

YOUTH ON THEIR OWN

STRATEGIC PLAN FY21 - FY24

APPROVED JULY 23, 2020



YOUTH ON THEIR OWN™

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this plan is to articulate the strategic direction and priorities for Youth On Their Own (YOTO). The objectives and strategies described in this document have been approved by our Board of Directors and will guide YOTO's efforts and programmatic investments over the next four years.

Since our last strategic plan was created in 2017, YOTO has experienced unprecedented growth in student enrollment. In response, we've implemented a number of program enhancements and expanded our staff capacity to meet the increased need. We've also collaborated with partners to create programmatic alliances that help us serve students better and smarter; grown a robust volunteer program to increase capacity; leveraged our social media channels to increase the visibility of our work; prioritized our financial stability; and strengthened our governance and operations. We've achieved maximum purposeful growth within the constraints of our current program model. Our new strategic plan will help YOTO scale our impact by investing in a program redesign and improvements in our program delivery to best serve our student population.

This plan balances our ambitious goals and desires for growth with our current environment of global uncertainty. We made the conscious decision to adopt a four-year strategic plan given the current impacts and limitations of COVID-19. In addition to frequent review of the planned objectives, the Board of Directors will conduct an in-depth progress assessment in FY22 to determine any adjustments to the established goals and timelines.

Finally, this plan encapsulates the input and best thinking of YOTO's myriad stakeholders, including our students, school liaisons, volunteers, board, and staff. We also engaged the professional services of Lecroy & Milligan for program evaluation and Alexander | Carrillo Consulting for group facilitation. This plan was funded in part by a grant from the Jewish Community Foundation of Southern Arizona. We are incredibly grateful for the community of champions that came together to help us envision and plan for YOTO's exciting future.

MISSION • VISION • HISTORY

Mission Statement

Youth On Their Own supports the high school graduation and continued success of youth experiencing homelessness by providing financial assistance, basic human needs, and guidance.

Vision Statement

Young people on their own are empowered, positive, and productive citizens of our community.

History

Youth On Their Own was founded in 1986 when Ann Young, a guidance counselor at Tucson's Amphitheater High School, noticed that talented and motivated students were dropping out of school due to homelessness and being forced to live on their own without a parent. Inspired by the students' tenacity and desire to stay in school despite overwhelming obstacles, Ann gathered together a group of teachers, volunteers, and local community members to form the Pima County Homeless Teen Student Project. The goal was to help youth who were on their own stay in school and on track to graduate. In 2001, the organization officially changed its name to Youth On Their Own. We currently support over 2,000 homeless and unaccompanied students each year in their quest to remain enrolled in school and achieve the goal of high school graduation.

CORE VALUES

As a youth-serving, youth-centered organization, we believe...

- YOTO is a safe place for youth to ask for help. No young person should be abandoned, and all youth deserve the compassion and support of their community.
- Every teen experiencing homelessness has the potential to graduate from high school. YOTO students deserve to know that a bright future is their right, and that it requires effort to attain.
- YOTO provides guidance during the most challenging time in a young person's life, helping youth learn accountability, responsibility, and self-sufficiency. Guidance and belief in the student are just as important as material support.
- Today's youth are tomorrow's leaders. Our investment in youth today positively impacts the future of our entire community.

As an organization providing social benefit in our community, we believe in...

- Building and maintaining trust and transparency with our donors, honoring the intent of their gifts, and communicating the impact of donations.
- Being good stewards of money and maintaining a sustainable organization.
- Taking care of our staff and volunteers who serve our youth.
- Nurturing collaborative relationships with schools and other nonprofits in our community, without whom we could not do this work.

STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Scale to Impact

Youth On Their Own adopted a "Scale to Impact" model for this strategic plan. Scale to Impact enables intentional growth so that organizational impact meets the level of need. For Youth On Their Own, Scaling to Impact means being able to effectively and sustainably serve all the homeless and unaccompanied teens who need us, and to serve them with the appropriate level of services.

Scaling to Impact means smart growth. We considered growth in terms of increased students served, increased depth of service, increased staff, and adopting other changes that enable us to achieve our intended outcomes through a scalable model, regardless of the number of youth served each year. Our services and the organizational structure were modified to ensure effective use of resources and fidelity to our mission.

Throughout this process, we embraced a growth mindset, practiced the humility to accept expert recommendations, learned from experience so we don't repeat what we know doesn't work, and envisioned a future that looks different than the past. Then we set ambitious, achievable goals to get us there.

Elements of Scale

Scaling to Impact involves three crucial elements which informed the structure of our strategic plan:

- **Pathways:** How we deliver our programs and services
- **Partnerships:** Who we collaborate with to serve our students
- **Capacities:** What we need to achieve our goals

STRATEGIC ISSUES

Program Model

Youth On Their Own serves a broad population of students who experience varying degrees of homelessness and housing instability – from traditional homelessness, to couch-hopping, to living in group homes. Each subcategory of program participants has different degrees of need. The current program model is a one-size-fits-all approach that does not adequately address the needs of our most vulnerable students. To address this, the Board of Directors approved these recommendations:

- Adopt tiered services to better match student needs. Students with high degrees of instability or with extraordinary personal circumstances (ex. parenting youth) will be eligible to receive a greater quantity or more personalized services than youth with lower levels of need.
- Modify accountability measures for the highest-need youth, going beyond attendance and grades and focusing on personalized goals that address barriers to education specific to each student. For students with lower degrees of need, focus heavily on school attendance.
- Lower the Student-to-Staff ratio to provide more individualized support to the highest-need youth.

Facilities

Inadequate space is a major barrier to YOTO's Scale to Impact goals. The current buildings are at maximum capacity due to a combination of poor structural layout and shortage of square footage needed to accommodate the staff and program services required to meet demand. To address this, the Board of Directors approved this recommendation:

- Move to a new location that can accommodate future growth.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

I. Pathways: How we deliver our programs and services

GOAL: To grow, modify, and establish services that provide the maximum benefit for YOTO youth

OBJECTIVE 1	YEAR 1 (2020-21)	YEAR 2 (2021-22)	YEAR 3 (2022-23)	YEAR 4 (2023-24)
Increase staffing for direct student support	1:250 ratio = Add 1 additional Program Coordinator A Lead Program Coordinator based on-site to assist student drop-ins and provide services to YOTO alumni	1:250 ratio = Add 1 additional Program Coordinator	1:250 ratio = Add 1 additional Program Coordinator	1:250 ratio = Add 1 additional Program Coordinator (if needed)
<i>Costs</i>	\$70,000	\$46,000	\$46,000	\$46,000

OBJECTIVE 2	YEAR 1 (2020-21)	YEAR 2 (2021-22)	YEAR 3 (2022-23)	YEAR 4 (2023-24)
Improve assessment of student needs to inform eligibility and level of service (tiered services model)	Work with LeCroy & Milligan to adapt application questions and advise on youth reassessment process Define tier model for pilot including eligibility criteria and services Among the foster care population, prioritize serving: 1) Youth who are awaiting placement and are residing in a shelter 2) Youth who are in kinship placements that have become destabilized	Pilot tier model at one large HS and one alternative program Solicit continual feedback from pilot school liaisons, Program Coordinators, and students Establish "enrollment team" consisting of Program Director and Managers to assess eligibility for all applicants in pilot Design training for Enrollment Coordinator Transition students in foster care to Tier 3 services	Roll out tiered services at all schools Hire Enrollment Coordinator to review all applications and conduct periodic reassessment of student needs Provide tier model training for Program Coordinators Provide tier model training for liaisons Phase out direct support for foster care youth; transition to other community-based services	Explore required in-person meetings with high school Juniors to prepare for Senior year and graduation
<i>Costs</i>	\$5,000	\$20,000	\$46,000	Existing budget

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 3	YEAR 1 (2020-21)	YEAR 2 (2021-22)	YEAR 3 (2022-23)	YEAR 4 (2023-24)
Modify requirements for student stipend requests to align with national performance data for vulnerable youth	Implement a modified stipend program that meets the needs of stakeholders (schools, students, YOTO) during the COVID-19 pandemic	Pilot attendance and goal-based stipend programs at two schools to assess for effectiveness and impact towards high school graduation Develop monthly assessment tool for attendance and goal-based stipend programs	Expand new stipend program changes to all schools Expand quarterly grade incentive program to reward academic performance Explore/design GED program expansion with community partners	Pilot/test a more developmentally appropriate middle school stipend program with two middle schools Pilot/test GED program expansion with community partners Consider year-round stipend program
<i>Costs</i>	Existing budget	Existing budget	\$30,000	Existing budget

OBJECTIVE 4	YEAR 1 (2020-21)	YEAR 2 (2021-22)	YEAR 3 (2022-23)	YEAR 4 (2023-24)
Replace outmoded student database with robust student portal to improve tracking and student access to services	Launch youth-friendly student portal with virtual announcements and video embeds Provide remote access to YOTO Portal Align portal-based service requests to be more reflective of the on-site Mini Mall Utilize portal to manage and track alumni services (YOTO Ambassadors, Mini Mall access, and scholarship program) Import FY17-FY20 student data into the portal to better track alumni and student data over time Implement inventory management system for Mini Mall	Launch mobile access to student portal Explore digital means for stipend payment Improve data reporting capacity with standardized report templates and improved tools for tracking outputs and outcomes Improve liaison portal to better align content with their specific YOTO responsibilities	Pilot/test online stipend request form Fully digitize student files Pilot/test digitized means for stipend payments Track external service referrals in YOTO Portal	Implement fully online stipend request form (teacher logins and student logins) Implement annual school-level and district-level reports on YOTO student progress and services received Integrate Tableau
<i>Costs</i>	\$56,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 5	YEAR 1 (2020-21)	YEAR 2 (2021-22)	YEAR 3 (2022-23)	YEAR 4 (2023-24)
Formally establish an alumni program to support YOTO youth in their education and employment efforts post HS	<p>Expand eligibility for some services up to 1 year after high school graduation: Mini Mall access, bill assistance, gift cards, bus passes</p> <p>Implement 4-year scholar plan (year 2 of cohort 1)</p> <p>Hire 0.5 FTE Scholarship Coordinator</p> <p>Explore opportunities for counseling services for scholarship students</p> <p>Develop and offer skill-building/adulthood workshops for alumni</p>	<p>Expand eligibility for some services up to 2 years after high school graduation: Mini Mall access, bill assistance, gift cards, bus passes</p> <p>Continue implementation of 4-year scholar plan (year 3 of cohort 1; year 2 of cohort 2)</p> <p>Increase to 1.0 FTE Scholarship Coordinator</p> <p>Pilot/test counseling program for scholarship students</p> <p>Implement alumni networking events</p>	<p>Expand eligibility for some services up to 3 years after high school graduation: Mini Mall access, bill assistance, gift cards, bus passes</p> <p>Continue implementation of 4-year scholar plan (year 4 of cohort 1; year 3 of cohort 2; year 2 of cohort 3)</p> <p>Request and review proposals for longitudinal study of YOTO alumni</p>	<p>Expand eligibility for some services up to age 24: Mini Mall access, bill assistance, gift cards, bus passes</p> <p>Continue implementation of 4-year scholar plan (year 4 of cohort 2; year 3 of cohort 3; year 2 of cohort 4)</p> <p>Begin longitudinal study of YOTO alumni</p> <p>Explore partnerships with local workforce development programs</p>
<i>Costs</i>	\$20,000	\$46,000	\$15,000	\$50,000

OBJECTIVE 6	YEAR 1 (2020-21)	YEAR 2 (2021-22)	YEAR 3 (2022-23)	YEAR 4 (2023-24)
Explore and pilot new programs in areas of high student need	<p>Research alternative transportation options for YOTO youth (ex. electric scooters)</p> <p>Explore structures for a cell phone program for YOTO youth</p> <p>Establish a Trauma-Informed Care Work Group to assess and advise on practice improvements</p> <p>Define goals and structure of a Youth Action Board model to meaningfully include youth voice in program decision-making</p>	<p>Pilot/test alternative transportation options</p> <p>Explore ways to better support youth sub-populations, including LGBTQ+ youth and victims of trafficking</p> <p>Implement recommendations of the Trauma-Informed Care Work Group</p> <p>Establish a Professional Boundaries Work Group to assess and advise on practice improvements</p> <p>Establish a Youth Action Board</p>	<p>Offer alternative transportation options program-wide</p> <p>Implement a cell phone program for YOTO youth</p> <p>Pilot/test student workers in the Mini Mall to increase youth presence and provide opportunities for job training</p> <p>Implement recommendations of the Professional Boundaries Work Group</p>	<p>Pilot/test a Host Home program to increase stability in housing placements for YOTO youth</p> <p>Pilot/test coordination of counseling services for YOTO youth</p>
<i>Costs</i>	Existing budget	\$10,000	\$65,000	\$35,000

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 7	YEAR 1 (2020-21)	YEAR 2 (2021-22)	YEAR 3 (2022-23)	YEAR 4 (2023-24)
Expand 2-generation service approach to best meet the needs of parenting youth and those supporting siblings	<p>Add application questions that capture students who are caring for siblings</p> <p>Add additional financial supports for parenting youth in response to COVID-19 and its impacts</p>	Add application ROI (release of information) so that YOTO may share student info with referral agencies for smoother handoffs	Pilot/test co-enrollment of services with partner agencies	Implement co-enrollment of services with select partner agencies
<i>Costs</i>	\$10,000	Existing budget	Existing budget	Existing budget

OBJECTIVE 8	YEAR 1 (2020-21)	YEAR 2 (2021-22)	YEAR 3 (2022-23)	YEAR 4 (2023-24)
Strengthen program infrastructure and clarify staff roles	<p>Outline plan for policy/procedure priorities</p> <p>Review staff roles and responsibilities to increase effectiveness</p>	<p>Update and create policies and procedures</p> <p>Create a training program for policies and procedures</p>	Provide updated policy and procedures training program	
<i>Costs</i>	Existing budget	Existing budget	Existing budget	

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

II. Partnerships: Who we partner with to serve our students

GOAL: To establish, nurture, and strengthen relationships with our community partners and stakeholders

OBJECTIVE 9	YEAR 1 (2020-21)	YEAR 2 (2021-22)	YEAR 3 (2022-23)	YEAR 4 (2023-24)
Improve relationships with school liaisons through shared expectations, clarified roles, and enhanced site-based training	Modify stipend procedures to accommodate COVID-19 effects on school operations and to reduce impact on liaisons	Work with the Program Committee and liaisons to develop/clarify liaison expectations and possible performance measures	Implement modified goals and expectations for liaisons	Create school-site training program that addresses the unique needs of youth experiencing homelessness
<i>Costs</i>	Existing budget	Existing budget	Existing budget	Existing budget

OBJECTIVE 10	YEAR 1 (2020-21)	YEAR 2 (2021-22)	YEAR 3 (2022-23)	YEAR 4 (2023-24)
Grow community referral network to improve student access to services and reduce duplicative efforts	Regularly communicate with students about available local, state, and federal resources to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19	Add application ROI (release of information) so that YOTO may share with referral agencies for smoother referral handoffs Increase student participation in El Rio telehealth services	Track referrals in student portal	
<i>Costs</i>	Existing budget	Existing budget	Existing budget	

OBJECTIVE 11	YEAR 1 (2020-21)	YEAR 2 (2021-22)	YEAR 3 (2022-23)	YEAR 4 (2023-24)
Build and grow an organized cohort of volunteers that addresses YOTO's everyday operational needs and strengthens our network of individual and corporate supporters in the community	Design and implement a modified volunteer program that provides meaningful volunteer opportunities during COVID-19	Re-introduce traditional means of volunteer group involvement in YOTO's program, intentionally integrating volunteer opportunities into stewardship plans	Incorporate volunteer opportunities into the construction/renovation of YOTO's new space	Convert groups who helped us create our new space into traditional volunteers
<i>Costs</i>	Existing budget	Existing budget	Existing budget	Existing budget

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 12	YEAR 1 (2020-21)	YEAR 2 (2021-22)	YEAR 3 (2022-23)	YEAR 4 (2023-24)
Actively participate in collaborations and conversations pertaining to youth homelessness, education access, and programs/policies that directly impact the students we serve	<p>At least one YOTO representative participates in the Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness (TPCH) General Council</p> <p>Host on-site Youth Engagement Coordinator to help facilitate TPCH Youth Action Committee</p> <p>One YOTO representative participates in the Metropolitan Education Commission</p> <p>At least one YOTO representative participates in the Help and Hope for YOUTH mental health initiative</p> <p>Explore partnership with United Way, ASU, Starbucks, and Goodwill METRO to establish a college track for youth on traditional high school tracks but who need a “non-traditional” format</p> <p>Strengthen partnerships with Foster Ed, Arizona Children’s Association, and DCS to best transition youth in foster care to appropriate community-based support services</p>	<p>Continue involvement with partnerships initiated in Year 1</p> <p>Extend hosting of on-site Youth Engagement Coordinator to help facilitate TPCH Youth Action Committee</p> <p>Strengthen partnership with El Rio Telehealth program to improve student engagement</p> <p>At least one YOTO representative participates in a human trafficking coalition to improve YOTO’s screening and support for students who have experienced sex/labor trafficking</p> <p>Strengthen relationships with school principals of the major districts in Pima County</p> <p>Explore national partnerships to strengthen YOTO’s implementation of research-driven best practices (Chapin Hall, Point Source Youth, NN4Y, etc.)</p>	<p>Continue involvement with partnerships initiated in Years 1-2</p> <p>Strengthen relationships with superintendents of the major school districts in Pima County</p> <p>Present at a national conference (Chapin Hall, Point Source Youth, NN4Y, etc.)</p>	<p>Continue involvement with partnerships initiated in Years 1-3</p> <p>Strengthen relationships with superintendents and principals of Charter Schools in Pima County</p> <p>Explore new partnerships and collaborations in the community that align with YOTO goals and benefit YOTO students</p>
Costs	Existing budget	Existing budget	\$4,000	Existing budget

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

III. Capacities: What we need to achieve our goals

GOAL: To make targeted organizational investments enabled by increased community awareness and support

OBJECTIVE 13	YEAR 1 (2020-21)	YEAR 2 (2021-22)	YEAR 3 (2022-23)	YEAR 4 (2023-24)
<i>Facilities:</i> Identify and pursue a long-term solution to YOTO's space needs	Work with a local agent to explore potential properties	Secure a new space Complete renovation plan/pricing and launch quiet phase of capital campaign to fund improvements	Conduct/complete renovation Relocate organization to new space	Coordinate large grand opening event for students, community, and supporters
<i>Costs</i>	Existing budget	\$1,500,000	\$1,000,000	\$5,000

OBJECTIVE 14	YEAR 1 (2020-21)	YEAR 2 (2021-22)	YEAR 3 (2022-23)	YEAR 4 (2023-24)
<i>People:</i> Improve YOTO's human resource management, grow internal leaders, and cultivate an inclusive organizational culture	Adopt BambooHR online platform for HR functions and utilize for all new hire processes Finalize creation of Manager Handbook and accompanying training program Establish an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) task force to assess YOTO's program, policies, practices, and organizational norms	Develop framework for an Emerging Leaders training program for existing and aspiring managers Conduct advanced hiring training for directors and managers Begin implementation of training and programmatic recommendations from the IDEA task force	Formalize succession plans for key staff and board positions Continue implementation of training and programmatic recommendations from the IDEA task force Adopt an internal/employee committee structure to enable full staff participation in organizational improvement initiatives	Re-evaluate staff pay range model utilizing current data and perform adjustments as needed Continue implementation of training and programmatic recommendations from the IDEA task force
<i>Costs</i>	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	Existing budget

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 15	YEAR 1 (2020-21)	YEAR 2 (2021-22)	YEAR 3 (2022-23)	YEAR 4 (2023-24)
<i>Financial Support:</i> Establish and/or strengthen relationships with YOTO donors through enhancements to annual giving, major giving, and legacy giving programs	Design modified donor communications during COVID-19 Maintain donor retention rate of at least 58% Formalize unique stewardship model for legacy donors	Plan and launch quiet phase of capital campaign to fund our move to a new location Use person-to-person interactions to return average individual donation sizes to pre-COVID-19 levels	Plan and launch public phase of capital campaign to fund our move to a new space: 1) Focus on individual donors doubling their donations one time 2) Secure a capstone gift from an individual donor or local organization	Utilize connections made during capital campaign to increase the total number of active donors
<i>Costs</i>	\$4,800	\$4,000	\$10,000	Existing budget

OBJECTIVE 16	YEAR 1 (2020-21)	YEAR 2 (2021-22)	YEAR 3 (2022-23)	YEAR 4 (2023-24)
<i>Technology/Communications:</i> Ensure that YOTO is equipped with the necessary technology to fulfill its mission and clearly communicate YOTO's positive community impact	Implement a COVID-19 communication strategy that informs stakeholders of operational changes and student needs Conduct an audit of existing website and identify improvements Approve an Advocacy Policy to guide YOTO's participation in media and other public forums	Complete bid process for website redesign Launch new website Develop technology plan for relocation to new space	Implement technology plan for relocation to new space Upgrade outdated hardware	Conduct one-year re-assessment of needed technology investments for new space
<i>Costs</i>	Existing budget	\$20,000	\$30,000	Existing budget

OBJECTIVE 17	YEAR 1 (2020-21)	YEAR 2 (2021-22)	YEAR 3 (2022-23)	YEAR 4 (2023-24)
<i>Evaluation:</i> Utilize expert and stakeholder feedback to continually improve our services	Engage LeCroy & Milligan to adapt student application questions and advise on reassessment process	Engage LeCroy & Milligan to define tier model for pilot including eligibility criteria and services	Conduct liaison evaluation to solicit feedback and recommendations regarding tier model	Conduct stakeholder survey in preparation for next Strategic Plan
<i>Costs</i>	\$5,000	\$10,000	Existing budget	Existing budget

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