Elevated Denver:

User Experience Data to Drive Solutions to Homelessness

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A new model for tackling homelessness that puts power in the hands of those with lived expertise, using their insights to create sustainable solutions driven by real-time, user-experience data.

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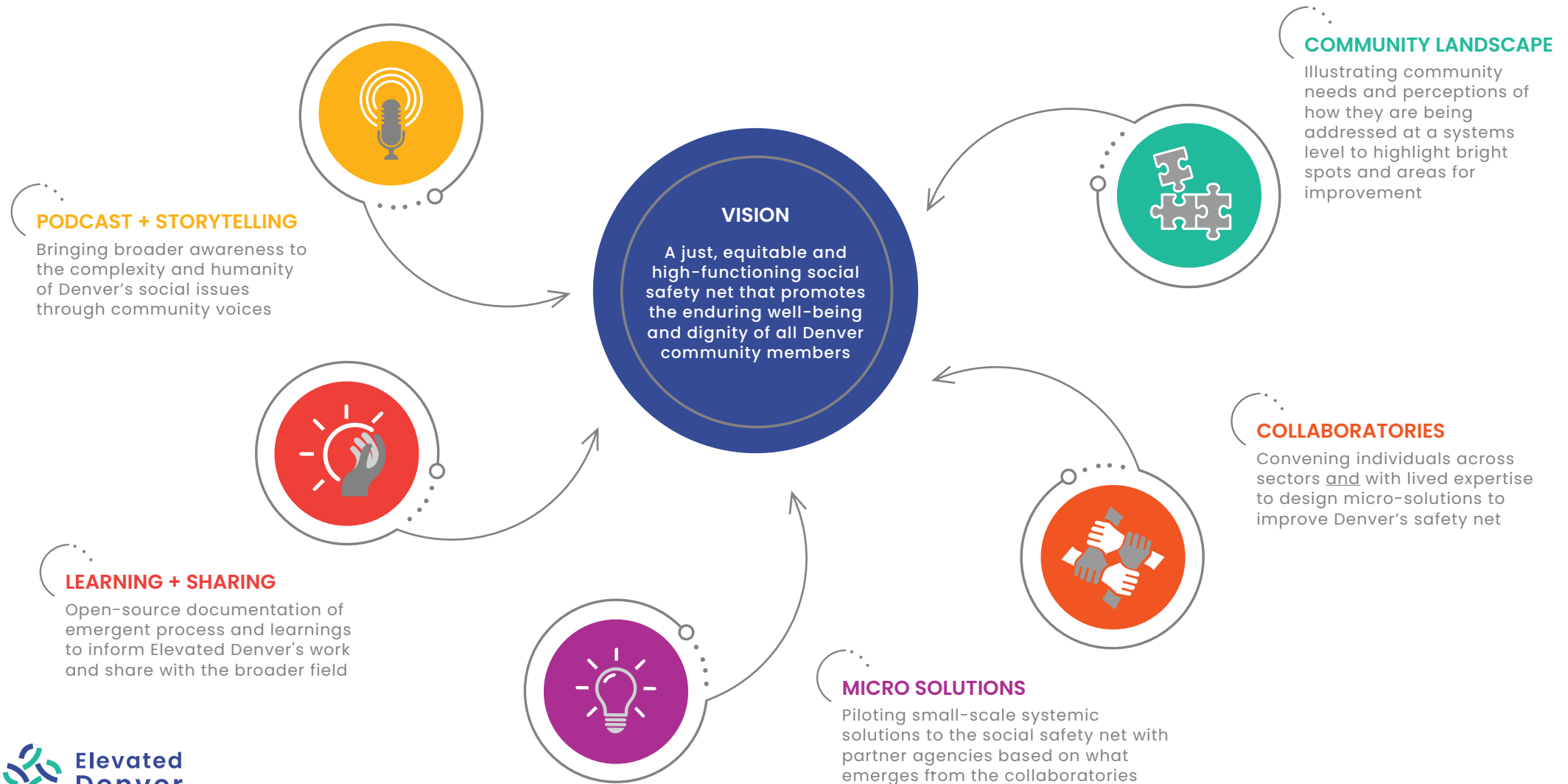# ELEVATED DENVER: THE TEAM

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Shifting power to those with lived expertise to collaborate in new ways with civic, private and public sectors to strengthen Denver's housing and homelessness system

COMMUNITY LANDSCAPE

Illustrating community needs and perceptions of how they are being addressed at a systems level to highlight bright spots and areas for improvement

PODCAST + STORYTELLING

Bringing broader awareness to the complexity and humanity of Denver's social issues through community voices

VISION

A just, equitable and high-functioning social safety net that promotes the enduring well-being and dignity of all Denver community members

COLLABORATORIES

Convening individuals across sectors _and_ with lived expertise to design micro-solutions to improve Denver's safety net

LEARNING + SHARING

Open-source documentation of emergent process and learnings to inform Elevated Denver's work and share with the broader field

MICRO SOLUTIONS

Piloting small-scale systemic solutions to the social safety net with partner agencies based on what emerges from the collaboratories

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Community Landscape: Data + Insights

COMMUNITY LANDSCAPE

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Current Housing

- In a shelter (6)
- On the street (3)
- With friends/family (2)
- In transitional housing (10)
- Subsidized housing (PHS or Voucher) (9)
- Motel (1)
- Self-paid apartment (5)

Ages 20-65+

Identify as male (16) & female (20), including transgender females

Racial & Ethnic Representation

- Latinx (5)
- White (20)
- Native American (1)
- African-American (6)
- Iranian (1)
- Burundi (1)
- Indian (1)
- Micronesian (1)

Family death or traumatic event prompted homelessness in most cases

100% Find resources through word-of-mouth

+ Strong sense of community helps get needs met & instills hope for the future

– It is hard for people to imagine a life of stability if they grew up in poverty

"[My Mom] died in 2005... My birthday was the next day. She died of cancer when I was 14... so she left, that put me into a spiral – gangs, drugs, stealing, robbing.... Due to the death of my mother...I was Rebel Without a Cause."

– Rico

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THE HOUSING DILEMMA:
the location of the housing opportunity can be isolating &/or triggering

When housing becomes available, there may be a tradeoff between being housed and feeling safe.

People want choice in housing so that it meets their, and their families,' needs.

Several interviewees were in housing that was supposed to be temporary but became more permanent. No community was being cultivated & they felt very isolated.

"You know, we're homeless people. In the morning and you['re] woken up by gunfire...or arguing? I got to get away from that.... This is where you die. I've seen that."

– Teri V.

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STRATEGICALLY PROFICIENT:
sense that one must game the system to get resources

There is a common perception that there aren't enough resources to go around & that you must have a special circumstance or hit rock bottom to get help.

People don't have the bandwidth to think or act strategically because they are consumed with meeting basic needs & are traumatized from homelessness.

Resource access is inequitable since it depends on users' strategic navigation skills, disadvantaging those who may struggle, and resulting in fewer resources for them.

"You have to be in dire need. Not just in need, which, you know, the line between those seems pretty thin. And most of the help we received was because I had children. This experience has really driven home that my value as a person is heavily tied to me being a mother."   - Jillian K.

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Next Steps:
Data Collection ➡
Collaboratories

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COLLABORATORY: INSIGHTS TO SOLUTION

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USER-EXPERIENCE DATA & INSIGHTS

DESIGN ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION

RAPID PROTOTYPE OF MICROSOLUTION

PILOT, LEARN & SCALE

DISCUSSION

How could this data be most useful to you?

What else do you want to learn about users' experience of the housing & homelessness system?

How might we partner to develop and/or implement Microsolutions?

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Thank you!

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