



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Program Evaluation  
Longitudinal study



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## INSTRUCTIONS

Interested parties may respond to one or both of the requested evaluation services. Proposals may be submitted to Daniela Figueroa, Director of Program Design, at [dfigueroa@yoto.org](mailto:dfigueroa@yoto.org) by **February 28, 2025**. Firms may request a 30-minute informational session to ask questions and/or to request any information necessary for the RFP not included in this document.

Competitive proposals should include:

- **Evaluation design:** State the type(s) of evaluation design that will be used and why this is the most appropriate design to achieve the evaluation goal(s) and answer the research question(s).
- **Sampling Methods:** Include control or comparison group formation (if applicable), sample selection and sample size justification.
- **Data Collection Procedures, Data Sources, and Measurement Tools:** Describe each data source and measurement tool and the procedures that will be used to collect or extract data, including when, how often, and by what mode (i.e., paper/pencil, phone, or web survey; administrative data extract). Explain how the proposed data sources and tools are adequate for addressing all of the research question(s) and how the data align with the evaluation's outcome(s) of interest.
- **Analysis Plan:** Describe an analysis plan that is appropriate for the evaluation's design and data sources. Explain how the analysis will address all of the evaluation's research questions.
- **Evaluator Qualifications:** Describe how the person(s) who will conduct the evaluation are sufficiently qualified to conduct the proposed evaluation (e.g., have experience and technical qualifications that align with the planned evaluation design).
- **Timeline:** Provide a timeline for all of the major evaluation activities (e.g., finalizing evaluation design, developing data collection instruments, collecting pre-intervention data, collecting post-intervention data, analyzing data, writing report, etc.).
- **Agency Supports:** List expected time and tasks that are needed from YOTO staff to support the project, and any additional supports or tasks needed from the agency.
- **Budget:** Specify the cost for deliverables and key elements of the evaluation project. Respondents should not exceed a 15% indirect cost rate.
- **Experience & References:** Speak to the company's experience implementing longitudinal studies and program evaluations. Provide at least two references that can speak to the quality of work and working experience with the company in similar evaluation projects.
- **Company Values:** Speak to the company's values, including any diversity, equity, and inclusion statements.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Mission**

Youth On Their Own (YOTO) supports the high school graduation and continued success of youth experiencing homelessness.

### **Vision**

Young people on their own are empowered and engaged community members.

### **Values**

YOTO believes...

- YOTO is a safe place for youth to ask for help without judgement.
- All teens experiencing homelessness have the potential to graduate from high school.
- Guidance and belief in a young person are just as important as material support.
- Our investment in YOTO youth doesn't just benefit youth; it's an investment in our community.

YOTO's actions...

- We build and maintain trust and transparency with our donors.
- We are good stewards of money and maintain a sustainable organization.
- We take care of our staff and volunteers who serve YOTO youth.
- We nurture collaborative relationships with schools and fellow nonprofit organizations.

### **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.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

### Services

Since 1986, Youth On Their Own (YOTO)'s core focus has been education – specifically a high school diploma – as a tool to disrupt the cycle of poverty for Pima County's students experiencing unaccompanied homelessness. Supporting over 1,600 youth annually, YOTO's model is built on what youth say they need to achieve their goals, such as:

1. **Direct financial incentives to attend school** via an earned academic stipend and other monetary support. The more days a youth attends school, the more money they can earn each month.
2. **Meeting youths' basic needs** by providing free food, hygiene items, school supplies, and more at YOTO's Mini Mall pantry and through weekly school deliveries.
3. **Guidance and consistent support** from a caring adult. YOTO provides guidance to youth in middle school, high school, and beyond to help young people pursue their chosen pathways for self-reliance.

YOTO implements a conditional cash transfer program in which youth are incentivized to attend school with a stipend from September – May. They submit an academic stipend request form in which youth provide updates to living situation and basic needs access. The school's YOTO Liaison (typically their school counselor) provides the youth's attendance record for that month.


Academic stipends for traditional schools are based on an 140-day school calendar. The chart describes how youth attending traditional school models are incentivized and how they earn their stipend amounts.


Level Earned	This means youth are attending on average...	Attendance Rate	MAX	PLUS	STANDARD
<b>PLATINUM</b>	Four to five days a week	85% - 100%	\$350	\$300	\$100
<b>GOLD</b>	Three to four days a week	84 - 70%	\$150	\$100	\$50
<b>COPPER</b>	Two to three school days a week	69% - 60%	\$50	\$50	\$25
<b>NONE</b>	Missing more than 8 days a month	No stipend earned			


Youth attending alternative school models designed for credit recovery vary from seat time to class progress as many are online based. See the sample chart below.

Level Earned	This means youth's total seat time per month is...	Rates	MAX	PLUS	STANDARD
<b>PLATINUM</b>	80hrs – 68 hrs.	85% - 100%	\$250	\$200	\$100
<b>GOLD</b>	67hrs – 56hrs	84 - 70%	\$150	\$100	\$50
<b>COPPER</b>	55hrs – 30hrs	69% - 60%	\$50	\$50	\$25
<b>NONE</b>	29hrs or less	No stipend earned			

## Theory of Change

Outcome 1: Youth graduate from high school.			
<b>Precondition:</b> YOTO students are successful in school.			
<b>Precondition:</b> YOTO students have regular school attendance.			
<b>Precondition:</b> School sites effectively support implementation of YOTO program.	<b>Precondition:</b> Eligible YOTO students apply for and receive stipends in a timely manner.		
Assumptions			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Youth are motivated to complete high school.</li> <li>- YOTO program staff are able to effectively provide students vital assistance related to obtaining the education stipend, and access to basic needs resources.</li> <li>- School liaisons are effective in assisting students in obtaining the stipend and accessing other needed education and other basic needs resources.</li> <li>- YOTO Program Coordinators are effective in supporting School Liaisons – effective in facilitating program implementation at a school site.</li> <li>- The school culture is supportive of students who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.</li> </ul>			

Outcome 2: Youth have stable housing, food, clothing, dependable transportation, and supplies for personal hygiene.				
<b>Precondition:</b> YOTO students report access to community resources (health, behavioral health, etc.)	<b>Precondition:</b> Youth report easy access to Mini Mall services for basic needs items	<b>Precondition:</b> Youth have access to stable housing	<b>Precondition:</b> Youth have access to dependable transportation.	
<b>Precondition:</b> YOTO staff and school liaisons regularly assess each youth to identify services that best fit their individual needs.				
Assumptions				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to needed services keeps YOTO students healthy, enabling them to do well in school.</li> <li>- Some YOTO students may need more money than the stipend provides to cover their living expenses.</li> <li>- YOTO staff and school liaisons are aware of services needed by students.</li> <li>- YOTO staff and school liaisons require up-to-date information about community resources available for students.</li> </ul>				

Outcome 3: YOTO staff are effective in their roles.	
<b>Precondition:</b> Youth trust YOTO staff and School Liaisons as caring adults.	
<b>Precondition:</b> YOTO staff effectively support program implementation at each school site.	
<b>Precondition:</b> YOTO staff roles are well defined with agreed upon measures of staff performance.	
Assumptions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- YOTO staff are hired with sufficient competencies / skills to succeed in their role.</li> <li>- YOTO has data that shows its staff are performing well and programs are successful; data is used for program improvement.</li> <li>- YOTO staff have the resources necessary to be effective in their role.</li> <li>- A trusting, positive relationship between YOTO staff and School Liaisons – and between YOTO staff and youth is critical to program success.</li> </ul>	

## Logic Model

### Outcome 1: Youth graduate from high school.

Interventions	Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YOTO student academic needs are assessed for individualized academic supports.</li> <li>• School liaisons regularly meet students to complete stipend forms and access educational/basic needs.</li> <li>• YOTO staff periodically contact students to monitor their academic progress, fulfillment of YOTO program requirements, and additional educational/basic needs.</li> <li>• YOTO student progress is assessed on at least a monthly basis (meeting 85% attendance rate).</li> <li>• YOTO provides support to school staff (meet regularly with school liaisons to discuss student needs, etc.)</li> <li>• Youth receive stipends in a timely manner.</li> <li>• Youth have access to supplies for use in school/for education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 85% of YOTO youth graduate “on time” as defined by high school policy.</li> <li>• Less than 10% of youth drop out of high school due to non-attendance.</li> <li>• 70% of youth attend school at least 85% of the time.</li> <li>• 30% of youth who miss an academic stipend month (incentive) re-engage the following month.</li> <li>• 80% of eligible participants submit for academic stipends each month (9 months of the school year)</li> </ul>

### Outcome 2: Youth have stable housing, food, clothing, dependable transportation, and supplies for personal hygiene.

Interventions	Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth receive stipends in a timely manner.</li> <li>• Food, clothing, hygiene products, educational, household and other items are made available to students.</li> <li>• YOTO provides information directly to students about services available to them.</li> <li>• YOTO maintains an up-to-date list of local youth-serving agencies, services, and other resources available to YOTO youth with associated contact information and appropriate forms, and shares this list with school liaisons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 75% of eligible YOTO youth make use of Mini Mall (basic needs) services.</li> <li>• 50% of Mini Mall orders are entirely fulfilled.</li> <li>• 50% of Mini Mall inventory staple items have a 1-month supply on hand.</li> </ul>

### Outcome 3: YOTO staff are effective in their roles.

Interventions	Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YOTO staff assess youth for needs on a monthly basis.</li> <li>• YOTO staff provide effective supports to School Liaisons.</li> <li>• YOTO staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.</li> <li>• YOTO staff receive effective professional development in order to succeed in their roles.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 85%+ satisfaction on annual youth &amp; Liaison survey.</li> <li>• 90% of youth report they have a good understanding of YOTO services; 85% of YOTO Liaisons report they understand YOTO services well and can communicate them accurately to youth.</li> <li>• 90% of School Liaison staff report adequate supports from YOTO and administrative systems.</li> <li>• 90% of YOTO staff report easy access to student academic data to drive effective program implementation.</li> <li>• 90% of program staff report they receive enough performance feedback from their supervisor.</li> <li>• Program staff invest in continued learning, skill development, and strengthening their practice by attending a median of 6 – 8 hours per quarter of training relevant to their role.</li> </ul>



The current program model has been in place since July 2021 after the FY19 program evaluation was completed. Over the last four decades, the program model has had several iterations. Rough services timeline:

- 1986 – 1988: Group home/host home housing program
- 1988 – 1989: stipend disbursed to host homes for youth needs in addition to group home
- 1990 – 2005: Host home program & stipend to host homes; Strategies for Success program in place, stipend model uncertain
- 2005 – 2019: Grade based academic stipend, more robust Mini Mall (basic needs program)
- 2020 – 2021: Flat stipend amounts due to COVID & quarantine
- 2021 – present: Attendance based academic stipend

**Client Management System & Data Collection**

Youth On Their Own uses a custom client management system that serves several functions, including:

- Youth program application submission
- Youth program enrollment
- Services tracking & delivery
- Historical youth information
- School information & contacts
- Basic needs inventory management

Youth submit a new YOTO application each fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) to be considered for program enrollment. YOTO works with schools to identify one person of contact that can verify school enrollment and provide academic information, such as attendance records. They are involved in the enrollment process and have user accounts in the client management system to track YOTO youth in their schools. YOTO youth have accounts as well to request services and see services provided throughout their YOTO history.

Through the YOTO application, YOTO collects data points for each YOTO youth enrolled (see chart). YOTO has these data points for all youth enrolled in the program from July 2020 to present.

Date of birth	Supports received from parents
Age	Reason for unaccompanied status
Race	Living situation
Languages spoken & preferred language	Parenting and caregiving status
Gender	Employment
Gender pronouns	Rent obligations

Sexual orientation	Basic needs assessment for food, hygiene items, water, electricity, heating/cooling, and technology access
Contact information	Justice system involvement
School	Foster Care system involvement
YOTO past enrollment	Educational plan status (Individualized Education Plans, English Language Learning, Exceptional/gifted programs)
General health	Grade level
Assessment of supportive adults in their life	McKinney-Vento status
Unaccompanied status	

Records prior to 2020 contain some of the listed information, with varying degrees of completeness. These are Excel files exported from the various client management systems at that time. The most complete records are from 2020 and forward. Most of the records prior to 2008 were likely paper records that are not likely to be as accessible.

- FY07 and before: paper records
- FY08: Excel export
- FY09: missing
- FY11 – FY15: Excel tracking only
- FY16 – FY18: Clienttrack Excel exports
- FY19 – FY20: Microsoft Access Excel exports

## **STUDY PURPOSE/DELIVERABLES**

Firms may submit a proposal for one or both projects. Project 1, YOTO Longitudinal Study, will begin as soon as feasible, while Project 2, will begin sometime in the FY27 fiscal year (July 2026 – June 2027).

### **PROJECT 1: LONGITUDINAL STUDY**

#### **Purpose**

Conduct a longitudinal study to determine the long-term impacts/effects of the YOTO program on YOTO youth 5, 10, 15+ years after they engage with the program, if any.

#### **Deliverables**

- (1) Determine the long-term economic impact of YOTO services on YOTO alumni.
  - What is the long-term economic impact of YOTO services on older YOTO alumni?
  - Is their income access or income generation higher compared to adults with similar high school history?
  - Is their job attainment/employment better than expected, compared to adults with similar high school history? Do they hold better titles than expected, compared to adults with similar high school history?
  - Is there a decrease in experiences of homelessness as adults versus adults with similar high school history?
  
- (2) Determine the long-term impact of YOTO services on YOTO alumni's post-secondary pathways and achievements.
  - What is the long-term impact of YOTO services on YOTO alumni on 2-year degree/college and 4-year degree attainment? Is attainment higher than expected compared to adults with similar high school history?
  - Do YOTO alumni have higher than expected certifications (trade/vocational, specialized certifications, etc.) compared to other adults with similar high school history?
  
- (3) Determine the long-term impact of YOTO guidance on YOTO alumni.
  - What is the long-term impact on YOTO alumni of YOTO's relationship building, emotional support/guidance during school, and belief in their success? Is this higher than expected compared to adults with similar high school history?
  - Do YOTO alumni have higher self-worth, confidence, or resilience compared to adults with similar high school history.

## **PROJECT 2: PROGRAM EVALUATION**

### **Purpose**

Conduct a program evaluation to determine program model effectiveness and provide recommendations for FY28 – FY30 strategic planning.

### **Deliverables**

- (1) Update Logic Model & Theory of Change:** provide any recommendations for adjustments to current guiding documents.
  
- (2) Determine the effectiveness of the current attendance based conditional cash transfer on senior graduation** (asked a version of this in FY22 academic stipend evaluation).
  - Does the stipend program contribute to increased engagement in YOTO services?
  - Does the stipend program contribute to increased school attendance?
  - Does the stipend program contribute to maintaining and or increasing academic performance?
  - Does participation in YOTO academic stipend program and other services contribute to high school graduation?
  
- (3) Provide recommendations for YOTO services improvements:** Conduct focus groups with staff, youth, YOTO Liaisons, and other collaborators to determine services effectiveness and make recommendations to improve program model/services.
  
- (4) Provide recommendations for multi-site program delivery:** strategies for effectively operating program services across different locations.

## DEFINITIONS

**Youth:** people aged 14 – 24

**Unaccompanied:** not in the physical custody of adoptive or biological parents

**Homelessness** definitions used by YOTO:

- **Experiencing literal homelessness (HUD 1):** individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence – folks staying in a congregate shelter, place not meant for long term human habitation (abandoned buildings, tents, outside, etc.), exiting an institution where they have resided for 90 days or less and experienced literal homelessness immediately before entering that institution.
- **At Imminent Risk of Experiencing Homelessness (HUD 2):** Will be evicted within 14 days & received official eviction notice.
- **Homeless under other Federal Statutes (HUD 3):** Have not had a lease, ownership interest in permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the homeless assistance application; Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during in the preceding 60 days; and Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time due to special needs or barriers.
  - o **McKinney-Vento:** the youth is lacking a regular, adequate, and fixed nighttime residence if they experiencing literal homelessness and are attending school (K – 12); “Doubling Up”: youth is sharing a household with other families because they have nowhere else to go and due to loss of housing and economic hardship.
  - o **YOTO Couch Surfing:** The youth has moved 3 or more times (not including parental home) within the last 6 months (not a federally recognized definition).
- **Feeling Unsafe Living Conditions/HUD 4:** if the youth left home because of a domestic violence issue and they are experiencing literal homelessness.

**“On Their Own”** definitions:

- **YOTO Self-Supporting living in own apartment:** The youth has name on the lease agreement and is paying rent (not a federally recognized definition).
- **YOTO Self-Supporting living with others:** youth is living with relatives or friends, does not have a formal rent agreement, and is required to pay some sort of rent (not a federally recognized definition).

**School YOTO Liaison:** used interchangeably with “Liaison”, “School Liaison”, and “YOTO Liaison”; these are school site staff that volunteer to be the point person for YOTO youth for YOTO services at the school site, are involved in the YOTO enrollment process, and deliver YOTO items to youth.