

Community Reinvestment Narrative – 2025

Flathead County, Montana

Intro

Freedom Bank, located in the heart of Columbia Falls, Montana, is a single-location community bank driven by a mission that goes beyond providing financial services. We are deeply committed to advancing the growth, stability, and prosperity of Flathead County, with a special focus on the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) objectives. This narrative outlines demographic and economic data from reliable sources, providing the foundation for our strategic initiatives designed to meet the evolving needs of our local community.

At Freedom Bank, we recognize that every individual and business has a distinct financial story. Rather than relying solely on standardized underwriting models, we pride ourselves on offering personalized service and tailored financial analysis. This commitment ensures that our products and services not only address immediate needs but also support long-term financial goals—especially for those in low- and moderate-income brackets.

Our approach mirrors the intent of the Community Reinvestment Act by fostering inclusion, addressing economic disparities, and helping all members of our community participate in economic growth. Through deep local relationships, financial education, and responsive lending, we empower individuals and businesses to navigate their financial futures confidently.

Demographic Overview

Flathead County continues to experience steady population growth, reaching an estimated 114,527 residents as of July 1, 2024—a 9.7% increase since the 2020 census and a 0.75% rise over the past year. This growth reflects the area's increasing attractiveness to families, retirees, and remote workers.

- Median Household Income: \$71,327
- Poverty Rate: 9.7%
- Population under 18: 18%
- High School Graduates: 29.4%
- Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 35.1%

These numbers highlight the growing need for family support services, affordable housing, and educational initiatives that will help equip residents with the tools to succeed in a competitive and evolving economy.

Economic Landscape

Flathead County's economy is anchored in small businesses, tourism, recreation, construction, and agriculture—sectors that have shown resilience and adaptability in recent years. Despite opportunities, the area faces some pressing challenges:

- **Housing Affordability:** With demand outpacing supply, the rising cost of housing is a significant barrier for young families, first-time homebuyers, and essential workers.
- **Workforce Needs:** As industries expand, the gap in skilled labor creates a strong demand for vocational training and workforce development programs.
- **Income Disparity:** Although the countywide median income stands at \$71,327, certain populations—particularly seniors and families with young children—face economic hardships, with an estimated 11.6% of the population living below the poverty line.

Freedom Bank is addressing these issues through lending programs tailored for affordable housing, financial counseling services, and partnerships that help businesses thrive.

Community Needs and Strategic Initiatives

Freedom Bank's community reinvestment strategy is shaped by continuous input from local stakeholders and a thorough analysis of socioeconomic data. Key areas of focus include:

Affordable Housing:

We work with local developers and nonprofits to help increase the availability of affordable homes for low- and moderate-income families. We actively support financing for projects that serve these populations.

Education and Workforce Development:

Freedom Bank supports adult education and vocational training programs to enhance economic mobility. Partnerships with local schools and trade programs remain a priority.

Small Business Growth:

From startup financing to expansion loans, we offer flexible solutions and business advisory services that empower entrepreneurs—particularly in underserved sectors.

Healthcare Access:

Board member Don Bennett serves on the Logan Health Hospital Board of Trustees, advocating for accessible healthcare options across the region, especially in rural areas.

Childcare, Youth Programs, and Senior Support:

Freedom Bank champions organizations that serve vulnerable populations. We support nonprofits like the Boys and Girls Clubs, Intermountain Children's Home, Dream Adaptive, Special Olympics, CASA for Kids, Boy Scouts, Nate Chute Foundation, Two Bear Therapeutic Riding Center, and the Senior Mobile Home Repair initiative.

Columbia Falls Kids Foundation (2024):

Founded by Don Bennett, this 501(c)(3) nonprofit transformed the historic 1940 Junior High

building—originally slated for demolition—into a vibrant community center for youth services. Thanks to a donation facilitated by local philanthropist Mick Ruis, the building now houses a Boys & Girls Club, a nonprofit daycare, a wrestling academy, and a youth nutrition program. Nonprofits lease space for just \$1 per year, maximizing their ability to serve local families.

Digital Security and Financial Literacy

With the rise of digital threats, Freedom Bank is committed to protecting customers through advanced cybersecurity protocols and proactive fraud education. We host workshops and offer personalized guidance to shield vulnerable customers—especially seniors—from scams and cyber fraud.

This is not just a service, but a community imperative. By enhancing financial literacy and digital resilience, we help prevent economic harm and support the financial health of our community.

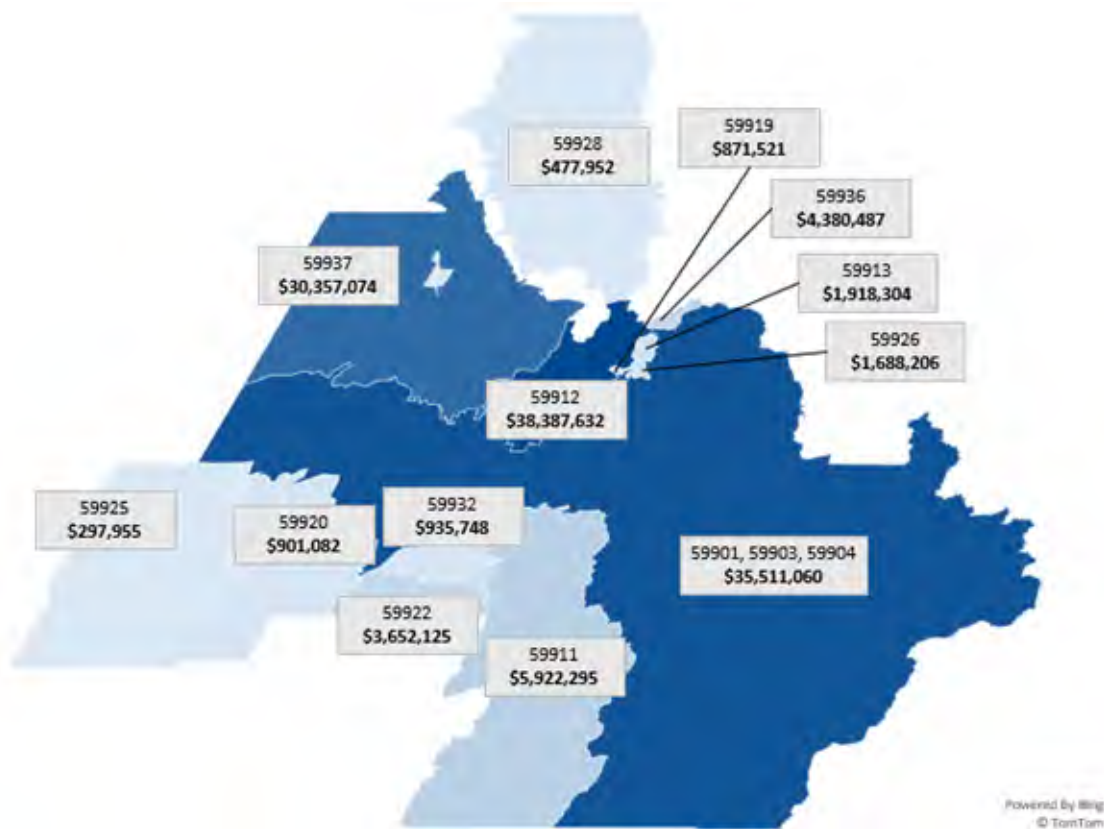
Conclusion

Flathead County is a dynamic, growing community with a strong sense of identity and collaboration. Freedom Bank stands as a partner in progress, drawing on data-driven insights and genuine relationships to meet CRA obligations with integrity and innovation.

Our localized approach ensures that community needs are met with empathy, expertise, and long-term vision. Through volunteerism, philanthropy, inclusive lending, and strategic investments, we remain dedicated to building a more equitable, prosperous Flathead County for all.

2024 CRA Loan Data

YTD Average Principal Balances in Flathead County



ZIP	City	Total YTD Average Principal Balance
59901	Kalispell	\$26,490,545
59903	Kalispell	\$4,586,995
59904	Kalispell	\$4,433,521
59911	Bigfork	\$5,922,295
59912	Columbia Falls	\$38,387,632
59913	Coram	\$1,918,304
59919	Hungry Horse	\$871,521
59920	Kila	\$901,082
59922	Lakeside	\$3,652,125
59925	Marion	\$297,955
59926	Martin City	\$1,688,206
59927	Olney	\$0
59928	Polebridge	\$477,952
59932	Somers	\$935,748
59936	West Glacier	\$4,380,487
59937	Whitefish	\$30,357,074

Service Area Totals

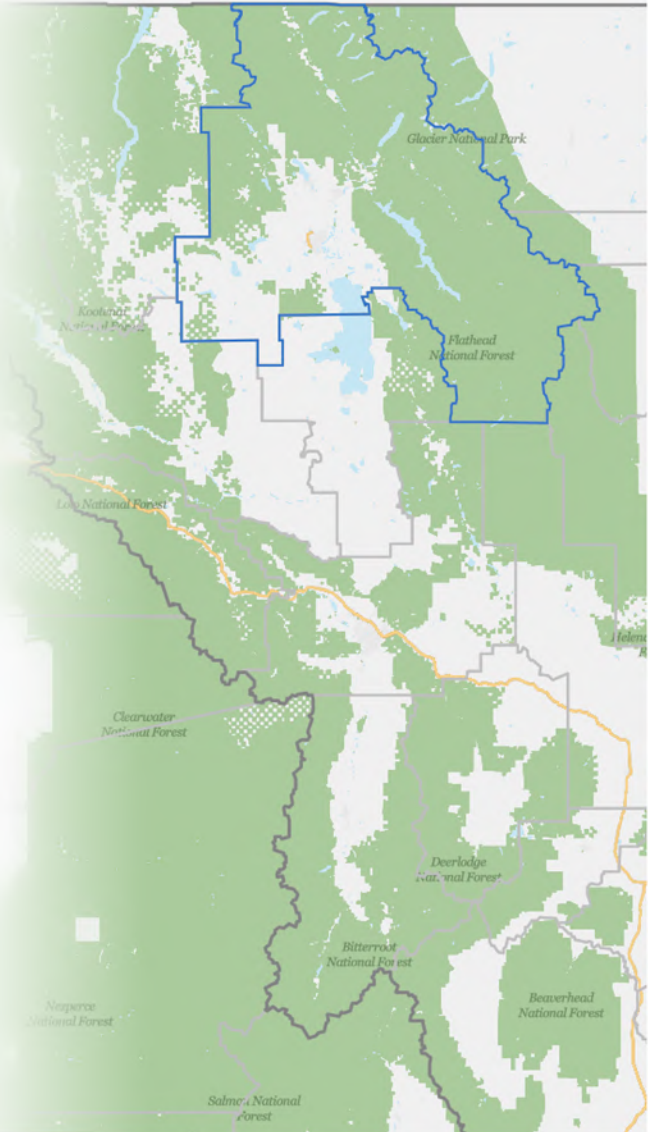
	COMMERCIAL		CONSUMER		Total YTD Average Principal Balance	Total %
	YTD Average Principal Balance	%	YTD Average Principal Balance	%		
FLATHEAD COUNTY	\$92,797,630.18	80.05%	\$32,503,811.08	80.17%	\$125,301,441.26	80.08%
OTHER	\$23,124,648.34	19.95%	\$8,038,057.12	19.83%	\$31,162,705.46	19.92%
Totals	\$115,922,278.52	100.00%	\$40,541,868.20	100.00%	\$156,464,146.72	100.00%

County

Flathead County, Montana

Flathead County, Montana has 5,087.2 square miles of land area and is the 3rd largest county in Montana by total area. Flathead County, Montana is bordered by Pondera County, Montana, Lake County, Montana, Glacier County, Montana, Powell County, Montana, Missoula County, Montana, Sanders Coun...[Read More](#)

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// [United States](#) / [Montana](#) / Flathead County, Montana

[Display Sources](#)



Populations and People

Total Population

104,357

[P1](#) | 2020 Decennial Census



Education

Bachelor's Degree or Higher

37.4%

[S1501](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates



Housing

Total Housing Units

49,875

[H1](#) | 2020 Decennial Census



Business and Economy

Total Employer Establishments

4,737

[CB2100CBP](#) | 2021 Economic Surveys Business Patterns



Race and Ethnicity

Hispanic or Latino (of any race)

3,329

[P9](#) | 2020 Decennial Census



Income and Poverty

Median Household Income

\$74,274

[S1901](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates



Employment

Employment Rate

62.8%

[DP03](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates



Health

Without Health Care Coverage

10.2%

[S2701](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates



Families and Living Arrangements

Total Households

45,510

[DP02](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates



Populations and People [↗](#)

Age and Sex

41.7 ± 0.5

Median Age in Flathead County, Montana

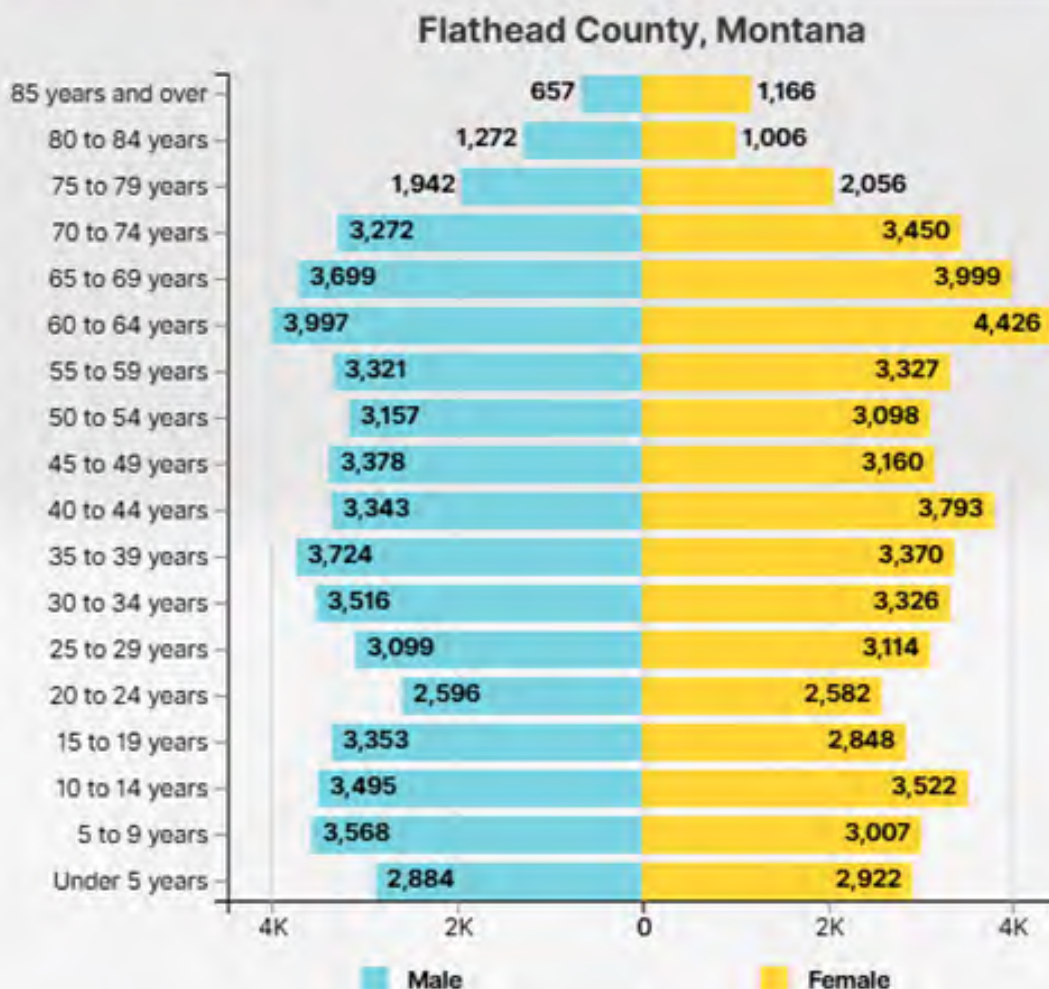
40.6 ± 0.4

Median Age in Montana

[S0101](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Population Pyramid: Population by Age and Sex in Flathead County, Montana

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[S0101](#) | 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables

Language Spoken at Home

N ± N ?

Language Other Than English Spoken at Home in Flathead County, Montana

4.5% ± 0.4%

Language Other Than English Spoken at Home in Montana

[S1601](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Native and Foreign-Born

2.3% ± 0.7%

Foreign-Born population in Flathead County, Montana

2.2% ± 0.2%

Foreign-Born population in Montana

[DP02](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Foreign-Born Population

in Flathead County, Montana

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Naturalized U.S. citizen - 79.7%



Not a U.S. citizen - 20.3%



0% 20% 40% 60% 80%

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[DP02](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Older Population

21.1% ± 0.3%

65 Years and Older in Flathead County, Montana

20.5% ± 0.1%

65 Years and Older in Montana

[DP05](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Older Population by Age

in Flathead County, Montana

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65 to 74 years - 13.2%



75 to 84 years - 6.3%



85 years and over - 1.7%



0% 5% 10% 15%

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[DP05](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Residential Mobility

3.2% \pm 1.3%

Moved From a Different State in the Last Year in Flathead County, Montana

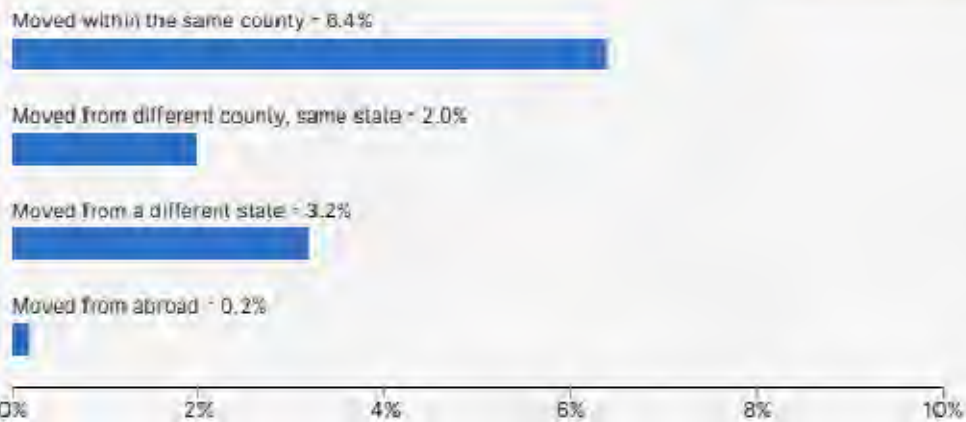
3.3% \pm 0.4%

Moved From a Different State in the Last Year in Montana

S0701 | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Residential Mobility in the Last Year in Flathead County, Montana

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*S0701 | 2023 American Community Survey
1-Year Estimates*

Veterans

8.1% \pm 1.3%

Veterans in Flathead County, Montana

8.9% \pm 0.4%

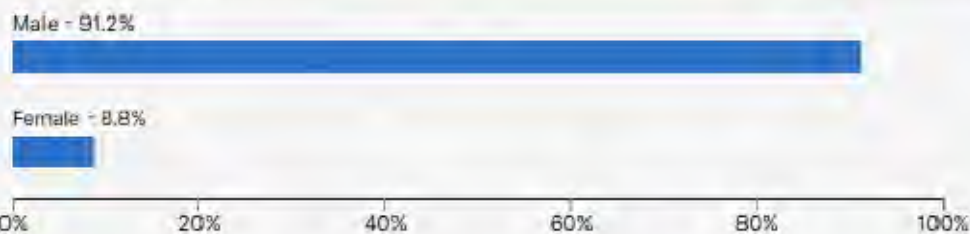
Veterans in Montana

S2101 | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Veterans by Sex

In Flathead County, Montana

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*S2101 | 2023 American Community Survey
1-Year Estimates*

Income and Poverty

Income and Earnings

\$74,274 \pm \$3,655

Median Household Income in Flathead County, Montana

\$70,804 \pm \$1,475

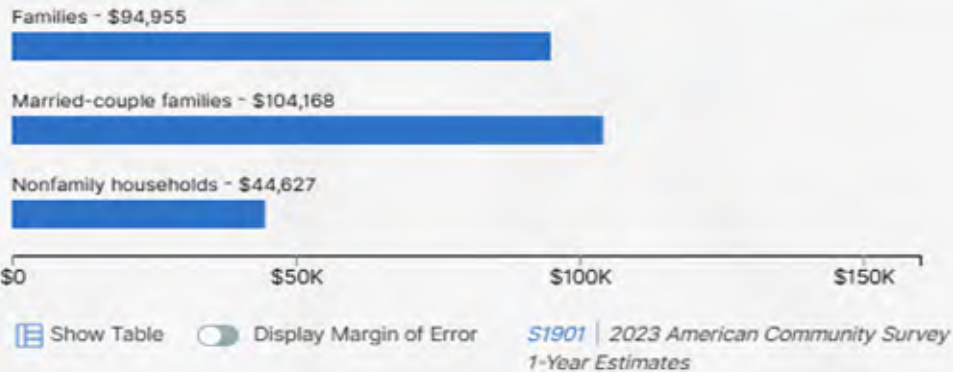
Median Household Income in Montana

S1901 | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Median Income by Types of Families

in Flathead County, Montana

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Poverty

9.7% \pm 1.9%

Poverty, All people in Flathead County, Montana

11.7% \pm 0.7%

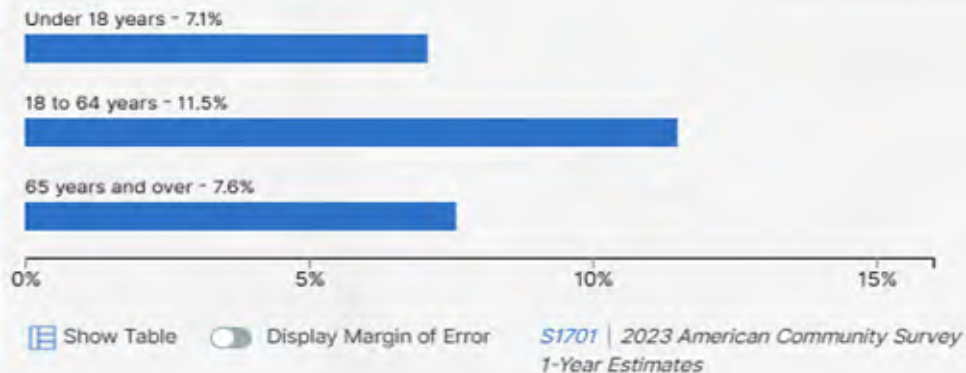
Poverty, All people in Montana

S1701 | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Poverty by Age

in Flathead County, Montana

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Education

Educational Attainment

37.4% \pm 3.0%

Bachelor's Degree or Higher in Flathead County, Montana

34.6% \pm 1.0%

Bachelor's Degree or Higher in Montana

[S1501](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Education Attainment (Population 25 Years and Older) in Flathead County, Montana

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High school or equivalent degree - 28.3%



Some college, no degree - 18.9%



Associate's degree - 11.5%



Bachelor's degree - 24.8%



0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35%

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[S1501](#) | 2023 American Community Survey
1-Year Estimates

School Enrollment

81.8% \pm 4.2%

School Enrolled Population Enrolled in Kindergarten to 12th Grade in Flathead County, Montana

72.5% \pm 1.3%

School Enrolled Population Enrolled in Kindergarten to 12th Grade in Montana

[S1401](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

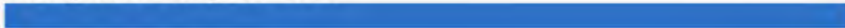
School Enrollment (Population 3 Years and Over Enrolled... in Flathead County, Montana

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Nursery school, preschool - 4.4%



Kindergarten to 12th grade - 81.8%



College, undergraduate - 10.0%



Graduate, professional school - 3.9%



0% 20% 40% 60% 80%

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[S1401](#) | 2023 American Community Survey
1-Year Estimates

Employment

Class of Worker

13.2% \pm 2.6%

Local, state, and federal government workers in Flathead County, Montana

17.1% \pm 0.9%

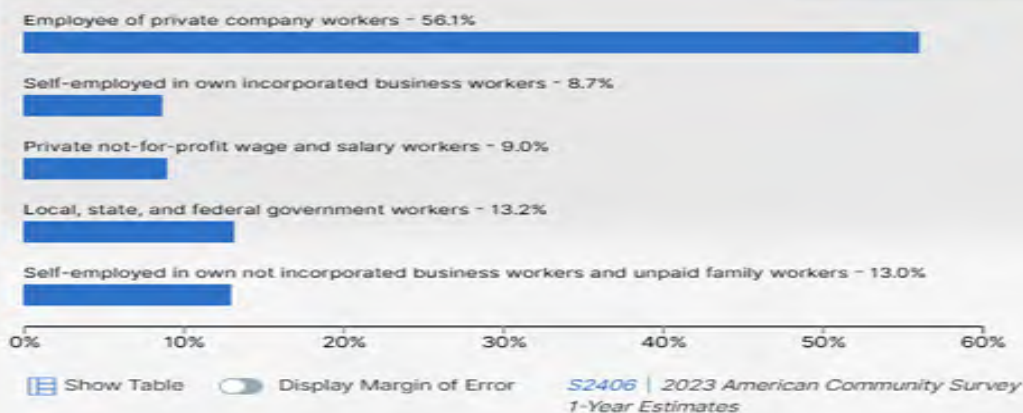
Local, state, and federal government workers in Montana

[S2406](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Class of Worker

in Flathead County, Montana

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Commuting

20.8 \pm 1.9

Average travel time to work (in minutes) in Flathead County, Montana

20.2 \pm 0.6

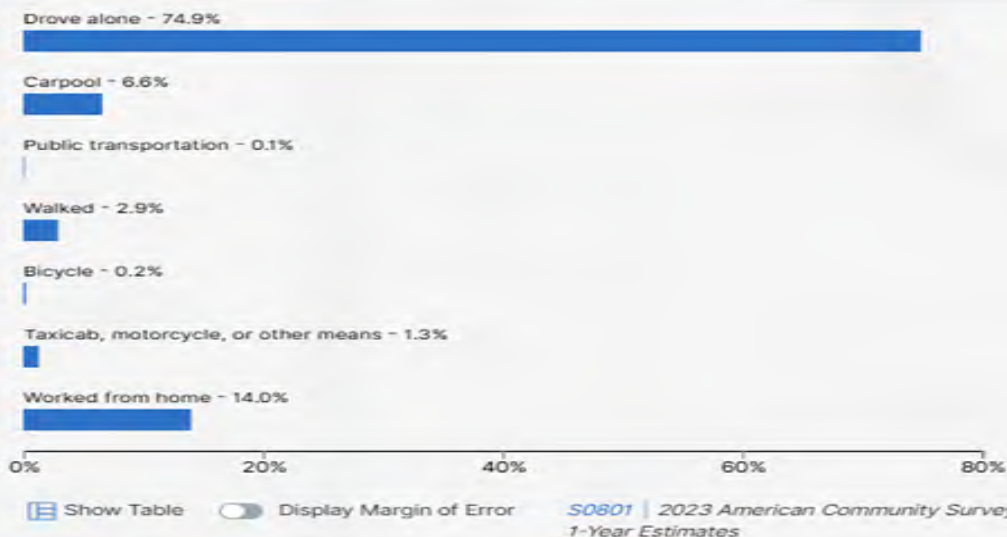
Average travel time to work (in minutes) in Montana

[S0801](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Means of Transportation to Work (Workers 16 Years and ...

in Flathead County, Montana

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Employment and Labor Force Status

62.8% ± 1.8%

Employment Rate in Flathead County, Montana

60.8% ± 0.7%

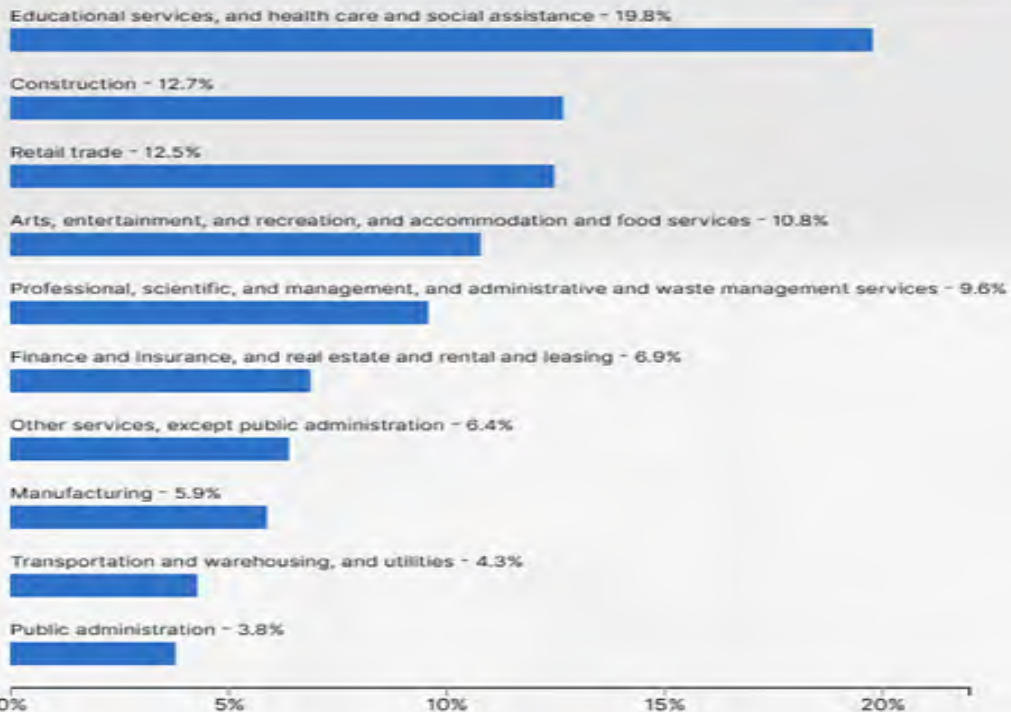
Employment Rate in Montana

[DP03](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Industry

Industry for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years a...
in Flathead County, Montana

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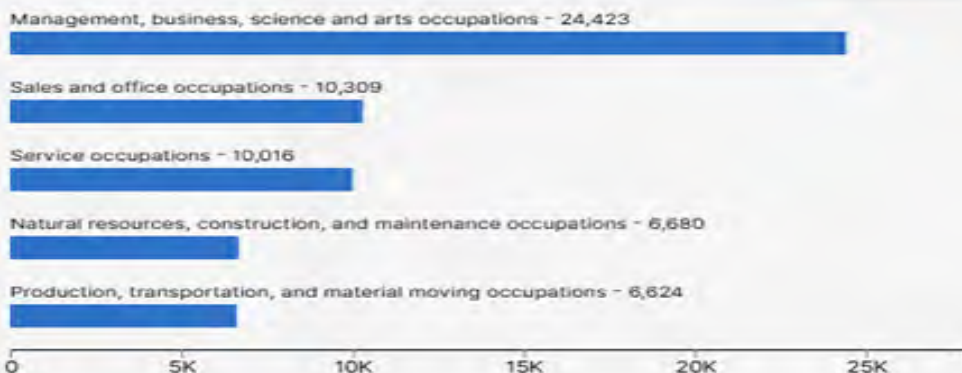
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[DP03](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Occupation

Occupation for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Year...
in Flathead County, Montana

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[S2401](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Work Experience

37.9 ± 0.8

Mean Usual Hours Worked for Workers in Flathead County, Montana

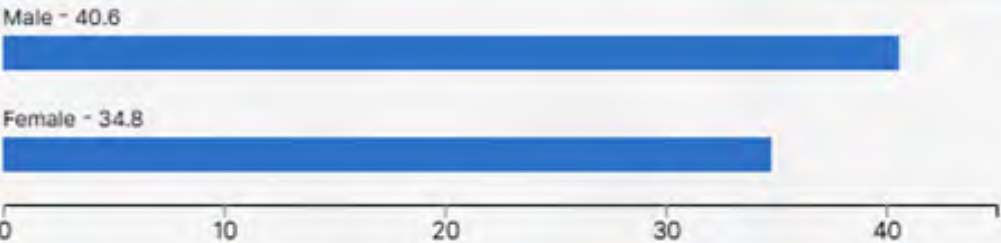
38.3 ± 0.3

Mean Usual Hours Worked for Workers in Montana

[S2303](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Mean Usual Hours Worked for Workers by Sex in Flathead County, Montana

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[S2303](#) | 2023 American Community Survey
1-Year Estimates

Housing

Financial Characteristics

\$1,275 \pm \$117
Median Gross Rent in Flathead County, Montana

\$1,083 \pm \$30
Median Gross Rent in Montana

DP04 | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Homeownership Rate

74.7% \pm 3.1%
Homeownership Rate in Flathead County, Montana

69.2% \pm 1.1%
Homeownership Rate in Montana

DP04 | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Housing Value in Flathead County, Montana

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Less than \$50,000 - 4.4%

\$50,000 to \$99,999 - 2.6%

\$100,000 to \$149,999 - 0.2%

\$150,000 to \$199,999 - 1.5%

\$200,000 to \$299,999 - 5.8%

\$300,000 to \$499,999 - 26.2%

\$500,000 to \$999,999 - 46.0%

\$1,000,000 or more - 13.1%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50%

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DP04 | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Housing Units

49,875
Total Housing Units in Flathead County, Montana

514,803
Total Housing Units in Montana

H1 | 2020 Decennial Census

Housing Occupancy in Flathead County, Montana

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Occupied housing units - 42,481

Vacant housing units - 7,394

0 10K 20K 30K 40K

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H1 | 2020 Decennial Census

Occupancy Characteristics

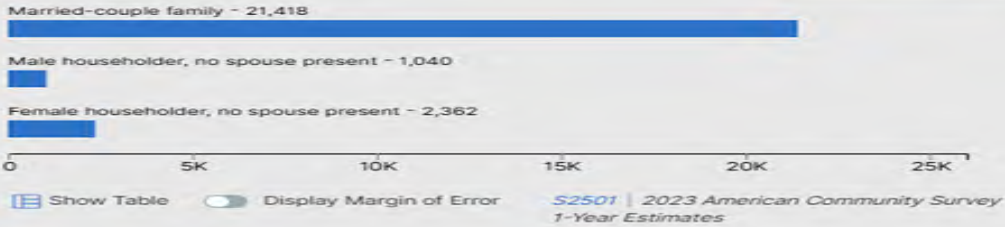
42,481

Occupied Housing Units in Flathead County, Montana

H1 | 2020 Decennial Census

Owner Occupied Housing Units by Types of Households in Flathead County, Montana

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Owner/Renter (Householder) Characteristics

24.4% \pm 3.5%

Moved 2021 or Later Into Occupied Housing Unit in Flathead County, Montana

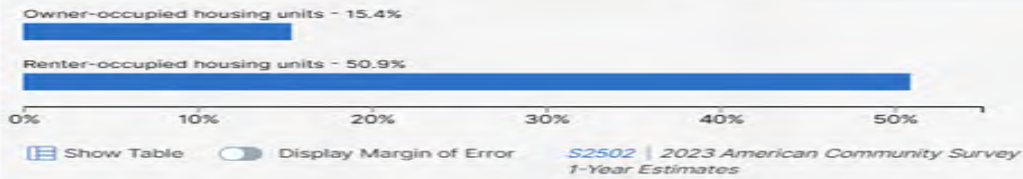
25.3% \pm 1.0%

Moved 2021 or Later Into Occupied Housing Unit in Montana

S2502 | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Moved 2021 or Later Into Occupied Housing Unit by Type... in Flathead County, Montana

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Physical Characteristics

27.0% \pm 3.5%

Occupied Housing Units with Four or More Bedrooms in Flathead County, Montana

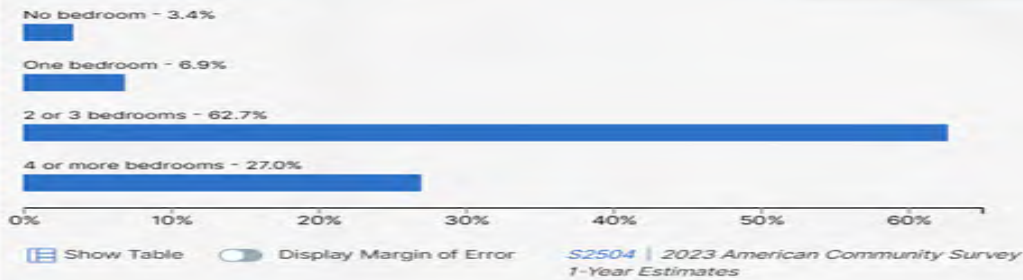
26.4% \pm 1.0%

Occupied Housing Units with Four or More Bedrooms in Montana

S2504 | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Bedrooms in Occupied Housing Units in Flathead County, Montana

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Vacancy

7,394

Vacant Housing Units in Flathead County, Montana

H1 | 2020 Decennial Census

Health

Disability

11.1% \pm 1.6%

Disabled Population in Flathead County, Montana

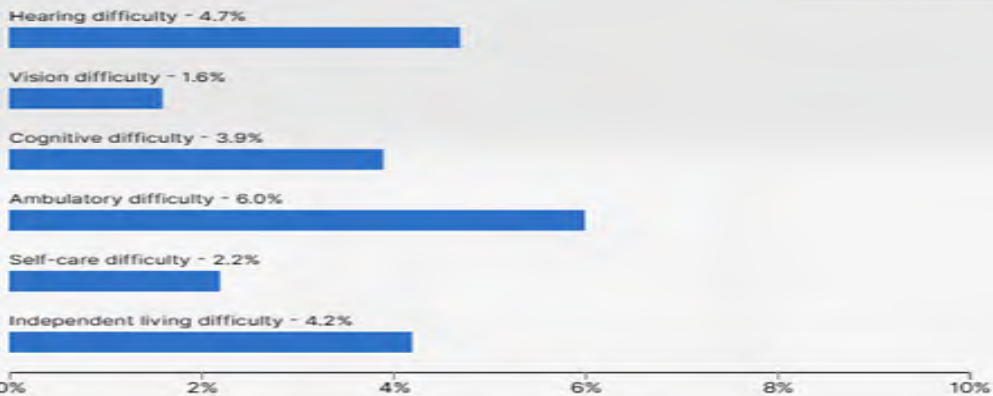
14.9% \pm 0.7%

Disabled Population in Montana

S1810 | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Types of Disabilities in Flathead County, Montana

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S1810 | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Fertility

24,498 \pm 542

Women 15 to 50 years old in Flathead County, Montana

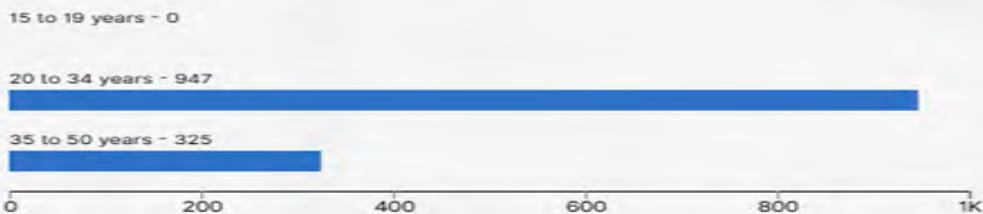
248,544 \pm 2,353

Women 15 to 50 years old in Montana

S1301 | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Women with Births in the Past 12 Months in Flathead County, Montana

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S1301 | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Health Insurance

10.2% \pm 1.8%

Without Health Care Coverage in Flathead County, Montana

8.4% \pm 0.6%

Without Health Care Coverage in Montana

S2701 | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Families and Living Arrangements

Children

21.5% ± ***** ⓘ

Under 18 years old in Flathead County, Montana

20.8% ± 0.1%

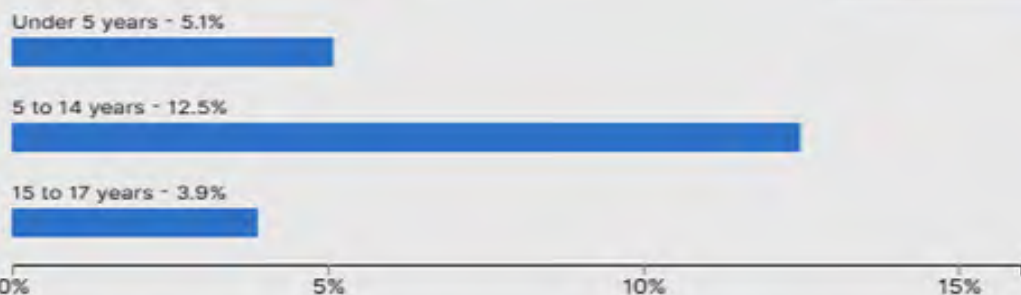
Under 18 years old in Montana

S0101 | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Children Under 18 by Age Range

in Flathead County, Montana

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S0101 | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Families and Household Characteristics

3.03 ± 0.14

Average Family Size in Flathead County, Montana

2.95 ± 0.04

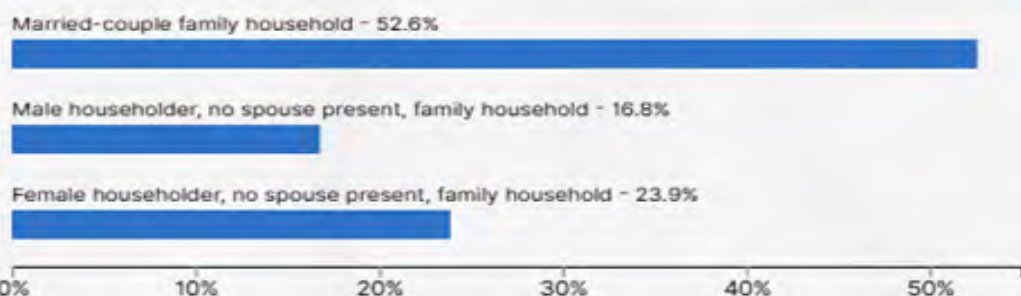
Average Family Size in Montana

DP02 | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Total Households by Type of Households

in Flathead County, Montana

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DP02 | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Marital Status and Marital History

N ± N ?

Never Married in Flathead County, Montana

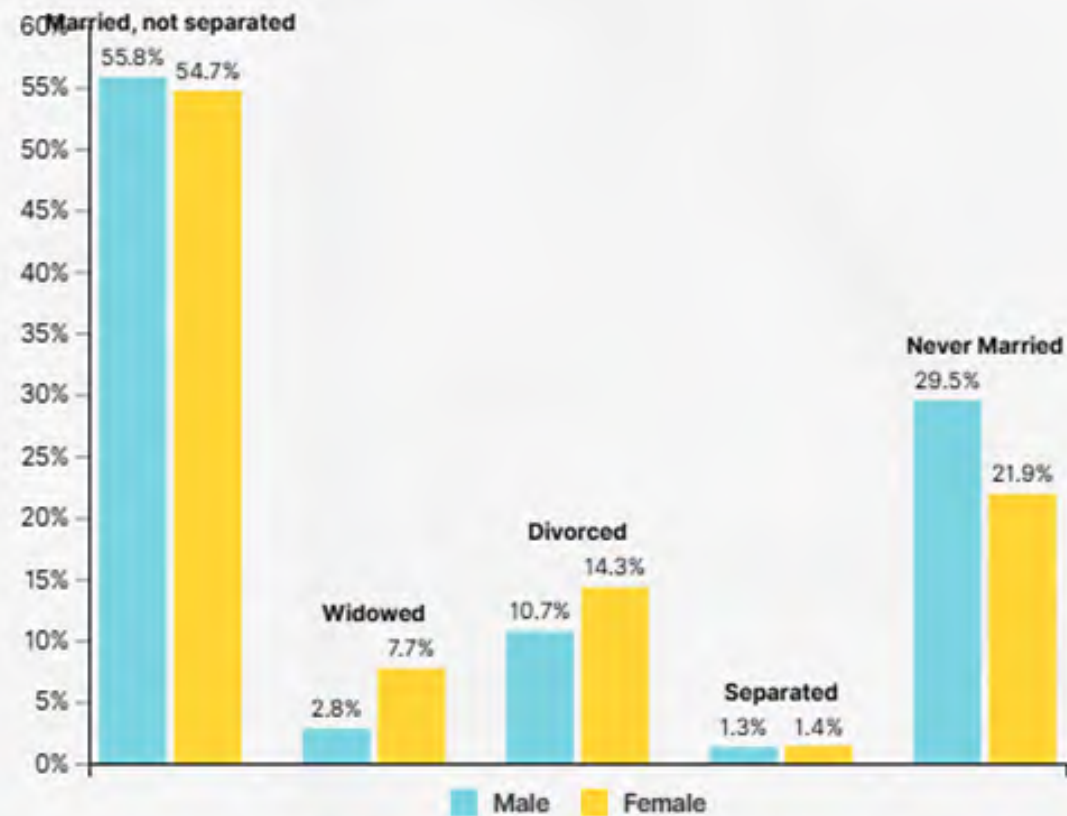
29.8% ± 0.8%

Never Married in Montana

S1201 | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Marital Status by Sex in Flathead County, Montana

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S1201 | 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables

Race and Ethnicity

American Indian and Alaska Native

985

American Indian and Alaska Native alone in Flathead County, Montana

67,612

American Indian and Alaska Native alone in Montana

[P8](#) | 2020 Decennial Census

Asian

717

Asian alone in Flathead County, Montana

8,300

Asian alone in Montana

[P8](#) | 2020 Decennial Census

Black or African American

280

Black or African American alone in Flathead County, Montana

5,484

Black or African American alone in Montana

[P8](#) | 2020 Decennial Census

Hispanic or Latino

3,329

Hispanic or Latino (of any race) in Flathead County, Montana

45,199

Hispanic or Latino (of any race) in Montana

[P9](#) | 2020 Decennial Census

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander

90

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone in Flathead County, Montana

941

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone in Montana

[P8](#) | 2020 Decennial Census

Not Hispanic or Latino

93,416

White alone, not Hispanic or Latino in Flathead County, Montana

901,318

White alone, not Hispanic or Latino in Montana

[P9](#) | 2020 Decennial Census

Not Hispanic or Latino

93,416

White alone, not Hispanic or Latino in Flathead County, Montana

901,318

White alone, not Hispanic or Latino in Montana

[P9](#) | 2020 Decennial Census

Some Other Race

1,039

Some Other Race alone in Flathead County, Montana

14,089

Some Other Race alone in Montana

[P8](#) | 2020 Decennial Census

Two or More Races

6,641

Two or More Races in Flathead County, Montana

71,275

Two or More Races in Montana

[P8](#) | 2020 Decennial Census

White

94,605

White alone in Flathead County, Montana

916,524

White alone in Montana

[P8](#) | 2020 Decennial Census

