

**“We Speak in Unison: A Comprehensive Work Compiled by The Flagstaff
Indigenous RARE Team and Our Unsheltered Relatives Community”**

RARE ASSESSMENT

December 22, 2022

NATIVE AMERICANS FOR COMMUNITY ACTION, INC.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

THE CITY OF FLAGSTAFF



NACA
Healing Together.

Special thank you to the volunteers that provided their time and actions to capture the voices of our unsheltered relatives in the Flagstaff, Arizona area. The volunteers include Somana Tootsie, Marc Bilagody, Kyra Vandervere, Fawn Toya, and Jalen Redhair. And, the Native Americans for Community Action, Inc., Supportive Services staff, Lucinda Yazzie. These individuals provided hours collecting data in the community, that included seeking out the unsheltered, asking questions, and hosting focus groups. The volunteers also took part in the analysis of the items in this report that included participating in the evening hours after school or work. During this time the group looked over the items, grouped like areas, and pulled out the main themes. This effort was completed by Indigenous volunteers for our unsheltered relatives, mainly those who are Indigenous.

Thank you to Dr. Miguel Vasquez for teaching the group the approach and implementation process of the RARE Assessment with a community-based approach.

A special thank you to the City of Flagstaff for providing the financial support to complete this assessment to find the barriers and opportunities to assist our unsheltered relatives.

Most importantly, a very big appreciation to the Unsheltered Relatives who took time to talk with us about their experience. The courage it takes to express the truths of their experience is often discouraged or unheard. Without their voices this RARE Assessment would not provide us with the pathway to improve services.



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Introduction

Native Americans for Community Action, Inc. (NACA), has moved to use the term “Unsheltered Relatives” to get rid of the stigma associated with using other labels to define this population. In Indigenous communities the people around us are treated as relatives, such as when people come to a home for a visit, this individual is welcomed in, given food and water to continue their journey in a positive way. This same principle is considered when NACA staff encounter our Unsheltered Relatives.

With the notion that Indigenous populations share a commonality in being relatives it was only proper that the group formed because of ongoing discussions about Indigenous population of Unsheltered Relatives in Flagstaff, Arizona. Historically, the land that is currently Flagstaff, Arizona is the ancestral homeland to the following Tribal Nations, Hopi, Navajo, Havasupai, Hualapai, White Mountain Apache, and Kaibab Paiute¹.

This population is unique due to the experience of living through intergenerational trauma and experiencing negative social determinant factors because of systemic racism and oppression. Intergenerational Trauma is described as “Historical trauma (HT) is cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experiences².” As a result there are many responses and symptoms associated with unresolved trauma. Often compounded with systemic racism as defined as “Systemic racism is said to occur when racially unequal opportunities and outcomes are inbuilt or intrinsic to the operation of a society’s structures. Simply put, systemic racism refers to the processes and outcomes of racial inequality and inequity in life opportunities and treatment. Systemic racism permeates a society’s (a) institutional structures (practices, policies, climate), (b) social structures (state/federal programs, laws, culture), (c) individual mental structures (e.g., learning, memory, attitudes, beliefs, values), and (d) everyday interaction patterns (norms, scripts, habits).¹⁶” Lastly, taking into account low social determinants of health, you can imagine the many disparities this population often faces.

In 2019, the Flagstaff community experienced the loss of two unsheltered relatives from exposure to the cold elements. As a response to these tragic events Native Americans for Community Action, Inc. (NACA), employees gathered to discuss an approach on assisting the unsheltered population, called the Advocated for Unsheltered Relatives. This ongoing discussion resulted in the group obtaining the funding to conduct the RARE (Rapid Assessment Response Evaluation) Assessment.

Origination of Unsheltered Relatives Advocacy

“As Indigenous people it is imperative to always recognize that before it was Flagstaff, these lands were and always will be the ancestral home to multiple tribes in the southwest. Acknowledging this makes it that much more painful to see our Indigenous Unsheltered Relatives struggle in their own ancestral homes. The recognition for the need to create the Unsheltered Relatives Task Force started in October of 2020 when two Unsheltered Indigenous men passed away due to exposure from the cold. Remaining abeyant was no longer an option, as this was an all too familiar story in Flagstaff. As an organization filled with professionals that already cater to the Indigenous community, it was now time to work to change this familiar narrative. We as Indigenous people are endowed with the innate ability to help one another, but this does not happen without first addressing and validating the issues our Unsheltered Relatives face daily, then doing something about it, together.” An excerpt written by Jonathan Yellowhair, on the initiation of the Unsheltered Relatives Task Force/Advocates for Unsheltered Relatives.

At NACA we take pride in our mission statement, “is to provide preventive wellness strategies, empower, and advocate for Native peoples and others in need to create a healthy community based on Harmony, Respect, and Indigenous Values.” which only fuels our approach in working with our community, including Unsheltered Relatives.

The R.A.R.E. (Rapid Assessment Response Evaluation) Team

The Community Development Director took on the task of gathering volunteers to be trained on the implementation of the RARE Assessment which included data collection, community partnership, team building, and data analysis. The indirect result was capacity building, creation of trust, and mentorship of community members.

The team involved with completing the R.A.R.E. Assessment is composed of Lucinda Yazzie, Supportive Services Coordinator/Unsheltered Relatives Advocate, Marc Bilagody, Volunteer, Kyra Vandever, NAU Social Work Student Intern, Jalen Redhair, Volunteer, Fawn Toya, Volunteer, Somana Tootsie, Volunteer, Dr. Miguel Vasquez, Subject Matter Expert; Jacelyn Salabye, Community Development Director/Lead.





Assessment Approach

The RARE Assessment is implemented using a community based participatory approach along with seeking out cultural experts as the professionals to serve as the experts. Volunteers also possessed lived experience to bring another lens to the process of training, implementation, and data collection that ensures the process is capturing the voices of the Unsheltered Relatives appropriately. The assessment was conducted in 2021 with little participation due to weather.

The second round of the RARE Assessment was conducted from June-September 2022. Using a multi-tiered approach, the following tools were used to collect information:

- Surveys
- Cultural Expert Interviews
- Focus Groups

The analysis of the data collected used grounded theory research to analyze, code many of the interviews and focus groups. This approach was only customary given the community approach being a consensus of “themes” captured in the data. The “themes” assisted the group to be identified as the needs or areas of improvement when it came to the Unsheltered Relatives. The needs or areas of improvement were then taken into a solution focused mindset that resulted in an action plan. As a result, the RARE Team completed roughly 6 data analysis meetings.

The RARE Team gathered 61 surveys with roughly half of these turning into interviews. The total number of focus groups conducted was 5.

Data Related to Unsheltered Relatives

To paint a picture of the population in Coconino County and Flagstaff, Arizona, the total population in the county is roughly 145,052.³ As described in the recent County Community Needs Assessment, “In 2018, 118 homeless individuals were interviewed in Coconino County during the 2018 Point in Time survey by the Arizona Department of Housing. Of these, 56 were White, Non-Hispanic (47.5%), 52 were Native American (44.1%), 8 were two or more races (7.8%), and 2 were African American (1.7%). None of the individuals interviewed during this cycle were Hispanic or Latino.⁴”

In Flagstaff alone there are about 76,989⁵ people living in the area. Taking these numbers into account along with the cost burdens associated with the economy, COVID, cost of living and land density there is a potential for people to experience insecurities and homelessness. Currently in Coconino County the largest landowners are tribal nations and the United States Forest Service with only 13% of Coconino County having private land⁶. As for Flagstaff, the most populated area in the county, is surrounded by restricted land use leaving 58% of land zoned for single family homes and 14% for multi-family development⁶ resulting in limited housing and construction.

A glimpse of the data related to housing “According to the City of Flagstaff 10-Year Housing Plan, our cost of living is 13% higher than the national average and the cost of housing 29% higher. Forty-five percent of households are living in a housing cost burdened situation (spending more than 30% of their monthly income for housing). This cost burden includes 27% of homeowners and a whopping 57% of renters. Across Coconino County, 50% of renters are cost burdened per a study by ASU’s Morrison Institute for Public Policy⁷.” This information is important to understand when looking at the intricate details pertaining to housing in the Flagstaff area. Not only is it important to hear the background in terms of data, but it is also important to understand the cultural implications surrounding our Unsheltered Relatives.

Indigenous Resiliency

It is important to provide context on the factors our indigenous unsheltered relatives face in this modern urban environment called Flagstaff, Arizona. The term unsheltered relatives is focused on the individual being a human being, first and foremost. The Indigenous concept of relating to one another through clanship to establish kinship is essential when greeting one another. As stated previously, the approach of greeting humans with clanship or “where you from?” when greeting is one traditional value that is taken into consideration when working with individuals who are relatives. In this sense, relatives are invited in, and a brief discussion takes place regarding their current state of family, self, journey, etc. Food and drink are always provided to these individuals who traveled to “see” you and visit with you. This is where the concept of unsheltered relatives comes from. The indigenous people on the streets are human and, in many ways, our relatives. The following points will help to create a better picture of the factors our unsheltered relatives face each day.

Social Determinants of Health

The social determinants of health (SDH) are an important piece in discussing the barriers and inequities an individual “needs” when it comes to health outcomes. According to the World Health organization “The SDH have an important influence on health inequities - the unfair and avoidable differences in health status seen within and between countries. In countries at all levels of income, health, and illness follow a social gradient, the lower the socioeconomic position, the worse the health⁸.” The following list provides examples of the social determinants of health, which can influence health equity in positive and negative ways:

- Income and social protection
- Education
- Unemployment and job insecurity
- Working life conditions
- Food insecurity
- Housing, basic amenities and the environment
- Early childhood development
- Social inclusion and non-discrimination
- Structural conflict
- Access to affordable health services of decent quality.

Taking these areas into consideration, which is a human being’s everyday life there will be some major impacts. At first notice housing, basic amenities and the environment is obviously a barrier to those unsheltered. Coupling this with the lack of food, unemployment, social stigma and discrimination, fines, law enforcement, childhood trauma, no insurance, and no high school diploma brings many threats to unsheltered relative’s humanity and well-being.

Well-being

There are many Indigenous perspectives across the globe with a commonality that focuses on the perspective of holistic approach. To get a glimpse of this perspective the approach consists of many layers that incorporate the full being of a person, the environment, and the relationships held with everyone and everything. For a simplified version the term ‘holistic approach’ is often used to discuss the cyclical format held in high regard among Indigenous populations. This description is also used to refer to the medicine wheel and the non-linear world views.

Indigenous Well-Being can be referred to having balance between the physical, mental, social, and emotional self. As explained by Teri Cross “The relational worldview, sometimes called the cyclical worldview, finds its roots in tribal cultures. It is intuitive, non-time oriented and fluid. The balance and harmony in relationships between multiple variables, including spiritual forces, make up the core of the thought system. Every event is understood in relation to all other events regardless of time, space, or physical existence. Health exists only when things are in balance or harmony. In the relational worldview, helpers and healers are taught to understand problems through the balances and imbalances in the person’s relational world. We are taught to see and accept complex (sometimes illogical) inter-relationships that can be influenced by entering the world of the client and manipulating the balance contextually, cognitively, emotionally, physically, and/or spiritually.”⁹ This relational perspective is often stigmatized as different or non-compliant in the linear worldview, that is now, Western society. Through time and the shift in world views through the generations the Indigenous populations are often caught in ‘Two Worlds’, the relational and linear.

Taking this information into account there is also another perspective related to our basic essential needs, with the concept of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs inspired by Siksika Blackfoot Wisdom. This information will assist in gaining an understanding of self-actualization. The Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs that is well known in western institutions consists of the needs portrayed in a triangle with least importance at the top to the most important at the bottom, the foundation starts with Physiological needs, Safety needs, Belongingness and love needs, Esteem needs, need to know to understand, aesthetic needs, Self-actualization, and Transcendence. As for the Indigenous Perspective, the foundation is Self-actualization, Community actualization, and Cultural perpetuity. As witnessed by Maslow it was determined that “While Maslow saw self-actualization as something to earn, the Blackfoot see it as innate. Relating to people as inherently wise involves trusting them and granting them space to express who they are (as perhaps manifested by the permissiveness with which the Siksika raise their children) rather than making them the best they can be. For many First Nations, therefore, self-actualization is not achieved; it is drawn out of an inherently sacred being who is imbued with a spark of divinity. Education, prayer, rituals, ceremonies, individual experiences, and vision quests can help invite the expression of this sacred self into the world.”¹⁰ The concept of self-actualization in Indigenous Communities, more specifically when the concept of “you” is put into place on earth the notion this concept is instilled upon you at conception. A child is viewed as sacred; the child rearing process is very delicate with self-actualization being innate and consistently taught

through traditional practices, customs, songs, and everyday activities. A child's caretakers are responsible for laying out a vision of their life and giving this child the ability to lay out and plan their daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly achievements. This process is daily and lifelong with a child becoming aware of their ability to be a leader and take control of what stands before them.

Taking this same stance into consideration it is important to understand the policies, discrimination, racism, lack of resources, unresolved trauma, assimilation, forced religion, genocide, land revocation, and oppression that Indigenous people have encountered through the years. All of these with added systemic racism results in individuals facing criminal charges, inability to acquire identification documentation, and employment due to criminal charges. There are several revolving cycles at play whether it be systems, substance use, or trauma. But this is not to say all Unsheltered Relatives are the same, nor to be stereotypical, but these are some, or perhaps there is more that unsheltered face.

Stigma, Microaggressions, Discrimination, and Racism

The definition of these terms will assist in conceptualizing these actions but are present for educational purposes. Stigma is "a mark of shame or discredit."¹¹ Microaggression is "a comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group (such as a racial minority)."¹² The following quotes are examples of microaggressions:

"This is my town" stated by judicial representative"

"They choose to be out here, they are selfish" as stated by community members

This action is often seen in border towns when referencing "Indians" from those who are not familiar with the population or are "fed up". This instance is also exhibited by those who are overwhelmed or stressed in their current helping profession. Discrimination is defined as "prejudiced or prejudicial outlook, action, or treatment."¹³ Prejudiced is defined as "resulting from or having a prejudice or bias for or especially against."¹⁴ Lastly racism is defined as "a belief that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race."¹⁵

Taking all this information into consideration it is important to identify within you, how you relate to each one, jotting down how you have contributed to these behaviors is important for growth in identifying the thoughts and feelings concerning this topic area. Taking a humanistic and compassionate approach to the care of ourselves should be mirrored over to our Unsheltered. This will only be beneficial when working or meeting Unsheltered Relatives.

As for Unsheltered Relatives facing stigma, microaggression, discrimination, and racism it is important to understand how much of these actions unsheltered relatives face daily, it is stated

these are present more specifically when talking about law enforcement. Unsheltered populations have a heightened awareness when it comes to those in authority for fear of “catching a case” or another criminal charge. The other stance is that there is so much energy put into seeking out resources, getting multiple directions to receiving services, and finding basic needs that these actions have caused Unsheltered Relatives to suppress emotions and become apathetic or desensitized.

Strengths

The importance of asking Unsheltered Relatives about their strengths is to remind us of the human connection we have to our unsheltered population. Our unsheltered relatives possess many strengths, and these are not a complete list of the population's strengths but only an example from those participating in this assessment. The strengths-based perspective is not only appropriate but empowering to our Unsheltered Relatives



Challenges

For unsheltered relatives some of the listed items are areas they face daily.

- Extreme Environmental Elements
- Access to Healthcare (Including Mental Health/Behavioral Health and Medical)
- Stigma
- Policy and Law
- Cultural Issues and Concerns
- Accessibility for Disabled
- Basic Needs
- Clean clothes and Shoes
- Existing Shelter Issues
- Permanent Affordable Housing
- Transportation Challenges
- Safety Concerns
- Employment Barriers
- Addiction/Substance Use (Isolated Situation)

Safety

In terms of safety and feeling safe in their current environment. Many of the Unsheltered Relatives stated they generally feel safe. A few concerns when it comes to safety, as expressed by Unsheltered Relatives, includes the following:

- Braving the Elements
- Medical Issues
- Unfamiliar Environment
- Established Shelter Issues
- Shelter Specific Issues
- Social Safety Issues
- Violence
- Police Issues

Recommendations

These are areas of concern for unsheltered relatives that need urgent action.

- Housing
- Basic Needs
- Job Opportunities
- More Shelters
- Access to Health Care
- Easier Access to Food
- De-escalation from Police
- Respect
- Vehicle Solutions

- Improve Services
- Dignity
- Transportation Solutions

Unsheltered Relatives Discussion

Serious Issues or Top Needs:

Housing and Clothing

Housing for Felons

Location for Tents

Address Criminal Charges Related to Unsheltered

Security

Laundry Services

Employment Opportunities

“Jobs, employers to help with hiring people. There should be a certain percentage of hiring people who are felons, I was an educator then got a charge for contraband, it's biased.”

“Jobs that are available, Motel 6 only works part time. \$400 a week to pay for a room. Not a 40-hour work week. If I paid 40 hours and taxes.”

Recommendations for Change:

Zero Homelessness

Safety

Counseling

Expedite Services

Shelter Improvements

More Outreach from Employers

Quick Change

More Funding for Services

Bike Repair

“Being homeless is not cheap, you have to come up with water, building (shelter). Etc.”

Professional Voice

Serious Issues or Top Needs

Health Care Provider:

Stable Housing	Assault/Sexual Assault-Safety
Health Care Providers:	Restrooms
Transportation Costs	Altered State of Individual-Ability to Care for Self
Housing	Winter Weather
Detox/Residential Treatment	Food
Blacklist from Services	Medical/Behavioral Health Care BH Care
Lost and Stolen items	Unsheltered living in the Forest-Concerns

“I have seen the challenge of criminalization of activities that are common in the unsheltered population because of lack of housing or resources (urinating in public, “loitering”, etc.).”

Crisis Response Professionals:

Lack of Cultural Education	Stigma as Discrimination
Lack of Education on Issues Specific to Unsheltered Relatives	Lack of Social Support
Emotional Intelligence of Unsheltered Relatives	Unresolved Grief Trauma
	Perception of Alcohol Use Based on Class

“Part of that misunderstanding is the comparison of those who abuse alcohol or drugs and yet are very functional and may hold esteem jobs to someone who abuses alcohol or drugs and is unsheltered, unemployed, on the streets.”

“Not being treated with self-worth by community people, unsheltered are lacking support to make themselves feel self-worth.”

Law Enforcement:

Transportation Support	Community Safety
Safety	Medical Issues
Resources	De-Escalate
Substance use	Lack of Support
	Unresolved Trauma
	Presence Viewed as Harassment

“No aftercare for these individuals and some may be victims of a crime if they don’t have an address and continue a circle of behavior.”

“Resources when they are clear minded and not intoxicated.”

“Big difference with people on alcohol or drugs some are trying to make it and those who use ruin it for others especially at the shelter during winter hours this tends to go away somewhat”

“People are speaking with police doesn’t mean we are harassing and most of the time we are trying to make sure they are ok and we are trying to prevent them from being a victim we need to change how the community looks at how we help them”

“Trauma based is very real with generational trauma that the majority of these people are going through out in the streets”

Tribal Leader:

“Most are “institutionalized”, especially those with no family support and have a deep physical dependence on alcohol and drugs, and the lack of family support affects their psyche in a bad way, they lose all hope.”

Domestic Violence
Substance Use
Support
Intervention
Employment

Housing Disparities
Treatment Centers
Disconnect of Cultural Ways
Physical Activities Needed
Religious Spaces Needed

“They need shelter, wellness centers, shelters, and reassurances.”

“Unsheltered people often turn themselves in to police officers during cold months just so they have somewhere decent to sleep and to eat. “

Recommendations

Health Care Providers:

Funding to Prevent Homelessness

Case Management

Crisis Response Professionals:

Access to Resources
Timing of Services, i.e. Evenings,
Weekends

Navigator
Consistency with Warm Hand Offs
Shared Database/Dashboard

Law Enforcement:

Showers
Food
On Call Mobile Unit
Safety Identification for Volunteers

Update Unsheltered Relatives Address
Organizational and Community Support
Visual Representation

“It would be huge to show publicly that we are trying to address this situation and they need to know we have a good working bond.”

Tribal Leaders:

Hire New Graduates
Unsheltered Relative Coalition
Conversation Pertaining to Unsheltered
Relatives Consistent
Gaps in Services Addressed
Data Collection
Database-MMIW, Runaway, or Missing

Need for Cultural Awareness
Collaboration of Navajo Nation and
Flagstaff Government
Increase size of Shelter
Veteran Specific Services for Unsheltered
Community Service Officer
Understanding Police Officer Burnout

Plan of Action

The following information is an expansion of the recommendations that were provided by our Unsheltered Relatives populations along with professional voices. The RARE Team went into

more specifics, by taking into consideration all voices and creating a solution focused plan of action. Short-term goals are those that can be achieved soon, within a year. The long-term goals are those that take longer than one year to establish.

A. Housing/Home	
Short Term Goals	<p>Funding-Allocate more funds to existing shelter programs so they can expand using their expertise to develop the needed type of safe and appropriate shelters/housing.</p> <p>Policy-Revisit camping laws particularly during camping season.</p> <p>Education and Cultural Humility-Respecting the term “<i>home</i>” to Indigenous people encompasses the stewardship and sacredness of the land and the concept of community and “<i>reciprocity</i>”.</p>
Long Term Goals	<p>Alternate Housing Solutions-Tiny home developers can create tiny homes as part of transitional housing.</p> <p>Creative Solutions-Renovate existing vacant motel or abandoned buildings/motels to create additional shelter/housing for veterans, low-income, non-religious base transitional living quarters for men and women, and families.</p> <p>Vision-Use a holistic and cost-effective approach to develop a safe integrated unit that offers housing and multiple top service needs located in an accessible location while promoting self-determination and respecting rights and dignity of individuals and families.</p>
B. Basic Needs	
Short Term Goals	<p>Coordination of Donations-Partner with different agencies throughout Flagstaff and the surrounding tribes that can donate necessities such as clothing, blankets, etc.</p> <p>Warmth-Establish heat stations during the winter months for unsheltered relatives to keep warm.</p> <p>Water-Establish a water location for unsheltered relatives can wash up or fill up bottled water</p>
Long Term Goals	<p>Wash House-Provide a permanent structure that has multiple laundry and multiple shower services to meet basic needs for all people in the community, this includes environmental emergency needs in multiple locations.</p> <p>Rest Area-Create locations that provide restroom, hand washing, heat, and water fountains for unsheltered relatives to access.</p>
C. Job Opportunities	

Short Term Goals	<p>Identification-A secondary identification in place to assist in employment opportunities if identification requirements are challenges to successful employment.</p> <p>Tribal Employment Opportunities-Establish partnership with surrounding tribes to create jobs for unsheltered, including seasonal jobs, helping meet the needs of the community (example: firewood, home repair, forest cleanup)</p> <p>Art Consignment-Establish a consignment program/coop guild partnership to sell artwork created by unsheltered relatives, identifying a representative to be present at the NACA Overlook under Economic Development.</p> <p>Indigenous Businesses-More support for Indigenous owned businesses.</p>
Long Term Goals	<p>Co-Op for Daily Jobs-Establish an Indigenous based coop for daily jobs.</p> <p>Equal Employment Opportunity Commission-Employers communicate EEOC opportunities up front to establish awareness for those from oppressed or disabled groups.</p> <p>Tribal System Change-Job salaries on the reservation need an increase for individuals to maintain a living on their homeland to prevent from searching for adequate paying jobs, hitchhiking, supplies, groceries, etc.</p> <p>Day Labor-Partner with different agencies around Flagstaff that can offer day labor for unsheltered relatives</p>
D. More Shelters	
Short Term Goals	<p>Inclusive Shelter Options-Create appropriate transitional homes and/or shelters for women, men, families, Veterans, and pet-friendly shelters.</p> <p>Partnerships for Housing-Nonprofit and for-profit entities work toward partnering with bordering tribal governments in addition to the city and county to invest in temporary shelters while supporting and advocating for affording housing and <i>reducing</i> homelessness.</p> <p>Culturally Based Programs-More shelters/transitional housing with culturally oriented and culturally based programs to offer a more person-centered approach to <i>reduce</i> homelessness.</p>
Long Term Goals	<p>Case Management-Create more shelters or expand on existing shelters to offer case management for individuals with specific needs, in addition to housing, like medical/behavioral history, mental health/behavioral health, employment (training or education), veteran/military, medical such as AHCCCS/Medicare/social security/disability</p> <p>Substance Use Treatment Shelter Options-Allow for multiple shelters that are customized to the diverse populations, including medical/behavioral health, mental health needs, family, wet shelters, indigenous, with a 90-day turn around program.</p> <p>Additional Shelters-Create more shelters or expand on existing shelters with shower space and laundry for single people, showers for families (i.e minors needing help or adults needing help), handicap accessible showers/bathrooms.</p>

E. Access to Health Care	
Short Term Goals	<p>Access to Medications-Making medications more accessible for unsheltered</p> <p>Healthcare Transportation-Make less barriers to healthcare transportation Care and Referral. Enforce care and referrals easier to access</p> <p>Mental Health Services-Make mental health services more accessible for indigenous unsheltered relatives</p>
Long Term Goals	<p>Transportation-Have a bus system that goes to health care agencies</p> <p>Substance Use Rehabilitation-Have native specific alcohol rehabilitation</p>
F. Access to Food	
Short Term Goals	<p>Collaboration of Food Banks-provide more money to the food banks so they can get better quality food and not have to compete just to finance their institutions</p> <p>Food Donations-Allow agencies to donate close to expiring foods to food banks</p> <p>Increase Better Bucks-Put more money into better bucks so unsheltered people can use that to get food from agencies that accept better bucks</p> <p>Increase Partnerships-Partner with agencies, local stores, corporate entities and implement better bucks into those agencies</p> <p>Community Feast-Have a community cookout where the community members can volunteer to make hot meals, donate food, and serve unsheltered people, food handlers licensing assistance to be established through Coconino County.</p> <p>Meal Bus-Have a bus that goes to different locations throughout Flagstaff that serves meals to unsheltered people.</p>
Long Term Goals	<p>Partnership for Better Bucks-Partner with agencies, local stores, corporate entities and implement better bucks into those agencies</p> <p>Increase Partnerships-Partner with native tribes around Arizona to get more funds and food donations, begin to be included on the USDA distribution point with the understanding that all Native American tribes be included.</p> <p>Navajo Agriculture Product Partnership-Partner with Navajo Agricultural Products Industry to be a site for distribution of food.</p> <p>Niman Farms Partnership-Partner with Niman Farms to provide hot meals twice a month.</p>
G. De-escalation with Law Enforcement	
Ongoing Goals	<p>Education-Have police officers attend a training/education class on Native population, history, culture. Can be basic so cops know a little bit more about the Native population</p> <p>Behavioral Health-Have a member from a behavioral health agency accompany police officers so that when there's a need for de-escalation there</p>

	are two trained professionals. Have the police department hire their own behavioral health member.
H. Respect from Law Enforcement	
Ongoing Goals	<p>Training-Have a training/education course for police officers on the what is respectful and what is not respectful for Native tribes in the southwest, possibly have an elder come and teach it, or a cultural expert-the difference in respect for western culture vs indigenous cultures-each tribe has their own way of showing respect, not every tribe is the same</p> <p>Culture Share- Invite police officers to ceremonial events happening on the reservation so they are able to experience it firsthand-use this experience to teach the officers about respect for their tribe</p>
I. Vehicle Solutions	
Short Term Goals	<p>Bike Program-Have a free-bike program or other free for those in need of transportation and are unsheltered/homeless.</p> <p>Bus Pass Program-Have a 30-day bus program for those with supporting documents for school/employment/ or someone who has vehicle problems and is waiting on vehicle repair for a person who is unsheltered/homeless</p> <p>Vehicle Maintenance-Start a fund that supports a lottery system for assistance with vehicle maintenance for person who is “known” to be unsheltered</p>
Long Term Goals	Policy Change -Do not criminalize vehicle residency yet offer a free safe-space overnight parking spaces in wide parking lots
J. Improve Services	
Short Term Goals	<p>Shelter Hotline-Develop an easy-to-follow shelter hotline for local and neighboring area</p> <p>Resource Guide-Develop a website with specific and easy to follow resource guides to help person navigate the “homeless system” on their phone</p> <p>Human Rights-Have websites that include rights of a person who is unsheltered, that includes rights to: housing, food needs, victim rights, or right to complain about a service provider; or offer said workshops to a person who is unsheltered.</p> <p>Education-Mandate shelters, social service networks and the community serving to unsheltered relatives/homeless to have workshops specific to the rights of an unsheltered relative (homeless individual/families) or offer related topics to interested community members</p> <p>Resource Info at Stores-Have resource info available at convenience stores and/or popular unsheltered relative hang outs.</p> <p>Wifi-Offer wi-fi services for unsheltered to access the internet or phone calls</p>

	<p>Donation Campaign-Implement an adopt an unsheltered for a day</p> <p>Unsheltered Relative Voices-Invite unsheltered individuals to participate in discussions about community goal (empowerment) to end or reduce homelessness</p> <p>Advocate Service-Have an advocate service in the community Provide lockers to store personal items, backpacks, documents, etc.</p>
Long Term Goals	<p>Resource Center-Have a resource center with pathway programs (employment/education/AA/NA/spiritual space) – or allow agencies to rotate these services monthly</p> <p>Donation Campaign-Implement an adopt an unsheltered for a day</p> <p>Unsheltered Relative Voices-Invite unsheltered individuals to participate in discussions about community goal (empowerment) to end or reduce homelessness</p> <p>Advocate Service-Have an advocate service in the community Provide lockers to store personal items, backpacks, documents, etc.</p> <p>End Homelessness-Create a community goal to reduce or end homelessness</p>
K. Dignity	
Ongoing Goals	<p>Basic Needs-Make access to basic needs, food, showers, clothing, heat (in winter), water for the whole city.</p> <p>Change Bias/Stigma-Change perception from the leadership that not all homeless should be treated as faceless.</p> <p>Humanistic View-Emphasis on we are all parts of this beautiful community and unsheltered are humans too.</p> <p>Compassionate Approach-Lead with compassion instead of condemnations</p>
L. Transportation Solutions	
Short Term Goals	<p>Schedule-Hopi transit comes into Flagstaff, arriving before 8AM.</p> <p>Partnerships-Discuss transportation with Hopi and Navajo Nation, county, cities, to gather funding to provide transportation to and from Flagstaff, this in turn assists with economic development, safety, health, welfare (trafficking/missing individuals), and prevent people being stranded.</p>

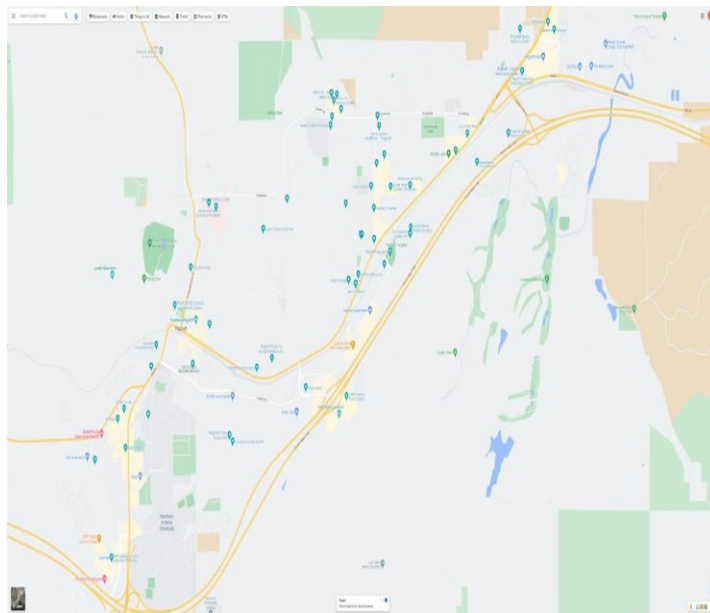
Long Term Goals	<p>Coordinated Efforts-More coordinated approach between City, county, tribe, grants etc., with Mountain Line for bus passes.</p> <p>Bus Service Expansion-Discuss expansion of Mountain Line bus stops to outlying areas of Flagstaff such as Silver Saddle, Mountain View, Timberline, etc.</p> <p>Extend Jurisdiction of Bus Service-Advocate for the existing bus transit (Hopi bus/Navajo bus) out of towns to establish an agreement with the city/county/non-profit/ for profit entities for unsheltered relative/homeless person to make it out of town; person can provide proof of address of said destination. This includes advocating for bus systems to run out to outlying towns like Williams, Munds Park, Valle, Pinetop, Winona – opportunity for employment</p>
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The last recommendation is to establish the Unsheltered Relatives Task Force that is a group of volunteers with lived experience, Flagstaff Police Department, CARE Team, City of Flagstaff Leaders, Tribal Leaders, and Indigenous service workers. This group will collectively discuss these plans of action and ensure movement of these goals. This group will meet as determined by consensus.

Resource/Asset Map

Mission Shelter
GOD Bless House
Libraries
Flagstaff Shelter
Flagstaff Food Services-2nd and Huntington
Aquaplex
NACA
North Country
Day Labor
DES
Gloria's Bakery-Bread
Pantry 7th Ave
Route 66 East of Flagstaff
Community Members
Mountain Line Bus Passes
Guidance Center
Cedar Closet-Voucher for Clothing
Catholic Charities
Salvation Army
Little American
St. Vincent De Paul
Friends/Acquaintance
Ft. Tuthill
Family Food Center
Parks

Hope Cottage
New Walmart-Water Spigot
Veterans Program-Nation's Finest
Jack in the Box
Goodwill
Hospital
Cares Team Unit
Sacred Peaks
Coconino County HHS-Phones Bikes Bus
Passes
Buffalo Park/Cedar Street
CCSO
Forest
Safeway
McDonalds
Terros
Mountain Lion Bus Stops
Victim Witness
Residential Treatment Facilities-Substance Use
Family Resource Center
Santa Fe Laundromat
Crown-(Shelter Services) Medical Priority and
Families
CATS Bus
Info Shop-Taalaah Hogan



Volunteer Voice

The volunteers included in this project are all individuals with lived experience and cultural indigenous perspectives that assist in the overall assessment. The volunteers were gathered through an open call looking for volunteers with lived experience. Through this process we gathered a team of six volunteers. Each volunteer has a wide perspective on Indigenous needs stemming from their childhood, family, and/or past experiences that motivate them to advocate for Indigenous equity in Flagstaff, Arizona. The perspective of our volunteers is an important piece to this assessment because these individuals have lived through these experiences, have families who are unsheltered and are indigenous. The following are personal observations from the field, suggestions for the next assessment round, and most importantly: quotes from unsheltered relatives that were mostly because of receiving toiletries and daily living supplies.

Personal Observations

“Almost everyone we approached, were thankful for us listening to them.

They were all acutely aware of the issues that law enforcement and the policies that are not effective, have on them as an unsheltered population.

Many regarded the anti-camping laws as inhumane.

Many had good things to say about the library.

Many wished they had a place to camp that was safe (security, dry ground, services nearby)

Several offered to give help if we needed it, the spirit of volunteerism was strong.

They all said thank you for the items we gave them.

We saw some businesses who were absolutely terrible to unsheltered relatives. We also saw many who had the most grace and concern for their community, they reminded me that not all businesses are intolerant and callous.

Most days, the work was fulfilling, some days were heavy, I saw people I knew, and they would tell me things they were experiencing, and it would be hard to hear sometimes. Racism, social injustice are all things they face each day, and I would admire how they would handle some of the situations. They can be so compassionate not just with other unsheltered individuals, but the community in general.”

During the initial assessment, there were few people to interview, it could have been due to the winter months or events in town -NAU graduation, Christmas parade (December 2021), but the second assessment, there were more people to interview at the locations assigned (Red) despite the thunderstorms and rainy weather. With both assessments, it was noticeable that most were dressed inappropriately – no caps in the summer, no jackets in the winter, no jacket for rain. Most of the individuals interviewed were approachable and willing to provide information freely where a few declined, a few older men who claimed they were in town “temporarily” appeared a little embarrassed by the survey questions by the way they had their head down and avoiding eye contact when asked the question. Most were surprised to be offered/given swag items but were very thankful when received.

Multiple interviewees expressed loss of a loved one to COVID and some to alcohol abuse, some shared that they had no home of their own on the reservation and that there are no shelters on the reservation. Some reported that when admitted to a hospital or treatment center, they are discharged to the local shelters. A female person indicated she carries a knife for protection; prefers staying alone and feels safer that way. Those who struggle with alcohol expressed insights to the negative consequences of their alcohol use and the challenges of being in an environment that would support sobriety. One person who was deaf and mute was most concerning, but he felt safe in the area and had a notebook and pen in his backpack to communicate.

It was a good feeling to hear from local business staff that they take compassion to those who are unsheltered by offering food, water, and jackets during non-work hours, on their time off. The CARE UNIT seems to have well-rounded staff working with clients when called out to respond to community calls and when law enforcement gets involved. It was commented that an unsheltered person values their backpack; their special and sometimes sacred belongings are in there and they do not feel comfortable parting with it to be searched, especially by police. It was notable that few local resource organizations were repeated as a source of contact for certain needs, unfortunately, tribal government was not recognized as a source of support.

Moving Forward-Suggestion for the Future

Continue to use indigenous volunteers to do the assessment. Continue to use the current volunteers as experts

Involve tribal governmental agencies and leaders to participate on a volunteer basis to participate in the assessment

Continue providing supply kits – hygiene and weather appropriate kits

Have a premade pamphlets or cards to give out that includes resource list with an emphasis on major resources that “cater” to unsheltered relatives and maybe verbiage on their rights to receive services

Quotes from the Field

“Thank you for letting us participate, nobody asks us to help, they make decisions for us but don’t include us in those decisions.”

“We are grateful for the work you all are doing; we hope the City listens to you all.”

“Tell the politicians they need to remember we are part of the community too; we have value and can help the community too.”

“Not every person on the Streets is a bad person, I might not have clean clothes or a place to sleep some days, but I still work and help where I can. I pick up trash on the street because it makes me happy to know I help even a little. We love this town too.”

“The rain and the smell of the forest is so refreshing, rejuvenating, healing, I love it”

“Use the shelter to take shower only, never sleep there”

“Need a safer place to hang out, sit down” – when there are no jobs or tired of hanging out in the library

“Have no home on the reservation, no shelters, so I come here (to Flagstaff), even more expensive and no good paying jobs if you’re on foot”

“Their emotions and safety are important”

“How is NAU’s Tequila Sunrise” different from a group of Indigenous people drinking at the park?”

“Stigma is discrimination”

“Overcrowding at the shelter, spills into street homelessness”

“Get the city, county, tribal officials at the table to address this [homelessness]”

“They are resilient and tough as nails; they are just stuck in a rut”

“There are not enough mental health resources to help them”

“Some do not have the emotional intelligence to understand themselves, because they have been through so much trauma, sometimes for so long”

“Hate to call the police, but sometimes we have too, like when they steal something”

“Family witchcraft me and some people around here do that too”

Appendix

Street Intercept Survey/Interview Questions

1. **TIME**-How long have you been in Flagstaff?
2. **TRIBE**-Which tribe are you affiliated
3. ***CHALLENGES**-What are the 4 most serious problems or top needs for people that are unsheltered in the flagstaff area?
4. **RESOURCES**-Do you use or know of any social services resources in the area? If so, which ones have you used?
5. **REASON**-What are the circumstances that brought you to Flagstaff?
6. **SAFETY**-Do you feel safe?
7. ***RECOMMENDATIONS**-What can the city do to help you?
8. ***ROUTINE**-Where do you spend most of your day or sleep at night?
9. **RESIDENCE**-Where is home, or where are you originally from?
10. **STRENGTHS**-What are some positive aspects/strengths of your life?
11. **GENDER**-If you feel comfortable, can you tell me how you identify yourself?

Focus Group Questions

1. **CHALLENGES**-What are the four most serious problems or top needs for people that are unsheltered in the Flagstaff area?
2. **SAFETY**-What are some ways we can think of how safety is supported?
3. **RESOURCES**-Do you know of any social services resources in the area? If so, which ones do you refer to?
4. **RECOMMENDATIONS**-What recommendations for changes in our services would you suggest based on your experiences?

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