



**RISING
ROUTES**
reunion with nature

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR INCLUSIVE OUTDOOR OPPORTUNITIES PROJECT BRIEF

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Purpose

Rising Routes is a non-profit that intersects environmental stewardship, social justice, and mental health. They engage outdoor industry stakeholders in collaborations to reduce barriers to outdoor access. The primary goal for Rising Routes and their partners include increasing access to public lands, open spaces, and parks to develop opportunities for outdoor recreation through research, policy, and collaboration.

With 178 out of 186 of questionnaire respondents reporting they serve underrepresented peoples, this demonstrates the purpose of this project being to identify and address the needs of recreational providers in Colorado working to increase equity in the outdoors is necessary. This project has the potential to be highly impactful in addressing and informing the next steps for Rising Route's public collaboration and policy initiatives within the outdoor recreation industry.

Methods

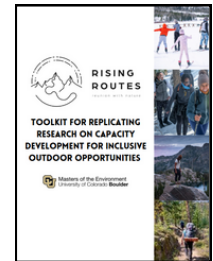
Our group started with a discovery research and introduction to the topic period where we researched the current outdoor education and recreation climate across the state of Colorado. We then developed our research study with the following steps:

Developed a questionnaire to understand gaps in equity in outdoor recreation and education in Colorado

Recruited questionnaire respondents through different methods with cohesive recruitment materials

Completed a quantitative and qualitative data analysis using the software Dedoose

Created a toolkit for research study recreation and an executive report of findings



Outcomes

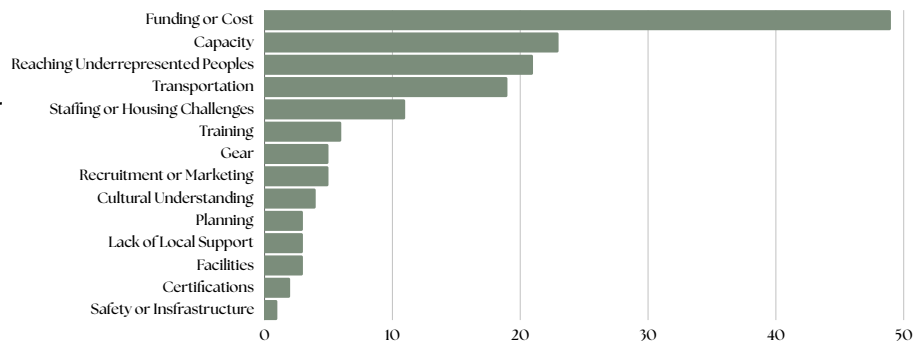
Deliverables

- 1 Developed a research project to improve understanding of key challenges and opportunities related to providing outdoor recreation and education for underserved communities in the state.
- 2 Created a guidebook outlining the research methodology, making the process conveyable to other regions or states.
- 3 Wrote an executive report including an abridged research methodology, research study findings, communication strategy for dispersal, and recommendations addressing challenges, barriers, limitations, needs, successes, and opportunities.
- 4 Analyzed research findings to make a policy recommendation to increase outdoor equity in the state of Colorado.

Key Data and Findings

While the questionnaire covered many topics and categories, the question below most closely addressed our research objectives, identifying what organizations need to successfully serve underrepresented populations in the outdoor recreation and education industry in Colorado.

Please identify any specific challenges, barriers, or limitations that are keeping your organization from increasing access for underrepresented populations in outdoor education and recreation programming.



This question, and others throughout the study, helped us better understand what organizations are facing when trying to serve underrepresented populations. From synthesizing the data, we found that many organizations struggle with similar challenges but are interested in making their programming more accessible.

Recommendations

Following this study, we recommend that Rising Routes continue researching outdoor recreation and education organizations in Colorado. Interviews, focus groups, and community visits would reveal more gaps in equity in the industry to help bring tangible solutions for underrepresented peoples.

Project Impact

Rising Routes will use the results of this research study to form a network of service providers and guide state-led grant program policymaking, aiming to enhance funding and access for underrepresented communities.

Takeaways

Data analysis on outdoor education and recreation programming across Colorado revealed that while many organizations successfully engage underrepresented communities, they face significant challenges. Commonly cited issues include insufficient funding for gear, transportation, and covering employee cost of living in expensive mountain towns. These constraints hinder the growth of affordable programs needed for effectively reaching underrepresented populations and meeting the scale of need.

Acknowledgements

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