

OAH Pregnancy Assistance Fund Program SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

Virginia Department of Health
Stronger Parents Brighter Futures

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Through education-based support groups, co-parenting navigation and counseling, and whole-family case management, Stronger Parents Brighter Futures provides participants with a network of support to empower them to meet their children's needs and make progress towards their educational, health, and career goals. Program staff also emphasize the importance and needs of young fathers and work with service providers and community leaders to build support for social services that target this population.

GOALS

1. Improve participants' parenting skills and co-parenting relationships
2. Improve participants' educational retention and attainment
3. Ensure participants' access to critical resources, such as housing, food, child care, and health services



“ We talk[ed] about goals and our future and we talked about values [and] what's most important to us and our kids. We discussed becoming resilient, a word I had never heard...I didn't realize that situations from my childhood could affect my adult life skills and my parenting skills. I want to give my kids everything I didn't have, so I'm glad I came to the program. ”

- Stronger Parents Brighter Futures program participant, age 24

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

Population

Expectant and parenting teens and young adults (ages 16-24) and members of their households

Locations

10 cities and 13 counties in the Central, Southwest, Northern, and Hampton Roads/Tidewater regions of Virginia

Partners

Fairfax County Health Department; Portsmouth Health Department; Richmond City Health District; Roanoke City Health Department (Roanoke City and Alleghany Health Districts); as well as community centers, juvenile justice centers, high schools, community colleges, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities across Virginia

STRATEGIES

Education-based support groups

Participants receive 24 hours of parenting classes through local fatherhood and motherhood support groups. Class topics include responsible parenting, understanding trauma, building resiliency, and co-parenting. All lessons employ a trauma-informed approach, are taught by certified facilitators, and are offered in Spanish where appropriate.

Co-parenting navigation and counseling

Participants receive ongoing counseling and support from a co-parenting navigator who helps them apply communication techniques, resilience strategies, and other skills learned in the support groups to their everyday lives. Navigators also help parents resolve conflict and, when necessary, help create co-parenting and parenting time agreements that lay out essential details, such as when each parent will spend time with their child. Navigators strive to build equal trust with both parents to serve as impartial mediators and counselors to support the entire family.

Whole-family case management

After administering a thorough assessment to determine participants' strengths and needs, case management specialists connect participants to an array of local resources, including affordable housing, mental health and substance abuse services, food access and nutrition support, education and employment support, child care, transportation, and domestic violence prevention support. Case management specialists build relationships with service providers to ensure that participants are referred to safe and stable environments; they also follow up with participants to make sure they attend classes and appointments in a consistent, timely manner.

Ensuring father participation

Through trainings, consortium meetings, conferences, and everyday interactions with service providers, Stronger Parents Brighter Futures staff advocate for fathers to be included in community support efforts and social service delivery. Program administrators also meet with political, community, faith, and social service leaders to discuss the importance of fathers' involvement in family life and build support for social services that target fathers.

Stats at a Glance

Between July 2017 and June 2018,
Stronger Parents Brighter Futures
served:

318

Expectant and parenting teens and
young adults

161

Dependent children of program
participants

46

Extended family members of
program participants

“The Motherhood Support Group has made such a positive effect within the habits of my life. I have gained knowledge on decision-making, self-esteem, my priorities, how to deal with stress, valuing not only myself but also my family, how to become more self-sufficient, dealing with my childhood trauma...and realizing it was NOT my fault. I have really enjoyed attending this group.”

- Stronger Parents Brighter Futures
program participant, age 24

Grantee Information

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About the PAF Program

The Office of Adolescent Health 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.