

# Colorado Black Lung Statistics

In 2020, over **\$162 million** in black lung compensation was paid from the Black Lung Disability Trust fund; these funds supported miners in 47 states<sup>1</sup>.

Miners in Colorado received over **\$990,000** in payments from the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund in FY 2020. This number only includes those that the trust fund is paying; it does not include claims paid by coal mine operators and insurers. Including both trust fund and coal company cases, as of September 2020, there are **111 active claims** in payment in Colorado.

These numbers show that black lung is not a disease of the past – and that the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund must be funded into the future. Rates of black lung disease have hit a 25-year high in Appalachian coal mining states, and have reached epidemic levels in coal communities across the nation.

Since 1973, Colorado miners have filed **7,245** applications for black lung disability benefits. Benefits provide healthcare and a small living stipend to miners with black lung. In cases where the miners' employer is no longer operating and cannot be held responsible, these benefits are paid by the trust fund. This fund is vital for our disabled miners' essential medical needs and for supplying basic needs to their families and widows.

Miners risked their lives to power this country. They deserve our support to make sure the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund remains solvent into the future.

Unthinkably, the Black Lung Excise Tax is threatened to be cut by more than half at the end of 2021 if Congress doesn't act. This problem is not going away. We need a long term solution. Congress must act to *increase the excise tax by 25% or extend the tax rate for at least 10 years*, or thousands of coal miners are at risk of losing the health benefits they depend on to breathe.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This amount only includes trust fund claims, it does not include the money that coal companies pay to former employees who developed this deadly illness while on the job.

Numbers from [US Department of Labor Division of Coal Mine Workers' Compensation \(DCMWC\)](#)

This fact sheet was prepared August 2021 by the Appalachian Citizens' Law Center.  
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