

SHELTER AMID COVID-19



A Colorado Politics Roundtable on the housing challenge

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Did you “shelter in place” this spring? Probably not for long if the threat of eviction was looming. And not at all if there was no place to call home to begin with.

It was one of the troubling ironies of the pandemic of 2020: Authorities closed businesses, offices and other places of employment — along with schools and other community institutions — ordering people to stay home to stem the spread of COVID-19. Many whose jobs didn’t allow for virtual officing found themselves out of work. Even with special programs in place to ease household cash flow, bills including rent and mortgage payments began to pile up, raising doubts about how much longer they could “state at home.”

But just how widespread has the problem actually been? How many Coloradans, particularly in the Denver area, have faced — or still face — uncertainty about the future of their housing?

And what about the homeless, whose ranks are said to have swelled from the same COVID-induced economic upheaval?

Meanwhile, what policies have been needed to ease the crunch, which continues for some amid an ongoing pandemic and its collateral damage to small businesses and other employers?

In this Roundtable, we put some of those questions to wide-ranging stakeholders in the housing debate, and not surprisingly, they didn’t necessarily agree on the answers. Not even on the scope of evictions during COVID.

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