

In The Matter Of:
*Needs and Strategies Public Hearing
from 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan*

*Transcript of Proceedings
April 3, 2024*

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BEFORE THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

NEEDS AND STRATEGIES PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE
2024-2025 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN
AND
2025-2029 CONSOLIDATED PLAN
FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

TRANSCRIPT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

On April 3, 2024, beginning at 2:02 p.m., the public hearing regarding the 2024-2025 Annual Action Plan and the 2025-2029 Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development was held via Zoom, before Cheryl Romsa, Court Reporter.

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A P P E A R A N C E S

PANELISTS:

Rosie Goldich
Megan Brace
Janelle Egli

PARTICIPANTS:

Shyla Patera	Sam Forstag
Cheryl Cohen	Galen Steffens
Mackenzie Espeland	Julie Flynn
Stephanie Crider	Jason Hanson
Megan Surginer	Nicole Newman
Chandler Rowling	Sharon Lofftus
Jennifer Stepleton	Kelsey Stewart
Melissa Higgins	Julles Engel
Rachel Singer	

I N D E X

PAGE

2024-2025 Annual Action Plan

Presentation by Rosie Goldich.....	3
Comment by Shyla Patera.....	8

2025-2029 Consolidated Plan

Presentation by Megan Brace.....	11
Presentation by Janelle Egli.....	21
Comment by Shyla Patera.....	24

Concluding remarks.....	27
Court Reporter's Certificate.....	29

1 WHEREUPON, the following proceedings were had:

2 MS. GOLDICH: Hi, everyone. I'm going to go
3 ahead and get started, if that's okay with everyone. Good
4 afternoon, and welcome to the needs and strategies public
5 hearing --

6 Actually, Janelle, can you start the recording,
7 please?

8 Okay. Good afternoon, and welcome to the needs and
9 strategies public hearing for the 2024-to-2025 Annual
10 Action Plan, or the AAP, and the 2025-to-2029 Consolidated
11 Plan. My name is Rosie Goldich, and I am the CDBG
12 coordinator here at the Department of Commerce, Community
13 MT Division. Today we'll be receiving public comments on
14 the community needs and suggested strategies for the
15 2024-to-2025 Annual Action Plan.

16 First a couple of housekeeping notes. We'll be taking
17 comments at the end of this section of the presentation.
18 Please hold your comments and until then. While making a
19 comment, please state and spell your name, then any
20 organization that you are representing today. Please take
21 a moment to ensure that you are muted before we begin.
22 This meeting will be recorded and available on our website
23 for you to review.

24 So first we'll be discussing the 2024-to-2025 Annual
25 Action Plan. The State of Montana, through the

1 Departments of Commerce and Public Health and Human
2 Services, is developing the 2024-to-2025 Annual Action
3 Plan, which covers the period from April 1st, 2024, to
4 March 31st, 2025. This plan, also known as the AAP, is
5 required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban
6 Development to assess Montana's immediate needs, and it
7 will guide investment for housing, economic, and other
8 community development projects during Year 5 of the
9 2024-2020 -- 2020-to-2024 Consolidated Plan for Housing
10 and Community Development, which was initially approved by
11 HUD in 2021.

12 The perspectives and opinions shared by participants
13 of this public hearing will inform the development of the
14 2024-to-2025 AAP. We hope that with your input we can
15 ensure housing and community development needs across
16 Montana are identified and addressed.

17 There are four programs between the Department of
18 Commerce and DPHHS that are covered in the AAP. The
19 Community Development Block Grant, CDBG, Program includes
20 housing, containing rental and single-family
21 rehabilitation; public and community facilities; economic
22 development; and planning.

23 The HOME Investment Partnerships Program includes
24 rental development, single-family development, rental
25 rehabilitation, and homebuyer assistance.

1 Housing Trust Fund, or HTF, includes rental
2 development and rental rehabilitation.

3 Lastly, the Emergency Solutions Grant, or ESG, covers
4 emergency shelter, homelessness prevention, and rapid
5 rehousing.

6 HUD has yet to announce its 2024-to-2025 Community
7 Planning and Development, or CPD, allocations for CDBG,
8 HOME, HTF, and ESG. The State is currently seeking
9 initial input on the way CPD funds which are to be
10 announced should be utilized to meet housing and community
11 development needs in Montana.

12 The draft 2024-to-2025 AAP is scheduled to be
13 available for public comment between May 15th, and a
14 public hearing for the document is planned for May 29th.
15 During the comment period and public hearing of the draft
16 2024-to-2025 AAP, the State will seek input on the
17 published plan. The final 2024-to-2025 AAP is due to HUD
18 no later than August 16th, 2024, but will be submitted as
19 early as June 28, 2024, to ensure successful
20 implementation of the plan.

21 If HUD has not announced CPD allocations by the time
22 the State must publish its draft 2024-to-2025 AAP for
23 public review, the State will provide estimated funding
24 amounts and explain how it will adjust the plan to match
25 allocation amounts once they are known.

1 So this year, this program year runs from April 1st,
2 2024, to March 31st, 2025. During Plan Year 5 -- Oh.
3 This is for last year. Excuse me. So during Plan Year 4,
4 which that year ran from April 1st, 2023, to March 31st,
5 2024, \$6,541,090 was allocated to the CDBG Program;
6 \$3,450,234 has been allocated to the HOME Program;
7 \$3,066,413 was allocated to Housing Trust Fund, or HTF;
8 \$741,200 has been allocated to the ESG Program.

9 For more detail on how each of these funding sources
10 allocated their dollars, please visit [Commerce.mt.gov/
11 consolidated-plan/documents](http://Commerce.mt.gov/consolidated-plan/documents). Once drafted, the documents,
12 including the 2024-to-2025 AAP, will be available on
13 Commerce's website at [14 documents](http://Commerce.mt.gov/consolidated-plan/), several repositories throughout the state,
15 which are available on our website, and also by request to
16 the Department of Commerce. You can contact the
17 Department of Commerce at 301 South Park Avenue in Helena,
18 Montana, Zip Code 59601, or P.O. Box 200523 in Helena,
19 Montana, at 59620-0523.

20 Our division administrators are Galen Steffens from
21 the Community MT Division and Cheryl Cohen from Montana
22 Housing. I am the CDBG coordinator, Rosie Goldich.
23 Janelle Egli is the program specialist. You can reach us
24 by phone at 406-841-2770, by TDD at 406-841-2702, by fax
25 at 406-841-2771. You can also email at DOConPlan@mt.gov,

1 and you can also find the Consolidated Plan documents on
2 our website, which is [Commerce.mt.gov/consolidated-plan](https://commerce.mt.gov/consolidated-plan).

3 You can also inquire at DPHHS, which is located at
4 1400 Carter Drive in Helena, Montana 59601. You can reach
5 out to the P.O. box, which is P.O. Box 202956 in Helena,
6 Montana, Zip Code 59620-2956. The administrator is
7 Jessie Counts. The bureau chief is Sara Loewen. The
8 phone number is 406-447-4265. The fax is 406-447-4287.
9 And the website is www.dphhs.mt.gov.

10 Okay. We are now accepting public comments on the
11 needs and strategies for the 2024-to-2025 AAP. If you
12 have a comment and are joining via webinar, please raise
13 your hand so we can unmute you. If you are joining via
14 phone, please press star-9 to indicate you have a comment,
15 and then press star-6 to unmute and remute yourself.
16 While you are providing comment, please first state
17 your -- state and spell your name and state the
18 organization that you represent if that is applicable.

19 Written comments should be addressed to the address or
20 email below and will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on
21 April 17th, 2024. You can send your public comment to the
22 Montana Department of Commerce, Community MT, Attention:
23 Con Plan, P.O. Box 200523 in Helena, Montana; the Zip Code
24 is 59620-0523. And you can also email your comment to
25 D-O-C-C-O-N-P-L-A-N@mt.gov. So that's DOCConPlan@mt.gov.

1 So do we have any comments?

2 Okay, Shyla. You can go ahead and unmute yourself.

3 MS. PATERA: Good afternoon. My name is
4 Shyla Patera. That's spelled S-H-Y-L-A, last name,
5 P-A-T-E-R-A. And I represent North Central Independent
6 Living Services in Black Eagle, Montana. And I thank you
7 for holding this idea hearing about the Annual Action Plan
8 and Consolidated Plan.

9 One of the ideas that my agency and the Montana
10 Independent Living, Community Living Task Force, always
11 recommends is more visitable, affordable, universal
12 designed single-family and multifamily homes as well for
13 those that need disability access as well. One of the
14 other things that we've been working on is also keeping an
15 eye on how to work with tiny homes and different options
16 for community housing for people with disabilities. And
17 we know that Montana needs those very -- housing
18 desperately, even if it's just as transitional housing.

19 So we're hopeful that some HOME activities can go to
20 that, as well as some HTF activities in certain
21 communities. Because not every, not every planning grant
22 or plan that each community has is eligible for each pot
23 of funding, and not everyone is able to access the Housing
24 Trust Fund, at least in past go-rounds. So that is a huge
25 need for us.

1 We also have talked about, in previous plans, that we
2 don't want to see people with disabilities without getting
3 their needs met in emergency shelter grants and different
4 options. So that if someone is in a hospital or
5 institution, which is classified as even a nursing home,
6 if they've had a rehab, fall or whatever, and they want to
7 go home, we'd like to see some funding for small ADA
8 repairs and modifications through the Montana Housing and
9 Department of Commerce, even if it's just through CDBG; or
10 I'm not sure, as a person who has been a longtime housing
11 advocate, if the small ADA rehab/construction that used to
12 be housed in CDBG is still active.

13 And when I was trying to get people's homes modified
14 to ADA standards, current ADA standards, smaller or
15 mid-sized communities often found it difficult, and there
16 were lots of needs. So if anything, we can hopefully work
17 on those things.

18 In the realm of homelessness, I know it's partially --
19 it's split between DPHHS and Montana Housing, but I would
20 like to recommend that we work with the DPHHS to ensure
21 that all of our housing components in the Annual Action
22 Plan and Consolidated Plan work with housing components in
23 each of the Medicaid waivers, not just mental health.
24 It's been a great opportunity through the Behavioral
25 Health Commission that has come forth, but all of us who

1 have disabilities may need accessible housing at some
2 point.

3 And as far as fair housing, we'd like to see just
4 definitions on when, when and how a person is done with
5 their crime or sentence or how someone is classified or
6 helped as domestic violence -- a domestic violence
7 survivor with disabilities. And this might be the wrong
8 section of the hearing, but I hope everyone will take a
9 chance and take a look, because it's really important.

10 And we also hope that Montana Housing will look at the
11 disparate impacts that sometimes can happen when not
12 everyone takes their HUD subsidies and has some of those
13 barriers that I've mentioned before.

14 And I thank you for taking my comments.

15 MS. GOLDICH: Thank you, Shyla.

16 Do we have any other comments during this time?

17 Okay. So I'm seeing no other comments.

18 So just a reminder that we will be accepting written
19 comments on the 2024-to-2025 AAP through April 17th, which
20 is two weeks from today, until 5:00 p.m. So you can mail
21 those comments to Montana Department of Commerce,
22 Community MT, Attention: Con Plan, P.O. Box 200523 in
23 Helena, Montana 59620-0523. And you can email at
24 DOCConPlan@mt.gov.

25 So I believe we are going to finish this portion of

1 the AAP presentation, and then we are going to transition
2 over to discussing the Con Plan, the Consolidated Plan.

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6 MS. BRACE: My name is Megan Brace, and I am the
7 senior advisor with Community and Policy Advisors. We are
8 working with the State of Montana, the Department of
9 Commerce, to develop their Consolidated Plan and their
10 Fair Housing Plan. So I'm going to take a few minutes to
11 talk about each of those, and then, again, we will open it
12 for comments at the end.

13 Just so all of you are aware, again, this is being
14 recorded. And please hold your comments until the end,
15 and we'll do kind of the same process that we just
16 undertook with the Action Plan.

17 Next slide, please.

18 Thank you.

19 So I'm going to take a few minutes and just talk about
20 what the Consolidated Plan is, what we're doing, why we're
21 doing this, and the steps that we're taking now and in the
22 future to make sure that this is an inclusive process.

23 So the State of Montana is working through the
24 Department of Commerce, as well as the Public Health and
25 Human Services Department, to create this five-year plan.

1 And with this five-year plan, it helps guide policy and
2 investment for housing, economic, and community
3 development projects, really, under those funding options
4 that Rosie mentioned earlier in the presentation. So I'll
5 talk about those a little bit more.

6 But what this five-year plan, this Consolidated Plan
7 does, is it gives us the framework and the outline for how
8 we are going to spend those dollars over the next
9 five years. It's required by the U.S. Department of
10 Housing and Urban Development, or HUD, and it helps us
11 assess Montana's needs, the current conditions that we're
12 seeing in housing and economics, demographics, as well as
13 determining priorities and how we're going to allocate
14 that HUD funding.

15 Next slide, please.

16 Thank you.

17 So part of this is this public participation process.
18 So we're trying to get perspective and opinions shared by
19 the participants of today's meetings, as well as
20 additional public input processes where you can provide
21 your input. So we're going to have a public input
22 hearing, this is the first of them, to inform in the
23 development of this 2025-to-2029 Consolidated Plan.

24 This also includes the first year of the Annual Action
25 Plan. So Rosie was talking about the Annual Action Plan

1 that's going to be initiated soon. That will start in
2 2024. The development of this 25 -- 2025, excuse me,
3 Consolidated Plan will include that first Action Plan,
4 which will start next year, in 2025.

5 We're also talking about the Equity Plan for
6 Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing. So we hope that
7 with your input, we can ensure housing and community
8 development needs across Montana are identified and
9 addressed. So this is really just an opportunity to
10 discuss what that looks like at this point and
11 opportunities for you to comment in the future.

12 Next slide, please.

13 I wanted to give you all some background on what this
14 looks like and the overarching goals and objectives. So
15 the objectives of the Consolidated Plan actually align
16 with the national objectives of these programs; you know,
17 the CDBG, those HOME programs that we were talking about
18 just a few minutes ago.

19 There's some national objectives that align with all
20 those, and these include providing decent housing,
21 providing suitable living environments, and expanding
22 economic opportunity. So when we look at those
23 overarching objectives, we then define goals that can fall
24 under that and then also meet those needs that we're going
25 to talk about in a minute.

1 So the past Consolidated Plan that is ending this
2 program year, so it was from 2020 to 2024, had
3 five different goals. These were goals that were defined
4 by the State of Montana under those objectives to how we
5 can use those HUD funds to meet the needs of Montana
6 citizens.

7 The first goal was to preserve and construct
8 affordable housing. The second goal was to plan for
9 communities. The third goal was to improve and sustain
10 public infrastructure. The fourth goal was to revitalize
11 local economies. And the fifth goal was to reduce
12 homelessness. So as part of this process, we're looking
13 at these goals. Some of these might change in this
14 revision of the Consolidated Plan; some of them might stay
15 the same. The process is really to understand if these
16 goals will continue or if they'll change based on the
17 findings that we have.

18 Next slide, please.

19 So those programs that Rosie talked about, I'll just
20 briefly go through those again that we're including in the
21 Consolidated Plan. There's four different programs. We
22 have the Community Development Block Grant, or CDBG. This
23 is the widest program. It allows for some housing
24 funding. It allows for community development. Within
25 housing, there's rental development, single-family

1 rehabilitation. We also have public and community
2 facilities, economic development, and planning. So that
3 really allows for the widest range of funding options.

4 The second program we're talking about is the
5 HOME Investment Partnerships Program, or HOME. This
6 really focuses on housing alone. So we look at rental
7 housing development, single-family development, rental
8 housing rehabilitation, as well as homebuyer assistance.

9 The Housing Trust Fund is very similar to the
10 HOME Program, with a couple exceptions. It's focused
11 primarily on very low income households, and it's focused
12 primarily on rental development and rental rehabilitation.

13 The last program is the Emergency Solutions Grant, or
14 ESG. This funding is targeted to households that are
15 experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and it can
16 include things like street outreach, emergency shelters,
17 homelessness prevention, and rapid rehousing.

18 Next slide, please.

19 As we're going through this consolidated planning
20 process, we're doing a variety of steps. The first step
21 that we're doing right now is we are collecting data.
22 This includes both quantitative and qualitative data;
23 quantitative data being, you know, those numbers that
24 we're looking at to see what trends are changing
25 demographically, housing, economically within the state,

1 but also qualitative data. We're collecting survey data,
2 which Janelle is going to talk about our surveys in a
3 couple minutes. And we're also collecting data from
4 public input.

5 So the second part of this process is engaging the
6 public, agencies, and stakeholders to get input about need
7 that you're seeing in your communities. Sometimes, the
8 data that we collect may or may not reflect the need that
9 you are seeing, so this is the second source of data that
10 we're collecting.

11 Once we compile all of that together, we conduct
12 analysis of that, and then we identify needs within the
13 state. These needs can vary regionally, by different
14 groups. And then we look at what needs we can address
15 with this funding that we're talking about.

16 So once we've identified those priority needs, we
17 start to develop a strategy in response to needs. Those
18 strategies go back to those goals that -- those five goals
19 that I talked about that we had with the last plan. Each
20 of those goals will be aligned with different targeted
21 communities, different targeted outreach groups, and also
22 a direction of funding to address those strategies over
23 this five-year period. So we're really looking at, you
24 know, the, the larger picture of the five-year period with
25 this consolidated plan.

1 Next slide, please.

2 Once we have finished with this process, we're going
3 to have a number of documents. So the first document is,
4 you know, number two on the list, if you're viewing this
5 presentation, is that five-year Consolidated Plan. And
6 this will show you all that data we've collected, all the
7 analysis we've done, those priority needs, and then those
8 goals and strategic plans that will guide housing and
9 community investments over the five-year period.

10 Each year after that, we have the Annual Action Plan,
11 or AAP, and this outlines specific activities, goals, and
12 objectives for that given program year.

13 After that, we have the Consolidated Annual
14 Performance and Evaluation Report, or the CAPER. And what
15 this does, is it's an annual report that details the use
16 of funds, measures progress towards meeting goals and
17 objectives that were identified in the Annual Action Plan
18 and as well as the overarching Consolidated Plan. So that
19 really provides a scorecard for maybe where we're meeting
20 our goals and maybe where we need to make some
21 adjustments.

22 The last thing that -- document that will be prepared
23 is actually, you know, first on this list if you're
24 looking at the presentation, and it's the Equity Plan for
25 Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing. So what this

1 Equity Plan is, is it's a plan that will be developed
2 every five years that will serve the purpose of assessing
3 fair housing issues and their underlying causes, as well
4 as setting fair housing goals and outlining strategies for
5 achieving equity in housing, increasing access to
6 community assets, and broadening economic opportunities.

7 And the mandate to affirmatively furthering fair
8 housing requires proactive and meaningful action to
9 overcome patterns of segregation, promote fair housing
10 choice, eliminate disparities in opportunity, and foster
11 inclusive communities free from discrimination.

12 So what the overarching goal of the Equity Plan or
13 this Fair Housing Plan is, is to look at any barriers to
14 accessing housing. If there's any systemic issues,
15 identifying those, and how the state and other agencies
16 can mitigate that over the next five years.

17 Next slide, please.

18 As we're working on that Equity Plan, I'm going to
19 take just a couple minutes to talk about what that looks
20 like in conjunction with the Consolidated Plan. We are
21 doing a similar process. We're collecting data, and we're
22 also engaging in this public input process.

23 Under the proposed rule that HUD has put out for this
24 plan, the State will oversee a more streamlined analysis
25 of fair housing compared to what was required in 2015 with

1 the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule. The State
2 will also see a more robust community engagement effort to
3 identify fair housing needs and opportunities.

4 As part of this effort, the State will be conducting
5 at least three public hearings to engage comments on the
6 state Equity Plan. Two of these meetings will be held
7 before the publication of the Equity Plan to provide
8 opportunity for comment, and then one hearing will be held
9 after the publication of the Equity Plan.

10 Today's hearing is the first of those initial
11 two hearings. And the State is seeking input about fair
12 housing issues and their underlying causes, as well as
13 asking for recommendation for fair housing goals and
14 strategies. You'll also have additional opportunities to
15 provide those comments as we proceed through this process.

16 This initial input will be accepted through June 25th,
17 2024. Feedback regarding the to-be-published Equity Plan
18 will be accepted during a comment period to be announced;
19 again, that public review period that I mentioned.

20 As part of its outreach efforts, the State will gather
21 data to inform the Equity Plan development via the Montana
22 Fair Housing Survey. This survey will be open for the
23 month of May. It will start on May 1st and then close on
24 May 31st. And then once it's available, the survey will
25 be available at [Commerce.mt.gov/consolidated-plan/updates](https://commerce.mt.gov/consolidated-plan/updates).

1 And Janelle will talk a little bit more about this in a
2 couple of slides as well.

3 Next slide, please.

4 So once this plan is developed, again, this really is
5 looking at the overarching access to housing and how that
6 can be addressed. Some of these goals and issues will be
7 integrated into this Consolidated Plan development as
8 well. We're looking at September 2024 for that initial
9 development. The Equity Plan will be submitted to HUD.
10 Upon receipt, HUD will publish it for about 60 days for a
11 public review period. And then after HUD accepts the
12 Montana Equity Plan, it will be published on the
13 Commerce's website.

14 It will include fair housing goals and strategies to
15 be incorporated into the State's Consolidated Plan and the
16 associated Annual Action Plans. Progress evaluations for
17 the Equity Plan will be required annually, similar to that
18 CAPER I talked about, after the Equity Plan is adopted.
19 Before submitting its annual progress evaluations for the
20 Equity Plan to HUD, the State will make available to
21 interested parties the proposed evaluation for a comment
22 period of no less than 15 days.

23 Next slide, please.

24 So I am going to turn this over to Janelle, and she is
25 going to talk about how you can access these documents and

1 make additional comments or additional opportunities for
2 public input. Thank you.

3 Janelle.

4 MS. EGLI: Thank you so much, Megan.

5 Megan has been wonderful to work with us and keep us
6 trekking along as we undertake this process. And I also
7 wanted to say thank you to Rosie for providing her portion
8 of the presentation as well since these are two separate
9 but very connected efforts that we're undertaking.

10 So for those of you who may not know me, I am a
11 program specialist with Montana Housing. And I am going
12 to talk with you a little bit about how to engage with the
13 2025-2029 Consolidated Plan process.

14 Okay. So let's see here. So once drafted, our
15 documents are going to be available on our website, and
16 that is [Commerce.mt.gov/consolidated-plan/documents](https://commerce.mt.gov/consolidated-plan/documents).
17 Specifically, you can look for the Consolidated Plan and
18 our Equity Plan as Megan described. Those documents
19 will -- once they are published, will also be available at
20 repositories throughout the state. For a list of our
21 repositories, you can look at our website, and we will
22 also have those documents available by request and in
23 alternative formats as requested.

24 Next slide.

25 Okay. So how can you participate in this process? We

1 have lots of different options for you. So as we
2 mentioned above, as part of our outreach effort, the State
3 is gathering data to inform Equity Plan development via
4 the Montana Fair Housing Survey. The survey will be
5 available, as Megan said, May 1st, 2024, through May 31st,
6 2024.

7 And we have an additional survey which is actually
8 online right now. We're gathering data to inform broad
9 Consolidated Plan development via the Montana Housing and
10 Community Needs Survey. This survey was made available
11 March 18th and will be open through April 30th. So the
12 clock is ticking. If you haven't participated in that
13 survey yet, we encourage you to do so.

14 Both of these survey efforts are very important to us
15 in our development of our Consolidated Plan and
16 Equity Plan development. So yes, please do give us your
17 input, your feedback, and we will read them and analyze
18 our data and make sure that we use all of that to inform
19 our ultimate plan. So if you're interested in
20 participating in the surveys or if you want to participate
21 in upcoming public meetings that will be a part of this
22 process, go ahead and visit [Commerce.mt.gov/consolidated-](https://commerce.mt.gov/consolidated-plan/updates)
23 [plan/updates](https://commerce.mt.gov/consolidated-plan/updates).

24 Next slide.

25 Okay. So if you wish to ask questions or submit

1 comments outside of this hearing, we are going to just
2 share our contact information for you. So first we have
3 Montana Department of Commerce. You can reach us at
4 301 South Park Avenue, Helena, Montana 59601;
5 P.O. Box 200523 Helena, Montana 59620.

6 The division administrators that oversee this effort
7 are Galen Steffens with Community MT and Cheryl Cohen with
8 Montana Housing; CDBG coordinator, Rosie Goldich; and me,
9 program specialist, Janelle Egli. Our phone number is
10 406-841-2270, TDD is 406-841-2702, and our fax number is
11 406-841-2771. You can email us at DOCConPlan@mt.gov.
12 And, of course, our website is [Commerce.mt.gov/
13 consolidated-plan](http://Commerce.mt.gov/consolidated-plan).

14 And just as a reminder, the programs that Commerce
15 oversees that are a part of this Consolidated Plan are the
16 CDBG, HOME, and HTF programs.

17 And then next slide.

18 So DPHHS, our partner agency, they oversee the
19 ESG Program, and any questions and comments that you may
20 have or wish to make outside of this hearing you can
21 direct their way. They're at 1400 Carter Drive in Helena,
22 Montana 59601; P.O. Box 202956, Helena, Montana 59620.

23 Their administrator overseeing this effort is
24 Jessie Counts; bureau chief, Sarah Loewen. Phone number,
25 406-447-4265, fax is 406-447-4287, and their website is

1 www.dphhs.mt.gov.

2 Next slide.

3 All right. So we will now move into our commenting
4 portion of this part of our presentation. So verbal
5 comments regarding needs and strategies pertaining to the
6 2025-2029 Consolidated Plan, including the Year 1 AAP that
7 spans from 2025 to 2026, and the associated Equity Plan
8 for Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing are now being
9 accepted. Please note that this is a separate commenting
10 portion, so if you have comments, even if they are, you
11 know, related to what we discussed in the AAP, please make
12 those here so that we have them for this process.

13 If you have a comment and are joining via webinar,
14 please raise your hand so we can unmute you. And if you
15 are joining via phone, please press star-9 to indicate you
16 have a comment and then press star-6 to unmute and
17 remute -- reunmute yourself -- remute yourself. Sorry
18 about that. And I'll repeat those instructions once as we
19 go along in case you missed them.

20 So we'll go ahead and go to our comments, and I see
21 that we have Shyla ready to go.

22 MS. PATERA: Hello. My name, for the record, is
23 Shyla Patera. My -- that is spelled S-H-Y-L-A,
24 P-A-T-E-R-A. And I represent North Central Independent
25 Living, Center for Independent Living, and Disability

1 Advocacy Agency in Black Eagle, Montana, Great Falls,
2 Montana, but we serve a 17-county area.

3 And again, we would also encourage visitable,
4 universally designed housing, any housing, working on ESG
5 and CDBG with a small ADA program. One thing I forgot to
6 mention last comment section was a possible idea for CDBG
7 is accessible sidewalks. Because without accessible
8 sidewalks and transportation, you cannot have fully
9 inclusive neighborhoods. And we also hope that the HOME
10 and Housing Trust Fund can further the goals of enhancing
11 accessible, affordable rehab and repair and single-family
12 and multifamily construction for people with disabilities,
13 as well as home ownership.

14 One of the ideas I have for the Equity Plan beyond
15 previously mentioned is allowing citizens who may have
16 lived experience or advocates like myself to be trained in
17 rental or housing counseling, similar to fair housing
18 testers. Because a lot of the consumers that I see and I
19 deal with, when they try to do eviction prevention, they,
20 they don't really know if the perceived, perceived and
21 lived experience matches, matches the level of legal
22 discrimination.

23 So one of the things I would like to see as part of
24 the affirmatively furthering fair housing in the
25 Equity Plan is definitely some training and some avenues

1 for citizen training so that -- Because we know the
2 home -- the person potentially being evicted doesn't need
3 a representative in court, but I've had to help them write
4 their answers, and sometimes they don't understand how
5 their lived experience transfers into legal languages.

6 So that is one of the things that I would like to see,
7 along with the disability and tribal supports we'll be
8 building in, as well as those who may have criminal past
9 histories but their sentences are done or completed and
10 they can show that in a court of law. How do we help
11 those individuals expunge those needs, particularly when
12 they do need accessible housing?

13 There is so much more I will say, but I probably have
14 to put that into written comment. But I thank you for
15 your time.

16 MS. EGLI: Thank you so much, Shyla.

17 And Shyla was good enough to follow the instructions
18 that I didn't give, which was to, when providing comment,
19 state and spell your name and to also state the
20 organization you represent if applicable.

21 So thank you, Shyla, for being so on it. And thank
22 you for your comment. We will address that as part of
23 this process.

24 So I'll just repeat the instructions once again. In
25 case there's anybody attending via phone, if you have a

1 comment and are joining via phone, please press star-9 to
2 indicate you have a comment, and then press star-6 to
3 unmute and then remute yourself. And we have a little bit
4 more time, so any other comments, please raise your hand
5 if you're on webinar, and please press star-9 if you are
6 joining via phone.

7 Okay. Not hearing any additional comments.

8 Our -- Julie Flynn with Montana Housing went ahead and
9 shared our survey link in the Q&A, and I added that to the
10 chat, so that's there for your convenience should you wish
11 to complete that survey in response to this presentation.

12 And I will also indicate as a wrapping up that written
13 comments should be addressed to the address or email that
14 we have listed here on the screen. And those comments
15 regarding the 2025-2029 Consolidated Plan and our
16 Equity Plan will be accepted until 5 o'clock p.m. on
17 April 17th, 2024. Well, I should, I should clarify. So
18 through April 17th for the AAP and also the
19 Consolidated Plan, and then through June 25th for the
20 Equity Plan. So those are separate comment periods to be
21 aware of.

22 And if you want to send your comments to the
23 Department of Commerce, you can send them to Montana
24 Department Commerce, Community MT, P.O. Box 200523,
25 Helena, Montana 59620. And the email that you can submit

1 comments to is DOCConPlan@mt.gov.

2 So I just want to say thank you to everybody who has
3 joined us today, whether you're joining from another
4 department here at Commerce or you are joining from
5 another agency or are a member of the public representing
6 specific needs that are happening in our communities.
7 This is a very, very important process that will help us
8 address real needs that we see throughout Montana. And
9 we're so thankful for your input and to be embarking on
10 this process that will help us really guide our
11 investments here in Montana. So thank you, everybody who
12 has joined us, and we look forward to continuing to hear
13 from you throughout this process. And that's it for me.

14 Rosie and Megan, anything else to add?

15 MS. GOLDICH: I don't think so.

16 Thanks, everyone, for joining today.

17 MS. BRACE: Yes. Just echoing those sentiments.
18 Thank you for joining, and your input is valuable.

19 MS. EGLI: All right. Thank you so much,
20 everybody, and have a wonderful rest of your day. Take
21 care.

22 (The proceedings concluded at 2:50 p.m.)

23 * * * * *

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25

1 COURT REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

2
3 STATE OF MONTANA)
4 COUNTY OF LEWIS AND CLARK) ss.

5
6
7 I, CHERYL A. ROMSA, Court Reporter, residing in
8 Helena, Montana, do hereby certify:

9
10 That the foregoing proceedings were reported by
11 me in shorthand and later transcribed into typewriting;
12 and that the foregoing -28- pages constitute a true and
13 accurate transcription of my stenotype notes of the
14 proceedings.

15
16 DATED this the 9th day of April, 2024.

17
18 /s/Cheryl A. Romsa
19 CHERYL A. ROMSA
20
21
22
23
24
25

	address (6) 7:19;16:14,22; 26:22;27:13;28:8	alone (1) 15:6	back (1) 16:18	CDBG (13) 3:11;4:19;5:7;6:5, 22;9:9,12;13:17; 14:22;23:8,16;25:5,6
\$	addressed (5) 4:16;7:19;13:9; 20:6;27:13	along (3) 21:6;24:19;26:7	background (1) 13:13	Center (1) 24:25
\$3,066,413 (1) 6:7	adjust (1) 5:24	alternative (1) 21:23	barriers (2) 10:13;18:13	Central (2) 8:5;24:24
\$3,450,234 (1) 6:6	adjustments (1) 17:21	always (1) 8:10	based (1) 14:16	certain (1) 8:20
\$6,541,090 (1) 6:5	administrators (2) 7:6;23:23	amounts (2) 5:24,25	begin (1) 3:21	chance (1) 10:9
\$741,200 (1) 6:8	administrators (2) 6:20;23:6	analysis (3) 16:12;17:7;18:24	Behavioral (1) 9:24	change (2) 14:13,16
A	adopted (1) 20:18	analyze (1) 22:17	below (1) 7:20	changing (1) 15:24
AAP (16) 3:10;4:4,14,18; 5:12,16,17,22;6:12; 7:11;10:19;11:1; 17:11;24:6,11;27:18	advisor (1) 11:7	announce (1) 5:6	beyond (1) 25:14	chat (1) 27:10
able (1) 8:23	Advisors (1) 11:7	announced (3) 5:10,21;19:18	bit (4) 12:5;20:1;21:12; 27:3	Cheryl (2) 6:21;23:7
above (1) 22:2	Advocacy (1) 25:1	Annual (14) 3:9,15,24;4:2;8:7; 9:21;12:24,25;17:10, 13,15,17;20:16,19	Black (2) 8:6;25:1	chief (2) 7:7;23:24
accepted (5) 7:20;19:16,18; 24:9;27:16	advocate (1) 9:11	annually (1) 20:17	Block (2) 4:19;14:22	choice (1) 18:10
accepting (2) 7:10;10:18	advocates (1) 25:16	applicable (2) 7:18;26:20	both (2) 15:22;22:14	citizen (1) 26:1
accepts (1) 20:11	Affirmatively (6) 13:6;17:25;18:7; 19:1;24:8;25:24	approved (1) 4:10	Box (8) 6:18;7:5,5,23; 10:22;23:5,22;27:24	citizens (2) 14:6;25:15
access (5) 8:13,23;18:5;20:5, 25	affordable (3) 8:11;14:8;25:11	April (8) 4:3;6:1,4;7:21; 10:19;22:11;27:17, 18	BRACE (3) 11:6,6;28:17	clarify (1) 27:17
accessible (5) 10:1;25:7,7,11; 26:12	afternoon (3) 3:4,8;8:3	area (1) 25:2	briefly (1) 14:20	classified (2) 9:5;10:5
accessing (1) 18:14	again (7) 11:11,13;14:20; 19:19;20:4;25:3; 26:24	assess (2) 4:6;12:11	broad (1) 22:8	clock (1) 22:12
achieving (1) 18:5	agencies (2) 16:6;18:15	assessing (1) 18:2	broadening (1) 18:6	close (1) 19:23
across (2) 4:15;13:8	agency (4) 8:9;23:18;25:1; 28:5	assets (1) 18:6	building (1) 26:8	Code (3) 6:18;7:6,23
Action (14) 3:10,15,25;4:2; 8:7,9;21:11;16; 12:24,25;13:3;17:10, 17;18:8;20:16	ago (1) 13:18	assistance (2) 4:25;15:8	bureau (2) 7:7;23:24	Cohen (2) 6:21;23:7
active (1) 9:12	ahead (5) 3:3;8:2;22:22; 24:20;27:8	associated (2) 20:16;24:7	C	collect (1) 16:8
activities (3) 8:19,20;17:11	align (2) 13:15,19	attending (1) 26:25	can (38) 3:6;4:14;6:16,23, 25;7:1,3,4,13,21,24; 8:2,19;9:16;10:11, 20,23;12:20;13:7,23; 14:5;15:15;16:13, 14;18:16;20:6,25; 21:17,21,25;23:3,11, 20;24:14;25:10; 26:10;27:23,25	collected (1) 17:6
Actually (4) 3:6;13:15;17:23; 22:7	aligned (1) 16:20	Attention (2) 7:22;10:22	care (1) 28:21	collecting (5) 15:21;16:1,3,10; 18:21
ADA (5) 9:7,11,14,14;25:5	allocate (1) 12:13	August (1) 5:18	Carter (2) 7:4;23:21	comment (21) 3:19;5:13,15;7:12, 14,16,21,24;13:11; 19:8,18;20:21;24:13, 16;25:6;26:14,18,22; 27:1,2,20
add (1) 28:14	allocated (5) 6:5,6,7,8,10	available (12) 3:22;5:13;6:12,15; 19:24,25;20:20; 21:15,19,22;22:5,10	case (2) 24:19;26:25	commenting (2) 24:3,9
added (1) 27:9	allocation (1) 5:25	Avenue (2) 6:17;23:4	causes (2) 18:3;19:12	comments (27) 3:13,17,18;7:10, 19;8:1;10:14,16,17, 19,21;11:12,14;19:5, 15;21:1;23:1,19; 24:5,10,20;27:4,7, 13,14,22;28:1
additional (6) 12:20;19:14;21:1, 1;22:7;27:7	allocations (2) 5:7,21	aware (2) 11:13;27:21		Commerce (15)
	allowing (1) 25:15	B		
	allows (3) 14:23,24;15:3			

3:12;4:1,18;6:16, 17:7;22:9;9:10;21; 11:9,24;23:3,14; 27:23,24;28:4 Commercemtgov/ (2) 6:10;23:12 Commercemtgov/consolidated- (1) 22:22 Commercemtgov/consolidated-plan (1) 7:2 Commercemtgov/consolidated-plan/ (1) 6:13 Commercemtgov/consolidated-plan/documents (1) 21:16 Commercemtgov/consolidated-plan/updates (1) 19:25 Commerce's (2) 6:13;20:13 Commission (1) 9:25 communities (7) 8:21;9:15;14:9; 16:7,21;18:11;28:6 Community (27) 3:12,14;4:8,10,15, 19,21;5:6,10;6:21; 7:22;8:10,16,22; 10:22;11:7;12:2; 13:7;14:22,24;15:1; 17:9;18:6;19:2; 22:10;23:7;27:24 compared (1) 18:25 compile (1) 16:11 complete (1) 27:11 completed (1) 26:9 components (2) 9:21,22 Con (3) 7:23;10:22;11:2 concluded (1) 28:22 conditions (1) 12:11 conduct (1) 16:11 conducting (1) 19:4 conjunction (1) 18:20 connected (1) 21:9 Consolidated (31) 3:10;4:9;7:1;8:8; 9:22;11:2,9,20;12:6, 23;13:3,15;14:1,14, 21;15:19;16:25; 17:5,13,18;18:20; 20:7,15;21:13,17; 22:9,15;23:15;24:6;	27:15,19 consolidated-plan (1) 23:13 consolidated-plan/documents (1) 6:11 construct (1) 14:7 construction (1) 25:12 consumers (1) 25:18 contact (2) 6:16;23:2 containing (1) 4:20 continue (1) 14:16 continuing (1) 28:12 convenience (1) 27:10 coordinator (3) 3:12;6:22;23:8 counseling (1) 25:17 Counts (2) 7:7;23:24 couple (5) 3:16;15:10;16:3; 18:19;20:2 course (1) 23:12 court (2) 26:3,10 covered (1) 4:18 covers (2) 4:3;5:3 CPD (3) 5:7,9,21 create (1) 11:25 crime (1) 10:5 criminal (1) 26:8 current (2) 9:14;12:11 currently (1) 5:8	decent (1) 13:20 define (1) 13:23 defined (1) 14:3 definitely (1) 25:25 definitions (1) 10:4 demographically (1) 15:25 demographics (1) 12:12 Department (16) 3:12;4:5,17;6:16, 17:7;22:9;9:10;21; 11:8,24,25;12:9; 23:3;27:23,24;28:4 Departments (1) 4:1 described (1) 21:18 designed (2) 8:12;25:4 desperately (1) 8:18 detail (1) 6:9 details (1) 17:15 determining (1) 12:13 develop (2) 11:9;16:17 developed (2) 18:1;20:4 developing (1) 4:2 Development (31) 4:6,8,10,13,15,19, 22,24,24;5:2,7,11; 12:3,10,23;13:2,8; 14:22,24,25;15:2,7, 7,12;19:21;20:7,9; 22:3,9,15,16 different (8) 8:15;9:3;14:3,21; 16:13,20,21;22:1 difficult (1) 9:15 direct (1) 23:21 direction (1) 16:22 disabilities (5) 8:16;9:2;10:1,7; 25:12 disability (3) 8:13;24:25;26:7 discrimination (2) 18:11;25:22 discuss (1)	13:10 discussed (1) 24:11 discussing (2) 3:24;11:2 disparate (1) 10:11 disparities (1) 18:10 Division (4) 3:13;6:20,21;23:6 DOCConPlan@mtgov (5) 6:25;7:25;10:24; 23:11;28:1 D-O-C-C-O-N-P-L-A-N@mtgov (1) 7:25 document (3) 5:14;17:3,22 documents (8) 6:11,14;7:1;17:3; 20:25;21:15,18,22 dollars (2) 6:10;12:8 domestic (2) 10:6,6 done (3) 10:4;17:7;26:9 DPHHS (5) 4:18;7:3;9:19,20; 23:18 draft (3) 5:12,15,22 drafted (2) 6:11;21:14 Drive (2) 7:4;23:21 due (1) 5:17 during (6) 4:8;5:15;6:2,3; 10:16;19:18	23 efforts (3) 19:20;21:9;22:14 Egli (5) 6:23;21:4;23:9; 26:16;28:19 eligible (1) 8:22 eliminate (1) 18:10 else (1) 28:14 email (7) 6:25;7:20,24; 10:23;23:11;27:13, 25 embarking (1) 28:9 Emergency (5) 5:3,4;9:3;15:13,16 encourage (2) 22:13;25:3 end (3) 3:17;11:12,14 ending (1) 14:1 engage (2) 19:5;21:12 engagement (1) 19:2 engaging (2) 16:5;18:22 enhancing (1) 25:10 enough (1) 26:17 ensure (5) 3:21;4:15;5:19; 9:20;13:7 environments (1) 13:21 Equity (24) 13:5;17:24;18:1,5, 12,18;19:6,7,9,17, 21;20:9,12,17,18,20; 21:18;22:3,16;24:7; 25:14,25;27:16,20 ESG (6) 5:3,8;6:8;15:14; 23:19;25:4 estimated (1) 5:23 Evaluation (2) 17:14;20:21 evaluations (2) 20:16,19 even (4) 8:18;9:5,9;24:10 everybody (3) 28:2,11,20 everyone (6) 3:2,3;8:23;10:8, 12;28:16
			E	
			Eagle (2) 8:6;25:1 earlier (1) 12:4 early (1) 5:19 echoing (1) 28:17 economic (6) 4:7,21;12:2;13:22; 15:2;18:6 economically (1) 15:25 economics (1) 12:12 economies (1) 14:11 effort (5) 19:2,4;22:2;23:6,	
	D			
	data (14) 15:21,22,23;16:1, 1,3,8,9;17:6;18:21; 19:21;22:3,8,18 day (1) 28:20 days (2) 20:10,22 deal (1) 25:19			

<p>evicted (1) 26:2</p> <p>eviction (1) 25:19</p> <p>exceptions (1) 15:10</p> <p>Excuse (2) 6:3;13:2</p> <p>expanding (1) 13:21</p> <p>experience (3) 25:16,21;26:5</p> <p>experiencing (1) 15:15</p> <p>explain (1) 5:24</p> <p>expunge (1) 26:11</p> <p>eye (1) 8:15</p>	<p>five-year (7) 11:25;12:1,6; 16:23,24;17:5,9</p> <p>Flynn (1) 27:8</p> <p>focused (2) 15:10,11</p> <p>focuses (1) 15:6</p> <p>follow (1) 26:17</p> <p>following (1) 3:1</p> <p>Force (1) 8:10</p> <p>forgot (1) 25:5</p> <p>formats (1) 21:23</p> <p>forth (1) 9:25</p> <p>forward (1) 28:12</p> <p>foster (1) 18:10</p> <p>found (1) 9:15</p> <p>four (2) 4:17;14:21</p> <p>fourth (1) 14:10</p> <p>framework (1) 12:7</p> <p>free (1) 18:11</p> <p>fully (1) 25:8</p> <p>Fund (5) 5:1;6:7;8:24;15:9; 25:10</p> <p>funding (11) 5:23;6:9;8:23;9:7; 12:3,14;14:24;15:3, 14;16:15,22</p> <p>funds (3) 5:9;14:5;17:16</p> <p>further (1) 25:10</p> <p>Furthering (6) 13:6;17:25;18:7; 19:1;24:8;25:24</p> <p>future (2) 11:22;13:11</p>	<p>17:12</p> <p>gives (1) 12:7</p> <p>goal (6) 14:7,8,9,10,11; 18:12</p> <p>goals (18) 13:14,23;14:3,3, 13,16;16:18,18,20; 17:8,11,16,20;18:4; 19:13;20:6,14;25:10</p> <p>GOLDICH (6) 3:2,11;6:22;10:15; 23:8;28:15</p> <p>Good (4) 3:3,8;8:3;26:17</p> <p>go-rounds (1) 8:24</p> <p>Grant (5) 4:19;5:3;8:21; 14:22;15:13</p> <p>grants (1) 9:3</p> <p>great (2) 9:24;25:1</p> <p>groups (2) 16:14,21</p> <p>guide (4) 4:7;12:1;17:8; 28:10</p>	<p>Hi (1) 3:2</p> <p>histories (1) 26:9</p> <p>hold (2) 3:18;11:14</p> <p>holding (1) 8:7</p> <p>HOME (14) 4:23;5:8;6:6;8:19; 9:5,7;13:17;15:5,5, 10;23:16;25:9,13; 26:2</p> <p>homebuyer (2) 4:25;15:8</p> <p>homelessness (5) 5:4;9:18;14:12; 15:15,17</p> <p>homes (3) 8:12,15;9:13</p> <p>hope (5) 4:14;10:8,10;13:6; 25:9</p> <p>hopeful (1) 8:19</p> <p>hopefully (1) 9:16</p> <p>hospital (1) 9:4</p> <p>housed (1) 9:12</p> <p>households (2) 15:11,14</p> <p>housekeeping (1) 3:16</p> <p>Housing (66) 4:5,7,9,15,20;5:1, 10;6:7,22;8:16,17, 18,23;9:8,10,19,21, 22;10:1,3,10;11:10; 12:2,10,12;13:6,7, 20;14:8,23,25;15:6, 7,8,9,25;17:8,25; 18:3,4,5,8,9,13,14, 25;19:1,3,12,13,22; 20:5,14;21:11;22:4, 9;23:8;24:8;25:4,4, 10,17,17,24;26:12; 27:8</p> <p>HTF (5) 5:1,8;6:7;8:20; 23:16</p> <p>HUD (13) 4:11;5:6,17,21; 10:12;12:10,14; 14:5;18:23;20:9,10, 11,20</p> <p>huge (1) 8:24</p> <p>Human (2) 4:1;11:25</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">I</p> <p>idea (2) 8:7;25:6</p> <p>ideas (2) 8:9;25:14</p> <p>identified (4) 4:16;13:8;16:16; 17:17</p> <p>identify (2) 16:12;19:3</p> <p>identifying (1) 18:15</p> <p>immediate (1) 4:6</p> <p>impacts (1) 10:11</p> <p>implementation (1) 5:20</p> <p>important (3) 10:9;22:14;28:7</p> <p>improve (1) 14:9</p> <p>include (4) 13:3,20;15:16; 20:14</p> <p>includes (5) 4:19,23;5:1;12:24; 15:22</p> <p>including (3) 6:12;14:20;24:6</p> <p>inclusive (3) 11:22;18:11;25:9</p> <p>income (1) 15:11</p> <p>incorporated (1) 20:15</p> <p>increasing (1) 18:5</p> <p>Independent (4) 8:5,10;24:24,25</p> <p>indicate (4) 7:14;24:15;27:2, 12</p> <p>individuals (1) 26:11</p> <p>inform (6) 4:13;12:22;19:21; 22:3,8,18</p> <p>information (1) 23:2</p> <p>infrastructure (1) 14:10</p> <p>initial (4) 5:9;19:10,16;20:8</p> <p>initially (1) 4:10</p> <p>initiated (1) 13:1</p> <p>input (16) 4:14;5:9,16;12:20, 21,21;13:7;16:4,6;</p>
F		H		
<p>facilities (2) 4:21;15:2</p> <p>fair (20) 10:3;11:10;13:6; 17:25;18:3,4,7,9,13, 25;19:1,3,11,13,22; 20:14;22:4;24:8; 25:17,24</p> <p>fall (2) 9:6;13:23</p> <p>Falls (1) 25:1</p> <p>far (1) 10:3</p> <p>fax (4) 6:24;7:8;23:10,25</p> <p>Feedback (2) 19:17;22:17</p> <p>few (3) 11:10,19;13:18</p> <p>fifth (1) 14:11</p> <p>final (1) 5:17</p> <p>find (1) 7:1</p> <p>findings (1) 14:17</p> <p>finish (1) 10:25</p> <p>finished (1) 17:2</p> <p>First (12) 3:16,24;7:16; 12:22,24;13:3;14:7; 15:20;17:3,23; 19:10;23:2</p> <p>five (5) 12:9;14:3;16:18; 18:2,16</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">G</p> <p>Galen (2) 6:20;23:7</p> <p>gather (1) 19:20</p> <p>gathering (2) 22:3,8</p> <p>given (1)</p>	<p>hand (3) 7:13;24:14;27:4</p> <p>happen (1) 10:11</p> <p>happening (1) 28:6</p> <p>Health (4) 4:1;9:23,25;11:24</p> <p>hear (1) 28:12</p> <p>hearing (13) 3:5,9;4:13;5:14, 15;8:7;10:8;12:22; 19:8,10;23:1,20;27:7</p> <p>hearings (2) 19:5,11</p> <p>held (2) 19:6,8</p> <p>Helena (11) 6:17,18;7:4,5,23; 10:23;23:4,5,21,22; 27:25</p> <p>Hello (1) 24:22</p> <p>help (4) 26:3,10;28:7,10</p> <p>helped (1) 10:6</p> <p>helps (2) 12:1,10</p>		

18:22;19:11,16; 21:2;22:17;28:9,18 inquire (1) 7:3 institution (1) 9:5 instructions (3) 24:18;26:17,24 integrated (1) 20:7 interested (2) 20:21;22:19 into (5) 20:7,15;24:3;26:5, 14 investment (4) 4:7,23;12:2;15:5 investments (2) 17:9;28:11 issues (4) 18:3,14;19:12; 20:6	5:18 law (1) 26:10 least (2) 8:24;19:5 legal (2) 25:21;26:5 less (1) 20:22 level (1) 25:21 link (1) 27:9 list (3) 17:4,23;21:20 listed (1) 27:14 little (4) 12:5;20:1;21:12; 27:3 lived (3) 25:16,21;26:5 Living (6) 8:6,10,10;13:21; 24:25,25 local (1) 14:11 located (1) 7:3 Loewen (2) 7:7;23:24 longtime (1) 9:10 look (9) 10:9,10;13:22; 15:6;16:14;18:13; 21:17,21;28:12 looking (6) 14:12;15:24; 16:23;17:24;20:5,8 looks (3) 13:10,14;18:19 lot (1) 25:18 lots (2) 9:16;22:1 low (1) 15:11	May (14) 5:13,14;10:1;16:8, 8:19;23,23,24;21:10; 22:5,5;23:19;25:15; 26:8 maybe (2) 17:19,20 meaningful (1) 18:8 measures (1) 17:16 Medicaid (1) 9:23 meet (3) 5:10;13:24;14:5 meeting (3) 3:22;17:16,19 meetings (3) 12:19;19:6;22:21 Megan (6) 11:6;21:4,5,18; 22:5;28:14 member (1) 28:5 mental (1) 9:23 mention (1) 25:6 mentioned (5) 10:13;12:4;19:19; 22:2;25:15 met (1) 9:3 mid-sized (1) 9:15 might (3) 10:7;14:13,14 minute (1) 13:25 minutes (5) 11:10,19;13:18; 16:3;18:19 missed (1) 24:19 mitigate (1) 18:16 modifications (1) 9:8 modified (1) 9:13 moment (1) 3:21 Montana (41) 3:25;4:16;5:11; 6:18,19,21;7:4,6,22, 23;8:6,9,17;9:8,19; 10:10,21,23;11:8,23; 13:8;14:4,5;19:21; 20:12;21:11;22:4,9; 23:3,4,5,8,22,22; 25:1,2;27:8,23,25; 28:8,11 Montana's (2)	4:6;12:11 month (1) 19:23 more (8) 6:9;8:11;12:5; 18:24;19:2;20:1; 26:13;27:4 move (1) 24:3 MT (6) 3:13;6:21;7:22; 10:22;23:7;27:24 much (4) 21:4;26:13,16; 28:19 multifamily (2) 8:12;25:12 must (1) 5:22 muted (1) 3:21 myself (1) 25:16	O objectives (8) 13:14,15,16,19,23; 14:4;17:12,17 o'clock (1) 27:16 often (1) 9:15 once (11) 5:25;6:11;16:11, 16:17-2;19:24;20:4; 21:14,19;24:18; 26:24 One (7) 8:9,13;19:8;25:5, 14,23;26:6 online (1) 22:8 open (3) 11:11;19:22;22:11 opinions (2) 4:12;12:18 opportunities (5) 13:11;18:6;19:3, 14;21:1 opportunity (5) 9:24;13:9,22; 18:10;19:8 options (5) 8:15;9:4;12:3; 15:3;22:1 organization (3) 3:20;7:18;26:20 out (2) 7:5;18:23 outline (1) 12:7 outlines (1) 17:11 outlining (1) 18:4 outreach (4) 15:16;16:21; 19:20;22:2 outside (2) 23:1,20 over (6) 11:2;12:8;16:22; 17:9;18:16;20:24 overarching (5) 13:14,23;17:18; 18:12;20:5 overcome (1) 18:9 oversee (3) 18:24;23:6,18 overseeing (1) 23:23 oversees (1) 23:15 ownership (1)
J			N	
Janelle (7) 3:6;6:23;16:2; 20:1,24;21:3;23:9 Jessie (2) 7:7;23:24 joined (2) 28:3,12 joining (10) 7:12,13;24:13,15; 27:1,6;28:3,4,16,18 Julie (1) 27:8 June (3) 5:19;19:16;27:19			name (8) 3:11,19;7:17;8:3, 4;11:6;24:22;26:19 national (2) 13:16,19 need (8) 8:13,25;10:1;16:6, 8;17:20;26:2,12 needs (26) 3:4,8,14;4:6,15; 5:11;7:11;8:17,9;3, 16;12:11;13:8,24; 14:5;16:12,13,14,16, 17;17:7;19:3;22:10; 24:5;26:11;28:6,8 neighborhoods (1) 25:9 Next (16) 11:17;12:8,15; 13:4,12;14:18; 15:18;17:1;18:16, 17;20:3,23;21:24; 22:24;23:17;24:2 North (2) 8:5;24:24 note (1) 24:9 notes (1) 3:16 number (6) 7:8;17:3,4;23:9, 10,24 numbers (1) 15:23 nursing (1) 9:5	
K				
keep (1) 21:5 keeping (1) 8:14 kind (1) 11:15 known (2) 4:4;5:25				
L	M			
languages (1) 26:5 larger (1) 16:24 last (6) 6:3;8:4;15:13; 16:19;17:22;25:6 Lastly (1) 5:3 later (1)	mail (1) 10:20 making (1) 3:18 mandate (1) 18:7 March (4) 4:4;6:2,4;22:11 match (1) 5:24 matches (2) 25:21,21			

25:13	24:24;15;26:25; 27:1,6	press (7) 7:14,15;24:15,16; 27:1,2,5	28:5	14:11
P	picture (1) 16:24	prevention (3) 5:4;15:17;25:19	publication (2) 19:7,9	reflect (1) 16:8
Park (2) 6:17;23:4	Plan (85) 3:10,11,15,25;4:3, 4,9;5:17,20,24;6:2,3; 7:1,2,3;8:7,8,22;9:22, 22;10:22;11:2,2,9, 10,16,20,25;12:1,6,6, 23,25,25;13:3,3,5, 15;14:1,8,14,21; 16:19,25;17:5,10,17, 18,24;18:1,1,12,13, 18,20,24;19:6,7,9,17, 21;20:4,7,9,12,15,17, 18,20;21:13,17,18; 22:3,9,15,16,19; 23:15;24:6,7;25:14, 25;27:15,16,19,20	previous (1) 9:1	publish (2) 5:22;20:10	regarding (3) 19:17;24:5;27:15
part (11) 12:17;14:12;16:5; 19:4,20;22:2,21; 23:15;24:4;25:23; 26:22	partially (1) 9:18	previously (1) 25:15	published (3) 5:17;20:12;21:19	regionally (1) 16:13
participants (2) 4:12;12:19	participate (2) 21:25;22:20	primarily (2) 15:11,12	purpose (1) 18:2	rehab (2) 9:6;25:11
participated (1) 22:12	participating (1) 22:20	priorities (1) 12:13	put (2) 18:23;26:14	rehab/construction (1) 9:11
participation (1) 12:17	plan/updates (1) 22:23	priority (2) 16:16;17:7	Q	rehabilitation (6) 4:21,25;5:2;15:1, 8,12
particularly (1) 26:11	planned (1) 5:14	proactive (1) 18:8	Q&A (1) 27:9	rehousing (2) 5:5;15:17
parties (1) 20:21	planning (5) 4:22;5:7;8:21; 15:2,19	probably (1) 26:13	qualitative (2) 15:22;16:1	related (1) 24:11
partner (1) 23:18	plans (3) 9:1;17:8;20:16	proceed (1) 19:15	quantitative (2) 15:22,23	reminder (2) 10:18;23:14
Partnerships (2) 4:23;15:5	please (26) 3:7,18,19,20;6:10; 7:12,14,16;11:14,17; 12:15;13:12;14:18; 15:18;17:1;18:17; 20:3,23;22:16;24:9, 11,14,15;27:1,4,5	proceedings (2) 3:1;28:22	R	remute (4) 7:15;24:17,17; 27:3
past (3) 8:24;14:1;26:8	pm (4) 7:20;10:20;27:16; 28:22	process (20) 11:15,22;12:17; 14:12,15;15:20; 16:5;17:2;18:21,22; 19:15;21:6,13,25; 22:22;24:12;26:23; 28:7,10,13	raise (3) 7:12;24:14;27:4	rental (11) 4:20,24,24;5:1,2; 14:25;15:6,7,12,12; 25:17
PATERA (4) 8:3,4;24:22,23	PO (8) 6:18;7:5,5,23; 10:22;23:5,22;27:24	processes (1) 12:20	ran (1) 6:4	repair (1) 25:11
P-A-T-E-R-A (2) 8:5;24:24	point (2) 10:2;13:10	Program (18) 4:19,23;6:1,5,6,8, 23;14:2,23;15:4,5, 10,13;17:12;21:11; 23:9,19;25:5	range (1) 15:3	repairs (1) 9:8
patterns (1) 18:9	Policy (2) 11:7;12:1	programs (7) 4:17;13:16,17; 14:19,21;23:14,16	rapid (2) 5:4;15:17	repeat (2) 24:18;26:24
people (3) 8:16;9:2;25:12	portion (4) 10:25;21:7;24:4, 10	progress (3) 17:16;20:16,19	reach (3) 6:23;7:4;23:3	Report (2) 17:14,15
people's (1) 9:13	possible (1) 25:6	projects (2) 4:8;12:3	read (1) 22:17	repositories (3) 6:14;21:20,21
perceived (2) 25:20,20	pot (1) 8:22	promote (1) 18:9	ready (1) 24:21	represent (4) 7:18;8:5;24:24; 26:20
Performance (1) 17:14	potentially (1) 26:2	proposed (2) 18:23;20:21	real (1) 28:8	representative (1) 26:3
period (9) 4:3;5:15;16:23,24; 17:9;19:18,19;20:11, 22	prepared (1) 17:22	provide (4) 5:23;12:20;19:7, 15	really (11) 10:9;12:3;13:9; 14:15;15:3,6;16:23; 17:19;20:4;25:20; 28:10	representing (2) 3:20;28:5
periods (1) 27:20	presentation (8) 3:17;11:1;12:4; 17:5,24;21:8;24:4; 27:11	provides (1) 17:19	realm (1) 9:18	request (2) 6:15;21:22
person (3) 9:10;10:4;26:2	preserve (1) 14:7	providing (5) 7:16;13:20,21; 21:7;26:18	receipt (1) 20:10	requested (1) 21:23
perspective (1) 12:18		public (27) 3:4,9,13;4:1,13,21; 5:13,14,15,23;7:10, 21;11:24;12:17,20, 21;14:10;15:1;16:4, 6;18:22;19:5,19; 20:11;21:2;22:21;	receiving (1) 3:13	required (4) 4:5;12:9;18:25; 20:17
perspectives (1) 4:12			recommend (1) 9:20	requires (1) 18:8
pertaining (1) 24:5			recommendation (1) 19:13	response (2) 16:17;27:11
phone (9) 6:24;7:8,14;23:9,			recommends (1) 8:11	rest (1) 28:20
			record (1) 24:22	reunmute (1) 24:17
			recorded (2) 3:22;11:14	review (4) 3:23;5:23;19:19; 20:11
			recording (1) 3:6	revision (1)
			reduce (1)	

14:14 revitalize (1) 14:10 right (4) 15:21;22:8;24:3; 28:19 risk (1) 15:15 robust (1) 19:2 Rosie (8) 3:11;6:22;12:4,25; 14:19;21:7;23:8; 28:14 rule (2) 18:23;19:1 runs (1) 6:1	4:2;8:6;11:25 setting (1) 18:4 several (1) 6:14 share (1) 23:2 shared (3) 4:12;12:18;27:9 shelter (2) 5:4;9:3 shelters (1) 15:16 show (2) 17:6;26:10 Shyla (8) 8:2,4;10:15;24:21, 23;26:16,17,21 S-H-Y-L-A (2) 8:4;24:23 sidewalks (2) 25:7,8 similar (4) 15:9;18:21;20:17; 25:17 single-family (6) 4:20,24;8:12; 14:25;15:7;25:11 slide (13) 11:17;12:15; 13:12;14:18;15:18; 17:1;18:17;20:3,23; 21:24;22:24;23:17; 24:2 slides (1) 20:2 small (3) 9:7,11;25:5 smaller (1) 9:14 Solutions (2) 5:3;15:13 someone (2) 9:4;10:5 sometimes (3) 10:11;16:7;26:4 soon (1) 13:1 Sorry (1) 24:17 source (1) 16:9 sources (1) 6:9 South (2) 6:17;23:4 spans (1) 24:7 specialist (3) 6:23;21:11;23:9 specific (2) 17:11;28:6 Specifically (1)	21:17 spell (3) 3:19;7:17;26:19 spelled (2) 8:4;24:23 spend (1) 12:8 split (1) 9:19 stakeholders (1) 16:6 standards (2) 9:14,14 star-6 (3) 7:15;24:16;27:2 star-9 (4) 7:14;24:15;27:1,5 start (5) 3:6;13:1,4;16:17; 19:23 started (1) 3:3 state (27) 3:19,25;5:8,16,22, 23;6:14;7:16,17,17; 11:8,23;14:4;15:25; 16:13;18:15,24;19:1, 4,6,11,20;20:20; 21:20;22:2;26:19,19 State's (1) 20:15 stay (1) 14:14 Steffens (2) 6:20;23:7 step (1) 15:20 steps (2) 11:21;15:20 still (1) 9:12 strategic (1) 17:8 strategies (10) 3:4,9,14;7:11; 16:18,22;18:4; 19:14;20:14;24:5 strategy (1) 16:17 streamlined (1) 18:24 street (1) 15:16 submit (2) 22:25;27:25 submitted (2) 5:18;20:9 submitting (1) 20:19 subsidies (1) 10:12 successful (1) 5:19	suggested (1) 3:14 suitable (1) 13:21 supports (1) 26:7 sure (3) 9:10;11:22;22:18 survey (13) 16:1;19:22,22,24; 22:4,4,7,10,10,13,14; 27:9,11 surveys (2) 16:2;22:20 survivor (1) 10:7 sustain (1) 14:9 systemic (1) 18:14	together (1) 16:11 towards (1) 17:16 trained (1) 25:16 training (2) 25:25;26:1 transfers (1) 26:5 transition (1) 11:1 transitional (1) 8:18 transportation (1) 25:8 trekking (1) 21:6 trends (1) 15:24 tribal (1) 26:7 Trust (5) 5:1;6:7;8:24;15:9; 25:10 try (1) 25:19 trying (2) 9:13;12:18 turn (1) 20:24 two (5) 10:20;17:4;19:6, 11;21:8
S			T	
same (2) 11:15;14:15 Sara (1) 7:7 Sarah (1) 23:24 scheduled (1) 5:12 scorecard (1) 17:19 screen (1) 27:14 second (4) 14:8;15:4;16:5,9 section (3) 3:17;10:8;25:6 seeing (4) 10:17;12:12;16:7, 9 seek (1) 5:16 seeking (2) 5:8;19:11 segregation (1) 18:9 send (3) 7:21;27:22,23 senior (1) 11:7 sentence (1) 10:5 sentences (1) 26:9 sentiments (1) 28:17 separate (3) 21:8;24:9;27:20 September (1) 20:8 serve (2) 18:2;25:2 Services (3)				
				U
				ultimate (1) 22:19 under (4) 12:3;13:24;14:4; 18:23 underlying (2) 18:3;19:12 undertake (1) 21:6 undertaking (1) 21:9 undertook (1) 11:16 universal (1) 8:11 universally (1) 25:4 unmute (6) 7:13,15;8:2;24:14, 16;27:3 up (1) 27:12 upcoming (1) 22:21 Upon (1) 20:10

<p>Urban (2) 4:5;12:10 use (3) 14:5;17:15;22:18 used (1) 9:11 utilized (1) 5:10</p>	<p>working (5) 8:14;11:8,23; 18:18;25:4 wrapping (1) 27:12 write (1) 26:3 Written (4) 7:19;10:18;26:14; 27:12 wrong (1) 10:7 wwwdphsmtgov (2) 7:9;24:1</p>	<p>2020-to-2024 (1) 4:9 2021 (1) 4:11 2023 (1) 6:4 2024 (13) 4:3;5:18,19;6:2,5; 7:21;13:2;14:2; 19:17;20:8;22:5,6; 27:17 2024-2020 (1) 4:9 2024-to-2025 (13) 3:9,15,24;4:2,14; 5:6,12,16,17,22; 6:12;7:11;10:19 2025 (5) 4:4;6:2;13:2,4; 24:7 2025-2029 (3) 21:13;24:6;27:15 2025-to-2029 (2) 3:10;12:23 2026 (1) 24:7 202956 (2) 7:5;23:22 25 (1) 13:2 25th (2) 19:16;27:19 28 (1) 5:19 29th (1) 5:14</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>5 (3) 4:8;6:2;27:16 5:00 (2) 7:20;10:20 59601 (4) 6:18;7:4;23:4,22 59620 (3) 23:5,22;27:25 59620-0523 (3) 6:19;7:24;10:23 59620-2956 (1) 7:6</p>	
V	Y		6	
<p>valuable (1) 28:18 variety (1) 15:20 vary (1) 16:13 verbal (1) 24:4 via (10) 7:12,13;19:21; 22:3,9;24:13,15; 26:25;27:1,6 viewing (1) 17:4 violence (2) 10:6,6 visit (2) 6:10;22:22 visitable (2) 8:11;25:3</p>	<p>Year (13) 4:8;6:1,1,2,3,3,4; 12:24;13:4;14:2; 17:10,12;24:6 years (3) 12:9;18:2,16</p>	<p>2025 (5) 4:4;6:2;13:2,4; 24:7 2025-2029 (3) 21:13;24:6;27:15 2025-to-2029 (2) 3:10;12:23 2026 (1) 24:7 202956 (2) 7:5;23:22 25 (1) 13:2 25th (2) 19:16;27:19 28 (1) 5:19 29th (1) 5:14</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">6</p> <p>60 (1) 20:10</p>	
W	Z			
<p>waivers (1) 9:23 way (2) 5:9;23:21 webinar (3) 7:12;24:13;27:5 website (10) 3:22;6:13,15;7:2, 9:20;13:21;15,21; 23:12,25 weeks (1) 10:20 welcome (2) 3:4,8 WHEREUPON (1) 3:1 widest (2) 14:23;15:3 wish (3) 22:25;23:20;27:10 Within (3) 14:24;15:25;16:12 without (2) 9:2;25:7 wonderful (2) 21:5;28:20 work (5) 8:15;9:16,20,22; 21:5</p>	<p>Zip (3) 6:18;7:6,23</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>301 (2) 6:17;23:4 30th (1) 22:11 31st (5) 4:4;6:2,4;19:24; 22:5</p>		
1	1	3		
<p>1 (1) 24:6 1400 (2) 7:4;23:21 15 (1) 20:22 15th (1) 5:13 16th (1) 5:18 17-county (1) 25:2 17th (4) 7:21;10:19;27:17, 18 18th (1) 22:11 1st (5) 4:3;6:1,4;19:23; 22:5</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p>	4		
<p>2 (1) 28:22 200523 (5) 6:18;7:23;10:22; 23:5;27:24 2015 (1) 18:25 2020 (1) 14:2</p>	2	<p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p>4 (1) 6:3 406-447-4265 (2) 7:8;23:25 406-447-4287 (2) 7:8;23:25 406-841-2270 (1) 23:10 406-841-2702 (2) 6:24;23:10 406-841-2770 (1) 6:24 406-841-2771 (2) 6:25;23:11</p>		