



*Voices Guiding Overdose Prevention in Montana*, was created to learn how people impacted by substance use access and utilize supplies and services. The goal was to make sure their voices help guide overdose prevention efforts across the state. The survey focused on hearing directly from people most affected by substance use—people who often face barriers to health care, stigma, and a higher risk of overdose. Between June and December 2025, trained staff conducted confidential one-on-one interviews with **180 participants** at **nine locations** across Montana. Participants shared their experiences accessing overdose prevention supplies and services, identified unmet needs, and suggested ways support could be offered earlier. These findings reflect the experiences of people who chose to participate and were often already connected to community services, so results may not represent everyone affected by substance use in Montana. Responses were self-reported and capture a snapshot in time, and some communities or experiences—especially in rural areas—may be underrepresented. Even with these limits, the survey provides important insights to improve access to services, reduce overdose risk, and support healthier communities.



## Key Findings



### Motivation

97% tried to cut back or stop because of concerns about family, health, safety, or cost.



### Polysubstance Use

79% used more than one substance in the last 90 days.



### Access Matters

46% used substances every day.



### Frequency

46% relied on weekly supplies.  
53% relied on weekly services.



### Most Used Supplies

Safer-use tools and sharps containers.

### Most Used Services

Peer support, food assistance, and mental health counseling.



### Community

Participants said kind, nonjudgmental staff and safe, easy-to-reach places make it easier to stay healthy.



## Service Preferences



### Where

Syringe Service Programs, mobile vans, drop-in centers, health clinics, and vending machines.



### When

Afternoons, evenings, and weekends.



### How

Easy to access, private, nonjudgmental, trauma-informed support.



### What

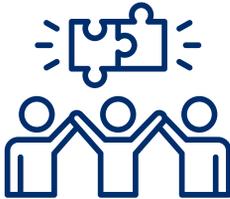
Easy to understand overdose education and naloxone use.



### Also needed

More detox options for people who want help.

## Recommendations



### BUILD TRUST

- **Create private, welcoming, nonjudgmental spaces**, including discreet entrances and confidential intake areas.
- **Train all staff in trauma-informed, respectful care**, especially front-desk and intake staff.
- **Reduce stigma through kindness and compassion**, so people feel safe asking for help.



### STRENGTHEN SUPPORT

- **Expand supply options**, including safer-use tools, hygiene items, hydration, food, socks, gloves, and gas cards.
- **Increase access points and hours**, with more locations, mobile vans, vending machines, and evening/weekend availability.
- **Develop low-barrier service hubs** where people can access basic needs, health care, detox, mental health support, and peer services in one visit.



### INCREASE PROTECTION

- **Expand low-barrier detox, wound care, and behavioral health services**, including walk-in options.
- **Increase naloxone availability** in community settings.
- **Provide simple overdose education and naloxone training.**