



SOFT LANDING MISSOULA
2024 IMPACT REPORT



in love &
gratitude

The impact you made for new neighbors in 2024:



73 high school and college students

gained confidence and skills
through academic mentoring.



\$34,500 collectively earned by
31 United We Eat chefs who shared
their cultures through food.

26 newly-licensed drivers

gained independence and greater access
to opportunities.



17 individuals



proudly became U.S. citizens.



3,990 visits to our
Community Center—each one a
step toward connection, support,
and belonging.

42 students

explored their college
options through tours and
financial aid workshops.



76 new neighbors expanded
their personal networks, building
friendships and support systems
through matches with volunteers.



200 students started the
school year ready for success
with backpacks full of supplies.





2024 was a transformative year.

It was a year of hope, resilience, and growth as the United States welcomed the highest number of refugees in decades. With your generosity, Missoula opened its arms even wider, embracing new neighbors seeking a safe place to call home.

In 2024, we reaffirmed our commitment to new neighbors and those still to come—making the bold and exciting move into a larger home for our Community Center. We also expanded into a bigger kitchen for United We Eat—already sparking new ideas and fresh dreams for refugee and immigrant chefs.

In this Impact Report, we'll look closely at how we made progress in carrying out key elements of our mission and vision: integrating, thriving, and welcoming. You'll see the results of your kindness and commitment, which are helping build something extraordinary—a truly welcoming Missoula. I am incredibly proud of the responsive services you have strengthened and more confident than ever in the dedication of our team. Your unwavering belief in this work is truly inspiring.

We face many challenges ahead. In this time, it is important to remember one of the most valuable lessons from working with refugee and immigrant families: Learning how to persevere through life's challenges with gratitude and joy.

We are able to do this work of welcome because of your attention, your time, and your financial support—which are needed now more than ever. **Thank you for caring deeply about our new neighbors in Missoula and building a welcoming community with us.**

In love and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Poole'.

Mary Poole, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“

HAVING SOFT LANDING in my life has made everything so much easier for us. Through it, I've met incredible people and experienced amazing opportunities. One of the most special people I've met is Tantine. We have been friends since 6th grade... Without Soft Landing I wouldn't have met this amazing soul or had access to the incredible opportunities they provide such as college application support, the girls' group, Stories of Home, and so much more. I'm beyond grateful to everyone who has volunteered and contributed. You have truly made a lasting impact on our lives. — MALAK, IRAQ



“

WHEN UNITED WE EAT FIRST STARTED, I was honored to be among the first chefs. The continuous support of United We Eat helped me launch a food truck, which was my dream. It would not have been possible without the constant support of Soft Landing... Personally I do not have the words to express how grateful I am and believe that immigrants would not thrive here without Soft Landing. The connections, the friendships, and visibility (from a business point of view) have been tremendous. — ZOHAIR, PAKISTAN



WHEN I FIRST CAME TO MISSOULA, I was sad in my heart. It was wintertime, we lived in a hotel with just one room. No car, no anything. 2022 was very cold and I cried all day. My first months, I didn't know about Soft Landing. When I found them, I would come to talk with them and relax. They showed me everything: how to

pay my energy bill, how to find a therapist, and I love my driver's license! When I have a hard day, I go to Soft Landing and they help me. Now I am so happy. I don't cry anymore. My mom and sister are not here but there are kind people who help so much. I told my mom that I have so many friends here like her and like my sister. I have friends from Africa from Syria. I love Missoula, this is my Afghanistan. — MALIKA, AFGHANISTAN

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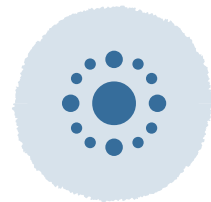
Growing Community

607 refugees and immigrants from more than 30 countries found connection, resources, and a welcoming community through Soft Landing Missoula.



New Neighbors Integrating

Soft Landing fosters **integration** with opportunities for education, sharing cultural identities, financial stability, and community connection.



Integration means holding onto cultural identities while also meeting basic needs, accessing healthcare and education, gaining financial stability, and building meaningful relationships. Most of all, it's feeling a sense of belonging.



BOTH PRACTICAL HELP AND THE STRONG COMMUNITY NETWORK SOFT LANDING MISSOULA OFFERS ARE ESSENTIAL for new neighbors rebuilding lives and integrating into our community.

In 2024, Soft Landing's cultural sharing opportunities fostered mutual understanding and community ties. Families laid down roots and became integral members of their neighborhoods. Our Youth Program saw record engagement, and the young people involved developed skills, friendships, and self-confidence needed to succeed in school and beyond.

Through community-building events, we helped newcomers and longtime residents forge friendships, reduced isolation and strengthened a shared sense of belonging.

WHAT INTEGRATING LOOKED LIKE IN 2024



31 United We Eat chefs boosted their financial stability, together earning \$34,500 while sharing their cultures through food.



26 adults earned their driver's licenses, and our Community Center welcomed 150 visits for guidance on the road. Reliable transportation means access—to jobs, housing, and the beauty of Montana.



15 community-building events eased the isolation of starting fresh in a new place.

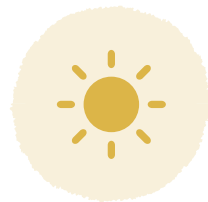
15 families navigated the affordable housing process with our support—**11 have already moved into new homes**, easing financial strain.

159 youth and young adults participated in our Youth Program, engaging in academic, social, and recreational opportunities.



New Neighbors Thriving

We saw growth in personal networks, civic engagement, and pursuit of citizenship and education.



Thriving means new neighbors move beyond the basics and are able to contribute to their communities. It means they've moved beyond survival mode and are able to focus on personal fulfillment, civic engagement, physical health, emotional well-being, relationships, and career success.



IN 2024, SOME OF THE STRONGEST INDICATORS OF THRIVING included new neighbors deepening their social networks, increased interest in civic engagement, and more high school graduates and young adults exploring higher education and career opportunities.

The steadfast financial support and investment of time we saw from you—our community of donors, volunteers, United We Eat customers, and community partners—made it possible for Soft Landing Missoula to respond by growing our offerings to better support refugees and immigrants in these areas of life.

WHAT THRIVING LOOKED LIKE IN 2024

76 new neighbors were matched with volunteers for long-term friendship and support.

As new neighbors form friendships with longtime community members, they're **building a stronger support network** for themselves and their families. These connections don't just ease loneliness or help families adjust—they **help more Missoulians know refugees and immigrants**, leading to greater advocacy and support.



11 new neighbors were supported in becoming more civically engaged.

We made significant strides in **amplifying the voices of refugees and immigrants** within our community. Instead of solely relying on our staff to attend community meetings on issues like transportation, housing, reproductive rights, and neighborhood development, we began shifting towards **a model that brings new neighbors directly into these critical discussions** to actively participate in decisions that impact their lives.

42 students engaged in college exploration activities and **55 youth** received career mentorship through our Youth Program.

In 2024, **interest in college ramped up** in a way we had not yet seen previously. Looking ahead we expect to see a higher number of high school graduates and potential college students annually. We have been proactively working with partners at the University of Montana and the Lifelong Learning Center to ensure students' success. Long-term these students are **improving their future employment options, financial stability, and health outcomes**.

17 new neighbors earned their U.S. citizenship.

Becoming a citizen is a big step in thriving as it means that they can **participate in our political process and travel freely**. Since beginning to support new neighbors in achieving this milestone four years ago, we have paired up many individuals with volunteers through our match program to prepare for their exam with a **100% success rate so far!**



Missoula Welcoming

While you've helped make Missoula a more **welcoming community**, there is more to do.



A welcoming community fosters belonging by supporting integration, combating misinformation, actively seeking ways to build connections, and advocating for inclusive policies. Through language access, job and housing support, with the help of many engaged volunteers and partners, we ensure new neighbors can fully and authentically thrive.



SOFT LANDING MISSOULA REMAINS AT THE FOREFRONT OF FOSTERING UNDERSTANDING about refugees, immigrants, and the realities of resettlement.

Through countless cups of tea, chopping onions in the kitchen, mentoring youth, and at our Community Center, our dedicated volunteers were a key piece in moving Missoula towards welcome for all.

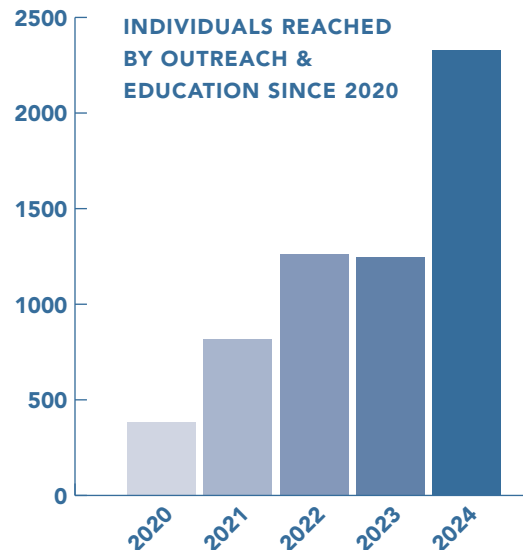
With the 2024 election cycle, we saw a sharp rise in anti-refugee and anti-immigrant rhetoric. We expect this to continue for the foreseeable future and have reconvened a state-wide advocacy group to ensure that our voices—and those of our clients—are heard at the highest levels.

WHAT WELCOMING LOOKED LIKE IN 2024

Soft Landing's Community Outreach & Education is increasing Montanan's awareness of refugee and immigrant issues.

2,300+ Montanans learned about refugee and immigrant issues through **37 outreach & education events**

356 volunteers contributed well over **3,100 hours** to Soft Landing's Community Center, United We Eat, and Youth Program—as well as providing one-on-one support to new neighbors through our Match Program.



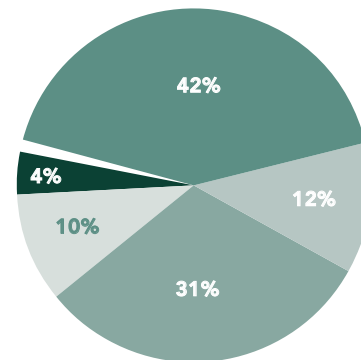


Financial Picture

All you invested in 2024 made a local impact and helped sustain programs that welcome and uplift new neighbors to build a stronger, more inclusive community.

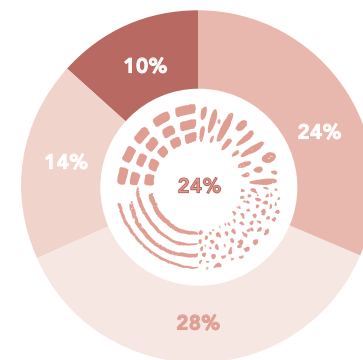
INCOME \$905,183

- Individual Donations: 42%
- United We Eat Sales: 12%
- Foundation Grants: 31%
- Federal/State Grants: 10%
- Business Donations: 4%
- Interest: 1%



EXPENSES \$955,604

- Core Mission Support: 24%
- Community Center, Adult & Family Services: 24%
- United We Eat: 28%
- Youth Programming: 14%
- Outreach & Education: 10%



Soft Landing Missoula is fiscally sponsored by Social & Environmental Entrepreneurs, a 501 c 3 non-profit that provides administrative and fiscal support for projects like ours.

Love and gratitude to you, our community of support!

You've made a difference through
your generosity.

We are continually inspired by you—our supporters—who continue to show up in many ways to welcome and assist refugees and immigrants. **Your** belief in upholding dignity, celebrating diversity, and building a welcoming community—through time, financial support or both—continues to be critically important.



Your generosity and dedication amaze us.

LAST YEAR YOU:

- Continued to **invest in a “soft landing”** and long welcome for new neighbors.
- Became **monthly donors**.
- Sponsored our **World Refugee Day Celebration**.
- Included us in **your wills**.
- **Honored loved ones** with donations.
- Volunteered—Shout out to the **356 volunteers who gave 3,100+ hours** to support new neighbors!
- Shared meals and desserts made with love by **United We Eat** chefs.
- Donated winter gear, technology, and household items to **help families get on their feet**.



Thank you! Your kindness and
commitment changes lives.
We couldn't do this without you!



Soft Landing Missoula partners with our community to provide supportive services and welcome for refugees and immigrants in Missoula, working together to create a home where new neighbors can **integrate** and **thrive**.

Refugees and immigrants have opportunity, dignity, and the freedom to build the life they wish to live as members of a **welcoming community**.

Soft Landing Missoula puts its mission and vision into action through its Community Center, Adult & Family Services, Youth Program, Outreach & Education, and United We Eat.



SOFT LANDING
MISSOULA

softlandingmissoula.org