



One Size Does Not Fit All: Recommendations for Improving Gendered Access to and Experiences with Basic Needs Hubs

In an [October 2021 report](#) on nudging, The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice found that men used Amarillo College's Advocacy and Resource Center (ARC) less often than students of other genders. To investigate the disparate usage and its subsequent impact, The Hope Center conducted focus groups with students in December 2021 and January 2022. Twenty-one students (sixteen men, four women, and one non-binary individual) who use ARC were interviewed across five focus groups. The voices of the interviewees were compiled and reviewed for themes by gender.

This brief summarizes the responses received regarding the use of ARC, barriers to using ARC, and additional needs/suggestions, specifically for men in college. We find great value in investigating experiences and impacts by gender subgroups given unique perspectives on access, staffing, stigma, and services outreach. Yet, many of the findings and recommendations below can be applied to other service design, implementation, and staffing contexts. Our findings suggest the following recommendations:

Reconsider eligibility requirements that limit access to some ARC services

Multiple men mentioned not getting the help they needed due to unavailability of support (i.e., message not returned, need not covered) or academic ineligibility. For example, the cut-off of a 2.0 GPA to receive financial aid (e.g., Amarillo College Foundation scholarship) may have been a gender issue with this sample particularly, because men had lower grades than women. The burden of GPA requirements for financial aid also falls [disproportionately](#) on students of color and should be reexamined at the federal, state, and institutional levels.

Diversify staffing of ARC

One man in the focus group stated, and others agreed, that he would like to be able to go to ARC and speak with a male staff member, particularly regarding sensitive subjects. Additional research is needed to identify the assets and gaps in staffing one-stop centers across the country.

Work to reduce stigma of using ARC

Multiple men in the focus group said that the stigma associated with asking for help either delayed or limited their ability to visit ARC. They stated that ARC should do more to let students know that it's normal to ask for help. Education on stigma reduction for students, [stigma-reducing outreach messages](#), and utilizing peers should be considered.

Increase and diversify outreach for ARC

Students reported that promotion of ARC is mostly word-of-mouth via faculty members. They recommended doing more promotion with specifics about the services offered at ARC, and multiple individuals felt ARC should consider including people that have been helped by ARC who want to get involved in promoting its services to peers. They also mentioned that other mediums (e.g., flyers, syllabi, improving the visual appeal of the website) should be considered to relay the information as the students do not often check their Amarillo email.



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