



Engage  Estero

**ANNUAL
REPORT** 2024



Engage Estero

Your Community, Your Voice, Your Future

Join Us in Shaping a Better Estero in 2025!

Introduction

Engage Estero is a nonpartisan, nonpolitical, nonprofit organization committed to making Greater Estero a safer, more vibrant, and more connected community. In 2024, we addressed key challenges, led impactful initiatives, and achieved tangible improvements in our area. We invite all local HOAs and businesses to support our mission in 2025.

Engage Estero has had a highly active year, with many important issues addressed and communicated. The Executive Management Team (EMT) has prepared this summary report to keep members updated.

Engage Estero is indebted to our members for their continued support, which enables us to act on behalf of our residents to ensure that the quality of life that everyone enjoys in the greater Estero area is maintained and, where possible, enhanced.

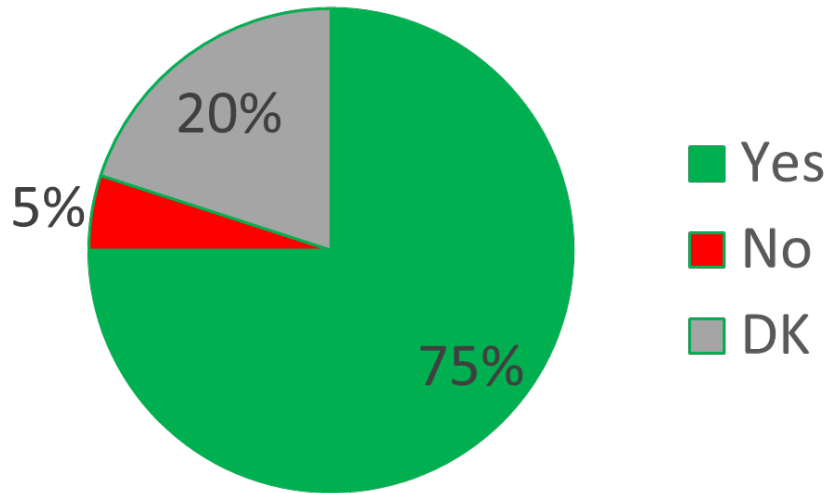
In 2022, Engage Estero was recognized as a 501(c)(3) organization by the IRS because it provides information to residents of Greater Estero about issues that could positively or negatively affect their quality of life. With this 501(c)(3) classification, Engage Estero can directly solicit tax-deductible contributions to support our efforts. This designation enables Engage Estero to maintain its focus on our mission and advocacy to involve the community in enhancing the environment, safety, transportation, health, education, culture, and recreation.

Our Mission

Our mission is to combat misinformation and empower residents with knowledge through well-researched, unbiased intelligence and survey data that enhances our community. We offer information on traffic, balanced development, and water quality through engaging forums, comprehensive reports, insightful articles, impactful educational outreach, and successful collaborations with fellow nonprofits.

Is an Organization like Engage Estero Needed?

In a comprehensive marketing research study conducted in 2022, Engage Estero asked, "Is there a need for a community-based, 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonpolitical, volunteer organization?" The pie chart shows that an overwhelming majority (based on 831 residents' responses) believe such an organization is essential for several reasons.



The reasons expressed by over 650 residents were:

- We need nonpartisan and nonpolitical groups in our divided society.
- To be a voice for responsible growth and environmental issues.
- Keep development to a minimum to maintain our quality of life.
- To help shape Estero's future.

Many made comments such as:



"To provide perspectives that the official government representatives and employees either don't see or refuse to acknowledge."

"A nonpolitical organization is needed to address all resident's wants and evaluate accordingly."



Regarding our actions, while all items listed were considered necessary, the following were the top 5 cited.

1. To help protect our environment and **preserve clean water and wetlands**.
2. To **inform** about Village, County, Regional, and State issues and ways to respond to issues threatening the quality of life in our communities.
3. To function as a **watchdog organization** to monitor the implementation of Village of Estero initiatives and plans.
4. To **proactively respond** to perceived immediate threats to our quality of life.
5. To help **improve our safety** by supporting the funding and planning for safe and adequate roadways, walking/biking/and multi-use paths serving our communities.

Engage Estero is genuinely unique in Southwest Florida. No other organization is dedicated to engaging our community to enhance and preserve our quality of life. Our identity is now clear, and our purpose centers on informing the greater Estero community about important issues that could affect our quality of life.

Our mission outlines how we achieve our goals, and our vision serves as an inspiring call to action, inviting all who believe in it to contribute and become part of the movement. We strive for clear, concise statements embodying our culture, values, and ethics.





What We Achieved in 2024 – A Year of Impact

Smarter Growth & Safer Roads

- **Corkscrew Road Expansion:** Enhanced safety and ensure timely progress on the widening of East Corkscrew Road by collaborating with Lee County officials and the East Corkscrew Alliance.
- **Urban Development Updates:** Provided six comprehensive updates on local developments, increasing transparency and resident engagement.
- **Community Forums on Transportation:** Organized expert-led community forums, including Ron Gogoi (Lee MPO), to address road safety and infrastructure challenges.
- **Increased Transparency in Development:** Successfully sponsored the need for developers to present plans to the public before submitting them to the Village, ensuring community input in key projects.

We aim to continue advocating for traffic safety improvements and innovative growth strategies that align with Estero’s long-term vision.

Enhancing Sports & Recreation Opportunities

- **100-acre Sports & Recreation Complex:** Supported the Village’s initiative for a 100-acre sports and recreation complex near Via Coconut and Williams Road, boosting property values and improving quality of life.
- **Bike and Pedestrian Path Expansion:** Partnered with BERT (Bonita and Estero Rails to Trails) to secure land for bike and pedestrian paths, creating safer and more accessible outdoor spaces.

In the future, we will continue advocating for additional recreational facilities and exploring partnerships that promote active lifestyles.

Leading Environmental & Water Quality Initiatives

- **Septic-to-Sewer Conversion Support:** We have supported and encouraged the Village's “Septic to Sewer” project, although timing has been a concern. However, the Village’s effort in securing grants for the project has lowered residents' costs and will improve the Estero River’s water quality. This will also help improve contamination in Estero Bay.
- **Climate Change Mitigation Advocacy:** Partnered with FGCU’s Water School and other environmental organizations to promote climate change mitigation strategies essential for tourism and property values.

Our next steps include continued engagement in water conservation initiatives and promoting environmentally responsible development.



Investing in Education & Workforce Development

- **Breaking Par Event Success:** Sponsored 2024 Breaking Par for Education event produced by LEAD Estero with net proceeds of \$80,000 used for scholarships and educational programs for Estero High School students. The prior eleven years of Breaking Par averaged \$51,600 per year. With the 2024 proceeds, a total for twelve years is \$641,000, all for the betterment of K-12 education in greater Estero.
- **Scholarship Expansion:** Provided direct scholarship funding to support local students pursuing higher education and careers that benefit our community.
- **Workforce Housing Advocacy:** Brought workforce housing issues to the forefront, leading to productive discussions on affordability for essential workers.

Looking ahead, we aim to expand our scholarship programs and create mentorship opportunities for young leaders in our community.

Honoring & Supporting Veterans

- **Veterans Memorial Advocacy:** Supported the inclusion of a Veterans Memorial in the new sports complex, creating a dedicated space for reflection and remembrance.
- **Veteran Support Resources:** Published vital resources to help local veterans navigate daily challenges and access key support services.

Future efforts will focus on expanding resources and events that support our veteran community.

Improving Healthcare Awareness & Access

- **Proton Therapy Center Awareness:** We informed residents about the state-of-the-art Proton Therapy Center on Estero Parkway, which will open in 2025 and bring cutting-edge cancer treatment closer to home.
- **Educational Health Articles:** Published essential health articles on topics such as:
 - Longevity and social connection
 - Managing Parkinson's, MS, and dementia
 - The benefits of telemedicine and robotic surgery
 - Summer heat safety, CPR, and fall prevention
 - Emerging healthcare innovations, including nanotechnology and black mold mitigation

In the coming year, we plan to expand our health awareness initiatives and partner with local healthcare providers to improve community well-being.



Why HOAs, Businesses, and Individual Residents Should Support Engage Estero in 2025

Your involvement fuels initiatives that directly impact your community, property values, and quality of life. By supporting Engage Estero, you:

- **Amplify Your Voice:** Ensure decision-makers hear community needs.
- **Strengthen Local Input:** Drive policy changes that benefit businesses and homeowners alike.
- **Enhance Community Livability:** Promote safer roads, environmental sustainability, and enhanced recreational spaces.
- **Support Education and Workforce Development:** Invest in local students and essential workforce housing to build a stronger future.
- **Champion Veterans & Healthcare Initiatives:** Improve access to healthcare and veteran services for our residents.

Given the growth and developments planned in the coming years, our community will rely on Engage Estero more than ever. Engage Estero will continue to inform and engage the community on issues of significance that will impact our quality of life.

The work involves expenditure:

- ✓ on setting up special public forums.
- ✓ monthly community meetings.
- ✓ Requiring a videographer to provide YouTube access to the events for those unable to attend.
- ✓ a webmaster and communications coordinator.
- ✓ external expert consultants to provide unbiased analysis on key issues.
- ✓ legal advice on specific items that could impact our 501c3 non-profit status.
- ✓ support for students in Estero via support for scholarships and Lead Estero (a student-run 501c3).
- ✓ computer program and software costs.
- ✓ promotional support items.
- ✓ likely future expenditure to employ several senior staff similar to other 501c3 organizations to increase efficiency and continuity.

In addition, given the increasing threat from more frequent and stronger hurricanes in our area, Engage Estero believes it is vital for a local organization to build up funds to provide emergency aid quickly to Estero residents who are in difficulty. Although we were able to initiate an essential response in calling for donations to help residents following Hurricane Ian's impact in our area, this took more time to resolve than we would have liked.

We require an annual budget of around \$400,000 or more to achieve our aims and aspirations. Please continue to support Engage Estero so that we can help our residents!

Support Engage Estero

Our Commitment to Community Engagement

Engage Estero’s accomplishments for 2024 highlight our commitment to community improvement and addressing key issues:

- Our focus on developments, environmental initiatives, and support for education and health showcases a well-rounded approach to enhancing the quality of life in Greater Estero.
- Through collaboration, forums, and evidence-based communication, Engage Estero continues to empower residents, strengthen local involvement, and enhance the quality of life for all.

Become a Force for Change – Join the Movement Today!

The challenges ahead require a united front. Whether you’re an HOA leader, a local business owner, or a community member, your support is vital in shaping our village’s future. Let’s come together, share our visions, and collaborate on solutions that benefit us all. By uniting our efforts, we can build a vibrant community that thrives for years.

Your involvement is vital—let’s take this journey together!

**Let's build a stronger, innovative, and connected community.
One inspired initiative at a time.**

Visit Esterotoday.com to learn more, subscribe, and get involved!

A Summary of Engage Estero’s Annual Financial Report is Appended.

Engage Estero: A Community Engagement Association

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2024 Financial Highlights

This year, Engage Estero brought in a total of **\$55,875** from a mix of sources:

- **Media partnerships**
- **HOA memberships**
- **Donations**
- **Events**

We also invested **\$34,261** in market research to understand our reach and revenue potential. This is important as we look to establish professional leadership.

On the expense side, we incurred a total of **\$91,159**. Excluding the one-time project costs, our baseline operating expenses amount to **\$56,898**. This resulted in a slight net operating loss of **\$1,024**. Media expenses are our most significant operating expense.

Key Takeaways

Despite the financial challenges, we remained within our budget. Our investment in the research project proved beneficial, highlighting the need to raise awareness of Engage Estero's mission. It also affirmed that residents prioritize concerns such as development, traffic safety, congestion, and water and environmental restoration.

Looking Forward to 2025

To enhance our financial standing, we are focusing on increasing our membership of HOAs and businesses, expanding media partnerships, and launching our first formal donor campaign. These efforts will help us regain sustainability and continue making a meaningful impact in Estero.

Profit and Loss - copy
ENGAGE ESTERO
January-December, 2024

Distribution Account	Total
Income	
Contributions	5,044.89
Media Income	27,221.45
Member Support	11,805.00
Program Income	11,803.23
Unapplied Cash Payment Income	--
Total for Income	\$55,874.57
Cost of Goods Sold	--
Gross Profit	\$55,874.57
Expenses	
Administration	0.00
Total for Administration	\$50,339.85
Communications	0.00
Total for Communications	\$19,974.56
Engagement Activities	0.00
Total for Engagement Activities	\$13,418.83
Grants Issued	4,620.00
Membership	0.00
Total for Membership	\$28.34
Operations	0.00
Total for Operations	\$2,777.82
Unapplied Cash Bill Payment Expense	--
Total for Expenses	\$91,159.40
Net Operating Income	-\$35,284.83
Other Income	
Interest Income	12.20
Total for Other Income	\$12.20
Other Expenses	--
Net Other Income	\$12.20
Net Income	-\$35,272.63

Cash Basis Tuesday, February 11, 2025 12:10 AM GMTZ