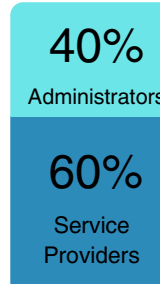


Innovations & Strategies in AZ Homeless Service Provision

A summary of perspectives from statewide homeless service providers and a scientific literature review

Participation Summary

- 9 exploratory interviews guided focus group questions
- 25 statewide focus groups in 2022 and 2023
- 58 homeless service providers and administrators participated in focus groups
- More information on methodology is available [here](#)



Key Themes

Participants shared innovations and strategies used to address system challenges. They were categorized into the following three themes.

1. Housing

Focus on more affordable, available, and accessible housing stock

2. Economic Security

Support before, during, and after homelessness through financial assistance

3. Wraparound Supports

Integrate systems to meet needs related to mental health, physical health, and substance use

1. **Housing:** Multiple & complementary types, with community support

- **Housing First:** permanent housing placements without prerequisites (1,2).
- **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH):** Non-time-limited supportive housing for people with complex needs (3).
- **Repurposed Hotels:** use of commercial sites or repurposing hotels/motels to provide non-congregate shelter (4-6).
- **Shared Housing/Host Homes:** short-term housing through partnerships with community members who “host” people or combine residences (7,8).
- **Tiny Homes, Trailers:** agencies build, purchase, and/or lease small homes/trailers for people experiencing homelessness (PEH; 9,10).
- **Landlord Engagement:** relationships with and assistance for landlords to prevent eviction or develop rental stability (11).
- **Progressive Engagement** (coupled with flexible regulations): tailoring the amount and type of service to match client needs (12-15).

Housing First:
The Human Services Campus,
Maricopa County

Repurposed Hotels:
The Crown,
Flagstaff Shelter Services

Tiny Homes:
The Outlaw Project,
Pima County

Landlord Engagement:
The Threshold Program,
Maricopa County

[Evidence for strategies & references are available here.](#)

2. Economic Security: Empowerment-oriented, flexible, & client-driven

- **Direct Cash Transfers:** lump sum or monthly income provided to PEH or at risk of homelessness (16, 17).
- **“Money Matching” or Match Savings Programs:** matching funds and financial literacy toward asset development to be used for approved expenses(18, 19).
- **Education/training stipends:** funds to spend on education or training, including degree completion, workforce credentials, and up-skilling for those currently employed.
- **Shallow (Rental) Subsidies:** time-limited or ongoing rental assistance (20, 21).
- **Flexible “Flex” or Crisis Funds:** rapid financial assistance for prevention, diversion, or rehousing (22, 23).

Direct Cash Transfers:
Youth on Their Own, Pima County

Education Stipends:
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Pell Grants, Perkins, TANF, SNAP E&T

Rental Subsidies:
Catholic Charities, Coconino County

Flex funds:
St. Vincent de Paul, Maricopa County

[Evidence for strategies & references are available here.](#)

3. Wraparound Supports: From prevention through rehousing

- **Peer Support:** people with lived experience & training are paid to support others (24-26).
- **Mental Health Services & Outreach:** comprehensive clinical services and support for mental health offered at the community level (27-29).
- **Case Management:** individualized support to address issues related to housing and other social needs (30, 31).
- **Harm Reduction:** evidence-based approaches to reduce the risk and harms associated with substance use (32-35), as a complement to sober living.
- **Pet Accommodations:** allow PEH individuals to keep their pets while receiving services (36-37).
- **Transportation:** increasing access to public transportation, rides, bikes, ride-sharing, gas cards, and car repairs (38).

Peer Support & Outreach:
Community Bridges, Inc.

Harm Reduction
Sonoran Prevention Works

Pet Accommodations:
The Arizona Pet Project

Transportation (Provision of Bicycles to PEH):
Regional Center for Border Health, Inc., Western, AZ

[Evidence for strategies & references are available here.](#)

Recommendations for Innovative Implementation

Focus group participants made recommendations to optimize and expand homeless services across the state

Center the leadership & experiences of people with lived experience

Engage in policy advocacy

To address rent stabilization, short-term rentals, inclusionary zoning, etc.

Support a stable, healthy workforce

That is well paid, well trained, & supported in their mental health

Prioritize equity

Policies and programs that explicitly address the needs of people who face social and structural barriers

Expand collaborations and coalitions

Reduce systemic barriers, increase eligibility, expand services

Advocate for flexible funding

Can be used for multiple needs expressed by PEH

Increase wraparound service capacity to reach underserved areas & populations

Provide culturally responsive & trauma-informed services

Such as bilingual staff & family unification

Evaluate, sustain, & replicate effective COVID-era innovations

Supplemental Innovations & Strategies

Additional recommendations from our scientific literature review

- **Homeless Prevention (Including use of Predictive Modeling):** immediate financial assistance & services to at-risk households (39-42). Other types of homeless prevention include:
 - **Eviction Diversion:** support for tenants and landlords to reach agreements outside of court & formalize services (43, 44).
 - **Critical Time Intervention (CTI):** case management targeted at continuity of care during the transition from a shelter/institution to independent housing (45, 46).
- **Alternative Legal Practices:** Provide PEH and at risk of homelessness with legal and advocate resources, prioritization of non CJ system responses, and/or provision of housing for special populations (47-51).

Homeless Prevention
LA County
Homeless Prevention

Eviction Diversion:
City of Philadelphia
Eviction Diversion Program

Alt. Legal Practices:
Maricopa County
Regional Homelessness Court & Qualified Tenant Advocates in Delaware

[Evidence for strategies & references are available here.](#)

A Note About Rapid Rehousing (RRH):

Many participants expressed frustration about RRH implementation. A recent review found RRH less effective than PSH and research is inconclusive about the housing, health, social, and economic impacts of RRH (52). Best practices for implementation can be [found here.](#)