

NEPG AT A GLANCE

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation implemented a two-year Pregnancy Assistance Fund (PAF) grant from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services who received funds from the Federal Office of Population Affairs to serve expectant and parenting young people ages 14-25 via the Connected Youth Initiative and Community Response Initiative. The grant funded three community collaboratives in 2018: Douglas County, Lincoln County (North Platte), and Madison County (Norfolk area) and two additional communities in year 2019: Lancaster County (Lincoln area) and Sarpy County. These communities demonstrated a statistical need for expectant and parenting services, sufficient capacity to rapidly implement strategies, and the ability to sustain the strategies beyond the federally funded project period.

NEPG PURPOSE

Nebraska's Expectant and Parenting Grant project embeds evidence-informed parent and child well-being supports into the local service array, using Youth and Families Thrive promotive factors and an array of programs supporting high-quality older youth and early childhood practices, which include Circle of Security® Parenting™, Sixpence Early Learning Fund for home-visiting and early childhood education, LEAP Back on Track™ postsecondary pathways, and Opportunity Passport™ program, among others.

GOAL

The Nebraska Expectant and Parenting Grant project aims to affect change at both the individual and system level to:

- Increase protective factors for expectant and parenting young people
- Increase parenting effectiveness and parental resiliency and decrease parental stress
- Increase economic self-sufficiency for young parents
- Increase sustainability of services for young parents within local community prevention systems
- **Reduce two-generation involvement in the child welfare system among children under age 5 years**

NEPG IMPLEMENTATION









Connected Youth Initiative and Community Response coordinated systems in each community works to connect all of these supports and services for young adult parents to enhance protective factors and achieve their goals. Nebraska Children and Families Foundation works in partnership with communities to identify the most critical evidence-based services and supports available for young adult parents and assure accessibility via central navigation. Collaborative community teams and young adult parent leaders help identify barriers and determine additional needs and gaps in the supports and services available in communities. Training and professional development opportunities on Nebraska's Youth and Families Thrive™, Reaching Teens®, Askable Adults, and other multigenerational best practices are facilitated for all community partners.

PROCESS EVALUATION

Schmeeckle Research, Inc. conducted a process evaluation as part of the NEPG project, with key successes, challenges, and lessons learned further detailed in a full report. The process evaluation used a mixed-methods approach and leveraged multiple sources of data including, but not limited to, group interviews of project and training staff, coalition leaders, and central navigators, a survey with 60 expecting and/or parenting young adults, and trainee pre-post evaluations. The evaluation includes multiple stakeholder perspectives around concepts such as progress on grant-related implementation and experiences with programming and service delivery. Select key findings are included throughout this document, and a link to the full evaluation report is here. [**A link to the full evaluation report is here.**](#)

NEPG RESULTS

Individual-Level Results from 2018-2020

-  950 expectant and/or parenting young people served
-  1,100 dependent children served
-  87% served identified as women
-  40% served identified as black, indigenous, or multi-racial
18% served identified as Hispanic
-  76% served were age 20 or older
-  30% served were currently pregnant
-  89% of surveyed participants said the services they received mostly or completely helped them meet their own goals or needs
-  90% of survey participants were satisfied or very satisfied with the services they and/or their children received

Most commonly accessed services:

- Support Services Funds/ Concrete Supports (45%)
- Coaching (42%)
- Central navigation to other services (38%)
- Social engagement/peer support (38%)

KEY SUCCESSES

- Mobilization of NEPG participants led to the organization of the Youth Families Thrive Summit in October 2019; this summit resulted in key recommendations from young adults being implemented, including a peer-to-peer support position at Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
- Collaboration with Sixpence brought to light the needs of expecting and parenting young people in the public schools
- Creation of Maternity Leave Program, which provides matching funds to young working mothers, so they are able to stay home with their infant child for bonding and attachment, while ensuring their job is secure
- Community collaboratives using family-centered approach and treating the entire family as a whole
- Social media influencers to assure young parents receive accurate information and are connected to resources
- Systems impact on the perception about expecting and parenting young people in the community and a change in the mental models of those serving young parents

LESSONS LEARNED

- NEPG Continuous Quality Improvement practices led to the use of community dashboard to engage in conversations to identify gaps, areas of need, and additional services
- NEPG community sites are now focused on access to services for young parents and their children and assuring flexibility in service delivery, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Early intervention is important by community-based organizations, so that young parents are not fearful of seeking help and support; we must normalize asking for help
- Families Thrive implementation improves contracting processes with language how the Guiding Premises are the foundation of community-based prevention
- COVID-19 pandemic led to virtual engagement; which many communities reported increased the effectiveness of the referral process, improved relationship-building between coach and young person, and increased connectedness of service providers collaborating to meet needs of young families

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase engagement with hospitals and medical providers; particularly connection to home-visiting programs when young mothers and fathers receive hospital support at time of birth
- Engage sectors of education, faith-based community, housing, and juvenile justice in dual-generation best practices and strategies, including Families Thrive
- Identify opportunities to engage young fathers and increase supports. Use youth data from CYI and Transitional Services Survey (TSS) to help communities identify gaps and a targeted recruitment process
- Continue to offer both virtual and in-person coaching for young parents and continue online referral process

NEPG RESULTS

Systems-Level Results from 2018-2020

529 partners actively engaged
in NEPG implementation
(unduplicated count)

309 people trained
to work with pregnant and/or parenting
young people (unduplicated count)

176 participants from 58
different organizations participated in
Youth and Families Thrive training across
five communities



In a retrospective survey, Youth and Families Thrive training participants reported an increase from 45% before the training to 98% after the training in terms of the Youth and Families Thrive premises and how to apply them to their work and an increase from 48% before the training to 97% after the training in terms of being knowledgeable about the family system model.



People work together but it doesn't mean there aren't systemic challenges that impact young families.

Like housing... it takes city and public buy in – that is cross-sector collaboration. Not just non-profits, but the larger community needing to work together.



The community as a whole values this population [young parents, aged 14-25] more.



nebraskachildren