

# 2020 Community Needs Assessment (CNA)

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January 29, 2020, 6 p.m.

City-County Building, Rm 426, 316 N. Park Ave, Helena, MT

## I. Welcome and Introductions (6 p.m.)

See sign-in sheet for full listing of participants

**ATTENDEES:** United Way of the Lewis and Clark Area, Lewis and Clark County Public Health, Lewis and Clark County Community Development and Planning Staff, City of Helena Community Development Staff, Helena Citizen's Council members, Helena Food Share, Salvation Army, YWCA, Helena Area Habitat for Humanity, Lewis and Clark County Community Development staff, Helena Indian alliance, Family Promise, Helena Housing Authority, Montana Business Assistance Connection, Good Samaritan Ministries

## II. The Purpose of the Community Needs Assessment

Ann McCauley, the Lewis and Clark County Grants Administrator, delivered background information on the purpose of the CNA.

- The CNA is a process that reviews the needs of the community as a whole
- It is a required step ahead of applying for funding from the Montana Department of Commerce (see Grant Program Overview handout), and serves as the first of two required hearings on community needs as part of a future application, per requirements from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development
- The CNA affords an opportunity to discuss the activities the community may utilize to meet any identified development needs
- Areas of need include:
  - Capital improvements
  - Housing
  - Economic development
  - Urban renewal
- The outcome of this effort will be a list of potential projects or actions that will be pursued to improve our community
  - Will be presented to City and County Commissions for consideration
  - Agencies were asked to speak to their organization's readiness with respect to match funding and the project's anticipated timeline as part of their public comment at the hearing

### III. Grant Program Overview

See handout provided by staff discussing Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), the Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME), the Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP), Housing Trust Fund (HTF), Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits (HRTC), and Montana Historic Preservation Grant program.

The County is sponsoring West Mont for CDBG Public and Community Facilities and HOME grants to renovate the group home at the Farm & Gardens property, which is anticipated to reach completion in winter 2020. The County is also sponsoring Good Samaritan Ministries for a CDBG Planning Grant (to end by June 2020), and intends to sponsor them for a CDBG Public and Community Facilities grant in the fall of 2020. The CDBG-Economic Development grant with MBAC for Hi-Country Snack Foods is anticipated to end by spring of 2020. The County anticipates having openings for CDBG Planning and CDBG Housing grants, TSEP grants, and HOME grant for the 2020 cycle.

The City is currently sponsoring the Center for Mental Health with a CDBG Public and Community Facilities grant (through the last quarter of 2020) and is sponsoring Guardian Apartments for a HOME grant (through the end of March 2020). The City was approved by the MT Department of Commerce for CDBG Small-Scale Single-Family Housing Rehabilitation Grant in late 2019. The City also has a TSEP grant award for the Westside infrastructure installation project that will be ongoing for the foreseeable future. The City has openings for CDBG Planning and Large-scale Multi-Family Housing. The City is also considering applying for Montana Historic Preservation Grant funding to assist with predominantly exterior rehabilitation on the 404 Fuller Avenue building (part of the Law and Justice Center).

### IV. Public Comments

- 1) *Emily McVey (UWLCA Director)* → The two big things on UWLCA's HRA Leadership Team radar are a shelter(s) (for all family unit and age types) and a warming shelter to house the overflow homeless in winter months.
- 2) *Jacqueline Isaly (Lewis and Clark County Public Health)* → No specific projects; came to listen to community needs.
- 3) *Theresa Ortega (Good Samaritan Ministries Director)* → Good Sam's is currently working on a CDBG Planning grant with the County for a PAR to address the need for the replacement of their 50-year old roof at their facility. If the roof were to give way, the organization would have no opportunity to provide services in the community. They will be working with the County on a CDBG Public and Community Facility Grant application once the Planning grant/PAR is complete.
- 4) *Sharon Haugen (City of Helena Community Development Director)* → Sharon wanted to discuss areas that are always a challenge for the community: (1) ADA accessibility for city and county-owned buildings, facilities, parks; (2) the historic

preservation needs of city and county-owned facilities; (3) water, sewer, and other infrastructure activities associated with affordable housing projects and sponsorship for such installation or repair; (4) economic development opportunities are always being sought to apply for economic development grant funds; (5) the City has 2—soon to be 3—urban renewal districts with tax increment financing provisions that the City hopes to identify community benefits associated with any TIF-funded activities.

- 5) *Meg Bishop, Susan Lenard, Pat Christian (HCC)* → Present to listen to community needs to see how the HCC can interface more as proactive liaisons to the City Commission in support of local agencies. They wish to voice the opinions and needs of citizens, such as those presented this evening, and to share knowledge within neighborhood districts.
- 6) *Bruce Day (Helena Food Share Director)* → In the last year, HFS provided 7,800 food assistance services in the community, touching around 8,400 individuals. They collected and distributed about 1.8 million pounds of food in 2019 (8% increase on 2018), and are reaching about 2.5 times the people served from 2001 when they moved into the present pantry at 1616 Lewis Street (roughly 250% increase in number of people served and 800% jump in services provided). The pantry serves roughly 125 clients daily. HFS distributes 1,150 kid packs throughout the city weekly through the schools. One in seven people are experiencing food insecurity in the community at any given time. Food Share is beyond capacity both in the number served and food distributed, and they are committed to building a new community food resource center to meet clients' needs in a dignified and respectful manner. HFS wants to be able to allow clients to wait safely indoors, be able to have space to distribute food to other agencies in the community and have a commercial production kitchen. Food Share has contracted for a PAR in the spring (anticipated completion in May). Currently, they are working on pinpointing funding for the totality of the project, some of which is anticipated to come from private fundraising. The hope is that HFS would begin construction sometime in 2021. No particular site has been selected; site selection will be incorporated into the PAR decision-making process.
- 7) *Majors Phil and Lawry Smith (Salvation Army)* → SA is looking to enter into a strategic planning period, entailing learning about needs in the service area. They are looking to expand their knowledge to learn how best to respond to needs in the community with the responders/agencies tasked with meeting local challenges. SA has capacity to expand offerings in the community, which requires understanding needs and how they may collaborate with others in the community to maximize reach. They have identified programmatic needs thus far. While they have undeveloped parcels under their ownership, they are not yet poised to consider grant opportunities to expand facilities/their own programs.
- 8) *Jen Gursky (YWCA Executive Director)* → YWCA is a gender-specific, trauma-informed addiction recovery residential facility. They received CDBG funding in 2015, but there are a range of needs left unmet following the interior renovations that were part of that funding. YWCA needs a basement renovation, which houses the Caterpillars Parenting Center (the only place in the Tri-County area that allows those involved in the

criminal justice system to have unsupervised CPS visits with children and that offers critical parenting classes). This means that staff and clients utilize basement space and also adjoining porch space that leak. Some aspects of the 24 residential units were not fully touched in renovations with grant as well all of the 100+ windows in the facility and some necessary façade repairs (especially on the south-facing frontage). YWCA will be getting an energy audit soon to determine how best to address some of the thermal efficiency and energy issues in the building. YWCA does have a building prioritization report and PAR drawings of the basement. Would expect they will be in a place to seek grant sponsorship in 2021.

- 9) *Jacob Kuntz (Helena Area Habitat for Humanity Director)* → East Helena has a preliminary TSEP project that is currently under review and may HFH may try to acquire land to build homes there. There is the possibility for additional activities in Helena to build homes. The Habitat Restore has about 6,000 sf of usable space at their current Restore/classroom/office site, built in 1885, but it is not conducive to the needs of the organization. HFH are working with Youth Build through CTI to learn construction trades in areas that do not fully meet current building code but want to expand this program further. Have acquired land on Hwy. 12 to build a new facility, and are hoping to build an expanded Restore, classroom space, and ADA-accessible offices to better serve the community. Currently, they half-way through a capital campaign for the new building and are anticipating breaking ground on the new building in spring 2021. Architectural design work is underway, which is anticipated to be complete in September or October. Would like to phase in the development of the new facility in stages as funding allows. HFH will also look at the potential for HOME projects to chip away at the transitional housing needs in the community and also potentially working on a land trust.
- 10) *Bev Guest (Helena Indian Alliance)* → Came to listen; no comments for the evening.
- 11) *Mariah Ramirez (UWLCA)* → Works with service providers in the community. At YWCA, Mariah is tasked with coordinating the roll out the Point in Time Survey mandated by the federal government. She works on the Helena Resource Advocates team, is part of the local FUSE grant project with HHA and St. Pete's, and collaborates between agencies and coalitions to decrease the silo-effect in providing community services. A Coalition Collaboration Celebration will be happening on February 13<sup>th</sup>, which will help toward establishing a resource hub online for coalitions to share what they're doing for the community, maintain information for their organization, and coordinate on grants. UWLCA also houses 211, and fields between 5 and 20 phone calls weekly from residents in desperate, immediate need of resources. UWLCA have talked about the prospect of a MT 211 Call Center being established in Helena because calls are currently routed through Great Falls, where staff don't have as solid an awareness of Helena-area services. Mariah runs the Housing First Program (Coordinated Entry), including the weekly case conferencing meeting to help those experiencing housing instability get housed and fulfill the basic needs they are lacking. Housing First utilizes the Housing Management Information System database to collaboratively track clients with partner agencies. Case management has become a huge need in the community for vulnerable residents in the community. Today's case conferencing meeting alone had

137 clients being tracked in need of housing. Rapid Rehousing and Homelessness Prevention are provided through HUD, RMDC, Good Sam's, but there is difficulty providing services when funding is not available. Mariah noted the great need for supportive housing growth in the Helena area, and stated that there is not a great awareness in the community regarding those who are living at or below 50% of AMI and the challenges they face. UWLCA and other partners are hopeful that Chandler Rawling, the new Housing Navigator at Good Sam's, will make a huge impact on addressing some of the above-noted housing issue areas.

- 12) *Renee Bauer (In-coming Family Promise Director)* → Came to listen; nothing to contribute at this time.
- 13) *Michael O'Neil (HHA Director)* → Michael noted that success starts with a safe, decent home, and there really is a need in the community to support efforts to address housing needs in the community, from homelessness to affordable rentals to homeownership for those well at up to 130% of AMI. Economic development and job training needs are also critical. Montana does not have a Section 3 forms, and HHA would find it useful to create Section 3 forms as a form of economic development. HHA provides housing for roughly 1,900 individuals in the community and has served Helena since 1939. HHA administers public housing programs, tax credit programs, housing choice vouchers, permanent supportive housing, VASH, and other programs for the community. It is critically important to allow people to live in the community with the necessary support systems that help them thrive. HHA serves working families, single-parent families, the elderly, seniors, and the disabled at a time when social support networks in Helena are contracting. HHA works with UWLCA and St. Pete's on the FUSE grant program to study data on homelessness in the community to help develop an implementation plan to address issues found. What is known from preliminary data is that there is a high cost of not addressing homeless individuals' needs that trickle down through emergency services and otherwise in Helena. Further, it is known that the community can meet their needs at a fraction of the cost of the cost expended to have them continue to live as they are. HHA has some of the oldest public housing in the country (units averaging about 62 years), all of which is need of preservation and renovation in coming years (132 units at Stewart Homes, 76 units at ME Anderson, and 158 scattered-site units). HHA will require work be done in phases to address all of the needs. There is about \$80 billion in unmet public housing needs nationwide, and no real federal funding to address HHA's needs (outside of applying for highly competitive grant and tax credit programs as part of public housing repositioning). Major renovation is the greatest need for HHA properties, which may involve demolition and rebuilding of some structures but not all. Recent changes to city zoning dimensional standards and the resultant density increases may afford HHA an opportunity to build additional units on existing properties. HHA anticipates being about a year out from being able to apply for grants (2021 cycle, likely). Michael also discussed New Market Tax Credits that require a certain scope and scale, which is primarily used to develop high-end offices but also things like emergency shelters and other community facilities. There may be a way to complete a single application that addresses multiple community agencies' needs while serving to construct other, more

expensive spaces simultaneously.

- 14) *Brian Obert & Anne Pichette (MBAC)* → Brian thanked the City and County for support of CDBG-ED and BSTF work force training grant activities. MBAC have taken on new staff recently (Chris M. has been taken on as a VISTA researching work force training). They are happy to assist HFH in East Helena, if needed, to conduct public hearings, as needed. MBAC is currently working with HIA on a Brownfields assessment and a PAR for roughly \$3.5—\$6 million for necessary renovations for their Euclid Avenue (Leo Pocha) property, which serves as an update to an earlier PAR. MBAC can assist other agencies and property owners on targeted Brownfields assessment work. They may work with the County to continue to bring asbestos issues to light in the Tri-County region. Highlighted the utility of the Tax Increment Financing Districts to help with the infrastructural needs in the districts. This can include MBAC assisting with needed environmental assessment work in preparation for the demolition of blighted buildings and for health and safety activities.

## V. Close (7:45PM)

### Written comments submitted by the following organizations, and available as an appendix to these CNA meeting minutes:

- (1) Queen City Estates → for rehabilitation of their housing facility
- (2) Kathy Macefield → representing the need for transitional housing for foster/adoptive children and mentally/physically disabled youth