

FUNDAMENTALS 201: GROUNDWORK & POSITIONING



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GOAL OF THE TRAINING

The purpose of this training is to introduce elected officials and government staff to the local needs assessment process, including understanding local housing needs and conditions, finding, accessing, and analyzing national and local data, the role of local electeds in facilitating community input, and the value of stakeholder engagement in identifying housing gaps and opportunities.



What is *Groundwork & Positioning?*



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What is Groundwork & Positioning?

The process of collecting and synthesizing information and engaging with community and stakeholders to better understand local housing needs and conditions, with the aim of determining how to best address housing gaps and allocate resources. **This is fundamentally a social process vs a research project.**

Goal:

Understand **why** and **for whom** housing affordability is a challenge.



UNDERSTANDING LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS & CONDITIONS

Qualitative & quantitative data are equally important.

Qualitative data can help you get from identifying a gap to understanding the underlying causes and how to address them.

Qualitative and quantitative data can help local officials:

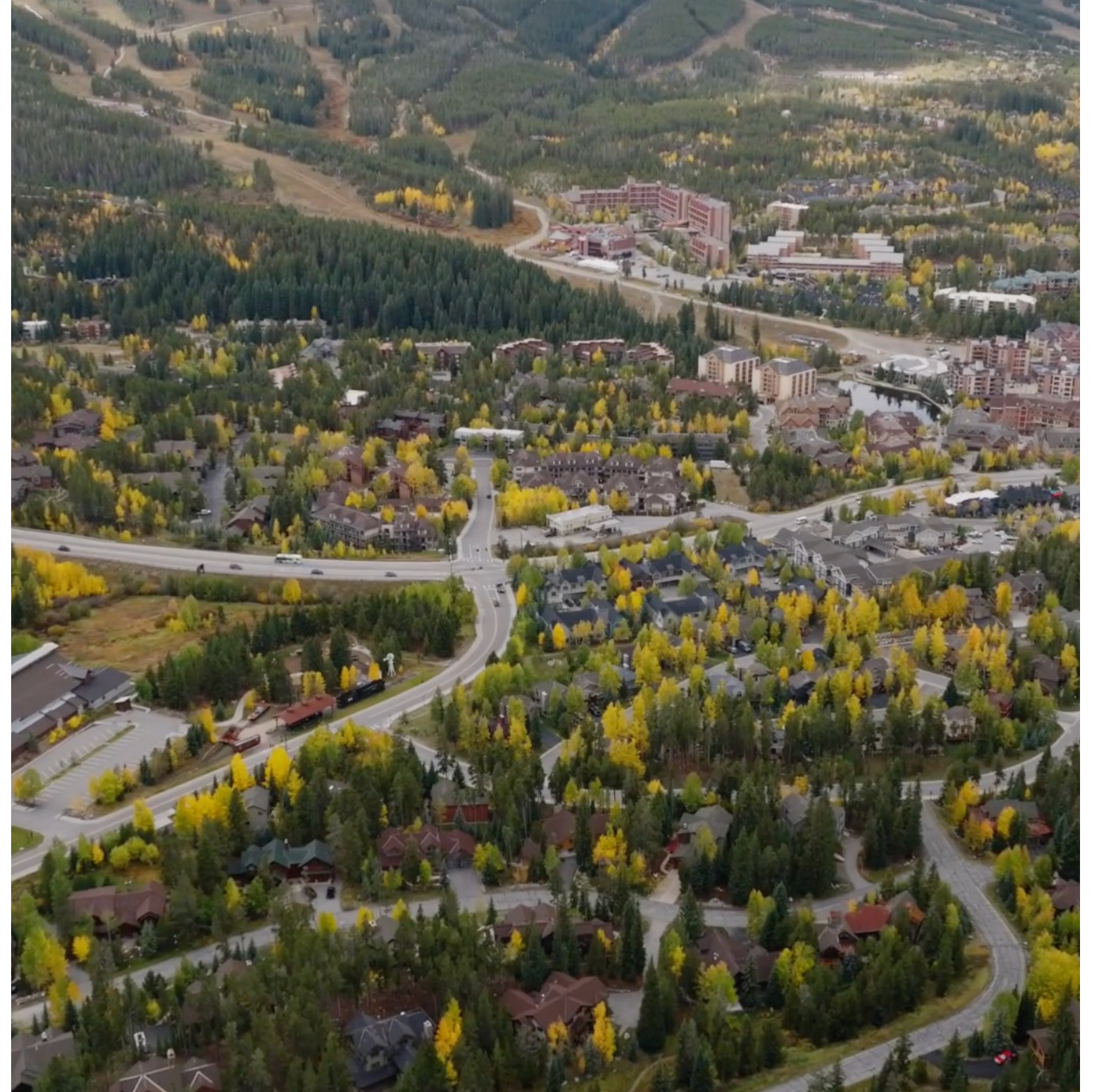
- Design a local housing strategy
- Decide on housing goals and objectives
- Secure grant and project funding
- Evaluate existing policies
- Build consensus and community support
- Strategize the allocation of local resources
- Monitor and evaluate progress



GROUNDWORK & POSITIONING

Role of local government

- Understand local needs & conditions
 - Housing needs assessment
 - Assessment of existing regulatory and policy tools and planning efforts to date
 - Community and stakeholder survey design and input
- Assess local capacity & leverage public-private partnerships
- Build consensus around identified goals & needs
- Develop a local housing strategy



GROUNDWORK & POSITIONING

Role of local electeds

- Support and organize community engagement efforts, public forums, and events
- Communicate/advocate for your community's needs
- Trust building
 - Do you represent communities who are mistrustful of government or the public process? Is there skepticism or other conditions that may prevent them from engaging?
- Coalition building
 - What organizations, businesses, healthcare providers, etc. are impacted when housing needs are not met?



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LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT



What Is The Difference Between A Market Study & Housing Needs Assessment?

Housing Needs Assessments do not serve the same function as market studies, though the two are often confused. A market study is an in-depth analysis of the market feasibility and demand for a specific type of development (and potentially in a specific location within the community). A market study is used to build an understanding of how your project site will fit into the community and what needs will be met.

A housing needs assessment is a more global and comprehensive assessment of the housing needs and conditions in the community but is not focused on assessing the feasibility of a specific development or type of housing. A Housing Needs Assessment could cover a whole state, county, or reservation for example.



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LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Design and planning process

- Define/identify your geographic bounds
 - Housing markets often extend beyond political boundaries, so this geographic definition is a critical consideration
 - For some, a county-level or MSA-level needs assessment, with specific information broken out by jurisdiction, may give you the most complete picture
- Identify what you want to know and who needs to be included in the process
 - Populations are most impacted by housing gaps?
 - Employers and anchor institutions?
 - Nonprofits and housing/health/social services providers?
 - Developers? Builders? Real estate professionals?
- Assess your local capacity
 - What are the existing plans, policies and programs? what is currently being done and how those programs are working?
- Leverage community partnerships
- Design and facilitate community engagement
- Review your findings. Did the process reveal unexpected gaps deserving additional attention and review?



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LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

How can a local government fund this work?

There are public and private resources available to support needs assessments:

- Department of Local Affairs, Division of Housing
- Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA)

Philanthropic or Foundation Grants



LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The breadth and focus of your needs assessment can be tailored to local priorities and concerns. A housing needs assessment typically includes the following components, but is not limited to:

- Analysis of demographic and economic conditions
- Evaluation of housing stock
- Housing gap analysis
- Homelessness and special needs housing
- Stakeholder interviews
- Housing needs forecast
- Conclusion and recommendations for further action



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LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS & CONDITIONS

Housing needs assessment

A needs assessment should help you understand key housing conditions:

- Adequacy of existing housing stock?
- Alignment between existing/available housing stock (location, structure age, size, bedrooms, tenure, price) and demand (purchasing power/income, household size, need)?
- Is the rate and types of housing production in the market adequate to meet the community's current and forecasted needs?
- Existing dedicated affordable or workforce housing units and demand?
- Current services and depth of need for unhoused populations? Transitional or Permanent Supportive housing?



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LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

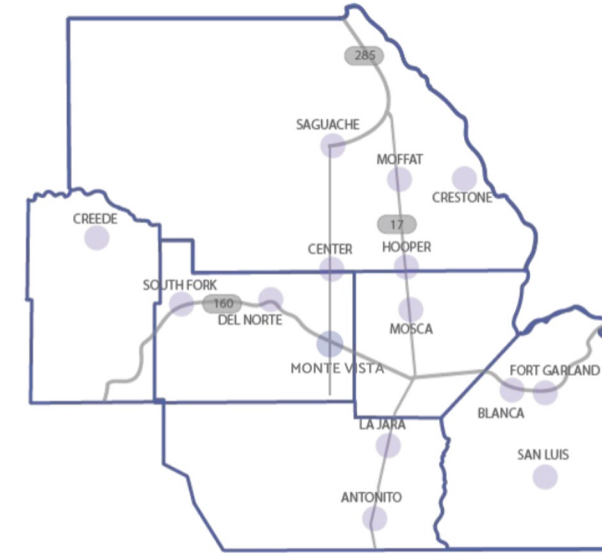
Case study

San Luis Valley Housing Coalition - Housing Needs Assessment

Smaller communities with less funds often did not have studies completed. This project brought regional municipalities together to fund a study in an area that is often forgotten.

The study assessed current housing stock and housing needs for each county, and included a deeper dive in 14 smaller communities that either have never had a study done or who has studies that are over 10 years old.

Goal: To determine the greatest location of future housing to meet the needs of the community.



WILLIFORD, LLC **URBANrural**
land use & affordable housing —continuum—



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LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS & CONDITIONS

Data access, sharing & resources

National data sources

Census Bureau Data

- The Decennial (10-Year) Census
- The American Community Survey
- OnTheMap
- Other Census Products

Other Nationally Available Data

- HUD
- HMDA Data
- US Postal Service Data
- FBI Uniform Crime Reports
- Commercial Data Providers
- PolicyMap
- Other Data Providers



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LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS & CONDITIONS

Data access, sharing & resources

State-level resources

- Colorado Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) [Gap Map](#)
- State Demography Office
- Economic Development Administration
- Department of Labor and Employment

Local & regional resources

- Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- Housing Authority
- Community Development & Planning
- Building Department
- Economic Development Districts
- Assessors Office
- Clerk and Recorder
 - Property transactions
 - Foreclosure filings
- Health & Human Services
- School districts
- Transit authorities
- Nonprofits



LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS & CONDITIONS

Data access, sharing & resources

Local and regional data combined with community engagement may provide a richer understanding of local challenges.

- Local data may be more **current and better able to capture market shifts**
- Sometimes more comprehensive and context-sensitive
- Ability to capture perspective and experiences of local residents (surveys, interviews, focus groups, stakeholder engagement sessions)
- Establishing formal data sharing partnerships or agreements (across governments, with nonprofits, etc.) can improve utility for everyone
 - National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership resource on data sharing agreements



DATA ACCESS, SHARING & RESOURCES

Stakeholder & community engagement

- Stakeholder engagement is not simply verifying data or filling in gaps; it can add totally new dimensions to the assessment.
- Numbers tell the story of where and how much, how quickly, etc.
- Experiences reveal more about the how, why and for whom

- Surveys
- 1-1 or small group Interviews
- Focus groups
- Online polls



LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS & CONDITIONS

Assess regulatory, policy, and previous planning efforts

Take a high-level look at existing plans, policies and programs to understand what is currently being done and how those programs are working. This type of assessment may be useful to inform discussion with local developers about factors that influence local development costs.

This type of evaluation can be:

- General (*are our plans and policies helping or hurting?*)
- Detailed analysis of specific ways local plans, policies or programs impact housing development (I.e. zoning audit, land use audit, development process audit, etc.)



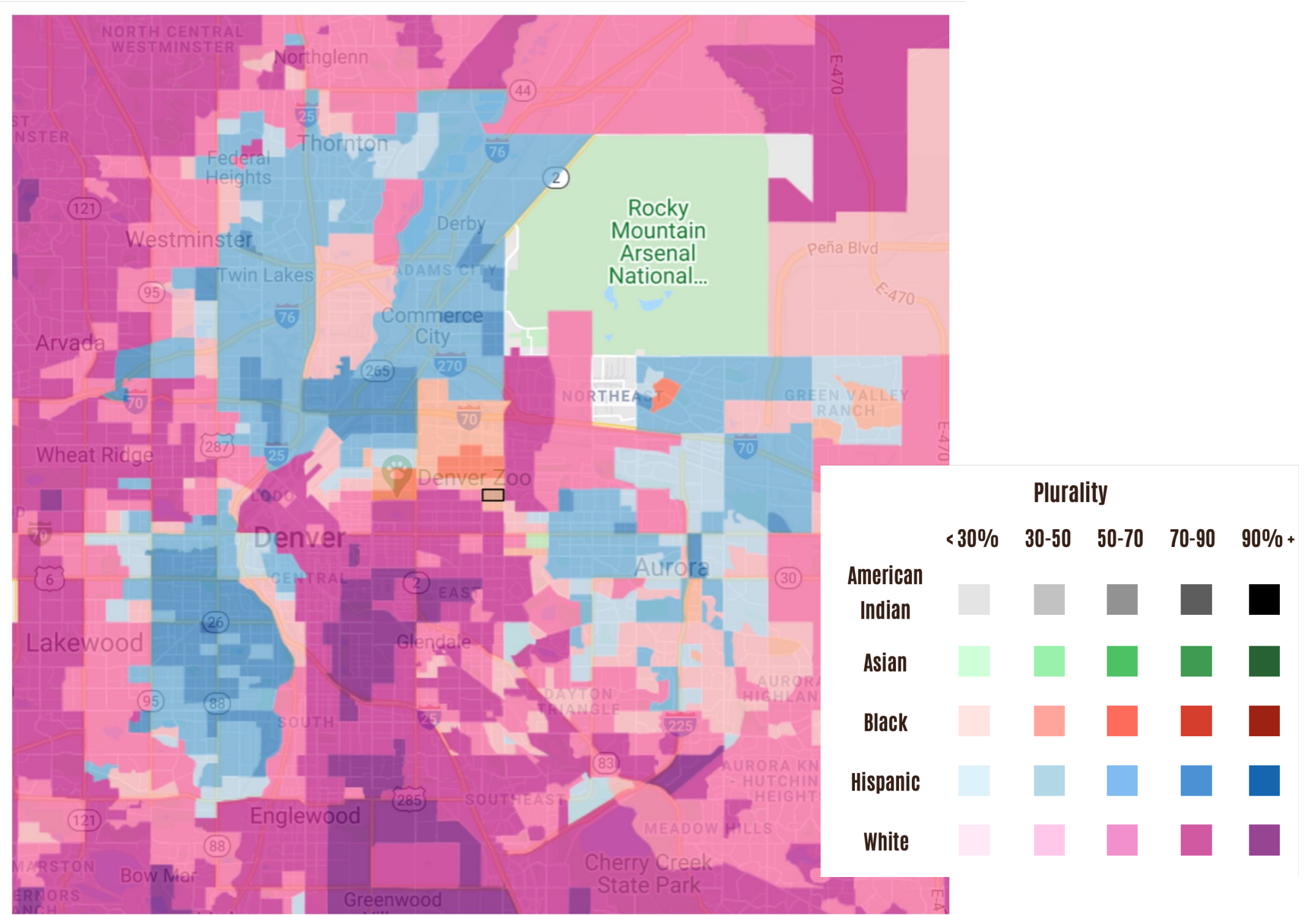
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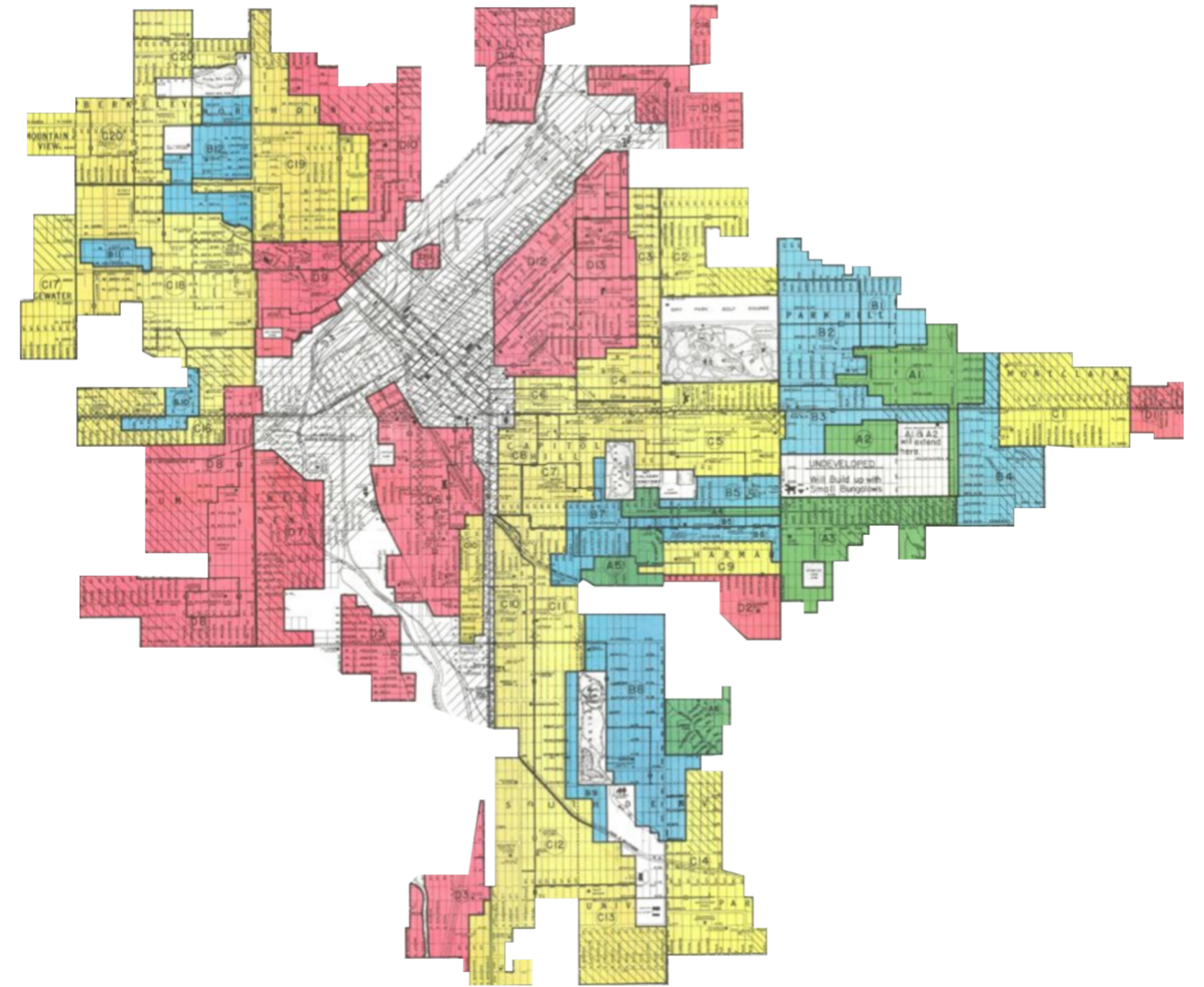
GEOGRAPHY OF EQUITY, DEVELOPMENT, AND INVESTMENT

Housing needs, conditions, and investment can be geographically mapped across our cities and jurisdictions. A key component of understanding local housing conditions is to develop awareness of the policies that drive historical and modern-day development patterns, and draw connections between housing policy and racial disparities today.



REDLINING & UNDERWRITING

The FHA established homeownership as a tool for wealth generation and stability and used it to bolster national pride. But not for everyone.



HOLC Redlining Maps - 1930's



GEOGRAPHY OF EQUITY, DEVELOPMENT, AND INVESTMENT

- (1862-1934) The Homestead Act
- (1930s-60s) Federal Housing Initiatives
- (1933-1968) Redlining
- (2008) The Great Recession
- (Throughout) NIMBYism
- Other historical impacts: “Block-Busting”, Single Family Zoning, [...]



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LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Community engagement

Developing an understanding of the community landscape

- Which groups or service providers are trusted by community members and can help to engage the most effected populations? Are there resident organizing groups who should be involved?
- Who are the other stakeholders that bring important perspectives, concerns, and expertise to the housing planning process?
- Consider past planning and community engagement activities in the community. Has a planning or engagement process taken place that never came to fruition? Were promises made to the community that weren't followed-through on?
- How this community engagement effort can navigate any potential planning fatigue or skepticism in the community?



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LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Community engagement

Successful Engagement with Impacted Populations

- Partner with organizations they already work with and trust
- Have staff/contractors with relevant lived experience, language skills, and/or cultural awareness lead engagement
- Meet people where they are physically to improve turnout and participation
- Anticipate and address barriers to participation (e.g., work schedules, translation, childcare, transportation, accessibility needs)
- Compensate participants to acknowledge the time they share and value of their experience
- Be aware of power dynamics and inclusivity in facilitation
- Don't overpromise on what you can deliver and follow through on what you promise.
- Use activities that avoid making assumptions about perspectives, preferences or experiences
- Expect to encounter frustration, suspicion and trauma



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LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Community engagement

Gathering information about your community

Before heading out into the community, review the following questions with your team:

- What do you want to know?
- Who do you need to hear from?
- How you will collect information?
- Who are trusted community partners who can assist with outreach and assessment? Schools, community-led organizing groups, service providers?
- How are you ensuring intentional outreach and engagement with people who may be end users of the housing?



LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Community engagement

A needs assessment is not a one-way exchange of information.

It is also an opportunity for building shared vision and awareness of issues, convening stakeholders to learn from others' experiences, and identifying potential partners for implementation or community champions.



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DETERMINE LOCAL CAPACITY

Assess local capacity & resources

Capacity describes the staff, time, resources, and skills you have available to dedicate to a particular effort.

Assess what resources your community or region already has and what gaps exist. Take stock of the people, institutions, and funding sources in your community and what roles they can play in housing creation.

Questions to Help Assess Local Capacity

- How well do we understand our needs and the nature of our housing challenges?
- Who needs this information? Who do we need to ensure understands the problem?
- What resources do we have to assess the problem? Both financial resources and people power.
- If we lack the resources to pay for a Needs Assessment, how can we construct a basic assessment on our own?



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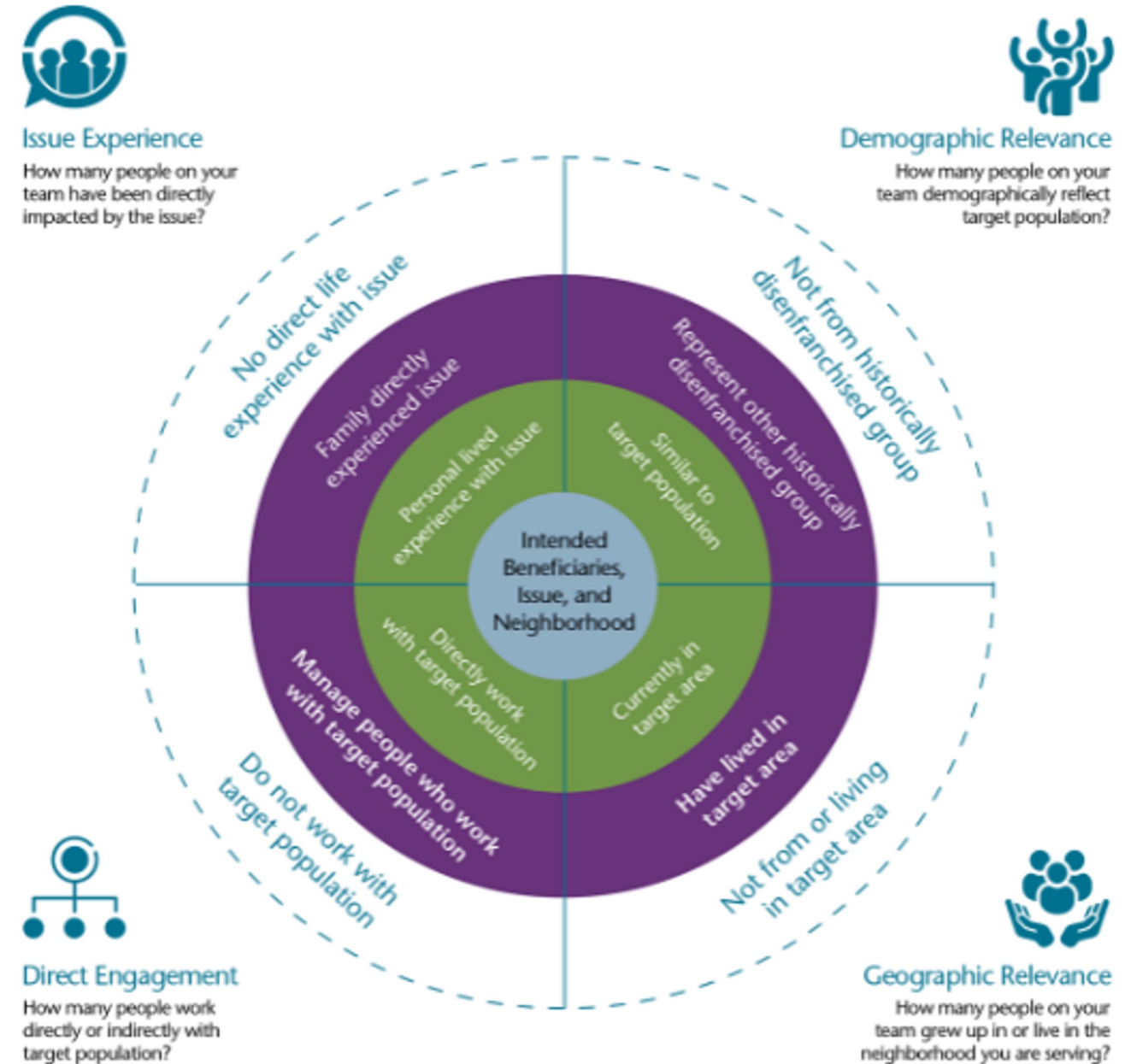
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DETERMINE LOCAL CAPACITY

Leveraging public-private partnerships

Questions to Help Build Your Team

1. Who, if anyone, is already working on housing affordability?
2. Who has the trust of the community?
3. Who are important connectors to target stakeholders?
4. Does our leadership team reflect the diversity of our community? What voices are missing?
5. Who has expert knowledge that could be useful for our efforts?
6. Who is willing and able to put the time in to see the strategy through?



Example Framework for Considering Team Experience



FURTHER LEARNING

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [DOLA Division of Housing](#)
- [Affordable Housing Toolkit for Local Officials](#)
- Stay up to date with training materials and next steps for Technical Assistance. Contact
 - Andrew Atchley (719) 298-2903 andrew.atchley@state.co.us or
 - Natalie Wowk (720) 812-4137 natalie.wowk@state.co.us
 - Sign up for DOH's email blast [here](#)



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THANK YOU!



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