higher paying opportunities.

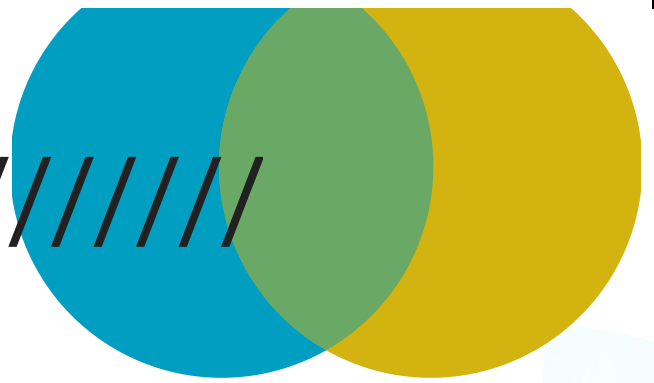
## ILLUSTRATING THE POINT



**STABILITY IMPROVES WITH EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**

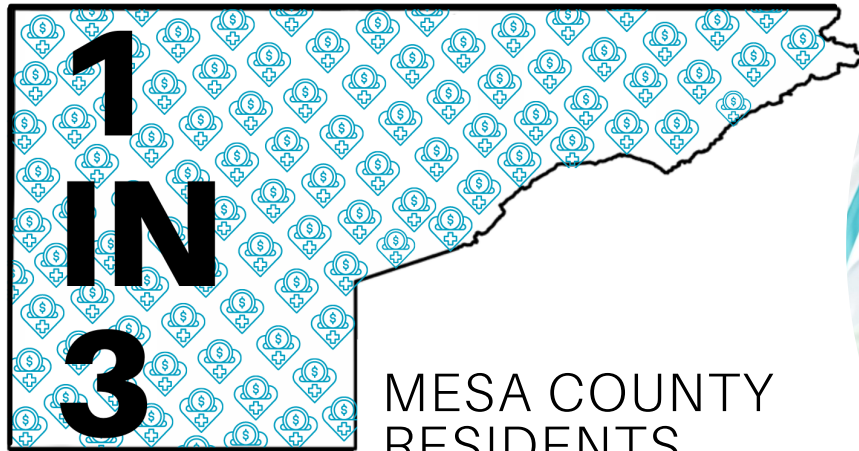


# COST OF HEALTH CARE



## WHAT WE FOUND

NEARLY



MESA COUNTY RESIDENTS

HAVE GONE WITHOUT NEEDED MEDICAL CARE BECAUSE OF COST.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

01

Increase participation in affordable care options such as Medicaid, CHP+, APTC, and MarillacHealth's sliding fee primary care.

02

Educate patients on the costs of different types of care and insurance coverage to encourage efficient use of preventive care and services covered by insurance.

03

Partner with employers, providers, and insurance companies to offer innovative coverage types and payment systems.

04

Assist families in using existing financial resources to reduce overall household expenses.

05

Strengthen referral pathways between hospitals and MarillacHealth for access to affordable primary care.



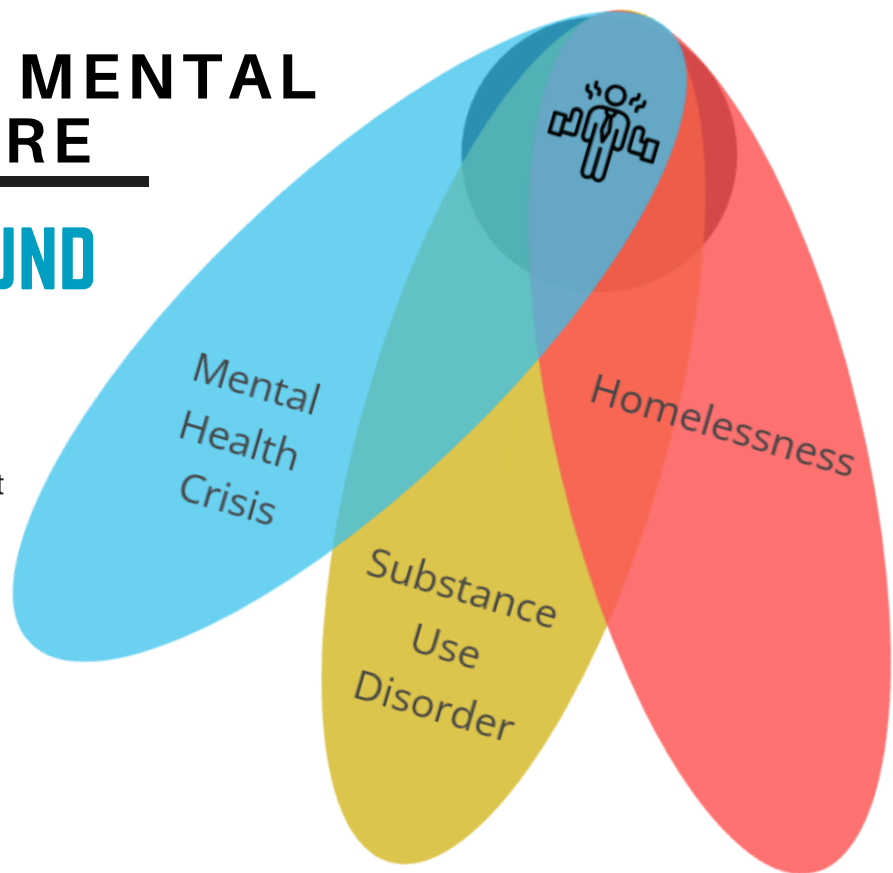
## AREAS OF IMPACT

- Economic Stability
- Health Care and Access

# ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE

## WHAT WE FOUND

Mesa County health care institutions and emergency departments exhaust limited resources and struggle to meet the needs of patients suffering from multiple crises (mental health, substance use, homelessness) at the same time.



**MORE THAN  
1 IN 10**

MESA COUNTY RESIDENTS WENT WITHOUT NEEDED MENTAL HEALTH CARE IN 2019.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

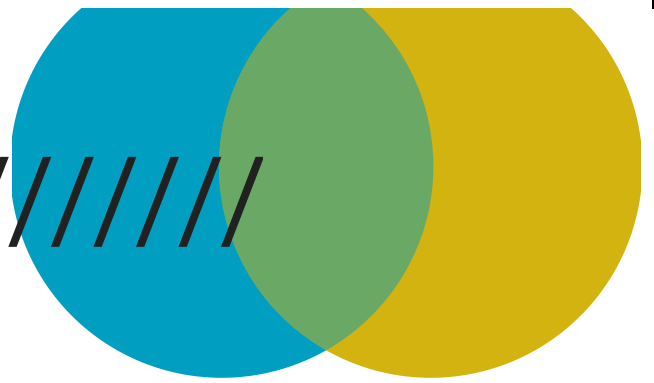
- 01** Launch and support a community resource offering intensive case management for individuals needing mental health and economic stability assistance.
- 02** Identify or develop a community resource to assist individuals experiencing non-emergency substance use intoxication and/or mental health crises with staying safe and accessing needed treatment resources.
- 03** Reduce barriers associated with seeking mental health services. Barriers include wait times, issues scheduling an appointment, lack of access to a desired provider, and being unable to take time off work.
- 04** Use peer-to-peer support to increase accessibility and diversity in services.
- 05** Work through the multidisciplinary mental health steering committee to systematically address other key issues such as workforce, information sharing between agencies, and telemedicine.

### AREAS OF IMPACT

- Economic Stability
- Health Care and Access
- Social and Community Context



# HIGH COST OF HOUSING



## WHAT WE FOUND

There is declining availability of starter homes and family homes priced near or below \$250,000.

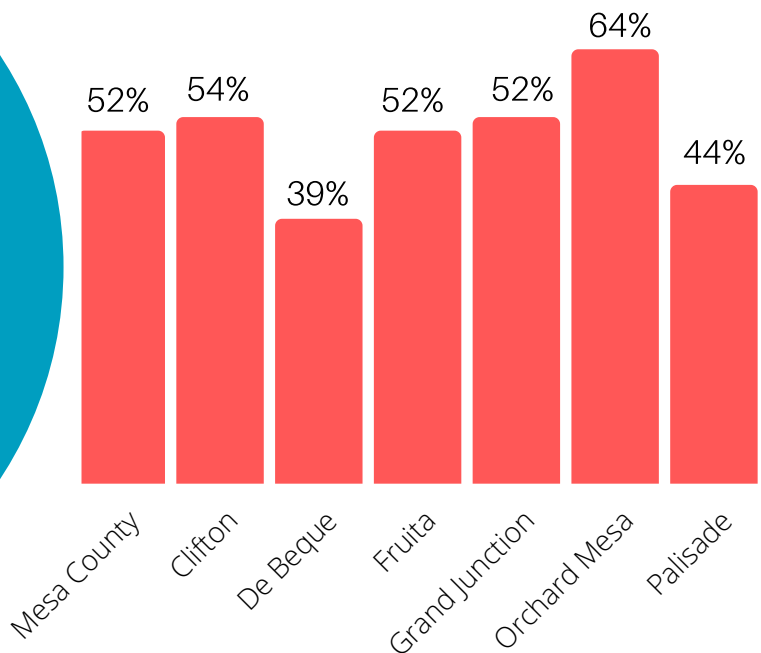
MORE THAN  
**HALF**

OF MESA  
COUNTY  
RENTERS



**SPEND MORE THAN  
30% OF THEIR  
INCOME ON RENT.**

PERCENT OF RENTERS PAYING MORE THAN 30% OF THEIR INCOME ON RENT BY COMMUNITY



## RECOMMENDATIONS

01

Provide financial support to existing housing and homelessness services and promote access to these services.

03

Implement land use code changes that facilitate attainable housing development and housing diversity.

02

Participate in a local and regional collaboration regarding housing needs and services.

04

Formalize existing incentives and consider additional incentives for housing development.

\*Data and recommendations in this section are from the Grand Junction Housing Needs Assessment.

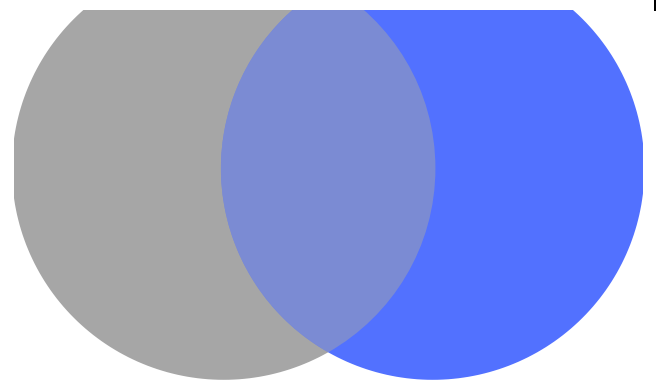


## AREAS OF IMPACT

- Economic Stability
- Neighborhood and Build Environment
- Social and Community Context



# CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



## WHAT WE FOUND

In 2020, 80% of registered Mesa County voters cast a vote in the presidential election, a local record for turnout. However, precincts with the highest levels of poverty showed the lowest level of turnout.

Many local churches and service organizations report a lack of young people (less than 40 years) joining.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

01

Improve voter participation in low-turnout precincts by targeting get-out-the-vote efforts in low-income precincts.

02

Diversify the opportunities to engage people under 40 in civic and community organizations outside of the traditional options.

CONNECTION IS THE ENERGY THAT EXISTS BETWEEN PEOPLE WHEN THEY FEEL SEEN, HEARD, AND VALUED;

WHEN THEY CAN GIVE AND RECEIVE WITHOUT JUDGMENT; AND WHEN THEY DERIVE SUSTENANCE AND STRENGTH FROM THE RELATIONSHIP.



## AREAS OF IMPACT

- Social and Community Context

