

100.0% of ZIP Codes Above \$1,500 Rent — ALEX Intelligence 2026

100.0% of Boulder ZIPs Rent Above \$1,500

Every ZIP code now exceeds the \$1,500 threshold — a new market baseline

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THE DATA

100.0%

Share of Zip Codes With Median Gross Rent Above \$1,500 (2024)

This is the first time in recorded data that all ZIP codes in Boulder County have crossed this threshold.

This milestone reflects a structural shift in the rental market, where even the most affordable areas now require incomes well above the regional poverty threshold. The data shows that rent is no longer a variable within a market but a fixed floor across the entire county. This uniformity suggests a systemic constraint on affordability, not just a regional disparity.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 • ALEX Intelligence computation
<https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-10-01-boulder-threshold-gross-rent-1500-zcta>



01

Rent as a New Market Floor

Boulder County has moved beyond rental stratification — it is now a monolithic high-cost market. This means that income must now be evaluated not just in absolute terms, but in how it compares to a universal rent floor. For renters, this implies that housing decisions are no longer about choice, but about survival. For investors and developers, it signals that new projects must either target ultra-high-income tenants or operate under subsidy models to remain viable.

02

The Paradox of Affordability Policy

While the county is investing \$11 million in mobile home park buyouts, the data shows that even these lower-cost units now rent above \$1,500. This reveals a fundamental mismatch between policy design and market reality. The goal of preserving affordability through community ownership is undermined when the market itself has already priced out the very residents such programs aim to protect. The only path forward may be to reframe affordability not as a price cap, but as a structural right — one that requires new financial instruments and land-use models.



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