

Arbor Youth Services

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Title of Proposed Project:

Arbor Youth's Outreach Aftercare Program

Project Summary:

Arbor Youth's Outreach Aftercare Program extends our Outreach Center hours to serve youth, particularly those 18+, offering resources like food, shelter, and support. We'll collaborate with Fayette County Public Schools to address homeless students' needs.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY & EXPERIENCE

Agency Mission

Arbor Youth's mission is to end youth homelessness by providing a safe and supportive environment to youth who have suffered abuse, abandonment, or are at risk of victimization. We envision a community where every child and youth have a stable home. We strive to provide a safe, supportive, and welcoming environment for unaccompanied youth (from birth through 24 years of age). We provide an emergency shelter for children and youth under the age of 18, a Tay Overnight Shelter for youth 18 and 24 years, and we help youth who are between 18 and 24 years of age transition from homelessness to housing. We do this through various services, including our Emergency Shelter, Tay Emergency Shelter, Outreach Center, and Supportive Housing programs. All the children and youth we serve find themselves homeless often at no fault of their own, whether they've been removed from their homes, kicked out of their homes, or age out of foster care.

Experience

Since 1976, Arbor Youth Services has been a cornerstone of support for runaway and homeless youth in Central Kentucky, providing emergency shelter and essential services to help them achieve stability and security. We proudly operate the only emergency shelter for unaccompanied minors in the region and, in 2020, expanded our services to include a Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Overnight Shelter for young adults ages 18-24. With over four decades of experience, Arbor has consistently delivered compassionate, age-appropriate services tailored to the unique needs of each youth.

Our approach is rooted in trauma-informed care and guided by the principles of Positive Youth Development, which focuses on cultivating strengths, fostering resilience, and encouraging personal growth. This philosophy underscores our belief in empowering young people to build on their abilities and achieve their potential, even in the face of adversity.

Throughout our history, Arbor has successfully managed a variety of federal, state, and city-funded initiatives, continuously implementing innovative and life-saving programs. Since 1986, we have been

proud participants in Project Safe Place, a national initiative that provides a safety network for at-risk youth. Arbor has also offered a range of impactful programs, including an after-school program, transitional housing, and summer art initiatives. Between 2009 and 2015, we operated a robust street outreach program, which provided critical services to youth living on the streets. Although this program concluded due to a loss of federal funding, our commitment to meeting the needs of homeless youth remains unwavering. The Arbor Youth Outreach Center provides outreach, education, and facility services to youth ages 18-24 who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless. Our center is open by walk-in Monday through Friday 7am-3pm and extended hours or weekends by appointment. We provide homeless youth with a safe place to wash laundry, cook meals, take a shower, and receive case management, basic need/survival items, transportation, referrals, housing and employment support, and emotional support. All the support provided is aimed at helping youth transition from the streets to stable housing and gainful employment.

We are also proud to hold re-accreditation through the Council on Accreditation (COA), a distinction that confirms our adherence to nationally recognized best practices and standards.

This accreditation reflects our commitment to quality in every aspect of our work, from administrative processes to service delivery, and highlights our dedication to continuous improvement.

By integrating trauma-informed care and the core values of Positive Youth Development, Arbor Youth Services continues to evolve and adapt, ensuring that our programs effectively address the challenges faced by vulnerable youth. We remain dedicated to empowering young people with the tools, resources, and support needed to build brighter futures and break the cycle of homelessness.

Arbor Youth Services is proud to have a highly skilled and compassionate team dedicated to supporting homeless and at-risk youth:

- Executive Director Joshua McKinley has 5 years of experience working with homeless populations. Joshua is responsible for the overall oversight of Arbor's programs and agency operations. His leadership ensures the continuous improvement and alignment of our services with the agency's mission and vision.
- Selena Liston, our Shelter Coordinator, has 10 years of experience working with youth, including 6 years focused on at-risk and homeless youth. She has provided mentorship, crisis intervention, and support to help young individuals overcome challenges and access essential resources. Holding a master's degree in social work, her work has centered on creating safe, empowering environments for vulnerable youth.
- Dominique August-Smith, our Shelter Advocate, has over 10 years of experience working directly with youth. Dominique is committed to providing a safe and nurturing space for youth, offering support that addresses their immediate needs while fostering long-term resilience. She provided support to individuals who have intellectual, developmental, or behavioral disabilities.
- Janell Walls has 4 1/2 years of experience providing support to individuals experiencing homelessness and navigating mental health services. Her expertise ensures a trauma-informed approach to assisting youth with complex needs.
- Darryl Watkins has 12 years of experience working with youth who have intellectual, developmental, or behavioral disabilities. His specialized knowledge allows him to provide tailored support for youth facing unique challenges.

All personnel undergo a thorough orientation process and are required to complete at least 40 hours of ongoing professional training annually. This includes training in trauma-informed care, case management best practices, and the principles of Positive Youth Development. Staff also participate in specialized workshops to deepen their understanding of youth development, mental health, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Additionally, all staff maintain current CPR and First Aid certifications. To ensure the safety and well-being of the youth we serve, all employees are subject to comprehensive criminal background checks and central registry checks. Arbor Youth Services' team is united by a shared commitment to empowering youth with the resources, skills, and support needed to achieve stability, independence, and brighter futures.

Collaboration

Arbor Youth Services is excited to collaborate with Fayette County Public Schools (FCPS) to implement the Arbor Youth Outreach Aftercare Program, leveraging the support and framework provided by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. This partnership is essential in addressing the specific needs of students experiencing homelessness, particularly those aged 18 and older, as they navigate the transition to adulthood. By combining our resources, expertise, and shared commitment to youth, this collaboration will create a comprehensive safety net for homeless students. Our work together will ensure that these young individuals not only succeed academically but also have the stability and support required to thrive as they transition into independent living.

PROJECT DESIGN

The **Arbor Youth Outreach Aftercare Program** is designed to address a critical gap in services for youth experiencing homelessness in Lexington, particularly those aged 18 and older. This population often faces barriers to housing stability, education, and long-term independence, especially after they age out of the foster care system or graduate from high school. The primary gap this project seeks to address is the lack of accessible, consistent resources outside of typical school hours, particularly for youth who are navigating homelessness or housing instability. Currently, there are limited options for these young individuals to access support, food, shelter, and case management after regular business hours, and no coordinated system that effectively connects them to housing resources and social services.

Identified Service Gap:

The gap identified is a lack of extended hours and wraparound services tailored to youth, particularly those 18 and older, who are experiencing homelessness. Data from Fayette County Public Schools and local youth service providers indicate that these youth often face challenges when school-based support ends, and they have no other place to turn for assistance. Additionally, surveys of local service providers reveal a critical need for extended access to services during evenings and weekends when many other resources are closed. The Lex End Homelessness Housing Flex Fund has shown that one of the largest barriers to housing stability for youth is access to timely and comprehensive support services.

Alignment with Local Strategies and the Office of Homelessness' Strategic Plan:

This project aligns closely with the **Office of Homelessness' Strategic Plan** and the **Continuum of Care (CoC)** strategies to reduce youth homelessness. CoC's strategies include increasing service access during non-traditional hours and providing flexible resources for young people in transition. By offering extended evening and weekend hours, the program will fill an existing gap in service and directly contribute to the CoC's goal of supporting youth in achieving housing stability and self-sufficiency. Additionally, the program aligns with the strategic priority of improving collaboration across service providers to create a more comprehensive system of care.

Innovation and Unique Resource:

This project introduces a new resource in the Lexington CoC, by expanding the availability of resources during critical times (evenings and weekends) when youth experiencing homelessness are most vulnerable. While other agencies provide support to homeless individuals and families, Arbor Youth's Outreach Aftercare Program is unique in focusing specifically on youth aged 18+ and offering an integrated service model that includes not only housing navigation but also life skills development, food, shelter, transportation, and employment readiness assistance. By collaborating with Fayette County Public Schools, this project leverages existing relationships with educators and staff who can directly refer students to the program, ensuring a seamless transition for students who are at risk.

Project Location and Accessibility:

The project will be located at **Arbor Youth Services' Outreach Center**, located at 540 W Third St in Lexington, KY. The center is centrally located and easily accessible by public transportation, making it convenient for youth in need to access services. The extended hours (3:00 PM to 7:00 PM daily and 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM on Saturdays and Sundays) will ensure that youth can access support outside of traditional working hours. The program will serve up to 50 youth annually, with the capacity to expand based on demand.

Operational Processes and Positive Outcomes:

The program will utilize a **case management** approach to identify the specific needs of each participant, develop a customized plan for housing stability, and connect youth to critical resources. Case managers will assist with securing housing, employment, and educational opportunities while addressing mental health and substance use challenges. Additionally, the program will coordinate with local service providers, including Fayette County Public Schools, to ensure that participants are linked with the appropriate resources.

The project will track outcomes including the number of youth who successfully transition into permanent housing, secure employment, complete educational milestones, and access other critical services. Success will be measured by reductions in youth homelessness, increased housing stability, and improved quality of life indicators for participants.

Contribution to Reducing Homelessness:

The **Arbor Youth Outreach Aftercare Program** contributes to reducing and ultimately eliminating homelessness by providing youth with the tools and resources needed to transition into stable housing and self-sufficiency. The flexible nature of the program allows for an individualized approach that addresses the unique challenges each participant faces. Through targeted outreach, education, and case management, the program will help break the cycle of homelessness for many youths, giving them the opportunity to thrive in a supportive environment.

Anticipated Impact:

The anticipated impact of this project is a measurable reduction in the number of youth experiencing homelessness in Fayette County, particularly those aged 18 and older. The program will provide essential resources and support during critical hours, significantly improving the outcomes for youth who are often underserved. In the long term, the project will build a sustainable support network that reduces barriers to housing and economic independence for youth in transition.

Proposed Timeline:

- **Month 1:** Program planning, recruitment of case managers, coordination with Fayette County Public Schools.
- **Month 2-4:** Program launch, outreach to youth in need, and opening of the Outreach Center for extended hours.
- **Month 5-6:** Begin tracking outcomes, evaluating early success and challenges, and adjusting as needed.
- **Month 6-12:** Full program implementation, ongoing case management, and service delivery. First-year outcomes review and strategic planning for year two.

By the end of year one, we anticipate serving at least 50 youth and making a significant impact on housing stability for this vulnerable population.

SERVICES AND OUTCOMES

The **Arbor Youth Outreach Aftercare Program** offers a comprehensive range of direct services designed to meet the diverse needs of youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those aged 18 and older. These services include:

1. **Emergency Shelter and Housing Navigation:**
 - **Direct Service:** Youth will have access to emergency shelter during extended hours (3:00 PM to 7:00 PM daily, 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM on weekends). In addition, case managers will assist youth with housing search, applications, and navigating housing programs, helping them transition into stable, long-term housing.
 - **Outcome Facilitation:** Housing stability is a critical indicator of success, and youth will have the resources to secure permanent housing, eliminating one of the main causes of homelessness.
2. **Food and Basic Needs Support:**
 - **Direct Service:** The Outreach Center will provide meals, hygiene products, clothing, and other essential items to youth in need. This ensures that youth can meet their immediate survival needs while focusing on securing long-term stability.
 - **Outcome Facilitation:** Meeting basic needs reduces immediate stressors, allowing youth to focus on employment, education, and housing. Stable access to food and basic needs contribute to improved well-being and housing stability.
3. **Case Management and Support Services:**

- **Direct Service:** Case managers will work one-on-one with youth to develop personalized service plans that address their individual needs, including mental health support, employment readiness, education goals, and life skills.
 - **Partnership:** The program will collaborate with Fayette County Public Schools to identify and assist students experiencing homelessness, ensuring they are connected to academic support and resources to complete their education.
 - **Outcome Facilitation:** Case management ensures that youth have a clear path forward and the necessary support to achieve housing stability, maintain employment, and continue their education.
4. **Employment and Education Support:**
- **Direct Service:** The program will offer employment readiness training, job placement assistance, and access to educational resources, including GED programs and job training.
 - **Outcome Facilitation:** Employment and education are critical factors in achieving long-term housing stability. The program will help youth gain the skills necessary to secure stable employment, thus reducing their risk of homelessness.
5. **Transportation Assistance:**
- **Direct Service:** The program will provide transportation support to youth, including bus passes and travel stipends, to assist with housing searches, employment, education, and accessing essential services.
 - **Outcome Facilitation:** Transportation assistance ensures that youth can access housing, employment, and support services, which are necessary for their independence and stability.
6. **Collaboration with Other Community Providers:**
- **Partnership:** In addition to Fayette County Public Schools, the program will work with local mental health services, substance abuse treatment providers, and job training centers to ensure youth have access to comprehensive care.
 - **Outcome Facilitation:** By connecting youth to a network of community resources, the program addresses the multiple factors that contribute to homelessness and supports long-term success.

Tracking and Assessing Program Outcomes:

To ensure the program's effectiveness and to track progress toward achieving key outcomes, the following data points will be collected:

1. **Data Points to Be Collected:**
- **Youth Demographics:** Age, gender, education status, housing history, and referral sources.
 - **Service Utilization:** Number of youth served, types of services accessed (e.g., housing, food, case management, employment support).
 - **Housing Stability:** Number of youth who secure permanent housing, remain housed for 6 months or more, or transition to independent living.
 - **Employment and Education Outcomes:** Number of youth who gain employment, receive job training, or complete education goals (e.g., obtaining a GED).

- **Health and Well-being:** Number of youth accessing mental health services, substance abuse treatment, or other health-related services.
 - **Basic Needs Fulfillment:** Number of youth receiving food, clothing, or other essential items.
 - **Transportation Usage:** Number of youth using transportation assistance for housing searches, work, or education.
2. **Specific Outcomes to Be Tracked:**
- **Housing Stability:** The primary outcome is the number of youth who transition into permanent housing and remain housed for at least 6 months. Target: **80% of participants will secure permanent housing** within 6 months.
 - **Employment:** The number of youth who secure employment, complete job training, or gain meaningful work experience. Target: **50% of youth will obtain employment** or engage in job training during the program.
 - **Educational Achievement:** The number of youth who complete educational goals, such as earning a GED or achieving academic milestones. Target: **60% of youth will complete educational goals** (GED, diploma, or enroll in higher education/job training).
 - **Mental Health & Well-being:** The number of youth accessing mental health or substance abuse services. Target: **30% of youth will engage in mental health or substance abuse treatment**.
 - **Basic Needs Fulfillment:** The number of youth receiving essential support such as food, clothing, or hygiene items. Target: **100% of participants will have access to basic needs services**.
 - **Program Engagement:** The number of youth who actively engage with case management services. Target: **100% of youth will participate in case management and service planning**.
3. **Methodologies for Data Collection and Tracking:**
- **Case Management Software:** To track individual progress, case managers will utilize a secure, electronic case management system to record service usage, outcomes, and youth progress.
 - **Surveys and Feedback:** At regular intervals, youth will complete surveys to assess their satisfaction with services, the barriers they face, and their perception of the program's effectiveness.
 - **Collaboration with Fayette County Public Schools:** Data on school enrollment, attendance, and academic progress will be shared (with consent) to track educational outcomes for youth.
 - **Follow-up Surveys:** Youth will be contacted at 6-month and 12-month intervals after program completion to assess long-term outcomes, including housing stability, employment, and education.
4. **Measures and Methodologies for Evaluating Program Outcomes:**
- **Quantitative Data:** The number of youth who secure housing, employment, or achieve educational milestones will be measured. Data will be reviewed quarterly to assess progress toward meeting targets.
 - **Qualitative Data:** Case manager feedback, youth surveys, and success stories will be analyzed to understand the program's impact on individual lives.

- **Continuous Improvement:** The program will undergo an annual evaluation to assess effectiveness. Adjustments will be made based on outcome data, community feedback, and the evolving needs of youth experiencing homelessness

Targets for Specified Outcomes:

- **Permanent Housing:** 80% of youth will secure permanent housing within 6 months.
- **Employment:** 50% of youth will gain employment or engage in job training.
- **Education:** 60% of youth will complete educational goals, such as obtaining a GED or enrolling in further education or job training.
- **Mental Health Services:** 30% of youth will access mental health or substance abuse treatment.
- **Basic Needs Fulfillment:** 100% of participants will have access to essential services like food, clothing, and hygiene products.
- **Program Engagement:** 90% of youth will engage with case management services and service planning.

SUSTAINABILITY

To ensure the **Arbor Youth Outreach Aftercare Program** continues beyond the initial grant funding, we will pursue a multi-faceted approach to secure ongoing financial support.

1. Public Funding Sources:

- **Federal & State Grants:** Apply for funding from programs such as the **Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)** and **McKinney-Vento** to support housing and educational services for homeless youth.
- **Local Government Funds:** Pursue resources from the **Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG)** and **Kentucky Housing Corporation (KHC)** for homelessness prevention and housing stabilization.

2. Private Funding Sources:

- **Foundations & Corporations:** Seek grants from local foundations like the **Blue Grass Community Foundation** and national entities such as the **W.K. Kellogg Foundation**. Additionally, approach corporate partners like **Toyota** and **Lexmark** for sponsorships, in-kind support, and matching gifts.
- **Individual Donors & Major Gifts:** Develop annual fundraising campaigns and cultivate relationships with major donors committed to homelessness initiatives.

3. In-Kind Contributions & Operational Efficiency:

- **Volunteer Engagement:** Utilize volunteers for tutoring, case management support, and event assistance to reduce costs.
- **Resource Sharing:** Collaborate with local organizations for shared services and co-located support to minimize operational expenses.

4. Community & Stakeholder Engagement:

- **Fundraising Events:** Host annual galas, community dinners, and peer-to-peer fundraising campaigns to engage the community and raise program funds.
- **Advisory Board Support:** Leverage the advisory board's connections to secure funding and relationships with high-net-worth individuals.

5. Long-Term Strategy:

- **Endowment Fund:** Develop an endowment to provide a sustainable financial resource for the program over time.

By securing diverse funding sources and building strong community and private sector partnerships, the **Arbor Youth Outreach Aftercare Program** will maintain long-term operations and continue to support youth experiencing homelessness in Lexington.

PROPOSED LINE-ITEM BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

Total Requested Amount: \$40,000

1. Personnel - \$37,000

Supports a **Housing Advocate** working full-time on the project to manage operations, deliver outreach services, and provide case management for homeless youth

2. Fringe Benefits - \$3,000

Fringe benefits calculated at 23% of personnel costs, covering health insurance and other benefits.

4. Travel - \$1,000

Local travel (\$1000) for outreach and staff meetings, Arbor will provide an in-kind match.

7. Indirect Costs - \$4,100

Overhead expenses, calculated at 10% of total direct costs, covering administrative support and utilities. Arbor will provide an in-kind match.

This budget totals **\$40,000**, with clear allocations for personnel, operations, and necessary services, ensuring effective implementation of the **Arbor Youth Outreach Aftercare Program**.