

Arizona SOR Initiatives

Addressing Opioid and Stimulant Misuse & Use Disorders: The Impact of State Opioid Response (SOR) Grants

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) administers the SOR grant program. SOR addresses the opioid overdose crisis by providing resources to states and territories to increase access to Federal Drug Administration-approved medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) and to reduce unmet treatment needs and opioid-related overdose deaths with prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery supports. In 2020, SOR expanded to support evidence-based services for stimulant misuse and use disorders (StUD), including cocaine and methamphetamine.

This brief was developed by the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD) in collaboration with the Opioid Response Network (ORN) as part of a series of state reports intended to showcase initiatives across the continuum of care that states have implemented with SOR funds. The ORN is a SAMHSA-funded technical assistance and training center that works with states, health professionals, community organizations, the justice system, and individuals in all 50 states and nine territories to support efforts to address the opioid and stimulant crisis.



Single State Agency (SSA): Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System



The Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) received \$170,995,982 in SOR funding from FY18 through FY23. In FY23–24, it received \$33,080,062. AHCCCS's goals are to increase access to MOUD and recovery support services and to provide coordinated and integrated care, ultimately aiming to reduce the prevalence of opioid use disorder (OUD), StUD, and overdose deaths across the state.

The state's approach involves developing and supporting state, local, and regional collaboration; substance use disorder (SUD) prevention programming, including targeted and strategic messaging; and service enhancements that enact evidence-based practices across the continuum of care.

The primary populations of focus for Arizona's SOR funds are:

- Individuals with active opioid use, OUD, or StUD
- Individuals at risk for opioid overdose or misuse
- Individuals in recovery



- Youth confronted with social pressures related to opioids or stimulants
- Youth, parents, community members, and health consumers unaware of the potential risks of opioid or stimulant misuse and StUD

Arizona has also identified the following sub-populations for targeted initiatives:

- Individuals re-entering the community from correctional settings
- Individuals in rural and isolated areas
- Individuals without housing or with insecure housing
- Tribal populations
- Veterans, military service members, and military families
- Pregnant women and parents with OUD, especially those involved with family court or state child welfare
- Individuals with disabilities or traumatic brain injury
- Individuals in need of pain management
- Individuals who have experienced trauma, toxic stress, or adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)

Although funding will be used in part to address stimulant use, the bulk of the state's focus remains on opioid misuse and use disorders.

Preventing Opioid and Stimulant Misuse Before It Starts

AHCCCS has used SOR funding to support the media campaigns, coalitions, and other evidence-based prevention programs described below.

Substance Abuse Coalition Leaders of Arizona (SACLaz) Media Campaigns

SACLaz was developed to strengthen and support the collective impact of substance use coalitions across the state. It involves 28 substance use prevention coalitions that work together to raise awareness and education about fentanyl, naloxone, and psychostimulants. Together, the coalitions implemented a statewide media campaign using multiple modalities, including television, radio, billboards, and social media. The campaign encourages parents to talk to their children about the dangers of fentanyl and encourages them to learn more on the [TalkNowAZ](#) and [LearnMoreAZ](#) websites.

The coalitions have also created animated fentanyl prevention ads to play before PG-13 and R-rated movies throughout the state. These efforts have had positive outcomes, with 91.1% of survey participants indicating they intended to make behavioral changes consistent with the project's objectives. For adults, this included talking to their children about risks, monitoring youth social media, carrying naloxone, and sharing information with others. For youth, this included staying away from pills not prescribed by their doctor, offering to help a friend who is struggling, calling emergency services if someone is overdosing, and sharing what they learned with others.

School-Based Focus Zones

Arizona's Cottonwood-Oak Creek School District (COCSA) and Help Enrich African American Lives (HEAAL) Coalition implemented "focus zones" to support students affected by opioids and stimulants. In these safe spaces, students receive quality counseling to shift negative-impulse behaviors into positive-choice behaviors. The zones allow students to remain in school rather than being sent home or suspended for challenging



behaviors. Once a student’s behaviors are managed, they return to class with their peers and reengage in learning. Participation in zones has tripled since its implementation in 2018.

In 2023, COCSD received three recognition awards for their work providing trauma prevention and whole child support to students. Most importantly, program surveys showed that teachers found the programs particularly helpful for students adjusting to stressful life events, such as divorce or death of a parent/sibling, as well as students who found the resumption of in-person classes challenging. Teachers also reported that collaborating with zone staff was helpful, citing that they provided tools needed to help students manage anxiety and remain focused in the classroom.

Community Coalitions

Arizona has coalitions across the state implementing evidence-based prevention programming and education on trauma-informed care, overdose prevention, and naloxone administration. The coalitions are present at community functions and schools. They provide naloxone training and distribution for key community sectors, including law enforcement and first responders, as well as local businesses like hotels and stores. Several coalitions collaborate with community churches to feature prevention education messaging while participants wait for services to begin.

Arizona Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Positive Parenting Program

The Arizona Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has implemented programming to educate people who are incarcerated on the importance of preventing trauma and ACEs. The program uses the evidence-based “Triple P” Positive Parenting Program. Triple P provides participants the opportunity to learn simple and practical strategies to build strong, healthy relationships and confidently manage their children’s behavior.

Overdose Reversal Efforts: Saving Lives

Arizona uses several mechanisms to provide overdose reversal agent distribution and education, which are described below.

Naloxone Distribution

The Arizona Department of Health Services uses SOR and other funding to distribute naloxone to law enforcement agencies, community health departments, healthcare facilities, schools, hospitals, emergency medical service agencies, and other qualifying organizations. To date, it has distributed 139,385 naloxone kits (278,770 doses), and there have been 43,616 overdose reversals reported by first responders.

Over 59,000 individuals have experienced opioid overdose reversal from Arizona’s naloxone distribution efforts using SOR and other funding.

Street-Based Outreach

Arizona works with several organizations to provide street-based outreach. These providers engage individuals at elevated risk for substance use in community locations, such as parks, shelters, college campuses, housing camps, and colleges. They distribute naloxone to individuals at risk for overdose; disseminate educational materials; and provide water in cooling stations around the state for individuals at risk for heat-related illness. Together, these providers reported distributing 24,727 naloxone kits (49,454 doses), resulting in 15,716 known overdose reversals.

Coalition Distribution

Arizona's prevention coalitions have joined efforts to train the community on how to recognize overdose, the importance of overdose-reversing medications, and how to administer naloxone. The coalitions have distributed 562 naloxone kits (1,124 doses).

Naloxone Vending Machines

Two of the street-based outreach organizations have purchased vending machines to distribute naloxone. Clients are issued a code to use at the vending machine when they need naloxone.

Implementing Harm Reduction Strategies

Arizona has also used SOR to support allowable harm reduction strategies.

Community Medical Services (CMS)

Statewide CMS providers offer harm reduction services in addition to MOUD. CMS provides naloxone kits and HIV testing for clients. Those who test positive are given a warm handoff to a medical provider for treatment.

Fentanyl Test Strips

To reduce OUD-related deaths due to substances containing illicit fentanyl, Arizona's street-based outreach providers and state-wide coalitions incorporated the distribution of fentanyl test strips. Between 2021 and 2023, Arizona's providers distributed 21,775 test strips.

Increasing Access to Treatment

Arizona has used SOR to expand treatment access for OUD, including MOUD, implementing the programs below.

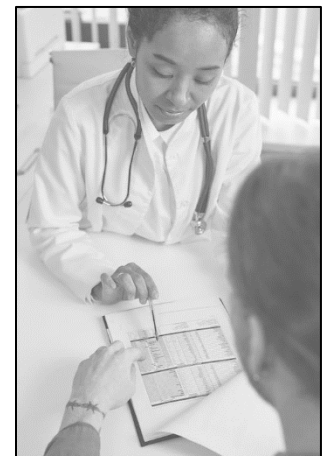
Using SOR funding, Arizona has provided MOUD for 52,439 clients.

24/7 Access Points

Arizona provides funding for four Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) access points. These providers not only offer crucial MOUD services, but also wraparound supports that promote SUD recovery, such as housing, medical care, and counseling. Staff also conduct community outreach activities, targeting high-risk groups by partnering with correctional health facilities, transitional housing programs, and programs for pregnant women with OUD. Since the program's start, 22,778 individuals have been assessed or had an intake completed through these sites, and 12,782 have received MOUD services at these locations.

Hushabye Nursery

Hushabye Nursery uses evidence-based practices to treat opioid-exposed infants and provide wraparound services for families. Hushabye programs include, but are not limited to, Triple P, which increases parenting skills and confidence by engaging, encouraging, and empowering families to address common social, emotional, and behavioral problems; Hushabye Opioid Pregnancy Preparation and Empowerment (HOPPE) classes, which discuss topics like neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS), safe formula feeding, working with the state child welfare agency, safe sleep practices, building a baby's brain, and maternal mental health; recovery group sessions, which focus on providing a safe space for clients to share their stories and learn about



sobriety, recovery, and health lifestyles; and OUD/NAS Soothing Secrets, which teaches caregivers signs of withdrawal and seven techniques to help calm the infant.

Supporting Long-Term Recovery

Arizona has used SOR to implement a range of recovery services through 24/7 access points, correctional settings, and OTPs. These and other programs are described below.

24/7 Access Points

In addition to MOUD, Arizona's 24/7 Access Points provide recovery supports, such as housing, medical care, and counseling. These programs have supported 107,133 individuals.

Re-Entry Coordinators

Re-entry coordinators assist clients through recovery support services and actively recruit new participants and peer mentors by conducting monthly presentations and trainings in jails and prisons. The coordinators help clients secure stable housing, medical treatment, mental health services, SUD services, and other support needed to be successful in the community. The coordinators also serve as staunch advocates for the population they serve. For example, they meet with housing providers reluctant to rent to clients with complex legal pasts to educate them and build relationships. The first year of this program aided 3,184 clients in securing recovery services and housing.

Health and Well-Being

One of Arizona's OTPs established a partnership to designate space for clients to refocus attention on their overall health and well-being. This program offers fitness classes, gym challenges, running events, and nutrition education. Participants working on their recovery reported that the program was a healthy coping strategy, as they often experienced increased positive body image and feelings of self-pride. To date, the program has had 440 unduplicated participants; some went on to become employed by the program and are now mentoring other program participants.



Rapid Re-Housing Programs

AHCCCS continues to support the statewide implementation of the rapid re-housing and recovery housing models. One rapid re-housing program targets justice-involved individuals and assists them in acquiring MOUD; medical, SUD, and mental health services; and ancillary supports to obtain and maintain long-term employment and independent housing. To date, 35 families have been successfully discharged from the program with the ability to sustain housing without assistance.

Community Bridges Incorporated (CBI) Housing

CBI Housing is a particularly strong advocate for helping clients, especially those with justice-system involvement, secure housing. This provider meets with property owners and recovery homes to offer reassurances of its clients' support. CBI also provides active collaboration with its populations' clinical teams and actively monitors their clients' recovery progress. Providing this level of engagement promotes trusting relationships with property owners; reduces the likelihood of recidivism; and results in an increase of available placement properties for this high-risk population. CBI has assisted 338 individuals.

Family Reunification

Arizona's Family Involvement Center uses the Parent Ally Program model to support families whose children have been removed from their custody due to substance use. The model employs parents who have been reunified with their children to provide peer support to parents whose children have been removed. Allies educate parents about boundaries, child abuse and neglect, substance use, self-care, ethical practices, support planning, and trauma. Parent allies have helped connect 190 clients to services and support.

Reaching & Serving Populations of Focus

Arizona has identified several sub-populations, detailed at the beginning of this brief, for targeted initiatives.

Detention Re-Entry Program

AHCCCS has worked with correctional institutions to implement SUD recovery support services. They screen individuals for SUD upon arrival, provide treatment and recovery services, and coordinate mental health and SUD care upon release. Correctional settings involved with this initiative have provided recovery support services for 1,914 clients and coordinated care for 3,117 upon release. Staff who work within the jail system advocate for clients who have SUD upon booking so they can receive assistance and treatment while in jail. Advocates have successfully had their clients' sentences reduced or dismissed with the condition that they go directly from jail into a psychiatric or residential SUD treatment program.

Maggie's Place

Maggie's Place offers resources and support to pregnant women and families experiencing homelessness. The program offers medical care, stable housing, trauma-informed services, and programming to strengthen parent confidence and knowledge.

Pregnancy and Early Childhood Support

Arizona's child welfare agency implemented a Healthy Families Program to support at-risk families by promoting positive parenting, enhancing child health and development, and preventing child abuse and neglect. They also implemented a Substance Exposed Newborn Safe Environment (SENSE) Program in rural and underserved communities. The program provides home health services for families referred by the child welfare agency after the birth of a substance-exposed infant. The program includes in-home nursing assessments and continuous monitoring of the infant's overall health, as well as referrals to other support services. To date, 8,320 home visits have been conducted, and 1,896 families have been served.

An OBGYN practice in Arizona utilizes SOR to offer treatment and recovery services for pregnant and postpartum women. So far, the program has provided treatment for 29 women, assisted 41 women with recovery housing, provided recovery coaching for 551 women, and helped 25 women with employment.

Tribal Partnerships

AHCCCS contracts with the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and the Gila River Tribe for implementation of MOUD treatment, prevention programming, and other therapies. These partners organize culturally appropriate educational opportunities and provide recovery support services that target both clients and their families. Public outreach activities also include distribution of drug deactivation bags and naloxone, as well as training related to their appropriate use.



About the Opioid Response Network (ORN): ORN is a group of diverse individuals and organizations working collaboratively to address the opioid and stimulant crisis. Funded by SAMHSA’s SOR/Tribal Opioid Response (TOR) Technical Assistance (TA) grant, ORN works with states, health professionals, community organizations, the justice system, and individuals in all 50 states and nine territories to provide education and training. **Visit the ORN website [here](#) or request training or TA [here](#).**

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