

2025

Visit Estes Park Operating Plan



REVIEW
OF EDITS



What Tourism and Lodging Tax Means to Our Workforce

The availability and affordability of workforce housing and childcare has been a significant challenge in the Estes Valley for decades. Until Visit Estes Park's lodging tax extension (ballot initiative 6E) passed on November 8, 2022, a consistent, meaningful funding mechanism to finance these issues had not been available.

As of January 1, 2023, the lodging tax in Estes Park increased from 2% to 5.5% and is collected on overnight stays at hotels, motels, RV parks, campgrounds, guest ranches, rental properties, and other lodging facilities. Two percent is used to fund the Estes Park Local Marketing District. The remaining 3.5% is for funding dedicated workforce housing and childcare projects, with 90% of the funds going to the Town of Estes Park and 10% remaining with VEP for marketing and visitor education, as required by the Colorado statute, such as the Estes Experiences workforce initiative, the community roundtables and the Estes Inspired community initiative. In 2023, this meant \$5.9 million in lodging taxes would be earmarked for workforce housing and childcare in Estes Park.

Thanks to tourism and lodging taxes, a pathway to significant, positive impacts on these two issues is now in action. In addition to funding public safety services and local amenities, tourism is the engine that drives funding for our community's workforce housing and childcare programs.

What does this mean? A strong tourism economy is crucial in order to create a sustainable community ecosystem where local workers can live and prosper. Tourism success is more significant than ever.

UPDATED

Partners in Destination Stewardship


Effective destination stewardship is rooted in strong partnerships between governmental agencies and partner organizations within a destination. Knowing this, Visit Estes Park actively maintains collaborative partnerships with the the Town of Estes Park, Larimer County, Estes Park Visitor Center, Estes Park Chamber of Commerce and Rocky Mountain National Park.

Visit Estes Park will continue to strengthen relationships with Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest, Hermit Park Open Space, Rocky Mountain National Park visitor centers, and the Colorado Welcome Centers through communications, information exchange and programming development.

Together with these partners, Visit Estes Park will continue implementing its Destination Stewardship Plan, which was developed in collaboration with destination development counselors Clarity of Place and the Colorado Tourism Office.



UPDATED



Key Organizational Goals

- Continue executing the Destination Stewardship Plan
- Execute programming to support the workforce and contribute to community sustainability efforts
- Communicate the Destination Stewardship Plan and generate support from key partners

See the outcome of last year's goals in our [2023 Annual Report](#).

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Key Organizational Goals

- Generate 900 million paid and earned media impressions
- Exceed 10 million paid and organic social media impressions
- Drive 2 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
- Integrate messages of sustainability, inclusion and preserving community character at all levels of guest communications

See the outcome of last year's goals in our [2023 Annual Report](#).

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Key Organizational Goals

- Increase the Frozen Dead Guy Days (FDGD) festival attendance to 7,000 attendees, boosting both overnight and day visitation during a slower season
- Continue to enhance the FDGD festival experience to include more elaborate and immersive experiences
- Secure a strong lineup of FDGD-themed offerings from lodgers, restaurants and local businesses to encourage spending beyond the festival footprint and within the destination
- Develop an integrated marketing campaign and include new relevant content on FDGD website
- Expand FDGD marketing to reach a national audience in key target markets

See the outcome of last year's goals in our [2023 Annual Report](#).

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Goal

Develop existing and introduce new programs that contribute to the pillars of sustainable tourism within our destination.

Strategy

Track and support important destination issues within the community related to tourism.

Tactic 1

Regularly meet with the organizations working on these issues, including the Town of Estes Park, Larimer County, The Estes Chamber Economic Development Workforce Council, Rocky Mountain National Park, Estes Valley Housing Authority and EVICS. and the NOCO Hospitality Partnership.

Tactic 2

Contribute to solutions by supporting these organizations' initiatives with Visit Estes Park resources where appropriate.

Tactic 3

Partner with organizations and services that are working to make Estes Park more inclusive and sustainable and track the progress to establish benchmarks.



Goal

Support large-scale, multi-day events that reflect community character and are able to draw overnight visitors during off-peak and need periods.

Strategy

Collaborate with Running Wild Events by sponsoring the inaugural Ski Jor Estes Park in January 2025 with financial and marketing support.

Tactic 1

Collaborate with event producers to aid in developing the Ski Jor event weekend and satellite events.

Tactic 2

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

Tactic 3

Work with partners to create lodging packages, satellite events, transportation options and special offers to boost the economic impact in the community.



Goal

Boost visitor numbers in April, a critical period in spring before the bustling summer season.

Strategy

Collaborate with community partners to plan a successful event season in April, including sponsoring a variety of local events and organizing VEP’s 2nd Annual Earth Week.



Tactic 1

Work with community partners to aid in developing, promoting, and marketing local events.

Tactic 2

Execute the 2nd Annual Earth Week as an authentic Estes Park experience.

Tactic 3

Launch an integrated marketing campaign to target travelers most likely to travel in early spring/April.

Tactic 4

Support event and project development through a sponsorship program and marketing and staff support.

Goal

Increase awareness and visitation to Visit Estes Park in the Winter and holiday season through an integrated marketing strategy.

Strategy

Use comprehensive tracking, combined with travel data, to guide season-specific targeting for media placements to prospects in key markets.
Support the marketing plan with public relations and content efforts.

Tactic 1

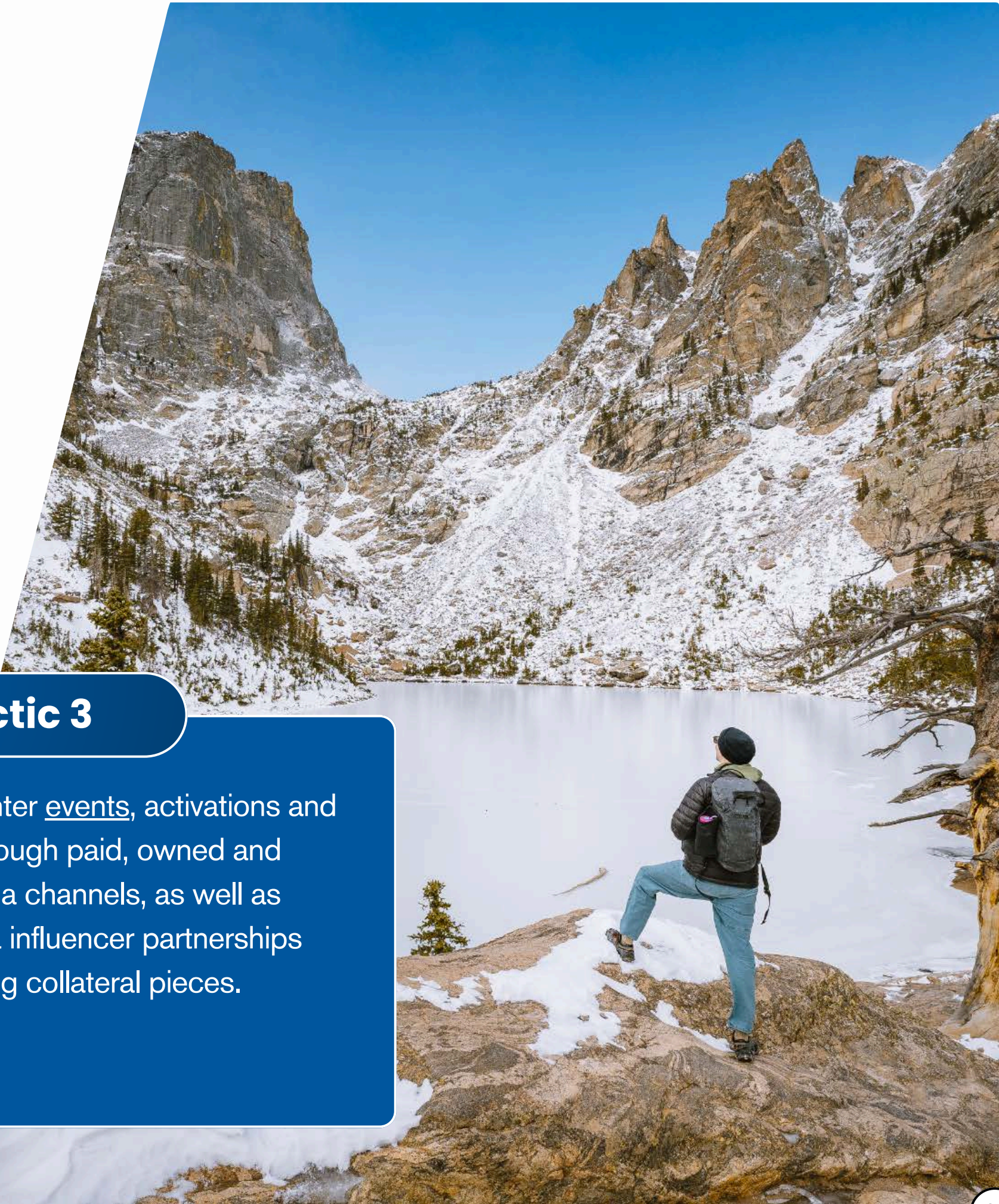
Execute a dedicated winter marketing campaign with season-specific interests and targeting.

Tactic 2

Position Estes Park as the picturesque winter wonderland, offering an affordable family-friendly getaway, through media pitches, social media and blog content.

Tactic 3

Promote winter events, activations and activities through paid, owned and earned media channels, as well as social media influencer partnerships and engaging collateral pieces.



A photograph of two hikers with backpacks walking up a rocky mountain trail. The hiker in the foreground is wearing a red jacket and a black backpack. The hiker in the background is wearing a blue jacket and a grey backpack. They are surrounded by green shrubs and a large, reddish-brown mountain peak in the background under a clear sky.

Marketing

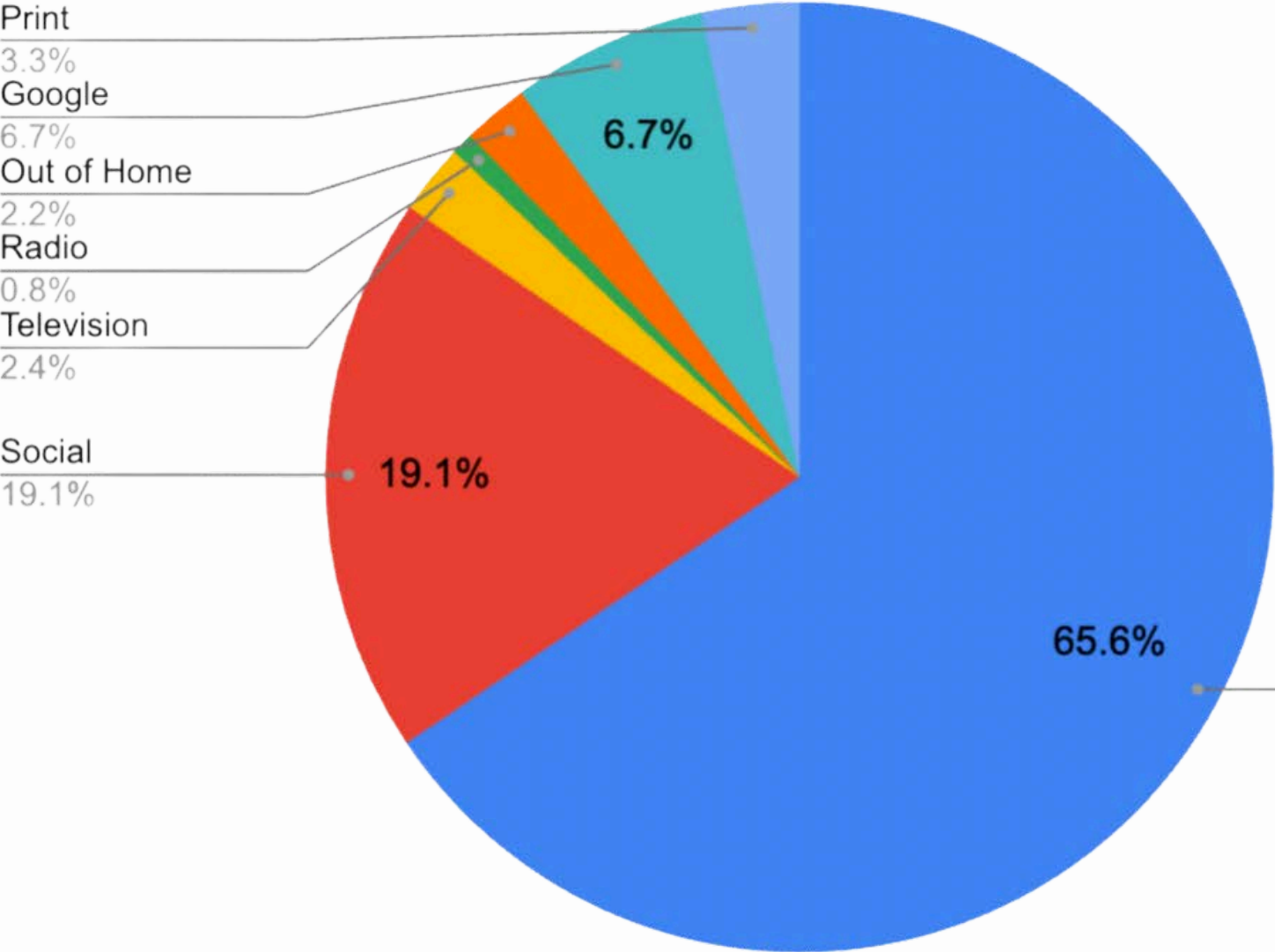
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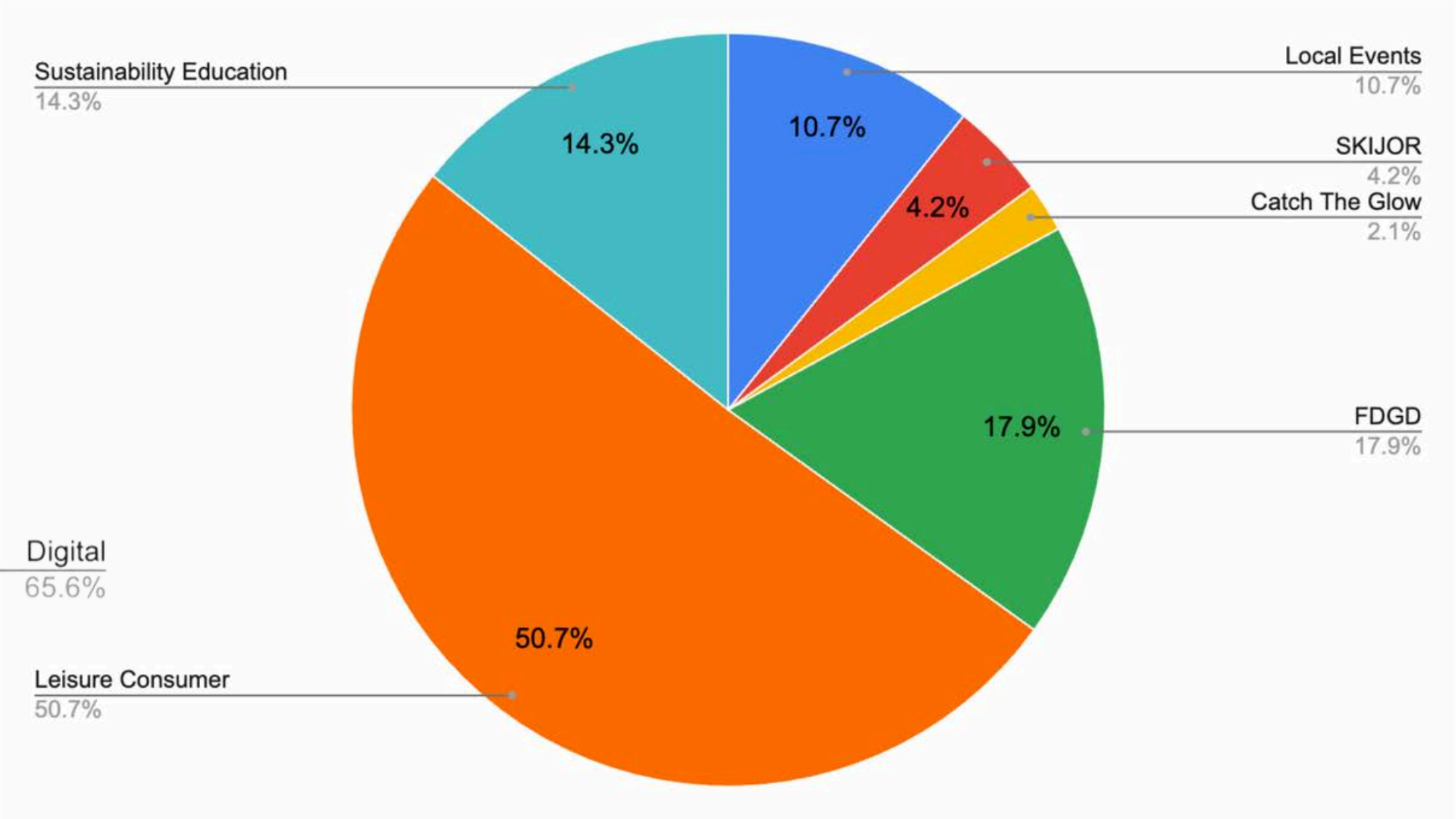
A photograph of two hikers with backpacks walking up a rocky mountain trail. The hiker in the foreground is wearing a red jacket and a black backpack. The hiker in the background is wearing a blue jacket and a grey backpack. They are surrounded by green shrubs and a large, reddish-brown mountain peak in the background under a clear sky.

Leisure Consumer Marketing

Paid Media Allocation



Paid Social Media Allocation

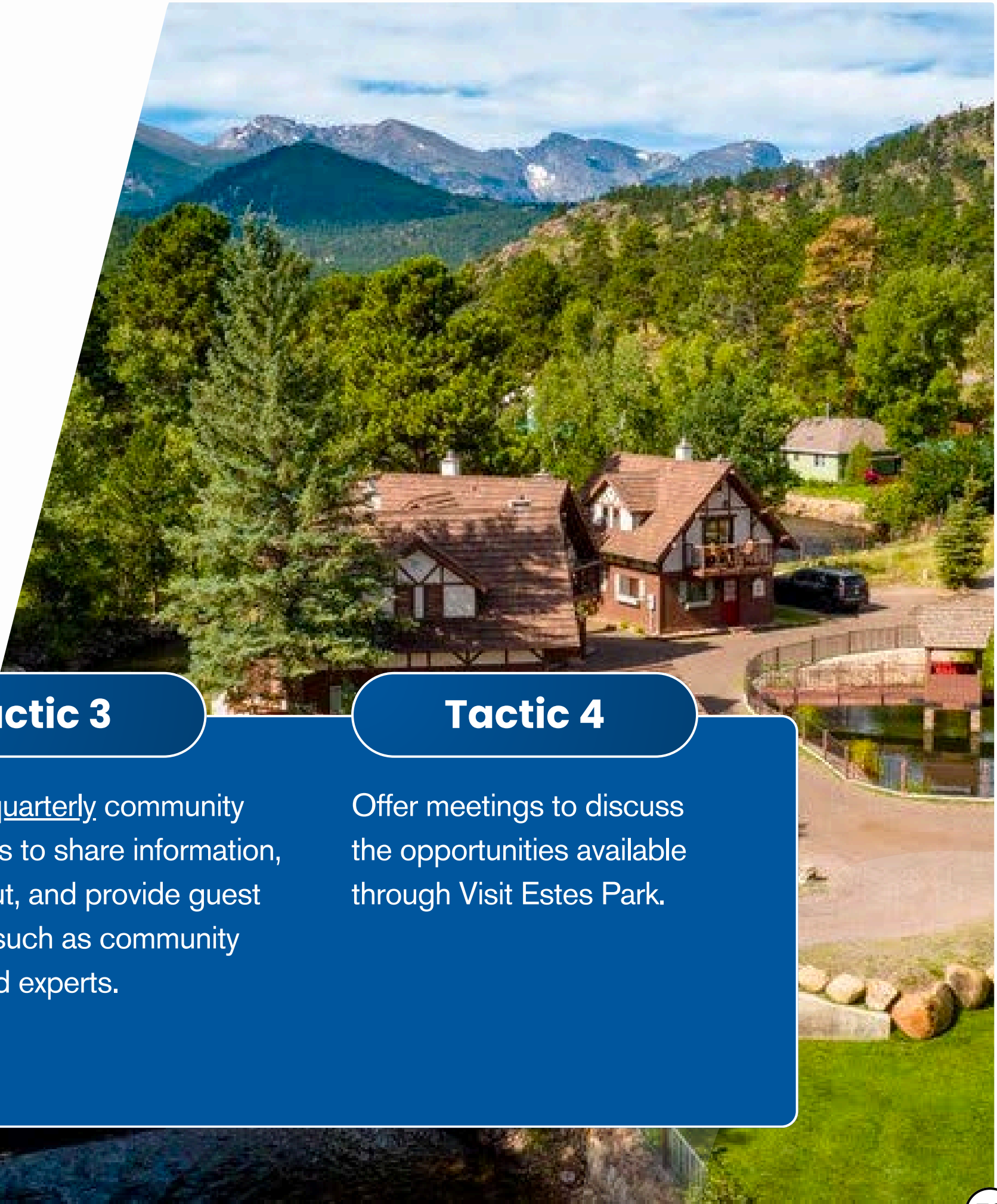


Goal

Establish and strengthen partner relationships with Visit Estes Park.

Strategy

Support partners through education, connection and staff resource support and track personal communication in the CRM portal.



Tactic 1

Host an annual open-house event that provides partners with OLIVE training.

Tactic 2

Host DTN to connect partners with advertising opportunities.

Tactic 3

Organize quarterly community roundtables to share information, gather input, and provide guest speakers, such as community leaders and experts.

Tactic 4

Offer meetings to discuss the opportunities available through Visit Estes Park.

Goal *Cont'd*

Establish and strengthen partner relationships with Visit Estes Park.

Strategy *Cont'd*

Support partners through education, connection and staff resource support.



Tactic 5

Engage partners in the Beyond Program.

Tactic 6

Continue to offer the Visit Estes Park sponsorship program to provide financial and in-kind marketing support for community and Town of Estes Park events and projects. See a list of 2023 sponsored events [here](#).

Tactic 7

Host a state of the tourism industry event that allows for two-way dialogue.

Tactic 8

Maintain an increased presence at Estes Park and Larimer County events to serve as a community resource and demonstrate support during events.

Goal

Communicate Visit Estes Park initiatives and programs to the community.

Strategy

Reach the Estes Park community through written communication and in-person interactions.

Tactic 1

Develop a robust editorial calendar that leverages written content and video content distributed through advertorials in the local newspapers, Visit Estes Park’s stakeholder e-newsletters, the Visit Estes Park Partners Facebook Group, press releases and the partner's pages on VisitEstesPark.com.

Tactic 2

Enable the community relations team to communicate these messages during in-person meetings by informing them of key talking points.



Goal *Cont'd*

Prioritize partnerships within the Estes Valley, Larimer County and the state of Colorado.

Strategy

Continue to develop relationships with Roosevelt National Forest, Hermit Park Open Space, Rocky Mountain National Park Visitor Centers and Colorado Welcome Centers.

Tactic 1

Request biannual meetings with each organization to share information, explore how we can work together and report on shared projects.

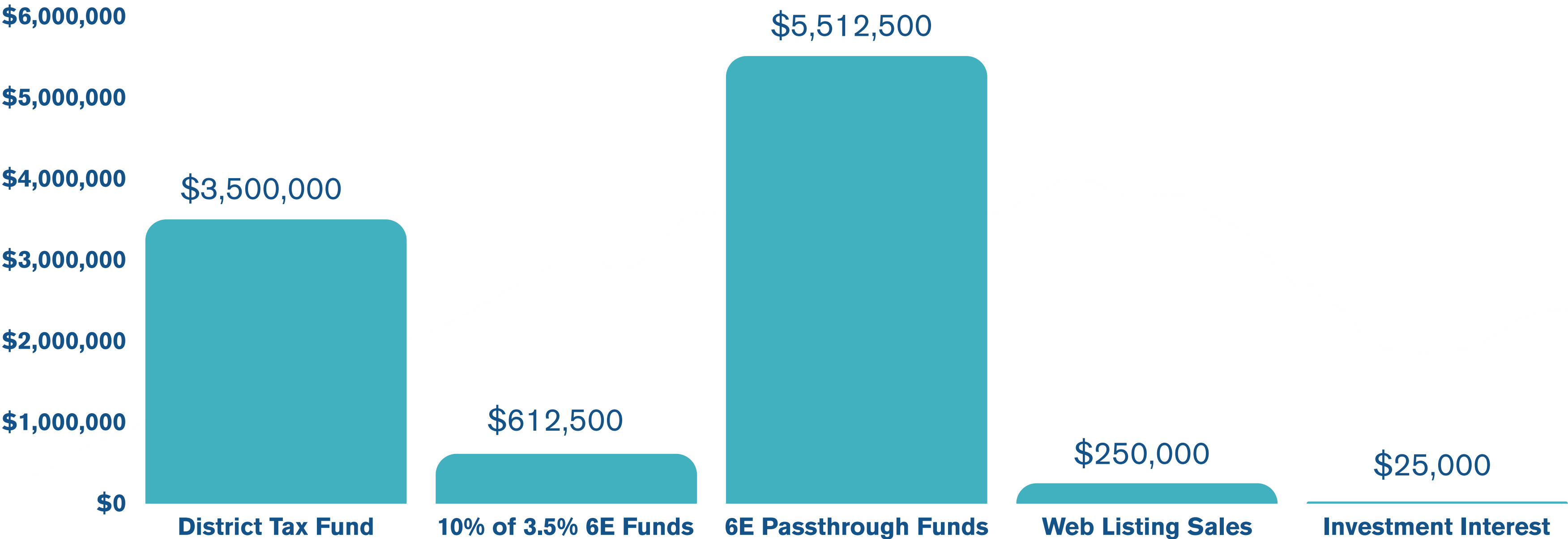
Tactic 2

Host FAM tour with Colorado Welcome Center staff so they can better market our destination.



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Operating Revenues: \$4,387,500
Total Budgeted Revenues: \$9,900,000



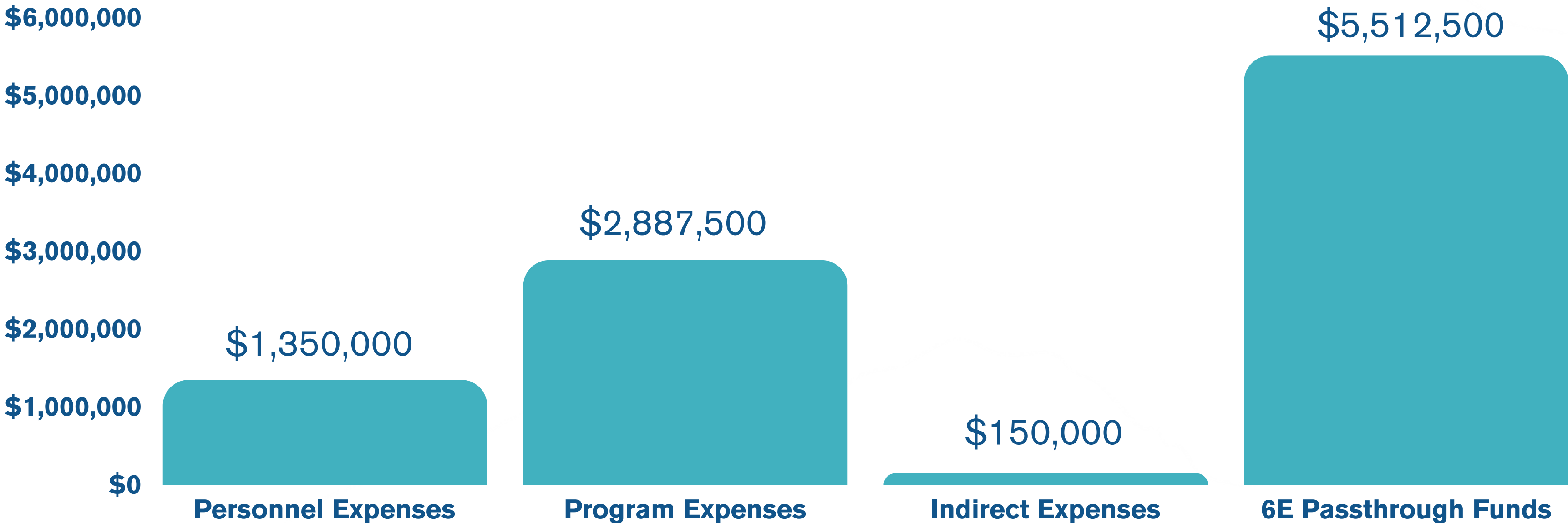
Lodging tax on stays less than 30 days in the District boundaries.
VEP receives the 2% base district tax fund, plus retains 10% of the 6E 3.5% incremental tax increase for marketing purposes.
The remaining 90% of the 6E funds are forwarded by VEP to the Town of Estes Park for workforce housing and childcare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

Income from paid placement on VisitEstesPark.com

Interest earned from reserve funds

UPDATED

Operating Expenses: \$4,387,500
Total Budgeted Expenses: \$9,900,000



Key Terms

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.

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.

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.

