Boulder Independent Business Alliance™

Supporting locally owned independent businesses.™

1202 Folsom Street
Boulder, Colorado 80302
720.565.3854 *voice*
www.boulder-iba.org *website*

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Boulder Independent Business Alliance?
The Boulder Independent Business Alliance (Biba) is a collection of over 140 locally owned and independent businesses in Boulder County. It is our mission to promote locally owned independent businesses in order to preserve Boulder's unique character. Our goals are achieved, respectively, through three initiatives; brand recognition, public awareness and cooperative marketing. Biba highlights the local independence of our members and the importance of shopping locally in Boulder County.

Who are the members of Biba?
Biba members are local independent business owners who care about sustaining their community. Our members range for McGuckin Hardware to the Boulder Army Store and offer a variety of services from Art Galleries to Legal Work to Video Rentals (see the Biba Guide for listings).

How is Biba funded?
Biba is a non-profit organization with a paid Executive Director, Xian Izquierdo, and six additional staff members. Annual membership dues and community supporters presently fund the alliance. Biba also works hard to sustain programs with marginal profits to aid in funding.

Are there other organizations like this elsewhere?
While there are initiatives with overlapping goals, such as community currency programs and local credit unions, Biba is the first independent business alliance in the nation. Biba has sparked great interest from other communities. Six independent business alliances have formed since our start in 1997 and we are still assisting communities seeking to employ our model. Jeff Milchen and Jennifer Rockne, original founders of Biba, have also founded the American Independent Business Alliance (AMIBA). Both alliances share a common vision and pooled resources. (Information on AMIBA online at www.AMIBA.net)

How does Biba differ from the typical Chamber of Commerce?
Most chambers are mainstream business associations that do not actively promote locally owned independent businesses. Chambers do not promote group purchasing nor do they solely rely on membership donations for their primary source of revenue. Biba is an alliance that allows specifically locally owned independent businesses to thrive. The Biba advantages are the energy and creativity of other independents, reaching out to community supporters, and instilling a sense of pride in shopping locally and independently in Boulder County.

What issues does Biba address?
Biba addresses issues that affect locally owned independent business in Boulder County. We educate and advocate through feature articles, email, opinion-editorials, and letters to the editor. Biba is committed to preserving Boulder's unique character and we have found that public support through awareness is the most successful avenue.

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What benefits do members receive?

Member businesses receive benefits designed to promote local independence and customer awareness. The Biba window decal informs customers that they are shopping locally and independently. Biba publishes the Biba Guide that lists all active members and the 85 different discounts offered with the Biba Community Benefit Card. We distribute over 25,000 Biba Guides a year, and the community embraces it as a quick reference to all of their favorite local shops. We also provide our members with free email and a free webpage for marketing. Advertising space in our two-page spread in the Colorado Daily, which saves members up to 45% on advertising costs, is available to all member businesses. Members are invited to quarterly socials and also receive our newsletter: The Independents, which updates members on both national and local issues that affect our members. One of Biba's greatest advantages is group purchasing. For example our coffee cup program, the Biba Coffee Cup, saved participating member businesses $375 per participant. These cups can be seen around Boulder promoting both the member business and Biba!

What is the Community Benefit Card?

The Community Benefit Card is a service Biba provides to over 6,000 community supporters. The card offers significant discounts at over 85 locally owned independent businesses; savings range from a 10% discount on new merchandise (except periodicals) at the Boulder Bookstore to $5 off any $50 purchase at McGuckin Hardware. Community Benefit Cards are free to member business owners, $5 for member business employees, and $15 for community supporters. (Biba Community Benefit Cards can be purchased online at www.boulder-iba.org)

How can businesses join Biba?

Biba members need to be locally owned and independent. Members have their primary place of business in Boulder County, live within Boulder County and are free to make their own business decisions. Membership forms are available at the Biba office and online on our website www.boulder-iba.org.