

# COL FAX AVE

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



C O L F A X A V E . C O M





## THE COLFAX AVE BID

### VISION:

Colfax is the most dynamic street in Denver, welcoming all, offering joyful and fulfilling experiences, and sustaining a diverse mix of community-centered businesses and residents that help each other thrive.

### MISSION:

The Colfax Ave BID builds community and cultural vitality, supports economic prosperity, and ensures the East Colfax Avenue corridor is safe and well-maintained.







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## FRIENDS OF COLFAX,

There is no denying I care deeply about Colfax. I live just houses away from this amazing street, and I'm one of the more than 20,000 people that live within a 5- to 10-minute walk or bike ride of this part of Colfax. The area is like no other.

It is inspiring to be part of such a large community that supports this unruly gem that runs through so many Denver neighborhoods. As I complete my second term on the Colfax Ave BID board, it's been an honor to serve as Board President and work alongside our talented directors and passionate community to strengthen this incredible corridor.

Our passion is shown in our accomplishments outlined in the following pages, and it couldn't come at a more important time for Colfax Avenue.

The long-awaited, and long-planned, bus rapid transit (BRT) system will be the first in a system of BRTs in Denver. It will help increase the "carrying capacity" of Colfax and boost the number of people that can travel here – and it will make transit travel safer, convenient and more reliable.

But over the next couple of years the construction will be a disruption for our beloved businesses. We are working extremely hard with the City's Department of Economic Development and Opportunity (DEDO) office to bring much-needed grants to Colfax businesses. Our support includes fundraising efforts for microgrants to benefit our businesses and hosting monthly events to encourage visitors to Colfax. For example, our first Holiday Tree Lighting last November drew 200 attendees and will now become an annual tradition. It's just one way we we're keeping Colfax lively during this transition.

None of this happens without the amazing businesses and the community that loves them. In 2025, every visit, meal, drink and laugh you share on Colfax will matter more than ever. The construction is temporary—the improvements will last—but our businesses need you now.

**Thank you for your support and love for Colfax!**



A stylized, handwritten signature in pink ink, likely belonging to Leonard Austin.

**LEONARD AUSTIN**  
Colfax Ave BID Board President

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Leonard Austin, President**  
*Front Range Services /  
Consolidated Services Group*

**Alex Barakos, Vice President**  
*Pete's Satire Lounge +  
Pete's Kitchen*

**Christopher Bishop, Treasurer**  
*UMB Bank*

**Jennifer Neuhalfen, Secretary**  
*1915 E Colfax LLC*

**Andy Baldyga, Director**  
*The Mulhern Group*

**David Bentley, Director**  
*Argonaut Wine and Liquor*

**Bex Schimoler, Director**  
*The Learned Lemur*

## COLFAX AVE STAFF

**Frank Locantore**  
*Executive Director*

**Denon Moore**  
*Business Support Director*

**Mitch Freund**  
*Operations Director*

► **Photo Credit:** All photos by Owen Braley,  
@weareprophecy unless otherwise credited.







# COLFAX AVE

## BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

## BOUNDARIES

The Colfax Ave BID boundaries span from the alley west of Grant Street to the alley east of Josephine Street with 14th and 16th Avenues as the southern and northern borders, respectively.







# MAINTENANCE

## WELCOME NEW MAINTENANCE PROVIDER

As of Jan. 1, 2025, KG Facility Solutions (KG) has assumed the role of maintenance responsibilities for the Colfax Ave BID. Besides the Colfax Ave BID's complimentary maintenance services, KG will offer fee-for-service opportunities to private property owners.



## MANAGING BID ASSETS DURING CONSTRUCTION

A large municipal project like the construction of the East Colfax Bus Rapid Transit system requires a great deal of cooperation and coordination between contractors, the City of Denver, and the Colfax Ave BID. District staff attend weekly construction meetings monitoring many aspects of the project, as well as advocating for our stakeholders and managing the public assets within the District.



## PEDESTRIAN LIGHT POLES

We manage and maintain 204 pedestrian light poles throughout the District. These decorative lights increase safety by illuminating the sidewalk for those walking at night and display our street banners. The light poles were again dressed up for the holiday and winter seasons with the installation of commercial-grade, warm white LED light strands and, for the first time, LED snowflake lights.

Photo Credit: Michelle Valeri

05

## MAINTENANCE BY THE NUMBERS



1,541

pieces of graffiti removed



2,124

stickers removed



17,680

bags of trash removed



1,835

block faces powerwashed

### OTHER

Number of Colfax Ambassadors: 3

Block faces hand-swept with pan and broom: 7,665

Hospitality interactions: 5,038

Block faces cleaned using an all-terrain litter vacuum: 3,137

Biohazards removed: 741

06





# EVENTS + HAPPENINGS

## THE COLFAX CRAWL

The third annual Colfax Crawl on Sept. 6 celebrated 19 of the District's favorite bars across five themed routes. For \$25, participants got a limited-edition t-shirt and a wristband unlocking specials at each stop. The Colfax team added to the fun by popping into bars with prizes and schwag for crawlers.

[COLFAXAVE.COM/  
COLFAX-PROGRAMS](https://colfaxave.com/colfax-programs)



## INAUGURAL HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING

In partnership with Denver Parks and Recreation, we kicked off the holiday season with Colfax's first Holiday Tree Lighting on Nov. 30 at Colfax and Park Avenue. The event welcomed more than 200 attendees and marked the start of Winter Pride. Guests enjoyed carols from the Denver Gay Men's Chorus, treats from Play Haus Bakery, and the debut of Colfax and Cream's new food truck. Colfax Ambassadors and BID staff kept the tree lit nightly throughout the season.



## SUPPORTING COLFAX COMMUNITY EVENTS

Each year, we support major events that bring thousands to the District, including Denver PrideFest and the Colfax Marathon. PrideFest, hosted by The Center on Colfax, celebrated its 50th anniversary on June 22-23, drawing 550,000 attendees and transforming Colfax into a vibrant celebration of community and culture.

On May 18-19, the Colfax Marathon welcomed nearly 25,000 runners, highlighting Colfax as an active, energetic corridor and connecting athletes, spectators, and local businesses along the way.







# COLFAX INDIE BASH + INDEPENDENTS DAY

## INDEPENDENTS DAY

Independents Day returned for its fifth year from July 19-21, celebrating the local and independent businesses that make Colfax unique. Nearly 30 businesses participated, offering exclusive deals and promotions to attendees who mentioned “Independents Day.”

Beyond the special offers, the Colfax Ave BID curated a dynamic lineup of events and experiences throughout the corridor. Visitors enjoyed Drag Queen Storytime with Alice Glamoure at Savageau, browsed local art by Emily Burrowes at Doppio and Bruz Off Fax and learned about Colfax BRT outside Carla Madison Recreation Center. Fitness enthusiasts took part in a 60-minute strength class at Green Door Fitness, while poetry lovers received custom poems from Michael Prince at Crazy Mountain Brewing. Our efforts were even featured on Denver7.

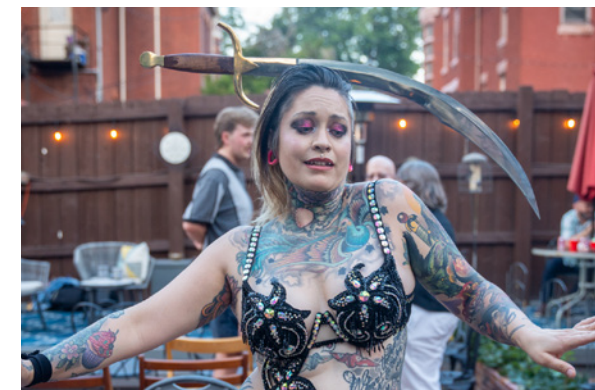
The weekend was a true celebration of community, creativity and Colfax’s independent spirit.

[COLFAXAVE.COM/INDIE-WEEK](https://COLFAXAVE.COM/INDIE-WEEK)



## COLFAX INDIE BASH

The second-annual Colfax Indie Bash held on July 18 kicked off the Independents Day weekend. The event highlighted the incredible garden at Flora House Bed & Breakfast and showcased a variety of Colfax favorites including a live recording of City Cast Denver episode, spiral painting on recycled Colfax hearts, music by DJ Babah Fly from Youth on Record, belly dancing by Molly Tsunami, custom poems by Michael Prince, and artwork from Karl Christian Krumpholz. Attendees enjoyed food and drinks from our local businesses, including Flora House, Chuey FU’s, Spices and Porchetta House.



# 3

### Characters of Colfax Awards given to outstanding community members



STORYTELLER

**Shellie Martinez**

received the **Storyteller Award** for thoughtfully sharing the stories of small, and minority-owned businesses in our community on her podcast and YouTube show: Choppin it up with Shellie.



HEART OF COLFAX

**Network Coffee House**

received the **Heart of Colfax Award** for providing over 42 years of unwavering service and dedication to fostering relationships and solace for our unhoused community.



THICK + THIN

**John Kulsar**

(of Herbs and Arts) received the **Thick and Thin Award** for his commitment to Colfax for their 31 years of spreading compassion, love and connection on Colfax Avenue.



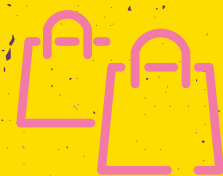


# PROGRAMS

## BAG OF COLFAX

The Bag of Colfax program ended 2024 on a high note! More than 200 bags were sold out in less than two weeks. These gift bags, filled with a handful of products from local businesses (and a repurposed t-shirt pencil bag) were a hit once again, bringing in nearly \$11,000 in 2024 for participating businesses. The VIP bags - where your goodies come packed in a durable tote made from upcycled material from our street banners - showcased the work of the one-and-only Karl Christian Krumpolz, heightening their popularity. We partner with local non-profit Esperanza Productions (formerly Mile High Workshop) to turn our banners into bags; they create employment opportunities for those seeking to rebuild from addictions, homelessness and incarceration.

[COLFAXAVE.COM/BAG-OF-COLFAX](https://colfaxave.com/bag-of-colfax)



BROUGHT LOCAL BUSINESSES

# \$11,000



## WEAR YOUR HEART ON YOUR STREET

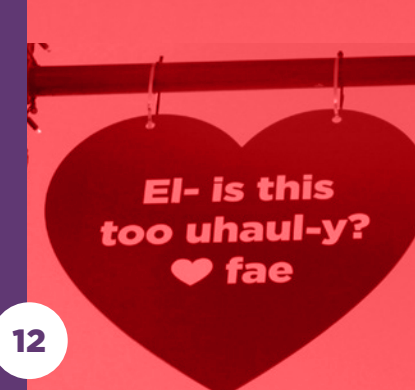
Colfax was bursting with love in February 2024, as 75 “hearts” hung from our light poles all month long! Residents, businesses and community members personalized their own Colfax hearts with heartfelt messages, and in just a week, the street transformed into a stunning display of love. These giant hearts were suspended above Colfax spreading joy and #ColfaxLove to all who passed by.

[COLFAXAVE.COM/WEAR-YOUR-HEART-ON-YOUR-STREET](https://colfaxave.com/heart-on-your-street)

## FIRST ANNUAL WINTER PRIDE DENVER, CO

DECEMBER  
2024

New this year, the Colfax Ave BID and Lavender Hill Cultural District launched Denver's Winter Pride in December 2024, a month-long celebration of inclusivity, connection and LGBTQ+ community joy. Designed to create a warm and welcoming space during the holiday season, Winter Pride featured a diverse lineup of events, including drag brunches, music showcases, sober gatherings and holiday-themed festivities. Highlights included a Queer Holiday Market, a Winter Wonderland Drag Show, and a Festive Film Night, all aimed at fostering community while supporting local businesses. This first-of-its-kind celebration brought people together to spread love and pride throughout the season—a tradition we look forward to continuing for years to come.







# BUSINESS SUPPORT

In 2024, the Colfax Ave BID prioritized business support to meet the evolving needs of our corridor. A realignment of staff roles in March enabled a renewed focus on direct outreach and resources for our 184 Colfax-facing businesses, particularly in preparation for the impacts of the upcoming BRT construction project.

## KEY INITIATIVES INCLUDED:

- + Developing and distributing a BRT project one-page overview tailored to businesses.
- + Hosting and promoting community engagement events with the BRT team to ensure clear communication.
- + Connecting businesses to BRT-related resources and fostering open lines of communication for ongoing support.
- + Collaborating with the BRT communications team to bring relevant information and training to our businesses that could directly benefit them during the construction period.



## SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT GRANTS

Additionally, the Colfax Ave BID was selected as a subcontractor for the Small Business Support Grants that launched in 2025. This partnership ensures the Colfax Ave BID remains a trusted and familiar advocate, helping to reduce confusion and stress for businesses navigating the construction period.



## THE LEARNED LEMUR SPOTLIGHT

A major success story of the year was one of our businesses, The Learned Lemur, being awarded a \$50,000 grant to purchase their property, securing their place on Colfax Avenue for years to come.



## NEW BUSINESSES

The District welcomed **12 new businesses** to the corridor in 2024 and conducted more than **133 in-person visits** to provide assistance with community resources, permitting and licensing, technical support, financial resources and grant opportunities.

**“THIS IS COLFAX” VIDEO SERIES:** With this video series we are able to capture the Colfax vigor of businesses and residents who meet any challenge. These videos have been shared widely bringing more people to the area. Check them out! ▶▶▶







# SAFETY

**Safety is a top priority for the Colfax Ave BID as it helps businesses thrive, residents feel at home and customers enjoy their time on the corridor. We continuously work with our partners to keep Colfax welcoming, secure and vibrant for all.**

## NEW LIGHTS, IMPROVED SAFETY

After a lengthy community engagement process with the businesses and residents in the area of the 1400 block of Ogden Street, **eight new pedestrian-scale light poles** are in the process of being permitted and installed to provide additional lighting for the area. You will notice that while these light poles look very similar to the ones on Colfax, they have an extension rising to 18-feet (normally about 13-feet) to accommodate “festoon lighting” that can span across the street for special occasions and festivals. This was something the community requested to enable future street festivals as well as safety improvements.

## DENVER DREAM CENTER

The Denver Dream Center is a non profit that helps people repair their lives and works closely with the Denver Police. We are grateful for the grant that allowed them to work effectively addressing the crime problems in the 1400 Ogden block, and we look forward to future collaborations.

## COLFAX'S GORDIAN KNOT

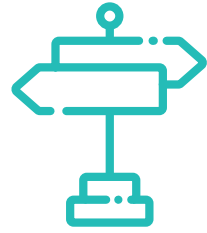
The Colfax Ave BID actively works to untangle the “Gordian Knot” created where crime and quality of life issues entangle. The unfortunate circumstances of **homelessness**, **mental health** and **extreme poverty** create a perception of danger. They also too often intersect with actual crime in “predatory-prey” relationships. The Colfax Ave BID is in constant communication with the police about actual crimes, while also communicating with the relevant neighborhood services.



## SUPPORT TEAM ASSISTED RESPONSE (STAR)

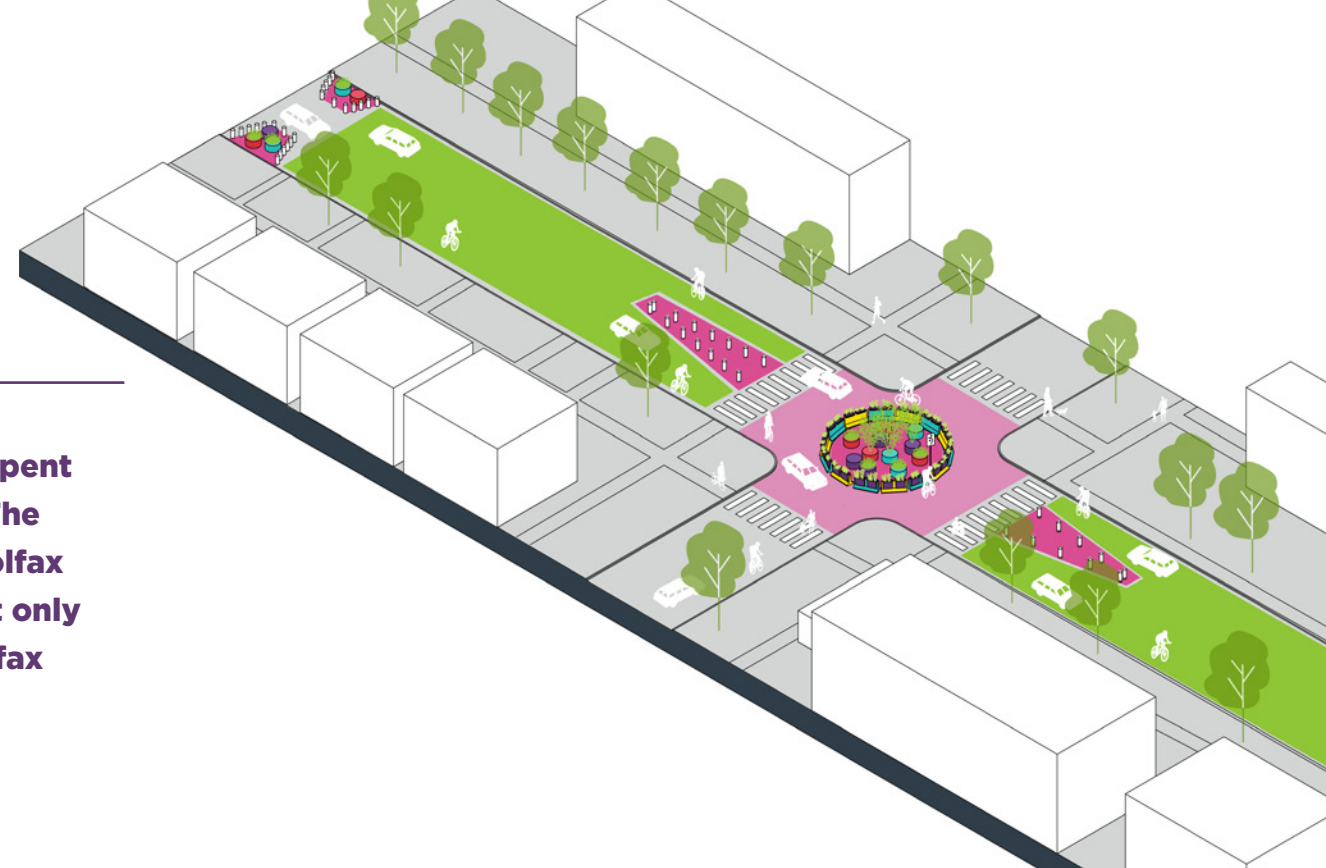
In 2024, Colfax Ave BID partnered with STAR, the Network Coffeehouse and the Denver Dream Center to address quality-of-life safety concerns with the right resources. Different situations require a different response for mental health issues, police or policy change from the city government. These partnerships help us tackle challenges with understanding and openness for effective solutions.





# STREETSCAPE

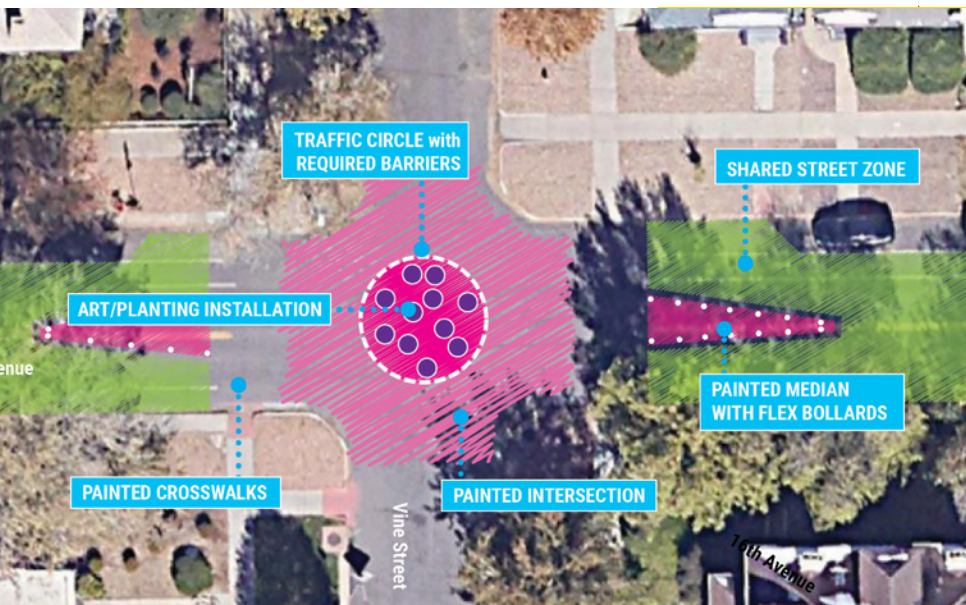
As construction began on the Colfax BRT system, the Colfax Ave BID spent much of 2024 reimagining what the future avenue would look like. The monumental project provided us with the opportunity to “refresh” Colfax curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and more, as part of the BRT design, that not only creates a modern destination for our City but also maintains the Colfax grit that has become our character.



## DESIGNS SUBMITTED

Working with partners at Michael Baker International and Dig Studio, an engineering and landscape architecture company, respectively, we have submitted preliminary designs for City approval of future streetscape concepts. Next steps are to coordinate with the BRT Team to determine the implementations that make sense during the new transit system construction.

Renderings by: Dig Studios



## WAYFINDING SIGNS + BIKE CORRALS

Our wayfinding signs and bike corrals are being built and we are waiting for permits to be finalized and opportunities to install them without interfering with BRT construction.



COLFAXAVE.COM/  
STREET-EXPERIENCE

## FESTIVAL STREET

We've been working with the businesses on the 1400 block of Ogden Street on designing a “Festival Street” atmosphere. By collaborating with local businesses, the Ogden Theater and the Fillmore Auditorium to bring in entertainment and possibly food trucks, we can create a welcoming space for concert-goers to gather and enjoy themselves before shows and special events.







# COLFAX BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT)

## COLFAX BRT IN MOTION!

Big changes are coming to East Colfax with the long-awaited Colfax BRT Project, that began construction in October 2024. This transformative project will make Colfax safer, more accessible, and more community-focused.

Construction is moving west to east in five segments, with the first two affecting the Colfax Ave BID area between Grant and Josephine streets. Work started at Broadway and Colfax in 2024 and is set to wrap up corridor-wide by late 2027.

While these improvements bring lasting benefits, construction is disruptive. The Colfax Ave BID is helping with updates through monthly “Chats on Colfax,” a BRT-focused newsletter, and Instagram (@ColfaxAveDenDirt). Office hours will also be set up in 2025 to provide direct support for businesses.

The 250+ Colfax Ave BID businesses add about \$7.5 million to the City’s budget through sales tax. Supporting these businesses with city grants and other fundraising is a top priority in 2025 so they may benefit from the thousands of jobs, economic growth, housing options, and other placemaking amenities. In the long run, the BRT will cut transit travel time by up to 30 minutes, improve access to 250,000+ jobs and services, and create new opportunities for economic growth and placemaking.

▼ **Photo Credit:** Kyle Harris / Denverite

## RAISING AWARENESS THROUGH ART

In 2024, the Colfax Ave BID launched an art contest for “Colfax Under Construction” designs, selecting Noemi Sanchez-Nunez and Jessie Allan as the first-round winners. Their designs are featured on t-shirts available for purchase [colfaxave.com/gear](https://colfaxave.com/gear), with all profits benefiting the BRT emergency microgrant fund.



## MICROGRANTS FOR BUSINESSES

The Upper Colfax Community Foundation (soon to be the Colfax Culture & Community Collab), a 501(c)(3) supporting the Colfax Ave BID, participated in the 2024 Colorado Gives Day to raise \$50,000 for an emergency microgrant fund, providing financial relief to businesses within the District affected by construction.

Every dollar raised—on Colorado Gives Day and throughout 2025—directly funds these microgrants, providing immediate relief to keep our small businesses thriving. When we support each other, we all succeed.







# COMMUNICATIONS

Colfax's reputation precedes it, creating both opportunities and challenges in communications. The Colfax Ave BID works to enhance and strengthen our image through authentic storytelling that highlights the unique character and vibrancy of our local businesses.

We employ a diverse mix of promotional strategies, including social media, email campaigns, advertisements, and our website, alongside events and promotional programs that foster a sense of community along the corridor. Our goal is not only to share Colfax's rich stories but also to equip business and property owners with the tools and resources they need to thrive and succeed on Colfax.

## HIGHLIGHTS

25

media stories featuring Colfax Ave BID programs

456K

views on social media in 2024

53.5%

avg. open rate for Colfax Ave email communications in 2024  
(An increase of 2.5%)

## FOLLOW US



@ColfaxAveDen



@ColfaxAveDen



@ColfaxAve

WEB

colfaxave.com

## SHOP

You can now shop your favorite Colfax Avenue apparel and drinkware and get it shipped directly to your home! Explore our Less Fancy, More Fun, Colfax Love, and Classic Colfax Avenue collections. A portion of all sales from the Pride collection will go toward supporting the efforts of Lavender Hill, Denver's first Queer Cultural District. All products are available at [colfaxave.com/gear](https://colfaxave.com/gear)

## JOIN US

### GET OUR NEWSLETTER

Distributed monthly with the latest Colfax news and events: [colfaxave.com/newsletter](https://colfaxave.com/newsletter)

### VOLUNTEER

Email us at [info@colfaxave.com](mailto:info@colfaxave.com) to sign up to volunteer at future events!

### JOIN A COMMITTEE

Committees generally meet monthly or quarterly. Email us at [info@colfaxave.com](mailto:info@colfaxave.com) for more info.



# 2025 FINANCIALS

36%

MAINTENANCE

10%

ORGANIZATIONAL

17%

ADMINISTRATIVE

6%

STREETSCAPE

16%

SAFETY

14%

BIZ SUPPORT / COMMUNICATIONS / PROGRAMS



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