Dear local employer,

As a business owner or manager in Chaffee County, we don’t have to tell you that finding and keeping employees is a challenge. While there are multiple causes, for many businesspeople, the lack of affordable local housing is a major factor.

In 2019, the Chaffee County Office of Housing and Department of Public Health launched the “Housing + Health” program, a public education and advocacy initiative to bring more attention and awareness to the local housing crisis. We’re exploring all the ways that housing impacts the lives, health and livelihoods of local workers, businesses, and families.

We’d like you to play a role.

On March 12-14 from 9am-5pm in Salida, we’re hosting a video-based storytelling workshop to support ten participants who live or work in Chaffee to hone and deliver personal stories about their experiences with local housing challenges – then be the “star” of a professionally produced video delivering that story. The workshop will be led by the Denver-based StoryCenter, an organization that helps to transform lives and communities through listening to and sharing stories. The outcome will be a set of ten videos (one for each participant) that will be screened at a public film event in Spring 2020 and used to generate public interest, advocacy and action to address local housing problems.

Would you, or one of your employees or colleagues, be a good fit for this program? We’re looking for individuals who have personal experiences they are willing to share, and a desire to make a difference in the community by telling those stories publicly.

The no-cost workshop is limited to ten participants, and recruitment is currently underway. Potential participants include local employers, employees, renters, homeowners – or anyone struggling to find affordable housing. Possible experiences could include: facing lost opportunities or poor health due the high cost of housing, being a local business owner unable to hire and retain employees, having to drive long distances to work in Chaffee County, or any number of other scenarios.

While this is an exciting opportunity, we also understand that three full days is a major commitment. To offset that, we can offer transportation assistance, meals each day, childcare, and provide incentives for any lost time at work. We are also committed to work with the potential storyteller’s employer to ensure that there is minimal impact to the business.

If you’re interested in participating in the workshop, contact Chaffee County Public Health at 719-539-4510 or email Andrea Carlstrom at acarlstrom@chaffeecounty.org with questions.

Warm regards,

Andrea Carlstrom, Director of Public Health
Becky Gray, Director of Office of Housing