



# High-Level Themes from Community Events

- **Streamlined support:** Simplify access to services and resources through a "one-stop-shop" where knowledgeable and empathetic staff help us navigate all the systems based on our individual needs.
- **Responsive services:** Provide immediate crisis support. Gradually reduce assistance as individuals regain self-sufficiency rather than having sudden cutoffs. Adapt services to meet local/community needs
- **Barrier-free services:** Prioritize support that addresses all aspects of accessibility, including reliable transportation, affordable childcare, and language ensuring everyone can access essential services without obstacles.
- **Information everywhere:** Disseminate information about support services broadly through diverse in-person and virtual channels, and in multiple languages across Boulder County. Engage communities through culturally relevant events and spaces.
- **Advocate for affordability:** Acknowledge Boulder County's high cost of living and advocate for increased support to assist those facing financial challenges, promoting a diverse and inclusive community.

# What we heard...

"Increase income limits... families are experiencing the cliff effect."

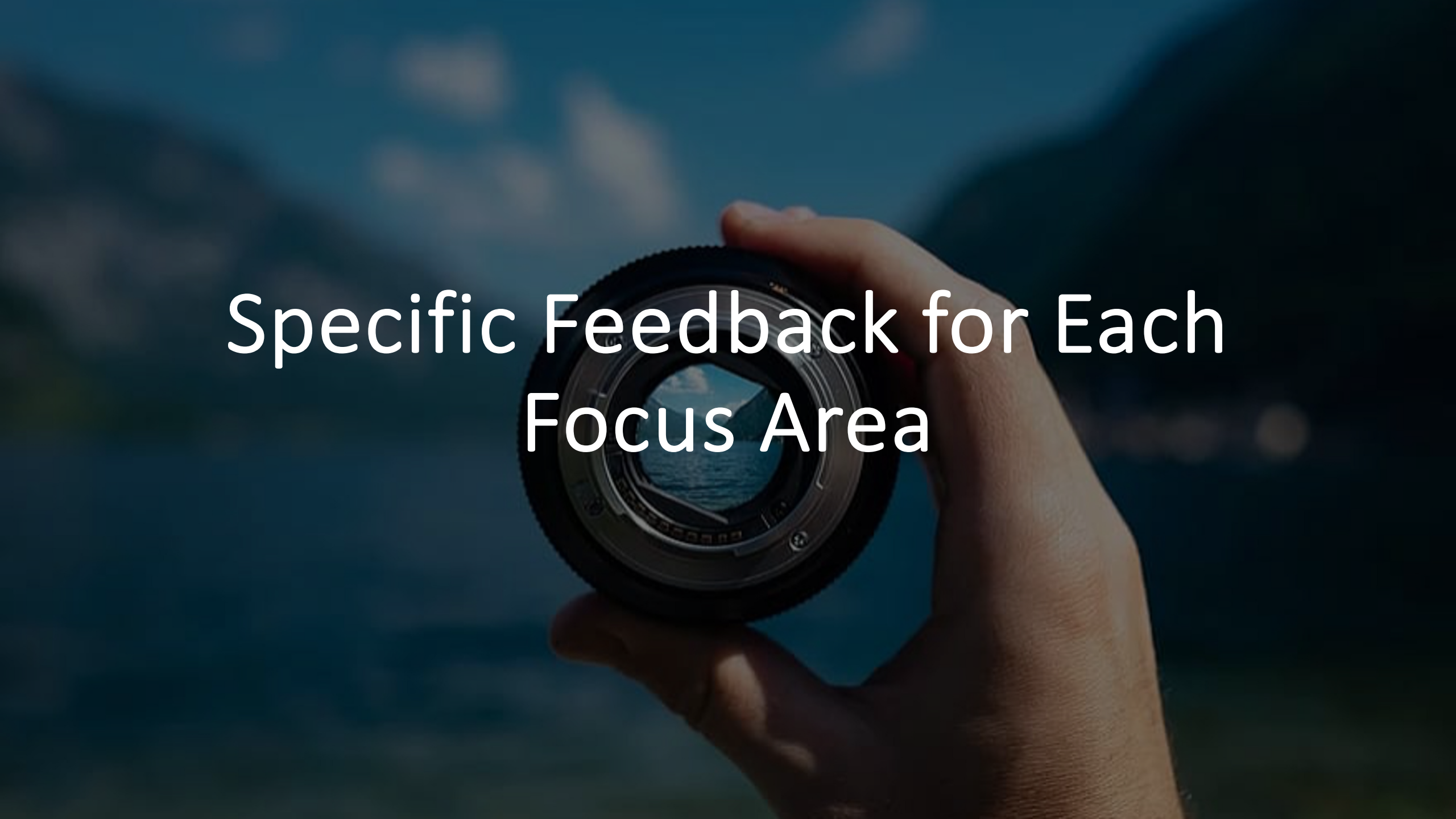
"Ensure Boulder retains a diverse population, not just the wealthy."

"My life would be easier if I could apply for many services at once. It would be one system where they already have my info (and could apply the information across the services)"

"Have support staff and services that minimize barriers of applying to services."

"Communication: Unless someone tells you specifically about the service, you don't know it exists."



A hand is holding a camera lens, with the lens's aperture visible. The background is a blurred landscape of water and mountains under a blue sky. The text "Specific Feedback for Each Focus Area" is overlaid in white, centered on the lens.

Specific Feedback for Each  
Focus Area

# Food Services

- People are struggling to get enough food
  - Income limits and benefit amounts are too low for the rising cost of living in Boulder County
  - “Cliff effect” occurs when people lose benefits due to a slight increase in income, putting them worse off overall
  - Programs like double-up are a huge help
- There are perceived barriers to enrollment
  - Having an address or ID
  - The ways that paychecks are calculated (e.g., multiple months of income, including roommates)
- The types of food matter
  - Healthy and varied food, fresh, organic produce, baby food, clean water at mobile communities, food for people with medical needs or food restrictions, culturally relevant food for newcomers. Watch expiration dates.
  - Provide education about healthy food and nutrition
- Community resources
  - We have great food banks, food pantries, and nonprofits
  - It can take incredible amounts of planning, time, and transportation, to get to the right places at the right times to get different types of food (e.g. produce and staples)
  - Meet us in our libraries, schools, colleges, and apartment complexes.
  - Support local farmers, community gardens, and other neighborhood-based sources of food



# What we heard about Food Services

"When I received \$450 in SNAP, I made \$24,900. Now, I make \$26,264 and my SNAP is \$23/mo. I have to use EFFA and food pantries to SURVIVE."

"Boulder is so expensive, so people don't have enough to buy healthy food."

"Food security seems one of the basic human needs to be met prior to addressing other life issues."

"Having to go to one place for produce, another for different products without a car is expensive and makes it inaccessible. (gas, time, etc.)"

"What does 12 dollars a month cover?"



# Education and Skill Building

- Boulder County has many great resources and programs
- People here have a wide range of educational needs across the lifespan
  - Blue- and white-collar job training
  - Technology, arts, languages (to learn English and for English Speakers to learn other languages), life skills, emotional awareness
  - After-school and camps
- People need support to access the available education
  - Childcare
  - Varied hours and locations, including online and in-person
  - Transportation
  - Free technology and supplies
  - Financial support
- More communication, outreach, and partnerships
  - People often do not know what opportunities are available
  - Come to schools, community nights, knock on doors, partner with other organizations, hotlines and newsletters, advertising
  - More internships and connections to jobs.
  - Connections with networks, skill shares, and volunteers

# What we heard about Education and Skill Building

"Boulder County and school districts need to team up. Many times, you do not even learn about the programs and there are many barriers to them."

"Workforce had great instructors- resume, interview, job searches. More outreach and awareness because people don't know."

"I believe minorities are still in a system that excludes them. Education and skills around inclusivity is important."

"If everyone was given the freedom to explore their passion and build skills, we could support each other and reduce the work of the county"

"I want to learn English and get a job, but I can't find childcare because I don't have a job."





# Health Coverage

- There are many excellent healthcare providers in Boulder County, including some that operate on a sliding scale
- Affordability is a major barrier to healthcare
  - Low-income, and even middle-income families, are struggling to afford healthcare
  - “Cliff effect” can cause people to lose coverage due to small increases in income
  - Though there are some services for people with limited financial resources, these can have long waitlists and some limitations
  - Advocate at federal and state levels for better healthcare policies
- Navigating systems can be challenging
  - Mental health and substance use services need to be more integrated and more available
  - Need for better interpretation services in all healthcare settings, including clinics
  - Develop resources and information in Spanish and other languages to improve accessibility
  - Improve cultural competency among healthcare providers and ensure trauma-informed care
  - Information is often outdated or fragmented, provider lists are old
  - Need more support understanding the options and filling out the paperwork
- Include preventative and holistic care in healthcare options

# What we heard about Health Coverage

"There is a good healthcare system but every time you make a doctor appointment, you need to wait two months. Could we get more providers?"

"I avoid the dentist because I have to pay out of pocket because I lost my Medicaid due to my income going slightly higher. "

"Effective, wrap around mental health and drug addiction services would make our community safer both for those with that need and for other residents."

"Better health coverage would mean I don't have to risk homelessness because of injury."

"My wife can't work and we don't have any benefits because we're not citizens. We have to pay private insurance."



# Children and Family Services

- Supporting the whole family in their needs supports children in Boulder County
  - Connecting families to resources
  - Financial, food, employment, education support are all needed
  - Parenting support, emotional support, and community connection are needed
- More early intervention and prevention
  - Family conflict
  - Bullying in schools
  - Mental health challenges for children and guardians
  - More resource navigation and information
  - Information is particularly opaque for people who speak don't speak English
- People have traumatic experiences with the foster care system
  - Kids aging out of foster care need more support

# What we heard about Children and Family Services

"As a kid, I had lots of changes that were unnecessary. Ask children what they want and get them involved in decisions"

"Families that have less draw more attention"

"They gave me the runaround. I was needing counseling and they said to look into this person who sent me to another person."

"What's working is the caring and empathetic employees. Their discretion + consideration is much appreciated."

"Better services would give me the confidence that my daughter will have a bright future here (like I felt I had as a child). The future feels very uncertain as of now."

"I wish they had therapists for family problems. Financial assistance for low-income families. Helpful talks with the entire family."



# Older Adults

- There are great nonprofits in the area and many opportunities for community and connection for older adults
- Every issue that is a challenge in Boulder County disproportionately affects older adults, who are often on a fixed income. Particular challenges include:
  - **Transportation:** Focus on improving transportation services, including more routes and accessible options.
  - **Healthcare and Medications:** Increase access to healthcare services. Address barriers like language and technology challenges.
  - **Housing and Home Services:** Provide affordable housing options that are accessible and safe, such as homes with ramps and one-level layouts. Support services like snow removal and home repairs to help older adults maintain their homes independently.
  - **Community Engagement and Support:** Create community hubs offer diverse activities and resources, including cultural programs and educational classes. Encourage intergenerational activities to foster connections and support networks.
  - **Financial Support and Resources:** Advocate for support for low-income older adults, including assistance with rent and utilities. Simplify access to benefits and ensure information about available resources is easily accessible.
  - **Family Connection:** Caring for an elderly family member can bring meaning and joy but can also be costly and emotional. Supporting caregivers financially would help.

# What we heard about Older Adult Services

"Support families who are taking care of elders. Income and support for elders, transportation, healthcare services, cultural events."

"Older adults have a lot of resources available to them but don't know how to access them or don't know about them. Boulder County needs case managers to help them navigate these services."

"When an elderly Boulder resident has a life event that suddenly moves them into low income, they need immediate help to navigate hospice and food services."

"we need centers for older Hispanic adults or people who don't speak English."

"Better services for older adults means the people who carry a special kind of wisdom can better shape that wisdom with the community."





# Financial Assistance

- **Affordable housing access:** Though the Department of Human Services has separated from the Department of Housing, the affordability of housing remains the major barrier to financial stability in Boulder County.
- **Community Engagement and Advocacy:** Foster community engagement and advocacy efforts to address systemic issues like housing insecurity, high living costs, and inadequate support for vulnerable populations. Empower residents to participate in decision-making processes that impact their livelihoods.
- **Accessibility and Equity in Services:** Advocate for more equitable access to services like healthcare and transportation, ensuring they meet the diverse needs of the community, including those with disabilities or limited English proficiency.
- **Streamlined Processes and Supportive Services:** Simplify bureaucratic processes for accessing assistance programs and provide comprehensive support services that help individuals navigate challenges like unemployment or unexpected financial crises.
- **Financial Assistance and Support Programs:** Enhance financial assistance programs to address various needs such as medical expenses, transportation and childcare. Improve outreach and accessibility of these programs to ensure they reach those in need effectively.

# What we heard about Financial Services

"Nonprofits have to fill in the emergency gaps."

"Some people just can't work. Some disabilities are invisible. I need to know what those members are not valued less."

"Support with more information in Spanish. Help filling out paperwork."

"This benefits family, community wholeness and racial and environmental justice."

"More clarity (ease of understanding) on the restrictions/ guidelines of resources."

"Helping people that work in Boulder, live in Boulder."





# IDEALS

Your ideals are the values behind why you do the work you do. We use "IDEALS" because they are largely unchanged over time. They are the spark that lights the fire to the work and/or the foundation for why you do the things you do.

## *Building a thriving future together centering racial equity and opportunity for All*

**Equity and Accessibility:** We believe that equitable access to resources and essential services, inclusive of their identities (e.g., race, sex, gender, ability, etc.) requires on-going engagement, learning and adaptation.

**Reach Out to Everyone:** We go where people are and make sure everyone gets the help they need. We are committed to reaching out to communities that include those who need assistance. We center equity as value to our work and strive to meet people in their community to provide the assistance that is relevant, timely, and appropriate.

**Help When and Where You Need It:** We make it easy for you to get help and support. We focus on getting people connected to resources that will help them live the lives they want to live in the Boulder County community.

**Take Care of People:** We treat everyone with respect and make sure our staff and the community feel supported and valued. We value the identities of all of Boulder County's residents and will incorporate how those experiences shape experiences of our community.

**Work Together for a Better Future:** We include everyone in Boulder County as our partners in the mutual creation of our common good. We believe that the diversity of the people in Boulder County is a strength. We recognize that our work is a foundation of healthy communities, and we will always strive to make our work efficient, engaged, and humane.

## *IDEAL's informed by staff input & community feedback*

**Caring the Right Way** – We listen to our community and make sure our programs and services meet the needs

**Culture is Key** – We foster an open, warm, and welcoming culture that shows that we care for everyone

**People Matter** – We invest in growing our people and focus on their wellbeing so that we can be our best to our community

**In it Together** – We collaborate with our community partners to create positive change for Boulder as a whole.



## *For Your Consideration*

**Caregivers** – A person who tends to the needs of others

**Care for Self** – The practice of looking after the needs of self

**Care for Family** – The practice of looking after family/friends

**Care for Community** – The practice of looking after individuals  
and groups within the community