



**AARP**<sup>®</sup>  
Montana



Investing In  
*Montana Communities*

---

The AARP Community Challenge Grants



Content	Page
Investments in Infrastructure	4
Outdoor Recreation	8
Community Improvements	13
Transportation	16

## AARP'S PURPOSE AND MISSION:

Empower people to  
choose how they live as  
they age.

*"We fight for and  
equip individuals  
50 + to live their  
best life."*

AARP's Community Challenge Grant publication provides information regarding funding allocated to Montana communities between 2017 and 2023. For information on how to apply for upcoming funding opportunities, please contact Nancy Andersen 406-457-4703 [andersen@aarp.org](mailto:andersen@aarp.org)

[www.aarp.org/mt](http://www.aarp.org/mt)  
30 West 14th Street, Suite 301  
Helena, MT 59601

Montana is aging at an unprecedented rate. Right now, about 20% of all Montanans are age 65+. In fact, Montana currently ranks 6th in the nation for having the highest percentage of our population that is age 65+. This trend will only continue, and Montana communities need to be ready. AARP's Livable Communities initiative supports the efforts of neighborhoods, towns, cities, and rural areas to continue to be great places to live for everyone. We believe that communities should provide safe, walkable streets; age-friendly housing, transportation options; access to needed services; and opportunities for residents to participate in community life.



That's why AARP started the AARP Community Challenge Grant program to help already great communities become even more livable for people of all ages.

**-AARP Montana Team including from left to right: Stacia Dahl, Communications; Tim Summers, State Director, Mike Batista, Government Affairs, Loraine Wodnik, Operations; Nancy Andersen, Outreach**

## PURPOSE AND GOALS

The AARP Community Challenge grant program provides small grants to fund quick-action projects that help already great communities become even more livable for people of all ages. Applications are accepted for projects to improve public places, housing, transportation, civic engagement, diversity and inclusion, and more.

The program is open to the following types of organizations:

- 501(C)(3), 501(C)(4) and 501(c)(6) nonprofits
- Government entities
- Other types of organizations will be considered on a case-by-case basis

Project Types:

- Permanent physical improvements in the community
- Temporary demonstrations that lead to long-term change
- New, innovative programming or services



# Thank you

All of us choose Montana as a place to live, raise families, create businesses, and work together since it's such an amazingly beautiful state with a bright future. This is one of the reasons why AARP invests in Montana communities through partnerships with local Montana leaders and nonprofits.

The leadership exhibited by local leaders, including the Montana League of Cities and Towns has helped to empower older adults to choose how they live and age. The League and the communities that comprise it have remained focused on economic security for rural areas and often support issues important to older adults including transportation, housing, and community safety.

Involvement of city and county leadership from communities including Anaconda-Deer Lodge, Bozeman, Missoula, Prairie, Cascade, and the greater Helena area help to ensure grant funds meet the individual and unique needs of the community. AARP Montana recognizes the need for active voices in local government to guide us through these unprecedented times and to maintain a voice that is true to Montana's values.

Though local governments are often the catalyst for community change, nonprofit partnerships, volunteers, and engaged residents frequently lead the implementation. Nonprofits planned, spearheaded, and advocated for many of the projects included in this publication. Montana's 129 incorporated cities and 56 counties benefit daily from organizations such as the Roundup Community Partners, Montana State Park Foundation, and Anaconda Local Development Corporation, to name only a few.

On behalf of AARP Montana, we express our gratitude for the efforts of those improving the lives of older Montanans every day.

# BY THE NUMBERS

**417,734 +**

Estimated Montanans Impacted by  
AARP Montana  
Community Challenge Grants

**\$435,995**

Granted to Montana Communities

AARP Montana Awards  
**\$1K** ↔ **\$30K**  
Individual Grants Annually

**26** Awarded to  
Local  
Nonprofits

**41**  
Grants

**15** Awarded  
to Local  
Governments

**133,000+**

AARP  
Montana  
Members

**5**

Transportation

**11**

Outdoor  
Recreation

**12**

Infrastructure  
Investments

**13**

Community  
Improvements

Awards Per Category



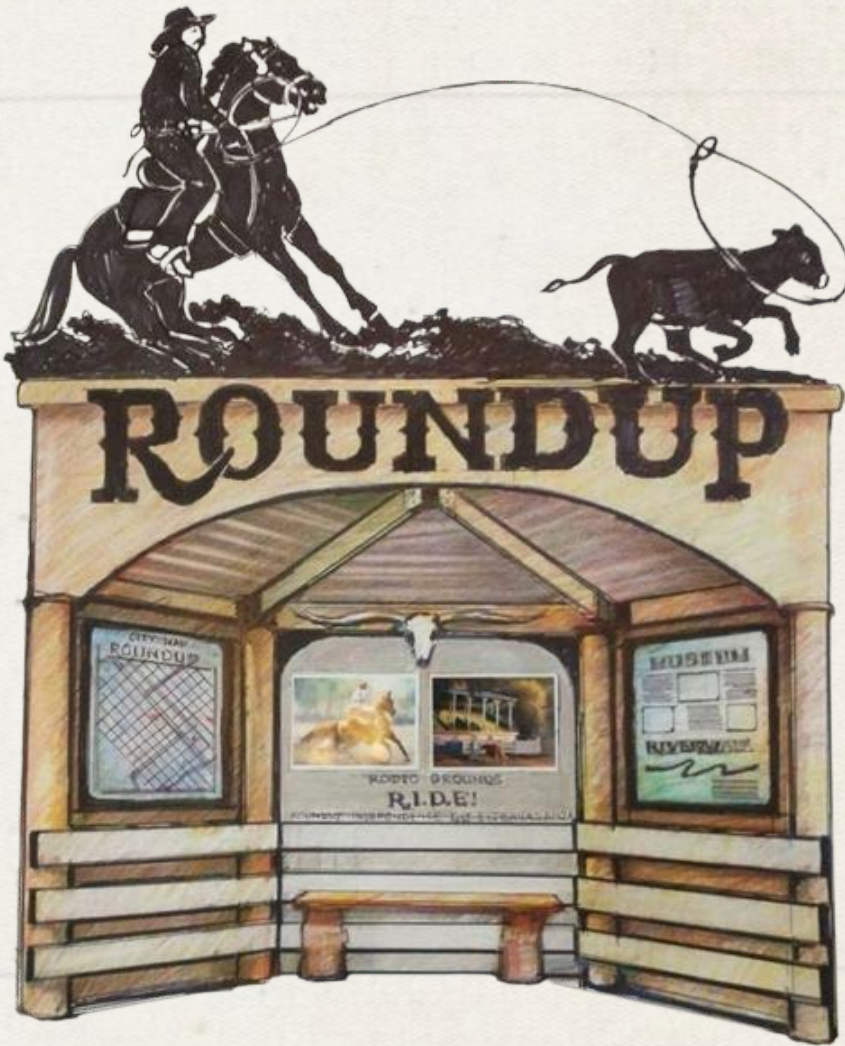
The **Great Falls Business Improvement District** led the development of a stunning mural at the Katherine Building, located in the heart of historic downtown Great Falls. Community members of all ages were welcomed to participate and local artisans were recruited to celebrate the western art capital of the world. **Award: \$5,000 ■**



# INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE

Electric City Mural, Downtown Great Falls





**Roundup Welcome Plaza**, spearheaded by **Roundup Community Partners**, was developed to ensure Main Street is accessible for all residents. Main Street winds through this serene Central Montana city from end to end, stretching more than one mile. The addition of benches and picnic tables now welcome the residents who call this beautiful place home, but also the 5,000 cars a day that travel through this community.

**Award: \$17,000 ■**

*"Thanks to our local leaders and AARP, Roundup's Welcome Plaza is a dynamic hub for the community that increases local commerce, strengthens local pride, and broadens awareness of Roundup's history."*



**- Roundup Mayor, Sandra Jones**

In Terry, the **Prairie County Economic Development Council** applied to create a covered outdoor space at the Prairie County Fairgrounds. The recent upgrade includes a new pavilion and picnic tables to allow shade and comfort during community events, birthday parties, graduation parties, and more. The leadership of local community members has increased the value of the Fairgrounds to local residents and created a vibrant gathering place for visitors to enjoy. **Award: \$5,000 ■**

The **Montana State Park Foundation** partnered with AARP Montana to improve the new Somers Lake public access point that provides 155 miles of shoreline access to Flathead Lake. Funding resulted in a visitor information kiosk to inform park visitors of recreational, wildlife sighting, and natural resource conservation opportunities. The kiosk is also the primary source of information regarding park regulations, fee collection, and general orientation that park visitors interact with when visiting MT State Parks. **Award: \$5,000 ■**



The **Anaconda Local Development Corporation** is a grassroots, neighborhood-driven group improving the downtown area. Their efforts have improved an active corridor downtown with art, lights, paving, and trees. This project has resulted in a clean and secure alleyway for residents of all ages to safely enjoy. New trees, cafe lighting, and ADA accessibility are just some of the benefits that community leaders are bringing to Anaconda's business district.

**Award: \$5,000 ■**



Local Artist Maria Hamm, Myrna Loy Art Installation



Myrna Loy Art Installation



Myrna Loy Performing Arts Center, Helena

Once an 1894 county jail, the **Myrna Loy Performing Arts Center** collaborates with county and city governments, local businesses, schools, and area residents to conduct arts projects and education. Improvements to the blighted streetscape of Helena's Rodney Street include repaving the street, planting trees, and street lighting. AARP Montana was proud to support this first major Helena city investment in the neighborhood in 30 years. This project funded tangible neighborhood improvements including ADA-compatible benches and art installations on dumpsters, planters, and on a boarded-up historic building.

**Award: \$27,300 ■**



**Local Artist: Sherri Cornett**

Four sculptures feature unique and natural elements. The public art pieces titled *Peace, Comfort, Rest, and Ease* provide beauty to the otherwise conventional intersection. Symbolically, the sculptures represent Billings as a nurturing community where ideas can grow and flourish.



Sherri Cornett & Nell Eby



Adam Roebeling & James Chandler



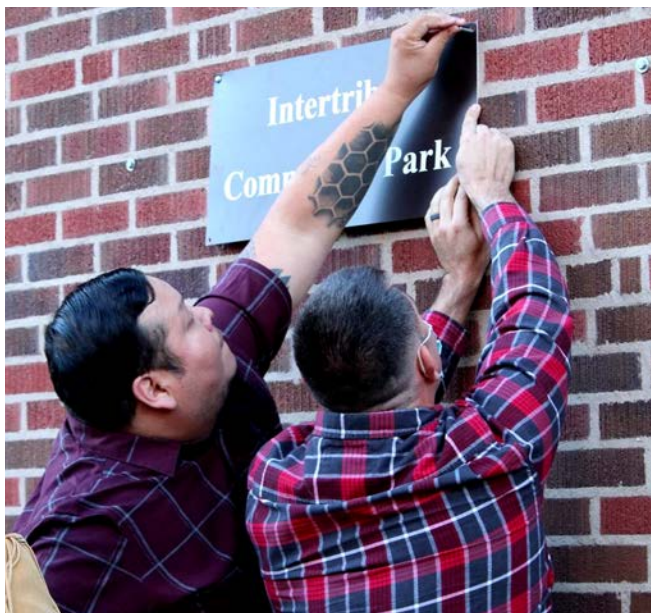
Amanda Boyer and Family

The Billings First Congregational Church led the efforts to create a pocket park at the northwest corner of 27th and 3rd street in the heart of downtown.

**INTERTRIBAL  
COMMUNITY  
PARK  
DOWNTOWN BILLINGS**



Cara Gunhild



Josiah Hugs and Nate Moyer

Thank you Thom McLean and **Big Sky Economic Development** for supporting the sculpture creation and installation of native plants for the gardens. **Award: \$5,000** ■







The **Cut Bank Dog Park** along Nyhagen Road is a bright addition to Cut Bank's thriving community. AARP provided funds for shade pavilions, ADA-accessible benches, and planting new trees. The city of Cut Bank rose to the challenge with fencing, volunteers, and additional infrastructure development. Community leaders planned for years to bring the dog park to life. AARP Montana is excited to watch this project continue to grow and serve even more people in the surrounding area in a safe environment that allows for people and pets of all ages to enjoy. **Award: \$23,758** ■

The **Pony Homecoming Club** supports all of the facilities and community maintenance of the town of Pony. Local leader, Sandra Bailey, helped lead the charge for improvements to Pony Park. In 2022, AARP Montana awarded the Homecoming Club a grant to add an irrigation system to Pony Park where community members, gather, socialize and celebrate. Pony residents are overwhelmingly 50+ and a park irrigation system will also decrease water usage and help reduce fire danger.

**Award: \$4,444** ■

*"Small communities are the vital force of Montana and we must seek opportunities to invest and improve the lives of all residents together. -Sandra Bailey*





The **City of East Helena** implemented an updated growth policy promoting livability, inclusion, open space, and walking and biking trails. City leaders have collaborated with organizations to raise funds, build new playgrounds, and replace outdated infrastructure. Previously, AARP partnered with local city leaders to fund projects that serve thousands of individuals in centrally located JFK Park including the installation of outdoor exercise equipment in the newly installed FitLot Park featured on Page 23 of this publication. Most recently, in 2022, AARP provided funding for three pre-cast picnic tables to augment the accessibility and enjoyment of people with mobility issues. **Award: \$5,000 ■**



The **Malta Senior Center** supports active players in pinochle, whist, bridge, and bingo games and hosts congregate meals throughout the week. In 2022 the Malta Senior Center identified much-needed facility updates and improvements. Senior Center Treasurer, Margaret Leader, led the charge to request assistance from AARP Montana for infrastructure improvements. AARP granted the senior center funds to repair a broken storm door and to construct an awning above the bench outside to provide safety and shelter for visitors. Funds were also used to repair damaged rain gutters, add a window to the side door, and eliminate a large window that prohibited efficient temperature control within the building. **Award: \$2,000 ■**







Since 1997, the **Three Forks community** has supported development of the Headwaters Trail System. Volunteers maintain paths to ensure safe use of the trails. In 2020, a partnership with AARP Montana completed the **Jefferson Loop Trail** with paving, signage, and pedestrian safety measures. **Award: \$25,000** ■

# OUTDOOR RECREATION

Missouri Headwaters Trail System, Three Forks, Montana



Lewis and Clark camped in 1805 at what is now the Missouri Headwaters State Park . The park includes **535 acres of recreational land** and marks the confluence of the Jefferson, Madison, and Gallatin Rivers.

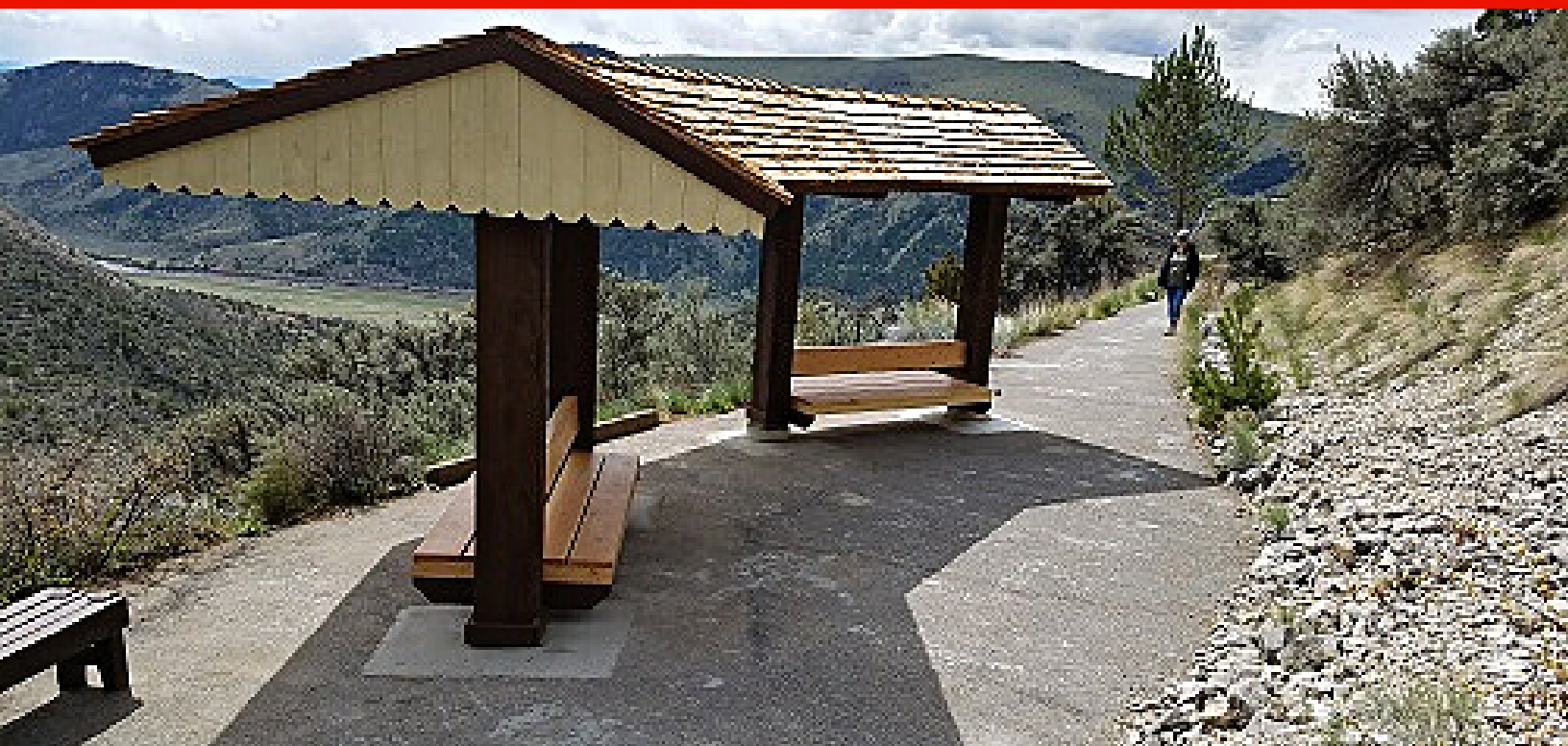




The **Powell County Parks Board** applied for funding to build a trail connector between Deer Lodge City Park and the north-end commercial district among businesses and the new medical center. County Commissioners negotiated easements with private landowners; staff donated time, labor, and equipment for construction; and Commissioner Dan Sagar donated the use of his personal skid steer. In a short amount of time and with tremendous community involvement, the County created a solid foundation upon which to improve the trail for all non-motorized users. **Award: \$4,500 ■**

The nonprofit **Kootenai Cross-Country Ski Club** negotiated a 10-year lease on previously unused property in the city of Libby to create 13 miles of looped trails with a warming hut and an informational cabin to serve as a center point for outdoor recreation. Although the city is surrounded by public lands, no direct access to trails or natural walkable areas existed for residents. The project required collaboration between the Kootenai Cross-Country Ski Club, Lincoln County, the City of Libby, and community members to create the parking lot and warming hut improvements. **Award: \$5,000 ■**

## ▶ A MOMENT OF SCENIC REST: LEWIS AND CLARK CAVERNS



The **Montana State Parks Foundation** has made the caving opportunities at the Lewis and Clark Caverns more available to a wider array of visitors. The steep hike to the cavern discouraged access for many with mobility challenges. The Foundation spearheaded the creation of a shade and weather shelter for visitors to gather and rest prior to beginning and after ending the Paradise Room tour. **Award: \$10,000 ■**

# ▶ ACCESS FOR THE AGES: CLINTON TRAIL IMPROVEMENT



ROCK CREEK NEIGHBORS AND VOLUNTEERS

AARP Montana funds were leveraged alongside community volunteers to build upon the Confluence Universal Trail System including the following efforts:

- Fabricate and install benches
- Install a solar audio post detailing the Rock Creek Confluence story
- Purchase trail tools and supplies for volunteers to maintain the trail
- Fabricate and install an interpretive sign near the wetland restoration site.



DUSTY AND DIANE HILMO



## FIVE VALLEYS LAND TRUST CLINTON TRAIL IMPROVEMENT



BOY SCOUTS TROOP 1911

The **Five Valleys Land Trust** trail system serves as a living laboratory, hosting a banding station to fit migratory birds passing with transmitters and the Montana Natural History Center provides summer camps and school programs.

Twenty-five volunteers spruced up the 1/3-mile trail including Boy Scout Troop 1911 and First Interstate Bank employees. The trail system is now a welcoming and more accessible place for all community members.

**Award: \$5,000 ■**

### Dave Juran, Lion Lumber and Build Missoula County Youth in Restoration Crew





## ▶ FOCUS ON RESTORATION: BEAVERHEAD TRAILS COALITION



Cornell Park located just outside of Dillon, Montana, was donated to the **Beaverhead Trails Coalition**. The Coalition is determined to restore this 3.5-acre park from a state of disrepair to recapture its natural beauty. Restoration partners include the Beaverhead Watershed Committee; Trout Unlimited; Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks; and the Dillon Kiwanis Club. AARP funding developed signs outlining restoration, stream bank erosion, and local bird habitat.

The **Helena Rotary Club and City of Helena Parks and Recreation Department** proposed and created a one-half mile accessible trail for the community. Helena's vast trail system and public land access provide a wonderful recreation opportunity for residents and visitors. However, few opportunities existed for individuals with limited mobility. The trail departs from the Mount Helena trailhead running along a knoll overlooking the city. Additionally, a flat surface was created to enable two wheelchairs to pass and for a single wheelchair to safely turn around. Today, people of all ages are able to access and use the Mount Helena trail. **Award: \$5,000 ■**



The park is popular with local residents for picnicking, relaxing, wading, and fishing in the river. The park serves the public as a quiet spot on the Beaverhead River.

**Award: \$2,350 ■**

The **Rx Trails Program** in Missoula combines preventative medicine and the idea of walking as a health and wellness measure for all ages. The trail system is designed with benches and activities to combat obesity and other chronic health conditions. Healthcare providers, physical therapists, nutritionists, and other medical professionals provided insight into the plan. The Missoula City Parks and Recreation Department partnered with AARP Montana to install two benches overlooking the Clark Fork River, update and improve the Rx Trail signage, create a new logo, and order promotional items to raise public awareness about the accessibility and benefits of the trail. **Award: \$10,000 ■**



## ► FEATURE THE RENOWNED: HISTORIC VIRGINIA CITY

Virginia City-born, self-made millionaire William Boyce Thompson decided to build a library and museum in 1918. He named it the Thompson-Hickman Memorial Building in honor of his father, William Thompson, and his wife's father, Richard Hickman, who were both prominent businessmen in Virginia City. Thompson willed the building and the surrounding properties to Madison County and directed that the building continue to function as a library or the property would be returned to his family heirs. Today, this library has served the community for more than 100 years.



# VIRGINIA CITY

## FRIENDS OF THOMPSON-HICKMAN MADISON COUNTY LIBRARY

For a centennial, the Thompson-Hickman Madison County Library has enriched lives

Historic uneven platforms and steps create a barrier to equal access

The **Friends of Thompson-Hickman Madison County Library** united in the belief the library plays an extensive role in the community collaborated to create a roadmap and pilot project to guide handicap access improvements throughout historic Virginia City.



Funding from AARP Montana has led to the coordination of local volunteers, well-attended community listening sessions in the community, and plans to create greater access for all who enjoy the city.

**Award: \$8,500** ■





# COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS



The Tunnel Vision 2021 public art project was achieved through collaboration between the Rails-to-Trails of Northwest Montana nonprofit and the KALICO Art Center with support by AARP Montana. Local artists gathered to replace gray graffiti-covered overpass tunnels frequented by recreational bikers and joggers. **Award: \$4,000 ■**

Five new murals were dedicated in tunnels along the trail system. Seven artists and over 120 volunteers transformed nearly 5,400 square feet of gray concrete into five colorful murals.

**Rails to Trails, Kalispell, Montana**



The **Blackfeet Eagle Shield Center** is supported by the Blackfeet Tribal Government Agency. The center is comprised of 20 surrounding acres and 16 apartments. AARP Montana provided funding to create an Elder Park and fenced area behind the Center where elders can plant flowers, have picnics, and host community gatherings. AARP Montana also provided funding to construct a greenhouse and community garden plots. Led by community members, the grant purchased pots, soil, and seed to grow flowers and vegetables in addition to the greenhouse. This exciting project has been used to address issues such as isolation, nutrition, and to encourage elder storytelling. The Center recruits local teens to help improve the project and create multigenerational partnerships. **Award: \$15,000 ■**

## Elder Park and Greenhouse, Browning



## ► MULTIGENERATIONAL: BLACKFEET EAGLE SHIELD CENTER

The **Kennedy Commons Area** is centrally located in Anaconda. The park was donated to Anaconda in 1906 by the Anaconda Copper Mining Company and a covenant requires that the land remain a park for residents to enjoy into perpetuity. Anaconda-Deer Lodge County boasts an older adult population significantly higher than the state average and local leader and County CEO Bill Everett recognized the need for greater access to the outdoors. AARP Montana provided a grant for new and much-needed ADA-compliant picnic tables. The commercial-quality tables and benches provide a more comfortable place for folks to enjoy community events for many years to come. **Award: \$1,500 ■**

The Cascade County Treasurer, Jodie Campbell, led the project to build an ADA-compliant picnic area in **North Railroad Park**. Residents of all ages are now able to comfortably utilize the area that contains a playground for children and a basketball court. The Cascade Senior Community Center is within walking distance and the seating area boasts a beautiful flag pole to display Montana's patriotism as well as planters with fresh flowers for locals to enjoy. Two permanent concrete picnic tables have been installed and are regularly enjoyed by parkgoers while they appreciate the view of the Missouri River. **Award: \$9,087 ■**





**Joy McClure**

The recent upgrades within **Ravalli County** have enhanced a facility and program venue that encourages agricultural, social, and educational opportunities in the Bitterroot Valley. President of the Ravalli County Fairgrounds Foundation, Joy McClure, led the effort to acquire private donations to

to install handicap seating at the Grandstand. The project included an EZ-Access Platform and ramp, skirting of the platform, seating, and signage. Previously, handicap seating consisted of the concrete apron - with a limited field of vision that included a chain-link fence and cattle pens. Today, the 70-year-old Grandstand is well-equipped to allow participants of all ages and abilities an unobstructed view of the annual fair, rodeos, and many other community events. **Award: \$5,000** ■

Additionally, AARP Montana sponsored the development of the **Ravalli County Aging Community Garden in Hamilton**, Montana. While many communities struggle to purchase fresh and healthy food for their seniors, Ravalli County is leading efforts to create sustainable and independent sources of nutrition. AARP Montana believes in the health benefits of a fresh diet as well as the community benefits associated with shared gardens. **Award: \$7,000** ■

The **Great Falls YWCA** created and provided community presentations to empower individuality and community involvement. Numerous individuals have attended the presentations and local volunteers are helping the local nonprofit in its endeavors. Sandi Filipowicz, the Great Falls YWCA Executive Director is working diligently to empower women of all ages and provide critical services to the community. **Award: \$5,000** ■







The "Veggie Brigade" created by **Cultivating Connections Montana** aims to connect older adults in Ravalli County with Youth Farm interns as an inter-generational approach to growing food. Although Montana is known for its agriculture, too many older adults face food insecurity. The "Veggie Brigade" provides great benefits to the community with locally-grown vegetables, exchange of gardening knowledge and skills, and provides additional resources for members of the community who may struggle with access to food.



Laura Garber, Founder of Cultivating Connections Montana and Farming and Food Coordinator leads eight Youth Farm interns each season to ensure Ravalli County residents are provided direct access to fresh, local, and healthy food.

The Youth Farm interns and their older adult partners host weekly garden visits to their own yards to promote "more salads for seniors." Interns grow a significant amount of produce for the salads, harvest, prepare & package weekly salad deliveries for older adults in the community from June to October.

**Award: \$23,050 ■**



**ExplorationWorks** of Helena is a science museum offering interactive and hands-on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) exhibits, programs, workshops, and camps. The 13,000-square-foot facility showcases exhibits, classroom and community space, and a fabrication shop.

In 2022, AARP Montana awarded Exploration Works a grant to provide scholarships for Grandparent Memberships for low-to moderate-income grandparents raising grandchildren. Fifty families benefited from this innovative program. **Award: \$5,000 ■**







**Helena's Sixth Ward** is under focused rejuvenation. The Helena Rotary Club combined funding and volunteers from AARP Montana, the Helena Public Art Committee, Sixth Ward businesses, and Montana artist Megan Ruff to beautify an exposed building. Volunteers of all ages aided the development of the mural by painting, sketching, and delivering supplies. Helena's Rotary Club hopes that this is just the first of several murals in the community representing their efforts to bring fresh art and culture to the 6th Ward. **Award: 5,000** ■



The Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribes applied for a grant from AARP Montana to create a **CSKT Community Garden**. This garden project will include a greenhouse as well as adjacent garden space that is already fenced. Produce from the garden will be used to increase the number of participants in the congregate nutrition program offered by the Elder Services Division at six senior centers on the reservation.

The project aims to decrease the social isolation of older adults, improve the quality and diversity of local food, and improve nutrition knowledge among seniors and their caregivers. The Elder Services Division will utilize this garden to increase awareness of community services and to provide garden infrastructure for future use. **Award: \$7,000** ■



## Bozeman, Montana

In Bozeman, a traffic calming project led by the Western Transportation Institute and the City of Bozeman helped to paint colorful crosswalks and installed pedestrian medians to naturally and efficiently slow traffic. **Award: \$5,000** ■

# TRANSPORTATION

"In August 2020, AARP Montana awarded Rocky Mountain Development Council a grant to provide the **Doors To Transit Community Challenge**, calling attention to the city's new bus routes by using "door signs" at various stops to illustrate the opening of new opportunities through public transportation.







Volunteers came together to transform **East Missoula's** community center into a **traffic-calming popup** and an environment more welcoming for pedestrians. The event was hosted by the East Missoula Community Council alongside Missoula County and the Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization. Participants of all ages gathered to illustrate safe street pathways, and set up traffic calming pop-ups and planters.

**Award: \$9,131 ■**

**Missoula's Riverfront Neighborhood** boasts the "**Hip Strip**" an area of high pedestrian traffic with safety and mobility concerns for local residents. The area is a hub of single and multi-family homes as well as commercial businesses. To address the pedestrian safety concerns, residents and business owners worked together to create vibrant public spaces in the areas previously occupied by parked cars. This project extended intersection corners into the street, improving visibility and narrowing travel distance on active roadways.



The extensions were created with colorful pavement markings, planters, and seating. Two ADA-compliant crosswalks were completed and the community gathered public input during the project to inform long-term intersection improvements. The City of Missoula and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board led the effort toward this exciting and innovative project and many community members enjoyed and benefited from the newly configured and accessible location.

**Award: \$12,500 ■**







Structures and spaces that allow people of all ages to play, gather, and exercise are important to local communities and healthy aging. The AARP-sponsored Outdoor Fitness Park organized by **FitLot** and located in **Kennedy Park in East Helena** provides exercise stations, regularly scheduled free classes, and allows residents aged 50+ and their families to live their best lives.

**Award: \$60,000 ■**

Residents of the greater Helena area can now register for no-cost FitLot classes to learn proper movement and safe equipment use, all led by certified fitness professionals. The outdoor fitness park offers equipment for 22 possible exercises and includes additional hooks for adjustable resistance bands. The park is also ADA compliant and wheelchair accessible.





# SNEAK 2023 PEEK AWARDS *STAY TUNED ...*

AARP Montana is excited to highlight the following projects in next year's 2024 edition of "Investing in Montana Communities."

- The Arlee Community Development Corporation is providing benches and shade to improve comfort and access for Elders at the Victory Garden located on the Powwow grounds. Award: \$18,396
- The Foundation for Montana History will provide discounted History Walk tickets to the 50+, history presentations to assisted living facility residents and an AARP-hosted community history walk. Award: \$5,000
- The 18,766-acre CSKT Bison Range Visitor Center is installing an outdoor community shelter, picnic tables, and fire rings allowing guests outdoor access while connecting with history and culture. Award: \$20,000
- Kootenai Heritage Council – Libby Memorial Events Center will provide much needed upgrades to their kitchen facilities which are heavily used by the community. Award \$7,000
- The City of Hamilton will implement pop-up traffic calming projects on high-traffic streets to support walkability near 55+ income-restricted affordable housing, schools, and government offices. Award: \$11,380
- The Winnett ACES will provide ADA-accessible restrooms in the town square for public gatherings and laundry facilities for residents. Award: \$7,000
- The Headwaters Trail System will purchase stationery exercise equipment at the Edwin Bellach Memorial Park next to the Headwaters Trail, emphasizing benefits to people aged 50+. Award: \$13,099
- Age-Friendly Billings and partners are increasing access to Lillis Park for daily walking and exercise and encouraging challenging joints in a safe way to keep up mobility. Award: \$20,000
- The Senior Mobile Home Repair Program provides repairs to older adults' mobile homes, allowing for independent living lives in a safe, sanitary, and dignified manner. Award: \$5,000
- The Urban Food Forest in Butte-Silver Bow will purchase provide additional plants and to share the harvest with Meals on Wheels and the local food commodities program. Award: \$1,000



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many communities across Montana submitted great ideas and projects that are included in this document. Each day, our partnerships with local organizations and community leaders turn ideas into action. Investing in communities to ensure livability for all ages is a top priority for AARP.

Applications for the AARP Community Challenge Grant Program are usually accepted from January through March. Applications are screened by volunteers and selected by state and national AARP staff. We encourage you to pursue funding for quick-action projects that lead to long-lasting improvements. For information on how to apply for upcoming funding opportunities, please contact: Nancy Andersen at 406-457-4703 [nandersen@aarp.org](mailto:nandersen@aarp.org)

These projects would not be possible without the innovation and strategic thinking of AARP's Livable Communities team and the AARP Montana State Office Team in Helena. We'd like to thank Mike Batista, AARP Montana's Government Affairs Director, who had the original idea to create this publication.

Thank you to the 5 Valleys Trust, Anaconda Economic Development, Beaverhead Trails Coalition, Big Sky Economic Development, Bozeman HRDC, Browning Eagle Shield Center, City of Billings, City of Bozeman, City of Cascade, City of Cut Bank, City of Dillon, City of East Helena, City of Hamilton, City of Helena, City of Kalispell, City of Libby, City of Missoula, City of Roundup, City of Three Forks, Cultivating Connections Montana, Confederated Salish Kootenai TribesDeer Lodge County, East Missoula Community, Exploration Works, Friends of Thompson-Hickman Madison County Library, Great Falls Business Improvement District, Great Falls YWCA, Helena's 6th Ward, Helena Rotary Club, Kootenai X-Country Ski Club, Lewis and Clark Caverns, Malta Senior Center, Missoula District Public Transit, Montana League of Cities and Towns, Montana State Parks Foundation, Pony Homecoming Club, Powell County, Ravalli County, Ravalli County Council on Aging, The Myrna Loy, and the Western Transportation Institute.

***Success is within the reach of us all. With the right partners, we can do anything for our communities. The Helena Rotary Club is grateful for the collective efforts of local businesses, AARP Montana, and community volunteers to improve Helena's 6th Ward for generations.***  
- Shawn Thomas, Helena Rotary Club President

***The Montana League of Cities and Towns leads the coordinated efforts of our municipalities to benefit all communities. AARP Montana's efforts to partner with local officials aid the League's mission of building and maintaining vibrant, healthy, and safe communities. Thank you, AARP for your willingness to reach into Montana's cities and towns to empower individuals of all ages.***  
- Kelly Lynch, Executive Director  
Montana League of Cities and Towns

***County fairgrounds can be taken for granted, but it takes a lot of work behind the scenes to keep these facilities open and accessible. AARP Montana's Community Challenge Grants have helped Ravalli County ensure that the fairgrounds are a community space benefiting everyone in the Bitterroot Valley.***  
- Joy McClure, Chair  
Ravalli County Fairgrounds Foundation





Montana

(866) 295-7278  
[www.aarp.org/mt](http://www.aarp.org/mt)

**AARP Montana**  
**Investing in Montana Communities**

30 West 14th Street, Suite 301  
Helena, MT 59601