

TITLE X GRANTEE PROFILE: UNITY HEALTH CARE, INC.

DECEMBER 2020

Unity Health Care, Inc. is the largest network of community health centers in Washington, D.C., providing primary care and family planning services through a network of service sites, including school-based health centers and homeless service sites. Unity has provided healthcare services to the area since 1985 and became the District's grantee in 2007 after serving as a subrecipient to the previous Washington, D.C., grantee for nearly a decade.

When Unity first became a subrecipient of Title X funding in 1999, it operated two health centers. Since then it has grown extensively to provide services in all eight wards of the city, including in community health centers, homeless service sites, school-based health centers, and correctional facilities. The transition from Title X subrecipient to grantee was encouraged by the Regional Federal Director and Unity leadership. As Unity's family planning clinical coordinator shares, "We were expanding, we were adding clinics, our overall family planning services were becoming more robust—it was natural for us to shift to the grantee side."

Unity is recognized and designated as a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) by the Health Resources and Services Administration. As an FQHC, Unity integrates reproductive care into the primary care setting, enabling clients to receive holistic care in single visits. "You can get anything and everything you need," shares Unity's senior technical adviser to the family planning program. "That's the beauty of a community health center."

Unity's technical adviser also noted the network's close relationship with local hospitals. Many Unity providers deliver preconception and prenatal care and work in the labor and delivery units of the hospitals. These relationships enable continuity of care for patients.

One of the network's major efforts to deliver comprehensive family planning services involved stocking all sites with reversible contraceptive methods, including the more expensive long-acting reversible contraceptive (LARC) methods. Having this inventory readily available enabled clients to receive any and all methods on the same day. Each clinic now carries all reversible methods and has trained multiple staff members in counseling and LARC placement.

FAST FACTS

HHS Region:	3
Year of initial Title X funding:	2007
Grantee tenure:	13 years
# of subrecipients:	3
# of service sites:	21

Website: [Unity Health Care](https://www.unityhealthcare.org)

COMMUNITY CHALLENGES

- Like many metropolitan areas, the District has high rates of homelessness, which create barriers to accessing primary and reproductive healthcare.
- The District is home to a large population of undocumented immigrants, many of whom do not speak English as a primary language.
- In 2019, the District reported 1.8 percent of its population was known to be living with HIV.

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In addition, Unity put significant resources into making reproductive healthcare and education available to non-English speakers at a time when digital translation services weren't readily accessible. Unity's family planning clinical coordinator notes, "When we became a grantee, we made a commitment to producing our own unbiased family planning education materials and translating into four other languages—Spanish, French, Chinese, and Amharic." Unity also has a number of bilingual or multilingual staff at its service sites, which ensures that clients from many backgrounds can have more meaningful conversations about their health.

When reflecting on Unity's transition from Title X subrecipient to grantee, the senior technical adviser to the family planning program shares, "Our subrecipients have largely been FQHCs or FQHC look-alike primary care providers. That's a success of the program in the District—and it was intentional. We wanted to make sure we were reaching the areas with highest need." Unity's family planning clinical coordinator adds, "Title X enabled us to really improve the quantity and quality of [reproductive health and preventive] services."

Unity's president and CEO expresses, "Unity looks forward to continuing and strengthening its D.C.-wide family planning leadership role, including advocacy, trainings, and in collaboration with public and private funders, such as Title X. Title X is critical to serving the needs of families in the District."

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Special thanks to Mark Hathaway, senior technical adviser to the family planning program, Nadra Henderson, Title X project director, Vincent Keane, president and CEO, and Karen Klauss, family planning clinical coordinator, for their contributions to this story. James Huang is Unity's family planning medical director.

ABOUT TITLE X

For 50 years, Title X family planning clinics have played a critical role in ensuring access to a broad range of family planning and related preventive health services for millions of low-income or uninsured individuals and others. Title X is the only federal grant program dedicated solely to providing individuals with comprehensive family planning and related preventive health services.

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