

Family Homelessness in Boulder County, and What We Can Do About It

Hundreds of families across Boulder County experience homelessness or are just one crisis away from losing their homes. This problem is often invisible because many homeless families aren't on the streets; they are sleeping in cars, motels, or doubling up in others' homes while trying to keep their children safe and their lives intact.¹

By working together, we can help prevent families from losing their housing, help homeless families return to stability, make sure every parent and child has a safe place to live, and help ensure all families have what they need to thrive.

Key Facts

In Boulder County:



Roughly 1 in 10 children live below the poverty line.²



Approximately 1,000 students experience homelessness each year. 13% of these students are no longer enrolled in schools by the end of the academic year.³



1 in 2 households spend more than 30% of their monthly income on rent which means that the household is not financially stable. The higher the percentage of income spent on rent, the more families struggle to pay for food, child care, health care and other basic needs.⁴



Family homelessness isn't easy to track and remains invisible to the community. Families move frequently between hotels or temporary shelters, or live with other families and rarely appear in official homelessness assessments.

When a child experiences homelessness, they are nearly 47 times more likely to experience homelessness again as an adult. Preventing homelessness is not only more cost-effective; it also prevents trauma and instability that occurs when a family loses its home.⁵

¹ Under the McKinney-Vento Act, families are considered homeless if they lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes children sharing housing due to economic hardship ("doubled-up"), living in motels, hotels, shelters, cars, parks, or substandard housing.

² [American Community Survey Data](#)

³ [McKinney Vento Act](#) data for Boulder Valley School District and St. Vrain Valley School District

⁴ [Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy](#)

⁵ [Correlates of Past Childhood Homelessness in a Nationally Representative Sample of US Adults - PubMed](#)

What Forces Families Out of Their Homes

There are many reasons why a family could lose their home, even when parents work and reach out to organizations for help.



Costs outpace wages: Rent and home prices have risen faster than incomes.



Not enough affordable housing: Despite robust affordable housing programs, there are limited options available for low- and moderate-income families.



Economic shocks: Many low-income families live paycheck to paycheck. Sudden job loss, medical bills, or major car repairs can push families into homelessness.



Domestic violence: Survivors often face an immediate loss of housing when they flee abuse to protect themselves and their children.



Barriers to recovery: Lack of childcare, transportation and timely support services mean it takes longer to get stable housing.

A couple and their children were homeless and living in a van after the loss of a job of 10 years and being owed back wages, plus experiencing a serious illness in their immediate family while searching for work. Initially accessing groceries from OUR Center's market, they were able to get into affordable housing through the advocacy of OUR Center's housing support specialist. The couple now are focused on education, job skills training and helping their children stabilize in school.

- Joni Lynch, OUR Center Family Development Services Director

A Coordinated Community Response

Schools, nonprofits and local government agencies – including those affiliated with the Boulder County Family Resource Network – work closely together to prevent family homelessness and provide support to families who are experiencing homelessness.

- School districts assist homeless families with transportation, meals, referrals for housing and other services to help children feel stable and supported.
- Nonprofits and local governments provide a range of services including:
 - Rental assistance, legal and mediation services to help avoid eviction
 - Financial assistance for utilities, transportation, food, health care and child care

- Case management to help families stay or get back on their feet
- Housing programs to secure short-term shelter, longer-term housing and other supportive services

Funding is essential and critical in order to increase the access, stability and educational success for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Without adequate program funding, we are jeopardizing their educational enrollment, attendance and academic success.”

- Luis Chavez, St Vrain Valley School District McKinney-Vento Education Liaison

Meeting the Moment: A Community Call to Action

The number of homeless families in Boulder County has risen steadily. In 2025, services and funding through Boulder County Housing and the county’s three family resource centers alone – not including other city and nonprofit program funds – helped keep an estimated 2,300 families housed. Domestic violence shelters provided emergency shelter and housing-related support for 200 households.

Yet each year, hundreds of families are placed on a waitlist or turned away due to limited financial capacity. Due to changes in federal policies, fewer low-income families will be able to access food, housing and health benefits.

Through the Family Resource Network, agencies working on the frontlines of family homelessness recommend actions including:

- Exploring options for local, dedicated funding for eviction prevention – through mediation, legal services and rental assistance – so that all Boulder County families have better opportunities to remain housed.
- Allocating additional resources for emergency and transitional housing, to more quickly get families from sleeping in cars and on couches to stable, long-term housing.
- Increasing economic mobility and stability through financial assistance, direct cash assistance and financial coaching.
- Supporting local, state and federal policy initiatives that support expanded access for high-cost services like child care and health care, as well as food and other basic needs.
- Maintaining and strengthening anti-violence programs and domestic violence services that help survivors achieve long-term stability.

*Behind every family experiencing homelessness is a story of resilience.
When communities invest in housing and support services,
families have the opportunity to move from crisis to stability.*
- Jasmin Mendez, Emergency Family Assistance Association Housing Navigator

How You Can Help

In addition to supporting the recommendations above, individuals can also:



Donate: Support the nonprofit organizations of your choice, that provide direct housing and financial assistance.



Volunteer: Offer time or skills where they make the greatest impact.



Advocate: Lift up and support local, state and federal policies that reduce costs for basic needs like health care and child care, provide living wages and expand affordable housing opportunities.



Inspire: Share this information with others so more people understand the problem of family homelessness and commit to helping solve it.