The growing equality Colorado saw after the civil rights movement has eroded.

CAN IT BE SAVED?
By some of the most important measures of social progress, black and Latino residents of Colorado have lost ground compared to white residents in the decades since the civil rights movement.

An I-News analysis of government data shows that minority gains made during the 1960s and 1970s have eroded in the decades since.

The analysis focused on family income, poverty rates, high school and college graduation, home ownership, health and justice.

The implications for the state are enormous, especially since nearly half of the state’s under 1-year-old population is minority.

Within two generations, they are expected to be a majority of Colorado’s workforce.

To read the full report, see the accompanying video and download the free e-book, go to www.iNewsNetwork.org/LosingGround. You’ll also find an easy-to-use county-level chart of statistics specific to your community and an interactive timeline.

I-News is hosting a series of community discussions around the state related to the findings in this report. For information on an event near you, please go to www.iNewsNetwork.org/LosingGroundEvents. I-News encourages you to host a meeting of your own, too, at your place of worship or with your neighbors, co-workers or friends. You can find tips on how to lead such a discussion at www.iNewsNetwork.org/LosingGround.

"There is an opportunity for us all to take off the sunglasses and say this is an American problem. We can’t leave anyone behind."

Landri Taylor, President and CEO of the Denver Urban League

Losing Ground is the culmination of 18 months of investigative reporting done by a veteran team of award-winning journalists at the I-News Network, the public service journalism arm of Rocky Mountain PBS.
The I-News Network is the public-service journalism arm of Rocky Mountain PBS.

I-News produces in-depth, research-based journalism that many newsrooms couldn’t do alone. We collaborate with the most respected news outlets to deliver this journalism to millions of Coloradans.

Together with our media partners, we’re filling a void in serious public-service journalism, bringing more in-depth news to the places you already look for your news: your newspaper, radio, television, computer and digital device.

We produce journalism that makes a difference. Here are some recent examples:

• More doctors now disclose payments from drug companies after I-News helped Colorado Public Radio report hidden funding, allowing patients to make better-informed decisions.

• Lawmakers changed tax law after I-News helped The Denver Post reveal that movie stars and developers got tax breaks meant for farmers and ranchers.

• Officials now do more to protect students after I-News helped its news media partners report that some schools withheld information about assaults on campus.

• A new law was passed to close legal loopholes after I-News uncovered dangerous and illegal treatment of hazardous electronic waste unknown even to state regulators.

• The Colorado State Board of Education toughened standards for online schools after I-News showed the schools get millions in tax money while half their students drop out.

Losing Ground is yet another example of how I-News reports on issues of statewide importance and local impact. Our specialty is turning complex information into compelling multimedia stories – so the public can make better-informed decisions.

You can join in, too. Share your insights, suggest a story or make a donation to sustain quality public-service journalism at www.inewsnetwork.org.
Equality Has Eroded in Colorado. Can It Be Saved?

I-News analysis shows growing gaps in income, poverty, home ownership, education, and health.

Colorado has a rich history when it comes to civil rights. Major civil rights efforts for women African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, and people with disabilities have occurred here.

After the civil rights movements of the 1960s, Colorado was one of the most equitable places in the nation for minorities. That began to change, however, in the 1980s and 1990s. To understand where Colorado is headed in the future, it’s important to understand both the past and how it began.

**Income**

In 1970, African American families earned 73 percent of white family income and only 80 percent of that income had been sufficient to raise a family. Before 1980, African American families earned 73 percent of white family income and only 40 percent of that income had been sufficient to raise a family. While the Latino family earned 73 percent of white family income, the Latino family income had been sufficient to raise a family.

**Home Ownership**

Almost 60 percent of Latino households were owner-occupied in 1970; now it’s just beneath 50 percent. The Latino family had owned 73 percent of white family incomes and only 50 percent of their income had been sufficient to raise a family. Home ownership among blacks had stayed at about 40 percent.

**High School Education**

Among more positive trends, 80 percent of black adults had graduated from high school by 2010, up from 50 percent in 1970. Latino adults have improved their high school graduation rates through the decades, but in 2010, only 40 percent of them had graduated from high school, compared to 50 percent for whites.

**College Education**

The gaps among adults with college degrees have steadily widened since 1970, with 50 percent of adults with college degrees in Colorado being African American. The Latino rate and double the gap for African American college degrees three times higher than the national average for all groups.

**Poverty Gap**

After moving in the 1970s and 1980s, the poverty gaps in Colorado have widened, with rates almost three times higher for black and Latino residents.

**Life Expectancy**

A black baby born in Colorado is three times as likely to die in the first year of life as a white baby. A Latino baby is five times as likely to die in the first year of life as a white baby. While Colorado experienced an infant mortality rate of 5 deaths per 1,000 live births—lower than the national average for whites, the infant mortality rate for blacks is 15 deaths per 1,000 live births—almost three times as likely to die in the first year of life than a white baby. And a Latino baby is five times as likely to die in the first year of life than a white baby. Whites in Colorado experience an infant mortality rate of 5 deaths per 1,000 live births—lower than the national average for whites. The infant mortality rate for blacks in the state is five times as likely to die in the first year of life than a white baby. The state’s black and Latino incarceration rates are higher than the national averages, where disparities also exist.

Many thousands of Colorado’s well-paying, blue-collar manufacturing jobs have disappeared, hurting minority families disproportionately. Pueblo’s CF&I Steel, Denver’s Gates Rubber Co. and Montbello’s Samsonite Corp. are just a few examples.

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What’s behind these concerning gaps?

Community leaders, lawmakers and researchers have described the growing gaps in income, poverty, home ownership, education, and health. Various factors contribute to the widening income gaps, but the most significant factor is the concentration of poverty in the Latino population.

About one in every 20 black men is incarcerated in Colorado state custody, compared to one in every 20 Latino men and one in every 15 white men. The state’s black and Latino incarceration rates are higher than the national averages, where disparities also exist.

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