



2020 Award Recipient

Elevations Credit Union

Elevations Credit Union empowers its members and the communities it serves along Colorado's Front Range with financial solutions and education. In addition to offering a broad portfolio of consumer and business banking services, Elevations is the No. 1 credit union mortgage lender in Colorado. This member-owned, nonprofit financial institution serves more than 147,000 members via 14 branches. With assets of over \$2.7 billion and more than 560 employees, it serves members in Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, El Paso, Jefferson, Larimer, and Weld counties, Colorado.

This is the second Baldrige Award for Elevations Credit Union.

Senior Leadership

- Leaders motivate the workforce by setting and communicating the core purpose (mission): "Together we create solutions for a better life" and by building and reinforcing the core competency of membership first.
- Leaders align all aspects of Elevations' business through the Operational Rhythm, an engineered sequence of meetings and decision-making forums designed to ensure that the right people are getting the right information at the right time to make the right decisions, and that those decisions are communicated in a timely way to the right people.

Financial Results

- Elevations matches or exceeds the top 25% of its national peer group for financial results, including revenue per full-time equivalent staff member, net interest margin, cost of funds, non-interest operating income/average assets, delinquency ratio, and net charge-offs per average loan.
- In 2018 and 2019, Elevations produced more mortgages annually than any credit union in the state. Elevations' share of the mortgage purchase market in Boulder County increased from less than 15% in the fourth quarter of 2018 to over 20% in the first quarter of 2020, outperforming large originators such as Wells Fargo and Chase.
- An assessment by the American Credit Union Mortgage Association ranks Elevations as #11 out of the top 300 credit unions in the nation. This high rating outpaces Elevations' asset size, which ranks #127 of 300, and its ability to lend only in Colorado versus other lenders that cross state lines.

Customer Process with Results

- Elevations uses Net Promoter Score (NPS), a rigorous measure of customer engagement where a score over 50 is considered excellent. In its market in 2018 and 2019, Elevations outperformed



Highlights

- Elevations uses the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award framework to help drive its efforts to continuously improve service for its members and community.
- In 2018 and 2019, Elevations produced more mortgages annually than any credit union in the state.
- An assessment by the American Credit Union Mortgage Association ranks Elevations as #11 out of the top 300 credit unions in the nation. This high rating outpaces Elevations' asset size, which ranks #127 of 300, and its ability to lend only in Colorado versus other lenders that cross state lines.
- In spring 2020, Elevations ranked in the top 95% of U.S. organizations for overall employee engagement based on the Gallup Q12 survey.
- For business/commercial loans, production increased from less than \$50 million in 2015 to about \$175 million in 2019, even as the charge-off ratio (losses in relation to loan portfolio growth) remained at zero.



2020 Award Recipient

Elevations Credit Union

large competitors, such as Bank of the West, US Bank, Key Bank, and Chase, with scores ranging from about 60 to 80.

- Elevations builds relationships with members and delivers on its Member Value Proposition through the Elevations Way, a systematic approach to connecting with members to serve them best. All staff members complete training on how to engage members, foster member connections, and discover member needs.
- To understand its members' needs and expectations, Elevations uses social media, a secure email and chat tool, feedback tools integrated into its website, and semiannual phone surveys of consumers, as well as transaction surveys and market analytics. All are tailored by geographic region, service, and member life stage.
- To continue building relationships and trust during the COVID-19 pandemic, Elevations tailored its approaches to members' new needs. For example, while branches were closed due to state mandates, senior citizens could walk in without appointments. During lockdowns, branch employees called members to ask about their welfare, with some members noting that the Elevations employee was the only person they had spoken with since the beginning of the lockdown. Elevations also offered loan, mortgage, and credit card payment deferments to members.

People Process with Results

- In spring 2020, Elevations ranked in the top 95% of U.S. organizations for overall employee engagement based on the Gallup Q12 survey. From 2017 through 2020, Elevations ranked in the national top 90% on 8 of the 12 elements of the Gallup Q12.
- Elevations organizes its workforce by its four value streams, thereby aligning all employees' work with its Member Value Proposition: We build long-term relationships and deep mutual trust with our members by acting in the best interest of our membership and community. To ensure that employees understand what they need to accomplish for this proposition, strategic goals cascade to each employee's performance objectives.

Strategic Planning

- The rolling, five-year strategic plan is translated into an annual business plan, with the potential need for transformational change addressed through the rolling, five-year, envisioned future. Inputs include Operational Rhythm forum outputs, scenario planning, a comprehensive PESTLE (political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental) survey, and an environmental scan.
- Elevations stimulates innovation by identifying strategic opportunities during strategic planning, along with strategic advantages and challenges that help identify areas for innovation. These opportunities leverage the Innovation Plan, which has three avenues: (1) an Employee Innovation Forum, (2) Innovation Workshops for individuals, and (3) Test and Learn experiments.

Process Efficiency/Effectiveness with Results

- Elevations' pull-through rate has exceeded 88% since 2015, better than the Mortgage Bankers' Association 75th percentile.
- For business/commercial loans, production increased from less than \$50 million in 2015 to about \$175 million in 2019, even as the charge-off ratio remained at zero.
- To achieve efficient and effective operations, Elevations uses Business Process Management, a system of more than 600 documented work processes that are reviewed annually by identified stakeholders and refined for improvement. Improvements consider new technology, organizational knowledge, product excellence, member value, and risk, as well as information from member listening posts.

Citizenship with Results

- From 2015 to 2019, Elevations doubled the number of K-12 students reached in its youth financial literacy program; the number of free educational seminars offered; and the amount of scholarships provided. Reduction in the amount of eco-cycle materials (e.g., greenhouse gas emissions, toxic air pollutants, water pollution) also doubled over this period.
- Elevations Credit Union and its members proudly support Elevations Foundation, an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that was established in 2010. Over the last decade, Elevations Foundation has provided \$1.97 million in scholarship funds for local students, community grants for local nonprofit organizations, and emergency assistance for flood victims, wildfire victims, and community organizations. Every two years, Elevations Foundation conducts a community needs assessment to ensure that its support resources are being used wisely.

For more information:

Elevations Credit Union
2960 Diagonal Highway
P.O. Box 9004
Boulder, CO 80301
www.elevationscu.com

Baldrige Performance Excellence Program

The Baldrige Program educates organizations of all sizes and from all sectors in organizational performance management and improvement. We also administer the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Our key services are to identify and recognize role-model organizations, share best management practices, and help organizations achieve best-in-class performance levels. We are the only public-private partnership and Presidential award program dedicated to improving U.S. organizations.

For more information on the Baldrige Program:
www.nist.gov/baldrige | 301-975-2036 | baldrige@nist.gov