



# THE BARBELL SAVES PROJECT

HEALING THE BODY TO SAVE THE MIND

# MISSION

Support the physical and mental well-being of people in recovery from substance use with community based exercise.



## Population

Adults in recovery from drug and/or alcohol use. We also have a program for youth age 12-17.



## Community

We focus on building a supportive, honest, encouraging environment for everyone that attends.



## Peer Run

All staff and coaches are certified as Peer Recovery Support Specialists - meaning they have lived experience with substance use.

# VALUES



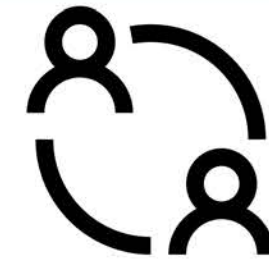
## Health of the Whole Person

Physical and mental wellness,  
person centered & sustainable  
recovery



## Inclusivity

Non-judgmental, compassionate  
and loving



## Connectivity & Community

Support members, grow and build  
community,



## Community Service Agency

# PEER RECOVERY SUPPORT SPECIALISTS

The Barbell Saves Project is credentialed as a Community Service Agency and follows the peer-run model. Coaches and staff of TBSP are certified as Peer Recovery Support Specialists, meaning they have "lived experience" with substance use. More than 51% of the Board Of Directors also have lived experience. TBSP is an organization created by people in recovery for people in recovery.





# The Barbell Saves Project



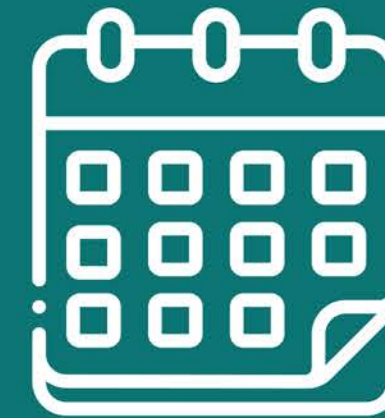
**Over 1000 individual people served since 2021 with over 12,000 sign-ins to class.**



**26 people have attended over 100 classes.**



**Three members transitioned into staff roles and two more shadowing to be coaches.**



**Open 7 days a week  
36 classes a week  
Over 150 hours of classes a month**

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# Impact

**85%**

Of people attending believe their quality of life has improved since attending classes.

**83%**

Of people attending believe their overall physical health has improved since attending classes.

**80%**

Believe they are an important member of TBSP

# CURRENT PARTNERSHIPS





# TBSP DRUG PREVENTION COALITION & YOUTH PROGRAM

Youth intervention program  
Integration of evidenced based curriculum, Seeking Safety, and provided to students who are at high risk of or known to have engaged in substance use. The program pairs mental health topics with exercise.

Delivered to 9 students in Spring 2023 and currently 13 students participating.

Students are from Hope High School.

Ages: 15 - 19

68% Latino/a/x

57% White, 28% African American, 9% Indigenous,  
19% decline to answer

56% female, 44% male

85% heterosexual, 10% gay, 5% unsure

## DEFY: Drug Education For Youth

This is a prevention focused program intended to be implemented at high schools across the Valley. The focus is on using topics, known mediators of youth substance use, in combination with physical activity, to change perceptions of using substances and decrease the likelihood of youth using substances.

Pilot program running at Imagine Prep High school. Program is 6 weeks long with 12 lessons delivered, 2 each week. The program is designed to use no or minimal equipment on site.



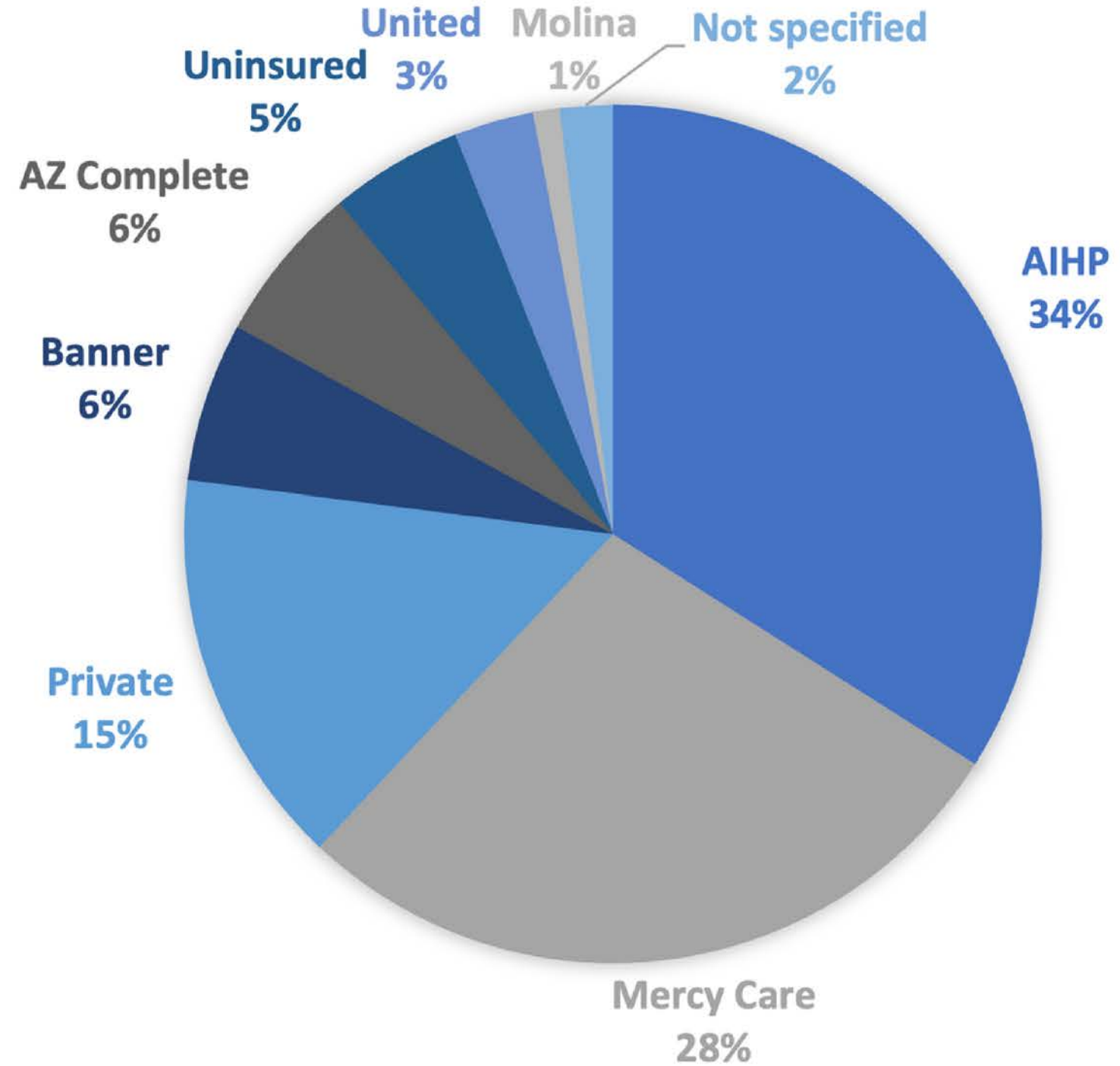
# CREATION OF TBSP DRUG PREVENTION COALITION

In partnership with Arizona Counter Drug Task Force National Guard Drug Demand Reduction Office, TBSP has created a coalition to bring together stakeholders to build a youth prevention program.



# HEALTH PROVIDERS FOR MEMBERS

- Mery Care - 28%
- American Indian Health Plan - 34%
- Private - 15%
- Banner - 6%
- AZ Complete Care - 6%
- Uninsured - 5%
- United - 3%
- Molina - 1%
- Not Specified - 2%





## Gender

Female - 49%  
Male - 51%

## Race

White - 65%  
American Indian - 18%  
Black, African American - 6%  
Asian - 3%  
Hawaiian, Pacific Islander - 3%  
Multiracial - 3%  
Decline to Answer - 3%

## Income

20 - 40k - 30%  
40 - 60k - 28%  
Less than 20k - 18%  
60 - 80k - 8%  
Over 80k - 8%  
10 -20% - 6%

## Problem With

Both alcohol and drugs - 51%  
Alcohol only - 30%  
Drugs only - 28%

## Age

35 - 44 - 44%  
24 - 34 - 36%  
45 - 54 - 12%  
55 - 64% - 4%  
18 - 24% - 2%

## Latin / Hispanic

No - 90%  
Yes - 10%

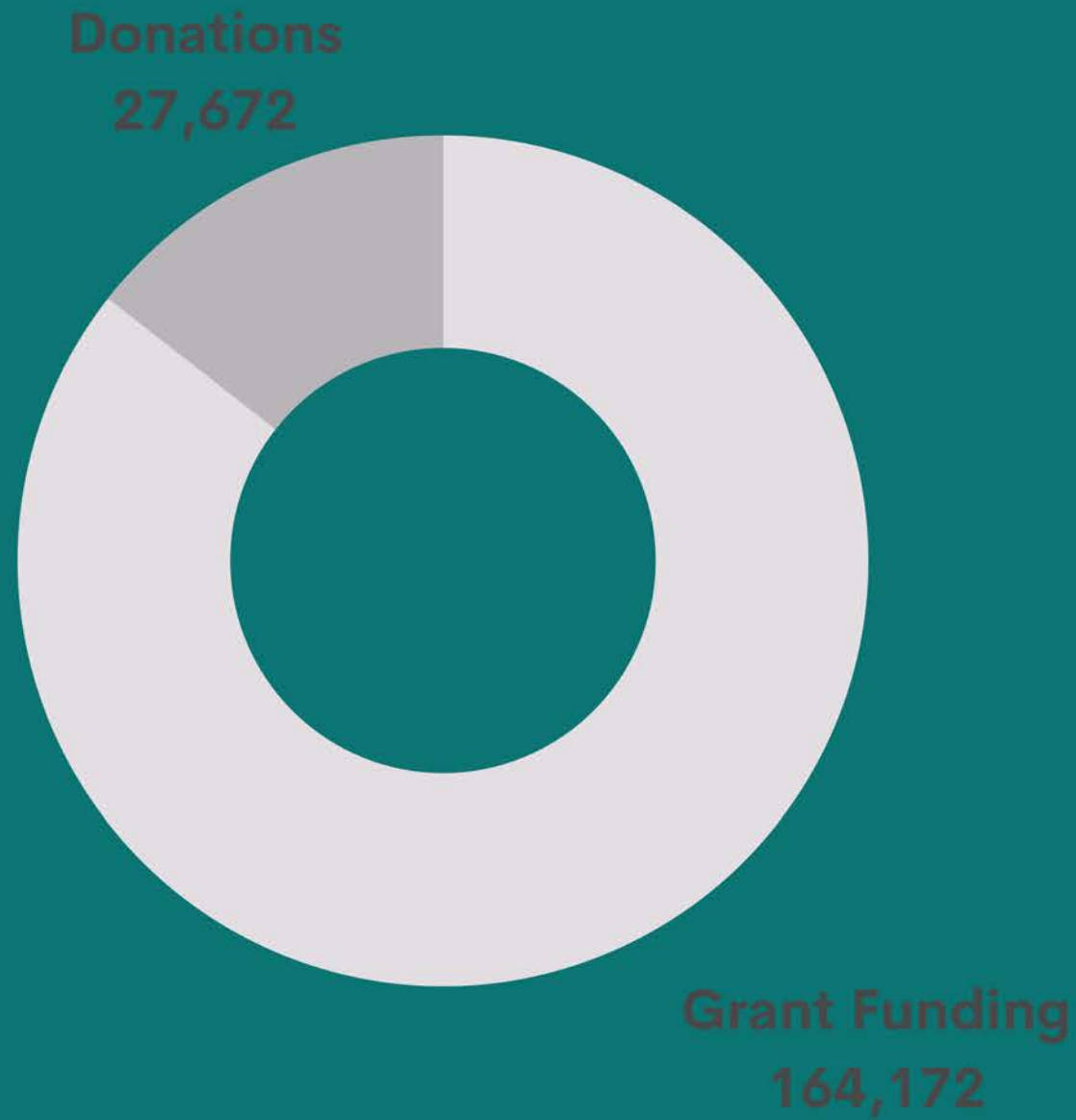
## Employment

full time - 60%  
Unemployed seeking - 17%  
Unemployed not seeking - 12%  
Part-time - 9%  
Disabled - 1%

## Education

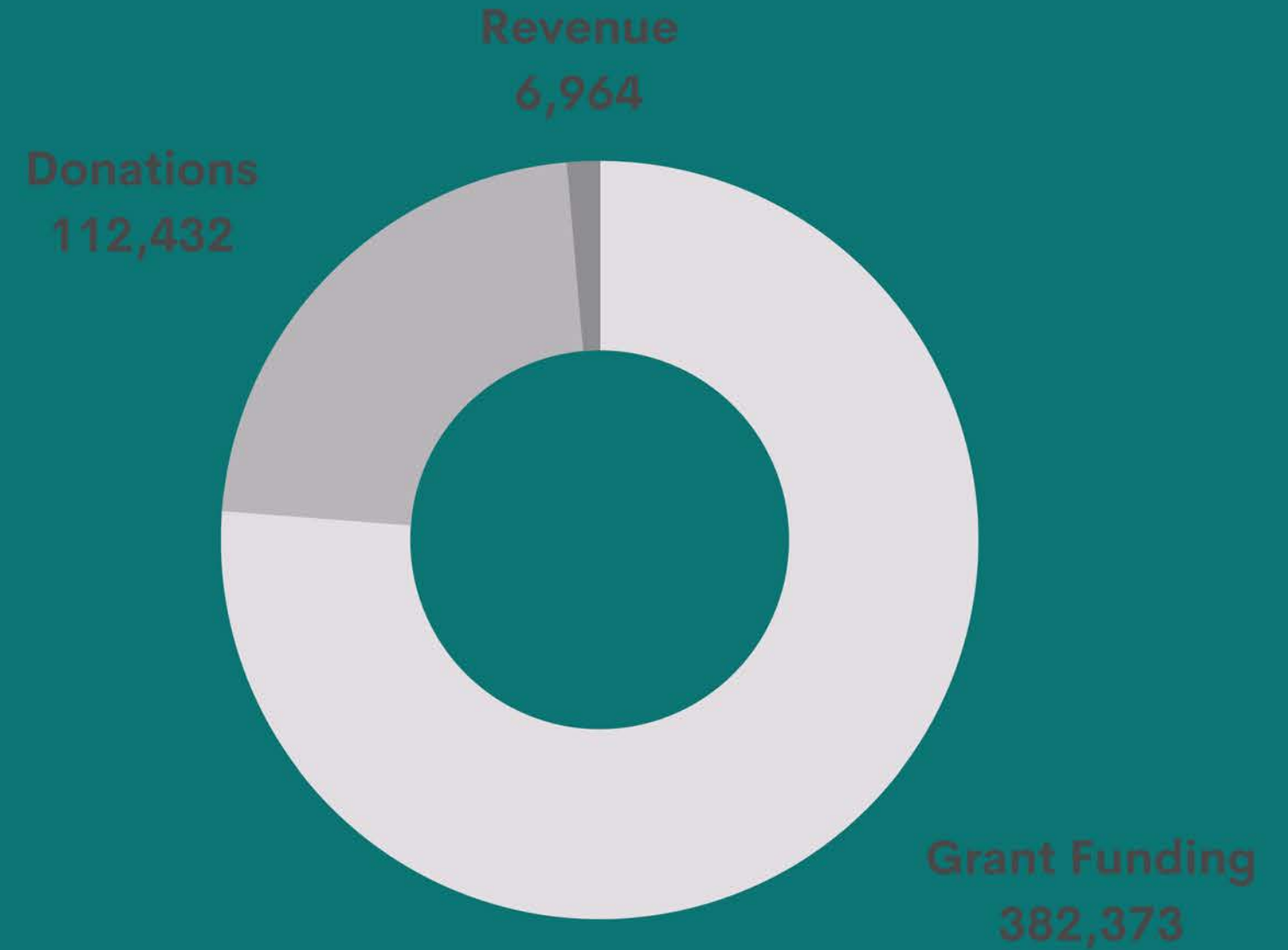
HS / GED - 33%  
Some college - 26%  
Bachelor's Degree - 14%  
Graduate / Master's - 10%  
Associate Degree - 7%  
Trade School - 5%

**2021**



**\$191,844**  
TOTAL INCOME

**2022**



**\$501,769**  
TOTAL INCOME



# Exercise Substance Use



## Financial



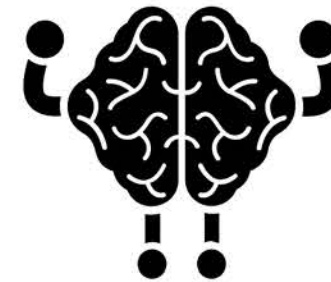
For every dollar invested in treatment of SUD, there is a return between \$4 and \$7 related to reducing justice system and criminalization costs. When savings related to healthcare are included, the savings surpass the costs of treatment by a ratio of 12 to 1.

## Mental Health



Exercise has repeatedly been shown to reduce symptoms and feelings of depression and anxiety - both of which often co-occur with SUD.

## Cravings



Engaging in physical exercise, especially in early recovery, is shown to reduce feelings of cravings.

## Abstinence



Participating in an exercise program is shown to increase numbers of days abstinent.

The Barbell Saves Project (TBSP) was founded by people in recovery from substance use disorder who felt firsthand the invaluable impact that exercise has on the recovery experience. Our mission is to use movement in a community setting to help people sustain their recovery and improve their mental well-being.

Substance use disorder (SUD) has profound proximal and distal effects that impact functioning among individuals, families, and communities. Our team of coaches and staff have lived experience with SUD and demonstrate firsthand to participants that change and a new way of living is possible. Our team have overcome destroyed family relationships, justice involvement, loss of parental rights, lack of housing, health complications, and unemployment.

Today, our team has restored parental rights, stable employment and housing, repaired relationships, and much more.

TBSP purposely combines the use of exercise with community. Exercise improves the mental well-being in people and also reduces feelings of cravings, increases number of days abstinent, and fosters new healthy behaviors for people in recovery. Social connection and relationships are one of the most vital favors for longevity and health. Thus, by intentionally combining these elements, we have created a holistic, supportive environment for people in recovery.

In addition to our peer run group exercise classes, we engage in additional peer, self-help activities. These include providing nutrition information that focuses on the needs of people in recovery. We host “friends and family days,” and “coffee and chats days” to further the sense of community and support among members and their close friends and family. Our coffee and chat days provide fellowship and peer coaches review specific topics, such as how to deal with conflict at work or in the home. TBSP supports members emotional growth just as much as their physical growth.

The Barbell Saves Project has become an essential part of the recovery process for so many people. We have served over 1000 people since we started in August 2019. Now we offer over 30 classes a week totaling more than 150 hours a month of recovery focused community exercise classes. We also partner with multiple local agencies, from Community Medical Services (CMS) to Axiom Care and have additional partnerships in the works with Phoenix Rescue Mission and Maricopa Re-Entry Center. In 2023 we will launch our Barbell Saves Youth Program as well, serving youth age 12-17 considered at-risk for substance use.

When people are embattled with addiction, the cost to the healthcare system is extreme. When these same people are supported and given the opportunity to thrive, they increase their healthy behaviors, like seeing a primary care doctor, eating nourishing foods, and advocating for their health, all things that significantly reduce the healthcare burden. Research has shown that supporting recovery reduces healthcare costs. We envision a future where people with dark and painful pasts of substance use live bright, productive, helpful, healthy lives, giving back the same support and encouragement to the new person in recovery.



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