

Cost Study of Evidence-Based Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs

THE ISSUE: Assessing the Cost of Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs

Although researchers have identified a broad range of programs with evidence of effectiveness in reducing teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and associated sexual risk behaviors, relatively little is known about the cost of implementing these programs, or how the costs compare to the observed benefits for youth. More information on the cost of teen pregnancy prevention programs is needed to help policymakers and practitioners make informed decisions about program implementation and assess the potential return on investment.

Research Questions and Objectives

To help expand the available information on program costs, the Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is conducting a cost study of evidence-based approaches to teen pregnancy prevention. OAH has contracted with Mathematica Policy Research, an independent research organization, to design and conduct the study.

The study will examine the following types of research questions:

- How much does it cost to implement selected evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs?
- What are the main drivers of program costs and how do costs vary by such factors as geographic location and program setting?
- What is the cost-effectiveness or benefit-cost of using selected evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs?

Who Will Be Asked to Participate in the Study?

The study will be conducted with a subset of the 75 grantees currently receiving federal funds under “Tier 1” of the OAH Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) grant program. Established in 2010 as part of the federal government’s ongoing effort to “work smarter” and invest in evidence-based interventions, the TPP grant program provides approximately \$100 million in annual grant funding to support the implementation of evidence-based approaches to teen pregnancy prevention.

Current TPP grantees are implementing a broad array of programs, ranging from relatively short, individualized clinic-based programs to broad multiyear youth development approaches. The program settings range from school classrooms to community-based organizations and health clinics, in all areas of the country.

Study Requirements and Activities

The study team will collect information from each participating grantee on the full range of costs necessary to implement an evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention program. This information will include such costs as staff training; purchasing curriculum materials, program equipment, and supplies; salaries for program staff and facilitators; and overhead costs for the grantee and any supporting agencies. To conduct a cost-effectiveness or benefit-cost analysis, the team will also request information on study outcomes and findings from grantees conducting program impact evaluations.

The data collection activities will be designed to minimize burden on participating grantees. Most of the cost data will be collected through easy-to-use spreadsheets that grantees can complete on their own schedules. The study team will schedule introductory and follow-up phone calls with each grantee to clearly explain the study, answer questions, and confirm the information provided. In some cases, the study team may also have resources to travel on site to meet with program staff and facilitate the cost data collection.

How Will the Study Team Analyze and Report the Data?

The data will be analyzed and reported strictly for research purposes. The study team will generate aggregate estimates of the overall program costs to each grantee, the costs of different program activities and components, and costs per program participant. For grantees conducting program impact evaluations, the team will also compare these cost estimates to the measured program impacts on youth outcomes. The aggregate findings will be presented in peer-reviewed journal articles and reports. The data will not be used to evaluate program implementation or for federal monitoring of grantee or program performance.

What Are the Benefits of Participating?

This study is the first of this scope in the field of teen pregnancy prevention research. Participating programs and grantees will perform an invaluable service to the field by providing much-needed information on the costs of implementing teen pregnancy prevention programs. Grantees will also receive aggregate cost estimates for their own programs, which may help inform their future planning and programming decisions.

Contact

To learn more about the study, please contact:

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For general information about OAH and the TPP grant program, please see the OAH website:

<http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/>