

VICTIM SERVICES IN GREAT FALLS, MT



2/24/2022

Montana Board of Crime Control State and
Tribal Victim Liaison Project

Data collected from a roundtable discussion with victim service providers who support Great Falls, Cascade County, and, the surrounding areas.

Victim Services in Great Falls, MT

MONTANA BOARD OF CRIME CONTROL STATE AND TRIBAL VICTIM LIAISON PROJECT

PARTICIPANTS

Thank you to United Way of Cascade County, service providers representing many facets of victim services came together to discuss victim services, gaps in the system, and solutions for those gaps. Those participating in the roundtable included:

- Montana Department of Corrections Victim Services
- Montana Department of Corrections Probation and Parole Division
- Indian Family Health Clinic
- Victim -Witness Assistance Services
- US Air Force - Malmstrom Air Force Base
- MT DPHHS Child and Family Services Division
- FBI
- Cascade County Children's Advocacy Center
- Great Falls Public Schools
- Youth Court Services
- NE Montana MMIP Task Force
- Cascade County Attorney's Office
- Cascade County Sheriff's Office
- United Way of Cascade County

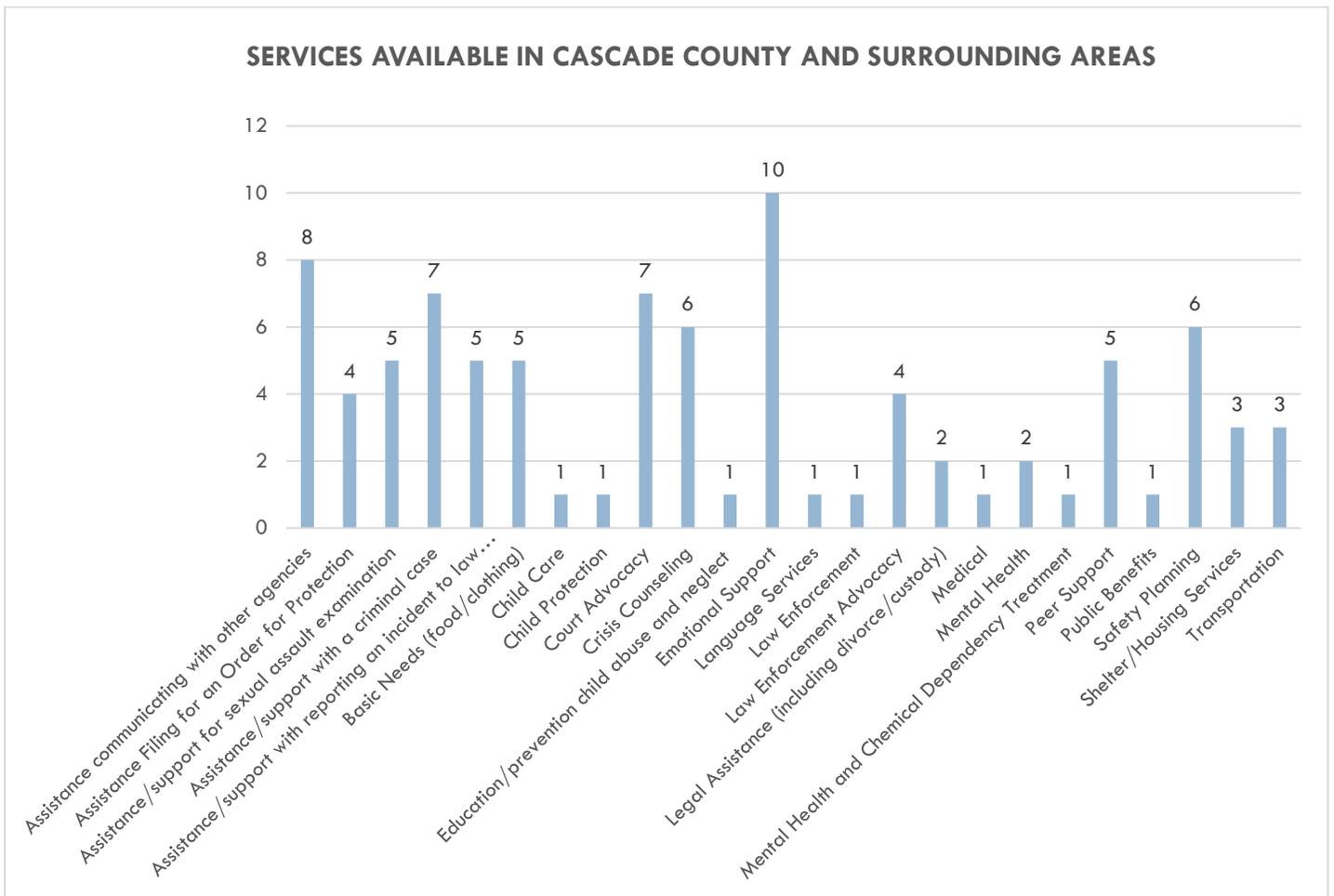
Services Represented

Those who were able to participate, filled out a short survey addressing the services they provide to the Great Falls, Cascade County, or the surrounding areas. Of the fourteen agencies who participated, nine agencies filled out the survey and the below data set represents the numerous services they provide.

This list encapsulates the listed services from the survey and all the agencies that provide these services. **90** services are represented:

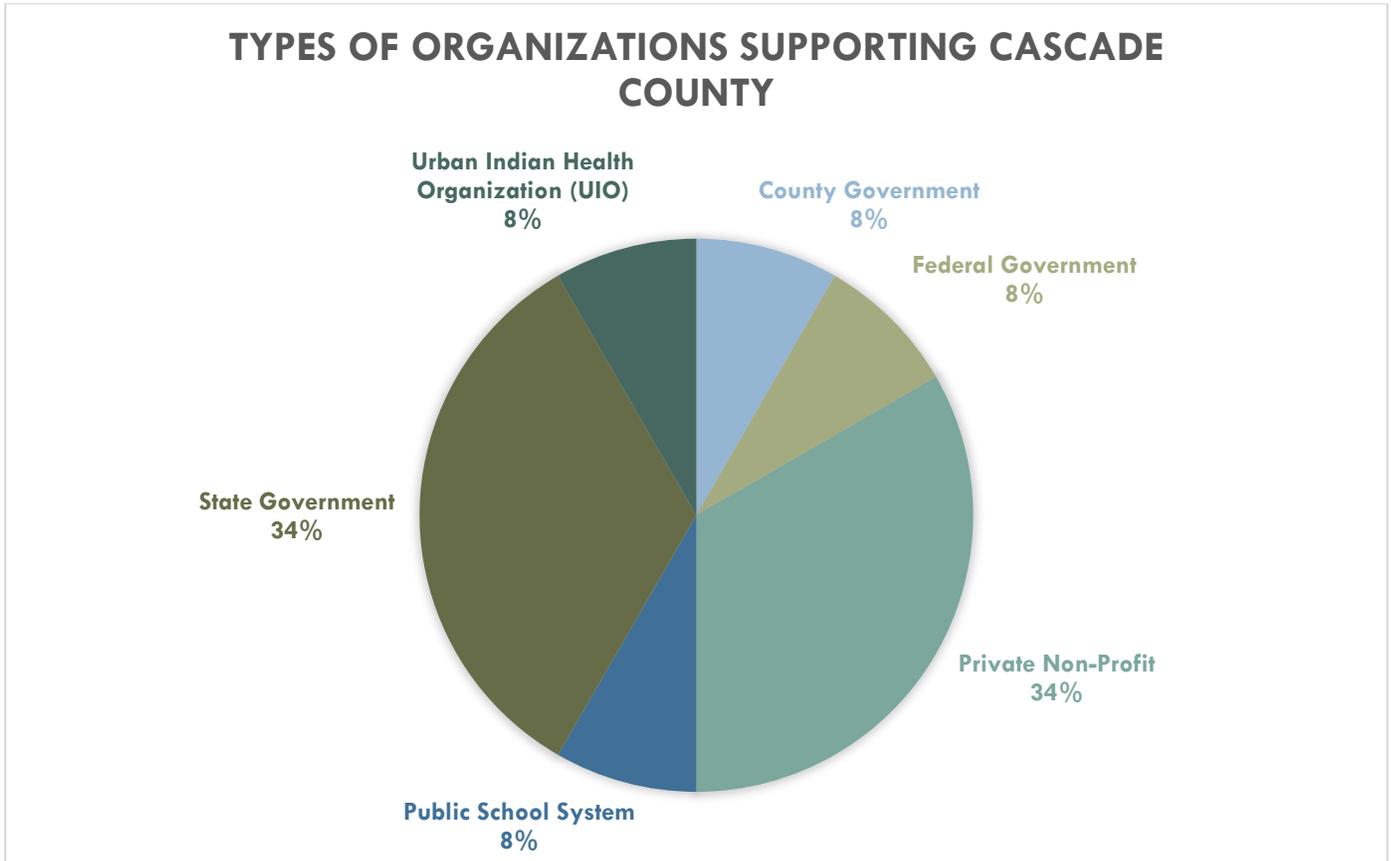
<i>Assistance communicating with other agencies</i>	8
<i>Assistance Filing for an Order for Protection</i>	4
<i>Assistance/support for sexual assault examination</i>	5
<i>Assistance/support with a criminal case</i>	7
<i>Assistance/support with reporting an incident to law enforcement</i>	5
<i>Basic Needs (food/clothing)</i>	5
<i>Child Care</i>	1
<i>Child Protection</i>	1
<i>Court Advocacy</i>	7
<i>Crisis Counseling</i>	6
<i>Education/prevention child abuse and neglect</i>	1

<i>Emotional Support</i>	10
<i>Language Services</i>	1
<i>Law Enforcement</i>	1
<i>Law Enforcement Advocacy</i>	4
<i>Legal Assistance (including divorce/custody)</i>	2
<i>Medical</i>	1
<i>Mental Health</i>	2
<i>Mental Health and Chemical Dependency Treatment</i>	1
<i>Peer Support</i>	5
<i>Public Benefits</i>	1
<i>Safety Planning</i>	6
<i>Shelter/Housing Services</i>	3
<i>Transportation</i>	3
Grand Total	90



Types of Organizations Represented

The following data represents the types of organizations providing services to survivors, victims, and family members of victims in Cascade County. Many of the agencies and organizations who provided information, also provide services outside to Cascade County. As a rural area, many service providers reach far into the surrounding counties to ensure no one is left behind.



County Government	1
Federal Government	1
Private Non-Profit	4
Public School System	1
State Government	4
Urban Indian Health Organization (UIO)	1
Grand Total	12

Gaps Discussed

- No available space in emergency shelter
- Competent and caring SANE exams
- Access to competent mental health providers
- No wrap around support services
- Lack of service providers in rural areas
- Lack of rural services such as medical, mental health, and legal services
- No available transportation assistance
- Lack of available childcare
- Lack of legal services
- No self-help law center
- Court delays
- No pretrial services
- Jails are full and no services available in community
- Young, inexperienced cops can cause additional trauma to victims
- No connection of systems
- Under representation of Native Americans and resources
- Housing is very unaffordable
- Prevalence of child abuse and neglect
- No civilian resources for military spouses with family going through a criminal justice experience (MAFB)
- Improving Lobbyists for community; legislative planning sessions
- Lack of understanding grant reporting parameters
- Stable funding
- Lack of behavioral health services (in and outpatient)
- Access to appropriate services
- Cultural education
- Resources are spread out and disconnected.

Solutions Discussed:

- Relief to front line advocates and case workers
- Coordinate care/services across providers
- Continuity of care
- Warm hand-offs
- County wide and community resource guides
- Legal help with a focus on victim's rights
- Funding to expand shelters
- DV specific offender supervision
- SANE exam provider training
- More informed about what services exist in the area

- Advocates to specifically help with Orders of Protection, Divorce, ect.
- Unified paperwork between courts
- Educating Judges on victims' rights
- Legislative change regarding victims' rights
- Montana Law Enforcement Academy to better inform officers on victim role
- Knowing who/what services are available in the area for indigenous populations
- Affordable housing
- Increase availability of mental health services
- Connect system, provider to provider system
- Case management – management should operate the same on all issues when it comes to victims
- Education (language gap); needing commonality in the language
- Education for ER staff (all hospitals) surrounding human trafficking
- Expanding all services to rural areas
- Increased CASA advocates to be able to better advocate for the child
- Increase lobbyists at local level
- Get involved with Judicial reform
- Increase referrals from law enforcement for services
- In-patient and Out-patient mental health service
- Wrap around services for Indigenous populations for those coming from reservations to urban areas
- Jurisdiction training/understanding training/education for the Indigenous population

Conclusions reached

Through our roundtable discussion in Great Falls, many victim service providers and criminal justice allies came together to talk about how to identify and address barriers that currently exist. A passionate, comprehensive group of individuals that included providers from local advocacy agencies such as Victim-Witness Assistance Services to the County Attorney's and County Sheriff's Office, as well as crucial players from Great Falls Public Schools. One gap that stuck out was the lack of access to SANE services, especially in the surrounding rural areas. This allowed a deeper conversation about how to approach healthcare professionals about additional training. The most important thing to come out of this conversation was how many other resources existed that could be brought to the table. Below is an action plan to invite others and start identifying ways to ensure resources are public knowledge.

Great Falls Roundtable Action Plan:

- Who to bring to the table in the future:
 - YWCA, VOH, Toby's House, Alliance for Youth, Great Falls PD, Benefis, SANEs, Native American Visiting Center, Alluvion, APS, GFPS Mental Health (Ms. Savage), and CASA and Kairos Youth Services
- Additional meeting, follow through from MBCC

Without the voices and knowledge of victim service providers and agencies, the voices of victims would not be heard in an offender-centric system. The primary goal from our Great Falls roundtable was to move forward in ensuring that all available resources were easily available to those attempting to access them.