

# 2021 City of Helena & Lewis and Clark County Community Needs Assessment Hearing

Thursday, March 4, 2021. Virtual meeting via Zoom.

- Call meeting to order – 5:33PM
  - Welcome and introductions
  - Discussion Topics: *(see accompanying PowerPoint presentation for further details)*
    - Purpose of the Community Needs Assessment
    - Grant program overview
  - Public Comment
1. **BRUCE DAY (HELENA FOOD SHARE)**: HFS has started working on a preliminary architectural report (PAR) for the creation of a new multi-purpose facility. HFS is currently serving nearly 8,000 individuals in the greater Helena area over 2 million pounds of food annually through many food distribution programs (food pantries, Kid Packs, Senior Commodities, etc.). HFS moved into their existing pantry facility in 2000. The number of services has increased 800% in 20 years, and they are now unable to serve all those in need of their offerings through one location. Indeed, their operations are split amongst 3 sites (the pantry, the warehouse, and their administrative/development office). HFS's proposal is to build a new Community Food Resource Center. To achieve this, HFS is looking to provide greater shopping space, increased warehouse space, increased cold storage space, food processing space, a commercial production kitchen, and a community education space. HFS is working with Mosaic Architecture on the PAR, inclusive of a site selection process. HFS is anticipating completing their PAR this spring. They have also recently commissioned a feasibility study to inform a capital campaign, which they look to launch shortly. HFS also provided written comments (see attached).
  2. **DEVIN VAN DER SCHAFF (ASI)**: Accessible Space, Inc., serves low-income adults, particularly the disabled and seniors, and they are the owners of Aspen Village and Queen City Estates in Helena. ASI received CDBG Planning grant funding in fall 2020 in partnership with the County to do PARs for each site, which are anticipated for completion in summer 2021. ASI will look to apply for CDBG Housing program funding in the fall for rehabilitation, including improvements to the parking lot and landscaping. ASI also provided written comment (see attached).
  3. **JACOB KUNTZ (HELENA AREA HABITAT FOR HUMANITY)**: HFH is working on a Home Center for project space to coordinate their home ownership program, expand the Re-Store, create additional office space, and create a workshop space. HFH also works with Youth Build to teach basic skills, and want to provide adequate space for their work with their youth partners. They are working on a PAR currently, and will ultimately be looking to break

ground in the spring of 2022 on a new facility on the east side of town and are interested in applying for a CDBG Community and Public Facilities grant.

4. **JENIFER GURSKY (YWCA)**: The YWCA is a participant in the city's recently awarded CDBG Planning Grant (in coordination with Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church, Habitat for Humanity, Rocky Mountain Development Council, and Trust Montana). YWCA clients are living at or below 30% of AMI, and the lack of childcare in the community hinders their independence. YWCA is trialing childcare that is trauma-informed and trauma-responsive to meet client needs. They will be looking to retrofit the basement of their facility to make it ADA compliant, fire code compliant, and a safe space for therapeutic childcare. They are currently serving twelve kids and aim to serve up to 24 upon completion of construction activities. Supportive housing is also of interest to the agency. To this end, they have launched an after-care program. The treatment program they operate is now outpatient in an effort to promote supportive housing needs of clients. YWCA has existing building needs, and the agency's board have been excited to see exponential agency growth in staffing and funding. The board is now strategizing repair work for the building to keep the property serviceable, including energy upgrades, accessibility updates, and other safety measures. The YWCA has noted in their strategic plan the need for a women's shelter in the community.
5. **MICHAEL O'NEILL (HELENA HOUSING AUTHORITY)**: HHA has been providing safe, decent housing for over 80 years, providing homes for upward of 1,800 individuals. They currently own and maintain 366 public housing residences across the city, over a third of which are at Stuart Homes. Other sites include ME Anderson (for the elderly and disabled) as well as an array of scattered site residences. HHA's units have an average age of over 60 years. They also have an opportunity, due to the nature of their land and innovative efforts by the city to help fund future redevelopment with the goals, to improve and modernize their existing housing stock to make it both accessible and functional, while also looking to create additional housing sites. COVID-19 has exacerbated Helena's already-tight housing market, and it is imperative to retain and create homes for residents. Michael noted that the more we can improve our transportation offerings, the more we can support clients that the community's agencies all share. Raising pay for residents so that people can continue to afford to live in the Helena is important as well. Improving permanent supportive housing offerings to serve mental health and other needs of HHA residents and others in the community is a persistent need.
6. **THERESA ORTEGA (GOOD SAMARITAN MINISTRIES)**: GSM is getting started on a capital campaign for their new roof which is in part being funded by a fall 2020 CDBG Community and Public Facilities grant through the County. They are looking to add amenities for staff, rearrange office spaces, etc., as well as the structural work on the roof and AC units. GSM has been working with RMDC on providing homelessness services in the community utilizing Emergency Solutions Grant-CARES Act funding. They

have housed close to 20 individuals (out of 94) through their homelessness outreach program and have been able to link individuals with other necessary community services. Through case management, they are able to get individuals into housing or have witnessed the individuals' housing situations self-resolve. GSM is grateful to their agency partners for their continued support. GSM brought forward information on what they see as causes of homelessness in the community to the new city manager and city directors. It was noted that there is a need to address additional sheltering options, especially in considering that the local shelter, God's Love, typically operates at capacity. Another idea that was presented was establishing a formal "tent city" location in the community, possibly following on how Missoula is now operating such a facility (which includes platforms for tents, a warming shelter, etc., and firm rules for operation).

7. **SYDNEY BLAIR (CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH)**: C4MH has completed a 12-bed facility for men facing major mental illness in the community. More recently, C4MH has gotten 2 significant grants: one for community treatment services and another large federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Grant. Sydney noted that it is difficult to find housing for clients, and would love to partner with other agencies to expand/supply housing opportunities. Part of the SAMHSA grant addresses housing.
8. **RACHEL SAUNDERS (GOD'S LOVE)**: God's Love continued all of their operations throughout the pandemic. The only operational change that they have had to make is going from 31 beds to 25 beds for men (they continue provide 7 beds for women and 9 rooms for families). They have been having many success stories from families of late. Rachel has been working with Alan Miller on building a website to assist with outreach and awareness in the community that they anticipate will launch in the spring. Rachel and Teresa have done outreach work with the Poverello Center in Missoula on operations and best practices that they have utilized during the pandemic, and will be meeting with their staff to learn more from their experiences. During winter months, the shelter does experience overcrowding, which does it ease warmer weather enters the area in the spring.
9. **COMMUNITY OF LINCOLN**: written comment; see attached.
10. **AUGUSTA SOLID WASTE DISTRICT**: written comment; see attached.
11. **SHARON HAUGEN (CITY OF HELENA)**: The City is working on their CDBG planning grant, which will require extensive infrastructure planning and installation. The City is looking to expand efforts on job retention and business expansion efforts, with respect to economic development. The city now has three urban renewal districts (Downtown, Railroad, and Capital Hill Mall areas). The Commission has set aside 10% of all TIF funding to assist in affordable housing projects and would encourage housing

developers/owners to reach out to the city if they are interested in accessing such funding.

12. **Florence Crittenton:** written comment after the meeting; see attached.

- Adjournment – 6:50PM

Written Comments were received from the following entities and are attached hereto:

- Accessible Space, Inc.
- Helena Food Share
- Augusta Solid Waste
- Envision Lincoln group
- Florence Crittenton

**From:** [Devin C. Vander Schaaf](#)  
**To:** [Ann McCauley](#)  
**Cc:** [Ken Berry](#); [Dora Jacobson-Bauer](#); [Gregg Scofield](#); [Amy Bauer](#); [Lisa Forbes](#); [Dean Dunlap](#)  
**Subject:** Information for the Community Needs Assessment  
**Date:** Thursday, March 4, 2021 3:12:27 PM

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Hi Ann,

I hope you're doing well. I will be on the Zoom call this evening. Below is some information that can be used for the community needs assessment public hearing tonight, assuming it's not too late to submit.

Accessible Space, Inc. (ASI, a Minnesota based nonprofit housing and service provider owns and manages two aging, HUD subsidized apartment communities in Helena: The Aspen Village Apartments and the Queen City Estates. Both communities are in need of rehab, including new roofs, security cameras, parking lot overlay and landscaping. ASI was approved for funding for two Preliminary Architectural Reports (PAR) with a State of Montana CDBG planning grant in 2020, and ASI will be hiring a local architect to complete the PARs this spring. Upon completion of the PARs, there may be additional work identified as needing rehab at the building. If that is the case we will add those estimates to our scope of work and in our application.

Aspen Village Apartments is a 40-unit HUD section 202 apartment community for very low-income seniors ages 62 and better. Queen City Estates is a 25-unit HUD section 811-apartment community for very low-income adults with qualifying disabilities, mobility impairments and/or traumatic brain injuries. ASI has been in operation for 40 years and sponsor, develops and manages housing in 31 states across the country. ASI currently owns and manages 11 apartment communities in Montana.

Let me know if you think I should supply additional info before the meeting.

Thanks much!

**Devin C. Vander Schaaf**

*Public Relations and Marketing Manager*

Accessible Space, Inc. (ASI)

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Working to create a hunger-free community since 1987

## 2021 Community Needs Assessment Hearing

### Lewis and Clark County and the City of Helena

Rooted in the belief that no one should go hungry, Helena Food Share was started in 1987 to provide food for those in need and work as a community to end hunger. However, the need in our community has increased year after year. In 2019, Helena Food Share provided food for over **8,300 people**, and the need continues to grow. Of those served, 16% were senior-aged adults, 28% were kids under 18 years, and with 99% at or below the poverty level, all are low- or moderate-income residents. When added up – with our general food assistance, child- and senior-specific nutrition programs, and food distribution partnerships with other non-profits, churches, and schools – Helena Food Share provided food assistance to someone in need more than **75,000 times** in 2019, distributing just under **2 million pounds of food**.

Working in close partnerships with individual donors, businesses, churches, foundations and other nonprofits who serve those in need, Helena Food Share is governed by a 15-person Board of Directors comprised of local business leaders, educators, philanthropists and financial experts who join together to help create a hunger-free community.

While the impact of Helena Food Share in our community is substantial, it has become clear our facilities limit what can be done, and no longer have the capacity to meet the growing need.

## Addressing An Urgent Need

Since Helena Food Share opened its current Lewis Street location in 2000, the number of people we've served has increased **236%**, and the number of food assistance services we've provided has risen more than **800%**. We have had to expand into two additional buildings during this time to meet the increased need for our services.

Over the past five years, Helena Food Share has reviewed how best to address this growing need and is ready to move this work forward by building a new facility that will provide increased efficiencies and enhance our programming, enabling us to serve more people. We have hired Mosaic Architecture to produce a Proposed Architectural Report (PAR) in preparation for building a new facility that will meet the current and future needs of our community. Below is a comparison of our current spaces with the proposed facility.

<b>Space Needs</b>	<b>Existing Properties</b>	<b>Proposed Facility</b>
<i>Pantry</i>	<b>1,032 sf</b>	<b>3,800 sf</b>
<i>Shopping Area</i>		pantry sized for stocking once/day + 250 sf lobby
<i>Warehouse</i>	<b>3,500 sf</b> between two buildings	<b>6,300 sf</b>
<i>Cooler &amp; Freezer</i>	<b>240 sf</b>	<b>1,700 sf</b> includes walk-in display cooler for the pantry
<i>Food Processing</i>	<b>560 sf</b> partially in warehouse	<b>4,400 sf</b>
	<i>Proposed processing area is expanded to provide more efficient volunteer working space and to expand processing services to include bulk food repackaging and a production kitchen</i>	
<i>Staff Work Area</i>	<b>1,700 sf</b> between three facilities	<b>3,500 sf</b> includes swing space for accommodating volunteers and a dedicated workroom
<i>Total Size</i>	<b>7,150 sf</b> between three buildings	<b>25,000 - 26,000 sf</b> Projected site size needed: approximately 1.6 acres for one-story construction

(sf = square feet)

### New Features:

- One building increases efficiency, effectiveness and reduces costs
- Community Education spaces to include a teaching kitchen
- Commercial production kitchen for increased food rescue and production
- Bulk food repackaging space allows for lower cost, high nutrition food sources
- Safe and weather protected receiving dock
- Dedicated volunteer room for hundreds of community members



# Helena Food Share Programs Help Support Our Community

## ► Grocery Share

Customers can shop for items such as milk, eggs, meat and peanut butter, as well as other perishable food items (bread, produce, etc.).

## ► Kid Packs

A special pack of kid-friendly foods that provides weekend nutrition during the school year for elementary school kids at risk of hunger.

## ► Helena Food Share Garden

Our garden grows fresh produce for Helena Food Share customers. The garden offers customers a chance to get fresh, locally grown food.

## ► Farmers Market Coupons and Senior Commodity Boxes

Low-income adults age 60 and older can receive \$50 worth of coupons to shop at the local farmer's market. The monthly commodity boxes provide a staple of nutritious food in addition to what seniors can get at the pantry.

## ► Holiday Meal Share

As an extra for the holidays, customers receive a turkey and sides so they can serve a traditional holiday meal.

## ► Grocery Rescue

Generous grocers in the Helena area donate food every weekday to Helena Food Share, saving food that cannot be sold and would otherwise be discarded. The food is brought to our warehouse, sorted, and made available for customers to shop.

## ► Emergency Snack Packs

For people with urgent need, we offer a special pack of high-calorie snacks that provides immediate nutrition. We prepare these packs for use by the police department, EMTs, God's Love and other human services organizations in the Helena area.

*Note: There are no income requirements to receive food assistance at Helena Food Share.*



We provide emergency food for **1,500** local families each month.

Each day over **6,000 pounds** of food are given to local families in need.

Kid Packs are given to nearly **1,100** Helena area school students every week.

## Here's How You Can Help

### Make a financial gift

98% of Helena Food Share's funding comes from local donors. Ending hunger is a big job and we cannot do it without you.

**Volunteer** Helena Food Share relies on 1,900 volunteer hours each month in order to keep our doors open.

**Organize a virtual food drive** 80% of the food we distribute comes directly from the community through food drives and direct donations.

Helena Food Share's garden helps provide nutritious fresh produce to those in need.



To find out more visit [HelenaFoodShare.org](https://www.HelenaFoodShare.org) or call us at (406) 443-3663



*Creating a Hunger-Free Community*

**Lewis Street Pantry**  
1616 Lewis Street  
Helena, MT 59624

**East Helena Pantry**  
50 Prickly Pear Avenue  
East Helena, MT 59635

To: Ann McCauley, Grants Administrator  
From: Augusta Solid Waste District on behalf of Jacki Pierson  
Emailed on: February 19, 2021

The Augusta Solid Waste District board members are interested in a grant(s) for the purpose of constructing a multi-purpose building that would range from \$25,000 to \$40,000 or higher. Below are the answers to your questions.

### **Augusta Solid Waste – Grant prep questions**

1. Eric listed a number of functions for this building; what's the primary need/benefit to the community? Is it a crucial infrastructure need to keep the District operations going, etc? Knowing this will help hone in on possible grant opportunities and their competitiveness. **\*Answered below in Board Responses\***
2. Are there any matching funds that can be brought to the project? Most govt grants require a match (both cash or in-kind are often acceptable).
  - The district has a bit of excess reserves that could be used for matching funds – roughly \$15,000. There is also the possibility of an intercap loan as well. There are possible in-kind possibilities as well with volunteer/time donations.
3. **What is the hopeful time frame for this project? \*Answered below in Board Responses\***
4. Can the District apply for funds directly, meaning do they have their own federal tax ID # and ability to manage the grant or would the County need to sponsor the project?
  - The District cannot apply for the funds directly. The project would be sponsored by the Lewis & Clark County Public Works Dept. and approval through the Lewis & Clark County Commission.

### **Board responses to questions 1 & 3:**

**Function of building:** Purpose of the building would be to; provide shelter for District machinery and equipment, provide covered protection for baled recyclables, house a larger baler, and provide a sheltered area for repurposing items (Swap Shop). Building could be completed in stages as budget allows and must have expansion capabilities for adding on or additional cold storage.

#### **Primary need/benefit to the community:**

The Augusta Solid Waste site currently provides many benefits to our community including compaction of waste in containers, recycling, free compost, and safe disposal of burnable wood products. Our recycling program not only helps to keep materials out of the waste stream and landfills, it also provides revenues back to the District that has helped to keep property tax assessments level. Currently we do not have onsite infrastructure to accommodate storage and sheltering needs and having this would assure that the District can continue its operations that widely benefit the community.

#### **Is this infrastructure crucial to District operations?**

Compaction of waste on our District owned containers is accomplished using District equipment, this compaction provides efficient use of the containers in that our District is located over 60 miles from the landfill. We are currently charged \$232 per container to haul our waste. With compaction we average about 6 tons per container, without compaction in the past, we were at about 2 tons per container. We average about 100 containers shipped per year. If we did not compact our waste, we would be hauling three times the number of containers on average.

In addition to the compaction of waste in the containers, this critical equipment also provides compaction of burnable wood pile, compaction and management of recyclable metal pile, ability to handle and move baled recyclables, ability to handle and move Freon units for transfer, ability to organize community firewood donations, ability to manage and mix compostable materials.

This crucial element to our operations is currently being housed at the County shop in Augusta since we do not have a building to house it at the site. The backhoe must be driven from the shop to the site and back each day, at a cost both in labor and wear & tear on the equipment as well as equipment hours. Having this equipment and locating it at the site is crucial, effective, and efficient for the long-term District operations.

With the recycling market currently at a low and the ability to bale recyclables on site, the District can store these commodities and wait for opportune times in market to sell. Outside storage of recyclables is challenging as the bales require tarping to protect from elements to assure best price and ability to market. Currently the elements, including wind damage and destroy tarps quickly which are costly to replace. Having coverage storage for our baled recyclables is crucial to a successful recycling program which not only benefits the community financially, keeps thousands of tons of waste material out of the landfill.

In addition, to the above, the District currently allows community members to leave items on the side of the container for give away. This is somewhat successful in that community members in need are able to take items and rehome them at no cost. While this benefits community members, items not taken the day they are left must be disposed of in the waste containers. Having a dedicated storage area would not only shelter the items from the elements, it would lengthen the time that items would be available for repurposing and keeping out the waste stream.

### **What is the hopeful timeframe for this project?**

The District operates on a Fiscal Year (FY) basis which runs from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>. The board reviewed a proposal in FY 20 for this project but due to funding and budget had to table the proposal. We need the building now but are hopeful that by late FY22 or early FY 23 with a grant, we can begin construction.

Thanks for any help and consideration.

March 3, 2021

Dear Ms. McCauley,

The community of Lincoln is interested in pursuing downtown master planning in 2021 and has submitted grant applications to the Montana Main Street and Big Sky Trust Fund programs to help support a plan (\$40,000 total). However, we have not yet received award notices from these programs.

In the event that Lincoln is not awarded one or both grant awards, the community of Lincoln would be interested in pursuing a CDBG Planning grant opportunity with the County for downtown master planning. Lincoln is also interested in CDBG grant opportunities that could support implementation of the downtown master plan, which may include affordable housing developments or rehabilitation, and neighborhood revitalization projects.

Thank you for your consideration,

Karyn Good

Envision Lincoln, Lead Community Coordinator



**March 4, 2021**

**Community Needs Assessment**

**Statement of Need**

Florence Crittenton Home and Services (FCHS) has seen consistent growth in the need for services and programs for families across the state and within the L&C County area. The increased need for services includes expanded residential Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment for women and their children, expansion of childcare for ages 4-5 (currently serving 0-4), additional infant care, additional outpatient (SUD and mental health) services, and expanded community-based/in-home services.

The current space FCHS utilizes includes the residential facility on Harris (owned by the Florence Crittenton Foundation) for residential, outpatient, and 0-2 childcare, classrooms and offices at 940 N. Roberts (leased by FCHS) for 2-4 preschool, and administrative office space at 639 Helena Ave (leased by FCHS) for administrative, development, and home visiting staff. All current spaces are completely full, with no opportunity for further growth or additional staff or clientele within current programs.

The increased need for services demands that we acquire additional space for both our programs and administration. As such, we are seeking a campus that can accommodate all the programs we offer and have room for future growth. Bringing all services and departments onto one site would have significant positive programmatic and fiscal impact.

Presently, FCHS is exploring options to acquire real estate for expansion. Efforts to raise capital are underway should an opportunity present itself.

Heather Greene  
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Florence Crittenton Home and Services  
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(406) 442-6950 ext. 255

*where compassion meets action*