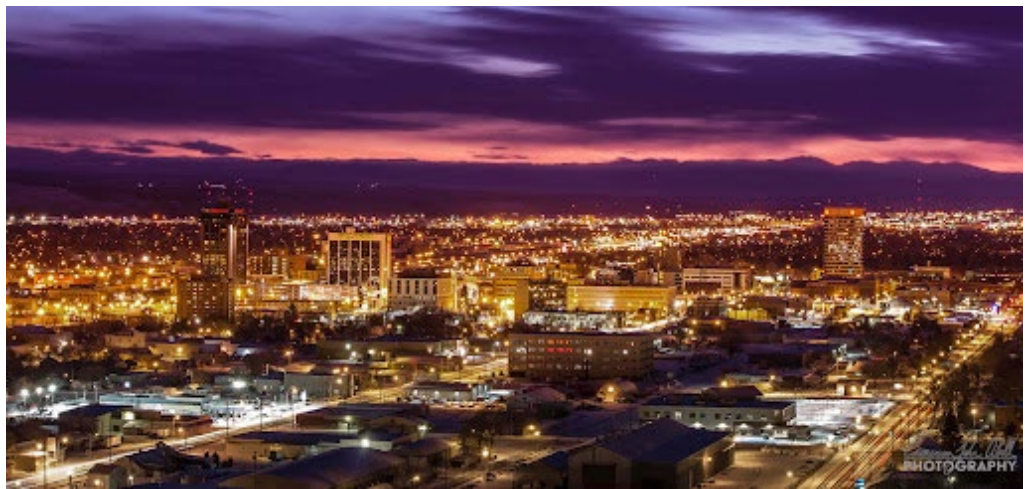


# VICTIM SERVICES IN BILLINGS, MT



10/25/2021  
and  
10/26/2021

Montana Board of Crime Control State and  
Tribal Victim Liaison Project

Data collected from a roundtable discussion with victim service providers who support Billings, Yellowstone County, and the surrounding area.

# Victim Services in Billings, MT

## MONTANA BOARD OF CRIME CONTROL STATE AND TRIBAL VICTIM LIAISON PROJECT

### PARTICIPANTS

Thanks to the graciousness of Rocky Mountain Tribal Leader's Council, a myriad of service providers came together to discuss victim services, gaps in the system, and solutions for those gaps. Those participating in the roundtable included:

- CASA of Yellowstone County
- Angela's Piazza: Women's Drop-in Center
- Billings City Attorney's Office
- Alternatives
- Montana Department of Corrections
- Yellowstone County Justice Court
- FBI
- Rocky Mountain Tribal Leader's Council
- Montana Legal Services Association
- Yellowstone County Attorney's Office

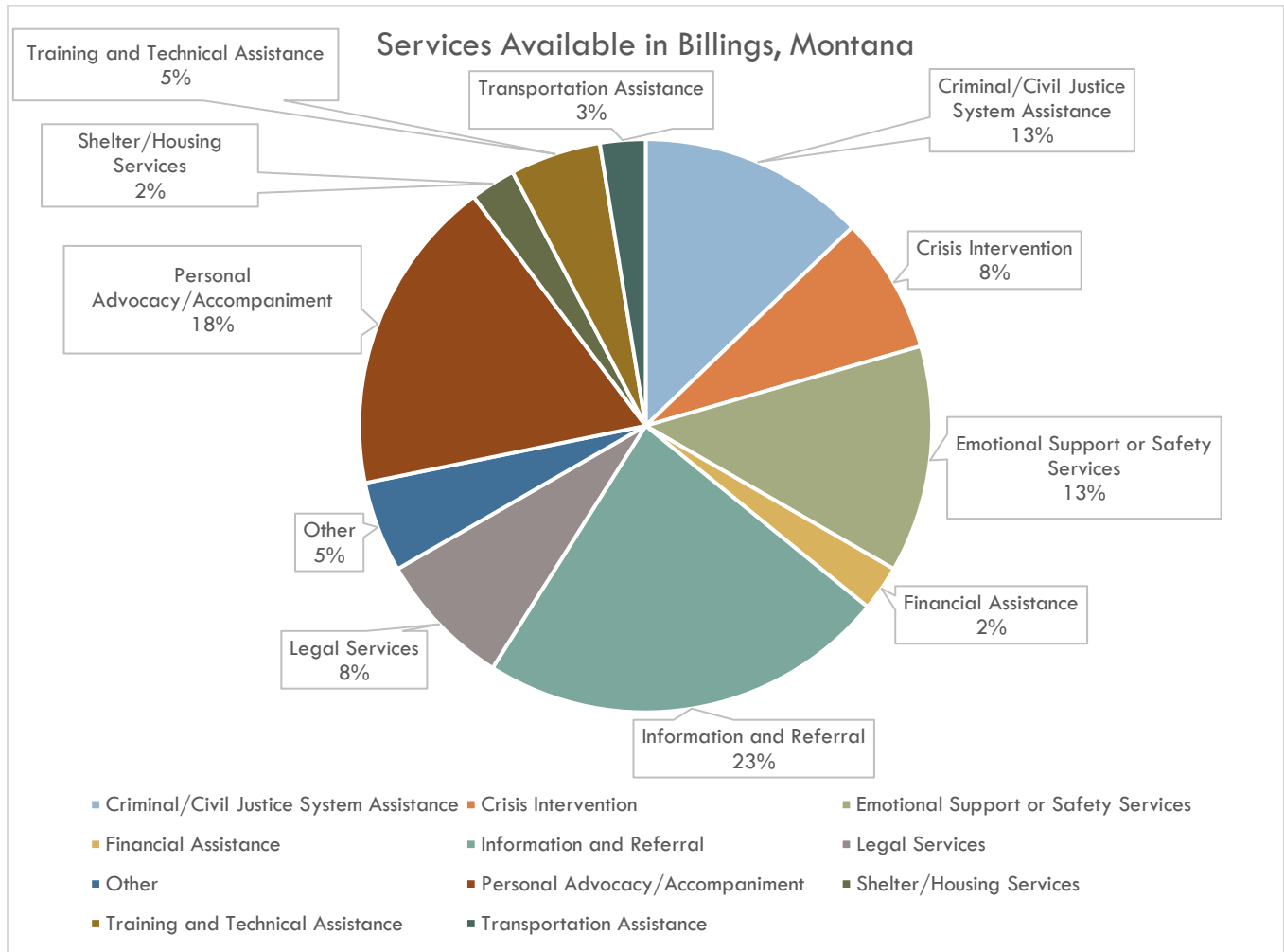
### Services Represented

Those who were able to participate, filled out a quick questionnaire addressing the services they provide to the Billings city, Yellowstone county, or surrounding areas. Based on those surveys, this was the data collected:

| Type of Services                         | Count of Services |
|--|-------------------|
| Criminal/Civil Justice System Assistance | 5                 |
| Crisis Intervention                      | 3                 |
| Emotional Support or Safety Services     | 5                 |
| Financial Assistance                     | 1                 |
| Information and Referral                 | 9                 |
| Legal Services                           | 3                 |
| Other                                    | 2                 |
| Personal Advocacy/Accompaniment          | 7                 |
| Shelter/Housing Services                 | 1                 |
| Training and Technical Assistance        | 2                 |
| Transportation Assistance                | 1                 |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                       | <b>39</b>         |

Other services were listed as:

- Advocacy for youth in dependency and neglect cases, facilitating and recommending services to CPS and the judge
- Offender monitoring



### Gaps and Solutions Discussed

Gaps Identified:

- Disconnect between systems (Criminal, Civil, Juvenile, ect)
- Lack of understanding of the infrastructure (What is the roadmap?)
- Rural Resources
- Sharing of information (Tribal, City, County, State, Federal)
- Continuity of Care
- Childcare
- Transportation
- Strong meaningful collaborations
- Understanding all the players, (service providers, roles, ect.) and the who, what, where, when and why of what they provide.
- Timeliness in getting to victims (being able to help right away).
- Law Enforcement based services

- Legal Advocacy
- Mass Violence response
- Trauma-informed trained service providers and therapists
- Voice for victims and families (Translating, helping, ect.)
- Tribal Community Advocates on ALL reservations
- Lack of Mental Health Services in Montana
- Managing burn out of providers, advocates, ect.
  - o Addressing their needs so they can stay in field.
- Stable funding sources.
- Coordinated response team
- Emergency Shelter (pet friendly)
- Legal Advocacy (Parenting plan help, orders of protection, ect.)
- Office structure; privacy issues; needs to be a central location that can address needs of victims.
- Lack of “wrap around” services for victims
- Fewer people involved that victims have to call themselves; too overwhelming.
- Early Discovery/Reporting of Abuse by Civil Litigants (Victims): No clear process for court personnel (judges, clerks) exists to report to law enforcement or a victim service agency of a potential victim discovered during civil proceedings.
- Victim Services tied to a Pending Case/Litigation (similar to Continuity of Services): Unfortunately, victims sometimes only “exist” so long as an investigation or criminal case is pending.

Solutions Identified:

- Meaningful, solution-oriented conversations
- Communication index/log
- Defined terms
- Clarified roles
- Seamless Services
- Law Enforcement Victim Assistance
- Tele-mental health services (in-progress through CACs)
- Involve key community people (particularly rural and train them in the process (legal jargon, process, ect.))
- A community grassroots advocate
- Tribal victim advocates
- School social work/MH/Early intervention
- Travel advocacy
- Stable state funding
- More money for emergency expenses and mental health services
- Family Justice Center; one stop shop; coordinated response
- Availability of shelter with pets or short-term fosters for pets
- YWCA – legal advocacy; more resources
- Centralized victim services (back story)
- More systematic collaborations (CPS; APS)
- Fewer people victims have to call or connect with.
- Transportation
- Access to information
- Initial offense report
- Alignment of city/county/state resources

## Conclusions reached

After two days of discussions with 10 different agencies who provide services to victims in the Billings, Yellowstone County, and surrounding areas, we found that the most common service provide was information and referral. One of the most common gaps identified was a lack of communication between systems and systemic players. As far as solutions, money and funding were the top identified solution. However, we also discussed in length the need for meaningful, solution-oriented discussions and better wrap-around services for victims and how money could be used in these ways.