

# Colorado Municipal League

## Case Study: State of Our Cities and Towns

### ABOUT CML:

The Colorado Municipal League (CML) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that has served and represented Colorado's cities and towns since 1923. Currently, 269 of Colorado's 272 municipalities (representing more than 99 percent of the state's municipal population) are members of CML and benefit from their advocacy, information, and training services.

CML's mission is twofold: to represent cities and towns collectively in matters before the state and federal government, and to provide a wide range of information services to assist municipal officials in managing their governments.

### HISTORY

*The State of Our Cities and Towns* report grew out of earlier efforts to collect data on tax rates, budgets, and other statistics. CML realized these data in themselves were not as valuable as they could be, and in 2008 it sought to reconfigure its efforts and data collection to tell a more complete story of what municipalities in Colorado were currently facing. *The State of Our Cities and Towns* research has been conducted each fall ever since.

### CORONA'S SOLUTION

Corona Insights worked with CML to review past research conducted as well as assess its current needs. Surveys were designed to collect accurate information on various municipal topics and to allow both comparability from year to year (such as the economy and general challenges) and to capture information on specific

“*If repeat customers are an indication of quality service, Corona Insights has to be rated as excellent because CML has been coming back every year since 2008 to partner on our annual State of our Cities and Towns survey. Corona Insights crafts the survey, collects the data, and delivers an analysis of the results providing a complete package. They are responsive and helpful every step of the way.*

Mark Radtke, Municipal Research Analyst,  
Colorado Municipal League

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topics (such as transportation, economic development, shared government services, livability, and public safety).

Corona worked with CML to conduct the survey and maximize response to ensure the results represented as many municipalities as possible. This included providing municipalities multiple ways to respond, including hard copy or online.

Corona crafted the analysis depending on the nature of the data and their expected use. In some cases, this meant segmenting the findings by size of municipality or by region; in other cases, data were presented as a database for reference only. In all cases, analysis was customized and took into account the type of data and needs of the end user. As a final step, Corona worked with CML to ensure the data were interpreted correctly and all key themes were identified for their own communications.



## THE OUTCOME

Corona's data and reports have been used extensively by CML, its members, and state government. The annual report provides a beautiful snapshot of the current year, but the continuum of the data over several years allows analysis of the data within context of the bigger picture. The "long-data" provide a robust big-picture view of trends and context that give the data greater relevance. Data from *The State of Our Cities and Towns* report highlight current challenges, successes, and the overall state of municipal government. This report is distributed widely to inform state policy-making.



CML's video, brochure, and report used to disseminate the *State of Our Cities and Towns* Research.



## FOLLOW-UP

CML also uses the annual findings to create additional materials that communicate key themes from that year's report. Brochures and video segments are produced to give users an additional way to consume the findings as well as to allow for greater distribution and therefore vigilance around the issues most important to towns and cities. To read the most recent report and view the videos, you can visit:

[http://www.cml.org/state\\_of\\_our\\_cities\\_and\\_towns.aspx](http://www.cml.org/state_of_our_cities_and_towns.aspx)

### 2017 STATE OF OUR CITIES & TOWNS: LIVABILITY

Trying to define the quality of life in Colorado's cities and towns is like trying to catch lightning in a bottle. But there are ingredients to the magic formula that can be measured.

The Colorado Municipal League's 2017 *State of Our Cities & Towns* Report looks at the municipal facilities, activities, and events that make our cities and towns special places to live.



Quality of life issues are important to families when you're making decisions about which community you want to live and where you want to raise your children.

— Karen Palus, Colorado Springs parks and recreation director

Colorado's cities and towns are recognized throughout the nation for their vibrancy. A big reason is the quality of life they offer, drawing new employers, attracting creative and energetic people, and providing the lifestyle our residents enjoy every day.

To view the complete survey results, as well as a video on the State of Our Cities & Towns, visit [www.cml.org/state-of](http://www.cml.org/state-of).



Can there be anywhere else in the world where a city program offers ice climbing at one end of town and a soak in the municipal hot springs pool at the other? That is life in Ouray.



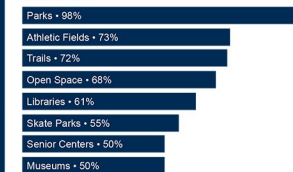
City facilities let you kayak through Golden, gain broadband access at the Wray library, and take in a professional rugby match in Glendale.



The list of amenities provided by our cities and towns is long and varied and a big reason why Colorado's municipalities are recognized throughout the nation as "best places to live" and "best places to raise a family."

Nature gave us a head start in Colorado, but our municipalities have added the extras that we use to expand the mind and nourish the body.

Most frequent amenities provided solely or in partnership by a municipality:



Swimming pools, recreation centers, performance halls, and golf courses are also among the most popular municipal offerings. One-third of municipalities now provide dogs with a park of their own!

Youth and adult recreation and sports programs are offered to residents in a majority of municipalities - with many delivering specialized programs for seniors and disabled residents.

Special events are becoming a popular method to bring the community together for fun and enjoyment. Most frequent special events provided solely or in partnership by a municipality:



Food fests, neighborhood block parties, and beer/wine festivals also rank among the most popular.