



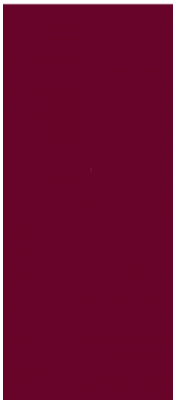
Enhancing Services for Homeless and At-Risk Teens

Presented to Argleton Regional Public Library

Proposal by Ben Hartline, Chaz Carey, Suzanne Gelwick-Knight, Vince Garin,

Diane Fogle, and Kelley Moulton

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Executive Summary

The librarians of Argleton Regional Public Library System (ARPLS) propose an increase in the library system's services for at-risk and homeless teens. In recent months, the librarians have noticed an increase in teens' use of library services. This team was assembled to analyze the trend, investigate solutions, and propose a plan to better serve the community. The following plan outlines the present situation, and ways to effectively expand current services and implement new ones to serve this population.

Overview and Goals

Over the past couple of months we at ARPLS have noticed an increase of teen patrons in our library. We maintain close communication with local homeless shelters and have discovered that the homeless teen population in our city has increased significantly. While our library already has several teen programs in place, we need to create additional programming aimed at this population. The goal is to help the displaced teen population of Argleton feel welcome at Argleton Regional Public Library, and provide the stability they need and deserve.

Hundreds of thousands of Americans experience homelessness every year. While our library strives to serve every member of our community, the librarians of ARPLS have noticed the lack of programs and services for teens and youth experiencing homelessness. We plan on marketing new programs to this population in order to provide stability and resources for youth under the age of twenty-four who are experiencing homelessness. This is a population that needs support. The provision of a safe space, internet access and a representative collection is only the beginning. Our library needs programs that serve youth experiencing homelessness.

By the Numbers

- Youth.gov estimates that between 500,000 and 2.8 million youth experience homelessness each year.
- Covenant house, a nonprofit dedicated to helping homeless and trafficked youth, estimates over 2 million cases each year. Of those 2 million:
 - 57% go one day a month with no food.
 - 50% are fleeing conflict or physical harm.
 - 40% are under 18 years of age.
- The National Conference of State Legislatures estimates that one in seven young people, aged 10 to 18 will run away from home. Of those children:
 - 75% are female.
 - 20% to 40% identify as LGBTQ.
 - 75% of homeless or runaway youth have dropped out of school.

Scope of Current Services and Facilities

ARPLS serves the city and county of Argleton with a central branch in the Agloe Heights neighborhood, and 16 branch locations throughout the county. With a collection approaching 1.5 million volumes, the system serves 350,000 card holders in a community of 2.4 million residents. The Agloe Heights facility was renovated in 2010 and features over 500 public computers, several large instruction classrooms, a state of the art maker space (Argleton Technology Exchange), and a shared workspace/small business incubator.

With a rapidly growing population and the rising rents that accompany such growth, Argleton has seen a dramatic rise in people with unstable housing situations. As a centrally-located, safe, indoor location, the main branch of the library system has become a popular locations for dislocated people to congregate. This has been especially true for the teens living on the street. The city recognizes the need for additional services and acknowledges the library as a potential nexus for connecting to this community. As part of a larger package of measures to address the issues of homelessness, the county board of directors has asked for a proposal from the library to address the needs of teens experiencing homelessness.

Scope of Proposed Services

Engaging community resources while enhancing our role as a resource to the community.

- **Create a comprehensive list of shelters, food banks, health clinics, and employment and legal services.**

We will have our outreach librarians coordinate with local organizations to create a list of available resources that has been tailored for teens who are experiencing homelessness. This list of resources should be hosted on a dedicated library website, and should be revisited quarterly to assure that the information remains current. Print copies of the list should also be available throughout the library system.

- **Create a temporary library card program.**

This program would allow those without a fixed address, such as those in temporary housing or a homeless shelter, to check out up to five items and access library computers and databases. While this program would require a photo ID, staff would work with Harris University Law School's LegalID program to acquire proper documentation, as many other government benefits have similar requirements.

- **Offer our expertise and facilities to organizations that work with this community.**

Our instructional librarians and professional staff already provide a wide variety of training through the Argleton Tech Exchange (ATE) including computer literacy, job search and

resume workshops, basic coding, and maker skills. We propose to both advertise these resources heavily with organizations that serve teens experiencing homelessness as well as make our staff available to teach these courses at other community facilities. Conversely, we will offer our collaborative spaces and computer labs to organizations such as Argleton Reads (a literacy organization) and GED4ALL! for teen-centric programing.

- **Develop targeted programing for teens experiencing homelessness.**

Working with outside organizations who are already engaged with this community, we will create regular events that bring teens together in an informal setting. Other communities have offered programs such as movie and pizza nights, open-mike nights, and book clubs. These events will provide a safe, welcoming environment for teens, as well as an opportunity for the library and other support organizations to pitch their services. We will also expand and adapt some of our current instructional offerings to better suit the needs of teens experiencing homelessness. Several suggestions for ATE programing have already been offered including creating basic sewing classes to aid in garment and gear repair as well as drop in electronics repair sessions.

- **Hire a full-time social worker.**

As part of this community building effort, Argleton should follow the lead of several other cities such as Denver, San Francisco, and Edmonton and establish funding for a full-time social worker. This library employee would provide split his/her time between direct case work, as well as leading training for all library staff and helping to shape library policy so that it addresses the needs of all patrons. Additionally, this position would act as a liaison with Harris University's School of Social Work in order to offer opportunities for students to gain direct experience working with with at-risk populations.

- **Establish a peer navigator program.**

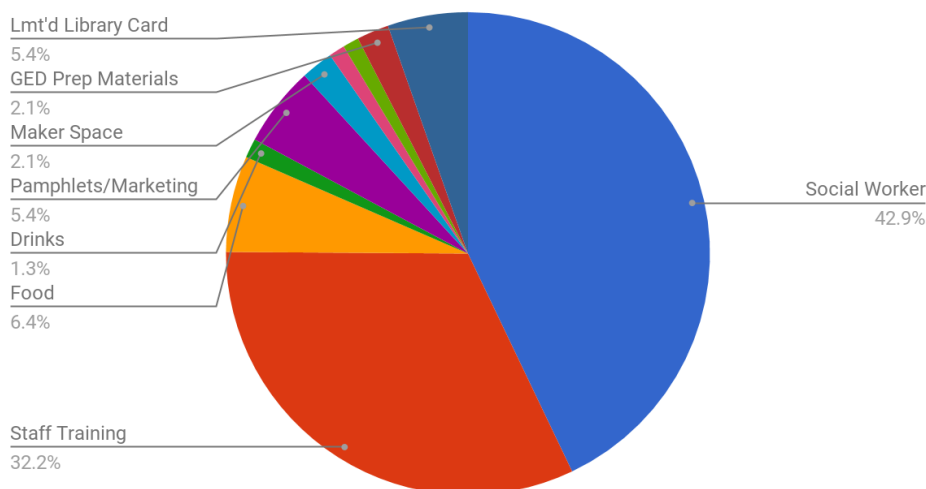
Based on the success of the Denver Public Library program, we will establish a peer navigator program that will offer paid positions to teens and other young people who have experienced homelessness to act as ambassadors for our programs.

Budget for Implementation

Item Name	Expense	Already covered in full library budget?	Possible Volunteer or Donation Use?	Notes
Social Worker	\$4,000.00	No	Yes	\$25/hr, Full-time
Staff Training	\$3,000.00	Yes	Yes	6% of payroll should be set aside for training.
Food	\$600.00	No	Yes	Pizzas or Subs

Drinks	\$120.00	No	Yes	At least 1 water and 1 juice per person
Pamphlets/Marketing	\$500.00	No	No	3000 flyers, 500 pamphlets
Makerspace Resources	\$200.00	Yes	No	This is for additional/specific materials
Drop in Tech Teacher	\$100.00	No	Yes	
GED Prep Materials	\$200.00	No	Yes	
Limited Use Library Card	\$500.00	No	No	
Program Total	\$9,320.00			

Expense



Evaluation

We will evaluate the effectiveness of our teen programs by watching the numbers in terms of how many come to the programs. The increase should show in how many of patrons come back and if the numbers rise and hold steady over a period of time. This would show that we are catching their interests and are helping to provide them with a space where they feel comfortable spending time, and that will indirectly show the value of the programming overall.

We will also provide the teens with surveys which they could fill out in order to give us an idea of what they need more of, and what they do not need, and we can use that information to alter our plans to fit both their wants and needs.