



MONTANA VICTIM SERVICES NEEDS ASSESSMENT | KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INFORMING A MORE RESILIENT AND
RESPONSIVE SURVIVOR SUPPORT SYSTEM

Author: Tawny Rogers, MACJ
State Victim Liaison Project
Montana Board of Crime Control



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WHO AM I AND WHY AM I HERE?

- I am the product of a Montana victim service provider.
- I have a Masters Degree in Criminal Justice.
- I spent 8 years working in the non-profit/community-based world.
- I have spent the last 7 years working for the state of Montana in the criminal justice/victim services world.
- But, most importantly, I am a daughter, a sister, an auntie, and a dog mom.



WHY WE ARE HERE

Purpose: To present findings from a statewide needs assessment.

Goals:

Aims to pinpoint gaps and barriers hindering effective support for survivors.

Driven by the recognition that victims of crime require comprehensive and accessible services to navigate the complex aftermath of their experiences, the assessment identifies key gaps in resources, training, and funding.

Informs policymakers, stakeholders, and community organizations about pressing needs.

A call to action for collaboration, increased funding, and trauma-informed practices.

STATE VICTIM LIAISON PROJECT

Montana Board of Crime Control's State Victim Liaison Project launched in July 2021, aims to enhance victim services across Montana through three primary goals: the implementation of a statewide needs assessment, the creation of a comprehensive map of victim services, and the establishment of a unified victim services network. This project seeks to identify and address the specific needs of crime victims throughout the state, ensuring better access to resources and support, and fostering collaboration among service providers to create an effective and responsive victim assistance framework.



STATE VICTIM LIAISON PROJECT | CORE OBJECTIVES



Statewide Needs Assessment

- Facilitated roundtable discussions with providers to create and deploy the Statewide Needs Assessment. This was a crucial first step in understanding challenges and gaps.

Comprehensive Map of Services

- Gathered and analyzed provider data to create a map highlighting service needs statewide, in collaboration with the Statistical Analysis Center (SAC). This helped pinpoint areas most in need of support and resources.

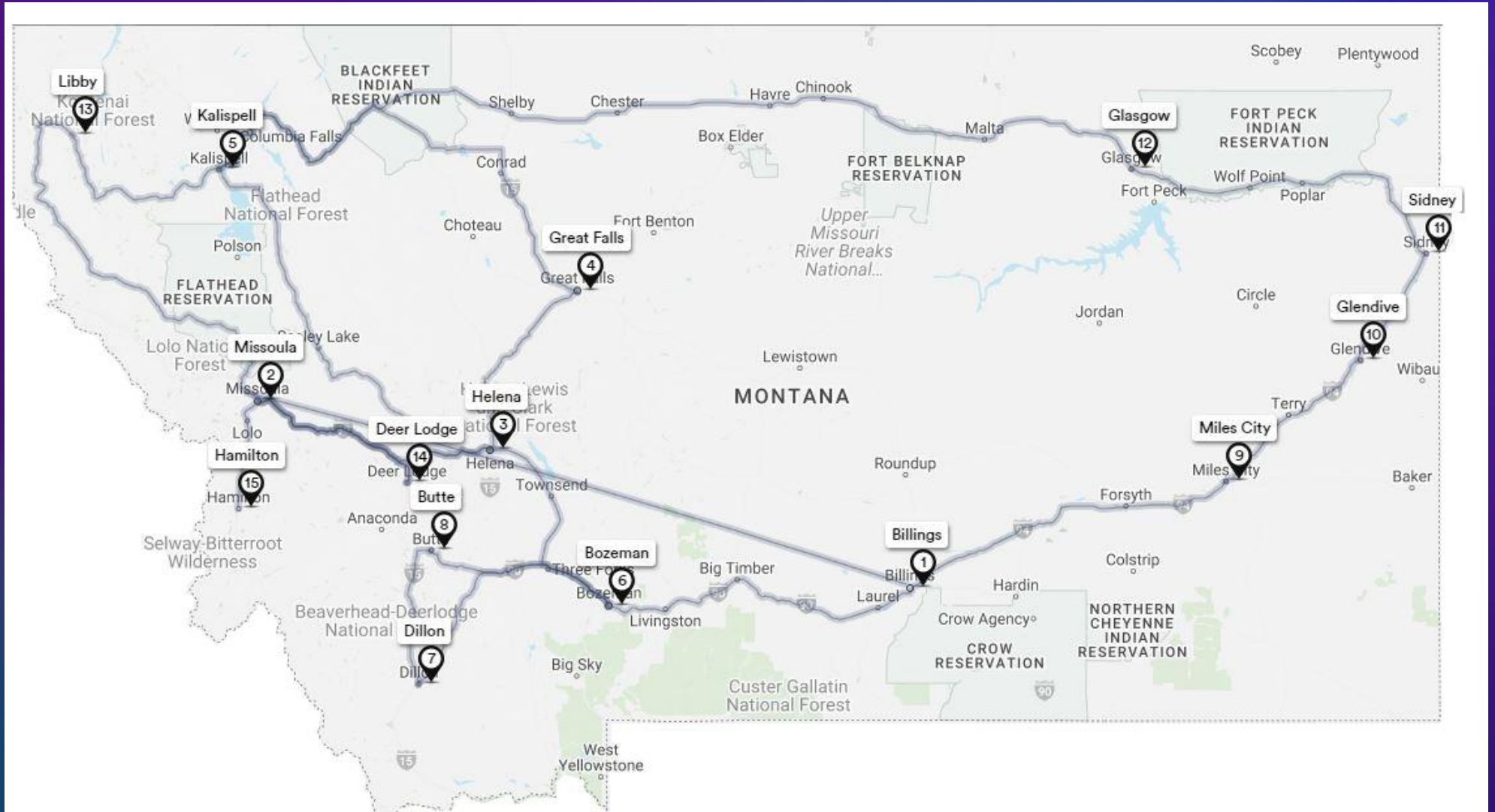
Building a Strong Network

- Working to build professional relationships between MBCC, partners, and providers to establish the Montana Victim Services Network. Facilitate communication and collaboration to maximize available resources during funding constraints and ensure accessibility for victims across Montana.

METHODOLOGY – HOW WE GATHERED INSIGHTS



ROUNDTABLES ACROSS MONTANA



SURVEY DEVELOPMENT

Beta Survey

165 Respondents

18% County Government

30% Private Non-Profit

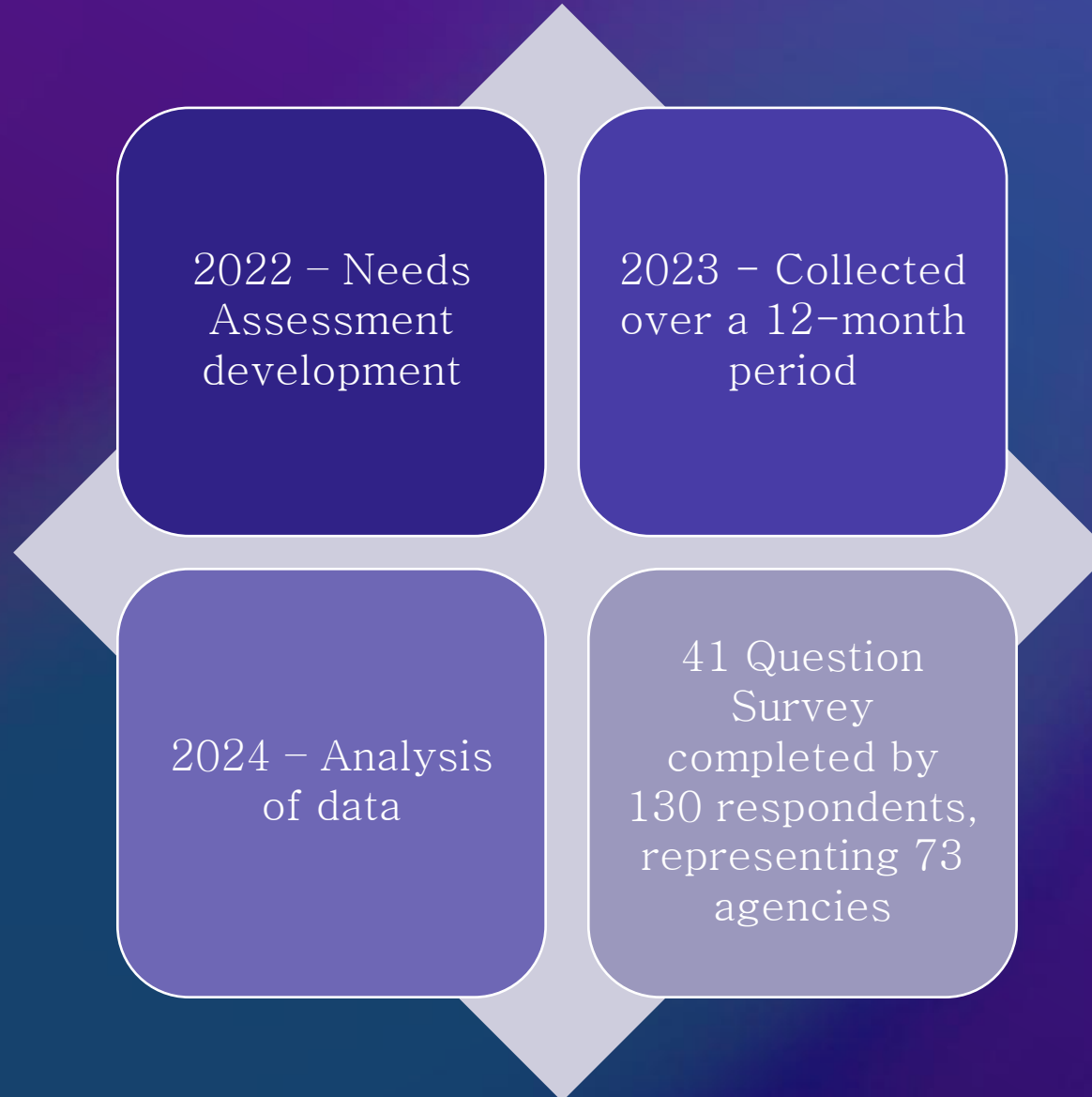
Review Team

Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

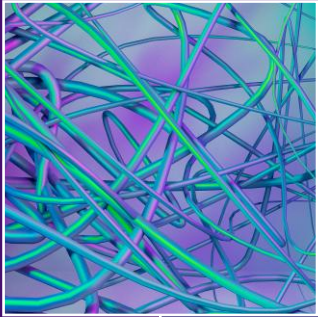
Department of Corrections – Victim Services Unit

National Native Children's Trauma Center

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS



NAVIGATING THE ASSESSMENT LANDSCAPE



Obstacles

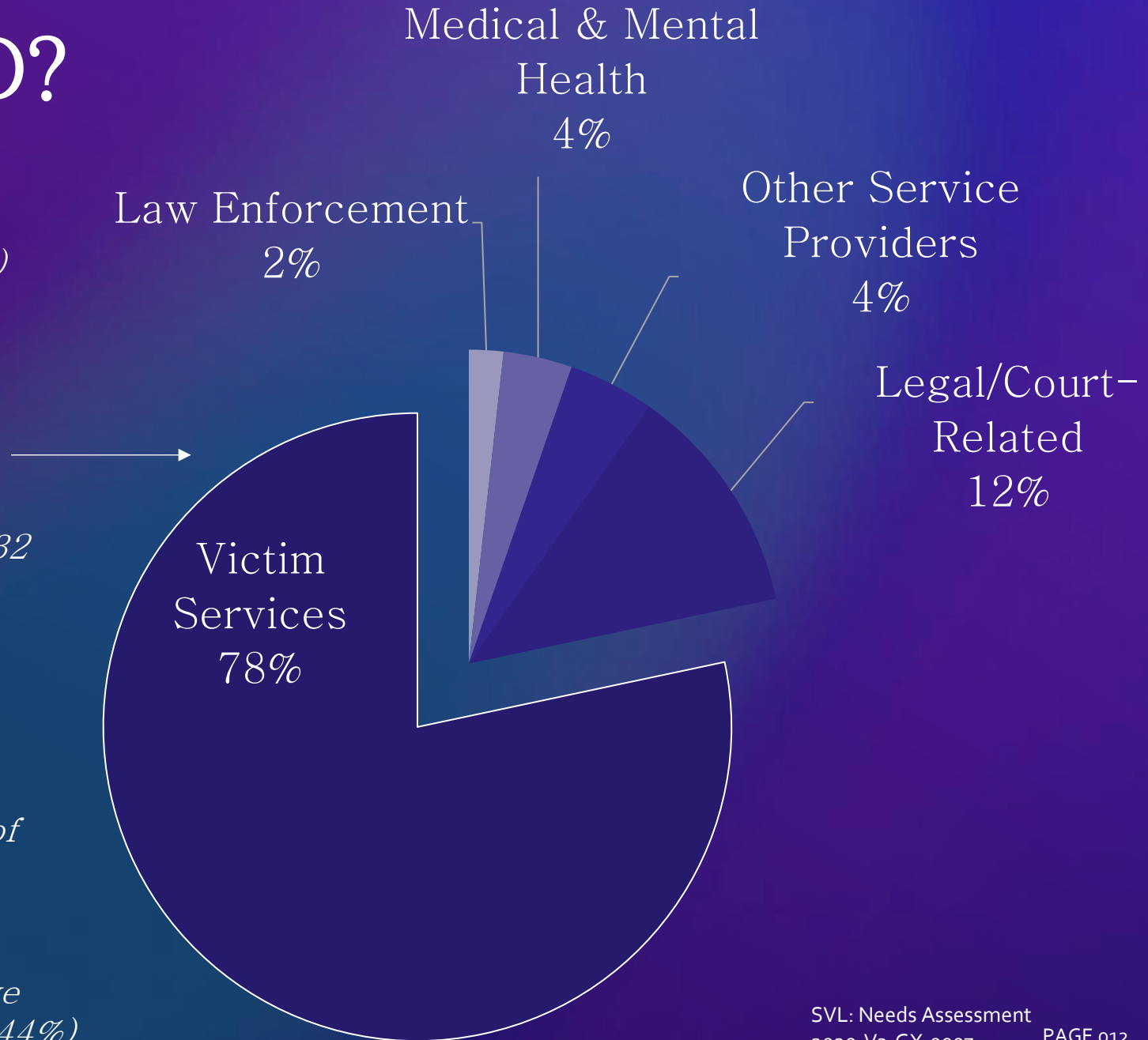
- COVID 19
- Contact information for tribal and American Indian Partners
- Culturally aware assessment that reflects the Montana American Indian Population
- Participant Engagement



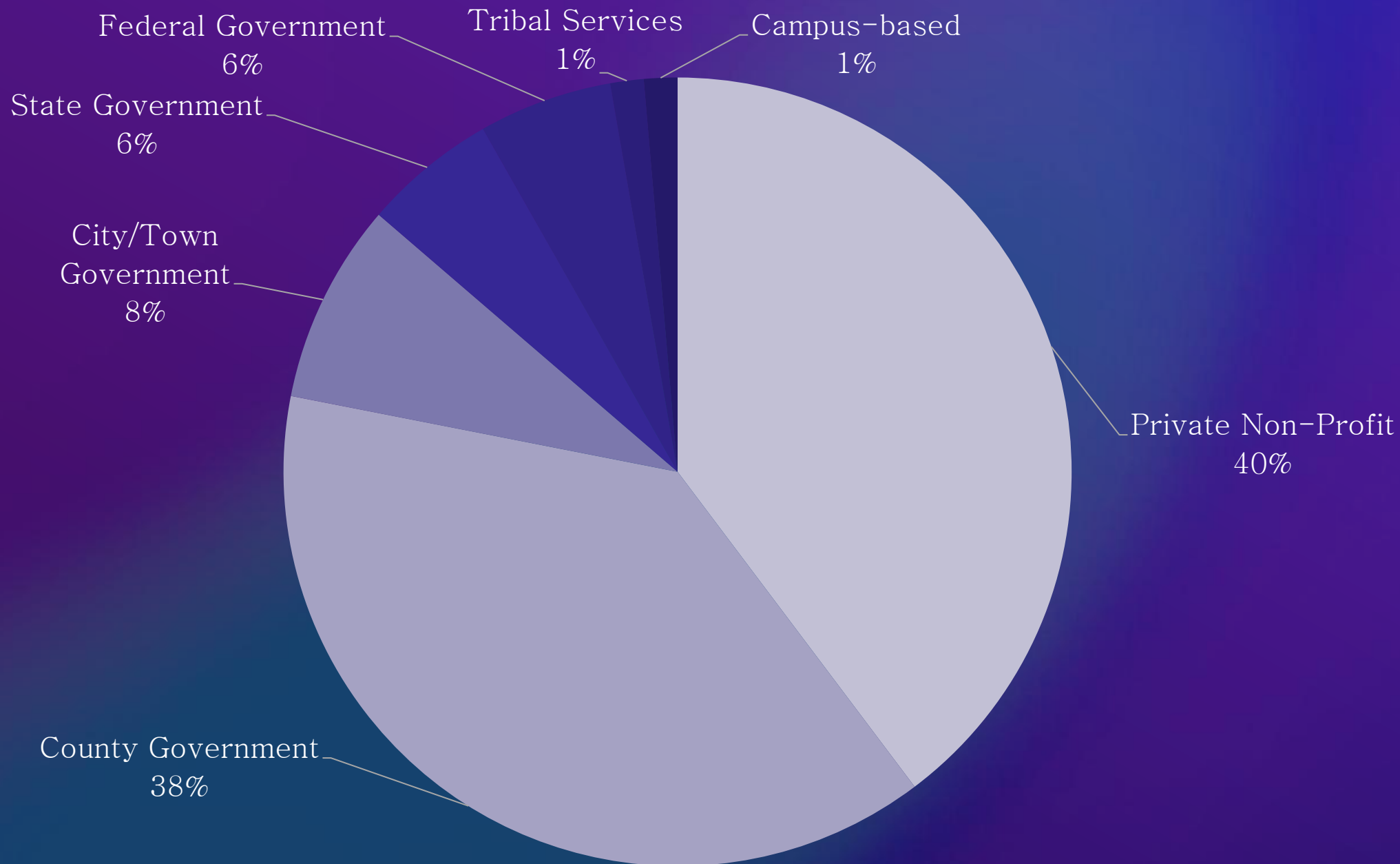
WHO PARTICIPATED?

Sub – categories:

- *Victim Services – Prosecutors Office: 47 (20.89%)*
- *Victim Services – Law Enforcement Agency: 14 (6.22%)*
- *Victim Services – Corrections/Post-Conviction: 8 (3.56%)*
- *Victim services – Court based: 1 (0.44%)*
- *Victim Services for the County: 1 (0.44%)*
- *Victim Services – Community Based/Grassroots: 32 (14.22%)*
- *Victim Advocacy – Campus Based: 5 (2.22%)*
- *Domestic and Family Violence Organization: 28 (12.44%)*
- *Sexual Assault Services Organization: 22 (9.78%)*
- *Child Abuse Service Organization: 11 (4.89%)*
- *Organizations by and/or for underserved victims of crime: 5 (2.22%)*
- *Support in reporting missing loved ones to law enforcement: 1 (0.44%)*
- *although we are not IN prosecutor or LE office, we provide services via collaboration with them: 1 (0.44%)*

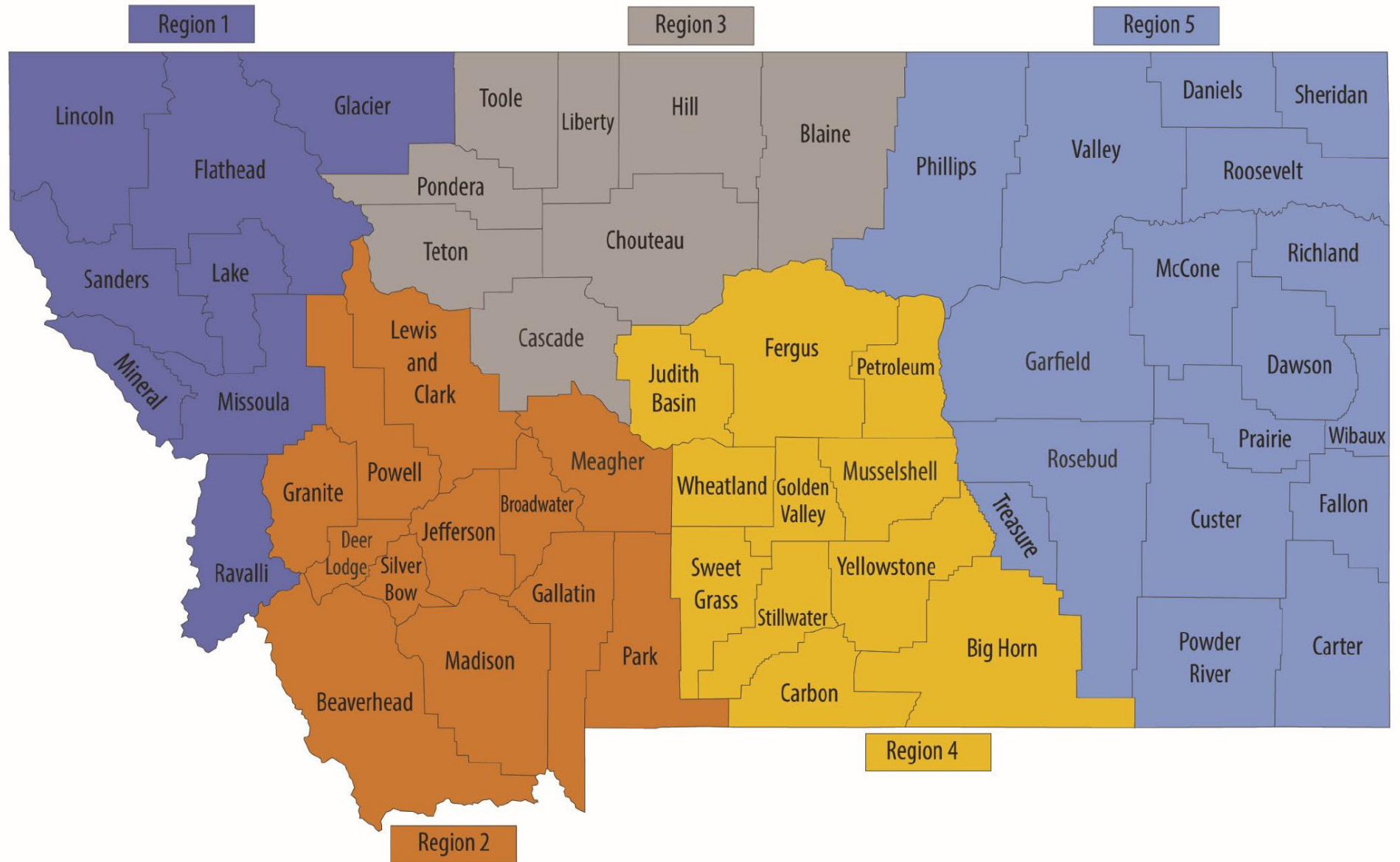


TYPE OF ORGANIZATION



MBCC GRANT REGIONS

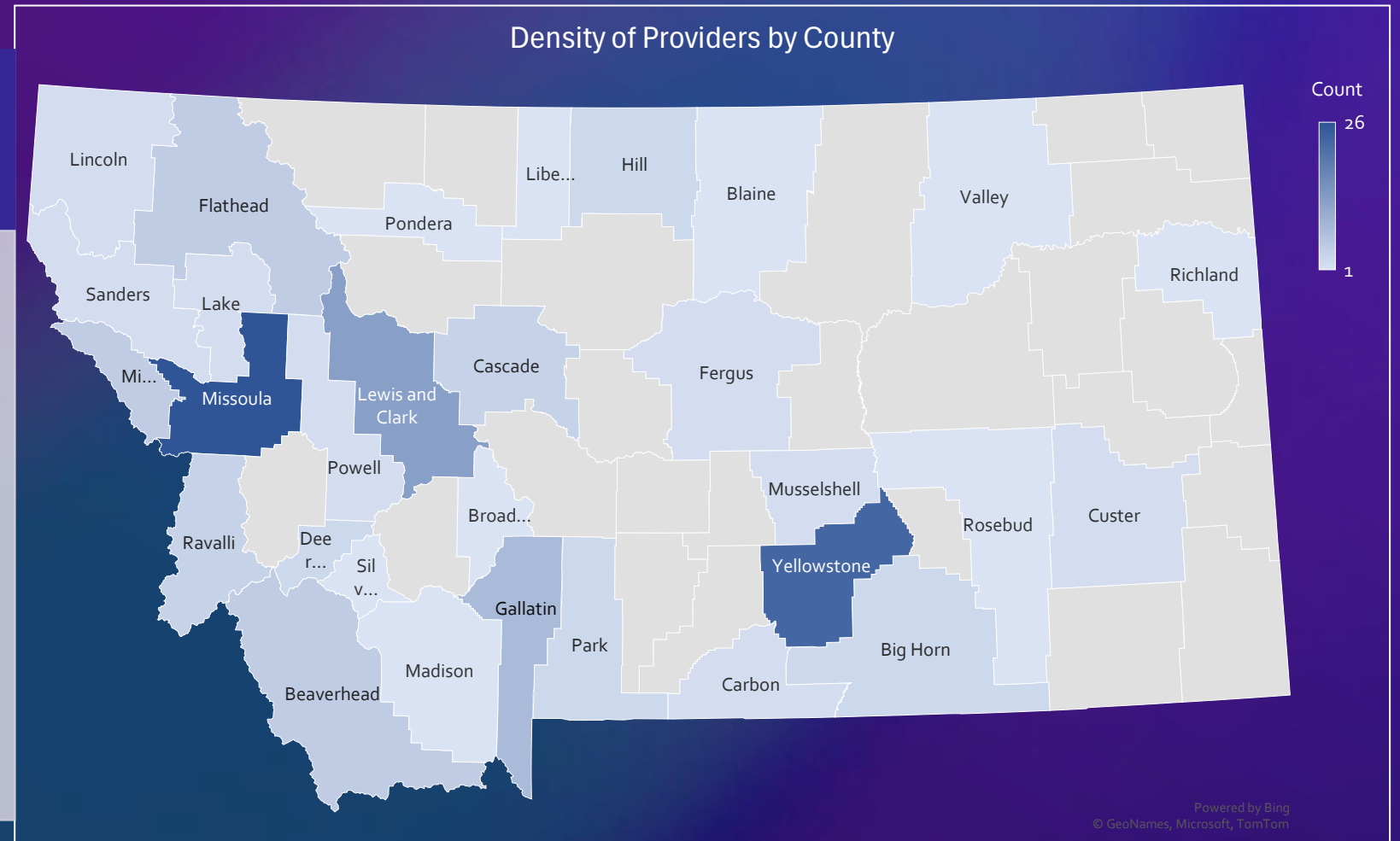
Montana Board of Crime Control Grant Regions



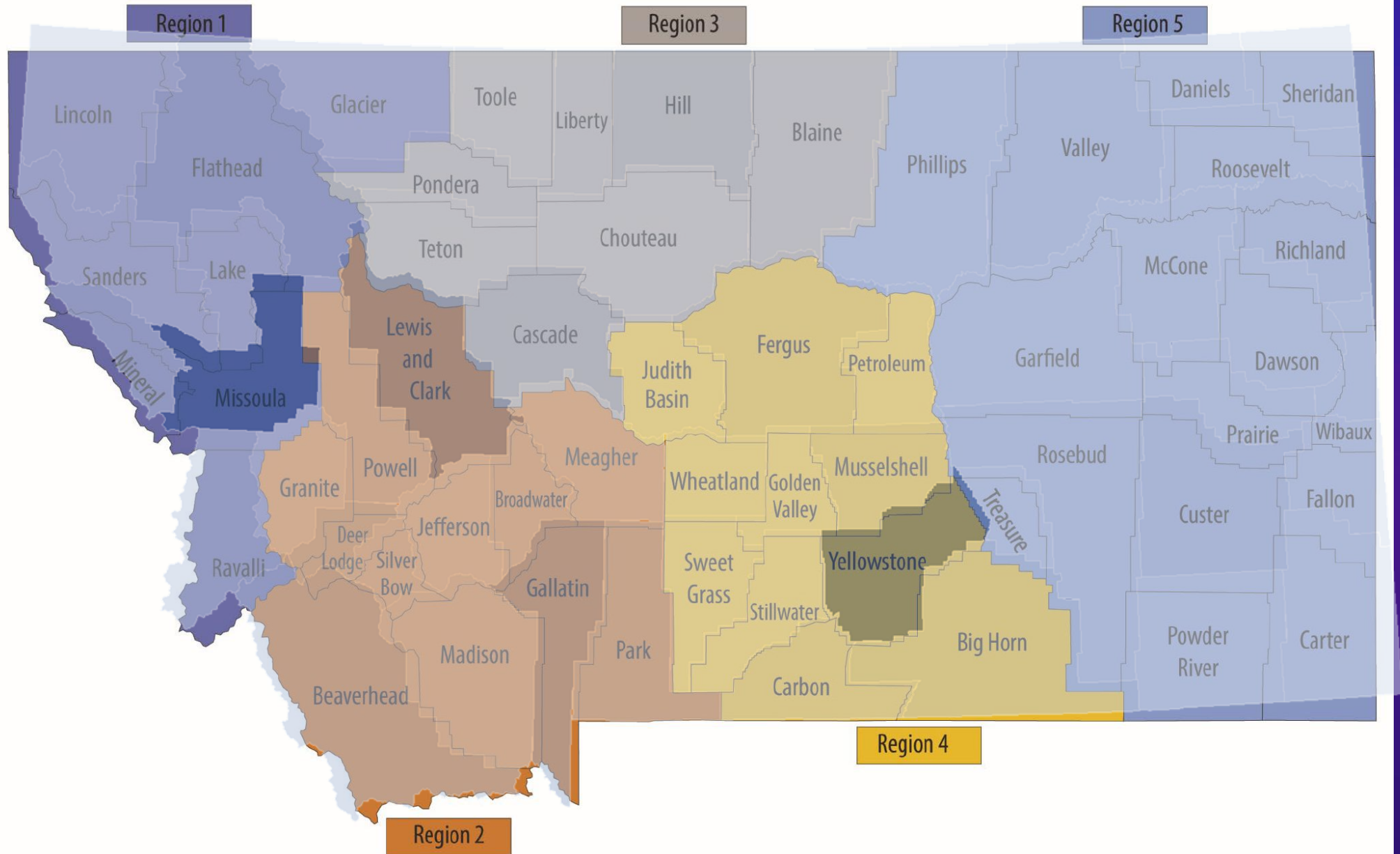
GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS REACHING ACROSS MONTANA

Representation from five
geographic regions of
Montana.

- Northwestern Region (Region 1): 35% of Respondents
- Southwestern Region (Region 2): 18% of Respondents
- Northcentral Region (Region 3): 18% of Respondents
- Southcentral Region (Region 4): 25% of Respondents
- Eastern Region (Region 5): 4% of Respondents

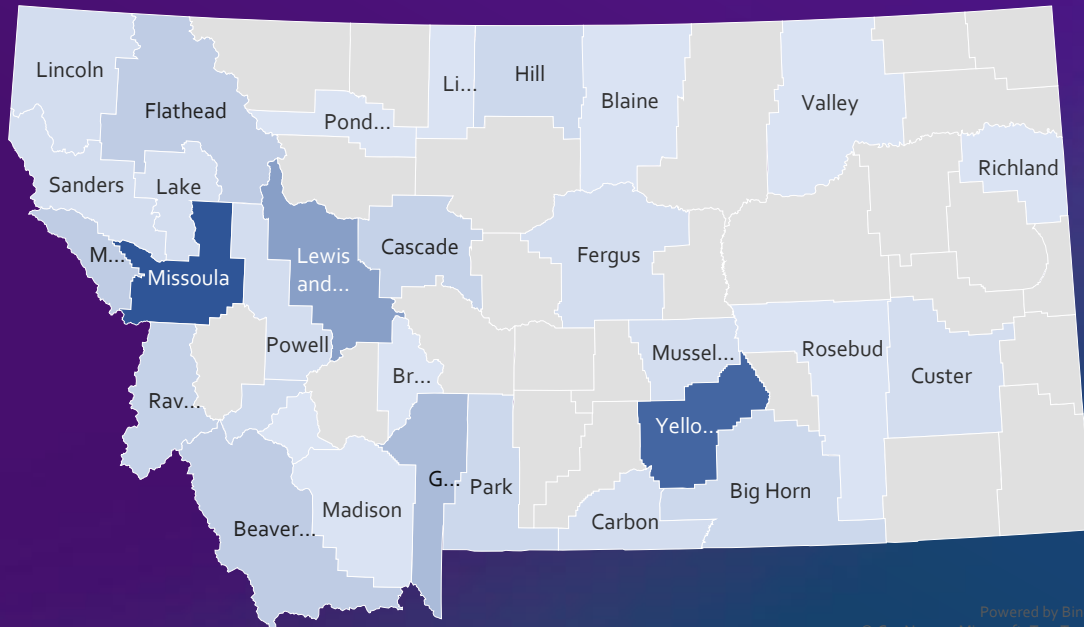


Montana Board of Crime Control Grant Regions



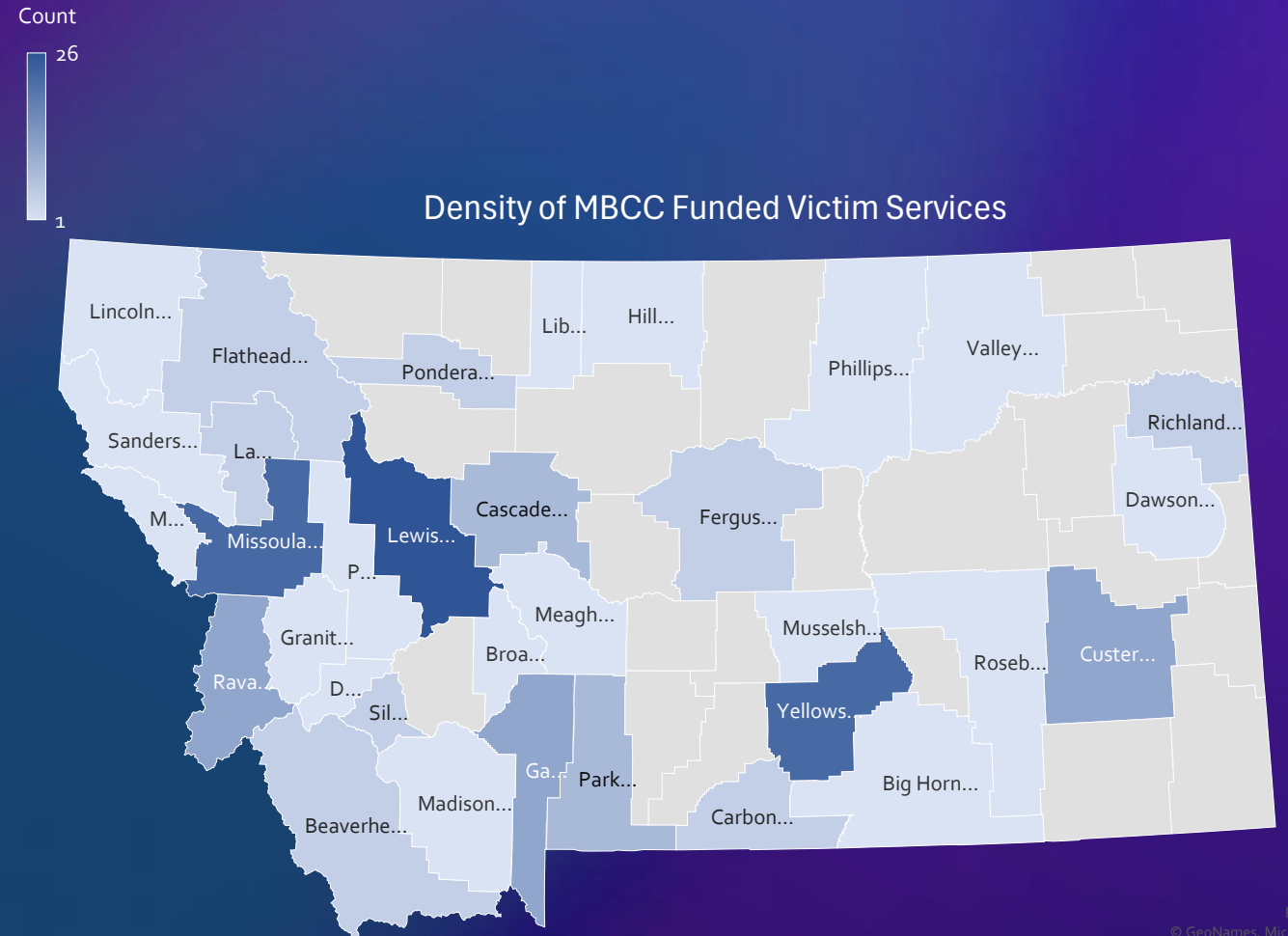
GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF MBCC FUNDED VICTIM SERVICES

Density of Providers by County



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Density of MBCC Funded Victim Services

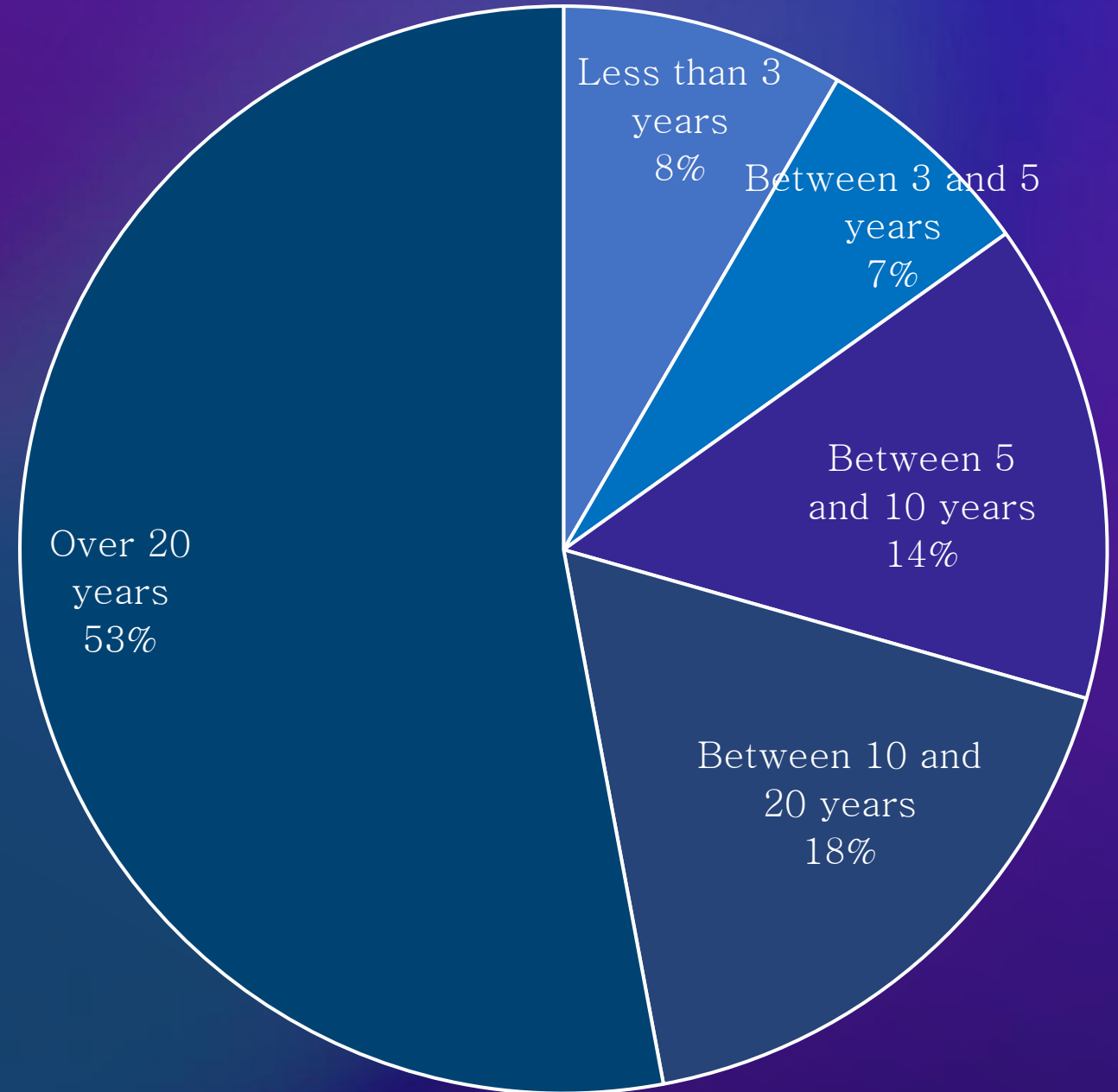


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PROGRAM LONGEVITY

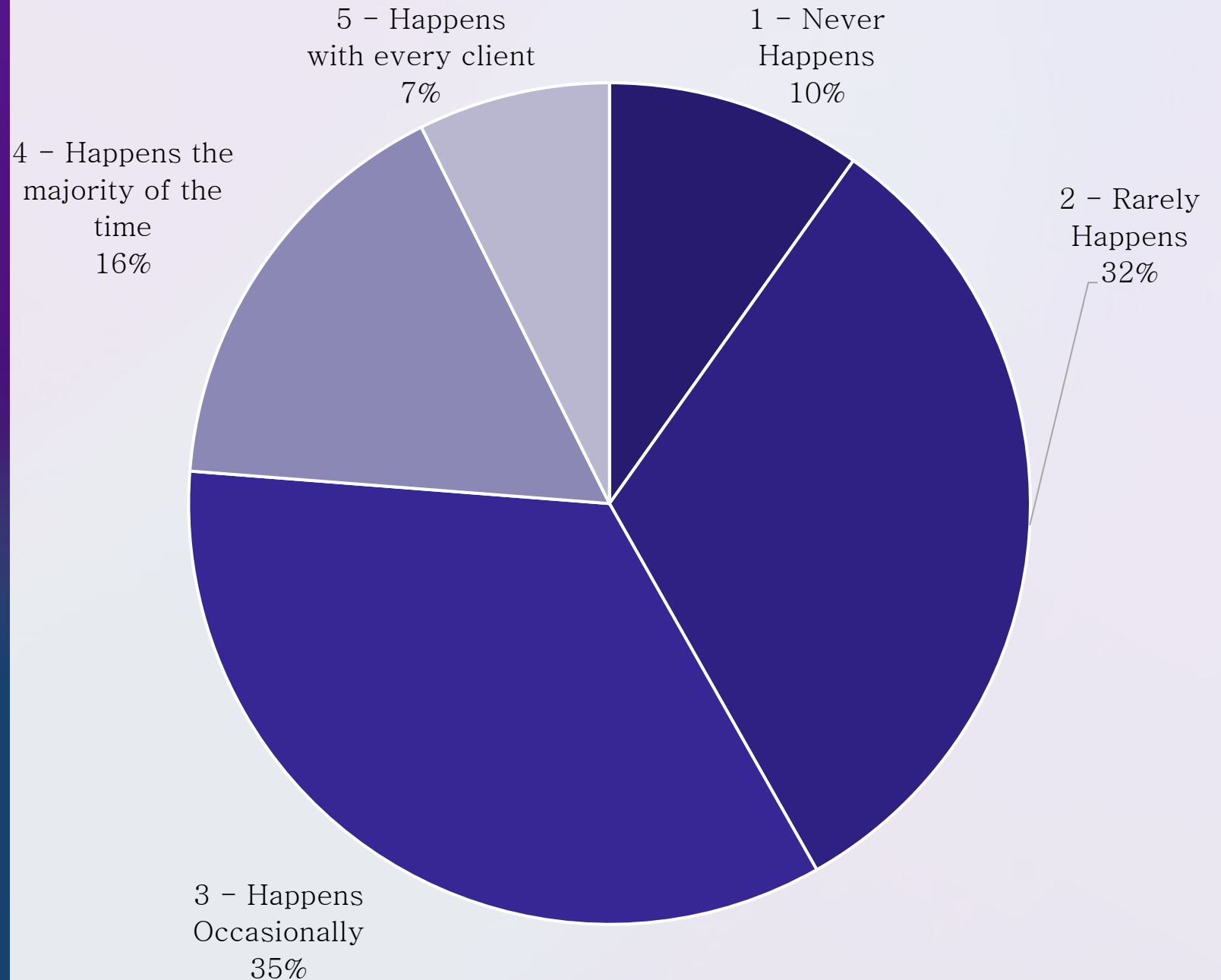
Of 130
respondents

- 53% indicated their program has been in operation for over 20 years.
- Breakdown:
 - Less than 3 years: 8% (10 respondents)
 - Between 3 and 5 years: 7% (8 respondents)
 - Between 5 and 10 years: 14% (17 respondents)
 - Between 10 and 20 years: 18% (21 respondents)



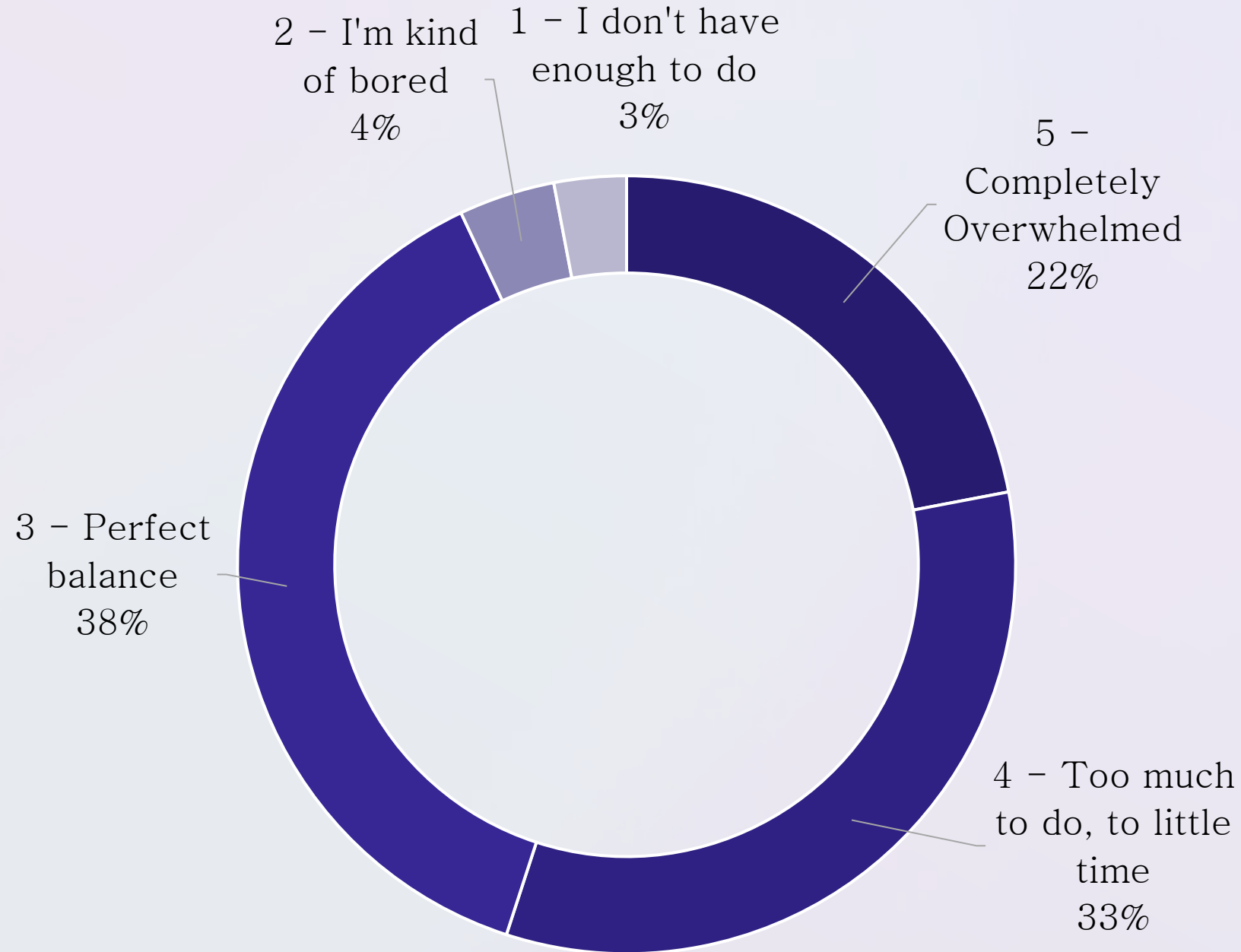
COMMONALITY OF UNMET NEEDS

On a scale of 1 to 5, how common is it for clients to approach your agency with needs you are unable to meet (this may include services you cannot provide such as emergency housing, but can still refer a survivor to the appropriate resources)? (With 1 being never/rarely happens and 5 being happens with every client.)



MANAGEABILITY OF CASELOAD

On a scale of 1 to 5, how manageable is your caseload (with 1 being I don't have enough to do and 5 being I am completely overwhelmed)?



WHY?

What are the most common reasons you are unable to provide services to a client, even though you may be able to refer them elsewhere?

25%

Respondents indicated “resource is insufficient or unavailable in the community” 25% of the time.

21%

21% of the time providers are unable to provide as resource to a client due to “Lack of financial resources (no money for gas cards or hotel vouchers, no money for funeral expenses, moving or relocation expenses, etc)”

13%

13% of the time, an inability to provide a service is directly related to geography and/or isolation.

UNCOVERING CRITICAL NEEDS

Key Points

- Many respondents identified significant gaps in services, particularly in rural areas.
- Top priorities identified:
 - Access to Services: 85%
 - Cultural Competency: 70%
 - Funding and Resources: 65%

'We need more resources and support to effectively reach and assist victims in our communities. The barriers we face are not just logistical; they are deeply rooted in the lack of funding and training.'

Specific Service Gaps and Barriers

Lack of resources and funding constraints impact approximately 65% of providers.

Access to transportation further hinders assistance (over half of respondents).

Need for stable funding and reduced turnover (65%)

Housing, childcare, mental health services: Over 80% identified as pressing needs for survivors.

Trauma-informed practices in justice system: 55% underscored the need.

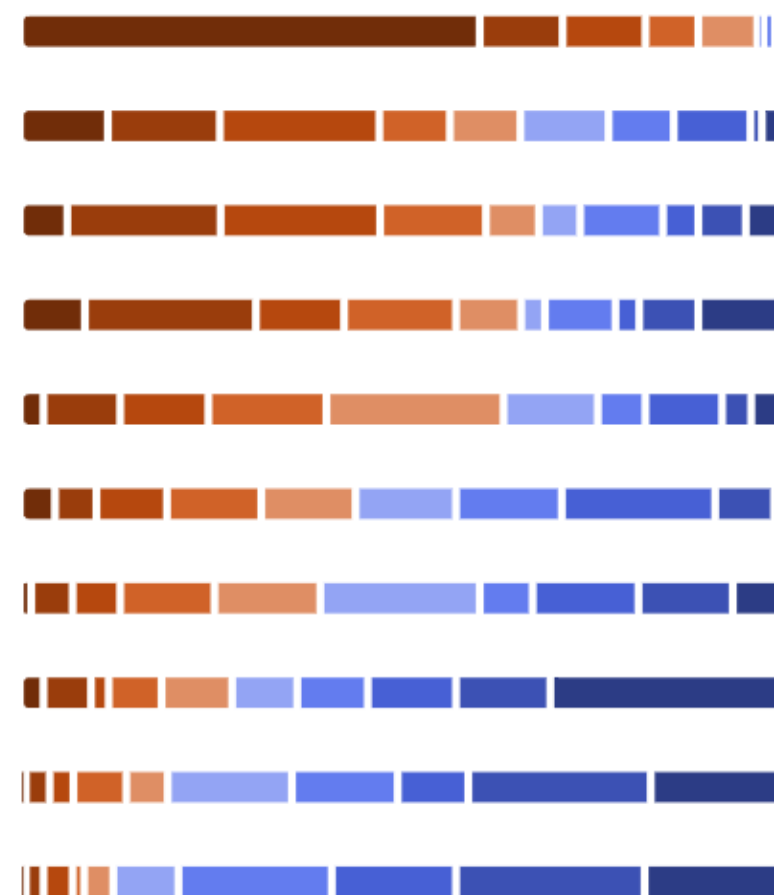
GAPS AND BARRIERS: PRIORITIZED

130 Responses

Rank Options

- 1 Lack of access to basic needs (housing, childcare, employment, etc)
- 2 Lack of education about victims needs and victim services for law enforcement, attorneys, and the judiciary
- 3 Limited legal advocacy options for victims and survivors
- 4 Lack of mental health and emotional support within the criminal justice system
- 5 Gaps in services when victims try to access victim services (LGBTQ+ services, elder abuse services, rural services, etc.)
- 6 Need for trauma-informed services
- 7 Lack of communication between service providers
- 8 Lack of access to updated, easily accessible trainings
- 9 Need to ensure cultural humility within victim services
- 10 Lack of data related to victim services

First choice ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● Last choice



FUNDING LANDSCAPE | SECURING SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

Respondents were able to select all funding sources that apply to their agency.

Crucially, 23 respondents (approximately 18% of all respondents) indicated they did not know where their program's funding originated.

Significant contributions from direct federal grants (15%), state-level support (12%), and community donations (11%).

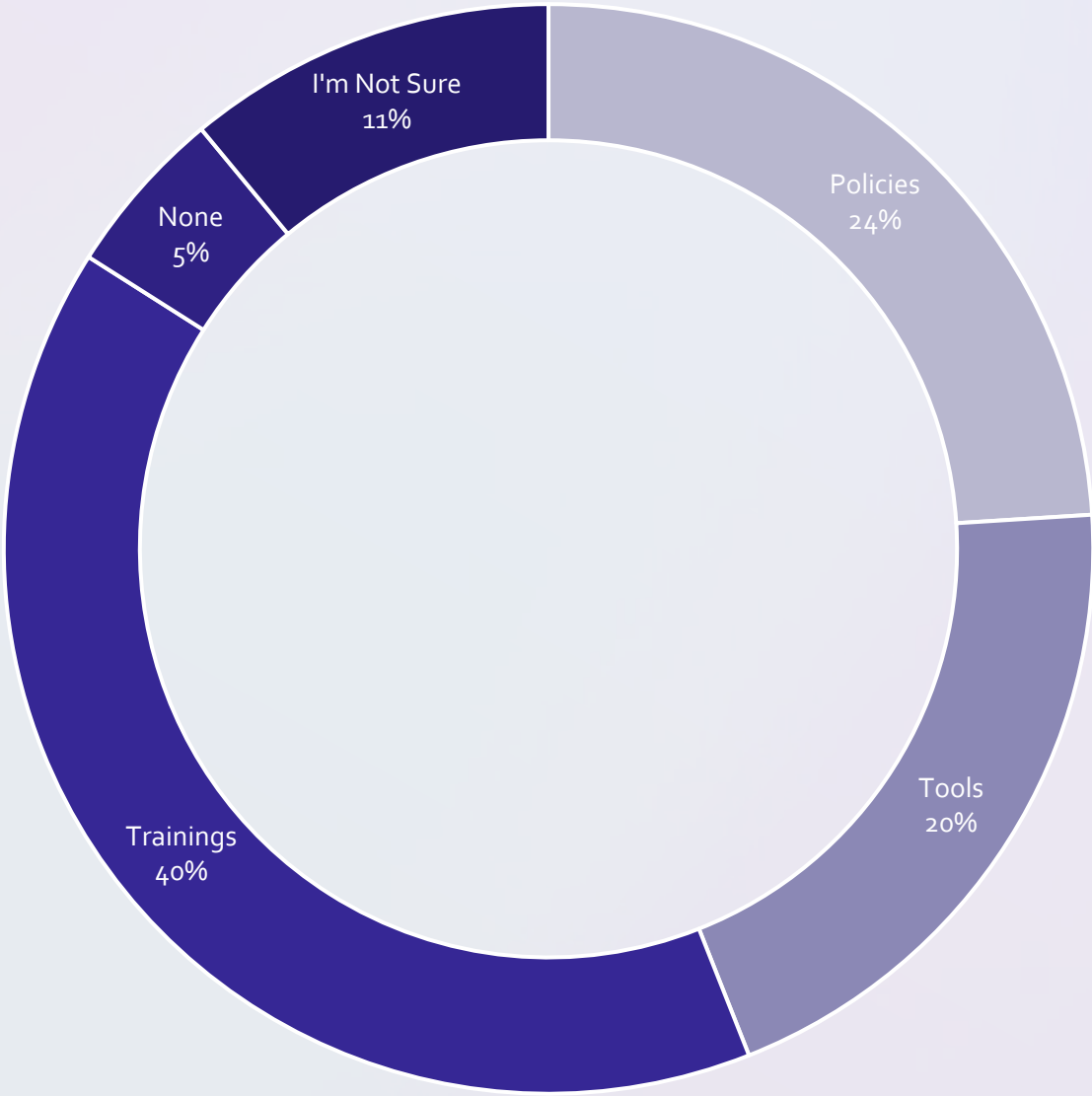
Reliance on combined funding streams illustrates both commitment and potential precarity if one source is significantly reduced.

The Montana Board of Crime Control (MBCC) is the primary funding source for 23% of respondents.

TRAUMA-INFORMED SERVICES: CURRENT STATE

Trauma-Informed Care – Being trauma-informed means being aware of the ways in which the people you are serving have been traumatized and the ways that traumatization has shaped their life trajectory. Trauma-Informed Care seeks to prevent re-traumatization of the victim and the staff.

Does your agency have policies, tools, and/or training in place to ensure services are trauma-informed?

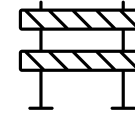


OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

KEY BARRIERS:



LACK OF
RESOURCES



SYSTEMIC AND
INTER-AGENCY
BARRIERS



GEOGRAPHIC
BARRIERS (RURAL
ISOLATION)



INTER-AGENCY
CHALLENGES



EVEN THOSE WITH
"NO BARRIERS"
DESIRE
ADDITIONAL
TRAINING



IMPACT OF
SECONDARY
TRAUMA AND
BURNOUT

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Core Challenges for Providers:

Limited affordable housing options for victims/survivors (104 respondents)

Limited money and resources for victims/survivors to live independently or access services/legal assistance (97 respondents).

Victim fear, shame, or embarrassment (85 respondents).

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR MONTANA

Key Points

Data reveals significant regional disparities in service availability and access, particularly between urban and rural areas.

Emphasis on cultural sensitivity, particularly for the American Indian population, highlight the necessity for tailored services.

Pressing need for increased funding and resources to bridge identified service gaps.

RECOMMENDATIONS: A MULTI-FACETED APPROACH



ACTIONABLE STEPS MOVING FORWARD



Centralized Resource-Sharing Platform
& Montana Victim Services Network



Improved Communication



Training program for victim advocates

A CALL TO ACTION | BUILDING A STRONGER FUTURE FOR VICTIMS IN MONTANA



THANK YOU

- Thank you to the partners who worked side-by-side with me to make the needs assessment what it is now.
 - Thank you to Rocky Mountain Tribal Leader's Council for assisting us in hosting our first roundtable, and for providing guidance on the best way to approach the conversation.
 - Thank you to the Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence for endless meetings and always being willing to provide feedback.
 - Thank you to Department of Corrections, Victim Services Bureau for letting me bounce ideas off you allll the time and for your continuous dedication to improving services for victims.
 - Thank you to every single victim services provider and allied partner who took time out of their busy schedule to attend roundtables, meetings, and one-on-one conversations, but, most importantly, thank you for the work you do everyday that impacts the lives of survivors.
 - And, thank you to the Board of Crime Control and staff for all their guidance and ability to listen to my endless talking.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION