



**THE ALLIANCE
CENTER**

Mobilizing for Action

Launching Our Next Era of Impact

2020-2022 Strategic Plan

WHO WE ARE

We exist to bring people together to solve systemic problems.

Climate change is the greatest challenge in modern history, and it will affect all of us within our lifetimes. The Alliance is tackling this issue head on.

Our mission is to **DEMONSTRATE** sustainability in action and **MOBILIZE** change agents to **ACCELERATE** solutions.

Our vision is a sustainable and equitable future in which all communities thrive, democracy is strong, the economy works for everyone and the planet is healthy.

OUR PROVEN APPROACH

The Alliance Center was founded in 2004 as the first shared space in Denver and since then has effectively become the hub of sustainability for the Front Range of Colorado. We leverage our high-performance building with its collaborative working and event space to **demonstrate** sustainability in action. The Alliance Center's programs **mobilize** our tenants, partners and supporters in the fight against climate change. Since our founding, The Alliance Center has been a sustainability leader, convening government, academia, nonprofit, for-profit, media and community leaders to **accelerate** solutions. Key highlights include:

DEMONSTRATE

6 LEED CERTIFICATIONS

three of them Platinum, currently the highest scored building in Colorado

100 THOUSAND WASTE ITEMS

diverted annually through our Hard to Recycle station

25.7 KW OF CLEAN ENERGY

produced by the Alliance's rooftop solar panels

ACCELERATE

233 LEGISLATIVE WINS

since 2014, tenant-led, Alliance-supported

40 NEW COMPANIES

joined our Best for Colorado community over the last year

80 PERCENT OF OUR TENANTS

state they are more effective because they are at the Alliance

MOBILIZE

180 VALUES-DRIVEN BUSINESSES

through the Best for Colorado program

53 TENANT ORGANIZATIONS

advancing their missions in our coworking space

450 EVENTS THAT MOBILIZE

over 17,000 change agents annually

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

To track the impact of our work, the Alliance measures our progress against the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). All 17 goals are *accelerated* by our tenant community and through the events in our green event space. The Alliance Center's work directly advances these seven goals:



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Alliance Center addresses the climate crisis by leveraging three unique, powerful and intersecting assets to drive change:

- Our high-performance building and collaborative working and event space
- Our extensive cross-sector network
- Our focus on scalable solutions at the intersection of climate change with democracy, business and the built environment

The Alliance spent the last 15 years forming a powerful network, *demonstrating* the power of collaboration through our building and the community it supports. We build this network by convening leaders from all sectors to identify, implement and scale solutions at the intersection of democracy, business and the built environment. We are committed to *accelerating* the youth climate movement, *mobilizing* young voters and fostering a culture of diversity, inclusion and equality.

Recognizing that no single organization can solve the climate crisis alone, we work in partnership to face the greatest challenge of our time.



The Alliance Center's shared space is comprised of the LEED platinum certified, high-performance building, green event space and over 50 values-aligned tenant organizations. Moving forward, it will continue to enhance the capacity of our community through virtual communications technology, as well as membership, ambassador and academic partnership programs. This provides the sturdy foundation from which the following programs have launched:



MOBILIZE agents of change to fight the climate crisis through civic engagement and tangible actions.

- Public education that leads to civic action
- Youth and business activation
- Data visualization and GIS mapping to inform policy
- Partnership with The State of American Democracy Project



Increase the number and **ACCELERATE** the impact of socially and environmentally responsible businesses in Colorado.

- Action-oriented events and workshops
- Media spotlights to showcase best practices
- Measuring what matters through the right assessment
- Tailored consulting to improve impact
- Commit To Action Campaign



Pilot innovative solutions utilizing our building as a **DEMONSTRATION** site for sustainability.

- High-performance building as the lab
- Partner with industry leaders to leverage our microgrid
- Test new and innovative solutions in the built environment

OUR COMMUNITY ASSET



The Alliance Center increases the capacity of our tenants to more effectively advance their missions and *accelerate* solutions. By supporting organizations that collectively address all 17 SDGs, we serve as physical home of Colorado's sustainability community, frequently referred to as the *hub of sustainability*.

Part of our unique value add is that we focus on providing below-market rate services for nonprofits to ensure they have a prime location, efficient resources access to a powerful network. These assets increase our network's capacity to instill change, advance their missions and create healthy social, political, environmental and economic systems.

HOW WE'LL GET THERE

Maintain full (95 percent) occupancy with a waiting list and a full-capacity event space. This equates to supporting over 50 office space organizations and 450 events annually, generating over \$1.3 million in revenue annually.

Accelerate organizations impact in all 17 Sustainable Development Goals with anchors in Climate Action, Cities & Communities and Environmental Conservation. Provide support and affordable resources to nonprofit sustainability organizations.

GROWING OUR NETWORK

To address the challenges we face in the time and scale required, we need a larger and more diverse network than ever before. To address this, we will expand our network through membership and ambassador programs.

Membership Program

Expand and formalize our network through a membership program that effectively supports sustainability organizations beyond our physical resources (office and meeting spaces) and capacity building services (social events, workshops, information exchanges). Our goal is 100 members by 2023.

Potential membership benefits include:

- First access to tickets for our Solutions Speaker Series events at a discounted rate before tickets are offered to the general public
- Member-only events, such as visits from public officials, thought leaders and practitioners
- Exclusive member-only newsletters
- Promotion of events outside The Alliance Center will be a member-only perk
- Access to our network of change agents

Ambassador Program

The ambassador program will assemble a collection of notable individuals and thought leaders who bring unique knowledge, expertise and skills that complement The Alliance Center's staff and Board of Directors.

The purpose of the ambassador program is to grow The Alliance Center's social capital and brand awareness. We will offer ambassadors the opportunity to network with fellow climate leaders and to align themselves with the most vibrant community of sustainability professionals in the state. The program will bring ambassadors together to discuss The Alliance Center's programming, our legislative initiatives and our partnership work.

EMPOWERING THROUGH EDUCATION

As The Alliance Center launches into a new era of impact, the organization's communication efforts will be crucial in creating lasting change. To truly address the issues we collectively face, we must engage with a wide variety of audiences with a consistent yet nuanced message. The Alliance Center's communication efforts promote and support programmatic offerings, empower the public through access to resources and education and utilize partnerships to maximize reach.

HOW WE'LL GET THERE

Mobilize individuals, organizations, youth climate leaders, businesses and other change agents for inclusive climate action. We will do this through events, customized resources and access to information through multi-modal outlets including videos, social media and targeted newsletters.

Accelerate The Alliance Center's reputation as thought leaders and practitioners in the sustainability community. As the hub of sustainability, The Alliance Center has long been known as the place to convene on climate issues. Through promotion of our new consulting services and intentional public relations efforts, we will grow our reputation far beyond the walls of the building. Promoting the knowledge and expertise of The Alliance Center and our community will help to increase our reach, impact and revenue.

Build partnerships that will help to expand The Alliance Center's potential reach. The Alliance Center's primary audience are change agents who are leaders in their communities, so that our impact may extend far beyond what we could accomplish alone. The first priority group the Alliance will pursue in 2020 is youth with a racial equity lens. This means the organization will be intentionally inclusive of youth from minority populations, focusing on high school and college students of voting age. To do this, we will form and continue to grow partnerships with universities and youth organizations. Other partnerships we will continue to build include those with policymakers, media, other nonprofits and more.



COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

As the hub of sustainability in Colorado, The Alliance Center brings people together to find and implement solutions. While convening is a strength of ours, we can only convene people in one physical space at this time. To create solutions to match the scope of the problems, we must find a way to scale impact beyond our physical space. Through the creation of a Communications Center, the Alliance can leverage our hyper-connected, digital world using interactive information technology to expand our reach and the reach of our tenants and partners to both broadcast local solutions out and bring global solutions to Colorado.

We will utilize the Communications Center as a means of *accelerating* the reach of our programmatic offerings. To do this, we will partner with academic institutions who are looking to share knowledge related to topics planned in our Solutions Speaker Series. Through our virtual technology of the Communications Center, we will be able to broadcast our events to our partners. As the Speaker Series develops, we will plan to expand to other partners across the state, including municipalities, other nonprofits and more institutions of higher education.

A FUTURE FOR ALL

The Alliance Center is committed to *demonstrating*, fostering and preserving a culture of diversity, inclusion and equality. We will operate in a holistic model, engaging in the social, environmental and economic aspects of sustainability. During the next three years, the organization will not create programs solely focused on equity, rather it will leverage it into all aspects of our work, which will help The Alliance Center become more aware and impactful.

We recognize that diversity comes in many forms, from gender identity to race, to ability, to experience and many more. As we considered how to build equity into our work more cohesively, youth climate leaders with a racial equity lens are our primary focus group for the next three years. As in all aspects of our work, we will approach this through symbiotic partnerships, building on the current bonds we already have and creating new ones where needed.



ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

As students around the globe hold climate strikes, we will work with them to help institutionalize the changes needed to create an equitable and sustainable future. At The Alliance Center, we have the capacity to create a pipeline for youth leaders to enter the sustainability workforce with the skills that are needed to face the challenges of our new economy. To *accelerate* the impact of the climate strikes and help translate this passion into action, we are creating a fellowship to work with students from across the state. The goals of this fellowship are to:

- Build students' experiential knowledge of the current sustainability workforce
- Enhance students' social capital by exposing them strategically to The Alliance Center's vibrant social network
- Diversify the makeup of the sustainability community by tailoring our outreach to engage with currently underrepresented communities
- Strengthen The Alliance Center's relationship with institutions of higher education across the state

For example, students from the CU Denver Business School provide consulting for Best for Colorado businesses to improve their BIA score. Another potential project is to have students from a local college or university conduct research around the topic areas of each of the Solutions Speaker Series events. This will provide broader context for topics that will be covered during the events in a way that will *mobilize* the youth vote. Students can research each of the ballot measures on the 2020 ballot before our Ballot Forum to provide more information for voters about how issues intersect and what these ballot measures may do for our ability to fight climate locally. Students would produce both academic and public-facing collateral as part of these fellowships – building their ability to translate complex topics into clear and concise science and policy communications, which will then translate into the youth vote.

CLIMATE+ DEMOCRACY



Scientists predict we have 10 years to address the climate crisis. To do this, we must fully engage in and strengthen our democratic systems. By better understanding how climate science and policy intersect with our democratic systems, change agents of all kinds can be more effective at the local, regional and national levels. Climate+ Democracy empowers agents of change to commit to civic actions that scale to long-term equitable climate solutions. The program will focus on four main areas: public education, business activation, data visualization and fiscal sponsorship for The State of American Democracy Project.

HOW WE'LL GET THERE

Leverage partnerships to host Business Lobby Days. Through coordination with Good Business Colorado, Environmental Entrepreneurs and Colorado Business Alliance, we will *mobilize* our collective networks to engage civically. With these same partners (and more), the Alliance will host business civics 101 workshops, empowering business leaders to engage with elected officials leading up to lobby days and through elections.

Create custom GIS maps and data visualization to inform policy for the Alliance's tenants, partners and elected officials. We will intentionally engage with policy makers on both sides of the aisle and key tenants in advance of each legislative session to identify priority areas where data visualization can *accelerate* policy wins.

Accelerate our work nationally through a fiscal sponsorship of the State of American Democracy Project. Through this partnership, we will deepen and broaden the conversation about democracy. This initiative is committed to rebuilding our democratic institutions with 21st century solutions, powered by an informed and engaged citizenry, regardless of their political stance.



SOLUTIONS SPEAKER SERIES

Through educational programming presented as the Solutions Speaker Series, we will emphasize the ongoing need for thoughtful and vibrant civic action in our democracy in 2020 and beyond. The Speaker Series will showcase key thought leaders and practitioners in all facets of sustainability with a main focus on the intersectionality between democracy and climate change and the need for action. Themes for 2020 events include:

- The 2020 census: Promoting engagement to increase voter enfranchisement
- Celebrating the 50th anniversary of Earth Day: *Mobilizing* youth climate leaders and their votes
- The civic power of business: Outdoor recreation and business as a force for (civic) good
- Media and democracy: Freedom of the press and the ability to address climate change
- 2020 Colorado election forum: Decoding the state ballot

Depending on the success of our Solutions Speaker Series, and our organizational capacity, the Alliance may begin crowdsourcing climate solutions in 2021, with the potential for a Solutions Festival event in 2022. It will bring together funders, climate leaders, elected officials and academia to scale up local climate solutions through funding, connections and other resources.

BEST FOR COLORADO



The business model that has shaped capitalism to this day is not what can carry us forward any longer. Consumers are demanding a new approach, and companies need support as they transition into a model that exists beyond profit. Our Best for Colorado program increases the number and impact of socially and environmentally responsible businesses. We support companies that believe in sustainability, want to address climate change and leverage business as a force for good. The program will focus on five main areas: action-oriented events and workshops, media spotlights, measuring what matters through the right assessment, tailored consulting and the Commit To Action Campaign.

HOW WE'LL GET THERE

Mobilize companies through workshops, networking events, company spotlights and recognition in an annual award ceremony. To accomplish this, Best for Colorado will continue to create a space where conscious companies can come together to learn and share resources and best practices. An annual recognition ceremony will honor the most impactful, inclusive and innovative companies.

Elevate best practices through media spotlights. Storytelling is an essential element in the transformation of business and society as it compels people to action, allowing them to see what's possible. The program will continue sharing compelling stories, develop company spotlights including interviews, actionable impacts and case studies, and work with media partners to recognize top performers.

Accelerate impact through tailored consulting. The Alliance Center will offer consulting activities to Best for Colorado companies. These services will include guidance to take the BIA and helping companies define and/or implement a tailored action plan to meet the final requirements. We partner with the University of Colorado Denver Business School to create tailored impact improvement plans for Best for Colorado companies.

Measure what matters through the right assessment. Best for Colorado will encourage businesses to measure impact within their company and provide tools for them to accomplish this. This includes supporting companies as they complete the Business Impact Assessment (BIA) from B Lab and offering guidance and recommendations based on the assessment through tailored impact improvement plans. For companies who want to use business as a force for good but aren't ready to commit to the full BIA, we have created the Commit to Action Campaign, which is outlined below.



COMMIT TO ACTION CAMPAIGN

Our Commit to Action Campaign is the gateway to impact. It's the perfect place for businesses to start to leverage the power of business beyond profit. Through this campaign, companies make commitments related to their work in the areas of environment, democracy and equity. These commitments lead to measurable action. To be a Best for Colorado company, a business will need to do three things:

- Sign on to the commitment pledge
- Share the four commitments they will make that year
- Agree to self-report back annually

The future-facing approach of the campaign will allow companies to commit to using business as a force for good, regardless of where they are in their corporate social responsibility journey. No matter what action the company has taken in the past, the campaign allows for tangible, measurable action in the future, and provides a supportive community and resources to achieve their goals.

LIVING LAB



Buildings significantly impact our quality of life and our environment. We spend over 90 percent of our lives inside buildings, and they generate nearly 40 percent of annual global greenhouse gas emissions. Our Living Lab program leverages our organizational experience in existing building operations to pilot innovative and scalable solutions. We focus on solutions that increase the use of clean energy and focus on resiliency in the commercial building sector. The goal of our Living Lab program is to *demonstrate* scalable solutions that reduce the commercial building sector's negative environmental impact and improve occupant well-being. The program utilizes our building, our microgrid and key industry partnerships to develop innovative solutions that can scale.

HOW WE'LL GET THERE

Leverage partnerships with industry leaders to pilot and disseminate solutions and *accelerate* profitable operations, occupant productivity and positive environmental impact. Scaling solutions that meet this criteria is the Living Lab's primary focus.

Demonstrate the leadership of The Alliance Center to *accelerate* the efficiency of building operations and an enhanced occupant experience. Operating a LEED Platinum certified building at the highest levels of performance provides us with a long history of innovation, including:

- 2014: Renovation that doubled occupancy and reduced energy usage by 15 percent
- 2017: First direct current retrofit in the United States, and possibly the world
- 2019: Highest scored LEED project in the state of Colorado (sixth LEED certification in our history)

These examples of innovation and leadership position The Alliance Center to drive systems change (addressing the root cause of large problems) in the built environment over the coming years through our Living Lab program.



LIVING LAB, DEFINED

Research institutions frequently test solutions in a sterile lab setting. In order to truly evaluate the efficacy of these initiatives, testing in a real-world setting is a must. Our building provides such a setting – a diverse lab in which industry leaders can pilot solutions. Potential focus areas include:

- Analyze the impact and scalability of microgrids and distributed energy systems.
- Examine the digitization of power driven by consumer electronics, microgrids and resiliency.
- Test the effectiveness of integrating computing devices of everyday objects (Internet of Things) into building automation systems.
- Explore occupant behavior change strategies that lead to more efficient building usage.

SUSTAINABLE REVENUE

The strategies outlined above require \$2.2 million in 2020. The Alliance Center has a comprehensive, sustainable revenue plan with a diverse set of income streams, including fundraising and earned income.



DEVELOPMENT

The goals and activities outlined below represent a multi-faceted approach that will provide the best possibility of achieving diversified and stable revenue streams and maximized partnerships with funders. Moving forward, our development strategies have a five-part focus: building a culture of philanthropy, major donors as partners, foundations, corporate sponsors and special events fundraising.

Maximize relationships with current funders. Our donor base has great potential and is the foundation upon which we will build our fundraising strategy. The Alliance Center will work to realize the full giving potential of our current pool of funders, which is comprised of individuals, corporations and foundations.

Mobilize our network by building a culture of philanthropy among staff and Board of Directors to not only elevate current donors, but also expand our base.

Implement a robust foundation strategy. By building meaningful relationships with foundations and creating robust strategies, we will cultivate and receive a diverse array of grants that will feed into a continuous pipeline from discovery to applications.

Engage corporate sponsors as long-term partners. Our corporate partnership program will include clear returns on investment for the corporate partners, such as co-branding opportunities, visibility at Alliance events and more. Best for Colorado is a great launch pad for this, but not the only avenue.

Host special events that will maximize both programmatic and development-focused events to bring in revenue. The Solutions Speaker Series and other planned events will be leveraged for corporate sponsorship, donations, strategic ticket pricing, possible grants and post-event VIP fundraising.



EARNED INCOME

The revenue generated by The Alliance Center's coworking and event spaces provides the costs to operate our building. In addition to these established streams of revenue, we will explore ways to diversify and expand new earned income to monetize our current work, leveraging both our building and programs.

Foster a fiscal sponsorship model in which The Alliance Center assumes fiduciary responsibility of an outside project in exchange for a portion of the project's income. We started with one successful pilot in 2019 with the State of American Democracy Project, with potential to incorporate more.

Monetize programmatic offerings like customized climate mapping through Climate+ Democracy. Unique or customized data sets are intended to be fee-for-service and can be monetized within a range of options and prices for government, nonprofit and for-profit partners.

Create income through the membership program. By formalizing our network and services offered by The Alliance Center, we will be able to monetize our existing offerings.

Consult on areas of staff expertise, including the BIA, green building, collaborative workspace, green events, waste diversion, program-specific finance and organizational capacity consulting.

Utilize the Communications Center as a potential source for earned income by upselling the virtual technology at The Alliance Center to organizations seeking connectivity.