

Watershed Navigation Center & Temporary Safe Outdoor Space Tour

Welcome Law and Justice Interim Committee and
Criminal Justice Oversight Council members and guests!

AGENDA

Date: November 18, 2025, 1 PM – 3 PM

Location: Watershed Navigation Center Community Room, 2200 Mullan Road

1 PM – 1:15 PM **Welcome and Opening Remarks** – Commissioner Josh Slotnick

Tour Overview – Shantelle Gaynor

Meet your tour guides and split into three groups.
Each group will move between programs and
spend ~30 learning about each program.

1:15 PM – 2:45 PM **Embark on Tours**

- A. Temporary Safe Outdoor Space (TSOS) -
including a walkthrough of the property,
community room, and one residence. –
*Hope Rescue Mission & United Way of
Missoula*
- B. Campus Tour - Overview of development
and funding of Trinity Project including a
walkthrough of Blue Heron's Community
Room. – *Homeward & Missoula Housing
Authority*
- C. Watershed Navigation Center -
Partnership Health Center Clinic (PHC)
and County Justice Navigation Services –
*Partnership Health Center & Missoula
County Community Justice Department*

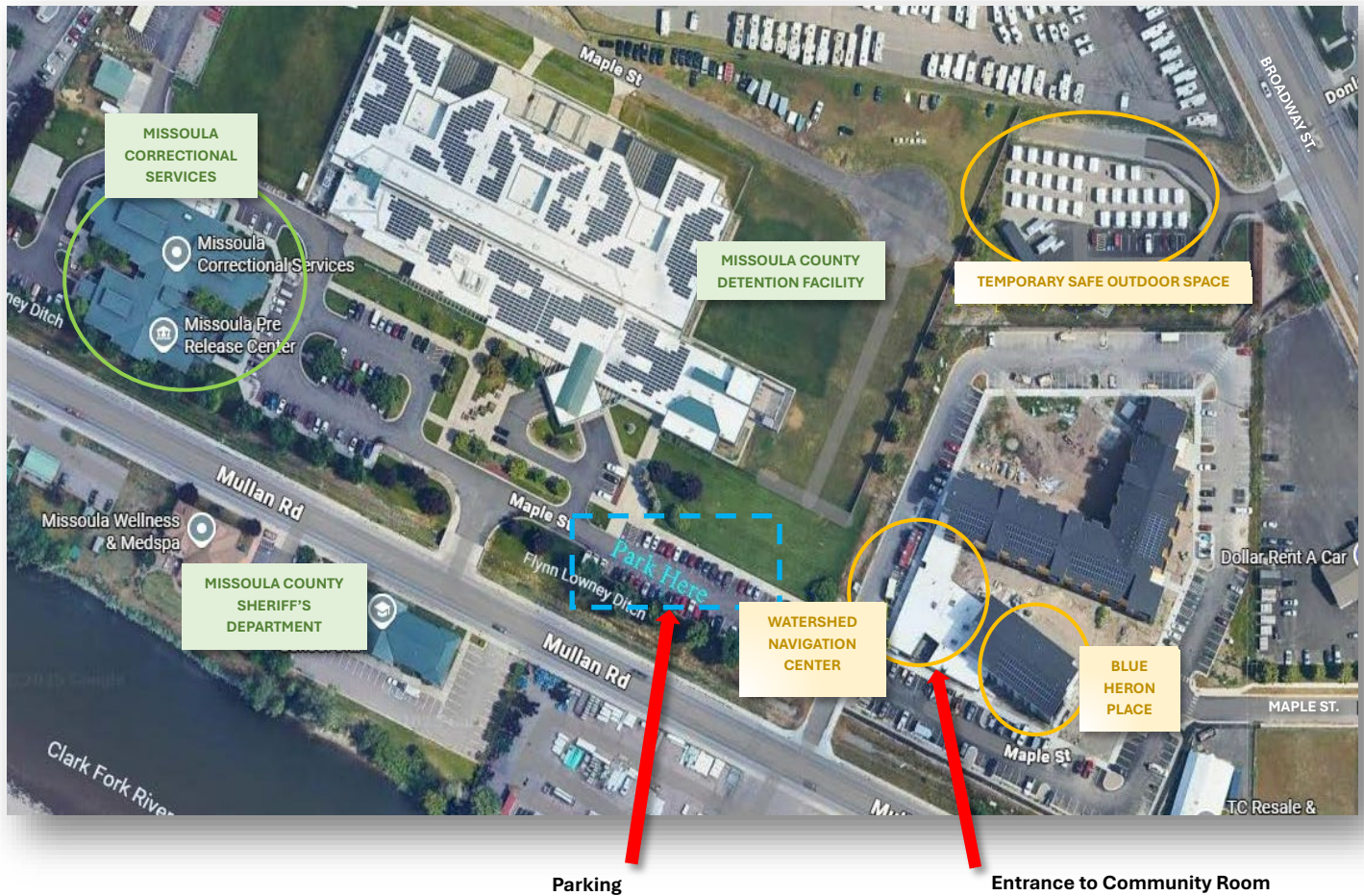


2:45 PM – 3:00 PM **Final Q&A and walk to Missoula Correctional Services**

Thank you for joining us.

Watershed Navigation Center & Temporary Safe Outdoor Space Tour

TOUR MAP



Watershed Navigation Center & Temporary Safe Outdoor Space

Overview

The Watershed Navigation Center in Missoula is a low-barrier, safe, and welcoming service hub providing access to housing, justice system, and medical and behavioral health services. Partnership Health Center, the Missoula County Community Justice Department and other community service providers partner to deliver these services under one roof.

The Navigation Center is located next to Missoula's Temporary Safe Outdoor Space, run by Hope Rescue Mission with support from Missoula County and the United Way of Missoula, creating a care campus for its residents- people experiencing homelessness or housing instability, including those involved in the justice system, and individuals at high risk of repeated hospital or jail utilization due to untreated medical or behavioral conditions.

Purpose / Mission

- To serve people experiencing chronic homelessness, people who are justice-involved, and other high-vulnerability residents via a low-threshold, high-service model.
- To provide centralized access into Missoula's coordinated entry and housing system, linking clients to wrap-around services (health, behavioral, housing).
- To interrupt the cycle of homelessness ↔ crisis services (jail, emergency departments, law enforcement, etc.) by providing earlier, stable, service-rich access points.

Key Features & Services

- On-site supportive services through partner agencies providing health care, behavioral health, and case management.
- Low-barrier access to engage individuals with high needs.
- Strong linkage with the coordinated entry system to transition individuals into permanent supportive housing and affordable housing.
- On-site justice system services (pretrial support, reentry navigation, court access) provided adjacent to the Missoula County Detention Facility.

Target Population

- Individuals experiencing chronic or repeated homelessness with overlapping behavioral health and justice-system involvement.
- Individuals reentering the community from the criminal justice system who lack stable housing and support.
- People at risk of losing housing or in housing instability needing navigation and support services.

Additional Watershed Navigation Center On-Site Supportive Services and Amenities

- Free Laundry
- Free Lockers
- Wi-Fi
- Computers & Printers
- Document Storage
- Mail Services
- Clothing
- Small Food Items
- Free Coffee, Cocoa & Tea
- Hygiene Kits
- Safe, Climate-Controlled Space

Community Partners at Watershed

- **Housing Advocacy Network**— Volunteers help with housing applications
- **Missoula Food Bank**— SNAP Benefit Coordinators
- **Summit Independent Living**— Medicaid and SNAP application support and Mail and Meals
- **PASS**— Voluntary pretrial services for people engaged with the Municipal Court system
- **Municipal Court's Community Court**— a monthly collaborative, problem-solving court designed to address low-level, nonviolent offenses that often stem from homelessness, behavioral health challenges, or poverty
- **Food Not Bombs**— Monthly Potluck for all community members
- **Welcome Back**— Supportive programming for people exiting prison
- **Montana Employment and Training Services** – job training and support to Montanans who qualify for food or cash benefits.



PARTNERSHIP HEALTH CENTER

Partnership Health Center (PHC) delivers integrated medical, behavioral, and tenancy support services to individuals experiencing homelessness or housing instability; ensuring high-vulnerability populations receive care in a low-barrier, coordinated setting to improve health and housing outcomes while reducing reliance on emergency and crisis systems. Services include:

Watershed Medical Clinic—On-site primary care, chronic disease management, preventive care, and linkage to specialty referrals.

Community Care Team— Mobile team providing medical care to unsheltered individuals and linking them to the clinic and other services.

Navigation Center Supportive Services—Tenancy support service that includes case management focused on housing retention, benefit access, and employment coordination; community outreach; behavioral health services including counseling, assessments, substance-use treatment referrals, and harm-reduction support.



PHC Health Care & Supportive Services at Watershed Navigation Center

- **Established:** July 2025
- **Staffing:** 1 FTE Center Manager; .5 FTE Community Organizer; 2.5 FTE tenancy support staff | Clinic Staff: 1 FTE Medical Provider, 2 FTE Medical Assistants | Community Care Team: 1 FTE Physician Assistant, 1 FTE Nurse; 1 FTE Medical Assistant
- **Annual operating costs:** \$1,000,000
- **Revenue sources:** HOME-ARP grant (HUD), Opioid Settlement Funds, Medicaid reimbursement.
- **Number of people served:** 15 – 30 people per day with over 200 unique individuals since July; over 500 loads of laundry in 2 machines, and over 800 cups of noodles served.
- **Outcomes:** Meeting people's basic needs, helping them get a job, helping them find housing and providing a safe place for clients to connect to other services. *Example:* A person who was released from prison to homelessness in Missoula started regularly visiting the Navigation Center and met onsite support staff. They helped her visit the PHC clinic for chronic condition management. She secured a job and saved enough to secure housing. She is now working full-time and volunteering at Watershed.

MISSOULA COUNTY COMMUNITY JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

Missoula County Community Justice Department (CJD) increases public safety, reduces recidivism, and strengthens community well-being through coordinated, evidence-based justice system initiatives and services. It integrates multiple divisions and programs, including court-based victim services, defendant services, and justice initiatives to bridge the gaps between the courts, detention, behavioral health, housing, and social service systems. Department staff provide services to justice involved people at the Watershed Navigation Center including:

- *Reentry Navigation Services*—Provides individualized support for people returning to the community from incarceration, jail, or supervision and connects individuals with housing, employment, and services to promote successful reentry and reduce recidivism which includes: pre-release planning and coordination with the jail behavioral health team; case management; housing navigation; links to health care, benefits, and employment; connection to justice system services like pretrial supervision, probation, and treatment courts; and connection to peer support and community-based providers.
- *Pretrial Assistance to Support Success (PASS)* office hours— Provides voluntary pretrial support for individuals with cases pending in Municipal Court. PASS promotes court appearance and community safety. Services include court reminders, appointment scheduling, and targeted case management; outreach and site-based office hours for clients who are unhoused; and connection to public defense attorneys, behavioral health services, housing, and employment resources.
- *Community Court* convened monthly on-site the Watershed Navigation Center is a collaborative, problem-solving court. It addresses low-level offenses linked to homelessness, behavioral health, and poverty by connecting participants with services instead of fines or jail to reduce the cycle of citations, warrants, and incarceration and connect participants immediately with case management, behavioral health, and housing navigation. Participants can quash warrants, make an initial appearance on a new charge, consult with a public defender, speak with a judge, check on upcoming court dates, and access various resources.



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Justice System Services at Watershed Navigation Center

- **Established:** May 1, 2025
- **Staffing:** 1 FTE Reentry Navigator (at Watershed), 3 FTE PASS Court Support Specialists (providing weekly office hours and monthly court support)
- **Annual operating costs:** Reentry Navigation Services - \$81,000 (FY26) *(all other justice system services are provided as in-kind resources supported by the City of Missoula Municipal Court and Missoula County).*
- **Primary revenue sources:** MT DPHHS Crisis Diversion Grant – Reentry Navigation
- **Number justice involved people served at Watershed:** 225 (in 5 months) including 56 reentry clients, 20 -25 PASS clients per month, and 10 – 15 people per month for Community Court.
- **Outcomes:** Reduce failures to appear for court dates, reduce new criminal charges, increase stable housing, increase use of community-based services, increase job placement. (Outcome evaluation will be completed April 30, 2026, at the end of year one.)



BLUE HERON PLACE

Blue Heron Place is a 30-unit permanent supportive housing program owned by Homeword and the Missoula Housing Authority (MHA) and managed by MHA. Blue Heron Place is located next door to the Watershed Navigation Center. Blue Heron provides safe, stable housing with wrap-around services for individuals who have experienced chronic homelessness and/or justice system involvement. Full time, on-site supportive services are provided by Partnership Health Center and the Poverello Center to reduce cycles of homelessness, justice involvement, and crisis system reliance. Blue Heron Place also promotes community connections and stability through on-site events and classes. BlueLine Development partnered in the development of the project on land donated by Missoula County.

- **Established:** September 2023, fully leased by winter.
- **Services:** Rental assistance (tenants pay no more than 30% of income toward rent; subsidies provided by MHA); on-site wrap-around services and access to the Navigation Center, transportation, food assistance; and evening and weekend support provided by the Poverello Center, plus community-building activities like the resident-led art room, counseling and recovery groups.
- **Staffing:** 1 FTE Program Manager; 1.5 FTE tenancy support staff; .4 FTE peer support staff; 3 FTE Poverello Center evening and weekend coverage
- **Annual operating costs:** \$561,000, including all staffing, facility, and rent charges (primary revenue source from 30 HUD housing vouchers). PHC staffing costs \$219,335.
- **Number of people served:** 32 residents in 30 units with an average stay of 2+ years. *Prior to Blue Heron, residents were living unhoused for 5+ years.*
- **Outcomes:**
 - 74% of residents maintained housing and 84% had positive housing outcomes. *(One person moved to a higher level of care; 3 passed away; 5 evictions.)*
 - 62.5% reduction in jail bookings for residents.
 - 12.7 % reduction in hospital utilization for FUSE program individuals housed at Blue Heron place¹. *(One resident who had 20 visits to the ED with 41 in-patient days in the 9 months prior to moving into Blue Heron Place. That same resident had one ED visit with 7 in-patient days in 9 months after moving into housing.*



¹ Missoula County Standard Crisis Report, Quarter 3, JG Research & Evaluation, Strategic Alliance for Improved Behavioral Health Frequent Utilizers of System Engagement including emergency services, emergency department, jail, and homeless shelters.)

HOMEWORD

Homeword creates safe, healthy homes people can afford and equips individuals with the knowledge and tools for financial stability and home ownership. It develops and preserves affordable rental and ownership housing projects across Montana, using sustainable building methods and design processes that engage community input. Homeword was the project leader in developing and building the Trinity Project: Watershed Navigation Center, Blue Heron Place, adjacent workforce housing, and additional workforce housing in a nearby neighborhood (172 total apartments). Altogether the project cost \$57,602,453 to develop and build. Costs were shared across the total project and minimized with the donation of land owned by Missoula County. Funding sources to build the Trinity Project included:

- Mortgage
- Housing Tax Credit Equity
- Energy Tax Credit Equity
- ARPA
- TIF/County/City Infrastructure Improvement/Energy Rebates
- Land Donation
- Housing Trust Funds
- City HOME
- State HOME
- NOI (Net Operating Income)
- Deferred Developer Fee



MISSOULA HOUSING AUTHORITY

Created in 1978, the Missoula Housing Authority (MHA) is one of the largest public housing authorities in Montana. Over 2,300 families with a broad range of incomes have safe, stable homes through MHA programs. It administers subsidized housing programs, rental vouchers (including special-purpose vouchers for people experiencing homelessness or with disabilities), and owns/manages many affordable housing units. MHA is a development partner in the Trinity Apartments project and is the property manager for Blue Heron Place and the adjacent workforce housing (202 rental homes on two sites (Mullan Road and Cooley Street) with rents affordable to people earning 30% to 70% of area median income (AMI). MHA supports the “low-threshold” and mixed-income housing model used in the Trinity Project (including workforce housing and supportive housing for people with high vulnerability).

TEMPORARY SAFE OUTDOOR SPACE

The Temporary Safe Outdoor Space (TSOS) is a staffed, 24/7, safe and secure facility with 30 individual locking hard-sided shelters (single or double occupancy) with climate control, security, and privacy. It offers bathroom and shower facilities, centralized office, a community room, and on-site services. TSOS is located less than 1,000 yards from the Watershed Navigation Center. It is operated by Hope Rescue Mission, with support from United Way and Missoula County. TSOS was designed to serve 30–40 people experiencing unsheltered homelessness who are not accessing traditional shelter or housing services and provides a low-barrier, dignified, safe outdoor shelter option for those living on the streets, in camps, or in vehicles to reduce the burden on emergency and justice systems by providing structured alternatives to street homelessness. *“Temporary” refers to the goals of the residents, not the location.*

- **Established:** December 24, 2020; moved to its current location January 2023.
- **On-site services:** Outreach, hygiene facilities, laundry, trash removal, and transportation access, case management, peer support, housing navigation, ID assistance, employment support, wellness screenings, and behavioral health linkage and access to Watershed Navigation Center and services.
- **Building and Operating Costs:** \$1.48 Million in ARPA funds were used to build TSOS. Annual operating budget: \$430,000 (FY26).
- **Primary revenue sources:** County ARPA funding (ending June 2026). Additional resources are needed to sustain this important housing resource.
- **Staffing:** 4 FTE + contracted weekend security services
- **Number of people served:** 233 (January 2023 – October 2025)
- **Outcome:** 45.5% positive exits to treatment, temporary housing, permanent housing, assisted living, etc.) which far exceeds the 2023 national average of 32.4%²
- **Requirements that support outcomes:** Participant Agreement that outlines expectations of personal responsibility and conduct for residents and staff. If a resident leaves or is exited from the program, re-entry may be possible through a structured review process.



² [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\) “National Summary of Homeless System Performance” measure 7b1](#)

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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ADDITIONAL ARTICLES, STUDIES & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

News Article: Montana Free Press, [‘That missing piece’: Missoula program offers solution for jail crowding, homelessness](#)

Local Study: [The Economic Impact of Homelessness in Missoula](#), Missoula Economic Partnership.

Summary: [Economic Impact Homelessness 2023-24 Summary.docx](#)

News Article: [Nonprofit exploring youth housing project following report linking homelessness, criminal justice involvement](#), Montana Free Press

Local Study: [Just Home: Understanding Cycles of Housing Instability and Justice involvement in Missoula County](#), Rural Institute.

Summary: [Just Home Report 2025 Summary.docx](#)