

2024 IMPACT REPORT

Highlighting Our Solutions to Address Homelessness
and Alleviate Hunger in Southwest Montana

Photo by Townsend Collective



HRDC
BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY



Heather Grenier stands in front of the Homeward Point construction site on Griffin Drive

DEAR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS,

As I reflect on the past year, I am reminded of how much change has become a constant for the communities and residents we serve. Across Southwest Montana, the rising cost of living, shortage of homes that people who live and work here can afford, and growth across the region, continue to impact all of us, in many instances, on families that have not felt this type of impact before. The changes we face are significant and will test our resilience, individually and collectively.

Yet, in the face of this change, I remain inspired by the determination, generosity, and sense of community I see daily. There are many reasons to be

hopeful. Change makes us adaptable. Change opens up possibilities to new futures and new realities.

Change allows hunger to be alleviated, homes to be made, families to have warmth, children to learn, independence to be achieved, and the ability for all of us not to just get by, but to have the opportunity to thrive.

This report highlights the problems we are solving and the needs that remain. It also shares how we continue to bring innovative solutions and continue our commitment to not only meeting the needs of today, but preparing for a better tomorrow.

Our communities come together every day to take care of each other. Every aspect of our work is driven by a small kindness that pays forward. Thank you for standing with us as we work to build a better community.

With gratitude,

Heather Grenier
HRDC President and CEO

A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to Heather Grenier, the HRDC President and CEO.

OUR 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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OUR SOLUTIONS TO HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is not confined to a single municipality. It is a regional issue that requires a coordinated response across all of Southwest Montana. While Bozeman is often the focal point for visible homelessness due to its concentration of service providers, unhoused individuals from across the region frequently seek assistance in Bozeman. This is demonstrated by the wide geographic distribution of seniors, families, youth, and veterans receiving services from our region's providers.

Despite our efforts to increase our emergency shelter capacity and increase the number of transitional housing units available in our region, the rapid escalation in housing and living costs has significantly outpaced these efforts. As a result, the demand for additional shelter and transitional housing continues to rise, underscoring the urgent need for region-wide solutions.

On any given night, we host 90 guests at our emergency shelter, 35 families at our family shelter (Wheat Suites), 19 residents at Housing First Village, and three youth at Blueprint. Many of our guests are children, seniors, and veterans. At Housing First Village alone, we housed six seniors and two veterans experiencing chronic homelessness in the past year.

We offer a range of solutions to address homelessness in Southwest Montana, including emergency shelters in Bozeman and Livingston. These shelters are available to anyone in need of a warm place to sleep.

In addition to our emergency shelters, we also provide supportive housing solutions. Supportive housing pairs safe, stable housing with essential resources, including case management and counseling, that help individuals and families rebuild their lives. For those transitioning out of temporary hardships, transitional housing offers a bridge back to independence, creating a pathway to a more stable future.

Right: Housing First Village provides 19 small homes for individuals experiencing homelessness

One of our key supportive housing projects is ***Housing First Village, which provides 19 small, energy-efficient homes for individuals facing chronic homelessness.*** This housing is offered without preconditions such as sobriety or employment, following the "Housing First" model. Once housed, residents gain access to comprehensive wraparound services, such as mental health support, substance use treatment, and job assistance. Research shows that when people have a secure place to live, they are much more likely to address other challenges in their lives, transforming their health and well-being.

Wheat Suites is another cornerstone of our supportive housing efforts. Originally a motel, it has been converted into transitional housing for families and individuals moving out of homelessness. Residents enjoy fully furnished private units and receive wraparound services to support their journey toward stability and independence.

Additionally, ***Blueprint provides essential services specifically for youth aged 16-24 who are experiencing homelessness.*** Through stable housing and critical support including life skills training, employment assistance, and educational opportunities, Blueprint empowers young people to transition to independent living and reduce their risk of long-term homelessness.



Photo by Rory Doyle



FINDING HOME: BILLY'S RESILIENCE

Billy, a current resident of Housing First Village, has a story marked by resilience. He spent decades in and out of homelessness, often battling mental health challenges, substance use, and a life of survival on the streets. A Montana native, Billy was born in the back of a semi-truck between Manhattan and Bozeman, lost his mother to cancer as an infant, and met his father only at age ten. After time spent in prison, Billy helped care for his father through his battle with dementia, earning a CNA license and providing hands-on care.

“Today, Billy has a home at Housing First Village, where he cares for his dog Dozer, connects with old friends, and hosts frequent barbecues. His home is now filled with personal touches, including a framed photo of his mom that he proudly displays.

However, after his father's passing, Billy returned to homelessness, facing PTSD, bipolar disorder, and other mental health issues. Despite his struggles, Billy frequently helped others navigate resources, directing them to HRDC and other services that could offer basic necessities.

Three years ago, Billy's path changed when he began working closely with HRDC case managers, who provided support to help him transition from survival to stability. Today, Billy has a home at Housing First Village, where he cares for his dog Dozer, connects with old friends, and hosts frequent barbecues. His home is now filled with personal touches, including a framed photo of his mom that he proudly displays.

Known in his community as a supportive figure, Billy helps others on the street, sharing advice and resources to survive and find support. His journey illustrates how access to housing and supportive services can change lives and highlights the importance of our work in helping people not only survive but thrive.



Billy sits in front of his home at Housing First Village



A MOTHER'S DETERMINATION

Brittney is a single mom with a 9-year-old son, a 7-year-old daughter, and a baby girl on the way. She's moved around between Colorado, Texas, and Montana, but no place has felt quite as much like home as Montana. "I feel like I fit better where I'm at now than I have in the past. This is home," she said.

Brittney loves being a mother and shared one of her favorite moments. "A while back, I was sitting in the living room with my son. He came up, sat on the couch, and I was just sitting there. He goes, 'Mommy, you know, I think you're the best mommy in the world.' And I said, 'Why do you say that?' He goes, 'Because you work hard for us every day, and we always have what we need.'"

But motherhood hasn't come without challenges for Brittney. As a single mom, she's had to navigate a single income, school, housing, and taking care of her kids all at once. She described the difficulty: "It's extremely hard, and I don't think it gets talked about enough...having just one income, and then the mom is expected to raise the baby like she doesn't have a job and work like she doesn't have a baby to take care of."

When Brittney arrived in Montana, she couldn't find an affordable place to live on her income. She moved in with her dad and stepmom, a situation that worked for a while until tension built in the house. It became clear Brittney wouldn't be able to parent independently while living there. "It was getting to the point where I was living with my folks and trying to have my kiddos listen to what I would say, but they would say, 'This isn't your house; this is Nana and Papa's house,'" she explained.

One day, Brittney was driving with her stepmom past the Warming Center. "She looked out the window and said, 'Man, I'm so glad I never have to live like that.'" About a month later, the situation at home escalated, and Brittney found herself experiencing homelessness. "It's easy to judge a situation until you're in one like it. It's a humbling experience for sure," she said. "You learn real quick to be thankful

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for the things you have when the things you had are pulled out from under you like a rug.”

Brittney never expected to be homeless. However, she said the people she met at the Warming Center “will give the shirt off their back to anyone who needs it...It's usually the people that get looked down on the most who are the warmest and kindest.”

Brittney started coming to the Warming Center in January. With HRDC's help, she moved into Wheat Suites seven months later. “A lot of people down here picked me up and said, 'Hey, you can do this. You're gonna be fine. Everything's gonna be alright.' When I started believing it, that's when things started to change.” For Brittney, the move from the Warming Center to transitional housing helped her overcome feelings of self-doubt and defeat.

With another daughter due in six weeks, Wheat Suites is a step toward more stable housing for Brittney. It gives her the independence she needs to take care of her three kids together. “It's hard, but it's worth it every day,” she said. “Being in this situation and being homeless the last year hasn't been easy, but it's made me realize that I'm a lot stronger than I thought I was.”



HOMeward POINT

A SPACE BUILT FOR LASTING SOLUTIONS

The entire first floor of Homeward Point will be dedicated to “off-ramps” that reduce the length of time individuals and families remain in emergency shelter. The goal isn’t just to house more people temporarily, but to provide immediate, tangible support that accelerates their journey out of homelessness. Medical and behavioral health care will be available on-site, as well as the support of local partners like Haven, Family Promise, Love INC, and Greater Impact. Together, these resources provide pathways to overcome barriers to housing, employment, and well-being.

With HIPAA-compliant meeting rooms, guests can discuss sensitive topics in private, away from the busy environment of a congregate shelter. This thoughtful design demonstrates our commitment to restoring dignity and respect and to fostering the healing needed for each guest to find their next step forward.

A SAFE, RESTORATIVE SECOND FLOOR

Homeward Point’s second floor will be a sanctuary of calm, intentionally structured space to encourage restful nights, which are essential for guests as they begin to think about long-term solutions. In contrast to the current setup with areas separated by mere curtains, the new facility will offer bunk rooms that allow for personalized, quiet places to sleep. There will be separate areas for individuals in recovery and for younger guests who may have different schedules, ensuring a more respectful and peaceful environment.

Additionally, six suites will be available for families, each equipped to provide the privacy, stability, and dedicated support they need as they work with case managers to plan their path forward.

A COMMUNITY LANDMARK OF COMPASSION

Homeward Point will be more than just a shelter—it will be a community landmark that reflects the compassion of Bozeman and our region. “When guests come to visit Bozeman,” says Brian Guyer, HRDC’s Emergency Shelter and Supportive Housing Director, “they see Main Street, they hike the ‘M,’ they tour the campus. I want Homeward Point to be a stop on that tour, a place that demonstrates how this community cares for those in need. It’s something that should make us all proud.”

Homeward Point stands as a testament to our commitment to dignity, safety, and transformative care for all. It will be a place of pride, a beacon of hope, and a model for how we take care of our neighbors in Southwest Montana.

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We are incredibly excited to open our doors to Homeward Point in the summer of 2025.

COME SEE FOR YOURSELF: TAKE A TOUR WITH US

The stories of Brittney and Billy remind us that homelessness is more than a statistic. It's a personal journey defined by resilience, determination, and the right support at pivotal moments. Their experiences show how shelters and transitional housing can transform lives, but they also underscore the need for lasting solutions. That's why we're building Homeward Point—a thoughtfully designed space where individuals can find not only shelter but also the stability and support to rebuild their lives and move beyond crisis.

Homeward Point has been carefully designed to be a sanctuary where those facing homelessness can begin to heal, regain stability, and envision a future beyond crisis. This trauma-informed space will serve as a safe haven, offering not just shelter, but also the essential dignity and respect each person deserves.

For many, arriving at an emergency shelter is one of the most difficult steps they'll ever take. As Brian Guyer, HRDC's Emergency and Supportive Housing Director, puts it, "Walking through that door often marks the lowest point of people's lives. But when they enter, it's crucial they know they are safe. Then, they can start to feel grounded and move towards healing."

Homeward Point is more than a shelter; it's a sanctuary designed to help individuals rediscover stability, dignity, and hope, reaffirming that homelessness is not a permanent condition and recovery is within reach.

***Homeward Point will have
130 Beds, On-Site Support
Services, a Cafeteria on
the Main Floor, and
Separate Private
Suites for Families***

**With Homeward Point
nearing completion, we
invite you to schedule a
tour and see this exciting
new building up close!**



HOW WE ARE ALLEVIATING HUNGER

UNDERSTANDING THE CRISIS

Food insecurity in Southwest Montana reached unprecedented levels this year, reflecting a broader crisis across the state. While hunger has long been a challenge in Montana, Southwest Montana has seen particularly sharp increases, with children, seniors, and working families being hit hardest. Families are now spending more than 20% of their income on food, leaving little for other essentials.

Our most recent needs assessment highlighted a concerning issue: many people facing food insecurity also struggle with isolation and a lack of social support. This lack of connections can make it harder for individuals to access resources or navigate the systems that could help them. Social isolation can deepen the challenges of food insecurity, as it often leads to missed opportunities for assistance and community support.

Statewide data further emphasizes the urgency of the issue. **A survey of 97 food banks across Montana found that 84% have seen increased demand over the past year.** Despite programs like SNAP, many eligible households still cannot access these benefits. In Gallatin County, only 21% of eligible households utilize SNAP, while in Park County, the rate is 43%, and in Meagher County, it's closer to 30%.

Economic conditions have worsened over the past year, putting additional strain on families already struggling to make ends meet. The gap between wages and the cost of living continues to grow, leaving many workers unable to afford basic needs. **In Gallatin County, the average job covers just 64% of the cost of living. In Park County, it's only 53%, and in Meagher County, it's a mere 42%.** These disparities show how deeply food insecurity is rooted in the economic challenges of Southwest Montana.

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THE SUCCESS OF MARKET PLACE

This year, we've been able to make a greater impact than ever, thanks to our new Market Place facility located at 206 E Griffin Drive. By consolidating food storage and distribution under one roof, we've significantly streamlined all of our program operations. We are no longer spending time shuttling food between multiple locations. Instead, we can now purchase food in bulk, and share resources across all of our programming.

Our programs are tailored to meet the diverse needs of our community, offering critical support to individuals and families struggling to put food on the table:

- **Food Box Distribution:** Across our three food banks, including Gallatin Valley Food Bank, Headwaters Area Food Bank, and Big Sky Community Food Bank, we distribute thousands of pounds of supplemental groceries to help families stretch their monthly budget.
- **Fork & Spoon Pay-What-You-Can Restaurant:** Our unique community restaurant served thousands of pay-what-you-can meals this year, providing a welcoming space where anyone can enjoy a hot, nutritious meal regardless of their ability to pay.
- **Senior Groceries:** We deliver supplemental groceries to seniors, ensuring some of our most vulnerable neighbors have access to the food they need to thrive.
- **KidsPack Program:** Children who might otherwise go hungry over the weekend receive backpacks filled with nutritious, kid-friendly meals.
- **Free Summer Lunch:** This year alone, we served an incredible 22,652 free summer lunches to children, giving them a consistent and reliable source of nutrition during school breaks.

By combining efficiency at Market Place with a wide range of targeted programming, we are alleviating hunger in Southwest Montana. As demand for food assistance continues to rise, we remain committed to ensuring no one in our community goes to bed hungry.

Left: A community member reaches inside one of our refrigerated spaces at Market Place



REDUCING WASTE TO FEED HUNGRY BELLIES

Feeding our neighbors is about more than just providing meals. It's about making the most of every available resource to create a larger impact. Hunger and food waste are connected in surprising ways. While many families struggle to put food on the table, enormous amounts of edible food go unused. By addressing these challenges together, we reduce waste while increasing food security across the Gallatin Valley. This work not only helps meet immediate needs but also builds a stronger, more resourceful community.

Our food rescue brings in a wide variety of items, including fresh produce, pre-made meals, dairy products, frozen meats, vegan and gluten-free options, and non-perishable goods. Food that doesn't meet our standards for distribution is composted or shared with local farmers as animal fodder, ensuring that nothing goes to waste. Last fiscal year, we rescued 932,316 pounds of food, with over 85,599 pounds benefiting local farmers. Here's how we make it happen:

HRDC team members and volunteers collect produce from local grocery stores.



This rescued food accounts for 50% of the total food we distribute each year.

MORNING PICKUPS

Our volunteer drivers start early, picking up fresh produce, dairy, bread, and non-perishables from grocery stores throughout the area. These items, which might otherwise go to waste, are carefully collected and transported to our various food banks.

SORTING AND DISTRIBUTION

Once the food arrives at our warehouse, our dedicated staff and volunteers quickly sort it, ensuring it reaches the right programs. This rescued food accounts for 50% of the total food we distribute each year.

HRDC team members and volunteers move and organize food once it arrives at our Gallatin Valley Food Bank



JOIN US IN BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY

DONATE

This holiday season, we invite you to make a difference in our community by donating to HRDC. Your generous contributions enable us to address the most pressing needs where they are greatest, ensuring that essential services are available to those who rely on us.

Monetary and food donations make up 35% of our operating budget, and many programs depend almost entirely on donations. Your support is crucial to sustaining these efforts.

Learn more at thehrdc.org

Photo by Townsend Collective

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VOLUNTEER

Join us in our work to build a better community. Check out our current volunteer opportunities at thehrdc.org/volunteer.

SUPPLIES

Simple items like gloves, toiletries, and cleaning supplies are greatly appreciated. You can find our current wishlist on Amazon.



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