

ANNUAL REPORT

2017



CELEBRATING LOCAL CHARACTER.
SUPPORTING INDEPENDENT BUSINESSES.
STRENGTHENING COLORADO'S DOWNTOWNS.

A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In 2017, Downtown Colorado, Inc. turned 35 years old. For most of us, it's an age of reckoning: so many accomplishments to be proud of, so many more milestones to achieve.

It's funny that change is inevitable — but growth isn't. DCI's mission and metrics for success have never changed: we're here to help develop sustainable business districts throughout our beautiful state, and our success is defined purely by that of the people, businesses, and agencies we serve.

Your growth is what matters most to us, and it isn't easy getting there. Last year, we worked with our partners to ask and answer tough questions: How do small businesses thrive in a digital world? What can rural communities do to attract more visitors to their region? Why should the entrepreneurs focus on collaboration rather than competition within their business districts?

These questions will remain with us in 2018 as DCI continues to look at the bigger picture with all of you.

Sincerely,



Katherine Correll
Executive Director



2018 UPDATES

CLEAR CREEK COUNTY HOUSING AND LAND USE

Clear Creek County, like much of Colorado, faces an acute shortage of workforce housing. DCI worked with the Clear Creek Housing Cohort for six months to identify housing summit, pressing needs, expertise, and the stakeholders needed to jumpstart a housing initiative. DCI developed the content and worked with the Clear Creek County Housing Cohort supported by Freeport-McMoRan, to engage the county, municipalities, non profits, residents and businesses to attend plan a Housing Strategy Summit. DCI's team of consultants included private developers, finance professionals, brokers, and state agency experts to present their experience and assist in the formation of an action plan. The Housing Strategy Workshop drew over 50 local stakeholders and included an in-depth solution-oriented discussion resulting in a targeted action plan for the county to move forward. Clear Creek County Economic Development Corporation and Housing Authority are collaborating to implement the action plan starting January 2018, including two additional workshops focused on creating a tool to assist in shaping requests for proposals for developers.

AMERICORPS VISTA: SERVING WHERE NEEDED

Established in 2016, DCI's Downtown Capacity Builder AmeriCorps VISTA program works with the Corporation for National Community Service (CNCS). The Downtown Capacity VISTA program provides public sector or non-profit DCI members, such as Downtown Development Authorities, municipalities, Main Street Programs, and economic development organizations. Downtown Capacity VISTA volunteers work a full 40-hour week building organizational capacity and the foundations for DCI member organizations. We look forward to expanding the program in 2018.

"Without [our DCI VISTA,] Hunter's help we wouldn't be able to work on as many projects as we do and accomplish initiatives like historic preservation, economic vitality, and Main Street Program projects. We are able to do all of this because of Hunter's capacity building which is key to Buena Vista's success."

Emily Katsimpalis, Assistant to the Town Administrator for Buena Vista

2017 SUCCESSES BY THE NUMBERS

INTRODUCING DOWNTOWN INSTITUTES FOR BUSINESSES!

This year, DCI identified the need for practical business training around the state to enhance economic development. Through partial grant funding from USDA Rural Development, DCI was able to bring Downtown Institutes for Business to Grand Junction, Hot Sulphur Springs, Craig, Yampa, Monte Vista, Buena Vista, and Walsenburg. Downtown Institutes for Business have focused on how small businesses can thrive in the Amazon world and how they can use placemaking, creativity, and savvy marketing techniques to find practical solutions for development, sustainability, and growth. These events brought together business owners and community leaders to start a discussion about what can we accomplish together as we enhance all of our businesses.

"I really appreciated the fresh approach for helping small businesses by giving new ideas and confirming that we do not have to spend large amounts of money to be competitive in today's business world." - Sarah Dishong, Grand Junction

DCI'S VIBRANT DOWNTOWNS CONFERENCE | APRIL 10-13 | BOULDER

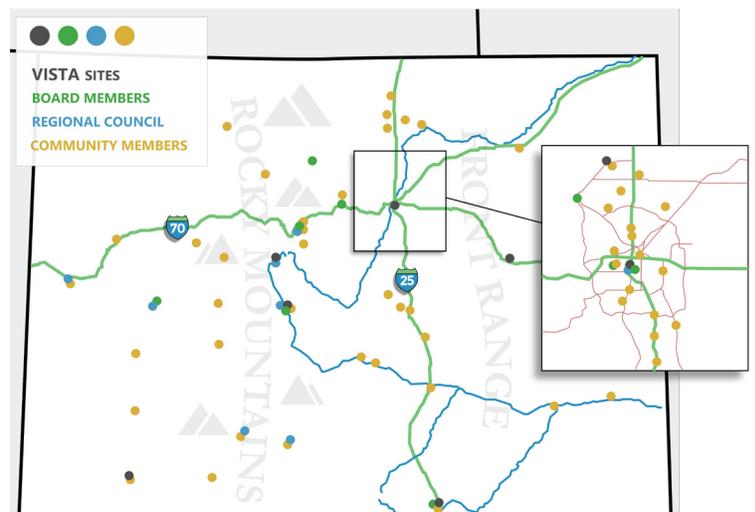
The 35th Annual Vibrant Downtowns event was held in Breckenridge in May 2017, just six months after the 2016 Vibrant Downtowns in Pueblo. The 2017 theme was IN THE GAME, as in "skin in the game," and featured 10 Challenge Studio workshops facilitated by regional experts to bring together different audiences for education, celebration, and solving real problems facing Colorado communities. Challenges included incentivizing the right development in Nederland, social media for civic engagement in Wheat Ridge, and branding a destination for business and living in Hot Sulphur Springs.

Keynotes by Steven Thomson from the Van Alen Institute, Julie Burros from Create Boston, and Vince Kadlubek of Meow Wolf created a conceptual framework for participants that considered how a built environment influences behavior and vice versa, how the public sector is integrating creative thinking, and how creative entrepreneurs are leading the public sector.

This year, our Vibrant Downtowns IN THE GAME Conference takes place April 10-13, 2018, in Boulder, and the popular Challenge Studios will once again provide side-by-side guidance to help towns address specific issues and come away with actionable solutions. For more information about IN THE GAME, visit downtowncoloradoinc.org/2018-conference.

- **4** URA Board Trainings, **3** City Builder Events, **3** Advisory Team Panels, **8** Downtown Institutes for Business, and **3** Housing Strategy Summits
- **4** new VISTAs placed this year, doubling the amount of VISTAs in our communities to **8**
- **\$51K+** dollars in leveraged for communities through the VISTA program to plan **25** local community events
- **33%** Increase in DCI Membership
- **10** communities received Challenge Studio Workshops, **5** follow-on activities to further community efforts.
- First IN THE GAME Vibrant Downtown Event, with **16** dynamic speakers, **6** innovative tours, **16+** organizational partners, and **165** engaged community participants.
- Reached **2,500** people with **117** emails, **430** Facebook posts, and **3** #InsideDenver Twitter events that gained over **12,000** Twitter impressions!

DCI THROUGHOUT COLORADO



WHAT DCI MEMBERSHIP MEANS FOR ALL OF COLORADO

People who invest in Downtown Colorado, Inc. memberships — whether individual business owners, local agencies, or entire town governments — are plugged in to an active statewide network of advocates and experts who have one unified goal: strengthening and sustaining business districts throughout Colorado.

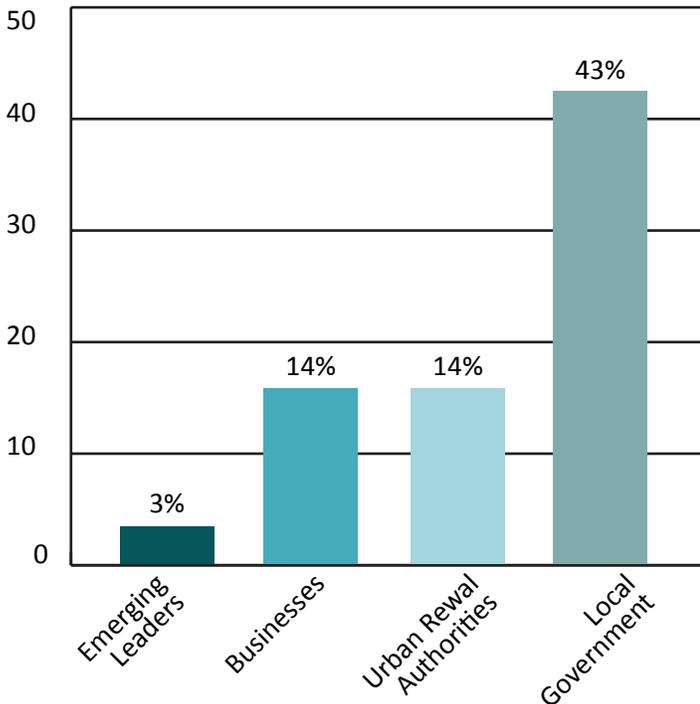
To achieve this, DCI provides members with advisory services, educational programs, and informational resources. The solutions we offer are driven directly by the unique challenges voiced by our communities.

Whether you're new to DCI or a current member wanting to maximize your benefits, contact us at membership@downtowncoloradoinc.org or 303.282.0625 for more information.

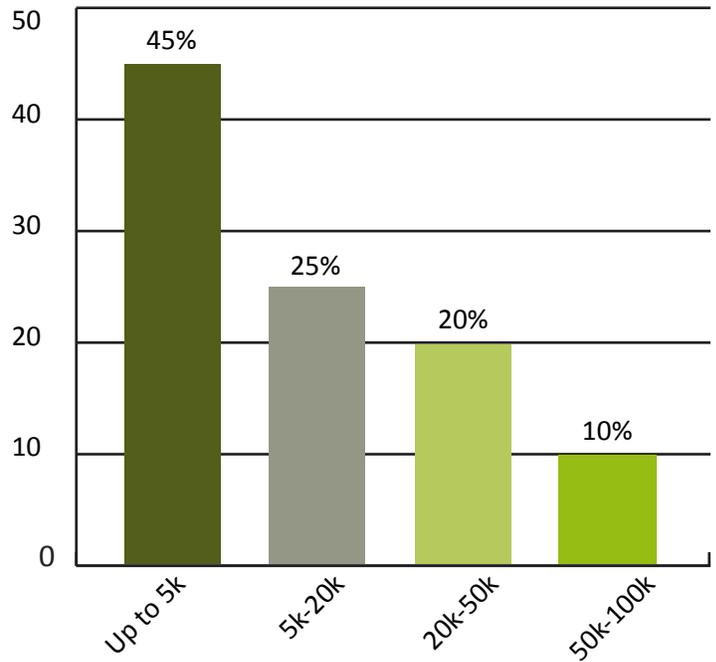
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MEMBERSHIP BY TYPE



LOCAL GOV'T MEMBERS BY POPULATION



WHAT'S NEXT IN 2018?

In 2018, we're focused on improving our services to better serve our members and all of Colorado. This year, downtown districts throughout our state can expect more from DCI: more workshops, more technical assistance, more tools and resources. What do you want to see more of? Let us know at outreach@downtowncoloradoinc.org!

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