



LOCAL CROSS-SYSTEM COLLABORATIVES (LCSC)

a project of the National Network for Youth

PHOENIX/MARICOPA COUNTY, AZ

WHO IS INVOLVED?

- Phoenix/Maricopa County, AZ has a LCSC that was established in January 2015 in their community that meets regularly to discuss ways to address youth homelessness. The LCSC has strong regular attendance and participation.
- The organizations that are regularly involved in those meetings include: young people with lived experience, community-based youth service providers, public education homeless liaisons, Continuum of Care members (CoC), child welfare agencies, law enforcement, other housing providers, and various funders.
- Homeless Youth Connection (HYC), a Runaway and Homeless Youth Act grantee that serves youth between the ages of 13 and 21, is one of the leaders of the LCSC, and has strong partnerships with other stakeholders and LCSC members.

COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

Population: **4.307** million
Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness*: **2,657**
Youth and Young Adult Population Experiencing Homelessness**: **365**
Youth Service Providers:

UMOM New Day Centers, Inc.
Phoenix, AZ
www.umom.org

Homeless Youth Connection
Avondale, AZ
Hycaz.org

CHALLENGES THEY ARE TACKLING

- Insufficient funding for efforts to prevent and respond to youth and young adult homelessness is a challenge for the LCSC. HYC alone increased the overall number of students served from 400 to 700, but has not seen an accompanying increase in funding.
- Arizona's current legal framework for minors, including consent for housing and services, access to information about services available to young people, sharing of information by a young person, and liability issues, poses particular challenges for youth to access the services and housing they need.
- Transportation throughout the city of Phoenix, and particularly throughout Maricopa County's large rural areas, is a challenge for young people and the agencies and organizations that work with them.
- There is a lack of sufficient emergency housing for young people in Phoenix/Maricopa Co. Host homes have proven an effective response and host home families are consistently identified, recruited, trained, and maintained. However, the process is lengthy and time consuming, so there are not enough homes ready to serve youth in an emergency situation. Adult shelters in the community are not seen by the young people or many members of the LCSC as appropriate places for youth and young adults.

SUCSESSES:

- Working collaboratively through the LCSC:
 - All of the youth-serving organizations throughout Maricopa County meet monthly as an LCSC.
 - The LCSC has ensured the establishment of a Youth Work Group within the local Continuum of Care (CoC) to address issues related specifically to youth. This group's primary focus is making sure that the community identifies all homeless youth, not just those age 18-24.
 - The community has developed a Youth Advisory Board made up of young people with lived experience, and two youth members also serve as members of the Youth Working Group.
- The CoC and LCSC organizations have all agreed to use the Transition Aged Youth form of the Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (TAY VI SPDAT) to determine who is the most at need of a bed and/or services in a local community.
- HYC has started to utilize Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to help ensure all unaccompanied youth are identified. This identification ensures young people are included on a 'By Name List', which helps the community better understand the scope of youth homelessness. HCY's HMIS lead also attends the Youth Working Group meetings referenced above.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Key strategies to address challenges identified and achieve success:

- The CoC has continued to expand partnerships with agencies, such as surrounding school districts, law enforcement, behavioral health, and Maricopa County Juvenile Justice Court.
- The CoC has worked with public partners, such as the Phoenix Public Library, the Light Rail, QuikTrip, and others to implement Safe Places and are continuing to discuss opportunities to expand into a greater variety of settings.
- HYC has been meeting with Uber to discuss options for addressing their transportation challenges. They have also contacted Total Transit, an Arizona-based cab company, to consider providing discounted fares or a monthly allotment of taxi vouchers.
- HYC and youth service providers are doing grassroots advocacy to support legislation which would address many of the issues identified as consent related barriers for minors experiencing homelessness.