

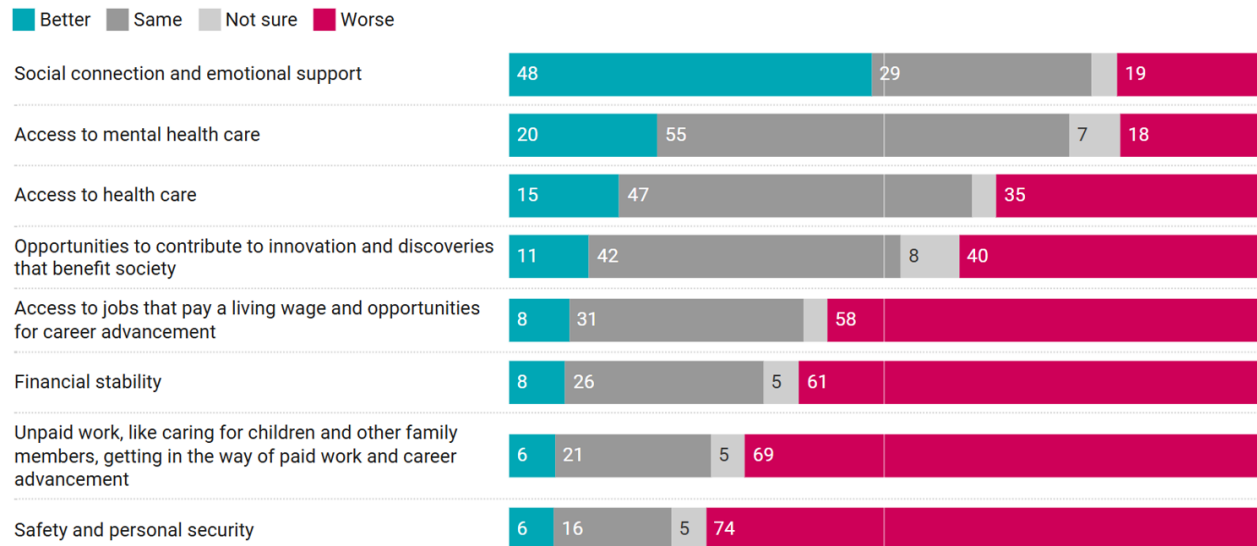
## Colorado Women Struggling to Fully Thrive

### *Facing Barriers to Getting Ahead Financially, Staying Safe and Healthy*

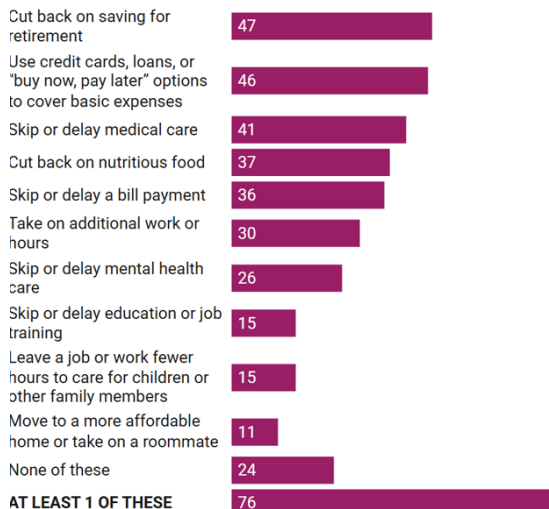
A new poll conducted by Aspect Strategic on behalf of The Women's Foundation of Colorado highlights key areas of well-being in which Colorado women<sup>1</sup> are not fully thriving. The poll surveyed 725 women and gender-expansive individuals registered to vote in Colorado April 26 - May 4, 2026, including oversamples of Hispanic, Black, and AAPI registrants and other women of color. Full methodological details are available [here](#).

**Colorado women say they are faring worse than Colorado men.** Nearly two-thirds (63%) say women today have fewer rights and opportunities than men, and many believe the gap is widening again after years of progress. The widest disparities are tied to financial well-being and safety. Majorities say women are worse off in terms of financial stability (61%), unpaid caregiving burdens that interfere with career advancement (69%), and access to jobs that provide a living wage and advancement opportunities (58%), and three-quarters (74%) say women are doing worse than men when it comes to safety and personal security.

### Compared to men in Colorado, how do you think women are doing in each of the following areas?



### In the past 12 months, have you had to do any of the following due to financial reasons?



**Women are struggling to get ahead financially, with incomes failing to keep pace with rising costs.** Most Colorado women (84%) say the cost of living is rising faster than their income, including 95% of lower-income women (annual household incomes less than \$50,000), 93% of LGBTQ+ respondents, and 91% of Black women. These pressures are forcing difficult tradeoffs across many aspects of life, such as rising debt and reduced savings. Three-in-four women (76%) say they have had to make at least one difficult financial choice in the past year, such as cutting back on saving for retirement (47%), relying on credit cards, loans, or "buy now, pay later" programs (46%) to cover basic expenses, skipping meals, or taking on extra work.

**Financial strain is also delaying major life decisions.** 44% say they postponed or canceled major decisions such as

<sup>1</sup>The term woman includes everyone who identifies with the experiences of womanhood. This definition was provided to survey respondents.

moving, changing careers, buying a home, having children, retiring, or leaving unhealthy relationships because of financial concerns.

**What major life decisions have you delayed or canceled in the past 12 months due to financial reasons?**

*I've been putting off medical and mental health care. Had to move to a smaller place with a roommate. Saving for retirement is all the way out the door, and trying to buy a house seems more and more out of reach.*

*AAPI Woman, 35-49*

*I need to move for my safety and well being but can't afford to live anywhere else.*

*White non-binary respondent, 35-49*

*I've had to cut out dental and health care for my entire family.*

*Black woman, 35-49*

*Being a 74-year-old woman I would like to work less but due to economy, I haven't been able to reduce job hours. Instead, I'm working more to being able to pay all the bills and buy food.*

*Hispanic woman, 65+*

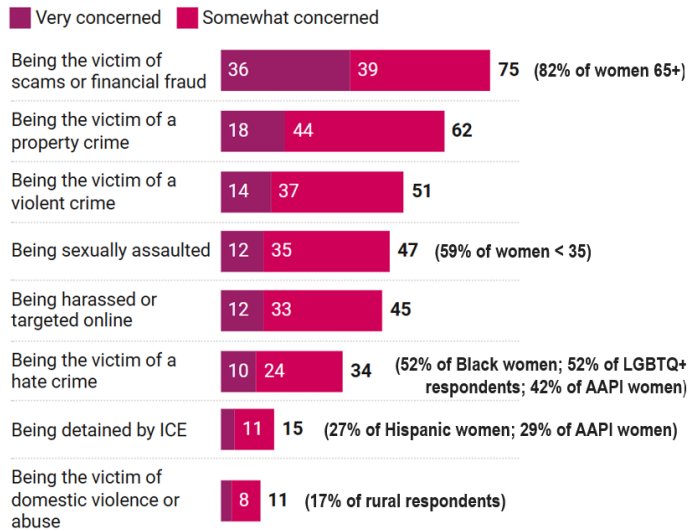
*I delayed leaving a bad partnership due to a binding housing lease. I ended up leaving the situation and moving in with family while still paying rent on the place he lived at.*

*White woman, 18-34*

A majority of Colorado women are living with little financial cushion, leaving many just one unexpected expense away from serious hardship. Nearly six-in-ten (58%) would be worried about their ability to cover basic expenses like rent, utilities, and groceries over the following month if hit with an unexpected \$500 bill. The financial precarity is especially acute among lower-income women: 88% say they would be worried, including 65% who would be very worried. Among Black women, 74% say they would be worried, including 42% who would be very worried.

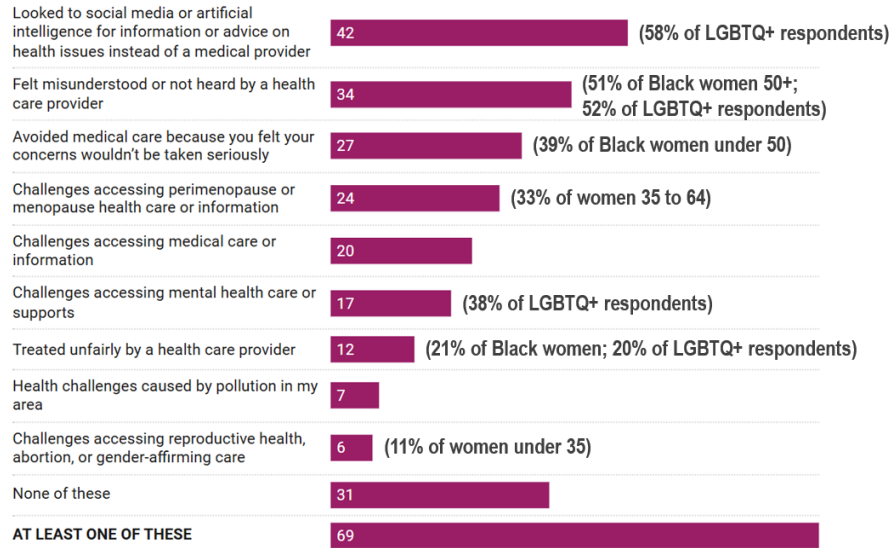
**Beyond facing barriers to getting ahead financially, Colorado women worry about their personal safety and security.** One-in-five say they do not feel safe in their communities, including 29% of Hispanic women and 27% of lower-income women. Three-quarters (75%) are concerned about becoming victims of scams or financial fraud, including 82% of women ages 65 and older, making it the most widespread personal safety concern identified in the poll. Half are concerned about being victims of violent crime (51%) and sexual assault (47%). Concern about sexual assault is notably higher among younger women: 59% of those under 35 report this as a worry. Overall, 11% of respondents express concern about being the victim of domestic violence or abuse, with higher rates of concern among rural respondents (17%).

**How concerned are you about:**



**Healthcare is another key area in which Colorado women are facing barriers, with many feeling dismissed, unsupported, or unable to access the care they need.** More than two-thirds (69%) say they experienced at least one healthcare-related challenge in the past year. One-third (34%) felt misunderstood or not heard by a healthcare provider, and one-quarter (27%) avoided medical care because they felt their concerns would not be taken seriously. These frustrations are driving many women to seek information elsewhere: 42% turned to social media or artificial intelligence instead of a medical provider for health information or advice in the past year.

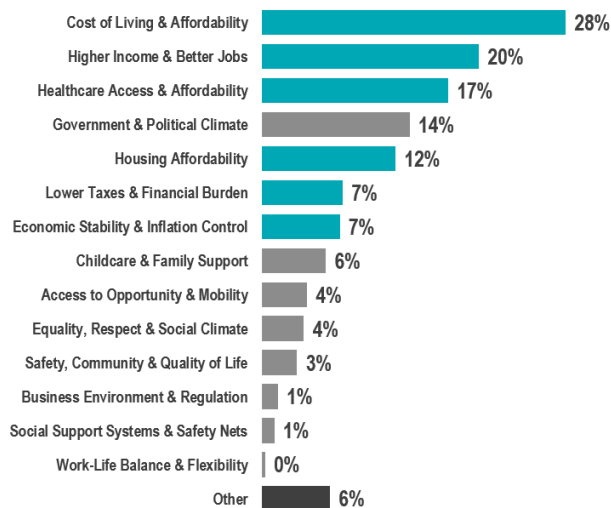
### In the past 12 months have you experienced any of the following?



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**As a woman with perimenopause in a rural community, my options for treatment are not only limited but almost nonexistent**  
*White woman, 18-35*  
**[A big challenge is] access to healthcare, especially doctors that will listen.**  
*Hispanic woman, 35-49*  
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**What solutions would help Colorado women most? Economic support tops the list of things they say would help them thrive.** Two-thirds (67%) cited at least one economic support that would help them get ahead financially, including lowering the cost of living generally, and reducing healthcare and housing costs specifically. Other solutions high on women’s list include ways to help grow and stabilize income. When asked whether they would want to start or grow a business, 52% of respondents said they would be interested if they had access to the necessary money, resources and support. Entrepreneurial ambition among Black women is especially strong: 64% say they would be interested in starting or growing a business if they had the supports to do so.

### What are one or two things that would have the biggest impact on making it easier for you to thrive?



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**Less restrictive access to financial backing for business.**  
*Native American or Alaska Native woman, 65+*  
**More affordable childcare, healthier food being less expensive than cheap food. More affordable higher education.**  
*Hispanic woman, 18-34*  
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**Getting healthcare and home taxes down, more affordable and availability of child summer care.**  
*White woman, 35-49*  
**Access to affordable healthcare, healthy foods and mental health support for my dependents.**  
*Mixed race or multi-racial woman, 35-49*  
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**Colorado women want action on addressing the barriers that are keeping them from fully thriving.** Overall, 72% say state leaders should do more to help women thrive, and 63% say they are more likely to support a candidate who wants to make advancing equality and opportunity for all Colorado women a top priority.