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# **New Research Report Illustrates the Need for Investment in Colorado Women and Families**

## ***Federal Tax Bill, Federal Funding Freezes, and State Budget Restrictions Hurt Middle- and Low-Income Women***

DENVER – Today, The Women's Foundation of Colorado (WFCO) and the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) released the [Status of Women: Colorado Snapshot](#), which revealed mixed economic indicators for women in the state. The Colorado snapshot also recommends that policies promoting equity—such as Medicaid, the Family Affordability Tax Credit, and the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act—be protected to keep women and families moving forward.

The snapshot is a product of IWPR's State Policy Action Lab, which connects state-level data to policy solutions and real-time legislative tracking. Examining caregiving and families, education and career advancement, equitable work and wages, and reproductive justice and health equity, the Colorado snapshot findings include:

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- Nearly one in six women relied on Medicaid between 2019 and 2023. In 2023, Medicaid financed more than a third of all births in the state, and over half of the births for Black, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander women.
- Between 2019 and 2023, almost one in five households headed by single women lived in poverty, more than double the proportion of households in poverty headed by single men. More than two-thirds of households headed by single Black and Hispanic mothers with children under 18 were living at or under 200% of the Federal Poverty Threshold.
- In 2023, home-based infant care cost \$12,750, and center-based infant care cost \$19,753, which is a third of women's median annual full-time year-round income.
- Women working full-time year-round between 2019 and 2023 earned just 80.9 cents for every dollar earned by men.
- In 2023, women aged 62+ had just 65% of the median annual retirement income earned by men and only 68.6% of the median annual Social Security benefit that men their age received.

“Women in Colorado need stability and resources to raise healthy families,” said Louise Myrland, vice president of programs for The Women’s Foundation of Colorado. “While the federal government is cutting taxes for the highest-income earners, it is freezing, restricting, and banning programs that are lifelines for hardworking middle- and lower-income families struggling to meet basic needs.”

Tens of thousands of Colorado women, particularly single mothers of teens, will be stripped of benefits by new work requirements in Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

“Four out of five mothers with whom we work have Medicaid,” said Birdie Johnson, founding executive director of Mama Bird Doula Services—a nonprofit in Aurora, CO, that serves BIPOC pregnant individuals. “Taking away Medicaid from Colorado women will harm the Black community. I have no doubt the probability of low-birthweight and preterm births will increase, and C-section rates will rise.”

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Additionally, federal tax cuts for high-income earners will eliminate key state tax credits that working families depend on, including the Family Affordability Tax Credit (FATC). These expanded state tax credits helped cut child poverty in Colorado by 40.5% in 2025, according to a draft report from Washington University and Appalachian State University researchers. Yet families are at risk of no longer receiving the Family Affordability Tax Credit when they file in 2027, as the state once again must trim \$850 million from the budget during the 2026 legislative session.

“Having the extra boost in my tax return gave me the ability to purchase things my family really needed, like a bed for my son and shoes and jackets for all my children,” said Delilah Lopez, a single mom of five in Fort Collins who is working to obtain her MBA. “People do not realize what a big difference it makes for a family. And knowing I have an extra bit of savings feels really good.”

In the 2026 Colorado legislative session, WFCO will advocate to protect investments in tax credits and programs that support women and their families on the path to economic security, including:

- Renewing the Child Care Contribution Tax Credit (CCTC) and policies that strengthen our state's early care and education system.
- Mitigating harm caused by the federal changes to tax and spending laws under H.R. 1, closing ineffective tax loopholes, and ensuring that Colorado families benefit from Colorado's tax code by restoring the Family Affordability Tax Credit.
- Protecting women and gender-expansive people from discrimination, as the use of AI and algorithmic decision systems exacerbates risks in hiring and employment opportunities, wage setting, and increased prices for consumers.
- Ensuring the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act is implemented fully, and employers comply with transparency requirements, whether humans or AI-enabled systems are involved in hiring.
- Supporting policies to improve Black women's maternal health and protect trans rights.

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“We are living in an age when our data systems are under threat, and when data disappears, so does our ability to promote progress,” said Emily Maistrellis, director of the Status of Women in the States Initiative at IWPR. “State PAL enables advocates to analyze how state policy shapes women’s lives by combining legislative tracking with data on gender and racial equity—capturing disparities in access, opportunity, and outcomes based on women’s lived experiences.”

### **About The Women’s Foundation of Colorado**

[The Women’s Foundation of Colorado](#) (WFCO) is the only statewide community-funded foundation protecting the progress and advancing gender, racial, and economic equity for all Colorado women. Since WFCO’s inception, WFCO has granted \$33 million to nonprofit organizations across Colorado and helped to pass groundbreaking legislation for women, such as the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act and FAMLI.

### **About the Institute for Women’s Policy Research**

The Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR) is the nation’s leading think tank working to win economic equity for all women. Through evidence-based research, policy solutions, and advocacy, IWPR is advancing the power and well-being of women across the US. Learn more at [IWPR.org](#).

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