

2024 Needs & Gaps Analysis

Missoula Continuum of Care Coalition
May 2024

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Introduction

Missoula's local Continuum of Care is named the At-Risk Housing Coalition (ARHC). ARHC is an ongoing formal task force comprised of representatives from health and human service agencies and governmental departments. ARHC was formed in 1993 to initiate a community-wide effort to prevent and address homelessness. In 2004, ARHC formalized as a coalition requiring membership and adherence to agreements and protocols. ARHC works on issues surrounding low-income housing and homelessness in Missoula and coordinates the local effort to plan and provide comprehensive services through a continuum of care.

ARHC meets bi-monthly and sub-committees meet both monthly and bi-monthly. Members perform the annual Point in Time survey. ARHC plans, reviews, and endorses local projects for HUD Continuum of Care funding and represents Missoula on the Montana Continuum of Care Board of Directors and Coordinated Entry System State Leads meeting. Members of ARHC committees also work on distinct projects, such as the Missoula Coordinated Entry System, annual Point in Time Survey and Housing Inventory, specific grant applications, program planning and coordination, annual Homeless Persons' Memorial, and improvement of service to those experiencing housing instability.

ARHC membership includes representation from local government (City and County), health care, mental health and substance use service providers, law enforcement/corrections agencies, affordable housing developers, the Missoula Housing Authority, victim service providers, street outreach teams, Veteran service providers, emergency shelter directors and staff members, leadership of a local interfaith collaborative, faith-based service providers and university students (e.g., social work, psychology, public administration). *For a full list of partners, see page 22.*



ARHC

Missoula At-Risk Housing Coalition



Data Sources

Built for Zero Performance Measure Tracker

- Dashboard representation of data submitted from Missoula Coordinated Entry System to Built for Zero monthly. Shows number of households at the end of each month, as well as limit for reaching functional zero for each population.

City of Missoula Consolidated Plan & Needs Survey

- Data shared in this report came from the Community Development Needs Survey which informs and guides the City's Consolidated Plan and Equity Plan. More survey details attached to data, including a link to full documents.

City of Missoula's Unsheltered Survey 2023

- Survey designed and created by City of Missoula's CPDI staff and community partners, with review and support from JG Research and Evaluation. Some questions were modeled off other survey and assessment tools including the Matching to Appropriate Placement (MAP) tool used by the Missoula Coordinated Entry System.
- Surveying lasted for 5 days (July 31st-August 4th). All respondents were given the option to have staff used collected information to update MCES profiles.
- Community partners involved included The Poverello Center, Partnership Health Center, Hope Rescue Mission, and Missoula County.

Missoula Coordinated Entry System (MCES) and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

- Coordinated Entry is a nationally recognized best practice for houseless services that has been adopted by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and is required by the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act. Missoula's CES strives to centralize supportive services, cultivate a community of collaborators, and collect reliable, quality data on the needs and realities of homelessness in Missoula.
- "HMIS" is the database used to collect client-level data and data on services provided to houseless individuals and families. It allows authorized partner agencies in Missoula Coordinated Entry System to input, use, receive, and share information, subject to agreements, regarding clients. This information then populates the By-Name List, past and current.

Missoula Organization of Realtors (MOR) Dashboards

- In partnership with the Missoula Organization of Realtors, MCES/HMIS data is housed in the MOR dashboard. This data offers a longitudinal perspective of homelessness and data quality over time. Please note, MOR dashboard counts include every household served by month or year, not just those who were unhoused at the end of the month.

Point in Time (PIT) Count

- Annual, HUD-required, count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. Both local and statewide PIT data utilized.

Acronym Glossary

CoC: Continuum of Care

ESG: Emergency Solutions Grant

FUSE: Frequent Users of System Engagement

HMIS: Homeless Management Information System

HUD-VASH: Dept. of Housing & Urban Development – Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing

MCES: Missoula Coordinated Entry System

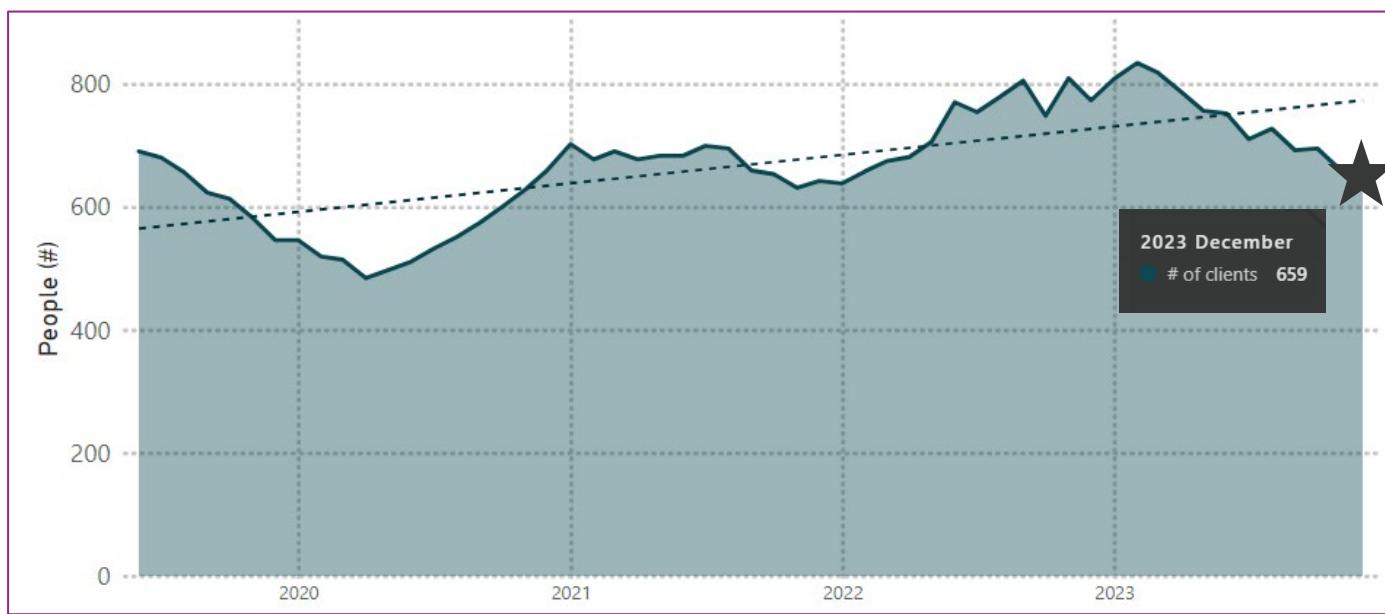
PSH: Permanent Supportive Housing

RRH: Rapid Rehousing

State of Houselessness

The following graphics include information on the current state of houselessness in Missoula. Some information is offered as a snapshot, or what houselessness looks like in real-time, today. Other data is comprehensive counts over time to show how different populations' experiences of houselessness have changed by year. Snapshot data is from a single day in March. Yearly data is pulled directly from MCES enrollments in HMIS, aggregated by year. All other data will be titled with its source, including the Point in Time count (PIT), the City and Partners' Unsheltered Survey, and the City's Missoula Housing and Community Needs Survey.

Below is a screenshot the Missoula Organization of Realtors (MOR) social data dashboard, showing overall trends in houselessness in Missoula from 2019 through 2023. Please take note that the count of **659 households** represents all households served by MCES in the month of December; it does not represent the total number of unsheltered households at the end of the month. *For more information, please see slides 15-19 [here](#).*



State of Houselessness: Emergency Shelter + Transitional Housing Beds

As of March 2024, Missoula has 513 emergency shelter beds, including two adult emergency shelters, emergency family shelter, and a domestic violence shelter. Missoula has up to 12 transitional housing beds for families and up to 28 transitional housing beds for veterans.

Missoula's shelter capacity has increased due to the approval of a year-long shelter at Johnson Street. This shelter is only guaranteed through September 2024, at which time a continuation or alternate shelter will need be determined. Missoula's shelter capacity is currently at 553 beds, including both Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing, as of Spring 2024.

This is not enough to meet the need both in literal capacity, but also in the spectrum of unique options for individual households. Some households may not be eligible, or may opt out of, the available options for a variety of personal and structural reasons.

Emergency Shelter + Transitional Housing Capacity (# of beds)

Emergency Shelter

YWCA Family Housing Center	124
YWCA Domestic Violence Shelter	49
Poverello Center – Broadway Shelter	135
Poverello Center – Johnson Street Shelter	165
Hope Rescue Mission - Temporary Safe Outdoor Space	40
Total Emergency Shelter	513

Transitional Housing

Poverello Center - Housing Montana Heroes	20
Poverello Center – Veteran Shelter Program	8
YWCA Transitional Housing	12
Total Transitional Housing	40
Total Emergency Shelter/Transitional Housing Capacity	553

State of Houselessness: 2023 Point in Time (PIT) Count

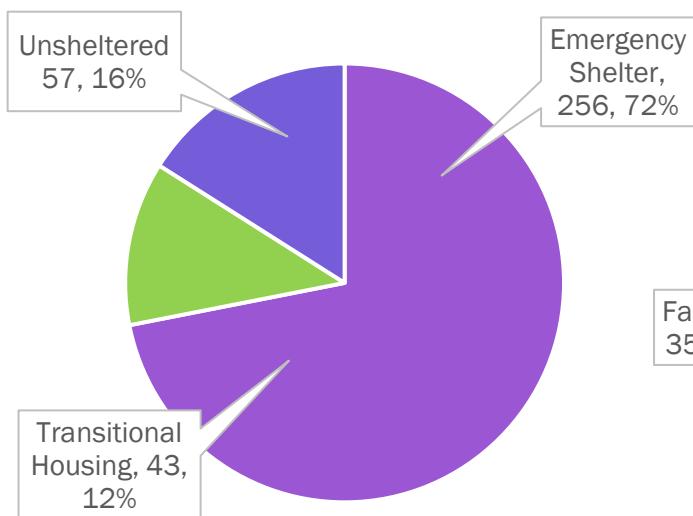
The 2023 PIT survey revealed that there were 356 people in Missoula experiencing houselessness in January 2023, which was the second highest in the state (16.3%). These 356 people (including children and other household members) were either in an emergency shelter (256), transitional housing (43) or were unsheltered (57) on the night of the 2023 PIT Count.

Of the 356 people experiencing houselessness in Missoula, 129 individuals met the definition of chronic homelessness (40% of all individuals surveyed). For the 35 family households experiencing houselessness, 14 (40%) met the definition of chronic homelessness. Missoula currently receives HUD Continuum of Care funding to support Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and Rapid Re-housing (RRH) programs.

Thirty-five (35) households, with a total of 29 children aged 0-17, and three-hundred twenty-one (321) individuals experienced houselessness in Missoula on the night of 2023 PIT survey.

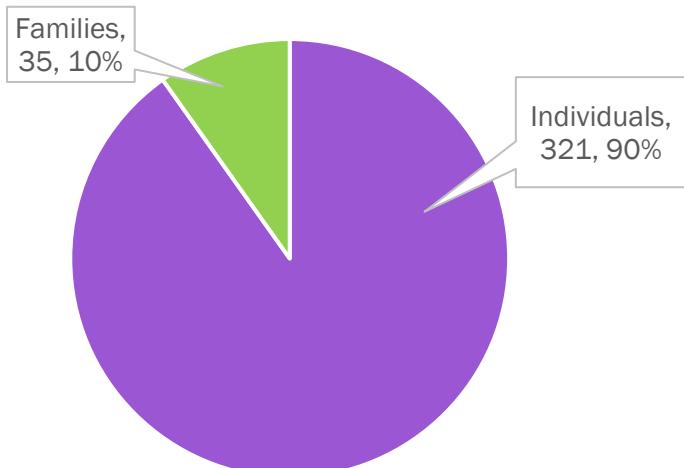
Point in Time data has its limitations. While Missoula's efforts are robust, both at the shelter level and in collaboration with organizations providing street outreach, we see much lower counts of households in PIT than we do in the local coordinated entry system.

2023 Point in Time Count by Shelter Type



Total households counted
356

2023 Point in Time Count by Household Type



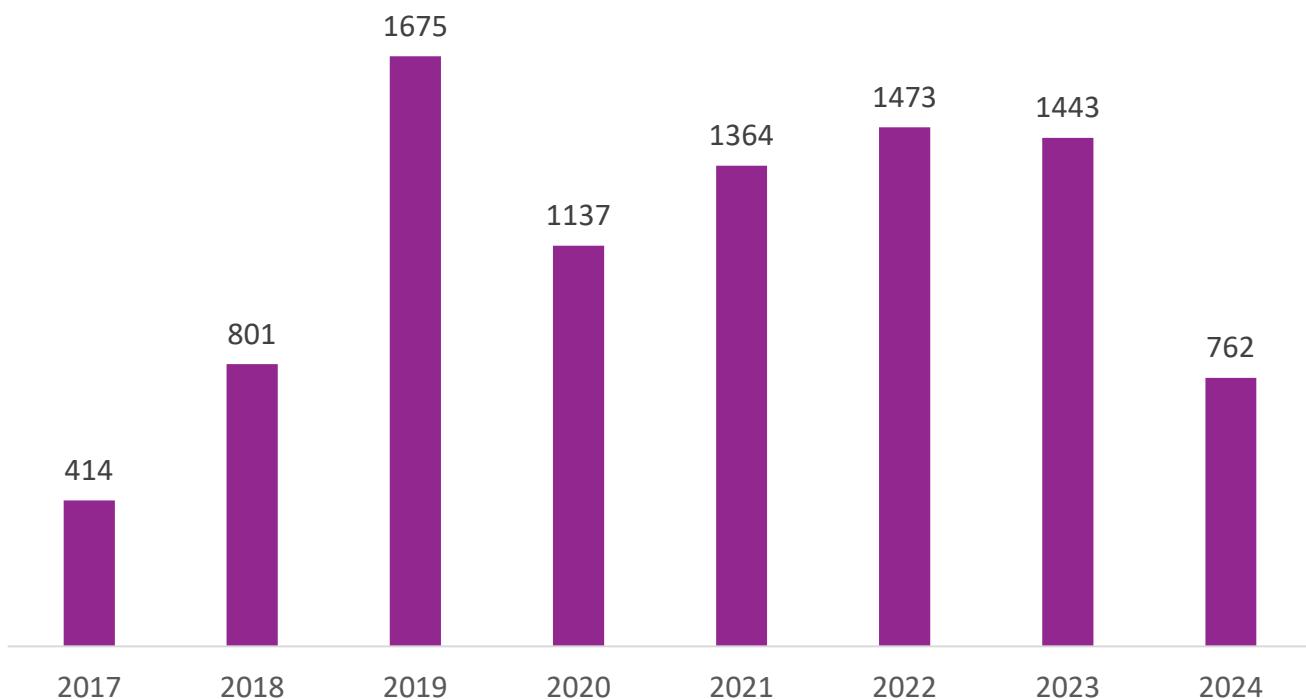
State of Houselessness: Total Served by Missoula Coordinated Entry System

The Missoula Coordinated Entry System's By-Name-List aims to give our local CoC a robust set of data points that can be used in addition to our annual PIT survey to define who is experiencing homelessness at any given time. On March 1st, 2024, there were 634 households on the By-Name-List. The graphic below shows, by year, the total number of individuals and families in the Missoula Coordinated Entry System who had an experience of being unhoused for any length of time since 2017. The Missoula Coordinated Entry System was created in 2017, so earlier counts are not wholly reflective of how many people were unhoused, rather the progressive engagement and systemic development of early implementation. 2024's count is incomplete, capturing the first three months of the year from January 1st -March 1st, 2024. Yearly totals include any household served in that year; it is not the total count at the end of the year.

All MCES data is voluntarily shared by those experiencing homelessness. Some households may opt out of certain data requests. Omitted responses are not included in total counts.

Missoula received third party verification of Quality Data in our Coordinated Entry System in November 2023, starting in June 2023. Local MCES data is reliable and comprehensive. For more information, please see [Missoula, Montana Reaches Quality Data milestone for all single adults experiencing homelessness](#) (Community Solutions, 2023).

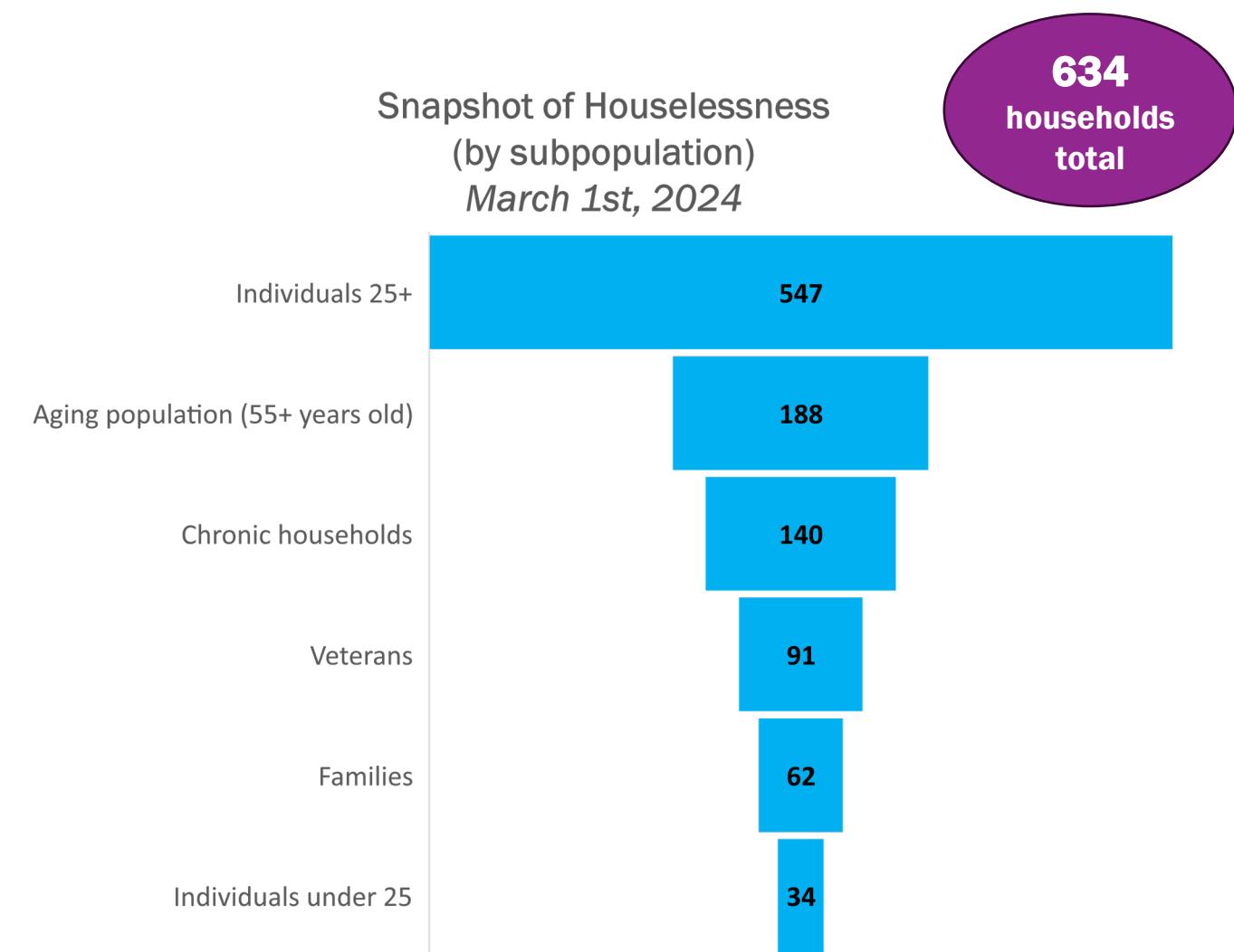
Total Served by Missoula Coordinated Entry System (by year)



State of Houselessness: MCES Subpopulation Snapshot

Missoula Coordinated Entry System utilizes the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to track and monitor the number of individuals experiencing homelessness at any given time in Missoula. The below snapshot of homelessness in Missoula, shows the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness on March 1st, 2024, by various subpopulations. In total, there were 634 individuals and heads of household in MCES, the majority of those being single, non-Veteran adults aged 25 and older. Note that the number 62 refers to heads of household for families and does not include individual family members. Some households may fall into several subpopulation categories and are therefore counted in each.

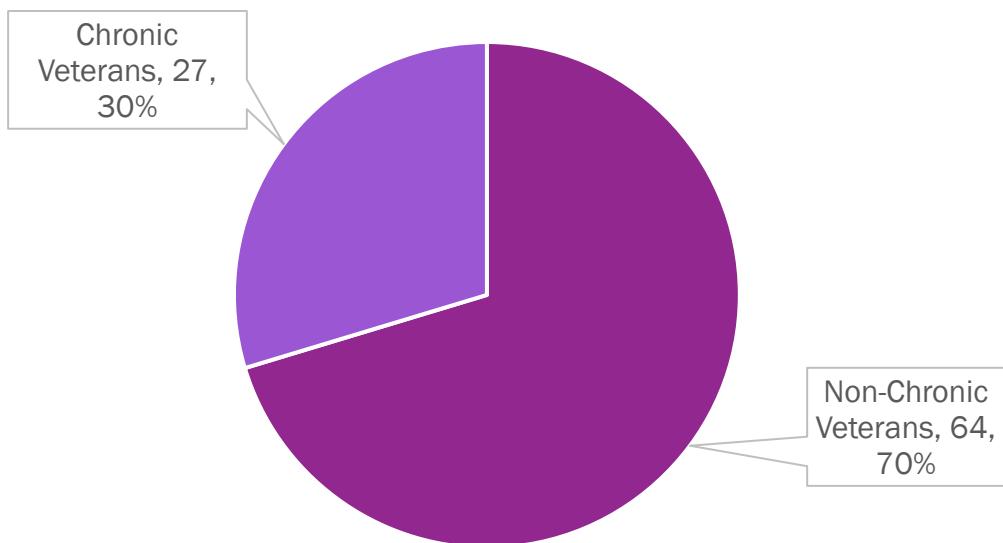
For those designated as chronically homeless, HUD defines chronicity as a household with a disabling condition that has experienced homelessness for the last year consecutively or that has had four episodes of homelessness in the last three years separated by breaks.



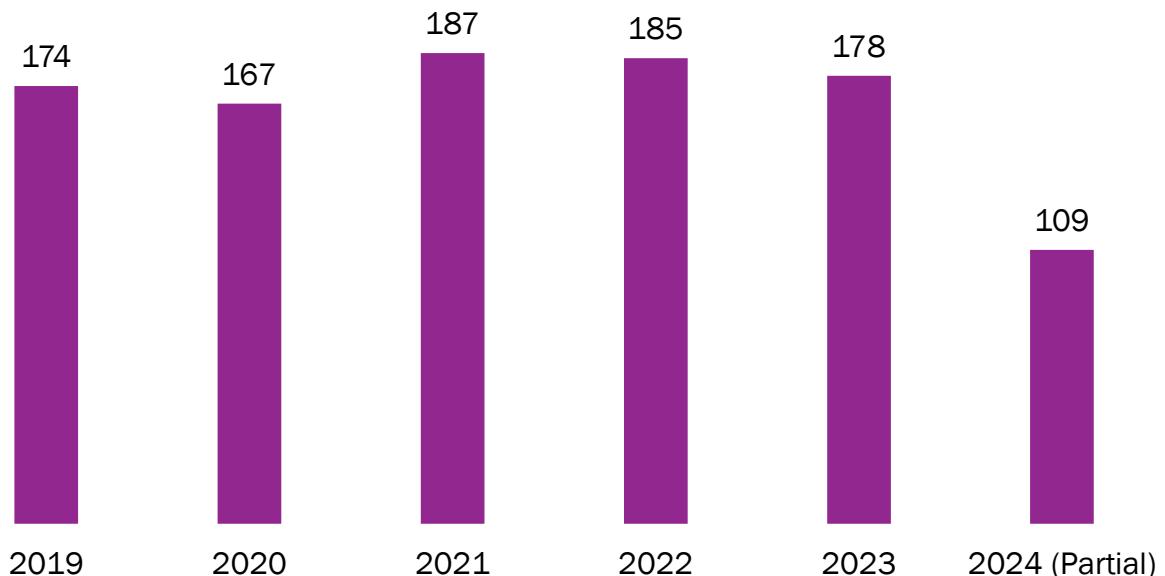
State of Houselessness: Veterans

Veteran status is requested at the time of intake into MCES. Veterans included are those who self-reported veteran status.

Missoula Coordinated Entry System Snapshot on 3/1/2024



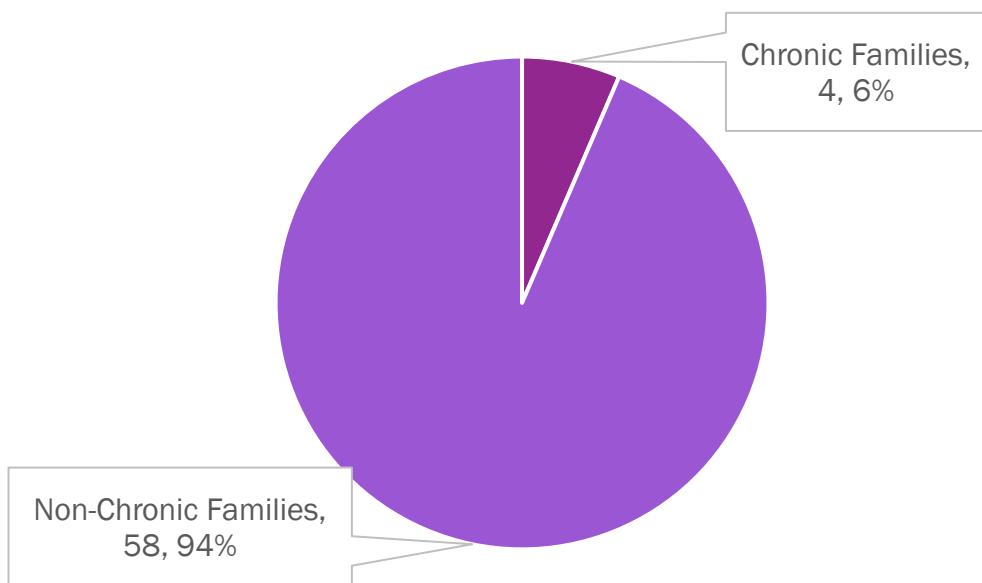
Total Veterans Served by MCES (by year)



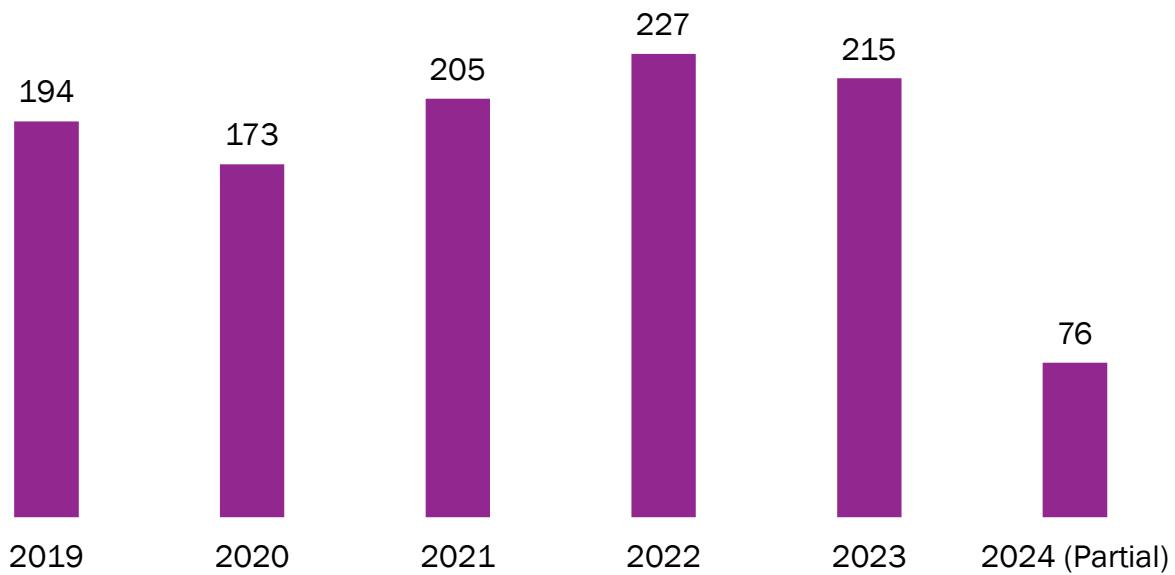
State of Houselessness: Families

MCES defines “family” as households with children under the age of 18 in the household or households with a pregnant member.

Missoula Coordinated Entry System
Snapshot on 3/1/2024



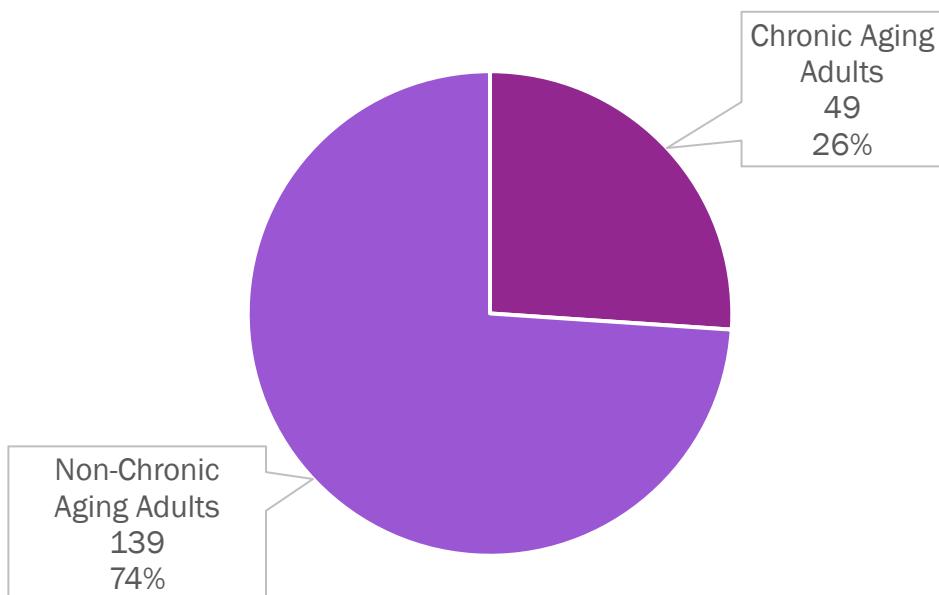
Families served by MCES (by year)



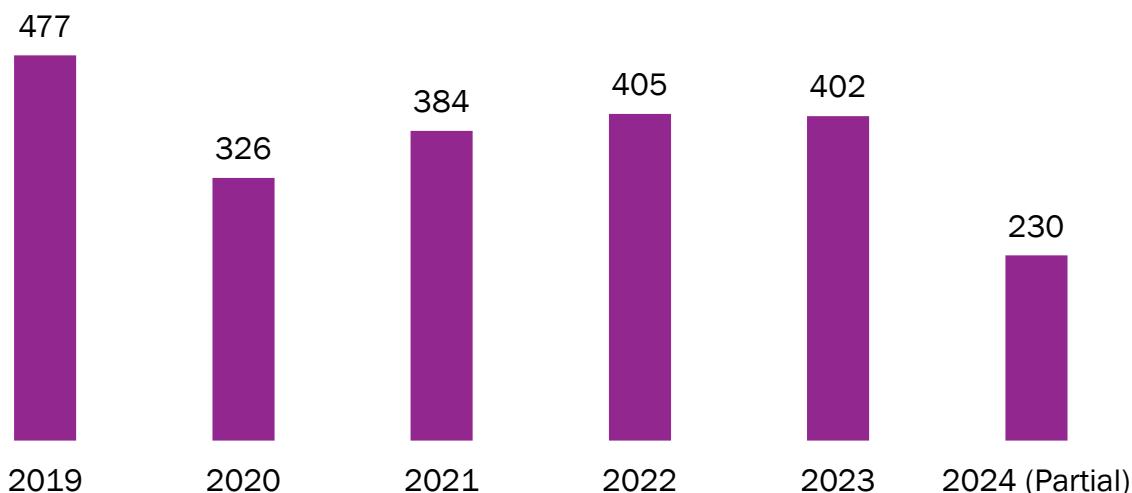
State of Houselessness: Aging Adults 55+ Years Old

MCES considers those aged 55 and older as “aging”, given that being without stable housing impacts health at an accelerated rate. Significant research has occurred on this topic. For a collection of some, see this [article](#) and associated links.

Missoula Coordinated Entry System Snapshot on 3/1/2024



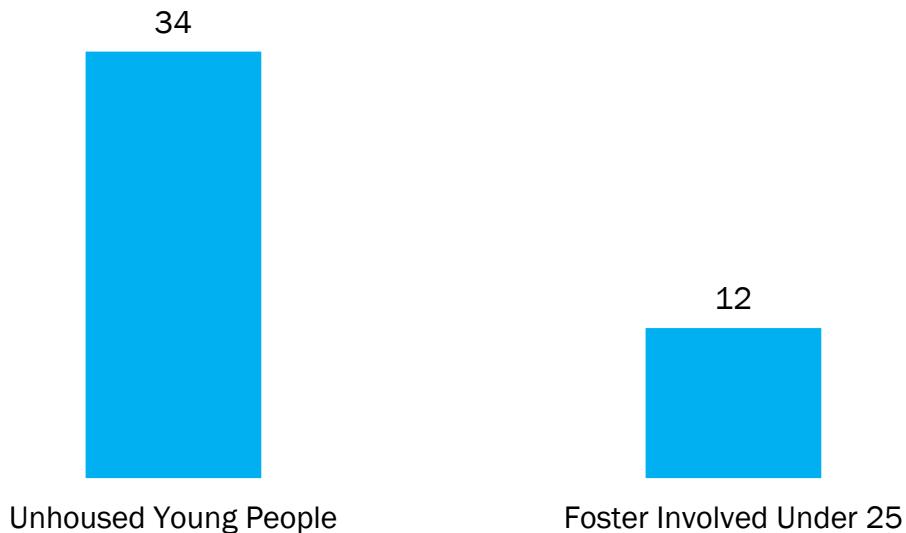
Aging Adults 55+ Served by MCES (by year)



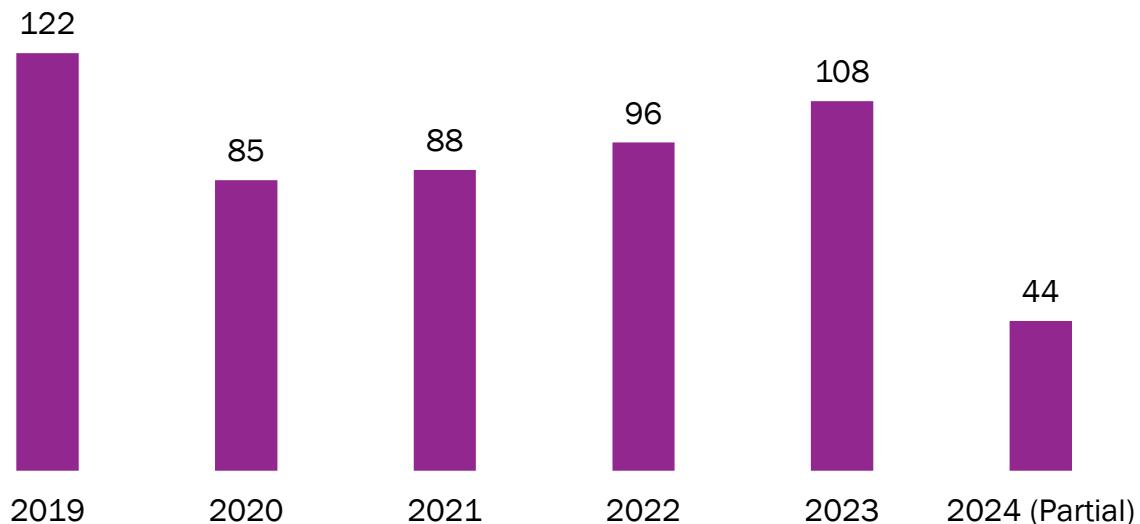
State of Houselessness: Unhoused Young People

Those aged 18-24 are considered Transitional Aged Youth, or locally as "Unhoused Young People". In recent years, MCES has also served several unaccompanied youth aged 17. In lieu of chronicity, those with experience in the foster care system are highlighted here.

Missoula Coordinated Entry System Snapshot on 3/1/2024



Unhoused Young People aged 17-24 Served by MCES (by year)

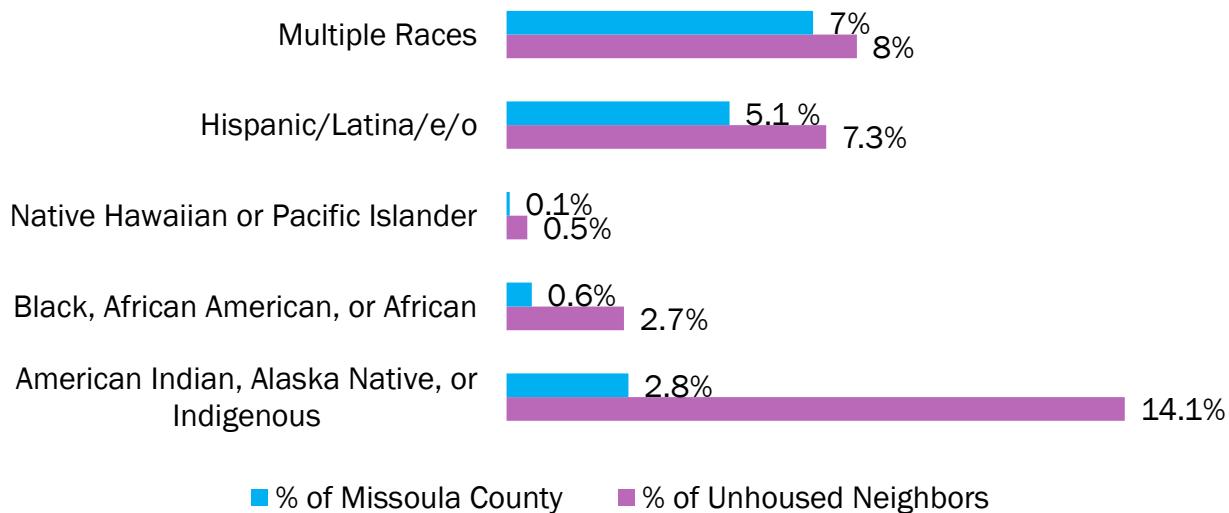


State of Houselessness: Racial Disparity

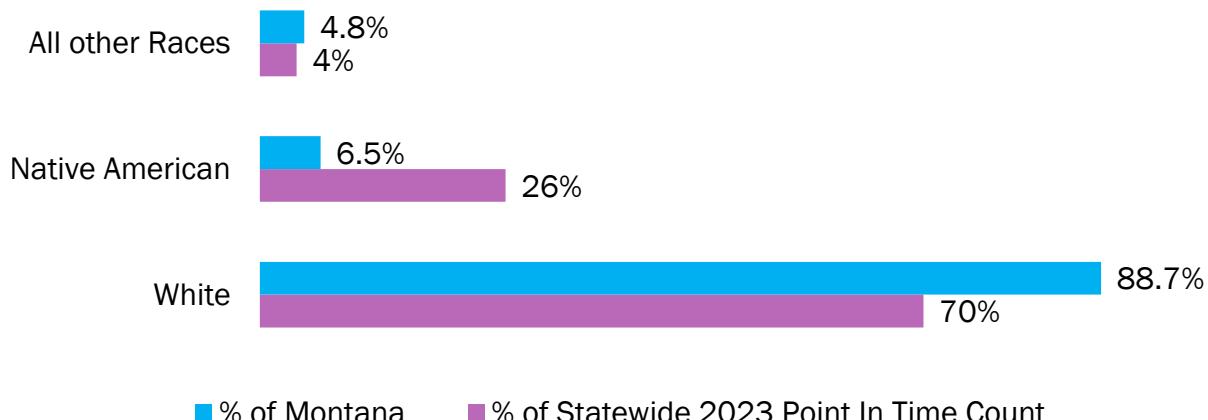
Experiences of houselessness occur more frequently for those who identify as Indigenous, multi-racial, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian, or Black in Missoula. Due to historical and contemporary systems of racism and discrimination, Missoula and Montana see an overrepresentation of racialized households in the houseless response system.

The below graphics epitomize this disparity by comparing representation amongst systems tracking houselessness to overall representation of Missoula County and the state of Montana Census counts.

Missoula Coordinated Entry System Snapshot on 3/18/2024



Racial Disparity across Montana

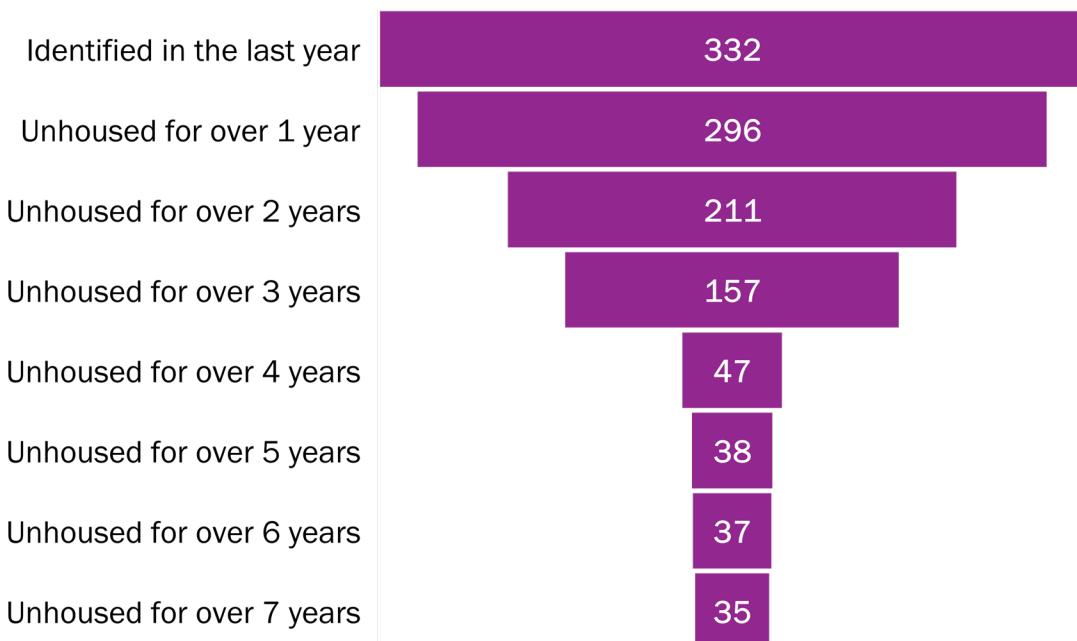


State of Houselessness: Length of Time Unhoused

Households that have been in and out of the houseless response system for three or more years may require additional supportive services or unique and dynamic solutions to find housing that meet their needs. Many households' experiences of houselessness are shorter term. The graphic below shows the number of households for each duration of houselessness on March 1st, 2024.

The start of an episode of houselessness is determined by the earliest MCES enrollment in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Some households may have been in and out of houselessness since being first identified, but they are currently active and are unhoused.

**Households Experiencing Houselessness
(by date first identified by MCES)**



State of Houselessness: Cause of Episode of Houselessness

In early 2023, Coordinated Entry System partners across the state of Montana crafted an additional assessment question to identify the root causes of individual experiences of houselessness. Those experiencing houselessness are asked to identify out of a list of fourteen of the most common causes of houselessness which apply to their current situation. They can select multiple, co-occurring causes. The results below are from those who were actively unhoused in Missoula as of March 1st, 2024, a total of **276** households shared this information, which gives insight into the systemic underpinnings of houselessness in Missoula.

Missoula Coordinated Entry System Snapshot on 3/1/2024

1. Mental Health

For those who responded 'yes' to Mental Health, the Top Three Secondary Causes of Houselessness are family conflict, physical disability, and job loss.

2. Job Loss

For those who responded 'yes' to Job Loss, the Top Three Secondary Causes of Houselessness are family conflict, mental health, and transportation issues.

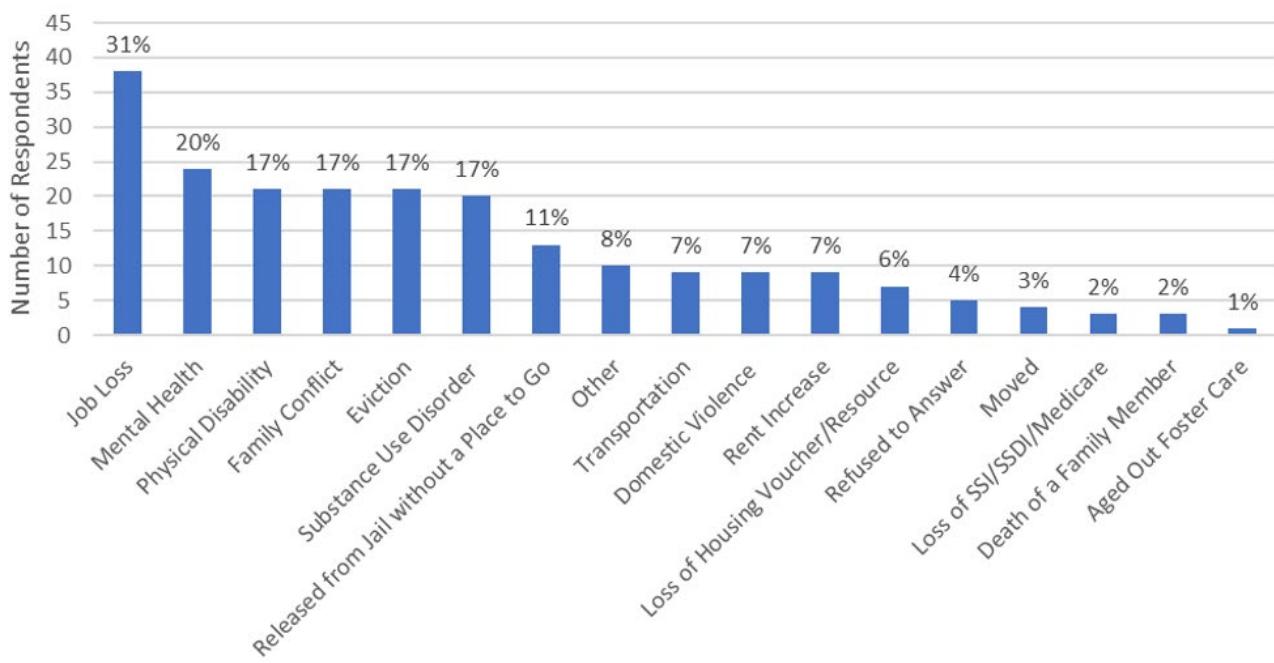
3. Family Conflict (divorce, parents kicking out, etc.)

For those who responded 'yes' to Family Conflict, the Top Three Secondary Causes of Houselessness are mental health, job loss, and physical disability.

State of Houselessness: Cause of Episode of Houselessness, Unsheltered Survey

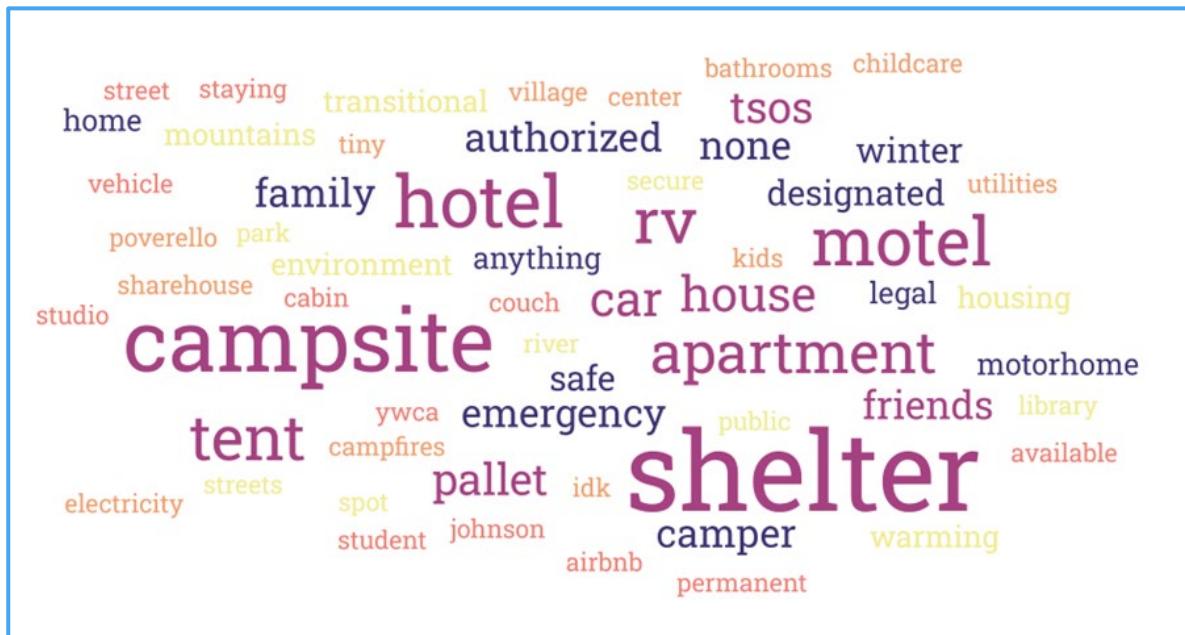
Created to better understand who's living without shelter in Missoula, how our community can support them, and what kind of resources they would like to see in Missoula, the 2023 Unsheltered Survey gathered information from those living without shelter (in camps, on the streets, or in vehicles). The following graphics describe the responses for cause of houselessness, temporary shelter preferences, and supportive services that were most beneficial. *For all findings, please review the Update on Missoula's Houseless Data presentation [here](#).*

*What has caused this episode of houselessness?
(select all that apply)*

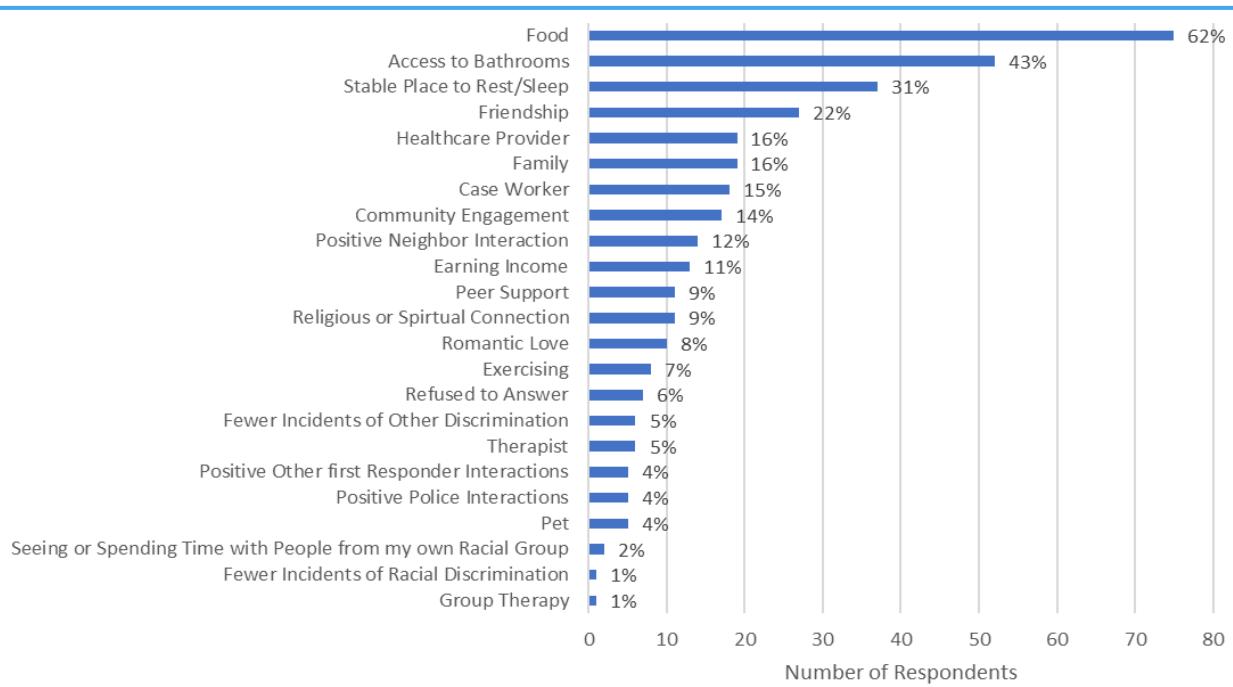


State of Houselessness: Shelter Preferences + Supportive Services Unsheltered Survey

If you could access any temporary living environment that you would want to use while being unhoused, what would it look like?



What made you feel more supported in the community in the last week? (Select all that apply)



State of Houselessness: City's Housing and Community Needs Survey

From August through December 2023, the City of Missoula's Housing and Community Needs Survey collected 730 resident responses on the City's unmet housing, community development, and economic development needs. The following information were specifically solicited from those living without housing. Additionally, the top community development priorities from all survey participants is highlighted. To review the entire document, follow this link: [HUD Grants | Missoula, MT - Official Website](https://www.hud.gov/grants/missoula-mt-official-website).

Top Five Community Development Outcomes for the City to Prioritize (all survey respondents)

Increased access to mental health care services	Increased access to addiction treatment services	Additional and/or higher quality childcare centers	Street and sidewalk improvements	Climate resilience-focused planning and implementation
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What type of shelter is most needed in Missoula? (responses from those living unhoused)

- "A larger, year round [shelter] where people can keep their pets and there is separate space for families and women."
- "Domestic violence shelters that accommodate companion animals."
- "Camping facilities, with bathroom, shower, and garbage facilities maintained by a committee or cooperative of the residents."
- "Long-term, low-barrier housing, an outdoor public authorized camping space, and designated lots/space for those car camping."
- "Transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, permanent affordable housing."

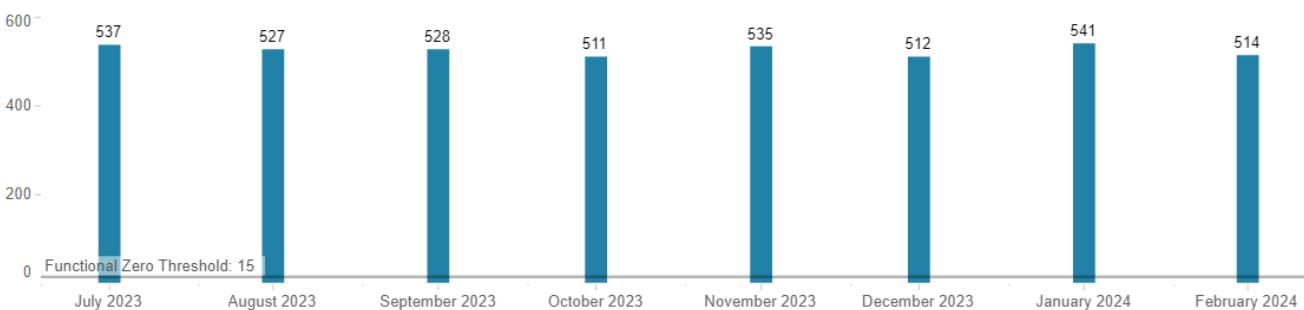
What kind of shelter would best meet your needs, or the needs of other unhoused residents? (responses from those living unhoused or previously unhoused)

- "Affordable rental housing for single parents that don't qualify for low-income programs."
- "A shelter that provides safety for all residents, bathrooms, needle pickup, showers, trash pickup, and a grievance process that allows residents to advocate for themselves and appeal being kicked out indefinitely through neutral-party mediation."
- "An apartment that I can afford that has healthy living conditions. Our current rental has incredibly ridiculous issues and mold issues. There is 6 of us living in 740 square feet and the rent cost kills me."
- "Just a place to shower."

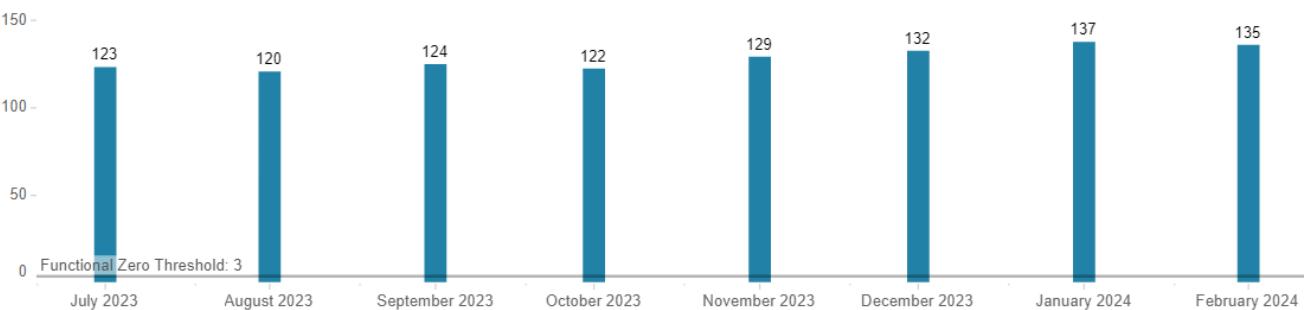
State of Houselessness: Built for Zero Performance Measure Tracker + Functional Zero Thresholds

Submitted monthly, the City of Missoula staff report total numbers of active households, those inflowing into the system, and those moving into inactivity or housing. Community Solutions' Built for Zero tracks the metrics to determine reliability of data, and to recognize shifts in overall houselessness. Since reaching Quality Data in 2023, the following subpopulations' counts are totaled below. This is the number of households experiencing houselessness at the end of each month. Additionally, these graphs show different thresholds for reaching Functional Zero.

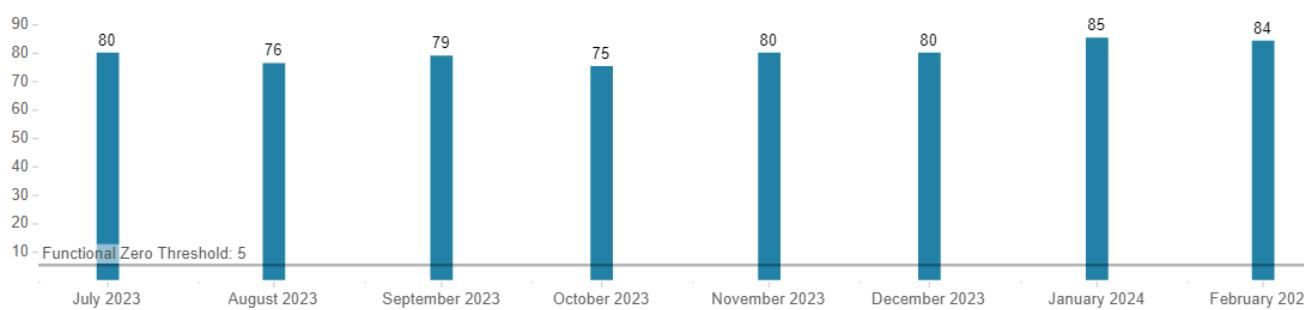
Actively Homeless Population Monthly count for All Single Adults



Actively Homeless Population Monthly count for Chronic Single Adults



Actively Homeless Population Monthly count for Veteran Single Adults

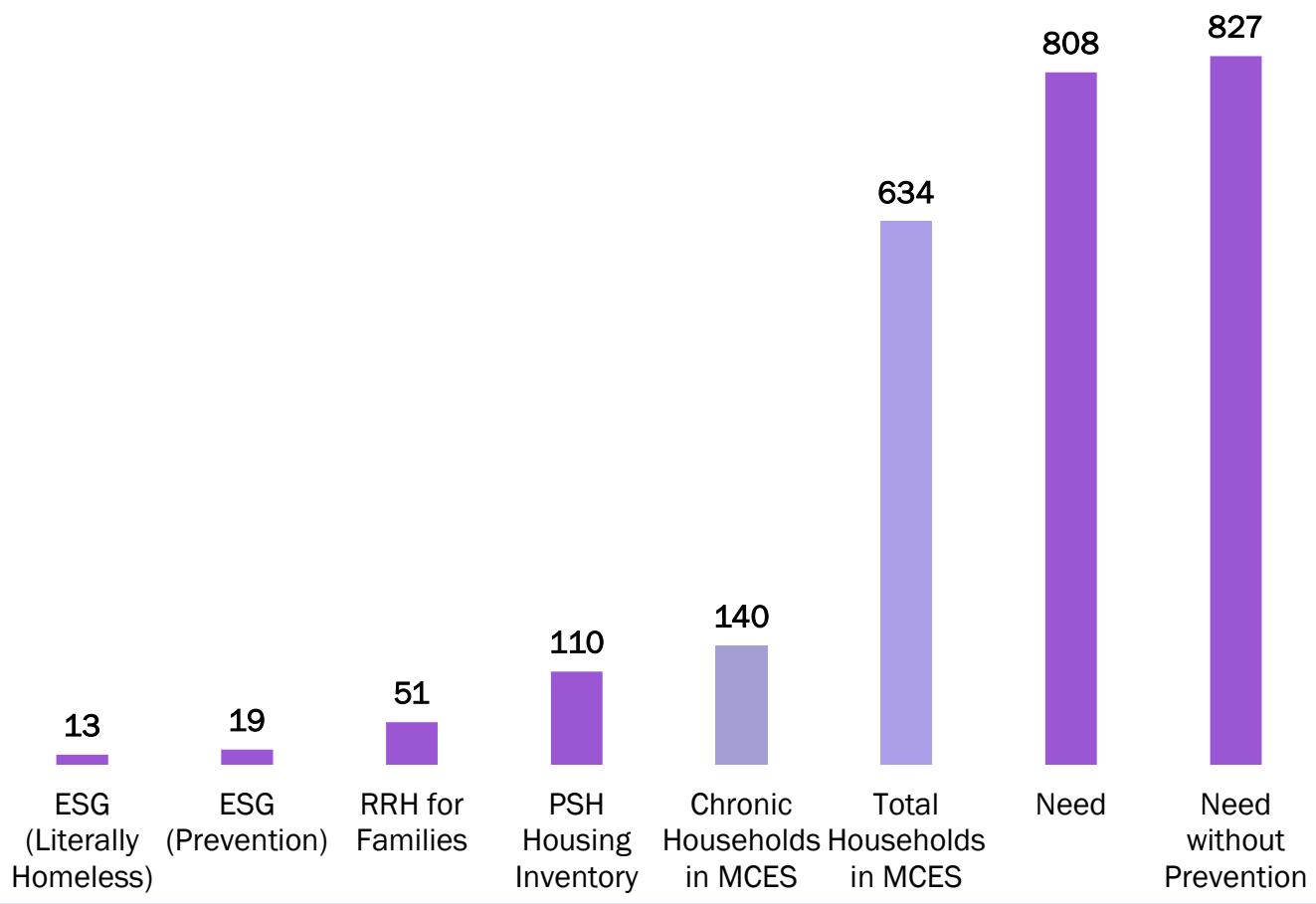


Permanent Housing Needs

The At-Risk Housing Coalition (ARHC) continues to explore strategies for increasing various permanent housing options for people experiencing houselessness in our community—to include exploring Housing First solutions, increasing the stock of affordable rental units and permanent supportive housing, and expanding on our Coordinated Entry System prevention and diversion efforts. Overall ARHC membership and attendance has remained steady in the past year. Missoula has been facing serious challenges due to a Nationally impactful housing crisis with rental vacancies consistently below healthy percentages. The Coalition has come together to provide cross-organizational support and adapt quickly in real time to keep services moving.

In 2023, Missoula Housing Authority's Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) served a total of 178 individuals (113 households). So far in Fiscal Year 2024, MHA's PSH has served 174 individuals (110 households), including a property-based PSH program at Blue Heron Place. Currently, PSH targets those experiencing chronic homelessness. In addition to the 110 current households, 140 actively unhoused individuals and families are in need. A total of 634 households need any permanent housing solution. While PSH is a vital resource in addressing houselessness, Rapid Rehousing (RRH) and Prevention funding are equally important. Without either resource, the overall need by household increases dramatically.

Existing CoC Programs and Overall System Need



Missoula Continuum of Care Coordination and Engagement

Missoula's CoC is facilitated and organized by the City of Missoula's Community Planning, Development & Innovation (CPDI) department. CPDI solicits and considers opinions from individuals and organizations with knowledge of homelessness or an interest in preventing or ending homelessness through a variety of subcommittees and projects, including the Missoula Coordinated Entry System and its Oversight Committee, local SOAR Steering Committee, Homeless Persons' Memorial, ARHC Executive Committee, Houseless Providers Working Group, Point in Time Count, and general CoC subcommittee. The table to follow includes organizations by focus area but does not necessarily represent the total number of individuals in ARHC or the Missoula Coordinated Entry System.

Category of Service	Name of Organization
Local Government Staff/Officials	Dept. of Corrections, Missoula City-County Health Dept., Missoula County Dept. of Grants and Community Programs, City of Missoula's Dept. of CPDI
CDBG/HOME/ESG Entitlement Jurisdiction	City of Missoula's Dept. of CPDI
Law Enforcement	Missoula Police Dept., City of Missoula's Crisis Intervention Team
Local Jail(s)	Western Montana Mental Health Center Jail Diversion Program, Missoula Sheriff's Dept.
Hospital(s)	Partnership Health Center, Providence Health & Services
EMT/Crisis Response Teams	Partnership Health Center, Missoula Emergency Services Inc. (MESI), Mobile Support Team, Western Montana Mental Health Center
Mental Health Service Organizations	3 Rivers Mental Health, Winds of Change, Western Montana Mental Health Center, Partnership Health Center, Mountain Home Montana, Open Aid Alliance, AWARE
Substance Use Service Organizations	Western Montana Mental Health Center, Partnership Health Center, Open Aid Alliance
Affordable Housing Developer(s)	Homeword, North-Missoula Community Development Corporation
Disability Service Organizations	Missoula Aging Services

Missoula Continuum of Care Coordination and Engagement *continued*

Category of Service	Name of Organization
Disability Advocates	Summit Independent Living, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI Missoula), Missoula Aging Services
Public Housing Authorities	Missoula Housing Authority
CoC Funded Youth Homeless Organizations	Mountain Home Montana, Human Resource Council – Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project
Non-CoC Funded Youth Homeless Organizations	Salvation Army, Youth Homes CHAFEE program
Youth Advocates	Associated Students of the University of Montana Renter Center, Missoula County Public Schools
School Administrators/Homeless Liaisons	Missoula County Public Schools
CoC Funded Victim Service Providers	YWCA
Domestic Violence Advocates	YWCA
Street Outreach Team(s)	Hope Rescue Mission, Poverello Center, Western Montana Mental Health Center, Partnership Health Center, Open Aid Alliance
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ+) Advocates	Open Aid Alliance
Agencies that serve survivors of human trafficking	YWCA
Other homeless subpopulation advocates	Human Resource Council XI, International Rescue Committee, Missoula Food Bank & Community Center, Missoula Interfaith Collaborative, Open Aid Alliance, United Way of Missoula County, VA Montana – HUD-VASH, Volunteers of America, Veterans Inc., All Nations, Missoula Aging Services
Homeless or Formerly Homeless Persons	Open Aid Alliance, Poverello Center, Hope Rescue Mission* <i>*listed organizations have staff with lived expertise; Missoula does not have a formal body or council of lived experts</i>

CoC Coordination and Engagement

Coordination with Federal, State, Local, Private and other Organizations

- Missoula Housing Authority (MHA), the YWCA, Open Aid Alliance and Missoula City/County have direct relationships with HUD. MHA also works closely with the Veterans Affairs (VA) Liaison.
- Houseless Programs Coordinated Entry Specialist attends and contributes to monthly statewide phone calls on Coordinated Entry.
- Missoula has three representatives on the CoC Board.
- Mountain Home and Open Aid Alliance partner with DPHHS.
- ARHC Membership includes local government, nonprofits, and private agencies.
- The City's Department of Community Planning Development and Innovation (CPDI) is responsible for developing the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan (AAP) and consults with ESG recipients and homeless service providers to communicate and address local homelessness needs.
- Missoula Coordinated Entry System has partners from governmental, nonprofit, and private organizations.

CoC Coordination and Engagement

Addressing the Needs of Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking

- The YWCA, an active voting member of ARHC, is our primary provider of both domestic violence services and emergency housing and rapid rehousing for unhoused families and has been tracking the intersection of DV and homelessness for many years. As of May of 2021, the YWCA has operated an expanded facility in partnership with Missoula Interfaith Collaborative's Family Promise. The Family Housing Center includes the family housing and domestic violence shelter in one facility. MIC provides supportive services and system access during weekly drop-in hours at the Family Housing Center.
- Missoula prioritizes HUD Homeless Categories 1 and 4 for Missoula Coordinated Entry System (MCES). MCES agencies refer Category 4, those fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, directly to the YWCA or their 24-hr crisis line where trained advocates can facilitate safety planning, with household consent.
- MCES has a robust system of ensuring that those who remain as “Unique Identifiers”, due to safety risks associated with domestic violence, are still considered for other resources in which they are eligible for.
- The City’s Houseless Programs staff continue to engage with CES leads statewide to ensure that our CES is supportive of and responsive to the needs of survivors of domestic violence and in accordance with state and federal Violence Against Women Act regulations.

CoC Coordination and Engagement

Addressing the Needs of LGBTQIA+ Individuals

- ARHC agencies have diversity statements in their employee handbooks.
- EmpowerMT has provided trainings to YWCA, Mountain Home Montana and ARHC General Meeting, and the broader MCES.
- MCES and partnering agencies are required to adhere to HUD's Equal Access Rule (equal access to HUD housing programs without regard to a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status). Annual training is provided, statewide, for MCES programs.
- At the end of 2022, Missoula Coordinated Entry System added a line to its Policies & Procedures to dictate that self-reported identities are honored and reported in MCES spaces and HMIS.

CoC Coordination and Engagement

Public Housing Agencies

- The Missoula Housing Authority has had an admission preference for homeless households since 2005. MHA has project-based Housing Choice Vouchers, including those identified as FUSE clients (unhoused individuals that frequently use crisis services), unhoused veterans and victims of domestic violence. MHA also administers HUD-VASH and Emergency Housing Vouchers. Last year, 27% of their new admissions into the Housing Choice Voucher program were homeless at intake.
- Missoula's Youth Homes Chafee program, in collaboration with Missoula Housing Authority (MHA), provides access to Foster Youth to Independence vouchers to young adults that are literally, or at-risk of becoming homeless who were involved in foster care. MHA served 9 households with FYI vouchers in 2023.
- For those in our community who have experienced chronic homelessness, we utilize Permanent Supportive Housing vouchers administered by MHA.
- Missoula Housing Authority and Human Resource Council District XI are integral partners of the Missoula Coordinated Entry System, engage in local Case Conferencing meetings, as well as the policymaking and system Oversight Committee.

CoC Coordination and Engagement

Discharge Planning

- Western Montana Mental Health Center coordinates with the Montana State Hospital as well as St. Patrick Hospital and Community Medical Center. WMMHC has an Outreach and Resource Coordinator that orchestrates and supports transitions from institutions to community.
- Missoula has adopted a Jail Diversion Masterplan.
- The Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS) employs one Community Liaison Outreach Specialist in Missoula, located at Western Montana Mental Health Center.
- St. Patrick Hospital coordinates with Montana State Hospital regarding patients being conditionally released.
- Missoula has a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program that organizes and facilitates care coordination for those discharging from institutions, as well as those engaging frequently with emergency services. CIT is a community partnership of law enforcement, medical and first responders, emergency dispatchers, mental health services, attorneys, advocacy groups, and homeless service providers.
- As of Fall 2023, Missoula's Crisis Receiving Center, Riverwalk, opened for quick, responsive crisis stabilization for community members. Staffing includes nursing, peer support, and case management.

CoC Coordination and Engagement

Housing First and Reducing Barriers

- 100% of CoC funded programs and MCES partners commit to adopting and implementing a Housing First approach for application into their programs, as outlined in the Montana Continuum of Care Coalition **Housing First Assessment** which includes scoring on Low-Barrier Access, Retention, and Engagement.
- Housing First is a foundational value of the City's Houseless Programs, which includes the Missoula Coordinated Entry System and its partners. Houseless Programs is responsive to needs for expanded shelter options across a spectrum including low-barrier shelter options. Since inception, Emergency Winter Shelter has operated on a lowest-barrier, Housing First model, and is now operating for a whole year.
- As of February 2023, the YWCA's Family Housing Center discontinued the requirement of a security deposit to ensure greater access and fewer barriers to families entering shelter.

CoC Coordination and Engagement

Street Outreach

- Missoula's Community Outreach Team (WMMHC's PATH program, Poverello Center's Homeless Outreach Team, Open Aid Alliance, Volunteers of America, Hope Rescue Mission and others) is covering the city of Missoula, the urban area around Missoula, as well as East Missoula and Bonner.
- Partnership Health Center collects data on housing status in Seeley Lake and Mineral County and provides connection to services and/or referrals.
- Missoula Aging Services employs a Resource Specialist for the Seeley Lake area.
- Our District School Liaisons identify at-risk and houseless families and youth in Missoula County Schools.
- Both the VA and VOA provide outreach and services to our entire geographic area. They also receive referrals from primary health care providers outside of Missoula.
- Outreach and service connection for more rural areas and counties remains challenging and limited.

CoC Coordination and Engagement

Affirmative Outreach

- Missoula provides information on how to receive documents in alternative formats and to receive auxiliary aids and services to persons with disabilities to participate in and enjoy the benefits of the programs/activities receiving federal assistance including telecommunication devices for deaf or hard of hearing (TTY/State Relay number 711). Printed materials are made available to participants, applicants, beneficiaries, and employees, and in procedures where persons can contact and obtain information concerning the existence and location of accessible services, activities, and facilities. Translation services are vital, as Missoula has a growing refugee population. The Montana CES has drafted a version of its assessment to accommodate Spanish-speaking participants.
- Acting against discrimination via Montana Fair Housing and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is a routine and encouraged practice amongst partners with a growing number of training opportunities becoming available.

CoC Coordination and Engagement

Criminalization

- Missoula is actively involved in Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Montana and provides a 40-hour basic academy each year. CIT is a collaborative effort between law enforcement, mental health agencies and community resource providers. This program continues to grow with two positions fully funded to expand beyond the annual academy, a CIT Program Manager and Data Analyst.
- In addition to the CIT academy, the CIT operates a regular case conferencing to dialogue individuals who need robust wrap-around services. This space includes members of the CIT, as well as service providers from mental health and medical facilities. CIT is a partnering program of Missoula's CES; there is overlap in providers in both groups.
- Mayor's Downtown Advisory Commission (MDAC) works to prevent the criminalization of being unhoused or experiencing poverty, among other issues of quality of life in downtown Missoula. Several members of ARHC are also MDAC members.
- The Poverello Center's Homeless Outreach Team educates the community at large about the issues of homelessness and hunger. They provide a HOT line for community members who wish to deter the use of costly emergency services related to homeless issues.
- The City of Missoula's Municipal Court holds twice-monthly "Shelter Courts" where judges and legal staff facilitate quick, low-risk review of non-violent cases impacting unhoused residents. In partnership with Municipal Court, Missoula County operates a Pretrial Assistance to Supportive Success (PASS) program that supports those with upcoming court appearances. PASS services include text reminders and supportive services connections to increase stability and likelihood of appearance. Both PASS and Municipal Court are active partners of the Missoula Coordinated Entry System.

CoC Coordination and Engagement

Rapid Rehousing

Rapid Rehousing in Missoula saw an increase in utilization in the last year. A lack of affordable housing continues to be a barrier, and new developments have provided some relief. Both the YWCA's CoC RRH and Human Resource Council's ESG take referrals exclusively from Missoula Coordinated Entry System.

- YWCA CoC funds for Families and Single Survivors of Domestic Violence
 - 51 units rented in Missoula (10 one-bedrooms, 34 two-bedrooms, 7 three-bedrooms) between 7/1/2022-6/30/2023.
 - From July 1, 2023 to February 23rd, 2024, 13 families exited the program, 10 of them remaining in permanent housing after exit. 48% of the YWCA's Fiscal Year 2024 budget remains with six months left in the program. On average, the YWCA provides \$25,283/month in rental assistance. By providing more rental assistance in the first year of the program the Y is subsidizing larger amounts of rents which is helping our overall budget. The YWCA continues to have retention issues with case manager positions. This position is the primary person who assists individuals from referral to obtaining permanent housing.
- Human Resource Council, District XI's Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)
 - The Emergency Solutions Grant provides stabilization to community members in Missoula, Mineral and Ravalli County. Community members served are at risk of homelessness or are experiencing homelessness. The most recent ESG allocation was utilized for deposit in cases of homelessness and for up to 3 months of arrears in cases where the household faced eviction. 14 households who met the definition for Rapid Rehousing received deposit assistance to obtain housing in cases of homelessness. 19 households who met the Homeless Prevention definition received assistance with arrears to maintain their housing.

CoC Coordination and Engagement

Mainstream Benefits and Other Assistance

- The ARHC General Meeting meets every other month for an informational presentation from a guest speaker, networking, and information sharing. Comprised of case managers, service-level staff, managerial staff, and executive leadership.
- SOAR (SSI/SSD Outreach, Access and Recovery) meets monthly to ensure high quality SOAR applications are being submitted to the local Social Security Administration by monitoring community outcomes, identifying and resolving application challenges, identifying areas for SOAR expansion and exploring strategies for ongoing funding and sustainability.
- Missoula Coordinated Entry System ensures that Veterans are receiving Veterans Affairs (VA) dollars wherever possible.
- MCES screens and refers to some mainstream programs, although not prioritized, such as the Foster Youth to Independence voucher, Mountain Home Montana's group home, and all local Veteran programs.
- In response to a system-wide grievance from a client experiencing homelessness, the ARHC Executive Committee, in partnership with the Coordinated Entry Specialist of the City, created a document outlining mainstream resources with associated wait-list times to be shared publicly, easing the burden of navigating complex and varied subsidized programs available in Missoula.

CoC Coordination and Engagement

Coordinated Entry System

- Missoula's Coordinated Entry System can serve Missoula, Mineral, and Ravalli counties.
- Missoula's Community Outreach Team is working to reduce duplication of services and increase their coverage area as well as expand their services, in addition to Coordinated Entry assessment. This team includes outreach workers with lived experiences of mental health, addiction and/or homelessness.
- Missoula's Prioritization Policy ensures that individuals who are identified as Frequent Users of Systems Engagement (FUSE) are prioritized first for PSH. The prioritization policy considers a household's Matching to Appropriate Placement (MAP) assessment score as well as other relevant factors in prioritizing all households after the FUSE population.
- As of July 2022, the City of Missoula, and in turn Missoula Coordinated Entry System, began working with Built for Zero, an initiative that supports and evaluates housing response systems by way of immense technical assistance, to reach an end to subpopulation and all homelessness. In the nearly two years since initial involvement, MCES has built robust policies to ensure continuity of programming. As aforementioned, Missoula also reached Quality Data standards starting in June 2023 (confirmed in November 2023). Reaching Quality Data requires a perfect score on a 29-point scorecard and consistent, reliable data for four or more months, as verified by Built for Zero and Community Solutions.

CoC Coordination and Engagement

Addressing Racial Disparities in Homelessness

- Illuminating disparities in our unhoused system remains a priority for our system, its partners, and the community. Historically racialized communities are overrepresented in MCES and specific strategies to address that disparity are vital.
 - Since 2021, MCES adopted a Housing Problem-Solving model to provide Prevention, Diversion, and Rapid Exit support to the spectrum of experiences amongst participants. Housing Problem-Solving is an equitable approach because it can be implemented with anyone the system is serving; everyone is eligible!
 - To support Housing Problem-Solving conversations, the Housing Solutions Fund was created. “HSF” is a collaborative fund (United Way of Missoula County, Human Resource Council District XI’s 2-1-1, and the City of Missoula) that offers up to \$1500 of flexible funds to anyone at-risk of losing their housing or those experiencing literal homelessness. Intended to cover housing-related expenses that other funds or programs are unable to, typical requests include pet deposit/rent, utility arrears, rental application fees, relocation assistance, and deposit/rental assistance. HSF is grounded in the value that households experiencing housing instability know what they need to stabilize, and that request is honored and covered. One creative use of the fund was to cover the legal support necessary to get an expired green card reinstated so a client could look for work and apply for housing. The average request is about \$900.
- The Missoula Coordinated Entry System successfully completed reporting and continues to work on outcomes from HUD’s second Equity Initiative, seeing significant improvements in lived expert processes and structure, access to Indigenous resources, fewer exits from Coordinated Entry to unknown destinations, and improved marketing efforts for great accessibility to the system itself.

▼ Discussion ▼

Based on the 2023 Point-in-Time survey and the current data in the Missoula Coordinated Entry System, **Missoula does not currently have enough resources to serve the individuals and families experiencing homelessness**. While shelter capacity has increased with the addition of a supplementary year-round shelter, diverse housing options are still needed. When considering the current number of individuals on the Missoula Coordinated Entry By-Name List, 634 households as of March 1st, 2024, and the current shelter and transitional capacity in Missoula, 553 households, Missoula requires at least 81 additional beds just to provide emergency shelter to all individual adults, families and veterans experiencing homelessness.

Missoula's community goal is to rapidly respond to people experiencing housing crises by ensuring homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring. Emergency shelters and transitional housing programs are not long-term solutions to housing instability. **Missoula needs 827 permanent or transitional housing options to maintain our current inventory of CoC housing interventions (110 PSH, 64 RRH, 19 Prevention), and to address the unmet needs of 634 households to meet the goal of ending homelessness.**

Increasing options on the spectrum of housing and shelter remains a need. The solutions to homelessness in Missoula need be as unique as all the individual households served. While Missoula has seen an increase in income-capped, affordable housing and projects like Blue Heron Place, additional need remains, as exemplified in this report. To explore which options would be most impactful and effective, Missoula service providers can find answers and insights from those with the most expertise, people currently living unhoused or those who have experienced homelessness recently.

Systemic racism directly impacts opportunities for non-white neighbors to access housing and supportive services. Missoula Coordinated Entry System (MCES) sees a disproportionate representation of racialized people in the houseless response system, particularly residents who identify as American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous, a reality present at the state level as well. **Access to culturally appropriate services, targeted programming, and systemic intentionality** for these populations is imperative in addressing inequities.

Access to mental health treatment and support remains a gap in services and a priority identified by the community as a whole. Funding cuts to these services has left many seeking services without options. For those currently in housing, this gap also impacts their ability to stay in housing.

Access to low-barrier, flexible funding to support creative housing solutions remains a budding strategy to increase rapid exits from Missoula's houseless response system. One such program, a collaboration between United Way of Missoula, Human Resource Council's 2-1-1, Hope Rescue Mission, and the City of Missoula, the Housing Solutions Fund continues to grow as sustainability evolves. *[Find more information on Housing Solutions Fund here.](#)*

Those experiencing homelessness in Missoula represent about .5% of the county's total population (634/117,922). Reaching a functional end to homelessness is possible. Missoula has many strengths, both in the number of service providers working towards the same goal and collective strategies to fill gaps. This collection of data aims to provide a working knowledge base for individual organizations and the community at large to advocate for resources and services to fill gaps and achieve a Missoula where everyone has a place to call home.

Compiled by the City of Missoula's
Houseless Programs in partnership with
Continuum of Care and Missoula
Coordinated Entry System partners.

For questions or curiosities, please
contact the City of Missoula's Houseless
Programs staff.