



Preventing Unplanned Pregnancy in Community Colleges A Request for Proposal

Background and overview of the National Campaign

The National Campaign's goal is to improve the lives and future prospects of children and families and, in particular, to help ensure that children are born into families committed to and ready for the demanding task of raising the next generation. Our specific strategy for reaching this goal is to prevent teen pregnancy and unplanned pregnancy, especially among single, young adults. We support a combination of responsible values and behavior by both men and women and responsible policies in both the public and private sectors. If we are successful in reducing both teen and unplanned pregnancy, child and family well-being will improve. There will be less poverty, more opportunities for young men and women to complete their education or achieve other life goals, fewer abortions, and a stronger nation.

Our work to reduce unplanned pregnancy, in particular, is based on extensive data and common sense as well that unplanned pregnancy is a serious problem in America with significant consequences for young women and men, children and families, and communities, too. Although many Americans have a general understanding that *teen* pregnancy is a major U.S. problem, too few realize that *young adults* also struggle with pregnancy planning. In fact, half of all pregnancies at present are reported by women to be unplanned, and this challenge is especially common among single young women in their 20s. More specifically:

- More than one-third of unplanned pregnancies (1.1 million) are to unmarried women in their 20s – and these 1.1 million pregnancies lead to about a third of non-marital births.
- Seven in ten pregnancies to unmarried women in their 20s are unplanned.
- 72 percent of unplanned pregnancies to unmarried women ages 20-29 that result in a birth are to women who have had already at least one pregnancy.
- More than half of pregnancies reported by unmarried **men** in their 20s are unplanned, and approximately 7 in 10 pregnancies which resulted in a live birth in the past five years among never-married young men aged 20-24 were unplanned.

Although unplanned pregnancy is more common among minority women, lower income women, and women with limited education, it is a widespread phenomenon in all sociodemographic groups. For example, about one-third (34%) of unmarried women in their 20s having an unplanned pregnancy live below the poverty level, one-third (31%) are between 100% and 200% of the poverty level, and one-third (35%) are above 200% of the poverty level. In addition, 40 % of unmarried women in their 20s having an unplanned pregnancy have at least some college education, with 38% having at least a high school diploma or GED, and 22% having less than a high school diploma.

Key Consequences. There are a wide variety of serious consequences for the young men and women—especially those who are unmarried—who experience an unplanned pregnancy, as well as for the children born as a result of such pregnancies (for more information see www.thenationalcampaign.org). For example:

- Unplanned pregnancy is linked to late entry into prenatal care, infant mortality and low birthweight. In addition, it can impede adequate child spacing, which in turn can lead to less favorable health outcomes for mother and child.
- The majority of unmarried women having an unplanned birth do not move into a more formal union—that is, most single mothers having an unplanned birth remain single and most cohabiting mothers having an unplanned birth either continue cohabiting or break up.
- Both mothers and fathers who have an unplanned birth report more depression, less happiness and more conflict in their relationship compared to women and men who have a planned birth.
- Children born from unplanned (and especially unwanted) pregnancies are also at greater risk of child abuse and neglect, poor mother-child attachment, cognitive and physical deficits, and more.

These consequences of unplanned pregnancy directly affect community colleges in at least the following ways:

- Unplanned pregnancies increase the risk of dropping out or stopping out of college – 61% percent of community college students who have children after enrolling don't finish their education, which is 65% higher than the rate for those who didn't have children.
- Unplanned pregnancies also increase stress, both emotional and financial, on the young men and women involved, which can impede academic performance.
- And such pregnancies can also add to the overall costs of operating community colleges themselves, through increased demand for child care and related support services.

Purpose of this Grant Opportunity

The National Campaign is seeking proposals that develop and assess various ways to reduce unplanned pregnancy among community college students, with a primary focus on unmarried women and men in their twenties. The community college system provides a natural institutional base for an effective, efficient, and far reaching effort to reduce the high rates of unplanned pregnancy among young adults. The 11.5 million students in this system closely mirror those who are most at risk of unplanned pregnancy, and forty-six percent of all students in post-secondary education attend a community college. Moreover, a significant number of community college students already have children. As of 2003-2004, 15 percent of community college students were single parents, and community college students are 2.4 times more likely to be single parent compared to students attending four-year institutions (public and private non-profit). Community colleges have the opportunity to reach students who are already parents and are at risk of subsequent unplanned pregnancies, as well as students who have not yet become parents. In either case, an unplanned pregnancy could seriously interfere with their educational success.

General Grant Content

The National Campaign seeks and encourages creativity in responding to this grant announcement. Any prevention strategies, activities, or services that reach a significant number of community college students in their twenties (men and women) will be considered. Listed below are a few ideas that give a general sense of possible activities, but others are welcomed, too. And many of these approaches can—and perhaps should—be combined.

1. Provide education about the importance of pregnancy prevention and planning for students by developing or adapting curricula in required freshman seminar courses, orientation, or other settings.

2. Collaborate with community groups to provide family planning education or services through the college health center, or by referral.
3. Enhance health center operations to address healthy relationships and responsible sexual behavior. Such an approach might include adding staff, providing more effective forms of contraception, etc.
4. Develop, adapt, or link to available resources that provide information and answer questions for students about preventing unplanned pregnancy.
5. Build institutional capacity for reducing unplanned pregnancy by training counselors or other student services staff to provide relevant information, education, or services. Such an approach could also include working through child care centers, women's programs, programs for single parents, etc.
6. Develop, enhance, or support student-led activities through training peer educators, working with student groups, etc (could include giving credit and/or paying trained peer educators to reach other students).
7. Build an array of resources, curricular and co-curricular, to support responsible and healthy sexual relationships. Such an approach could include using, adapting, or partnering with tested strategies practiced at universities.
8. Institute campus-wide activities to spark conversation and raise awareness about the issue of unplanned pregnancy and importance of pregnancy planning through a range of communication strategies and events that provide ways for students to discuss the issue (could include online information, discussion through college website, making information available through open labs and library, series of campus events, student government or association-led activities, etc).
9. Collect data on the extent of the problem of unplanned pregnancy among community college students at one or more campuses; how it affects student success and retention; and attitudes and behaviors with respect to sex, pregnancy, contraception, childbearing, and relationships.

More Specific Grant Terms

The National Campaign intends to make three grants—each spanning 2 years—with an average award of \$100,000 each. The overall grant period will be approximately September 2008 through August 2010.

The National Campaign is structuring this award to include a modest “match” from the grantees. Applicants are to provide matching funds of at least 10% of the requested amount (for example, for an award of \$100,000, the match provided by the community college should be at least \$10,000). Match may be in-kind or cash, although preference will be given to cash match.

Applications are to be structured in 3 phases. Phase I is a planning period of about 1 to 3 months in which the grantees develop specific and detailed plans for the balance of the grant period. These plans must include specification about how the overall funded activity will be tracked and monitored; metrics will depend, of course, on what is to be done, but will likely include a series of performance measures, “pre-post test” assessments and other similar assessment metrics. At the end of the planning phase, the National Campaign and the applicant(s) will discuss in detail the proposed plans and applicants will make reasonable adjustments as requested by the National Campaign. Phase I will also include a meeting in Washington of all the grantees in this project.

Phase II is an implementation interval ranging from 19-21 months. During this phase, grantees will collect data agreed on in Phase I and will submit one interim progress report.

Phase III is the final month or two in which the grantees complete a final report on the overall project and lessons learned; the final report will also include data derived from the tracking measures and assessment metrics developed in Phase I. In this final phase, it will be important that grantees develop materials that can be shared with other community colleges, such as articles for relevant websites, journals and newsletters.

In addition to attending one meeting in Washington, grantees will be expected to participate in collaborative learning and feedback facilitated by the Campaign and individuals designated by the National Campaign, via telephone and internet. The purpose is to share learning, progress and emerging lessons.

Awardees will receive half of the funding soon after the proposal is selected and a memorandum of understanding is signed (this will outline the details of the award). The second half of the funding will be released at the start of the second program year.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include accredited community colleges (either on an individual basis or in a consortia), councils of the American Association of Community Colleges, professional organizations, or others non-profit organizations (including research organizations) in conjunction with community colleges.

How to Apply

Interested parties should submit a proposal of not more than 10 pages including:

1. A cover page that includes full contact information for the applicant (both the organization and a contact person), amount requested, and a one paragraph summary of the contents of the proposal.
2. The proposed objective(s) of the project and expected outcomes, along with preliminary plans for tracking and reporting on these outcomes (approximately 1 page)
3. A brief history/summary of your organization and if applicable any organizations partnering for this proposal. Please make sure to include relevant demographics of the community college(s) that will be participating in the program including any information about the extent to which unplanned pregnancy affects the college(s) (1-2 pages)
4. A description of your idea(s) at this point for working with community college students to prevent unplanned pregnancy and an explanation of why you think these are promising strategies (approximately 2-pages)
5. A detailed description of your planning phase: how you will go about refining your ideas and gathering the information you need to create a detailed work plan for Phase II (implementation) and Phase III (summation and reporting). The deliverable for Phase I will be a detailed work plan, timeline and refined budget for Phase II and III, including a definition of the target population, how you will reach them, who will be doing the work, a long-term plan for how you hope to fund the activities once the grant ends (approximately 2-3 pages)
6. Clear identification of key staff who will work on this project, along with their relevant qualifications/experience, and a description of your organizational capacity to execute the proposed activities (approximately 1 pg).

Attachments (in addition to the 10-page proposal) should include relevant appendices or other materials that help develop the basic proposal, along with the following:

- An itemized budget for all phases of the proposal. Please note that we understand that Phase II and III budgets may be *preliminary*. We anticipate that grantees will refine and revise them during the planning phase as plans are clarified. Even so, the overall total may not increase. Budgets must identify the time commitment of the project director and other key staff. Note that the budget should include travel for the project leader to attend a one day meeting in Washington at the end of the planning phase.
- Resumes of key project staff.

- A letter of commitment from the college president(s).
- Contact information for 2 references (funders or partner organizations you have worked with in the past).

During the proposal review process, you might be asked for additional information.

Evaluation Criteria Used in Reviewing Proposals

In reviewing applications, the criteria to be considered include the following:

- Ideas and approach (including objectives, expected outcomes, innovation and ability to reach a significant number of students on an ongoing basis)
- Clear understanding of the planning phase
- Organizational capacity (including relevant experience, personnel, and ability to execute)
- Commitment to developing and collecting relevant performance measures and related assessment data
- Budget specificity and clarity

All proposals should be written in Times New Roman 12 point font, in one-point spacing, and with 1” margins.

This proposal should be emailed to Melissa Spindler at mspindler@thenc.org by 11:00 am Eastern time, June 16th, 2008. For all questions regarding this grant, please contact Melissa at the above email or by phone at 202.478.8505. All proposals will be reviewed as quickly as possible and responses to applicants are expected to be sent by mid-August.