

SOFT LANDING MISSOULA | 2025 IMPACT REPORT

in love & gratitude



10 YEARS OF
WELCOME

2025 was not an easy year.

In fact, as we transition into the tenth year of our work with refugee and immigrant families here in Missoula, there were many moments during 2025 that were our hardest on record. We navigated many anti-refugee and anti-immigrant policies and experienced shrinking social safety nets. We stood alongside families who had already been through so much and come so far as they once again felt the ground shift underneath their feet.

But amidst all of the uncertainty, some things were made abundantly clear:

- Through so many new challenges, there were elements of our work that shifted and adapted, but **the HEART of our work remained the same**—grounding us in the strength and loveliness of the families we get to work with and all we have to learn from them.
- There is no end to this incredible community of support that you are all a part of. **You showed up with time and love and partnership.** You built whole new systems to keep families safe, trusted us to prioritize critical needs, and kept our “welcome lights” on with your support.

- This year we got to know many of the families we serve at a much deeper level. Challenge builds a closeness that means the **families we work with don't have to face things alone** and can grow their support systems well into the future.
- **We have a CHAMPIONSHIP staff.** You know them and love them, as do I. They have been through the thick of things this year and continue to show up each day with full hearts and sharp minds, ready to do the work of welcome. They are the magic makers, the warm hugs, the fierce advocates, the baby smoochers, and the jumpers for joy.

- **AND YES, THERE IS STILL JOY. THERE IS STILL HOPE.** There is still celebration and strength and success of all kinds. The challenges don't stop the good stuff, they just make it sweeter.

Thank you for being a part of everything you will see in the next pages of this report.

This year has shown us that the heart of this community of welcome beats stronger than ever.

In love and gratitude,



Mary Poole, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR





I FEEL REALLY GRATEFUL THAT SOFT LANDING IS THERE FOR ALL FAMILIES. They are happy to help anyone with anything. For my family, they were so helpful when we went through a really tough time...They showed up.

— P., DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



THROUGH UNITED WE EAT... I'M GROWING AS A CHEF. Coming in to create a menu and being able to concentrate and focus on what I need to do, and having all the hands available to make it happen. It's all hands on deck... Every time I work with United We Eat, it definitely feels like I am a world-renowned head chef!

— B., VENEZUELA

SOFT LANDING IS A WELCOMING COMMUNITY FOR REFUGEES. They helped us find housing, school programs, English, driving tests, and connecting refugees with people to pursue a passion or be helped in what you want to do...Soft Landing is such a help for refugees and immigrants to become independent.

— S., DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



Our Community

700 refugees and immigrants from 30+ countries found connection, trustworthy guidance, friendship, and support as they navigated highs and lows of putting down roots in Missoula.

Together, we welcomed 18 new neighbors to Missoula.

On January 20, coinciding with the inauguration of the current Administration, refugee resettlement was halted across the country. In October 2025, the lowest refugee admission number in history was set at 7,500 individuals for fiscal year 2026.



Soft Landing Missoula's mission is to partner 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.

We envision Missoula as a place where refugees and immigrants have the opportunity, dignity, and the freedom to build the life they wish to live as members of a **welcoming** community.

In this impact report, we're sharing how your generosity moved our mission forward in three key ways:

Integrating. Thriving. Welcoming.

Soft Landing Missoula's mission and vision are put into action through its Community Center, Adults & Family Services, Youth Program, Outreach & Education, and United We Eat.



New Neighbors Integrating

With your help, new neighbors continued to integrate into our community through Soft Landing's opportunities for learning, sharing cultural identities, building community connections, and working towards financial stability.



Integration starts with meeting basic needs and learning to navigate new systems: health-care, education, and employment. It means adding English to a repertoire of languages while holding fast to cultural identities. Most of all, integration is a journey toward belonging. It is not a single milestone but a spectrum of shared moments and growing trust.

Soft Landing's low-barrier, relationship-based model ensures new neighbors are welcomed by a team ready to help before small challenges become crises. Families work with trusted staff and volunteers to learn to navigate new and complex systems, building a supportive community for times of struggle and times of celebration.



WITH YOUR HELP, SOFT LANDING DOUBLED DOWN TO HELP NEW NEIGHBORS INTEGRATE IN A CHANGING LANDSCAPE.

In 2025, the rug was pulled out from beneath many new neighbors who rely on refugee resettlement and public benefit systems. As federal funding cuts dismantled systems and strained our local safety net, your support allowed Soft Landing to double down. Zero new neighbors were turned away from resources and assistance they needed at Soft Landing.

Throughout the year, our team walked alongside families facing urgent needs and mounting uncertainty. We worked towards creative solutions. And we held to our belief that the best antidote to hard times is a powerful mix of togetherness and joy.

WHAT INTEGRATING LOOKED LIKE IN 2025



4,870 visits to our Community Center for help with housing, employment, benefits and insurance, as well as social visits and access to food, toiletries and household goods.

A **26% increase in visits over 2024**, our space remained a vital anchor even with a slow down of new arrivals.

16 community gatherings offered **joy and belonging**. Gatherings included a World Refugee Celebration and Monthly Women's Swim Nights.



72 high school and college students gained confidence and skills through 2,649 hours of tutoring.



UNITED WE EAT

\$22,129 earned by 19 chefs. That's rent, groceries, soccer cleats for kids, and visits to see family.


We were especially proud to work alongside two Yemeni chefs in preparing a **Welcome Dinner for 100 guests**, honoring new neighbors from Yemen.



170 youth and young adults
found encouragement and safe spaces to build relationships
through our Youth Program's social and recreational activities.



9 families moved
into affordable housing,
easing the stress of high rent.

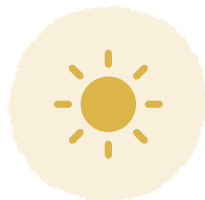
122 clients 
assisted with driving-related needs,
gaining greater independence and access
to opportunities.

 **10** high school
graduates!



New Neighbors Thriving

Your support made it possible for new neighbors to expand their personal networks, deepen their civic engagement, and pursue the dreams of citizenship and higher education in 2025.



Thriving is when an individual moves beyond survival mode to focus on fulfillment: professional goals, civic engagement, and emotional well-being. The pursuit of art, learning, and expression signals a powerful shift from surviving to truly living.

We call our approach **the long welcome**. We stay present long after initial needs are met because thriving doesn't follow a single path or timeline. It grows when people have the support to take risks and invest in their futures, knowing they have a community to lean on.



DEEP, MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS ARE THE FOUNDATION FOR NEW NEIGHBORS TO THRIVE.

One of the things Soft Landing does best is bring people together. Community reduces the isolation of starting over: it also builds the connections that open doors to opportunity and purpose. In times of uncertainty, these relationships are a vital safety net for families.

This focus on connection shines brightest in our Match program. By pairing new neighbors with longtime residents around shared goals, lasting friendships take root. These bonds help neighbors grow their networks, get involved in civic life, and set their sights on the future.

WHAT THRIVING LOOKED LIKE IN 2025

9 new neighbors became U.S. citizens!

3 more have passed their tests but due to immigration policy changes they are awaiting their naturalization ceremonies.



79 students explored their futures through college tours, job skills workshops, and financial aid guidance.



- **22 students enrolled** at University of Montana received academic support from our Youth Program team.
- **2 students proudly graduated** with 4-year degrees!



2 United We Eat chefs opened or expanded their own food businesses,

hosting pop-ups to connect to a new customer base.

16 individuals took the lead in civic engagement and advocacy, sharing their perspectives to help make Montana a more welcoming place.



89 new neighbors expanded their circles of support through meaningful matches with local volunteers for consistent support with English practice, mentorship, and more.

Missoula Welcoming

Your support helped thousands of community members come together in 2025 to learn, share stories, and advocate for a community where new neighbors are welcomed with dignity and opportunity.

A welcoming community is created by people who choose connection and understanding over fear. By supporting integration, challenging misinformation, and advocating for inclusive policies, we are building a Missoula where every neighbor can truly belong.

Together with donors, volunteers, partners, and community members, we continued to build welcome. In doing so, we're ensuring that new neighbors are celebrated for all they bring to our community.



TOGETHER, WE BUILT WELCOME FOR NEW NEIGHBORS.

With your help, Soft Landing created spaces for dialogue and shared understanding in classrooms, community rooms, and city hall, reaching thousands of children and adults in 2025.

We saw welcome take shape through everyday acts of support. Volunteers served as advocates. Donors increased their generosity to sustain this work. And supporters across Montana called their Representatives, pushing back against harmful rhetoric and policies. Together, we moved toward a Missoula where new neighbors are met with dignity and supported in rebuilding their lives.

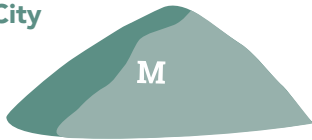
WHAT WELCOMING LOOKED LIKE IN 2025

39 events reached more than **3,200 people**, creating space for education, connection, and shared stories.



1,225 donors made this work of welcome possible through their generosity.

Several key meetings were held with **City and County leaders** to encourage good decisions for a safe and welcoming Missoula.



3 Know Your Rights trainings empowered neighbors, partners, and allies with the knowledge and confidence to understand and protect constitutional rights to **help keep immigrant families safe** in our community.



350 dedicated volunteers gave their time, their skills, and their hearts to walk alongside new neighbors.



© Kyle Stansbury

1 Month of Welcome

In September, Missoula showed up in force to **11 events celebrating our newest neighbors** and the richness they bring to our city.

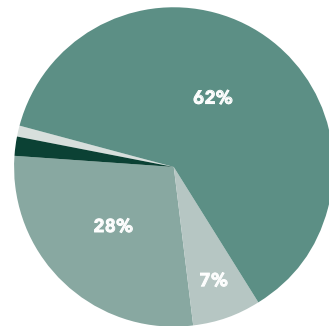
FINANCIAL PICTURE

Your investment in 2025 made a local impact, helping sustain our long welcome for new neighbors.



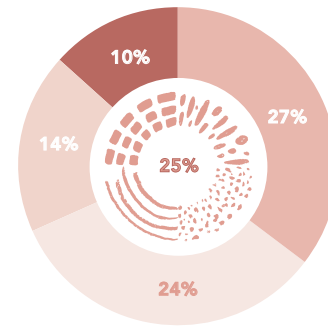
INCOME \$1,317,025

- Individual Donations: 62%
- United We Eat Sales: 7%
- Foundation Grants: 28%
- Business Donations: 2%
- Interest: 1%



EXPENSES \$1,018,944

- Community Center, Adult & Family Services: 27%
- United We Eat: 24%
- Youth Programming: 14%
- Outreach & Education: 10%
- Core Mission Support: 25%



Thanks to your generosity, we closed 2025 in a strong position. Some of this funding was raised for work in 2026. A portion will also strengthen our reserve fund so that Soft Landing Missoula can remain a steady, responsive presence that is ready to assist new neighbors in a changing world.

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.

SOFT LANDING MISSOULA STAFF

Mary Poole, Executive Director & Co-Founder

Molly Cottrell, Deputy Director & Co-Founder

Greta Bates, Director of Partnerships & Adult Services & Co-Founder

Maria Netzloff, Donor Engagement & Impact Director

Jessica Roberts, Development Coordinator

Allie Ouendag, Development Coordinator

Meli Slater, Outreach & Communications Manager

Natalia Boise, Youth Program Manager

Madelyn Bouchard, Youth Program Assistant

Logan Stabnau, Youth Program Assistant

Kathleen Lovett, Summer Youth Program Assistant

Rachel Baer, Community Center Coordinator

Lee Winter, Community Engagement Coordinator

Beth Baker, United We Eat Program Manager

Lindsey Tucker, United We Eat Kitchen Manager

Vivian Redding, United We Eat Kitchen Assistant

We are also deeply grateful for our interns, practicum students, and AmeriCorps members, whose dedication, care, and commitment to welcoming strengthen our work every day.



YEARS OF WELCOME

**SOFT LANDING
MISSOULA**

softlandingmissoula.org



THANK YOU!

Because of you, when neighbors faced a year of rising uncertainty, they didn't have to face it alone.

Soft Landing Missoula was there because you were there.

