



Central Plains Center for Services ARP-HCY Proposal

Please find included a proposal to further expand Central Plains Center for Services' mission of *"Offering opportunities for positive change to individuals, families, and communities"* by providing allowable services and supports of the American Rescue Plan – Homeless Children and Youth.

Central Plains Center for Services is a state-wide, rural-based, nonprofit social service agency, founded in 1995 and headquartered in Broken Bow, Nebraska. We are governed by a Board of Directors and administrative oversight is shared by two co-executive directors supporting both the urban and rural areas of the state. Our staff are located throughout Nebraska, including Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney, Omaha, Lincoln, Blair, Papillion, Bellevue, Beatrice, Norfolk, Schuyler, Clearwater, Broken Bow, Lexington, North Platte, Scottsbluff, and Long Pine.

With our extensive experience in working with Nebraska's most vulnerable youth and young adults, Central Plains Center for Services is the recognized partner across the State of Nebraska for service providers, and most importantly, for young people ages 14-26 needing to establish stability in their lives. This population includes those with foster care experience, are pregnant and/or parenting, homeless or near homeless, or are at risk of or have experienced trafficking. The cornerstone of Central Plains Center for Services has been our unwavering commitment to provide quality individualized coaching, education and financial literacy service and support. Central Plains' highly skilled and qualified staff ensure youth have pathways to safe and stable housing; employment; educational services; and physical, psychological, and emotional safety that eliminates disparities and creates equitable opportunities for success and independence.

The proposal included here of \$350,000 in ARP-HCY funds will allow us to further impact our community-based work with youth and young adults at risk of or experiencing homelessness across the state of Nebraska.

Sincerely,

Andra White

Andra White, Executive Director
Central Plains Center for Services
Phone: (308) 872-6595
Email: awhite@central-plains.org

Central Plains Center for Services ARP-HCY Proposal
Amount requested: \$350,000

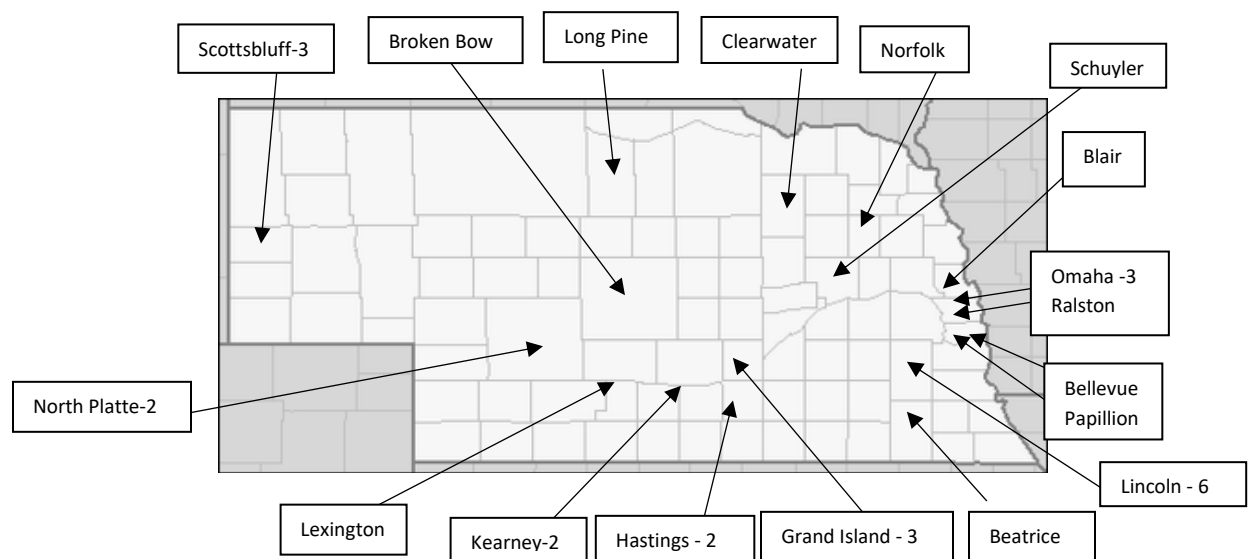
Homelessness and the related instability is often disruptive to relationships, education, and positive youth development. To address the root cause of homelessness, multiple levels of intervention and support are necessary. Therefore, Central Plains Center for Services proposes the following:

1. Hire/Maintain Coaching Staff (including graduation, education, and financial literacy coaches)

Central Plains provides a youth driven system of support that comes from a multi-faceted prevention framework provided through our Coaching Model. These services are future-focused, and goal oriented, in the areas of coaching, education and financial literacy services. This prevention framework incorporated in our coaching model emphasizes each young person has a safe and reliable place to call home; healthy connections to supportive adults, community, school, and social networks; education, training, and employment opportunities; financial capability; permanent connections; and social and emotional wellbeing. Individualized, trauma-informed, and relationship-based coaching has proven to be an effective strategy for youth currently experiencing or at risk of homelessness, by helping them increase self-confidence and self-esteem, identify significant and achievable goals, and with support, take action to achieve their goals and achieve successful and stable adulthoods.

Central Plains coaches work one-one-one with youth to create strong and trusted relationships to ensure positive outcomes across all life domains. When young people have access to preventative and comprehensive one-on-one coaching supports, they are better able to overcome barriers related to housing, education, employment, finances, transportation, and personal well-being. This approach creates a safe and non-judgmental space for young people to explore their values, beliefs, and aspirations while gaining clarity about what they truly want in life and creating a roadmap to get there. This builds capability and self-determination by the young people and allows them to take control of their life, make informed decisions, and participate in developmentally appropriate activities.

Through this proposal, Central Plains will maintain and add Coaching Staff to further our impact across all of Nebraska's 93 counties. To provide a sense of Central Plains' current reach, the following map shows the location of our 31 Coaching staff. These 31 coaches, along with the addition of coaching staff through this proposal, will guarantee coverage to all eligible youth who live within Nebraska's 77,348 square miles.



Central Plains Coaching is perfectly suited to a time when a young person’s future is yet to be determined. Our philosophy of meeting young people where they are expands beyond mere location. We take a non-judgmental approach to service and meet young adults where they are in terms of development and motivation and don’t rely on their personal history or current circumstances to determine their potential outcomes. This supports our focus on equity and equitable opportunities for success and independence for all youth.

All youth participating in Central Plains coaching, including youth identified and served through ARP-HCY funds, will have access to Central Plains’ Opportunity Passport Program™ (OPP), and if eligible, the Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV) and Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP).

❖ *Opportunity Passport™ Program*

Through our direct work with young people who have experienced foster care, homelessness or near homelessness; or those who are pregnant and/or parenting or a victim of human trafficking, we have first-hand awareness of the unique challenges facing this population. Many of these young people lack basic financial fundamentals such financial education, economic security, and the opportunity to build financial capability and assets. Through our *Coaching Model*, Central Plains Center for Services is pleased to offer the *Opportunity Passport™ Program*. *Opportunity Passport™* is a matched savings, asset-building program that includes financial literacy education, asset-specific training, and support through a dedicated Coach. OPP is administered by Central Plains across the entire state of Nebraska. Not only do young people learn the fundamental aspects of financial wellness such as budgeting, saving, and financial planning through the *Keys to Your Financial Future curriculum*, they together with their coach, set goals to become financially independent. Coaching assists the young person in understanding their finances, setting up a bank account, getting connected with credit repair and counseling services, and/or complete asset-specific training to prepare for an asset match.

Our overarching goal in providing the Opportunity Passport™ Program is to teach financial education through the *Keys to Your Financial Future Curriculum* to assist them in becoming financially capable. Upon completion of the financial literacy education, OPP provides young people with \$140 in seed money to either start or add to their own savings account; as well as the means to build and maintain savings, develop relationships with banking institutions, and pursue financial asset matches. The savings requirement ensures youth understand and develop savings habits and reduce instances of unnecessary spending.

Once a youth has completed the OPP orientation and Keys class and has demonstrated 4 months of continued and maintained savings, they are able to match their savings towards various domains (table below) for asset purchases that increase their access to opportunity, increase their well-being, and allow them to set goals that align with their interests as they build their future. Asset matches provide a pathway for young adults to increase their independence and self-sufficiency. Specifically, matched savings offer young people the access they need to obtain assets that unlock employment and educational opportunities, open doors to safe and sustainable housing, reduce debt, building or repairing credit, making investments either in the market or in oneself in the form of entrepreneurship and business startup.

Asset	Match Rate
Vehicle	4:1 <i>(Participant saves \$2k, OPP matches with \$8k)</i>

Housing, Education, Health, Credit Building, Small Business Startup, or Investments like CD or Child Savings Accounts.	2:1
Participant Specific Needs	1:1
<i>Lifetime limit of \$8,000 matched dollars per participant.</i>	

❖ *Education and Training Voucher Program*

Central Plains is committed to improving foster youth’s access to post-secondary education and training through the federally funded ETV Program. We do this by providing eligible students with financial scholarships at the post-secondary institution of their choice, paired with support and guidance from an ETV Scholarship Coordinator. ETV is an on-going program that assists qualified students with their post-secondary educational costs and supportive needs for up to five years. ETV is provided through the John H. Chafee Foster Care to Independence Act of 1999.

Central Plains has been providing the ETV Program and educational coaching for over 20 years. We have successfully developed and delivered the statewide and youth-directed Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program, which is based on the one-on-one relationship between the ETV Scholarship Coordinator and the young person. This combination of program and relationship creates the foundation for the young person’s successful transition to post-secondary education and beyond.

❖ *Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP)*

The Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program is a HUD funded program designed to drastically reduce the number of youth experiencing homelessness. Eligible youth populations include those ages 24 and under who are literally homeless, “couch surfing”, fleeing violence, as well as those who are at imminent risk of homelessness. Central Plains offers two YHDP funded projects in the Nebraska Balance of State, Coaching and Rapid Response; and as of October 1, 2022, Central Plains also administers a YHDP Coaching Project in the city of Lincoln. Central Plains YHDP offers coaching paired with assistance in the form of rental assistance, outpatient medical, or basic need support.

2. Hotel/Motel Stays

Securing safe and stable housing takes time. This is especially true for youth experiencing homelessness and their necessity to locate suitable and sustainable housing that is near supportive adults, school and work. Central Plains proposes the usage of hotel/motel stays as a solution to the youth’s need for short term and temporary housing while permanent housing options are being explored and secured.

3. Early Child Education and Training

Central Plains has a certified parent educator on staff. We propose to use ARP-HCY funds to offer eligible young parents the Love and Logic and/or Circle of Security parenting classes in the community in which they reside. We will take these classes to the youth and facilitate them in small group settings. Additionally, Central Plains will educate and train the parents of homeless children and youth about the rights and resources available for these children/youth and offer “seed” money to open a NEST 529 plan

for their child(ren). This will enhance the meaningful involvement of young parents in the lives of their child(ren) and provide educational impact for years to come.

4. Transportation

Through this proposal youth will have access to reliable transportation that enables them to get to school and work and have access to age-appropriate activities and experiences. This may include bicycle purchases or costs associated with reasonable and necessary car repairs for vehicle ownership. Additionally, funds will be available for young people to utilize public transportation or community-based transportation providers, where available, to support the youth's individual transportation needs. Central Plains will also offer funds to cover the cost of driver's education for eligible youth to increase their driving knowledge and skills and overall independence.

5. Prepaid Store Cards/Debit Cards

Central Plains Center for Services is interested in providing community-based prepaid store cards/debit cards to meet individual basic needs. In order for young people to thrive in life and in safe and stable housing they must have their most urgent basic needs met. Meeting basic needs also lessens the risk of victimization of this highly vulnerable population. Prepaid store cards could be provided to youth for food, fuel, hygiene, blankets, or clothing. At Central Plains we have seen firsthand the effectiveness of flexible resources that meet young people's most basic needs.

6. Rent and Rental Deposit

Central Plains rental assistance through ARP-HCY funds will function both as a diversion program preventing youth that are not yet in a literally homeless situation from ever entering and as a rapid rehousing program to quickly move those youth that are recently homeless into permanent housing. This will allow us to specifically focus on those youth who need short-term but immediate rental assistance and supportive assistance in order to avoid entering a critical homeless situation. Our emphasis is on diverting homelessness by providing rental assistance (not to exceed 3 months) for youth at imminent risk of homelessness to remain in their current housing; or security deposits (not to exceed 2 months rent) and rental assistance (not to exceed 3 months) to quickly re-house those who have recently become homeless.

7. School Supplies and Technology

Through ARP-HCY funds, Central Plains may purchase technology/equipment for youth that is necessary for academic success and to allow full participation in school activities.