The Colorado restaurant industry has lost billions of dollars in revenue in 2020:

- Nearly $1 billion in April alone.

Staffing levels are at about 2/3 of what they were in 2019.

- The industry has shed about 87,000 jobs.

90% of restaurants say their sales are down since 2019.

- Sales are down an average of 40%.

Restaurants are worried about winter.

- 80% of Colorado restaurants are trying to grow takeout and delivery options.
- 61% say they would take advantage of a winter outdoor expansion program if offered...

...but to make outdoor space usable through cold months, they estimate they’ll need to spend $5500 on average.

If nothing changes,

- 62% of restaurants will have to consider permanently closing in less than 6 months.

Biggest needs: 43% say cash, 30% say increased capacity.
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“I’d like to thank you for being such a great resource to our community during this time. Your leadership is a beacon of reason!”

- Patrick H., museum restaurant operator
Dear Members,

I know I don’t need to tell you that it’s been a challenging year. Since March, we have been living through the COVID-19 pandemic, the biggest crisis this industry has faced in living memory.

The Colorado restaurant industry has suffered billions of dollars of losses this year — nearly $1 billion in April alone. We’ve seen employment in our industry drop by one-third — a big blow to Colorado’s workforce, since restaurants typically account for 10 percent of the state’s employment. You told us in July that your revenues continue to be down by 40 percent on average — and some of you are down by much more, and you anticipate winter is going to be much worse. So much worse, in fact, that 65 percent of restaurants will consider permanently closing in the next six months. No statistics can account for the whipsaw of regulatory changes we’ve faced — from the shutdown to capacity restrictions, from mandated last call times to emergency paid sick leave — and we know keeping up with compliance issues has been exhausting. We are happy that this is one of the things we can track and communicate to you as you work tirelessly to keep your doors open.

Like you, we’ve suffered losses: we cut our budget, and we were forced to lay off about a quarter of our staff. Since the crisis began, everyone working at the Colorado Restaurant Association has refocused on four primary activities: advocacy on the industry’s behalf, communication to Colorado’s restaurants about all COVID developments impacting the industry, member support and services, and, through our Foundation, support for restaurants and workers.

We created this report to give you insight into all of these activities, and to show you that we’ve made some great strides, and, most importantly, to show you that we continue to work hard on your behalf.

Our sole purpose is to support you — if there’s anything we can do on your behalf, in this crisis and beyond, please reach out to us at info@corestaurant.org.

We know that things will not be easier for quite some time, but we’re hopeful that 2021 will be a better year for all of us. Thank you for everything: Colorado’s communities would not be the same without you in them. Your support as a member makes our work possible.

Sincerely,

Sonia Riggs
President & CEO
Colorado Restaurant Association
Key Accomplishments

The CRA and CRF have worked on behalf of all Colorado restaurants and employees throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

ADVOCACY ACHIEVEMENTS

- State and local tax deferments
- Local patio extension programs
- CDPHE allowance for restaurants to sell food and provisions as a relief option
- Restaurants categorized as essential businesses, allowing them to stay open for takeout and delivery through the stay at home orders
- Local grant and loan programs created, state grant and loan programs passed in legislature
- Worked with nearly every member of the Colorado U.S. Congressional Delegation on PPP reforms and federal relief for the industry
- Alcohol to-go and delivery authorized via executive order; legislative extension until July 2021
- Industry-specific amendments to public health orders: use of pool tables, clarification on the 50 person max per room guidance, flexibility on allowances for compliance, and more
- Flexibility in CDPHE and LED guidance to prevent unnecessary requirements on restaurant operations

MAKING SURE RESTAURANTS HAVE A SEAT AT THE TABLE

- Collected survey data from hundreds of restaurants to shape our advocacy agenda
- Hosted numerous town halls with local, state, and federal elected officials and regulators
- Compiled feedback submitted by restaurateurs for local, state, and federal officials
- Engaged restaurants for grassroots activation for state and federal initiatives
- Partnered with allied organizations to achieve broad industry goals
- Opened all CRA communication and resources to all restaurants in need
- Represented restaurants on state and local economic recovery task forces

TOOLS FOR NAVIGATING THE CRISIS

- Hosted more than 20 webinars with experts in real estate, PPP & EIDL loans, marketing, law, public health and more
- Created online Coronavirus Resource Center for up-to-the-minute updates in one place
- Free COVID-19 legal support – up to 4 hours
- Near-daily email communication with critical regulatory and compliance updates, grant information, resources, and how-tos

TAILORED SUPPORT FOR RESTAURANTS

- Answered thousands of restaurants’ individual email questions, and made hundreds of referrals to our Legal Resource Center partners
- Provided free signage, labels, and forms to help restaurants comply with regulatory changes
- Created online how-tos for navigating takeout and delivery operations, reopening, PPP applications, and more
- Created directory of resources for COVID-19-specific needs, including reopening resources

HELP FOR EMPLOYEES

- Granted nearly $2 million to more than 3,500 restaurant and hospitality workers diagnosed with COVID-19, or out of work due to the shutdown
- Offered free mental health workshops and counseling sessions to all industry employees
- Created employee resources hub to help laid-off and furloughed workers navigate government resources
- Partnered with COVIDCheck to provide affordable rapid COVID-19 testing for hospitality workers
Testimonials

“I just want to personally say thank you for all the information you are providing to us. One example: In rushing to create a game plan with online ordering and delivery... I completely lost sight of insurance requirements. The email I received brought me back in check. These little details mean a lot.”

Teresa T., Dillon restaurateur

“Thank you for all of the work you are doing on behalf of restaurant owners. I appreciate the updates as I feel someone is making our voice, our financial struggles, and overall fear of the unknown a little more bearable.”

Rick M., Winter Park & Denver pizzeria owner

“I am a relatively new business owner. I’ve worked in several other industries before and have been a member of several trade organizations in the past. I am so thoroughly impressed by how organized, timely, and informative all of the emails that have been sent to me. You must be the hardest working CEO in this entire town right now. I am not sure of my future or of my employees; I’m anxious, scared, and worried that I’m not going to financially recover from this. But if I do, my membership to this organization will not be one of the budget cuts I make.”

via Facebook, Colorado restaurateur

“We would be lost without the guidance of the CRA.”

Anyssa R., Ft. Collins butcher and deli

“I appreciate how your email communications are not filled with clutter; you are straight to the point and provide very helpful, informative, and useful information.”

Phillip B., Metro Denver sandwich shop owner

“I just wanted to take a moment to give you a heartfelt thank you... for your tireless effort and your determination to help us all through this epic situation. We are all caught up in our daily struggle to survive that we forget who is working on the bigger picture. Thank you so much for your 7-day work weeks and the sacrifice that you make towards your family in order to help your other family - the Hospitality Industry. You are making a difference to hundreds of thousands of lives. Next time you are exhausted and tired of the flight remember you are our champion and you are helping the entire state of Colorado through a crucial moment in history. You are truly appreciated!”

Micah N., Boulder restaurateur

“Thank you for your terrific communication – this is the reason I’ve decided to become a member, even though times are tough.”

Kevin H., Thornton pizzeria owner

“We’ve never considered adding a membership to CRA into our budget until this pandemic. You’ve literally become indispensable to us as a resource and we’re looking hard at how we can afford it. Thank you!!! ”

via Facebook, Colorado restaurateur

“Thanks for ALL that you do! Colorado Restaurants would not survive without you and your incredible team!”

Kelly M., Denver and Englewood restaurateur

“Over the years I’ve worked with numerous Restaurant Associations throughout the US and have to say that the leadership, communication, references, resources, and educational (virtual) meetings have truly been remarkable. I/we cannot properly articulate the degree to which your efforts have aided us (Atomic Provisions). We are incredibly grateful. Thank you for your outstanding leadership.”

Bob S., Colorado restaurateur

“The CRA... has been doing a really exceptional job with disseminating Covid-related updates and resources available to the industry. Thank you so much for all the hard work and diligence on behalf of the hospitality community at large. Really grateful to see the presence and effort!!”

Jessa R., Denver restaurateur

“I cannot begin to express the appreciation for your collective efforts to support us as an individual business and a collective community. We are learning many things during this time of stress. We learn about one another and often find goodness that can be surprising and heartwarming.”

Brad R., Denver Italian restaurateur
Advocacy

The CRA’s Government Affairs team continues to advocate fiercely on restaurants’ behalf at all levels of government. We continue to keep our elected officials focused on the fact that COVID-19 is still a crisis for our industry.

BY THE NUMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20+</td>
<td>Federal, state, and local calls to action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17+</td>
<td>Town halls with federal, state, and local officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,647</td>
<td>Letters sent to elected officials in support of alcohol to-go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+</td>
<td>Surveys of restaurateurs impacting advocacy priorities</td>
</tr>
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</table>

In addition to supporting the National Restaurant Association’s advocacy work, the CRA continues to work directly with both of Colorado’s U.S. Senators and most of Colorado’s U.S. Congressional Delegation on federal legislation, with the goal of securing meaningful financial relief.

Key Federal Accomplishments:

- **Paycheck Protection Program**: CRA partnered with the National Restaurant Association to begin advocating for industry relief at the onset of the restaurant closures. We were closely involved in advocating for the PPP program.

- **Paycheck Protection Program reforms**: CRA pushed for an extension of the PPP timeline and a shift in the eligible forgivable expenditures allowing restaurants to use their loans to cover more overhead costs. We continue to advocate for more relief funding to directly support restaurants.

“...The job you and your staff have done through all these hurdles put in your path has never ceased to amaze me. The merits speak for themselves. I wish you could sigh and think we’ve done it but we both know you have miles yet to go. But what you have accomplished is beyond description and you should be so very proud. So very, very proud.”

- Tom G., local restaurateur
The CRA deepened relationships and partnerships with the Governor’s office and officials at key State agencies to make sure restaurants were involved in writing the rules that would define the industry during the pandemic. We focused on removing barriers to survival, opening new avenues of revenue, keeping cash in the hands of restaurants, and making orders easier to implement and more industry-friendly.

Key State Accomplishments:

• **To-go and delivery alcohol**: After securing an executive order to allow restaurants to sell alcohol for takeout and delivery during the state of emergency, CRA successfully lobbied the legislature to extend this provision until July 2021.

• **State tax deferments**: CRA convinced the State to defer state sales tax collection during the shutdown to keep cash in restaurants’ pockets.

• **Restaurants are essential businesses**: CRA pushed to categorize restaurants as essential businesses, allowing them to stay open for takeout and delivery through the stay at home orders.

• **Industry-specific changes to public health orders**: CRA worked on industry-specific amendments to public health orders, including allowance for the use of pool tables, clarification to allow 50 people maximum per room instead of per restaurant, flexibility on compliance requirements, and more. CRA continues to push for multiple regulatory changes for restaurants that include increased capacity and cash in your pockets.

• **State grant and loan programs**: CRA supported legislation that launched state-level grant and loan programs, and we partnered with the State to launch a grant program for winterizing patios.

• **Flexibility in guidelines**: CRA worked with the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE) and the Liquor Enforcement Division (LED) to write flexibility into the reopening guidelines and subsequent public health order guidance to prevent unnecessary requirements on restaurant operations.

• **State economic recovery task force**: CRA represented the industry, giving restaurants a seat at the table.

• **Winter Outdoor Dining Program**: CRA led efforts to partner with the Governor’s office, state and local officials, and design and construction professionals to develop a winter outdoor dining program and subsequent grant program to help restaurants pay for modifications to their outdoor spaces.
Municipalities across the State had different approaches to regulation and recovery. CRA worked with local leaders to establish programs that would help restaurants survive, push for the removal of regulatory burdens, and drive local grants to restaurants.

Key Local Accomplishments:

- **Patio expansion programs**: CRA worked with state and local governments to authorize expanded outdoor seating areas to offer restaurants much needed capacity. Restaurants across the state pointed to this as a lifeline.
- **Alcohol beverages on expanded patios**: CRA worked with the State LED to temporarily waive state liquor statutes allowing restaurants to quickly expand their licensed premise and serve alcohol through noncontiguous licensed premises.
- **Local grant and loan programs**: CRA successfully advocated for local grant and loan programs for restaurants in municipalities across the state.
- **A seat at the table**: CRA represented the restaurant industry in local stakeholder and coalition groups, including those for Denver, Boulder, Centennial, Lone Tree, Greenwood Village, Aurora, Commerce City, Arapahoe County, Adams County, and more. These groups drove key pieces of local recovery plans, and drew directly from our industry’s concerns to make recommendations.
- **Local policy wins**:
  - Deferring the proposed Aurora minimum wage hike
  - Denver third-party delivery fee caps
  - Shaping Boulder County composting initiative
  - Shaping single-use plastics regulations
  - Building and fire code modifications
  - Working on third-party delivery fee caps across the state
  - Modifications to outdoor dining spaces

“The CRA has been our light we are so thankful for the meetings, posters, updates and assisting to have the PPP extended, thank you, take care, I am sure many of us restaurants could not have reopened without you!”

- via Facebook, Telluride restaurateur

**Coming Soon:** Restaurants have told us they need two things more than anything else: cash and increased capacity. As we gear up for winter advocacy and a new legislative session in 2021, this will be the focus of our work.
At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Colorado Restaurant Association launched a communication program to provide real-time updates in straightforward terms to the entire industry. Over the first critical weeks of the crisis, we became the central hub of information for the restaurant industry, and continue to maintain that status.

Key Components

**Email**

We opened our email communication to all restaurants, regardless of membership status, and continue to send news, compliance information, and other pertinent developments several times per week.

**Web**

We launched a Coronavirus Resources Center on our website, which we continue to update in real time with all critical developments. During the reopening phase, we created a Reopening Resource Center to compile guidelines, implementation recommendations, and other support in one place.

**Text**

We send the biggest developments via text message. Opt into our list by texting CRAVIP to 22452 and responding “yes” to the prompts.

**Social Media**

We share pertinent updates via Facebook, which allows us to reach more restaurants.

**Data**

In March, we launched monthly surveys to solicit regular feedback on the state of the industry, to support our advocacy efforts, and to better inform the public and the media of the realities we’re facing. These surveys invoke a powerful response from all audiences and have been critical to our success.

Responding to these surveys is one of the most important things you can do to influence policy in this era!
Media

We had a near-daily presence in the media at the beginning of the pandemic and continue to be a regular source for all major media outlets in the state. We field an increasing number of requests for comments from restaurants, which we connect to members.

Key themes:

- Survey results
- Recovery
- Reopening
- Alcohol to-go
- Patio expansions
- ppp
- Last Call order
- Third-party delivery
- Surviving the winter
- New regulations and guidelines
- The importance of restaurants to our local communities
- Encouraging the public to dine out or order in
- Angel Relief Fund

We know how important it is for the public to support restaurants right now - so we’ve also created a number of campaigns to encourage diners to go out to eat.

**Colorado Restaurant Bingo**

Diners across Colorado played Colorado Restaurant Bingo on Instagram over the summer. Every time they posted photos of their food, they were entered into drawings for gift cards to Colorado restaurants. Eight lucky players won Colorado getaways. We had hundreds of entries and plan to revive a version of the game this winter.

**Advertising**

We’ve used more traditional print advertising to push Coloradoans to dine out, including a campaign in *Westword* and spots in *5280* and the *Denver Post*.

**Instagram**

We’ve used the @coresteors Instagram account to show dining across the state, and to reinforce the message that supporting local restaurants is safe, fun, and important for the future of our communities.

**Video Series**

We spent the fall collecting video of restaurateurs sharing their COVID-19 experiences from across the state and compiling them into ads and short documentary-style videos. This video campaign encourages support for restaurants heading into winter.

**Coming Soon:** We’ll grow several aspects of our communication program in 2021, including chapter communication, data collection, and marketing on behalf of the industry.
One of the hardest parts of the pandemic? The uncertainty. From the outset of the shutdown, CRA shifted staff positions to ensure we were able to respond quickly to anxious restaurateurs in need of answers and understanding. We immediately opened up our communication to all restaurants so that we could serve the entire industry in Colorado and keep our community intact. We’ve tackled ever-evolving compliance issues through the web, our emails, and webinars, and opened up our trove of resources -- which has expanded in the time of COVID-19 -- to the entire industry.

**Compliance Assistance**

As COVID-19 shifted the regulatory environment for doing business, CRA stepped in to help restaurants navigate their new responsibilities and requirements in several ways:

- **Up-to-the-minute compliance changes:** CRA actively monitored federal, state, and local orders; local county variances; and shifting guidelines and reopening phases to keep our members armed with up-to-the-minute knowledge of what was required of them in daily operations.

- **Compliance help for the whole industry:** CRA immediately opened up all lines of communication to restaurant owners throughout the state. Restaurateurs were encouraged to email questions to info@corestaurant.org, and we had staff ready to answer phone calls and emails to quickly direct people to the help they needed.

- **Compliance webinars:** CRA held webinars with state and local government officials, industry stakeholders, and outside experts to help restaurants navigate the new rules governing the shutdown, paid sick leave, federal legislation, re-opening, and more.

- **Compliance resources:** CRA created a Coronavirus Resources page and, as restaurants were able to reopen, a Restaurant Reopening Resources page, both of which continue to be updated daily with compliance information and webinar recordings.
Resources
The CRA offers members a variety of resources during normal times - during the pandemic, that pool grew, with special emphasis on services that could help owners survive:

- **COVID-19 directory**: CRA created a COVID-19 directory so that resources, from PPE to legal help, were at restaurants’ fingertips.
- **Legal Resource Center**: Our attorneys continued to offer limited free advice in different areas of practice, including labor law, real estate and rent negotiations, PPP, liquor law, and more.
- **Pro bono COVID-19 legal assistance**: Our legal partners at Messner & Reeves donated up to four hours of free COVID-19 related legal help to Colorado restaurants.
- **PPP wrap-up assistance**: Our accounting partners at Henry + Horne offered restaurants free PPP wrap-up compliance and tax assistance.
- **Operational webinars**: Thousands of restaurant operators tuned in to ask questions and keep up-to-date through our operational webinars, which covered topics like rent renegotiation, marketing, technology, insurance, take-out, and more.
- **Operational advice and how-tos**: CRA connected restaurants to help when they weren’t sure where else to turn. We distributed operational advice from partners on the web and in emails.

Colorado Restaurant & Bar Show Virtual Education Series
The COVID-19 pandemic canceled most of our annual events - including the Colorado Restaurant & Bar Show, our annual trade show and education and networking event. With restaurants asking how they’d survive the winter, however, we opted to shift the event into a Virtual Education Series.

Over the course of several weeks, industry experts dug into operational best practices to give practical, implementable ideas restaurateurs could immediately apply to their own businesses.

Topics covered:

- Contingency planning
- Cost-cutting
- Creative ways to keep cash on hand
- Outdoor dining practicalities
- Takeout and delivery
- Crisis communication
- Reanalyzing your business for the new market
- Labor law

Coming Soon: Our Colorado Restaurant & Bar Show Virtual Education Series will continue into 2021. Join us for more operational education from experts aimed at helping you survive this crisis. Go to corestaurant.org for details.
The pandemic shutdown put nearly 200,000 Colorado restaurant and food & beverage hospitality workers out of work overnight. The Colorado Restaurant Foundation quickly mobilized to help this critical workforce survive.

CRF raised more than $2 million to provide Angel Relief Fund grants to more than 3,500 restaurant and food & beverage hospitality workers. Restaurant and food & beverage hospitality workers who met at least ONE of the following criteria qualified for assistance:

1. Received a COVID-19 diagnosis or were quarantined under doctor's care;
2. Were unemployed, underemployed, or furloughed; OR
3. Were unable to obtain other government assistance.

Special thanks to the Kemper family foundations, which made a $1 million contribution to the CRF for this program. The Foundation was also part of two high-profile live fundraisers - one with the Modern Eater, the other with the Lumineers.

The Angel Relief Fund will continue to fund hardship grants as the pandemic continues.

Employee Resources:

- **COVID-19 Resource Hub**: In the wake of the shutdown, CRF created a COVID-19 Resource Hub that continues to provide support services to industry workers. This includes access to additional relief fund support, food banks, rent and mortgage abatement programs, mental and tele-health services, childcare, and more.

- **Stress management**: CRF held a stress management webinar for over 150 industry workers looking for tools to deal with anxiety, depression, stress, and trauma in the immediate aftermath of the shutdown.

- **Mental health resources**: CRF partnered with CODE-4 Counseling, United Healthcare, and 9Health Fair to offer free mental health counseling and tele-health services.

**BY THE NUMBERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$2 million+</th>
<th>Raised for the Angel Relief Fund</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3500+</td>
<td>Hardship grants given</td>
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<tr>
<td>$750,000</td>
<td>Raised for winter outdoor dining grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>Resources compiled for furloughed and unemployed hospitality workers</td>
</tr>
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</table>

"I can’t believe how quick you and the Angel Relief Fund Support program has been. I want to thank you for that and being so helpful to the restaurant community. I have other coworkers who have had a great experience with you all as well. We are all so extremely grateful to all your hard work!!"

- Recipient, COVID-19 grant
CRF also launched initiatives to fund restaurants directly, with the view that keeping restaurants open keeps workers employed.

**Dine Out to Help Out Cherry Creek Restaurants & Workers**

CRF partnered with the Cherry Creek Business District to launch a Dine Out To Help Out Cherry Creek Restaurant and Workers program. CRF raised more than $180,000 to provide funds to 33 restaurants to run a gift card program that brought customers to Cherry Creek restaurants.

**Colorado Restaurant Day**

CRF asked Governor Polis to proclaim September 12 COLORADO RESTAURANT DAY in an effort to bring awareness to struggles of restaurants in every community. We pivoted Denver Food + Wine Festival into a campaign to ask every Coloradoan to support restaurants all over the state that day via dining out, taking out, or ordering delivery.

**Winter Outdoor Design Workshop and Grant Program**

CRF and CRA partnered with the State of Colorado and several engineering, architecture, and design organizations to launch a winter design workshop and grant program. CRF will administer the grants to restaurants to make their patios usable through the winter. We raised more than $750,000 of initial funding to launch this grant program, and are working on raising more.

The Colorado Restaurant Foundation continues its workforce development initiatives as we maneuver this new reality.

**ProStart**

- As a result of COVID, 37 ProStart Programs pivoted from in-class instruction to virtual learning. CRF staff developed the virtual learning platform and resources needed for students to be able to continue their academic credit, industry certifications, and scholarships by the end of the 2019/20 academic year.
- CRF saved CO ProStart funding from the CDLE Secondary Hospitality grant of $362,000 for the upcoming academic year.

**Registered Youth Apprenticeship**

- CRF partnered with the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation on two new grants for Registered Youth Apprenticeship and Justice Involved Youth and raised an additional $500,000 to support the Foundation’s workforce development efforts.

**Coming Soon:** As initiatives to fund restaurants have been incredibly impactful, CRF will continue to look at ways it can directly help restaurants through grant initiatives throughout the rest of this crisis and beyond.