

Teenage Pregnancy Prevention: Replication of Evidence-based Programs

Appendix C – Guidance for Grantee-level, Independent Evaluation Plans (Only applicable to applicants requesting funding in Range C or D)

Evaluation plans should be developed using the following guidance:

- (1) The evaluation plan clearly states the study specific aims, objectives, and hypotheses. Hypotheses identify empirical questions that will be addressed by the evaluation. Research objectives quantify goals the intervention will achieve in meeting its ends and should be in S.M.A.R.T. terms. The objectives and hypotheses should be clearly aligned with the intervention activities. The extent of change anticipated should be based on the literature or existing data where available.
- (2) Evaluation plan includes a clear description of a process evaluation. This entails a clear description of process objectives (specific aims), including a list of elements to be assessed to evaluate implementation, measurement of dosage, fidelity of key program inputs and activities, and detailed records identifying and quantifying services. A high quality process evaluation should be reported every year to assess changes in the program.
- (3) Application includes a clear description of the outcome evaluation plan. This plan should describe how the program will assess the impacts, benefits, and changes to the intervention and control groups during and after their participation in the programs. Outcome evaluations should examine these changes in the short-term (e.g., at 6 months) and longer-term (at least one year after the intervention services have ended). The evaluation plan should include a logic model (in Appendices) that visually ties the intervention objectives and activities to the expected results. The logic model should include: activities, outputs, outcomes (short, intermediate, long term), goals, and moderating effects/assumptions. The logic model should illustrate direct linkages between the intervention and outcomes.
- (4) Applicants propose using instruments that are relevant to the intervention specific outcomes. Information on the validity and reliability of the additional instruments and/or surveys is provided, if available. If measures are not available and the applicant will be developing new measures, the grantee is expected to outline the development process that will be used.
- (5) Evaluations should have an adequate sampling strategy and sample size estimation procedures. An adequate sampling strategy ensures that the sample selected is a reasonable approximation of the underlying population. Sample size estimation is supported by a power analysis that indicates the proposed sample size is sufficient to detect statistically significant differences in outcomes between the intervention and

control groups. Methodology used to estimate sample size and select participants should be detailed and provided in the context of the overall study design.

- (6) Evaluation plans have a randomized design that does not allow self-selection into the intervention or comparison group. Projects can randomize individuals or sites. If randomization is not possible, then a justification for a strong quasi-experimental design should be made. It is incumbent on the grantee to provide ongoing monitoring of the intervention and comparison groups to ensure that the groups are comparable at baseline and have comparable levels of attrition over time.
- (7) Evaluations have a detailed recruitment plan that describes steps taken to increase the likelihood that participants in both the intervention and comparison groups of the project are similar. Detailed plans for recruitment and retention should be included to ensure high levels of participation in all intervention and comparison group sites. The recruitment plan should address site recruitment, informed consent and assent, retention strategies, steps to be taken to maintain adequate sample size, and the use of incentives. The recruitment plan should include a description of how parental consent and participant assent will be obtained.
- (8) Evaluations include a detailed data collection plan. A data collection schedule should directly align with program activities. It is expected that at least one research assistant will be budgeted as part of the program staff to handle data collection procedures. NOTE: Project staff involved in delivering the intervention is not permitted to administer the data collection instruments. Proposed data collection procedures and methods for the intervention and comparison group participants should be identical. Participant data need to be kept confidential (names linked to data are kept private and secure) and detailed plans for maintaining confidentiality must be provided. The plans should describe the data management protocol, data security measures, evidence of thorough training of data collectors, and proposed procedures that are least likely to introduce bias or promote non-response. Evaluations should include evaluation training activities for program staff and specific data collection procedures for the research assistant and other staff, if applicable.
- (9) Evaluations include a detailed quantitative and qualitative data analysis plan that includes a description of the statistical approaches proposed to assess program effects. It is recommended that applicants consult with a statistician. The statistical approaches should be matched to the characteristics of the evaluation design and the data being collected, including stratification and multivariate analysis appropriate for the evaluation design. The analysis should describe methods for handling attrition and missing data.
- (10) Evaluation plans address how threats to validity of the design (i.e., factors that permit alternative explanations of program outcomes) will be controlled and assessed.
- (11) Evaluations include a description of the process for protection of human subjects and institutional review board (IRB) review and approval of the proposed program and evaluation plans. A Federal-wide Assurance should be included in the Appendices of the application.

- (12) Timeline - The first 6 months should be used for development which may include any or all of the following: planning, instrument development, and/or piloting the intervention. During this period, evaluation plans will be reviewed and approved by the OAH. Evaluations in their first year will focus on process evaluation, including determining that the intervention is in place, that it is adequately and appropriately staffed, and that it is reaching its intended population.
- (13) Evaluations include a plan to disseminate and publish findings. Preparation for publishing and dissemination should occur throughout the life of the grant with direct attention taking place in the 4th and 5th years. OAH must be acknowledged as a funding source in all disseminated materials and presentations resulting from this project, with copies of published papers forwarded to OAH.
- (14) The independent evaluator should demonstrate his/her ability to conduct the proposed evaluation as defined in the next section of this announcement.

Evaluator Requirements

Evaluations should be conducted by an organization or entity independent of the funded organization. To accomplish this, applicants should collaborate with an independent evaluator. OAH recommends that applicants select a lead evaluator who has knowledge and working experience with conducting and managing intensive evaluations similar to those proposed. Since grantees are expected to disseminate and publish findings about their projects, the selected evaluator should have experience publishing and presenting at professional conferences.

OAH expects each project to establish a strong working relationship with its evaluator. The successful applicant will work with the evaluator as the application is being prepared to ensure that the evaluation plan addresses the criteria listed above. This relationship should be clearly established prior to funding as evidenced in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the evaluator and the applicant organization and a copy of the evaluator's curriculum vitae, included in the Appendices of the application. The MOU should describe the responsibilities of the evaluator, anticipated time commitments/work plan, and deliverable schedule, dissemination activities and a statement indicating support to disseminate such findings to the field. OAH encourages the lead evaluator to develop a team to assist in conducting the rigorous evaluation. The evaluation team members should not be used for direct program activities in order to maintain their independence.