



PARK COUNTY
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

We Will

PARK COUNTY



2024 Report

Data, opinions and grants for the future of our county



We Will Park County Informs our Grants

DATA & OPINIONS ➤ REPORT ➤ EVENTS & INPUT ➤ GRANTS

The Park County Community Foundation (PCCF) has awarded grant funding to local nonprofits every year since 2007. These grants are just a portion of the total distributions we make to the community, but they are a growing portion that we think can have a deeper impact on the issues the community cares about most.

Five years ago, we started *We Will Park County* to establish a common vision and facts that citizens could utilize to help address those issues. What started as a compilation of third-party data and a report has grown to include an annual survey of residents’ opinions about a slate of issues as well as a series of events where we gather input from people throughout the county.

More recently, we’ve realized that these two programs—grants and *We Will Park County*—are one and the same. The vision, data, opinions and events of *We Will Park County* deeply impact our grant-making decisions. In effect, these annual grants represent our best effort at addressing the issues highlighted by *We Will Park County*. So for the first time, we’ve included a recap of our annual grants in this year’s *We Will Park County* Report.

At our core, PCCF’s operating philosophy as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit is quite simple: We LEARN about the issues facing our community. We ENGAGE citizens and other nonprofits who can best mobilize solutions around the issues. And we GIVE our time and money to organizations addressing them. *We Will Park County*—grants and all—is one of our best examples of that philosophy.

Thank you for your input, your support and for being engaged in keeping our community one of the best places to live on earth.

For the love of Park County,

Jeff Welch, Board Chair

Gavin Clark, Executive Director

COVER: Fall hunt at Paradise Valley Ranch, hosted by AMB West Hunting Program for Montana residents seeking to stock their freezers with wild game. | Photo Credit: Blair Speed

The We Will Vision

LANDSCAPES & NATURAL AMENITIES:

We Will remain one of the most beautiful places to live on earth.

SMALL TOWN & RURAL LIFESTYLE:

We Will embrace and nurture our sense of community.

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE:

We Will support varied and viable economic opportunities consistent with the character of our community.

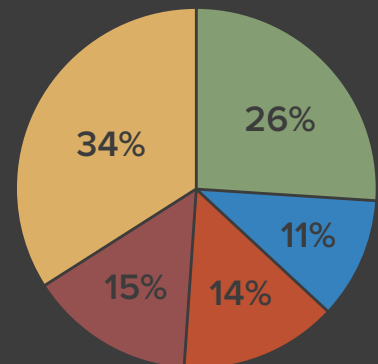
HOUSING & AFFORDABILITY:

We Will support good solutions that address affordability for all who choose to live and work here.

HEALTH, SAFETY & EDUCATION:

We Will continually strive to improve the well-being of all our residents.

2024 WE WILL GRANTS BY ISSUE AREA



Executive Summary

For the last three years, PCCF has fielded the *We Will Park County* Community Survey, gathering residents’ opinions on the area’s current challenges and future opportunities. This year we heard from a record number of 940 individuals. Details on our survey methodology and the respondents can be found on page 26.

As a community-led foundation, we’ve also been tracking and compiling data relevant to residents’ interests to better understand not only everyone’s opinions, but also the objective, third-party facts as to what is happening across the county.

As in previous years, there are both bright spots and areas of concern as we consider how to move forward, navigating the challenges of housing, growth, and infrastructure as well as the social issues of political divisions and mental health.

This year, there is a trend of fewer people feeling optimistic about the future of Park County (39% in 2024 vs. 42% in 2023). Based on the survey results, being optimistic about Park County’s future seems directly related to how long someone has lived here. 58% of those who have lived here less than 6 years are optimistic while only 31% of those who have lived here 21 years or more are optimistic. Yet those optimism levels don’t necessarily correlate to the person’s age. 42% of respondents ages 65 and older were optimistic about the future of Park County while only 37% of respondents between 35 and 64 were optimistic.

Although our latest survey didn’t explore why those who have lived here longer are less optimistic, our best guess is that more change has been experienced by those who have been here longer. When survey respondents were asked about their greatest fears about the future of Park County, common responses focused on: “too much,” “too many,” “over-” or “un-” — whether there was “too much growth,” “too many outsiders,” “overdeveloped,” “overpopulated,” “overcrowded,” or “unregulated,” “unplanned,” “unmanaged,” “unsustainable” or “uncontrolled” — all words frequently used by survey respondents.

Yet, there are many instances of positive opinions and affirmative data indicators as well as forward-looking projects addressing these concerns. Throughout this year’s report we highlight where opinions have changed; when the opinions differ from the data; and what organizations are working to make a difference.

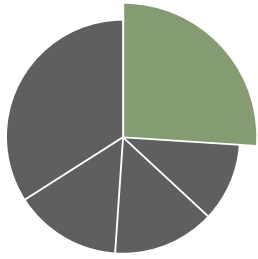
COST OF LIVING, HOUSING CHALLENGES, AND GROWTH CONTINUE TO BE TOP CONCERNS

SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN CONCERNS

Source: We Will Park County Community Survey

Increased Concerns	2022	2023	2024
Cost of living	67%	72%	78%
Too many short-term rentals	69%	66%	74%
Too many luxury homes being built	57%	55%	64%
Too much ranching and farming land is being subdivided	58%	53%	62%
People not putting political differences aside to work together	55%	56%	62%
Growth is one of the greatest challenges	*	49%	60%

*Countywide responses to the We Will Park County Community Survey, 2022-2024.
The specific question about growth was not asked in the 2022 survey.



Landscapes and Natural Amenities

THE VISION: *We Will* remain one of the most beautiful places to live on earth.

Although Park County residents have differing opinions on many topics, the importance of our landscapes and natural amenities is nearly universally agreed upon.

- 94% agree it's important for the area to remain one of the most beautiful places to live on earth.
- 95% agree it's important to preserve natural resources—water, air, etc.—for future generations.

Park County has over 2,810 square miles of varying elevations, so it's not always easy to quantify what's happening with our landscapes and natural amenities. Existing data can also tell conflicting stories. For example, the 2022 USDA Census of Agriculture showed a 3% increase in agricultural land in Park County since 2017. This small increase may be a result of Park County landowners who do not fall into the typical categories of farmer and rancher leasing pastureland or bringing in at least \$1,500 in agriculture revenue a year, allowing them to declare their property agricultural land for tax purposes. Since 2017, there has also been a 17% decrease in the number of farms and a 24% increase in the average size of farms, which may be a trend in the consolidation of ownership.

There have been more than 730 septic permits issued in the last five years. Septic permits are issued for multiple reasons including for new developments, which may reduce the number of acres of agricultural lands. They are also issued for repair and/or replacement of existing systems; upgrades and expansions; and to connect to existing septic systems.

This year's report includes data showing the number of volunteer hours and dollars invested in stream restoration and conservation efforts by Park County nonprofits to better quantify what's being achieved.

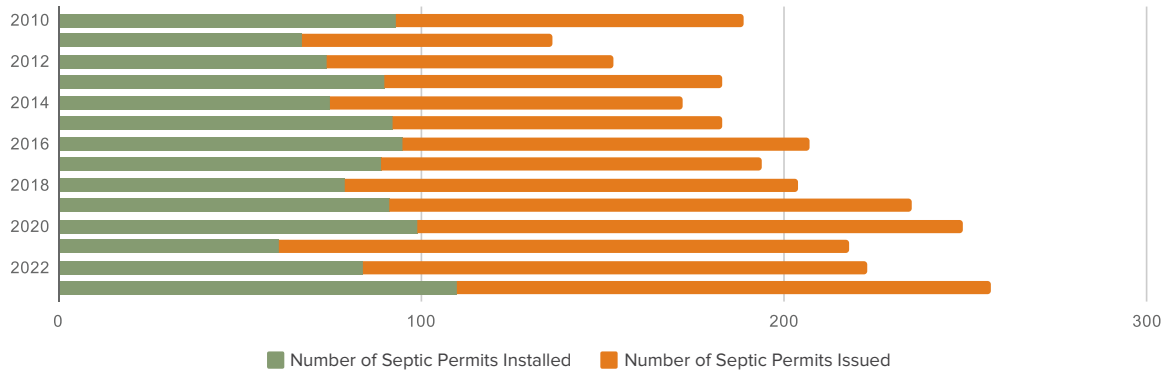
Filmmakers are drawn to Montana's dramatic landscapes. | Photo Credit: Wyatt Maw



SEPTIC PERMITS AND INSTALLS HIT ALL-TIME HIGH IN 2023

SEPTIC PERMITS BY YEAR: ISSUED AND INSTALLED

Source: Park County Health Department



The chart shows the septic permits issued and installed in Park County by year through 2023. This data does not include data related to sewage infrastructure and use within Livingston city limits unless a property within Livingston city limits is served by a septic system. Issued permits are valid for two years and are issued for the following reasons: new systems; repair/replacement of existing systems; upgrades and expansions; and connect to existing septic. This data may reflect errors, omissions and inconsistencies but is provided to give an overview of development in Park County.

17% FEWER FARMS SINCE 2017

PARK COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PROFILE

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture

	2017	2022	% Change
Total number of acres in agricultural land	711,966	736,194	3%
Total number of farms	575	478	-17%
Average size of farms in acres	1,238	1,540	24%

The slight increase in the number of acres in agricultural land may be a result of Park County landowners who do not fall into the typical categories of farmer and rancher leasing pastureland or bringing in at least \$1,500 in agriculture revenue a year, allowing them to declare their property agricultural land for tax purposes. The decrease in the number of farms and an increase in the average size of farms may indicate a trend in the consolidation of ownership.



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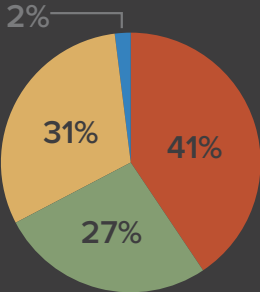
My greatest fear about the future of Park County is uncontrolled growth that undermines the very attributes which make the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem so extraordinary—our wildlife, pristine nature, open spaces and rural communities.”

- Full-time resident of 6 to 10 years, age 45-54

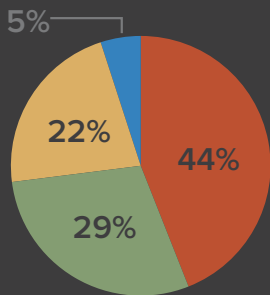
COMMUNITY OPINIONS

● Agree ● Neutral ● Disagree
● Don't know or N/A

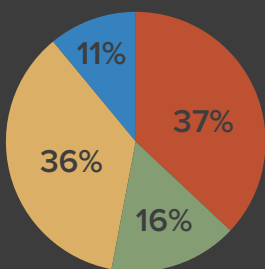
THERE ARE TOO MANY TOURISTS VISITING IN THE SUMMERTIME.



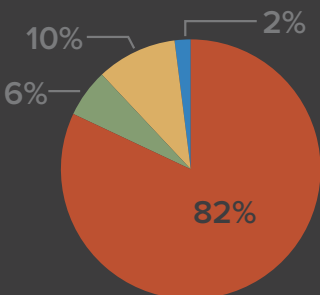
THERE SHOULD NOT BE A LIMIT TO THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE RECREATING ON THE YELLOWSTONE RIVER EACH DAY.



THERE ARE TOO MANY PEOPLE ON THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE/DIRT TRAILS.



FUTURE FLOODING, WILDFIRES AND/OR OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS IN THE AREA WILL NOT IMPACT ME.



VOLUNTEER HOURS SPENT ON STREAM RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION HAS QUADRUPLED SINCE 2023

INVESTMENTS IN STREAM RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION

Sources: Montana Freshwater Partners and Trout Unlimited

Investments	2023	2024 YTD
Estimated Volunteer Hours	318	1,214
Estimated Dollars Invested	\$459,425	\$592,678

Estimated volunteer hours include time working to restore and conserve the Yellowstone River and its tributaries in Park County including time spent on the Give Back to the Yellowstone River Cleanup and planting projects, but are not exhaustive of all of the volunteer hours spent in Park County. The estimated monies invested has increased 29% from 2023 to 2024 year-to-date and include direct-to-project dollars and paid staff time for both Montana Freshwater Partners and Trout Unlimited.

YELLOWSTONE RIVER ATTRACTS NUMEROUS TYPES OF USERS

YELLOWSTONE RIVER RECREATION USE FROM GREY OWL TO CARTER'S BRIDGE

Source: Upper Yellowstone Watershed Group

Monthly Weekend Averages	2021*	2022*	2023*
July: Average number of watercraft	4,161	*	3,803
July: Average number of people	8,479	*	8,490
July: Average number of boats angling*	582	*	635
August: Average number of watercraft	2,360	2,585	1,821
August: Average number of people	5,034	5,921	3,932
August: Average number of boats angling*	341	483	381

*Summary of data collected upstream and downstream of Loch Leven and downstream of Pine Creek fishing access sites. "Boats Angling" records evidence of people actively fishing or fishing gear observed in boat. Due to the June 2022 flood, no data was collected in July 2022. Many factors affect when and where river users access the Upper Yellowstone. Variations in weekend river use are heavily influenced by weather (i.e., clear, calm, cold, windy, smoky) and water conditions (i.e., warm, clear, muddy). Other examples include: In 2021, COVID-19 caused many to escape indoor confinement and head to the river. In 2022, flooding damaged fishing access sites upriver as well as closed Mallard's Rest. In 2023, there was unseasonably cool and wet weather, especially on the weekends, which typically deters river users.

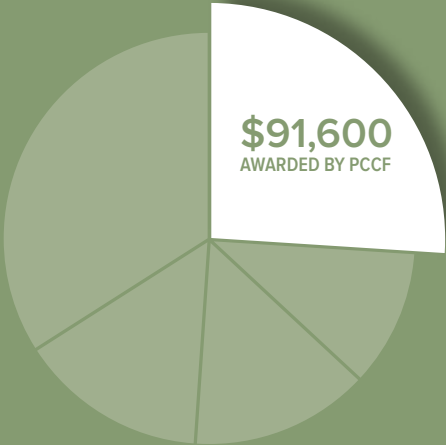
PHOTO OPPOSITE PAGE: Snow falling on Mill Creek. | Photo Credit: Erik Peterson

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It is hard to see change, especially change that impacts our way and quality of life. Hopefully the community can come together to plan for a healthy, prosperous future where we can still enjoy small town life, conserve our resources and the beauty that surrounds us.

- Park County native, age 55-64

2024 Landscape and Natural Amenities Grants

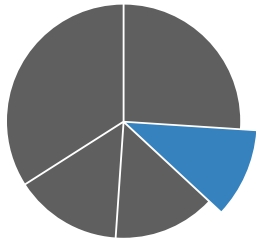


- **BEAR CREEK COUNCIL:** \$10,000 to implement their Bear Awareness Gardiner program that enhances a peaceful coexistence between humans and bears.
- **FRIENDS OF PARK COUNTY:** \$15,000 in general operating support to update Park County residents on the impacts of thoughtfully planned growth strategies.
- **FRIENDS OF THE YELLOWSTONE GATEWAY MUSEUM:** \$10,000 in support of their upcoming lectures and fields trips that tell the story of humans, animals, and land in Park County.
- **GALLATIN VALLEY LAND TRUST:** \$15,200 to increase their capacity to promote conservation efforts of Park County’s agricultural and ranching landscapes.
- **INVASIVE SPECIES ACTION NETWORK:** \$10,000 in support of their proactive and well-established Park County Invasive Species Prevention and Outreach Campaign.
- **MONTANA FRESHWATER PARTNERS:** \$30,000 in bridge funding to sustain the Park County Water Initiative while awaiting three years of funding from the Bureau of Reclamation.
- **WILLSALL SCHOOL:** \$1,400 to deliver the Ripple Effect Aquatic Learning curriculum to the fifth grade class.



FEATURED GRANT YELLOWSTONE RIVER RESTORATION

The Yellowstone River is one of Park County’s primary natural amenities, supporting our quality of life and our local economy. Montana Freshwater Partners works to restore, enhance, and protect the Yellowstone River and other waterways through science-based solutions. With the funding received, Montana Freshwater Partners is implementing high-priority, on-the-ground conservation and restoration projects for the Yellowstone River, including initiatives bolstering flood and drought resilience by enhancing water quality, preserving fish habitats, ensuring consistent late-season flows, and promoting floodplain connectivity. Ultimately, these efforts will fortify the watershed’s resilience against the myriad of pressures it faces.



Small Town and Rural Lifestyle

THE VISION: *We Will* embrace and nurture our sense of community.

As we consider how to better work together to manage growth and maintain the small town and rural lifestyle we value, there have been significant increases in concerns:

- Too many short-term rentals (from 66% in 2023 to 74% to 2024).
- Too much ranching and farming land is being subdivided (from 53% in 2023 to 62% to 2024).
- People not being able to put their political differences aside and work together (from 55% in 2022 to 62% in 2024).

Interestingly, the data shows a slightly lower percentage of short-term rentals across Park County in 2023 versus 2022, with the exception of Pray where there was a slight increase. Since 2019, more than 470 new residential addresses have been assigned beyond the incorporated towns of Livingston and Clyde Park, reflecting continued concerns about ranching and farming land being subdivided. However, that growth slowed in 2023.

Hell's A-Roarin' horse drive through Gardiner. | Photo Credit: Jacob Schwarz/schwarzcaptures





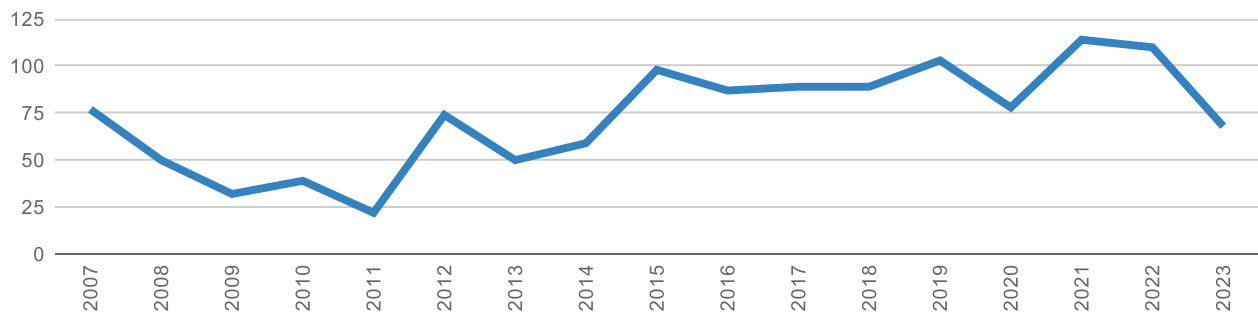
Park County is a special place. Many people are trying to solve complex issues.
Growth is challenging, but let's stay focused on our shared vision.

- Full-time resident of 11 to 20 years, age 45-54

OVER 470 NEW RESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES IN LAST 5 YEARS, BUT SLOWED IN 2022 AND 2023

NEW RESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES ASSIGNED IN UNINCORPORATED AREAS: BY YEAR

Source: Park County GIS/IT Department



New residential addresses are another indicator of growth in Park County. The chart shows the number assigned by year in Park County. This data does not include new residential addresses from the incorporated towns of Livingston and Clyde Park. According to Park County government, it may reflect errors, omissions and inconsistencies but is provided to give an overview of residential development in Park County.

OVER 10% OF ALL ADDRESSES IN PRAY, GARDINER AND EMIGRANT ARE SHORT-TERM RENTALS

SHORT-TERM RENTALS IN PARK COUNTY: 2023

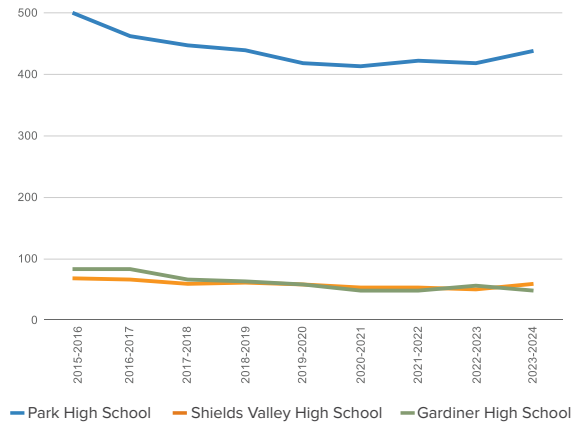
Source: State Database of Licensed Public Accommodations

Town	Total Residential Addresses	Total Active Short-Term Rentals	% of all Addresses that are Active Short-Term Rentals
Pray	231	37	16%
Gardiner	1,012	111	11%
Emigrant	790	79	10%
Cooke City	248	18	7%
Silver Gate	173	8	5%
McLeod	190	3	2%
Livingston	8,110	207	3%
Wilsall	592	6	1%
Clyde Park	463	5	1%
Springdale	31	0	0%
TOTAL	11,840	474	4%

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT CONTINUES TO DECLINE OUTSIDE LIVINGSTON

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT COUNTS

Source: Montana Office of Public Instruction



Gardiner High's enrollment has declined 42% since 2015. Shields Valley High saw a small uptick but has declined 13% during the same time period.

MORE THAN 2,300 NEW RESIDENTS SINCE 2010; MEDIAN AGE STILL HIGH

POPULATION CHANGE

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Year	Population
1990	14,643
2000	15,706
2010	15,595
2020	17,223
2021	17,515
2022	17,753
2023	17,903

Year	Median Age
2010	44.6
2020	46.5
2021	46.3
2022	46.2

Park County's median age of 46.2 years in 2022 was higher than the Montana median age of 40.1 and the U.S. median age of 38.5.



I love it here. I want to live here in the future, but I'm worried it will be a completely different place. I really hope the Park County of my childhood can continue to exist.

- Park County native, age 18-24

PHOTO BELOW: Live summertime concert held at A Stones' Throw Bed & Breakfast in Livingston. | Photo Credit: Jake McGlothlin/Rusty Fox Media
 PHOTO OPPOSITE PAGE: Moving sheep through the chute. | Photo Credit: Melanie Maganias/Nashan Photographers



PARK COUNTY SCORES IN TOP 30 MOST ARTS-VIBRANT RURAL COMMUNITIES

ARTS VIBRANCY INDEX 2023

Source: SMU DataArts, the National Center for Arts Research, <https://dataarts.smu.edu/ArtsVibrancyMap>

RANKED #14
 AMONG RURAL COUNTIES
 IN THE UNITED STATES

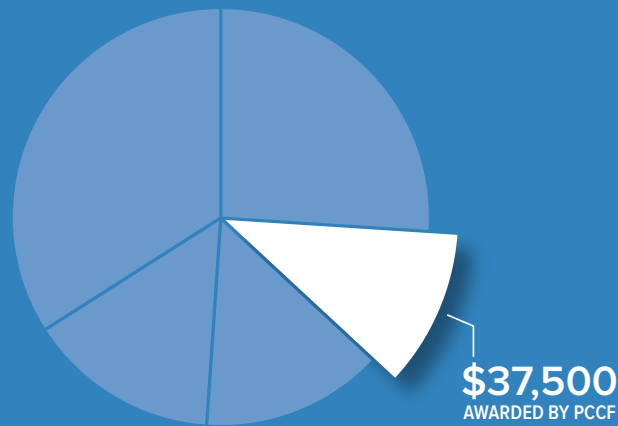
TOP 1% IN ARTS PROVIDERS

TOP 10% IN ARTS DOLLARS

TOP 23% IN GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Park County was ranked #14 of all of the rural counties in the nation, based on an assessment of arts vibrancy among all of the counties located outside of an urban area. The assessment includes three main rubrics including art providers (number of artists, organizations, employees, firms), art dollars (programming, revenue, expenses, compensation) and government support (number of government grants and funding for the arts) for arts and culture.

2024 Small Town and Rural Lifestyle Grants

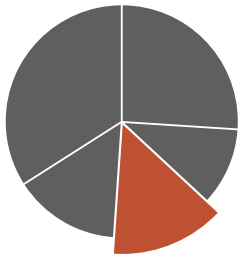


- **COMMUNITY FAIRGROUND FOUNDATION:** \$12,500 to fund physical improvements to the Exhibit Hall to increase its use and accessibility.
- **ELECTRIC PEAK ARTS COUNCIL:** \$5,000 to support this all-volunteer organization in providing winter arts programming and youth education activities in Gardiner.
- **ELK RIVER ARTS & LECTURES:** \$15,000 toward their 2024 author lectures and classroom visits that connect Park County with innovative artists and diverse perspectives.
- **THE SHANE LALANI CENTER FOR THE ARTS:** \$5,000 to continue expansion of their Arts Education Program and allow for additional arts offerings in Livingston Public Schools.



FEATURED GRANT FAIRGROUND EXHIBIT HALL UPGRADES

The Park County Fairgrounds' Exhibit Hall has been used as a central convening place for the rural youth and community groups of Park County for the past 100 years. Although the Exhibit Hall is one of the largest spaces for public gatherings within the county, its physical appearance and functionality needed updating. The Community Fairground Foundation is using its grant to help complete essential renovations and upgrades: bringing natural light into the space; increasing the building's energy efficiency; improving the overall sound quality and the accessibility for the hard of hearing; and allowing for the long-term care of this vital community space.



Economic Performance

THE VISION: *We Will* support varied and viable economic opportunities consistent with the character of our community.

Over the past three years, survey respondents have increasingly voiced concerns about the overall cost of living in Park County. More people also believe more Park County residents are struggling financially. These opinions are consistent with national and local data: despite the continued rise of median household income for Park County residents, the annual cost of living is also increasing. The economic performance of Park County involves multiple aspects including available jobs. The Jobs by Industry chart indicates:

- 45% increase in the professional, scientific, management, and administrative services industry occupations in the last 3 years.
- 23% decrease in the agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industry occupations during the same period.

The charts show mixed opinions on current employment opportunities. Interestingly, the percentage of respondents who believe it's difficult for people to find a good job is nearly identical to those who believe it's difficult for employers to get quality employees.

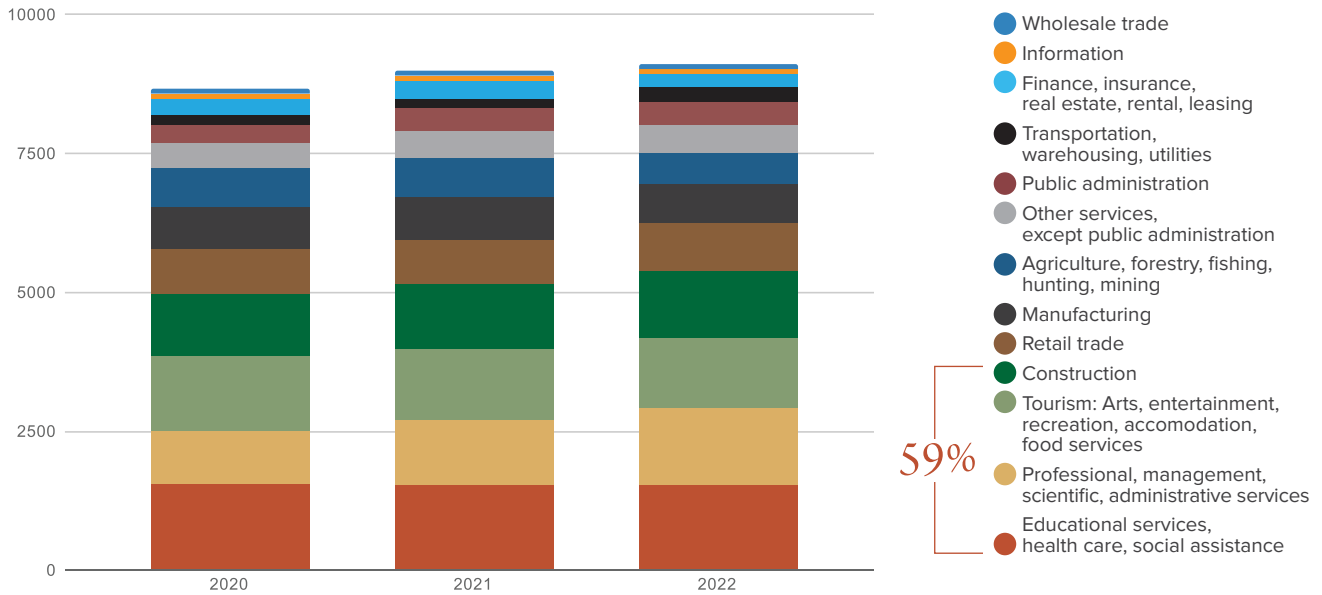
Park County dining options expand significantly during the summer months thanks to a large variety of locally owned food trucks. | Photo Credit: Jacob Schwarz/schwarzcaptures



59% OF JOBS COME FROM 4 SECTORS

JOBS BY INDUSTRY

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP03

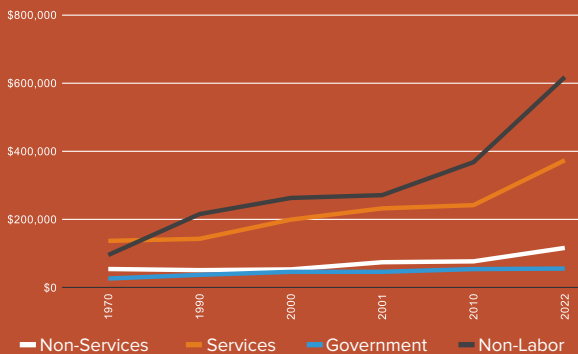


Jobs in the professional, management, scientific and administrative services industry have increased 45% in last 3 years.
Jobs in the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting industry have decreased 23% during the same period.

NON-LABOR INCOME ACCOUNTS FOR 53% OF ALL PERSONAL INCOME

INCOME IN PARK COUNTY BY SOURCE

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis

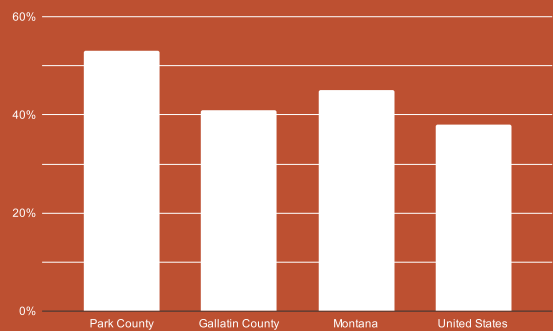


Non-labor income includes dividends, interest, rent, and transfer payments. Services are industry sectors that include educational services, health care, professional services, tourism, construction, retail trade, transportation & public utilities, wholesale trade, finance, insurance, real estate, and other services. Non-services are industries that include farm, agricultural, forestry, fishing, mining, construction, and manufacturing. Government includes income from jobs in federal, military, state, and local governments.

NON-LABOR INCOME HIGHER IN PARK COUNTY COMPARED TO OTHER LOCATIONS

NON-LABOR INCOME COMPARISONS

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis

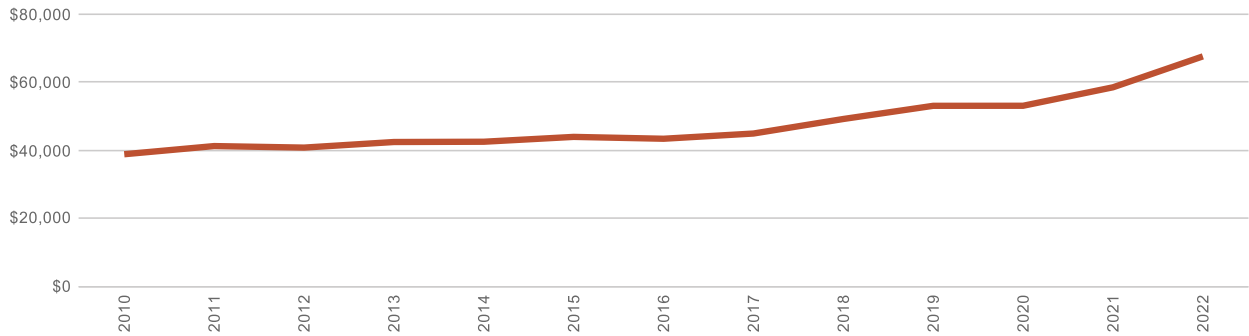


The percentage of non-labor income in Park County is 25% higher than the percentage of non-labor income in Gallatin County; 15% higher than it is in Montana; and 33% higher than it is in the U.S.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME = \$67,602

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME: PARK COUNTY OVER TIME

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table S1901



ANNUAL COST OF LIVING = \$84,438

ANNUAL COST OF LIVING IN PARK COUNTY: 2024

Source: <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/30067>

Food.....	\$10,438
Childcare	\$9,398
Medical.....	\$8,038
Housing.....	\$12,738
Transportation	\$15,060
Civic	\$6,715
Other.....	\$11,437
Required annual income after taxes.....	\$73,822
Annual taxes	\$10,616
Required annual income before taxes	\$84,438

Cost of living is for two working adults and one child.

“

My partner and I both work full-time jobs, and our wages do not match the cost of living. Together we cannot afford to pay all of our bills each month. We don't go out to eat, we don't spend money on luxury items, we just try to survive each month. Park County will lose all of its workforce if something does not change.

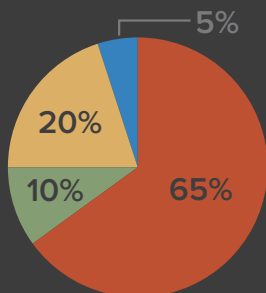
- Full-time resident of 6-10 years, age 25-34

PHOTO OPPOSITE PAGE: Kids getting an early start with camera gear during the Wild at Heart Kid's Camp. | Photo Credit: Jake McGlothlin/Rusty Fox Media

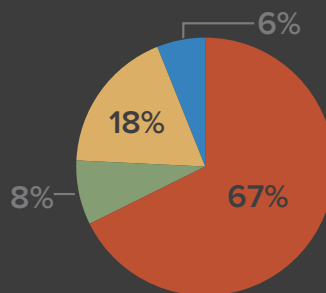
COMMUNITY OPINIONS

● Agree ● Neutral ● Disagree ● Don't know or N/A

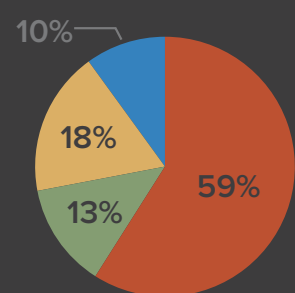
IT'S EASY FOR PEOPLE TO FIND A GOOD PAYING, LIVING WAGE JOB.



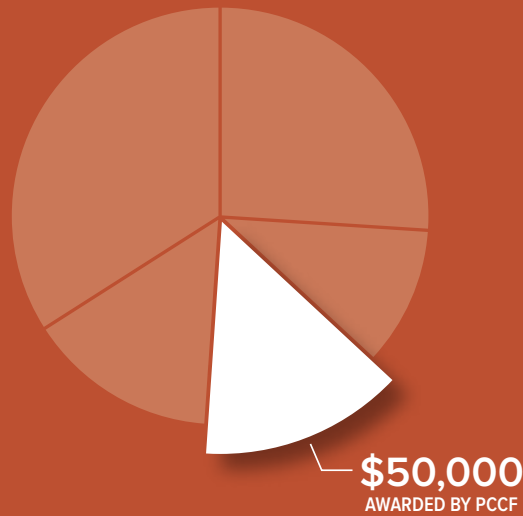
IT'S EASY FOR EMPLOYERS TO GET QUALITY EMPLOYEES.



THOSE GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOLS IN PARK COUNTY HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO LIVE AND WORK HERE.



2024 Economic Performance Grants

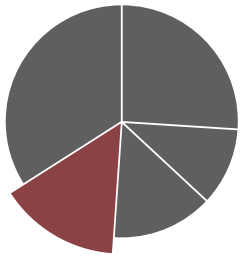


- **LITTLE PEOPLE’S LEARNING CENTER & GARDINER SNOOPY COOPERATIVE PRESCHOOL:** \$15,000 to access strategic planning services in support of merging with Gardiner Snoopy Cooperative Preschool.
- **PARK COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL:** \$10,000 to inform tourists about the local conservation values of the Wild Livelihoods business coalition.
- **PARK LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION:** \$5,000 in general operating support to fulfill their mission of providing economic development services.
- **THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND:** \$10,000 for construction of the Emigrant Linear Park and Trail, an early component of the Yellowstone Heritage Trail.
- **WESTERN SUSTAINABILITY EXCHANGE:** \$10,000 in support of their Regenerative Ranching Program that promotes ranch land productivity and profitability.



FEATURED GRANT STRENGTHENING CHILDCARE SERVICES

Supporting access to childcare and preschool programs is crucial for the growth and stability of our community. The overall goal of Little Peoples Learning Center and Gardiner Snoopy Cooperative Preschool is to provide safe, affordable, and high-quality education to the children of Gardiner and Mammoth, enabling working parents to contribute to the local economy. Understanding that limited resources exist, the two entities are using grant funds to help facilitate the merger of their programs, working together to create a stronger, more efficient organization to better serve the needs of the local families.



Housing and Affordability

THE VISION: *We Will* support good solutions that address affordability for all who choose to live and work here.

For the 2024 survey, we dug in deeper to residents' opinions about housing. We learned:

- 34% anticipate they will not stay in their current residence within the next five years.
- 30% expect they will not be able to find, afford, and/or remain in their preferred type of housing in Park County within the next five years.
- 58% believe their ability to find, afford, and/or remain in their preferred type of housing in Park County impacts their ability to pursue their goals in Park County.
- 67% say housing is a very important consideration for them when thinking about their plans for the next five years.

To better understand these opinions, we looked into residential property taxes to provide us with available data. According to the Montana Free Press' analysis of data provided by the Montana Department of Revenue, Park County median residential property taxes increased 26% in 2023 vs. 2022.

PHOTO BELOW: Home in Paradise Valley with a view of the Absaroka Range. | Photo Credit: Jacob Schwarz/schwarzcaptures

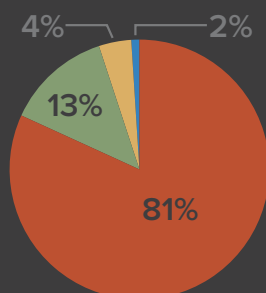
PHOTO OPPOSITE PAGE: Park County's current housing shortage sometimes means living year-round in structures primarily intended for vacation use. | Photo Credit: Wyatt Maw



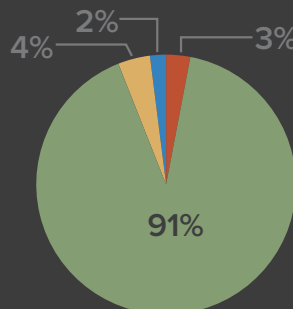
COMMUNITY OPINIONS

● Agree ● Neutral ● Disagree ● Don't know or N/A

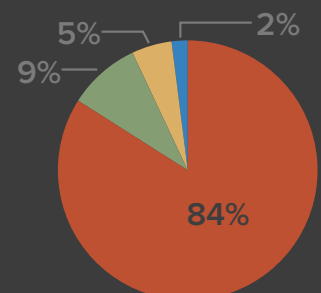
FIRST-TIME BUYERS CAN AFFORD TO BUY A HOME IN THE AREA.



THE COST OF HOUSING IS TOO EXPENSIVE WHEN COMPARED TO THE TYPES OF CURRENT JOBS AVAILABLE.



THERE ARE ENOUGH PLACES TO LIVE FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO WORK HERE.



MEDIAN RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY TAXES ROSE 26% IN 2023

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY VALUES AND TAXES

Source: Montana Department of Revenue data analyzed by Montana Free Press, December 2023

	Park	Gallatin	Madison	Meagher	Sweet Grass
Residential Property Values: 2023 Increase on Median vs. 2022	52%	61%	62%	56%	48%
Residential Property Tax Bills: 2023 Median Change vs. 2022	26%	30%	46%	31%	34%
Estimated Countywide Tax Collections: Per Resident	\$2,012	\$2,602	\$7,869	\$2,848	\$3,741
Estimated Countywide Tax Collections: 2023 vs. 2022	15%	27%	40%	0%	-7%
Tax Burden paid by Residential Properties: 2022	44%	55%	74%	21%	11%
Tax Burden paid by Residential Properties: 2023	49%	59%	78%	26%	16%

“

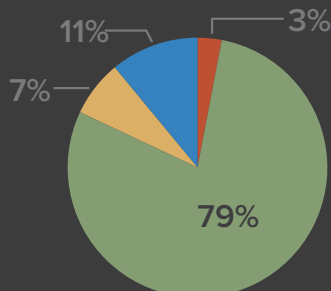
We have a modest house in town, and feel so lucky we have that. But property taxes are scary, and we worry about how much they will continue to go up. I am becoming increasingly discouraged. - Full-time resident of 11 to 20 years, age 35-44

PARK COUNTY HOUSING COALITION

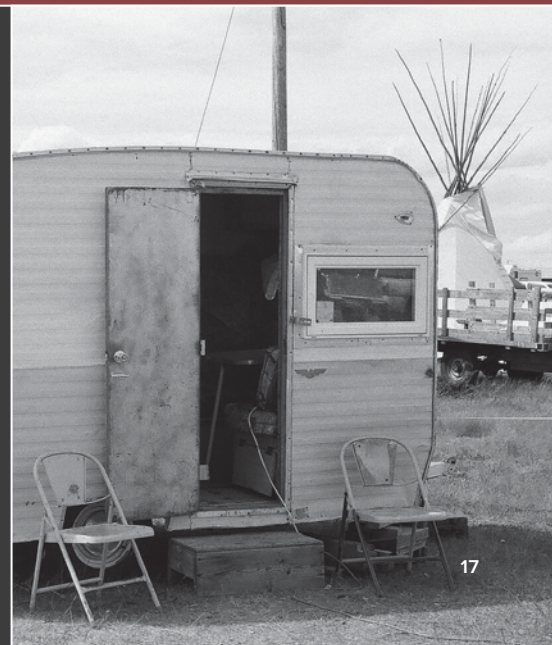
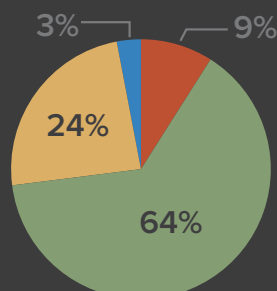
To more effectively address housing challenges in our community, PCCF has been an active supporter and funder of the Park County Housing Coalition. The Coalition began as a collaborative program between PCCF and the local Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) of District IX and is now entering its second year with a full-time program manager. The Coalition’s 2024 priority work areas are informed by the 2022 Housing Action Plan and include:

- Exploring workforce housing and employer-based solutions to increase housing opportunities.
- Participating in the City of Livingston’s zoning update to ensure zoning changes are clear, complementary, and allow for more abundant housing at needed sizes and affordable prices.
- Educating local homeowners on the logistics of building accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on their property. Workshop topics will include financing, permitting, construction, and property management.

THERE ARE TOO MANY PEOPLE WHO PAY RENT/MORTGAGES THAT EXCEED 30% OF THEIR INCOME.



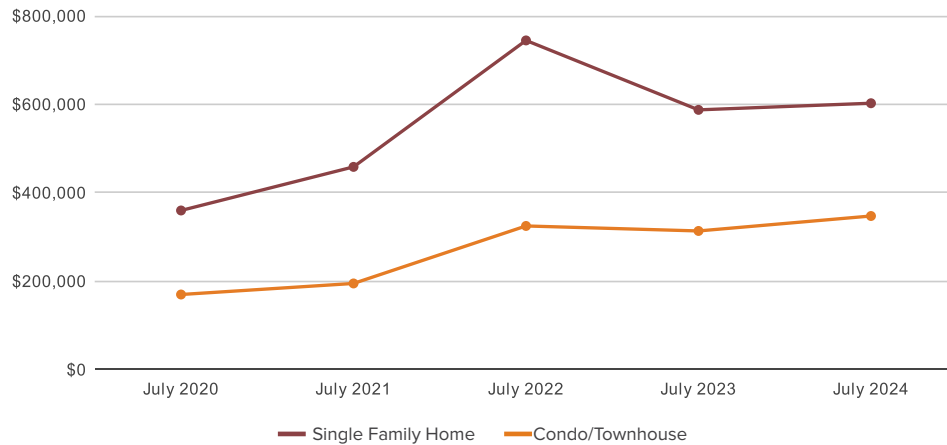
THERE ARE TOO MANY LUXURY HOMES BEING BUILT IN THE AREA.



PROPERTY PRICES ARE DOWN FROM 2022 BUT STILL CONTINUE OVERALL UPWARD TRAJECTORY

MEDIAN SALES PRICE IN DOLLARS

Source: Big Sky Country MLS



LIVINGSTON RENTAL RATES CONTINUE TO INCREASE, RENTAL RATES OUTSIDE OF LIVINGSTON DECREASED

RENTAL RATES IN PARK COUNTY

Sources: Park County Housing Needs Assessment, Hannah Montana LLC and Pineview Properties

Type of Rental	2021 Rental Rate	2022 Rental Rate	2023 Rental Rate	2024 Rental Rate	% Change 2023 vs. 2024
2 bedrooms in Livingston	\$1,200–\$1,500	\$1,250–\$1,600	\$1,500–\$1,700	\$1,800–\$2,100	20% to 24%
4 bedrooms in Livingston	\$1,900–\$2,200	\$1,900–\$2,400	\$2,200–\$2,500	\$2,300–\$2,700	8% to 17%
4 bedrooms outside of Livingston	\$2,300+	\$2,500+	\$3,200+	\$2,900+	-9%

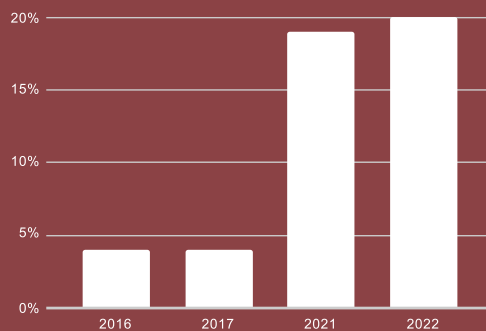
The 2021-2023 rental prices included above were provided by Hannah Montana, LLC, based on its inventory of 296 rentals in Park County. The 2024 rental prices were provided by Pineview Properties, based on its inventory of 27 rentals. Rental rates are for standard rentals.

PHOTO OPPOSITE PAGE: The Park County Senior Center, located on Main Street in downtown Livingston. | Photo Credit: Jacob Schwarz/schwarzcaptures

INCREASE IN MIDDLE CLASS RENTERS WHO ARE COST-BURDENED

COST-BURDENED RENTER HOUSEHOLDS

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Policy Map



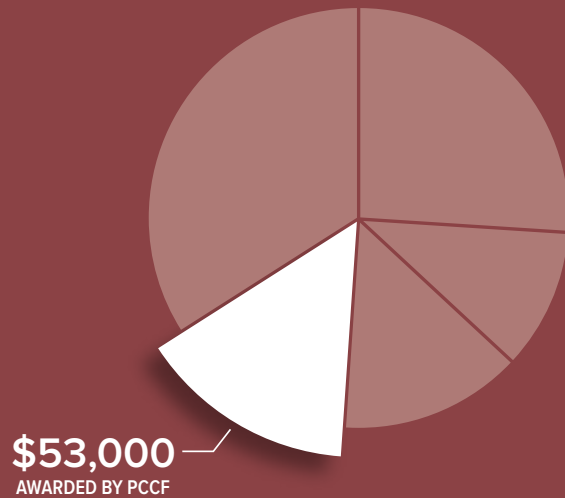
This chart shows the percent of cost-burdened renters in Park County with a household income of \$50k-\$75k, based on available data. Cost-burdened households spend 30% or more of their income on monthly rent and utilities.



I love this place and want it to be the good and affordable place for families to live that it has historically been.

- Full-time resident of less than 6 years, age 35-44

2024 Housing and Affordability Grants

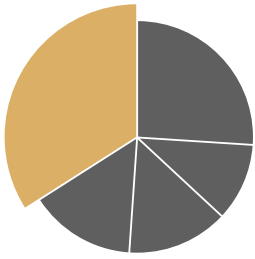


- **HRDC OF DISTRICT IX – LIVINGSTON OFFICE:** \$20,000 to conduct a feasibility study on transitional housing.
- **LIVINGSTON FOOD RESOURCE CENTER:** \$5,000 in support of school-based satellite food pantries where students can self-select food, toiletries, and school supplies.
- **NORTH YELLOWSTONE EDUCATION FOUNDATION:** \$28,000 toward their ongoing efforts to increase housing opportunities for teachers at Gardiner School.



FEATURED GRANT AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR TEACHERS

The Gardiner School is an essential part of the local community, keeping and attracting families who help grow a sustainable economy. However, high rents and increased home values make it challenging for teachers to afford to live here. The North Yellowstone Education Foundation (NYEF) has been actively working with the community to create long-term housing solutions for teachers and school staff. With help from the grant monies received, NYEF will purchase and develop four affordable housing units for local teachers, with the overall goal of securing six affordable housing units by 2027.



Health, Safety and Education

THE VISION: *We Will* continually strive to improve the well-being of all our residents.

When considering the health, safety, and education of Park County residents, what survey respondents believe doesn't always align with the data. They are also more inclined to have a neutral opinion or indicate they don't know the answers relating to health, safety, and education issues compared to other topics.

The data shows both positive developments and continuing challenges.

- Park County District Court data shows drug offenses are at a 10-year low, but 68% of respondents believe drug use and substance abuse are on the rise.
- Fewer people agree Park County is a safe place to live compared to years past, down to 73% from 84% in our 2022 survey; however, court cases are declining after an uptick in 2022.
- While substantiated child abuse cases are trending down, 30% of respondents with children in their home believe it's trending up.
- 50% don't know if more students are graduating from the county's high schools. Updated data from the Montana Office of Public Instruction shows a slight decline in the cohort rate—the total number of graduates based on the students who started the school in ninth grade, along with those who transferred in and out, divided by the total number of those who graduated, dropped out or re-enrolled.

When it comes to food insecurity, community perception is aligned with reality. 66% believe more people need food assistance, which is consistent with data from the Livingston Food Resource Center; 2024 food distributions have already surpassed what was distributed in 2022.



Park County is a very cool place to live, with a lot of people who are committed to making it a safe, connected, engaging community.

- Full-time resident of 6-10 years, age 55-64

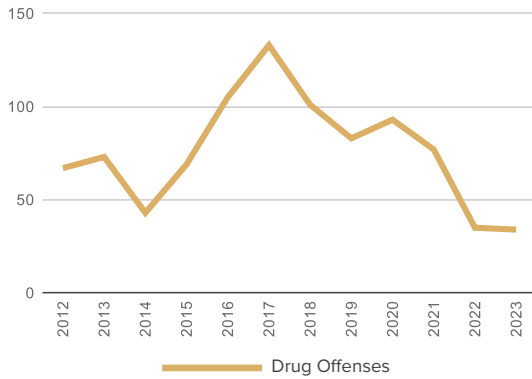
PHOTO BELOW: Many Park County families cherish the opportunity to raise their kids in a rural environment. | Photo Credit: Townsend Collective
 PHOTO OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP: A view of Park High School by a current student. | Photo Credit: Noah Craig/Alpine Range Photography
 PHOTO OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM: Dan Bailey's Outdoor Company hosts the Wild At Heart Kid's Camp each August. | Photo Credit: Jake McGlothlin/Rusty Fox Media



DRUG OFFENSES AT A 10-YEAR LOW

PARK COUNTY DISTRICT COURT DRUG OFFENSES

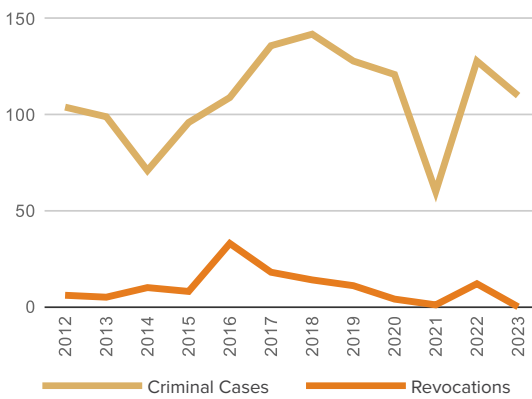
Source: Park County District Court



COURT CASE DECLINE AFTER UPTICK IN 2022

PARK COUNTY DISTRICT COURT CASE LOADS

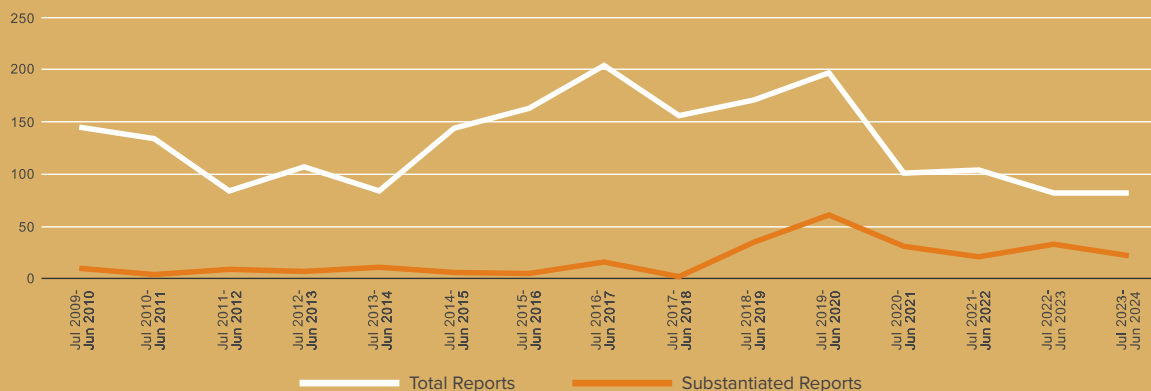
Source: Park County District Court



SUBSTANTIATED CHILD ABUSE CASES TRENDING DOWN

CHILD ABUSE REPORTS: TOTAL AND SUBSTANTIATED

Source: CAPS and MFSIS

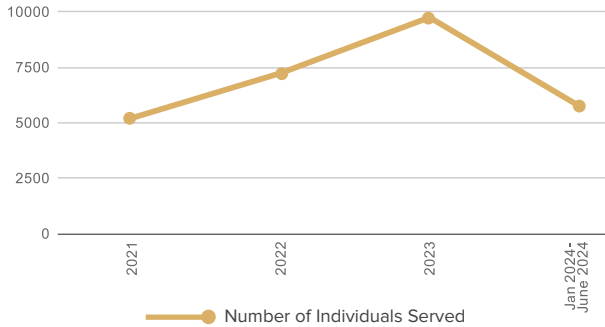


After an uptick in substantiated reports during FY23, cases continue to trend down in FY24. Total reports indicate the number of total reports accepted for investigation and substantiated reports indicate the total reports that concluded in a disposition of founded or substantiated reports within the fiscal year.

2024 YTD FOOD DISTRIBUTIONS HAVE ALREADY SURPASSED 2022

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED

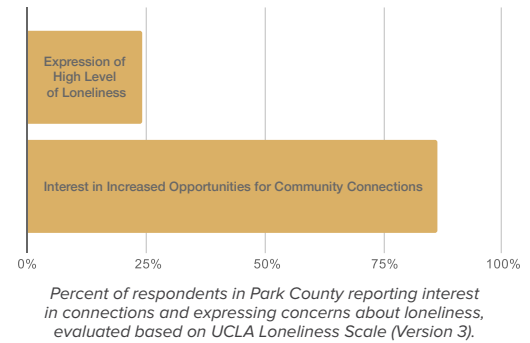
Source: Livingston Food Resource Center



5 OUT OF 6 PEOPLE WANT MORE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

LONELINESS IN PARK COUNTY

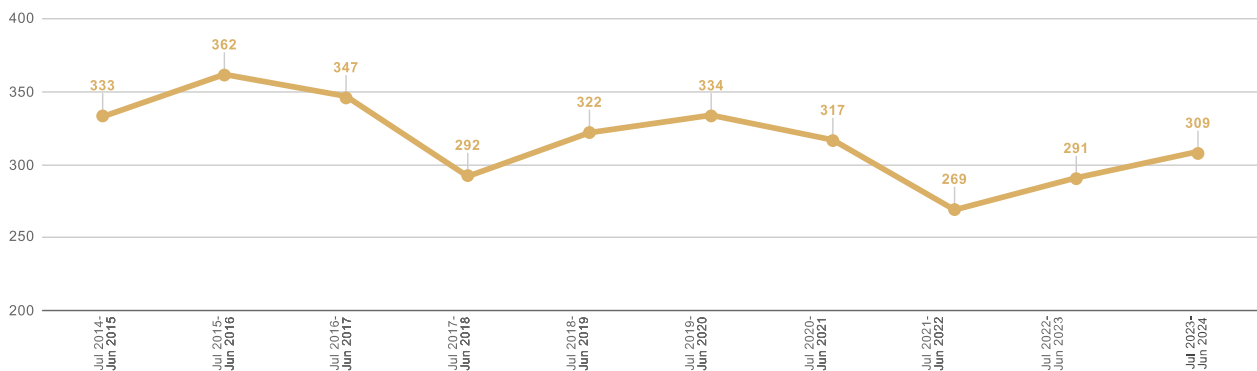
Source: Park County Connect Project 2024, conducted by the Park City-County Health Department



LICENSED CHILD CARE PROVIDER CAPACITY CONTINUES TO REBOUND

PARK COUNTY LICENSED CHILD CARE PROVIDER CAPACITY

Source: Child Care Connections



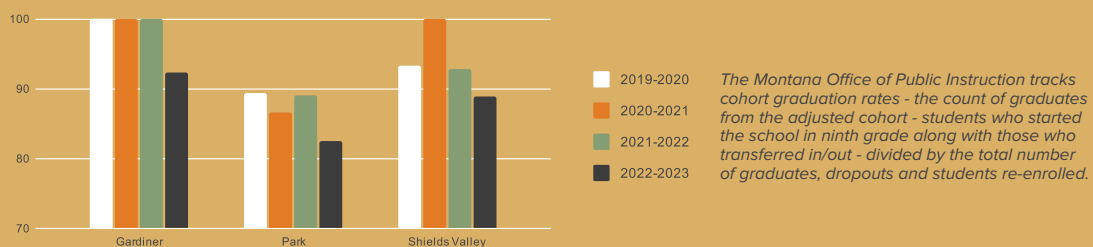
As of July 31, 2024, there were 12 licensed providers in Park County with 309 slots. There were an estimated 739 children under the age of 5 in Park County in 2022, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The data in the chart reflects the total child care capacity from licensed providers. It does not include the capacity from unlicensed providers.

PHOTO OPPOSITE PAGE: Park County maker Brian Pickering, proprietor of St. Johns Supply Co. | Photo Credit: Townsend Collective

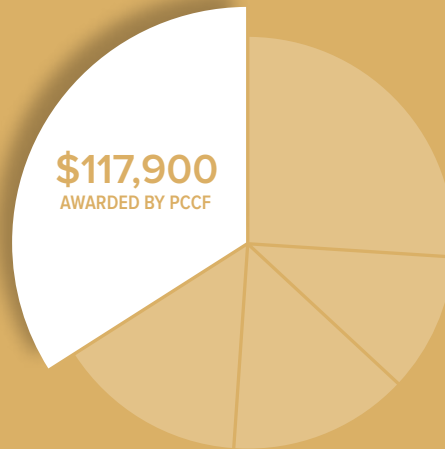
COHORT RATES SHOW LESS THAN 100% GRADUATION

COHORT GRADUATION RATES IN PARK COUNTY

Source: Montana Office of Public Instruction



2024 Health, Safety and Education Grants



- **ASPEN (ABUSE SUPPORT & PREVENTION EDUCATION NETWORK):** \$8,000 in support of their ongoing work to reduce domestic and sexual violence in our community.
- **COMMUNITY HEALTH PARTNERS:** \$15,000 in support of the Early Childhood Coalition.
- **COOKE CITY SILVER GATE EMERGENCY SERVICES:** \$20,000 to finish the interior build-out of their recently constructed fire hall / community building.
- **FARM TO SCHOOL OF PARK COUNTY:** \$15,000 to enhance their existing K-12 programming that addresses the food insecurity experienced by 43% of Park County youth.
- **LIVEWELL49:** \$28,400 to support leadership in developing a Suicide Prevention Coalition.
- **PARK COUNTY CANCER ALLIANCE:** \$10,000 to pursue their mission of alleviating stress and financial challenges for cancer patients and their families.
- **PARK COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT:** \$1,500 to purchase infant supplies that are distributed to Park County's vulnerable families through the Park County Diaper Depot.
- **RURAL RESILIENCE:** \$10,000 to expand behavioral health care in rural Park County.
- **THE COMMON GROUND PROJECT/YELLOWSTONE SAFE PASSAGES:** \$10,000 for continued development of Yellowstone Safe Passages to reduce wildlife-vehicle conflict.



FEATURED GRANT

NEW COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACE FOR COOKE CITY - SILVER GATE – COLTER PASS

The new Fire Community Center for the Cooke City, Silver Gate and Colter Pass communities is nearing completion. Cooke City Silver Gate Emergency Services, an all-volunteer organization of 15-20 people who provide fire and emergency medical services, will use the grant funds received to help cover the costs of the center's interior construction needs. The community space will offer a place for residents to gather for social events, club meetings, and town events as well as serve as an emergency command center and a safe, warm shelter during emergencies, power losses, floods, and other weather-related events.

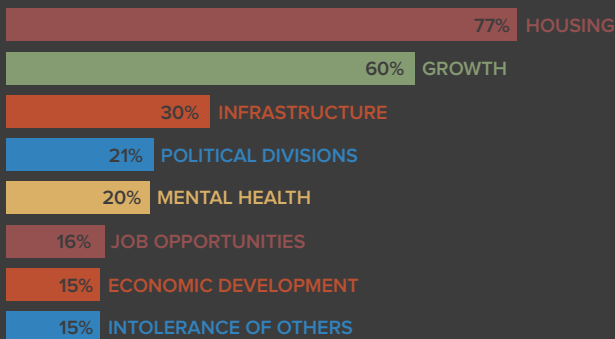
Other 2024 Survey Highlights

“

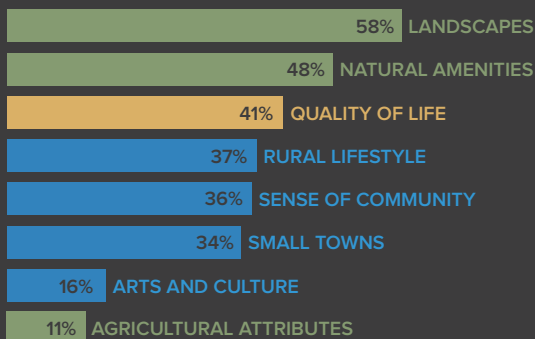
The people of Park County are stubborn, ornery and care deeply about this place.

- Park County native, age 45-54

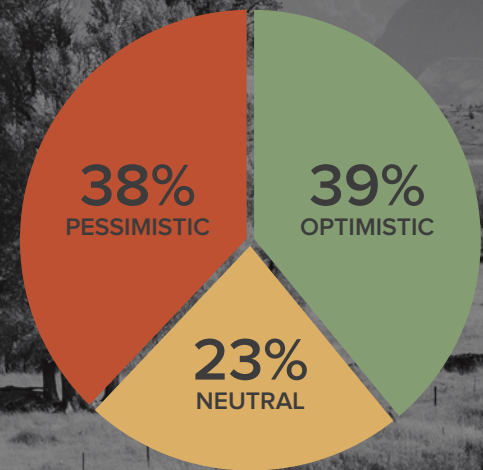
WHAT ARE THE GREATEST CHALLENGES THAT PARK COUNTY IS FACING?



WHAT ARE THE 3 THINGS YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT LIVING IN PARK COUNTY?



WHAT'S YOUR OVERALL FEELING ABOUT THE FUTURE OF PARK COUNTY?



“

Park County is not perfect, but I love it here.

- Full-time resident of 41+ years, age 75-84

More People are Getting Involved

An impressive 97% of survey respondents believe it's important to address challenges faced by individuals, groups, or communities locally.

Fortunately, more Park County residents say they are getting involved in local issues, and 50% or more reported that they volunteer, attend public meetings, donate money, and/or contact their local elected officials. Among those who aren't engaged, it's more likely due to time and scheduling constraints than not knowing how to get involved. That's a positive for the numerous Park County organizations that rely on citizen engagement.

- Fewer people have negative sentiments about how growth is being addressed compared to 2023.
- A higher percentage of people are aware of local organizations working to address challenges related to political divisions, but as in 2023, no one believes these challenges are being successfully addressed.
- More people are aware of those working to address mental health challenges and more people believe that they are being successfully addressed.
- Also of note, a higher percentage of people believe that infrastructure challenges are not being successfully addressed compared to last year.

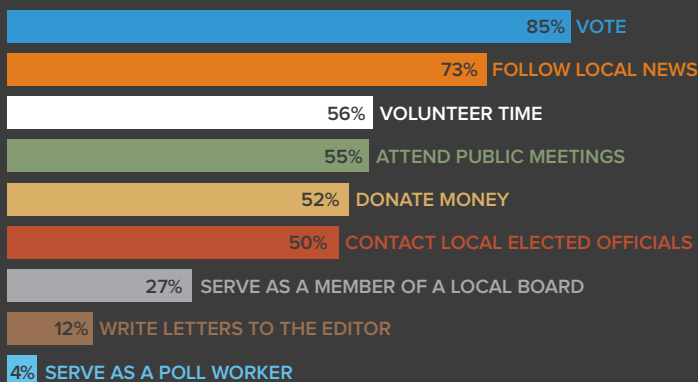


A list of organizations currently addressing some of the issues outlined in this report can be found on the Park County Community Foundation's website at: pccf-montana.org/we-will-park-county-GET-INVOLVED

PHOTO OPPOSITE PAGE: Photo Credit: Keellia Jo Photography

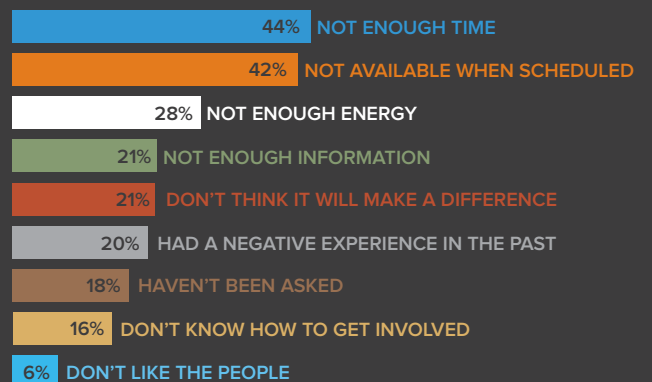
HOW PEOPLE ARE GETTING INVOLVED

SURVEY QUESTION: HOW HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED?
SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.



WHY PEOPLE DON'T GET INVOLVED

SURVEY QUESTION: WHEN YOU DON'T GET INVOLVED,
PLEASE SELECT ALL OF THE REASONS WHY.



Survey Methodology + Participants

The 2024 *We Will Park County* Community Survey was conducted in May, June, and July 2024. A total of 940 residents answered fill-in-the-blank and multiple choice questions, sharing their opinions and qualitative perspectives about Park County. The survey was extensively distributed and promoted throughout the county via postcards, email newsletters, local media coverage, flyers, and community outreach. Although actions were taken to encourage feedback from a diverse group of community members, the survey was not a random sampling or a scientifically-based representative sample of Park County residents.

Nearly 40% of this year's survey respondents were from communities outside of Livingston, an increase over previous years. Participants noted they were from: Beaver Creek, Bozeman Pass, Chadborn, Clyde Park, Cokedale, Colter Pass, Cooke City, Emigrant, Gardiner, Grannis, Jardine, Livingston, Loch Leven, McLeod, Meigs Road, Mission Creek, Paradise Valley, Pine Creek, Pray, Shields Valley, Silver Gate, Springdale, Swingley Road, Wilsall, and Wineglass.

- 66% of all of the respondents are female
- 58% are employed full-time or self-employed
28% are retired
- 59% are between 35-64 years old
32% are 65 and older
10% are 34 and younger
- 92% are full-time residents
- 46% have lived here more than 21 years
19% have lived here 11 to 20 years
15% have lived here 6 to 10 years
20% have lived here less than 6 years

Photo Credit: Blair Speed



“

I love Park County and have been here for 30 years. I love the young people, I love the old people, but I see a lot of changes. Changes are good, as long as they are thought out and respectful of all people's values as well as making this a place where people who love it and respect it can afford to live here and work here.

- Full-time resident of 21 to 40 years, age 55-64

Thank you

We Will Park County is made possible
by the generous support of our sponsors:



We are grateful for 2024 *We Will Park County* event hosts:

Shields Valley Community Center
Park County Fairgrounds
Gardiner Community Center

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR COVER IMAGE:

Paradise Valley Ranch is one of four AMB West properties in Paradise Valley. As Montana ranch owners for two decades, AMB West is dedicated to conserving lands for future generations while also serving the community by being good neighbors. The AMB West Hunting Program hosts an annual drawing to provide Park County residents access to this unique hunting opportunity.

For more information on the hunting program visit www.pvrhunting.com

Thank you to our directors
for their volunteer service
to the community.

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Park County Community Foundation (PCCF) is a local 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization which believes that Park County's challenges can be addressed best with local, collaborative solutions. PCCF inspires a culture of generosity and leadership by partnering with donors, nonprofits, and other stakeholders to invest in nonprofit programs that build resilient communities, while honoring our heritage and uniqueness of place.

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Annie Beaver | Finance & Administration Director

Tricia Erikson | Philanthropy Director

Barb Oldershaw | Program Director

Amanda W. Hester | Operations Manager

Keva Ward | Nonprofit ACTION Program Coordinator



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