



OAH PREGNANCY ASSISTANCE FUND PROGRAM: SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

Leveraging Partnerships to Deliver Services

New York State Department of Health— *Pathways to Success*

In August 2013, the HHS Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) awarded the [New York State Department of Health](#) (NYSDOH) a four-year Pregnancy Assistance Fund (PAF) program grant to support expectant and parenting teens, women, fathers, and families.

NYSDOH implemented *Pathways to Success*, an initiative to foster strong, sustainable service systems for expectant and parenting students in three communities: the Bronx, the City of Rochester, and the City of Buffalo. They worked in six grantee sites: the Fund for Public Health New York, Hostos Community College, Rochester City School District, Monroe Co. Community College, Buffalo Public School District, and Erie Co. Community College.

As part of the general directive of this grant, NYSDOH fostered and created collaborative partnerships to address their participants' needs. NYSDOH developed a systematic approach to identify partners, reduce service duplication, and measure partnership strength. They institutionalized core program services to improve service delivery and plan for program sustainability beyond the life of the grant. Partner agencies included the New York State (NYS) Education Department, community colleges, school districts, and academic institutional partners, as well as non-traditional partners like the juvenile justice system, faith-based organizations, and community organizations.

At the community level, in collaboration with Cornell University's ACT for Youth Center of Excellence, the six grantee sites conducted a comprehensive needs and resources assessment to take inventory of existing formal and informal partnerships. By recognizing gaps in each sites' existing networks, they built upon and enhanced existing partnerships to better deliver services. As a result, they are better positioned to connect young parents to additional resources including job training, mentorship, educational support, parenting skills, and more.

To measure, evaluate, and improve each community's partner networks at the state level, NYSDOH utilized the social network PARTNER Tool. The tool generated maps that visualized partner relationships and provided a summary of the information across the network, such as degree of centrality and overall network levels of trust and value. These data were utilized to further strengthen collaboration and guide sustainability efforts, which also helped improve services for participants.

Why It Matters?

- Despite a ten percent decline in the teen birth rate in New York in 2014-2015, there were 9,055 births to females under 20 in 2015.¹
- In Year 3 of the four-year project, *Pathways to Success* served a total of 1,097 students, of which 148 were pregnant/expectant teens, and 864 were parenting.
- Supporting expectant and parenting young families helps increase educational attainment and improve birth spacing.^{2,3}

“Proactive solutions always start with individual conversations”

-Saying among the program coordinators of *Pathways to Success*

NYSDOH and its grantees, worked not only with partner organizations, but also with the community at-large, to increase awareness about parenthood and young parents to tailor strategies used to support participants and families. They found creative ways to engage and retain participants by offering family-friendly events at accessible sites, such as local basketball facilities, and by also providing child care. Furthermore, non-traditional partners were invited to events, so expectant and parenting families were exposed to diverse resources. For example, young people at one engagement event learned how to obtain recommendations for vocational training or reengage in school after being released from juvenile facilities.



Participants of the “Two Generation Student Retention and Degree Acceleration Program.” Credit: Carla Lasso.

The grantee sites prioritized the partnership with their expectant and parenting participants. This included collecting feedback from participants about program services and activities to better address and meet their needs. For example, Erie and Monroe Community Colleges successfully established lactation rooms to provide student mothers a safe space to feed their infants and to promote breastfeeding within the school community. Both Monroe and Hostos Community Colleges successfully integrated core services, such as identifying expectant and parenting teens at enrollment, into their Health and Wellness Centers. This strategy helped institutionalize efforts that support many expectant and parenting young families to become successful.

The grant program ended on July 31, 2017. NYSDOH recently received funding for a new one-year initiative focused in New York City that will build on successes from the previous project. The initiative will work with expectant and parenting youth at high schools, community colleges, and community-based organizations in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens to develop, expand, and sustain supportive communities to help expectant and parenting teens/young adults succeed by strengthening linkages and existing infrastructure to create sustainable systems of tightly integrated health, education, and social service supports.

Grantee Contact Information

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About the Office of Adolescent Health Pregnancy Assistance Fund Program

The Office of Adolescent Health Pregnancy Assistance Fund (PAF) Program awards grants to states and tribal entities to provide expectant and parenting teens, women, fathers, and their families with a seamless network of supportive services. PAF Program funds are used to help these populations complete high school or postsecondary degrees and gain access to health care, child care, family housing, and other critical supports. The funds are also used to improve services for pregnant women who are victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

¹ U.S. Department of Human and Health Services. Office of Adolescent Health. (2017). New York Adolescent Reproductive Health Facts. Retrieved July 31, 2017 from <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/facts-and-stats/national-and-state-data-sheets/adolescent-reproductive-health/new-york/index.html>

² Philliber, S., Brooks, L.P., Oakley, M. & Waggoner, S. (2003). Outcomes for teen parenting programs in New Mexico. *Adolescence*, 38(151), 535-53.

³ Sadler, L.S., Swartz, M.K., Ryan-Krause, P., Seltz, V., Meadows-Oliver, M., Grey, M. & Clemmens, D.A. (2007). Promising outcomes in teen mothers enrolled in a school-based parent support program and child care center. *Journal of School Health*, 77(3), 121-30.