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Analysis shows Colorado ranks No. 11 in income inequality

Colorado's overall income grew more than 6 percent between 2009 and 2012, but nearly half of that new money went to the wealthiest 1 percent of Coloradans. In fact, in 2012 **the state's top 1 percent took home nearly 27 times more than the bottom 99 percent**, according to new analysis published by the [Economic Policy Institute](#). Colorado had the 11th largest gap between the average income of the top 1 percent and the average income of the bottom 99 percent in 2012.

"This study provides further confirmation that the state's economic recovery has been lopsided at best," said Claire Levy, executive director of the [Colorado Center on Law & Policy](#), a nonprofit organization dedicated to research, education and advocacy on economic security issues. "As the economy improved, only the very wealthiest Coloradans enjoyed substantial income gains while the vast majority of Colorado workers and their families — those who fuel economic growth across the state — saw little, if any, gains." Levy noted that similar trends are highlighted in CCLP's report, "[The State of Working Colorado 2014](#)," published late last year.

The authors of "[The Increasingly Unequal States of America: Income Inequality by State, 1997 to 2012](#)," compiled widely cited findings to highlight how inequality is rising throughout the United States. Between 1979 and 2007, the top 1 percent of taxpayers captured an increasing share of income in every state. While incomes at all levels declined as a result of the Great Recession, income growth has been lopsided since the recovery began.

Unfortunately, Colorado is not exempt from these trends. **Colorado was among 16 states in which all income growth between 2009 and 2012 accrued to the top of 1 percent.** Between 2009 and 2012, incomes of those in the top 1 percent increased by 48 percent while incomes of those in the bottom 99 percent declined by 1 percent. Lopsided income growth is a long-term trend, not just a recent phenomenon. **Between 1979 and 2007, the top 1 percent took home 48 percent of the total increase in state income.** Over this period, the average income of the bottom 99 percent of Coloradans grew by 21.2 percent while the average income of the top 1 percent grew nearly 10 times as much — by 200.8 percent.

"This study quantifies the roots of wage stagnation and why so many Coloradans don't feel their personal economic security is improving — even though economists continue to generate forecasts showing that things are getting better," Levy said. "Colorado lawmakers need to pay close attention to these trends and support policies that benefit all Coloradans so we can build an economy that works for everyone."

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