



**City of Missoula, Montana
City Council Committee Agenda Item**

Committee: Housing, Redevelopment and Community Programs

Item: Presentation of the Evaluation of Reaching Home

Date: March 8, 2023

Sponsor(s): Emily Armstrong

Prepared by: Emily Armstrong

Ward(s) Affected:

- Ward 1
- Ward 2
- Ward 3
- All Wards
- Ward 4
- Ward 5
- Ward 6
- N/A

Action Required:

No action required. This is an informational item.

Recommended Motion(s):

I move the City Council: No motion. This is an informational item.

Timeline:

Committee discussion: March 8, 2023
 Council action (or sets hearing): N/A
 Public Hearing (if required): N/A
 Final Consideration: N/A
 Deadline: N/A

Background and Alternatives Explored:

In 2012 the City of Missoula and Missoula County jointly announced *Reaching Home: Missoula’s 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness*. In 2022, the City embarked on a process to review the work accomplished under the 10-Year Plan and understand successes, gaps, and challenges.

In spring 2022, City staff led a limited solicitation process to gather proposals from interested evaluation consultants. Staff reached out to 11 firms and evaluators and received 3 proposals, from which JG Research and Evaluation (JGRE) proved to be the most qualified and well-positioned to effectively conduct all stages of the evaluation process. The evaluation process included three main stages: 1) project planning, 2) data collection, and 3) data analysis and final reports. The City contracted with JGRE in May 2022 and JGRE has been engaged in the above-mentioned stages over the last 9 months.

As stated in the Evaluation report:

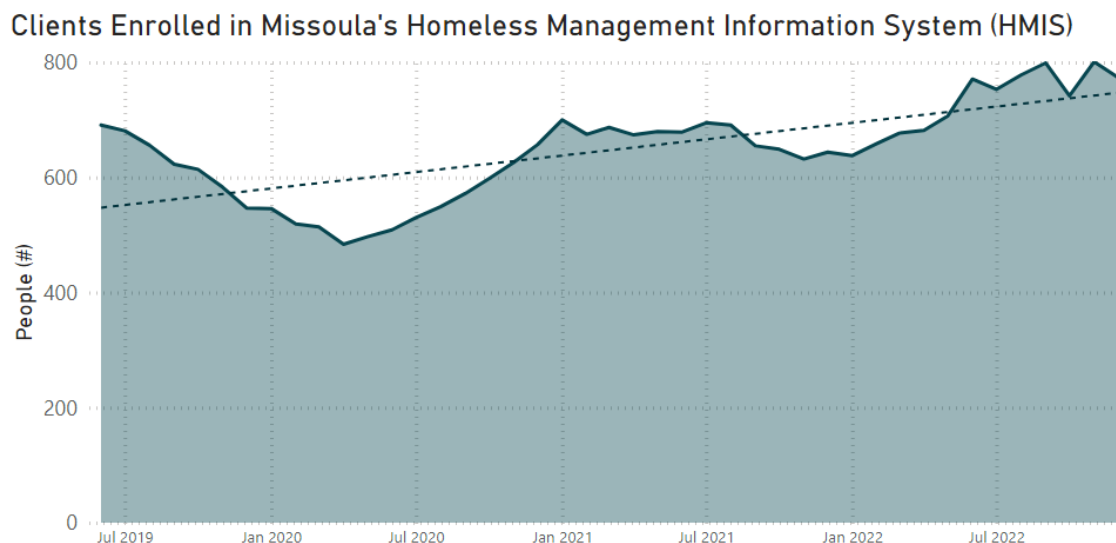
The evaluation study was guided by the following key questions: a) How well was Reaching Home put into action across time and across organizations and partners; b) what factors helped or got in the way of putting the plan into action, c) what gaps remain in housing options available in Missoula; and d) what are the experiences of individuals who have been or are currently unhoused or at risk of losing housing related to Reaching Home activities?

To answer the key evaluation questions, the evaluation team used many methods to gather information and carefully study it. Sources of information included interviews with individuals who have experience being unhoused (N=23), interviews with individuals working to serve those experiencing houselessness (i.e., city and partner agency staff (N=29), a partner agency staff survey (N=39) and focus group (N=8)), a community-based survey (N=601) and two focus groups with community members (N=18). Lastly, client-level data collected through the Missoula Coordinated Entry System (MCES, N= 3308) was used to look into how individuals used services over time and whether they became housed or not.

From 2012 to 2022, Reaching Home set a common vision and developed a system for organizations to work well together with the goal of understanding houselessness in Missoula and providing services for the individuals experiencing houselessness in the community, identify gaps in the system, and grow services toward making housing easy to get and use for each person who calls Missoula home. The city's leadership, the Missoula Coordinated Entry System, Operation Safe Shelter, and the efforts of direct service providers happening today show the gains made over the last ten years and the expected successes in the future.

Reaching Home did not end the experience of houselessness in Missoula, but it did make the connections needed to bring organizations together to better understand houselessness while supporting and measuring creative efforts to make real improvements for those experiencing houselessness. As the City of Missoula and its partners think about next steps in preventing and addressing houselessness in an organized and unified way, the foundation that has been laid over the last ten years should guide their efforts. Priority should be placed on supporting the long-term success of existing programs while creating new programs that fill the key gaps outlined by study participants. The city and partners should also invest in ways to easily communicate and connect with the Missoula community around their efforts to provide resources to those who are experiencing housing insecurity or houselessness.

Summary of Related Program History (non-exhaustive)



Slide 15 from MOR social data dashboards, taken 12/7/2022: <https://www.missoularealestate.com/social-data/>

- 2012 – City and County jointly launched *Reaching Home: Missoula's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness*; Reaching Home Coordinator hired at United Way of Missoula County

- 2016 – City of Missoula created Housing and Community Development department; Reaching Home program moved to the City
- 2017 – Missoula's Coordinated Entry System is created
- Winter 2018-2019 – First year creating a winter warming shelter
- March 2020 – COVID-19 pandemic shut-downs began in Montana
- December 2020 – Temporary Safe Outdoor Space opened
- Winter 2020-2021 – Opened larger Emergency Winter Shelter operation using Johnson St. Community Center
- Spring 2021 – Operation Shelter launched as joint City-County initiative, led by County Incident Command Team
- Summer 2021 – Operation Shelter initiatives and opportunities identified
- October 2021 – City entered into first contract for security services in shelter neighborhoods
- January 2022 – Authorized Camping Site opened; Community Care Team officially launched
- May 2022 – City began the evaluation process for the *10-Year Plan*
- July 2022 – City joined Built for Zero, a national movement to address houselessness
- October 2022 – *Reaching Home: Missoula's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness* reached 10-year life
- November 2022 – Authorized Camping Site Closed
- January 2023 – Temporary Safe Outdoor Space expanded Pallet site opened
- February 2023 – Trinity begins leasing rental housing that's affordable
- March 2023 – Completion of the evaluation of the *10-Year Plan*

Financial Implications:

No financial implications. This is an informational item.

Links to external websites:

<https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/DocumentCenter/View/37773/Reaching-Home-Missoulas-10-Year-Plan-to-End-Homelessness-PDF>

<https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2124/Houseless-Initiatives>

<https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2840/Houseless-Data>

<https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2612/Missoula-Coordinated-Entry-System-MCES>