



**THE MONTANA COALITION TO
SOLVE HOMELESSNESS**

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New Homeless Coalition Forms to Support People Living Without Shelter in Montana

The Montana Coalition to Solve Homelessness announced its formation to advocate for policies and resources to effectively and compassionately support people living without shelter in Montana. The coalition is a group of service providers, community partners, and other stakeholders working together to ensure that people living without housing in Montana are sheltered and on a path to housing stability.

"Everyone needs stable housing to be healthy and safe. Homeless service providers are a critical part of the plan to solve homelessness," said Chris Krager, Executive Director of the Samaritan House, a homeless shelter and transitional living program in Kalispell. "This coalition is a diverse group with a shared vision to find policy solutions to ensure that people living without housing in Montana are sheltered and on a path to housing stability."

Identified policy solutions include increasing access to shelter beds - especially for aging populations, increasing state funding for nursing homes, group homes, and other supportive housing options, providing Medicaid reimbursement for shelter services, and funding state grants to shelters to enhance and improve operations.

"Every Montanan needs a home they can afford and keep," said David O'Leary with Montana Continuum of Care. This statewide organization works with local service providers across Montana to help individuals, families, and youth experiencing homelessness. "With Montana's ever-growing housing crisis, the number of people living on the streets, in their cars, or on someone's couch is growing. This isn't the Montana we want. We can choose a different path by ensuring everyone across the state who needs shelter has it."

Members of the coalition include Montana Rescue Mission (Billings), Montana Continuum of Care (statewide based in Helena), Samaritan House (Kalispell), Great Falls Rescue Mission, Poverello Center (Missoula), Montana Catholic Conference (statewide based in Helena), Montana Hospital Association (statewide based in Helena), Human Resource Development Council (Bozeman, Livingston), Western Native Voice (statewide based in Billings), NeighborWorks (statewide based in Kalispell), and Montana Primary Care Association (statewide based in Helena).

"Homeless service providers are the experts," said Carrie Matter with the Great Falls Rescue Mission. "We are on the ground, working with people living unhoused, addressing shelter, hunger, mental health, physical health, and safety needs. Our teams act as case managers, housing navigators, and crisis response professionals. We want to partner with policymakers to decide what services and resources are needed and how to deliver them."