



HRDC

COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

Program Guide

Dear Friends,

We have assembled our most updated Program Guide that describes the agency's 23 programs and services. For 53 years HRDC has actively assisted individuals and families achieve self-reliance and economic independence. As a Community Action Agency, we strive to eliminate the barriers that impede the growth and prosperity of all people in the five county region, including Big Horn, Carbon, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, and Yellowstone Counties. Together with the help of our community partners, dedicated staff, and generous funders, HRDC continues to change lives as we build better communities. When good things happen at HRDC, the entire community thrives.

Best Regards,



Denise Jordan
Chief Executive Officer

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ENERGY SHARE

Energy Share is a year-round, one-time emergency assistance loan program for eligible individuals facing an energy emergency. It is available only when there is a notice of disconnect and all other resources have been exhausted. All Energy Share loans must be repaid. This is not a grant program. Energy Share of Montana is a private non-profit working in partnership with HRDC.

LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIEAP)

LIEAP provides low income households with energy assistance. The program is open to both homeowners and renters. The program provides subsidized residential energy to low income individuals and families that need assistance heating their homes, powering their appliances, and running lifesaving equipment for the elderly and disabled. HRDC provides assistance across the five county service area. LIEAP staff are available to assist all applicants that need help filing and completing the state of Montana LIEAP application. The program is designed so that LIEAP pays a portion of the heating bill directly to the utility provider during the heating season beginning October 1st through April 30th of each year.

WEATHERIZATION

The Weatherization program provides energy conservation services to low-income families to help them improve the energy efficiency of their home. Following an energy audit, a professional installation crew will take measures to improve energy efficiency and safety of the household by installing smoke detectors, adding insulation, providing CO2 alarms, and a menu of other related energy saving services. The LIEAP application doubles as the Weatherization application. Once approved for LIEAP, households are automatically added to the next Weatherization priority list for consideration. Households in the five county region are listed and prioritized based on degree of need. Special priority is given to the elderly and disabled individuals, which include, both homeowners and renters.



FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM ON INDIAN RESERVATIONS

HRDC operates the FDPIR in Hardin, Montana. This program services the Crow Reservation and surrounding area, providing a variety of healthy and nutritious foods from canned fruits and vegetables to dry goods, frozen meats, and fresh produce. All enrolled low-income tribal members living on or near the Crow reservation are eligible for this program as well as low income non-enrolled tribal members and non-native people living on the reservation.



WHEELS FOR WORK

The Wheels for Work program assists low-income individuals who need a ride to and from work to maintain employment by reducing transportation barriers. United Way of Yellowstone County provides partial funding for this program. Contingent upon eligibility, participants are provided with gas vouchers, bus passes, and car repairs, (on a limited basis) to help reduce barriers that impact successful employment. To apply for this program, individuals must meet income eligibility standards and reside in Yellowstone County.

CONTINUUM OF CARE RAPID REHOUSING

CoCRRH provides deposit and rent payment assistance for homeless families with children. Housing must meet minimum safety, sanitation, and HUD standards. Intensive case management is required in this program. This program is only available to Yellowstone County residents.

EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT

The Emergency Solutions program places emphasis on helping people to quickly regain stability into permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis and/or homelessness. Eligible individuals seeking emergency shelter, homeless prevention, and rapid re-housing services will be assigned a case manager and are required to meet monthly.



GENERAL RELIEF

General Relief is an assistance program available to individuals without dependents. It provides rental assistance while individuals are waiting for approval of SSI/SSDI (Social Security Insurance and Social Security Disability Insurance). Eligibility requirements require that participants have no household income; have established residency in Yellowstone County for 90 days; are current recipients of food stamp benefits; have a medically verified disability; and have applied for SSI/SSDI, but not yet been approved.

District 7 HRDC, is one of over 1000 Community Action Agencies across the United States. Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

BEST BEGINNINGS SCHOLARSHIP

Many Montana families are paying over \$9,000 a year to have an infant attend a full time child care center. For a low-income working single parent this could mean close to 50% of their income is spent on child care services. HRDC administers the State of Montana's Best Beginnings Childcare Scholarship program in a 14 county service area which covers the south central and south eastern parts of the state. Children enrolled in the Best Beginnings Scholarship program must attend a licensed childcare center, a registered group, a family child care home, or a certified Family, Friend, Neighbor location. Recipients of the Best Beginnings scholarship program must meet work and income requirements to participate.

CHILD AND ADULT FOOD PROGRAM

In an effort to reduce the costs of childcare, while ensuring children receive healthy and nutritious meals and snacks, licensed family or group childcare providers are given cash reimbursement for serving nutritious meals and snacks to enrolled participants. These meals and snacks must meet Federal nutrition guidelines as outlined in the CACFP meal pattern. HRDC is eligible to administer the CACFP for the Montana Department of Health and Human Services in all Montana counties.



PROVIDER SERVICES

Parents, children, and Montana's economy rely heavily on quality child care. Early Childhood Provider Services helps to advance training, advisement, and consultation to instruct Providers in how to establish a nurturing environment which protects children and promotes healthy development. HRDC provides oversight and an array of resources to ensure child care providers in the 14 county region are given the tools they need to remain compliant with state regulations as they deliver safe and affordable quality services. Early Childhood Provider Services assists providers with oversight issues, continuing education, training, and compliance questions to ensure area facilities meet state standards and remain viable profitable businesses. Early Childhood Provider Services is housed on the HRDC campus in Billings, MT.



REFERRAL SERVICES

HRDC's Referral Specialist helps you find quality childcare that best fits your needs. Whether your hours of child care are limited, or you are looking for specific environments, we connect families to licensed or registered childcare providers to offer quality experience for everyone. We provide referrals for families in Big Horn, Carbon, Carter, Custer, Fallon, Golden Valley, Musselshell, Powder River, Rosebud, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Treasure, Wheatland and Yellowstone counties.



STARS TO QUALITY

The Best Beginnings STARS to Quality program is a quality rating improvement system. It aligns quality indicators with support and incentives for early childhood programs and professionals. STARS to Quality is a continuous improvement model that evaluates the characteristics of the overall program and measures progress over time. Montana's Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) was developed to: (1) raise the standards of childcare in Montana, (2) to increase the number of children being cared for in a high-value child care settings, and (3) to enhance workforce development. This program is a pathway to the NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) and the NACC (National Association of Family Child Care) accreditation. To be selected to participate in the Stars to Quality Program, applicant's must apply on the SQP site.



FAMILY FORWARD PROGRAM

The Family Forward program promotes self-sufficiency and economic independence through a strength based program of bundled services and long term case management. The program's success has been based on an effective pilot project demonstrating the positive impact of family engagement, long term case management, and family goal setting. The program is designed to conduct a comprehensive intake assessment at entry which determines and prioritizes family needs based upon 16 meaningful life domains. The goals that are jointly set by the individual, family, and case manager are monitored, modified as required, and reprioritized as goals are achieved. A minimum of a 12-month commitment is required for acceptance to this program with extensions granted contingent upon progress and outcomes. The Family Forward program addresses the belief that families and individuals are more likely to succeed when multiple barriers are addressed concurrently. A community consortium of partnering organizations provides and receives referrals for programs and services that participants require as part of this program. Family Forward is available to low income individuals and families in the 5 county service area.



ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Earning a High School Equivalency Diploma (formerly GED) is the first step in breaking the cycle of poverty. Low income individuals, ages 16 to 80+ who are in pursuit of a High School Diploma or who have been unsuccessful in achieving High School Equivalency are eligible to receive one-on-one, self-paced instruction from HRDC's state certified Instructor. Tutoring is also available to low-income, high school students for all coursework, college prep readiness for the ACT, SAT, as well as assistance with the driver's license written examination. Remedial reading and math tutoring is also offered for all ages.

WORK EXPERIENCE FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Youth Employment work sites provide young people (ages 14-21) with work opportunities to develop employment skills, acquire knowledge, and to practice positive work behaviors. In exchange for providing work experience, mentorship, and supervision, HRDC covers all wages, workman's compensation, and FICA for all work experience participants. The program is open to all eligible youth living in the five county service area.



YOUTH EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

The Youth E & T Programs provide year-round training and Work Experience opportunities to better prepare Montana's youth ages 14-24 for employment. This program provides opportunities for young people to develop skills, knowledge, and positive work behaviors that will assist them in securing and maintaining gainful employment. The program goals are to provide long-term economic independence and self-sufficiency to this target population. Youth E & T programs include WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) Youth Program, Youth Employment Program, and Summer Youth Employment and Training.

PATHWAYS

The Pathways program is designed to support individuals who are receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in their pursuit for self-sufficiency. Eligibility begins at the Office of Public Assistance for all families and individuals residing in any of HRDC's five county service area. Pathways is a group of interconnected programs designed to assist participants define family and personal goals that lead them to sustainability and economic independence.



SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

SNAP E&T assists eligible recipients who are referred to the program by the Office of Public Assistance. SNAP E&T helps Yellowstone County residents find opportunities for work experience, education, and job retention training activities. Participants are required to meet with a case manager and complete employability activities weekly.



WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS FOR EMPLOYERS

HRDC offers a variety of opportunities to enable businesses to become work experience sites at no cost to the employer. Work experience sites provide participants with opportunities to develop skills, knowledge, and work behaviors to increase the participant's employability. Participating businesses provide mentoring, supervision, and on-the-job training opportunities.



WORK EXPERIENCE FOR PATHWAYS PARTICIPANTS

While participating in the Work Experience program, participants will continue to receive TANF and SNAP benefits in lieu of an hourly wage. This practice eliminates payroll costs to the employer, while providing a work platform for the client. Work site supervisors in the five county region, are expected to provide direct supervision and must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Work experience sites are developed to provide supervision for Pathways and SNAP E&T participants while offering opportunities for learning, skill development, and improved work behaviors to increase employability.

HARMONY HOUSE

Harmony House Transitional Living Program provides a supportive, nurturing place for homeless, pregnant or parenting youth ages 16-22 and their children. Pregnant or parenting women live in a group home setting with other residents and their children, or receive rental assistance for their own apartment. Couples and single men with children are also eligible to receive rental assistance for their own off campus housing. Participants take part in life skills training, parenting classes, peer support groups, budgeting and financial literacy, as well as recreational activities. Harmony House Participants receive intensive case management, with wrap-around supportive services while enrolled in the program. Aftercare services are also available upon exit from the program. The Harmony House Transitional Living Program provides services to youth in 20 south central and eastern counties in Montana.



HOME CENTER "HELPING MAKE YOUR DREAMS A REALITY"

The HRDC Home Center is a community resource center, providing everything you need to know about rentals, homeownership, home improvements, foreclosures, real estate, banking, saving, credit, and more. The Home Center is conveniently housed on the HRDC campus in Billings, Montana. The organization is a collaborative effort among local agencies and organizations providing housing services in Yellowstone and surrounding counties.

The Home Center can help individuals and families create a personalized spending plan; help build or improve your credit; identify specialized savings and down payment assistance programs; determine if you are "Mortgage Ready;" assist in evaluating mortgage options; and educate individuals on the home buying process.

HOUSING COUNSELING

HRDC is a HUD-approved housing counseling agency providing no-cost counseling in the areas of mortgage delinquency, default resolution, and pre-purchase. All individuals who are in pre-foreclosure, foreclosure, or are first time homebuyers are eligible for counseling services. There are no income guidelines or county restrictions for these services. This service provides the best in customized home purchase and home buying advice. It provides info on FHA, Federal Home Administration programs, insured financing, fair housing, predatory lending, loan product comparisons and more. Each client receives intensive one-on-one assistance provided by a trained and certified housing counselor. The housing counselor will assess each customer's unique financial circumstances in an effort to help individuals and families achieve their housing goals. This service is free and is open to everyone.

RENTAL COUNSELING

The HRDC Home Center offers one-on-one guidance provided by a trained and certified counselor who will help the client focus on how to secure and maintain a rental unit. She/He can provide information and assistance on contracts, leases, renter's rights, and provide guidance in dealing with difficult rental issues. The participant can secure local assistance with fair housing, housing search assistance, landlord/tenant laws, rent delinquency, and lease. This is a no-cost service and is available to all people in Yellowstone and surrounding counties.

HOMEBUYER EDUCATION

Certified educators and industry experts teach prospective homeowners about the process of purchasing a home. They provide pertinent, timely, and updated information that every homebuyer needs. Classes are offered monthly and fill up quickly. Topics include; Homebuyer readiness which entail the pros and cons of buying a home, housing affordability, the purchase process, and credit. Other important elements covered in the course are money management, understanding credit, financing a home, shopping for a home, home inspection, and understanding insurance. There is a nominal fee for this class.

FINANCIAL EDUCATION

This class offers a great opportunity for individuals and families to learn the basics about personal financial management. The program assists and encourages participants to become actively involved in their own personal finances and to take charge of their financial life. It provides the essential tools required to teach applicants to make sound financial decisions related to savings, credit, insurance, budgeting, and financial products. This class is scheduled monthly at no cost to the participant.

SAVINGS FOR TOMORROW

The Saving for Tomorrow program offers a variety of individual development accounts designed to encourage consistent monthly savings going toward a specific asset. These matched saving programs help motivate families and individuals to save money. For a defined period of time, eligible individuals save a portion of their monthly income in a special savings account. HRDC then matches each dollar saved with up to a \$4 match. While in the savings program, participants complete a range of personal finance activities which teaches them how to increase their money management skills. The financial education component is offered on-line, at home, or at HRDC.

The Assets for Independence (AFI) Program is available to participants in the five county service region, as well as Custer, Musselshell, and Rosebud counties. AFI is a matched savings program designed to help families and individuals save enough seed money to acquire a first home, pay for post-secondary education or training, and or start or expand a small business.

TAXPAYER ADVOCATE SERVICE AND IRS APPEALS

The Taxpayer Advocate Service (TAS) connects taxpayers directly with a TAS employee at an offsite location. The TAS advocate is there to assist individuals and families with their tax issues. TAS is an independent organization within the IRS assigned to help taxpayers experiencing financial difficulties. The TAS advocate works with the client that has tried but has been unable to resolve their problems with the IRS; and or individuals who believe an IRS process, procedure, or system is not functioning as it should. TAS works to ensure every taxpayer is treated fairly, and knows and understands their rights. The mission of the Taxpayer Advocate Service is to resolve tax controversies, without litigation on a non-partial basis which promotes a fair and equitable resolution for both the government and the taxpayer in a manner that enhances voluntary compliance and public confidence in the integrity and efficiency of the Service.

VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE

The VITA program provides no cost income tax preparation and electronic filing for individuals and families who have a qualifying adjusted gross income of less than \$55,000. Taxpayers with incomes up to \$66,000 can prepare their own taxes at the HRDC computer lab with the assistance of a certified Tax Volunteer. Both state and federal tax returns are completed and e-filed by an IRS trained and certified volunteer. The Billings VITA site is open by appointment and accepts walk-ins on specific days and times January - mid April.

Following tax season, the site operates on a limited appointment-only basis. HRDC tax certified VITA professionals utilize a software package developed by HR Block for United Ways across the country. The tax software is similar to other more expensive interactive tax products and is available for use at no charge. My Free Taxes Partnership is an online filing service that has helped millions of families claim nearly \$8 billion dollars in tax credits and refunds since 2009. My Free Taxes collaborates with over 1000 partners, including United Way of Yellowstone County to bring this program to the community.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM / RURAL SECTION 8

HRDC administers the Rural Section 8 program in the five county service region (not including the city of Billings). The program assists individuals and families to secure affordable, safe, and sanitary housing by paying a portion of their rent in an approved dwelling unit. Rent payments are made directly to the property owner or landlord. All housing units meeting eligibility requirements must be pre-approved.

HRDC CAMPUS DIRECTORY



HRDC Main Office (Billings)

7 North 31st Street, Billings, MT 59101
office 406-247-4732 | fax 406-248-2943

HRDC Satellite Office (Hardin)

501 North Center, Hardin, MT 59034
office 406-665-3500 | fax 406-665-1395

Child Care

Billings - office 406-247-4700 | fax 406-869-2585
Hardin - office 406-665-3500 | fax 406-655-1395

Employment and Training for Adults

Billings - office 406-247-4732 | fax 406-248-6971
Hardin - office 406-665-3500 | fax 406-655-1395

Energy Assistance

3116 1st Avenue North, Billings, MT 59101
office 406-247-4778 | fax 406-247-4791

Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations

409 Crook, Hardin, MT 59034
office 406-665-2523 | fax 406-665-1026

Housing

office 406-247-4710 | fax 406-248-2943

Money Management/Savings

office 406-247-4710 | fax 406-248-2943

Youth Employment & Training

3124 1st Avenue North, Billings, MT 59101
office 406-247-4732 | fax 406-247-4747

For assistance with all other programs,
email info@hrdc7.org or
call the main office at 406-247-4732 or 1-800-433-1411.

ASK Directory

The ASK Directory is a community resource tool to assist clients with options for locating other service providers in the service area. To learn more visit <http://ask.hrdc7.org>.