

2026

TETON COUNTY

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT & IMPROVEMENT PLAN

TETON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

Benefis TETON MEDICAL CENTER

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Teton County C.A.R.E.S

INTRODUCTION

Teton County's 2026 Community Health Needs Assessment & Improvement Plan provides an overview of current health in Teton County and outlines a strategic, action-oriented path forward.



We are pleased to share this collaborative document—a comprehensive look at the strengths, health priorities, and community-driven strategies designed to shape well-being across our region.

Thank you to the many residents who shared their perspectives and experiences. Your input directly shapes our action plan. We also deeply appreciate the commitment of our partners at Teton County Public Health, Benefis Teton Medical Center (BTMC), MSU Extension Teton County, and the Teton County Community Alliance for Resiliency and Educational Support (Teton County CARES). Together, we have crafted both a snapshot of our community's physical, mental, and social health and a practical Improvement Plan to drive positive change.

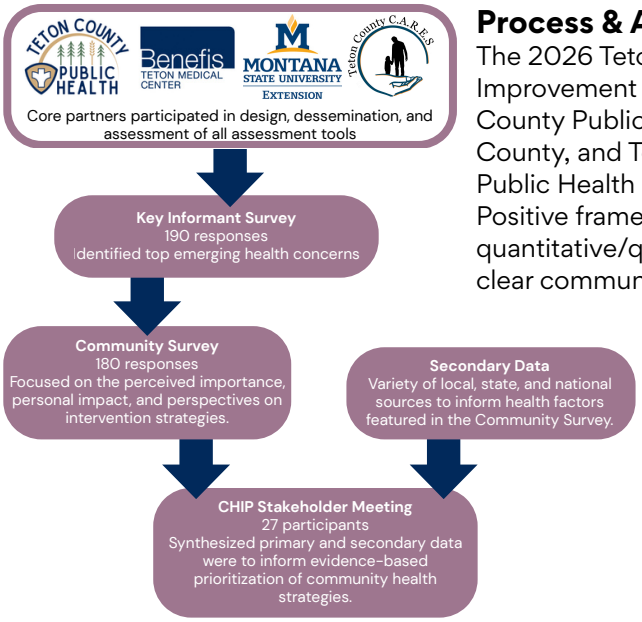
This document combines historical trends, state and national data, and direct community feedback to set measurable goals and priority initiatives. It serves as a shared roadmap—one that guides future health programming, aligns local resources, and supports concrete solutions that enhance the quality of life across Teton County.

As we move forward in 2026, our focus centers on implementing these targeted improvement strategies, building strong partnerships, and continuing to grow what makes our community healthy and resilient. Because health is shaped by where we live, learn, work, play, and worship, this Improvement Plan ensures we work together to build long-term resilience, health equity, and well-being for all Teton County residents.

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2026 TETON COUNTY CHNA-IP EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Process & Assessment Methodology

The 2026 Teton County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and Improvement Plan (CHIP) was led by a core collaborative partnership consisting of Teton County Public Health, Benefis Teton Medical Center (BTMC), MSU Extension Teton County, and Teton County CARES. Technical assistance was provided by the Montana Public Health Systems Improvement Office (PHSIO). Grounded in the Science of the Positive framework, the multi-phase assessment synthesized both primary quantitative/qualitative community feedback and localized secondary data to establish clear community health priorities:

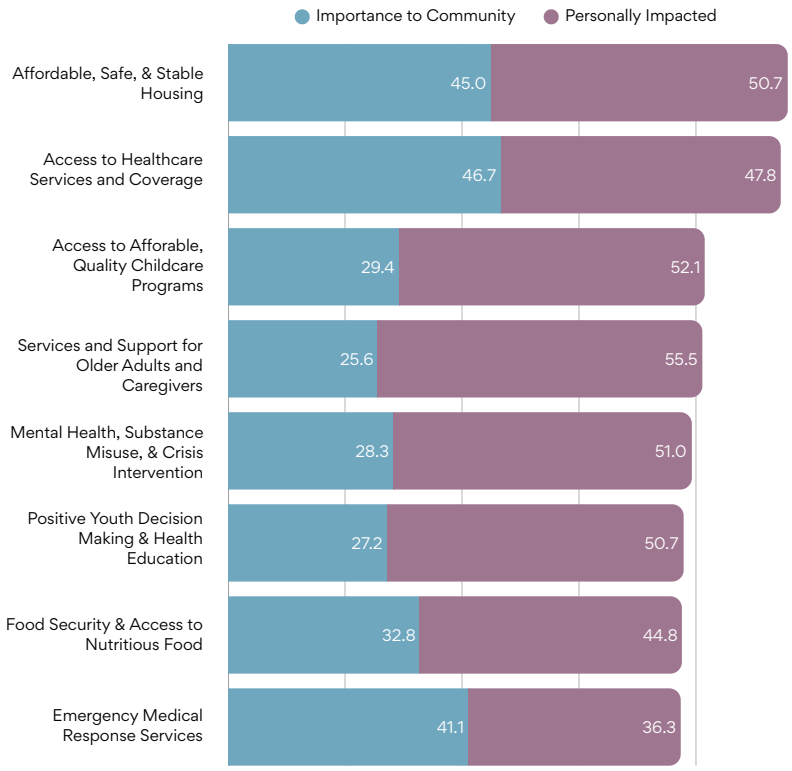
- **Key Informant Survey (June 2026):** Distributed to 472 local leaders, service providers, and community stakeholders; achieved 190 completed responses (40.3% response rate).
- **Community Survey (July 2026):** Administered county-wide via digital access, local QR codes, and printed flyers; gathered 180 direct community responses.
- **CHIP Stakeholder Meeting (September 2026):** Brought together 26 key stakeholders across 27 local agencies for structured small-group data review, priority setting, and strategy drafting.
- **Secondary Data Review:** Integrated health status, economic, and demographic benchmarks from the U.S. Census Bureau, County Health Rankings, and MT DPHHS.

Key Assessment Findings & Summary Data

The combined primary survey results and secondary health indicators highlighted critical health factors across the lifespan:

- **Behavioral & Mental Health:** 42.7% of key informants rated mental health/substance misuse as a primary factor needing improvement. 27.2% of local youth reported seriously considering suicide in the past year, compared to 41.1% statewide.
- **Access to Healthcare Services:** Primary care provider ratios stand at 3,180:1 (vs. Montana's 1,200:1). Key informant rankings identified comprehensive medical, dental, and vision care as high priority, while 53% noted that local general medical care is well-established.
- **Affordable Housing:** High cost burden affects local residents, with a median home value of $264,000. 47% of community survey respondents identified increasing affordable and workforce housing units as the single most effective strategy.
- **Emergency Medical & Safety Infrastructure:** EMS workforce recruitment and retention was highlighted, with 53% recommending increased recruitment/retention of EMTs and paramedics.
- **Childcare & Family Supports:** High early childhood care costs consume 37% of average household income for two children.

Top Health & Social Factors by Importance to Teton County & Personal Impact
Community Survey, 2026



2026 TETON COUNTY CHNA-IP EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) Priorities
Following the synthesis of survey and secondary data, local stakeholders established two overarching priority areas to guide collaborative action, policy development, and resource allocation over the next three years.



Priority Area 1: Community Connection & Resiliency Across the Lifespan

Goal: Cultivate a connected, supportive county-wide environment that strengthens resilience, reduces social isolation, and lowers mental health stigma across all stages of life—from early childhood through older adulthood.

1.1	**Community Connection & Resource Awareness** By December 31, 2027, Teton County CARES and partner agencies will deliver unified, consistent mental health and wellness messaging through at least 4 new or existing community events, reaching a minimum of 300 community members to increase local resource awareness.
1.2	**Early Childhood, Youth, & Family Support** By December 31, 2028, partner agencies (including school districts, Teton County Health Department, and youth organizations) will implement positive childhood experience (PCE) initiatives, early childhood support programs, and integrated school-based mental health screenings across 100% of Teton County school districts.
1.3	**Aging Adults & Caregiver Supports** By December 31, 2028, establish or expand at least 2 dedicated support initiatives for older adults and their caregivers—such as respite care provider trainings, healthy aging resource guides, or senior-focused social connection programs.
1.4	**Workforce, First Responder, & Provider Capacity** By December 31, 2027, deliver at least 4 specialized resiliency and crisis-response trainings (e.g., Mental Health First Aid, CIT, ACES/trauma-informed care, Love & Logic) to train a minimum of 40 local service providers, first responders, and educators.

Priority Area 2: Resource Coordination & Infrastructure

Goal: Build cross-sector partnerships and local infrastructure to improve access to essential family resources, health navigation, food security, and community support systems across Teton County.

2.1	**Resource Navigation & Health Access** By December 31, 2028, establish a unified Community Health Worker (CHW)/Resource Navigator model serving all Teton County communities, increasing active partner participation in the CONNECT Referral System by 20%.
2.2	**Food Security & Basic Needs** By December 31, 2027, establish or formalize 3 cross-sector partnerships to connect local service providers, school districts, and community groups to improve access to essential basic needs (including food security, housing assistance, and family supplies) for at least 25 vulnerable households across Teton County.
2.3	**Infrastructure & Family Supports** By December 31, 2028, create or expand 2 family support infrastructure projects (such as early childhood/childcare access options, low-cost community spaces, or local housing coalition initiatives).

COLLABORATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS

Teton County has a strong history of promoting collaborative approaches to community projects. Teton County's CHNA process engaged a diverse array of community leaders and other agency and organizational partners, community coalitions, and advisory groups with a strong focus on engaging community members facing significant barriers to better health.

Sponsorship of and much of the guidance for this assessment was provided by Teton County Public Health, Benefis Teton Medical Center, MSU Extension Teton County, and the Teton County Community Alliance for Resiliency and Educational Support. All four organizations participated in the development of surveys and the collection and analysis of responses, with technical assistance from the Montana Public Health Systems Improvement Office (PHSIO) of the Montana Department of Health and Human Services to develop a comprehensive health assessment of Teton County.

Teton County Health Department is a county department that provides health, wellness, and prevention services across Teton County. Programs include public health emergency preparedness, communicable disease surveillance and response, tobacco use prevention, Women, Infants, and Children Nutritional Supplement Program (WIC), cancer screening services, diabetes prevention, immunizations, and maternal and child health services. The Teton County Health Department is governed by the Teton County Board of Health and Board of Commissioners.

Benefis Teton Medical Center is a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital located in Choteau. Services include a 24-7 emergency room, physical therapy, occupational therapy, lab, X-ray and CT, inpatient beds, long-term care, and an outpatient clinic. Monthly special services include mammography, DEXA scan, general cardiology, women's health, pediatrics, podiatry and foot care. BTMC is a department of Benefis Health System, a large non-profit hospital system headquartered in Great Falls. The local hospital is overseen by president/CEO Louie King. The BTMC Board of Directors governs BTMC and is composed of six at-large community members and two hospital administrators.

Teton County MSU Extension Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS) provides research-based education to help individuals and families improve their health, finances, and quality of life. Through programs in nutrition, food safety, family well-being, and financial wellness, residents gain practical skills for improved resilience and quality of life. By partnering with local organizations and community members, FCS strengthens families and supports a healthier, more resilient Teton County.

Teton County Community Alliance for Resiliency and Educational Support (Teton County CARES) was created to confront Teton County's behavioral health challenges through comprehensive and evidence-based strategies that focus on resilience, education, prevention, access to treatment and reducing drug, alcohol, and mental health-related consequences, through community partnership and cultural change. This group was formed to address the concerns of the 2017 Teton County CHNA, and in 2019 merged with the Teton County Local Mental Health Advisory Council (LAC).



HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030 INFLUENCE

The Teton County Community Health Assessment incorporates this definition of health by presenting a diverse profile that includes the conditions and factors affecting people's health in Teton County, as well as indicators of health status.

Additionally, this profile aligns with goals set forth in Healthy People 2030, the national agenda for health developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2030 has moved from an understanding of health focused on the individual to one focused on communities and systems.

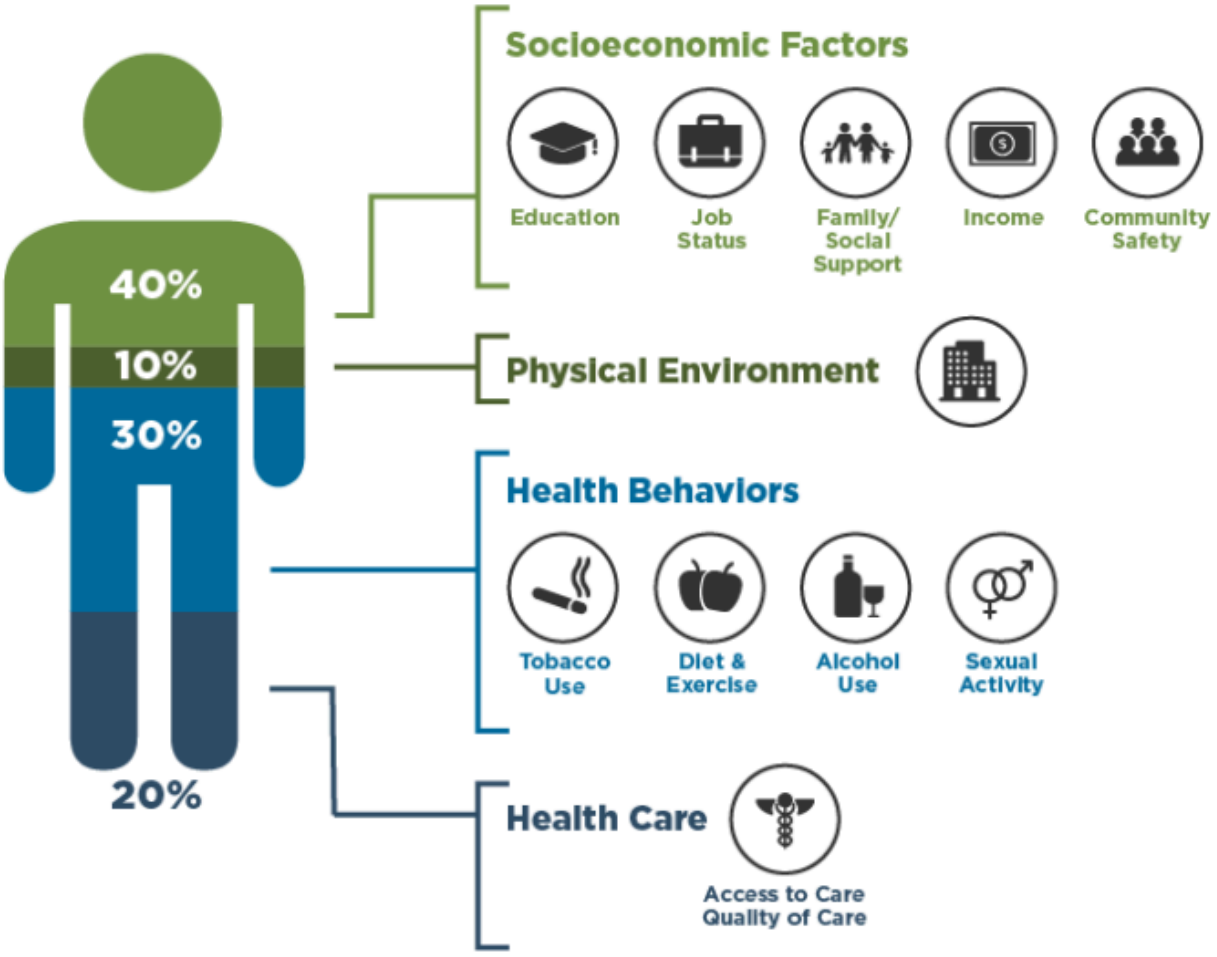
Healthy People 2030 Overarching Goals

- Attain healthy, thriving lives and well-being free of preventable disease, disability, injury, and premature death.
- Eliminate health disparities, achieve health equity, and attain health literacy to improve the health and well-being of all.
- Create social, physical, and economic environments that promote health and well-being for all.
- Promote healthy development, healthy behaviors, and well-being across all life stages.
- Engage leadership, key constituents, and the public to take action and design policies that improve health and well-being for all.

On behalf of all the individuals and organizations that have taken the time to participate and collaborate in the completion of this document, we offer thanks. We hope these efforts will help improve the health and well-being of the Teton County community.

DRIVERS OF HEALTH IN TETON COUNTY

What goes into your health?



Public health research indicates that factors other than health care contribute to differences in health. Global and national health authorities including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recognize that external factors such as education and income drive health. These factors are sometimes called the social determinants of health (SDOH).

The SDOH can be broken down into four categories: socioeconomic factors, physical environment, health behaviors and health care.[1] Genetic factors are not included in this analysis, since they are not modifiable.

METHODOLOGY

The 2026 Community Health Needs Assessment and Improvement Plan was developed through a collaborative, multi-phase methodology shaped by Teton County Public Health, Benefis Teton Medical Center (BTMC), MSU Extension Teton County, and Teton County CARES. Each partner organization participated in the design and development of the assessment tools, bringing essential insights and tailored consideration for the specific populations they serve. To ensure a representative picture of Teton County, special effort was dedicated to reaching groups traditionally underrepresented in community data, including low-income households, agricultural producers, older adults, and individuals with lived experiences in mental health. Additionally, all survey instruments were intentionally kept brief and crafted for accessible, low-literacy readability.

Core partners participated in design, dissemination, and assessment of all assessment tools.

Key Informant Survey
190 responses
Identified top emerging health concerns.

Community Survey
180 responses
Focused on the perceived importance, personal impact, and perspectives on intervention strategies.

Secondary Data
Variety of local, state, and national sources to inform health factors featured in the Community Survey.

CHIP Stakeholder Meeting
27 participants
Synthesized primary and secondary data were to inform evidence-based prioritization of community health strategies.

METHODOLOGY

Through various quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) process utilized different sources of information to identify the most pressing health needs in Teton County, Montana. In the section below, the different data collection models are described in detail, including each of their target audiences, questions asked, and survey/discussion locations among others.

KEY INFORMANT SURVEY:

The Key Informant Survey used in the 2026 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) was adapted from the survey utilized in the 2023 CHNA process. The original survey instrument was developed by PYA Consulting and was reviewed and modified by the CHNA core partner agencies, including the Teton County Health Department, Benefis Teton Medical Center, Montana State University Extension, and Teton County CARES. Survey revisions were informed by nationally recognized community health assessment practices, relevant health indicators, prior assessment findings, and emerging issues specific to Teton County. The survey was designed using the Science of the Positive framework, which emphasizes identifying strengths, protective factors, and opportunities for positive community change.

In June 2026, electronic survey invitations were distributed to 472 identified key informants. Key informants were defined as individuals with professional, volunteer, or lived experience knowledge of community health issues and broad connections to community groups and priority populations. The contact list included healthcare providers, educators, nonprofit leaders, business owners, public agency representatives, local government officials, senior service providers, faith leaders, and community volunteers.

The survey consisted of up to 28 questions and utilized skip logic to tailor questions based on respondents' answers. Questions explored perceptions of community strengths, health and social needs, barriers to well-being, and potential strategies for improvement. A total of 190 completed surveys were received, representing a response rate of 40.3 percent. Survey results were analyzed in aggregate and are discussed in detail later in this report.



METHODOLOGY

COMMUNITY SURVEY:

Findings from the Key Informant Survey were used to inform development of the 2026 Community Survey. Specifically, survey questions were designed to gather additional input on the health and social factors identified by key informants as most important to the well-being of Teton County residents. The survey was intentionally brief to encourage participation and included up to 11 questions.

Respondents were asked to identify demographic and population groups represented within their household and to provide feedback regarding priority health and social factors affecting the community. Questions were designed to better understand community members' experiences, perspectives, and recommendations related to these issues, as well as the approaches they believed would have the greatest positive impact.

The survey was administered electronically throughout July 2026. Quick Response (QR) code flyers linking directly to the survey were distributed at community events in Choteau, Dutton, and Fairfield. Additional outreach included social media posts by partner organizations, printed flyers displayed throughout the county, announcements in local newspapers, and inclusion in community newsletters. To encourage participation, respondents had the option to enter a raffle sponsored by Benefis Teton Medical Center.

A total of 180 community members completed the survey. Results were analyzed in aggregate and used alongside findings from the Key Informant Survey and secondary data review to identify community health priorities and inform the 2026 CHNA.

SECONDARY DATA REVIEW:

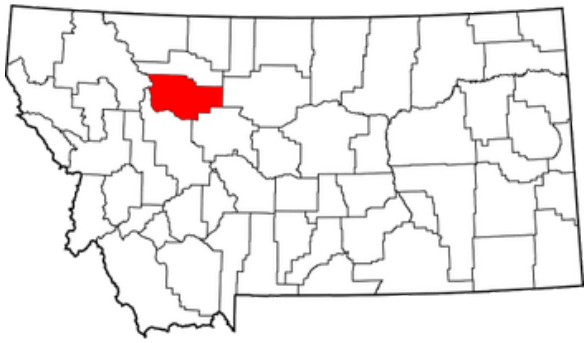
Secondary data were integrated throughout this assessment to contextualize topics identified in the Key Informant and Community Surveys, focusing on health status, demographics, and social conditions affecting Teton County residents. Rather than providing an exhaustive health review, data were selectively included to better inform specific priority areas.

Secondary data sources include the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) Community Health Insights Dashboard, County Health Rankings, and the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS). Teton County-specific data were prioritized; where local data were unavailable or statistically unreliable due to small population size, regional or state-level data were used for context. A complete list of references and additional community health resources is available at the end of this document.

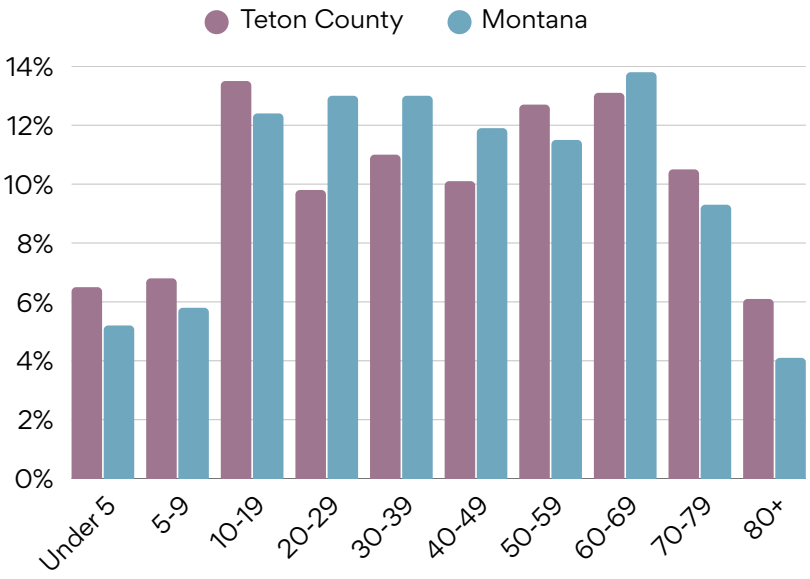
The CHNA team analyzed these data to identify trends, disparities, risk factors, and community strengths, as well as to inform survey development. Grounded in the Science of the Positive framework, this review highlights not only health risks and burden of disease, but also the assets, resilience, and protective factors that foster well-being throughout Teton County.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Teton County is located in the northcentral region of Montana. Its county seat is Choteau. The county features diverse landforms, including the Rocky Mountain Front, which forms the seam between the wilderness of the Lewis and Clark National Forest and the foothills and plains domesticated by area ranchers and farmers. Teton County has a population of 6,496 in 2025. With a total area of 2,272 square miles, the population density is 2.81 people per square mile.



Age Distribution Estimates Teton County, 2024



364

2024 number of veterans

Montana = 79,357 veterans

U.S. = 16,185,883 veterans

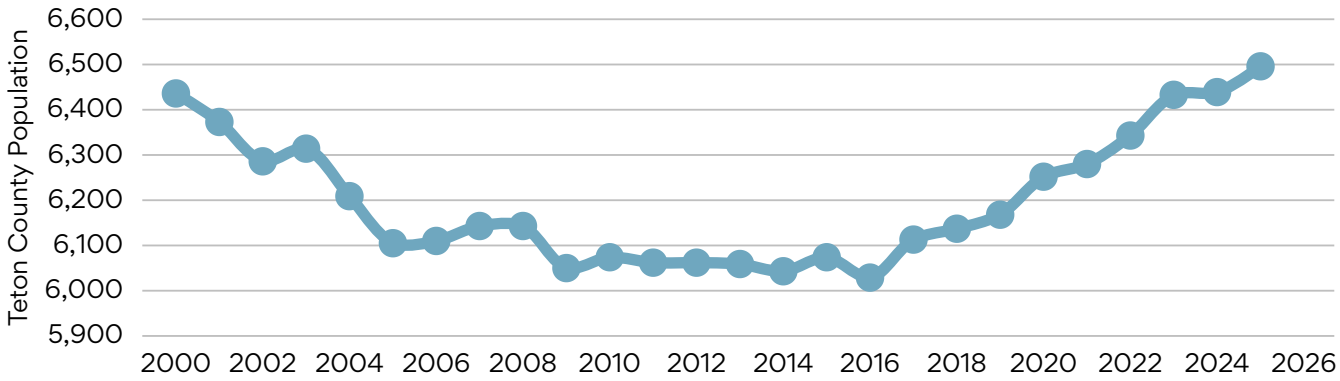
42.3

2024 median age (years)

Montana = 40.4 years old

U.S. = 38.9 years old

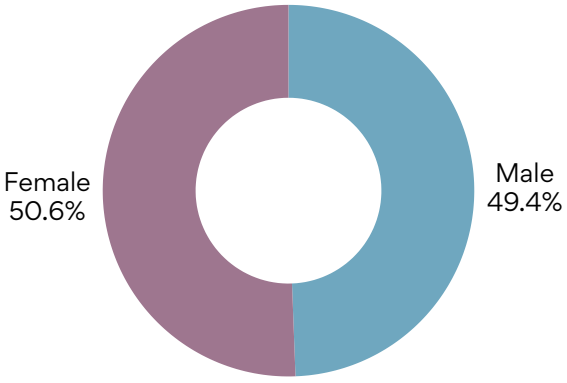
Resident Population in Teton County



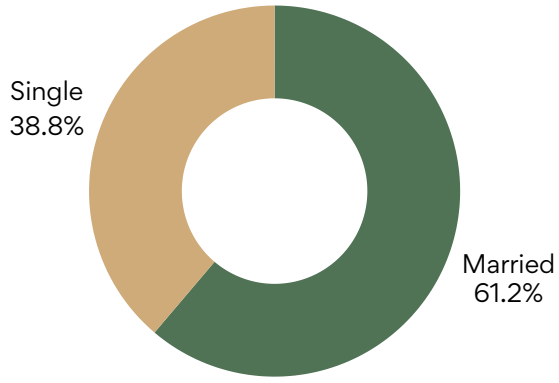
U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2024 5-Year Estimates

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

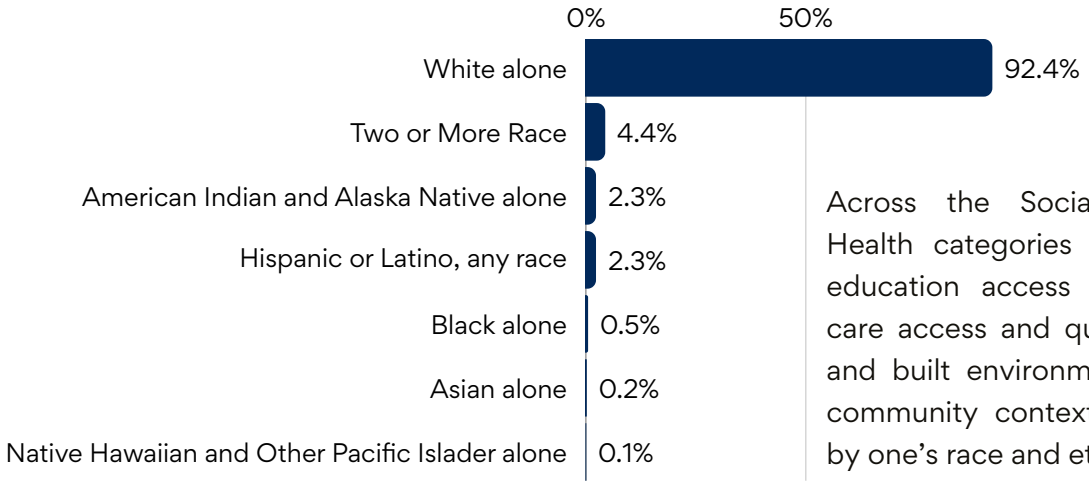
Sex Distribution, Teton County, 2024



Marital Status, Teton County, 2024

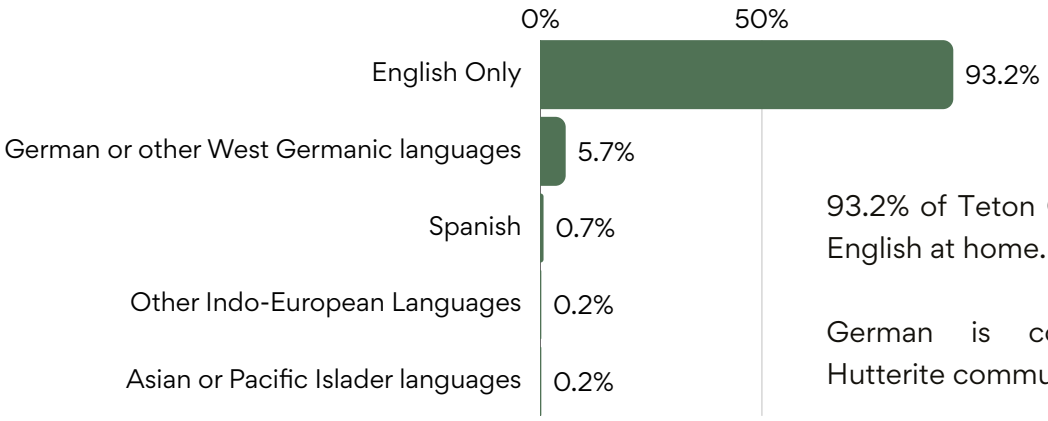


Racial/Ethnic Distribution Teton County, 2024



Across the Social Determinants of Health categories (economic stability, education access and quality, health care access and quality, neighborhood and built environment, and social and community context) can be impacted by one's race and ethnicity.[1]

Language Distribution Teton County, 2024



93.2% of Teton County residents speak English at home.

German is commonly spoken in Hutterite communities.

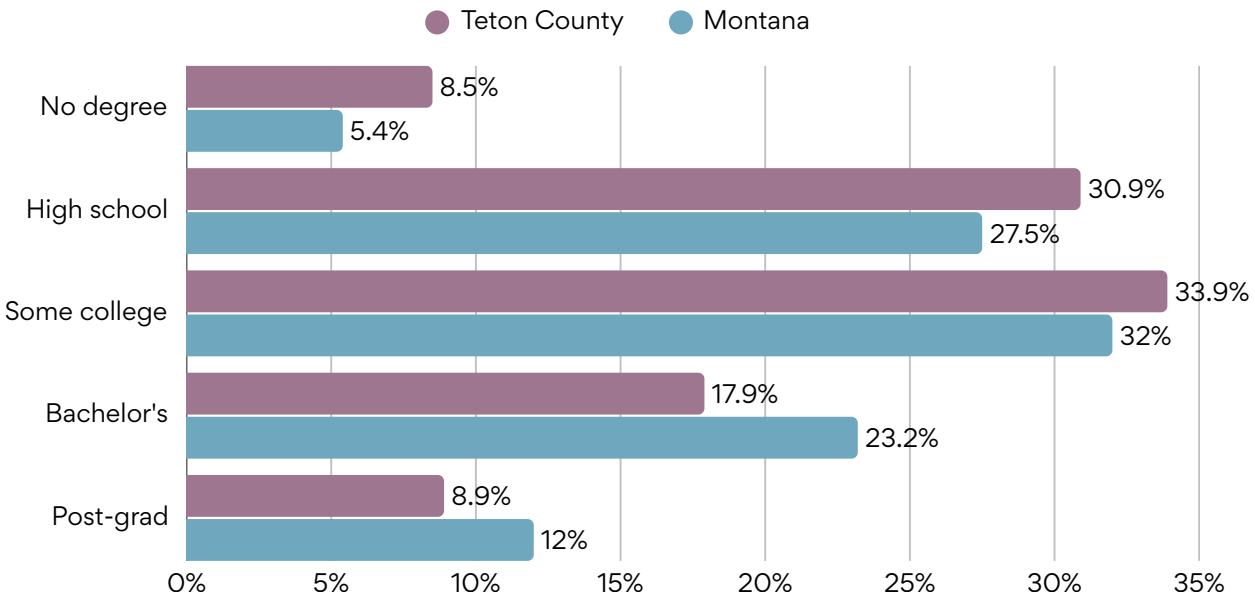
U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2024 5-Year Estimates

SOCIOECONMIC FACTORS

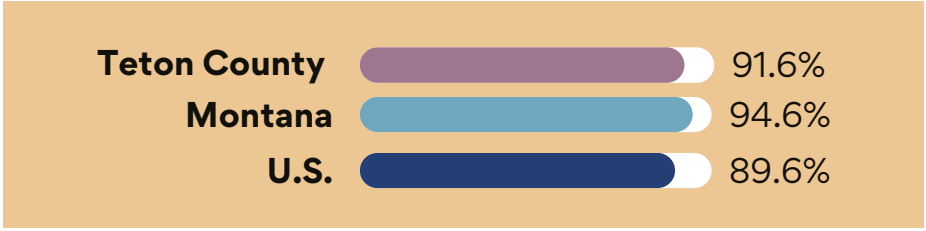
EDUCATION

Education is one of the strongest predictors of long-term personal and community health.[2] Higher levels of educational attainment directly correlate with improved job opportunities, higher income levels, and greater access to health insurance and health-promoting resources.[3] Conversely, lower educational attainment and lower income frequently correspond with higher rates of chronic disease and reduced life expectancy.[4] This relationship is bidirectional: while higher education leads to better health outcomes, good health during childhood is equally essential for cognitive development, school attendance, and academic success.[5] Fostering strong educational opportunities creates a foundation for health equity and community-wide resilience.[2]

Highest Level of Educational Attainment in Teton County, 2024



High School Graduation Rate, 2024



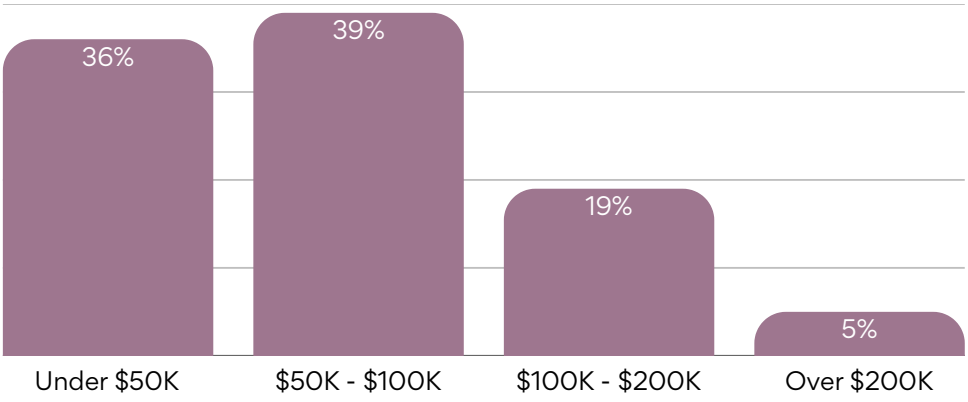
U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2024 5-Year Estimates

SOCIOECONMIC FACTORS

JOB STATUS AND INCOME

Job status and income are foundational drivers of health, with higher socioeconomic status consistently predicting longer, healthier lives.[6] Financial stability provides the means to access essential resources, including quality medical care, nutritious food, safe housing, stable transportation, and opportunities for physical activity.[7] Conversely, poverty serves as a root cause of health inequities, placing chronic stress on individuals and severely limiting choices related to healthy behaviors and living environments.[8] The relationship between economic security and health is mutually reinforcing and cumulative, creating intergenerational impacts that shape overall community well-being and resilience.[9]

Household Income, Teton County, 2024



Median Household Income, Teton County, 2024

$70,430

MT = $72,509
U.S. = $80,734

All Persons Below Poverty Line Teton County, 2024

13.4%

MT = 11.5%
U.S. = 12.5%

Children (under 18) Below Poverty Line Teton County, 2024

18.9%

MT = 12.7%
U.S. = 16.1%

Seniors (65+) below Poverty Line Teton County, 2024

8.6%

MT = 9.9%
U.S. = 10.8%

Top Industries in Teton County, 2020-2024

Education, Health Care, & Social Assistance
20.6%

Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing/Hunting, and Mining
19.9%

Construction
11.1%

Entertainment, Accomodation & Food Service
7.4%

Retail Trade
6.7%

Unemployment
2.6%

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2024 5-Year Estimates

TETON COUNTY VOICES

COMMUNITY VOICES

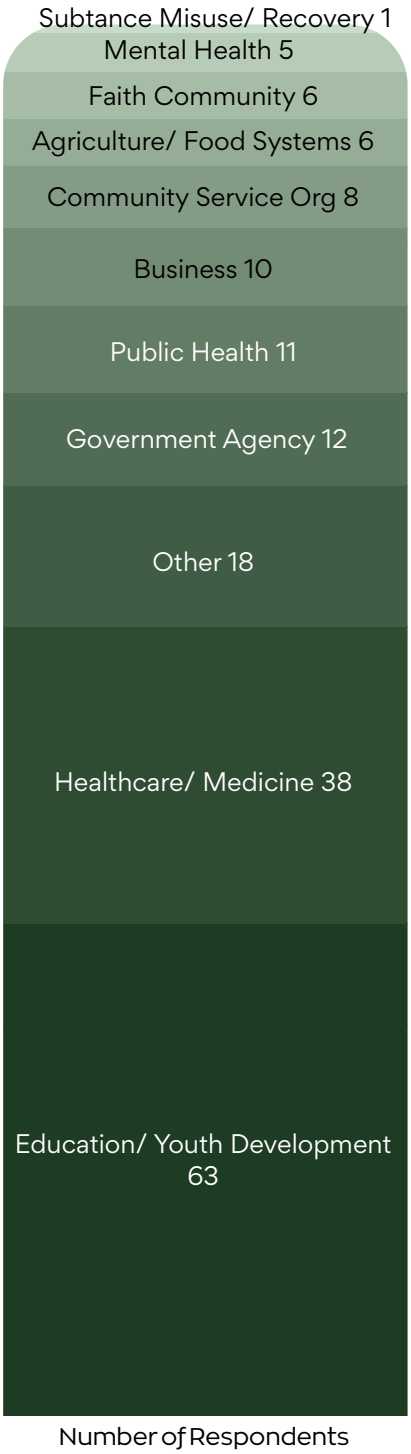
KEY INFORMANT SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

- Benefis Teton Medical Center
- Benefis Teton Medical Center Foundation
- Big Sky Special Needs Cooperative
- Bynum School District
- Choteau & Vicinity Soroptimist
- Choteau Activities
- Choteau Area Port Authority
- Choteau Arts
- Choteau Baptist Church
- Choteau Chamber of Commerce
- Choteau Education Foundation
- Choteau Lions Club
- Choteau Mountain View RV Campground
- Choteau Public School District
- Choteau Roxy Theatre
- Choteau Senior Citizens Center
- Choteau United Methodist Church
- Choteau Volunteer Fire Company
- Choteau Weatherbeater Board
- Choteau Youth Alliance
- Choteau/Teton Public Library
- City of Choteau
- Community Members at Large
- Dutton/Brady Public School District
- Eagles Nest Childcare
- Fairfield Chamber of Commerce
- Fairfield Public School District
- Front Range Family Psychiatry, LLC
- Frontier Family Practice
- Greenfield Schools
- Moggie & Mutts Family Animal Clinic
- Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks
- Montana Sons of the American Legion
- Mountain Front Family Vision Center
- NAMI Great Falls
- Neighbors Helping Neighbors
- NorthWestern Energy
- Old Trail Museum Board of Trustees
- Power Public School District
- Saint Joseph's Catholic Church
- Teton Adventist Christian School
- Teton County Board of Health
- Teton County CARES
- Teton County Commissioners
- Teton County Conservation District
- Teton County Council on Aging
- Teton County EMS/Ambulance Services
- Teton County Fire Department
- Teton County Food Pantry
- Teton County Health Department
- Teton County MSU Extension
- Teton County Search and Rescue
- Teton County Sheriff's Office
- Teton County Superintendent of Schools
- Teton Pass Ski Area
- The Montana Dinosaur Center
- Town of Fairfield
- Trinity Lutheran Church
- True North Counseling
- Vandolah Chiropractic Clinic
- Zion Lutheran Church

COMMUNITY VOICES

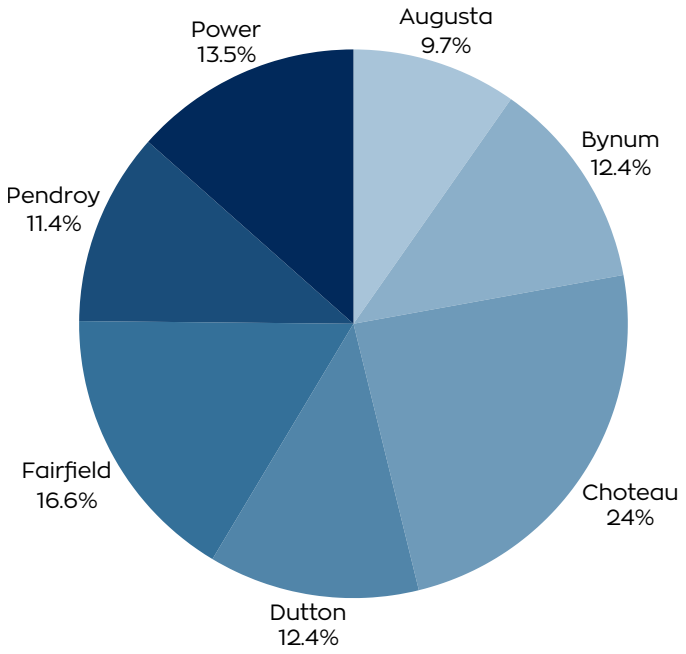
Which Best Describes Your Field?

Key Informant Survey, 2026



Which Local Areas Does Your Organization Serve?

Key Informant Survey, 2026

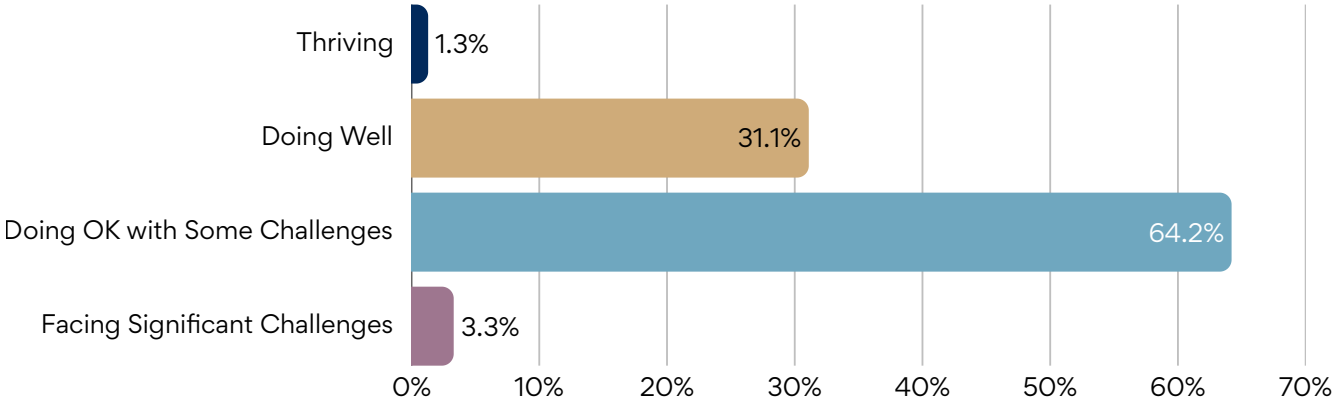


Populations Served Key Informant Survey, 2026	
Adults	53.4%
Children	50.6%
Adolescents	44.4%
Senior citizens/ Medicare recipients	36.0%
Agricultural or rural populations	35.4%
Individuals with low income/ Medicaid recipients	33.7%
Young Adults (18-24)	31.5%
Individuals experiencing mental health challenges	27.0%
Veterans	24.7%
Individuals who are disabled	24.7%
Individuals who are chronically ill	19.7%
Racial and ethnic minorities	17.4%
Individuals experiencing or recovering from substance misuse	13.5%
Individuals experiencing homelessness	10.1%
Incarcerated individuals	5.6%
Other	3.4%

COMMUNITY VOICES

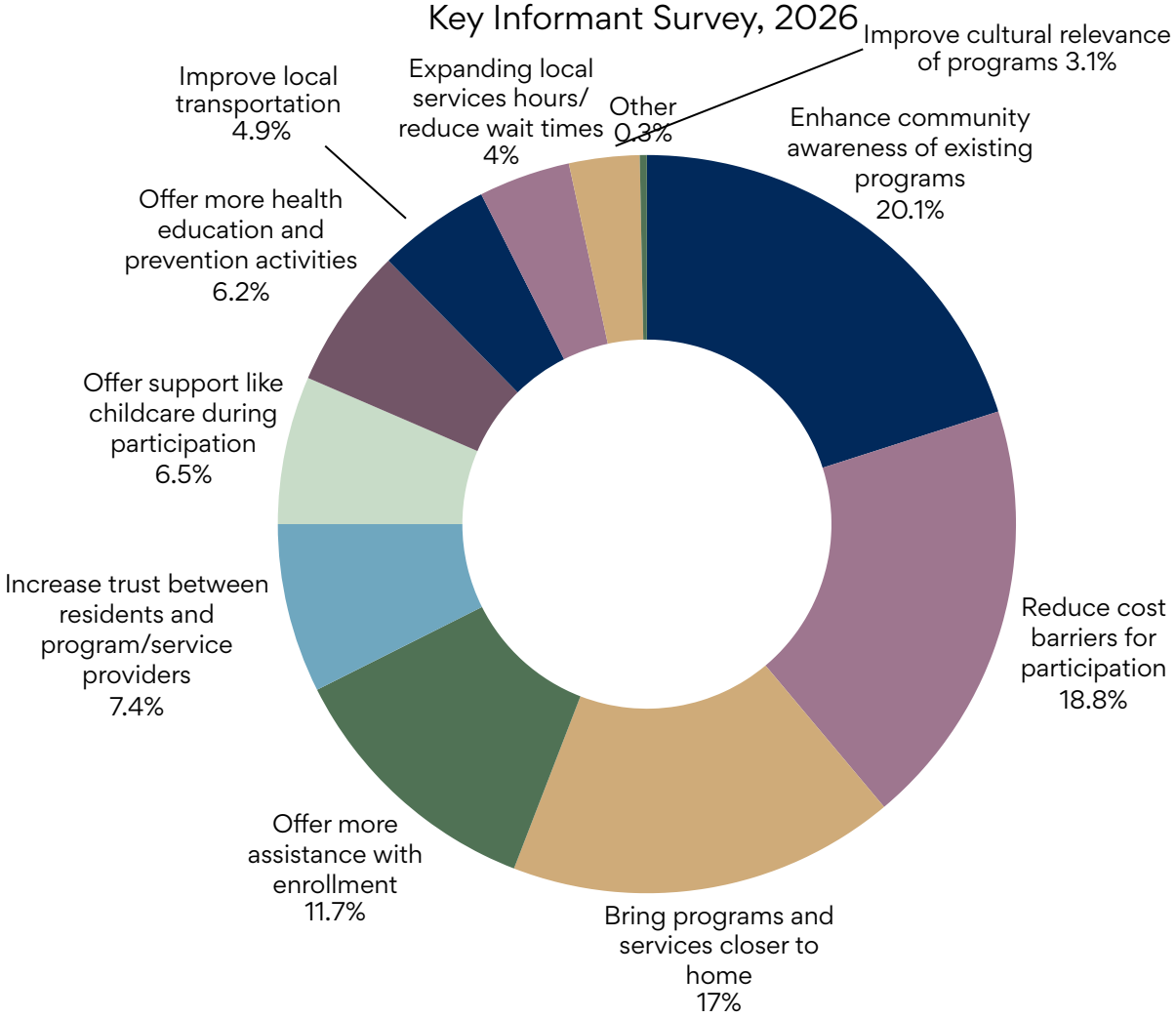
Describe the Overall Health of People in Teton County

Key Informant Survey, 2026



Drivers of better engagement in health and community services

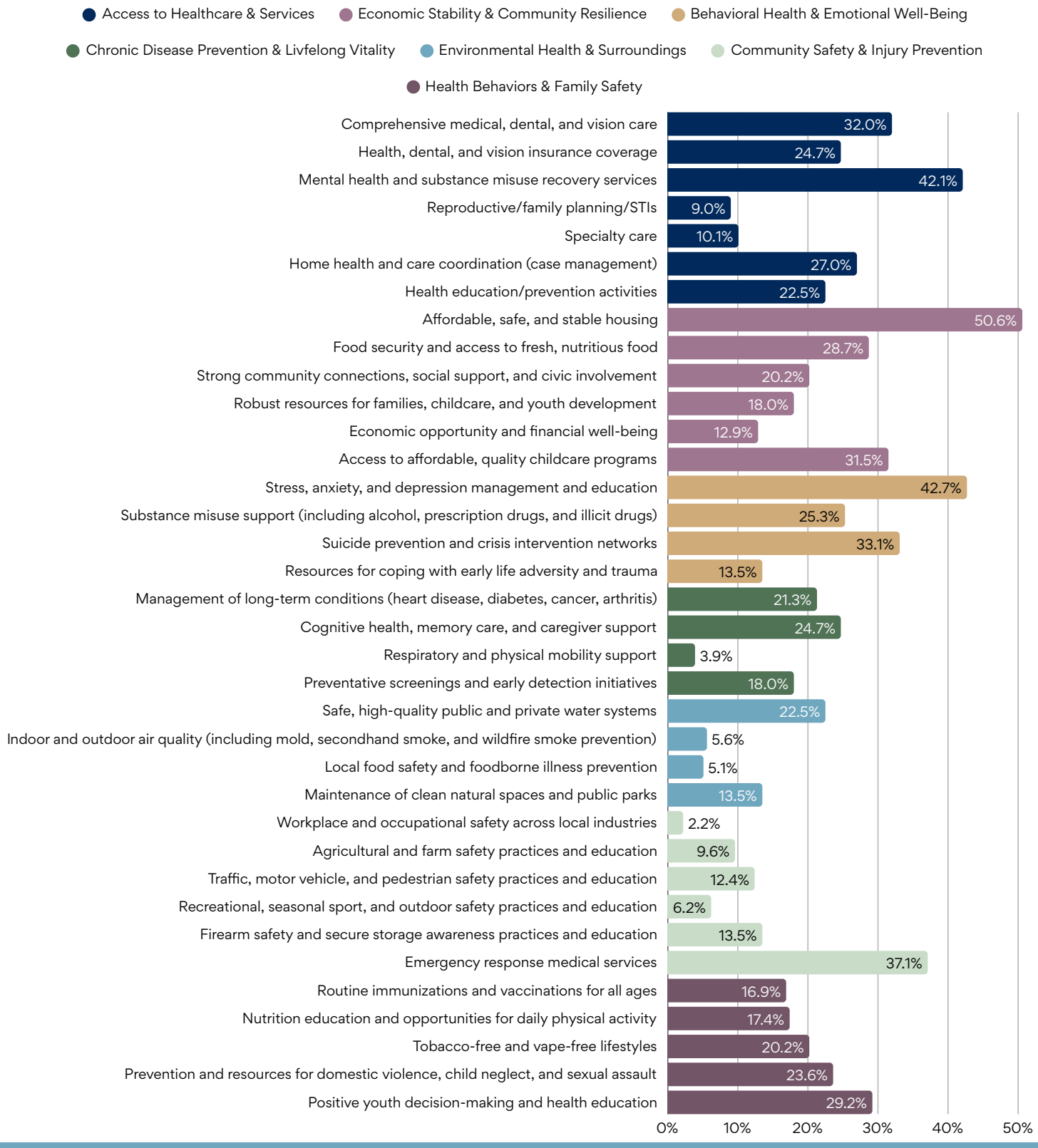
Key Informant Survey, 2026



COMMUNITY VOICES

Most Important Health & Social Factors to Improve or Protect in Teton County

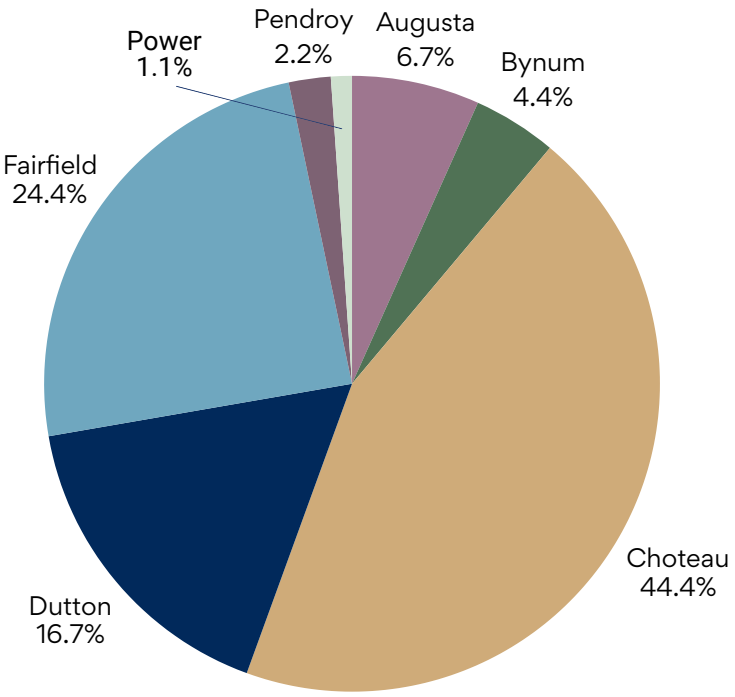
Key Informant Survey, 2026



COMMUNITY VOICES

Community Survey Respondents by Community

Community Survey, 2026



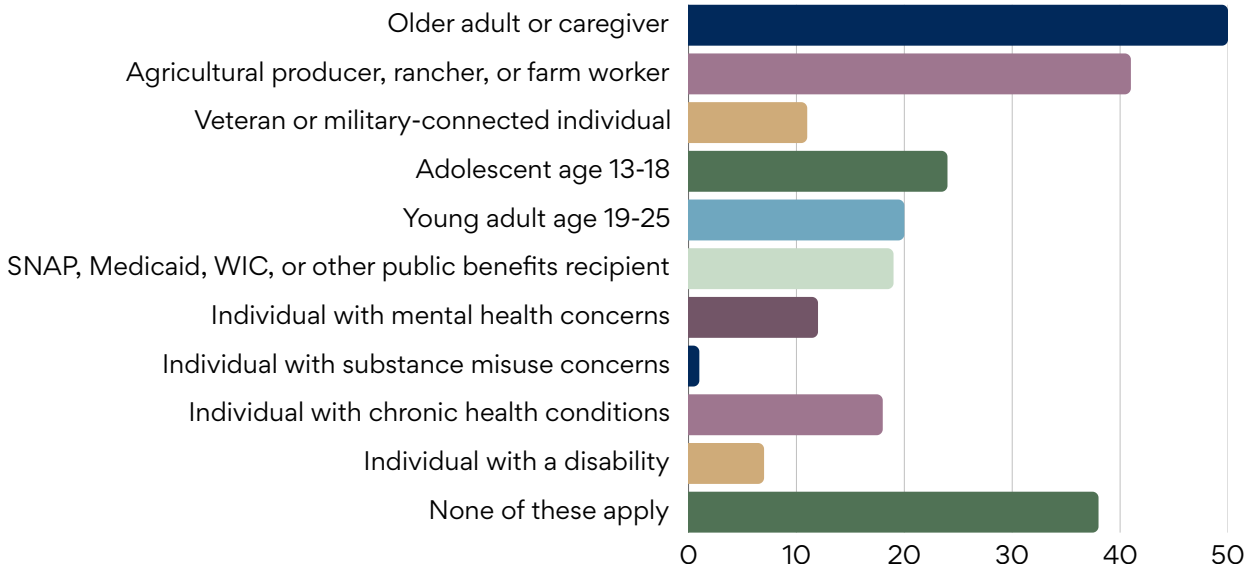
This page provides a breakdown of the characteristics of respondents to the Community Survey conducted in July 2026.

The core partner agencies were intentional in their survey collection methods to ensure that all communities across Teton County were represented, including individuals with specific household characteristics such as older adults, people with low incomes, and individuals living with chronic health conditions.

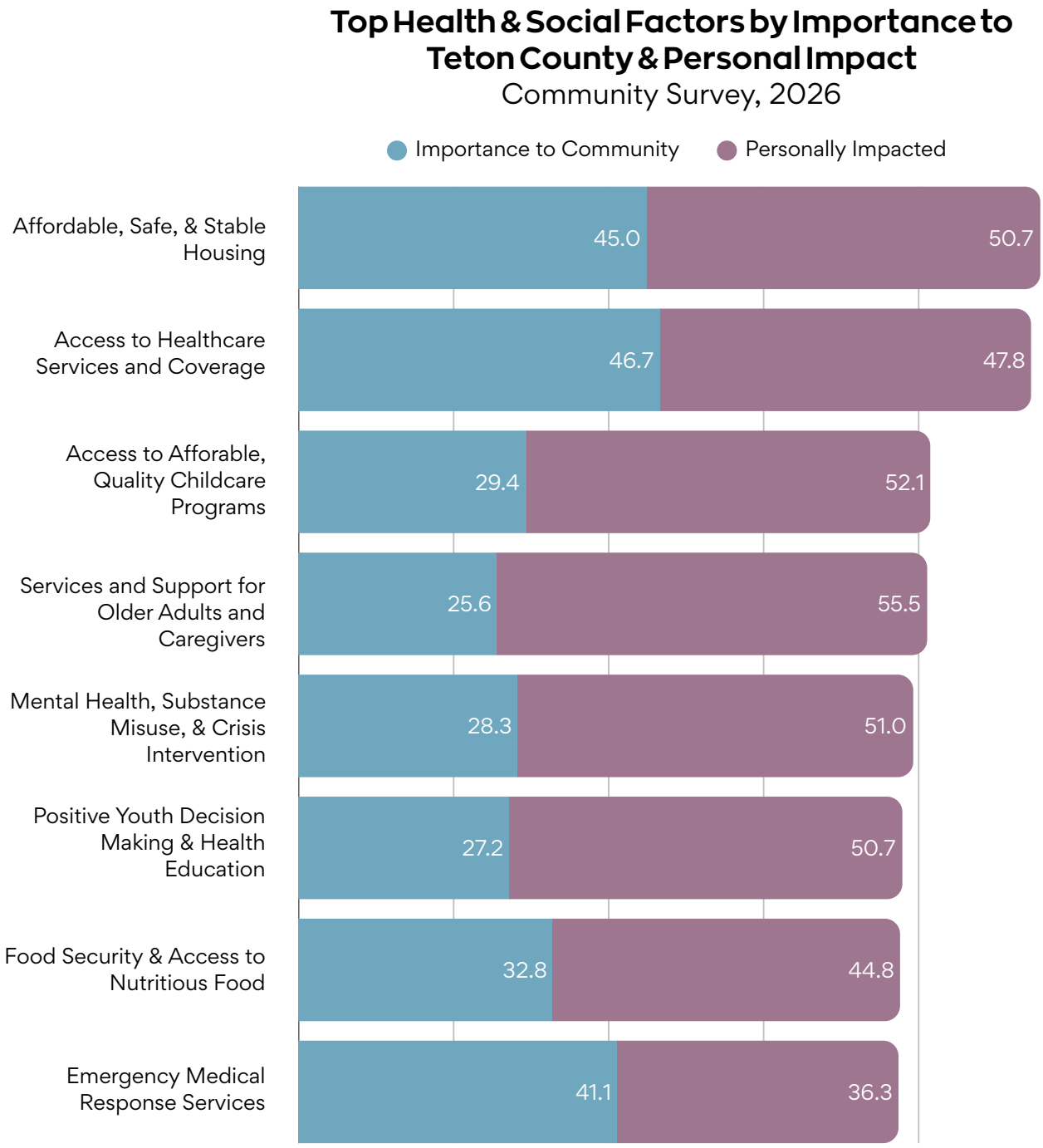
These groups are often underrepresented in local survey results.

Household Characteristics

Community Survey, 2026



COMMUNITY VOICES



This chart presents findings from two questions in the 2026 Community Survey. Respondents identified the health and social factors most important to their community and rated, on a scale of 0 to 10, the degree to which they or their family and friends have experienced challenges related to each factor (10 = significant challenges). Mean personal-impact scores were multiplied by 10 to align with the percentage scale used for how frequently a factor was selected for community importance.

HEALTH & SOCIAL FACTORS



AFFORDABLE, SAFE, AND STABLE HOUSING

Access to affordable, safe, and stable housing is a vital structural determinant of individual and community health.[10] Housing is considered unaffordable when costs exceed 30% of a household's income, forcing families to compromise on other health-essential needs such as nutritious food, preventative healthcare, and prescription medications.[11] Consequently, adults experiencing housing cost burden are significantly more likely to report fair or poor self-rated health.[12] Furthermore, physical housing quality directly affects physical well-being; secure, well-maintained homes minimize exposure to structural hazards, toxic substances like lead or mold, indoor pests, and respiratory allergens that trigger chronic conditions like asthma.[13] Local survey data reflects these broad national trends, with residents identifying affordable housing as one of the community's most pressing unmet needs (CHNA Community Survey).

Households That Spend 50% or More of Household Income on Housing

County Health Rankings, 2020-2024

10%

Montana = 12%
U.S. = 15%

Mobility in Past Year

NIMHD - HD*Pulse*, 2020-2024

Have not moved	88.0%
Moved, same county	3.9%
Moved, diffent county in state	4.3%
Moved, different state	3.6%
Moved from outside U.S.	0.1%

Median Rent Price in Teton County

U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2024 5-Year Estimates

$730

Montana = $1,081
U.S. = $1,413

Median Home Value in Teton County

U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2024 5-Year Estimates

$264,000

Montana = $375,800
U.S. = $332,700

Owner-Occupied Housing Units in Teton County

County Health Rankings, 2019-2023

75%

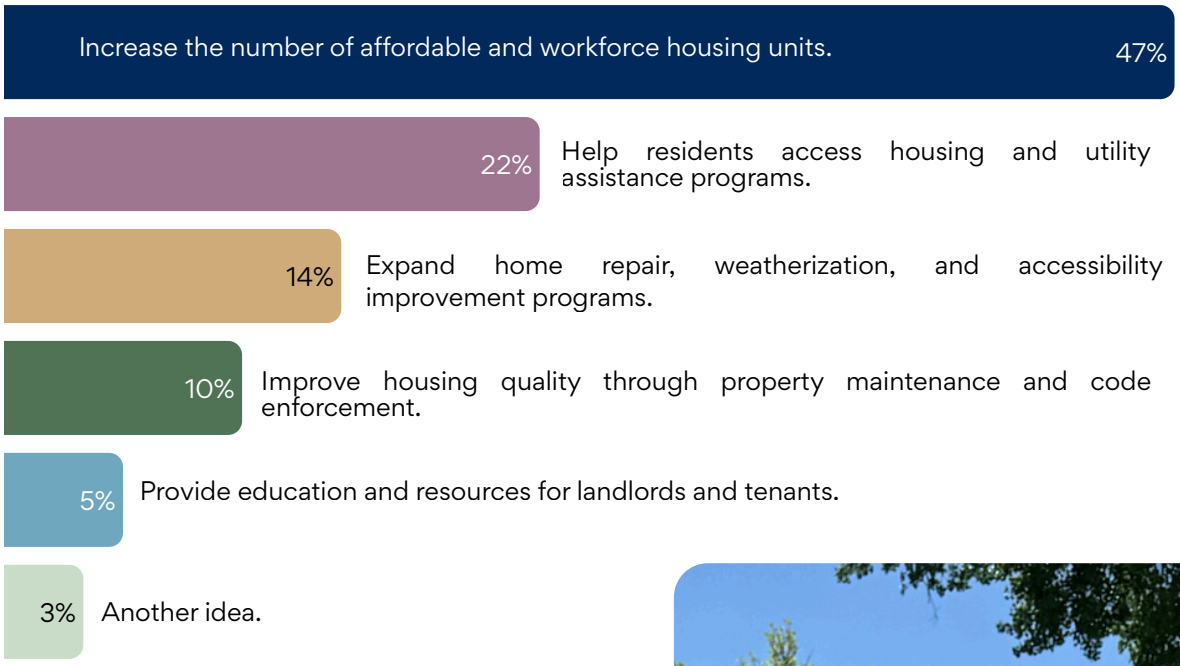
Montana = 69%
U.S. = 65%

AFFORDABLE, SAFE, AND STABLE HOUSING

TETON COUNTY VOICES

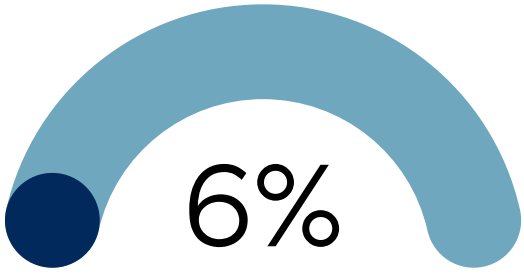
Strategies that Would Make the Greatest Positive Difference

Community Survey, 2026



How Well is Teton County Doing to Grow or Address Affordable Housing?

Key Informant Survey, 2026

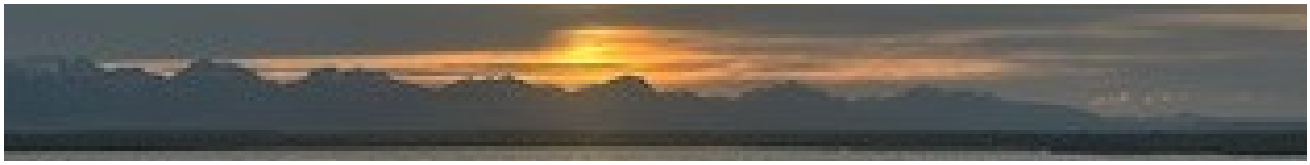


6% of respondents felt that Teton County is Making Good Progress or Well Established in addressing this issue.



ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE SERVICES AND COVERAGE

Access to comprehensive, timely, and affordable healthcare services is essential for promoting physical, mental, and social well-being across all stages of life.[14] Health insurance coverage and local service availability enable individuals to seek routine preventive screenings, manage chronic conditions effectively, and protect against catastrophic medical expenses.[15] When care is readily accessible, communities experience lower rates of avoidable emergency room visits, fewer preventable hospitalizations, and improved overall life expectancy.[16] Conversely, systemic barriers—such as high out-of-pocket costs, severe provider shortages, transportation constraints, and limited specialized care—frequently force individuals to delay or forgo necessary treatment.[17] These challenges are particularly acute in rural areas, where nearly 20% of Americans live and regularly navigate long travel distances and regional health infrastructure shortages to access basic care .[18]



Ratio of Dentists to Teton County Residents

County Health Rankings, 2023

2,140:1

Montana = 1,330:1
U.S. = 1,340:1

Ratio of Mental Health Providers to Teton County Residents

County Health Rankings, 2025

590:1

Montana = 230:1
U.S. = 290:1

Ratio of Primary Care Providers to Teton County Residents

County Health Rankings, 2022

3,180:1

Montana = 1,200:1
U.S. = 1,310:1

Uninsured by Age
County Health Rankings, 2023

	Teton	MT	U.S.
Children <19 years	9%	7%	5%
Adults <65 years	15%	12%	11%



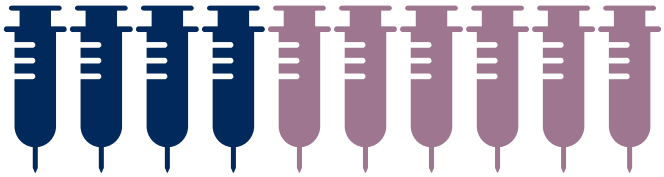
ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE SERVICES AND COVERAGE

SCREENINGS & PREVENTIVE CARE

Routine clinical preventive services—including annual check-ups, regular dental exams, cancer screening, and routine vaccinations—are fundamental to maintaining health and preventing disease across the lifespan.[19] Regular screenings enable healthcare providers to detect chronic conditions and cancers in their earliest, most treatable stages, significantly improving health outcomes and lowering long-term medical costs.[20] Preventive interventions, such as immunizations and routine oral care, not only safeguard individual well-being but also reduce overall community disease burden and prevent emergency care utilization.[21] When paired with healthy daily behaviors like avoiding tobacco and staying physically active, consistent access to routine preventive care establishes a strong foundation for lifelong community health.[19]

Medicare Enrollees who received an annual flu vaccine, Teton County

County Health Rankings, 2023



39%

Montana = 39%
U.S. = 44%

Routine Check Up within Past Year, Teton County Adults

MTDPHHS Community Health Insights Dashboard, 2024

72.1%

Montana = 74.4%

Visited Dentist or Dental Clinic within Past Year, Teton County Adults

MTDPHHS Community Health Insights Dashboard, 2024

63.1%

Montana = 66.8%

Annual Mammogram Among Female Medicare Enrollees, Teton County

County Health Rankings, 2023

54%

Montana = 47%
U.S. = 46%

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE SERVICES AND COVERAGE

CHRONIC DISEASE

Chronic diseases—conditions lasting one year or more that require ongoing medical attention, limit daily activities, or both—are the leading drivers of disability and healthcare costs in the United States.[22] Six in ten American adults live with at least one chronic condition, such as heart disease, cancer, or diabetes, and four in ten manage two or more overlapping conditions.[22] While many chronic illnesses are preventable or manageable through healthy behaviors like physical activity, nutrition, and tobacco avoidance, structural barriers complicate disease management.[14] Specifically, lacking health insurance or reliable healthcare access delays early diagnosis, disrupts continuous care, and increases the likelihood of severe health complications.[15]

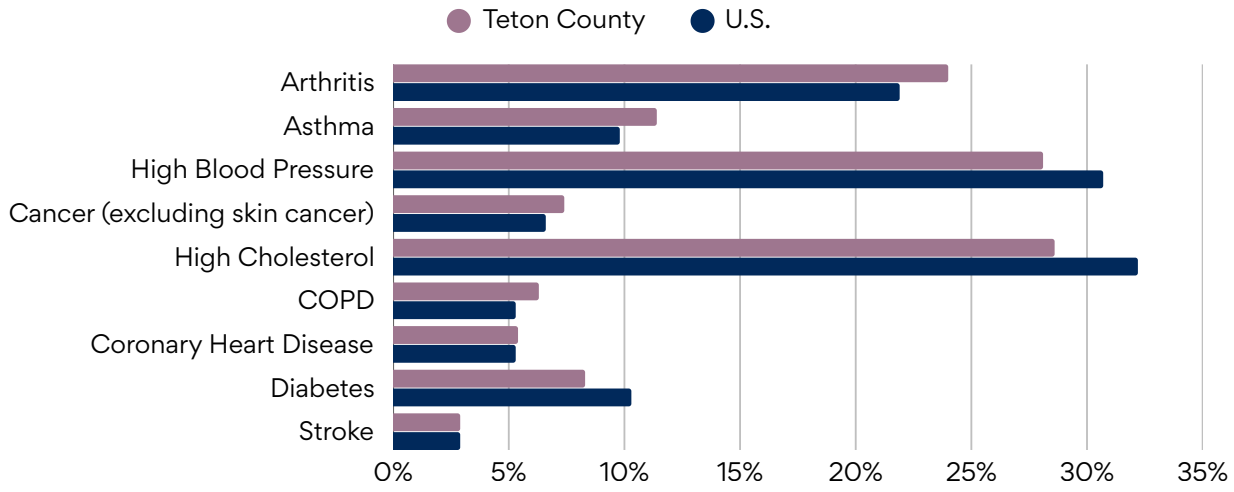
Risk Factors for Chronic Diseases

Chronic disease varies in cause and symptoms, but many share common risk factors.

	Heart Disease	Cancer	Asthma	COPD	Stroke	Diabetes	Dementia
Lack of physical activity	X	X				X	X
Poor nutrition	X	X				X	X
Obesity	X	X	X			X	X
Smoking/secondhand smoke	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Adverse childhood experiences	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Chronic Conditions among Teton County Adults, 2023

CDC Places, 2023



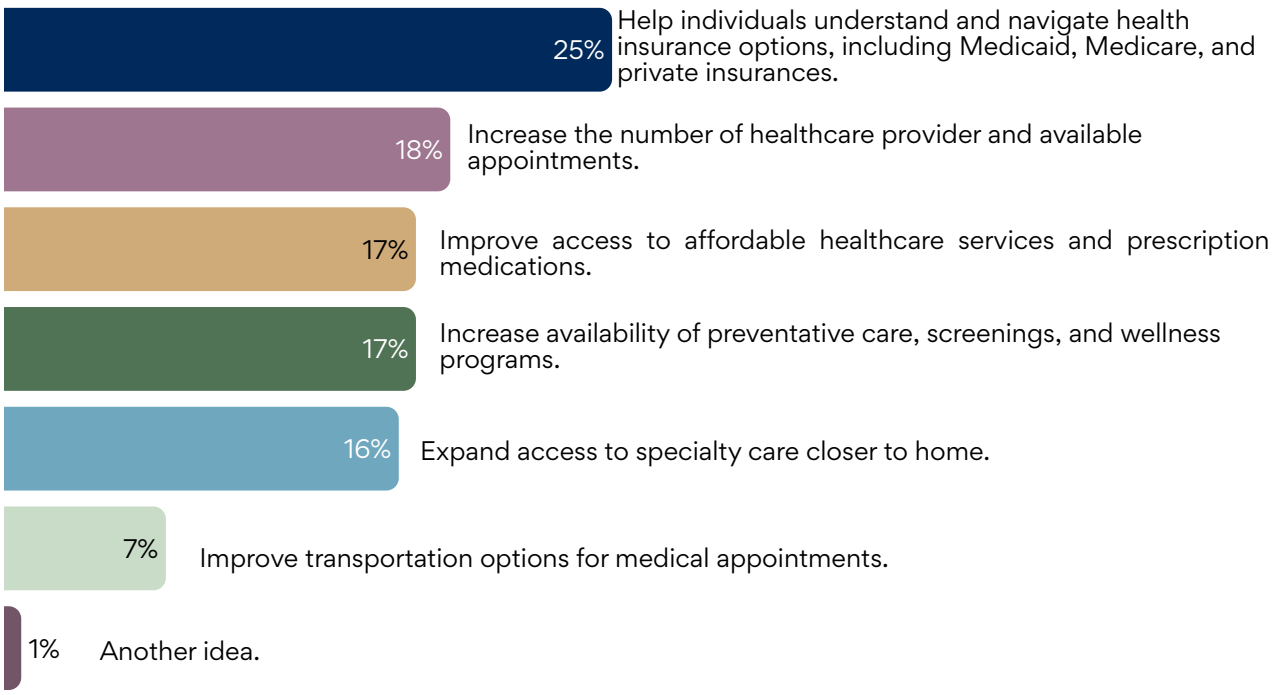
High cholesterol is the most prevalent chronic condition in Teton County adults. High blood pressure is the second-most prevalent condition and arthritis is the third.

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE SERVICES AND COVERAGE

TETON COUNTY VOICES

Strategies that Would Make the Greatest Positive Difference

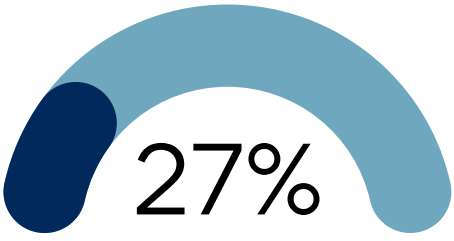
Community Survey, 2026



How Well is Teton County Doing to Grow or Address:

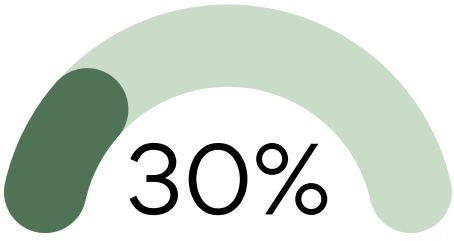
Key Informant Survey, 2026

Mental health & substance use recovery services



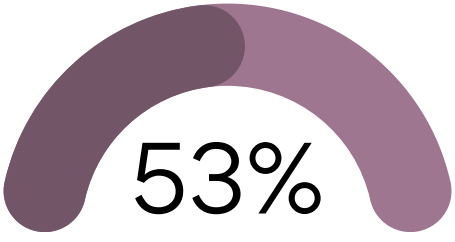
27% of respondents felt that Teton County is Making Good Progress or Well Established in addressing this issue.

Health, dental, and vision insurance coverage



30% of respondents felt that Teton County is Making Good Progress or Well Established in addressing this issue.

Comprehensive medical, dental, and vision care



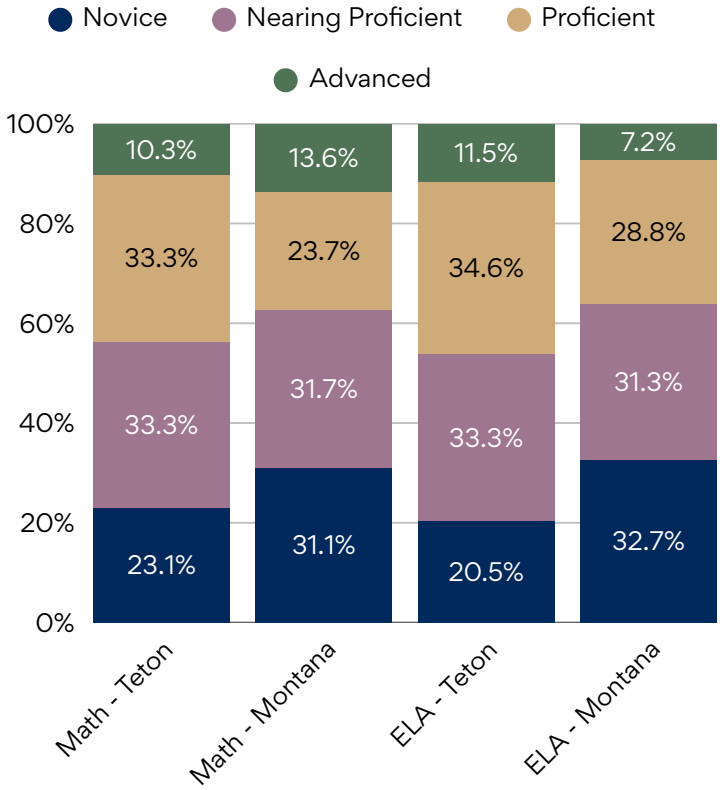
53% of respondents felt that Teton County is Making Good Progress or Well Established in addressing this issue.

ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, QUALITY CHILDCARE PROGRAMS

High-quality early childhood programs—including childcare, preschool, and center-based early learning opportunities—provide safe, stable, and nurturing environments essential for cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.[23] The first five years of life represent a critical developmental window that profoundly influences lifelong health, educational attainment, and well-being.[24] Children who participate in quality early education demonstrate greater school readiness, stronger social-emotional skills, and lower long-term risk for chronic disease.[25] Furthermore, access to affordable, reliable childcare is a core driver of family economic stability, enabling parental employment and reducing financial stress.[26] Investing in early childhood infrastructure serves as an evidence-based strategy that fosters intergenerational health, advances educational equity, and strengthens overall community resilience.[23]

Teton County 3rd Grader Proficiency in Math and English Language Arts, 2024-2025

MT OPI, GEMS



18.9%

Children (under 18) Below Poverty Line Teton County, 2024

U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2024 5-Year Estimates

Montana = 12.7%
U.S. = 16.1%

37%

Average household income spent on childcare for two children

County Health Rankings, 2023-2024

Montana = 41%
U.S. = 28%

6

Licensed Childcare Facilities in Teton County, 2026

MTDPHHS

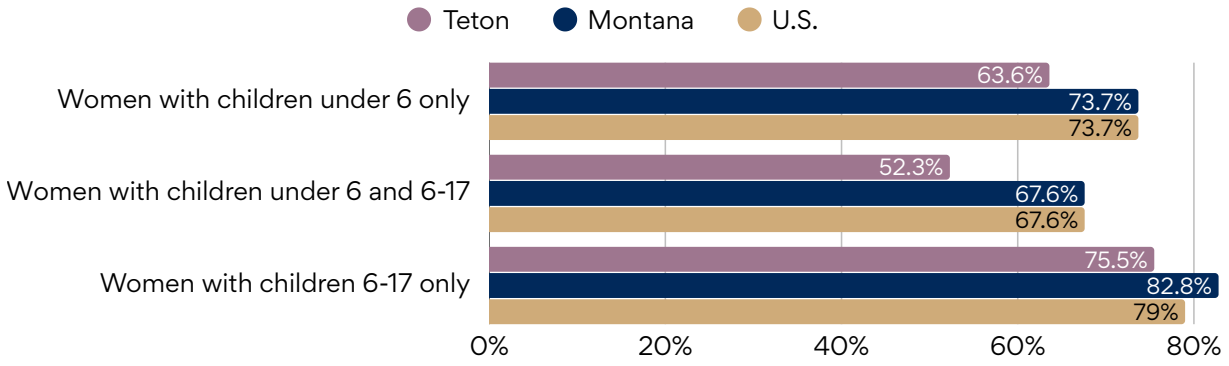
ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, QUALITY CHILDCARE PROGRAMS

MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH & WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE

Maternal and child health—encompassing a woman's well-being before, during, and after pregnancy, alongside the physical, developmental, and social health of children from birth through adolescence—serves as a primary barometer of overall community health.[27] Positive maternal and infant health outcomes create a critical foundation for lifelong health, educational attainment, and emotional resilience.[26] Access to comprehensive prenatal care, preventive pediatric services, and home visiting or family support programs significantly reduces pregnancy-related risks and developmental delays.[28] Furthermore, integrating maternal-child health with support for women in the workforce—particularly through access to affordable childcare and paid family leave—directly promotes family economic stability, enhances labor force participation, and strengthens community-wide economic resilience.[29]

Labor Force Participation Rates, Women Ages 20-64

US Census Bureau, ACS, 2020-2024



Births per 1,000 Women Aged 15-44 in Teton County, 2020-2024

MTDPHHS Community Health Insights Dashboard

71.3

Montana = 53.6

Infants Breastfed at the time of discharge, Teton County, 2020-2024

MTDPHHS Community Health Insights Dashboard

95.3%

Montana = 90.3%

Preterm Births, Teton County, 2020-2024

MTDPHHS Community Health Insights Dashboard

10.1%

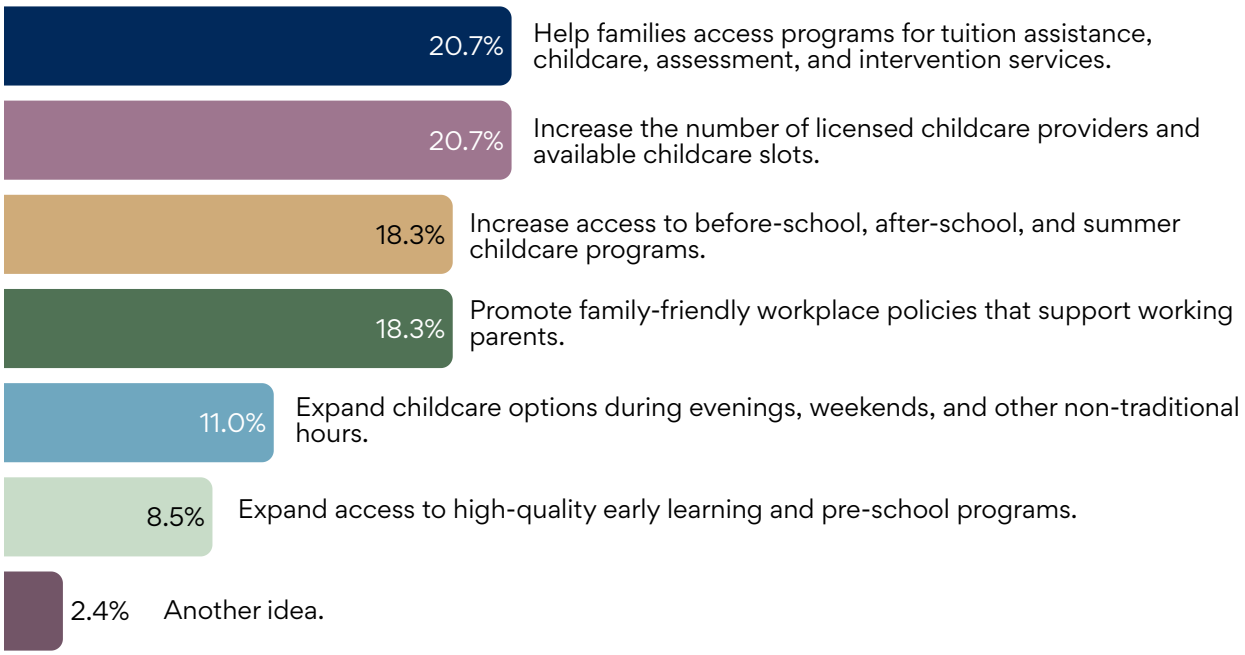
Montana = 9.6%

ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, QUALITY CHILDCARE PROGRAMS

TETON COUNTY VOICES

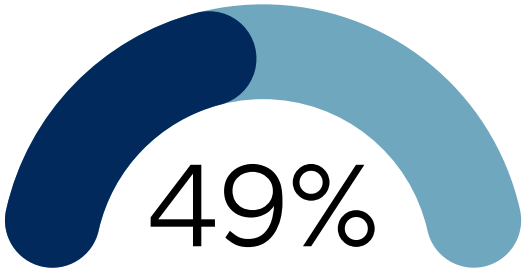
Strategies that Would Make the Greatest Positive Difference

Community Survey, 2026



How Well is Teton County Doing to Grow or Address Access to Affordable, Quality Childcare Programs?

Key Informant Survey, 2026



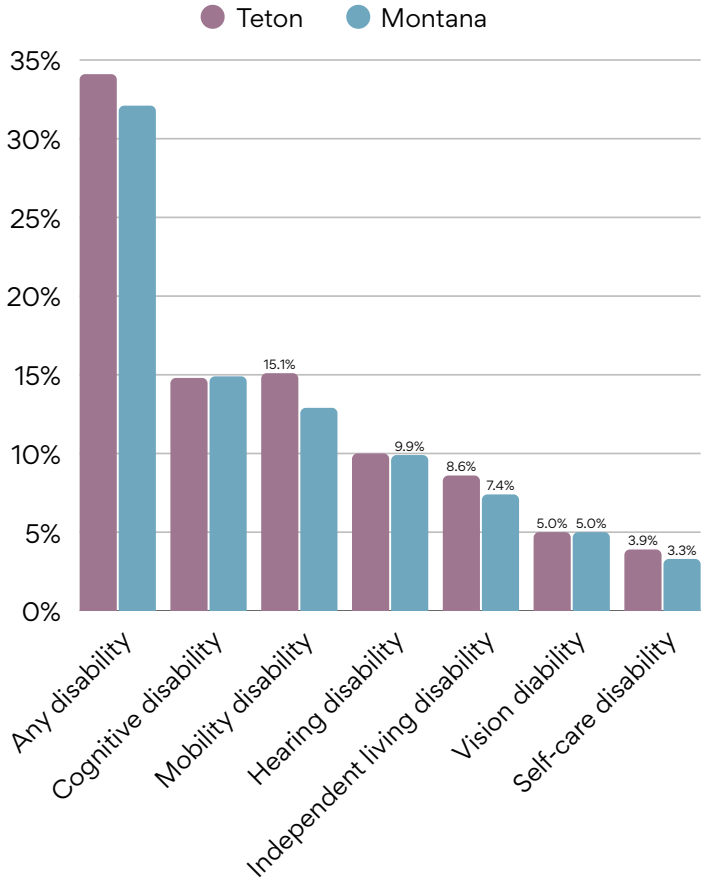
49% of respondents felt that Teton County is Making Good Progress or Well Established in addressing this issue.



SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR OLDER ADULTS AND CAREGIVERS

As the proportion of adults aged 65 and older continues to grow nationwide, investing in supportive infrastructure for aging populations and their caregivers has become essential for overall community resilience.[30] As individuals age, they face higher risks of chronic conditions, mobility challenges, falls, and cognitive decline, many of which can be effectively managed or prevented through early intervention and community-based health services.[31] Family caregivers serve as the backbone of this support system, providing vital daily assistance that enables older adults to maintain their independence, stay engaged, and age in place safely.[32] However, sustaining caregiver well-being requires deliberate community investment; establishing policies, transportation options, financial security resources, and caregiver respite programs mitigates caregiver burden, preserves quality of life, and fosters an age-friendly environment where all residents can thrive.[33]

Disability Among Adults, 2024
MTDPHHS Community Health Insights Dashboard



22.9%
Teton County Population Ages 65 and Older
County Health Rankings, 2023

Montana = 20.5%
U.S. = 17.7%

8.6%
Seniors (65+) below Poverty Line in Teton County, 2024
U.S. Census Bureau, ACS, 2024 5-Year Estimates

Montana = 9.9%
U.S. = 10.8%

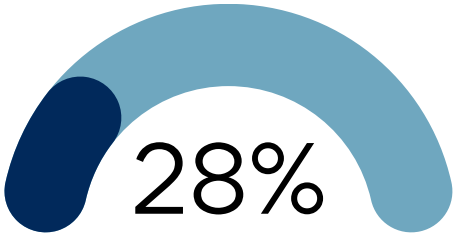
77%
Adults reporting that they always or usually get the social and emotional support they need.
County Health Rankings, 2023

Montana = 78%
U.S. = 76%

SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR OLDER ADULTS AND CAREGIVERS

No Leisure Time Physical Activity, Adults, Teton County

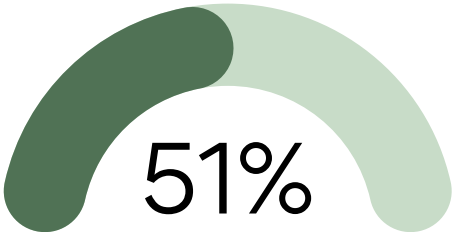
County Health Rankings, 2023



Montana = 20%

Adequate Access to Locatons for Physcal Activity

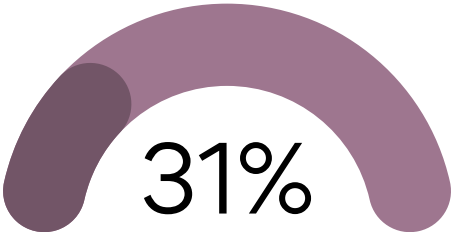
County Health Rankings, 2020-2024



Montana = 74%

Adult Obesity in Teton County

County Health Rankings, 2023



Montana = 33%

Non-fatal ED Visits for Unintentional Falls, Teton County, 2025

MTDPHHS Injury & Overdose Dashboard

151

Deaths Related to Unintentional Falls, Teton County, 2021-2025

MTDPHHS Injury & Overdose Dashboard

14

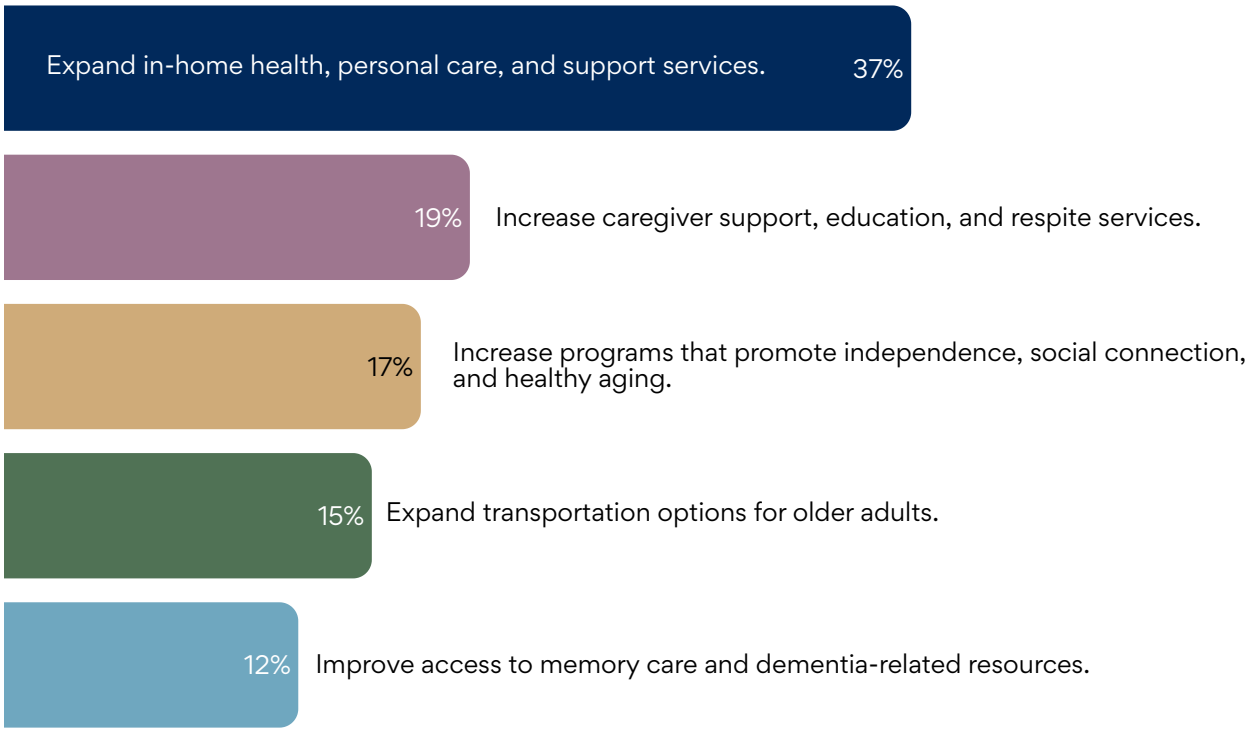


SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR OLDER ADULTS AND CAREGIVERS

TETON COUNTY VOICES

Strategies that Would Make the Greatest Positive Difference

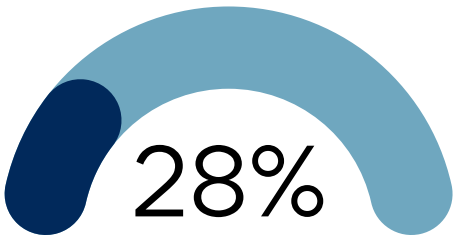
Community Survey, 2026



How Well is Teton County Doing to Grow or Address:

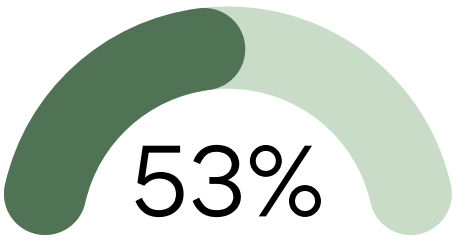
Key Informant Survey, 2026

Home health and care coordination



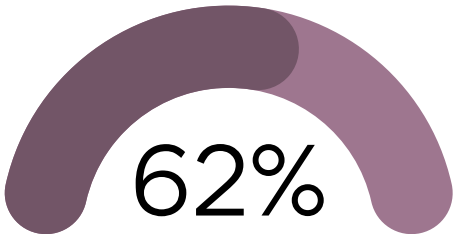
28% of respondents felt that Teton County is Making Good Progress or Well Established in addressing this issue.

Management of long-term conditions



53% of respondents felt that Teton County is Making Good Progress or Well Established in addressing this issue.

Health education/ prevention activities



62% of respondents felt that Teton County is Making Good Progress or Well Established in addressing this issue.

MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE MISUSE, & CRISIS INTERVENTION

Mental health—encompassing emotional, psychological, and social well-being—is foundational to overall health, directly influencing how individuals manage stress, build relationships, and make daily health choices.[34] Mental and physical health are deeply interconnected; conditions like depression significantly increase the risk for chronic physical diseases like heart disease and diabetes, while managing chronic physical illness conversely heightens susceptibility to mental health conditions.[35] Substance misuse frequently co-occurs with unaddressed mental distress, underscoring the critical need for accessible behavioral health services and responsive crisis intervention infrastructure.[36] While mental health challenges affect individuals across all demographics, certain rural populations face heightened risks due to distinct regional factors such as geographic isolation, severe weather disruptions, economic volatility, access to lethal means, and critical shortages of local mental health professionals.[37, 38]

1,608

Montana Suicide Deaths, 2020-2024
DPHHS Community Health Insights Dashboard

918

Montana Drug Overdose Deaths, 2020-2024
DPHHS Community Health Insights Dashboard

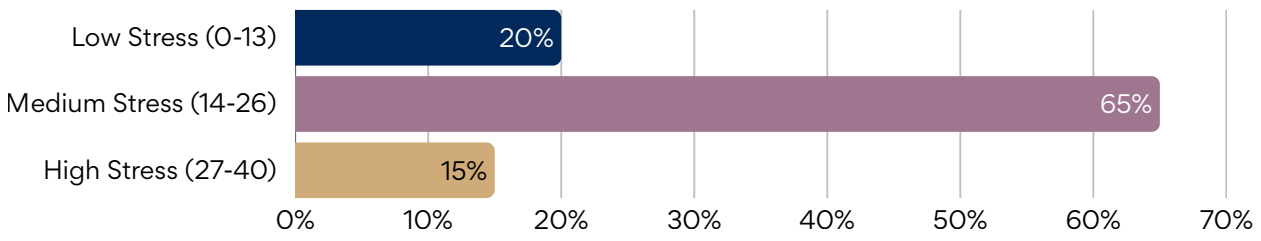
35.0%

Frequent Mental Distress in Teton County Adults, 2024
DPHHS Community Health Insights Dashboard
Montana = 32.2%

36.1%

Binge Drinking Among Teton County Adults, 2024
DPHHS Community Health Insights Dahboard
Montana = 34.0%

Montana Agricultural Producers Perceived Stress Score
WRASAP Baseline Survey, farmstress.us



MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE MISUSE, & CRISIS INTERVENTION

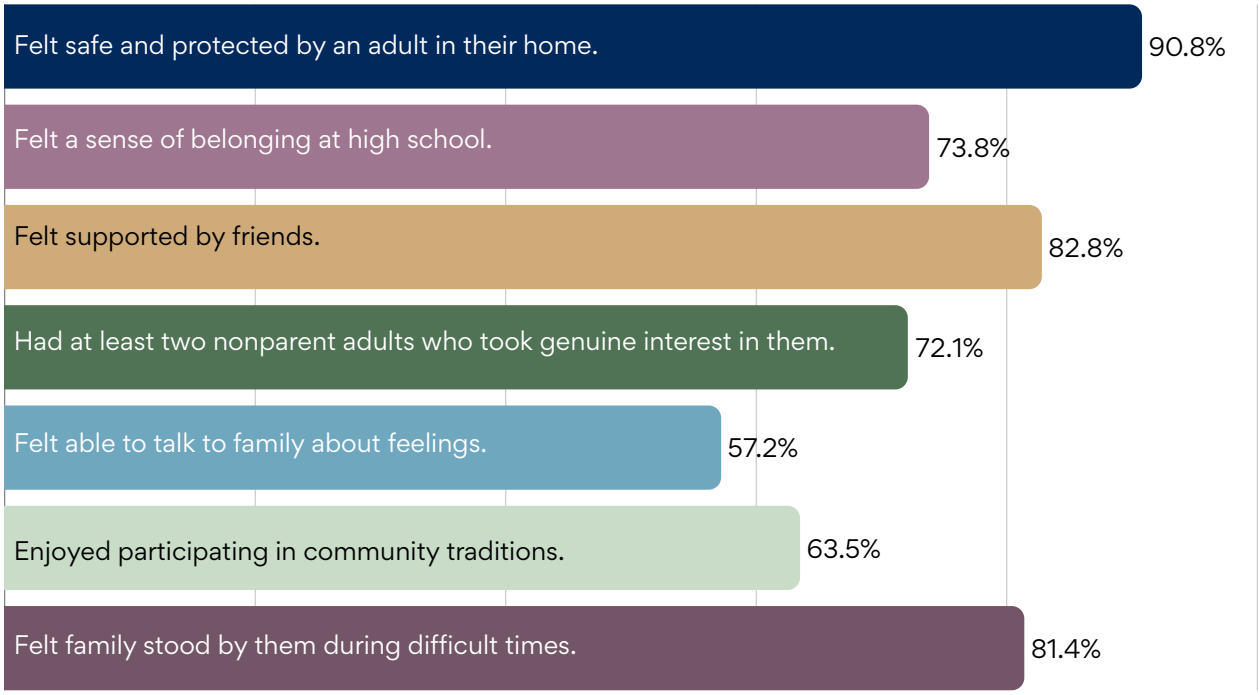
POSITIVE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)—nurturing relationships, supportive social networks, and safe community environments—help children feel secure, connected, and valued.[39] Key factors include having trusted adults outside the home, a strong sense of school belonging, and reliable friendships.[40] Research demonstrates that PCEs foster psychological resilience and significantly enhance lifelong health, resulting in better adult mental health outcomes, stronger social connection, and reduced risk of chronic illness.[41] Importantly, positive experiences serve as a powerful protective buffer, helping to mitigate the long-term biological and psychological impacts of early childhood adversity and trauma.[42]

Membership organizations per 10,000 people
County Health Rankings, 2023-2024

21.8
Montana = 18.8
US = 9.1

Adults who very often or often experienced PCEs as a child, Montana, 2019
Montana BRFSS, 2019

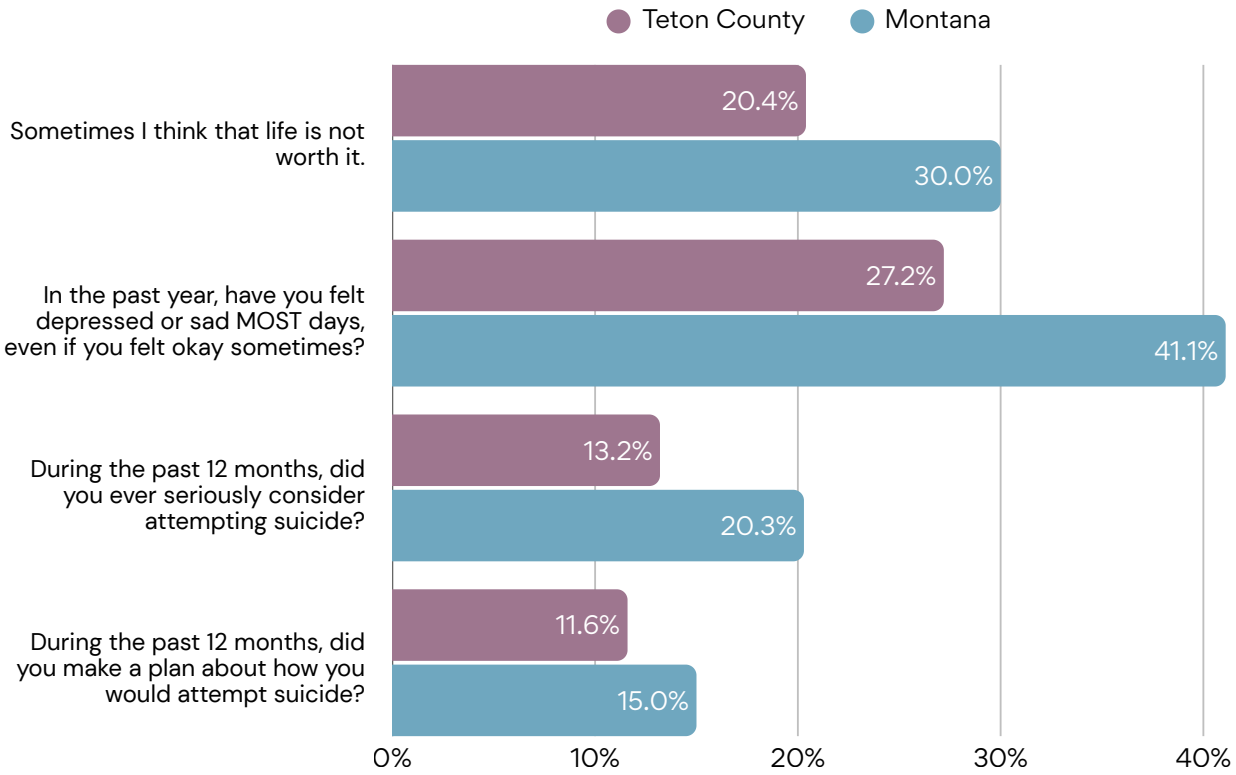


MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE MISUSE, & CRISIS INTERVENTION



Depression & Suicide Symptoms in Youth, Teton County

Prevention Needs Assessment, 2024



Youth who could ask parents for help with a personal problem

Prevention Needs Assessment, 2024

86.1%

Montana = 79.7%

Youth who feel teachers notice when they are doing a good job and let them know

Prevention Needs Assessment, 2024

76.5%

Montana = 70.0%

Youth with people in their neighborhood who encourage them to do their best

Prevention Needs Assessment, 2024

57.0%

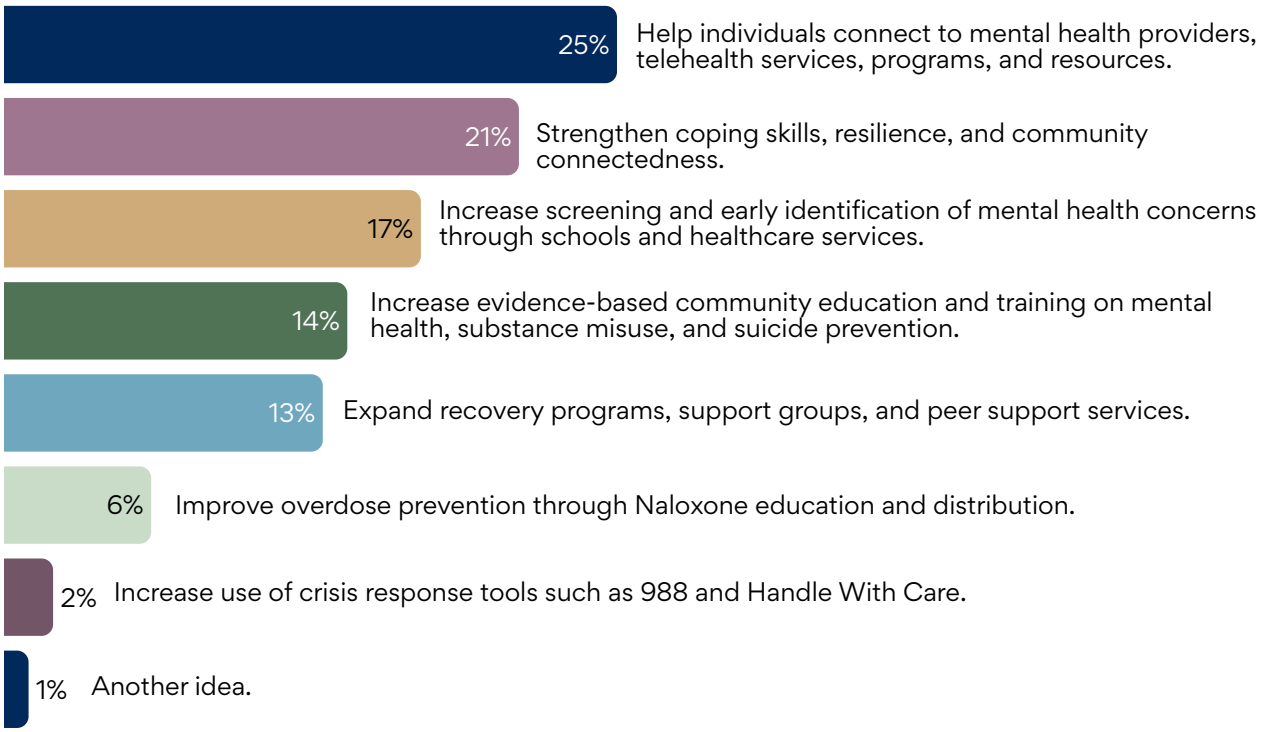
Montana = 40.2%

MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE MISUSE, & CRISIS INTERVENTION

TETON COUNTY VOICES

Strategies that Would Make the Greatest Positive Difference

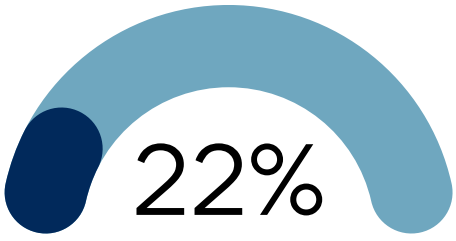
Community Survey, 2026



How Well is Teton County Doing to Grow or Address:

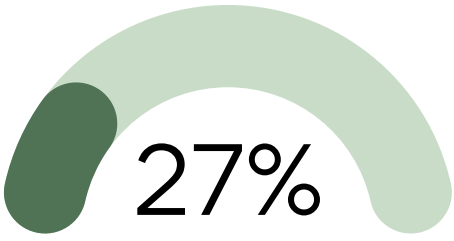
Key Informant Survey, 2026

Substance misuse support



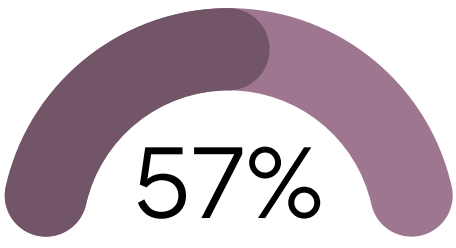
22% of respondents felt that Teton County is Making Good Progress or Well Established in addressing this issue.

Stress, anxiety, depression management, & education



27% of respondents felt that Teton County is Making Good Progress or Well Established in addressing this issue.

Social support & connection



57% of respondents felt that Teton County is Making Good Progress or Well Established in addressing this issue.

POSITIVE YOUTH DECISION-MAKING SKILLS AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Most young people make positive, healthy choices every day that support their growth and long-term well-being.[43] Comprehensive health education builds on these existing strengths by providing youth with the tools, knowledge, and self-efficacy to sustain positive health behaviors—including regular physical activity, balanced nutrition, and remaining substance- and tobacco-free.[44]

Skill-based health education also strengthens social-emotional assets, empowering youth to cultivate respectful, healthy relationships and navigate personal boundaries and sexual health with confidence.[45] Fostering protective environments and celebrating positive youth decision-making reinforces healthy community norms, driving lifelong health, resilience, and success across the lifespan.[44]

Physically Active at Least 60 Minutes per Day at Least 5 Days per Week, Youth

67.2%

Montana = 51.6%

Youth Very or Slightly Overweight in Teton County

24%

Montana = 31%



Youth Binge Drinking, Teton County

14.1%

Montana = 13.4%

Youth Current Smoking, Teton County

6.5%

Montana = 6.9%

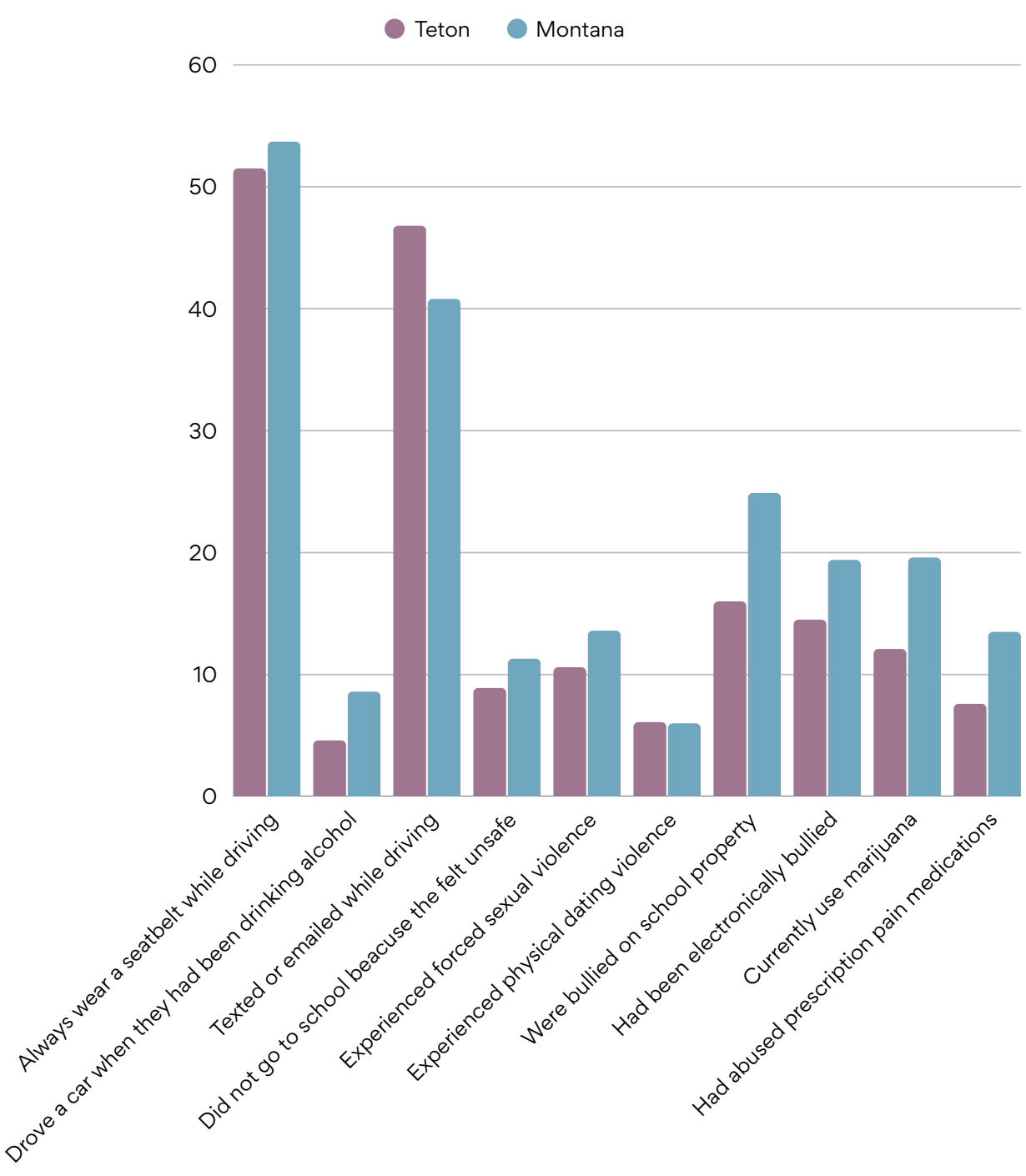
Youth Current Vaping, Teton County

21.4%

Montana = 24.3%

Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2023

POSITIVE YOUTH DECISION-MAKING SKILLS AND HEALTH EDUCATION

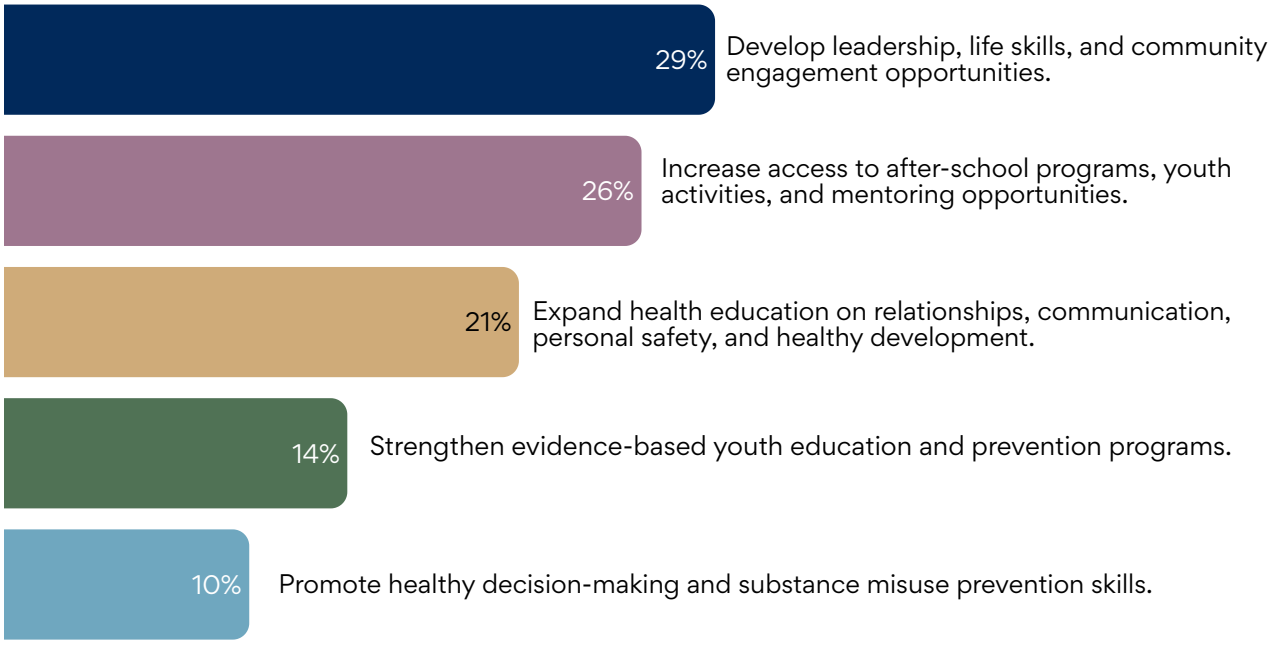


POSITIVE YOUTH DECISION-MAKING SKILLS AND HEALTH EDUCATION

TETON COUNTY VOICES

Strategies that Would Make the Greatest Positive Difference

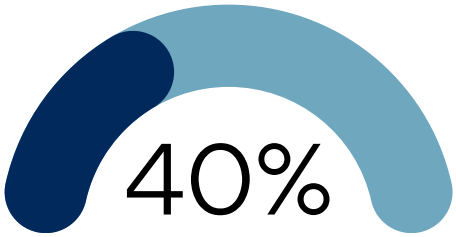
Community Survey, 2026



How Well is Teton County Doing to Grow or Address:

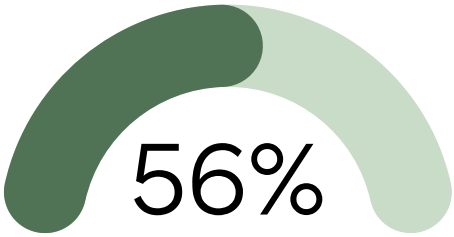
Key Informant Survey, 2026

Resources for families



40% of respondents felt that Teton County is Making Good Progress or Well Established in addressing this issue.

Positive youth decision-making & health education



56% of respondents felt that Teton County is Making Good Progress or Well Established in addressing this issue.



FOOD SECURITY AND ACCESS TO FRESH, NUTRITIOUS FOOD

FOOD SECURITY

Food security—consistent access to sufficient, nutritious food for an active and healthy life—is a fundamental social determinant of health and community well-being.[46] Food insecurity disrupts daily dietary patterns and severely limits access to nutrient-dense foods, significantly elevating the risk for chronic physical and mental health conditions including type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and depression.[47]

In rural areas, challenges such as geographic isolation, long travel distances to full-service grocery stores, and volatile household budgets further compound these risks.[48] Addressing food insecurity requires robust local partnerships, school meal initiatives, food pantries, and federal nutrition assistance programs (such as SNAP and WIC) that work collectively to improve food affordability and access, ultimately fostering lifelong health and economic resilience across the community.[47]

Food Insecurity Rate, Teton County, 2024

Feeding America

12.6%

Montana = 13.8%

U.S. = 14.4%

SNAP Eligibility Among Food Insecure People in Teton County

Feeding America





FOOD SECURITY AND ACCESS TO FRESH, NUTRITIOUS FOOD

NUTRITION

Good nutrition is fundamental to health and well-being across every stage of life, playing a central role in preventing and managing chronic conditions such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and certain cancers.[49] Following healthy dietary patterns—such as those detailed in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans—provides essential nutrients that support immune function, physical vitality, and cognitive health.[50] However, an individual's ability to maintain a nutritious diet is heavily shaped by external factors, including household income, local food environments, transportation options, and food literacy.[48] Strengthening community-level infrastructure—such as expanding local farm-to-table partnerships, nutrition education, and affordable healthy food options—empowers individuals to make sustainable, health-promoting choices.[51]

83.1%

Montana Adults Consumed 1 or More Vegetables per Day

NIMHD - HDPulse, 2020-2024



28.9%

Teton County Youth Ate Breakfast Daily

Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2023

Montana = 26.2%

11.9%

Teton County Youth Drank Soda Daily

Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2023

Montana = 15.0%

37.1%

Teton County Youth Were Trying to Lose Weight

Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2023

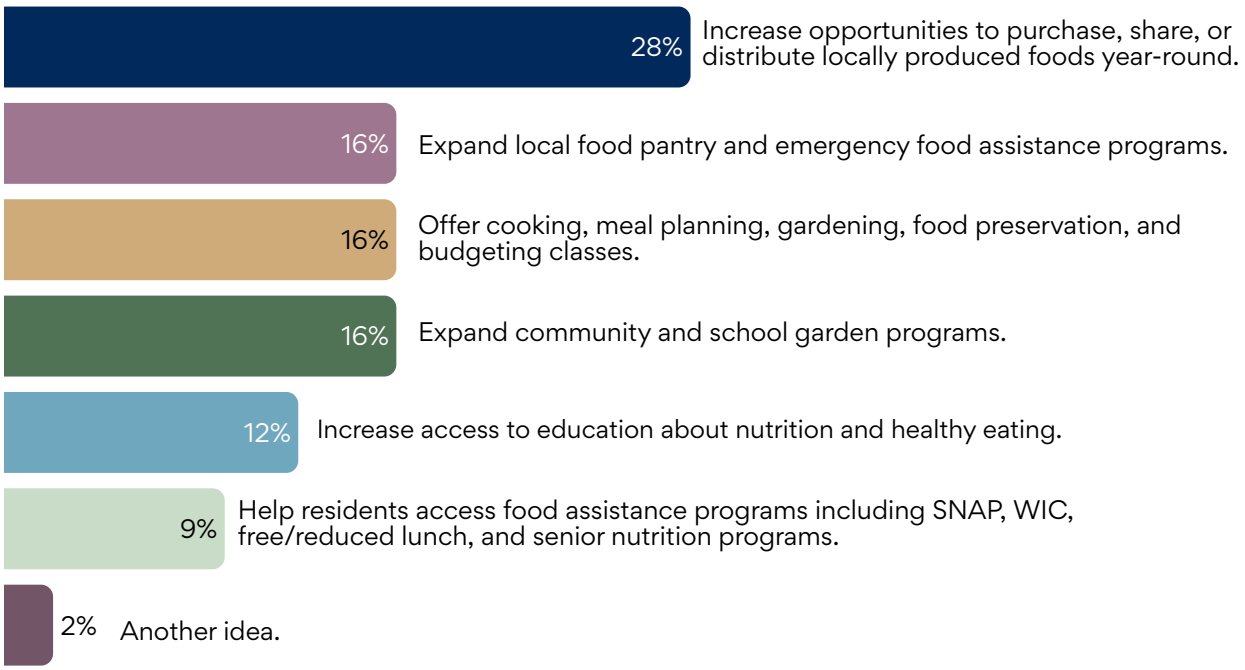
Montana = 41.3%

FOOD SECURITY AND ACCESS TO FRESH, NUTRITIOUS FOOD

TETON COUNTY VOICES

Strategies that Would Make the Greatest Positive Difference

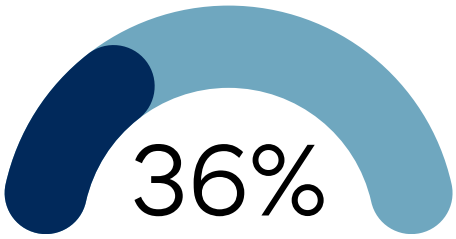
Community Survey, 2026



How Well is Teton County Doing to Grow or Address:

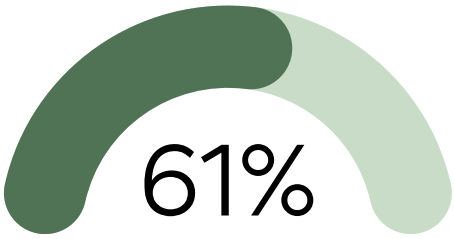
Key Informant Survey, 2026

Food security



36% of respondents felt that Teton County is Making Good Progress or Well Established in addressing this issue.

Nutrition education & opportunities daily physical activity



61% of respondents felt that Teton County is Making Good Progress or Well Established in addressing this issue.



EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONSE SERVICES

A robust workforce of primary care providers, behavioral health specialists, dentists, nurses, EMS personnel, and first responders forms the backbone of community safety and health system resilience.[52] However, rural regions frequently grapple with systemic staffing shortages that jeopardize timely access to routine, specialty, and life-saving emergency medical services.[53] These shortages carry concrete regional impacts: as of June 2026, Montana requires an additional 72 primary care physicians, 31 dentists, and 55 mental health providers to eliminate all federal Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) designations statewide.[52] To bridge these critical gaps, rural communities rely on targeted workforce development, recruitment and retention incentives, cross-agency first responder partnerships, and expanded telehealth infrastructure to sustain essential services and safeguard community well-being.[54]

A strong health care and EMS workforce is supported by:

- Affordable housing
- Competitive wages and benefits
- Workforce development and training opportunities
- Access to childcare and family supports
- Professional mentorship and career advancement opportunities
- Community support and volunteer engagement
- Strong health care and emergency response infrastructure
- Telehealth and innovative service delivery models
- Recruitment and retention initiatives for rural providers and first responders

Unintentional Motor Vehicle Deaths, 2020-2024

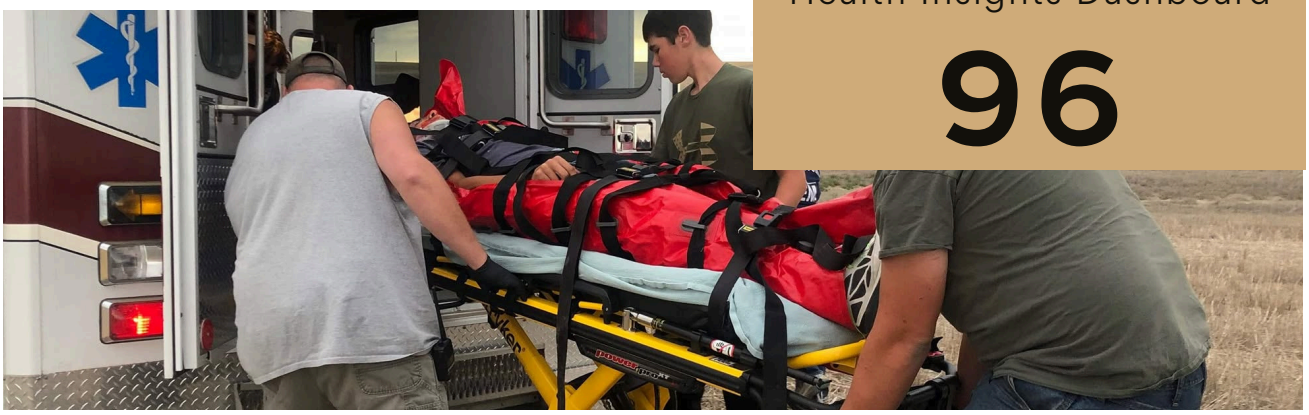
MTDPHHS Community Health Insights Dashboard

7

Non-Fatal Motor Vehicle Crash ED Visits, 2020-2024

MTDPHHS Community Health Insights Dashboard

96



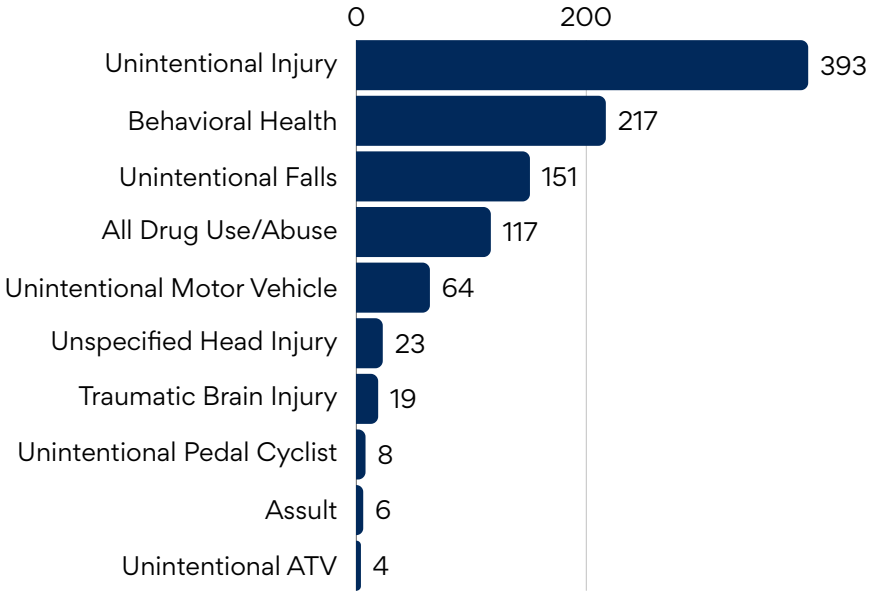
EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONSE SERVICES

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Safe communities provide the essential baseline for physical, mental, and social well-being, creating environments where residents can live, work, learn, and play without fear of harm or injury.[55] Safe, stable, and predictable surroundings are particularly crucial for youth, directly supporting healthy brain development and mitigating long-term emotional or behavioral challenges.[56] Community safety is strongly reinforced by high levels of social cohesion, mutual trust among neighbors, and active civic participation, all of which build local resilience and serve as protective buffers against crime and isolation.[57] Ultimately, sustaining safe neighborhoods requires combining equitable economic opportunities, accessible public spaces, and collaborative support services that improve overall quality of life for all residents.[56]

Nonfatal ED Visits, Teton County, 2025

MTDPHHS Injury & Overdose Dashboard



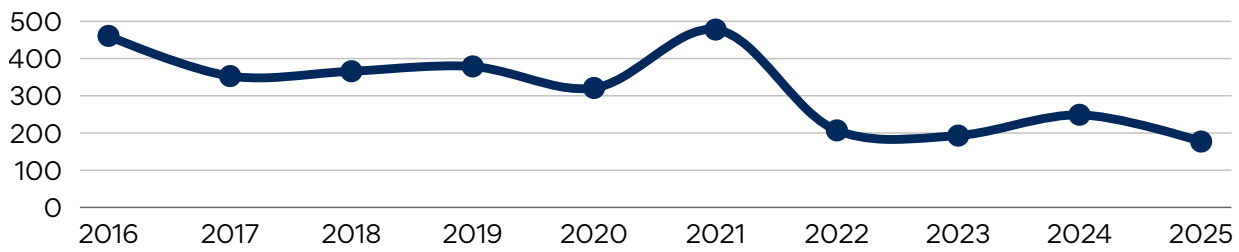
Injury Related Deaths, Teton County, 2021-2025

MTDPHHS Injury & Overdose dashboard

	Deaths
Unintentional Injuries	29
Traumatic Brain Injury	18
Unintentional Falls	14
Alcohol Related	14
Suicide	9

10-Year Offense Rate (per 10,000), Teton County

MBCC - Crime Dashboard (mt.gov)

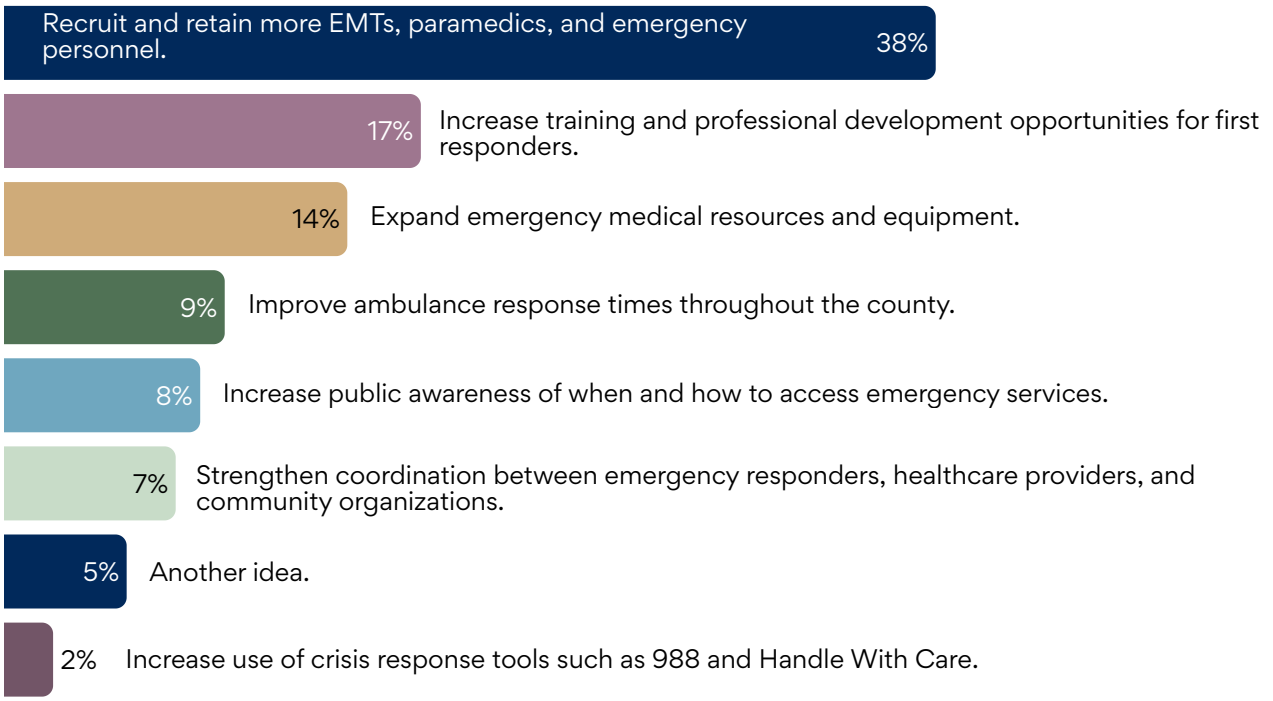


EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONSE SERVICES

TETON COUNTY VOICES

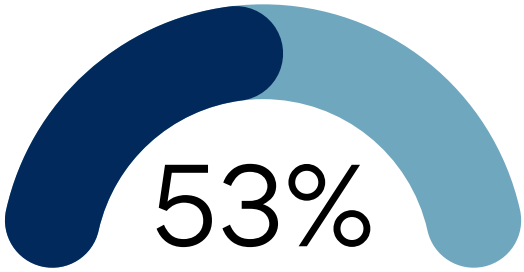
Strategies that Would Make the Greatest Positive Difference

Community Survey, 2026



How Well is Teton County Doing to Grow or Address Emergency Medical Response Services?

Key Informant Survey, 2026



53% of respondents felt that Teton County is Making Good Progress or Well Established in addressing this issue.



COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT DATA SUMMARY

Potential Priority Areas	Key Informant Survey Findings	Community Survey Findings	Secondary Data	Previous CHIP	2026 CHIP Stakeholders
Affordable, Safe, & Stable Housing					
Access to Healthcare Services and Coverage					
Access to Afforable, Quality Childcare Programs					
Services and Support for Older Adults and Caregivers					
Mental Health, Substance Misuse, & Crisis Intervention					
Positive Youth Decision Making & Health Education					
Food Security & Access to Nutritious Food					
Emergency Medical Response Services					

This Community Health Needs Assessment provides a vital snapshot of Teton County's current health landscape by combining robust secondary health data with direct insight from our key informant and community members. Identifying high-need areas like Access to Healthcare Services, Housing, and Behavioral Health is essential, but data alone does not dictate our path forward. Moving from assessment to action requires selecting health priorities that our community is genuinely motivated to tackle and has the resources, readiness, and capacity to address effectively.

Addressing these complex health challenges requires solutions that go beyond the capacity of any single agency. Armed with the findings of this report, Teton County will launch the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) process to mobilize local partners and set shared goals. True health improvement depends on deep cross-sectoral collaboration, bringing together healthcare providers, public health officials, local government, community organizations, and residents to pool resources and align our efforts. We welcome your continued partnership and engagement as we work together to build a healthier, more resilient Teton County.

COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN

OVERVIEW OF THE CHIP PROCESS

In the September 2026, the Teton County Health Department brought together a group of community stakeholders to evaluate local strengths and identify areas that need improvement. A Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) serves as a long-term, systematic strategy to address the issues highlighted in the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). The CHIP's aim is to outline how the local health department and the community will collaborate to enhance the health of the county's population. Community members, stakeholders, and partners can utilize the CHIP to set priorities, allocate resources, and develop and implement projects, programs, and policies. This plan details strategies to bolster the health of county residents over the next three years.

STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION PROCESS

A structured small-group discussion process was conducted to support comprehensive interpretation of the assessment findings. Stakeholders representing diverse sectors of the community were organized into small groups to review key data elements from the CHNA and provide contextual insight based on their professional experience and community knowledge.

Each group was guided by a set of structured questions designed to promote systematic reflection on the identified health issues, disparities, populations adversely affected, and contributing factors. Participants examined quantitative and qualitative data, discussed observed trends, and identified areas requiring further exploration or action. To ensure consistent documentation, groups recorded their responses to each question set. This approach strengthened the validity of the qualitative input and contributed to a transparent assessment process grounded in community perspective.

Given the CHA findings, what key issues should our community prioritize for collective action?

A facilitator encouraged full participation to ensure that multiple viewpoints informed the interpretation of findings. Each group selected a representative to share a summary of key insights during a structured report-out session. This collective interpretation helped validate emerging themes, clarified community priorities, and enhanced the accuracy and relevance of the CHA.

OVERVIEW OF THE CHIP PROCESS

The small-group discussion process contributed directly to the CHA's goal of developing a comprehensive understanding of community health needs, supporting broader efforts to maintain collaborative monitoring of population health trends.

ACTION-ORIENTED NEXT STEPS

Following the small-group discussions, stakeholders self-selected a priority area for deeper exploration. Within these focus areas, participants refined preliminary next steps by identifying responsible parties, necessary resources, and anticipated timelines. This information will be integrated into the ongoing 2026 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) development. This integration provides essential continuity, ensuring community input remains central to future planning even for stakeholders unable to attend the September 2026 CHNA review meeting.

While conversations spanned a wide range of topics, priority discussions centered on the following areas:

- Collaborative Community Resources
- Resource Navigation
- Mental Health Capacity
- Food Access
- Affordable Housing
- Multi-Generational Care







OVERVIEW OF THE CHIP PROCESS

Core partner agencies, Teton County Public Health, Benefis Teton Medical Center (BTMC), MSU Extension Teton County, and the Teton County Community Alliance for Resiliency and Educational Support (Teton County CARES), met to organize and synthesize input from the CHIP stakeholder meeting. The team merged strategic directions and refined objectives to align with SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound). The core partner agencies specifically evaluated strategies based on impact, feasibility, and buy-in, while ensuring alignment with the 2025 CHIP cycle. A final draft of the CHIP document was sent to key partner agencies to solicit feedback, secure commitments, and make final adjustments prior to publication.

CHIP STAKEHOLDERS

Twenty-six community members participated in a facilitated CHIP meeting, representing the following agencies:

- Alluvion Health
- Benefis Teton Medical Center
- Bynum School District
- Choteau Acantha
- Choteau Public Schools
- Choteau Soroptimists
- Choteau United Methodist Church
- Choteau Youth Alliance
- City of Choteau
- City of Fairfield
- Dutton Community Member
- Fairfield Food Pantry
- Front Range Family Psychiatry
- Montana State University Extension Services
- Neighbors Helping Neighbors
- Opportunities, Inc.
- Power Community Member
- Rocky Mountain Front Community Foundation
- Teton County Board of Commissioners
- Teton County Community Alliance for Resilience and Educational Support
- Teton County Emergency Medical Services
- Teton County Food Pantry
- Teton County Health Department
- Teton County Health Officer
- Teton County Sheriff's Office
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

CHIP PRIORITY AREAS

Grounded in feedback from local stakeholders and community assessment data, Teton County's Community Health Improvement Plan focuses on two core priorities: Community Connection & Resiliency Across the Lifespan and Resource Coordination & Infrastructure. Addressing the realities of our frontier landscape requires a dual approach—building strong social connections that reduce isolation and stigma across every stage of life, while simultaneously constructing the cross-agency infrastructure needed to streamline food access, health navigation, and family support systems. By focusing collective energy on these complementary goals, Teton County establishes a sustainable framework where residents, families, and service providers can adapt and flourish together.

Priority Area 1: Community Connections & Resiliency Across the Lifespan			
Objective 1.1 Community Connection & Stigma Reduction	**Objective 1.2** Early Childhood, Youth, & Family Support	**Objective 1.3** Aging Adult & Caregiver Support	**Objective 1.4** Workforce, First Responder, & Provider Capacity

Priority Area 2: Resource Coordination & Infrastructure		
Objective 2.1 Resource Navigation & Health Access	**Objective 2.2** Food Security & Basic Needs	**Objective 2.3** Infrastructure & Family Supports

PRIORITY AREA 1:
COMMUNITY CONNECTION & RESILIENCY ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

GOAL

Cultivate a connected, supportive county-wide environment that strengthens resilience, reduces social isolation, and lowers mental health stigma across all stages of life—from early childhood through older adulthood.

OBJECTIVES

1.1	**Community Connection & Resource Awareness** By December 31, 2027, Teton County CARES and partner agencies will deliver unified, consistent mental health and wellness messaging through at least 4 new or existing community events, reaching a minimum of 300 community members to increase local resource awareness.
1.2	**Early Childhood, Youth, & Family Support** By December 31, 2028, partner agencies (including school districts, Teton County Health Department, and youth organizations) will implement positive childhood experience (PCE) initiatives, early childhood support programs, and integrated school-based mental health screenings across 100% of Teton County school districts.
1.3	**Aging Adults & Caregiver Supports** By December 31, 2028, establish or expand at least 2 dedicated support initiatives for older adults and their caregivers—such as respite care provider trainings, healthy aging resource guides, or senior-focused social connection programs.
1.4	**Workforce, First Responder, & Provider Capacity** By December 31, 2027, deliver at least 4 specialized resiliency and crisis-response trainings (e.g., Mental Health First Aid, CIT, ACES/trauma-informed care, Love & Logic) to train a minimum of 40 local service providers, first responders, and educators.

KEY PARTNER AGENCIES

Italicized indicates potential partners
Bold indicates lead partners

- Alluvion Health
- *Area II Agency on Aging*
- Benefis Teton Medical Center
- Choteau Acantha
- *Choteau Lions Club*
- Choteau Youth Alliance
- Fairfield Food Pantry
- Faith Based Organizations
- Local Volunteer Fire Departments
- *Many Rivers Whole Health*
- **MSU Extension**
- *North Central Crisis Coalition*
- *Senior Centers*
- *Sober Life*
- **Teton Countu CARES**
- *Teton County EMS*
- **Teton County Public Health**
- *Teton County School Districts*
- *Teton County Sheriff's Office*

PRIORITY AREA 1:
COMMUNITY CONNECTION & RESILIENCY ACROSS THE LIFESPAN





The following list of general strategies were identified by key stakeholders at the 2026 CHIP Meeting, which can be used to achieve the objectives in this priority area.

GENERAL STRATEGIES

Bold indicates potential policy change

- **Encourage screen-free school environments and time constraints on school-issued devices.**
- Expand exposure to trade careers, medical/behavioral health career tracks, and mental health scholarships for high school students.
- Foster positive childhood experiences (PCEs) centered around local community traditions and connections with trusted adults.
- Implement evidence-based parenting education programs, such as Love & Logic and PCES classes.
- Broaden community awareness and utilization of existing family tools, including Parenting Montana and Handle with Care.
- Support paraprofessional development through peer-support networks, lay counseling opportunities, and worksite wellness champions.
- Create low-cost or free intergenerational activity spaces and micro-volunteering opportunities to reduce social isolation among youth and seniors.
- Develop and distribute updated aging resource guides detailing local respite care, social groups, and senior services.
- Explore collaborative service models that blend childcare, senior activities, and respite care.
- Coordinate specialized crisis intervention, trauma-informed care, and self-care trainings for emergency first responders and healthcare staff.
- Increase public awareness and utilization of the 988 crisis line and CONNECT Referral System across all partner agencies.

PRIORITY AREA 1:
COMMUNITY CONNECTION & RESILIENCY ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS

Community Connection & Awareness:

- Demonstrated increase in public awareness of local mental health and family resources measured through annual community-wide surveys.
- Sustained growth in intergenerational event attendance and multi-generational program participation county-wide.

Service & Resource Utilization:

- Increased volume of 988 crisis calls/texts originating from Teton County (indicating improved public awareness and trust in crisis lines).
- Increased utilization of community support tools, including Handle with Care activations in schools and engagement with Parenting Montana resources.

Workforce & First Responder Preparedness:

- Percentage of local first responders, educators, and service providers who report feeling confident in identifying and managing behavioral health crises following county-hosted trainings.
- Establishment of ongoing, cross-agency training schedules for trauma-informed care and crisis intervention.

Youth & Family Well-Being:

- Improved baseline scores in local youth behavioral health and resiliency surveys (e.g., Montana Prevention Needs Assessment data on trusted adults and depressive symptoms).
- Expanded availability of evidence-based parenting and early childhood support classes delivered annually.





PRIORITY AREA 2:
RESOURCE COORDINATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL

Build cross-sector partnerships and local infrastructure to improve access to essential family resources, health navigation, food security, and community support systems across Teton County.

OBJECTIVES

2.1	**Resource Navigation & Health Access** By December 31, 2028, establish a unified Community Health Worker (CHW)/ Resource Navigator model serving all Teton County communities, increasing active partner participation in the CONNECT Referral System by 20%.
2.2	**Food Security & Basic Needs** By December 31, 2027, establish or formalize 3 cross-sector partnerships to connect local service providers, school districts, and community groups to improve access to essential basic needs (including food security, housing assistance, and family supplies) for at least 25 vulnerable households across Teton County.
2.3	**Infrastructure & Family Supports** By December 31, 2028, create or expand 2 family support infrastructure projects (such as early childhood/childcare access options, low-cost community spaces, or local housing coalition initiatives).

KEY PARTNER AGENCIES

Italicized indicates potential partners
Bold indicates lead partners

- Alluvion Health
- *Area II Agency on Aging*
- **Benefis Teton Medical Center**
- Choteau Acantha
- ***Choteau Area Port Authority***
- Choteau Lions Club
- Choteau Youth Alliance
- *CoverMT*
- Fairfield Food Pantry
- *Habitat for Humanity*
- *Head Start*
- *Local Agricultrual Producers*
- *Local Contractors*
- *Local Daycares*
- *Local Municipal Town Councils*
- **MSU Extension**
- *Office of Public Assistance*
- *Opportunities, Inc. (Housing Authority)*
- *Private Businesses/Employers*
- *Senior Centers*
- *Teton County Commissioners*
- Teton County Food Pantry
- **Teton County Public Health**
- *Town Public Works Departments*
- *Teton County School Meal Programs*

PRIORITY AREA 2:
RESOURCE COORDINATION & INFRASTRUCTURE





The following list of general strategies were identified by key stakeholders at the 2026 CHIP Meeting, which can be used to achieve the objectives in this priority area.

GENERAL STRATEGIES

Bold indicates potential policy change

- Establish a unified network of insurance and social service navigators across regional and local health providers.
- Explore multi-source grant opportunities to fund dedicated Community Health Worker (CHW) coverage across all Teton County towns.
- Share grant-writing technical assistance and administrative resources across county agencies to secure local funding.
- Create a centralized county resource app, online directory, or shared advertising strategy (radio, print, TV).
- Coordinate town grocery store pickup routes, food exchange programs, and local emergency pantry stands.
- **Support policy and local initiatives that ensure long-term continuity of free school breakfast and lunch programs.**
- Develop collaborative programs that combine food security efforts with childcare assistance and emergency family support.
- **Engage local town councils and housing advocates to address rural housing options, including accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and cluster housing zoning.**
- Partner with landowners and local groups for lot cleanups, removal of abandoned structures, and revitalization of unused properties for housing development.
- Explore water conservation and infrastructure planning needed to support future residential building in rural areas.

PRIORITY AREA 2:
RESOURCE COORDINATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS

Cross-Agency Referral & Navigation:

- Growth in active partner organizations participating in and submitting referrals through the CONNECT Referral System.
- Total number of residents assisted by local Community Health Workers (CHWs) or insurance/resource navigators across Teton County.

Food Access & Security:

- Reduction in self-reported food insecurity rates among vulnerable families and seniors on annual community assessments.
- Increased volume of food distributed or families served through collaborative programs (e.g., pantry stands, food co-ops, school meal initiatives).

Infrastructure & Resource Growth:

- Creation or expansion of physical or social infrastructure assets (e.g., family activity spaces, childcare slots, senior respite care options).
- Formalization of multi-agency agreements (MOUs) or shared financial resources (such as joint grant proposals or centralized communication platforms) to sustain community programs.

Housing & Community Development:

- Active participation in cross-sector discussions or task forces addressing rural housing options (e.g., ADUs, cluster housing, lot cleanup).
- Secured grant funding or technical assistance dedicated to county-wide infrastructure and resource expansion.





NEXT STEPS: CHIP IMPLEMENTATION

This Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) outlines a multi-year effort to improve the health of Teton County residents. The plan will be presented to county and city leaders, made publicly available, and updated every 3 years.

This CHIP is a collaborative effort. Each of the core partner organizations will incorporate the CHIP's priority areas into the respective agency plans and documents:

Teton County Public Health	Strategic Plan
Benefis Teton Medical Center	Implementation Plan
Teton County MSU Extension	Engagement Plan
Teton County CARES	Strategic Plan

Other supporting organizations across the county will be encouraged to do the same. This cyclical process ensures continuous improvement through regular updates to the Community Health Assessment, CHIP, and supporting organizations' Strategic Plans.

The Teton County Health Community Health Implementation Committee will play a vital role in monitoring progress towards achieving the objectives of this CHIP. Lead stakeholders/organizations for each strategy will engage in regular meetings with community partners to develop and implement comprehensive work plans. Progress updates will be shared with the Teton County Community Health Implementation Committee through email or in-person meetings, and in existing coalitions in groups that are already formed across the county. The committee will meet twice per year to assess progress, address challenges, and adapt work plans as appropriate. The committee will utilize a performance management system to monitor progress. Additionally, annual CHIP meetings will be held to share progress with the community.

Each of us in Teton County has a role to play in creating a healthier community. Whether you're a parent, student, business owner, or senior citizen, your unique perspective is valuable. By getting involved, you can help create a community where everyone has access to the resources and support they need to live healthy lives. To learn more or get involved, please contact Teton County Public Health at health@tetonmt.org. Together, we can build a healthier and more vibrant Teton County.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Primary Care			
	Benefis Teton Medical Center Clinic	Choteau	406-466-6085
	Alluvion Health Choteau Clinic	Choteau	406-466-3574
	Frontier Family Practice	Fairfield	406-467-3447
Hospital / Emergency Room			
	Benefis Teton Medical Center	Choteau	406-466-5763
Behavioral Health			
	Montana Online Counseling		406-590-9177
	Eastern Front Counseling	Conrad	406-868-6902
	Front Range Family Psychiatry	Choteau	406-478-5510
	New Roots, PLLC	Dutton / Fairfield	406-590-6991
	Teton Counseling	Fairfield	406-467-2700
	True North Counseling	Choteau	406-369-6129
	Eating Disorders (Emily Wish)	Great Falls	406-952-3772
	Wholly Authentic Life	Choteau, Fairfield	406-799-2711
	Impeccable Therapy	Dutton	406-788-4706
	Onyx Counseling & Consulation	Conrad, Great Falls	406-201-9414
	Many Rivers Whole Health	Great Falls	406-466-5681
	988 Suicide and Crisis Hotline	Nationwide	988
Public Health			
	Teton County Health Department	Choteau	406-466-2562
Dental Care			
	Allen Dental	Choteau	406-466-5662
	Huhn Family Dental	Fairfield	406-467-2407
Vision Care			
	Mountain Front Family Vision Center	Choteau, Fairfield	406-466-2802
Physical Therapy			
	Benefis Teton Medical Center PT	Choteau	406-466-5763
	Benefis Teton Medical Center PT	Fairfield	406-467-3800
	Pivot Physical Therapy	Choteau	406-466-3040
Chiropractor			
	Vandolah Chiropractic Clinic	Choteau, Fairfield	406-466-5665
Police, Fire, & Ambulance			
	Teton County Sheriff's Office	Choteau	406-466-5781
	Teton County EMS	Choteau	406-466-5552
Child & Family Services			
	CASA-CAN	Great Falls	406-576-7041
	Centralized Intake	Statewide	1-866-820-5437
	Hi-Line Help for Abused Spouses	Conrad	406-278-3342
	Child and Family Services - Teton County	Conrad	406-278-5142

Child Care Resource and Referral			
	Family Connections	Great Falls	406-761-6010
Food/Living Expense Assistance			
	Teton County Food Pantry	Choteau	406-231-7633
	Choteau Schools - Backpack Buddies	Choteau	406-781-8711
	Fairfield Food Pantry	Fairfield	406-590-3150
	Caring Tree (Oct.-Dec.)	Choteau	406-590-1126
	Neighbors Helping Neighbors	Choteau	406-466-3646
	Opportunities for All Scholarships, Inc.	Choteau	406-466-5393
	Opportunities, Inc.	Great Falls	406-761-0310
	Women, Infants, & Children (WIC)	Choteau	406-466-2562
Homeless Shelter			
	Great Falls Rescue Mission	Great Falls	406-761-2653
Legal Services			
	Disability Rights Montana	Statewide	800-245-4743
	Montana Legal Services Helpline	Statewide	800-666-6899
	People's Law Center	Great Falls	406-761-7720
Schools			
	Rural County Schools		406-466-2907
	Choteau Schools Pre-K - 12	Choteau	406-466-5364
	Power Schools Pre-K - 12	Power	406-463-2251
	Dutton/Brady Schools Pre-K - 12	Dutton/Brady	406-476-3424
	Fairfield Schools Pre-K - 12	Fairfield	406-467-2528
	Greenfield School Pre-K - 12	Fairfield	406-467-2433
	Golden Ridge School K-8	Fairfield	406-466-2907
	CYA Preschool & Daycare	Choteau	406-609-5633
	Eagles Nest Daycare & Preschool	Fairfield	406-399-1224
	Big Sky Special Needs Cooperative	Conrad	406-271-7558
Personal/Home Health Care			
	Easter Seals	Choteau	406-466-2088
	Peace Hospice of Montana	Great Falls	406-455-3040
Senior Centers/Services			
	Choteau Senior Citizens Center	Choteau	406-466-2121
	Fairfield Senior Center	Fairfield	406-467-2574
	Dutton Senior Center	Dutton	406-476-3291
	Power Whistle Stop Senior Center	Power	406-463-2440
	North Central Area Agency on Aging	Conrad	406-271-7553
Independent/Assisted Living			
	Beehive Homes Assisted Living	Choteau	406-370-3507
	Skyline Lodge Retirement Home	Choteau	406-466-2062
	Front Range Assisted Living	Fairfield	406-467-2407
	Teton Peak Assisted Living	Choteau	406-590-1102

Community Service Organizations/Community Coalitions			
	Teton County C.A.R.E.S.	Choteau	406-466-2562
	MSU Extension - Teton County	Choteau	406-466-2491
	Choteau Lions Club	Choteau	406-203-4679
	Choteau American Legion Post 6	Choteau	406-466-2500
	North Central Cancer Support Group	Choteau	406-466-2562
	Soroptomists	Choteau	
Government Organizations			
	Choteau Chamber of Commerce	Choteau	406-466-5316
	Choteau Area Port Authority	Choteau	
	Fairfield Chamber of Commerce	Faifield	406-467-2531
	CONNECT Referral System	Statewide, Choteau	406-466-2562
Faith-Based Organizations			
	Choteau Ministerial Association	Choteau	
	Choteau Baptist Church	Choteau	406-466-2902
	Trinity Lutheran Church	Choteau	406-466-2291
	United Methodist Church	Choteau	406-466-2641
	New Life Church	Choteau	406-466-2303
	St. Joseph's Catholic Church	Choteau	406-466-2961
	St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church	Fairfield	406-466-2961
	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints	Choteau & Fairfield	406-466-2725
	Zion Lutheran Church	Power	406-463-2541
	Guardian Angel Catholic Church	Power	406-463-2357
	United Church of Christ	Fairfield	406-467-2466
	NewLife Fairfield	Fairfield	406-467-2713
	St. John Lutheran Church	Fairfield	406-467-3325
	Grace Lutheran Church	Fairfield	406-467-2277
	Pendroy Community Church	Pendroy	406-469-2245
	Bethany Lutheran Church	Dutton	406-476-3371
	St. William Catholic Church	Dutton	406-476-3327
	Dutton United Methodist Church	Dutton	406-476-3223
	Brady United Methodist Church	Brady	406-753-2253
Support Groups			
	Alcoholics Anonymous (Choteau Trinity Lutheran)	Choteau	406-466-2291
	Narcotics Anonymous (Choteau Trinity Lutheran)	Choteau	406-466-2291
	Loss Support Group (Choteau Methodist)	Choteau	406-466-2641
	Deer One Pregnancy Loss Support Group	Choteau	406-466-2562

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT.

TETON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

Benefis TETON MEDICAL CENTER

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Teton County C.A.R.E.S

2026



