

FAQ: STeP (Skills for Teen Parents) Project

1) What is this project about and why is it being implemented?

According to the CDC, teen pregnancies nationally have declined over the past several decades. In California, the teen birth rate was reduced by 45% between 2000 and 2012. Nonetheless, the number of teen mothers in California remains significant, with nearly 35,000 children born to mothers aged 19 or under in 2012 (latest year for which data are available). In that year, California ranked 19th in the nation in teen birth rates, at 23.6 per 1000. 21 counties had birth rates appreciably higher than the national average.

In recent years, most California counties and high schools have cut funding for support services for pregnant and parenting teens. Many of these teens can no longer access resources on campus, and regular high schools are no longer providing day care or half-days for teen moms. As a result, many drop out of school, with severe consequences for their futures. Nearly 70% of California teen moms drop out of high school, according to the California Department of Education.

In January 2015, the ACLU of California issued a comprehensive report on the treatment of teenage parents in California's school system. Among the report's key findings: 1) pregnant and parenting students frequently experience stigmatizing behavior in the classroom; 2) pregnant and parenting students are prevented from taking the A-G courses necessary to apply to many four-year colleges; and 3) pregnant and parenting students experienced being pushed out of their regular schools and into continuation schools. See the full report at <https://www.aclunc.org/news/aclu-report-pregnant-and-parenting-students-denied-equal-education-opportunity-california>.

This project seeks to bridge the gap and provide much needed support for pregnant and parenting teens, by piloting a library services model targeted to this population in selected California public libraries. These libraries will work with community partners to recruit participants and implement a series of informational and instructional workshops, aimed at providing pregnant and parenting teens with the necessary knowledge, skills and tools to succeed as adults and parents. Selected libraries will receive the necessary information, training, tools and funding to successfully plan and implement this project locally. The goal is to connect these teens with the services and resources they need to: 1) identify personal strengths and goals for the future; 2) continue their education, find employment, and manage their finances; 3) take care of their health and well-being and that of their children; and 4) develop skills to parent and build healthy family relationships.

Practices that will be emphasized include: focusing on creating a safe, nurturing environment for participants; developing strong, positive communication between staff and participants; providing incentives; incorporating diversity; modeling success; and developing strong community partnerships.

Expected outcomes include: a) At least 50% of teen parents will complete their current grade in school; b) At least 75% will put off another pregnancy; c) At least 35% will transition to postsecondary education; d) At least 50% will demonstrate increased knowledge and skills in the subject matter covered; e) At least 50% will feel better equipped to take charge of their lives and the lives of their children; f) At least 50% will have increased awareness of how the public library can support their educational and family needs and goals into the future; and g) At least half of the participating libraries will continue at least part of the service model in their regular programming after the grant project ends.

This project is a multi-year project. 2014/15 was the first cycle, and we are recruiting participants for the 2015/16 cycle at this time. We will pursue funding for a third cycle for FY 2016/17.

2) Who manages the project, and what will it entail?

This project is managed by the California State Library (CSL) in cooperation with the Southern California Library Cooperative (SCLC). Participating libraries are selected through a competitive process. We will be adding up to 8 libraries to the project for 2015/16.

We are planning to hold two training sessions in August 2015, one in Northern California, one in Southern California. Each participating library will be required to send at least one representative to this training session (travel expenses paid by the grant). Each library will also be asked, if possible, to bring a representative from a community partnership to the training session (expenses paid). Libraries will then have several months to recruit participants and additional community partners and develop a series of 10 workshops. Two project consultants will be available to assist libraries as they implement the project locally.

Libraries will have the option of either conducting their entire workshop series from January-May 2016, or splitting it between Fall 2015 and Spring 2016. Libraries will administer pre- and post-surveys and possibly other evaluation tools, as developed by the project consultants. Each library director will be required to sign a form certifying his/her library's commitment to the project.

Each participating library will be given an allocation of \$5000 to implement the project in one location within its jurisdiction. Libraries will be given guidelines on how their allocations may be spent according to LSTA requirements. Libraries will also receive a core collection to support the project (50 titles [books, videos, etc.]). Additional resources will be available for marketing materials and support (posters, bookmarks, postcards, media, etc.).

3) What's involved in the application process?

Applicants will be required to attend the April 22, 2015 Infopeople webinar about this project or view the archived version online (<https://infopeople.org/civcrm/event/info?reset=1&id=485>). They will then be required to complete a short online application. As part of the application process, applicants will be required to identify project staff, project location, and at least one strong community partner. Further details about applying can be accessed from the California State Library's "Apply for an LSTA Grant" application page (<http://www.library.ca.gov/grants/lsta/apply.html>).

4) Who are the contacts for this project?

The current project monitor/project manager is Janet Coles:

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The project contact at the Southern California Library Cooperative is Diane Satchwell:

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Courtney Saldana, Youth Services Supervising Librarian at Ontario City Library; and Amy Gleason, a social services specialist with more than 13 years of experience working with pregnant and parenting teens, are the consultants who will collaborate with participating libraries on this project.