

Criteria for designating additional Official Colorado Welcome Centers

Colorado Tourism Office Philosophy for Creating Additional Centers

The Colorado Tourism Office Welcome Center Program is committed to enhancing visitors' experiences and helping create lasting memories for travelers in Colorado while stimulating our local and state economy.

The Welcome Center Travel Counselors encourage visitors to lengthen their stay and increase their expenditures by providing accurate and helpful information to travelers about tourism-related activities throughout the state.

For the past 20 years, the Colorado Tourism Office has located its Welcome Centers at the major entry points into the State. This program has been extremely effective, and the Colorado Tourism Office would like to expand this program to include centers in the additional areas in Colorado. Centers should be located on major thoroughfares, near destinations, or near high traffic areas. All centers will be independently operated and are subject to the operating and management standards developed by the Colorado Tourism Office.

Location Selection is Dependent upon:

- Existing or potential visitor traffic
- Proximity to major attractions, national parks, retail environments, major highway intersections
- Financial Stability
- Accessibility
- Adequate Size
- Appearance
- Maintenance
- Management/staffing ability

Operating Standards

The Colorado Tourism Office determines the management, operating standards and requirements for the Colorado Welcome Center Program, as well as providing training, guidance, and conducting planned and unplanned inspections to assure compliance.

A convention and visitors bureau, chamber of commerce, local, state or federal government agency, private entity, or a combination of these may operate an official Welcome Center. All Welcome Centers must be committed to providing Colorado travelers with the highest standards of service and hospitality.

Signs

All centers must have adequate signs approved by the CTO. The Colorado Department of Transportation has the responsibility for placement of all Colorado Welcome Center highway signs. CDOT will charge each new center directly for costs related to highway signs, construction and maintenance. These charges are the responsibility of the new center. Costs for CDOT signs are \$9.50 per square foot. All other directional signs are the responsibility of the new center.

Revenue

All centers have the ability to generate revenue through a variety of methods. Some examples of accepted methods are advertising space, forming public/private partnerships, selling certain merchandise, or adding a coffee/snack shop. Most of Colorado's Welcome Centers participate in the "Transparency and Brochure Bag Program" as a way to generate revenue for the overall Welcome Center Program. All revenue generated is directed to the CTO. If a new Center chooses not to participate in the "Transparency and Brochure Bag" Program, alternative ways to generate revenue for the overall Welcome Center Program must be included in the proposal. All methods of generating revenue must have prior approval by the CTO.

Local, Regional and Statewide Promotion

Colorado Welcome Centers must represent the entire state and are encouraged to promote their region. Welcome Centers can lose their designation if they fail to provide visitors with information in a friendly, unbiased manner for all destinations throughout Colorado. Each CWC is pinpointed on Colorado's Official State Vacation Guide and State Map as well as on Colorado.com

Fees

Interested entities are required to provide a non-refundable application fee with their proposal. If approved as a Welcome Center, each Center must pay an annual fee to the CTO for costs incurred by the State in administering the program. The annual fee can be divided and paid on a quarterly basis.

Approval Process

- 1) Your proposal must include the attached "Applicant Questionnaire," a \$500 application fee, and a commitment to uphold the operating standards of the Colorado Welcome Center program.
- 2) The Colorado Tourism Office Board & staff will score your written proposal based on how well your center meets the "Conditions of Designations."
- 3) The CTO staff will inspect the site and score it according to set criteria.
- 4) If designated as a CWC, construction/conversion is to be completed before highway signs are in place.
- 5) Official start dates are to be determined by the CTO.
- 6) Designations are subject to an annual review.

Information

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COLORADO WELCOME CENTER **CONDITIONS OF DESIGNATION**

This document provides general information for entities interested in seeking designation as a Colorado Welcome Center. Guidelines included here may or may not be applicable to all locations. Specific conditions will be developed for each location based on a negotiated agreement.

1. The Contractor shall pay a five hundred dollar (\$500) application fee, upon submission of the application, to be considered for selection as a Center. The fee is non-refundable whether or not the Center is approved and must be included with the application.
2. Once designated, the Contractor shall pay an annual maintenance fee on a fiscal year (July – June) basis. The fee shall be payable either in a lump sum due July 1st or in quarterly payments. This fee shall be pro-rated depending upon the start date of the Center. This fee shall reimburse the CTO for all costs incurred in adding this center to the program.
3. The Contractor shall pay fees for local and state street/highway signs, permits, construction and placement. The Contractor will provide clear directional highway and street signage. It is the responsibility of the Contractor to ensure that graffiti is removed from and repairs are made to all Colorado Welcome Center signs, and those that are not repairable must be replaced.
4. The contractor will not receive operational funding from the Colorado Tourism Office.
5. The Colorado Tourism Office must approve use of the term "Colorado Welcome Center" for branding purposes such as retail, uniforms, or other signs.
6. The official wording "Colorado Welcome Center" shall be prominently displayed on the exterior of the Center. When identifying the Center, the term "Colorado Welcome Center at 'name of location,'" shall be used.

7. The Contractor shall not include real estate or time-share sales, telemarketing and other “high pressure” sales ventures.
8. The Contractor may provide travel arrangements and ticket booking services for visitors to the center
9. The Contractor shall maintain attractively landscaped grounds.
10. The Contractor shall have available, adequate parking with facilities for bus, recreational and oversized vehicles.
11. The Contractor shall have available adequate rest room facilities for both genders and people with disabilities. The rest rooms and public areas must be properly maintained and accessible during operating hours.
12. The Contractor’s personnel shall be trained under the guidelines required by the CTO and have a positive and welcoming attitude. The CTO will assist the Contractor by providing training to all staff at the beginning of the contract period, and management will ensure all additional staff hired will be similarly trained.
13. The Contractor shall adopt uniform and grooming standards for personnel as agreed to by the CTO. The Contractor shall incur the cost of all uniforms.
14. The Contractor may sell books, souvenirs, cards, gifts, maps, apparel or other merchandise of value and relevance to travelers, so long as merchandise is of good taste and of competitive price to goods sold near the facility. The CTO must approve all items of sale prior to center designation.
15. The Contractor may have attached commercial establishments, which provide service to travelers, such as, but not limited to, restaurants, food stores, convenience stores, gas stations, and accommodations of service to travelers. The CTO must approve all additional services provided at the establishment prior to center designation and prior to adding the new service.
16. The Center shall be operated from a permanent structure of attractive architectural design with appropriate heating and air conditioning at the address specified in the designation. The Center shall have approximately two thousand (2000 sq. ft.) square feet of public area. An information kiosk, walk-up facility or other similar structures are not considered Colorado Welcome Centers.
17. Any change to the Contractor’s management or their contact information or insurance carriers, must be submitted to the CTO, in writing within thirty days of the date of the change. Any change in ownership of the facility must be submitted to the CTO, for approval, no less than 90 calendar days in advance of the change.
18. The state shall conduct regular inspections of the Center, both announced and unannounced. Failure to pass a second inspection in a year may result in loss of designation as a Center, removal of signs, and forfeiture of all fees paid. If designation is revoked, the Contractor must reapply to the CTO for consideration. In such cases where past due fees have accrued, the fees must be paid in full before the site may reapply for designation.
19. Except for major holidays, the Center shall be open seven days a week, with specific hours of operation convenient to the traveler in that location and approved by the CTO. Any change in operating schedule must be pre-approved by the CTO.
20. The Contractor shall display the CTO required tourism information at no cost to the visitor. The Contractor cannot charge other entities for providing visitor information.

21. The Contractor shall provide professionally designed information displays, placed within the Center. The display must be divided into CTO defined "travel regions" and include all regions of the state. The Contractor will abide by the CTO brochure display policy.
22. The Contractor shall maintain and report information monthly to the CWC Program Manager, including but not limited to, statistics regarding number of visitors to the Center. Monthly visitor numbers shall be submitted at the end of each month.
23. The Contractor will use the same formula established to calculate visitor numbers at all Colorado Welcome Centers.
24. Each Center will be designated on the Colorado Tourism Office website (colorado.com), the Official State Vacation Guide, and Official State Map.
25. Each Center will provide Internet access to visitors at a specific location within the Center.
26. The Contractor's Center manager is required to attend two managers' meetings each year; failure to do so may jeopardize Center status.
27. There must be a dedicated phone line to be used strictly for Colorado Welcome Center. When answering the phone, the Center must identify itself as the "Colorado Welcome Center."
28. The Contractor may use paid staff, volunteers or a combination of both to serve as their "Travel Counselors."

APPLICANT QUESTIONNAIRE

A completed questionnaire along with a non-refundable \$500 application fee must be attached to your proposal before being considered for designation as an Official Colorado Welcome Center.

Name of Center: _____

Contact Name: _____

Contact Address: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____

Please show your commitment to each of the services required by an official Colorado Welcome Center by initialing next to each of the following criteria.

I understand:

_____ I must pay the annual maintenance fee by July 1st of each year in either a lump sum or in quarterly payments.

_____ I must be financially responsible for all local and state street/highway signs, permits, construction, placement, and maintenance.

_____ I must prominently display, on the exterior of the center, the term "Colorado Welcome Center."

_____ I must maintain attractively landscaped grounds.

- _____ I must train personnel under the guidelines required by the CTO and hire personnel with a positive and welcoming attitude.
- _____ I must adopt the uniform and grooming standards for personnel as agreed to by the CTO and that uniform costs will be incurred by the Center.
- _____ I must display and distribute the required CTO tourism information at no cost to the visitor and other entities providing visitor information can not be charged for brochure distribution at the Center.
- _____ I must have professionally designed information displays that are divided into CTO defined “travel regions.”
- _____ I must provide Internet access to visitors at a specific location within the Center.
- _____ I must maintain and report information monthly to the CWC Program Manager, including but not limited to, statistics regarding number of visitors to the Center. These numbers must be submitted by the end of the business day on the 28th of each month and the formula established to calculate visitor numbers will be used and provided to me.
- _____ I must have a dedicated phone line, which will be used strictly for the Colorado Welcome Center and, when answering the phone, the Center must identify itself as the “Colorado Welcome Center.”
- _____ there will not be any funding provided by the CTO toward the operation of the Welcome Center.
- _____ the Colorado Tourism Office must approve use of the term “Colorado Welcome Center” for branding purposes such as retail, uniforms, or other signs.
- _____ real estate or time-share sales, telemarketing and other “high pressure” sales ventures can not be included in the Center.
- _____ that any sales of books, souvenirs, cards, gifts, maps, apparel or other merchandise must be approved by the CTO prior to center designation.
- _____ the CTO must approve all additional services provided at the establishment prior to Center designation and prior to adding the new service, which may include commercial establishments such as, but not limited to, restaurants, food stores, convenience stores, gas stations, and accommodations of service to travelers.
- _____ that any changes to the Center’s management, contact information, or insurance carriers, must be submitted to the CTO, in writing, within thirty days of the date of the change. Any change in ownership of the facility must be submitted to the CTO, for approval, no less than ninety calendar days in advance of the change.
- _____ the state will conduct regular inspections of the Center, both announced and unannounced and that failure to pass a second inspection within a year may result in the loss of designation as a Center, removal of signs, and forfeiture of all fees paid.
- _____ that, except for major holidays, the Center must be open seven days a week, with specific hours of operation convenient to the traveler in that location and approved by the CTO. Any change in operating schedule must be pre-approved by the CTO.
- _____ that the Center’s manager is required to attend two managers’ meetings each year and that failure to do so may jeopardize the Center’s status.

General Questions:

1. Why do you want your facility to become an official Colorado Welcome Center?
2. Do you currently provide travel and tourism information to Colorado visitors?
3. If yes, approximately how many visitors come to your center in a year?
4. What are your current hours of operation?
5. What are your proposed hours of operation?
6. Do you currently have signage on roads directing visitors to your facility?
7. Please describe how to get to your facility from a major interstate/highway/freeway.
8. Please describe how someone would get inside of your center (example: you must take the set of stairs to the left of the front entrance). Is your center accessible to those with disabilities?
9. What procedures do you/would you have in place in case of adverse weather (how will you handle snow, tornados, hail, etc.)?
10. What type of support do you have in your community for the designation of an official Colorado Welcome Center?

Property Questions:

1. When was your facility constructed?
2. Has the building ever been renovated? If so, when and what was done?
3. Is your property attached to a commercial establishment that provides services to travelers, such as a restaurant, food store, convenience store, gas station, or accommodation?
4. Does your facility currently sell books, souvenirs, cards, gifts, maps, apparel or other merchandise?
 - a. If so, please describe what items you sell:

Outside of the Facility:

1. Is there space available on the outside of your building to display Colorado Welcome Center signage?
2. Does your facility have adequate parking for visitors and people with disabilities?
3. Does your facility have adequate parking for buses, recreational, and oversized vehicles?
4. Please describe the overall look of your building and landscape – include pictures of interior and exterior of building.

Inside the Facility:

1. Does your center have approximately two thousand (2000 sq. ft.) square feet of public area available for Welcome Center activities?
 - a. If so, does the layout of the room allow for a large number of brochure racks to fit comfortably without making the space feel tight?
2. Is your facility Internet ready or capable?
 - a. If so, does your facility have space available for an Internet access area to be used by visitors?

3. Does your facility have adequate restrooms for both genders and people with disabilities?
4. Are these restrooms convenient to Welcome Center activities and open during the hours of operation?
5. Please describe where the restrooms are located in relation to the Welcome Center activities.
6. Does your facility have adequate heating and air conditioning?
7. Do you have a sprinkler system and/or smoke detectors in your public space?
8. Does the property meet ADA requirements?
9. Approximately how many square feet of storage space do you have for housing brochures and other travel and tourism information for distribution?

Revenue Generating

1. Will your Center participate in the Transparency Program?
 - a. If so, how many square feet of wall space do you have available for this program?
 - b. If not, what types of revenue generating programs will you propose for your Center?

Staffing:

- 1) Do you have a current manager for your facility?
 - a. If so, will this person continue to be the manager if designated as an official Colorado Welcome Center (if yes, please attach his/her resume to this proposal)?
- 2) What form of staffing will your center use to hire “Travel Counselors?” Volunteers? Paid employees? A combination of both? If use volunteers, how will you recruit and staff the Center?
- 3) How many “Travel Counselors” will you have during each shift?
- 4) How many shifts will you have during your hours of operation?

Surrounding Location:

- 1) Is your facility located near: (Please give a brief description of each of the following, as well as distance from Center):
 - a. Highway/Freeway?
 - b. Attractions?
 - c. Hotels?
 - d. Restaurants?
 - e. Retail?
 - f. Event Facilities?
 - g. State/National Parks?
 - h. Airport/Train Stations/Bus Depots?
 - i. Other?

Signature

Date

Title