



Landscape Analysis of  
Initiatives and Activities  
Decreasing Barriers  
Around Child Care,  
Housing, and  
Transportation

# Barriers to Getting and Keeping Employment in Northern Colorado Executive Summary

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## Production Support

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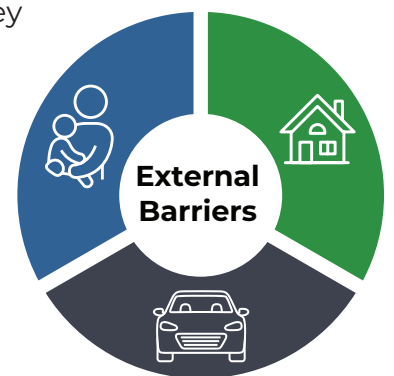


Across Weld and Larimer counties, Northern Colorado recognizes the importance of regionalism and the power of collaboration, specifically as it pertains to talent and workforce. This is not just an idea or a grand goal: it's a reality. Over 87,000 people cross over county lines every day for work (US Census, 2024). Northern Colorado is one shared labor force. As such, growing from the success of the Talent 2.0 initiative, NoCo Works is composed of collaborators from across Weld and Larimer counties with a commitment to co-development and co-ownership of one regional talent and workforce ecosystem.

Northern Colorado recognizes that to stay a dynamic labor market we must collectively address challenges to employment. Three key external barriers that impact the attraction and retention of the region's talent pipeline and workforce are

**child care,**  
**housing,** and  
**transportation**

(TIP Strategies, 2017). The exponential growth of these barriers, as well as the number of interested partners working to understand these key issues, has highlighted the need for a shared vision and more coordination, as well as a shared understanding of programming assets and gaps.



To achieve this, the Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce and Weld County's Early Childhood Council (WCECC) at United Way of Weld County (UWWC), provided equal financial contributions to hire a third-party local organization, Public Service Partnerships, LLC (PSP), to conduct a landscape analysis of what initiatives and activities are addressing barriers in child care, housing, and transportation in Northern Colorado. The Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce and UWWC are highly interested in supporting NoCo Works, and the efforts occurring across the Northern Colorado region to decrease barriers to employment including child care, housing, and transportation.

This report is the culmination of months of data collection and serves as the first phase of ongoing work around mapping regional efforts. Facilitated conversations, landscape analysis, and primary data collection were conducted, resulting in recommendations and alignment around strategic regional opportunities. Specifically, the research presented here informs actionable recommendations to NoCo Works and the External Barriers subcommittee, one of the six subcommittees created under the NoCo Works banner. The intention is to inform the work of the NoCo Works External Barriers committee, to not reinvent or duplicate efforts that already exist in these spaces, to better align activity for shared effort, and to maximize current and future resources.



## Interview Respondents

Formal interviews and informal discussions were conducted with the following individuals (listed in alphabetical order by organization):

### **ABC Child Development Centers**

- Scott Bright, Owner

### **BIPOC Alliance**

- Jamie Rasmussen, Program Director

### **City of Fort Collins**

- Jacob Castillo, Chief Sustainability Officer

- Liz Messenger, Lead Equity & Inclusion Specialist

- Sue Beck-Ferkiss, Social Policy and Housing Programs Manager

### **City of Greeley**

- Juliana Kitten, Assistant City Manager

### **Colorado Department of Transportation**

- Heather Paddock, Director Region 4
- Josie Thomas, Planning Manager

### **Early Childhood Council of Larimer County**

- Christina Taylor, Chief Executive Officer

### **Estes Park Township**

- Carlie Bangs, Housing and Child Care Manager

- Jason Damweber, Deputy Town Administrator

### **Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce**

- Ann Hutchison, President & Chief Executive Officer

- Yvonne Myers, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives

### **Front Range Community College**

- Leah Morley, Lead Faculty, Early Childhood Education

### **Fuerza Latina**

- Jesus Castro Gonzalez, Program Coordinator

### **Greeley Area Chamber of Commerce**

- Jaime Henning, President and Chief Executive Officer

### **Greeley-Weld Habitat for Humanity**

- Cheri Witt-Brown, Chief Executive Officer

### **High Plains Library District**

- Elena Rosenfeld, Community Engagement and Strategies Manager

- Matthew Hortt, Executive Director

### **Housing Catalyst (Housing Authority for Larimer County, Fort Collins, and Wellington)**

- Angelika Lintner, Director of Talent Management and Employee Experience

- Julie Brewen, Chief Executive Officer

### **Immigrant and Refugee Center of Northern Colorado**

- Araceli Calderon, Program Director

### **ISAAC**

- Arpi Miller, Executive Director

### **Larimer County**

- Alea Rodriguez, Housing Stability Program Manager

- Lorenda Volker, County Manager

### **Loveland Area Chamber of Commerce**

- Bill Becker, Director of Advocacy
- Mindy McCloughan, President

### **Northern Colorado Continuum of Care**

- Kelli Pryor, Director (formerly)

### **North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization**

- Alex Gordon, Transportation Planner III (formerly)

- Brooke Bettolo, Mobility Planner

### **One Voice for Housing**

- Joe Rowan, Independent Consultant

### **Poudre River Public Library District**

- Diane Lapierre, Executive Director

### **The Family Center/La Familia**

- Gloria Kat, Executive Director

### **Teaching Tree**

- Anne Lance, Executive Director

### **United Way of Larimer County**

- Joy Sullivan, President & Chief Executive Officer

### **United Way of Weld County/Weld County's Early Childhood Council**

- Adriana Carrillo, Assistant Director of Early Childhood Initiatives

- Lisa Sadar, Assistant Director of Early Care and Education

- Lyle SmithGraybeal, Chief Operating Officer

- Stefanie Knipple, Director of Reading Great by 8 (formerly)

### **Weld County**

- Anna Korthisus, Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) Manager

- Tami Grant, Deputy Director of Department of Human Services

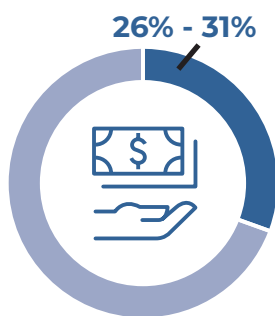


## Child Care Summary

### WHAT WE HEARD



- Child care is experiencing a market failure.
- There is a significant shortage in child care spaces in Weld and Larimer counties.
- There is a significant workforce shortage in providers, and employed child care workers make less than the Area Median Income.



• The percentage of income that is being spent on child care is between 26% and 31% of median household income, 19% and 24% more than what is recommended.


- There is not enough funding to support the child care industry and thus local tax initiatives may need to be leveraged.
- Public, private, and nonprofit sectors have a clear role to play.

## Bring Your Kids to Work: Yoder Family of Companies Child Care Facility

In Weld County, the Yoder Family of Companies, a private company that provides automotive and financing services, is opening a child care facility at Journey Christian Church in Greeley. Funded through the philanthropic arm of the company, Yoder Family Cares, and leveraging state programs like UPK and CCCAP, this benefit will primarily serve Yoder Family of Companies employees. Named the Yoder Family Early Childhood Education Center, the facility is slated to open in summer 2024.

Source: Yoder Family of Companies

The facility is licensed to serve:

 <b>40</b> children	Ages <b>6 weeks</b> to <b>6 years</b>	Within <b>3</b> <b>classrooms</b> <small>(infant, toddler, and preschool)</small>
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## A Place for Learning and Innovation: Loveland Youth Campus



In Larimer County, the Boys and Girls Club of Larimer County, United Way of Larimer County, Early Childhood Council of Larimer County, and Teaching Tree Childhood Learning Center, a nonprofit child care provider, have partnered to expand child care in Loveland through

the Loveland Youth Campus, now serving Loveland and the broader community. By opening 12 classrooms, the campus will expand Loveland child care seats for infants and toddlers by up to 200 spots, thus quadrupling Teaching Tree's current Loveland supply. An additional 150 youth will be served by Boys and Girls Club of Larimer County, totaling 350 children served between the ages of 0 and 18. Beyond child care and preschool, the campus will also offer wrap around services for youth and families in one location including out-of-school care for youth ages 5-12, teen development services for youth 13-18, and specialty care for children and youth with physical and developmental disabilities. In addition, mental health services, food distribution, basic needs support, adult education, transportation, recreation services, and family services including immigrant resources, housing navigation, and legal support will be offered to youth and their families. The partnership is being funded by public, corporate, and private grants including support from United Way of Larimer County, ARPA, Larimer County, U.S. Senator Michael Bennet's office, City of Loveland, Woodward, Nutrien, Ent Credit Union, Scheels, Comcast, Buell Foundation, and Gates Family Foundation.

Source: Loveland Youth Campus

Child Care Capacity Expansion:



Opening

**12**

classrooms



Increase by

**200**

spots for infants and toddlers

**350**

children served by Boys and Girls Club of Larimer County



## Housing Summary

### WHAT WE HEARD



- Northern Colorado is facing a housing supply and affordability problem.
- Affordable housing is defined as housing cost that does not exceed 30% of an individual or family's gross income. This cost includes rent or a mortgage, as well as utilities, mortgage insurance, HOA fees, and other related costs.
- To buy a \$600,000 home, with a 13% downpayment and a 30-year mortgage at 6.5%, to stay within 30% of their income, this means that households must make more than \$160,000 a year in gross income, which exceeds the median family income for a household of four people (100% AMI) for Weld (\$109,300) and Larimer counties (\$118,700).

#### Median Household Cost

ESTES PARK	\$807,500
FORT COLLINS	\$620,000
GREELEY	\$401,377
LOVELAND	\$524,800
TIMNATH	\$712,000
WELLINGTON	\$495,000
WINDSOR/SEVERANCE	\$559,458

- Cost burdened renters are disproportionately young adults (15-24 years old) and older adults (65+) as well as people of color and individuals with disabilities.

## Affordable Housing in 3D: Hope Springs

In Weld County, the Greeley-Weld Habitat for Humanity in partnership with City of Greeley, Alquist 3D, and Collab Architecture is building more than 491 high quality affordable housing units at Hope Springs for households making between 30%-80% AMI. Hope Springs, located in Greeley next to amenities including retail, grocery stores, restaurants, the library, schools, and public transportation, will be developed using 3D printing technology powered by Alquist 3D. The community has been designed to be water and climate friendly and is planned to be completed by 2029. In addition to the homes, Hope Springs will include on-site child care, trails, two mini-pitch LED soccer fields, and a nature discovery park. This project is fully funded through philanthropic and public grants and is made possible by U.S. Senator Hickenlooper, JBS USA, City of Greeley, CDOLA, CDOLA Division of Housing, OXY, The Weld Trust, and Richmark Companies, which donated the land and water for the project. Building began in May 2024.

Source: Greeley-Weld Habitat for Humanity



- All housing is workforce housing in that everyone needs housing to work. As such, there is a direct connection between people's ability to find affordable and secure housing and their ability to work in Northern Colorado.

## The People Have Spoken: Estes Park Lodging Tax Funds Housing and Child Care

In Larimer County, residents of the Visit Estes Park Local Marketing District voted to approve Ballot Initiative 6E Lodging Tax Extension in November 2022, increasing the lodging tax rate



Source: Visit Estes Park

by 3.5% (from 2% to 5.5%) to fund workforce housing and child care facilities in the Estes Valley. During its first full year receiving 6E revenue, the Estes Valley received \$5,309,126 of the projected \$5,375,000 from 6E, which was passed-through Visit Estes Park Local Marketing District to the Town of Estes Park. The Town, in coordination with Larimer County, is charged with deciding how best to administer the revenue. Estes Park Housing Authority (EPHA) was identified in July 2023 via a memorandum of understanding with the Town, as the organization to receive 88% of the funds to build workforce housing while the rest of the funds are retained by the Town to address child care challenges. About \$4.7 million of the revenue received by the Town of Estes Park was distributed to the EPHA in 2023. At the Town, the Housing and Childcare Manager is responsible for coordination and oversight of the funding, partnerships, programs, and processes needed to ensure 6E funds are spent appropriately and as intended.

Sources: Estes Park Annual Workforce Housing and Child Care Funding Plan



## Transportation Summary

### WHAT WE HEARD

- Roughly 87,000 individuals cross county lines on a daily basis, highlighting that the region is one labor shed. 
- The North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO) adopted the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), as required by the federal government, in September 2023 which maps out funding and transportation projects across the NFRMPO region.
- There is a spectrum of barriers in transportation – vehicle ownership, last mile transportation, access to public transit, road quality, road congestion, and distance traveled to work.
- Funding is the largest issue in transportation with gas and local taxes being the primary sources of funding for all projects. 

- A major collaboration in the works is the creation of a Transportation Management Organization (TMO) along US-34 from Kersey in Weld County to Estes Park in Larimer County. TMOs are organizations that implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies, typically in a specified geography to improve coordination of projects, improve transportation services, provide air quality improvements, mitigate congestion issues, and develop first and last mile connectivity for where people live, work, study, and play.

### Get to Work: Widening I-25

Across Northern Colorado, in response to increased congestion and traffic, business and government leaders banded together through Fix North I-25. The effort focused on widening I-25 to three lanes from Longmont to Fort Collins. The \$1.7 billion project was funded and implemented thanks to the business community's advocacy through the Fix North I-25 Business Alliance, the alignment of government partners through the North I-25 Alliance and the collaborative funding provided by local, regional, state, and federal dollars. The project is estimated to be completed in 2024.

*Source: Department of Transportation; Fix North I-25*



*Photo courtesy of Colorado Department of Transportation*

# External Barriers Recommendations

As a multi-stakeholder initiative composed of public, private, and nonprofit leaders interested in bolstering workforce and economic development regionally, NoCo Works can leverage relationships to decrease barriers to workforce development related to child care, housing, and transportation. NoCo Works can act as a convener, catalyst, and connector to organizations already working in this space while bringing information and a call to action to all community partners: public and private. This can be done through a multi-pronged approach around convening, educating, advocating, and mapping.

## Recommendation 1 **CONVENE**



NoCo Works can be a space where people come to learn about and align policy, programs, and opportunities that have been implemented in their own organizations, towns and cities, counties, and the region. NoCo Works could be a space to coordinate local efforts across policy areas. This would allow stakeholders to avoid duplication, to leverage scarce resources, and to make the

biggest impact on these barriers. To promote economic inclusion, diversity, and equity, convenings should also be a place that brings together multi-cultural business owners through their collaboration with nonprofit organizations and public entities. To reduce community engagement fatigue, NoCo Works should consider aligning convenings with other regional efforts and events.

### **Action Steps**

Based on the interview results, NoCo Works should inspire and support the convening of the following types of meetings and groups:

- An external barriers cross-functional group that includes organizations and experts to discuss how child care, housing, and transportation needs are interconnected and how to support policy and program solutions that decrease these barriers (see Advocacy section below).
- Cross-functional community facing organizations that lead initiatives that support historically marginalized populations. Convening these initiatives and groups can help NoCo Works connect, enhance, and align with entities that are already collaborating with marginalized populations to facilitate best practices.
- Business conversations to discuss how individual companies can provide localized solutions for their employees around child care, housing, and transportation to increase recruitment and retention.
- Public and private conversations with local, state, regional, and federal transportation authorities to align and inform transportation plans.



## Recommendation 2

# EDUCATE



NoCo Works has a role to play in educating the community about how child care, housing, and transportation are huge barriers to supporting workforce and economic development in Northern Colorado. In addition, NoCo Works should champion the benefits of child care, housing, and transportation programs, policies, and activities that foster economic and workforce development and create a more connected and cohesive community. Educating the community about the ecosystem of those working in this space is critical to decreasing these barriers. In addition, educating the community about legislative bills and laws, data, and reports that analyze the economic and workforce impacts of these barriers helps make the case to pass policy solutions that can support businesses and their employees. Furthermore, educating individuals about the resources that exist can help alleviate some of these barriers as they gain access to public and nonprofit services.

## Action Steps

Based on the interview results, NoCo Works should consider the following action steps that would support education:

- Inspire community educational roadshows:
  - Partner with existing coalitions such as One Voice for Housing, NoCo Housing Now, NCLA, NCCOC, NFRMPO, and others to understand key solutions and resources to be elevated.
  - Inspire education and training sessions to inform community members of the barriers of current initiatives and of solutions and best practices.
  - Recruit champions to provide these educational roadshows.
- Partner with initiatives and organizations to create an awareness and marketing campaign for 211 Colorado and other resources like RideNoCo, Larimer County Child Care Connect, ROADMAP4KIDS, and Childcare4Weld.
- Elevate and scale best practices of partnering with existing community serving organizations that have established trust with communities, especially those who serve underrepresented groups including older adults, individuals with disabilities, immigrants, people of color, rural communities, individuals experiencing homelessness, and low-income households.

## Recommendation 3

# ADVOCATE



Beyond educating the public about the benefits of eradicating these barriers, the private sector plays a direct role in advocating for policy solutions. Advisory councils, coalitions, city and county council and development meetings, and the ballot are all spaces where the community – businesses, nonprofits, and government – can show up and advocate for systems change. The Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance (NCLA), representing the Loveland, Greeley, and Fort Collins area chambers of commerce and Upstate Colorado Economic Development, has supported this aspect of NoCo Works at the State Capitol. Housing Colorado hosts the Rural Legislative Coalition, that’s working to impact state policies to support housing in rural areas. As proven by the success of the Fix North I-25 effort, advocacy and support for expanded transportation solutions including increased funding, is critical to regionally connect our communities. Leaders across child care, housing, and transportation are looking for more participation from all facets of the community, especially those who can advocate for solutions to these barriers that directly impact workforce development in the region.

## Action Steps

Based on the interview results, NoCo Works should consider the following action steps that would support advocacy:

- Inspire the investigation, alignment, and expansion of advocacy efforts to ensure that policies are complimentary across the region so that regional child care, housing, and transportation issues can be solved.
- Support organizations (like Early Childhood Council of Larimer County) who are advocating for a regional sales and use tax increase that would subsidize the child care industry by decreasing costs for households and increasing wages for employees.
- Support organizations (like One Voice for Housing and NCLA) who are advocating for housing policies that expand land use codes and decrease barriers to housing.
- Partner with initiatives (like Weld’s Way Home and Northern Colorado Continuum of Care) to advocate for programs and policies that decrease housing insecurity and make homelessness rare, short-lived, and non-recurring.
- Support local Chambers of Commerce and NCLA in their ongoing convening of regional advocacy and policy sessions around barriers and solutions.

## Recommendation 4

# MAP



Regional efforts can be siloed and duplicative. Individuals may feel fatigued by being over-asked to join initiatives. Alternatively, citizens may not know the ecosystem that exists that provides public services and resources to individuals facing child care, housing, and transportation barriers. As such, NoCo Works can connect stakeholders by elevating current asset maps that exist while also creating additional landscape analyses that help align regional efforts.



## Action Steps

Based on the interview results, NoCo Works should consider the following action steps that would support mapping:

- Expand on this report by creating and updating a publicly available database that maps people, organizations, stakeholder engagement, and initiatives doing work in child care, housing, and transportation.
- Advertise and market work that has already been done to track policies (for example, through NCLA's legislative tracker).
- Collaborate with United Ways to better understand in what ways 211 Colorado can be elevated and improved based on interview respondent feedback.
- Explore ways that the NoCo Works website can be a repository for resources and navigators (like 211 Colorado, RideNoCo, Larimer County Child Care Connect, ROADMAP4KIDS, and Childcare4Weld) so employers have a one-stop-shop for resources around child care, housing, and transportation.
- Support and explore a program that would allow private, nonprofit, and public sector organizations to conduct staff needs assessments to see to what extent their employees are in need of child care, housing, and transportation support. Use this information to identify local solutions.

# INITIATIVES

Colorado Association of Family Child Care  
 Colorado Children's Campaign  
 Council for Strong America  
 Early Childhood Council of Larimer County  
 Early Childhood Leadership Alliance  
 Housing Colorado  
 Larimer County Sandbox

Larimer Thrive by Five  
 Loveland Homelessness Task Force  
 NoCo Housing Now  
 North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization Community Advisory Committee  
 Northern Colorado Continuum of Care  
 Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance

One Voice for Housing  
 Sector Partnerships  
 United Way of Weld County  
 Universal PreK Meetings  
 Weld County Family Child Care Association  
 Weld County's Early Childhood Council  
 YIMBY Fort Collins

# TOOLS AND RESOURCES

211 Colorado  
 Alternative Homes for Youth  
 A Woman's Place  
 Catholic Charities: Guadalupe Shelter  
 ChildCare4Weld.org  
 Colorado Housing and Finance Authority  
 Colorado Housing Connects  
 Community Resources & Housing Development Corporation  
 Down Payment/Low-Interest Loans Assistance Programs  
 Estes Valley Workforce Housing Assistance Down Payment Loan Program  
 Family Business Solutions Tax Benefit  
 FirstBank Programs Supporting Black or African American Homebuyers  
 Greeley Family House  
 Habitat for Humanity of Colorado  
 High Plains Housing Development  
 Home Ownership Education:  
 • Colorado Housing and Finance Authority  
 • Community Resources & Housing Development Corporation  
 • Elevation Community Land Trust  
 • Neighbor to Neighbor Homebuyer Education Class

Housing Colorado's Legislative Tracker  
 Housing Navigation Center  
 Impact Development Fund: Colorado Down Payment Assistance  
 • FirstBank Down Payment Assistance Program  
 • Impact Development Fund (Weld County)  
 – Colorado Down Payment Assistance  
 – Greeley Home Ownership Program for Employees  
 Larimer County Child Care Connect  
 Larimer County Department of Human Services  
 Larimer Home Ownership Program  
 Loveland Resource Center  
 Murphy Center  
 Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance Legislative Tracker  
 Paso Program  
 Project Self-Sufficiency  
 United Way of Weld County Universal Preschool Resource Guide  
 Weld County's Early Childhood Council Roadmap4Kids  
 Weld County Department of Human Services

To find more about each of these initiatives, tools, and resources, and to find out the data sources, read the full report:



# NOCO WORKS DECLARATION OF COLLABORATION

We, the undersigned, commit our institutions and regional sector alliances to serving Northern Colorado through the mission of NoCo Works by contributing expertise to the development and implementation of a holistic and aligned regional talent and workforce network in Northern Colorado. We understand this mission will be actualized through strategic development and task-oriented goals through the following six regional themes: Economic Inclusion, External Barriers, Business Resources, Training and Development, Talent Pipeline, and Work-based Learning.

NoCo Works will build upon the success of modeled regionalism and workforce development efforts for Northern Colorado by honoring the previous work of: Joint County Workforce Development Board Meetings, The Workforce Symposium, The Work-based Learning Alliance (NoCo Inspire), Next Generation Sector Partnerships, Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI), Talent 2.0 (2015-2022), and most recently, a Northern Colorado Regional Workforce Development Partnership Memorandum of Understanding signed by all of Larimer County and Weld County Board of County Commissioners.

As an institution and/or sector alliance, we are dedicated to supporting NoCo Works and its six subcommittees through participating on the NoCo Works Steering Committee. The Steering Committee provides oversight and actively engages in the subcommittees, which is essential to bring NoCo Works to launch on September 27, 2023. In accordance with the objectives and priorities of each institution, ongoing support is required for this work.

The appropriate administrative personnel of each institution involved in this regional collaborative are prepared to establish and maintain the necessary supports to affect regional change in the Northern Colorado Talent & Workforce Landscape. This declaration is not a financial commitment, but rather a philosophical alignment across key institutions, alliances and stakeholders pertaining to NoCo Works. This signature supports the commitment to providing content expertise, steering committee representation, regional partnership support and commitment to the mission and vision of NoCo Works. This declaration will be revisited on a semi-annual basis by the NoCo Works Steering Committee to ensure alignment and institutional/alliance buy-in as NoCo Works advances.



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