

OPA Pregnancy Assistance Fund Program SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

Oklahoma State Department of Health

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) works with local organizations in the state's two major metropolitan areas to support expectant and parenting teens, women, fathers, and their families, including young parents who are currently or have recently been incarcerated. This network of organizations aims to improve educational, health, and social outcomes for young families by implementing parenting curricula, providing social services and case management to participants, and increasing public awareness of supports for youth.

GOALS

1. Improve participants' physical and emotional health and access to services and resources
2. Improve participants' relationships by increasing their knowledge of healthy relationships and communication skills
3. Increase participants' school connectedness
4. Reduce recidivism among parenting youth served by the Oklahoma Office of Juvenile Affairs



“Strong Tomorrows has been an inspiration to keep me moving forward and staying in school. The support they give me is more than I can say thanks for. Being a teen mom is a hard and challenging job. You have to have all hands on deck.”

- Strong Tomorrows program participant

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

Population

Expectant and parenting youth and young adults (ages 14-24), including those who are currently or have recently been incarcerated, and their families

Location

Oklahoma City and Tulsa Metropolitan Areas, OK

Partners

Oklahoma City-County Health Department, Oklahoma Office of Juvenile Affairs, Tulsa Health Department, Tulsa Public Schools, and Strong Tomorrows

STRATEGIES

Supports for youth in the juvenile justice system

The Oklahoma Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA) provides young parents in their custody with parenting supports like case management, education assistance, and an evidence-based, trauma-informed parenting curriculum. Youth who are incarcerated and youth on probation receive the same curriculum, *Nurturing Skills for Teen Parents*, which covers topics on child development and appropriate discipline with a focus on improving the parent-child relationship. OJA also provides GED and high school diploma programs to youth in their custody and offers material supports like baby care supplies to students on probation.

Teen pregnancy prevention curriculum

Staff from the Oklahoma City-County Health Department and the Tulsa Health Department implement *Love Notes*, a teen pregnancy prevention curriculum which emphasizes healthy relationship development and parenting skills. Over the course of 13 sessions held at college campuses, schools, and community-based organizations, program participants practice healthy communication skills through a combination of lectures, videos, interactive group activities, and self-reflection.

Building on Strong Tomorrows

Strong Tomorrows is a program that provides case management to expectant and parenting youth attending Tulsa Public Schools to help them complete their education while balancing the demands of parenthood. The program's case managers provide students with referrals to services and offer material supports such as laptops for summer course recovery or school-appropriate clothing, made possible by OSDH's PAF funding. Strong Tomorrows also works to grow wider awareness of issues facing expectant and parenting teens: for example, their Fatherhood Awareness event brought together young fathers, a panel of local experts, and other community members to discuss the importance of fathers in family life and the challenges young fathers face.

Strengthening youths' connections to services

More young parents qualify for services from the Tulsa Health Department than currently receive them. To begin to bridge this gap, the Tulsa Health Department is planning a series of focus groups with expectant and parenting teens aimed at determining what young people know about the Health Department and its services, what information is not reaching them, and how to best promote its programs to adolescents. The results of these focus groups will inform a campaign to increase expectant and parenting youth's connections with services that can benefit their families.

Stats at a Glance

35.7

Oklahoma County teen birth rate (per 1,000 females ages 15-19) in 2015-2017¹

31.1

Tulsa County teen birth rate (per 1,000 females ages 15-19) in 2015-2017¹

29.6

Oklahoma state teen birth rate (per 1,000 females ages 15-19) in 2017¹

18.8

National teen birth rate (per 1,000 females ages 15-19) in 2017²

¹ Oklahoma State Department of Health. Oklahoma Teen Birth Report 1991-2017. (2019). Retrieved from https://www.ok.gov/health2/documents/Oklahoma_Teen_Birth_Report_1991_2017.pdf

² Martin, J.A., Hamilton, B.E., Osterman, M.J., Driscoll, A.K., & Drake, M.S. (2018). Births: Final data for 2017. *National Vital Statistics Report*, 67(8). Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr67/nvsr67_08-508.pdf

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About the PAF Program

The Office of Population Affairs Pregnancy Assistance Fund (PAF) Program provides funding to states and tribal entities to improve the health, educational, social, and economic outcomes of expectant and parenting teens, women, fathers, and their families.