

Five Things to Know About Staffing Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs



1. Assess your long-term hiring needs and use competency-based job descriptions when hiring.

Start by thinking about the different tasks that will be required to implement your program (e.g., recruitment, content delivery, supervision, etc.) and [assess your organization's capacity](#) to complete these tasks. If you are implementing one of the [evidence-based programs](#) from the [HHS Teen Pregnancy Prevention Evidence Review](#), the program implementation reports have information on staffing needs. Keep in mind that staffing needs may change over the course of the program; you should strategically plan for expected staffing changes over time. Once you have identified your staffing needs, develop competency-based job descriptions that clearly outline job-related skills, knowledge, and behaviors.

2. Make staff professional development a high priority: invest in tailored training for staff.

Effective trainings focus on developing specific and relevant skills. While initial staff orientation is a crucial element of professional development, staff should have ongoing training opportunities. In practice, this requires reviewing actual staff performance against their job competencies and performance expectations to identify areas where support is needed. Remember, professional development should not be restricted to workshops and conferences. In fact, the 70/20/10 model for leadership development¹ suggests 70 percent of learning should occur through on-the-job training, 20 percent through coaching and mentoring, and 10 percent in a classroom setting (see the resources on professional development for more information). Finally, make sure to set aside funds each year for professional development, not just for initial training when implementing a new program.

3. Provide staff with meaningful opportunities and supportive feedback to improve performance and reduce burnout.

Supervision and supportive feedback are important aspects of avoiding burnout and fostering a supportive working climate that is focused on achieving positive sexual and reproductive health outcomes for youth. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management has identified five steps in a performance management cycle that supervisors should keep in mind in order to support staff in achieving desired outcomes. While focused on government agencies, this guidance is applicable to supervisors at any organization.

- 1 Planning work in advance so that expectations and goals can be set,
- 2 Monitoring progress and performance continually,
- 3 Developing staff ability through training and work assignments,
- 4 Rating each employee's performance against his/her performance standards, and
- 5 Rewarding high performers in some meaningful way.

1. Rabin, R. (2014). Blended Learning for Leadership: The CCL Approach. Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.

4. When funding is uncertain, manage staff anxiety and support productivity with planning and open communication.

Teen pregnancy prevention programs often experience uncertainty, especially related to funding. The resulting anxiety among staff can contribute to increased staff turnover. Developing a [plan for sustainability](#) from the very beginning can reduce the chances that changes in funding, such as the end of a grant, will result in the end of your program. Even in well-run programs, some staffing transitions are unavoidable. Nothing can guarantee that staff will stick around when they are uncertain about job security, but program managers can reduce staff anxiety by communicating openly and transparently about transition plans. Make sure to listen and respond to staff concerns.

5. Lead by example to cultivate an organization-wide performance culture that supports staff in achieving positive sexual and reproductive health outcomes for youth.

While budgets in organizations working to prevent teen pregnancy are often tight, prioritizing investments in talent management can help reduce the costs associated with staff turnover, thus saving money for the organization in the long run. Your organization should also work to foster a culture that demands and supports high staff performance (i.e., helping youth achieve intended outcomes). Senior staff should lead by example when it comes to using data to improve outcomes for youth. For example, senior leadership should review data themselves and show a willingness to learn and make changes. They should also involve staff in reviewing program data and openly communicate how decisions are based on that data. Organizational leadership should support a learning culture where mistakes are seen as an opportunity for learning and growth and not punitive in nature.

RESOURCES

Disclaimer: This is a list of some, but not all, of the relevant resources available to support organizations in improving their staffing practices. OAH does not endorse any of the resources listed other than those developed by OAH.

1. Assessing staffing needs and hiring

- OAH. Organizational Capacity Assessment for TPP. *A tool for assessing organizational capacity to implement a teen pregnancy prevention program, including staffing and training needs.*
http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen_pregnancy/training/Assests/organizationalcapacity-assessment.pdf
- Family & Youth Services Bureau. Positive Staff Development. *An online resource that provides guidance on staffing issues, including hiring and how to avoid burnout.*
<http://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/features/positive-staff-development>
- University of Kansas. Community Toolbox. *An online resource with practical information for community building. Chapter 10 focuses on hiring and training key staff.*
<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/hiring-and-training/develop-a-plan/main>
- ACT for Youth Center of Excellence. CAPP and PREP Core Strategy 1: Evidence-Based Programs. *A set of resources related to job competences and orientation for comprehensive sexual health educators.*
http://www.actforyouth.net/sexual_health/community/capp/strategies/

2. Professional development

- Center for Creative Leadership. Blended Learning for Leadership: The CCL Approach. *This document describes the 70/20/10 model for professional development.*
<http://www.ccl.org/Leadership/pdf/research/BlendedLearningLeadership.pdf>



RESOURCES

- National Staff Development and Training Association. A New Key to Success: Guidelines for Effective Staff Development and Training Programs in Human Services Agencies. *A resource that describes the key components and roles of effective staff development and training programs.*

http://www.aphsa.org/content/dam/NSDTA/PDF/Resources/New_Key_to_Success.pdf

3. Supervision

- U.S. Office of Personnel Management. Performance Management: Performance Management Cycle. *A description of the performance management cycle and links to additional, practical resources.*

<http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/performance-management/performance-management-cycle/#url=Overview>

- Herman, M. (2012). Reflective Practice Meets Youth Work Supervision. *Youth & Policy*. 109: 118-128. *A journal article that describes a framework for supervision with youth workers.*

http://www.youthandpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/herman_reflective_practice_meets_youth_work_supervision.pdf

- National Youth Development Learning Network. Recognition and Rewards for Youth Development Workers. *An e-newsletter that describes six steps to developing an employee recognition system for youth workers.*

http://sparkaction.org/sites/sparkaction.org/files/nydic/staffing/profdevelopment/documents/recognition_and_rewards.pdf

4. Managing uncertainty

- OAH. Building Sustainable Programs: The Resource Guide. *This document is a collection of resources that provide guidance to help programs and services achieve sustainable impacts, including practical tips and worksheets.*

<http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/assets/sustainability-resource-guide.pdf>

- The Foundation Center. Philanthropy Chat: How to Downsize a Nonprofit. *This podcast examines strategies for handling workforce reductions.*

http://foundationcenter.org/events/archive/phil_chat_downsize.html

- The Bridgespan Group. Managing in a Tough Economy: How Nonprofit Leaders and Their Organizations Are Facing the Uncertainty. *This document describes strategies to manage uncertainty in nonprofits.*

<http://www.bridgespan.org/Publications-and-Tools/Leadership-Effectiveness/Lead-and-Manage-Well/Managing-in-a-Tough-Economy.aspx#.VO6E2tHF9qU>

5. Developing a performance culture

- Society for Human Resources Management. Talent Management: Driver for Organizational Success. *This document provides an overview of talent management practices with links to several online resources.*

<http://www.shrm.org/Research/Articles/Articles/Documents/0606RQuartpdf.pdf>

- U.S. Office of Personnel Management. Human Capital Management: Performance Culture. *This online resource includes an overview of key aspects of developing a performance culture.*

<http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/human-capital-management/performance-culture/#url=Overview>

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