

Designing an Impact Study of Four Selected Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy

High rates of teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and associated sexual risk behaviors remain a troubling issue in the United States. Nationwide, 23 percent of high school students have had four or more partners by graduation, and nearly 41 percent of sexually active students did not use a condom during their last sexual intercourse. These behaviors increase the risks of sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy, as well as the associated negative consequences and costs to society.

To help address these issues, the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) provides a mix of competitive and formula grants to U.S. states, territories, and local organizations to provide educational programs to adolescents on teen pregnancy prevention and related topics.

To measure PREP's success, the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) and the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) have contracted with Mathematica Policy Research to conduct the PREP Multi-Component Evaluation.

As part of the evaluation, Mathematica is conducting a random assignment impact study of four PREP-funded programs. These programs were selected to fill specific gaps in the teen pregnancy prevention research literature and are not representative of all PREP-funded programs.



The four programs selected for the PREP impact study are:

1. **Wise Guys (Davenport, Iowa).** The *Wise Guys* curriculum is designed for young adolescent males. The evaluation is testing the curriculum with seventh-grade boys in seven middle schools.
2. **Reducing the Risk (rural Kentucky).** The evaluation is testing an adapted version of the *Reducing the Risk* curriculum in 13 high schools in mostly rural, low-income areas in Kentucky. The adapted curriculum, developed by health educators in Kentucky, can be delivered in 8 instructional hours, instead of the standard 12 hours.

The PREP Multi-Component Evaluation

The PREP evaluation, led by Mathematica Policy Research, has three main components. The evaluation team will (1) document the implementation of funded programs in participating states, (2) analyze performance management data provided by PREP grantees, and (3) assess the impacts of PREP-funded programs in four sites using a random assignment design. All three components of the evaluation will expand the evidence base on teen pregnancy prevention programs, and will help identify the decisions, successes, and challenges involved in replicating, adapting, and scaling up evidence-based programs.

This brief, and the accompanying [full report](#), are part of a series of products from the evaluation.

3. **Teen Choice (New York City area).** The evaluation is testing the *Teen Choice* curriculum with at-risk youth placed in five alternative schools because of behavioral, emotional, or academic issues. The evaluation will examine the effectiveness of this curriculum among youth at particularly high risk for teen pregnancy.
4. **Steps to Success (San Angelo, Texas).** *Steps to Success* is an enhanced home visiting program for adolescent mothers and the fathers of their babies that covers contraception, adequate birth spacing, relationship skills education, and career planning, in addition to standard home visiting content on parenting and child development.

In each site, the study team is using a rigorous random assignment design and longitudinal survey data to assess the impact of each program, compared to a control group in the same site.

Key outcomes of interest include sexual initiation and rates of unprotected sex and pregnancy. Data collection includes:

- A baseline survey conducted before programming begins
- Two follow-up surveys, the first conducted about a year after the start of programming and the second about two years after program start

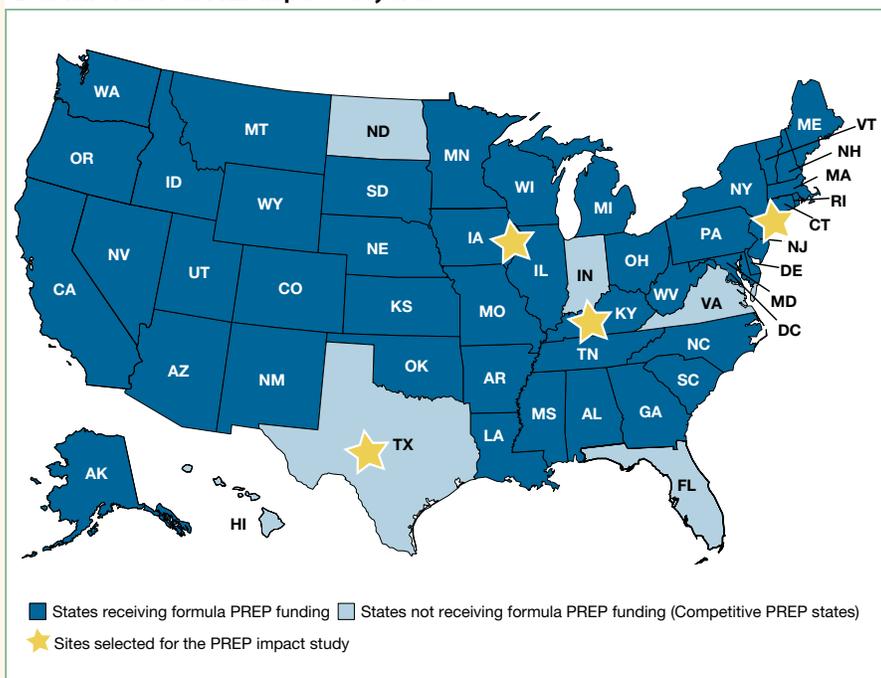
For each site, the study team will produce two impact reports: the first on interim program impacts from the first follow-up survey, the second on final program impacts at the end of follow-up data collection. Impact analyses will be conducted separately for each site to account for cross-site differences in program approaches, sample characteristics, and key research questions. The first impact findings will be available in 2016, with the remaining site-specific impact reports released on a rolling basis through 2018.

PREP at a Glance

Congress authorized PREP as part of the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. PREP is administered by the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) in the Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Most of the PREP funding (\$55.25 million of \$75 million, annually) was designated for formula grants to states and territories. In each U.S. state that elected not to participate in the state PREP formula grant program, FYSB awarded competitive grants to local service providers to deliver similar types of teen pregnancy prevention programming.

State grantees had discretion to design their PREP programs to align with expectations that they (1) be evidence-based, (2) provide education on both abstinence and contraceptive use, and (3) educate youth on at least three of six adulthood preparation topics. States were also encouraged to target their programming to high-risk populations, such as youth residing in geographic areas with high teen birth rates, adjudicated youth, youth in foster care, minority youth, and pregnant or parenting teens.

Location of the Four PREP Impact Study Sites



This brief was written by Robert G. Wood, Brian Goesling, Susan Zief, and Jean Knab of Mathematica Policy Research, under contract with ACF, DHHS (#HHSP23320110011YC). ACF Project Officers: Clare DiSalvo and Dirk Butler. Mathematica Project Director: Robert G. Wood.

This brief is in the public domain. Permission to reproduce is not necessary. Suggested citation: Wood, Robert G., Brian Goesling, Susan Zief, and Jean Knab (2015). *Designing an Impact Study of Four Selected Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy*. OPRE Report #2015-51, FYSB Report #2015-02. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Family and Youth Services Bureau, the Administration for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.