

Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)

Metropolitan Statistical Areas are defined and designated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) through the process of applying established guidelines to Census Bureau data.

An MSA is defined as a county or group of counties that has either

- A city with a minimum population of 50,000 or
- An urbanized area (minimum population of 50,000) and a total population of at least 100,000 in the component counties.

The county that contains the largest city is called the “central county.” In addition to the central county, an MSA includes any outlying counties if they exhibit certain commuting patterns and have a high degree of social and economic integration with the central county.

An **urbanized area** is defined as a central city and any densely populated area adjacent to that central city. An urbanized area is required to have more than 50,000 inhabitants and be closely settled. Both urbanized areas and MSAs can cross state boundaries. Some MSAs contain more than one urbanized area, and some urbanized areas are located in more than one MSA.

The largest city in the MSA is used in the title (example: Boulder MSA). In some cases, one or two additional central cities are included in the MSA title (example: Denver-Aurora MSA).

Current Employment Statistics in Colorado publishes data for seven MSAs

- **DENVER-AURORA MSA** (includes 10 counties: Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Denver, Douglas, Elbert, Gilpin, Jefferson, & Park)
- **BOULDER MSA** (includes Boulder County)
- **COLORADO SPRINGS MSA** (includes El Paso and Teller counties)
- **FT. COLLINS-LOVELAND MSA** (includes Larimer County)
- **GRAND JUNCTION MSA** (includes Mesa county)
- **GREELEY MSA** (includes Weld County)
- **PUEBLO MSA** (includes Pueblo County)