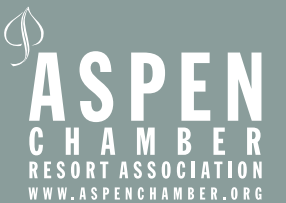


2020-2025 Strategic Plan

CORE VALUES

- We are a welcoming organization that values and embodies the Aspen spirit.
- We cultivate transparent, open and honest communications.
- We nurture and sustain long-term relationships.
- We honor the interconnectivity of the entire community.
- We facilitate balanced collaborative conversations.
- We adapt to dynamic changes in our ecosystem.
- We invite engagement through passion and fun.
- We celebrate the wonder of Aspen.

 Indicates interdepartmental collaboration



Aspen Chamber Resort Association (ACRA) is a 501(c)(6) nonprofit business association dedicated to supporting the business community and enhancing the visitor experience. ACRA is a unique blend of a traditional business chamber and a visitors' bureau made up of approximately 750 local businesses, a strong board of directors, and a talented staff.

VISION

Creating an environment for Aspen to thrive.

MISSION

Attract visitors to the resort, foster a dynamic Aspen experience, and provide valuable member benefits, to support a sustainable local economy.

GUIDELINES

- Tell our story better, both as a community and as an organization.
- Find better ways to listen to our community and membership.
- Set realistic operational and financial goals.
- Actively participate in the planning for the future of our community.

TAGLINE

Defy Ordinary

ORGANIZATION

The Aspen Chamber Resort Association's strategic plan serves as a framework to provide board governance and organizational management. Our strategic plan was formulated through the board of directors, committees and member feedback and will serve as a comprehensive guide of goals, objectives and strategies to identify and implement our long-term vision.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Organizational goals are high-level objectives that cultivate and promote fiscal responsibility, leadership and broad approaches for committees and staff to achieve our mission, vision and values.



[ORGANIZATIONAL VITALITY]

ACRA strives to create an open and trusted atmosphere that inspires creativity. Over the next five years, the administration department will focus on planning for the future to nurture our organization's most valuable asset, our team.

OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION

GOAL: Plan a new office space with advanced technology, that enhances productivity and allows for a flexible work environment.

Strategies

- Work with CEO and the City of Aspen, to determine new office space. .
- Work with IT company to follow replacement schedule of workstations and evolve the plan to allow easier access when working offsite.
- Research and implement innovative technology options.
- Calculate and establish a detailed budget of indirect and direct expenses of the office relocation.

GOAL: Ensure ACRA is getting the best value for services with contractors and vendors.

Strategies

- Inventory all service agreements and maintain in central location.
- Review and look for cost-saving solutions with current and future vendors.

GOAL: Provide comprehensive coverage in Human Resources arena.

Strategies

- Provide effective training / onboarding to staff.
- Ensure that present employee handbook is kept up to date and that all staff have access.
- Research, create, and implement an employee benefit package to increase employee retention.
- Provide ongoing educational opportunities for best practices in HR.
- Research, create, and implement employee wellness program to promote employee wellbeing.
- Conduct staff performance reviews.

GOAL: Maintain internal policies and procedures for efficient operations.

Strategies

- Provide support for board, membership, committee and official chamber meetings.
- Maintain liaison and communications with the officers and directors regarding the operation of the association.
- Maintain a permanent record of board and committee meeting minutes.
- Prepare annual budget for board consideration and assume responsibility for the management of the budget.

GOAL: Ensure financial stability through fiscal responsibility and conservative budgeting, in all departments.

Strategies

- Achieve increased revenue and decreased expenses within the budget process.
- Work with management staff on process for accurate forecasting and budgeting.
- Prepare and present clear and concise monthly financial statements and all related worksheets.

[DESTINATION PROMOTER]

As the destinations #1 promoter, we are fortunate to have brand recognition and frequent repeat visitors, which makes us well poised to shift our lens from inspiring travel to being mindful stewards of Aspen. Our goal is to continue our tradition of partnerships, collaboration and brand stewardship for the overall success of the resort, being mindful of the pitfalls of overcrowding.

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

GOAL: Develop and execute strategic partnerships and promotions to protect our destination assets.

Strategies

- Partner with Pledge for the Wild.
- Partner with an existing local environmental organization on a give-back program.
- Promote partnership via Social media as well as PR stories.
- Take a stance in regard to environmental awareness.
- Incorporate initiative into sales process.
- Continue promotion of Aspen Pledge and how-to content and adapt as needed.
- Target visitors traveling within the destination with educational content.
- Use local influencers to help spread sustainability messaging.
- Cultivate initiative in travel trade, meetings, and weddings marketing materials as well as targeting these audiences with our educational content.
- Facilitate collaboration with community entities on improving the experience at the Maroon Bells as one of our highest traffic areas and most valuable assets.
- Partner with a like-minded brand to elevate Aspen's exposure.

GOAL: Develop a framework that allows us to identify, support and enhance existing community and destination worthy events.



Strategies

- Events should complement our brand, offer shareable experiences and enhance quality of life and visitor experience.
- Target events that sales, marketing and special events can collaborate on bringing to Aspen.
- Prospect for new events through referrals from board members, local businesses, and community partners.

GOAL: Achieve best practices in business management.

Strategies

- Ensure ACRA is getting the best value for services with contractors and vendors.
- Practice excellence in fiscal responsibility.
- Achieve Certified Destination Management Executive Status for key staff members.
- Review all Destination Marketing contracts with ACRA attorney.

- Renegotiate contract for Destination Marketing services with the City of Aspen.
- Maintain DMAP Certification for the organization as required on yearly basis.
- Continue professional development for sales and marketing staff at leading industry events.
- Research, evaluate & implement the newest technology tools to be at the forefront of industry.
- Encourage staff members to participate on a board of directors or industry committee.

GOAL: Conduct and utilize research to inform programs and promotion.

Strategies

- Continue non-winter research for visitor data points and provide the community with an executive summary.
- Continue to evaluate new research opportunities and implement as programming and budget allow.
- Aggregate all research data points together.
- Evolve media buying based on research findings.
- Utilize post meeting, wedding, event, and fam surveys to inform and improve group experience and services offered to clients.
- Utilize research findings to inform a “value of tourism” educational campaign.

GOAL: Identify need periods and increase occupancy to achieve dispersement.

Strategies

- Target Niche Markets to fill need periods.
 - Host influencers and journalists for each identified niche.
 - Create content for each niche and grow page traffic.
 - Evolve KPIs to best reflect visitor actions/intentions.
- Capitalize on the unique relationship with our Sister Cities.
 - Establish Chamber Exchange Business Trips.
- Continue Secret Season and Fall in Love Media and Public Relations campaigns.
- Research, evaluate, and implement niche event opportunities in collaboration with the Special Events department.
- Work with business community to stagger shoulder season closures.
- Continue advocating for year-round transportation into and around the destination.
- Purchase databases and utilize research companies to increase prospects.
- Cultivate lead generation for need periods.

- Partner with Colorado Tourism office to grow international visitation.
- Identify similar destination to partner with on cross-promotion.

GOAL: Position ACRA as the best point of contact for all visitors into the destination during every phase of the trip planning cycle.

Strategies

- Create and provide useful and unique content on website, newsletters, blog, and social media platforms.
- Promote ACRA services through advertising, PR initiatives, social media, newsletters and all owned visitor touchpoints.
- Host qualified travel trade, meeting, and wedding planners at annual familiarization trips.
- Represent Aspen at tradeshow and sales missions in key markets.

GOAL: Unify ACRA Branding.

Strategies

- Establish brand guidelines for when to use ACRA logo vs. Defy Ordinary.
- Explore and establish visitor facing name that aligns with brand.
- Create and implement consistent branding in all assets.
- Implement brand storytelling in sales process.
- Cross-train all staff to promote each departments’ services.

GOAL: Increase Community and Local Business Engagement.

Strategies

- Develop baseline then grow the number of stakeholders who feel engaged with ACRA.
- Engage DestinationNEXT and implement education campaign based on findings of study.

“The ACRA Strategic Plan for 2020 - 2025 represents several months of collaborative efforts between key stakeholders in the process. The ACRA Board, Executive Committee, Marketing Advisory Committee, local business representatives and community members all weighed in on key elements of the plan, which will define and focus ACRA's Destination Management, Marketing Strategy and Brand Identity efforts in the coming months to better serve our members, guests and local community.”

*– Jeff Bay, General Manager,
Haymax Hotels, and Chair of Marketing Advisory Committee*

GOAL: Deliver Visitor Experience that Defies Ordinary.

Strategies

- Utilize Tourism Sentiment Study to identify areas for improvement and develop plan surrounding those findings.
- Provide relevant and useful information to front line staff (educational materials, “This Week in Aspen” blog posts, and seasonal trainings).
- Create a Tourism Ambassador program.
- Cultivate inclusivity for the guests that want a feeling of belonging to Aspen by integrating them into the community.
- Celebrate excellence in customer service.
- Advocate on behalf of the visitor experience with local agencies.
- Increase meeting and event resources to add value to the group experience.

- Use baseline, established by study results, to define Community and Growth.
- Partner with Membership Department on marketing seminars to empower members in their own business success.
- Convene with various stakeholder groups to inform initiatives.
- Work with Membership department to Evolve Shop Aspen campaign to an educational campaign (Why it matters to YOU to shop local and the value of tourism).
 - Measure results from Shop Aspen campaign.
 - Survey member businesses to gather data points on their role in the community to inform the campaign.

[COMMUNITY VIBRANCY]

The Aspen Chamber Resort Association's special events create memorable experiences and provide an opportunity for visitors and locals alike to enjoy our special mountain town. Unique community events capture the spirit and character of community, while destination events embrace Aspen as a world-renowned destination. Our goal is to continue to enhance experiences and invite engagement with targeted activations creating vitality to benefit the community.

SPECIAL EVENTS

GOAL: Attract and produce events that drive visitation. 

Strategies

- Produce signature destination and community serving events, balancing event activations of paid to attend vs. free and open to the public.
- Foster welcoming environment for all and incorporate inclusiveness effort.
- Renegotiate and up-date contracts for event management services and the City of Aspen contract for services.
- Conduct research and evaluate event activations to ensure menu of events ACRA is producing aligns with organizational mission.

GOAL: Engage in effective event management processes to align with industry leaders and best practices. 

Strategies

- Research and evaluate event technology opportunities to provide event information as well as utilize as an engagement tool to capture attendee data and provide analytics.
- Collaborate with marketing department on promotional strategies to optimize marketing efforts.
- Position event brand and unify marketing materials through development of memorable event specific logos.
- Obtain financial support including sponsorship, in-kind contributions, event management / contract for services fees and accurately manage operating budget for the sustainability of each of ACRA's special events. Coordinate sponsorship sales efforts with membership department opportunities and assets.
- Properly staff events department and increase event support.
- Educate and train staff to elevate event activations, and continue professional staff development to be leaders in event industry.
- Employ safety consultants to assess risk, provide risk control education, and develop event-specific emergency response and crisis communication plans.

GOAL: Be the community leader in event resource information. 

Strategies

- Provide beneficial information to event producers looking to produce events in Aspen by responding to inquiries, refer all leads to group sales.
- Refine event resource page on ACRA website, create consistent branding with and links to group sales online meeting / incentives / wedding resources.
- Act as umbrella organization to promote events, conduct outreach to local organizations to include and market their events on overall schedule of ACRA annual events.
- Serve as local liaison to provide contact information for other organizations and event vendor referrals when relevant.

“FOOD & WINE looks forward to many years of partnership with ACRA on the FOOD & WINE Classic in Aspen. ACRA is one of our most valued and important partners in Aspen, not only as our producing partner for the event, but with community relations support with local businesses. FOOD & WINE looks forward to growing our relationship with ACRA in years to come, enabling us to strengthen our connections with the Aspen community.”

*– Diella Allen - Executive Director,
Event Marketing FOOD & WINE*

GOAL: Partner with other organizations to enhance existing new events. 

Strategies

- Collaborate on opportunities presented by other organizations, evaluate feasibility of executing as well as alignment of opportunity with ACRA's mission.
- Convene local businesses to explore and gauge desire to participate in activations specific to their business sector. Coordinate outreach effort with membership department.
- Investigate inquiries made by outside event producers to determine potential for partnership, collaborate with marketing and group sales departments on targeted events that complement ACRA's brand and fulfill need time period.
- Activate event RFP on ACRA website event resource page.



EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION | CONNECTING

Membership development will support and expand our member base by providing value-added benefits and services that are responsive to our existing members needs and are attractive to prospective members. In order to represent the interest of members and the business community, we will enhance and sustain a positive business climate, identify and support for workforce issues, and remain an advocate for business at all levels of government.

MEMBERSHIP

GOAL: To be recognized throughout the business and local community as a convener. To be a catalyst for business growth. 

Strategies

- Provide valuable member benefits and discounts that are relevant to the current needs and conditions of the business community.
- Create and maintain partnerships.
- Develop our members knowledge, leadership and education through trainings and seminars. Educational programming.
- Evaluate Shop Aspen campaign in conjunction with Destination Marketing to evolve into an educational campaign (Why it matters to YOU to shop local). How that affects your business potential.
- Host industry educational workshops for members.
- Foster the members that want a feeling of belonging and integrate them into the business community.
- Implement a Business Outlook Forum.

GOAL: Identify and research the current workforce issues and provide an accurate picture of Pitkin County for current and potential business owners and residents.

Strategies

- Partner with the City and Community to build “civic infrastructure” to assist with the affordable housing and daycare crisis.
- Create bi-annual events with Workforce Colorado to inform the business owners on free educational services they have access to.
- Create a member portal page and/or website page to Workforce Colorado, that drives accurate resources to jobs, housing, healthcare and daycare.
- Collaborate with CMC and Aspen School District to provide educational materials and potential trainings and internship programs for local workforce development.

GOAL: Develop and sustain strategic partnerships that position the chamber as a leader in strengthening businesses.

Strategies

- Identify common goals between city and county government and business sector to ensure a proactive approach at the local level.
- Ask staff, volunteer leaders, and members to serve on appropriate committees or boards where they can help communicate and drive policy.
- Provide relevant input and information to community organizations, leaders and elected officials for issues, projects or decisions that could impact tourism, visitors, and business.

- Increase collaboration between other area chambers across the western slope to influence regional issues.
- Develop city to city visit program to study identified issues and implement at least one city to city visit.

GOAL: Execute a SWOT Analysis for all chamber communications and branding that results in providing a high-quality member experience. 

Strategies

- Establish a complimentary chamber brand to Defy Ordinary.
- Engage with contracted local firm to provide PR for the membership portion of the chamber including quarterly events and other outreach.
- Update media touchpoints in general and for quarterly luncheons and bi-annual membership drives/campaigns.
- Evaluate and review our on-boarding, dues structure, portal, software and benefits comprehension.
- Review membership software that will enhance our members experience through ease and clarity.
- Survey members annually and create communications plan that incorporates member feedback.
- Create and provide unique content on website, newsletters and social media platforms that highlight local business.
- Evaluate and develop strategies to identify Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for internal department communication.
- Identify and utilize shared knowledge between staff members.
- Create and implement SOP on how and when departments work together.
- Identify and create SOP for Defy Ordinary between DM and Chamber.

“Thanks for all of y’all’s hard work. We are privileged to have such a great program available as a business asset. Your continued work to get us engaged in the community helps our effort to achieve optimal success as a small and growing business. The hard work at ACRA is much appreciated.”

– Kit McLendon,
Rich Valley Adventures LLC

GOAL: Increase membership by 2% annually.

Strategies

- Identify clear communication and pitch deck and pipeline to develop our member base.
- Revising our membership experience from first point of contact to last.
- Provide networking and social activities to engage new and existing members.
- Promote local business and spotlight various sectors of the economy.
- Offer valuable business resources to incentivize members to join.
- Create a sense of belonging.

GOAL: Develop leadership skills and educational training and opportunities to elevate knowledge within the chamber industry.


Strategies

- Utilize professional development opportunities within the chamber industry.
- Develop staff skills to be flexible, adaptable and curious to ensure the membership department never settles and is always enhancing the quality of the member experience.
- Actively participate in local service organizations.

[VISITOR EXPERIENCE]

The visitor center services will focus on technology and innovation to support our team and provide a visitor experience that defies ordinary. Visitor Services are the face of the organization and on the frontlines of guest interaction and education.

VISITOR SERVICES

GOAL: Be the best point of contact for Aspen visitors and community partners. 

Strategies

- Provide staff with knowledge, training, and resources to help visitors experience the wonders of Aspen.
- Meet annually with community and nonprofit partners to have the most current information on what is happening in Aspen.
- Increase engagement with local businesses and nonprofits for information sharing.
- Educate Guest Services staff to be fully aware of everything that ACRA has to offer our visitors, members, and community.

GOAL: Enhance visitor experience. 

Strategies

- Research and implement cutting edge technological for guest engagement.
- Research and execute industry best practices.
- Visit and engage with other resorts and airport guest services to share best practices.
- Improve the quality of communication with airport stakeholders to provide efficient and excellent service to our visitors.
- Include visitor experience questions on Summer Intercept Survey.
- Utilize technology to provide 24/7 access to visitor information.
- Maintain contract for services with City of Aspen and Pitkin County annually.
- Nurture long standing relationships through annual review.
- Continue professional development to be leaders in industry.

“Aspen airport is indeed a huge beneficiary of the services provided by the Aspen Chamber. And the Aspen Chamber should be very proud of the personnel...who interact with and solve passenger problems at Pitkin County Airport.”

– Carolyn Cheney

GOAL: Collaborate with partners to create modern visitor centers.

Strategies

- Collaborate with City of Aspen and Pitkin County to renovate and construct premier visitor centers at the Airport, Wheeler, Pavilion and future location of the ACRA office.
- Work with the City of Aspen to provide 15-minute visitor information parking.
- Communicate needs regarding airport expansion and impact to visitor experience at the Airport Visitor Center.

HOW TO ASPEN



I PLEDGE TO EXPLORE ASPEN RESPONSIBLY.

I WILL COME PREPARED FOR ANY EXPERIENCE.

I WILL FEED MY SENSE OF ADVENTURE, BUT
NEVER FEED THE WILDLIFE.

I WILL FOREGO HIGH FASHION, AND DRESS FOR
HIGH ELEVATIONS.

I WILL VENTURE INTO THE GREAT UNKNOWN,
WHILE STAYING ON THE KNOWN TRAILS.

I WILL CARVE THE SNOW & NOT THE TREES

I WILL FIND MYSELF WITHOUT MOUNTAIN RESCUE
HAVING TO FIND ME.

I WILL HIT THE SLOPES WITHOUT HITTING THE
OTHER SKIERS.

I WILL TAKE AWESOME SELFIES, WITHOUT
ENDANGERING MYSELF-IE.

I WILL CAMP ONLY WHERE PERMITTED AND
SECURE A PERMIT WHEN NECESSARY.

I WILL REMAIN IN ONE PIECE, BY LEAVING THE
WILDLIFE IN PEACE.

I WILL ADHERE TO SKI PATROL CLOSURES
AS I WANDER HERE AND THERE.

I WILL NOT SKI IN JEANS.

