



History Colorado

We Are Colorado. Somos Colorado.



FY 2023-24 Performance Plan

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Letter from Executive Director

Thank you for your interest in History Colorado's Performance Plan. History is a very human endeavor. It reminds us of our common humanity and our commitment to each other. We are so grateful to all of you who have been alongside us as we have risen to the challenges of our times. History Colorado takes our obligations very seriously: to the people of Colorado, to the pursuit of historical truth, and to build new knowledge that helps to shape our future.

This Performance Plan envisions how History Colorado will operate within this context over the next year with a commitment to 1) protecting the sustainability of our 145-year-old organization, 2) serving the people of Colorado, and 3) fulfilling our critical mission and work.

Our overarching theme is to maximize service to the State, with our major goal being to engage 1 million people annually by 2026. In this plan, you will find our Major Function areas and strategies to support our major goal:

Engage 1 million people annually by 2026. Around this goal we strive to.

1. Build Long-Term Sustainability
2. Invest in Rural Prosperity
3. Strengthen Colorado Through Education
4. Share the Diverse Stories of Colorado

History Colorado is a statewide organization that collects, preserves, and educates about the past and present and helps citizens and visitors understand what it means to be a Coloradan. The success of this Strategic Plan hinges on History Colorado's ability to work, communicate, and serve as a coordinated and unified institution.

History Colorado currently represents itself as many pieces and parts—both internally and externally. The organization can maximize its service to Colorado by working across departments and geographies.

The staff and Board of Directors at History Colorado are pleased to present this Performance Plan for the FY, 2023-24 under the direction and guidance of the Office of State Planning and Budgeting and the provisions of the State Measurement for Accountable, Responsive and Transparent Government (SMART) Act.

This Performance Plan reflects the critical value of a unified organization. Strategies, goals, objectives, and tactics are threaded together through each strategic priority — not broken down by department or location.

Thank you again for taking the time to read this plan; I welcome feedback from readers internal and external to History Colorado.

Sincerely,

Dawn DiPrince
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

Overview

Established in 1879, the Colorado State Historical Society (History Colorado), is an agency under the Colorado Department of Higher Education, an “institution of higher education” in the State of Colorado, and also a 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity under Federal tax law. History Colorado is the State agency entrusted with preserving the stories, places, and material culture that document the State’s history for the benefit of Colorado citizens (24-80-201 C.R.S).

Mission

History Colorado creates a better future for Colorado by inspiring wonder in our past.

Vision

We are Colorado: a people-driven, history-centered movement building a better future. We are stronger when we do this together, building new knowledge and shared meaning that improves lives today and for our descendants. Together we foster the robust understanding, dynamic reconciling, and fearless discovery necessary to build a just world.

At History Colorado, we strive to be a place of belonging for all Coloradans and serve as a community connection platform. We’re committed to Colorado’s diverse communities through education, engagement, and access. We know we’re succeeding when more voices, perspectives, and experiences are part of History Colorado.

Our organization is the sum of many parts. We offer access to our state’s history through enriching experiences at eleven museums and historic sites, with dynamic and relevant exhibits and activities. We work with school groups and young learners through field trips, day camps, and traveling programs focused on Colorado history. We’re also home to a free public research center, Colorado’s Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP), and the Colorado State Historical Fund (SHF), the nation’s largest preservation program of its kind. We steward 15 million objects, photographs, and archival resources that make up the State’s collection, and serve tens of thousands of learners of all ages through dynamic programs.

In pursuit of a more just and equitable Colorado, we embody the [grounding virtues](#) listed below as the foundation of all aspects of our work: our thinking, communication, process, outcomes, and evaluation. We commit to work guided by, for, and of the communities we build, belong to, and serve.

Grounding Virtues

- Being in Community.
- Amplifying and Centering Voices of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).
- Co-creation and Shared Authority
- Humility and Reflection.
- Responsiveness and Flexibility.
- Shared Destiny.

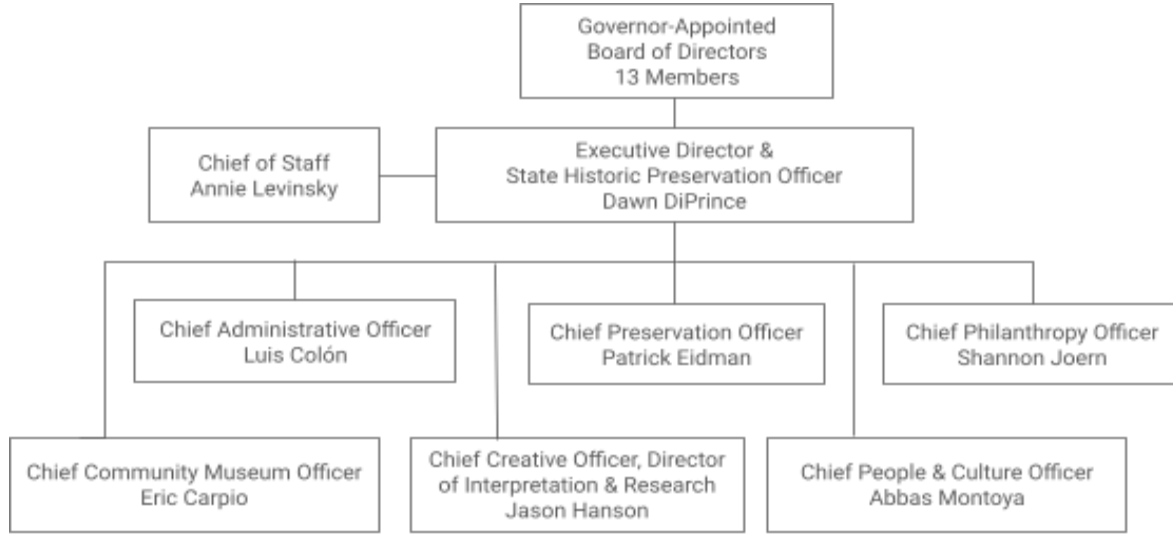
Strategic Plan

Everything History Colorado does is to maximize service to the State of Colorado, its residents, and visitors through our strategic initiatives, which include:

- Building Long-Term Sustainability
- Investing in Rural Prosperity
- Strengthening Colorado Through Education
- Share The Diverse Stories of Colorado

Through these initiatives, History Colorado has developed a wildly important goal of connecting with 1 million people annually by 2026.

Organizational Chart and Financial Breakdown



FY 2023-24 Operating Expense Budget (as per Long Bill; HB23-214)	
Central Administration (12 FTE)	\$2,259,185
Collections and Curatorial Services (16.5 FTE)	\$1,406,746
Facilities (10 FTE)	\$1,830,385
Historical Site Maintenance and Operations (5 FTE)	\$727,844
America 250- Colorado 150 Commission (History Colorado provides administrative support to the Commission, which is separate from History Colorado)	\$151,503
History Colorado Strategic Initiatives	\$1,500,000
Community Museums (19 FTE)	\$2,951,334
History Colorado Center (7 FTE)	\$ 1,257,265
Statewide Programming (34.5 FTE)	\$4,485,931
Archaeology & Historic Preservation (23 FTE)	\$1,826,938
State Historical Fund Administration (17 FTE)	\$1,767,493
State Historical Fund Preservation Grants	\$9,000,000
State Historical Fund Gaming Cities Distribution	\$5,700,000
Lease-Purchase of Colorado History Museum (Certificate of Participation)	\$3,525,209
Indirect Cost Assessment for History Colorado Administration	\$325,000
Total	\$38,714,833*

*Additional funding is also provided for expenses not directly attributed to these major functions. Some examples are controlled maintenance at History Colorado statewide properties, funding allocated for common policy expenses such as insurance and technology, and donations funds generated from philanthropic development.

Agency Description

History Colorado in FY 2023-24 comprises 144 FTE (Full-time equivalents), numerous temporary staff, and over 1,000 unpaid staff (volunteers) who are dedicated to preserving the stories, places, and material culture that document the State's history for the benefit of Colorado citizens (CRS 24-80-201 et seq.). Staff is located across eleven museums and historic sites to serve their communities and surrounding regions through exhibits, education, partnerships, and programs.

Sites include:

- Center for Colorado Women's History at the Byers-Evans House, Denver
- El Pueblo History Museum, Pueblo
- Fort Garland Museum and Cultural Center, Costilla County
- Fort Vasquez, Platteville
- Georgetown Loop Historic Mining & Railroad Park
- Grant-Humphreys Mansion, Denver
- Healy House and Dexter Cabin, Leadville
- History Colorado Center, Denver
- Pike's Stockade, Conejos County
- Trinidad History Museum, Trinidad
- Ute Indian Museum, Montrose

These museums and sites serve their communities and surrounding regions through exhibits, education, partnerships, and programs. For 145 years, defined in statute as an educational institution under the Department of Higher Education, every program area has been dedicated to educational growth and understanding of what it means to protect and promote Colorado's diverse history.

This work is done across History Colorado's operational programs and includes the following public-facing aspects:

- Museums and exhibits located throughout the state
- Educational programs and events ranging from K-12 students to adult learning
- Direct community engagement programs
- Public access to a vast array of collection resources
- Stewardship of archaeological resources (identifying, documenting, and protecting)
- Archaeology learning programs and certification
- Access to historic sites and survey location information
- Access and documentation of historic sites with national and state significance
- Consultative services that assess the impact on historic properties and/or cultural resources before federal and state funding, licensing, or permitting activity
- Administration of Federal and State tax credits for rehabilitation of historic buildings
- Administration of the State Historical Fund, one of the most extensive programs in the nation that awards grants to public entities and nonprofit organizations to protect, restore, and document archaeology and historic sites and provide education across Colorado

Major Function Description - One History Colorado

This section briefly overviews the primary functions or agency divisions that support strategic performance initiatives in this performance plan.

Museum Experience



Program areas that play a key role in museum experience:

- Creative Services (exhibits, interpretation collections access and curatorial services)
- Community Museums
- Marketing, Communications, Guest Services, and Education
- Equity & Engagement (including Museum of Memory)
- Hands on History Programs & Camps

Museum experience primary customers

- Colorado communities
- History Buffs
- Researchers and Scholars
- Families with children (kids are free)
- Elementary and Secondary Students
- Tourists



History Colorado's statutory obligation (is "collecting, preserving, and interpreting the history of Colorado and the west." (44.30-1201, C.R.S)¹ This is done by creating engaging experiences at History Colorado properties, including educational exhibits, programs, and services that inspire and engage people in the diverse history of Colorado.

Introducing new exhibits and engaging programs are critical to audience engagement, museum attendance, and membership interest. History Colorado exhibits and programs serve families, schools, groups, and individuals of all ages. History Colorado uses a 5-year plan for all museums' exhibit development, with a commitment to developing its museum exhibits, including several new exhibits in-house, from large-scale marquee exhibits to current exhibit enhancements, which focus on Colorado's

diverse history and feature artifacts from the state's collections.

The vision of the agency's education and public programs is to increase access to the organization's resources and programs so that more adults, families, and students identify with Colorado's story. Throughout the state, the education programs aim to reach more students and connect them to diverse, relevant, meaningful stories that reflect multiple cultural contributions to Colorado's history. Public programs drive membership and museum attendance and highlight the breadth of Colorado history. The guest services staff and volunteers will continue to work to deliver personal connection and outreach to ensure that visits to the exhibits and programs are meaningful.

Colorado Statute (24-80-210) states, "Collections of a scientific or historical nature shall be properly classed and cataloged and shall be at all reasonable hours open for public inspection and examination..." Management and care of the collection is a resource-intensive enterprise, and it is incumbent on staff to ensure collection resources are accessible to the broadest possible audience. The Stephen Hart REsearch Center, open to the public free of charge, is a primary access point to the collection for onsite and remote researchers. History Colorado continues to add collection information to online databases through grant-funded initiatives and provides direct access to resources through various collection-based programs, including behind-the-scenes tours, public reference inquiries, and image reproduction services.

¹ See also C.R.S. § 24-80-202 and § 24-80-210

Historic Preservation



Program areas that play a key role in Historic Preservation:

- Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP)
- State Historical Fund (SHF)

Historic Preservations' primary customers

- Historic buildings and property owners
- Local governments and community groups
- Historic preservationists
- Archaeologists
- K-12 and university students
- Nonprofits and agencies working with Federal and State agencies
- Developers
- Land use surveyors
- Federal and State agencies
- Legislators
- Congressional delegation



The Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation fulfills Federal mandates and State statutory responsibilities assigned to the State Archaeologist and the State Historic Preservation Officer. The division safeguards extensive archaeological and historic property site records. It assists with the stewardship of Colorado's historic built environment while providing access to these resources for researchers, archaeologists, historic preservationists, and educators. This program works to creatively engage Coloradans to discover, preserve, and take pride in the state's architectural and archaeological treasures through statewide, community-centered educational programs. For example, OAHP organizes Archaeology and Historic Preservation Month and provides statewide leadership and partnership support in archaeology and historic preservation efforts. OAHP also manages the Centennial Farms and Ranches program that honors the history of families that have owned or operated their farm or ranch for over 100 years.

The State Historical Fund was created by the 1990 constitutional amendment allowing limited gaming in the towns of Cripple Creek, Central City, and Blackhawk. History the General Assembly statutorily designates Colorado to administer the State Historical Fund (Limited Gaming Act of 1991). History Colorado oversees a robust competitive grants program through this program, awarding millions of dollars in grants each year to deserving projects and historic properties throughout Colorado. Since 1993, more than \$355 million has been provided to support preservation throughout Colorado. Historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic resources stimulate economic activity and retain economic vitality in small and large communities, including Black, Indigenous, Latino, Asian American & Pacific Islander communities, and rural communities. Grants have been awarded in all 64 counties of the state.

Support Services



Program areas that play a key role in Support Services

- Executive Office
- Facilities
- Historic Site Maintenance
- Accounting and Finance
- People & Culture/HR
- Philanthropy & Membership
- Evaluation and Impact
- Volunteer Program

Support Service's primary customers

- Colorado communities
- Members
- Volunteers
- Donors
- Legislators
- Office of State Planning and Budgeting
- Other State and Federal Agencies
- Joint Budget Committee
- Capital Development Committee
- Partner organizations
- Staff



The Support Services group works closely with Museum Experience and Historic Preservation staff to ensure their work is supported and streamlined. They also work to develop and manage the overall agency budget (capital and operational), financial reporting, planning, audit, internal controls compliance with state fiscal rules, management policies, and best practices in governmental finance, budgeting, and legislative requests and relations. They oversee the project management for capital construction, maintenance and repairs of historic and modern buildings and structures, and controlled maintenance while working to build partnerships. They also cultivate donors and members, manage a robust volunteer program, and oversee special projects that intersect across all program areas.



Agency Business Initiatives and Priorities

In History Colorado’s five-year strategic plan identified four key areas to focus on to reach our wildly important engagement goal of engaging one million people annually by 2026.

Engage 1 million people annually by 2026

<p>Build Long-Term Sustainability</p> <p>Ensure the ability to innovate by solving financial imbalance and enhancing capabilities in financial planning and forecasting.</p> <p>Maximize the impact of all programs, collections sharing, and preservation activities by being one unified History Colorado.</p> <p>Nurture top talent by ensuring living wage compensation, work culture improvements, and professional development opportunities.</p> <p>Improve data collection and evaluation to ensure data-driven analysis of success, audience, impact, and operational revisions.</p>	<p>Invest in Rural Prosperity</p> <p>Exhibit a strong commitment to the importance and value of the entire state of Colorado through our budgeting, staffing, practices, and programs.</p> <p>Increase the successful engagement of people, places, and communities so that our programs are the national leader in historic preservation services.</p> <p>Build and implement a Rural Heritage Impact Program: a comprehensive program that mobilizes rural communities around their authentic assets of heritage and culture, with community liaison staff located across the state.</p>
<p>Strengthen Colorado Through Education</p> <p>Harness the power of history, civics, and humanities education by enhancing our formal education programs.</p> <p>Increase statewide replication of Hands-On History programs, including fifth-day youth education in communities with four-day school weeks, summer camps, and urban after-school programs in partnership with metro Denver school districts.</p> <p>Implement Colorado history classroom curriculum service, including easy-to-use programs and learning activities; online support and supplemental resources; professional development to support teachers; and on-site instruction support.</p>	<p>Share the Diverse Stories of Colorado</p> <p>Connect with diverse audiences through new forms of content creation, distribution, and engagement.</p> <p>Maximize engagement and expand reach through compelling and relevant exhibits.</p> <p>Create a new collecting plan that prioritizes a responsible, active approach to ensure both inclusiveness and the ability to tell relevant, contemporary stories.</p> <p>Develop a long-term solution for improved and expanded collection storage.</p> <p>Maximize impact with confidence and a grandness of scope.</p>

Agency Business Priorities for FY 2023-2024

Diversify Revenue Streams to Continue to Build Financial Stability

Much has been achieved in recent years as History Colorado recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic, but planning for an uncertain future remains an essential priority. As we continue to implement our strategic plan we are investing in strategic initiatives that diversify our revenue streams, particularly through new opportunities to earn revenue by developing new services and programs, or enhancing and expanding successful programs, such as Hands on History. The initiatives included in this priority area are also underway, with existing funding or Strategic Initiatives start-up

support (connected to SB 22-216). Within this priority area we are also focused on growing a long-term endowment through the cultivation of philanthropic gifts.

- Continue to build out initiatives in the Strategic Plan: Hands-On History, Affiliates, Curriculum opportunities
- Monetize professional services: corporate history, Museum of Memory, traveling exhibits, etc.
- Maximize core programs of rentals, school tours, and membership
- Build an Endowment Strategy

Expand Reach & Influence

Over the last two years History Colorado has received a number of accolades, including two awards from the American Association for State and Local History, and the Fort Garland Museum was named a finalist for the 2023 IMLS National Medal for Museum and Library Service. This type of recognition, both within Colorado and nationally, is important to History Colorado because it not only attracts visitors to our museums, but builds confidence among donors and community partners. Building this type of trust leads to major opportunities, such as John Fielder’s decision to donate his life’s work, a collection of over 6,500 photographs and related materials, to History Colorado. In the coming year History Colorado will work to build on this momentum to grow our profile, expand audiences, and develop trusted partnerships with communities across Colorado.

- Increase positive visibility in Denver, across the state and across the country
- Continue to raise profile with national museum and preservation industry groups
- Increase earned media coverage across the state and in major publications
- Increase awareness that History Colorado is a trusted partner

Establish Best Financial Infrastructure for Sustainable Future

As History Colorado continues to grow the organization’s leadership is focused on building a robust financial infrastructure. This includes developing the mechanisms and tools to expand philanthropic giving to History Colorado through endowed funds and exploring all options for managing the growth of earned revenue in thoughtful compliance of state fiscal rules and budget considerations. Given that the growth of limited gaming proceeds, which are used to support both the Colorado State Historical Fund and the operations of History Colorado, are capped at 3%, the continued support of the State Legislature to cover the Certificates of Participation related to the construction of the History Colorado Center is critical.

- Examine and develop the right structure for our Endowment Strategy
- Examine and make decisions about how best to manage growth potential of earned revenue, including Georgetown Loop operations
- Continue to advocate for State support for COP payments and statutory obligations, which are growing in tandem with state and federal infrastructure investments

Care for our Important Resources

History Colorado is a steward of invaluable resources- its human power, the collection of more than 15 million artifacts, and numerous buildings and sites, many of high historical value across the state, including the oldest buildings in the state’s real estate portfolio. Caring for each of these resources ensures the organization’s long-term viability and service to the state. Notable for 2023 and 2024 is the high need to implement a plan to develop a new Collections Care Facility to safeguard the state’s collection of irreplaceable materials, which represent generations of Colorado history.

Human power

- Incorporate Anti-Racism Guiding Principles in Hiring Processes
- Strengthen Human Resource Systems
- Build pay equity and align with Colorado’s Step Pay Program
- Collectively create Community Agreements to foster strong workplace culture
- Rebuild team culture post-COVID and with a hybrid work environment
- Increase racial/ethnic representation on staff

Collections Care

- Physical Control: Implement plans for the new Collections Care Facility
- Intellectual Control: Ensure content experts (curators and historians) have the tools to understand and make accessible the historic collection

Facilities

- Improve facilities support and security support for all History Colorado sites, including Community Museums
- Renew Georgetown Loop operating contract
- Explore operating partnerships with highly significant historic sites outside the History Colorado ownership, such as Boggsville and Amache Museum

Aggressively Work to Include

History Colorado is deeply committed to working in Colorado communities to meet local needs and co-author our shared state's history. All Coloradans are part of the state's history, and should be represented in the collection, exhibits, publications and programs of History Colorado. This work includes dedicated resources to engage with communities that have not been previously involved in the work of the organization, and the expansion of programs such as Museum of Memory, which invites communities to collectively remember and share their stories, as well as the Colorado Heritage for All Initiative, which aims to add 150 sites to the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties that represent Black, Indigenous, Latino, Asian American, LGBTQ, and others currently under-represented on this official list of the state's significant places. Much of this work is led by the State Historical Fund, which reaches all Colorado counties. History Colorado will also continue to be a resource in helping Colorado grapple with challenging history, such as the Federal Indian Boarding Schools research effort, approved and funded by the Colorado Legislature through HB22-1327.

- Maintain and expand Equity & Engagement Team
- Grow the Museum of Memory Initiative
- Implement Colorado Heritage for All effort to add 150 sites to the Colorado Register of Historic Places
- Staff Curatorial Content Experts
- Distribute statewide funds through the State Historical Fund to support diverse Colorado communities
- Lead in necessary historic research that supports understanding and reckoning with hard histories

FY 2024 Strategic Policy Initiatives Forecast: Maximize Service to the State

#1 Wildly Important Goal — Engage One Million people Annually by 2026

The Wildly Important Goal of this plan is to double History Colorado’s impact. History Colorado focuses on human-to-human interaction, but how that human-to-human connection happens has evolved as we learn from the data we have been collecting from the audiences we engage. Increasing engagement is still the best opportunity for the organization to generate a meaningful relationship with audiences and Colorado residents. It is also the best path toward a more financially sustainable organization.

Engagement Type	Base	June 30, 2024	June 30, 2025 (One-year goal)	June 30, 2027 (Three-year goal)
Interpersonal Engagement	592,214	558,095	799,739	1,139,658
Independent Engagement	1,233,853	2,247,294	2,613,084	3,536,980
Social Engagement	638,777	817,901	1,269,512	1,894,800

Initiative Description

History Colorado’s goal is to invest in the community and public engagement. By doing so, the agency should achieve overall attendance growth above a baseline level, generating a return on investment.

Measurement Framework

History Colorado created baseline numbers in 2019 to chart success and direction and charted growth patterns to indicate how to reach our primary goal. The baseline was created using a four-year average unless the data wasn’t available and then based on what was available. While each engagement type has separate charted growth paths, the total of over 1 million in engagement is specific to Interpersonal engagement. We will refine our projections better as we continue to study and learn more about our impact from evaluations and data analysis.

Three engagement types have become the buckets that our various department's work will be tracked for this performance plan.

1. **Interpersonal Engagement** - in-person and digital activities in which we have direct engagement and participation with our audiences, who are currently actively involved. (e.g., live-streamed or in-person events, admissions, research visits, etc.)
2. **Independent Engagement** - activities in which audiences enjoy our products and programs independently in their own way and on their own time without direct interaction with us. (e.g., Podcast, on-demand content, digital exhibits, etc.)
3. **Social Engagement** - These activities utilize social channels and websites where the audience enjoys our products and programs and engages with us but in their own time. (e.g., facebook, twitter, instagram)

History Colorado is implementing several strategic initiatives as part of this effort. Senate Bill 22-216 provided \$3.0 million for strategic initiatives to expand the statewide impact of History Colorado programs and generate additional earned revenue. These funds are available until FY27 and support the following programs:

- Grow Hands-on History youth program to more sites statewide
- Provide Free admission for kids at all History Colorado Museums
- Create and disseminate a comprehensive Colorado history curriculum
- Expand the Museum of Memory Program
- Create an Affiliates Program to assist all 417 historical organizations in Colorado
- Create and attract marquee exhibitions
- License “What’s Your Story” exhibition, which connects students to leaders and changemakers
- Upgrade meeting/events spaces to improve rental business
- Expand preservation access for marginalized communities
- Support compliance with S106 requirements as part of the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

FY 2023 Strategic Policy Initiatives Outcomes

For FY 2023, History Colorado tracked three strategic policy initiatives (SPIs), all of which are part of our long-term strategic plan and are still being carried forward in FY 2024 in some form. The charts below indicate progress toward the SPI metrics for FY2023.

SPI 1 – Engage One Million People Annually by 2026

The big idea of this plan is to Double Our Impact! History Colorado focuses on human-to-human interaction and engagement because it is the best opportunity for the organization to generate a meaningful relationship with audiences and Colorado residents.

Measure	Base	FY19	FY20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23 Goal	FY 23 End
Interpersonal Engagement*	592,214	553,288	454,115	280,565	465,248	531,363	515,699
Independent Engagement**	1,233,8539	316,172	1,150,488	1,196,423	1,860,515	1,656,480	2,504,668
Social Engagement	638,777	539,840	874,668	946,778	766,661	1,041,567	1,320,762

*Due to Covid-19 and the recovery, interpersonal engagement continues to be below base levels except at the Georgetown Loop.

** At the end of the fiscal year 2022-23, there was a consistently higher trend in independent engagement than in previous years as staff worked to build higher-quality online engagement

Measurement Framework

History Colorado has created baseline numbers and charted growth patterns to chart success and direction to indicate how the Agency can achieve its goal. While each engagement type has separate charted growth paths that total over 1 million in engagement, the goal is mainly for Interpersonal Engagement. Many of the engagement programs are growing and changing. Baseline numbers were created using a four-year average, except for new categories with very few data indicators. Over the next year, we will evaluate the base to understand if we need to alter it as more data is collected post-pandemic.