

From: [Sara Bruesch](#)
To: [Council](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] ICE
Date: Friday, January 23, 2026 8:19:40 AM



Please keep ICE out of our community! We don't need that kind of chaos and hate that it will bring. People in our community need to feel safe and respected and so far ICE has shown they don't respect the law or local law enforcement. Thank you. -- Sara Bruesch

From: [John Ringert](#)
To: [Mattox, Lora](#); [Monat, Elyse](#); [Neese, Roy](#); [Martonen, Dakota](#); [janderson@yellowstonecountymt.gov](#); [Logan, Rusty](#); [kschnieber@mt.gov](#); [Mehmet Casey](#); [sdonovan@ae.design](#); [michellewilliams@billingsdepot.org](#); [Janet.D.Hardy@p66.com](#); [.MayorAndCouncil](#); [mmorse@yellowstonecountymt.gov](#); [jostlund@yellowstonecountymt.gov](#); [mwaters@yellowstonecountymt.gov](#); [mplecker@yellowstonecountymt.gov](#); [Friday, Wyeth](#); [Vickers, Anna](#); [katie.potts@dot.gov](#); [Wood, Samantha](#); [heather@billingsbird.com](#)
Cc: [Fischer, Lisa](#); [Justin Delgado](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Billings 21st St. Underpass Study - Bi-Weekly Update
Date: Friday, January 23, 2026 4:38:46 PM



Hello PAC Members, Elected Officials, and Interested Parties,

I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays and the start of 2026 is going well!

Following is an update on our work on the 21st St Railroad Underpass Study:

Recent Work Activities

- Received input from BNSF Railway before the holidays.
- Launched the Round 2 public involvement before the holidays and closed the comment period this week.
- Continued work on the alternatives analysis memo.

Upcoming Work Activities

- Complete a draft of alternatives analysis memo.
- Complete a summary of the public involvement comments and survey responses received in Round 2.

Please contact Elyse Monat (MPO project manager) at monate@billingsmt.gov or myself at jringert@kittelson.com if you have any questions regarding the project or this update.

Thank you for your participation!

John

John F. Ringert, P.E.
Senior Principal Engineer
Kittelson & Associates, Inc.
101 South Capitol Boulevard, Suite 600
Boise, Idaho 83702

www.kittelson.com
jringert@kittelson.com
208.472.9802 (direct)
208.863.0201 (cell)

From: [Maddox, Wynnette](#)
To: [.MayorAndCouncil](#); [.Leadership Team](#)
Cc: [Greg Burns](#)
Subject: CA Weekly Report
Date: Friday, January 23, 2026 3:33:06 PM

Good afternoon.

The January 23, 2026, Weekly Report is available at the following link:

<https://www.billingsmt.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/19245>

Thanks.



wynnette Maddox
Executive Secretary
maddoxw@billingsmt.gov

billingsmt.gov

P.O. Box 1178 • Billings, MT 59103
P 406.657.8433 F 406.657.8390

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My hours are Monday – Thursday 7 AM – 5 PM

From: [Bohlman, Denise](#)
To: [Council](#)
Subject: DRAFT Minutes from November 24, 2025 Regular Business Meeting
Date: Friday, January 23, 2026 5:45:41 PM

Good evening, Mayor and Council,

Please click on the link below to review the DRAFT Minutes for your approval during Monday night's meeting.

[DRAFT Minutes - November 24, 2025 Regular Business Meeting](#)

Thank you and have a wonderful weekend – stay warm!!



Denise R. Bohlman
City Clerk, CMC
bohlmand@billingsmt.gov

billingsmt.gov

316 N. 26th Street, 5th Floor
P.O. Box 1178 • Billings, MT 59103
P 406.657.8210 F 406.657.8390

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From: [Erin Anderson](#)
To: r8eisc@epa.gov; tribbett.kate@epa.gov; Hoogerheide.Roger@epa.gov; payne.joe@epa.gov; sonja.nowakowski@mt.gov; james.fehr@mt.gov; kevin.stone@mt.gov; [Council](#); [Bohman, Denise](#); timothy.erickson@hdrinc.com; 1glennfoy@gmail.com; steers@fiberpipe.net; erin.robbs@mdu.com; neil@secondnature.consulting; rhafer@highplainsarchitects.com
Cc: speakup@billingsgazette.com; info@yellowstonecountynews.com; news@kulr.com; pohnemus@kulr.com; news@ktvq.com; heather@montanafreepress.org; amanda@montanafreepress.org; tips@montanafreepress.org; news@mtpr.org; ellis.juhlin@mso.umt.edu; dianne.parker@ktvq.com; press@vice.com; issues.pitches@vice.com; oliver.milman@theguardian.com; dharna.noor@theguardian.com; jessica.glenza@theguardian.com
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Formal Statement of Health Concerns, Environmental Exposure, Violent Crime, and Request for Accountability – Billings, MT Superfund Plume & Refinery Wastewater
Date: Friday, January 23, 2026 3:05:36 PM
Attachments: [Plume And Waste Water MT EA Official Statement Final \(2\).pdf](#)



Dear Public Service Officials, Counsel, and Press,

This executive brief is submitted as a summary reference only and should not be treated as a substitute for the full written statement provided. I strongly encourage counsel, commissioners, and decision-makers to read the full statement in its entirety and, where applicable, to enter the full statement into record during upcoming hearings, as it contains critical lived experience, contextual detail, and evidentiary framing that cannot be adequately captured in a brief summary.

I am including all recipients on this email intentionally, in the interest of transparency and accountability. I respectfully request that responses be made to the group collectively so I can confirm this statement has been received, reviewed, and entered into consideration.

I want to be transparent that I am copying contacts at both local and national news outlets on this outreach, in order to ensure that this story—and the stories of the people and families in the Billings community—is heard and taken seriously.

Overview of Concerns

This submission outlines serious concerns regarding prolonged exposure to

1. contaminated water from local refineries, 2. vapor intrusion risks associated with the Billings Superfund plume (including PCE), and the cumulative impacts of environmental pollution on public health and community safety in Billings, Montana.

This is a two part story that runs parallel to the other.

Key Points for Consideration

• Exposure & Notification Failures:

From December 2022 through December 2024, I lived and worked within the boundaries of the Billings Superfund plume without awareness of the designation. There was insufficient public-facing notice, community outreach, or accessible online communication to reasonably inform residents and workers of exposure risks.

• Health Impacts:

I experienced persistent fatigue, nausea, eye irritation, and systemic symptoms during this period. In October 2025, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. Genetic testing confirmed my cancer is not genetic.

It is well established that only 5–10% of cancers are hereditary, while 90–95% are influenced by environmental and lifestyle factors, including chemical exposures.

• Intergenerational Context:

My mother was diagnosed with the same type of breast cancer 13 years ago and has lived and worked in downtown Billings for decades, also within plume-affected areas. In recent months, I have spoken with at least 20 women from Billings who have experienced breast cancer, raising concern for multi-generational environmental exposure patterns.

• **Broader Disease Trends:**

These concerns extend beyond breast cancer to include rising rates of other cancers and autoimmune conditions observed nationally and locally over the past 10–20 years, which research increasingly links to long-term environmental toxin exposure.

• **Public Safety & Violent Crime:**

Billings continues to experience violent crime rates more than double the national average. Emerging peer-reviewed research indicates correlations between environmental pollution—particularly air and industrial contaminants—and increased aggression, impaired neurological regulation, and higher rates of violent incidents. Environmental stressors should be evaluated as contributing factors to public safety outcomes.

• **Equity Considerations:**

The communities most affected by plume exposure are disproportionately low-income and racially marginalized. These patterns reflect environmental injustice and warrant corrective action beyond minimum regulatory compliance.

Requests for Action

1. Immediate remediation of contaminated sites and vapor intrusion risks.
2. Compensation for residents, workers, and businesses for health impacts, lost income, and economic harm. (This extends beyond just the area of the Superfund Plume) as all residents are affected by contaminants in Billings' water supply
3. Stronger EPA enforcement and increased fines for refinery violations, past and ongoing.
4. Wastewater and cleanup standards aligned with actual health safety thresholds, not minimum federal compliance.
5. Recognition that delays since the 1990s represent systemic failure requiring urgent correction.

Again, this brief is intended to guide review, not replace the full statement. The full submission provides necessary narrative, professional context, and lived experience that should be considered by all officials and counsel evaluating these issues.

With gratitude and deep encouragement for response,

Erin Anderson
Currently Residing in Missoula, Montana
Hometown: Billings, Montana

Dear Public Service Officials,

I am sharing this two part statement as a broader account of my concerns regarding exposure to 1) contaminated water in Billings, including arsenic, benzene, and other known carcinogens that are now documented in the city's water supply. 2) I am also sharing concerns related to the Billings Superfund plume, specifically the presence of PCE and associated vapor intrusion risks, and how prolonged exposure to these (water & air) conditions may impact community health.

It is important to note that during the two years I lived and worked within the Superfund plume area, I was not aware that I was residing or working inside a designated Superfund site. As a community organizer, I understand what meaningful public engagement and notification require. Outside of postings located in the public library—which I did not regularly frequent—I did not encounter any visible, accessible online alerts, neighborhood notices, or in-community outreach that would reasonably inform residents and workers of the Superfund plume, vapor intrusion risks, or ongoing remediation processes.

My name is Erin Anderson. I am 43 years old, born in Billings, Montana, and raised here. I hold a Master's degree in Intercultural Youth and Family Development from the University of Montana and a Bachelor's degree in Sociology. Research, community health, and systems-level analysis are central to my professional background.

I lived on the 7200 block of Clark Avenue until age 10 and then on the 2900 block of Rimrock Road beginning at age 11. I attended Elder Grove Elementary, Poly Drive Elementary, Lewis and Clark Middle School, and Billings Senior High School. I lived in Billings until age 18, when I moved to Massachusetts, returning frequently over the years to visit family. During COVID, I relocated back to Montana and lived in Missoula for two years before moving back to Billings in June 2022. I resided in Billings continuously until December 2024. From December 24, 2022 through December 2024, I lived at 208 North 18th Street—within the boundaries of the Billings Superfund plume.

On my very first night in that apartment, I poured a glass of tap water and immediately noticed a strong, unpleasant smell. The following day, I purchased a Brita filter. While it reduced the odor somewhat, it did not eliminate it.

In October 2022, I began working at Jake's Downtown, which is also located within the Superfund plume area. Throughout my employment there—lasting until December 2024—multiple customers commented on the water quality. Personally, I experienced a consistent pattern: I arrived to work with energy and left every shift profoundly exhausted. I also experienced persistent burning and discomfort in my eyes.

Within two to three months of both living in my apartment and working at Jake's, I developed intense, ongoing physical fatigue that was not consistent with my work history or conditioning. I have taught yoga since 2017 and have long worked in physically demanding environments; this

level of exhaustion was alarming. I made repeated visits to my doctor, but no clear cause was identified.

Approximately six months into this period, I developed deep, recurring nausea that came in waves. I was not pregnant, maintained a balanced diet, took daily vitamins, practiced and have taught yoga daily. The nausea did not resolve.

During this time, I had multiple conversations that further raised concern. A friend—an environmental lawyer—shared that after moving to Billings, her physician questioned why her bloodwork showed elevated arsenic levels. The physician asked whether she had considered environmental exposure as a cause. Her conclusion was that living in Billings was the most likely explanation.

In November 2024, another friend told me that while working in Billings public schools, she witnessed children ages 5–18 experiencing frequent, substantial nosebleeds. Parents reportedly shared that blood testing revealed elevated arsenic levels in both children and adults. This issue has been an ongoing topic of concern and conversation in my life for several years. Anyone in close communication with me can confirm this.

There were also many nights when I returned home from work to an odor inside my apartment that resembled oil or industrial residue—an odor that seemed to cling to the walls even when exterior smells had dissipated. The building sat on a raised foundation in a heavily industrial zone; a site visit would make this context immediately apparent.

Billings faces elevated violent crime rates, which remain significantly above national averages. According to the most recent FBI Uniform Crime Reporting data, the city recorded 911 violent crimes in 2024, equating to 746 violent crimes per 100,000 residents, a rate more than double the national average of roughly 359 per 100,000 people. Compared with 2022 when the violent crime rate was 929 per 100,000 people, these figures reflect persistent elevated violent crime rates across multiple years. (beautifydata.com)

There is emerging scientific research suggesting that environmental pollution can influence neurological and behavioral outcomes, with multiple studies linking air pollution exposure to increased violent incidents and aggressive behavior, particularly assaults and other violent acts. ([pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)) This research does not claim environmental pollution as the sole cause of violent crime, but it does highlight that environmental stressors—such as toxic air contaminants—may adversely affect brain function, impulse control, and social behaviors in exposed populations.

I raised concerns with the Montana Oil and Gas Board (2023) after reviewing these findings and studies from other urban areas where pollution has been linked to behavioral outcomes that can stress community safety. During that meeting, I was interrupted by commissioners and told to “stay on target.” I responded that if allowed to finish, the relevance would be clear.

During the two years I lived on that block, four people were shot and killed on my block or within a 2 block radius from my home, including my next-door neighbor.

In January 2025, I moved back to Missoula because I believed my health was being negatively impacted by living in Billings.

In September 2025, I attended an intensive yoga and bodywork training involving deep tissue, compression, and release work. One week later, I discovered a lump in my right breast. In October 2025, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I had a lumpectomy in early December. I am currently undergoing radiation treatment and will begin hormone-blocking therapy afterward.

While I understand that cancer can take years or decades to develop, I know my body. I believe that both prolonged environmental exposure and intensive bodywork brought an existing cancer to the surface.

It is widely recognized by medical researchers that only about 5–10% of all cancers are due to inherited genetic mutations, while the majority (90–95%) reflect environmental and lifestyle influences, which include exposures to chemical pollutants, diet, tobacco, obesity, and other factors. (pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov) As an energetic professional who works with bodies daily, I also recognize the importance of lifestyle, cultural, and internal health factors in any diagnosis. However, given that most women diagnosed with breast cancer have no family history, and that environmental risk factors are robust contributors to disease risk — including documented links between chemical exposures and breast cancer development — it is essential to evaluate environmental context alongside personal and lifestyle factors. (niehs.nih.gov)

It is also critical to note:

- My mother was diagnosed with the same type of breast cancer 13 years ago.
- She has lived in Billings for 45–50 years and works downtown within the plume area at Yesteryear's Antiques.
- We completed genetic testing. My cancer is not genetic.

Based on this, I view my diagnosis through an environmental lens.

In recent months, I have spoken with at least 20 women from Billings (current or former residents) who have experienced breast cancer. The number of women who have reached out to me has been both emotionally supportive and deeply alarming from a public health perspective.

My requests are as follows:

1. **Compensation** for residents, workers, and businesses within the Superfund plume area—particularly as increased media coverage will result in economic harm.
2. **Financial accountability from the EPA and local refineries**, including compensation for medical expenses, lost wages, emotional distress, and long-term health impacts.
3. **Stronger EPA enforcement and substantially higher fines** for historical, ongoing, and future violations, including failures in wet testing.

4. **Recognition of economic and racialized inequity**, as the populations most impacted are low-income residents and racialized communities living in affected zones.
5. **Immediate action from city and state leadership**, including acknowledgment that *delays since the 1990s constitute negligence*.
6. **Updated wastewater and cleanup standards that meet actual health and safety requirements**—not merely minimum federal compliance thresholds, which research consistently shows do not equal safety.

If you are at all concerned with the health of children and families, the physical well-being of residents, and the overall safety of communities in Billings—particularly as these outcomes relate to environmental pollution and its documented links to increased rates of cancers, autoimmune diseases, and violent crime—I urge you to consider fast and immediate remediation of these issues. This must occur alongside meaningful compensation for the families, workers, and business owners who have been harmed by this form of environmental violence.

I am submitting this statement for formal record and encourage a timely and collective response.

With gratitude and deep encouragement for personal and community response,

Erin Anderson
Currently Residing in: Missoula, Montana
Hometown: Billings, Montana

From: [Puckett, Samantha](#)
To: [.MayorAndCouncil](#); [Associated Press](#); [Billings Gazette](#); [Darrell Ehrlick-Daily Montanan](#); [Denise Smith](#); [Iffland, Kevin](#); [jhaynie@khmt.com](#); [Krivitz, Brian](#); [KTVQ](#); [Kukulski, Chris](#); [KULR8](#); [Lennick, Matthew](#); [Mayo, Shawn](#); [NBC Missoula](#); [Northern Broadcasting](#); [Scott Twito](#); [sfredricks@desertmountainbroadcasting.com](#); [St. John, Rich](#); [Town Square Media](#); [Wake Up Montana](#); [Wooley, Brandon](#); [Yellowstone County News](#); [Yellowstone Public Radio](#)
Subject: 26-04903 School Shooting Press Release
Date: Friday, January 23, 2026 3:40:35 PM
Attachments: [26-04903 Suspicious-Shooting threat.pdf](#)
[image001.png](#)

Good afternoon,

Please see the attached press release regarding the West High School shooting threats investigation. Let me know if you have any questions.



Samantha Puckett

Administrative Lieutenant
Billings Police Department

pucketts@billingsmt.gov

Monday-Thurs 7:00 am-5:00 pm

billingsmt.gov

P.O. Box 1554 • Billings, MT 59103

P 406.869.3928 **F** 406.657.8417

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January 23, 2026

Press Release: School Shooting Threat

C&O 26-04903

Issued by: Lt. Samantha Puckett

This press release provides information regarding C&O 26-04903, a reported school shooting threat.

On January 23, 2026, at approximately 7:15 a.m., the Billings Police Department School Resource Sergeant received information from the FBI regarding an online post threatening a shooting at Billings West High School.

BPD officers and detectives promptly responded and were able to locate the suspect, a 16-year-old local male. Following further investigation, the threat was determined to be credible. The suspect has been charged with felony Intimidation and was remanded to Youth Services.

The Billings Police Department would like to thank the FBI for their assistance in this investigation.

Media Contact:

Lt. Samantha Puckett
Administrative Lieutenant
Billings Police Department
Phone: 406-869-3928
Email: pucketts@billingsmt.gov

From: [Kukulski, Chris](#)
To: [.MayorAndCouncil](#)
Subject: FJC Impact & Budgets/expenditures
Date: Friday, January 23, 2026 3:58:56 PM
Attachments: [FJC Impact Report 2025.docx](#)
[2024-25 Year FJC Budget v Actual.pdf](#)
[2025-26 FJC Budget v Actual.pdf](#)

Enclosed is the Family Justice Center (FJC) 2025 Impact Report and their budgets/expenditures for the current and prior year. The city uses proceeds (\$200,000) from our "crime prevention" fund to support the FJC. The FJC is an excellent evidence-based model to help families deal with the impacts of family violence. The Northern Lights FJC is the first FJC in Montana and is only in its 2nd year. It is not perfect and will continue to have growing pains as it matures.

I was fortunate enough to attend last year's FJC conference alongside members of our police department and the Northern Lights to learn more about the impact mature FJCs are having throughout the US and internationally. They are saving lives and breaking cycles of family violence. Sadly, prosecutor Halverson has already prosecuted the sons of fathers he prosecuted for family violence earlier in his career.

The FJC team and our staff is happy to answer any questions for clarification.



Chris A. Kukulski
City Administrator
kukulskic@billingsmt.gov

billingsmt.gov

P.O. Box 1178
Billings, MT 59103
P 406.657.8222
C 406.581-7026

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Northern Lights
Family Justice Center

2025 Impact Report



28 BPD DVI Program / FJC collaborations

The DVI Program (1 full-time officer) moved into the YWCA Northern Lights Family Justice Center in May 2024. The DVI Program started tracking FJC collaborations that same year. Due to limited resources, though, the DVI was not able to work collaboratively on more than a few cases that year.

The 2nd full-time DVI started at the FJC in March 2025, increasing the number of cases involving teamwork between the DVI Program and the FJC. Guests at the FJC are **never** required to file a police report or to meet with the DVIs to receive services from other FJC partner providers.

Since 2024, the DVI Program has collaborated with the FJC on **28 cases** and **26 unique victims**. “Collaborations” include cases during which a DVI works with a victim and then, through a *warm handoff*, refers that person as a Guest to additional FJC services. “Collaborations” also include any FJC partners referring a Guest to the DVIs to file a report or to follow-up on an offense. DVI/FJC Collaborations often include multi-disciplinary meetings, allowing several FJC providers to staff a case and develop a safety plan and service plan for the Guest.

Both DVIs work full-time at the FJC, so office hours are Mon-Fri. DVI’s work their own case load when not specifically collaborating on FJC cases.



68 City Attorney DV Unit / FJC collaborations

The City Attorney’s Office DV Unit also moved into the FJC in early 2024. The City’s 3 DV prosecutors alternate office days at the FJC, ensuring that a prosecutor is available 5 days a week. The City’s 3 DV Victim-Witness Specialists (VWs) have office hours at the FJC 3 days a week (Mon, Weds, Fri). The City Attorney’s DV Unit is available to meet with FJC Guests regardless of whether the Guest is involved in a pending criminal case. For example, the VWs frequently help Guests who are interested in obtaining civil orders of protection.

Since 2024, the City Attorney’s Office DVU has collaborated with the FJC on **68 cases**, helping **54 unique victims**. Similar to the DVIs, “collaboration” includes Guests

referred to the DVU from FJC partners, as well as Guests referred from the DVU to additional FJC services. Guests are **never** required to meet with the DVU to receive services from other FJC partner providers. Like the DVI's, the City's DVU work independently on their own caseload when they are not assisting Guests.

Centrally located and with ample parking, the FJC also provides a convenient location for the DVU to meet with victims in criminal cases. This location can also offer a layer of protection for victims who are afraid to be seen in or near the courthouses downtown. The City Attorney's Office DVU strives to offer support during victim meetings, encouraging victims to provide input on pending cases and to identify barriers to their participation in criminal justice proceedings. When victim meetings take place at the FJC, the DVU can offer victims a warm handoff to the Service Navigators. The Navigators then provide pathways to additional support and resources. From 2023 through 2025, the DVU has more than doubled the number of victim meetings.



55 YCAO VW / FJC collaborations

Eight of the Yellowstone County Attorney's Office Victim Witness Specialists (VWs) rotate through the VW office at the FJC. The County VWs maintain office hours on Tues and Thurs, alternating with the City's 3 VWs. The County's VWs also began working at the FJC in 2024. They are available to assist FJC Guests with orders of protection, as well as meeting with Guests who have questions about felony cases or cases that occur in Yellowstone County outside of the City of Billings. Additionally, because the Yellowstone County Attorney's Office (YCAO) uses a separate case management system, the DVIs often rely on the County VWs with whom the DVIs staff felony cases.

In 2025 (Jan-Nov), the YCAO VWs have been involved in collaborations with other FJC partner providers **55 times**. "Collaborations," as tracked by the YCAO, include meeting with victims/ Guests referred from the FJC, as well as assisting other on-site FJC service providers. With both County and City VWs maintaining office hours, FJC service providers are able to refer Guests to the appropriate prosecutor's office, depending on the type and location of a case, so a Guest can receive accurate information and relevant assistance. As with the City VWs, FJC Guests are **never** required to report a crime before meeting with the County VWs, and County VWs also maintain their own caseload while working at the FJC.



The YWCA Northern Lights FJC facilitates Guests' access to the Criminal Justice System while respecting Guests' autonomy in deciding which FJC services to utilize. With the knowledge that the FJC collaborations cannot change the nature of the Criminal Justice System, the goal is to wrap victims/Guests in supportive services, helping them to navigate the system and helping eliminate the barriers that often prevent victims participating in criminal cases.

As a guiding principle and recommendation from the International FJC Alliance, participation in the Criminal Justice System is *never* mandatory for a Guest to receive other FJC services.



308 Northern Lights FJC Intakes

In July 2024, Northern Lights FJC officially became an International FJC Alliance **Affiliated center**. It is the **FIRST** affiliated FJC in Montana. To date, the Service Navigators have done **308** FJC Guest intakes. **91%** (280) of those intakes were Guests who **did not** access YWCA shelter services.

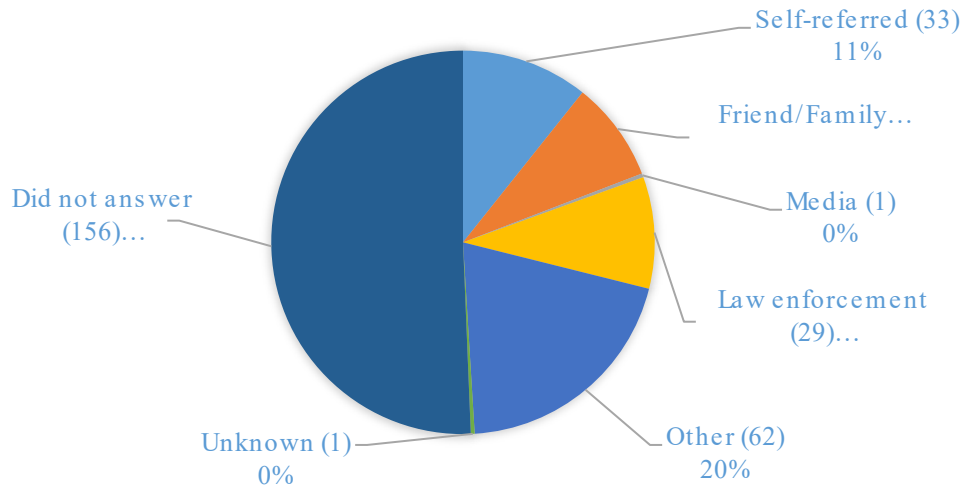
The intake process involves meeting with a Guest, either in person or by phone, and reviewing that Guest's individual circumstances. The Guest receives a Services Menu (attached as pages 13-14), and the Service Navigator helps him or her decide which of the available services might be helpful as the Guest works toward self-determined short- and long-term goals.

- Guests can be referred to the FJC from all on-site partner agencies, as well as from other organizations throughout the region.
- YWCA shelter residents receive an automatic referral to meet with a Service Navigator if they choose. Statistics related to service provision for shelter residents are tracked separately from non-resident FJC Guests.
- Victims referred to the YWCA help line via the Billings PD risk assessment process also receive an automatic referral to FJC service navigation.
- Word of mouth referrals and **walk-ins are welcome!**

FJC GUEST REFERRAL SOURCE

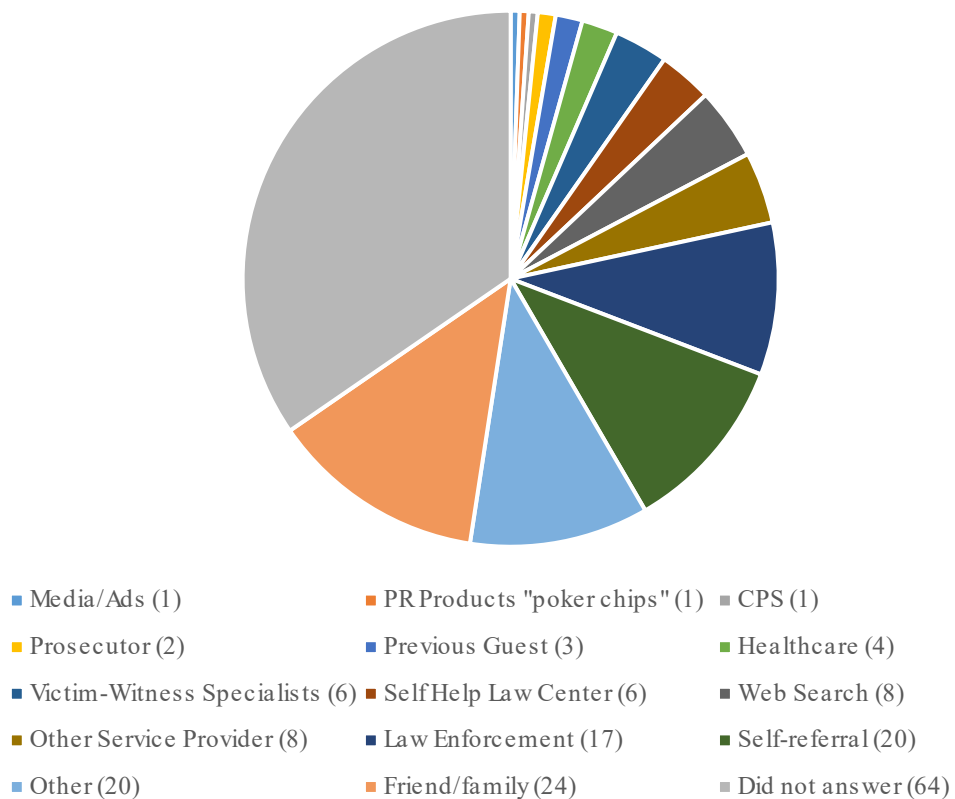
JULY 2024-DEC 2025

("WHO REFERRED YOU TO THE FJC?")



Updated Guest Referral Source

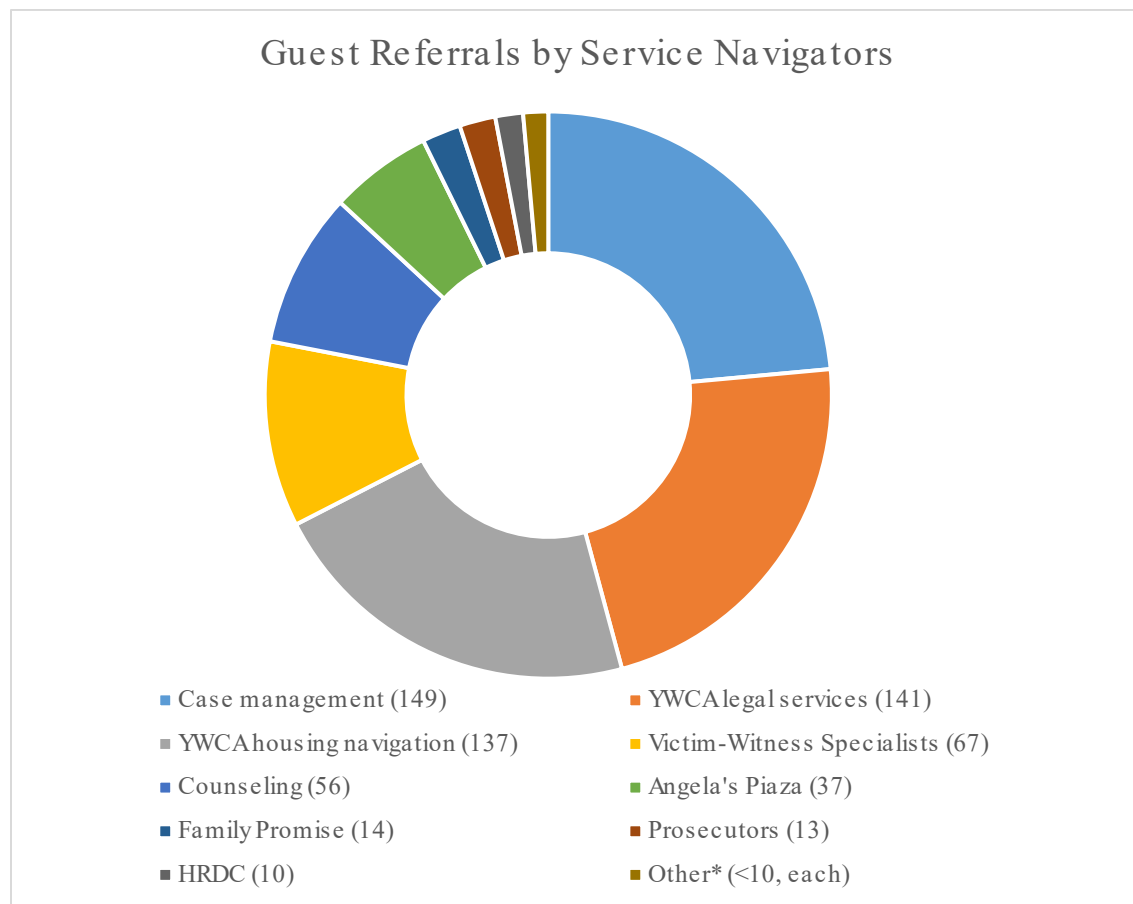
July 1, 2025-December 18, 2025



What can Guests expect?

When an individual walks through the doors seeking resources, that person becomes a Guest in the FJC. They can expect to be treated with judgment-free care, dignity, and respect. Service Navigators work with that FJC Guest and make specific referrals based on Service Menu selections (see attached Service Menu). The Navigators are experienced professionals, skilled in helping Guests identify and prioritize their needs. While the goal is to help Guests increase their safety and independence, the journey to achieve that goal is different for everyone. FJC Guests are never required to participate in any service as a prerequisite to receiving other services.

FJC partner agencies maintain their own criteria for client/participant eligibility. However, FJC Guests can include victims of domestic and dating abuse, sexual violence, human trafficking, and family-involved elder abuse. The FJC can serve Guests living in Yellowstone County, as well as some surrounding counties, situation-dependent.



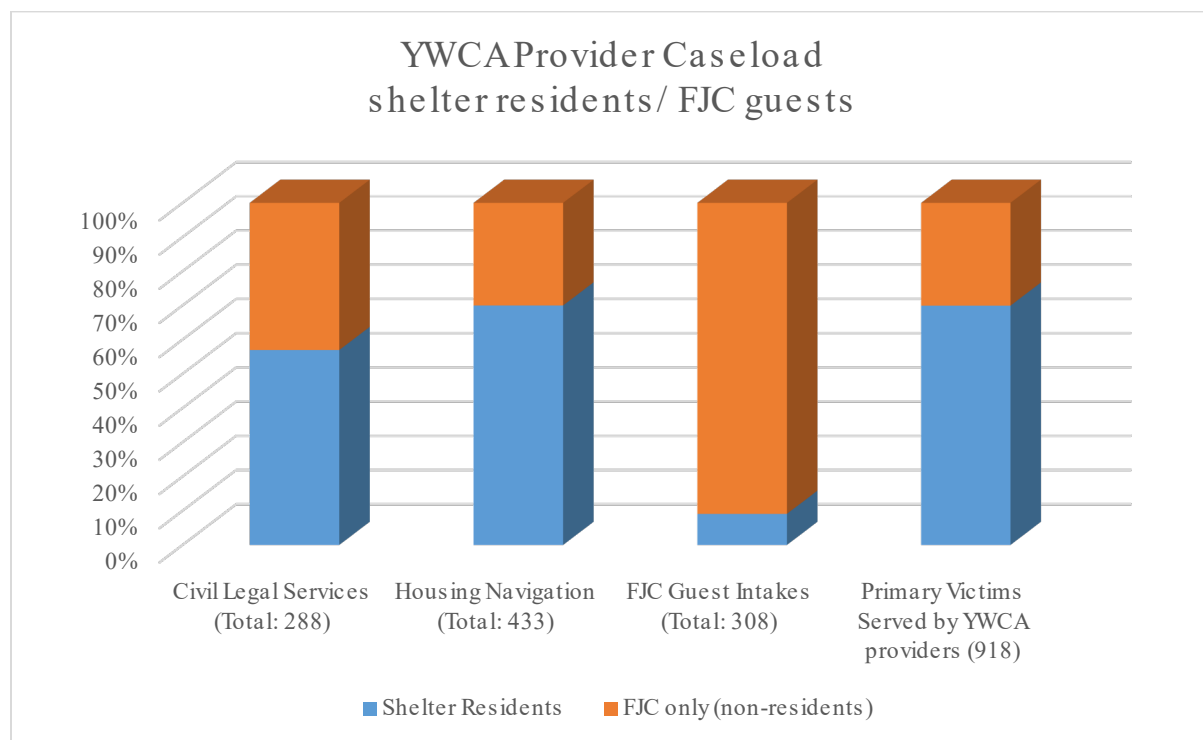
* Other referrals = fewer than 10 referrals, each, to Montana Rescue Mission, Salvation Army, Montana Legal Services, Family Service, Job Service, St. Vincent de Paul, Housing Authority of Billings, YWCA Gateway Horizons shelter, Riverstone Health, Off the Streets, Family Support Network, Family Tree, Law enforcement, Adult Education, & Community Crisis Center.

Have YWCA services changed?

YWCA still offers its core services, but capacity has expanded in some areas to meet the needs of FJC Guests! Traditional YWCA services include shelter, civil legal assistance, housing navigation, advocacy, and service navigation/case management. As with other human service organizations, providers already had full caseloads. Prior to the FJC collaboration, YWCA services were available to shelter residents only. With the FJC fully operational (July 2024), YWCA providers have extended their services, increasing their caseloads to include FJC Guests.

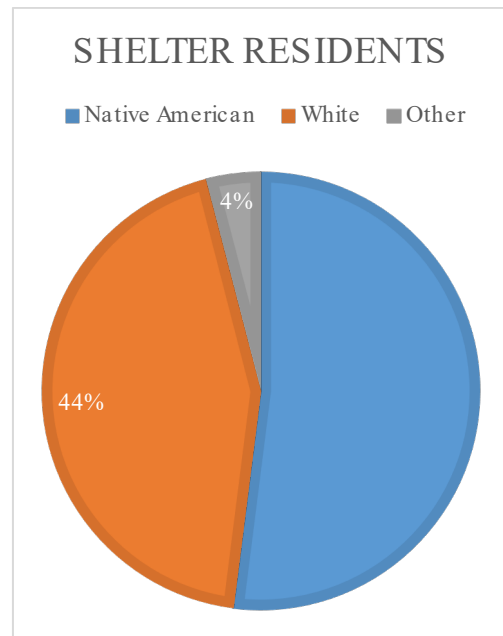
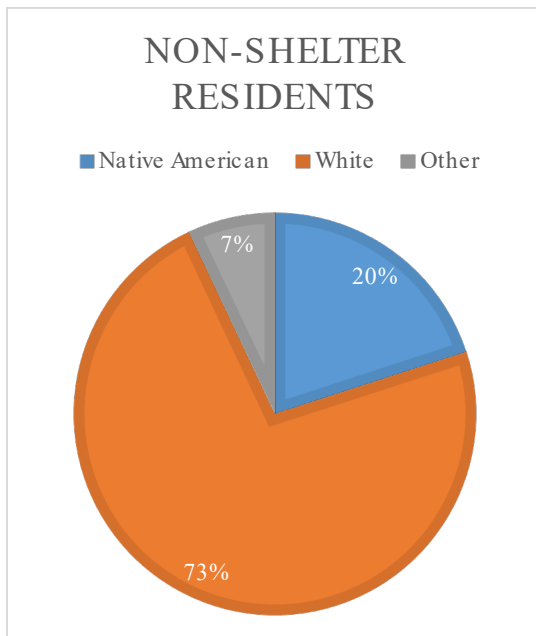
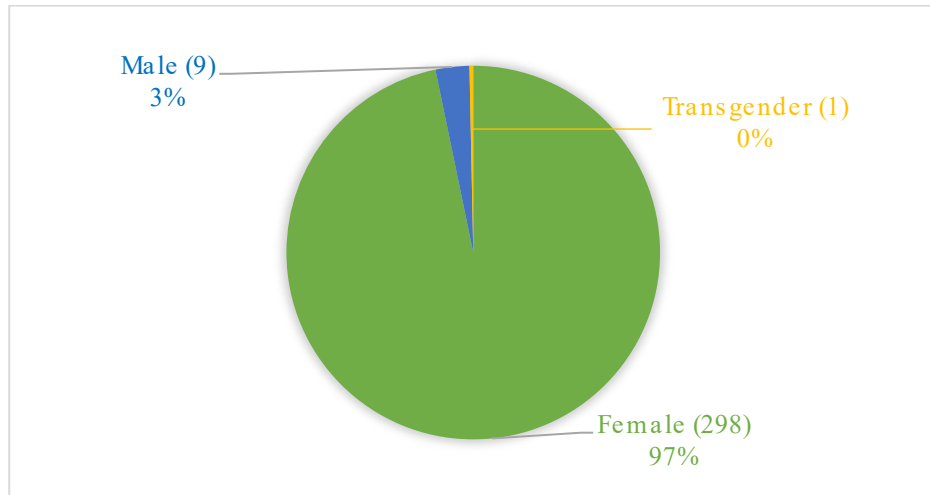
- 43% of the YWCA's civil legal caseload is from FJC referrals of non-shelter residents
- 30% of the YWCA's housing navigation caseload is from FJC referrals of non-shelter residents
- 91% of the YWCA's case management/service navigation** caseload is non-shelter FJC Guests
- 30% of primary victims served at the YWCA/FJC begin as non-shelter residents

**Funding from the City of Billings allowed the YWCA to add a 2nd case manager/service navigator.



FJC Guest Demographics

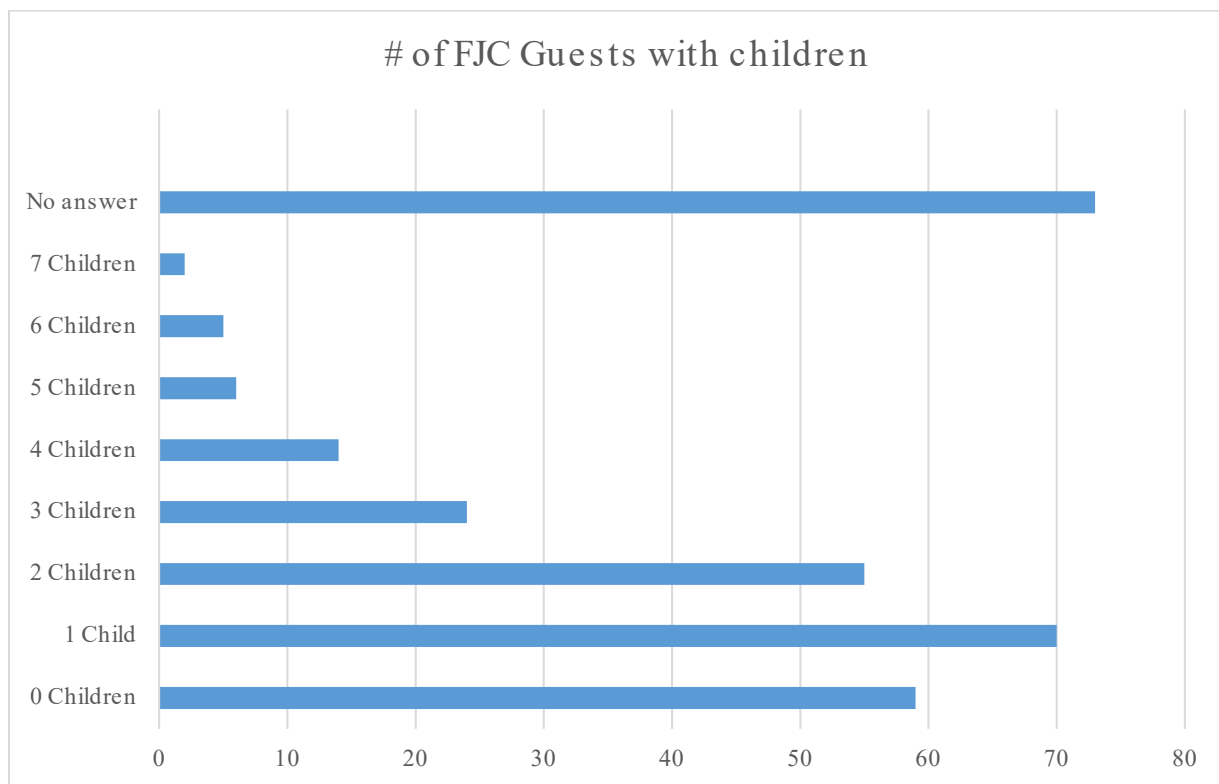
The FJC serves adult Guests regardless of their race, gender, age, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, or other social group identity. Demographic information is tracked for statistical purposes only.



What about children?

Northern Lights FJC currently does not have any on-site services specific to children as primary victims. The majority of FJC Guests, though, do have children who may be experiencing the trauma of living in an unsafe home. According to research by Kaiser Permanente in the mid-1990s, these child witnesses (referred to as secondary victims) tend to have more Adverse Childhood Experiences¹. People with higher ACE scores are at increased risk of social, mental, behavioral, and health problems into adulthood, up to and including premature death.

Since July 2024, the FJC has served 308 Guests (primary victims), and those guests were accompanied by a total of **382 children** (secondary victims).



¹ Center for Disease Control. (n.d.). *About the CDC-Kaiser ACE Study*.
<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/about.html>



On-site service providers share intangible successes every day through streamlined communication and multi-disciplinary collaboration. While the providers can *feel* the difference, we believe FJC Guests simply experience the level of coordinated, wrap-around care that they deserve and should expect.

Guest Success Stories

“Suzanne”:

Suzanne reported a DV-related assault to a Billings PD patrol officer. The officer believed that Suzanne needed emergency shelter, but she was hesitant. The officer called one of the DV Investigators who spoke to Suzanne over the phone and helped her understand the benefits of temporary emergency shelter for herself and her child. Before the end of the call, the DVI had also confirmed with the YWCA Emergency Services Coordinator that a safe space could be available for Suzanne and her child if she wanted to take advantage of that resource. The patrol officer then helped Suzanne call the YWCA Gateway Horizons shelter advocate to complete the intake process.

After Suzanne moved into shelter and reviewed the FJC Services Menu, a Service Navigator helped her connect with the YCAO Victim-Witness Specialist who answered questions about her criminal case and assisted Suzanne with an order of protection application, a meeting that took several hours. Following that meeting, the YCAO VW provided a warm handoff to a DVI who took follow-up photos of Suzanne’s significant injuries.

Suzanne was able to receive shelter, safety planning, and criminal justice support, accomplishing all of that in a single afternoon, in one location, and with assistance for childcare.

“Christine”:

Christine learned about Northern Lights Family Justice Center when she went to Billings Clinic for a strangulation and SANE exam. She had been sexually assaulted and strangled by her partner several times, and he had hurt her children on different occasions, too. Christine arrived at the FJC and met with a Services Navigator who helped Christine complete a Danger Assessment. The Assessment showed that she

was in extreme danger from her partner. The Services Navigator completed a safety plan with Christine and provided her with a counseling referral list.

Christine had been too fearful to contact law enforcement for help because her prior experiences with police had not felt positive. The Service Navigator gave Christine the option to meet with one of the on-site DV Investigators, explaining that the meeting would be in the FJC's soft interview room. The Services Navigator's support put Christine at ease about speaking to law enforcement, and she was able to file a report against her abuser. Christine then met with a Gateway Horizons Shelter Advocate, completed an intake and was able to move into shelter with her children. Later, a City Attorney VW helped Christine complete an order of protection application, and Christine was supported at the court hearing by her Services Navigator and the YWCA Legal Services Provider. The Court granted a one-year order of protection, prohibiting Christine's abuser from contacting her in any way.

Christine is now working with the YWCA Housing Navigator and is hoping to move into a new, safe place soon.

“Amy”:

Amy arrived at the FJC with an appointment to meet with one of the DV Investigators for a follow-up interview regarding a criminal case. During the interview, Amy described ongoing abuse, threats, and manipulation by her abuser. His manipulation included attempts to leverage their shared child, creating a barrier to Amy leaving the relationship. Amy mentioned to the DVI that she had started the process of filing a parenting plan in District Court, but she found the process very confusing. Amy was fearful about the family law process, as she did not have money to hire an attorney. After Amy's follow-up interview, the DVI arranged for Amy to meet with a Services Navigator for an FJC intake. That was followed by a meeting with YWCA Legal Services so Amy could receive advice from an attorney on her upcoming court proceedings.

The resources Amy received at the FJC made her feel validated and helped remove one of the barriers that had kept Amy trapped in an abusive relationship.

Thank You! to all of the agencies, organizations, and individuals who have worked so hard to make Montana's first Family Justice Center possible. We have made great progress, and we are excited to see what the future brings for the FJC and the community.

The Northern Lights FJC Network

On-Site Partners:



Yellowstone County Attorney



Montana State University TRIO

Supporting Partners:



Yellowstone County
Self-Help Law Center



YWCA IS ON A MISSION



Name: _____ Date: _____ Gateway Horizons Resident? ☐

How do you want us to contact you? ☐ Phone ☐ Text Message ☐ Email

What is the best day and time to contact you? _____

Phone Number: _____ ☐ Safe to call ☐ Safe to text ☐ Safe to leave a voicemail

Email Address: _____ ☐ Safe to email

Services Navigation

- ☐ I want help getting my (circle all that apply): ID Birth Certificate Social Security Card
- ☐ I want help applying for (circle all that apply): SNAP TANF LIEAP Best Beginnings Medicaid
- ☐ I want help fixing or building my resume
- ☐ I want help applying for jobs
- ☐ I want to get my HiSET (GED)
- ☐ I want to learn about vocational training options
- ☐ I want to learn higher education options
- ☐ I want [help](#) goal planning
- ☐ I want help finding childcare for my children
- ☐ I want help finding resources to help my children
- ☐ I want help finding an appropriate counselor for myself
- ☐ I want help finding an appropriate counselor for my children
- ☐ I want help finding support groups that will meet my needs
- ☐ I want help finding other community resources that will benefit me
- ☐ I want [help](#) [creating](#) a safety plan
- ☐ I want help finding substance use/abuse or recovery resources
- ☐ I have concerns about my health or injuries I have
- ☐ I want help getting a primary care doctor for myself or my children
- ☐ I want help finding religious or spiritual care resources
- ☐ I am affiliated with the military and would like to learn about resources

Civil Legal Services

- ☐ I want help with legal questions I have
- ☐ I want help getting an order of protection (restraining order)
- ☐ I want help getting a parenting plan
- ☐ I want help with a dissolution (divorce)
- ☐ I want help with an immigration matter
- ☐ I want help [preparing](#) for a civil court hearing and/or someone to provide support at an upcoming hearing

Criminal Justice System

- ☐ I want help understanding the legal process before I make a report to law enforcement
- ☐ I want [help understanding](#) the legal process after I have reported to law enforcement
- ☐ I want help reporting my victimization to law enforcement
- ☐ I want help preparing for a criminal court hearing and/or someone to provide support at an upcoming hearing
- ☐ I would like to check on the status of a criminal case I am a victim in
- ☐ I would like to speak with the investigator assigned to my case

Housing

- ☐ I want help understanding what my rental barriers might be and how to overcome them
- ☐ I want [help creating](#) a housing action plan
- ☐ I want help with [renter](#) education
- ☐ I want [help](#) printing, filling out, and/or turning in rental applications
- ☐ I want help with finding appropriate rentals
- ☐ I want help with rental advocacy or an appeal
- ☐ I want someone to go with me for a rental [walk-through](#)
- ☐ I need help understanding a lease agreement
- ☐ I want help applying for Section 8 and/or Public Housing

Is there anything else you were hoping Northern Lights could help you with?

What else would you like us to know [about how](#) to best help you?

You can ask any questions you have here.

Northern Lights
FY25 Budget v Actual (7/1/24 - 6/30/25)

	FY25 Budget	FY25 Actual	
Revenues & Public Support			
City of Billings Contribution	\$200,000	\$200,000	
Foundation Grants	\$25,000	\$27,000	
Donations	\$10,000	\$34,154	
Total Revenues & Public Support	\$235,000	\$261,154	
Expenditures			Notes:
Personnel Expense	\$109,532	\$146,721	1 FTE coordinator, 1.23 FTE Services Navigator, .37 FTE Attorney
Audit, Accounting, and Legal Fees	\$4,667	\$4,082	Legal advice on LLC, 10% of annual audit
Office Expense	\$3,600	\$2,460	10% indirect + actuals
IT Services and Software Fees	\$2,798	\$3,772	10% of client database, donor management software, IT support
Public Relations and Outreach	\$7,500	\$6,016	actual gala costs, website, brochure printing, outreach, no indirect cost sharing
Travel and Training Expenses	\$10,000	\$4,957	two people to FJC conference
Yoga + VOICES	\$13,500	\$13,334	yoga classes, VOICES meals and incentives, yoga supplies
Utilities	\$10,694	\$12,880	47% of admin and services building internet, electricity, natural gas and water, 10% security and fire monitoring, two phone lines
Occupancy Supplies	\$6,000	\$2,682	47% of admin and services building occupancy supplies
Building Repair, Maint., and Janitorial	\$5,520	\$11,455	Soft interview room prep + 47% janitorial+ 10% of admin and services building maintenance
Equipment	\$16,786	\$1,622	computer/printer for Services Navigator, soft interview room furniture
Indirect costs	\$40,000	\$40,000	20% of total City contribution to cover services of CEO, office manager, finance manager, community outreach liason, and shared outreach and fundraising
Dues	\$2,000	\$2,417	Alliance for HOPE dues
Insurance	\$0	\$4,780	10% of insurance
Total Expenditures:	\$230,597	\$257,176	
Net Revenues:	\$4,403	\$3,978	

*\$200,000 City contribution is 10% of total YWCA/FJC budget and FJC specific staff are 47% of the staff working in the services and admin building. All shared costs apply only to expenses for the services and admin building, not the total buget for the shelter or other YWCA owned /operated spaces.

Northern Lights
FY26 Budget v Actual (7/1/25 - 12/31/25)

	FY26 Budget	FY26 YTD Actual	
Revenues & Public Support			
City of Billings Contribution	\$200,000	\$100,000	
Foundation Grants	\$25,000	\$5,000	
Donations	\$10,000	\$6,004	
Total Revenues & Public Support	\$235,000	\$111,004	
Expenditures			Notes:
Personnel Expense	\$115,723	\$65,851	1.25 FTE Services Navigator, .58 FTE Civil Attorney
Audit, Accounting, and Legal Fees	\$4,900	\$0	
Office Expense	\$4,800	\$1,020	10% indirect + actuals
IT Services and Software Fees	\$3,556	\$1,546	10% of client database, donor management software, IT support
Public Relations and Outreach	\$5,500	\$1,107	website, outreach materials printing, planning meeting
Travel and Training Expenses	\$10,000	\$608	danger assessment certifications, McGuire conference registration for Services Navigator
Yoga and Voices	\$10,500	\$434	yoga classes, VOICES meals and incentives
Utilities	\$18,909	\$9,274	47% of admin and services building internet, electricity, natural gas and water, 10% security and fire monitoring, one phone line
Occupancy Supplies	\$6,000	\$1,727	47% of admin and services building occupancy supplies
Building Repair, Maint., and Janitorial	\$5,520	\$4,492	47% janitorial+ 10% of admin and services building maintenance
Equipment	\$5,000	\$500	air conditioning units for soft interview room + two city offices
Indirect Costs	\$40,000	\$20,000	20% of total City contribution to cover services of CEO, office manager, finance manager, community outreach liason, and shared outreach and fundraising
Dues	\$0	\$0	Alliance for HOPE dues are paid every other year
Insurance		\$2,611	10% of insurance costs
Total Expenditures:	\$230,408	\$109,169	
Net Revenues:	\$4,592	\$1,835	

*\$200,000 City contribution is 10% of total YWCA/FJC budget and FJC specific staff are 47% of the staff working in the services and admin building. All shared costs apply only to expenses for the services and admin building, not the total buget for the shelter or other YWCA owned /operated spaces.