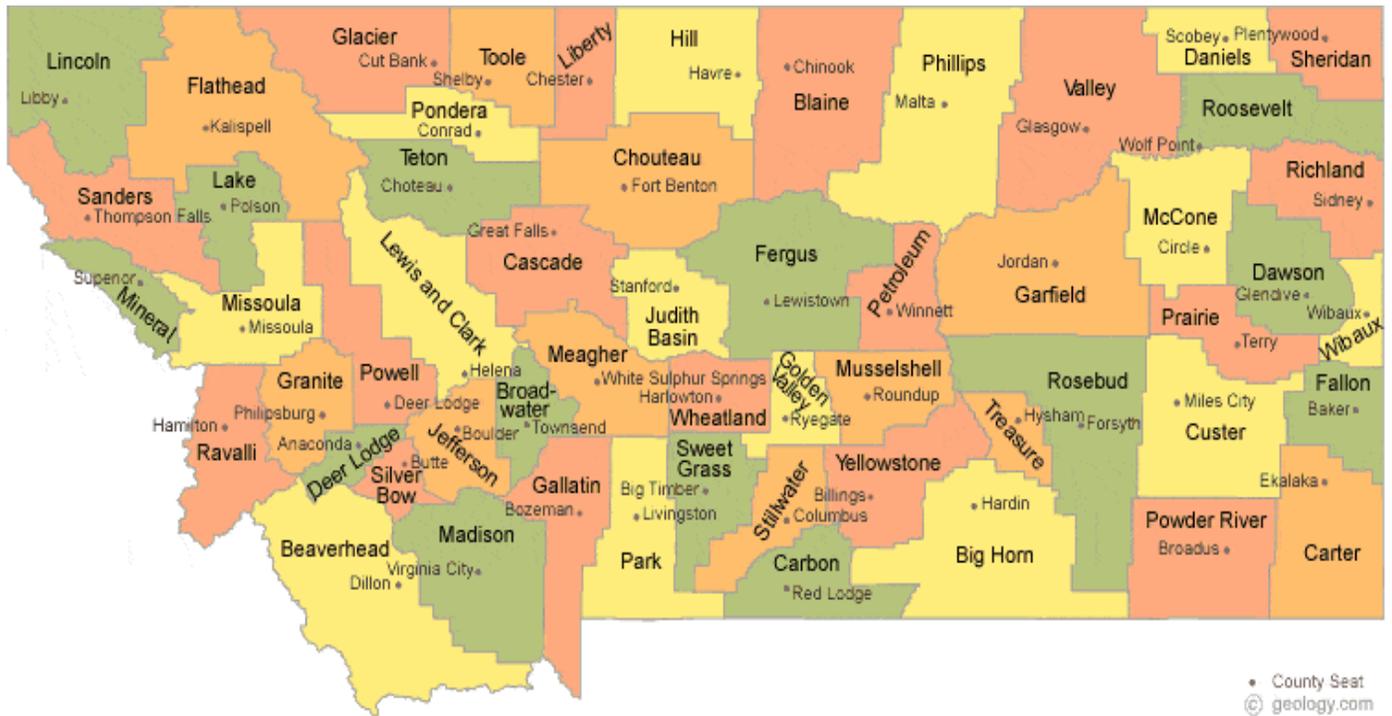


Rocky Mountain Development Council, Inc. Head Start  
Broadwater, Jefferson, and Lewis and Clark County  
2021 Tri-County Community Assessment - 2024 Update



Rocky Mountain Development Council, Inc. (Rocky) is a 501(C)3 non-profit human resource and development council organization based in Helena, serving Lewis and Clark, Broadwater, and Jefferson Counties. Rocky Head Start operates a center-based program in four communities serving 125 children and their families within the tri-county area.

Lewis and Clark County encompasses 3,497.6 square miles in land area. Three Head Start sites hold five classrooms in Helena, and one site has one classroom in East Helena. East Helena is six miles from Helena.

Broadwater County encompasses 1,238.0 square miles in land area. There is one site with one classroom in Townsend. Townsend is 32 miles from Helena.

Jefferson County encompasses 1,657.0 square miles in land area. There is one site with one classroom in Whitehall. Whitehall is 66 miles from Helena.

Completed: January 7, 2025  
Approved by Policy Council:  
Approved by Rocky, Inc. Board of Directors:

## Demographics

### **Lewis & Clark County**

The US Census Bureau estimates the total population of Lewis and Clark County for July 1, 2023, at 75,011, up from the July 1, 2022, estimate of 73,832. The county has experienced significant growth over the past two decades, with a population increase of 15,000. According to 2021 Kids Count, there were 15,359 children under age 18 and 4,692 children under age 6. In 2021, 11.2 % of children lived in poverty, down from 13.4% in 2018.

The racial/ethnic composition is 2.2% American Indian/Alaska Native, 0.6% black, 93.6% white, and 2.7% multi-racial. English is the primary language spoken.

The 2024 population of Helena, the Lewis and Clark County Seat, is 35,204. Helena is growing at a rate of 2.15% annually, and its population has increased by 9.18% since the most recent census, which recorded a population of 32,244 in 2020. Rocky Head Start serves 80 children and their families in Helena.

East Helena has a 2024 population of 2,201. East Helena is growing at a rate of 2.95% annually, and its population has increased by 12.99% since the most recent census, which recorded a population of 1,948 in 2020. Rocky Head Start serves 16 children and their families in East Helena.

### **Broadwater County**

The US Census estimates the total population of Broadwater County for July 1, 2023, at 8,032, up from the July 1, 2022, estimate of 7,793. According to the 2021 Kids Count, there were 1,417 children under age 18 and 464 children under age 6. In 2021, 12.6% of children lived in poverty, down from 15.5% in 2018.

Race/ethnic composition in Broadwater County is 1.4% American Indian/Alaska Native, 0.8% black, 95.5% white, and 1.8% multi-racial. English is the primary language spoken.

Townsend has a 2024 population of 2,235. It is also the county seat of Broadwater County. Townsend is growing at a rate of 4.78% annually, and its population has increased by 22.4% since the most recent census, which recorded a population of 1,826 in 2020. Rocky Head Start serves 16 children and their families in Townsend.

### **Jefferson County**

The US Census estimated the total population of Jefferson County for July 1, 2023, at 13,048, up from the July 1, 2022, estimate of 12,826. According to the 2021 Kids Count, there were 2,462 children under age 18 and 642 children under age 6. In 2021, 9.3% of children lived in poverty, down from 10.4% in 2018.

The race/ethnic composition in Jefferson County is 1.9% American Indian/Alaska Native, 0.6% black, 94% white, and 2.8% multi-racial. English is the primary language spoken.

Whitehall has a 2024 population of 1,104. Whitehall is growing at a rate of 2.22% annually, and its population has increased by 9.52% since the most recent census, which recorded a population of 1,008 in 2020. Rocky Head Start serves 13 children and their families in Whitehall.

### **Identified Needs**

Families must have access to safe, stable, affordable housing, mental and physical health care, quality nutrition, transportation, childcare, education, and employment to thrive. Families living in poverty face barriers in one or more of these areas. Because of that, they represent some of the most vulnerable of our community's citizens.

Families are eligible for Head Start at 100% or below the federal poverty line. Families are eligible for SNAP at 135%, Medicaid at 143%, Health Montana Kids/CHIP at 261%, energy assistance at 150%, Best Beginnings Childcare Scholarships at 185%, and WIC at 185%. Economic and resource barriers become apparent when looking at the resources available to people living in poverty compared to the actual costs of meeting basic needs. The latest LendingTree study shows that the average annual essential costs to raise a small child (from food and apparel to transportation and childcare) rose nearly 20% between 2016 and 2021, the latest year for which complete data was available.

The cost of living is defined as the amount of money needed to sustain a certain standard of living by affording basic needs such as housing, food, healthcare, and more. It is based on a US average of 100. An amount below 100 means a state is cheaper than the US average. A cost of living index above 100 means a state is more expensive. Montana's cost of living is 103.7. Housing is the most significant factor in the difference in the cost of living. Groceries and health care are also more expensive than the US average.

According to 2021 data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Montanan's average total personal consumption cost is \$47,887 annually. MERIC data in 2022 showed Montana ranks 35<sup>th</sup> in cost of living. That means Montana is more expensive than over half of the country. On January 1, 2025, Montana's minimum wage increased from \$10.30 to \$ 10.55/hour, bringing an annual salary to \$21,944. The gap between what is needed to live and what is earned in a minimum wage job is \$25,943. The estimated livable wage for one adult and one child in Lewis and Clark County is \$36.12/hour; in Broadwater County, it is \$37.48; and in Jefferson County, it is \$36.42.

### **Nutrition**

One in seven people is hungry, including one in five children who don't have enough to eat and one in five seniors who wonder when their next meal might be. The majority of Head Start families qualify for SNAP and WIC. In Lewis and Clark County, 34.0% of children participated in the free or reduced-priced lunch program; Broadwater County has 35.2% of children participating, and Jefferson County has 28.4% participating.

## Housing and Homelessness

Affordable, safe, and stable housing is a barrier for families living with low or no income in the tri-county area. Services for the unsheltered and rehousing have limited resources, and waitlists for HUD housing programs are long and depend on the bedroom size needed. If a family member has a felony record, it creates even more barriers to securing affordable housing, as they may not be able to access HUD housing. Another factor that may limit families from seeking housing services is the fear of losing their children. Parents reported staying in abusive relationships for fear of losing shelter. Many families double up to share expenses; some couch surf. The instability of not having a permanent home puts children at higher risk of witnessing abuse or being abused themselves.

Fair Market Rent prices in Lewis and Clark County are higher than the national average. This FMR area is more expensive than 77% of other FMR areas. Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Lewis and Clark County is \$1,359 monthly, up from a year ago when it was \$1,003 monthly. Two years ago, rent for a two-bedroom home was \$923 monthly. Compared to the rest of Montana, the Lewis and Clark County FMR area is more expensive than 87% of the state.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, there were an estimated 1,585 people experiencing homelessness on a single night in Montana in 2022. The 2023 Point in Time survey conducted in Helena on January 27 counted 164 neighbors living unsheltered, another 40 neighbors living in vehicles, and 110 community members living in local hotels through the Montana Emergency Rental Assistance Program. This count is based on the HUD definition of homelessness, so the numbers do not count people who are couch surfing or living doubled up with other families.

According to Helena Public Schools, the district identified 383 students fitting the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act definition of homeless in the 2022-2023 school year. During the 2022-2023 school year, Rocky Head Start served 10 families living unhoused. About two months into the 2023-2024 school year, the district had already identified 275 students fitting that definition. Rocky Head Start started the 2023-2024 school year with nine families living unhoused. Of the 139 families who have been enrolled so far in the 2024-2025 school year, 21 of those families, 15%, are experiencing homelessness.

Resources available for families living unsheltered are limited. Family Promise and God's Love Shelter provide services for families experiencing homelessness. Both programs are always full and have waiting lists. The Montana Emergency Rental Assistance program quit accepting applications on March 24, 2023. The average wait time on the wait list for HUD housing is 24-27 months.

On August 15, 2024, Montana closed the waitlist for Section 8 vouchers, also known as Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV), because of decreased funding disbursements from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The people on the waitlist before it closed will remain on

the waitlist; however, vouchers will not be issued until federal funding disbursements allow them to be.

### **Medicaid Unwinding**

“Medicaid unwinding” is the process of checking eligibility for Medicaid beneficiaries, a process the federal government suspended during the federal COVID-19 emergency. The federal government wanted more people to enjoy access to health care during the worst pandemic in 100 years. In a funding bill signed into law in December 2022, the federal government permitted state governments to re-commence Medicaid eligibility reviews starting March 31, 2023. Medicaid Unwinding had to be completed by March 2024.

As of mid-December 2023, Montana disqualified 100,000 Montanans from Medicaid. This number comprises three-fifths of Montana Medicaid beneficiaries. Of these, 60% lost their benefits for paperwork reasons and not because they were no longer qualified. DPHHS claims beneficiaries opted out of completing the paperwork. The network of human service providers challenges the DPHHS assumption. Instead, direct service providers see time and time again the inability of Medicaid beneficiaries to understand and complete re-determinations.

Unwinding involves completing a 23-page document. Beneficiaries cannot get support from the Office of Public Assistance (OPA) because OPA infrastructure does not handle so much traffic. In 2017, budget cuts resulted in reduced OPA staffing and the closure of OPA offices. In addition, the budget cuts resulted in the consolidation of OPA services so that the Havre office handles all Long-Term Care matters, and Kalispell manages all Community and Home-Based Services. Unless one lives in Havre or Kalispell, access to OPA support is limited to online, telephone, or snail mail. The bottom line is that OPA is woefully underprepared to deal with many redeterminations. OPA’s infrastructure falls well short.

Despite these problems, the state government refuses to slow down Medicaid Unwinding. Montana is one of the most aggressive states in the nation when it comes to Unwinding. The federal government noticed. The Regional Director of HHS and Region VIII Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services officials contacted Rocky during their separate fact-finding tours. The Regional HHS Director tested OPA’s response through Montana’s telephone hotline for Medicaid, and she reports she was on hold for six hours. The traffic to this hotline and OPA offices is so high that OPA no longer answers their hotline, and it’s extremely hard for Medicaid beneficiaries to get the support they require.

In addition, the state government tells beneficiaries to go to Area Agencies on Aging and other non-profit programs for support. While these programs assist beneficiaries with their applications, Area Agencies on Aging and Head Start have no professionals’ back door access to Medicaid. The program’s access is the same access recipients have, which is insufficient to support clients well. The federal government warned Montana that they may not comply with federal rules. Later, the federal government requested states to slow down redeterminations for children receiving Medicaid. Meanwhile, tens of thousands of Montanans who should be

eligible for Medicaid are being denied, and this is creating extreme hardship, unnecessary hardship, on those who should continue to receive Medicaid.

Medicaid expansion is due to sunset in June 2025. The 2025 State Legislature needs to take action to extend or eliminate the sunset altogether. If they do not, an estimated 81,000 Montanans risk losing their health insurance.

### **Health and Family Wellness**

According to Montana Kids Count 2021 Data, 7% of children in Montana were without health insurance. The percentage of persons without health insurance under age 65 is 11.7% in Broadwater County, 9.5% in Jefferson County, and 8.5% in Lewis and Clark County.

Child welfare agencies and models vary by state. Montana has 16 children in care per 1,000, which is the second highest in the nation. The number of kids in care has increased 126% since 2010. The Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Montana Budget and Policy Center data show 4,259 children aged birth to 17 in foster care. According to Who Cares: A National Count of Foster Homes and Families, Montana has 1200 foster homes.

Mental health support for children under five is challenging to find and, without monetary assistance through insurance, nearly impossible to afford. Access to mental health counseling and addiction treatment is a barrier for families living in poverty. Cost is not the only prohibitive factor in receiving treatment; availability and wait lists are also factors. The current workforce shortage has exacerbated this.

An emerging body of research underscores the need to support families and young children's healthy emotional and social development. Experts increasingly recognize Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as key indicators for future health. There is a clear link between increased exposure to ACEs and several poor health outcomes, including risky health behaviors, chronic health conditions, and early death. The prevention of ACEs is a key public health priority because children raised in safe and nurturing families and neighborhoods, free from maltreatment and other social adversities, are more likely to be healthy and prosperous adults.

Exposure to ACEs, including poverty, family violence, and substance abuse, is a concern for children. Based on the rates of reported alcohol abuse and mental health concerns among Lewis and Clark County adults, 1 in 10 children is likely to have a parent who is a heavy drinker, and 1 in 3 children is expected to have a parent who reports having had a poor mental health day in the past month.

Each year, hundreds of cases of domestic violence and thousands of cases of child abuse and neglect are reported in Lewis and Clark County. When children in our community reach high school, more than 1 in 10 report having been physically forced to have sexual intercourse.

Communities need interventions designed to protect children from ACEs and strengthen families to help mitigate the effects of early childhood trauma.

## **Transportation**

Transportation issues are the leading cause of absences and withdrawals from enrollment for Rocky Head Start families. Owning and maintaining a vehicle is prohibitive for many families living in poverty; insurance, driver's license renewals, registration, and fines are not in the budget for people with little to no income. The average transportation cost in Montana for a family of five, two working adults and three children, is \$15,073. Functioning in a community that does not have adequate public transportation, without private transportation, is a barrier. There are long geographic distances within communities, extreme weather conditions, and limited public transportation for Head Start sites in Lewis and Clark County. Public transportation is non-existent for Head Start sites in Broadwater and Jefferson County.

## **Adult Education and Employment**

Education advancement is essential because qualifying for degree positions leads to increased income. According to the 2022 Census, 94.5% of Montanans have a high school equivalent (HiSET), a high school degree, or higher. In Lewis & Clark County, the number of adults with a HiSET, high school degree or higher is 95%, 93.7% in Jefferson County and 93.3% in Broadwater County.

The implications of inadequate education are profound. People remain under-employed or unemployed without a solid educational foundation (including literacy and numeracy). Consequently, families live at subsistence levels. This means that their children lack opportunity from the beginning. Quality early childhood education or high-quality childcare includes consistent interaction and age-appropriate activities that stimulate healthy brain development. Families in poverty often cannot find suitable childcare at a price they can afford.

After 41 years of providing employment and training programs for low-income Montanans, Career Training Institute (CTI) was forced to close its doors when the Gianforte administration outsourced services to a for-profit company, Maximus, based in Virginia. CTI provided employment training, case management, business resources, and referral and outreach services in the tri-county area, including Lewis and Clark, north Jefferson, and Broadwater counties. The target populations included income-eligible teens and adults, SNAP and TANF recipients, programs for Helena Housing Authority residents, as well as offering services to the business community. CTI also provided on-site computer classes. All these services are no longer available locally, or even in the state, for our citizens.

The majority of Head Start families work between the hours of 6 am and 6 pm, 4 to 5 days a week. The workweeks usually include a weekend day. There are parents working swing and overnight shifts. Shifts that are early morning, weekends, and hours after 6 pm are difficult times to find childcare and public transportation.

## **Early Childhood Programs and Disability Services**

Montana is 1 of 5 states that fail to meet even half the potential need for childcare. Families not qualifying for Head Start or Special Education preschool use private preschools and/or childcare homes and centers for out-of-home child development experiences.

According to Montana Kids Count, in 2021, there were 642 children under age 6 in Jefferson County. As of 2022, licensed childcare providers had the capacity for 353 children. In Lewis and Clark County, there were 4,692 children under age 6, with licensed childcare providers having the capacity for 2,115 children. In Broadwater County, there were 464 children, and licensed childcare providers had a capacity for 75 children.

Childcare is considered affordable when it takes up 7% or less of a household's income. A typical Lewis and Clark County family spends over 27% of their income on childcare for one infant and toddler. In Broadwater County, it is 29%. And in Jefferson County, it is 25%. Licensed childcare in Montana meets only about 47% of demand, leaving over 20,000 children without licensed care.

Child Care Connections and Butte 4C's have provided resources to southwest Montana communities for nearly 50 years. They provided training, licensing, administrative tasks, and assistance applying for the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship Program. They helped connect families to childcare providers and supported childcare providers with professional development. Governor Gianforte's Administration awarded Montana's childcare regulatory and quality support and technical support contract solely to Shine Early Learning, a for-profit corporation in New York City. Beginning October 1, 2024, Montana families and child care providers must seek support for their child care needs from an agency based in New York.

Rocky Head Start has consistently served more than the federally mandated minimum of 10% of children identified as having a disability. Rocky Head Start receives support and services from one local school district (Helena Public Schools) and one special service cooperative (Prickly Pear Cooperative) that serves Townsend, East Helena, and Whitehall.

## **Continued Impacts of COVID-19**

Concerns about mental health and substance use remain elevated three years after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, with 90% of U.S. adults believing that the country is facing a mental health crisis, according to a recent KFF/CNN survey. The pandemic has affected the public's mental health and well-being in a variety of ways, including through isolation and loneliness, job loss and financial instability, and illness and grief.

As of July 1, 2021, 171 childcare programs closed in Montana. The lack of workforce in early childhood has profoundly impacted children receiving an early childhood education. Low wages and high costs contribute to the childcare crisis. The Montana Department of Labor and Industry says 40% of businesses report difficulty recruiting or retaining qualified workers due to

a lack of affordable childcare in their communities. And 30% of Montana businesses say inadequate childcare has prevented their business from growing.

Rocky Head Start has felt the impacts of a shrinking workforce. Due to staffing shortages, three classrooms could not open in the 2023-2024 school year. Rocky Head Start has not been fully staffed since the fall of 2020. Efforts have been focused on retaining and recruiting teachers and teacher assistants, including raising wages. Due to this staffing crisis, Rocky Head Start asked for and received a reduction in child slots from 176 to 125.

The ending of safety nets and programs that had been put in place in response to COVID-19 left many families facing higher levels of poverty and homelessness. Emergency rental assistance, the moratorium on evictions, increased access to Medicaid and food programs, and the monthly child tax credit were helpful to the stability of families living in poverty. The ending of the programs has been felt throughout the tri-county area.

### **Strengths of the community**

Families identify the strengths in their community as being close to nature and having access to outdoor activities such as hiking, camping, and hunting. Families enjoy parks, libraries, youth sports, community events, and celebrations.

Being able to count on the help of neighbors and having the small-town atmosphere feels supportive to families. Giving generously is a great strength. For example, at Christmas, the Helena and East Helena communities adopted all Head Start families enrolled and on the waitlist who needed assistance during the holidays.

As reflected in this assessment, the tri-county area has many agencies, community-based organizations, and coalitions in operation whose missions and visions are to meet the needs of families living in poverty and to build strong, resilient communities.

### **Over Arching Recommendations**

Housing, transportation, childcare, and preventing the effects of ACEs are the top identified needs of families. To address these complicated issues, communities must work collectively. Connecting providers and families to services is challenging across the communities Rocky Head Start serves. Organizations can work from a collective impact framework to align efforts and close service gaps.

Communities need interventions designed to protect children from ACEs and strengthen families to help mitigate the effects of toxic stress and early childhood trauma. Rocky Head Start is a part of Elevate Montana; the organization focuses on building resilient communities, educating on preventing exposure to ACEs, and treating trauma. Rocky Head Start continues to work with the Home Visiting Task Force to support home-visiting programs for families. We strive to embed trauma-informed care into the culture of Rocky Head Start.

A collaborative approach is imperative to address affordable housing and transportation needs. Rocky Head Start will continue to work with Helena Resource Advocates, Greater Helena Area Housing First, and Capital Transit Advisory Council.

Rocky Head Start will continue to advocate for access to high-quality childcare by participating in STARS to Quality and the Early Childhood Project. All Rocky Head Start classes are now a Star Level 5, the highest level of quality. We also connect families to the Best Beginning Childcare Scholarship Program so they can access affordable childcare. Another way to ensure more families can provide their children with preschool is to coordinate enrollment with local school districts that offer a preschool program.

Rocky Head Start will continue to participate in and advocate for the universal use of the CONNECT system, a web-based referral tool housed within Lewis and Clark Health Department and available in our community, that increases connection rates and care coordination for families. The Family and Community Partnerships Manager is a part of the CONNECT Advisory Team.

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## Rocky Head Start Tri-County Community Partners

### Lewis & Clark County

- Access to Success
- Adult Learning Center
- Alliance Church
- AWARE, Inc. Early Head Start
- Big Brothers and Sisters
- Pad for Paws
- Boy Scouts
- Boyd Andrew Chemical Dependency Services and Care Center
- Broadwater Village
- Capital Transit
- Carroll College
- Catholic Social Services of Montana
- Child Protective Services (Tri-County area)
- Child Support Services
- Children's Summer Feeding Program
- Consumer Credit Counseling Services
- Early Childhood Collaboration of the Greater Helena Area
- East Helena Public Schools
- Educational Opportunity Center
- Family Outreach
- Florence Crittenton
- Friendship Center
- Friends of Head Start
- God's Love
- Good Samaritan Ministries and Thrift Store
- Habitat for Humanity
- Helena Community Gardens
- Helena Food Share
- Helena Housing Authority
- Helena Indian Alliance
- Helena Job Service
- Helena Public Schools
- Home Visiting Partnerships
  - Safe Care
  - Parents as Teachers
  - Nurse-Family Partnerships
  - Asthma Home Visiting
- Home Visiting Task Force

- Intermountain
- Joining Community Forces
- Lead Education and Abatement Program
- Leo Pocha Health Clinic
- Lewis & Clark Public Health Department
- Lewis and Clark Library
- LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program for the tri-county area)
- Many Rivers Whole Health
- Montana Legal Services Association
- Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program (MTUPP)
- Office of Public Assistance
- Options Clinic
- Planned Parenthood
- Prickly Pear Special Services Cooperative
- Rocky Mountain Development Council
- Salvation Army
- St. Peter's Community Hospital
- United Way
- Helena College University of Montana
- WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)
- YMCA
- YWCA

### **Broadwater County**

- Broadwater County Health Department
- Broadwater County Social Services Committee (UWLCA partner organization)
  - Helping Hands Thrift for Adults and Children
  - Food Pantry
  - Mental Health Services
  - Farmers Market
  - Community Gardens (including at high school)
  - Youth Leadership
  - BECA (Broadwater Early Childhood Advocates)
  - Public Health
- Townsend School District
- Broadwater Christmas Connection
- Broadwater Community Foundation
- Broadwater Community Library
- Rotary Club
- Lions Club

- Forest Service
- Broadwater Mental Health Local Advisory Council
- Bulldog Pups Preschool
- Infinite Hope Counseling
- Rocky Senior Center
- Lodge of Townsend
- Townsend Ministerial Association
- Townsend United Methodist Church
- Family Promise
- LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program for the tri-county area)
- Treeline Psychiatry

### **Jefferson County**

- AWARE, Inc.
- Big Boulder Apartments
- Boulder Elementary School
- Jefferson County Public Assistance
- New Horizons Program
- Whitehall School District
- Whitehall Public Library
- Prickly Pear Cooperative
- Butte 4-C's
- Sincerely Paul – Food Bank
- Whitehall Medical Center
- Steve Sacry – movie theater, Whitehall site
- Carole Cogdill – Toys for Tots
- Kristi's Kiddie Korner
- Montana PBS
- Rocky Senior Center
- LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program for the tri-county area)

## Community Resources

### Addiction Services

#### **Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County**

Montana Chemical Dependency Center (MCDC), located in Butte, provides intensive in-patient treatment for the disease of addiction, including withdrawal management for substance use disorders and treatment for co-occurring mental health disease.

Montana Tobacco Quit Line provides free help quitting all commercial tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco and electronic cigarettes. All Montanans are eligible.

#### **Broadwater County**

Resource not identified yet.

#### **Jefferson County**

Resource not identified yet.

#### **Lewis and Clark County**

Boyd Andrew Community Services (BACS) provides outpatient services to adults for chemical dependency treatment in the Helena area. They also provide prevention, intervention, and treatment to adolescents and adults in Lewis & Clark and Jefferson counties. Services include residential services to adult offenders in the correctional system.

The First Judicial District Treatment Court is a court-supervised, comprehensive treatment program for non-violent offenders. The court is a voluntary program that includes regular court appearances before the treatment court judge. Treatment includes individual and group counseling and regular attendance at self-help meetings, provided through community-based treatment providers. The treatment staff will also assist with obtaining education and skills assessments and will offer referrals to vocational training, education, and/or job placement services. The program length, determined by each participant's progress, will be no less than one year.

Florence Crittenton (FCH) provides innovative, comprehensive services and nurturing programs that engage and empower children, young adults, and young families to thrive and build productive lives. Florence Crittenton is a trauma-responsive, relationship-based organization that provides family-centered support during critical times. Through a comprehensive

continuum of services, our programs include mental health services, substance use recovery, parenting education, childcare, preschool, and access to community support. They believe that children should accompany their parents to treatment and that a family-centered treatment approach is most effective in building a lasting foundation for young families.

FCH also offers prenatal & childbirth education; Circle of Security © and Love & Logic parenting classes; lactation support services; group, individual, and family therapy; substance abuse recovery support services; educational support; onsite Child Enrichment Center; recreational activities; adoption education, and independent living skills.

The Community Outreach Program through FCH aims to educate and support families with young children. These services include support groups for teen moms, such as prenatal education, various classes for parents of all ages, in-home visitation, a STARS-certified Child Enrichment Center, and Helena Parent Connections. Class fees are based on a sliding scale and cover all class materials. FCH maintains its strong commitment to the community, with no family being turned away due to inability to pay.

FCH also offers three residential programs. The Recovery Home for women aged 18-35 and their children aged 0-5. The Transitional Living Program for women and children successfully discharged from the Recovery Home. And the Youth Maternity Home for youth aged 12-21 who are pregnant and/or parenting.

YWCA- WINGS Provides transitional housing services for up to 24 women and their children (when applicable) at any time. Each woman has a furnished bedroom with shared bathrooms, a full kitchen, and a common area. This program serves women experiencing homelessness and who are transitioning into permanent housing. WINGS is an intensive research-based program requiring the residents to work with a case manager and manage mental health, engage in educational growth and obtaining employment, search for safe and sustainable housing, learn financial budgeting skills, and initiate self-care activities.

Caterpillars Parenting Center - Circle of Security Parenting Classes, Supervised Parenting time, and Safe Exchange.

### **Adult Education/Literacy**

#### **Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County**

Institutions of Higher Learning: Helena is the home of Carroll College, a private Catholic college, and Helena College University of Montana. Montana State University and the University of Montana have satellite campuses across the state.

## **Broadwater County**

Resource not identified yet

## **Jefferson County**

Whitehall Public Library provides access to written and digital materials and offers classes that range from book clubs to artwork, with guest presenters teaching specific topics throughout the year.

## **Lewis and Clark County**

The Helena Adult Learning Center is on the Helena College University of Montana Campus. The purpose of the Adult Learning Center is to provide for the literacy needs of adults in the community. Literacy is the individual's ability to apply reading, writing, and computational skills to a career and everyday life. Furthermore, all staff are committed to recognizing individual needs, assisting each student in achieving his or her highest potential, and promoting the desire for lifelong learning. Helena Adult Learning Center focuses on preparing students for employment and or college readiness. This includes preparation for the HiSET (High School Equivalency Test) and administering the HiSET. Jefferson County and Broadwater County families access adult education services in Butte and Bozeman.

The Helena School District offers an alternative high school, Project for Alternative Learning (PAL), for grades 10-12 to earn their high school diploma. Access to Success is a high school diploma completion program emphasizing earning a professional certificate or degree in a high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand career area while concurrently completing high school requirements. All coursework is provided in an adult learning environment. The program is housed on the Helena College campus. Eligibility is limited to those between the ages of 16-21 who meet minimum reading levels, are not currently enrolled in school, and do not have a high school diploma.

Lewis and Clark Literacy Council provides trained tutors/mentors who work with adults and young adults who want to improve basic reading, writing, spelling, and math skills. They help prepare for the HISET, improve employability skills, obtain one's driver's license, and more.

## **Animal Care**

### **Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County**

Lewis and Clark Humane Society LCHS is a small, private, community-based, not-for-profit organization that provides shelter for unwanted and stray animals (primarily dogs and cats) while working to end pet overpopulation, reduce the need for euthanasia and improve the humane treatment and well-being of companion animals. LCHS serves three counties in

Southwestern Montana, encompassing a population of roughly 92,000 residents, and services an area covering approximately 5,500 square miles. LCHS also provides shelter for dogs and cats with animal cruelty cases that are going to trial.

### **Broadwater County**

Resource not identified yet.

### **Jefferson County**

4 Paws Animal Rescue is a non-profit animal rescue operated by volunteers in Cardwell, MT.

### **Lewis and Clark County**

Pad for Paws Foundation provides pet food, pet supplies, and emergency veterinary care to those in need.

## **Child Care**

### **Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County**

The Early Childhood Services Bureau offers the Best Beginnings Childcare Scholarships for low-income families whose child receives care from a licensed childcare center, registered group or family childcare home, or legally certified childcare provider. Each family participates in the cost of that care by making a copayment based on a sliding fee scale. Scholarships are available to working families whose income is at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines and families who get cash assistance through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

The Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program was a voluntary quality rating and improvement system in Montana that aligns quality indicators with support and incentives for early childhood programs and early childhood professionals. It is currently in a redesign phase and not accepting new applications. The rebuilt Quality Recognition System (QRS) is projected to launch on October 1, 2025.

Regional Childcare Resource and Referral Agencies (R&Rs) support families in finding quality childcare as well as assisting providers with professional development to become quality childcare providers.

The Early Childhood Project supports R&Rs and childcare providers with professional development and quality improvement.

## **Broadwater County**

Resource not identified yet.

## **Jefferson County**

Kristi's Kiddie Korner offers preschool lessons and extended hours for daycare.

Wagner's Play House is a unique child care that offers van transportation for children as part of its services.

## **Lewis and Clark County**

Kay's Kids is a free youth summer recreation program for children 6-13 (children younger than 6 can still attend if accompanied by an adult.)

## **Clothing/Household Supplies/School Supplies**

### **Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County**

Marine Toys for Tots collects new unwrapped toys and distributes those toys to children at Christmas.

## **Broadwater County**

Helping Hands Thrift Store

Kids Korner Thrift Store

## **Jefferson County**

Whitehall Country Store is a thrift store that uses its profits from second-hand products as community grants or donations and offers affordable items.

## **Lewis and Clark County**

The Angel Fund is a nonprofit 501c3 Corporation helping Helena School District children who need school items, including clothing, shoes, school supplies, backpacks, classroom materials, field trip fees, and other scholastic necessities. The Angel Fund also offers Montana post-secondary scholarships to deserving seniors at Access to Success, Capital High School, Helena

High School, and PAL based on academic success, financial need, and a commitment to give back to their community. The program also provides children who meet income guidelines and have good school attendance with support for school-appropriate clothing during the winter holiday season.

Good Samaritan Ministries and Thrift Store is a private non-profit that operates a second-hand store to assist in clothing, furniture, and household items. Clothing and household items can be obtained free of charge through an appointment for a voucher. Financial help is available for housing, transportation, car repairs, court fee payment, and utility assistance to people in need as funds are available. The average number of clients receiving direct financial assistance monthly is 1,500. Good Samaritan Ministries works with other agencies to provide school supplies for children in the larger Helena area each fall.

Catholic Social Services provides parenting resources and infant supplies. Helena Baby Boutique is in the basement of the Cathedral of St. Helena, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11 am -1 pm. They offer free diapers, wipes, pull-ups, and other new or gently used children's items.

## **Disability Services**

### **Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County**

Montana Empowerment Center is a family-centered non-profit that enables families to realize possibilities and make informed decisions on family issues; this could include a child of any age that may experience a disability, special health care need, or sex/gender or other problems that affect their education, work, or life but are not required. They are based out of Kalispell, Helena, and Billings.

Prickly Pear Cooperative serves children with disabilities for the East Helena, Townsend, and Whitehall Local Education Agencies. Prickly Pear Cooperative provides support, in-service, and technical assistance to administrators, regular and special educators, and paraprofessionals to meet the needs of students eligible for special education under federal and state guidelines. Prickly Pear Cooperative members from East Helena, Montana City, and Clancy operate a self-contained special services classroom twice weekly at the Montana City School.

Local education agencies (LEAs) are the primary source of services and resources for children with disabilities, according to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), once the child turns three years old. Services can be provided to children in a classroom setting (where available) or through "outpatient" services at the child's neighborhood public school. There are 14 LEAs in the tri-county area: Helena Public Schools, Lincoln K-12 Schools, Trinity Elementary (Canyon Creek), Auchard Creek Elementary (Wolf Creek), Augusta Public Schools, East Helena Public Schools, Wolf Creek Elementary, Basin Elementary, Boulder Elementary, Cardwell

Elementary, Clancy Elementary, Montana City Elementary, Whitehall Public Schools, and Townsend K-12 Schools.

Family Outreach is a private, non-profit agency that provides home-based education and support services to individuals who have disabilities. One program (Part C) administers the Infant and Toddler (ages 0-3) portion of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA is a federal entitlement program, and services are implemented as soon as a child is eligible. There are two categories of eligibility under Part C – Type I and Type II. Type I includes established medical conditions, such as chromosomal or genetic disorders, infectious diseases, neurological disorders, congenital malformation, sensory disorders, severe attachment, and toxic exposure. Services under Type I require a physician's signature. Type II includes children with a 25% delay in 2 developmental areas or a 50% delay in 1 area, including physical, cognitive, communication, social/emotional, or adaptive. Family Outreach works with the family to gather information and to conduct assessments that help determine eligibility. Once a child is determined eligible, family support staff works with the family to assist in identifying needs and family priorities. Through collaborative efforts, services are developed to "wrap around" the child. Part C can also pay for other entitlement services such as diagnostic medical, physical/occupational, speech, and audiology services. Rocky Head Start and Family Outreach maintain a Transition Protocol that provides information each spring about the number of children with disabilities who will be turning three and their specific type of disability.

### **Broadwater County**

Resource not identified yet.

### **Jefferson County**

Liberty Place, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation located in Whitehall, MT. It was founded in 1996 by four women who dreamed of a better life for people who were severely impaired by brain injury. They envisioned a place to allow the individual to discover possibilities and build on strengths rather than focus on what was lost. It would encourage dignity of risk, purpose in life, and life-long growth.

### **Lewis and Clark County**

School District #9, East Helena Public Schools, also provides a paraprofessional in the Head Start classroom to assist the Head Start staff in providing services to children on Individual Education Plans (IEP).

School District #1, Helena Public Schools (HPS), provides services to children 3 to 5 years old with disabilities in the Helena area. All children who qualify through an Individual Education Plan (IEP) are eligible regardless of income. Helena Public School offers a continuum of services for

preschool-aged children with disabilities, from children needing therapies who go to sites within the district for those services to services provided in the Head Start classrooms.

## **Early Childhood Education**

### **Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County**

AWARE Early Head Start has a center-based program in Helena and East Helena and a child care partnerships program in Whitehall.

Montana PBS Kids provides educational games and videos from Curious George, Wild Kratts, and other PBS KIDS shows! PBS KIDS allows all children to explore new ideas and worlds through television, digital content, and community-based programs.

### **Broadwater County**

Resource not identified yet.

### **Jefferson County**

Dr. Steve Sacry owns and rents the Whitehall Head Start Facilities and partners on maintenance and lawn services.

Whitehall School District operates a pre-K preschool class. Head Start and Whitehall Elementary partner with enrollment; for families that are categorically eligible for Head Start, the school refers to Rocky, and for families that are not categorically eligible for Head Start, Rocky refers to the School District.

Kristi's Kiddie Korner provides preschool and child care services and is the area's Early Head Start partnership.

### **Lewis and Clark County**

Kinder Cubs is located at Eastgate Elementary. The Kinder Cubs program is for 4-year-olds. In addition, they must meet requirements set by the School Board. Requirements include qualifying for the free and reduced lunch program, being a registered member with a tribe, English as a 2<sup>nd</sup> language, or qualifying for Special Education. Families only need to meet one of the qualifications to be eligible.

## Employment

### Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County

Job Service Montana offices are part of a statewide workforce development center network that collaborates with community partners to provide customer-focused employment and training opportunities. These centers assist in preparing, training, and connecting a highly skilled workforce to local businesses. This assistance enhances long-term employment outcomes for both businesses and workers. There are offices in Helena, Butte, and Bozeman.

### Broadwater County

Resource not identified yet.

### Jefferson County

Jefferson Valley Community Foundation is a private, grassroots, and hometown permanent foundation that ensures that there will be a source of income now and in the future. This income will fund worthwhile community projects that improve the quality of life for the greater Whitehall area citizens.

### Lewis and Clark County

Resource not identified yet.

## Family Violence/Child Abuse

### Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) provides volunteer guardians to work on behalf of abused and neglected children to promote their best interests in the pursuit of safe, permanent homes. CASAs interview parents, teachers, foster families, counselors, and the child. With this information, they submit reports to the court. Judges can then make more informed decisions about the child's best interests.

Child and Family Services Division's mission is to protect children who have been or are at substantial risk of abuse, neglect, or abandonment. The department strives to ensure that all children have a family who will protect them from harm. They recognize the protective capacities of families and incorporate them in assessments, decision-making, and actions to improve children's safety, permanency, and well-being.

The Montana Foster Care Independence Program (MFCIP) is a part of the Child and Family Services Division of the Department of Public Health and Human Services. Youth in foster care face unique and complex challenges as they turn eighteen and leave the foster care system.

Studies indicate they are less likely to finish high school and become self-supporting. They are also more likely to be homeless or to become parents at a young age. The MCFCIP strives to assist youth in the foster care system by offering benefits to eligible youth to avoid these circumstances. The services offered are intended to help Montana foster youth get the life skills they need to transition into adulthood successfully. By assisting youth in achieving self-sufficiency and obtaining future goals, the MCFCIP enables youth in the foster care system to create a healthy lifestyle and a successful future.

Montana VINE, Victim Notifications Network, supplies the most reliable information for custody status, changes, and criminal case information.

### **Broadwater County**

Resource not identified yet.

### **Jefferson County**

Jefferson County Victim/Witness Advocate offers services specifically to victims of abuse or those who witnessed the abuse. Services are gained by calling the Sheriff's Department for the dispatcher referral.

### **Lewis and Clark County**

The Friendship Center is the only shelter in Lewis and Clark, Jefferson, and Broadwater Counties that provides a broad range of support services at no charge for anyone who has experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking. They provide safe shelter, counseling, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Survivor Groups, a Sexual Assault Outreach Program, a Crime Victim Advocate Program, a 24-hour Crisis Line, an Order of Protection Assistance, Community Education, and Legal Advocacy.

## **Financial Services/Assistance**

### **Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County**

Child Support Services of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services pursues financial and medical support for children by establishing, enforcing, and increasing public awareness of parental obligations. The division provides federally mandated child support enforcement services that include locating absent parents, establishing paternity, establishing financial and medical support orders, enforcing current and past-due child support, offering medical and spousal support, and modifying child support orders.

TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) is a federal program that provides temporary financial assistance to impoverished families with dependent children for no more than 60

months. Those eligible for TANF benefits apply at their local Office of Public Assistance. DPHHS contracts with Maximus out of the state of Virginia.

### **Broadwater County**

Financial Capability Class and Financial Coaching is offered through Rocky Mountain Development Council.

### **Jefferson County**

Financial Capability Class and Financial Coaching is offered through Rocky Mountain Development Council.

#### Jefferson County Family Services

#### Jefferson County Public Assistance

Rocky Mountain Bank offers counseling in fraud prevention, first-time home buying, and retirement and would host classes upon request. They also encourage school-age children to come for field trips and provide savings piggybanks to those who attend.

### **Lewis and Clark County**

Financial Capability Class and Financial Coaching is offered through Rocky Mountain Development Council.

## **Food**

### **Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County**

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides low-income people with supplemental food and nutrition assistance. SNAP recipients use EBT cards, like debit cards, to purchase food in authorized retail stores. The family income needs to be 135% or below the federal poverty guideline to qualify.

SNAP Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Program's goals are to assist SNAP-eligible participants in making healthy food choices within a limited budget and adding more physical activity throughout their day, consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans. A contract with Montana State University Extension manages Montana's SNAP-Ed program. WIC is the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. This public health program is designed to improve health outcomes and influence lifetime nutrition

and health behaviors in a targeted, at-risk population. Nutrition education is the cornerstone of the program. WIC participants can receive free breast pumps and benefits for fresh fruits and vegetables at seasonal farmers' markets. WIC now uses debit cards instead of paper benefits. This reduces stigma and allows food benefits to be used as the family needs them.

## **Broadwater County**

### Broadwater Food Bank

## **Jefferson County**

Sincerely Paul Feeding His Sheep Food Pantry is a faith-based ministry that offers food staples, cooking classes, and a youth group program.

Whitehall Food Bank provides necessary food supplies to families in need; it is open once/a month or by appointment.

Trinity United Methodist Church operates the community food pantry in Whitehall.

## **Lewis and Clark County**

Helena Food Share (HFS) is a local non-profit food bank founded in 1987 to help provide emergency food to people who face hunger. Families come to the pantry because they are facing difficult times. They need help while they have trouble paying medical bills, struggle with a disability, find their way through a layoff, or do their best to make ends meet with a low or fixed income. No matter the situation, Food Share is dedicated to serving its customers with dignity and respect and providing them with emergency food to help in any circumstances.

### Feed and Fun Summer Feeding Program – Sodexo + School District

18 and younger can receive free lunch

### Salvation Army food pantry

The Good Samaritan runs Placer Pantry, which provides hygiene and personal care products. It is available at no cost to individuals in need. Volunteers from the Greater Federation of Women's Club and the Soroptimists Club support the pantry. The store consists of full-size personal hygiene and household cleaning products. People can access the pantry once a month. Donations come from local businesses, Costco, Pad for Paws, and drives. Hours are Tuesdays 4:30-5:30 and Saturdays 10 am-11 am.

## General

### **Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County**

CONNECT is a secure, web-based system for sending and receiving referrals. Agencies are brought together under a single information-sharing agreement, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and Release of Information (ROI) that is HIPAA, FERPA, 42CFR, and IDEA compliant. The system was created in 2009 without incentives outside client advocacy and the desire to increase performance. The current version was launched in 2014 and has been continually enhanced. Strategic referral tracking via CONNECT aims to improve the referral process in our communities by establishing accountability and improving methods for exchanging client information. The goal is to foster a collaborative culture among service providers in Montana.

2-1-1 is a nationwide system that connects people to non-profit services. In Montana, 2-1-1 is a call center-based operation and a website, [www.Montana211.org](http://www.Montana211.org). If people in the tri-county area dial 2-1-1, they will be connected to Voices of Hope in Great Falls; when they discuss their needs, Voices of Hope staff will look up those services in an online database and give the caller information to fill them. Info includes services, eligibility, and hours of operation, among other info. This database also populates the website, which anyone can use to look up local resources. Although the database was not updated for two years, the United Way of the Lewis and Clark Area is now updating the information.

### **Broadwater County**

Resource not identified yet.

### **Jefferson County**

Resource not identified yet.

### **Lewis and Clark County**

Resource not identified yet.

## **Health (Physical, Dental, Mental, Behavioral)**

### **Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County**

988 provides 24/7, free, and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States.

AWARE, INC. is a statewide nonprofit organization that offers quality, community-based support for people with mental health and/or developmental disabilities and families with children ages 0 to 8

Healthy Montana Kids Plus (Medicaid) and Healthy Montana Kids (BC/BS) help ensure that the majority of Montana's children have health insurance. Access to health insurance for adults is more complicated.

Cover Montana is an organization that helps individuals across Montana find and decide upon health insurance coverage on the marketplace (non-employer-sponsored health insurance).

AWARE offers Early Childhood Services to families and prenatal children through age five. These services are available to families of all socio-economic statuses, and children with disabilities are welcome. The program includes Early Head Start and Successful Starts and behavioral health services for children and families.

Intermountain offers Child and family, Neurofeedback, and Co-occurring Substance use and Emotional Distress Therapy, Youth Case Management, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Occupational Therapy, Psychological services, School-based services, home support services, Intensive day treatment, Therapeutic After-school and Summer Support, and Therapeutic Foster Care and Adoption services.

The First Breath Program is available to pregnant women through their baby's 3rd month. It assists women who wish to reduce or quit tobacco use. Participants can receive free diapers.

St. Peter's Hospital is a 123-bed facility that provides healthcare services to an estimated 97,000 Lewis and Clark, Broadwater, Jefferson, Meagher, and Powell counties residents. It offers several health education classes, including Prepared Parenting, Safe Sitter, Health Insurance 101, CPR, First Aid, and other courses and education. St. Peter's also offers Cancer, Alzheimer's, Diabetes, Grief, Pregnancy loss, and Suicide Support groups.

Shodair offers acute psychiatric inpatient programs, child and adolescent residential treatment programs, education, outpatient, and medical genetic services.

## **Broadwater County**

Broadwater County Health Department and WIC in Townsend provide immunization services, health referrals, health education, and communicable disease surveillance and investigation. The health department also administers the Homemaker Program for Townsend and the WIC Program for Townsend, White Sulphur Springs, Whitehall, and Boulder.

## **Jefferson County**

Jefferson County Public Health is located in Boulder. They provide vaccines, WIC, Immunization/Screening tests, and planning and preparing for emergencies.

Meadowlark Manor Assisted Living, a Caslen Living Centers, Inc. member, is a privately owned company based in Billings, Montana. It is equipped to meet the needs of the aging population across Montana.

## **Lewis and Clark County**

PureView Health Center is a community health center that offers medical, dental, and mental health services. There is a sliding fee scale for low- and moderate-income individuals.

Leo Pocha Health Clinic, housed at the Helena Indian Alliance, provides the services of a medical doctor or nurse practitioner, and the fee is based on one's ability to pay. The clinic also offers other health-based services (substance abuse, nutrition for seniors, mental health, etc.). No one, regardless of race, is refused services.

Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department provides various health services to city and county residents. These include immunization clinics, sexually transmitted diseases testing and support, parenting classes, and parenting education, including the Parents as Teachers program, breastfeeding support, the WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) nutritional program, and intensive home-visiting programs.

Helena Indian Alliance and Pureview Health Center have ACA navigators to assist people in applying for health insurance.

### Breastfeeding Support

Registered nurses who are specially trained as certified lactation counselors or internationally board-certified lactation counselors can answer questions about breastfeeding and help solve breastfeeding problems. Visits can be by phone, at the health department, or home, whichever is most comfortable. Free weight checks for breastfeeding infants are available.

### Montana Youth Homes

### Many Rivers

### Our Place

## Home Visiting

### Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County

Resource not identified yet.

### Broadwater County

Resource not identified yet.

### Jefferson County

Resource not identified yet.

### Lewis and Clark County

Lewis and Clark County Healthy Families Home Visiting Programs offer family support through the Nurse-Family Partnerships and Parents as Teachers programs; nurse advisors and family support specialists- known as home visitors- provide free support and education on many topics of interest to pregnant women and families with children through age 5. These family services are provided in the home or other comfortable settings and include healthy pregnancy and preparation for a healthy baby, wellness and child development, breastfeeding, nutrition, safety, attachment and bonding, and parent skill building. Home visitors can also assist families in learning how to access community resources for food, housing, Medicaid, employment, childcare, and health care.

### Child Health and Developmental Screenings

Registered nurses and family support specialists offer free screenings for children from 2 months through 5 years old. They can suggest fun activities to help your child meet their full potential. They will make referrals if your child needs more specialized help. Home visitors can also perform free vision and hearing tests. The sooner a child's health or developmental problems are identified, the more likely they are to reach their fullest potential.

### Asthma Home Visiting

The health department's asthma project helps families of children with asthma control the disease rather than let it control them. Trained nurses will visit the homes of children ages 0-17 to help them and their families find ways to reduce exposure to the things that trigger asthma attacks. The free program can also supply special mattress and pillow covers, medication advice, asthma educational materials, and referrals to community resources.

## Housing/Shelter

### Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County

Homebuyer Education Classes are available to teach potential homeowners about purchasing a home. Homebuyer Education classes provide in-depth information on homeownership, including budgeting, finding a home, choosing a lender/closing on a loan, homeowner's insurance, home inspection & maintenance, and energy savings. Registration requires completing the Homebuyer Education Class intake form, paying a non-refundable class fee of \$35.00 (plus \$20 for each additional family member attending), and signing up for a 45-minute intake appointment at least two weeks before the class date.

Habitat for Humanity is part of a global, nonprofit housing organization dedicated to eliminating substandard housing locally and worldwide through constructing, rehabilitating, and preserving homes, advocating for fair and just housing policies, and providing training and access to resources to help families improve their shelter conditions. Habitat for Humanity operates in Jefferson, Broadwater, Lewis, and Clark County.

### Broadwater County

Resource not identified yet.

### Jefferson County

Cowdrey Court provides housing for families with low incomes.

La Casa offers low-rent spaces for mobile homes.

Big Boulder Apartments is a 36-unit 1- and 2-bedroom HUD housing complex in Boulder run by Rocky Mountain Development Council.

### Lewis and Clark County

God's Love is the only homeless shelter in Helena. The shelter provides three meals daily (6 am, 11:30 am, and 4:30 pm), clothing, medical assistance, and a warm place to sleep at night. The lower level has 31 beds to shelter men and a room for women made to shelter four people; when there is more need than accommodations, people sleep on the couches in the cafeteria area and the floor. The upper level has rooms for families.

The Salvation Army can help low-income families with rent, utilities, food, personal care, and transitional housing. They also have transitional housing for single women, men, and families.

Family Promise is a program for families living homeless. A network of churches volunteers to host families in their churches for two weeks. The families sleep at the churches and spend their days at the Family Promise office. The families work with an advocate who supports them in gaining employment, childcare, and stable housing.

Housing First is a community-wide coordinated entry system that aims to connect individuals and families who are homeless or those who are immediately at risk of becoming homeless to housing and other necessary resources. Good Samaritan Ministries, Pure View Health Center, Volunteers of America, and Our Place are Housing First front doors.

Helena Housing Authority (HHA) provides 1,065 total housing units in Helena, ranging from housing vouchers to HUD housing units. Of those units, 366 are 1–5-bedroom HUD housing units and 581 are Section 8 housing vouchers. In 2015, HHA served 1,373 household members and 418 children aged 0-12.

HHA offers two programs for residents. The first is a resident stipend, not to exceed \$200 a month, to go towards rent for performing a part-time service for HHA, which enhances the quality of life in the development. The second is a Youth Activity Pilot program for any child who resides in a HHA public housing unit. They may apply up to \$100 per calendar year for a healthy activity or educational financial assistance program.

Broadwater Village is an income-based HUD housing complex offering one, two, and three-bedroom apartments. Heat, water, garbage, and sewer are included in the monthly rent.

## **Legal Assistance**

### **Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County**

Montana Legal Services Association provides legal advice pro bono, referrals, application assistance, and self-help law materials for citizens. Montana Legal Services Association (MLSA) is a legal aid that empowers low-income people by providing free civil legal information, advice, and other services. MLSA works on individual cases and uses a systemic approach to help low-income people.

Montanalawhelp.org is an online legal resource that provides forms and directions to help people represent themselves with civil legal issues.

Montana State Library Self-Help Law Center provides legal forms, information, references, and resource referrals for civic matters.

### **Broadwater County**

Resource not identified yet.

### **Jefferson County**

Resource not identified yet.

### **Lewis and Clark County**

Resource not identified yet.

## **Military/Veteran**

### **Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County**

Fort Harrison VA Medical Center campus offers health services at several different facilities. A 34-bed medical-surgical hospital provides acute, chronic, and specialized inpatient and outpatient services for Veterans. A 24-bed inpatient mental health facility helps Veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse. The Group House provides Veteran-led mental health meetings and activities. Liberty House offers temporary lodging for Veterans and family members who live more than 125 miles from Fort Harrison.

Military OneSource is a Defense Department-funded program for military members and their families. Military OneSource offers various individualized consultations, coaching, and non-medical counseling for many aspects of military life. The program can help with tax services, spouse employment help, webinars and online training, and relocation and deployment tools.

### **Broadwater County**

Resource not identified yet.

### **Jefferson County**

Whitehall American Legion provides veterans mentoring and social/community service activities.

### **Lewis and Clark County**

VA – see Fort Harrison VA Medical Center

## Parenting

### Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County

ParentingMontana.org has information and tools to support your child's success from birth through the teen years.

### Broadwater County

Love and Logic/Circle of Security Parenting Classes offered to the community by Rocky Head Start.

### Jefferson County

Love and Logic/Circle of Security Parenting Classes offered to the community by Rocky Head Start.

### Lewis and Clark County

Love and Logic/Circle of Security Parenting Classes are offered to the community by Rocky Head Start, Florence Crittenton, St. Peter's Hospital, and Options Clinic.

## Recreation/Family Activities

### Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County

Resource not identified yet.

### Broadwater County

Resource not identified yet.

### Jefferson County

GOLD JUNCTION Presents aims to present the arts in all forms, educate, challenge, and culturally broaden the experiences available to the people of Whitehall and the other rural communities.

Star Theater provides inexpensive entertainment on weekends and partners with GOLD JUNCTION Presents to offer the public complimentary children's movies and westerns during the summer and early fall.

## **Lewis and Clark County**

Exploration Works is a children's museum located in Helena that offers reduced-cost membership for families receiving social services and science kits to be checked out by schools and homeschoolers, and they have developed a partnership with the library to check out a pass for the day.

YMCA offers reduced membership fees and scholarships for gym membership and YMCA sports activities.

## **Transportation**

### **Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County**

Resource not identified yet.

### **Broadwater County**

Resource not identified yet.

### **Jefferson County**

Whitehall Public Transportation serves the elderly, disabled, and the general population with area transportation.

## **Lewis and Clark County**

Capital Transit offers a ride-scheduling service model. Within city limits, the model is known as curb-to-curb service. The city does provide limited commuter bus stop locations in East Valley/ East Helena. Riders can take Capital Transit from East Valley / East Helena to the Transit Center, then schedule additional destinations within Helena City limits using the App. Capital Transit operates between 6:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday-Friday. East Valley/East Helena commuter service runs 8 am - 10 am and 2 pm - 4 pm and is closed on all federal holidays.

## **Utility Assistance**

### **Nationwide/Statewide/Tri-County**

Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) provides energy conservation education and assistance to Lewis and Clark, Jefferson, and Broadwater Counties. LIHEAP is designed to assist low-income households in meeting the expenses of keeping warm during the year's cold

months. Those who qualify for LIHEAP receive a credit to their utility account if heat costs are paid directly and a heating rebate if heating costs are included in rent. Those who use wood are usually paid directly for wood purchases. If a household has a heating emergency that poses an imminent threat to the health and safety of the household, LIHEAP can help with emergency assistance. Some examples of an emergency are broken furnaces, hazardous conditions in the heating system, loss of primary supply of energy, or other forces outside the control of the household, which cause severe heat loss. If your household benefits from the SNAP Program, your LIHEAP Application process may be drastically simplified.

Energy Share helps people with heating bill assistance once every 10 years up to a maximum of \$700. The primary way that Energy Share helps individuals and families through energy emergencies is by paying all or a portion of past-due heating bills. Families who live paycheck-to-paycheck often face a financial emergency when an unexpected expense occurs, such as a vehicle breaking down, loss of employment, or medical expenses. In certain circumstances, Energy Share can help replace inefficient older refrigerators and water heaters and repair some furnaces.

Weatherization is an energy conservation program that reduces home heating costs for families with limited income.

Energy Corps AmeriCorps serves communities and individuals in one of four mission areas: Energy education and outreach, community energy Planning, Hands-on energy assistance, and Green-collar Professional Development.

### **Broadwater County**

Resource not identified yet.

### **Jefferson County**

Resource not identified yet.

### **Lewis and Clark County**

Resource not identified yet.