

Billings Continuum of Care (CoC)
Board Chair: Erika Willis, Tumbleweed
Chair Contact: 259-2558 erika.willis@tumbleweedprogram.org

November 14, 2019
To: Billings City Council
Re: Safety Mill Levy Recommendations

Dear Billings City Council:

The Billings Continuum of Care (CoC) is grateful for your commitment to our community and to addressing our shared goals regarding homelessness. As a coalition of local leaders, we combine the resources of over 20 agencies working to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring. This expertise is vital to tackle such a complex issue. Therefore, we would like to take this opportunity to share some insights and recommendations for the Safety Mill Levy.

Value of Prevention: Preventative strategies have the power to increase community safety as well as save money and promote community vitality. Therefore, we encourage you to think beyond the standard strategies and include prevention as a long-term solution. Here are some suggestions and considerations:

- Investing just 10% of the levy in preventative services (Substance Abuse – Homelessness – Crime etc.) will provide great returns and lessen the burden on key safety systems.
- In order to make the most of this investment, we encourage the City to designate funding to priority agencies and require solid public safety outcomes and regular reviews to receive continued funds.

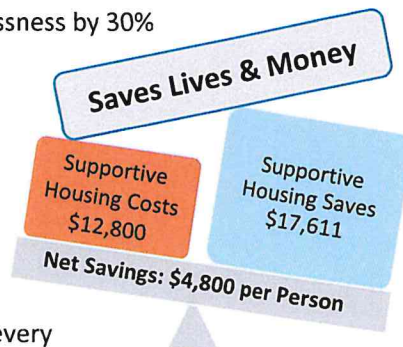
Impact of Prevention: Investing in prevention can have long-term rewards. For example:

Prevention Saves Lives: Multiple studies confirm prevention is effective.

- HUD found Permanent Supportive Housing decreased chronic homelessness by 30% in test sites.
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) saw a 30%-84% reduction in robberies in sites studied.

Prevention Saves Money: Studies show decreases in costs and burden to systems such as hospitals, law enforcement, and crisis response.

- The National Alliance to End Homelessness found Supportive Housing cut costs of a chronically homeless person in half. This saved nearly \$5,000 per person; even after costs of services.
- The Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration found every \$1 spent on youth substance abuse prevention returns up to \$18 in cost savings.



Thank you for this opportunity to share our thoughts. The complex problems we face cannot be solved without a comprehensive and connected approach. We believe now is a critical time to combine our community resources and work together towards our shared goals. We will contact you to schedule a meeting to discuss opportunities and ways we can strengthen our community together.

Sincerely,

[Handwritten signatures of committee members]

Billings CoC Steering Committee:

Alternatives Inc. – Besaw Integrity Consulting – Billings Clinic – Community Crisis Center – Housing Authority – HRDC – Mental Health Center – MT Dept. of Corrections, Probation & Parole Division – Montana Rescue Mission – Rimrock Foundation – RiverStone Health – St. Vincent Healthcare – Tumbleweed – United Way of Yellowstone County – Volunteers of America (VOA) – YWCA – St. Vincent DePaul – Yellowstone County.