



OAH PREGNANCY ASSISTANCE FUND PROGRAM: SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES for Partnerships and Collaborations

Children's Trust Fund of South Carolina

In August 2013, the HHS Office of Adolescent Health awarded Children's Trust Fund of South Carolina a four-year Pregnancy Assistance Fund (PAF) Program grant to support expectant and parenting teens, women, fathers, and families.

[The Children's Trust Fund of South Carolina](#), in conjunction with the [South Carolina Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy](#), created the [Community Support for Young Parents](#). This program assists teen and young adult parents ages 15-24 in four counties across the state (Darlington, Horry, Richland and Spartanburg Counties) in making constructive, short-term choices that can positively influence the long-term well-being of their families. The program's goal is to increase the number and quality of services to promote educational attainment, reduce the number of repeat teen births, and improve parenting skills.

To better provide expectant and parenting teens a seamless network of supportive services, the Children's Trust Fund has focused on developing and retaining partnerships. The Children's Trust Fund chose a lead agency in each of the four counties based on their capacity to collaborate with partners who provide wrap-around services, including positive parenting resources, emergency shelter access, and connections to health care. A [State Leadership Team](#) (SLT) consisting of five non-profit and academic organizations provides project oversight and capacity building assistance for young parent-serving organizations in the counties.

These partnerships are designed to address and support needs that arise from the community-level. When communities identified a lack of capacity and services for Latino adolescent and young parents, the SLT partnered with [PASOs](#); the mission of PASOs is to help the Latino community and service providers work together for strong, healthy families, to conduct needs assessments to identify specific gaps. Collaboration also raised awareness of the needs of young fathers and how to engage them more effectively, helping one partner agency in a clinical setting to pay greater attention to fathers in its outreach to pregnant and parenting teens.

By bringing organizations together, the Children's Trust Fund has provided agencies the opportunity to share information and identify the needs of the target populations beyond the scope of their own agency's work. Preliminary findings from qualitative interviews with representatives from lead implementing agencies and selected partners indicate that the program has enhanced awareness of other community organizations; facilitated new connections and partnerships; and provided new opportunities for collaboration.

Why It Matters:

- Although teen birth rates in South Carolina have fallen 54 percent since the early 1990s, the state still has the 12th highest teen birth rate in the nation.^{1,2}
- More than 4,700 teens give birth each year in the state, and about 25 percent of South Carolina teens giving birth are already teen parents.¹
- Nationally, only 38 percent of teen girls who have a child before age 18 get a high school diploma by age 22.³
- Supporting expectant and parenting young families helps increase educational attainment and reduce the rate of repeat pregnancies.^{4,5}

“A lot of times partners existed on paper only. This has not been the case. I can say that we actually have partners. I just think it comes down to the fact that the whole point of the OAH PAF Program is to streamline things in our community. So that, by itself, is reason enough for us all to work together.” - An interviewee from a partnering organization.



State Leadership Team for PAF grantee Children's Trust Fund of South Carolina. Credit: Andrea Heyward

As part of their local evaluation, the Children's Trust Fund is conducting a social network analysis, measuring how relationships among individuals or organizations are influenced, change over time, and affect observable outcomes of interest. Preliminary findings from 2014-2015 show that the four lead community partnerships differed in their levels of cohesiveness and connectedness as well as in their structural makeup at baseline. During the final reporting period of PAF program funding, 2016-2017, the Children's Trust Fund will repeat the survey and analyses to find out what creates

better collaboration and how to better support these efforts.

The Children's Trust Fund of South Carolina demonstrates that partnership and collaboration efforts can enable organizations to more effectively serve expectant and parenting youth. The Children's Trust Fund notes the need to continually assess the effectiveness of relationships in order to strengthen referral and service provision. The sustainability of these organizational relationships will be critical to the continued provision of wrap-around supports and services for young families in South Carolina.

Grantee Contact Information

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Community Support for Young Parents /

http://scchildren.org/about_us/programs/community_support_for_young_parents/

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 South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, Division of Biostatistics and Health GIS Office of Public Health and Information Systems. (2014). 2013 Teen Birth Data.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014). National Vital Statistics Reports: National and State Patterns of Teen Births in the United States, 1940-2013. Retrieved September 10, 2016 from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr63/nvsr63_04.pdf

³ Why it matters: Teen childbearing, education, and economic wellbeing. (2012). The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. Retrieved September 10, 2016 from <https://thenationalcampaign.org/sites/default/files/resource-primary-download/childbearing-education-economicwellbeing.pdf>

⁴ Philliber, S., Brooks, L.P., Oakley, M. & Waggoner, S. (2003). Outcomes for teen parenting programs in New Mexico. *Adolescence*, 38(151), 535-53.

⁵ 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.