



COLORADO FISCAL
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NEW DATA: Colorado continues to fall behind in key investments
State lags rest of country on education, health care, higher ed, and transportation

The Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute (COFPI) released new data today showing that Colorado continues to lag far behind most other states in the country in terms of key investments such as education, health care, higher education, and transportation. According to the most recent data available, **Colorado ranks 47th in total state spending**. The new data is an update from a 2007 COFPI report titled *Aiming for the Middle: Benchmarks for Colorado's Future*.

"The most startling thing about this data is that it doesn't reflect the effect of the recession," said **COFPI Senior Fiscal Analyst Carol Hedges**. "This data is from when the state's economy was in good shape, so we know it only goes downhill from there."

The original report was based on 2005 data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau and other sources. The updated numbers include the most recent data available, ranging from 2006 to 2008 depending on the area. Colorado moved from 49th to 47th in total state spending over that time frame, but that was largely due to other states falling further behind, and not based on any significant improvements in Colorado.

"This report has some very troubling numbers," said **Senator John Morse (D-Colorado Springs)**. "We need to do what we can to bring Colorado back to the lead. We can no longer allow Colorado to fall behind other states in this country. We must continue to invest in job creation to get Colorado's economy back on track."

"Colorado has a systemic revenue problem, plain and simple," Hedges went on to say. "The state simply doesn't have the revenue needed to support the public services that Coloradans rely on, knowingly or not, every single day, and that's a threat to our collective future and to our economy."

"We invest so little relative to nearly every other state because we collect so little," added Hedges. "Colorado ranks 49th in state taxation and 46th in combined state and local taxation (per \$1000 personal income). It's not rocket science, it's just the other side of the ledger."

"Our neighbors in Kansas, Utah, Wyoming, and elsewhere continue to invest more in their schools, their roads, their colleges, and their health care system, and we continue to fall behind," said **Lisa Weil, Great Education Colorado**. "What does that say about our priorities here in Colorado and the kind of state we want?"

According to the updated data, **Colorado is approximately \$4.89 billion behind what it would take to move to the U.S. average in terms of investment in critical public services**. The following five categories of vital public services shows Colorado lagging behind compared to almost every other state, as well as the corresponding investment it would take to actually reach the U.S. average:

Total State Expenditures

- Colorado ranks 47th in total state expenditures per \$1000 of personal income
 - \$4.89 billion to reach the per \$1000 of personal income U.S. average
- Colorado ranks 45th in total state expenditures per capita
 - \$3.62 billion to reach the per capita U.S. average

Elementary and Secondary Schools:

- Colorado ranks 48th for investment in public education per \$1000 of personal income
 - \$1.78 billion to reach the per \$1000 of personal income U.S. average
- Colorado ranks 32nd for investment in public education per capita
 - \$1.06 billion to reach the per capita U.S. average

Children's Health and Medicaid:

- Colorado ranks 49th for investment in covering families under Medicaid per \$1000 of personal income
- Colorado ranks 35th for investment in covering low-income children per \$1000 of personal income
 - Combined \$1.57 billion to reach per \$1000 of personal income U.S. average
- Colorado ranks 49th for investment in covering families under Medicaid per capita
- Colorado ranks 31st for investment in covering low-income children per capita
 - Combined \$1.23 billion to reach the per capita U.S. average

College Opportunity:

- Colorado ranks 48th for higher education per \$1000 of personal income
 - \$761 million to reach the per \$1000 of personal income U.S. average
- Colorado ranks 48th for investment on higher education per capita
 - \$594 million to reach the per capita U.S. average

Transportation and Highways:

- Colorado ranks 48th for transportation and highways investment per \$1000 of personal income
 - \$683 million to reach the per \$1000 of personal income U.S. average
- Colorado ranks 48th for investment on transportation and highways per capita
 - \$573 million to reach the per capita U.S. average

2009 Aiming for the Middle—Update Rankings (including maps of neighboring states)

http://www.cclponline.org/pubfiles/Afm2009Tables_FINAL.pdf

2007 Aiming for the Middle—Complete Report

http://www.cclponline.org/pubfiles/AIMING%20FOR%20THE%20MIDDLE_full%20report%20FINAL.pdf

Additional Note: Aiming for the Middle includes two different ways to compare spending—state spending per capita and state spending per \$1000 of personal income. Likewise, the report includes two different ways to compare the “middle”—the 25th ranked state out of fifty and the U.S. average. While these different calculations are included in the report, both the above examples and the Executive Summary include just per capita spending and the U.S. average. For computing these comparisons in all cases except where noted, the spending data comes from the U.S. Census Bureau. In some of the particular program areas, we have included alternative methods of measuring spending. These alternatives are included because experts in the areas have suggested alternative measures that they feel more accurately describe the state funding picture.