16.6% of adults in Colorado have low literacy
Colorado ranks 17 out of 50 in the U.S.

2 in 9 counties in Colorado have populations where 25% or more of the residents have below basic literacy

How does low literacy affect equity and quality of life?
In counties where at least a quarter of the population have below basic literacy, we see that many health, economic, and educational outcomes fall short.

Unemployment
- 9.0%
- 4.6%
- 4.7%

Median Income
- $38,915 low literacy counties
- $55,385 other counties
- $68,811 state

Adults Without a High School Degree
- 17.0%
- 7.6%
- 8.6%

No Access to Healthcare
- 12.8%
- 11.0%
- 8.1%

Residents Below the Poverty Line
- 20.4%
- 11.4%
- 10.1%

Demographics

The percent of 4th graders with below basic reading by race
- White: 18%
- Hispanic/Latinx: 46%
- Black/African American: 42%
- Asian: 28%
- State Average: 29%

Households Where Limited English is Spoken
The percentage of households where no adult speaks English "very well."

Over 60%
Under 10%

Over 30%
Under 5%
4th Grade Reading Levels

While literacy can be high or low in a given metro area, when we look at 4th grade testing, we can see that the performance in English/Language Arts is not consistent across race and gender.

English/Language Arts Test Performance by Race

- 7th
- 6th
- 1st
- 2nd
- 3rd
- 4th
- 5th

Unemployment

4%
63,446 adults living in Denver are unemployed.

Single Mother Households

9.9%
108,115 households in Denver are single mother households.

Residents Below the Poverty Line

8.6%
185,254 residents are living below the poverty line in Denver.

Didn’t Receive a High School Diploma

9.2%
180,897 adults living in Denver did not receive a high school diploma.

Receives Public Assistance

16.4%
107,905 residents receive public assistance in Denver.

Racial Distribution

- 64.3% White
- 23.0% Latinx
- 5.4% Black
- 4.1% Asian

Median Household Income

$75,565

Data for the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood Metro Area

Income by Race

- White $84,430
- Latinx/Hispanic $54,379
- Black $49,009
- Asian $76,541

Below basic literacy is defined as scoring level 1 or below on the PIAAC International Adult Literacy Survey. 4th grade reading scores come from the NAEP reading assessment. 4th grade ELA test performance data comes from edopportunity.org. Self-Reported health comes from the Community Health Status Indicators. All other data comes from the American Community Survey. PIAAC data is not available by city. Visit map.barbarabush.org for county-level PIAAC data.