

#98 in U.S. Metro Unemployment Rate — ALEX Intelligence 2026

Boulder Ranks #98 in U.S. Metro Unemployment

4.6% in August 2026 — ALEX Intelligence 2026

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THE DATA

4.6%

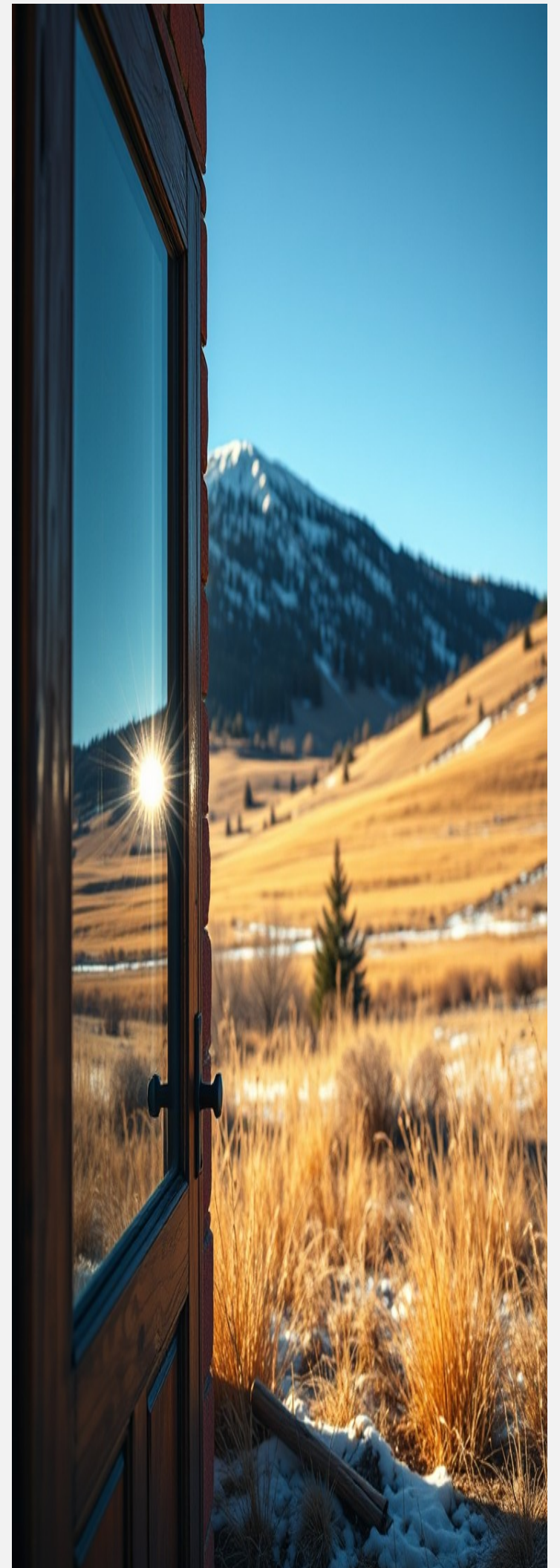
metropolitan unemployment rate (August 2026)

Boulder ranks #98 among 152 U.S. metropolitan areas in unemployment rate.

This figure reflects a labor market that appears stable on the surface but masks underlying economic fragility. Despite strong innovation and tech employment, Boulder's 4.6% unemployment rate signals that wage growth is not keeping pace with cost-of-living pressures, particularly in housing and public services. The gap between employment and affordability is widening, even as the city maintains a reputation for high-income, knowledge-based employment.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics and Current Employment Statistics, August 2026 (seasonally unadjusted, metropolitan) · ALEX Intelligence computation

<https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-10-04-boulder-lab-bls-unemp-rate-msa>



01

High Employment, Low Affordability

Boulder's labor market is resilient, yet its 4.6% unemployment rate hides a deepening affordability crisis. As the cost of living exceeds the federal poverty line for a family of four by over \$30,000, even employed residents face housing insecurity. This disconnect between employment status and financial stability undermines long-term economic health, particularly for public services reliant on stable tax revenue.

02

Public Services Under Siege

The fiscal strain is evident in the recent 20% staff cuts at the Boulder Library District and the Parks Board's rebuke of proposed service reductions. These decisions are not isolated—they are direct consequences of a labor market that is not translating into sustainable public revenue. Even as innovation-driven sectors absorb shocks, the erosion of civic infrastructure risks long-term social and economic degradation.



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Diane Hart Alexander, MBA, MHA

Chair & CEO, ALEX Companies

Designated Broker, Alexander Tiffany Southwest, LLC dba ALEX.realestate, et.al.

Texas License #574877-B · Broker License #565194-BB

diane@alex.realestate · +1 713.591.9902



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