



innovation hub

AMCHP | *Explore. Build. Share.*



MCH Innovations Database Practice Summary & Implementation Guidance

Maggie's Place: New Beginnings for Homeless Pregnant Women

Maggie's Place provides safe housing and a nurturing community for homeless pregnant women, empowering them to thrive throughout their lifetime.



Location

AZ



Topic Area

Access to Quality Healthcare;
Birth Outcomes; Family &
Youth Engagement; Mental
Health & Substance Use; Safe
and Connected Communities;
Workforce Development



Setting

Community



Population Focus

Adolescents & Young Adults;
Children; Families and
Caregivers; Infant; Women &
Maternal



Date Added

Spring 2025

Contact Information

Laura Magruder; Maggie's Place; 602-596-4985; lmagruder@maggiesplace.org

Section 1: Practice Summary

PRACTICE DESCRIPTION

The needs Maggie's Place addresses: Maggie's Place provides safe housing and a nurturing community for homeless pregnant women, empowering them to thrive throughout their lifetime. Maggie's Place serves homeless, pregnant, and parenting women seeking shelter, counseling, and recovery support in Maricopa County. Pregnant women struggling with homelessness, substance use, and addiction are largely disconnected to necessary resources and lack support to become self-sufficient.

Upon arrival at Maggie's Place, women are usually single, abandoned, without family ties, and have been homeless and living on the street for an average of 4.75 years. Most women enter our program at 22 weeks of pregnancy and, up until that point, have not received any prenatal care. At intake, our program staff determine an individualized care plan for ongoing support to help participants reach their goals. Once a woman enters our door, all services are available throughout the pregnancy and birth of her baby until her child is 12 months old. Upon exiting a Maggie's Place home, families are encouraged to continue utilizing all services offered at the Maggie's Place Family Success Center.

How Maggie's Place addresses those needs: Maggie's Place strives to meet the immediate physical and emotional needs of our moms and offers a variety of services to help them achieve their goal of sober living. In addition to addressing community health factors by removing obstacles these women face, we utilize a Wellness Wheel that focuses on complete wellness (social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, physical, environmental, financial, and occupational) and goals of each participant. Our goal is to remove any challenge that could prevent moms from achieving their goals.

Participants receive individual counseling from our Licensed Independent Substance Abuse Counselor (LISAC) and participate in many support groups (DCS, AA, Grief Processing, SMART Recovery, SUD, Perinatal and Postpartum, and Maternal Mental Health) that focus on working through grief and loss stemming from their past trauma and provide postpartum support and perinatal education. Moms also receive on-site case management services from our Stability Specialists and Peer Support moms that allow them to continue taking active steps towards achieving their personal goals.

Key Population: The target population is low-income female adults (18+) who are homeless and pregnant, usually single, abandoned, without family ties, and has nowhere to go. The typical profile of a mom we serve is a minority female, 71% of moms in our program are victims of domestic violence, 40% have been hospitalized because of a domestic violence injury, 61% report opioid addiction. All (100%) of our moms have experienced chronic and intermittent homelessness, have never experienced sustainable employment, have poor credit or no spendable credit, lack understanding of creating options for survival, and would rather hold a sustainable job than be unemployed. The most recent demographic breakdown of our population is as follows: 100% female; 31% African American, 20% Caucasian, 25% Hispanic, 18% Native American, 1% Asian, 5% Multi-Racial; 100% of Moms served meet HUD guidelines for homelessness and the Federal guidelines for poverty.

Intend to accomplish: Maggie's Place provides a robust portfolio of services beyond shelter by creating a transformative community, offering programs in parenting, child enrichment, health and wellness, and education aligned with empowering moms to reach their goals of self-sufficiency, stability, maternal wellness and child wellbeing.



CORE COMPONENTS & PRACTICE ACTIVITES

Maggie’s Place provides essential support for mothers and infants through safe housing, specialized care, and community building. The organization operates five maternity homes, offering shelter, food, and transportation to ensure stability. Mothers receive prenatal and postpartum support, including safe sleep education, infant safety, and early parenting guidance. Partnering with agencies and using **UniteUS** for referrals enhances service access. To foster connection, Maggie’s Place hosts weekly community nights and larger monthly events at the **Family Success Center (FSC)**, creating a strong support network for families.

Core Components & Practice Activities		
Core Component	Activities	Operational Details
Safe and stable housing	Provide bed, food, transportation	Maggie’s Place has five maternity homes that can house 34 moms and their newborns. Mom can reside in the maternity home through pregnancy and up to baby’s first birthday.
Specialized supports for prenatal, postpartum, and pediatric care	Safe sleep & infant safety; Support for moms in Medication Assisted Treatment	Partner with agencies to provide supplemental services. Utilize UniteUS for referrals
Social & Community building activities	Weekly community night in the maternity homes; monthly social events at FSC (Mother’s Day, Christmas, etc.)	Homes – weekly, coordinate with partner agencies, volunteers and staff to provide training, workshops, etc. FSC – monthly, larger social events for families
Supports for basic needs	Food; Clothing; Territories; Baby supplies; Bus passes	Access to food pantry, access to donation closet requires “MP\$” earned by attending classes, counseling, etc. Monthly bus passes
Case Management	Assessments; Coaching; Referrals; Coordination of Care	Az Self-Sufficiency Matrix, Pulse Check Homes – weekly meetings with staff FSC – meetings as needed Referrals – UniteUS platform Maintain case files in SharePoint
Specialized support for parents & child development	Evidence-based parenting classes; car seat safety; Safe Sleep	Nurturing parenting (various modules) Triple P Parenting; Staff certified to teach, completion of classes mom receives age appropriate car seat and/or pack-n-play.



Life skills	Classes	Financial literacy GED test preparation and tutoring Nutrition and fitness Workforce development (job fairs, resume writing, search/application assistance) Legal services
Peer support	One-on-one support; Peer led addiction support groups	Peer support, regular meetings/phone calls Groups: weekly addiction (“AA”)
Wellness	Group/individual counseling (grief, trauma, sobriety, and healthy relationships)	Counseling LISAC (addiction) Trauma based therapy Art journaling
AmeriCorps members	Provide 24/7 care and support in the maternity homes	Provide one-on-one mentoring daily Utilize motivational interviewing Provide emotional support and address the influences of trauma using evidence-based Seeking Safety curriculum

COMMUNITY WELLNESS

Upon entering our program, most women are single, abandoned, and have been homeless for an average of 4.75 years. Participating mothers are predominately young (average age is 28), single (92%), minority females who have been abandoned by immediate family. 71% are victims of domestic violence, 61% report opioid addiction, and 40% have been hospitalized due to domestic violence. All participants are experiencing homelessness and living below the federal poverty level at intake.

While in our care, moms are connected to resources, including prenatal care, health insurance (including Medicaid), low-cost housing, and education programs. All (100%) our participants have experienced chronic and/or intermittent homelessness prior to intake. The majority of our moms are victims of domestic violence and have turned to opioid misuse or substance abuse to cope with their desperate situations.

According to the 2024 Maricopa Association of Governments Homeless Point-in-Time Count, young women, ages 18-24, are considered an especially at-risk population when homeless, and their unsheltered numbers have increased in the past few years. Homeless women account for 36% of the current homeless population, and they have high rates of chronic and mental illness, poor birth outcomes, and high mortality. These at-risk women, some of whom are expectant mothers, are at high risk of having chronic illnesses, including asthma, anemia, bronchitis, hypertension, and ulcers. According to the most recent available data from the KidsCount Data Center, 25% of Arizona’s children have parents who lack stable employment, and 17% of Arizona’s children live in poverty. Maricopa County has one of the highest rates of housing loss in Arizona. From 2019 to 2023, rent increased by an average of 38%. Child safety threats and poor housing jeopardize family preservation and child permanency goals. Housing instability and homelessness pose greater risks of having a child removed from their family’s care and referred to the Department of Child Safety. Housing problems present challenges to reunification for families with children placed in out-of-home care. Maggie’s Place works diligently to provide housing and wrap-around support services for at-risk mothers and pregnant women across Maricopa County



while program participants work to build self-sufficiency, sobriety, and independence. By providing these historically at-risk communities with the tools, resources, and support networks necessary to achieve independence, Maggie's Place is working to improve service delivery and maternal and infant outcomes.

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

Maggie's Place (MP) is committed to building and using evidence to inform our practice and contribute to the broader field. MP is currently participating in a study of maternity homes, led by the Lab for Economic Opportunities within the University of Notre Dame. Through the Family Self Sufficiency Demonstration Development grant from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation within the federal Administration for Children and Families, Maggie's Place has been working in partnership with Mathematica to build our internal capacity to use data and research. Through this work, we developed a comprehensive logic model, created a culturally appropriate assessment (Pulse Check), created tools to promote consistent service delivery, developed and improved new mechanisms for collecting feedback from the moms we serve, and are currently working on redesigning our workforce development program and implementing a new data system. MP is also part of a retrospective survey evaluation through The Wellington Group as part of a grant addressing substance use.

2024 stats:

- Length of Stay continues to increase over the years-7 months
- Employed at exit-38%
- Az Self-Sufficiency matrix scores, 79% showed a positive increase across various domains
- Positive exit defined by HUD-62%
- Eleven monthly social/community events, attended by 501 moms and 986 children
- 18 moms participated in 390 individualized counseling sessions (LISAC) and 375 Accelerated Resolution therapy sessions
- 29 moms attended a total of 216 support group sessions

Section 2: Implementation Guidance

COLLABORATORS AND PARTNERS

Some partnerships are grant-driven and some are long-standing relationships in the community. We have a dedicated staff member to vet potential partners and cultivate relationships with other organizations. Establish MOUs to ensure understanding of metrics.



Practice Collaborators and Partners

Partner/ Collaborator	How are they involved in decision-making throughout practice processes?	How are you partnering with this group?	Does this stakeholder come from a community impacted by the practice?
Moms	Moms are regularly surveyed, allowing for real-time program adjustments	Minimum 2 surveys per year	Yes, all our moms have experienced homelessness and have lived in one of our maternity homes
AmeriCorps (CNCS)	Federal grant awarded through the state via competitive process, dictates how many Corps members Maggie's Place will host.	Staff the maternity homes 24/7, 365 days Key to program implementation Members are trained in Seeking Safety, motivational interviewing, conflict resolution	Possibly, not a requirement to serve, nor disclose Members have access to regular counseling services to address secondary trauma they may experience
Community Medical Services	N/A	Referral and support partner agency for moms utilizing MAT	N/A
Jacob's Hope	N/A	Referral agency, prepares moms for opioid pregnancy and NAS identification and treatment/care plan	N/A

REPLICATION

Through our experience establishing homes in states outside of Arizona, we've identified several key lessons that are critical to the success and sustainability of these initiatives.

- First and foremost, **local capacity is essential**. Ensuring that we have strong partnerships and reliable local resources significantly impacts the effectiveness of our operations. Access to **state and local services**, such as Medicaid, SNAP, and WIC, is also a vital factor in providing comprehensive support to



the families we serve. Building connections with these services early on allows us to meet the different needs of our residents.

- We've found that securing an **AmeriCorps grant or partnership** is a game-changer. AmeriCorps support strengthens our capacity by providing consistent staffing and program stability. However, to maintain quality and avoid overextending, it's important to **focus on doing a few things well** before expanding. Resisting the temptation to take on too much at once helps prevent mission creep and ensures we maintain the integrity of our programs.
- When evaluating potential properties, we've developed a **red light/green light process** to guide our decision-making. This process helps us assess whether a location meets essential criteria, such as **proximity to public transportation, daycare, and employment opportunities**, which are all vital for the families' independence and success. Additionally, having a **grocery store within walking distance** is an important factor in promoting accessibility and self-sufficiency.
- From a staffing perspective, we've determined that the **ideal capacity is a 1:2 ratio of AmeriCorps members to moms** when AmeriCorps members are responsible for the daily operations of the house. This ratio allows for effective support while preventing burnout and ensuring consistent care.
- Finally, we've learned the importance of considering **neighborhood support** for group homes. It is essential to determine whether there are public feedback processes, such as community hearings or HOA regulations, that could impact our ability to operate. Proactively addressing these factors helps us avoid potential roadblocks and fosters positive relationships with the surrounding community.
- Overall, these lessons have shaped our approach to expansion, enabling us to be more strategic, effective, and sustainable in supporting families in Arizona.

INTERNAL CAPACITY

To successfully establish and operate a new home, several essential steps and considerations must be addressed.

- The process begins with conducting a **feasibility study** and engaging with **local funders** to assess financial viability and secure initial support. Early collaboration with potential funders can provide valuable insights into local needs and funding opportunities. Establishing **501(c)(3) status** is also critical. This can be done either by creating an independent nonprofit organization or by partnering with an existing 501(c)(3) as a **fiscal agent** to streamline the process.
- Building a **board of directors** and leadership team is the next key step. A strong and intentionally structured board can offer strategic guidance, fundraising support, and community connections. It is also essential to **contact the state AmeriCorps commission** to determine eligibility for participation. If eligible, it is recommended to **start with a planning grant** to develop a clear and structured AmeriCorps program before seeking full funding.
- From a logistical standpoint, identifying **baseline assets** is crucial. This includes securing a property, assessing it for **renovation requirements**, and determining the **capital needed** to bring the home up to code and meet programmatic standards. The house must be designed to accommodate residents comfortably and support program goals.
- The next phase involves defining the **programmatic elements and requirements**. This includes establishing house rules, resident expectations, available resources, and the overall **timeline for stay**. Developing an **aftercare model** or identifying referral pathways for residents after they leave the program is also important for long-term support.
- Building a **referral and outreach network** with community partners is essential for maintaining bed capacity. These partnerships help connect eligible residents to the program and foster collaboration with local service providers.



- To ensure ongoing accountability and improvement, it is necessary to implement **data collection and evaluation processes**. Consistent tracking of outcomes, resident progress, and program effectiveness will support continuous improvement and demonstrate impact to funders.
- Staffing is another critical factor. It is important to determine the **necessary roles**, including site supervision, program management (both direct service and program design), case management, and fiscal and facilities management. Administrative support is also essential for smooth operations.
- Establishing a **supply chain** for the home involves identifying reliable sources for donations and determining which items need to be purchased. A consistent flow of household essentials, food, and personal care items will ensure residents have what they need.
- Finally, creating a **volunteer engagement plan** is key to building community support. This includes identifying volunteer opportunities, implementing **background check processes**, and establishing clear guidelines and boundaries to ensure the safety and well-being of residents.
- By following these steps, the organization can create a strong, sustainable program that effectively serves its residents while building long-term community partnerships and support.

PRACTICE TIMELINE

For more information on this practice's timeline and specific practice activities, please contact Laura Magruder directly at email@maggiesplace.org.

PRACTICE COST

The attached budget is based on a home that accommodates 6 mothers, 4 AmeriCorps members, supervision and case management, and home is free and clear. For more information on this practice startup costs and budgets, please contact Joyce Clapp directly at email@maggiesplace.org.

LESSONS LEARNED

One size does not fit all. Over the years Maggie's Place (MP) has revised programs, therapeutic partnerships, community guidelines (rules/norms for the homes), and referral processes. MP received Trauma-Informed Care certification as an organization, successfully incorporating trauma informed practices throughout the organization, including administrative staff. Leadership needs to recognize the effects of secondary trauma; MP has incorporated self-care into our regular staff meetings and an annual organizational wide retreat.

NEXT STEPS

Strategic planning session, February 2025, was focused on growth. Over the years we have expanded programs and opened additional homes. Senior staff have been evaluating a transitional apartment complex, allowing MP to add beds without stretching AmeriCorps members and staff.

The Perinatal Substance Use Disorder Implementation & Policy Hub project is supported by the Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts (FORE) and Perigee Fund. The content presented is the responsibility of the featured practices and policies and does not necessarily reflect the views of FORE, Perigee Fund, or AMCHP.

