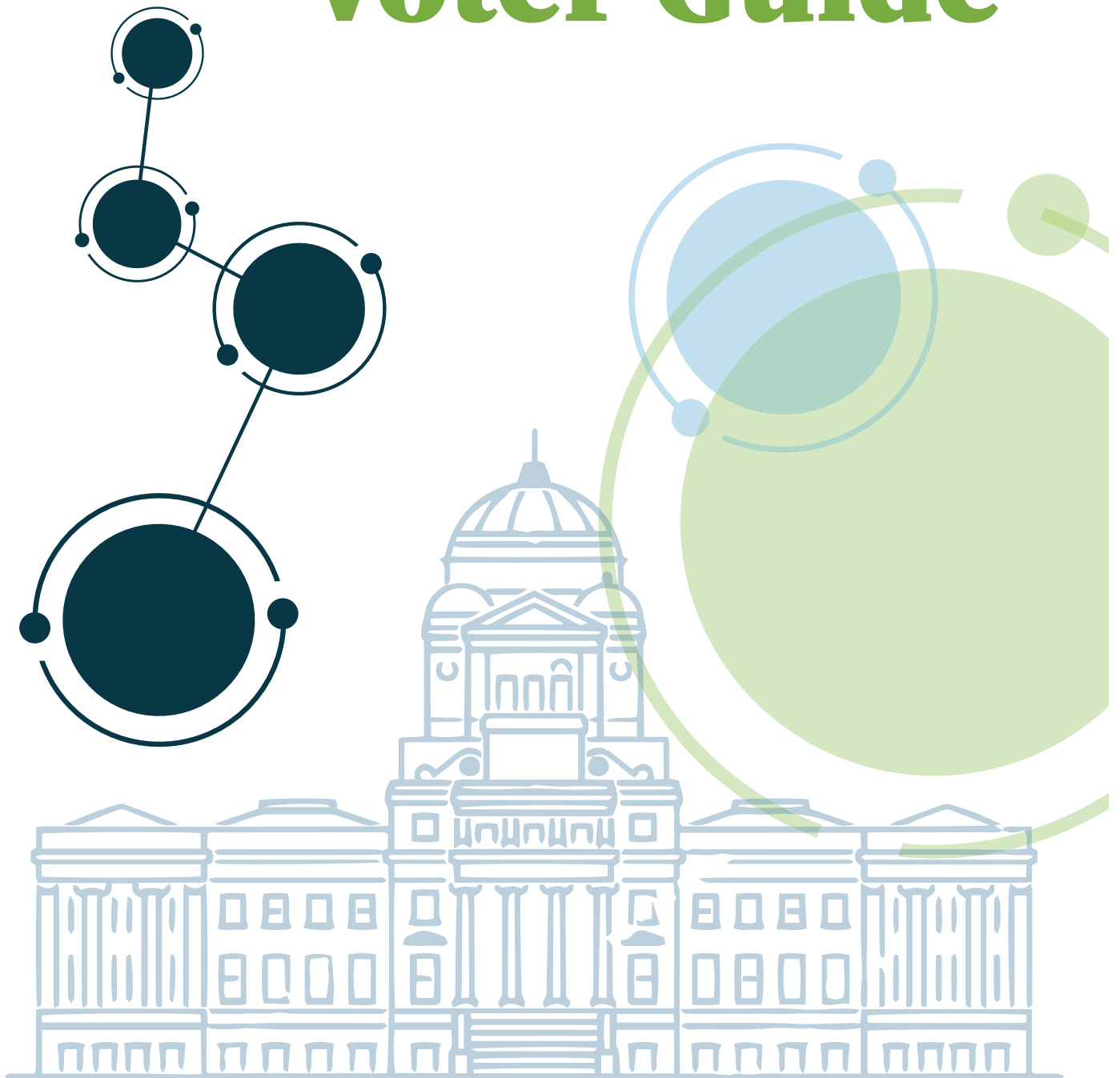


Montana Nonprofit Association

2024

Nonprofit Voter Guide



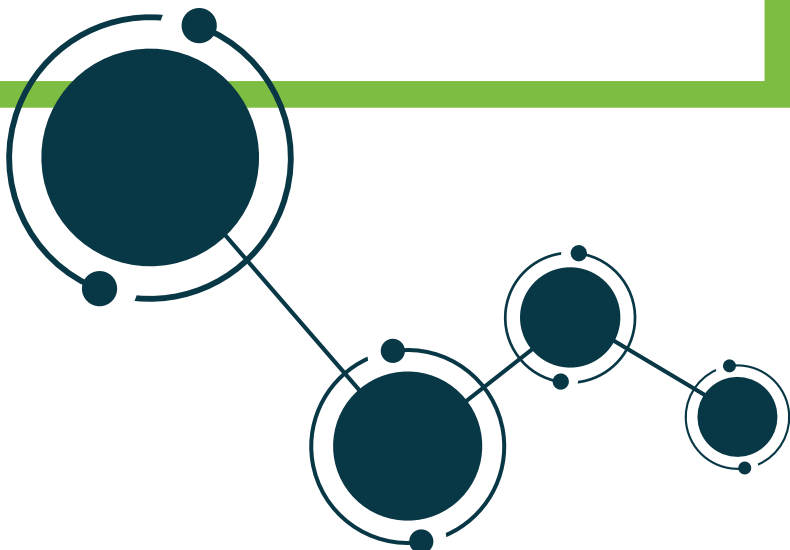
About this voter guide

Candidates for statewide elections in Montana were asked to respond to three questions about their relationship to nonprofits.

All candidates were contacted by email, mail, and phone (when provided in their campaign filing information).

The responses that we received are included here in their entirety. Not all candidates responded to our request. Some candidates have a policy of not responding to questionnaires.

MNA is a 501c3 nonprofit organization and is strictly nonpartisan. We do not endorse or oppose any candidates.



US Senator

Sid Daoud LIBERTARIAN

DID NOT RESPOND

Tim Sheehy REPUBLICAN

What is your personal and professional experience with nonprofits?

My wife, Carmen, and I believe strongly in giving back to the community and state that helped us succeed, and have been fortunate to support many outstanding Montana charities.

As the parents to four young children, it's been important to us to improve pediatric health care and neonatal intensive care so every newborn baby in our state has the best chance at a healthy life. In 2020, Carmen and I were privileged to contribute \$4 million to help bring the upgraded neonatal intensive care unit to Bozeman Health.

Additionally, we were proud to help Billings Clinic establish Montana's first Level I Trauma Center, and are helping build a new, larger library in Belgrade, including a dedicated children's space and a bigger outdoor playground, a teen-specific library space and study area, added computers and improved technology, and a makerspace for classes and allages creative programming.

What do you see as the value of nonprofits in Montana?

As parents to four beautiful kids ranging from 4 to 10 years old, there's nothing more important for Carmen and me than passing along the values of service and charity to them, including by supporting Montana's nonprofits.

Montana's nonprofit sector strengthens the foundation of our communities, making them stronger, healthier, and more vibrant.

What are three specific ways in which, if elected, you would partner with and strengthen the nonprofit sector?

Nonprofit leaders play an important role in shaping public policy. As Senator, I look forward to working with the Montana Nonprofit Association to strengthen nonprofits in our state and address issues many of them focus on by rebooting our economy with low inflation, stopping the flow of drugs across the southern border, fulfilling the promise our nation made to our veterans, and ensuring Montanans' access to high quality, affordable health care, among other priorities.

*Represents Montana in the US Senate in
Washington, D.C.*



Jon Tester DEMOCRAT

What is your personal and professional experience with nonprofits?

Montana's nonprofit sector is diverse, ranging from health care facilities to animal shelters to arts and culture centers. As Montana's senior U.S. Senator, I meet regularly with Montana nonprofits and work to make sure that our government is partnering with them to serve local communities.

Through my work on the Senate Appropriations Committee, I've secured funding to support nonprofits in communities from Butte to Brockton. And I've pushed back against both Democratic and Republican Administrations when they've tried to push rules that make it harder for Montana nonprofits to serve our communities.

What do you see as the value of nonprofits in Montana?

I've lived all my life in a town in north central Montana where people number in the hundreds, not thousands. In towns like Big Sandy, nonprofits like our health centers, food pantries, and Rotary clubs are a big part of the fabric of our communities. Nonprofit organizations help provide essential services, and they can effectively respond to local needs because they are physically based in these towns.

What are three specific ways in which, if elected, you would partner with and strengthen the nonprofit sector?

As a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I've always worked with Montana nonprofits to make sure they have the resources they need to serve our communities. That includes supporting both patients and providers at our state's non-profit healthcare organizations.

I've consistently secured funding for AmeriCorps, which helps make sure organizations providing critical services like feeding Montanans in need or protecting our public lands have the staff they need.

If re-elected, I'll make sure that my door remains open to Montana's non-profits, just like it is to all Montanans. I'm the only member of Montana's congressional delegation to hold regular town hall meetings where any Montanan can show up and share their ideas or concerns.

US Representative (MT-01)

Dennis Hayes LIBERTARIAN

DID NOT RESPOND



Monica Tranel DEMOCRAT

What is your personal and professional experience with nonprofits?

Throughout my professional career as a lawyer, I have had the privilege of representing multiple nonprofits, advocating for their missions and ensuring they have the legal support needed to make a meaningful impact in our communities.

I've been a supporter of our local nonprofit community throughout my life, as I deeply believe in the value of nonprofits and the positive impact they have on our state.

What do you see as the value of nonprofits in Montana?

Nonprofits play a crucial role in Montana, and they address vital needs that might otherwise go unmet, from providing social services and educational opportunities to preserving our environment and creating affordable housing.

In a state like Montana, where rural and underserved areas can face unique challenges, nonprofits are often the first to step in, offering support, resources, and a voice for those who might otherwise be overlooked. Their work enriches our communities and fosters a sense of connection and resilience among Montanans. The value of nonprofits in Montana is immeasurable—they are essential partners in building a stronger, more inclusive state for everyone.

What are three specific ways in which, if elected, you would partner with and strengthen the nonprofit sector?

If elected, I will focus on three key strategies to strengthen Montana's nonprofit sector.

First, I will advocate for increased funding opportunities by expanding grant programs and fostering public-private partnerships. Second, I will work to streamline regulatory processes, making it easier for nonprofits to operate efficiently and focus on their missions. Finally, I will promote collaboration between nonprofits, government agencies, and private sector partners to enhance their capacity and impact across Montana. For example, in developing my plan to address housing affordability in Montana (which can be found at monicatrael.com), I collaborate with nonprofit leaders to determine how best they can help address this critical issue.

Ryan Zinke REPUBLICAN

DID NOT RESPOND

US Representative (MT-02)

Troy Downing REPUBLICAN

What is your personal and professional experience with nonprofits?

I was involved with Warriors and Quiet Waters Foundation from its early days with no paid professional staff as a volunteer, to sitting on the original Advisory Board of Directors, through the acquisition of a permanent home and a full-time team helping injured veterans.

I sat on the original board of directors of Charity Storage which used industry surplus in the self storage industry to fund more than 150 other 501(c)3 organizations.

I currently sit on the board of the Montana Council on Economic Education.

I currently sit on the board of the Montana Financial Education Coalition.

We have financially supported non-profits ranging from the Holter Museum to the Helena Symphony, to Eagle Mount, to the Bozeman Art Museum to Big Sky Bravery among others.

What do you see as the value of nonprofits in Montana?

Non profit organizations fill needs ranging from the arts, to supporting industry, to helping those in need. We have a rich environment of non profits and a generous culture willing to support them. This fills niche needs in our communities, creates jobs, and helps solve problems.

What are three specific ways in which, if elected, you would partner with and strengthen the nonprofit sector?

Make sure there are no roadblocks in place preventing non-profits from acquiring services or setting up systems in financial markets, including the insurance markets.

Protect the ability deduct charitable expenses from personal and corporate income taxes.

Foster public/private partnerships where possible.

John Driscoll DEMOCRAT

What is your personal and professional experience with nonprofits?

Since 1999 I have been the Vice President and Treasurer of The Steward (501c3). My wife regularly (annually at least) contribute to Food Share, Friendship Center, Family Promise, YWCA, Planned Parenthood, Human Rights Network, ACLU, Montana Military Museum, Montana Historical Society, Habitat for Humanity, Montana Public Television, WETA, Grand Street Theater, the Myrna Loy Center, The Holter Museum, Lewis and Clark Library Foundation, Lewis and Clark Literacy Council and time and resources to the Lewis and Clark United Way shower program for the unsheltered.

What do you see as the value of nonprofits in Montana?

As can be seen from our pattern of nonprofit financial support (above), nonprofits serve people and needs in our community that otherwise would remain unserved.

What are three specific ways in which, if elected, you would partner with and strengthen the nonprofit sector?

Try to make favorable long-term ground leases to nonprofits for Limited Equity Housing Cooperatives dedicated to providing expanded affordable housing.

Try to make grants available for nonprofit Research and Development into Compressed Agricultural Fiber and Cross-Laminated timber for carbon-sequestering construction materials.

Try to use grants to incentivize work force training for construction with low-embodied carbon (local) construction materials, as well as the full range of skills and academic competencies required to produce green hydrogen.



Governor

Ryan Busse DEMOCRAT

What is your personal and professional experience with nonprofits?

I have been working with nonprofit organizations from the moment I became politically active in Montana, which happened when the administration of George W. Bush threatened energy development in the Badger Two Medicine region of Montana. As an avid hunter, hiker and angler, I worked closely with nonprofit conservation organizations to fight the proposal, and eventually ended up serving on (and chairing) the boards of both Montana Conservation Voters and Backcountry Hunters and Anglers.

What do you see as the value of nonprofits in Montana?

I am familiar with the different roles and classifications of various nonprofit organizations throughout Montana, and I have respect for their individual roles in supporting missions that improve lives, that educate the public, that educate voters, that hold our elected leaders accountable, and that provide goods and services to our neighbors in need. Simply put, nonprofit organizations are essential to the health of our communities, and to the health of our very democracy.

What are three specific ways in which, if elected, you would partner with and strengthen the nonprofit sector?

First, I will adopt an open-door policy for nonprofit organizations that represent all Montana constituencies and want to have dialogue with me and my administration. I will hold regular “office hours” and go out of my way to understand their missions, their work, and their requests—understanding that these meetings need to happen locally, not in Helena. Governor Gianforte does not do this. Second, I will personally commit to regular “work days” to spend time volunteering with nonprofit, nonpolitical organizations that provide goods or services to their communities. Third, I will bring transparency back to the Governor’s Office, making sure Montanans know where I am and who I meet with without cost or hassle, so nonprofit organizations can hold me and my administration accountable to our responsibilities.

Greg Gianforte REPUBLICAN

CAMPAIGN RESPONSE - DOES NOT DO QUESTIONNAIRES

Kaiser Leib LIBERTARIAN

What is your personal and professional experience with nonprofits?

I have no professional experience in the nonprofit sector. I volunteered for several years with the Revolutionary War Veteran's Association, a 501(c)3 dedicated to teaching rifle marksmanship and history and to promoting civic engagement. I was also a volunteer with FIRST robotics, which runs robotics competitions in which middle and high school students learn programming and engineering hands-on. I also ran a series of fundraisers for Rapha House International, Heifer International, Direct Relief, and local food banks, in which I would write essays on the topics of donors' choosing if they'd provide receipts proving their donation.

What do you see as the value of nonprofits in Montana?

In Montana and elsewhere, nonprofits are a great way for people to voluntarily come together and pursue some goal, to participate in the human experience in a way that benefits the community and do stuff that makes a lasting impact.

What are three specific ways in which, if elected, you would partner with and strengthen the nonprofit sector?

I do not think it proper for the government to spend tax dollars (on nonprofits or elsewhere) and so taxpayer-funded subsidies are not part of my plan.

I'd encourage the legislature to increase the available deductions for charitable donations and to allow deductions to include the fair market value of any benefit the donor receives.

I'd seek to partner with nonprofits to provide services which have traditionally been subsidized by taxpayers, such as after school programs.

Auditor

James (Jim) Brown REPUBLICAN

DID NOT RESPOND



John Repke DEMOCRAT

What is your personal and professional experience with nonprofits?

Since moving to Montana, I revived the Flathead-Kootenai Chapter of Wild Montana and served on its board for several years. I also have served on the board of the Glacier National Park Conservancy. My late wife served on the board of the Stumptown Art Studio in Whitefish (and now my oldest daughter is on that board).

I am active in my community. I have served on City of Whitefish standing committees for about 10 years and I am involved with the Safe Trails Whitefish effort to build a network of bike/ped pathways in Whitefish. I have also taught business classes and mentored business owners on a volunteer basis through Montana West Economic Development, Lake County Community Development, Flathead Valley Community College, and Confederated Salish & Kootenai tribal services.

As a consistent financial contributor, I support several nonprofits in my community and in the state with direct donations or through the Great Fish Community Challenge in Whitefish.

What do you see as the value of nonprofits in Montana?

Nonprofits play a significant role in making Montana a great place to live. Many provide vital services to folks in our community by filling gaps between those provided by state agencies and private businesses. Others do important work that not only enhances life in our state, but also provides folks with a way to pursue their passions and fulfill their desire to give back to their community. In addition to these valuable services, Montana's nonprofits, as a group, are a major employer and therefore contribute significantly to our state's economic health.

What are three specific ways in which, if elected, you would partner with and strengthen the nonprofit sector?

The State Auditor office is responsible for insurance regulation and securities fraud prevention.

I will work with interested Montana based nonprofits (and/or Montana Nonprofit Association) to help them secure affordable, quality insurance that meets their needs.

I will partner with nonprofits, especially those serving seniors, to educate Montanans about the risks of fraudulent scams and schemes and how to avoid becoming victims.

I will engage with leaders of Montana's nonprofit sector to make certain that the State Auditor's office is aware of and able to address any unique characteristics and needs of employees and volunteers of the nonprofit sector.

Secretary of State

Christi Jacobsen REPUBLICAN

What is your personal and professional experience with nonprofits?

Throughout my career, I've had the privilege of interacting with various nonprofit organizations, both on a professional level and personally. As the current Secretary of State, I've worked directly with many nonprofits in Montana, helping to streamline their registration and compliance processes. I have seen firsthand the impact these organizations make in communities across our state, from providing essential services to advocating for important causes. On a personal level, I have volunteered with local charities and understand the dedication and passion that drive nonprofit work.

What do you see as the value of nonprofits in Montana?

Nonprofits are the backbone of Montana's communities. They provide essential services that government and private sectors alone cannot fulfill, from supporting families in need to preserving our natural resources and advocating for social justice. They bring people together around shared values and missions, and they foster a sense of community and belonging that is uniquely Montanan. In a state where many communities are rural and remote, nonprofits play a critical role in filling gaps and addressing needs that might otherwise go unmet.

What are three specific ways in which, if elected, you would partner with and strengthen the nonprofit sector?

I've already eliminated administrative burdens as sec of state.

John Lamb LIBERTARIAN

DID NOT RESPOND

Functions include overseeing elections and maintaining records of businesses and nonprofits in Montana



Jesse Mullen DEMOCRAT

What is your personal and professional experience with nonprofits?

I have served as an executive board member of several Montana nonprofit entities, including service organizations, economic development organizations, and public/private nonprofit partnerships.

What do you see as the value of nonprofits in Montana?

Nonprofit organizations are invaluable. The contributions of Montana nonprofits provide stability and security and ensure the well-being of every Montanan.

What are three specific ways in which, if elected, you would partner with and strengthen the nonprofit sector?

Provide more specialized nonprofit training within the business services customer service department to ensure Montana nonprofits have reliable, accurate, and timely resources at the Secretary of State's Office.

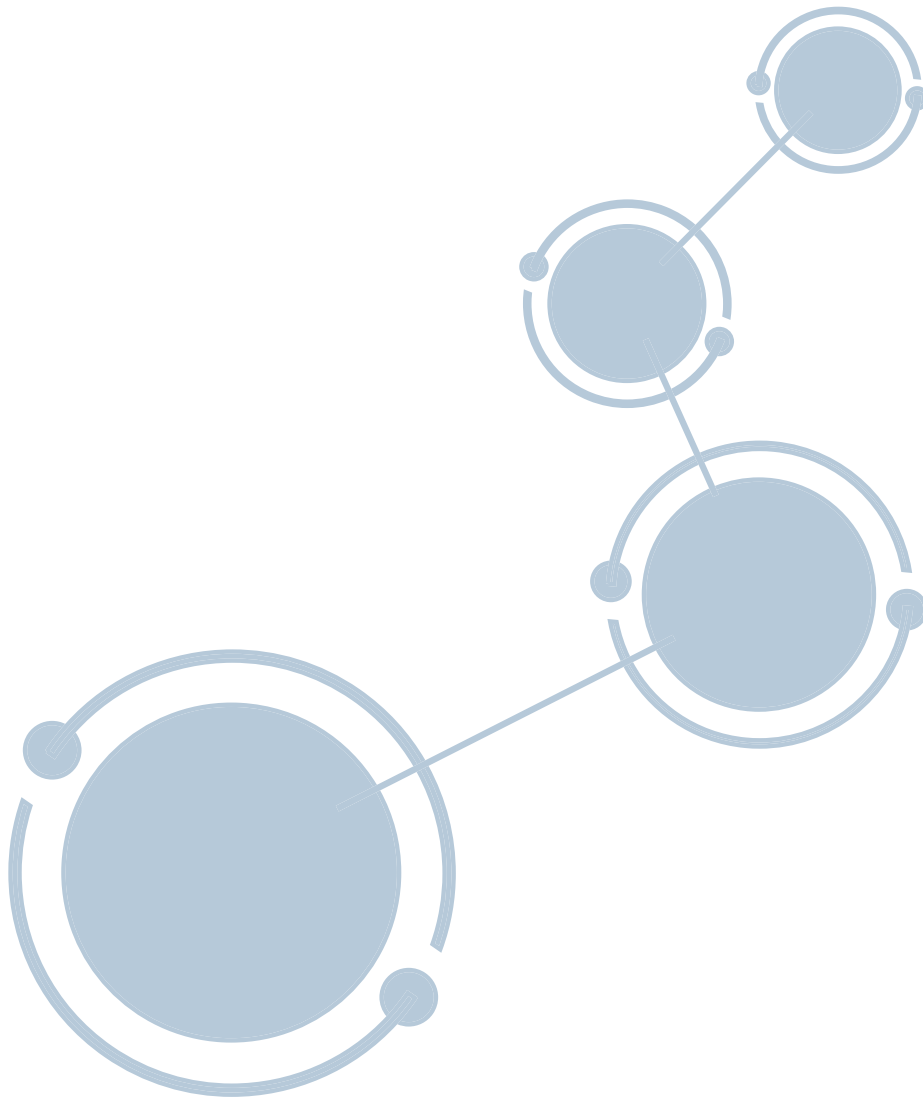
Ensure Secretary of State educational and informational resources are readily available and easily accessible (digitally or otherwise) so nonprofits can more readily fulfill their filing and registration obligations.

Create a true open-door policy to the Secretary of State's Office to ensure the MNA's priorities are heard in a timely manner. Work with our nonprofits to support policymaking that provides pathways to success for the nonprofit sector.

Superintendent of Schools

Susie Hedalen REPUBLICAN

DID NOT RESPOND



Shannon O'Brien DEMOCRAT

What is your personal and professional experience with nonprofits?

I have served on boards and have consistently supported nonprofits in annual giving and fundraising campaigns. I was a founding member of the Women's Giving Circle of Missoula and served on the advisory committee. I worked for 11 years at a non-profit summer camp and eventually served as assistant. As a teacher and member of the public sector I have worked hand in hand with several individual nonprofits, specifically as a state senator education policy advisor to Governor Steve Bullock, I collaborated with an alliance of non-profits to identify strategies for meaningful policy to elevate preschool opportunities for children in Montana.

What do you see as the value of nonprofits in Montana?

Nonprofits are instrumental to our communities as they often fill the gap that the public and private sectors aren't addressing. They are critical in supporting the essential needs of underrepresented populations, especially our youth, elderly, people of lower incomes and ethnic minorities. Nonprofits are invaluable when it comes to educating policy makers on the critical issues we are facing in our communities.

What are three specific ways in which, if elected, you would partner with and strengthen the nonprofit sector?

1 – First, public policy makers, such as legislators, need to be educated on the important issues facing the people and land of Montana. So often it is easy for legislators to get distracted from what is really going on in our state. We must rely on the nonprofits to partner in building relationships with policy makers so that everyone understands the issues and once we identify the barriers, we can find solutions that work.

2 – There are a vast number of needs in our communities across the state where philanthropic organizations have an opportunity to make impact. We will work with those nonprofits to see where we can partner. For example, developing scholarships for college students who are going into the teaching profession to help address the educator shortage crisis in Montana. Secondly, nonprofits are key in helping fill gaps when it comes to meeting the basic needs of students like housing, food and clothing. Making philanthropic connections and creating safe communities for children to grow and thrive.

3 – I will partner closely with nonprofits to learn together to understand the new challenges we face in our education system as they emerge and work to find the solutions needed to guarantee a quality education for our kids. I look forward to partnering with and supporting existing nonprofits that are already doing the work vital to our children, families, and communities.

Attorney General

Montana's chief legal officer, chief law enforcement officer, and director of the Montana Department of Justice

Ben Alke DEMOCRAT

DID NOT RESPOND

Austin Knudsen REPUBLICAN


CAMPAIGN RESPONSE - DOES NOT DO QUESTIONNAIRES



Save the Date!

2025
Nonprofit Day
at the Capitol

January 30th, 2025
8am - 3pm



Scan QR code to register, or visit
www.mtnonprofit.org/event/nonprofit-day-at-the-capitol-2025

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TOGETHER we are a force for good.