

Social Issues

Secondary Data

Gathering secondary data about community social issues, such as illiteracy, child and elder abuse and neglect, teen pregnancy, child care, and discrimination are difficult to obtain at a county level. Therefore, gathering additional information about these and other social issue topics will need to be an on-going collaborative process with appropriate entities in the County. There are, however, secondary data regarding teen pregnancy and child care, which are presented below.

Teen Pregnancy

As listed in Table 24, Weld County ranks among the counties with the highest percent of total births to teens. However, as shown in Figures 48 and 49, the percent of total births and fertility rates for girls aged 10-17 has steadily declined since 1999. However, Weld rates continue to be higher than the State rates.³²

Table 24. Total Number and Percent of Teen Births Among Selected Colorado Counties, 2000³³

County	Total Number of Births to Teens	Percent of Total Births to Teens
Boulder	276	7.1%
Jefferson	532	7.9%
Larimer	269	8.3%
Arapahoe	718	10%
El Paso	1,005	12.1%
Adams	871	14.2%
Denver City	1,607	14.6%
Weld	489	15.4%
Pueblo	369	19%

Figure 48. Percent of Total Births to Girls Aged 10-17 for Weld County and Colorado 1990-2003

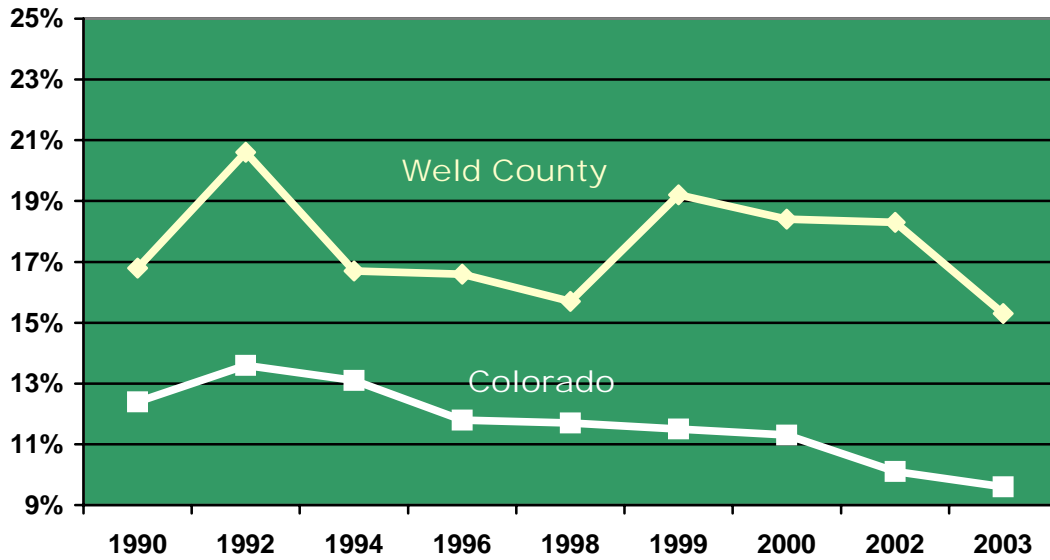
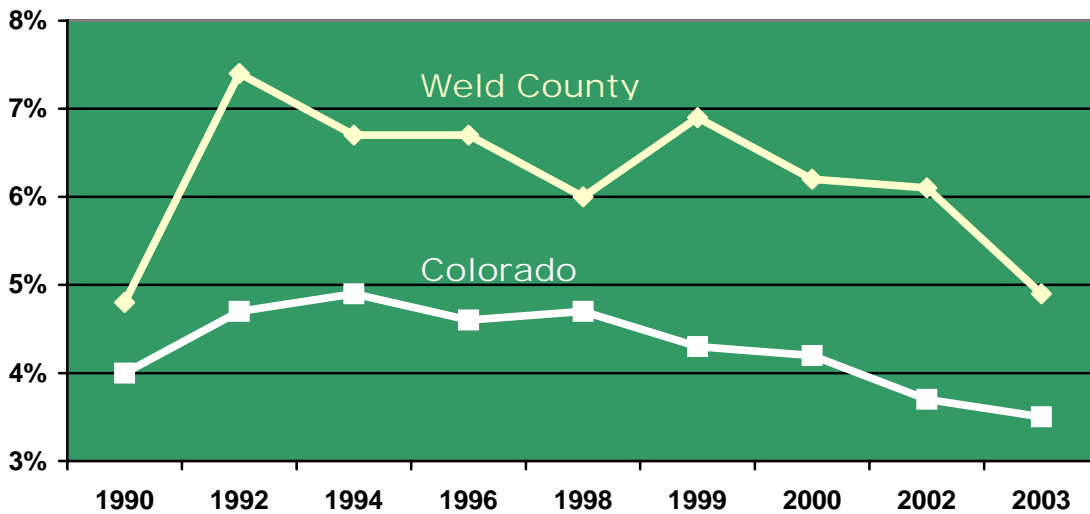


Figure 49. Fertility Rates (Live Births per 1,000) for Girls Aged 10-17 for Weld County and Colorado 1990-2003



Child Care

A study about child care needs in Weld County was conducted in 1999.³⁴ Results of that study indicated that:

- Respondents indicated that they relied on a variety of people, in addition to a spouse or partner, to assist with childcare for their children under age 6. Grandparents played an important role in assisting families with childcare needs.
- Cost of care was the most frequent reason given for why respondents had difficulty locating childcare services (65.7%).
- Not knowing whom to call was a reason for difficulty cited by 54.3% of the respondents and a similar percent (48.6%) of respondents said their difficulty was due to limited childcare services for a child of a particular age. One respondent comment, "We have a lot of trouble finding a babysitter if we do need one."
- Hours of care were also a problem for 42.9% of the respondents.
- Other reasons given by respondents for why locating childcare services was difficult included locating someone who is seen as "trustworthy", finding care providers who don't quit, and having very few childcare choices.
- Those who did report difficulties finding childcare in specific circumstances said they had trouble finding childcare when they worked weekends, overtime, and when their child was sick.
- Approximately 554 families with children age 5 and under in Weld County indicated that they had given up a job because of difficulties accessing adequate childcare.
- Thirty percent said they had difficulties finding sick childcare, while 29.1% said a lack of after school programs was problematic. Almost one quarter (23.9%) said they were not sure where to find available childcare or supervision programs.

All families interviewed for the child care study had some common childcare and child supervision difficulties. This included not knowing whom to call to locate childcare services or youth programs. In addition, 16% of families in this study reported that they had, at some point, given up a job because of childcare difficulties. This represents approximately 2,896 individuals in Weld County.

Grandparents are increasingly becoming responsible for caring for their grandchildren. According to Census data, of the 3,551 grandparents living in households with children

under 18, almost 50% of those grandparents indicate they were responsible for their grandchildren.³⁵

Community Social Issues – Survey Data

Respondents were asked if their community experienced social issues of teen pregnancy, racial or ethnic discrimination, family violence, abuse of children or adults, illiteracy and lack of affordable child care. Respondents indicated for each issue if they believed it was *not an issue*, *a minor issue*, *a moderate issue* or *a major issue* for people in their community. The results are presented in Table 25 and Figure 50.

Table 25. Percent of Key Informants and Household Respondents (HH) Indicating That Community Social Issues Are a Concern^a

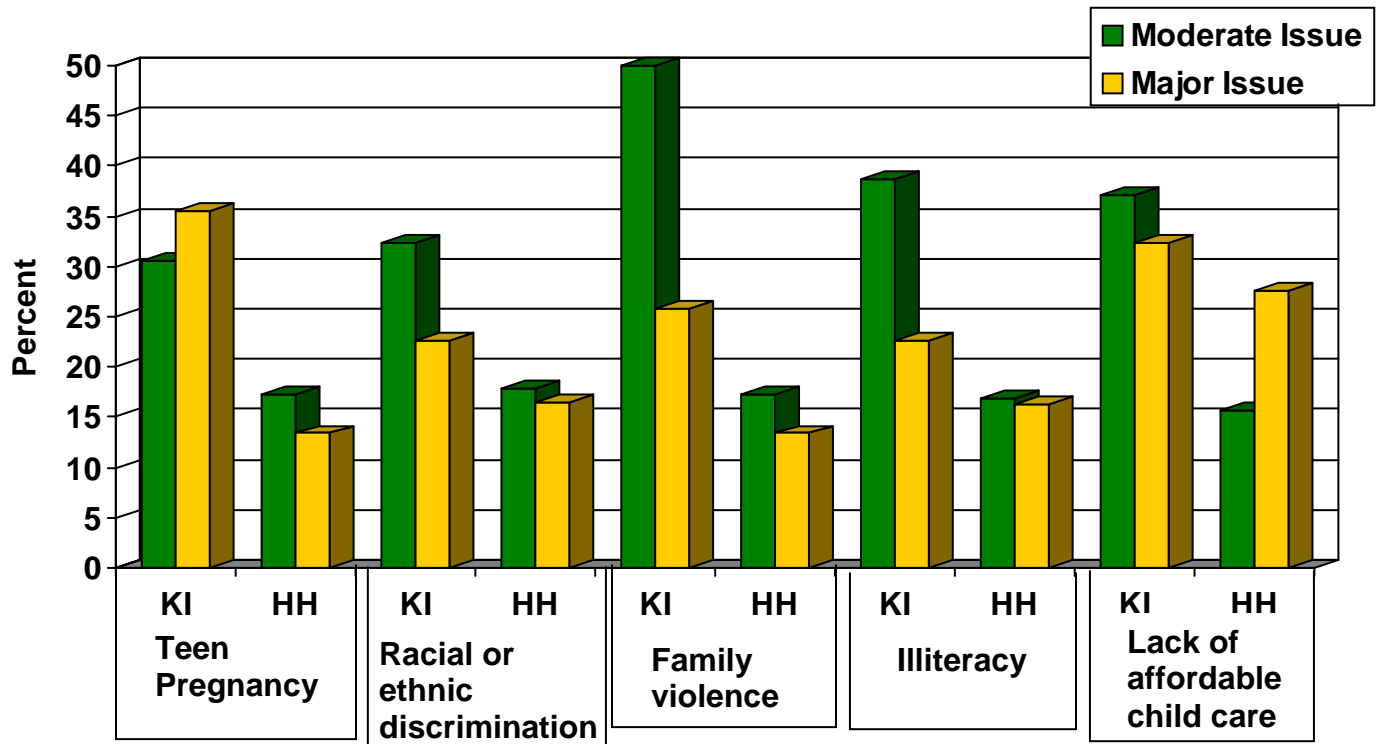
Social Issues	Minor Issue		Moderate Issue		Major Issue		Don't know	
	Key Inform %	HH %	Key Inform %	HH %	Key Inform %	HH %	Key Inform %	HH %
Teen pregnancy	14.5	17.4	30.6	17.6	35.5	18.2	16.1	23.4
Racial or ethnic discrimination	29.0	22.5	32.3	17.8	22.6	16.4	3.2	13.2
Family violence, abuse of children or adults	17.7	18.4	50.0	17.3	25.8	13.4	4.8	25.5
Illiteracy	24.2	16.5	38.7	16.8	22.6	16.2	8.1	20.9
Lack of affordable child care	16.1	13.5	37.1	15.7	32.3	27.5	6.5	22.3

^a Throughout this report, the percent of respondents who reported concerns were "not an issue" were excluded from the charts and tables. The complete set of frequencies can be found in the Appendix.

The majority of the key informants saw teen pregnancy (65.1%), racial or ethnic discrimination (53.9%), family violence, abuse of children or adults (74.6%), illiteracy (60.3%) and lack of affordable child care (68.2%) as moderate or major issues for people in their communities. Approximately one third of the key informants thought that teen pregnancy and lack of affordable child care were major issues.

Approximately one-third of the household respondents felt that teen pregnancy, racial or ethnic discrimination, family violence and illiteracy were moderate or major concerns. Lack of affordable child care was seen as the issue of greatest concern to household respondents as 27.5% indicated that this was a major issue. It is notable that 13% to 25% of household respondents did not know if these social conditions were an issue in their neighborhood.

Figure 50. Percent of Key Informants and Household Respondents Reporting Community Social Concerns as a Moderate or Major Issue



Other community social concerns mentioned by respondents included:

Bilingual Education

- There are programs (free) to teach English so the immigrants can get jobs, how about some free Spanish classes so the natives can get one
- Lack of bi-lingual proficiency
- Non English speaking people are a major issue
- Language barriers Spanish/English

Community Growth Issues

- Separation of upper and lower classes. Old timers vs. new comers
- Small towns have the same social problems as larger cities just no resources to help.
- Unwillingness to address competing tax statutes- weakening the fabric of our communities' social infrastructure

Services for Special Populations

- Lack of affordable elder/disabled care
- Affordable child care coincides with economic issues
- Several programs now in place to help (e.g. bright beginnings) but teen pregnancy and poor pre-natal care still a major issue
- No rehab center for drug abusers, the city council has decided to out source treatment centers from our city neighborhoods to “a farm somewhere” as one of our intelligent council members stated about deciding to not let the Rainbow House open

Racial Tensions

There were many comments on the relations between whites and Hispanics in Weld County:

- Too many Mexican that don't speak American.
- Many migrant workers and illegals in the area
- Racism and unqualified teachers, administrators
- Too many Mexicans wasting tax payer money.
- ...Mexicans who bring their life style into America, looking for Americans to give every thing for free.
- If its not destroyed by Mexican gang and disfigured by Mexican gang paint, its just destroyed due to American jealousy and hatred.
- There is discrimination about age and being a lesbian. Not just Hispanic vs. white, lets face it I've lived here all my life. The Hispanics are getting what they want when they want it. When is it time for the white people? Gay, Lesbian, Straight...all white.
- There are programs (free) to teach English so the immigrants can get jobs, how about some free Spanish classes so the natives can get one
- Due to the chachacha music at all times of the night, while Americans are trying to sleep, and rest for work the next day
- There is too much discrimination towards Hispanics in Greeley, all level of economic mobility.
- Getting tired of Hispanics taking over. They need to learn English and speak it. Bi-lingual stinks. I would have applied for more jobs; but at the bottom of as said “bilingual a must” isn't this reverse discrimination? Greeley is becoming a city that supports reverse discrimination...remember English.
- Mexicans seems to be under every rock...more Mexican flags than American
- I can't believe you have to speak Spanish to have a job in Greeley. Some people that wait on you can't speak good English or don't understand.
- Our neighborhood is an older one. Hispanics are moving in and their culture brings old cars, junk in the yards, lack of upkeep, and totally different way of looking at neighborhood values. Also, white low income groups are noisy and drive recklessly on our street endangering all of us, esp. children and animals and old men.

- The Hispanics tend to keep to themselves. I'd like to see more of a union between Whites and Hispanics.
- There is a real problem with a lack of cultural awareness in our community. There needs to be more opportunities for ethnic groups to learn about each other and form relationships rather than all the finger pointing that currently happens. It would go a long way to help breakdown stereotypes from both sides to have social relationships.
- I do not believe that my community really incorporates our Hispanic population in decision making or programming decisions.
- The police seem to pick on the Hispanics more than the other races in this town
- Greeley is a very prejudiced town, you learn to live with it. The police dept. is very prejudiced. This is a problem that will always exist. You are more than likely to be pulled over than a white person. Simply cause you are brown. The problem here is Greeley is a social problem...on everyday living problems, who knows it seems the police close their eyes to this kind of stuff. Prejudice is in the schools, some more than others, some not at all. When you learn to live with prejudice and close your eyes. Greeley is a good place to live. At least you can eat in the front of a restaurant! And drink out of any drinking fountain and sit at the front of the bus.

Community Social Issues by Subgroups

Significant differences in perceptions of community social concerns were found among different Weld communities. Teen pregnancy was perceived to be a moderate or major community issue by residents in west-central Weld (81.3%), Evans (68.6%), and central-south Weld (60.0%). A notable percent of residents in south-west Weld (46.7%) and Greeley (44.9%) thought teen pregnancy was a moderate or major issue in their communities.

Racial and ethnic discrimination was seen as a moderate or major community issue in central-south Weld (60%), east-central Weld (42.9%) and Evans (42.6%). Greeley respondents had the highest percentage of all other Weld community respondents who reported that racial or ethnic discrimination was a major problem (23.8%).

There were significant difference between communities with regard to illiteracy. Communities that were perceived to have illiteracy concerns by more than 50% of their respondents were Evans (78.6%), south-east Weld (67.2%), west-central Weld (58.8%) and central-south Weld (53.8%).

There were no significant differences between communities with regard to lack of affordable child care. However, high percentages of respondents felt their communities had a lack of affordable child care. With the exception of north Weld and east Weld communities, over 50% of respondents in all other Weld communities indicated that lack of affordable child care was either a moderate or major issue. The highest percent was

in Evans (82.3%), west central Weld (71.4%), south east Weld (66.6%), central south Weld (62.5%), south-west Weld (54.5%) and Windsor and Greeley (52.7%).

Household Social Issues- Survey Data

Respondents were asked if they or anyone in their household experienced selected social issues such as difficulty in reading well enough to get along, not being able to afford legal help, not being able to get care for an elder or an adult with a disability or serious illness, not being able to access community service due to a language barrier, and not being able to afford or find child care. Respondents indicated for each issue if they believed it was not an issue, a minor issue, a moderate issue or a major issue for them or someone in their household. Results are presented in Table 26 and Figure 51.

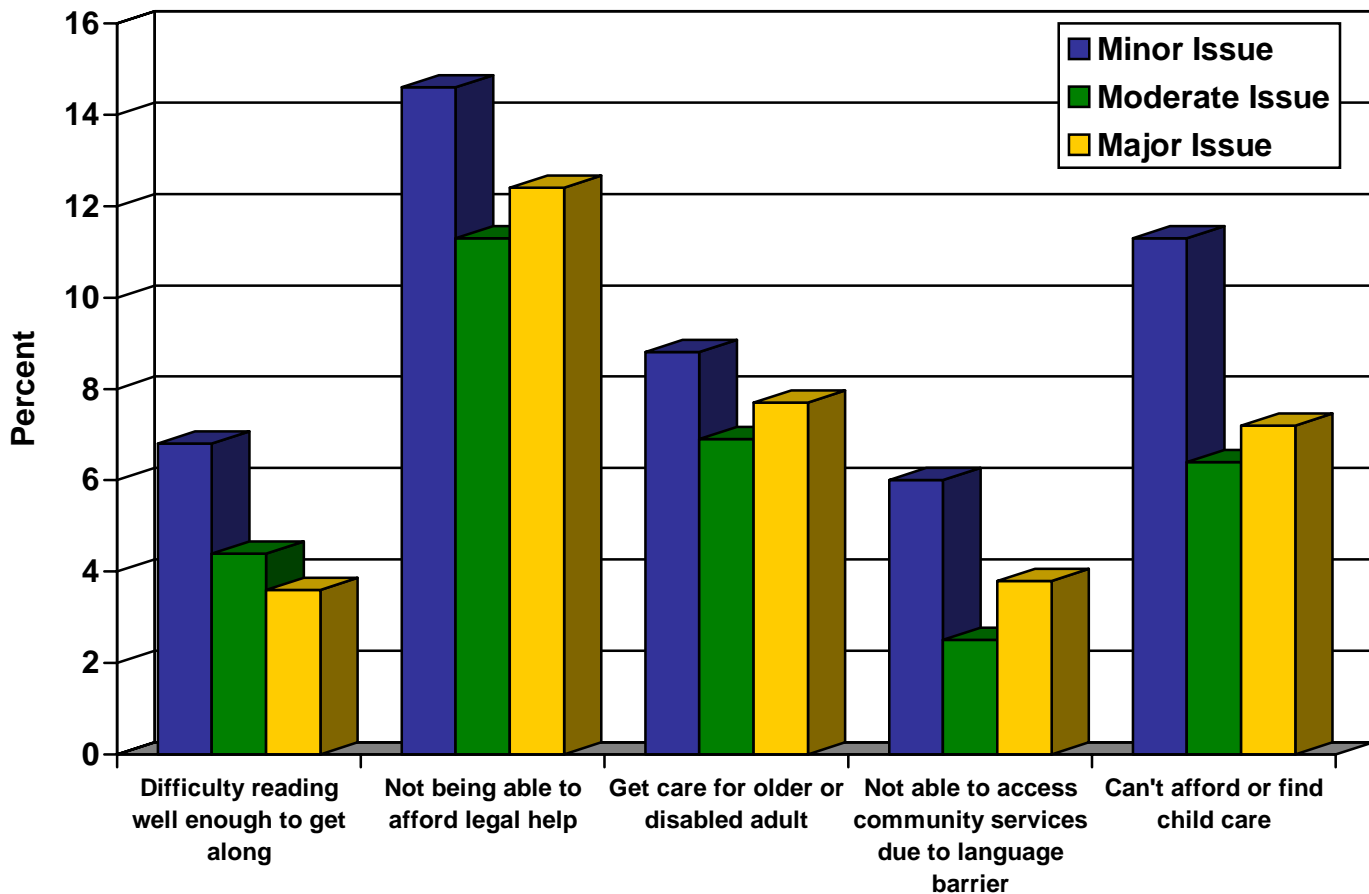
Table 26. Number and Percent of Household Respondents Indicating That Social Concerns Are Not an Issue, a Minor, Moderate, or Major Issue

Social Issues	Not an Issue		Minor Issue		Moderate Issue		Major Issue	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Difficulty reading well enough to get along	311	85.4	25	6.8	16	4.4	13	3.6
Not being able to afford legal help	225	61.8	53	14.6	41	11.3	45	12.4
Not being able to get care for an elder or an adult with a disability or serious illness	277	76.5	32	8.8	25	6.9	28	7.7
Not being able to access community services dues to a language barrier	319	87.6	22	6.0	9	2.5	14	3.8
Not being able to find or afford child care	272	75.1	41	11.3	23	6.4	26	7.2

Three household social concerns were identified as issues by a one-quarter or more of the respondents – not able to afford legal help (38.2%), not being able to find or afford child care (25%), and not being able to get care for an elder or adult with a disability or serious illness (23.5%)

Difficulty reading well enough to get along and not being able to access community resources because of a language barrier was an issue for 14.6% and 12.4%, respectively.

Figure 51. Percent of Households Reporting Social Concerns as a Minor, Moderate or Major Issue



Focus groups noted that child care is a major concern for many families. Participants conveyed their frustration with child care services in Weld County.

“Child care, it doesn’t exist”

Respondents indicated that child care is very hard to find in Weld County and creates enormous stress and a great burden on working parents.

“It is very hard to find. Some places take 4 year old kids but not 3 year olds. In others they accept 3 year olds but not 4 year olds. So I had to go from place to place and no one, no day care in all of the city of Greeley would accept my kids.”

“For the night there aren’t any. There are only babysitters.”

“They say, “I have the capacity to care for 4 children.” And I go there and there are 8 children in the house. And I’m not going to leave my child where they are beyond their limit.”

In an environment of limited child care resources, parents with Spanish only language skills are confronted with even greater challenges and difficulties in finding child care. One participant reflects on one of the frustrations that Spanish speaking only families face in Weld County.

“There are many day cares but I couldn’t find one with an interpreter. It’s not easy.”

Mothers with young children talked about how they are not able to make enough money to afford child care. One single mother with four children under the age of 6 had relied on the Migrant Head Start summer program to care for her children. She stated, “I don’t know what I’m going to do with my kids now that Migrant Head Start program is over.” With lack of child care options, participants reported that some families must take their children to work with them in the fields rather than leave them home alone while some participants reported they would not be able to work without a place to care for their children.

Parenting issues become apparent as a core issue for Latino families in Weld County. Focus group participants identified differences in cultural norms of raising children between the United States and Mexico and acknowledged their lack of knowledge about how to raise and communicate with their kids within the cultural expectations of Weld County. One woman explained that lack of knowledge about parenting customs of the dominate culture leads to frustration and worry for Latino parents.

“It’s hard to discipline your kids because they have so much freedom. We don’t know how to raise our kids here or how to talk to them. How can we communicate with them to have them listen to what we say? Sometimes a parent will say, come here, and the child disobeys.”

“Here when girls turn 12 or 13 they can go out with their friends but in Mexico, girls that age can’t do that.”

“In Mexico, it is okay to spank your kids, no questions asked. Many parents afraid if they spank their kid, they will call the police.”

“My son was born here, grew up here so he knows the rules here.”

Participants expressed a desire to know “how to understand my kids and how to talk to them”. They suggested parenting classes with a cultural emphasis “that teach us about the customs here.”

Discrimination

The majority of focus group participants experienced stigma. Stigma associated with language was pervasive and participants expressed their hurt, anger and frustration with people and institutions in the community who treated them indifferently and with disrespect.

“We went to buy a phone there at Verizon. We don’t know English but we tried to explain to the woman that we wanted to buy a phone. She started to laugh at us. I don’t know why she was laughing because we were able to pay. Then the woman understood us and answered in English. But I didn’t understand and she laughed at us and made fun of us. That is discrimination.”

Participants expressed helplessness and hopelessness with discrimination practices and recognized their lack of resources to combat many issues that confront them.

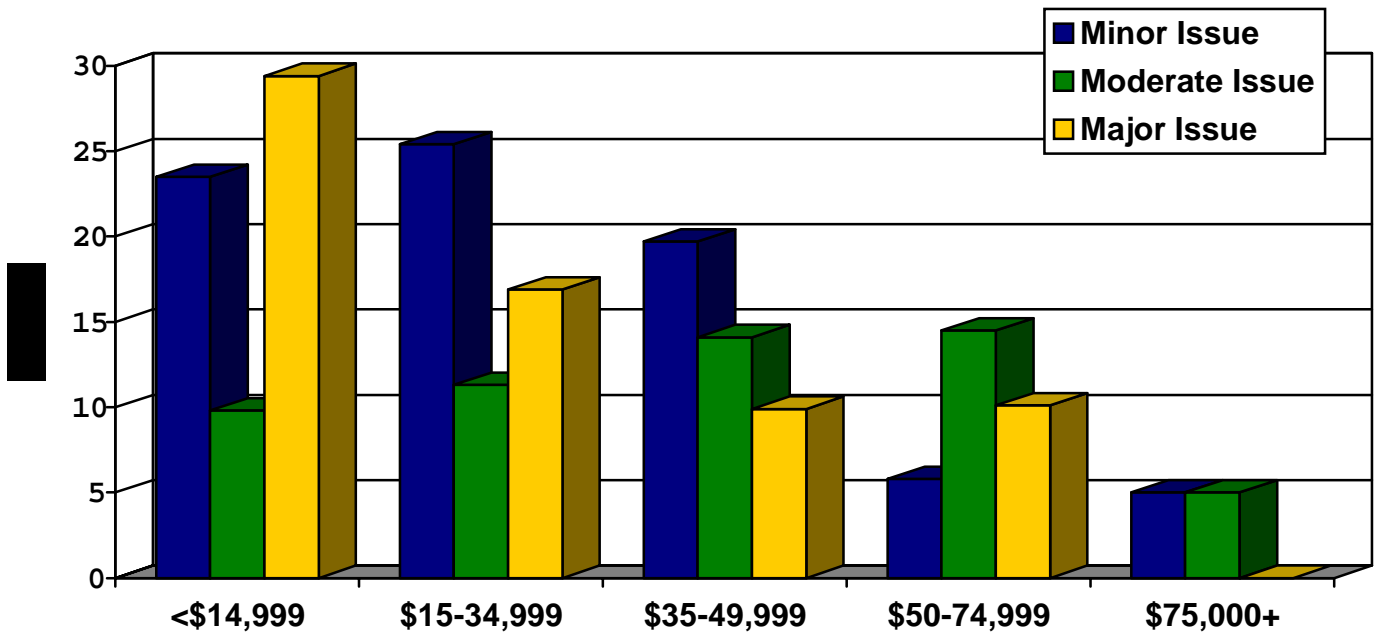
Household Social Issues by Subgroups

There were some differences in household social issues by subgroups. Three groups – non-white respondents, those with lower incomes, and residents living east of 35th Avenue were more likely than their counterparts to say that not being able to afford legal help was an issue. Twenty percent of non-whites¹ indicated that not being able to afford legal help was a major issue compared to 8.6% of whites. As shown in Figure 52, almost 30% of respondents with incomes below \$15,000 reported that not being able to afford legal help was a major issue. Similarly, over half of respondents living east of 35th Avenue compared to 17% of residents living west of 35th Avenue indicated that being able to afford legal help was an issue.

Not being able to get care for an elder or an adult with a disability or serious illness was more of an issue for certain respondents. Thirty five percent of households with incomes between \$15,000 - \$34,999 and 34% of households with incomes below \$14,999 indicated that not being able to get care for an elder or an adult with a disability or serious illness was an issue. Some 16% of respondents with incomes below \$14,999 indicated that it was a major issue. Others who indicated that getting care for an elder or another adult with a disability or illness was an issue were non-whites (40.2%) compared to whites (17%). Respondents living in different areas of Weld County reported difficulty accessing care for an elder or adult with a disability or serious illness. Almost 50% of Individuals living in central-south Weld, 29.2% of residents in west-central Weld, and 28.6% of residents living in south-east Weld, and 22% of residents living in Greeley reported getting care was an issue. Finally those residents living east of 35th Avenue were more likely to report getting care was an issue (32.6%) compared to residents living west of 35th Avenue (14.3%).

¹ Throughout this report non-whites were respondents who indicated they were either American Indian, Asian or Pacific Islander, or Hispanic and were grouped together for additional analyses (n=88).

Figure 52. Percent of Households Reporting Not Being Able to Afford Legal Help a Minor, Moderate or Major Problem by Income



Finally, not being able to find or afford child care was an issue among non-white respondents (48.1%) compared to white respondents (16.5%). Forty one percent of respondents living in central-south Weld reported that finding or affording child care was an issue.