

OAH SUSTAINABILITY TIP SHEET

In September 2015, the Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services funded a three-year study designed to better understand whether and how programs once supported by federal funding were sustained after their grant funding period ends. Our first brief (Sustaining Programs for Expectant and Parenting Teens) highlights lessons informed by former OAH Pregnancy Assistance Fund (PAF) grantees' sustainability efforts.

The strategies described here summarize the lessons from the Brief, and could be useful for future grantees in planning for sustainability beyond the Federal grant period.



1. Diversify funding sources. Identify federal, state, local, and private sources of funding. Solicit in-kind support both internally and from local partners or community organizations to help save money on operating costs.



2. Communicate regularly with key stakeholders in the community. Engage local leaders, program participants, and key stakeholders through focus groups, community meetings, or one-on-one discussions to maintain program relevance. Leverage these relationships to work towards program's sustainability.



3. Join or form a partnership of like-minded programs. Build formal partnerships with organizations serving similar populations or providing similar services. Collaborate with coalitions of partners to raise the profile of a program and apply for relevant opportunities as a group.



4. Consider choosing an evidence-based intervention. Identify relevant evidence-based programs and assess their fit with the target population, local needs, and desired outcomes. Use the evidence base to make an informed case for the program and build buy-in and critical support.



5. Begin planning for sustainability as early as possible in the grant period. Planning early in the grant period provides more time to foster bonds with partners and coalitions, identify specific funding opportunities, and develop a successful sustainability strategy.