



**TOWN OF ESTES PARK BOARD OF TRUSTEES
BOARD OF LARIMER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Joint Study Session

No public comment will be heard

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

3:00 p.m.- 4:30 p.m.

Virtually via Zoom Webinar

This study session will be streamed live and will be available on the Town YouTube page at www.estes.org/videos.

Agenda

- I. Introductions
- II. Visit Estes Park Operating Plan
Presented by Interim CEO Zumbaugh
- III. 2026 Workforce Housing and Childcare Funding Plan Draft
Presented by Manager Bangs
- IV. Commissioner & Trustee Comments & Questions.
- V. Adjourn.

NOTE: The Town Board and County Commissioners reserve the right to consider other appropriate items not available at the time the agenda was prepared.

Accessibility Statement: The Town of Estes Park is committed to providing equitable access to our services. Contact us if you need any assistance accessing material at 970-577-4777 or townclerk@estes.org.



Visit Estes Park 2026 *Operating Plan*



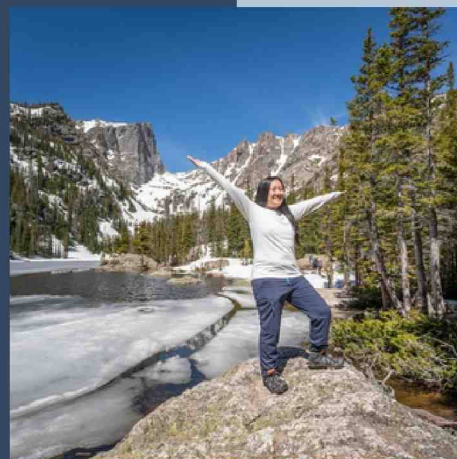
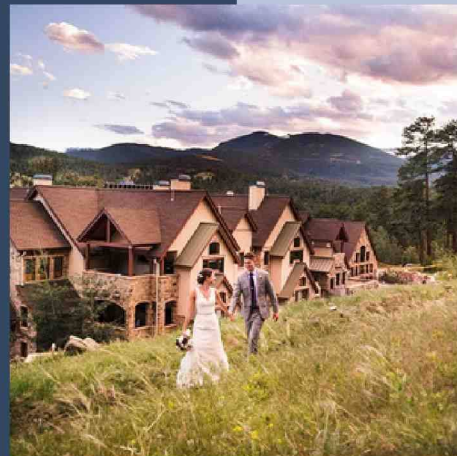
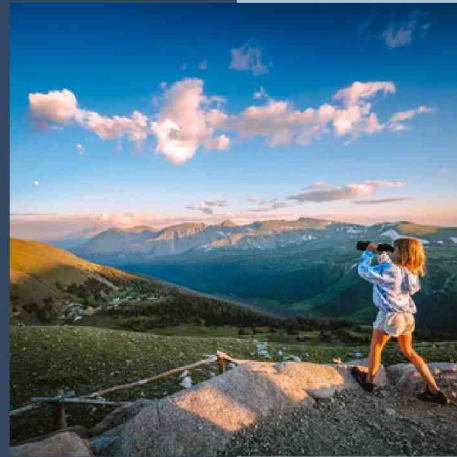


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Tourism is Integral



Tourism is a driving force in the Estes Valley.

With it, businesses flourish, work opportunities are available, and consistent funding supports workforce housing and childcare. It's why the amenities and public safety services our community enjoys are robust. It's how many ended up here and why many can stay. For generations, tourism has been the single most impactful economic driver in the area.

Resident quality of life is tightly interwoven with this integral industry. For this reason, destination stewardship is the mindset from which we operate and the thread that connects all we do. We strive to align with our community's shared values to support sustainable destination development and inspire responsible visitation using a conscientious, data-driven approach.

Our efforts aim to help protect the natural wonders that surround us while preserving the unique character of our vibrant mountain town for generations to come.



The Value of Tourism

TOURISM SPENDING RESULTED IN

**DIRECT
TRAVEL-RELATED
SPENDING**

\$510.8M

— this is like —



Covering the average grocery bill of every household in town for more than 25 years.

TOURISM SPENDING RESULTED IN

\$29.0M
LOCAL TAX REVENUE

2.2% increase compared to 2023

— this is like —



A lifetime supply of National Park Service entrance passes for each Estes Valley resident.

TOURISM CONTRIBUTED

82% 
of the Town of Estes Park sales tax

— without tourism, each resident household would pay an extra —



\$5,110

annually to sustain public services and support workforce housing and childcare solutions

TOURISM JOBS



3,419

Jobs generated in Estes Park for 2024



Visitor Economic Impact Per Day

- \$1.4 million in direct travel spending.
- \$79,452 in local tax revenue.



Tourism-generated tax dollars contribute to the public amenities and safety services that help make Estes Park such a wonderful place to live.

Source: Dean Runyan Associates



Tourism, Lodging Tax & the Estes Valley Workforce

In 2022, Visit Estes Park's lodging tax extension (ballot initiative 6E) was passed by the Estes Park community. The initiative provided a consistent, meaningful funding mechanism to finance a decades-long, significant challenge in the Estes Valley—the availability and affordability of workforce housing and childcare.

On January 1, 2023, the Estes Park lodging tax increased from 2% to 5.5%. Through the end of last year, almost \$12.5 million has been collected in support of this critical initiative. In 2024, this meant almost \$6.3 million in lodging taxes were earmarked for workforce housing and childcare in Estes Park.

Collected on overnight stays at hotels, motels, RV parks, campgrounds, guest ranches, rental properties, and other lodging facilities, 2% is used to fund the Estes Park Local Marketing District. The remaining 3.5% is used to fund dedicated workforce housing and childcare projects. 90% of those funds go to the Town of Estes Park, while 10% remain with VEP for marketing and visitor education, as required by Colorado statute. Programs like the Estes Experiences workforce initiative and VEP's community roundtables are executed with these funds.

In addition to funding our community's workforce housing and childcare programs, tourism also helps to fund public safety services and local amenities in Estes Park. For this reason, well-balanced tourism success is more significant than ever. A strong tourism economy is crucial to creating a sustainable community ecosystem where local workers and residents can live and prosper.



Letter from Larimer County Commissioners

The Estes Valley is a treasured part of Larimer County—its stunning natural beauty, outdoor adventure, and welcoming community members help define what makes our County so special.

Visit Estes Park plays a vital role in sustaining and enhancing that legacy. Through its work in promoting sustainable tourism and economic vitality in the Estes Valley while safeguarding the area's natural beauty, Visit Estes Park brings a thoughtful approach to tourism promotion and destination stewardship—helping to balance the needs of visitors, businesses, and residents alike. They are a valuable partner in helping to address the unique challenges that come with being a gateway to some of Colorado's most visited public lands, while still nurturing the character and charm that make the Estes Valley so beloved.

Larimer County is proud to support and collaborate with Visit Estes Park to ensure that the Estes Valley remains a vibrant, resilient, and welcoming place—not just today, but for future generations.

John Kefalas
Commissioner, District 1

Kristin Stephens
Commissioner, District 2

Jody Shadduck-McNally
Commissioner, District 3





Letter from the Mayor of Estes Park

What a joy it is to live in Estes Park! And what a wonderful thing that we're joined at the hip and the heart with Rocky Mountain National Park. There are many millions of guests who arrive each year to partake of the amenities of Estes and the wonders of the forests and the peaks around us. Estes Park strives to be welcoming and warm to all who pass through here, and we'd love to have you stay a few extra days in our many delightful accommodations, and get to know the area deeply. We have so many who make Estes Park a tradition from year to year, and there's plenty of good reasons why they do. In addition to all of the natural beauty, we have many festivals and events throughout the year, and we're a very creative and artistic town.

The Town of Estes Park and Visit Estes Park work in harmony to support tourism in our valley. Since the earliest settlers arrived in the late 1800s, Estes has welcomed visitors and offered food, outfitting, shops, guides, and more for their visit. Our cheer and optimism is infectious, and your senses will be awakened by the pristine mountain air. Visit Estes Park continues to build on our already robust offerings, and along the way will also gently provide information about being good stewards for our land and town and resources. Here in Estes Park, Visit Estes Park and the townsfolk hope to keep this mountain paradise beautiful and thriving for all generations to come, and we hope you'll join us this year and many more times in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gary Hall".

Mayor Gary Hall



Letter from the Visit Estes Park Board of Directors



Thanks to the dedication of local businesses, organizations, and community partners, Estes Park is steadily growing into a true year-round destination. Expanding economic opportunity throughout the year strengthens our tourism economy and enhances our community's overall quality of life.

To support this vision, Visit Estes Park remains deeply committed to sustainable destination development and responsible tourism marketing that centers inclusion and stewardship. In 2026, the team will continue to build destination drivers like the Catch the Glow Holiday Season while leveraging technology and data-driven strategies to attract visitors who respect and value our community.

This community-focused approach reflects our commitment to strong partnerships and thoughtful destination stewardship, ensuring our vibrant mountain town remains protected and thriving for generations to come.

Sean Jurgens
Visit Estes Park
Board Chair

Kirby Hazelton
Deborah Gibson
Jerusha Rice
Pat Murphy
Marie Cenac
Nick Smith

Vice Chair & Town Trustee
Secretary
Treasurer
Director
Director & Mayor Pro Tem
Director



Executive Summary

Introduction

Visit Estes Park is a destination organization guided by destination stewardship. This strategic directive recognizes the industry's evolution beyond marketing simply to put heads in beds. It acknowledges the need for a balanced, proactive marketing and destination development approach that values community collaboration and resident quality of life.

Our work utilizes destination stewardship principles to execute strategies that will positively impact the Estes Park community, contribute to a healthy economy and protect our natural wonders. Why? A healthy tourism economy and ecosystem are integral to a vibrant, year-round community with ongoing business, job and recreational opportunities, and a consistent workforce housing and childcare funding source.

This executive summary provides a high-level overview of our 2026 Operating Plan, highlighting how we will complete key organizational objectives that support our mission and vision, and carry through objectives from the Visit Estes Park Destination Stewardship Plan.



Executive Summary

Destination Stewardship & Sustainability

The Destination Stewardship Plan will continue to be advanced through integration in the 2026 Operating Plan, acting as a cornerstone as VEP works to enhance community and visitor experiences, foster workforce development, and strengthen local partnerships. Key priorities include supporting sustainability and inclusion certifications, raising awareness of responsible visitation practices, and aligning with the Colorado Destination Stewardship Strategic Plan.

Extend the Season

Efforts will focus on strengthening the destination's year-round appeal through targeted campaigns that drive visitation during off-peak periods, continued development of holiday experiences, and strategic use of the sponsorship program. We will foster strong community participation by engaging local businesses, providing resources to maximize event impact, and involving stakeholders through initiatives such as the Beyond Program. Ongoing evaluation through event data and performance metrics will inform strategies and ensure sustained growth.



Executive Summary

Leisure Consumer Marketing

Leveraging data, paid media, content development, social media and public relations, the marketing team will make a robust, cohesive case to new and returning guests to visit Estes Park by reaching them at multiple points in their decision-making process. Targeting efforts will reach guests who have visited Estes Park in the past and audiences who have not yet visited but have the same interests and travel habits. This integrated marketing approach will reach the right guests at the right time to inspire responsible, year-round visitation to our destination.

Paid Media

An integrated advertising strategy will drive destination awareness among new and returning guests, highlighting key need periods and encouraging overnight stays. Campaigns will run across digital and print media and leverage data and compelling creative assets to drive above-average click-through and engagement rates.

The types of ads used in the strategy include programmatic digital display, social media, out-of-home, print, co-branded emails, paid search, and sponsored content.



Executive Summary

Leisure Consumer Marketing, continued

Content Development & Social Media

Expertly crafted owned content will inspire guests to consider Estes Park and give them the information they need to plan their trips. It will provide a holistic view of the things to do, places to stay, and places to eat around town while integrating messages of sustainability, inclusion and Do Estes Right tips and tricks. It is designed to build intent to travel, boost engagement on social channels to expand organic reach and to drive traffic to VisitEstesPark.com.

Owned content includes VisitEstesPark.com webpages and blog, VEP social media profiles, and a consumer newsletter.

Public Relations

A strategic communications strategy will drive domestic and international destination awareness by positioning Estes Park as an authentic, vibrant destination while highlighting local tourism businesses and events. Separately, communications and public relations strategies will be applied to communicate the value of tourism to local stakeholder groups, including residents, municipal partners and local business owners.

PR components utilized include press trips/familiarization tours, media request responses, media marketplace attendance, desktide tours, media interviews and participation in local events.



Executive Summary

Leisure Consumer Marketing, continued


Key Organizational Objectives by Marketing Function

Marketing Function:


 Paid Media

 Owned Media*

 Earned Media*

Exceed
900 MILLION
Paid & Earned Media Impressions
 



Generate at least
10 MILLION
Paid & Organic Social Media Impressions
 



Drive
4 MILLION
views on VisitEstesPark.com
  



Deliver
400K REFERRALS
to lodging partner booking engines and websites
 

Obtain
20K ENGAGEMENTS
On Rocky Mountain Roamer, AI Travel Planner
 

Increase campaign effectiveness by targeting campaigns and content to marketing personas  

Integrate messages of sustainability, inclusion and preservation of community character 

Monitor current events, data tools and partner sentiment to market summer as necessary  

*  Owned Media = Content Development and Social Media /  Earned Media = Public Relations



Executive Summary

Partner Engagement

Partner engagement will be strengthened through a second annual tourism summit, stakeholder roundtables, and site visits designed to share updates and build awareness of current initiatives. Participation in the Beyond Program and enhanced use of the website's partners pages will expand collaboration, while regular communications will deepen stakeholder connections. Advertising opportunities, sponsorships, and in-kind marketing support will further align efforts with Visit Estes Park's mission and values. At the regional and state level, participation in Colorado Tourism Office initiatives and collaboration with key organizations will strengthen partnerships and advance shared tourism priorities.



Executive Summary

Sales & Services

Group sales and services efforts will focus on strengthening relationships with travel trade partners, international operators, and meeting planners through targeted networking, trade shows, and FAM tours. Stakeholders will benefit from education and training opportunities, updated group-focused resources, and the development of a comprehensive meeting planner guide. Ongoing participation in industry groups, associations, and local alliances will ensure access to quality leads and alignment with market trends. Incentive and referral programs, along with a paid media campaign, will promote mid-week and shoulder season visitation. To further support growth, new marketing assets will be produced to showcase Estes Park as a premier destination for groups and weddings.



Executive Summary

Finance & Administration

A strong framework focusing on strategic resource management, including financial and administrative oversight, while leveraging data to inform decisions, will ensure the organization's financial health, operational efficiency, and a positive work environment. The outlined goals and objectives aim to create a transparent and accountable operational foundation for the organization.

Goals fall into four key areas that collectively work to support the organization's mission:

- **Financial and Budgetary Management:** This area emphasizes transparent and accountable budgeting in accordance with established accounting standards. The goal is to ensure fiscal responsibility and compliance with all financial regulations.
- **Operational and Technological Support:** The organization is committed to making sure that its equipment and technology are well-managed and meet its needs. This includes all administrative and operational aspects required for daily functions.
- **Human Resources and Work Environment:** A significant focus is placed on fostering a productive and fulfilling work environment for employees. This involves comprehensively managing all human resource functions to ensure a satisfying workplace where people can thrive.
- **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** A central theme is empowering the organization with data and insights. Reliable data helps facilitate informed decision-making, ensuring strategies are based on evidence and comprehensive analysis.



Executive Summary

Finance & Administration, continued

The 2026 projected budget for lodging tax revenues reflects a 2% increase over the prior year. This is conservatively based on the 12 months of July 2024 through June 2025 revenues, which reflected an increase of 3.8% over the previous 12-month period.

General operating expenses fall into the following three categories:

- Personnel – Employee salaries, taxes & benefits, employee development, and employee professional development training.
- Promotional – Advertising, media buying, creative & production, research, tradeshow, familiarization tours, special promotions & sponsorships, event hosting, etc.
- Indirect – Telecommunications, liability insurance, maintenance contracts, professional fees, rent & cleaning, office supplies, etc.

Funds have been approximately appropriated to these categories based on prior years' allocations. A detailed and exact budget will be presented at the Visit Estes Park Public Budget Hearing in December 2025.



Introduction: Collaborative Destination Stewardship

Estes Park is enchanting. Our incredible destination continues to capture hearts and inspire passion, as it has for generations.

Visitors and residents value our vibrant mountain town's charm, spectacular views and outstanding recreational opportunities. As our tourism economy grows and evolves, a carefully considered and intentional approach to destination marketing and development is critical to balance economic opportunity and resident satisfaction.

Destination stewardship will continue to guide our strategies and inform our daily decisions in 2026. This year's operating plan outlines how Visit Estes Park will work alongside community stakeholders, partners and residents to drive economic opportunity and support our workforce by promoting responsible visitation and supporting sustainable destination development.

In our evolving visitor economy, we will continue leveraging powerful data tools to deliver the right message to travelers at the right time. We aim to attract visitors who value our mountain destination and wish to explore all it offers, while our destination development objectives seek to enhance the visitor and resident experience.

We remain committed partners in contributing to the area's long-term vitality by carefully considering our work's economic, social, and environmental impacts.



Mission

Visit Estes Park nurtures visitor reverence of this vibrant mountain town for business success, environmental sustainability and community harmony.

Vision

To be a year-round, family-friendly tourism and event destination that supports our vibrant mountain town with a balance of financial success, positive and memorable experiences for guests and a meaningful quality of life for our community.



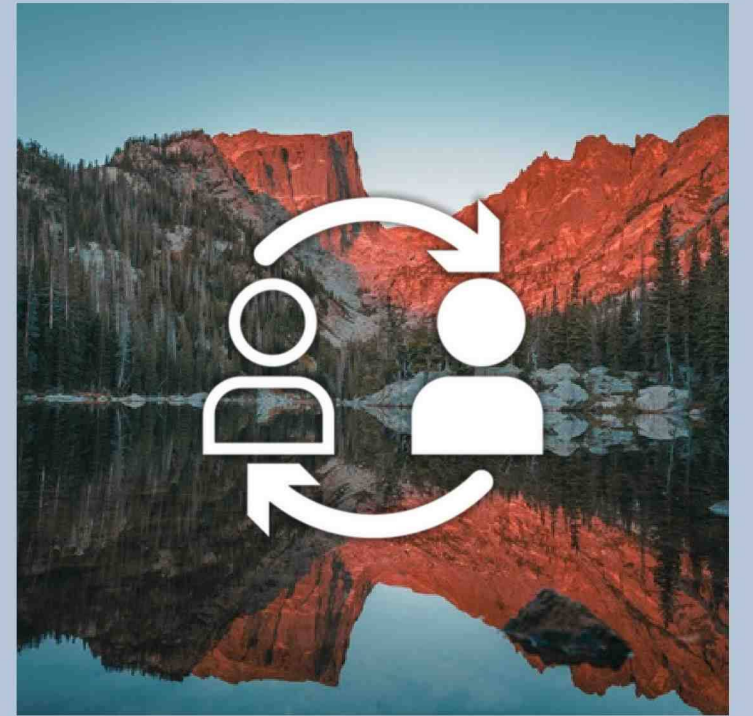
Values



Collaboration



Innovation



Empathy



Passion



Resilience



Stewardship



Destination Stewardship is our Cornerstone

Destination stewardship allows us to work toward achieving the delicate balance between economic vitality, enhancing the visitor experience and preserving the quality of life in the Estes Valley.

Becoming a partner in the stewardship of Estes Park is a paradigm shift in how we optimize our visitor economy and leverage tourism sustainably. Evolving the important work of promoting and managing our destination, stewardship emphasizes long-term community vitality, active stakeholder involvement and preserving Estes Park's authentic character, while striving to conserve the lands that brought us here.

Our Destination Stewardship Plan defines underlying principles that inform our annual operating plans and guide our daily decisions by carefully considering our work's economic, social, and environmental impacts. Alongside our partners, we're building a shared vision for how tourism supports and contributes to our community's future.

Estes Park's long-term sustainability depends on this work, found through destination stewardship, both as a place for our guests to visit and as a thriving, vibrant community.





Organizational Stewardship Imperatives

To ensure that Estes Park's visitor economy evolves in a way that attracts higher-spend visitors who value the destination, enhances the overall quality of the visitor experience, cultivates the town's authentic character and contributes to the area's quality of place, Visit Estes Park will continue to address these four imperatives.



Provide Best-in-Class Visitor Experiences

Continue to provide an excellent visitor experience and evolve the product to attract target audiences who appreciate and seek the quality, authentic experiences that Estes Park offers.



Steward the Environment

Lead the visitor economy in adopting and implementing practices that protect Estes Park's natural resources and ensure the area's long-term vibrancy.



Share Estes Park Responsibly

Prioritize the needs of residents when encouraging enhancements to the Town's product and working to grow visitation.



Optimize the Positive Impacts of the Visitor Economy

Ensure that the visitor economy continues to drive the Town's economic vitality and provide opportunities for engagement from all stakeholders in the community.



Partners in Destination Stewardship



Effective destination stewardship relies on strong partnerships among governmental agencies and local organizations. With this in mind, Visit Estes Park actively fosters collaborative relationships with the Town of Estes Park, Larimer County, the Estes Park Visitor Center, the Estes Park Chamber of Commerce, and Rocky Mountain National Park.

Visit Estes Park will continue to build and strengthen partnerships with the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest, Hermit Park Open Space, Rocky Mountain National Park visitor centers, and Colorado Welcome Centers through open communication, information sharing, and joint programming.

Working alongside these valued partners, Visit Estes Park will continue advancing its Destination Stewardship Plan and introduce the Tourism Master Plan, developed in collaboration with Clarity of Place, to ensure that Estes Park remains a vibrant, resilient, and sustainable destination.





Brand Attributes

Community Oriented

We support and foster relationships with local businesses, leaders and community members while identifying new opportunities for innovation and collaboration.

Sustainable

We embody sustainability and empower guests to do the same. This is key to preserving the natural beauty that surrounds us.

Educational

We educate guests about how to experience Estes Park and the surrounding public lands so they have the best experience while maintaining the charm of our local community and natural environment.

Inclusive & Accessible

We strive to welcome all to Colorado's Original Playground and emphasize that everyone can experience and thrive in the great outdoors.

Data & Tech-Driven

We make decisions based on data to sustainably attract guests and proactively adjust our strategies. Through the latest AI technology, we drive real-time conversation, booking and advanced content creation.



Key Performance Indicators

Destination Focused

- Tax Revenue
- Occupancy
- Average Daily Rate (ADR)
- Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR)
- Stakeholder Engagement

Marketing Focused

- Advertising – Impressions, CTR, Engagement Rate
- Public Relations – Impressions, Articles Earned, Ad Value
- Social Media – Engagement, Comments, Shares
- Website – Views, Engagement Time
- AI Travel Planner – Sessions





Destination Stewardship & Sustainability



Key Organizational Objectives

- Advance and communicate the Destination Stewardship Plan
- Support sustainable community and workforce initiatives
- Champion inclusion and environmental stewardship throughout the tourism industry
- Align local strategies with regional and statewide destination stewardship goals

A wide-angle photograph of a mountain range under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The mountains are rugged with some green vegetation and rocky outcrops. The foreground shows a valley with some trees and a winding road.

Destination Stewardship & Sustainability

SEE THE OUTCOME OF LAST YEAR'S GOALS IN OUR 2024 ANNUAL REPORT.



Goal

Develop and expand programs that uphold the pillars of sustainable tourism and contribute to community well-being.

Strategy

1 Address community priorities and foster inclusion.



1

Tactic 1

Continue to implement initiatives outlined in the Destination Stewardship Plan to contribute to responsible tourism development.

Tactic 2

Promote a shared, long-term vision for how tourism enhances Estes Park's quality of place, character, and community values using the Tourism Master Plan.

Tactic 3

Present messages of sustainability, inclusion, and stewardship across all guest communications.



Goal *Cont'd*

Develop and expand programs that uphold the pillars of sustainable tourism and contribute to community well-being.

Strategies

- 2** Strengthen the tourism workforce through education and engagement.
- 3** Promote and support sustainable tourism practices.



2

Tactic 1

Collaborate with the Economic Development & Workforce Council to increase participation in the Estes Experiences program to equip tourism workers, enhance the visitor experience, and support workforce development.

3

Tactic 1

Continue collaboration with partners to promote sustainability and inclusion certifications among partners

Tactic 2

Encourage and promote partners who obtain sustainability and inclusion certifications.



Goal *Cont'd*

Develop and expand programs that uphold the pillars of sustainable tourism and contribute to community well-being.

Strategy *Cont'd*

3 Promote and support sustainable tourism practices.



3

Tactic 3

Use Visit Estes Park communication channels to raise awareness and encourage adoption of sustainability and inclusion practices.

Tactic 4

Encourage partner participation in the Be a Giving Guest program and promote related campaigns.

Tactic 5

Continue to support and promote the Do Estes Right campaign as the primary tool for encouraging responsible visitation and guest behavior in the Estes Valley.



Goal *Cont'd*

Develop and expand programs that uphold the pillars of sustainable tourism and contribute to community well-being.

Strategy *Cont'd*

3 Promote and support sustainable tourism practices.



3

Tactic 6

Update and optimize Visit Estes Park's Sustainability and Inclusion web pages to improve user experience and increase engagement.

Tactic 7

Collaborate with the Colorado Tourism Office to advance regional coalitions such as Care for Colorado and implement initiatives outlined in the Colorado Destination Stewardship Strategic Plan.

Tactic 8

Collaborate with Larimer County and local stakeholders to support key tourism-related goals from the Climate Smart Future Ready Plan.



Extend the Season



Key Organizational Objectives

- Strengthen Estes Park's position as a year-round destination through off-peak and shoulder-season events
- Support events that reflect community character and drive meaningful economic impact
- Enhance seasonal visitor experiences through strategic placemaking and infrastructure improvements
- Foster community-wide participation in events to maximize economic benefits and lengthen visitor stays
- Develop dedicated advertising, paid social media, public relations and content campaigns for each initiative to attract consumers



Extend the Season

SEE THE OUTCOME OF LAST YEAR'S GOALS IN OUR 2024 ANNUAL REPORT.



Goal

Continue to support signature destination events that drive visitation during off-peak and need periods, with a focus on increasing overnight visitation.

Strategy

- 1 Invest in and promote seasonal events that foster a sustainable, year-round visitor economy.



1

Tactic 1

Provide financial and marketing support for destination-driving events and late-summer programming.

Tactic 2

Launch an integrated marketing campaign to target travelers interested in winter, snow sports, events and experiences, highlighting unique selling propositions.

Tactic 3

Continue to invest in and enhance seasonal holiday lighting throughout Bond Park, along Elkhorn Avenue, and on main arterial corridors to elevate the winter visitor experience and reinforce the festive atmosphere.



Goal *Cont'd*

Continue to support signature destination events that drive visitation during off-peak and need periods, with a focus on increasing overnight visitation.

Strategies

- 2** Engage local businesses and community partners to enhance the visitor experience.
- 3** Track event performance and optimize impact.



2

Tactic 1

Involve local partners with events that drive direct economic benefits and increase revenue opportunities.

Tactic 2

Offer toolkits and training to help partners participate effectively and maximize event impact.

Tactic 3

Work with partners to utilize the Beyond Program to create event themed lodging packages, satellite events, and special offers to boost community-wide economic impact.

3

Tactic 1

Monitor metrics such as attendance, overnight stays, and partner engagement.



Leisure Consumer Marketing



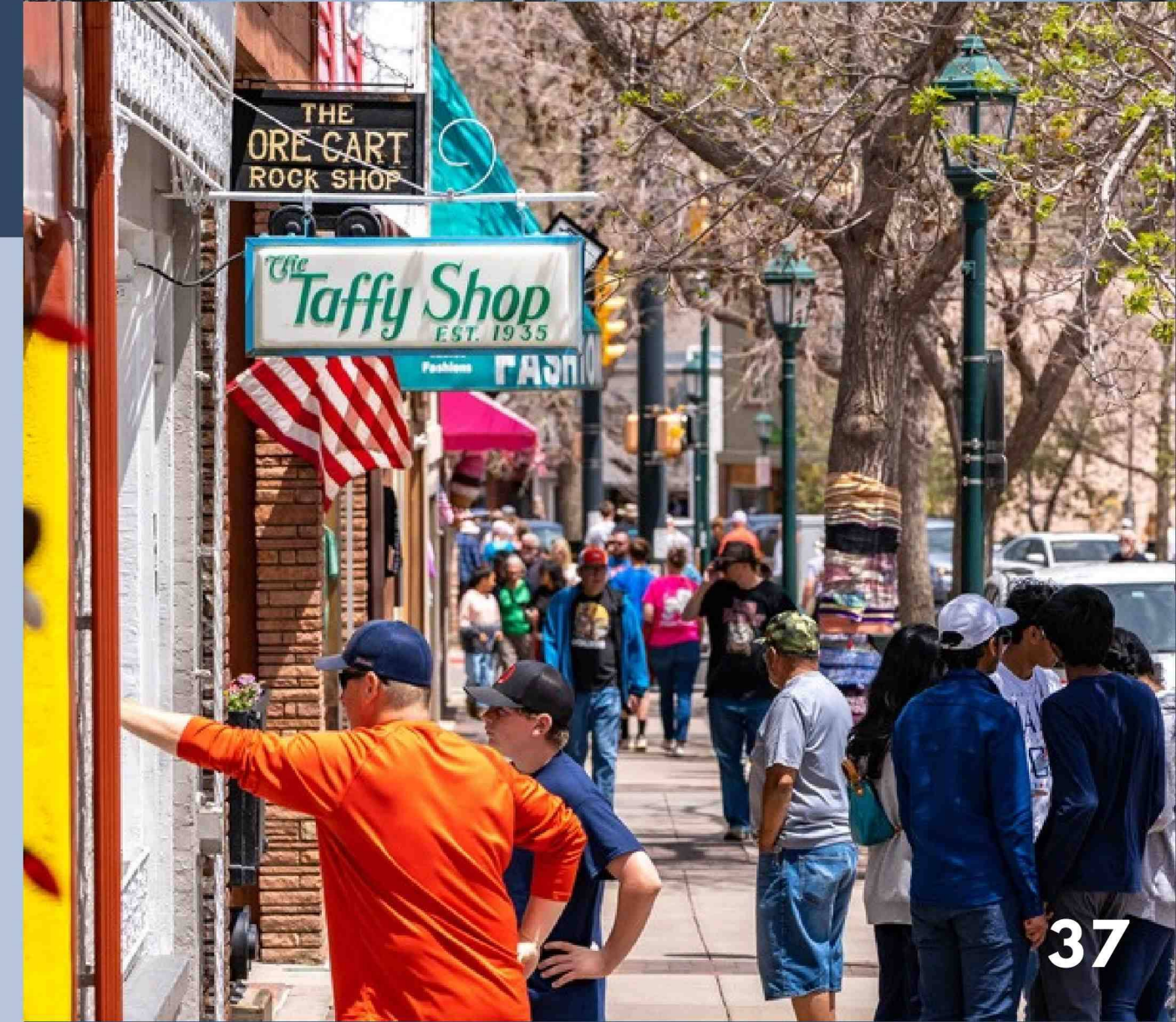
Guiding Messaging


Here in Estes Park, visitors and residents share a common goal for an uncommon land. We treat our guests as we do our neighbors, just as we ask them to treat the local wildlife: with awareness and appreciation. Together, we are supporting our community. Promoting sustainability. And focusing on social, economic and environmental impacts. Because if we take care of this beautiful place that has drawn us together, we can continue to honor what brought us here.

Destination Positioning


When travelers are considering a destination, we position Estes Park as an authentic, vibrant mountain town, offering unique lodging, activities, events, dining, shopping, and an experience that is welcoming and approachable.

Estes Park is affordable to families and offers a multitude of activities in every season, while also offering a basecamp to world-class adventure and outdoor experiences.





Messaging Key Points



Outdoor Experiences

Easy Access

Unique Local Offerings & Events

Year-round Affordability

Inclusion

Sustainability-focused Travel



Target Audiences

- Estes Park loyalists and lookalike audiences interested in multi-night stays in Estes Park and similar basecamp destinations
- Driving-distance guests seeking a day-long mountain escape
- Active adults, outdoorsy couples and outdoor enthusiasts
- Couples looking for a romantic getaway
- Multigenerational travelers visiting as a family with grandparents
- Adults and families interested in events
- Meeting planners and travel advisors
- Travelers who value sustainable tourism
- Digital Nomads, remote workers who travel while working
- Pre-tirees, travelers reaching retirement age and work part-time



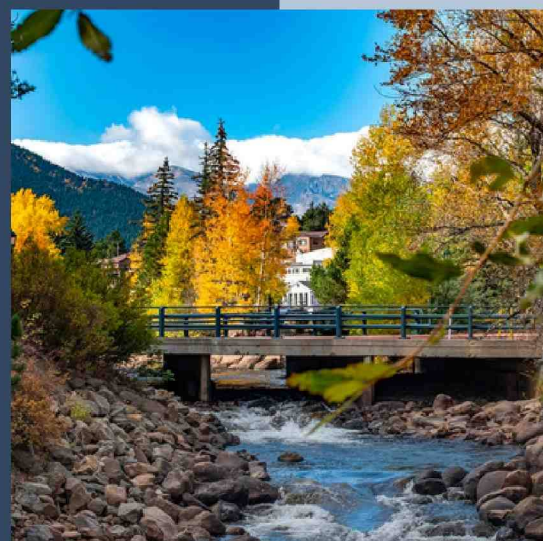
Demographics

- Age: 25-54 with an emphasis on 45+
- Family-friendly audience: 60+ with an emphasis on Multi-generational
- Household income: \$100K+

Traveler Personas

- Memory Makers
- Front Range Weekenders
- Wild at Heart Explorers
- Winter Wonder Seekers
- Culture Curious Festival Goer

Target Audience Interests



Overall Interests

Scenic beauty, relaxing mountain getaway, mountain biking and hiking, outdoor adventure/enthusiast, backpacking, trails, national parks, road trips, craft beverages, romantic getaways, family friendly, easy access, eco-tourism, wildlife viewing, events

Winter & Spring Interests

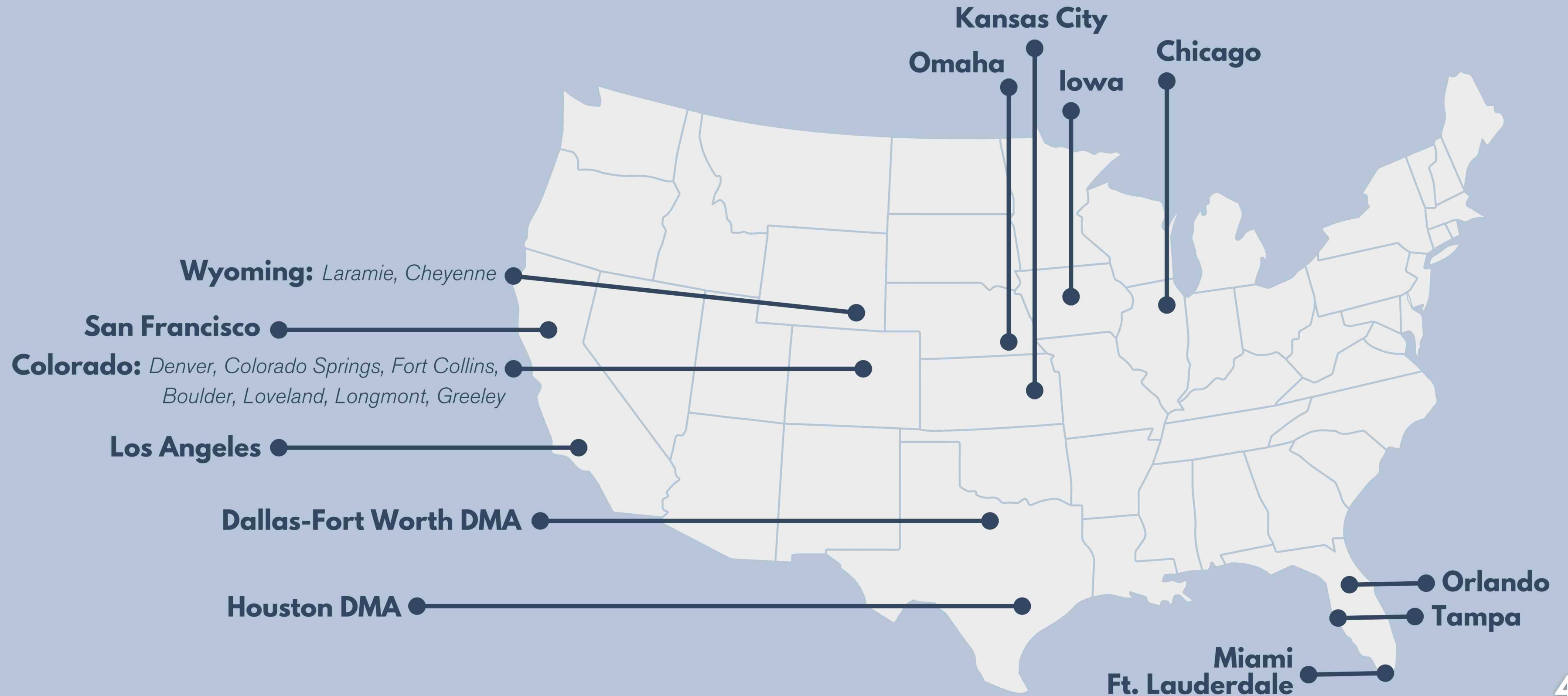
Cross country skiing, winter climate, snowboarding, snowshoeing, backcountry skiing and split boarding, avalanche education, sledding, ice climbing, mountain town, concerts, events

Summer & Fall Interests

Mountain biking, outdoor adventure/enthusiast, backpacking, golf, hiking trails, live music, events, road trips, craft beverages, fall colors, change of season, spooky travel



Geographic Focus





Key Organizational Objectives

- Exceed 900 million paid and earned media impressions
- Generate at least 10 million paid and organic social media impressions
- Drive 4 million views on VisitEstesPark.com
- Deliver 400,000 referrals to lodging partner booking engines and websites
- Obtain 20,000 engagements on Rocky Mountain Roamer AI travel planner
- Increase campaign effectiveness by targeting campaigns and content to marketing personas
- Integrate messages of sustainability, inclusion and preservation of community character
- Monitor current events, data tools and partner sentiment to market summer as necessary

A full-width background image of a mountain landscape at sunset or sunrise. The sky is filled with dramatic, colorful clouds in shades of orange, red, and blue. The mountains are dark and silhouetted against the bright sky.

Leisure Consumer Marketing

SEE THE OUTCOME OF LAST YEAR'S GOALS IN OUR 2024 ANNUAL REPORT.



Paid Media



Goal

Increase destination demand in all market segments, specifically during need periods, to ensure economic stability, disperse visitors and moderate congestion.

Strategy

Generate an increase in demand for overnight lodging stays by driving intent to visit Estes Park during need periods including April, late August, fall weekdays, winter and spring.



Tactic 1

Engage with potential visitors through mass reach and niche targeting, ensuring we capture the interest of all key audiences.

Tactic 2

Continually optimize campaigns based on data and analytics.

Tactic 3

Showcase ease of access from Denver International Airport (DEN) to Estes Park to flight markets, as well as the short drive for drive markets.



Goal *Cont'd*

Increase destination demand in all market segments, specifically during need periods, to ensure economic stability, disperse visitors and moderate congestion.

Strategy *Cont'd*

Generate an increase in demand for overnight lodging stays by driving intent to visit Estes Park during need periods including April, late August, fall weekdays, winter and spring.

Tactic 4

Leverage the power of analytics and strategic regional and state partnerships to identify and tap into emerging markets, staying ahead of trends and capturing new opportunities.

Tactic 5

Market to visitors more likely to travel during slower times.

Tactic 6

Develop advertising campaigns specific to Extend the Season destination development efforts that leverage paid, owned and earned media tactics.



Goal

Maximize analytics & data optimization.

Strategy

Build strategy and tactics on robust analytics leveraging data to optimize efforts.

Tactic 1

Utilize sophisticated targeting and retargeting strategies to reach and engage the right audience with personalized messages delivered at the optimal time for maximum impact.

Tactic 2

Leverage data tools to optimize digital messaging and delivery to maximize performance and goal conversions that deliver on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Tactic 3

Test different creative messages to different audience segments within digital and paid social to gain a deeper understanding of their preferences and responsiveness.



Goal

Obtain maximum value from advertising campaigns through optimized media plans.

Strategy

Distribute advertising on media channels specific to the media usage habits of each audience segment.



Tactic 1

Use data tools and campaign metrics to identify and leverage the most effective media partnerships to reach consumers most likely to visit.

Tactic 2

Monitor key performance metrics by using media that delivers measurable results in the form of impressions, click-through rates and net economic impact.

Tactic 3

Focus budget on the most effective measures and added value must-haves.

Tactic 4

Maintain paid social media throughout the year to continue consumer conversations and promote year-round offerings.



Goal

Leverage marketing assets to target audiences.

Strategy

Harness the power of video and image assets to craft inspirational narratives which create emotional connections and amplify aspirational desire among travelers.



Tactic 1

Develop high-impact interactive gamified units with proven success to deliver a high-end user experience driving engagement and clicks.

Tactic 2

Engage potential visitors through dynamic visual storytelling, including Google Performance Max campaigns, video snippets, reels and print ads prioritizing attractive creative assets.

Tactic 3

Integrate video assets into cross-channel units maximizing views and increasing click-throughs. Continuously monitor performance and refresh assets.



Goals

- 1 Leverage marketing assets to target audiences. *Cont'd*
- 2 Utilize paid media to drive visitors to Rocky Mountain Roamer, our AI travel planning tool.

Strategies

- 1 Harness the power of video and image assets to craft inspirational narratives which create emotional connections and amplify aspirational desire among travelers. *Cont'd*
- 2 Develop a dedicated paid media strategy for travel planning tools in order to reach visitors where they are looking for information.



1

Tactic 4

Present Visit Estes Park as an outdoor destination offering activities accessible to all ages and abilities, in all seasons.

Tactic 5

Develop a campaign dedicated to communicating to guests that they're valued while offering tips to successfully navigate the destination.

Tactic 6

Create an Estes Park history campaign that leans into destination nostalgia and targets the memory makers persona.

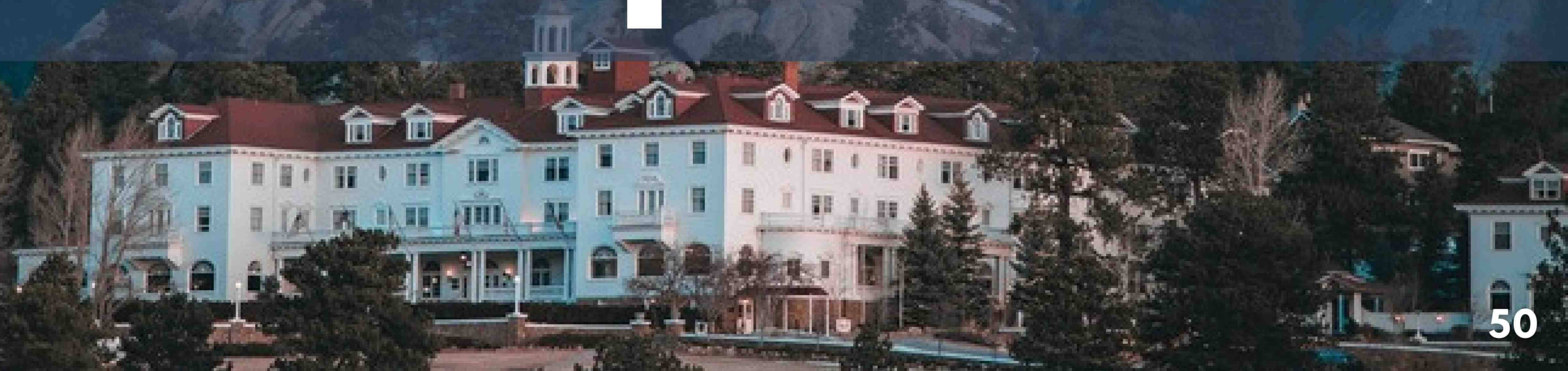
2

Tactic 1

Utilize paid social media to drive potential visitors to Rocky Mountain Roamer, our AI travel planning tool on WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram.



Content Development





Goal

Use storytelling to showcase the range of activities and businesses offered in Estes Park and provide tips to successfully navigate the destination.

Strategy

Develop, curate and promote world-class content through dynamic and diverse storytelling.



Tactic 1

Maintain and expand a robust content library to generate affinity for the destination, highlight distinctive brand attributes and evoke an emotional connection with the consumer.

Tactic 2

Develop a short-form video series that walks viewers through local businesses to answer FAQs, help fill out visitor itineraries and support organic search.

Tactic 3

Develop and implement a short-form video content strategy to support organic search on Google AI overview, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok.



Goal *Cont'd*

Use storytelling to showcase the range of activities and businesses offered in Estes Park and provide tips to successfully navigate the destination.

Strategy *Cont'd*

Develop, curate and promote world-class content through dynamic and diverse storytelling.



Tactic 4

Highlight businesses with green practices to provide environmentally conscious guests with resources for their stay.

Tactic 5

Showcase a diverse representation of identities and abilities to position Estes as a welcoming destination.

Tactic 6

Consider producing a second season of the Estes Inspired video series.



Goal

Develop strategic content to boost engagement, visitation and cultivate reverence.

Strategy

Optimize the Visit Estes Park online experience on VisitEstesPark.com, social media channels and Rocky Mountain Roamer artificial intelligence (AI) travel planning tool, in order to educate and inspire all audiences.



Tactic 1

Channel advertising and social communications towards the AI travel planning tool, in addition to VisitEstesPark.com content and landing pages, and track referrals to stakeholder booking engines and websites.

Tactic 2

Evolve and manage a comprehensive editorial calendar, while optimizing the VisitEstesPark.com homepage to serve as an ideal landing page for digital visitors.

Tactic 3

Utilize data and research to implement technical and content recommendations.



Goal *Cont'd*

Develop strategic content to boost engagement, visitation and cultivate reverence.

Strategy *Cont'd*

Optimize the Visit Estes Park online experience on VisitEstesPark.com, social media channels and Rocky Mountain Roamer artificial intelligence (AI) travel planning tool, in order to educate and inspire all audiences.



Tactic 4

Stay on top of AI trends to create web content that aligns with Google AI search priorities.

Tactic 5

Systematically apply search engine optimization techniques across visitestepark.com, including keyword research and best practices, to increase search result rankings.

Tactic 6

Captivate web users with content that strikes a balance between practical destination insights and resources, and aspirational storytelling.



Goal

Build visitor intent to travel through strategic outreach.

Strategy

Evolve our consumer newsletter program by implementing best practice techniques to increase engagement and grow the distribution list.



Tactic 1

Create a well-crafted welcome email drip campaign for new subscribers consisting of responsible travel trips, an introduction to the destination and other ways to engage and make them feel valued from the start.

Tactic 2

Design targeted re-engagement campaigns to win back inactive subscribers or those who haven't interacted with our emails for a while.

Tactic 3

Build the e-newsletter subscriber database, grow click-through and open rates through A/B testing and optimizing our content pillars and marketing personas.

Tactic 4

Segment current subscribers by marketing persona and create targeted newsletter series to increase engagement in that target market.



Goal

Provide comprehensive travel planning tools for potential visitors.

Strategy

Create travel planning tools available through various channels and mediums to reach consumers where and how they prefer to research.

Tactic 1

Research if a new visitors guide is necessary, which would pull the most valuable resources on VisitEstesPark.com into a print and digital guide. Continue guide partnerships for visitors in market via print and digital. Stay abreast of new guide partnership opportunities.

Tactic 2

Support the former Visit Estes Park social media influencer account @clairefromestes, providing first hand knowledge from an Estes Park local.

Tactic 3

Evolve the Rocky Mountain Roamer AI travel planning tool with new features and enhanced user experience.



Social Media



Goal

Boost engagement to maximize reach across all social channels.

Strategy

Use key social media channels to drive awareness and create engagement with traveling consumers.

Tactic 1

Continue building a highly engaged community of followers by strategically and regularly posting to Visit Estes Park's Instagram, Facebook, X, TikTok, YouTube and LinkedIn accounts.

Tactic 2

Strategically leverage short-form video content and key words to drive traffic and interest in the destination through organic search and TikTok, Instagram and YouTube.

Tactic 3

Develop a social media post series that regularly speaks to each of our marketing personas.



Goal *Cont'd*

Boost engagement to maximize reach across all social channels.

Strategy *Cont'd*

Use key social media channels to drive awareness and create engagement with traveling consumers.



Tactic 4

Boost Visit Estes Park industry recognition by regularly posting relevant industry news and noteworthy updates on LinkedIn.

Tactic 5

Use paid social media to reach our target markets and demographics by lifestyle preferences, expand the reach of marketing campaigns and generate awareness for destination events.



Public Relations



Goal

Increase national brand awareness of Estes Park.

Strategies

- 1** Leverage national travel trends to increase national brand awareness.
- 2** Create newsworthy communications of Estes Park's seasonal offerings to drive year-round media interest and coverage.



Tactic 1

Attend PR events and media marketplaces to connect with publications reaching our target audiences.

Tactic 2

Develop engaging, personalized itineraries for individual press visits to facilitate authentic, firsthand stories.

Tactic 3

Create content for news, pitches and editorials across audiences, including media, to maximize message reach, boost awareness and create synergy among VEP communications platforms and media outreach initiatives.



Goal

Earn coverage positioning Estes Park as an authentic, vibrant mountain town, offering sustainable recreation and dynamic activities to all.

Strategy

Communicate and emphasize all there is to see and do in Estes, including locally-owned shops you won't find anywhere else, exciting attractions, food for every taste and world-class recreational opportunities.

Tactic 1

Host press trips, group FAMs and attend media marketplaces to develop and strengthen media relationships, including media from a diverse range of backgrounds.

Tactic 2

Write and distribute seasonal “what’s new” press releases, as well as monthly press releases on major initiatives.

Tactic 3

Supply destination information to PR agency for inclusion in monthly pitching and press releases, highlighting offerings that are unique to Estes Park, emphasizing authentic Estes stories.



Goal *Cont'd*

Earn coverage positioning Estes Park as an authentic, vibrant mountain town, offering sustainable recreation and dynamic activities to all.

Strategy *Cont'd*

Communicate and emphasize all there is to see and do in Estes, including locally-owned shops you won't find anywhere else, exciting attractions, food for every taste and world-class recreational opportunities.



Tactic 4

Continue to update the online newsroom and press kit collateral to meet journalist needs, including photo/video.

Tactic 5

Maintain an ongoing social media influencer program showcasing Estes Park from a firsthand point of view.

Tactic 6

Measure success by evaluating earned coverage against PR goals designed to support marketing goals and increase overall brand awareness.



Goal

Increase international brand awareness of Estes Park.

Strategy

Leverage Colorado Tourism Office partnerships to increase brand awareness on an international level.



Tactic 1

Develop a deeper understanding of Estes Park's top international markets and what inspires them to visit the destination.

Tactic 2

Participate in hosting press trips arranged by the Colorado Tourism Office to provide international journalists with firsthand experiences in the destination.

Tactic 3

Respond to requests for information with curated information to suit international publications.

Tactic 4

Attend Colorado Tourism Office calls and media missions reaching target international markets. Include the international team on VEP's media list.



Goal

Develop and introduce an evolved advocacy program to show the mutually beneficial relationship the destination has with tourism.

Strategy

Leverage internal and industry resources to write and execute an integrated advocacy plan.



Tactic 1

Analyze the stakeholder and resident sentiment surveys that informed the Tourism Master Plan to identify opportunities to focus on in the plan.

Tactic 2

Reach key stakeholder groups, including residents, local businesses, organizational partners, and elected officials through targeted strategies.

Tactic 3

Work across departments to give input on tactics and ensure they align with advocacy goals and best practices.

Tactic 4

Create an advocacy framework to clarify how each department will contribute to the plan and define how staff will respond to issue-based advocacy needs.



Partner Engagement



Key Organizational Objectives

- Strengthen and maintain collaborative relationships with local, regional, and statewide partners
- Serve as a trusted resource and leader for tourism-related education, communication, and community connection
- Enhance partner participation and engagement through meaningful programs, tools, and communications
- Support community events and projects that align with the Visit Estes Park mission and promote tourism
- Advocate for tourism's positive impact on Estes Park through coordinated messaging, shared initiatives, and storytelling

A full-width background image of a mountain landscape. In the foreground, there are green pine trees and a grassy field. In the background, there are large, rugged mountains with patches of snow and green forested slopes under a blue sky with white clouds.

Partner Engagement

SEE THE OUTCOME OF LAST YEAR'S GOALS IN OUR 2024 ANNUAL REPORT.



Goal

Establish and strengthen relationships with partners while advocating for the value of tourism.

Strategy

Support partners through education, connection, and resource sharing.



Tactic 1

Organize an annual Tourism Summit, three community roundtables, and offer one-on-one training meetings.

Tactic 2

Schedule regular site visits with partners to stay informed, strengthen relationships, update partner listings, and share timely updates to build awareness and ensure alignment on current initiatives and opportunities.

Tactic 3

Engage partners in the Beyond Program to create seasonal offerings.

Tactic 4

Refresh and enhance Visit Estes Park partner landing pages to improve usability and engagement.



Goal *Cont'd*

Establish and strengthen relationships with partners while advocating for the value of tourism.

Strategy *Cont'd*

Support partners through education, connection, and resource sharing.



Tactic 5

Maintain up-to-date partner contact information to ensure accurate newsletter distribution and grow participation in the Partners Facebook Group.

Tactic 6

Host Destination Tourism Network (DTN) and similar companies to connect partners with advertising opportunities.

Tactic 7

Engage with local partners and stakeholders by serving on boards and committees to strengthen relationships and collaboration.



Goal *Cont'd*

Establish and strengthen relationships with partners while advocating for the value of tourism.

Strategy

Support community events through the Event & Project Sponsorship Program



Tactic 1

Provide financial sponsorships to support community events and projects that align with Visit Estes Park's mission and values.

Tactic 2

Offer in-kind marketing support—such as promotion through Visit Estes Park's channels—for events and initiatives that contribute to the community and visitor experience.



Goal *Cont'd*

Establish and strengthen relationships with partners while advocating for the value of tourism.

Strategy

Strengthen local, regional and statewide partnerships.



Tactic 1

Participate in the Colorado Tourism Office and Northern Colorado initiatives including America's 250th and Colorado's 150th Anniversary to celebrate the state's history, culture, and achievements.

Tactic 2

Maintain active partnerships with Roosevelt National Forest, Hermit Park Open Space, Rocky Mountain National Park Visitor Centers, and Colorado Welcome Centers to support aligned initiatives and enhance regional collaboration.

Tactic 3

Collaborate with key organizations—such as the Town of Estes Park, Rocky Mountain National Park, Estes Park Housing Authority, Estes Valley Investment Childhood Success, Estes Nonprofit Network and the Estes Chamber of Commerce, and the Economic Development Council—by contributing Visit Estes Park resources to support tourism-related initiatives.



Sales & Services



Holiday Inn



Key Organizational Objectives

- Foster collaborative community partnerships.
- Strengthen group and event markets to support key need periods.
- Increase market visibility and engagement with meeting planners.



Sales & Services

SEE THE OUTCOME OF LAST YEAR'S GOALS IN OUR 2024 ANNUAL REPORT.



Goal

Working with internal and external stakeholders to identify market availability, capacity and opportunities and providing education on the travel trade industry.

Strategy

Participate in relevant domestic and international trade shows, conferences and industry events to connect with travel trade professionals and showcase Estes Park's offerings.



Tactic 1

Build and maintain relationships with key travel trade partners, nurturing existing partnerships and exploring new collaboration opportunities. Connect partners with key receptive international operators in order to get them listed as participating hotels/lodges with static rates.

Tactic 2

Work with the Colorado Tourism Office and Tour Colorado to host domestic and international travel/trade FAM tours.

Tactic 3

Attend relevant trade shows and events, including IPW and Go West, and partner with local businesses where possible. When applicable, share relevant learnings or show stakeholders how it brings value back to the community.



Goal *Cont'd*

Working with internal and external stakeholders to identify market availability, capacity and opportunities and providing education on the Travel Trade industry.

Strategy

Encourage local businesses to increase travel trade inventory for both lodging and attractions.



Tactic 1

Provide education and training opportunities for local businesses to familiarize themselves with the travel trade industry and Visit Estes Park resources.

Tactic 2

Connect lodgers and attractions with receptive tour operators in order to contract, build and sell itineraries to the international traveler.



Goal

Building and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders in the groups and meetings markets to increase the number of group bookings for meetings, conferences, reunions, weddings and events, encouraging occupancy during need periods.

Strategy

Develop compelling sales and marketing materials, including wedding and group/conference materials, itineraries, videos, and other online content, highlighting Estes Park's selling points.



Tactic 1

Update the group-focused web pages with relevant information, resources, and tools.

Tactic 2

Create a digital and print comprehensive group/meeting planner guide



Goal *Cont'd*

Building and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders in the groups and meetings markets to increase the number of group bookings for meetings, conferences, reunions, weddings and events, encouraging occupancy during need periods.

Strategy

Participate in relevant trade shows, conferences and industry events to connect with meeting and event professionals and showcase Estes Park's offerings.



Tactic 1

Attend networking and educational events to connect with meeting planners and industry professionals.

Tactic 2

Renew and engage with industry groups that provide quality leads and RFPs.

Tactic 3

Attend valuable trade shows to grow meeting planner connections and collect leads for follow-up.



Goal *Cont'd*

Building and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders in the groups and meetings markets to increase the number of group bookings for meetings, conferences, reunions, weddings and events, encouraging occupancy during need periods.

Strategy

Collaborate with local businesses to create a comprehensive network of event services and facilitate seamless planning for group bookings.



Tactic 1

Facilitate recurring and one-off educational events to empower partner businesses to engage with groups.

Tactic 2

Attend local wedding association and alliance meetings to connect with partners and stay informed.

Tactic 3

Establish strong partnerships with local wedding and event planners, offering them incentives or referral programs, when it makes sense, to bring their clients to Estes Park.

Tactic 4

Sponsor and host familiarization tours in partnership with key stakeholders to garner industry-wide exposure through firsthand experiences.



Goal

Enhance Estes Park's visibility and reach among key stakeholders in the Travel Trade, Wedding, and meetings markets.

Strategy

Design marketing campaigns specifically tailored to the relevant group markets.



Tactic 1

Optimize website's meeting and event pages and online listings to highlight group, wedding and reunion offerings.

Tactic 2

Implement a paid media campaign that focuses on markets that are a good fit for Estes Park.



Goal *Cont'd*

Enhance Estes Park's visibility and reach among key stakeholders in the Travel Trade, Wedding, and meetings markets.

Strategy *Cont'd*

Design marketing campaigns specifically tailored to the relevant group markets.

Tactic 3

Produce group/wedding focused video and photography assets for use in sales pitch efforts and at trade shows.

Tactic 4

Promote incentives and offers specifically for mid-week, shoulder seasons, and other need periods.

Tactic 5

Showcase testimonials from meetings and events held in Estes Park.



Finance & Administration



Key Organizational Objectives

- Ensure compliance with financial and budgetary regulations and requirements.
- Foster a productive, fulfilling work environment for employees.
- Ensure that equipment, technology, and facilities adequately support the organization's needs.
- Empower the organization with comprehensive data and insights to facilitate informed decision-making.
- Continue to provide a transparent and accountable budgeting process.

A scenic photograph of a mountain landscape. In the foreground, there are rocky outcrops and a forest of tall evergreen trees. In the background, rolling mountain ranges are visible under a blue sky with some clouds. The overall tone is natural and serene.

Finance & Administration

SEE THE OUTCOME OF LAST YEAR'S GOALS IN OUR 2024 ANNUAL REPORT.



Goal

Ensure Visit Estes Park complies with all financial and budgetary requirements by adhering to GASB (Governmental Accounting Standards Board) and DMO (Destination Marketing Organization) best practices.

Strategy

Manage all financial and budgetary workflows in a timely manner to provide reliable financial data.



Tactic 1

Maintain compliance with all Colorado Open Records Act requirements.

Tactic 2

Produce timely and accurate organizational financial statements for board & management review, allowing for actionable decisions based on economic trends.

Tactic 3

Commission an annual audit to assure stakeholders of the organization's financial transparency, accuracy and reliability.

Tactic 4

Develop, review and update organizational policies as needed, seeking board approval prior to implementation.



Goal

Ensure human resource functions contribute directly to a more productive and fulfilling environment for all employees.

Strategy

Utilize human resources best practices to provide management of all employee functions within the organization.



Tactic 1

Provide employees with training opportunities that are relevant to the needs of the organization.

Tactic 2

Engage an HR consulting firm to provide on-demand support and guidance, ensuring employees have the help they need to succeed.

Tactic 3

Encourage professional development for all employees in order to foster and grow in-house talent.

Tactic 4

Coordinate a strategic planning & team building retreat for employees.



Goal

Manage all administrative and operational aspects to ensure equipment, technology and facilities meet the needs of Visit Estes Park.

Strategy

Collaborate with all departments to deliver highly effective support services.



Tactic 1

Upgrade technology equipment and software as necessary to assist staff productivity and capabilities.

Tactic 2

Research and implement methods of reducing administrative burden.

Tactic 3

Develop & enhance talent by embracing new technologies and work trends.



Goal

Empower the organization with the data knowledge necessary to make informed decisions.

Strategy

Provide reliable research and data services to staff and stakeholders.



Tactic 1

Deliver research and intelligence support for Visit Estes Park staff to ensure the full spectrum of visitor industry information can be utilized.

Tactic 2

Utilize technology to present lodging tax data in meaningful ways.

Tactic 3

Assess competitive positioning in the Rocky Mountain region, general tourism trends and emerging markets.



Goal

Maintain a budget framework with transparency and accountability in accordance with Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and industry standards.

Strategy

Provide relevant budget definitions that reflect the needs of Visit Estes Park.



Tactic 1

Work with all departments to identify organization budgetary needs.

Tactic 2

Create flexibility to expand budget detail in future years as needed.

Tactic 3

Produce and distribute an annual Visit Estes Park budget that reflects the strategic and tactical needs of the organization.

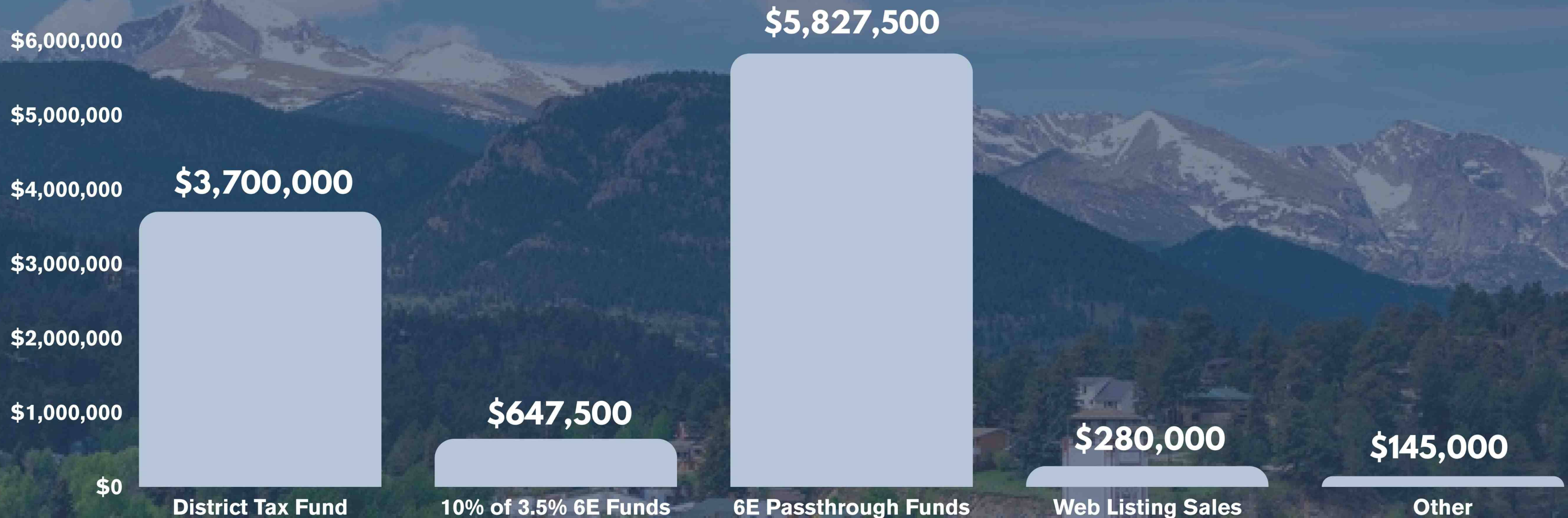
Tactic 4

Provide budget information to the State of Colorado as required on an annual basis.



Operating Revenues: \$4,772,500

Total Budgeted Revenues: \$10,600,000



Lodging tax on stays less than 30 days in the District boundaries. VEP receives the 2% base district tax fund, plus retains 10% of the 6E 3.5% incremental tax increase for marketing purposes. The remaining 90% of the 6E funds are forwarded by VEP to the Town of Estes Park for workforce housing and childcare initiatives.

Income from paid placement on VisitEstesPark.com

Interest earned from reserve funds, Town holiday funding



Operating Expenses: \$4,772,500

Total Budgeted Expenses: \$10,600,000



Key Terms



Destination Stewardship

Colorado Tourism Office's official definition of destination stewardship is that it is "a transformational holistic approach that seeks to find harmony between quality of life for residents and a strong visitor economy while protecting our cultural and natural resources."

Responsible Tourism

According to the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO), responsible tourism is important because "[w]ith many Colorado residents voicing concerns about the impacts of travelers on special places and natural resources, the [CTO] Roadmap's steward pillar laid the groundwork for a new partnership aimed at protecting what makes Colorado such a special destination. As part of this initiative, the Colorado Tourism Office is encouraging travelers to explore off-peak seasons and less-visited destinations, while inspiring them to travel like a local, engage in voluntourism and support causes important to Coloradans."

Values-Based Approach

Destination International makes the case that "words matter in politics, and those words need to be chosen carefully. If we are going to be successful in changing the narrative surrounding our industry, it starts with a values-based approach. That means talking to stakeholders in a manner that is simple and emotional and connects their values to your organization. Our industry must utilize a new tourism vocabulary to connect with stakeholders in a meaningful way and better illustrate the value of destination organizations."

Key Terms



Tourism Advocacy

According to Destinations International, “in an era of declining public support and increased need for transparency, it is more essential than ever for destination organizations to make an emotional and value-based appeal, supporting their message of ROI with the case for how their organization supports the people of the community with new opportunities for work, economic development and public services.”

Travel Trade

Travel Trade is a tourism term referring to tour operators, travel agents, receptive operators and wholesalers. These professionals organize and contract to buy travel products to sell to groups or individuals. Typically located in the market they are selling to, the travel trade have an intimate knowledge of traveler interests and motivations, and promote tourism experiences and vacations.

BookDirect Lodging Referral

BookDirect lodging referrals are user referrals sent from VisitEstesPark.com’s BookDirect booking engine directly to stakeholder booking engines. Referrals occur once a website user performs a search in the VEP BookDirect booking widget, reviews rates on the BookDirect results page and then clicks to be referred to a stakeholder website for more information or to complete their booking.

Key Terms



Organic & Paid Social Media

Organic social media is the free content shared on social networks, like posts with static images, reels, or posts to stories that are published without paying for promotion. Paid social media is when social networks like TikTok, Pinterest or Meta (for Facebook and Instagram) are paid to push posts and ads to a larger, targeted audience with a specific goal in mind: clicks, conversions or visibility. This can also include paid partnerships with influencers.

Reels/Short Form Video

Video content that is 5–90 seconds in duration.

Views

The number of pageviews on a website and screenviews on an app.

Paid Media Impressions

An ad impression is counted whenever an ad is displayed and seen on a website, social media, mobile application, digital newspaper or other digital source.

Earned Media Impressions

Earned media impressions refer to the total number of times an earned media article is likely to be seen by an audience; this includes views from various platforms including online news sites and social media shares. Public relations professionals use verified measurement tools that provide analytics to help track the reach and impact of earned media content.



Future Planning Integration

Visit Estes Park is committed to aligning our work with the long-term vision for the community. As the 2025 Tourism Master Plan is finalized, we will review and incorporate its recommendations into our operations to ensure our strategies and initiatives are consistent with community priorities and destination stewardship goals.

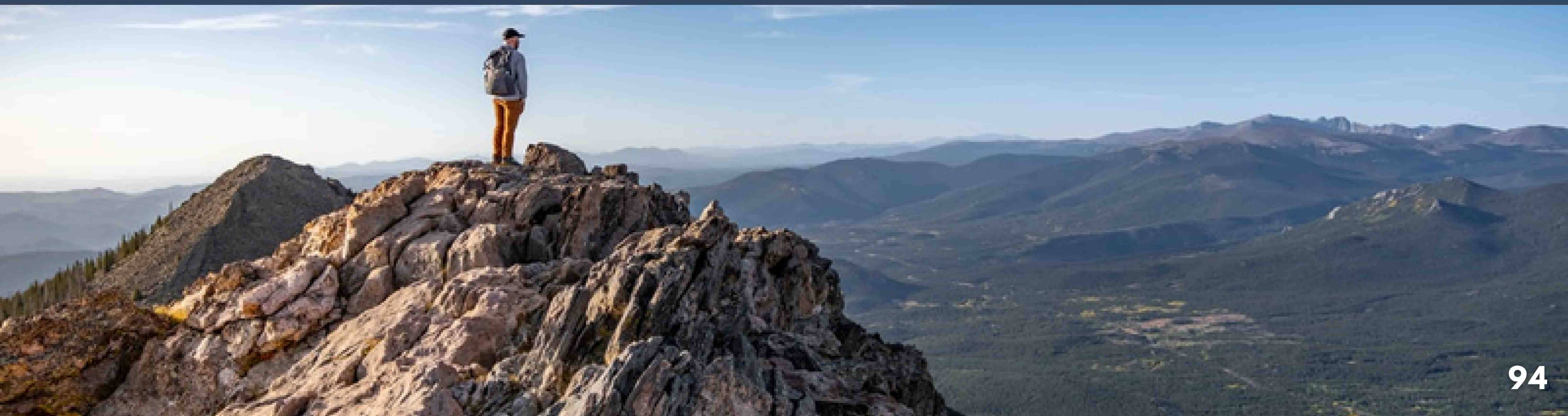
In addition, we will integrate planning and opportunities related to the Sundance Festival, ensuring our marketing and partnerships leverage the event to deliver lasting value for residents, enrich the visitor experience, and strengthen the local economy.

As guidance and recommendations are received throughout 2025, Visit Estes Park will adapt and refine our plans and processes to reflect these priorities and maintain flexibility in our approach.



Additional Opportunities

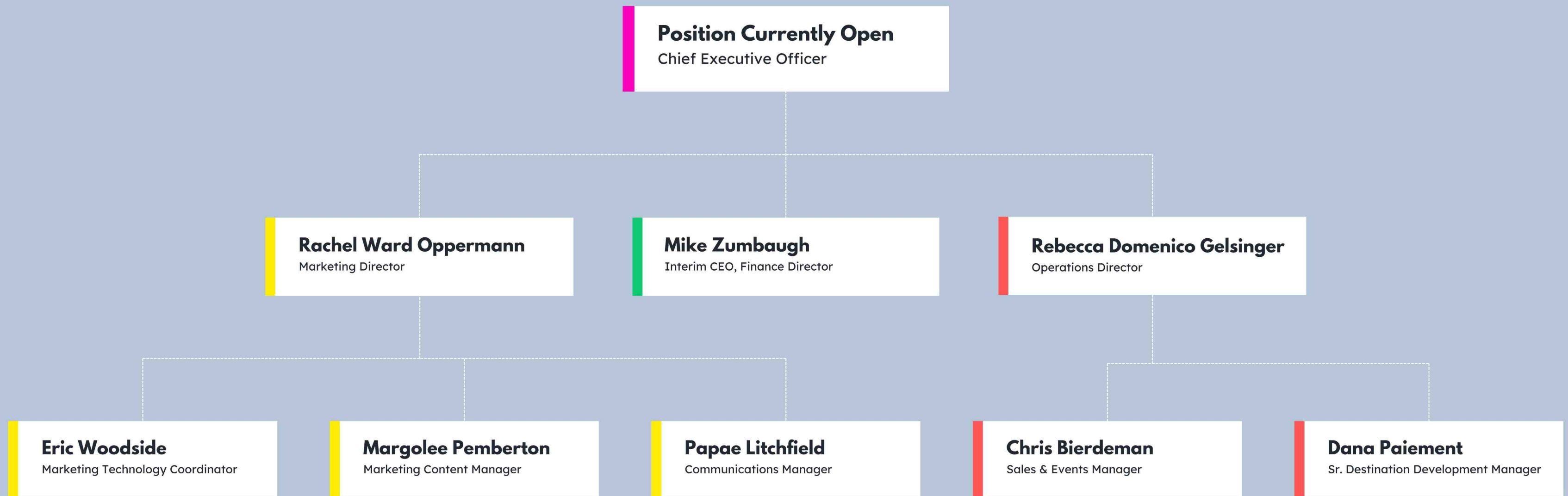
In order to continue in our mission of supporting economic vitality, Visit Estes Park may pursue additional opportunities, within the statutory authority of the District, that may present themselves, subject to budget appropriations & board approval.





Visit Estes Park Staff

Organizational Chart





2026 Annual Funding Plan

6E Workforce Housing and Childcare Lodging Tax

Purpose

The Annual Workforce Housing and Childcare Funding Plan (Annual 6E Funding Plan) is an outline of how the Town of Estes Park plans to distribute funds derived from the Lodging Tax Extension (6E) to support housing and childcare for the Estes Valley workforce. The plan demonstrates how the funds passed through from the Local Marketing District, which levies the tax, to the Town is allocated between workforce housing and childcare initiatives, and how decisions are made to address the needs in the Estes Valley in 2026 and beyond. The Annual Funding Plan is considered and approved by the Town of Estes Park, Larimer County Commissioners, and Visit Estes Park.

About 6E Lodging Tax

In November 2022, residents of the Visit Estes Park Local Marketing District voted to approve Ballot Initiative 6E to increase the total lodging tax rate from 2% to 5.5%. This 3.5% increase in tax provides approximately \$5 million in funds to address workforce housing and childcare needs in the Estes Valley. The Board of Visit Estes Park (VEP) decided to serve as a “pass-through” of the funds and rely on the Town of Estes Park, in coordination with Larimer County, to decide how to administer 6E revenue.

The Workforce Housing and Childcare Lodging Tax funds received by the Town are administered in accordance with the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the County and Town of Estes Park by the Housing and Childcare Manager. The Housing and Childcare Manager works hand-in-hand with the Estes Park Housing Authority to strategically identify future needs and outline how they will be addressed, resulting in the proposed Annual 6E Funding Plan.

A memorandum of understanding between the Town and Estes Park Housing Authority, originally entered into in July 2023, formalized the Housing Authority’s role as administrator of the Lodging Tax revenue dedicated to workforce housing. The Town’s Housing and Childcare Manager administers the distribution of funds retained by the Town to address childcare.

The Annual 6E Funding Plan is drafted based on the initial framework presented in the ballot language in 2022. The initial framework included priorities consistent with the present workforce housing and childcare initiatives outlined below.

Ballot Issue 6E

1. Construction or purchase of workforce housing or the purchase of land to provide sites for workforce housing;
2. Development and operation of programs to support workforce access to affordable housing; and
3. Develop and operate programs to support affordable workforce childcare services.

Changes to the framework and process can be made at any time based on mutual agreement of the Town and Larimer County.

2026 Overview and Projections

In January of each year, a lump sum is retained by the Town for personnel and operating expenses related to the position of Housing and Childcare Manager. Throughout the year, a predetermined percentage of the revenue is transferred directly to EPHA every month. This percentage is presented in the Annual 6E Funding Plan each year.

Funding decisions are made based on the evaluation of needs in the community and the consideration of maximizing the impact of Workforce Housing and Childcare Lodging Tax (6E Lodging Tax) funds. All funding decisions are made in accordance with the Intergovernmental Agreement between Larimer County and the Town of Estes Park and the adopted Annual 6E Funding Plan (including this plan for 2026).

The 2026 Annual 6E Funding Plan is informed by and builds upon foundational reports such as the [2023 Housing Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan](#), the [2024 Childcare Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan](#), the [Childcare and Housing Task Force](#) report conducted by the Town of Estes Park, previous Annual 6E Funding Plans and Impact Reports, and community outreach. The Annual 6E Funding Plan acts as a framework for how EPHA and the Town utilize 6E Lodging Tax funds to implement and measure the success of strategies. The Town monitors the impact of 6E Lodging Tax funds on both housing and childcare in the Estes Valley, which is reported in an “Annual 6E Impact Report” in the spring. Community feedback supports the draft of the Annual 6E Funding Plan and is compiled through direct outreach, public forums, and a feedback form, as presented in Exhibit A “Community Input”.

The original 6E ballot framework was intentionally designed to provide flexibility in allocating revenues between workforce housing and childcare initiatives, ensuring that funding could adapt to evolving community priorities. Early stakeholder input, including from the Estes Park Housing Authority, acknowledged that workforce housing needs were both urgent and costly, warranting a greater share of initial resources. At the same time, there was a shared understanding that

childcare funding needs would expand as program capacity, facilities, and capital projects developed over time. In alignment with this long-term vision, the allocation shifted in 2025 from 88% for housing/12% for childcare to 80%/20%, respectively, increasing the allocation to childcare initiatives while continuing to address critical housing needs. Maintaining this allocation in 2026 reflects a strategic commitment to building a more balanced and sustainable approach to meeting both housing and childcare demands in the Estes Valley based on need.

Projected total 6E Passthrough to the Town in 2026 (provided by Visit Estes Park): \$5,500,000

- 80% Workforce Housing: \$4,400,000
- 20% Childcare: \$1,100,000

All dollar figures are *approximations* contingent on several factors, including actual collections each year.

Approval by the Town Board is required for the creation of funding programs for both childcare and workforce housing, as outlined in the MOU with EPHA. Reporting on the use of funds is conducted at least annually and upon request by either the Town Board, County Commissioners, or Visit Estes Park. A detailed expenditure report for the previous year is presented to both elected boards by April 15 each year.

Childcare Initiatives

6E Lodging Tax revenue will be used to address the varied challenges faced by families in need of childcare, as well as the workforce challenges providers, early childhood teachers, and support staff experience. The Town will retain 20% of the expected revenue in 2026, projected to be approximately \$1,100,000.

In June 2025, the Town Board considered revisions to Town Policy 225: Childcare Funding Guidelines, which provides guidelines for the distribution of funding and introduced a new Priority Grant framework, Childcare Stability Initiative, and Childcare Assistance funding opportunities. The Town Board's approval of these revisions formalized programs and distribution methods to be considered with the approval of this Funding Plan. The proposed 2026 Priority Grant framework and budget allocations may be reviewed in Exhibit B.

Exhibit C depicts the overall projected revenue and expenditures for childcare funding in 2026.

The estimated revenue, expenditures, and projected budget for childcare is an approximation and is subject to change based on opportunities that arise and variations in 6E Lodging Tax revenue. Funds that are not spent each year may carry over to the following year.

Priority Areas and Targets:

1. Tuition Assistance

Affordable childcare is essential for supporting working families, enabling parents to balance their careers and caregiving responsibilities.

2. Out-of-School Programs

When school is not in session, provide a safe and engaging environment for children outside of school hours, promoting social interaction, learning, and personal growth.

3. Childcare Workforce

Supporting the childcare workforce is essential for ensuring high-quality care and education, enabling caregivers to thrive and positively impact the development of children.

4. Facility Expansion

New facilities and facility improvements are designed to create nurturing and stimulating environments to enhance early childhood development and increase capacity.

Capacity Goals and Targets

	2024 (Baseline)	2025	2026 Goal	2027 Target
Home Provider (FCCH)	2	4	4	4
Infant Classroom	0	0	1	1
Toddler Classroom	1	2	2	2
Preschool Classroom	3	3	4	4

To meet these targets, the following objectives direct the use of 6E Funds in 2026 for the priority areas as defined above:

Tuition Assistance

2026 Objective:

Expand and evaluate childcare affordability by increasing eligibility to include low- to middle-income households and school-age children.

With the launch of the Estes Valley Childcare Fund (EVCF) in 2025, additional children and families are eligible for childcare financial assistance in 2026. The program is fully funded for the 2025-26 program year (August-July) and is projected to support between 10 and 20 children of *middle-income* working parents in the Estes Valley.

The Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) is expected to remain frozen through 2026, allocating 6E Lodging Tax funds to childcare financial assistance critical to maintaining affordability for working families. CCAP typically serves families with children up to age 13. With the assistance program frozen, requests from low-to middle-income families during the school months have increased. While the YMCA of the Rockies and the Boys and Girls Club of Larimer County offer reduced tuition and scholarships for their summer out-of-school programs, demand for assistance continues to grow. Evaluation of these programs, along with the distribution of funds through EVICS Family Resource Center, will be essential for planning future School-Age Tuition Assistance needs. Based on anticipated demand, it is likely that additional funding or a separate program will need to be developed to meet these needs effectively if CCAP continues to be frozen.

While tuition assistance has been a central priority for the first three years of 6E funding, 2026 will serve as a focused evaluation year. Collaboratively with EVICS Family Resource Center (EVICS) and the Early Childhood Council of Larimer County (ECCLC), this evaluation will measure the reach and impact of tuition assistance on family financial stability and the overall sustainability of the local early childhood system. Findings will inform future funding priorities, ensuring that investments are both responsive to current needs and aligned with long-term vision for a stronger, more equitable infrastructure in the Estes Valley.

Tuition Assistance Goal 1:

Program creates a more equitable childcare system in the Estes Valley through improved policies and increased access to childcare assistance.

Tuition Assistance Goal 2:

Improve financial stability for underserved communities by offsetting the cost of childcare for families.

Tuition Assistance Budget

The proposed funding allocations for assistance programs is based on estimations from cost-modeling and projections from EVICS Family Resource Center. The expenditures are subject to change based on demonstrated need and experience.

Population Served	2024 Actual	2025 Approved	2026 Projected
80% AMI and Below	\$150,000	\$250,000	\$300,000
80-110% AMI	-	\$50,000	\$150,000
School-age Summer 110% AMI and Below	-	-	\$50,000
Reimbursement	\$38,260	N/A	N/A
Total	\$188,260	\$300,000	\$500,000

Tracking of the distribution of assistance administered to the various populations listed in the far left column in the table above will begin in 2026. Complete data demonstrating the various populations served in 2025 will be presented in the 2025 Impact Report.

\$150,000 in funds was granted to EVICS Family Resource Center in 2024 to support low-income families during the CCAP enrollment freeze, as well as for families with higher incomes seeking assistance while experiencing hardship or in need of emergency funding. In addition to the \$150,000 that was initially provided, the Town also supplemented the program with \$38,260 in “backfill” reimbursement to cover administered awards that required EVICS to dip into their reserves.

Assistance for 80-110% AMI households is administered through the Estes Valley Childcare Fund, administered by ECCLC, which has a fiscal year beginning in July. The program year is August-July, which is why the budget is split between the two years. Beginning in 2025, the program year budget is \$150,000 (\$50,000 approved for August-December 2025). In 2026, the budget will be proposed for another \$150,000 for the program year beginning in August, totaling \$150,000 in 2026.

Tuition Assistance Enrollment

Population Served	Child Enrollment		
	2024 Actual	2025 YTD*	2026 Goal
80% AMI and Below	58	74	50
80-110% AMI	-	5	20
School-age Summer 110% AMI and Below	-	-	20
Total	58	79	90

*YTD as of August 2025

Enrollment demonstrates the number of *children* receiving assistance. Tracking of the distribution of assistance administered to the various populations listed in the far left column in the table above will begin in 2026. Complete data demonstrating the various populations served in 2025 will be presented in the 2025 Impact Report.

Out-of-School Programming

2026 Objective:

Provide grant funding to support and expand capacity in out-of-school care programs, including new pilot initiatives offering care during teacher professional development days and holiday/school breaks.

Through Priority Grants and the Childcare Stability Initiative, funding will continue to address year-round childcare needs for school-age children. This includes care during the summer months, before- and after-school hours, and on out-of-school days such as teacher professional development days, holidays, and school breaks.

Out-of-school care providers are eligible for the Childcare Stability Initiative, offering predictable, ongoing funding that supports operational sustainability. Administrators of both school-year and summer-based programs can also apply for the Out-of-School Programming Priority Grant to support pilot programs, prioritizing new programs that serve children on teacher professional development days and school breaks.

A dual funding pathway for Out-of-School programs enables both the development of new pilot programs and strengthens existing organizations, ensuring Estes Valley families have reliable childcare throughout the year for children up to age 13.

Out-of-School Program Enrollment

	2024 (Baseline)	2025	2026 Goal	2027 Target
After-school	52	91	104	104
Summer	163	264	264	228

Childcare Workforce Support

2026 Objective:

Support wage increases and benefits for early childhood and childcare professionals closer to a livable wage and incentivize licensed childcare providers to establish childcare as a more lucrative profession in the Estes Valley.

6E Lodging Tax Funds will be allocated to grants, incentives, and collaborative initiatives that directly strengthen the childcare workforce. The Childcare Assistance program is available for Family Childcare Home Providers to support expenses related to health and safety improvements, as well as start-up costs for new providers. Funding may be used for childproofing, fencing, equipment, materials, and other essential needs that enable providers to meet licensing requirements and operate safely.

To further incentivize licensing, Family Childcare Home (FCCH) providers who become licensed and enroll in the Early Childhood Council of Larimer County Coaching Program to achieve a Colorado Shines Quality Level 2 rating will receive a \$1,000 bonus. ECCLC and EVICS Family

Resource Center offer training, networking opportunities, coaching, and technical support to Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) providers and licensed exempt providers to strengthen professional skills, promote quality improvement, and encourage licensing.

Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) care, or licensed-exempt care, is a critical solution to addressing childcare in the Estes Valley- specifically for infant and toddler care. Goal 1 of the Strategic Plan, conducted in 2023, includes strengthening infrastructure and support for FFN providers as a key objective. In 2026, the Town will support the inclusion of FFN providers with the creation of new grants and funding opportunities with 6E Lodging Tax revenue through the Childcare Assistance grant application. This segment of providers may receive funding to support their training for health, safety, and quality of care (such as CPR, child development courses, etc.), connect providers with state programs that can provide them with funding, and provide parents with the opportunity to access local tuition assistance if their provider is participating in the network.

Because FFN care is not subject to regulation by the state and because many people providing this type of care would not identify as professional childcare providers, it can be difficult to know who they are or connect them with resources. Collaboration with key stakeholders and organizations such as the Early Childhood Council of Larimer County (ECCLC) and EVICS Family Resource Center will be essential to the creation of these programs.

Additional workforce support strategies introduced in the 2025 Annual Funding Plan – including mortgage and rental assistance for providers, access to healthcare, and the integration of early childhood education into the high school Career and Technical Education program –will be evaluated and included in the 2025 Annual Impact Report.

Childcare Stability Initiative:

In June 2025, revisions to Town Policy 225: Childcare Funding Guidelines established the [Childcare Stability Initiative](#), replacing the Annual Childcare Workforce Subsidy while retaining its core intent: to provide consistent, dependable funding to stabilize the workforce and help bridge the gap between what providers can afford to pay staff and what constitutes a livable wage.

The Annual Childcare Workforce Subsidy, introduced in 2023, was an early effort to address wage gaps and improve retention of childcare employees, and received positive feedback from providers and demonstrated measurable success in increasing wages and stabilizing the workforce. However, program evaluation highlighted the need for a more reliable and flexible funding structure that providers could incorporate into long-term planning.

The Childcare Stability Initiative builds on these lessons by providing an annual, framework-driven funding mechanism for licensed childcare providers and entities offering essential services. Applicants submit requests as part of the Annual Funding Plan process, using a

structured workbook to document operational needs, workforce strategies, and any proposed solutions addressing critical gaps in the community. Requests are reviewed and approved with the annual budget, ensuring predictability for providers while aligning allocations with broader community priorities.

Funds awarded through the Childcare Stability Initiative directly influence the funding available for Priority Grants and Childcare Assistance in the following year, creating a balanced and integrated funding approach.

2026 Childcare Stability Initiative Funding Requests:

- Mountaintop Childcare
- YMCA of the Rockies Preschool
- Park Place Preschool
- YMCA of the Rockies Day Camp
- Boys and Girls Club of Larimer County
- Estes Valley Recreation and Park District

Funding requests and staff recommendations for Childcare Stability Initiative funding are provided in Exhibit D.

Capital and Facilities

2026 Objective:

Development of a Childcare Facility Master Plan for the Estes Valley, demonstrating the expansion of additional childcare facilities to ensure adequate space and resources to meet the current and future demand for quality early childhood care. Continue to collect and save funds year-to-year to remain flexible and reactive to opportunities as they arise.

The Town will continue to direct funds toward capital and facility improvements to meet the demand for increased childcare spots in the Estes Valley. By establishing a healthy reserve, the Town will remain flexible and responsive to emerging opportunities. By allocating and preserving funds year-to-year, the Town can make strategic investments in property acquisition, construction, or major renovations in alignment with long-term facility goals. In 2026, the Town intends to develop a Childcare Facility Master Plan to help guide these investments, providing a comprehensive blueprint for expanding and optimizing facilities across the Estes Valley.

The facility housing Mountaintop Childcare (1250 Woodstock Drive) was purchased by the Town in 2024 to retain the business and preserve the 40 childcare spots at that location. By leasing the facility back to the childcare provider, the Town has an additional revenue stream aside from the 6E Lodging Tax revenue to support the maintenance of Town-owned childcare facilities. The “Childcare Facility Account” does not utilize 6E Lodging Tax revenue unless identified in the Annual Funding Plan for specific projects. The Town Board will consider the use

of \$30,000 in 6E Lodging Tax dollars to address ADA accessibility and upgrades to the building, in addition to the use of received grant funds. More information about the Childcare Facility Account and the proposed budget can be found in Exhibit E

In parallel with the accumulation of flexible reserve funds and long-term planning, the Childcare Facility and Capital Funding Priority Grant will continue to provide licensed childcare providers with funding to support facility renovations, equipment purchases, and other capital improvements that expand capacity and improve quality.

Housing Initiatives

The Estes Park Housing Authority (EPHA) exists to create and facilitate housing opportunities in the Estes Valley. In July 2023, the Town entered into a memorandum of understanding to transfer Workforce Housing and Childcare Lodging Tax (6E Lodging Tax) funds dedicated to workforce housing to EPHA. EPHA has the authority to make purchasing decisions as outlined in the MOU and to administer and manage the various programs presented in the Annual 6E Funding Plan. All expenditures by the EPHA are subject to regular audits.

The Estes Park Housing Authority was created by the Town and is a quasi-governmental entity. The EPHA Board Members are appointed by the Town Board, and it is subject to the same auditing requirements as other public entities in Colorado.

Decisions regarding distribution will be made in collaboration with the Estes Park Housing Authority, and specifics are informed by the [Housing Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan](#), conducted in 2023, and the [Annual Housing Supply Plan](#) drafted by EPHA, which provides insight into the organization's future planning for housing development.

The estimated revenue, expenditures, and projected budget for housing is an approximation and is subject to change based on opportunities that arise and variations in 6E Lodging Tax revenue. All funds that are not spent each year may carry over to the following year.

Priority Areas and Targets:

1. Land Banking

Strategically acquire and hold vacant or underutilized land for future development of workforce housing, ensuring long-term availability of new development in the Estes Valley.

2. Development

Increasing the quantity of housing available for the workforce through new construction to support the local workforce who need housing within a reasonable proximity to their jobs.

3. Assistance Programs

Bridge the affordability gap and mitigate the financial strain caused by increasing housing costs on members of the local workforce.

4. Staffing Capacity- removed as a priority for 2026. Increased number of staff at the Estes Park Housing Authority is necessary to provide essential services and administer programs to fulfil housing initiatives.

Housing Initiatives Goals and Targets

	2025	2026 Goal	2028 Target
Property Acquisition	117	0	100 more preserved or enhanced
New Development	0	0	300-400 units
Down Payment Assistance Program	1	5	5-10 transactions per year
Rental Assistance	32	40	10-20 rentals annually

The following objectives inform the use of 6E Funds in 2026 to meet the targets and priority areas outlined above:

Land Banking

2026 Objective:

Remain flexible in the ability to acquire and preserve existing homes, properties, and strategically located land- both vacant and underutilized- to support the development and conversion of workforce housing.

The Estes Park Housing Authority is focused on being proactive and flexible with respect to property acquisition, enabling the ability to respond quickly to emerging opportunities. Land banking was a key strategy proposed in the 2023 Housing Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan, which EPHA immediately took advantage of with 6E Lodging Tax revenue. Since 2023, an additional 117 housing units have been added to the community through the conversion of existing properties that were previously utilized as short-term rentals, restricting them to use by the local workforce. With the financial resources that EPHA has access to, the rental rates at those properties are under market-rate, making them affordable for the workforce.

Targeted growth for increased housing units by 2028 is 300-400 units. The acquisition and conversion of the 117 units bring us closer to that goal. Moving into 2026, EPHA will shift its primary focus toward the development and predevelopment of properties owned by the Town and EPHA. Ground-up construction remains a top priority, while maintaining the flexibility to act on high-impact opportunities that strengthen the community's long-term housing supply.

Development

2026 Objective:

Advance the conceptual planning and initiate ground-up development of new housing units for both rent and sale. Efforts will align with the Estes Valley Housing Needs Assessment and the Town of Estes Park's Comprehensive Plan to ensure strategic, data-informed growth that meets local demand.

The Estes Park Housing Authority projects the creation of approximately 137 units through the development of four capital development projects within the next five years. These projects are dependent upon market forces and the availability of funding sources beyond 6E revenue. All projects are under the direct control of the EPHA or the Town of Estes Park. 6E Lodging Tax funds, in partnership with various Prop 123 initiatives, or other available federal and state funding sources, will support the development of these projects. Property owned by the Town of Estes Park in predevelopment includes the Fish Hatchery Housing Development and 179 Stanley Circle Drive. In addition to Town-owned property, EPHA is in the pre-development stage for property they own on Riverside Drive.

The Fish Hatchery Housing Development has been in predevelopment since 2021, but the Town stepped back from pursuing a workforce rental development at that location due to changes in the financial market, construction costs, and market demand. EPHA and the Town will continue to work together to jumpstart a redevelopment of mixed-income workforce housing at the site. EPHA anticipates pursuing Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to develop the site in coordination with development partners. As of August 2025, EPHA has filed a formal development plan with an amended rezoning application to the Town of Estes Park. This will position them to apply for low-income housing tax credits in 2027.

Assistance Programs

2026 Objective:

Implement and evaluate programs that financially support the rental and ownership of workforce housing, while exploring the potential incentives for the development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and private development of new workforce housing.

The Workforce Rental Assistance (WFRA) program launched in 2024 as a pilot program and concluded in April 2025, transitioning out of the pilot phase in May 2025. 54 households received assistance during the pilot program, and the evaluation of the pilot program demonstrated that a change in eligibility should include a higher income-to-housing ratio. The new program year began in May 2025, and with the launch of the new program nine additional applicants have been approved for the program. While attrition is expected, renewal of applications is expected in 2026. Renewal applications coincide with the recipient's lease renewal, and updated employment information is required to ensure the applicant still falls within the guidelines of the program structure.

To date, the priority has been to provide stability for the workforce in rental markets. In 2026 will evolve to include home-ownership programs by offering a Down Payment Assistance Program. The Trailhead Homeownership Down Payment Assistance Program is scheduled to launch in 2025, with a goal of serving five households. Qualified households may receive up to a 20% down payment shared equity loan. A shared equity loan does not require monthly payments by the household but requires that the loan be paid back upon the sale of the home, including the shared appreciation sum. The administration of the program and the loan issuance will be administered by the Impact Development Fund.

Staffing Capacity

In 2026, this will be removed as a priority. The staffing has been expanded at EPHA, providing systems that meet the needs of the increased scope of work conducted at EPHA that 6E Lodging Tax funds prompted.

6E Lodging Tax revenue transferred to EPHA will support the staffing needed to administer the work associated with the additional objectives related to the workforce, specifically the roles of the Housing Program Manager and the Real Estate Development Director positions. EPHA utilizes 6E Lodging Tax funds to cover additional administrative costs associated with the verification of housing and related covenants, the role of the Executive Director, and accounting services.

Final Summary

This year's funding plan reflects a strategic shift in 6E Lodging Tax allocation to respond to evolving community needs and market conditions. In housing, the focus shifted from primarily expanding availability of workforce housing through the conversion, preservation, and acquisition of property to an approach that combines targeted assistance programs, such as rental and down payment support, with investment in new construction and mixed-income developments. This dual strategy addresses immediate affordability while building supply for the future.

In childcare, the priority was workforce stability and financial stability through tuition assistance programs, operational support for providers, and initiatives to retain and strengthen the early childhood workforce. Moving forward, funding will be directed toward increasing childcare capacity through investments in facilities, capital projects, and long-term infrastructure that can meet current and projected demand. This shift ensures continued availability of quality care while laying the foundation for sustained growth in the sector.

Performance measures indicate significant progress in increasing the availability and affordability of both housing and childcare, while also laying the groundwork for sustained long-term impact. Moving forward, the outcomes of this year's plan will continue to inform funding

strategies, leverage partnerships, and adapt to emerging needs, ensuring that our community remains resilient, inclusive, and economically strong.

Exhibit A: Community Input

While drafting the annual funding plan, the Town engages with the public in several ways to gauge the direction of the proposed plan for the next year. In July and August 2025, the Town discussed strategies and alignment of the objectives and targets proposed in this plan through various methods including:

- One-on-one meetings with key stakeholders, such as EVICS Family Resource Center
- Two public outreach forums (18 individuals attended in-person, 6 virtually)
- Online Feedback Form (15 responses)

The same feedback form has been distributed, with minor edits, for the last three years and includes the following questions:

1. After reviewing the previous year's plan and impact report, what suggestions do you have for the 2026 Funding Plan?
2. What are your key takeaways from the use of 6E Lodging Tax funds for workforce housing/childcare to date?
3. What additional reporting mechanisms or data points would you like to see in the Annual Impact Report?
4. How do you feel about the distribution of funds between childcare and housing? (80%/20% split)
5. Please share your reasoning for suggesting any increases or decreases between the two focus areas.
6. Decreasing/No Change/Increasing funding for each workforce housing priority area: Land Banking, Development, Assistance Programs, and Staffing
7. Decreasing/No Change/Increasing funding for each workforce childcare priority area: Tuition Assistance, Out-of-School, Workforce Challenges, and Capital/Facilities
8. Recipients have the opportunity to ask questions and include their contact information, otherwise the form is anonymous.

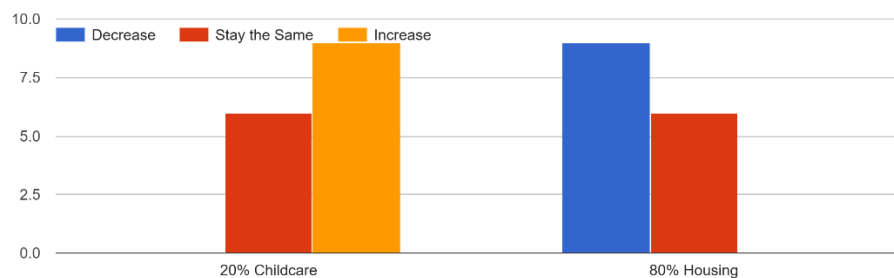
The feedback form is provided to interested community members who may not be able to attend a forum, where many of their questions may have been answered. The following points were taken from the feedback form and discussions during the forums:

- Childcare and Housing Focus: Several respondents suggested increasing funding for childcare, with some believing it needs more attention than housing. There is a significant need for affordable and quality care, especially for infants.
- Seasonal Worker Housing: A significant suggestion was to address the lack of housing for J1 and seasonal employees, proposing options like dorm-style housing and utilizing 6E funding for seasonal workers, as much seasonal housing has converted to short-term rentals.

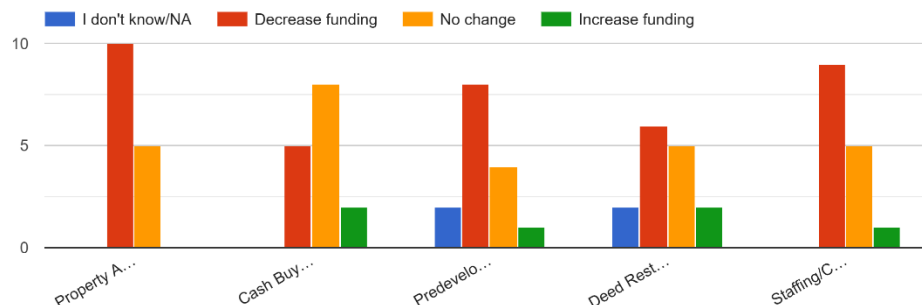
- **Funding and Oversight:** Suggestions included moving middle-income tuition assistance to EVICS, increasing citizen involvement in fund distribution, and reviewing leadership and practices related to 6E funding.
- **Alternate Housing Solutions:** Suggest increasing the focus on housing affordability issues and giving money back to the community for homebuyer programs and down payment assistance.
- **Housing Expansion Concerns:** Some respondents recommended slowing down workforce housing expansion due to perceived inefficiency and economic slowdown. There were comments about the high amount of funding that's gone to housing and the rapid growth of EPFA.
- **Childcare Workforce:** Incentivize the local workforce and focus on attracting and adequately compensating high-quality childcare workers.

The following charts are representative of the feedback received from the online feedback form:

In 2023 and 2024, the split between housing and childcare initiatives was 88/12, in 2025 that changed to 80/20. How do you feel about the distribution of funds between Childcare and Housing?



Workforce Housing Priority Areas



Childcare Priority Areas

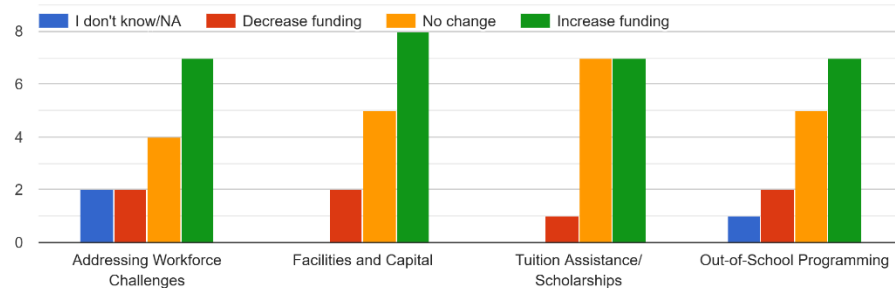


Exhibit B: Childcare Priority Grant Framework and Allocations

Priority Grant opportunities offer 6E Lodging Tax revenue to address specific childcare challenges in the Estes Valley by targeting objectives and outcomes presented in this Annual Funding Plan, including but not limited to, tuition assistance programs, out-of-school program expansion, capital projects and facilities, and addressing challenges in the early childhood workforce.

Childcare Facility and Capital Funding Grant

Childcare Facility and Capital Funding Grants are dedicated to supporting new facilities and facility improvements that are designed to create nurturing and stimulating environments to enhance early childhood development.

- Application Window: June 15- September 1
- Funding Allocation: \$100,000

Out-of-School Funding Grant

Out-of-School Funding Grant supports the expansion of existing programs serving children 0-13 years old when school is out of session. Funds must be used to increase capacity and serve more children in the Estes Valley after-school and when school is out of session.

- Application for School-year: July 15- October 1
- Application for Summer: March 15- May 1
- Funding Allocation: \$50,000

Childcare Stability Initiative

Childcare Stability Initiative provides eligible entities with a direct subsidy to support the early childhood and childcare workforce, and general operations and overhead of entities that play a critical role in providing childcare capacity in the Estes Valley.

- Applications due July 1.
- Funding Allocation: \$300,000

Tuition Assistance Funding

6E Lodging Tax revenue is available through the Childcare Assistance application, or by direction of the Town Board, to fund low- to middle-income families in the Estes Valley.

Requests for funding over \$50,000 must be approved by the Town Board.

Funding Allocation: \$300,000

New License Incentive Program

Family Childcare Home (FCCH) providers who become licensed and enroll in the Early Childhood Council of Larimer County Coaching Program to achieve a Colorado Shines Quality Level 2 rating will receive a \$1,000 bonus.

Funding Allocation: \$5,000

Exhibit C: Proposed 6E Childcare Budget

Based on projected revenue and allocated funds for developed funding programs, the following budget provides a proposed use of 6E revenue and expenditures throughout the year.

2026 Projected Childcare Budget

Revenue	
Roll-over from 2025/Reserve	\$750,000
Projected 6E Revenue	\$1,102,500
Total	\$1,852,500
Expenditures	
Allocated Program Funding	\$955,000
Childcare Facility Account Transfer	\$30,000
Total	\$985,000

An allocation of funds for each grant funding program ensures that funds are available to distribute and directs the prioritization of awards. These programs do not represent the total expected revenue in 2026. Funds may be distributed *up to* the amounts outlined in the proposed

program budget and may change throughout the year. By vote of the Town Board, expenditures may exceed funding allocations outlined below.

2026 Projected Program Funding Allocation

Priority Objective	Allocated Funding
Childcare Stability Initiative	\$300,000
Childcare Facility and Capital Grant	\$100,000
Tuition Assistance	\$500,000
Out-of-School Funding Grant	\$50,000
New License Incentive Program	\$5,000
Total	\$955,000

Exhibit D: Childcare Stability Initiative

Childcare Stability Initiative Request and Staff Recommendations

Applicant	Amount	Recommendation
Mountaintop Childcare	\$35,000	Yes
Park Place Preschool	\$25,000	Yes
YMCA BKB Preschool	\$40,000	Yes
Cubs Den	\$15,000	Yes
YMCA Summer Inclusion Program	\$60,000	Yes
Boys and Girls Club- Summer Program	\$60,000	Yes
Boys and Girls Club- School	\$40,000	Yes
Mountaintop Summer Program	\$15,000	Yes

The funding requested by Estes Valley childcare organizations and stakeholders has been recommended for approval from the Town Staff review committee for 2026. A total distribution of \$290,000 will be awarded in January 2026.

Exhibit E: Childcare Facility Account

As presented in Policy 225: Childcare Funding Guidelines, the Childcare Facility account was established with revenue from the rental of a Town-owned facility to a childcare provider. The Childcare Facility account is used to fund future maintenance, repairs, expansion, and acquisition of childcare facilities to be owned by the Town. 6E Lodging Tax revenue may be allocated to the Childcare Facility account with approval by the Town Board.

Expenditures from the Childcare Facility expense account for Town-owned childcare facilities will be presented and approved through the Town's annual budget approval process and Annual 6E Funding Plan.

Facility Account Projections

Revenue	2025	2026
1250 Woodstock Rent	\$37,452	\$37,452
FDGD Grant	\$10,000	\$10,000
6E Fund Transfer		\$30,000
Expenses		
Repairs and Maintenance	\$935	\$5,000
ADA Compliance Project		\$50,000

Staff recommend investing in upgrades to the outdoor ramp and playground area to meet ADA compliance and enhance the space to meet the needs of all children. The Town has applied for grant funding, but recommends transferring \$30,000 in 6E Lodging Tax revenue to the Childcare Facility Account to begin work on these projects, regardless of whether the project is awarded.

Additional repairs and maintenance expenses are projected in 2026 as outlined in the proposed 2026 Childcare Facility Account budget.

2026 Repairs and Maintenance

Exterior	
Signage	\$1,000
Lawn/Playground Maintenance	\$1,000
Gutter Extension	\$250

Interior	
Paint	\$1,000
Electrical Updates	\$1,750
Total	\$5,000

As of September 2025, the Town has been awarded \$20,000 in grant funding from Visit Estes Park, from proceeds they are redistributing back into the community from the Frozen Dead Guy Day festival. The Frozen Dead Guy Day (FDGD) Grant will support the ADA Compliance Project at the Mountaintop Childcare facility as proposed:

ADA Compliance Project

Revenue	
FDGD Grant	\$20,000
6E Fund Transfer	\$30,000
Expenses	
Ramp Construction	\$30,000
Surfacing	\$10,000
Equipment	\$5,000
Exterior Upgrades	\$5,000
Total	\$50,000