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**Executive Summary**

# City of Fort Collins Social Sustainability Gaps Analysis

2020 Update

**PREPARED FOR:**

City of Fort Collins

Social Sustainability Department

**CREATED**

June 2020



# What is Social Sustainability?

Social sustainability is the practice of ensuring healthy social systems so that people in our community can thrive. We do this through partnerships, programs and policies that provide equity and opportunities for all.

The following gaps analysis is a 2020 update to the original analysis conducted in 2014 and was completed prior to the outbreak of COVID-19.

2012 is generally used as the benchmark year to evaluate changes in the market since the last iteration of this gaps analysis.



The City commissioned an update to the gaps analysis, originally conducted in 2014, as part of its initiative to build a cohesive, coordinated approach to community sustainability across City departments.

The Social Sustainability Gaps Analysis is intended to provide a high level overview of current trends in the Fort Collins community, related to various components of social sustainability, including but not limited to housing, homelessness, poverty, health, wellness, education, diversity, and the needs of special populations.

The analysis will help inform the City of Fort Collins' strategic planning process and decision-making related to social sustainability by providing a quantitative and qualitative assessment of supportive service gaps in the community.

## Key themes and gaps

### 1. **Shifting demographics and rising housing costs** highlight areas of inequality.

Fort Collins is changing. The City lost low income households (in part due to rising home prices and rents), median incomes increased, chronic homelessness increased, poverty decreased overall but continues to disproportionately impact minorities, and the population is aging.

### 2. **Disproportionate impacts on racial and ethnic minorities** are cross-cutting in all subject areas.

Racial and ethnic minorities in the community are more likely to experience negative outcomes related to poverty, housing cost burden, low median income, educational attainment, lack of representation in leadership roles, and access to healthy and affordable foods.

### 3. **Focus on children** to stabilize the workforce and break intergenerational poverty.

Research shows programs that focus on children are impactful in breaking intergenerational poverty, stabilizing households through childcare, increasing economic stability through childcare, and improving health and educational outcomes for children in the community.

### 4. **Inadequate funding and capacity** for the well-developed network of social service providers.

Social service providers are at capacity and struggle to keep up with demand for services in healthcare, homelessness prevention, affordable housing, and childcare. Providers emphasized the cohesiveness of services in the community and expressed this as a funding and capacity issue.

### 5. **Stabilizing households** requires integrating and expanding existing services.

Stabilizing households involves the spectrum of social sustainability service areas including housing, homelessness prevention and intervention, youth supports, equitable policies, health and wellness, poverty support, and services that suit the unique needs of our targeted populations. While social services in the community are cohesive, there is a need for capacity expansion and increased duration of support services for households.



## Housing gaps

Affordability of housing decreased from 2012 to 2018.

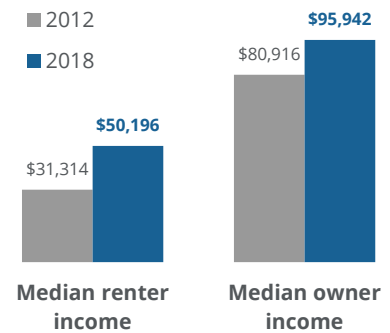
While household incomes increased, the City lost a significant portion of the low income population.

The need for accessible, affordable housing continues to rise with the aging population.

Manufactured housing preservation efforts are underway to maintain this naturally occurring affordable inventory and improve livability in these communities.

### Median household income increased.

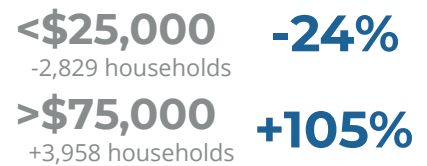
Median household income increased by 60 percent for renters (or \$18,882) and 19 percent (or \$15,026) for owners.



### Low income renter households left the City.

Fort Collins renter households earning less than \$25,000 decreased by nearly 3,000 households while households earning more than \$75,000 increased by nearly 4,000 households.

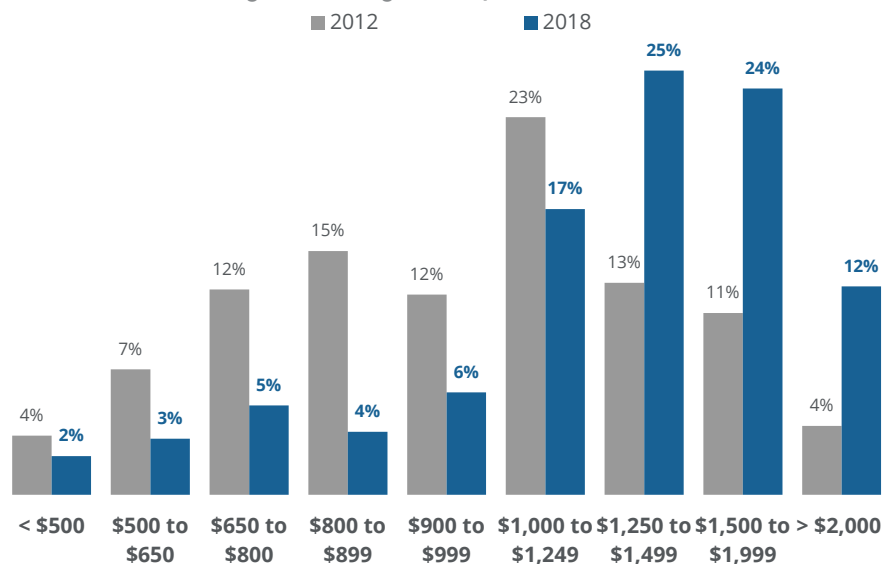
#### Change in Renter Households, 2012-2018



### Substantial loss of naturally occurring affordable units priced under \$1,250.

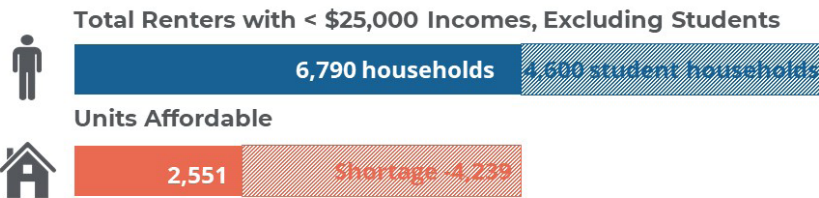
Nearly **950 affordable rentals were built** in the City since 2012; however, that increase was overshadowed by a decline in market-rate units affordable to lower income households. Overall, there was a 40 percent drop in rental units priced below \$1,250 per month.

#### Rental Units by Monthly Rent, 2012-2018



## The rental gap decreased but still shows a shortage of units for low income households.

2012



2018



The City could benefit from as many as 2,600 additional housing subsidies, which is an improvement from 2012 when the need was closer to 4,000 units. Some of this improvement reflects the efforts of the City and Housing Catalyst to increase the supply of affordable housing. However, it also reflects the reality that some low income households have been displaced from the City.

## Homeownership is out of reach for many, and affordability decreased.

**Renters that can Afford the Median Priced Home**

**23%**  
in 2012

↓

**11%**  
in 2018

There are 7,000 homeowners (21% of all owners) in Fort Collins that cannot afford their monthly housing costs. In addition, renters wanting to buy have very few options in the market until they earn around \$75,000 per year and can afford homes priced at \$280,000 or higher.

*More than **60 percent** of homebuyers who participated in Neighbor to Neighbor's homebuyer education program in Fort Collins purchased a home outside the City.*

## The need for accessible, affordable units increased, and will continue to increase with the aging population.

Nearly 4,700 residents are estimated to have an ambulatory disability, the majority of whom are seniors. As the population of Fort Collins ages, the need for accessible, affordable units will continue to rise.

## Households with at Least one Disabled Resident

**14%**  
in 2012

↑

**17%**  
in 2018

## Protections for manufactured housing communities are a priority for the City.

Manufactured housing community residents are particularly vulnerable to changes in the housing market. Short term solutions to alleviate disputes within communities and protect communities against redevelopment are underway. However, long term stabilizing policies have not been implemented.



## Homelessness gaps

Homelessness increased in the City from 2012 to 2018.

The prevalence of chronic homelessness increased, indicating a need for expanded supportive services for this population.

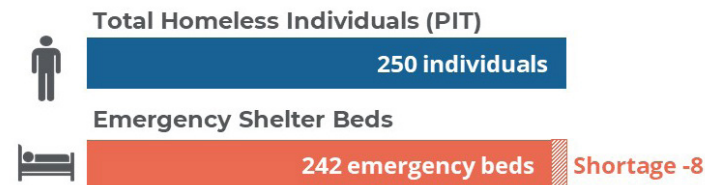
More than 1,000 students were homeless throughout the 2017 to 2018 school year in Poudre School District.

Service providers work well together to meet the needs of this population, but additional funding is needed to expand services to meet demand.

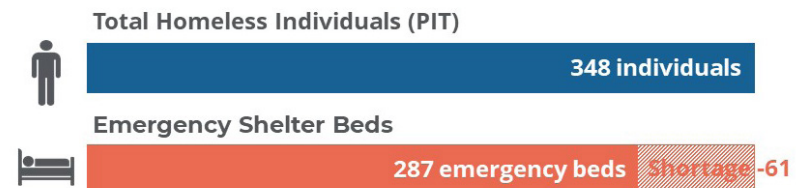
### Homelessness increased.

Homelessness captured in the point-in-time survey on a single night increased by nearly 100 individuals from 2013 to 2019. Emergency shelter beds increased by 45 beds during that time, resulting in an increased gap in emergency shelter beds.

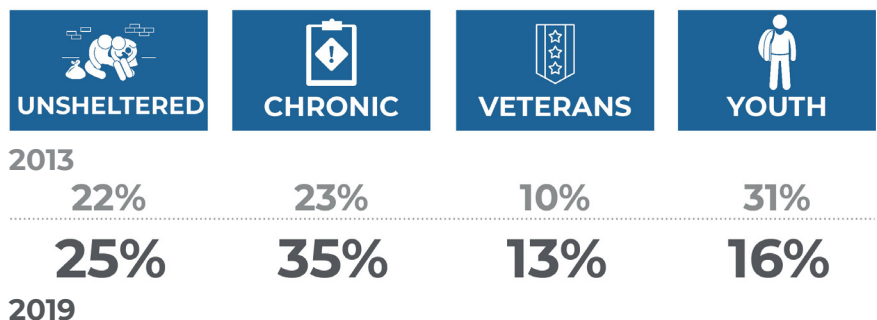
#### 2013



#### 2019



The share of unsheltered, chronic, and Veteran homelessness all increased.



Expanded services require additional funding, and service providers are at capacity.

Top needs identified by service providers include:

- Increased case management capacity
- Focus on deterrence (e.g., rent assistance)
- Youth focused shelter and services
- Permanent supportive housing and transitional housing
- Mental and physical healthcare access



## Persons in Poverty gaps

Poverty decreased citywide from 2012 to 2018.

Poverty largely decreased for residents who are educated, employed, and white.

Minorities are disproportionately impacted by poverty in Fort Collins.

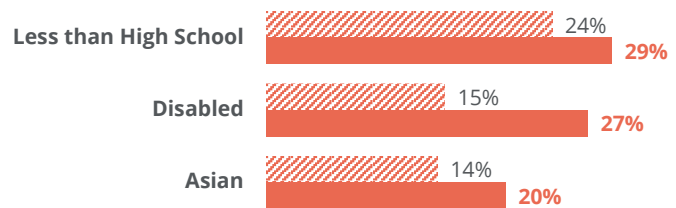
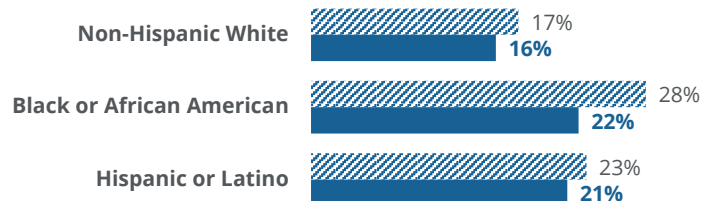
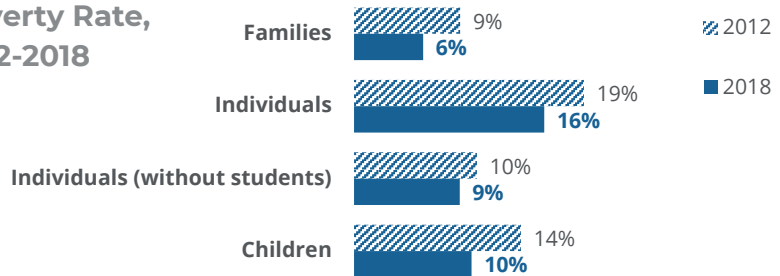
Fort Collins has a relatively low poverty rate for a community with a large university presence.

**Poverty decreased citywide, but not all residents experienced the same economic growth.**

Poverty rates are highest for:

- Minorities
- People with disabilities
- People with lower educational attainment

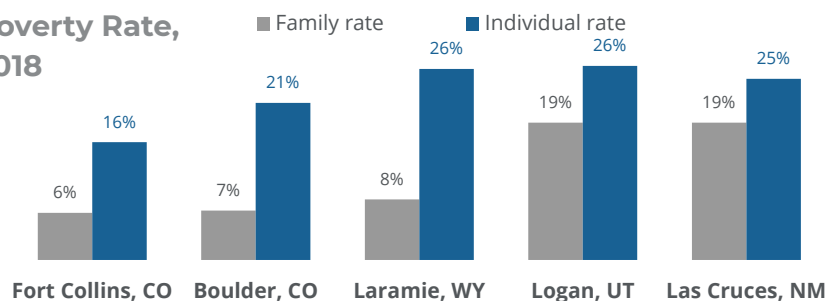
**Poverty Rate, 2012-2018**

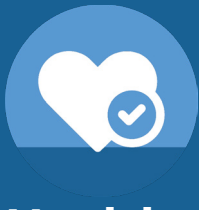


*The individual poverty rate is **16 percent** (25,400 individuals); however, without including the 18 to 24 age cohort (due to CSU students) the individual poverty rate drops to **nine percent** (11,372 individuals).*

**Poverty in Fort Collins is lower than peer communities in surrounding states with large universities.**

**Poverty Rate, 2018**





## Health + Wellness gaps

The need for mental health and substance abuse services increased in the City.

Access to healthy food remains a problem in the community which disproportionately impacts Hispanic households.

Several facilities will expand mental health and substance abuse services, but stakeholders indicate that gaps in capacity will remain.

Mental health challenges, suicide, and substance abuse (e.g., drugs and alcohol) increased.

	MENTAL ILLNESS (percent)		SUICIDE (per 100,000)	SUBSTANCES (residents in the past year)	
	Adults	Adolescents		Alcohol	
2013	25%	43%	22.5	11,800	
2019	19%	50%	22.8	Substance Use	6,600

*Several facilities are in the planning and development phase within the City to meet these needs around mental health and substance abuse.*

### NEW BEDS

**16**

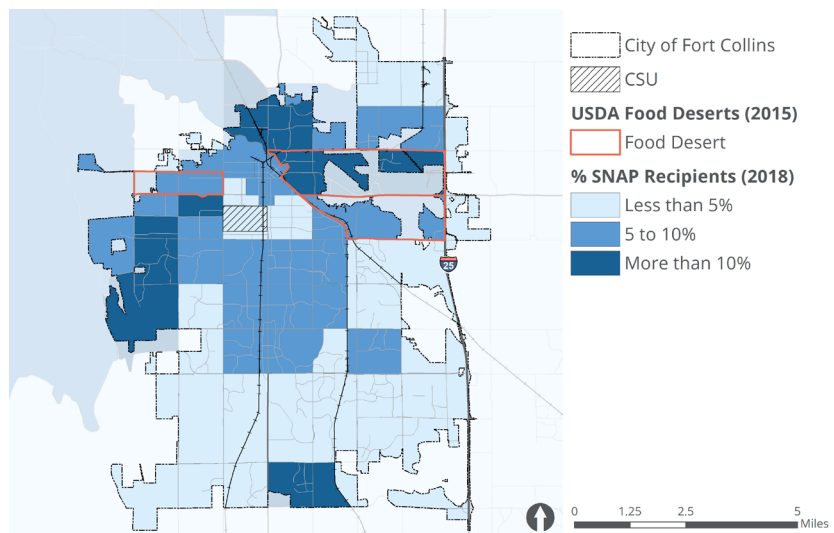
Garcia House

**64**

Behavioral Health Services Facility

### Access to healthy and affordable food is not equal.

All three Census tracts that are designated as food deserts by the USDA have a high share of SNAP recipients. Two of the three tracts also have a high share of Hispanic residents (greater than 10%).



### Additional services are needed to meet community needs.

Top needs identified by service providers include:

- Gap in 20- to 90-day short term residential programs and longer-term support for substance abuse and mental health
- Lack of mental or behavioral health services for children under 10 years old
- Persistent stigma around food benefits and a reduction in the utilization of food programs, not the need



## At-Risk Youth + Education gaps

At-risk youth and childcare are top priorities for the City to address intergenerational poverty, improve outcomes for children, and increase workforce capacity.

Generally, the at-risk population remains unchanged since 2012. Economic stability increased while household and educational stability decreased.

There is a gap in childcare capacity in the City of 645 for children under 6 years old. This is likely an underestimate of need due to the prevalence of in commuting from Larimer and Weld Counties.

### Economic stability among at-risk youth improved with the economic expansion following the Great Recession.

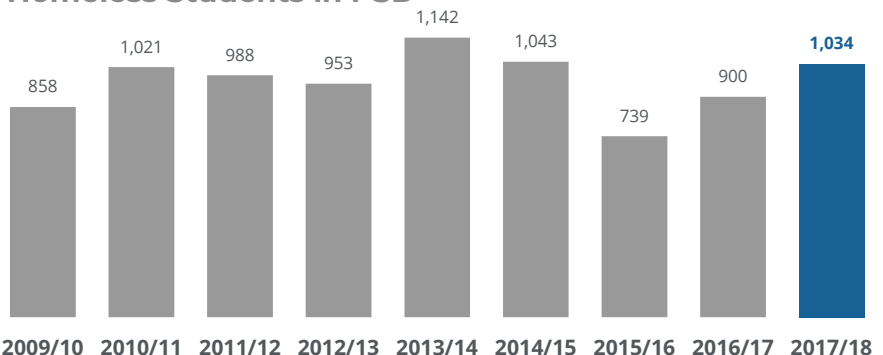
In 2018, nearly 3,000 children (10%) are living in poverty and 31 percent of students in Poudre School District are eligible for free and reduced lunch. The child poverty rate decreased from 14 percent in 2012 to 10 percent in 2018.

### Household and educational stability remained unchanged, and in some cases increased.

At-Risk Youth Include:

- **1,000** homeless students in PSD
- **350** neglected or abused children
- **1,300** who have severe mental illness
- **1,700** who leave school because of dropping out or are suspended/expelled
- As many as **5,500** who are less than proficient on standardized tests

### Homeless Students in PSD



### Childcare provision is a top priority to target at risk youth; however, gaps in childcare capacity persist.

#### Larimer County

Total population under 6 years old

21,160

Needing care (all parents in workforce)

13,754

Licensed Care Capacity

7,072

Shortage -6,682

#### Fort Collins

Total population under 6 years old

8,488

Needing care (all parents in workforce)

5,145

Licensed Care Capacity

4,500

Shortage -645



## Diversity + Equity gaps

Diversity and equity are cross-cutting in all elements of Social Sustainability.

Gaps in racial and ethnic equity are evident in income, poverty, and educational attainment in the City.

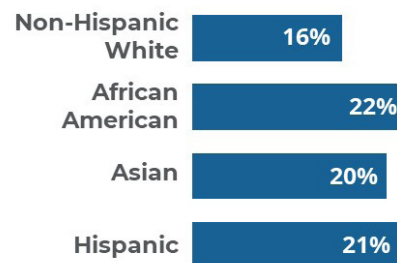
There is an interest in developing a framework to benchmark diversity and equity indicators in the community.

The City has made a commitment to improve equity in the community, and that requires the removal of obstacles that prevent historically marginalized groups from thriving.

*The City views diversity as the **full range of human difference** including ethnicity, familial status, gender identity, age, marital status, national origin, geographic background, race, religious and spiritual beliefs, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, disability, or veteran status.*

Racial and ethnic disparities in income and poverty are evident in Fort Collins.

### Poverty Rate

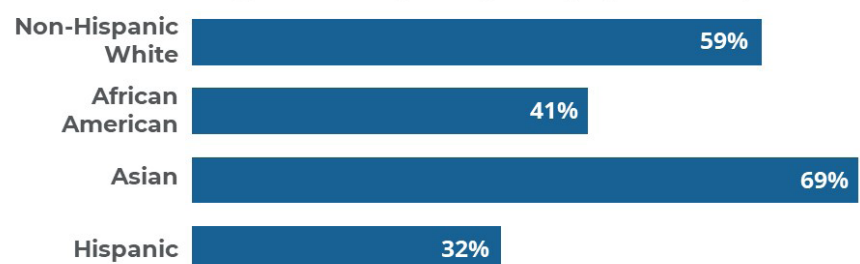


### Median Income



Disparities are also apparent in educational attainment for Hispanic and African American residents.

### Bachelor's Degree or Higher (% of population)



Stakeholders identified additional inequities in the community that are not prevalent in quantitative data.

Qualitative gaps identified by stakeholders:

- Disparity in public investment and access to services (geographically)
- Underrepresentation of people of color in leadership roles across multiple sectors
- Dominance of Christian ethos



## Target Populations gaps

Target populations of residents with a disability, seniors, and victims of domestic violence increased.

Expanded services are needed as these populations are expected to continue to rise.

Common themes in service needs include affordable, accessible housing; emergency support and rapid access to services; ongoing and enhanced services; and a broader range of transportation options.

### The population with a disability increased, and will continue to increase as the population ages.

Approximately 14,500 persons in Fort Collins have one or more types of disabilities. Seniors make up nearly 70 percent of these residents and have the highest disability incidence rate.

Top needs identified for residents with a disability:

- Challenges finding employment and working full time
- Affordable and accessible housing
- Enhanced community services
- Transportation options



Residents with a disability **10,100**  
in 2010

↑ **14,530**  
in 2018

Percent of population with a disability that is 65+  
**70%**  
in 2018

### Fort Collins is home to 18,000 seniors. By 2030, the senior population in the City could approach 26,500.

Seniors have the highest incidence rate of disability in the City. This, coupled with the high proportion of seniors who live alone—25 percent—means that home health care support and disabilities services needs will increase significantly in the future.

Top needs identified for senior residents:

- Housing options for grandfamilies
- Visitable and accessible housing
- Affordable rental housing
- Social service supports and transportation



Senior Population **12,458**  
in 2012

↑ **18,011**  
in 2018

### Prevalence of domestic violence increased.

Top needs identified for victims of domestic violence:

- Emergency health care services
- Safehouses and transitional housing
- Counseling and mental health support
- Faster access to mental health services
- Permanent, affordable housing



In any given year...

**5,000**  
women

**3,500**  
men

experience intimate partner violence  
based on U.S. prevalence rates