

VICTIM SERVICES IN KALISPELL, MT



4/19/2022

Montana Board of Crime Control State and
Tribal Victim Liaison Project

Data collected from a roundtable discussion with victim service providers who support Kalispell, Flathead County, and the surrounding areas.

Victim Services in Kalispell, MT

MONTANA BOARD OF CRIME CONTROL STATE AND TRIBAL VICTIM LIAISON PROJECT

PARTICIPANTS

Service providers representing different parts of victim services came together to discuss the services provided, gaps in the system, and solutions for those gaps at the City Hall in Kalispell. Thank you to Chief Overman and Captain Corbett for assisting in procuring our location! Those participating in the roundtable included:

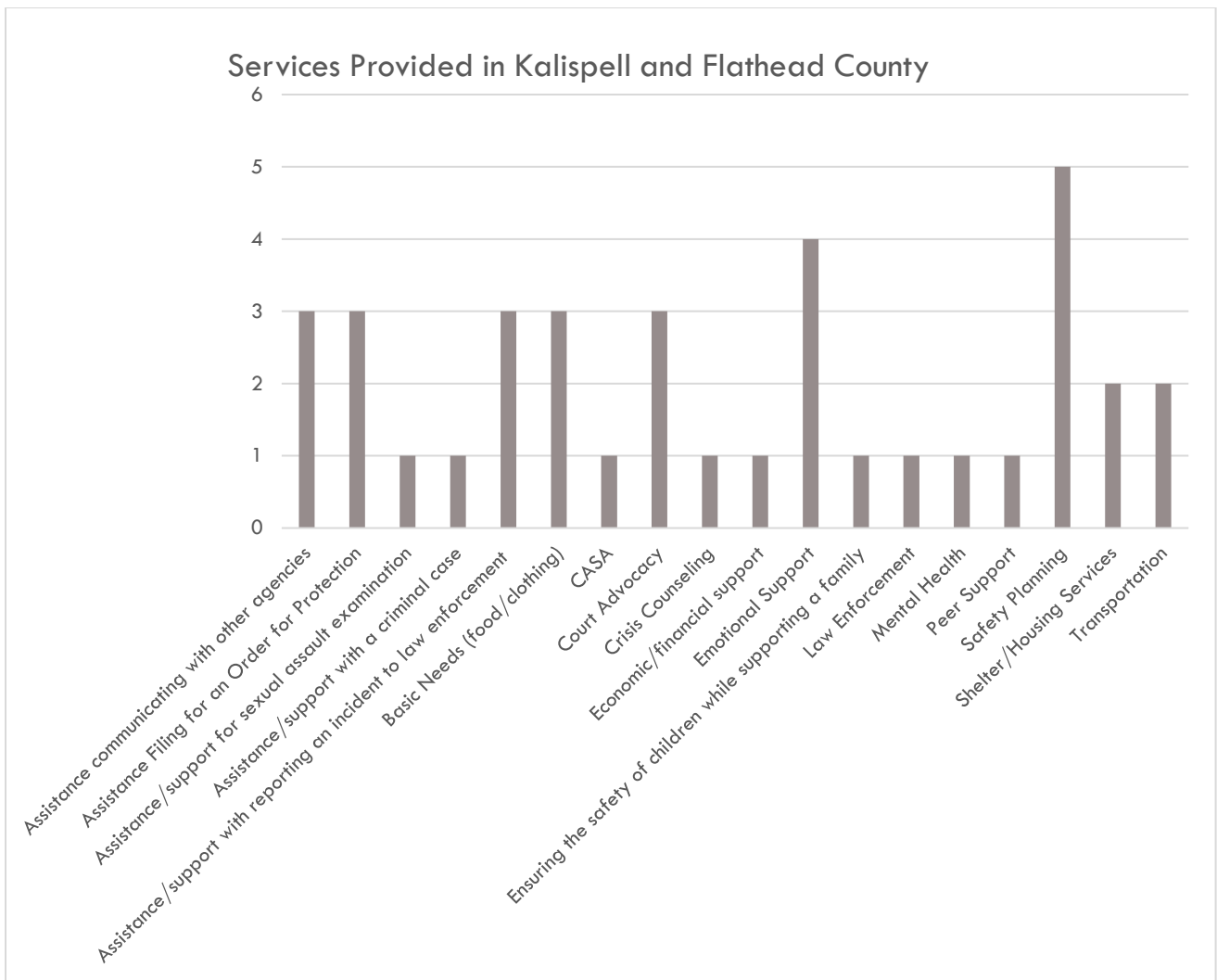
- Montana Department of Corrections Victim Services
- Abbie Shelter
- Flathead County Child Advocacy Center
- Kalispell Police Department
- Flathead County CASA
- Flathead County Attorney's Office

Services Represented

Service providers for the Kalispell and Flathead County areas completed short surveys addressing the services they provide to the Kalispell, Flathead County, or the surrounding areas.

This list encapsulates the listed services from the survey and all the agencies that provide these services. Safety planning appeared as the top offered service in the area. 37 services are represented:

<i>Assistance communicating with other agencies</i>	3
<i>Assistance Filing for an Order for Protection</i>	3
<i>Assistance/support for sexual assault examination</i>	1
<i>Assistance/support with a criminal case</i>	1
<i>Assistance/support with reporting an incident to law enforcement</i>	3
<i>Basic Needs (food/clothing)</i>	3
<i>CASA</i>	1
<i>Court Advocacy</i>	3
<i>Crisis Counseling</i>	1
<i>Economic/financial support</i>	1
<i>Emotional Support</i>	4
<i>Ensuring the safety of children while supporting a family</i>	1
<i>Law Enforcement</i>	1
<i>Mental Health</i>	1
<i>Peer Support</i>	1
<i>Safety Planning</i>	5
<i>Shelter/Housing Services</i>	2
<i>Transportation</i>	2
Grand Total	37

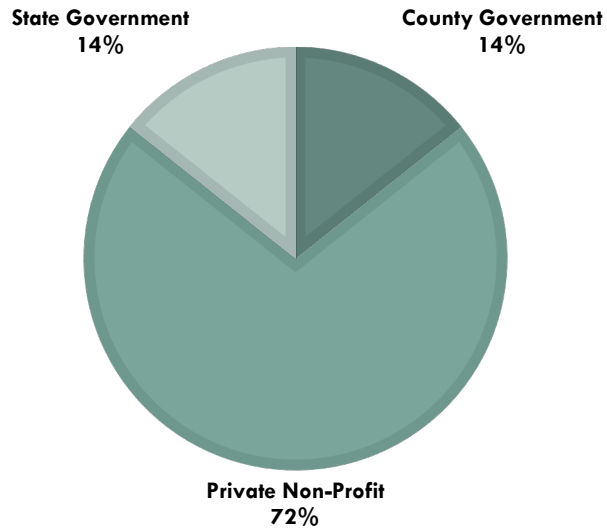


Types of Organizations Represented

The following data represents how the organizations and agencies identified the type of organizations they are. It should be noted that private non-profit appears to be strongly represented; however, that representation is due to several individuals from the same agency attending the roundtable and filling out the survey. Overall, this was an incredibly positive experience, but it should be considered when reviewing the data and notes.

<i>County Government</i>	1
<i>Private Non-Profit</i>	5
<i>State Government</i>	1
Grand Total	7

ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING KALISPELL AND FLATHEAD COUNTY



Gaps Discussed

Victim/Survivor Gaps:

- Lacking legal advocacy services
- Housing is not affordable
- Psychological evaluations are months out
- Transportation
- Need for education for victims and survivors on strangulation
- Reporting is very difficult when vulnerable
- Communication with providers can be hard
- Practical needs of victims v. legal needs of victims are not always clear
- Need for advocates at SANE exams
- Lacking mental health crisis services
- Access to legal services
- It's all on the victim to corroborate
- Resources for vulnerable populations
- Lack of in-patient care
- Length of criminal cases
- Length of time to keep victims/survivors engaged in the system
- Lack of pro bono services
- Abuse can lead to isolation
- Can't return to home state – statute regarding leaving “home” state with children
- Can't leave abusive relationship due to lack of resources available

- No alternative housing

Service Provider Gaps and Needs:

- Not enough victim advocates/liaisons/service providers
- Not enough mental health counselors
- Differences in civil and criminal assistance
- Communication and what happens from law enforcement through attorney and courts is not clear
- Struggles with staffing from the law enforcement to prosecution to victim advocacy
- Unintended consequences of information sharing
- Duplicate services v. no one covering services
- CPS staffing
- Family First model emphasizes prevention and planning and may not include service providers who could assist with in-home services
- In-person crisis response comes at a human cost
- Staffing turnover
- Need for staffing for high crisis/ high needs moments
- Can't give legal advice
- Public jail roster can lead to targeting for human trafficking
- Parameters of orders of protection
- Victims slipping through the cracks re: systems-based and community-based service providers
- Lack of HRT

Training Needs:

- Struggle when scheduling trainings when related to law enforcement and shift changes
- Need for victim sensitive education at law enforcement level
- MLEA – more continuing education

Justice System Gaps:

- No overseeing agency for recourse with judges and attorney's
- Orders of protection and parenting plans

Other:

- More sex education
- Lack of Medicaid funded resources

Solutions Discussed:

Survivor/Victim Specific Solutions:

- Education and resources for victims on civil and criminal law, as well as the criminal justice system
- Ensuring information and resources are available to crime victims and survivors

Service Provider Specific Solutions:

- Domestic violence caseloads, probation and parole offices specific to domestic violence and sexual assault cases
- Warm hand-offs
- More information sharing – criminal justice information sharing
- Someone to be on scene or assist
- Victim services chat box when searching victim services (Scotland government page has a chat box when people search victim services)
- Advocacy at the hospital and with SANE
- Someone, one person, to pick up the phone who has the answers
- Wrap-around services
- Best practices for systems-based v. community-based services
- State funding contingent on HRT
- Education to community about available resources
- Dangerousness Assessment utilization
- Shared victim services information network
- Security for domestic violence survivors and shelters and safe locations

Justice System Specific Solutions:

- Involvement of local attorney's, 2 hr law clinic availability
- Legislative changes for criminal justice information exchange
- More multi-disciplinary teams, high risk teams, sexual assault response teams, and coordinated community response teams
- Funding for civil assistance
- Law enforcement social workers
- Mental health providers that are able to come to crisis locations
- Countywide co-responder program
- Funding
- Montana state fund for sexual assault exams that does not come from police departments
- Implement mental health crisis services (crisis intervention)
- Local advocacy attorneys
- Funding for legal consultations and legal advice
- Consistency in the judiciary
- Consistency in forms and paperwork
 - Standardization across courts and systems
 - Easy to read/understand/user-friendly
- Standardized training/education (esp for intimate partner violence) for law enforcement, judiciary, and attorneys
- Trauma-informed practices and systems
- Streamline for the order of protection process

- More access to ICWA trained individuals
- Specialized services

Broader Solutions:

- Telemedicine and tele mental health
- Community Action Programs
- Appropriate medical training in regard to domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking

Conclusions reached

Through the discussions with service providers in Kalispell and supporting the Flathead County area, many solutions were discussed that could also benefit the whole state. At Kalispell Police Department, they have a co-responder who can assist at crime scenes. Based on this conversation, it was also determined that the co-responder, Sarah, should be invited to future meetings. A large gap that was identified was the need for legal services for victims, with many ideas regarding law clinics and volunteer hours. Moving forward, there are more providers that are needed at the table and a deeper conversation surrounding the roles of systemic based and community-based victim services.

Kalispell Roundtable Action Plan:

- More information provided on what systems based and community-based victim service providers do
- Who to bring to the table:
 - CPS, APS, Sarah (co-responder), Sheriff's Office, City Attorney
- More information about the systemic steps and how each entity fits into the system and supports a victim

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 Kalispell roundtable is to move forward and clarify the roles of all of the players and hear more about the collaborations and what has been successful and what has not.