



Street outreach and navigation

Situation

In 2020 in Maricopa County, at least:

- 7,419 people are experiencing homelessness (12% more than last year)
- 51% (3,767) of these people are living unsheltered, on our streets (18% more than last year)

The majority of people experiencing homelessness are in Phoenix (2,380) and the impact of this crisis can be seen on and around the Downtown Phoenix campus.

(Source: Maricopa Association of Governments, [2020 Point-In-Time Count](#))

Response Outreach and navigation

In January 2020, ASU partnered with **Community Bridges Inc.**, a local nonprofit, to provide outreach to people living, unsheltered, on and around the ASU Downtown Campus, to assist them in ending their homelessness and creating housing stability.

ASU funds a full-time Navigator, who provides outreach and helps people navigate services.

- The initial stage of this process is to identify, engage and establish relationships with people experiencing homelessness who might not otherwise seek assistance in or to help meet their immediate, basic needs for things such as food, clothing and transportation.
- The engagement stage occurs when a person expresses interest in pursuing services and housing.
- Once connection to services or housing is established, the goal is to maintain contact with the participant to ensure that they do not return to homelessness.

Services

The services provided are all related to the social determinants of health and include:

- Information, education and referrals for basic needs, such as food, shelter and clothing
- Transportation
- Employment assistance
- Assistance in scheduling and keeping appointments
- Advocacy
- Applying for benefits such as social security/disability and health insurance
- Assistance with housing eligibility and location
- Case management
- Coordination of behavioral and medical health care services

Community Bridges operates an email referral line for ASU faculty, staff and students to contact the Navigator if they encounter someone looking for services, and for ASU Police to communicate with Community Bridges regarding any concerns or incidents. Regular meetings between ASU, CBI and other agencies that fund outreach services, are intended to ensure outreach efforts are systematic, coordinated and comprehensive in the downtown Phoenix area.

In the first six months of this contract, the Community Bridges Navigator **provided outreach to 191 people. 133 people** chose to engage with the Navigator, resulting in:

- **11 people** entering **permanent housing situations**
- **30 people** entering into **temporary shelter**
- **10 people** entering facilities for **behavioral or medical services**

Community Bridges, Inc. is the primary provider of outreach and navigation services for people experiencing homelessness in Maricopa County, Arizona, and has a long history of success in meeting the needs of this population. As well as street outreach navigation, CBI also operates psychiatric and detoxification facilities, patient centered medical home and other evidence-based therapeutic interventions.

Student learning

Through a dedicated undergraduate course, students have the opportunity to shadow the Navigator in the field to learn first-hand the theory and practice of outreach and navigation, and the challenges facing a person who is living unsheltered, in taking the steps to engage with the system and services they need to end their homelessness.