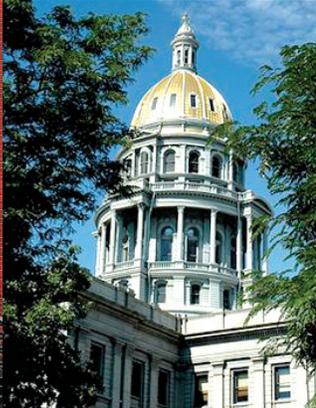


# 2010



**Alliance**  
for Sustainable Colorado



# Annual Report

Advancing sustainability through collaboration among nonprofits, business, government and education

*“We can build an economy*

*that does not destroy its natural support systems,  
a global community where the basic needs of all  
the Earth's people are satisfied, and a world that  
will allow us to think of ourselves as civilized.”*

— LESTER BROWN

From the Executive Director

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JOANNE KEYS



## 2010: A Year of Deepening and Broadening Connections

The Alliance for Sustainable Colorado progressed in several dimensions vital to our mission in 2010: the reach and depth of our collaborative network, the utilization of office space at the Alliance Center (devoted entirely to support of nonprofits) and above all our on-the-ground impact.

Our most fundamental tool for building a statewide sustainability network is our regional Sustainability Roundtables, which we expanded to eight in 2010 (up from six the year before). The Roundtables engaged over 430 leaders across all sectors (government, nonprofits, business and education) who are working on sustainability around the state. Our first statewide Sustainability Roundtable, co-hosted in November with CORE (Connected Organizations for a Responsible Economy), the Governor's Energy Office and the University of Denver, attracted over 200 attendees from around the state. Participants gave the Alliance high marks in post-Roundtable surveys, reporting that the meetings strengthened connections, resolve and plans for collaborative action on regional and statewide sustainability priorities.

On the legislative front, we initiated and won passage of the first-ever conservation-oriented plumbing codes bill in Colorado, bringing together critical partners like the Colorado Municipal League and Colorado Counties Incorporated with labor groups and nonprofit organizations. We also provided significant support for key policy initiatives with partners like Colorado Conservation Voters and the Colorado Environmental Coalition to help decisively defeat the "Bad Three" (Amendments 60 and 61 and Proposition 101), reckless tax-cutting measures that would have had shattering effects on local and state government.

At the Alliance Center, we increased the number of nonprofits we house from 25 in 2009 to 35 in 2010. We also passed key milestones in the initial phases of our "Modeling a NetZero Future" project, our high-visibility effort to see how close to net-zero and carbon neutral we can take the Alliance Center with a reasonable investment.

We held our most successful Heroes of Sustainability fundraising event yet, keynoted by this year's Hero, Lester Brown, founder of Worldwatch Institute and the Earth Policy Institute and one of the world's most trenchant, respected and far-sighted authorities on sustainability. The event was well attended and raised substantial funds for our work.

Finally, we were delighted to add two illustrious members to our board of directors, Bruce Hutton and David Johnston. Dr. Hutton is dean emeritus and professor of marketing in the Daniels College of Business at the University of Denver, and a co-founder of the Colorado Ethics in Business Awards. Sustainability pioneer David Johnston is the founder and president of What's Working, a green building consultancy that provides socially and ecologically responsible guidance to businesses, agencies and communities around the world.

Our deep thanks go out to all our tenants, partners and collaborators in 2010, whose expertise and dedication were indispensable to these accomplishments. Our successes in 2010 are shared successes that celebrate both the deep hunger for a sustainable future and the power of collaboration and partnership.



## The Alliance's Mission and History

The mission of the Alliance for Sustainable Colorado—to advance sustainability through collaboration among nonprofits, business, government and education—grows out of a deep conviction that the habitability of the Earth is in danger and that collective action across all sectors of society is required to mitigate this risk. We believe that building a culture of sustainability demands a long-term perspective, a thoughtful regard for the welfare of future generations, and a focus on the “triple bottom line” (people, planet and profit). We further believe that for decisions to contribute to sustainability, they should embody input and buy-in from a range of viewpoints. We strive to be nonpartisan, broadly inclusive and diverse, and to lead by example.

The Alliance's operational structure and history reflect this mission. The Alliance was designated a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization by the Internal Revenue Service in June 2004. Shortly thereafter, the organization purchased a 100-year old warehouse and adjacent empty lot in Denver's Lower Downtown (LoDo) Historic District and created the Alliance Center, a multi-tenant nonprofit center for organizations working on sustainability issues. The Alliance Center was extensively renovated to green standards, becoming the first historic building in the country to earn two U.S. Green Building

Council LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certifications, Existing Buildings Gold and Commercial Interiors Silver, along with U.S. EPA Energy Star Leader status. The Center now provides offices and meeting space at below-market rents, operations support and shared services to a community of nonprofit tenants. The building creates synergies and fosters partnerships that accelerate progress in all three dimensions of the triple bottom line in Colorado.

# Policy

## Promoting Sound Policies that Further Sustainability

The Alliance’s Policy program promotes policies and legislation that codify sustainable behavior. We collaborate with other organizations to support sustainable policy initiatives, educate legislators and the public on specific issues, identify emerging issues and track legislative interest in them, build coalitions, and in some cases originate ideas for bills. The support of the Alliance’s broadly based coalition takes the triple-bottom-line philosophy to a variety of industries and issues.

We have a consistent record of initiating sustainability legislation and guiding it to enactment: 2010 was our fourth consecutive year of seeing a bill through to passage. In 2010 it was House Bill 1204, which requires Colorado’s state plumbing code to include standards for water conservation and efficiency and for locally produced materials. The bill was sponsored by Representative John Soper and Senator Lois Tochtrop and backed by a diverse coalition that included labor unions, the AFL-CIO, FRESC, the Colorado Environmental Coalition, the U.S. Green Building Council, the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies, the Plumbing Board of Examiners, and water conservation advocates.

In February the Policy program hosted 88 entrepreneurs, business leaders and nonprofit representatives at the 6th Annual Sustainable Business Legislative Briefing, co-sponsored by nine sustainable-business associations and held in the Capitol’s Old Supreme Court Chambers. In the context of the event’s theme—“What does the green economic recovery look like in Colorado?”—the audience was given a preview of key legislators’ views and legislative agendas. Colorado Governor Bill Ritter urged an intensified focus on clean energy research and development. Paul Sheldon of Natural Capitalism Solutions agreed, maintaining that the challenges of sustainability demand that we think in terms of radical resource efficiency. Brett KenCairn, director of Veterans Green Jobs (an Alliance Center tenant at the time), gave evidence of how the clean energy sector is creating good jobs. Don Marostica, director of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade, went one step further and encouraged the sustainability community to create a statewide strategic plan.



# Education and Outreach

## Forging Relationships that Accelerate Progress

The Alliance links a statewide network of community leaders in an ongoing conversation about best policies and practices of sustainability. Through regional Sustainability Roundtable meetings, educational events and informational resources, our efforts combine the wisdom and insights of participants to overcome barriers and generate solutions, from local food production, recycling and renewable energy financing to efficient zoning codes and green jobs training. Alliance events inform and inspire key players to collaborate on regional and statewide goals aimed at building more sustainable communities.

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2010 INCLUDED:

**Sustainability Roundtables.** The Alliance led eight regional Sustainability Roundtables (in Fort Morgan, Loveland, Rifle, Colorado Springs, Craig, Durango, Lamar and Gunnison) and a statewide Roundtable in Denver on November 4. At the regional Roundtables, over 430 community leaders, state and county officials, and businesspeople attended to discuss their regions' sustainability challenges and share ideas and best practices for meeting them. The statewide Roundtable, which drew over 200 participants, was a collaborative effort with the Alliance, CORE (founded as Connected Organizations for a Responsible Economy), the University of Denver Chancellor's Office and Sustainability Council, and ColoradoBiz. One immediate tangible outcome was the launch of a telecommuting metrics project, with the Alliance taking the lead in developing a database on telecommuting programs by tracking our own related statistics and engaging other organizations in doing the same.



Participants in the regional Roundtables commonly mentioned the events' high value in promoting partnerships and making people feel like part of a larger statewide sustainability infrastructure. Participants also clearly indicated readiness to move ahead collaboratively on regional and statewide priorities for action on policies and best practices.

At the statewide Roundtable, participants revealed that the most common barrier to implementing sustainability practices was lack of funding, while effective partnerships and collaboration were often mentioned as strategies to overcome barriers. A key conclusion was that the best way to achieve sustainability goals is to adopt a new organizational model and framework for decision-making. This

corroborates indications of a growing paradigm shift toward using sustainability as a viable business model and planning tool.

**Green Jobs Pipeline for Women.** In 2009 the Alliance secured its first federal contract, from the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau, to promote the education, training and placement of women throughout Colorado into the green jobs market. The project came to fruition in 2010, when Alliance staff created and managed a coalition of 30 organizations committed to advancing green jobs for women, successfully connected hundreds of women to resources and support organizations, and distributed a monthly newsletter to over 750 recipients announcing training events, networking opportunities, career openings and green jobs resources.



Alliance involvement with the project was successfully concluded in late 2010; ongoing efforts were handed off to local community leaders, led by the Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce. The Alliance is proud of its role as a catalyst for the project and continues to collaborate with the Chamber and other green jobs coalition members.



**Sustainable Business Network.** The Alliance established the Network in 2003 to coalesce and enable green business efforts around the state. The Network has since grown to 47 associations representing over 20,000 businesses. The Alliance supports the Network by maintaining a directory of professional and trade associations in Colorado that have identified sustainability as a priority in their missions and/or practices, publishing a bi-weekly electronic newsletter, and hosting a sustainability calendar that lists upcoming opportunities to learn, network and advocate for sustainable business practices. The Network also helped support the 6th Annual Sustainable Business Legislative Briefing, sponsored by nine Colorado sustainable-business associations (see Policy section for a more detailed description).

**Heroes of Sustainability Gala Honoring Lester Brown.** This stellar event at the historic Oxford Hotel was packed with notable Alliance supporters. Lester Brown, the visionary founder of the Worldwatch Institute and the Earth Policy Institute, engaged in a three-way conversation with Colorado Governor Bill Ritter and Professor David Orr of Oberlin College (an Alliance board member), moderated by Alliance President John Powers. The event was successful in inspiring attendees and sharing news about Alliance activities, and in supporting the organization.

**New Website.** One of the most salient internal projects of 2010 was a complete redesign of our website. The Alliance worked with Boulder-based web design firm Vermilion, Inc. to create an interactive and compelling web presence intended to advance the Alliance's role as a hub of sustainability in Colorado. The new website will showcase our three program areas, highlight the great work of our Alliance Center tenants, allow us to grow our network by engaging others working on sustainability, provide resources to sustainability advocates, and give us a voice via an Alliance blog. The website is slated to go live in February 2011.

# The Alliance Center

## Nurturing Networks, Showcasing Innovation

Once a warehouse, the century-old Alliance Center has been remade as a “crucible of collaboration and support” for sustainability-oriented nonprofits, in the words of a tenant. The Center provides below-market rent, shared services and operations support to nonprofit organizations, all of which have missions that address some aspect of social, environmental and/or economic sustainability policies and practices. Tenants have included such diverse organizations as Colorado Consumer Health Initiative, Colorado Environmental Coalition, Veterans Green Jobs, the Latina Initiative, American Council for the Blind–Colorado, Colorado Conservation Voters, Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, Common Cause, Colorado Community Shares and over 25 more. In 2010 the Alliance Center remained fully occupied and maintained a waiting list. Visitors experience collaboration in action.



The Center is also a laboratory for exploring replicable ways to transform existing buildings into high-performing ones. As the first historic building in the world to earn two LEED certifications (Existing Buildings Gold and Commercial Interiors Silver), the Alliance Center demonstrates the value of resource efficiency and green building strategies through innovative measures like a building automation system, pressure-assisted 1-gallon flush toilets, lighting occupancy sensors, LED lighting, photovoltaics, and recycled or renewable material applications. Over 500 visitors—including representatives of foundations, businesses, nonprofits, schools, universities, AmeriCorps and the general public (during Doors Open Denver)—took part in dozens of guided tours. Many others took virtual tours (via our website) or self-guided tours using our brochure and the 100 educational signs mounted throughout the Alliance Center that describe its green features.

The Alliance’s “Modeling a NetZero Future” project, which will explore ways to take high-performing historic buildings to the next level, laid essential groundwork in 2010. The Alliance building team held a two-day design charrette attended by over 50 architecture, engineering and building professionals to explore options and best practices, and recruited an advisory council that included

experts from the Rocky Mountain Institute, What's Working Consulting, the Colorado Governor's Energy Office, YRG Sustainability, ShearsAdkins Architects, Adolfsen & Peterson Construction and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). Staff secured an award from the Colorado Historic Fund for the commissioning of a historic structure assessment, which identified portions of the building's historical features that need maintenance, repair and restoration. Staff also assisted an Alliance sponsor, the professional engineering firm TestMarcx, in retro-commissioning the Alliance Center to identify how energy is consumed and which equipment needed upgrading. Finally, staff worked with a graduate class of the University of Colorado-Denver, under the guidance of the distinguished professor Dr. Anuradha Ramaswami, to perform an inventory of the Center's carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions. These studies established baseline data against which the effectiveness of upcoming improvements can be measured.

In addition, with notable members of the Colorado architecture, design/build and green-building communities, Alliance staff provided crucial input to partner with the Living City Block Project in its winning a technical assistance award from NREL. The award will enable an in-depth energy analysis of systems and equipment to install in pursuit of achieving net-zero energy use by the Alliance Center.

As a hub of collaboration, the Alliance promotes synergies among its tenants and partners and leverages this networking into greater mission effectiveness. By co-locating like-minded activists in the same physical space, the Center provides mutual access and facilitates the kind of ready, informal interaction that leads to concrete results. The Alliance also creates regular opportunities for tenant staff to get to know one another and establish the social connections that encourage free and productive communication. Examples of these regular events include breakfast and lunchtime educational talks, which were attended by over 240 tenant staffers in 2010, as well as social events throughout the year.

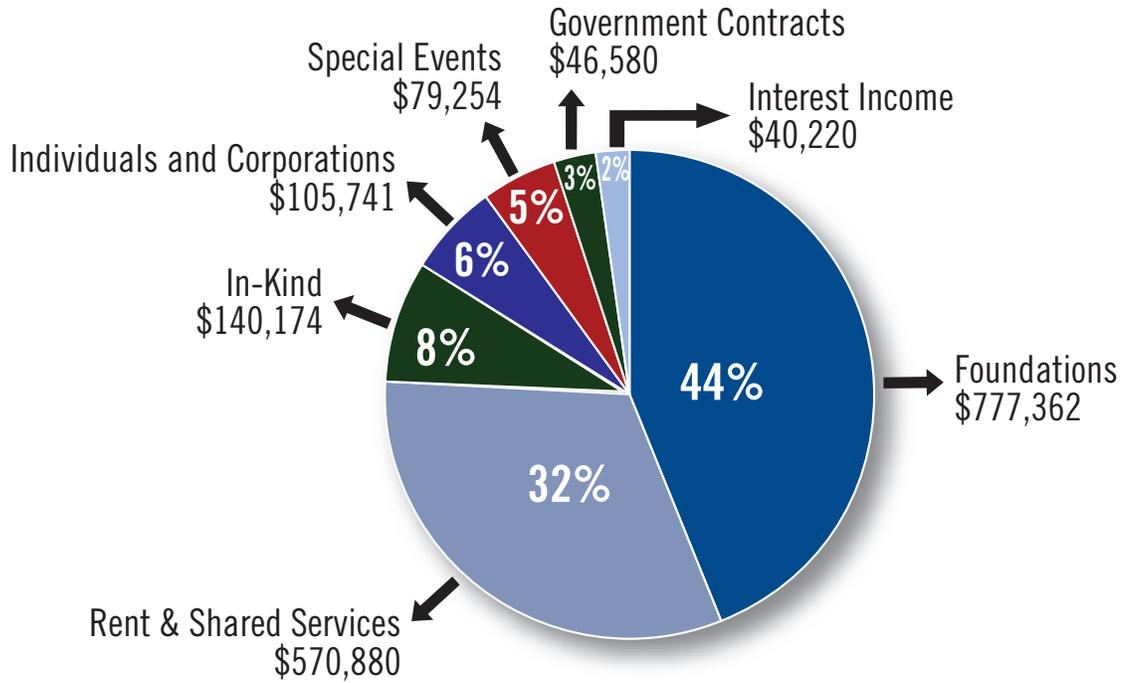
The effectiveness of our broad efforts to promote collaboration—and of our strategic proximity to the Capitol and state agencies—can be seen in the 50 sustainability-related bills that were signed into Colorado law in 2010 as a direct result of joint work by the Alliance Center's tenant organizations and community partners. Key bills included HB 10-1333 (Green Jobs Bill), HB 10-1107 (Agricultural Land in Urban Renewal Areas) and HB 10-1358 (Water-Smart Homes Bill).

Alliance staff also supported sustainability education and community outreach advancing sustainability. Highlights for 2010 included a class with MBA students at the University of Colorado-Denver on the beneficial economics of sustainability, a semester-long greenhouse design project with the Colorado School of Mines, presentations at the Rocky Mountain Green 2010 conference, and support of the CORE Sustainable Opportunities Summit.



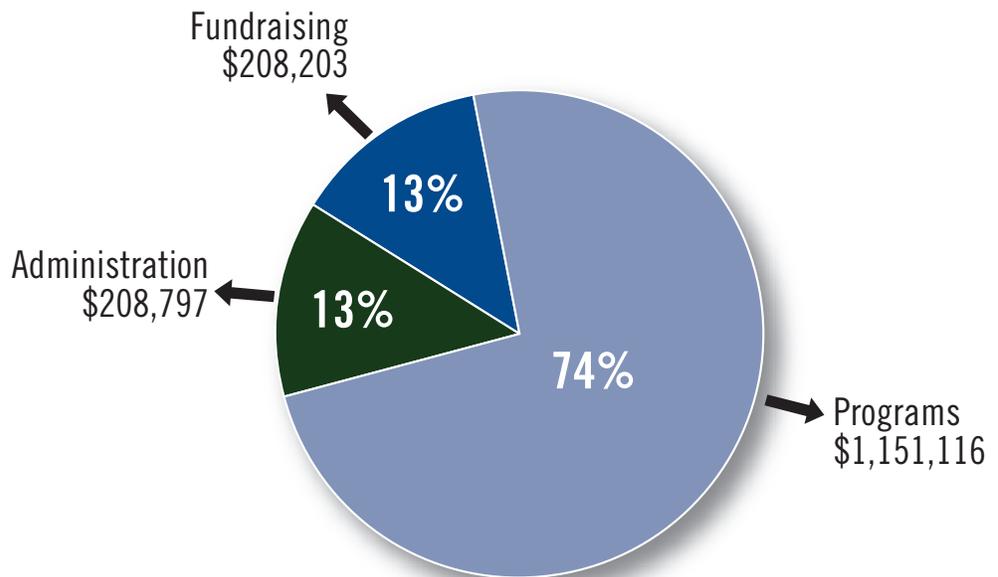
# Revenues and Expenses

## REVENUES



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## EXPENSES



# Board of Directors



**John Powers,**  
*President; Founder of Alliance for Sustainable Colorado and full-time volunteer.*



**Mark Hughes, Esq.,**  
*Vice President; Founder and Executive Director of Two Rivers Institute, a 501(c)(3) public interest law firm, and lecturer at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law.*



**Steven J. Schueth,**  
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**Andrea J. (A.J.) Grant,**  
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**Dr. Bruce Hutton,**  
*Dean Emeritus and Professor of Marketing in the Daniels College of Business, University of Denver.*



**David Johnston,**  
*Founder and President of What's Working, Inc., a green building consultancy that provides socially and ecologically responsible guidance to businesses, agencies and communities around the world.*



**Dr. David Orr,**  
*Paul Sears Distinguished Professor of Environmental Studies and Politics and Chair of the Environmental Studies Program at Oberlin College.*

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Complete biographies of our board members can be found on our website at <http://sustainablecolorado.org/about-us/board-of-directors>.

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From the President

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JOHN POWERS



## A Look Ahead: Doing More with Less

Last year (2010) posed profound economic challenges for Colorado businesses and citizens. By year's end, light had begun to shine in the dark tunnel, as the economy showed signs of improving. But in 2011 it's clear that government at all levels is being squeezed by drastically reduced revenues, which is severely curtailing its ability to provide public services. Now, more than ever, sustainability means becoming more efficient—in government, in business and in our private lives. In 2011 the Alliance will take our Alliance Center—already a living example of design for collaboration and resource efficiency—to new heights with our Modeling a NetZero Future Project.

As detailed elsewhere in this report, the seeds were sown for the Project in 2010 with studies and analyses that established key baselines of the Alliance Center's current performance, against which improvements will be measured. These included careful assessments of the Center's greenhouse gas emissions, shared services, energy consumption, and historical structure. Further, in partnership with the Living City Block Project (a Center tenant), the Center is also benefitting from an award administered by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) to help the partners dramatically reduce energy consumption, both in the Center and in the entire block on which it sits. Three DOE national laboratories—Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and NREL—will manage the effort and provide technical assistance.

These energy efficiency design goals are aggressive, yet include reasonable returns on investment. The Alliance is a nonprofit whose purpose is, in part, to test ideas and break trail so that others may follow more easily. Therefore, in 2011 we will study and document the returns on our investment in order to create a replicable framework for existing buildings. We will maintain the Alliance Center's LEED Existing Buildings Gold certification, and at the end of the project (estimated to be in 2013) we will seek to earn LEED Platinum and Living Building Challenge certifications to draw attention to the value of deep energy- and water retrofits.

The goals are a response to some stark facts: in the United States, buildings account for 40 percent of total energy consumption, 70 percent of electricity, 60 percent of raw materials, 12 percent of potable water, and nearly half of all greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, 80 percent of existing buildings will still be in use 40 years from now. Sustainability demands that we green our building stock, but tearing everything down and starting over is not a viable option. We agree wholeheartedly with

sustainable preservation pioneer Carl Elefante, who wrote, “The greenest building is the one that is already built.” We will test the proposition that, dollar for dollar, improving the efficiency of existing buildings is one of the most cost-effective and profitable ways to earn returns on investment while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

To these ends, we will launch a capital campaign in 2011 to enable this project and—because last year we were forced to turn away tenants—to expand the Center. We are deeply grateful to the Global Greengrants Fund for its \$220,000 grant and to donors who contributed during our preparatory phase.

Also in 2011, our Education and Outreach program will continue building a statewide sustainability network, adding more Roundtables and collaborating with regional and local organizations to create Regional Sustainability Councils. Our Policy program will advance a bill to make benefit corporations possible in Colorado and explore how to advance distributed electrical generation. We especially look forward to working with the newly elected representatives and governor.

The coming year will be replete with opportunities. We thank our many partners in the nonprofit, business, government and education sectors, and our tenants and many foundation, government and individual donors for your generous financial support.

*“The Alliance continues to be a vital partner in ensuring that legislation supporting the New Energy Economy is passed.” — Senator Gail Schwartz*

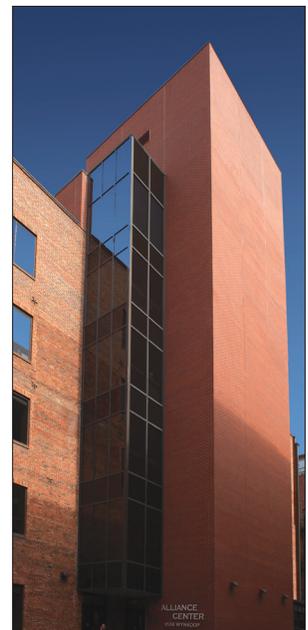
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## VISIT THE ALLIANCE CENTER AND TAKE A TOUR:

The Alliance Center, a century-old converted warehouse with two LEED certifications and a U.S. EPA Energy Star rating of 85, is a showcase for the potential of resource efficiency in existing buildings. It’s also a multi-tenant nonprofit center that supports and encourages collaboration to boost effectiveness and produce concrete results. Visitors are welcome to tour the building on their own, join one of our regularly scheduled guided tours, or set up a tour appointment. Contact us for more information.

## SUPPORT OUR WORK:

The Alliance welcomes your support and offers a variety of options: donation, sponsorship, volunteering and resource-sharing. Call us or visit <http://sustainablecolorado.org/support-our-work> for more information.





# Alliance

for Sustainable Colorado

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Denver, Colorado 80202

*Contact us at:*  
303-572-1536 (phone)  
303-572-0032 (fax)

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<http://sustainablecolorado.org>

Advancing sustainability through collaboration among nonprofits, business, government and education