



City of Missoula 2025 Legislative Priorities

The City of Missoula supports policies that address critical challenges and create opportunities for growth and well-being in our community. Below are the City's specific top legislative priorities for the 2025 Montana Legislature.

Property Tax Reform

Missoula's economy has shifted dramatically since the 1980s, but Montana's property tax system has not adapted, placing an increasingly heavy burden on residential taxpayers. With the loss of our industrial base and skyrocketing property values, homeowners and renters are shouldering a disproportionate share of the tax load. State laws that cap general fund property tax revenue growth exacerbate this problem, limiting cities' ability to raise necessary funds for essential services like public safety and infrastructure while relying heavily on residential property taxes to fill the gap. This system is unsustainable and unfair to taxpayers.

- **Support the work of Montanans United for Sustainable Taxation (MUST).**
- **Advocate for local option tax legislation, including Missoula County's tax reform efforts.**

Behavioral Health and Houselessness

Montana cities like Missoula are stepping up to address behavioral health and houselessness, areas traditionally managed by state and federal programs. Legislative support is essential to sustain these efforts and meet growing needs.

- **Support behavioral health legislation that:**
 - Improves access to crisis care.
 - Reduces incarceration and emergency department admissions.
 - Promotes early intervention strategies.
- **Support houseless service legislation supported by our partners at the Montana Coalition to Solve Homelessness.**
 - State grant funding to support shelter services.

- Study bill regarding the benefits of care coordination, wraparound services, and permanent supporting housing.
- Availability of Medicaid services for unhoused Montanans.

Medicaid expansion renewal is essential. It keeps healthcare accessible to all Montanans, keeps us working and is good for the overall economy.

Housing and Land Use

Addressing Montana's housing crisis requires state policy and investment to build new and preserve existing homes we can afford. Missoula stands ready to partner with the state to expand housing access and maintain local decision-making for land use.

- **Invest in policies that produce capital in the form of state housing credits, the Housing Montana Fund, and reauthorization of the Coal Trust Multifamily Loan program.**
- **Protect the Montana Land Use and Planning Act (SB382), newly adopted in 2023, to allow time for communities to implement the bill as intended.**
- **Support and defend local authority for land use decisions.**

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

TIF is a crucial economic development tool for Montana cities, enabling investments in infrastructure, housing, and public spaces that attract private investment and create jobs.

- **Defend TIF as one of the only tools available to cities for sustainable economic growth.**
- **There is a proposed bill that will eliminate the increased value of properties in districts using TIF from being classified as newly taxable properties upon sunset of the district. Newly taxable property values are a critical component in bridging the gap created by the 50% of inflation cap on property tax increases allowed for local governments. This change would have a significant negative impact on local property tax revenues and undermine the basis for creating districts that use TIF.**