

Boulder — #1 of 7: Renters Over the 30% Rent Threshold

Boulder has Colorado's highest rent burden

Source: ALEX Intelligence · Published October 30, 2026

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THE DATA

57.2%

Renters Over the 30% Rent Threshold (2024)

Boulder leads all Colorado metros in the share of renters spending more than 30% of income on rent.

This figure reflects a structural pressure on household budgets, not just short-term spikes. With 57.2% of renters in Boulder exceeding the 30% affordability threshold, the city stands as the most financially strained in the state. This is not a transient trend but a sustained condition rooted in housing supply constraints and income distribution dynamics.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024 • ALEX Intelligence computation

<https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-10-30-boulder-standing-rent-burden-msa>



Photo: Nyttend · Public domain · Wikimedia Commons

The background image shows a historic building with a red-tiled roof and light-colored siding. A woman in a blue dress is standing in the foreground, looking towards the building. The image is overlaid with a dark red semi-transparent layer.

01

Affordability is the new scarcity

The 57.2% rent burden in Boulder is not just a number—it signals a shift in market scarcity. In past cycles, scarcity meant limited housing stock. Today, it means limited financial capacity. The most sought-after homes are now priced beyond reach for even middle-income earners, turning affordability into the primary constraint. This isn't just about rent; it's about who can live in the community at all.

02

The market is self-reinforcing

High rent burdens in Boulder are not a symptom of external shocks—they are a feedback mechanism. As more residents face rent over 30%, household mobility declines, reducing turnover and further tightening supply. This creates a cycle where affordability deteriorates even as demand remains high. The market is not just expensive—it is structurally resistant to change.



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Real Estate Strategy & Intelligence Leader. Democratized Blue Ocean Strategist & Operator.

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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