



ENDING HEALTH DISPARITIES FOR ARIZONANS WHO USE DRUGS.

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021



## WE ENVISION

an Arizona where justice, autonomy, & wellbeing are guaranteed for people who use drugs

## OUR MISSION IS

building a safe & healthy Arizona with people who use drugs (PWUD)

## WE VALUE

collaboration | transformation | equity | centering PWUD

## WE EMBRACE HARM REDUCTION PRINCIPLES

Harm reduction is a social justice movement built on the recognition that people who use drugs are the experts of their own lives;

that stages of substance use are not linear;

and that the preventable health inequities faced by PWUD are driven by oppressive systems and are felt more greatly by PWUD with intersecting marginalized identities.



# OUR PROGRAMMATIC STRATEGY



## HARM REDUCTION OUTREACH PROGRAM

Peer certified outreach staff create opportunities for meaningful change through participant-driven, holistic goal setting while assisting with practical issues like transportation, getting health insurance, obtaining vital documents, or finding stable housing.

HIV & Hepatitis C testers conduct community-based testing, education on staying safe, and linkage to care.



## TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Staff and volunteers distribute naloxone and fentanyl test strips to people at risk of overdose and others who may be in a position to assist, while providing training on how to use them.

Overdose Prevention Coordinators provide in-depth trainings throughout the state to teach overdose prevention, proper response, and use of naloxone. These trainings are available to anyone interested.



## SYRINGE SERVICES PROGRAMS

SSPs provide safe disposal of used - and access to new - syringes as well as naloxone, fentanyl test strips, wound care and hygiene supplies, and connection to our Peer Support Specialists and HIV/Hepatitis C Testers. Syringe Services are offered via street outreach, fixed sites, and home delivery.



## SUPPLY DISTRIBUTION

We know that so many of our community members would be able to keep themselves safe if they only had access to unnecessarily difficult-to-come-by safety supplies. Through our outreach staff, our Harm Reduction by Mail program, and our secondary distributors, we ensure that safety supplies are available to people who use drugs and those who love them throughout the state.



## ADVOCACY

Many of our programmatic activities used to be illegal, and the only way that changed was through our legislative advocacy. Since 2011 we have advocated for harm reduction and smart drug policies in the state of Arizona.



## OUR IMPACT IN 2021

**26,755**

Individuals reached through street outreach and community training events.

**54,959**

Safety & hygiene kits distributed to people who use drugs.

**1,492**

HIV and hepatitis C tests administered.

**170,172**

Doses of Naloxone distributed.

**2**

Laws passed to increase safety and wellbeing for Arizonans who use drugs.

**6,516**

Overdoses reversed.

**4,023**

Volunteer hours donated.



## VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Anne Golibersuch is one of SPW's longest standing volunteers. In 2021, Anne assembled over 10,000 kits and spent over 370 hours supporting SPW through kit making, organizing inventory, event support, and more. Anne is a true harm reductionist, volunteering for other local HR and mutual aid groups as well as SPW. She is willing to take on all sorts of work to help PWUD stay safe and ensure people are treated with dignity. We're so lucky to work with someone like Anne!



## WE REACH FOLKS ACROSS THE STATE

Rural areas experience inequitable access to a variety of resources and services. That, compounded by different cultural stigmas, has left them hardest hit by the overdose crisis. We believe PWUD deserve life-saving and life-affirming care no matter where they live, which is why we developed community-specific programming to serve southern and rural counties.

### **In Cochise, Graham, and Santa Cruz counties we:**

- ✦ engaged a total of 2,043 individuals
- ✦ recruited 139 new volunteers
- ✦ supplied 2,487 naloxone, 2,175 medical + safer use, & 214 hygiene kits.
- ✦ trained 1,072 people on SPW's harm reduction best practices of overdose prevention & naloxone administration

***PWUD reported 145 successful overdose reversals using naloxone to our Outreach Specialists.***



## WE ADAPT

When COVID hit in 2020, reaching people where they're at took on a whole new meaning. Many folks could no longer come to our office, pop up sites, or events to pick up safe use supplies.

We turned this challenge into an opportunity by developing the Harm Reduction By Mail (HRBM) program. The system we created helped us reach into new corners of the state & help keep people even safer.

### **Our successes in the first 9 months:**

- ✦ 70 recipients registered to volunteer for SPW
- ✦ 111 cities and towns reached, 15 for the first time
- ✦ 1,042 unique naloxone recipients
- ✦ 929 receiving for the first time





# WE BELIEVE IN BETTER SYSTEMS AND CREATE THEM

Up until 2021, operating a syringe services program was a felony.

Although that didn't stop us and a few other public health subversives,

it did prohibit widescale implementation of SSPs and created major barriers to participation

Our founders advocated since 2011 for legalization of SSPs, and in 2018 we wrote a bill that would be introduced at the AZ legislature four years in a row. After hundreds of hours of our supporters' calling, emailing, and showing up to their elected officials' offices, 2021 was the year it passed.

To sweeten the deal, we were also able to get fentanyl test strips legalized, which - until now - carried a felony charge to distribute or possess.



*But we're nowhere near done.*

Although we're taking some time to celebrate our wins, we've got our eye on issues like:

- ✦ drug-induced homicide ✦
- ✦ possession defeloning ✦
- ✦ medication access ✦
- ✦ and sentencing laws ✦

which we know will take years to get them where we want them.

By building relationships with policymakers and public health experts, we're able to create coalitions that transcend politics and tangibly improve systems for PWUD.

**Stick around and help us make lasting change.**



# REMEMBERING THE MANY WE HAVE LOVED AND LOST TO THE WAR ON DRUGS.

On August 31, 2021, SPW hosted two events in Tucson and Phoenix for International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD). Between 80-90 people came together in public parks to celebrate the lives of those we have lost to overdose and to grieve in community. We built communal altars, ate together, shared our stories, and read the names of those we have lost.

These events fight against the stigma and isolation that surrounds drug use and overdose. They create space for people to connect in community, celebrate the fullness and beauty of the loved ones we have lost, and strengthen our commitment to the work of ending overdose deaths and stigma.



We welcome everyone who has been impacted by this loss to join us every IOAD, and in our ongoing work to dismantle the systems that perpetuate this injustice, take the lives and livelihoods of our loved ones, and do immeasurable harm to our communities at large.

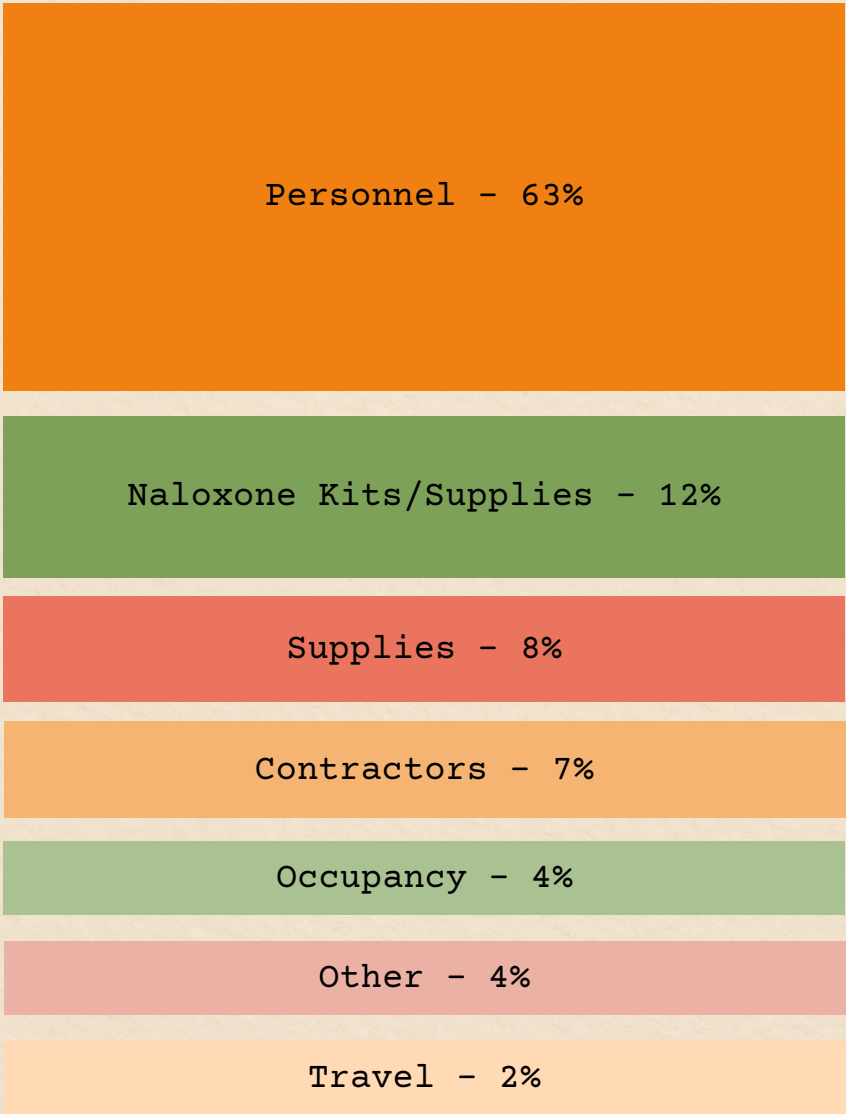
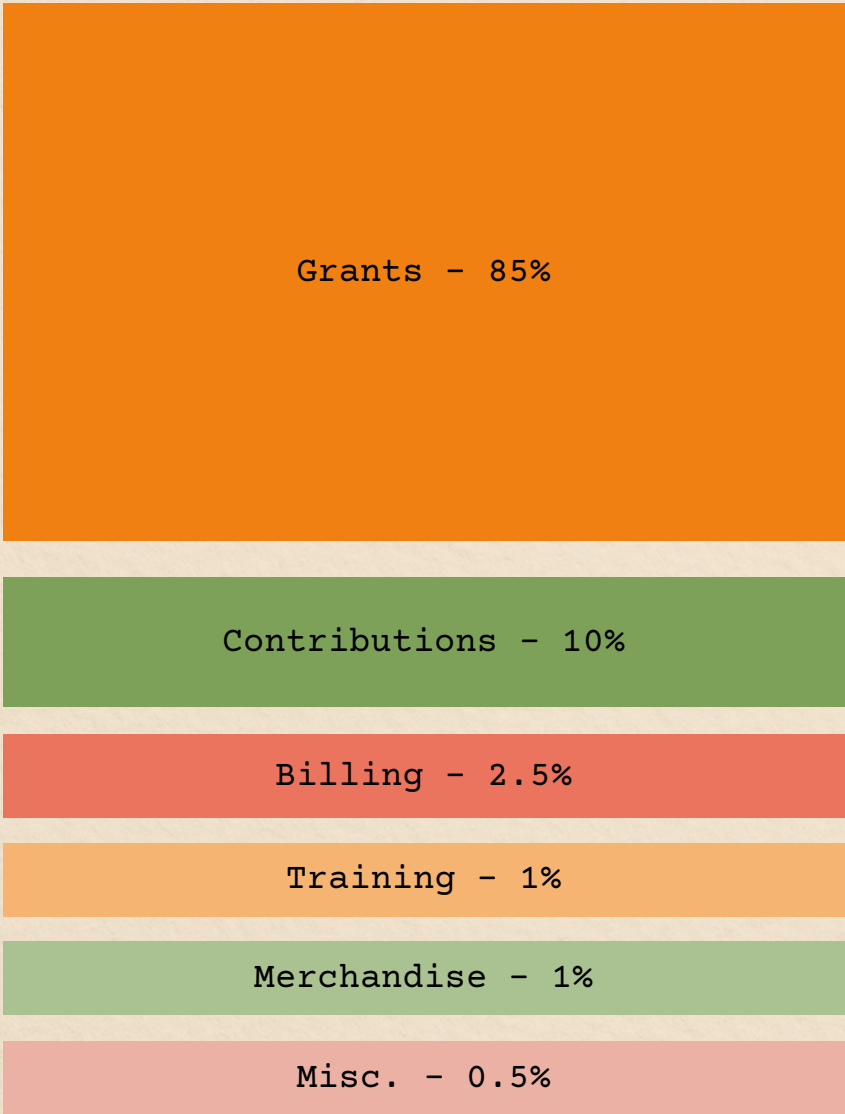




# OUR OPERATIONS

Revenue - \$2,904,059

Expenses - \$3,553,062



In 2021, we built out program infrastructure and created 6 new positions to expand our capacity and geographic reach. With your help, we will continue improving the systems and policy that enable even more meaningful and impactful work for PWUD.



## We can't do it without your help.

2021 was the deadliest year on record for overdoses. While we know that our naloxone distribution last year saved over 6,000 lives, we can't solve this problem alone.

As the War on Drugs continues to rage and evolve, so too must our response.

Time, input, and contributions from our community members help ensure we can change systems from the bottom up to keep each other safe and free.

Please consider signing up to become a monthly donor or a volunteer. With your support, we can build an Arizona where health & safety are guaranteed.

[spwaz.org/donate](https://spwaz.org/donate)

[spwaz.org/get-involved](https://spwaz.org/get-involved)