School of Thought

Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Matters to Our Youth

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Family Assistance

Real Families
Real Strengths

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Introduction

Relationships are very important to high school-age youth. As teens begin to form their own identities and transition into adulthood, relationships—particularly romantic relationships—take on a critical importance. Helping young people manage and succeed in their intimate partner relationships helps teens to thrive and become healthy, self-sufficient adults. The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, which reauthorized the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program managed by the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF), included $150 million to support demonstration programs that offered healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood programs, including relationship education services for high school-age youth.

In September 2006, ACF's Office of Family Assistance (OFA) announced five-year grant awards to state and community-based organizations to promote healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood. The funded healthy marriage programs focused on particular allowable activities that included:

- Public advertising campaigns on the value of marriage and the skills needed to increase marital stability and health.
- Education in high schools on the value of marriage, relationship skills and budgeting.
- Marriage education, marriage skills and relationship skills programs that may include parenting skills, financial management, conflict resolution and job and career advancement for non-married pregnant women and non-married expectant fathers.
- Pre-marital education and marriage skills training for engaged couples and for couples or persons interested in marriage.
- Marriage enhancement and marriage skills training programs for married couples.
- Divorce reduction programs that teach relationship skills.
- Marriage mentoring programs, which use married couples as role models and mentors in at-risk communities.
- Programs to reduce the disincentives to marriage in means-tested aid programs if offered in conjunction with any of the other seven activities.

Grants were awarded under one of eight priority areas (see Appendix A for a list of priority areas). The grantees that chose to implement one or two of the eight allowable activities were funded under Priority Area 8 (Healthy Marriage Grants to Implement any Allowable Activity). Forty-four organizations were awarded between $450,000 and $550,000 annually to operate services that address one or two of the allowable activities. Fifteen of those grants were awarded to organizations across the country whose specific focus is delivering services to high school-age youth (see Table 1).

Table 1. 15 Priority Area 8 Organizations serving high school-age youth

Best Friends Foundation – Washington, DC	Booneville School District – Mississippi
Character Counts in Maine – Maine	CJH Educational Grants – North Carolina
The Dibble Institute – California	Future Foundation – Georgia
Operation Keepsake – Ohio	Pregnancy Support Center – Ohio
ReCapturing the Vision – Florida	Rockdale Medical Center – Georgia
Shalom Task Force – New York	Texas State University – Texas
Trinity Church – Florida	University of Louisville – Kentucky
YWCA of San Antonio – Texas	

These organizations reached thousands of high school-age youth with group-based, relationship education services. Despite the geographic and organizational diversity of these programs, five common themes emerged from their demonstration projects:

- Youth desire information about healthy relationships.
- Young people need facilitators they can relate to and trust.
- Participants are able to develop a vision about what a healthy relationship is, and what it is not.
- Relationship education can be a powerful change agent within youth relationships.
- Young people are receptive to positive money management/budgeting strategies.

This report pulls from the experience of the 15 organizations listed above to summarize their common experiences and evaluation findings. It also focuses on how these programs were designed and structured to reach high school-age youth, according to information provided by organizations. The suggested influence of these demonstration programs is highlighted through quotes and links to video clips of the experiences of youth and program operators. Information on the program operations of all 15 grantees is included and supplemented by interviews with 23 students from three exemplary grantee programs.

Overarching Study Questions and Methodology

In order to understand and capture lessons learned and emerging promising practices in the field, a multi-method approach to collecting qualitative information from the 15 organizations was conducted. The data were gathered over a three-month period from May 2011 to July 2011. The overarching study questions to be answered were:

- How can scholarly research and field evaluation studies inform relationship education with youth?
- How have programs been structured to serve local needs?
- What is the general content and length of curricula in use?
- In what ways have programs needed to adapt curricula to serve the youth population in their locations?
- How much estimated exposure (in time) have youth clients actually had in program delivery?
- What outcomes, either intended or unintended, have been noticed or documented?
- What data have grantees collected?
- What can those data tell us that would inform the field?
- How can the "youth voice" and illustrative stories and experiences shared from the field inform practice and enhance outcomes?

In an effort to answer these questions, summarize common findings and highlight exemplary activities, four methods of gathering data from programs were used:

Review of Grantee Reports: To obtain a better understanding of the grantees' program design, service delivery and outcomes/outputs, program information and existing evaluation data were requested for each program. Quarterly reports, grantee profile information and other existing program resources were collected and reviewed. These data informed the development of a grantee profile (see Appendix B) containing key service delivery information such as target population, curriculum, service delivery area, number served, etc. Reports were available for 14 of the 15 organizations.

Self-Reported Program Information: Organizations were requested via email to voluntarily complete an online form to verify service delivery information. The form contained primarily closed-ended questions designed to supplement existing documentation of grant operations. The online form took approximately 20 minutes to complete and was available for two weeks from the date

the link was provided. Participation in this effort was optional, but strongly encouraged. Nine of the 15 organizations completed the online form. The gathered data offered a deeper understanding of the various programs and allowed grantees an opportunity to begin reflecting on their experiences prior to participating in face-to-face small group meetings or phone discussions to obtain additional information. The specific questions on the electronic questionnaire are shown in Appendix C.

Face-to-face Small Group and Phone Discussions: These voluntary discussions with organizations were the primary vehicle for capturing information on lessons learned and emerging promising practices from programs. Small group discussions were coordinated before and after sessions held at the 2011 OFA Grantees Annual Meeting: Real Families, Real Strengths: Celebrating 5 Years of Healthy Marriage and Promoting Responsible Fatherhood, May 3–5, 2011, in Baltimore, MD. Grantees had the option of attending these small group sessions or scheduling a phone discussion. Six one-and-a-half-hour sessions were held with a total of nine organizations. One or two staff per grantee were involved in a small group discussion with two or three organizations. For those programs preferring phone contact, subsequent calls were made and the same questions as those used in the face-to-face discussions were asked. During the face-to-face meetings as well as the phone conferences, respondents were encouraged to answer all questions freely from their own perspectives and to provide additional anecdotal information and stories that they felt would help illustrate their responses. The questions asked (see Appendix D) were designed to capture experiences related to how programs are structured, curricula content, program adaptations, observed outcomes and the perspective of youth participants.

Site visits: OFA identified three organizations for site visits to capture program observation data and provide perspectives of students, school administrators and others who were involved in the program but not part of the grantee staff. Site visits included service observations and discussions with program staff, as well as the filming of services and interviews with youth participants, teachers, school administrators, parents and other key stakeholders involved with the programs.

Discussions were conducted and, after obtaining signed consent, filmed with individuals at selected sites for the purpose of showcasing unique approaches to delivering relationship skills education to youth and describing how these services affect the lives of youth. Twenty-three youth participated in these discussions across the three sites. In the discussions, participants were encouraged to answer all questions honestly and candidly regarding their impressions or experiences with the program. This was especially important in order to capture the "youth voice" to inform program operators and decision makers of the needs and experiences of young people. The questions used in these discussions are located in Appendix E.

Background

Many high school teens (ages 14–18) are experimenting with romantic relationships. These high school-age youth (also referred to as "teenagers," "adolescents" or "young people") are entering their first romantic relationships while also managing relationships with peers, teachers, supervisors, co-workers, parents and others. Collins[1], using the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) dataset, found that 48 percent of 15-year-olds, and 70 percent of 18-year-olds reported having a "special romantic relationship." Another study in a regional urban sample found that 53 percent of 15-year-olds and 70 percent of 17-year-olds reported having had a "special romantic relationship" within the previous 12 months.[2] In a 10-state sample of 957 teens, Roisman et al. found that at age 15, 22 percent indicated a current romantic relationship; 45 percent reported mixed-group social activities, and 47 percent reported dating "just the two of us."[3] Although there is great variation in what constitutes a "relationship" during adolescence, it is known that young people are experimenting with some sort of romantic relationship.

The decisions young people make with respect to these relationships can affect their life's trajectories. Specifically, the consequences of making poor decisions in romantic and other relationships have the potential of derailing young people from their future educational and employment goals and aspirations. There is a body of research exploring the connections between adolescent relationships and a host of issues that influence young people's transition to adulthood, including delinquency, school engagement, pregnancy and violence.

- A 2005 study examined the relationship between friends' and romantic partners' delinquency to respondents' own delinquency. The study found that romantic partner delinquency does, in fact, influence the adolescent respondents' delinquency and that the effect is stronger on female involvement in minor deviance.[4] Youth who become involved in delinquent activities at a young age are two-to-three times more likely to continue these (or more serious) criminal behaviors[5] which may ultimately result in spending time in juvenile detention centers, dropping out of school, and/or becoming adult offenders.

"After teaching at Casco Bay High School, a student came up and told me the program was very helpful. He realized he had been acting as a bystander seeing bullying take place every day on the school bus. He asked me for further advice. It was a very productive conversation. He felt that this program helped him understand his role as a bystander and its impact on the situation. The program helped him figure out what to do." - Teacher, Maine

1 Collins, 2003.
2 Furman & Collins, 2009.
3 Roisman, Booth-LaForce, Cauffman, & Spieker, 2009.
4 Haynie, Giordano, Manning, & Longmore, 2005.
5 Flores, 2003.

- School climate is another important factor in the lives of young people, and it is directly influenced by the peer and romantic relationships in which teens engage. In fact, school climate is a factor that may influence chronic absenteeism, or truancy, which is seen as a gateway to other, more serious delinquent behaviors.[6] Anecdotal evidence from teachers and school administrators indicates that relationship education can improve intra-school student interactions.

- Most teens are having sex in the context of a relationship. "Thinking of themselves as a couple (83 percent) and telling others they were a couple (80 percent) were the most common behaviors reported among those teens who had had sex."[7] Therefore, talking about pregnancy prevention in the context of relationships may be very important to teen pregnancy prevention efforts.

- Violence is prevalent in youth relationships. Although the definition of violence varies across studies, young people report that it is common in relationships. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) conducts an annual census of both physical (not verbal) and sexual dating violence/aggression in high school, grades 9–12.[8] Across the United States, the CDC study found that the median percentage reporting physical dating violence is 10.8 percent for females in grades 9–12, and 11.9 percent for males.[9] Additionally, the study using Add Health data found that 26 percent of young adults reported having experienced violence in their current relationship.[10] Some studies find that youth believe violence is justified if a person is hurt or humiliated by a partner, that many boys believe they are expected to treat their girlfriends poorly, and that half of adolescent dating violence occurs not in private, but in the presence of other peers.[11] A Long Island study also found that about 65 percent of boys and girls involved in physically aggressive relationships said the aggression was mutual. Motivations causing violence are different for boys and girls: both sexes said anger was often the motivator, but girls also reported self-defense, and boys reported the need to exert control.[12]

Rarely disputed are the negative effects when youth abandon educational or vocational pursuits, become involved in criminal activity, have early and/or multiple sexual encounters and are involved in violent relationships. All have negative social and economic consequences that have the potential to throw adolescents off

According to a focus group conducted by a Priority Area 8 grantee, when asked what they think of when they hear the word "marriage," boys described "trappings" of the wedding like rings, the honeymoon and the reception. Girls indicated that their parents can teach you what NOT to do and that dating and reality shows on TV are not a realistic depiction of relationships. Both male and female focus group participants also said that it was hard to envision a marriage lasting forever.

6 Baker, Sigmon, & Nugent, 2001.
7 Ryan, Franzetta, & Manlove, 2003.
8 Centers for Disease Control, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance for 2009.
9 Hit, slapped or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend in prior 12 months.
10 Scott, Steward-Streng, Manlove, Schelar, & Cui, 2011.
11 Noonan & Charles, 2009.
12 Giordano, Manning, & Longmore, 2010.

a path that may be hard to restore as adults. The skills taught in relationship education help youth create and maintain healthy relationships as well as recognize unhealthy relationships and risky decisions within relationships that may have long-term negative effects. Assisting young people in developing these skills during adolescence may help encourage school attendance; prevent delinquency, teen pregnancy (parenthood) and dating violence; affect later adult relationships; and increase chances of successful transition into adulthood.

As part of an overall strategy to strengthen families, the OFA healthy marriage grants provided an opportunity for community-based organizations to deliver programming on the value of marriage, relationship skills and budgeting to young people in high schools.

The value of marriage. Recent research indicates that young people are delaying marriage, are more accepting of cohabitation and may be fearful of being in a bad marriage or experiencing divorce.[13] Furthermore, many low-income youth have few models of healthy relationships in their lives and have few expectations of ever having healthy relationships themselves.[14] Yet more than 80 percent of teens expect to marry someday.[15] These factors have led to a need for open and honest dialogue about marriage, as many teens say they expect to marry in the future. Young people may also have biased, and in many cases negative, views of marriage and relationships based on what they see in the media and/or in their own families. Youth relationship education can play an important role in the development of young people's views and expectations around healthy relationships.

Research on the effectiveness of specific youth relationship education curricula, many of which were used by OFA Priority Area 8 grantees (see Table 2), have examined the participants' beliefs about relationships. Immediately post-program, participants receiving a particular curriculum were significantly less likely to see divorce as a good option for troubled marriages, but not significantly different from the control group on attitudes toward marriage enrichment programs.[16] Additionally, results reported in 2010 from participants receiving another curriculum showed that the program significantly increased realistic relationship beliefs, but there was no change in faulty relationship beliefs.

13 The National Marriage Project, 2010.
14 Guzman, Ikramullah, Manlove, Peterson, & Scarupa, 2009.
15 Wood, Avellar, & Goesling, 2008.
16 Gardner & Boellaard, 2007.

The content presented to young people through youth relationship education programs may have increased their knowledge of what healthy and unhealthy relationships are; it may also have given them skills to make healthy decisions when confronted with a variety of risky behaviors that could result in delayed (or discontinued) educational pursuits and greater chances of living in poverty.

Relationship skills. Relationship skill building, also referred to as relationship education, may include content and skills related to:

- Self-knowledge and self-efficacy
- How relationships grow, develop and change over time
- How sex impacts a relationship
- Communication and conflict resolution
- Handling crisis
- The kinds of love
- Budgeting/financial management
- Getting to know someone
- Mate selection
- Evaluating your relationship
- Breaking up
- Relationship safety
- Commitment

Evidence-based relationship education is most often delivered as a curriculum through an experiential learning model. While it is possible for new knowledge to result in behavior change, there is evidence that work on actual skills (training, as opposed to knowledge) has more effect than education alone, and this is true for school-age youth, college-age youth, and adults. Programs may be presented as stand-alone courses or integrated into pre-existing youth services. There is no one-size-fits-all approach for teaching teens how to navigate their love lives. The content and delivery method must be tailored to the specific youth population that is being served, especially when serving vulnerable or disadvantaged youth. Cultural nuances must be addressed as well.

Many of the programs included in this report measured skill building as participants' beliefs that their skills had changed, although some measured skill usage over time. Past studies have found varying changes in skills over time. Reports of communication skill differences increased positively for participants in one program (*Familia Unida*), which targeted Texas Hispanic high school youth ages 14–16.[17] This is a perception of skill use (a perceived actual behavior), rather than belief the behavior would occur. In contrast, one study of a curriculum (*Connections*) found that immediately after participation, participants were not significantly different than the control group on conflict resolution skills.[18]

> Youth and adults alike involved in Priority Area 8 programs serving high school-age youth described these programs as *innovative, engaging, motivating, life-changing, insightful and effective.*

Budgeting. Financial education can help teens identify their personal financial patterns, understand how these affect their goals and relationships, and learn ways to use this knowledge to be more successful, regardless of their economic status.[19]

The 15 federally funded grantees targeting high school-age youth work to implement relationship education programming to help young people avoid risky behaviors and develop healthy, fulfilling relationships now and in the future. These programs have been described by youth participants and facilitators alike as innovative, engaging, motivating, life-changing, insightful and effective. The goal of this report is to understand these pioneering programs and highlight emerging promising practices and lessons learned from their experience working with teens and young adults. Specific effects noted through program evaluation and observations over time are also summarized and presented via video clips to provide a better understanding of how healthy relationship education programming influences the lives of young people and influences the greater community.

Grantee Overview

The 15 federally funded grantees served thousands of high school-age youth through demonstration programs operating in diverse communities. Therefore, the approaches to delivering services as well as the populations targeted are unique to each program. Table 2 provides a general overview of the Priority Area 8 organizations serving teens. More detailed profiles of each grantee can be found in Appendix B.

17 Jiminez, 2011.
18 Gardner & Boellaard, 2007.
19 The Dibble Institute.

Table 2. Overview of Priority Area 8 Youth Serving Organizations

Grantee	Primary Race/ Ethnicity Served	Approx. Number Served Annually	Setting	Current Curriculum
Best Friends Foundation	African American	201–500	Schools; Job Corps Campus	Diamond Girl Leadership/ Best Men Leadership
Booneville School District	Caucasian	>500	Schools	Connections Choice Game Rise to Your Dreams
Character Counts in Maine	Caucasian	>500	Schools	Maine Teen Talk
CJH Educational Grants	African American	>500	Schools; Community organizations	Connections: Dating & Emotions Love Notes
Future Foundation	African American	>500	Schools; Community organizations	Connections: Relationships and Marriage
Operation Keepsake	Caucasian	>500	Schools	For Keeps
Pregnancy Support Center	Caucasian	>500	Schools; Detention centers	Connections: Healthy Choices, Healthy Relationships Love U2: Relationship Smarts
ReCapturing the Vision	Information not available	>500	Schools	Vessels of Honor Capturing the Vision
Rockdale Medical Center	African American	>500	Schools	PAIRS of Peers Connections: Relationships and Marriage
Shalom Task Force	Jewish Orthodox	>500	Schools	Facing Forward
Texas State University	Hispanic	100–200	Schools	Love Notes
The Dibble Institute	Diverse population – Services offered in various communities across the country	>500	Schools; Community organizations	Connections: Dating & Emotions Connections: Relationships and Marriage Healthy Choices, Healthy Relationships Love U2: Baby Smarts Love U2: Communication Smarts Love U2: Relationship Smarts Love U2: Relationship Smarts PLUS Love Notes The Art of Loving Well
Trinity Church	African American and Hispanic	201–500	Schools; Faith-based and community organizations	Love U2: Relationship Smarts Becoming a Responsible Teen
University of Louisville	Diverse population; low-income, at-risk adults	>250	Work force development programs; Detention centers	Love U2: Communication Smarts
YWCA of San Antonio	Hispanic	201–500	Schools; Community organizations	Active Relationships for Young Adults

Source: Information gathered from various reports submitted to OFA by Priority Area 8 grantees as well as direct outreach to grantees.

Most programs targeted youth between the ages of 14 and 16 (see Exhibit 1); another large portion served a wider range of ages spanning from 14 to 22.[20] The majority of organizations provided services in schools—including public, private, alternative and vocational-technical (vo-tech) schools—and integrated programming into health, Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) and other academic and elective classes. In addition to providing services during regular class hours, programs were also delivered after school either on school property or by working with faith- and community-based organizations to provide services in the evenings and/or on weekends.

Most programs included mixed-gender groups of young men and women from various family backgrounds and with varying level of relationship experience. Some programs targeted specific youth populations such as pregnant/parenting teens, youth who have dropped out of high school and young people in juvenile detention centers. Programs most frequently delivered relationship education in English.

Organizations typically offered 8-to-21 hours of relationship education over multiple days or weeks. Overall, programs focused on providing young people with information and skills to:

- distinguish characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships,
- engage in positive communication with romantic partners, peers and other adults,
- understand the value of marriage,
- manage finances,
- resolve conflict effectively and
- make intentional, informed decisions about their relationships and about other areas of their lives.

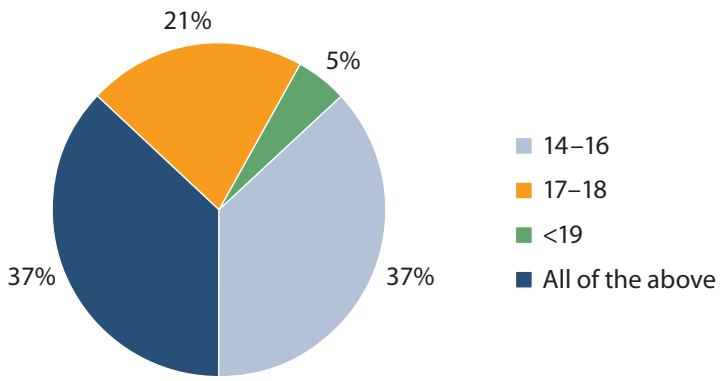
Ultimately, the organizations highlighted here aim to equip young people with the skills to develop healthy relationship skills during adolescence and prepare them for long-lasting relationships with future romantic partners, friends and employers/colleagues. These programs generally reported that these services fill a void in the lives of the young people and are necessary to promote future self-sufficiency and success.

20 Programs that expanded the target population to include young adults ages 19 and older did so in consultation and with the approval of their Federal Project Officer.

Characteristics of Youth Served

The majority of the 15 Priority Area 8 grantees delivered services to a range of ages, from teens younger than 14 to young adults ages 19 or older.

Exhibit 1: Age of Youth Served



Note: Information was available for 13 of the 15 grantees. Some grantees reported serving youth in multiple age categories.

Young people across this age range are considerably different in terms of their development and relationship experience. In fact, theories of adolescent development suggest that the development of adolescent relationships occurs gradually across different age groups. Typically, this is a progression from same-sex groups and friendships through mixed-group casual social activity to dating and then dyadic romantic relationships. Romantic relationships of older adolescents, as they develop, continue to be embedded in peer networks, while attachment shifts from parents to romantic partners during late adolescence and early adulthood.[21]

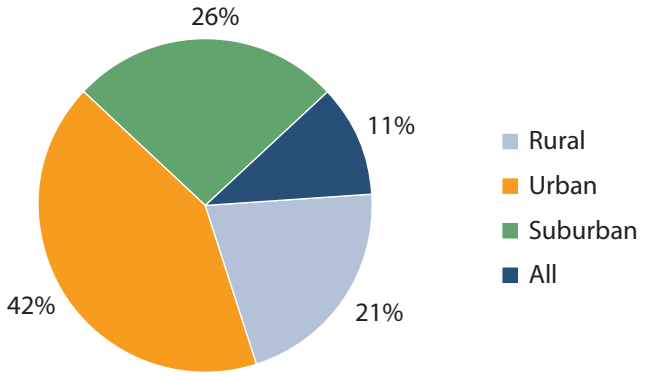
As most of the organizations serve youth that range in age from early adolescence to late adolescence to early adulthood, they have designed their programs to meet the needs of the youth where they are developmentally, both from a maturity standpoint as well as in their experience with relationships. This involves presenting content in a way that is relevant to young people's lives, including, for example, using videos and current media, utilizing facilitators who can relate to young people and their experiences, using examples throughout the curriculum with which young people can identify, and creating opportunities to practice skills in "real world" situations. In addition to addressing the needs of different age groups, programs have to consider the demographics of the

21 O'Donnell, Agronick, Duran, Myint-U, & Stueve, 2009.

youth served in terms of socioeconomic levels and the youths' community backdrop. As a group, the Priority Area 8 grantees target predominantly low-income areas to provide needed services to the growing number of young people living in households with limited resources. In 2002, 16 percent of youth (ages 5–17) in the United States lived below poverty level.[22] The federally funded programs experienced this situation first-hand, as the poverty rates for children under the age of 18 in the areas where services were provided ranged from 12 percent to 48 percent.[23] While many of the programs may be serving low-income youth, services may look very different depending on whether the young people come from rural, suburban or urban areas. Exhibit 2 depicts the community settings targeted by the Priority Area 8 grantees.

Furthermore, program implementation must take into account different values, beliefs and even language preferences when working with diverse groups of young people. Exhibit 3 illustrates the proportion of youth served by race or ethnicity. (It should be noted that the relationships between groups illustrated by Exhibit 3 may not be indicative of the racial/ethnic breakdown for each individual grantee.) Some programs specifically target a particular racial or ethnic group while others serve groups more representative of the general population in their area.

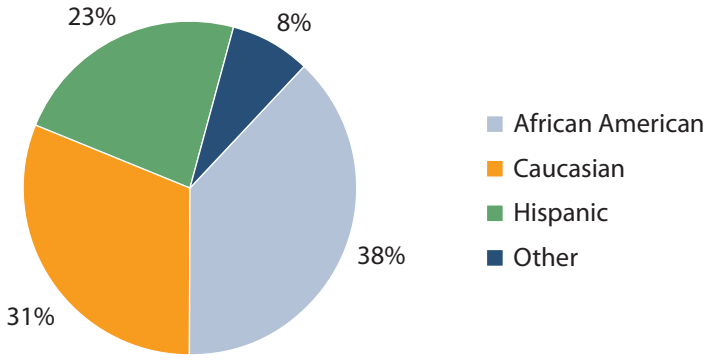
Exhibit 2: Community Setting



Note: Some organizations reported providing services in multiple community settings.

22 *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2006 National Report.* U.S. Department of Justice.
23 Kids Count Data Center. Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Exhibit 3: Primary Race/Ethnicity of Participants Served



Note: Information was available for 13 of the 15 programs. One organization reported both African American and Hispanic as the primary race/ethnicity of participants.

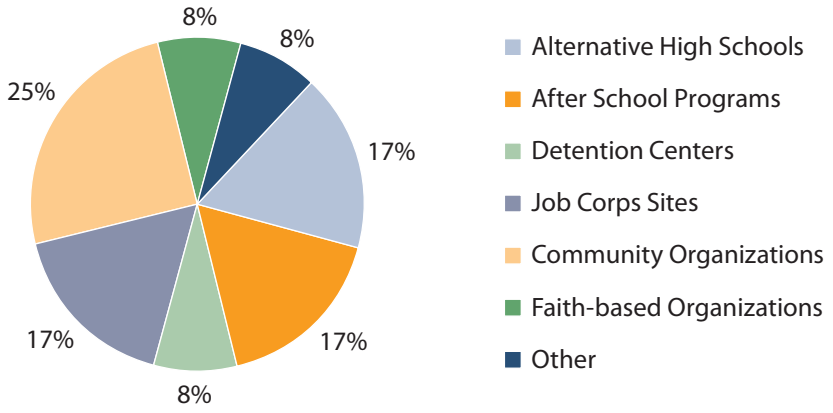
The varied ages/races/ethnicities of the youth served, the community setting in which programs operate, and the setting in which services are delivered illustrate the diversity of these demonstration grants and the need to design unique programming in order to serve such diverse groups of youth.

Service Delivery Strategies

A number of service delivery strategies are considered in order to reach diverse groups of teens and young adults. These strategies include variations on the setting where services are held, the curricula chosen for the population being served and the presentation of the material.

Setting/Format: The organizations described in this study designed programming to meet the specific needs of the youth in their distinct communities. Exhibit 4 illustrates the range of settings where programs are reaching out to provide needed relationship education services.

Exhibit 4: Additional Service Delivery Settings
All grantees deliver services, in some format, in a high school



Note: Information available for 14 of the 15 programs. All of the organizations reported providing services in high schools, but some reported providing services in multiple settings in addition to high schools.

Schools: High schools are a logical place for relationship education programs to reach young people because most youth are attending some form of school on a regular basis. Some schools offer the curriculum as a unit within a health, Family and Consumer Science (FACS) or psychology class. Others offer relationship education as a stand-alone elective class over the course of a semester. Some offer a combination of the two to meet schools' needs. In addition to delivering relationship education during the school day as a unit of an existing class or as an elective course, services have also been offered during lunch hours and as an after school program.

> "Our findings also suggest that existing programs and efforts related to teen dating, teen sexual behavior and preventing teen pregnancy and STIs may benefit from incorporating strategies aimed at building healthy romantic relationships"
>
> *- Child Trends, 2009*
>
> *Telling It Like It Is: Teen Perspectives on Romantic Relationships*

Other Settings: Teens and young adults engage in a variety of services outside of high school classes. Several grantees reached teens in programs for those who had dropped out of high school, are pregnant and/or parenting, are in treatment facilities or who are in juvenile detention centers. In these settings, relationship education is generally incorporated into existing programming (i.e., as a unit in a series of classes already offered), yet most programs have altered

their design in order to meet the needs of the participants. For example, programs have had to alter the format of the program to accommodate nontraditional schedules as well as the transient nature of these young people, who may not stay in a facility for the duration of a program.

Programs reported having to customize their curricula to include relevant examples that resonate with the young people they are trying to reach. In settings where the youth are juvenile offenders, in GED/employment programs or are parents, for example, these young people often have had life experiences that require relationship education programs to vary their approach in order to meet their unique needs and make the programming relevant to their lives. For example, the youth may have experienced trauma, been abused or be in a co-parenting relationship, so the programming needs to be relevant to their circumstances.

Curriculum Number of Hours: Relationship education curricula vary in length. Some are designed to be delivered over a short period of time (e.g., one or two days), while others are more extensive and may take weeks to complete. All of the Priority Area 8 grantees were required to deliver at least eight hours of curriculum. Depending on the program design, from eight to more than 21 hours of curriculum were delivered across programs—although most delivered between nine and 15 hours (see Exhibit 5 for an overview of the number of hours of curriculum offered by the Priority Area 8 grantees).

Comments from students on program content:

Communication: "I thought the class was helpful. It helped me learn better communication skills. It also helped me have more confidence when talking to people I don't know." - Student, Maine

"She taught me communication and commitment are important factors of a relationship." - Student, Mississippi

Relationship Safety: "This course really opened my eyes to how many relationships in high school involve violence."
- Student, Maine

Expectations & Life Goals: "This program really helps you understand the full meaning of good relationships and bad ones. ...I think that explaining about this to people will help them understand more about life after high school."
- Student, Maine

"You have to have the right mind frame and set high standards for anything you want to do. Best Men helped me develop a positive attitude about life." - Student, New Jersey

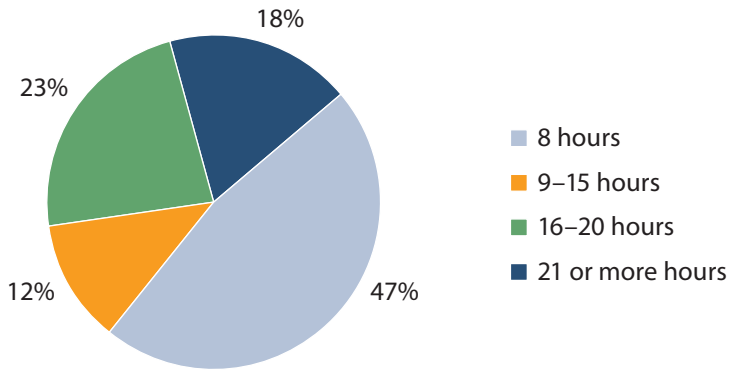
Budgeting: "Now that I am a dad I realize that I need to budget better - I made a budget chart to explain money to my baby's mom." - Student, Texas

Although the organizations are all reaching high school-age youth, the curricula delivered may be different depending on the needs of the audience and the amount of time available. Some programs use an existing youth-focused curriculum while others developed a new curriculum to meet their needs (see Appendix F for a list of the curricula utilized by grantees). Regardless of whether the curriculum was purchased or created specifically for a particular audience, several common content areas seem to resonate most with young people. What organizations and participants report as being the most relevant for young people includes information and skills related to:

- Communication
- Conflict resolution
- Characteristics of a healthy relationship
- Relationship safety
- Expectations for relationships
- Future life goals
- Budgeting/finances.

The curricula delivered to youth discuss relationships within a variety of contexts (e.g., friendship, dating relationships, peer groups, parents and employers). Most of the organizations talk about the program (with youth, to school administrators and within the community) in the context of "healthy relationships." However, the value and benefits of healthy marriage is a main topic that is woven throughout the curricula and organizations agree it is a topic of great interest among young people.

Exhibit 5: Number of Hours of Curriculum Delivered



Note: Information was available for 13 of the 15 organizations. Some programs reported delivering different dosages of curriculum for different audiences/settings, etc.

Facilitator(s)/Training: Although few studies have focused on effective qualities of facilitators delivering relationship education to youth, there is evidence from studies with other youth and adult programs indicating how the characteristics of facilitators and participants' perceptions of the facilitator contribute to a program's success.[24,25]

"Mrs. Christy handled the 'touchy' conversations well and made it easy for us to learn but in a light-mood environment." - Student, Mississippi

The Priority Area 8 grantees recognize the importance of the facilitator to the effectiveness of the service delivery and have implemented a variety of strategies when working with young people. For example, many of the programs employ trained staff or utilize volunteers who deliver curriculum as a guest instructor in various settings. These programs indicate that young people often responded to these "outsiders" because in many cases they were closer to the age of the participants, and the youth felt comfortable talking to them about difficult issues. Other programs offer curriculum training to school teachers who present material during their own classes or within their own facilities. This method also may be successful because young people develop healthy, trusting relationships with these teachers. The relationship established may make the youth feel more comfortable approaching the teacher when future relationship issues and/or questions arise. There are also programs that utilize a strategy that combines the use of program staff and teachers/internal staff in ways that meet the needs of the various schools and organizations that they work with. There are rationales for the effectiveness of both strategies. There is universal agreement, however, that good facilitators must be able to understand, relate to and connect with young people.

Effective facilitators connect with youth by presenting curriculum content in a way that is appealing and relevant to their lives. However, fidelity to the curriculum content and grant requirements are also important to program success. Most of the programs' facilitators and teachers participated in more than eight hours of curriculum training (some as much as 20 hours) prior to delivering services.

"This class is exceeding all my expectations! The educators are really connecting with the students." - Teacher, Maine

24 Jarrett, Horn, & Zhang, 2009.
25 Higginbotham & Myler, 2010.

Evaluation Findings

The Priority Area 8 grantees all implemented an evaluation specific to the design of their program and the outcomes they hoped to measure. Most of the evaluations included a pre-and post-assessment model. Ten of the 15 Priority Area 8 grantees had evaluation data available for review for the purposes of this report. Although no youth-specific, standard measures were required to be used across programs, the program assessments measured outcomes such as:

Positive change in attitudes and expectations about marriage and relationships

Over half of the evaluations available for review included specific questions that were related to participants' attitudes and expectations about relationships. Generally, these programs found that students reported a positive change in their expectations about relationships. For example, at post-assessment, students from one program were more likely to "strongly agree" that marriage is "good and a desirable goal in life."[26] In another program, of the boys who received services, 86 percent indicated that they "strongly agreed" that they had confidence about building a future relationship.[27] Another program found a 9 percent increase in the number of students who agreed at post-assessment that "getting married is a realistic option for me."[28]

Knowledge gained related to the benefits of healthy relationships and marriage

The content of the youth serving programs included information about the benefits of healthy relationships and marriage. However, only three of the organizations with evaluation data available for review included questions on their assessments specific to knowledge gained in this area. Of these, all three reported increases in the knowledge gained by the youth. One program indicated a 15 percent increase in participants reporting they understand the benefits/value of marriage.[29] Another evaluation showed a 23 percent increase in the number of students reporting the value of healthy relationships as "good" or "excellent."[30] Another program found at post-assessment that 90 percent of the female participants and 78 percent of the male participants said that they are sure they can "tell someone about the benefits of marriage."[31]

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26 **Rockdale Medical Center.** *Semi-Annual Report (date not provided), Section V. Evaluation.*
27 **Shalom Task Force.** *Semi-Annual Report (2009), Section V. Evaluation.*
28 **Future Foundation.** *Annual Evaluation Report (2009).*
29 **Future Foundation.** *Annual Evaluation Report (2009).*
30 **Character Counts in Maine.** *Semi-Annual Report (2010), Section V. Evaluation.*
31 **Best Friends Foundation.** *Semi-Annual Report (2009), Section V. Evaluation.*

Increased knowledge and/or use of relationship skills

Building skills for healthy relationships is a key element of the relationship education programs. Half of the evaluations available for review specifically measured changes in skills learned by youth participants. Some programs included indicators for general relationship skills learned, while others specifically measured communication, conflict resolution and anger management skills. These programs all found increases in skills learned at post-assessment. The programs measuring communication, conflict resolution and/or anger management skills acquisition found significant increases. Within one reporting period, a program found an improvement of approximately 81 percent in participants' communication skills at post-assessment.[32] Participants from another program reported an increase in their overall communication with their family and an increase in the use of negotiation skills with their partners,[33] an example of how the skills are being utilized in a variety of relationships. Another program found a 42 percent increase in the number of students reporting an increase in both communication and conflict resolution skills.[34] The programs that did not specifically measure communication and conflict resolution skills also saw reported increases at post-assessment. One program found a 7 percent increase in the number of students reporting that in the last six months they had improved their relationship skills.[35] Another program found that after completing the program, 62 percent of the female participants and 70 percent of the male participants agreed that they had identified new techniques for managing anger.[36]

> "I used these tips and skills this past weekend. I spoke to my girlfriend about some red flags we have, such as our dependency and anger issues, and discussed how to fix these problems."
> - Student, Maine

32 **YWCA San Antonio.** *Overview of Outcomes Using Available Semi-Annual Documents (2011).*
33 **Texas State University–San Marcos.** *Semi-Annual Report (2010), Evaluation.*
34 **Character Counts in Maine.** *Semi-Annual Report (2010), Section V. Evaluation.*
35 **Future Foundation.** *Annual Evaluation Report (2009).*
36 **Shalom Task Force.** *Semi-Annual Report (2009), Section V. Evaluation.*

Improved understanding of relationship violence/abuse

Dating violence (including verbal abuse) is prevalent in adolescent relationships and is an issue that several programs included in their evaluations. One program designed a multi-phase evaluation, and during the pre-test of the first phase learned that ninth- and tenth- grade females were significantly more likely than males to shout at and slap their romantic partner or non-romantic best friend during a disagreement. Boys were more likely to call their romantic partner or non-romantic best friend fat or ugly and destroy something that belonged to them.[37] This type of violence among adolescents is the reason relationship safety is an important element of the content presented through relationship education programs.

"I know now what I want to look for in a relationship and the signs of an abusive person". - Student, Mississippi

"Before this class, I never would have realized I was in an abusive relationship, let alone I never would have had the courage to leave. As we finished up the unit I learned how and where to break up with him. I am with someone new now that treats me right, but if I ever start seeing some of the red flags or warning signs, I will leave him immediately." - Student, Pennsylvania

Not all of the Priority Area 8 grantees specifically measured changes in attitudes and behaviors related to relationship violence, but most indicated (either through adult observation or feedback from youth participants) that young people gained knowledge about the dangers of relationship violence and that some participants had applied this knowledge to end an abusive relationship. Those programs that did include relationship violence in their evaluations had interesting findings. One program measured attitudes about relationship violence and found that there was a significant increase, from pre- to post-program assessment, in the number of students (from 55 percent to 63 percent) who responded they "strongly disagreed" with the statement "In today's society, it's okay to hit sometimes in a relationship."[38] During a particular reporting period, another program found an approximate 86 percent improvement among participants in abuse prevention skills.[39]

37 **Operation Keepsake.** *Semi-Annual Evaluation Report (2010).*
38 **Future Foundation.** *Annual Evaluation Report (2009).*
39 **YWCA San Antonio.** *Overview of Outcomes Using Available Semi-Annual Documents (2011).*

Knowledge gained about financial literacy/budgeting

Understanding the effect finances can have on relationships and families and learning how to manage personal finances are important to developing healthy relationships and becoming financially self-sufficient. Not every grantee evaluated specific changes in knowledge related to finances, but anecdotal comments from students across a number of programs indicate that this information was timely, relevant and very well received. Some programs did measure whether youth participants increased their knowledge related to finances and budgeting and showed positive outcomes. One program found there was an improvement rate of approximately 82 percent between pre- and post-assessment in budgeting/financial skills knowledge.[40] Another program found that at post-assessment, 59 percent of girls and 79 percent of boys "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that they were aware of how money affects relationships.[41]

"I learned your bills come first then spend for pleasure." - Student, Mississippi

"This course is helpful, especially the part of talking about money because I learned some things I didn't know before about finances and I think it is important for teenagers to know." - Student, Maine

"I liked the budget section best, and found it very helpful, seeing as I'm currently seeking employment." - Student, Maine

Lessons Learned

While all Priority Area 8 grantees provided group-based relationship education, they were unique in their approach because of the distinct characteristics of the young people and communities where services were delivered. Nevertheless, common themes emerged from these organizations that provide insight into some promising practices in delivering healthy relationship education to youth. While these themes hold true to previous studies that have examined relationship education, this field and its research base is relatively new. These demonstration projects show promise and highlight areas for future, rigorous research.

40 **YWCA San Antonio.** *Overview of Outcomes Using Available Semi-Annual Documents (2011).*
41 **Shalom Task Force.** *Semi-Annual Report (2009), Section V. Evaluation.*

Common Themes

Youth desire information about healthy relationships.

The topic of relationships—particularly those with friends and romantic partners—is of great interest to teens and young adults. Much of young people's social development during these ages revolves around relationships with peers and exploring romantic relationships, and they are open and willing to learn about the topic. Young participants describe relationship education programs as "life-changing," "eye-opening," "informational" and "interesting," which attests to the readiness of youth to receive this kind of information and to their enthusiasm for applying this knowledge to make more informed decisions for their lives.

> "I think this is the best class I've taken all year." - Student, Mississippi
>
> "What she taught us were things we will remember for the rest of our lives." - Student, Mississippi
>
> "I really liked how this wasn't only about dating and how it helped us understand how to have good relationships with everyone." - Student, Maine
>
> "I loved these lessons; something to look forward to each day! They have not only helped me with my personal problems, but have helped me inform others! Now I know how to deal with heated discussions!" - Student, Maine

The desire to talk about relationships and receive reliable information on how to manage these relationships is documented in other research. For example, a recent survey of 1,008 teens (ages 12–19) asked: "Which of the following [relationships, sex or birth control] do you most wish you were able to talk more openly about with your parents? Even if you'd like to be able to talk more freely about all three, I need you to tell me only the one you feel the most strongly about." Sixty-two percent responded "relationships," indicating a strong demand for knowledge about healthy relationships.[42]

Young people need facilitators they can trust and relate to.

The notion that the attributes of a teacher are paramount to students' learning is something that has been studied extensively in education literature. The experience of the youth-serving relationship education programs echoes what education research has found with respect to the facilitators delivering services. Regardless of whether or not the curriculum was delivered by grantee staff, volunteers, school teachers or staff from a partner organization, grantees recognized

42 Albert, 2010.

that to be effective in reaching young people, the facilitator had to be authentic and passionate about the work, be non-judgmental about the student's beliefs/feelings, demonstrate that they cared, and be consistent in their attitude toward the students, their teaching style and their delivery of the curriculum content.

> "She taught me communication and commitment are important factors of a relationship." - Student, Mississippi
>
> "It taught me about the bad things that happen when you make wrong choices. I learned the difference between real love and crushes." - Student, Mississippi

However, finding facilitators who have the right mix of passion about the work, commitment to practicing what they teach and the ability to connect with young people while maintaining fidelity to the curriculum was no small task for organizations. Over time, some programs changed their hiring process and made it more competitive to ensure they had candidates with a strong desire to do the work. Presentations to a panel of program staff were also added to the interview process by some programs in order to identify candidates with exceptional presentation skills, and additional staff trainings were developed to ensure that facilitators remained true to the curriculum content.

Participants are able to develop a vision about what a healthy relationship is—and what it is not.

So many young people—particularly low-income, vulnerable youth—grow up without a model of a healthy relationship and have no frame of reference by which to develop their own expectations for relationships. The federally funded healthy relationship education programs targeted many low-income youth, many of whom did not understand their own unhealthy and/or abusive relationships, but who saw how this type of programming can help remedy this phenomenon. As a result of relationship education, grantees saw youth begin to make decisions about what they wanted for their lives and for their relationships. This is consistent with previous relationship education studies that indicate that programs may be most effective for those who are most vulnerable.[43]

The material must be relevant to youth. Material that is relevant to young people's personal relationship experiences and that seems to come from their everyday lives was well received. Making the material interactive and incorporating a variety of activities and media (i.e., role playing, video, online interaction, social media applications, etc.) are important components to creating

43 See, for example, Gardner & Boellaard, 2007, and Kerpelman, 2010.

a program that is significant to youth culture. Youth culture includes slang, dialect, media and behavior; therefore, relevant programming must be sensitive to these dynamics in addition to the local culture (e.g., race, ethnicity, socioeconomic influences). One way to incorporate youth culture is to include youth in leadership roles, peer learning and on committees that inform relationship education services.

Healthy relationship education can be a powerful change agent within a variety of youth relationships.

The more the young people were empowered with information and skills related to healthy relationships, the more their behavior changed positively across a variety of relationships (i.e., with peers, parents, teachers, employers, etc.). Numerous examples of how skills were used in various relationships were offered as indicators of changes in the youths' capacity to positively change their relationships. This was especially true with peers (as discussed above) and parents. Principals and vice-principals, when asked about these programs, commented on better relationships between participants and their parents. Students too could identify negative communication patterns with parents and used the skills they learned to listen more effectively and frequently shared the tools with their parents.

"It has changed the way I choose my friends, the things I do, and the choices I make." - Student, Mississippi

"I really look at what I want to do in my life now." - Student, Mississippi

"This program has been terrific for our family, especially learning that it is important to nurture all relationships. Learning that relationships are all about respect and not just the boy-girl romantic aspect has been very important for our daughter. Maine Teen Talk has been a tremendous help for our family in getting through these teen years." - Parent, Maine

"I am having trouble with my teachers who don't understand me and it makes me so angry. Thank you for teaching me that I have other options and can deal with my anger before I explode." - Student, New York

"...at the beginning of the semester, I was still clinging to my old crowd. But during this class, I've found friends that actually care about me." - Student, Mississippi

Services can improve peer dynamics.

Anecdotal information from students and teachers pointed to young people using relationship skills (especially empathy, communication techniques and problem-solving strategies) to de-escalate situations with other students. Students become more empowered, and more effective in how they listen and how they choose their words, and made smarter and more respectful decisions in relating to one another. Many of the students seem to be turning more toward their parents or toward teachers as trusted people and as people they respect. In general, this work was reported as a catalyst for positive change in the school community by increasing tolerance and improving understanding of "healthy" relationships.

Programs can have a positive effect on school climate.

One program administrator received a call from a school principal saying how much more respectful the relationship education attendees were in school and that they had better attendance and graduation rates. Although this is only one specific example, teachers and school administrators generally reported that there was improved behavior in schools that included less fighting and more respect shown toward peers and teachers/authorities.

Young people are receptive to money management/budgeting strategies.

Many of the programs incorporated curriculum content related to money management/budgeting into their relationship education programs. For many youth participants, this was their first exposure to this type of information, yet they recognized its importance. This resulted in the integration of this knowledge into their behaviors and future planning.

Evaluating youth relationship education programming is important but difficult.

Programs found that collecting important evaluation data was a greater challenge than initially expected. While some youth participants may have recognized the importance of collecting data, many high school-aged youth are not interested in completing a form that likely resembles a test and may have many questions to be answered. The transient nature of some young people in communities made evaluation difficult and some program designs limited a grantee's ability to capture information from participants after the relationship education service ended.

Utilizing innovative strategies to engage young people and parents encourages ongoing participation.

While implementing a curriculum that is interesting and relevant for young people is a big part of effective programs, organizations found that incorporating innovative strategies to attract youth and involve them in activities outside of the classroom led to additional success. Program components such as teen leadership programs, teen panels/advisory groups, teen academies and teen ambassador groups involve youth beyond the classroom by charging them with outreach to other students, teaching skills they have learned and planning relationship-focused events (e.g., teen summits, Valentine's Day events). Organizations found that these opportunities support a more comprehensive youth development approach, and help young people apply the concepts and skills they learned through the curriculum and directly experience positive societal interaction. Additionally, programs have engaged parents in adult workshops and "family mentoring weekends" to encourage youth participation and promote the use of healthy relationship skills with family members.

Building community support for programming is vital.

Programs that were intentional in creating awareness in the community about healthy marriage and relationships and the specific services being offered to youth had positive results. Giving presentations within other community organizations, providing interviews to various media sources, as well as other outreach efforts, resulted in establishing referral partnerships, getting additional advertising and earning general support from within the community, which helped create and sustain a demand for services.

> "Through word of mouth alone, we have been invited to come into classrooms across the Metro Atlanta area. The community has come out to support all of our marriage appreciation events. We have reached 80 percent of projected community participation numbers."
> - Program Staff, Georgia

The common themes above emerged from a variety of discussions with students, parents, teachers and program administrators. Although many relationship education programs were new to a community, they were well received and promising practices for service delivery are emerging.

What We Still Need to Learn

The experiences of the youth serving Priority Area 8 grantees have provided the field with a wealth of knowledge as to how to successfully deliver relationship education to high school-age youth. Additionally, these experiences have identified four questions where further research can expand the knowledge base around youth relationship education.

- **Which curriculum components carry the most weight in outcomes for the teens?** A handful of curriculum topics (e.g., characteristics of a healthy relationship, healthy communication, conflict resolution) are commonly found in all youth curricula. These topics provide conventional wisdom about a minimum amount of information that youth need in order to create and sustain healthy relationships throughout their lives. While anecdotal reports from both facilitators and youth indicate that these featured topics have an effect on young people's learning, there is no research exploring which of the topics/concepts have the strongest outcomes. The true test of relationship education's success is identifying the curriculum concepts that have the greatest long-term influence on youth relationships and life choices. Further investigation is needed around how well the knowledge and skills learned through relationship education are used when students have to make decisions in their relationships.

- **How many curricula are needed to be effective?** Feelings about the length of curricula delivered by organizations are just as diverse as the curricula themselves. The content covered by relationship education curricula is of great interest to young people and, regardless of whether programs deliver eight hours or more than 21 hours, staff and students alike indicate that the length of the program is either "just right" or not long enough. A more thorough evaluation is needed to determine the ideal "dosage" of relationship education resulting in positive effects for high school-age youth. However, a strong interest in programming on the part of young people is promising if a longer exposure to curricula should be found to be most effective for long-term effects.

- **Are youth relationship education curricula applicable for a wide range of ages, developmental stages and levels of relationship experience?** The research suggests that youth generally progress through stages of relationship development throughout adolescence. This is an important factor for relationship education programs to consider, as the curriculum concepts presented to 13- or 14-year-old teens, who are typically less developmentally mature and who may have little dating experience, would need to have a very different context than they would for older youth, who have typically begun experimenting with dating relationships. Furthermore, pregnant and/or parenting youth and those in a juvenile detention facility have already experienced certain relationship dynamics that should be addressed by the curriculum content, regardless of their age. Although there was a general feeling among the Priority Area 8 grantees that the curricula delivered could be applied/adapted to young people across ages and levels of relationship experience, further study in these areas could greatly inform the field.

- **Is there a model for integrating services with schools that tends to be most effective across locations?** Across the spectrum of programs, there is great variation in how services have been integrated within schools. While most programs can demonstrate levels of effectiveness, it begs the question of whether a consistent model is needed. Some common themes emerged from visiting with the Priority Area 8 grantees that provide guidance for the effective use of relationship education programs in schools. First of all, most school systems are under pressure to deliver curriculum based on state-mandated learning guidelines, which include specific skills for each grade level. In incorporating relationship education, programs were most successful when they could either deliver curriculum that met the guidelines for the state or that could be incorporated into classes in a way that didn't infringe upon the school system's efforts to complete its required learning activities. Most often, this was accomplished through working in health or FACS classes because curriculum content is most compatible with existing standards for those courses. Without building relationships with school principals and teachers, however, none of these efforts would have been possible, as relationship education presents a shift in philosophy and thinking for many in the educational system. Overall, services are best integrated when the content is parallel to established learning objectives and value is seen in what the curriculum offers to students, teachers and communities alike.

Conclusion

The 15 Priority Area 8 healthy marriage demonstration grantees delivering relationship education to high school-age youth are unique in their approach to program design, service delivery and evaluation, making cross-cutting "impacts" to a diverse group of youth participants hard to measure. However, these programs have provided numerous lessons learned and emerging promising practices related to serving youth populations that will not only enhance the field of healthy marriage and relationship education but also broaden the field of services to youth.

As evidenced by program evaluations and anecdotal feedback from young people, program facilitators, school administrators and parents, these programs are discovering that relationship education not only plays a role in helping youth shape their attitudes and perceptions about relationships, it may also play a role in preventing youth from becoming involved in risky behaviors that can potentially affect their future life trajectories in a negative way.

Youth Served. These programs reached thousands of young people across the country. Teens of all ages and diverse backgrounds benefited from relationship education through these programs. Many youth today are not getting the message about healthy relationships in their home or community environments and they want to know about healthy relationships. The curricula offered as part of relationship education programs must address issues that teens are interested in, and the material must be presented in a way that is culturally relevant.

Most of the programming offered by organizations included both male and female participants in the same group. Having groups with both young men and women present offers opportunities to dispel myths, address gender stereotypes and consider strategies to improve relationships between the genders.

Service Delivery. Programming was often provided through the school systems, which are a natural fit for reaching this age group. However, unanticipated challenges arose, requiring a great deal of creativity and flexibility. For example, standardized testing schedules, unanticipated budget cuts and inclement weather resulting in unscheduled school closings all affected the ability to deliver curriculum content according to the original program design. Furthermore, the length of programming (i.e., eight or more curriculum hours) made it difficult for some schools to integrate the program during the standard school day due to competing academic requirements.

A variety of other models outside the school system were effective for delivering services. Community- and faith-based organizations, juvenile justice programs, youth employment programs and teen parenting programs were all able to reach and engage young people in relationship education services. The transient nature of some of these young people can make delivering programming difficult over an extended period of time. For example, youth may not participate in the same program once they have had a baby, or they may transition from a detention facility prior to completing programming. All of the organizations demonstrated great flexibility in working around these challenges in ways that showed understanding of the needs of the young people and the demands placed on the staff, while meeting the programs' need to deliver services to youth.

Evaluation. Organizations have learned that youth enjoyed their relationship education programming, and pre- and post-program assessments generally reflected positive results. Organizations varied in the types of data collected and the rigor of evaluations, as these were demonstration grants. Most evaluation measures looked at intimate partner relationship skills and attitudes about healthy relationships and marriage. Reports from teachers and school administrators indicated positive changes in peer and parent relationships, as well as overall school climate. While there is still much to learn about developing and delivering these services to young people, positive trends are emerging.

Summary. These 15 diverse programs delivered at least eight hours of healthy marriage and relationship education to thousands of teens across the country. Overall, young people demonstrated a desire to learn about healthy relationships and showed improved understanding

of healthy relationships (especially the fact that violence has no role in a healthy relationship), and evaluations indicated positive trends in skill building. Program administrators, facilitators, school professionals and parents also reported that the programs had a positive influence on the participants. Although additional research and evaluation is needed, these demonstration grants indicate that healthy marriage and relationships matter to our youth, and that these programs fill a void in current services in providing skills and information that can help keep young people on a positive path as they transition into adulthood.

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Appendix A. Priority Areas

Community Healthy Marriage Grants to Implement Multiple Allowable Activities, Level 1

Under this priority area, grants were awarded to organizations to implement five or more of the eight allowable activities simultaneously to a broad audience. Funding between $1,500,000 and $5,000,000 was awarded annually to six organizations.

Community Healthy Marriage Grants to Implement Multiple Allowable Activities, Level 2

Under this priority area, grants were awarded to organizations to implement five or more of the eight allowable activities simultaneously to a broad audience. Funding between $900,000 and $1,100,000 was awarded annually to 15 organizations.

Community Healthy Marriage Grants to Implement Multiple Allowable Activities, Level 3

Under this priority area, grants were awarded to organizations to implement five or more of the eight allowable activities simultaneously to a broad audience. Funding between $450,000 and $550,000 was awarded annually to 15 organizations.

Healthy Marriage Grants to Serve Low-Income Married Couples, Level 1

Under this priority area, grants were awarded to organizations to implement one allowable activity to low-income married couples (Allowable Activity #5). Funding between $450,000 and $550,000 was awarded annually to nine organizations.

Healthy Marriage Grants to Serve Low-Income Married Couples, Level 2

Under this priority area, grants were awarded to organizations to implement one allowable activity to low-income married couples (Allowable Activity #5). Funding between $225,000 and $275,000 was awarded annually to 13 organizations.

Healthy Marriage Grants to Serve Low-Income Unwed Expectant or New Parents, Level 1

Under this priority area, grants were awarded to organizations to implement one allowable activity to low-income, unwed, expectant or new parents (Allowable Activity #3). Funding between $900,000 and $1,100,000 was awarded annually to three organizations.

Healthy Marriage Grants to Serve Low-Income Unwed Expectant or New Parents, Level 2

Under this priority area, grants were awarded to organizations to implement one allowable activity to low-income, unwed, expectant or new parents (Allowable Activity #3). Funding between $450,000 and $550,000 was awarded annually to 20 organizations.

Healthy Marriage Grants to Implement any Allowable Activity

Under this priority area, grants were awarded to organizations to implement one or two of the eight allowable activities, each activity to a particular primary audience. Funding between $450,000 and $550,000 was awarded annually to 44 organizations.

Source: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/data-reports/annualreport8/chapter07/chap07.htm#3

Appendix B. Grantee Profiles

Best Friends Foundation

Program Name

Diamond Girl Leadership/Best Men Leadership

Contact Information

5335 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Suite 440
Washington, DC 20015
(202) 478-9677

www.bestfriendsfoundation.org

Organization Description

Through a developmentally sound curriculum, the programs of the Best Friends Foundation have provided long-term outreach to adolescents that teaches the value of marriage and the importance of abstaining from premarital sex. Since 1987, the Foundation has used its experience and success to create lasting behavioral change in predominantly African American communities across the country.

Use of ACF Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant Funds

Best Friends Foundation provides education in high schools on the value of marriage, relationship skills and budgeting as well as implementing marriage mentoring programs, which use married couples as role models and mentors in at-risk communities.

Curriculum

Diamond Girl Leadership/Best Men Leadership

Participants/Recipients

Primarily African American adolescents (ages 14–19) in Washington, DC, with replication sites in North Carolina, New Jersey and Wisconsin

Diamond Girl Leadership Program: Ninth grade and higher girls who have completed the Best Friends

Best Men Leadership Program: High school boys who have completed the Best Men program

Approximate Number of Youth Served

Between 2,000 and 3,000 youth served

Format of program

Curriculum (eight hours) delivered in schools once every two weeks for three months. Two-day Healthy Youth Summits are also provided twice per year, providing an additional eight hours of training curriculum.

Length of time program has been offered

Diamond Girl Leadership started as a relationship education program in 1992, and the Best Men Leadership program began in 2003.

Booneville School District

Program Name

Stay Connected For Life: The Booneville School District Healthy Marriage Initiative

Contact Information

P.O. Box 358
Booneville, MS 38829
(662) 427-8469

www.stayconnected4life.com

Organization Description

The Booneville School District serves approximately 20,500 students in grades 9–12. The districts comprise students from 27 high schools dispersed in 11 school districts and seven counties.

Use of ACF Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant Funds

The Booneville Healthy Marriage Initiative implements public advertising campaigns on the value of marriage, teaches the skills needed to increase marital stability and health, and educates high school students regarding the value of marriage, relationship skills and budgeting.

Curriculum

Choice Game, Connections: Dating and Emotions, Connections: Relationships and Marriage

Participants/Recipients

Predominantly Caucasian high school students (ages 14–19) in 11 school districts and seven counties in and around Booneville, MS. Students attend mainstream and alternative high schools as well as Vo-Tech schools, Boys and Girls Clubs, and adolescent offender programs.

Approximate Number of Youth Served

More than 500 youth are served per year.

Format of program

Eight to 20 hours of curriculum are delivered in schools (either as a semester-long elective class or as a unit within a class offered every other week). Services in schools in counties that are further away from the Booneville area are provided every other week for a semester.

Length of time program has been offered

Booneville School District has been offering healthy marriage education services since 2006.

Character Counts in Maine

Program Name

Maine Teen Talk

Contact Information

1321 Washington Avenue, #302
Portland, ME 04103-3675
(207) 699-2464

www.best4teens.org

Organization Description

Character Counts in Maine delivers research-based Healthy Relationships education that provides teens with the skills and knowledge they need to create lifelong successful and respectful relationships.

Use of ACF Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant Funds

CCM's program, branded as MaineTeenTalk (MTT), gives teens the essential strategies to build positive listening and speaking skills, set appropriate boundaries and develop responsible budgeting/financial skills. Outreach in the state includes program delivery by MTT educators. In addition, MTT trains teachers across Maine in Teach Out Of the Box (TOOB) workshops.

Curriculum

Maine Teen Talk

Participants/Recipients

Predominantly Caucasian high school students (ages 14–19) in 14 of the state's 16 counties.

Approximate Number of Youth Served

More than 500 youth are served per year.

Format of program

Eight hours of curriculum are delivered in various ways depending on the school's needs. The majority of services are offered on a weekly basis in health classes. Services were delivered in other schools for two hours over four weeks or for four hours during a two-day freshman orientation.

Length of time program has been offered

Character Counts in Maine has been offering services since 2006.

CJH Educational Grant Services, Inc.

Program Name

Healthy Marriage MATTERS: Marriage Activities Tailored for Teens through Education, Research and Services

Contact Information

P.O. Box 14264
Raleigh, NC 27620
(919) 832-0306

www.cjhgrants.com and www.healthymarriagematters.com

Organization Description

CJH Educational Grant Services, Inc. is a private grant-writing implementation company based in Raleigh, North Carolina. Its mission is to address the social and educational needs of citizens in North Carolina through the attainment of federal grant funds.

Use of ACF Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant Funds

The local project, entitled "Healthy Marriage MATTERS" (Marriage Activities Tailored for Teens through Education, Research and Services) serves youth and families in northeastern counties of North Carolina by: 1) engaging in a media campaign on the benefits of marriage and 2) promoting a high school curriculum tailored to developing healthy relationships.

Curriculum

Connections: Dating and Emotions, Love Notes

Participants/Recipients

Predominantly African American high school students (ages 14–18) in five North Carolina counties (Edgecombe, Halifax, Northampton, Vance and Warren).

Approximate Number of Youth Served

More than 500 youth are served per year.

Format of program

Eight hours of curriculum are delivered in a variety of settings including high school health classes, faith-based organizations and Boys and Girls Clubs. Curriculum is delivered in a variety of ways including on a daily basis and as a one-day intensive workshop on Saturday.

Length of time program has been offered

CJH Educational Grant Services, Inc. has been offering the Healthy Marriage MATTERS program since 2006.

Future Foundation

Program Name

RealTalk ATL

Contact Information

1892 Washington Road
East Point, GA 30344
(404) 766-0510

www.future-foundation.com

Organization Description

Future Foundation is a leader in effective education and prevention services for at-risk youth in Fulton County, Georgia. At the heart of Future Foundation's mission is a goal to improve the lives of youth by empowering them to achieve success. Their five agency programs provide an extensive community-engaged, education-based module to support the academic, social and physical development of youth.

Use of ACF Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant Funds

Future Foundation provides education in high schools on the value of marriage, relationship skills and budgeting. The RealTalk ATL program sparks conversations about healthy choices regarding sex, love, dating and relationships with thousands of youth in schools and community centers.

Curriculum

Connections: Relationships and Marriage

Participants/Recipients

Predominantly African American high school youth (ages 14–18) in South Fulton County, Georgia.

Approximate Number of Youth Served

More than 500 youth are served per year.

Format of program

Services are primarily delivered in schools during the day or as an after school activity. Twenty hours of curriculum are delivered either once or twice a week depending on the school's preferred format.

Length of time program has been offered

Future Foundation has been offering components of the program since 2004, but the RealTalk ATL program has been offered since 2006.

Operation Keepsake

Program Name

Operation Keepsake

Contact Information

10568 Ravenna Road, Suite 9
Twinsburg, OH 44087
(330) 486-0602

www.opearationkeepsake.com

Organization Description

Operation Keepsake has been well-established in the education of teens for more than 18 years and aims to challenge young people to develop healthy relationships and strong character so they may develop to their fullest potential in life.

Use of ACF Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant Funds

Operation Keepsake delivers curriculum, conducts presentations and parent/teacher seminars, develops resources and publications, and manages a media campaign in efforts to increase the participants' efficacy with relationship and communication skills, increase knowledge of the negative social, psychological and health consequences of domestic violence, and increase knowledge of the benefits of a healthy marriage to the individual, children and society.

Curriculum

For Keeps

Participants/Recipients

Predominantly Caucasian high school students (ages 14–19).

Approximate Number of Youth Served

More than 500 youth are served per year.

Format of program

Services are delivered almost exclusively in high schools through ninth-grade health classes although services in some schools are offered to tenth-grade students. Eight hours of curriculum are delivered in a 10-day program.

Length of time program has been offered

Operation Keepsake has been offering services in middle schools since 2000. The program was later expanded to include high schools.

Pregnancy Support Center

Program Name

Relationship Matters

Contact Information

P.O. Box 8451
Canton, OH 44701
(330) 445-9895

www.canyourel8.com

Organization Description

The Stark STRONG (Standing Together Reaching Ohio's New Generation) Project is a collaboration of the Pregnancy Support Center (PSC), Community Services and Catholic Charities. These Stark County Agencies have come together as one unified task force to educate area youth in skills for a healthy relationship equipping them to have a healthy marriage.

Use of ACF Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant Funds

The Pregnancy Support Center provides classroom instruction in high schools on the value of marriage and the skills needed to increase marital stability and health. It will also provide public advertising campaigns on the value of marriage and the skills needed to increase marital stability and health.

Curriculum

Connections: Healthy Choices, Healthy Relationships, Love U2: Relationships Smarts

Participants/Recipients

Predominantly Caucasian high school students (ages 14–19).

Approximate Number of Youth Served

More than 500 youth are served per year.

Format of program

Services are delivered in three ways: 1) a semester-long, accredited, elective class; 2) an 8-10 hour course/seminar in faith- and community-based organizations; 3) a 10-session course presented in area high school health classes.

Length of time program has been offered

The Pregnancy Support Center has been offering services through a semester-long class since 2007, and began delivering curriculum in other formats in 2009.

ReCapturing the Vision International, Inc.

Program Name

ReCapturing the Vision

Contact Information

9780 Indigo Street, Suite 302
Miami, FL 33157
(305) 232-6003

www.recapturingthevision.org

Organization Description

ReCapturing the Vision (RTV) is the force behind a suite of holistic, flexible, culturally-tailored intervention programs proven to help at-risk youth bridge the gap with their more successful counterparts. RTV's three-tiered Program Model reaches youth in every area of their existence: School/Learning Environment, Home and Community.

Use of ACF Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant Funds

RTV provides education in high schools on the value of marriage, relationship skills and budgeting as well as marriage education, marriage skills and relationship skills programs for non-married pregnant women and non-married expectant fathers. It increases the percentage of youth and young adults who are armed and fortified with the necessary skills and knowledge that enable them to make informed decisions about healthy relationships. The Vessels of Honor and Capturing the Vision (state-approved curriculum) is utilized, along with field trips, speakers and bi-weekly visits by married couples.

Curriculum

Vessels of Honor, Capturing the Vision

Participants/Recipients

High school students ages 14–18 in the Miami-Dade area.

Approximate Number of Youth Served

More than 500 youth are served per year.

Format of program

The program is designed to be 18 weeks, meeting daily for one hour and totaling 90 sessions. Services are offered during the school day.

Length of time program has been offered

RTV has been providing relationship education for 17 years, but since 2006, the organization has made this work its focus.

Rockdale Medical Center

Program Name

MATURE (Marriage Appreciation Training Uplifting Relationship Education)

Contact Information

1412 Milstead Avenue, NE
Conyers, GA 30012
(770) 918-3296

www.matureproject.com

Organization Description

Rockdale Medical Center (RMC) was established in 1956 to provide quality health care, educational services and community wellness programs. The hospital manages more than $100 million each year, employs nearly 1200 people and is accredited by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Health. RMC has been responding to the needs of adolescents in the tri-county area of DeKalb, Newton and Rockdale Counties for more than 10 years. In an effort to share the value and advantages of marriage with high school students in the three counties, RMC offers Marriage Appreciation Training Uplifting Relationship Education (MATURE).

Use of ACF Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant Funds

MATURE integrates educational strategies that support healthy marriages through the provision of 15 lessons. It serves ninth- through twelfth-grade students in the tri-county area of DeKalb, Newton and Rockdale Counties of Georgia. In addition to marriage appreciation, lessons address healthy male/female relationships and life-skills information such as dating violence prevention, domestic violence prevention and budgeting.

Curriculum

PAIRS for Peers, Connections: Relationships and Marriage

Participants/Recipients

Predominantly African American high school students (ages 15–19) in DeKalb, Newton and Rodale Counties of Georgia.

Approximate Number of Youth Served

Approximately 11,000 students served to date.

Format of program

Services are offered as 90-minute classes over 15 weeks, totaling 22.5 hours of curriculum delivery.

Length of time program has been offered

RMC has been offering the MATURE program since 2006.

Shalom Task Force

Program Name

Bertha Kaufman Education Awareness Program

Contact Information

P.O. Box 137
Bowling Green Station, NY 10274
(212) 742-1478

www.shalomtaskforce.org

Organization Description

Shalom Task Force (STF) is a nonprofit organization based in New York City with the goal of uprooting domestic violence in the Orthodox Jewish Community. Its mission is to prevent domestic abuse and promote peaceful family relations.

Use of ACF Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant Funds

Shalom Task Force offers relationship and marriage education workshops to high school students as well as young women and men who are engaged or interested in marriage. Shalom Task Force has trained community members to deliver workshops for high school seniors and those interested in marriage.

Curriculum

Facing Forward

Participants/Recipients

High school-aged youth (ages 14–18) and couples in the Orthodox Jewish community.

Approximate Number of Youth Served

More than 500 youth are served per year.

Format of program

Eight to 10 hours of curriculum are offered in schools, typically in one-hour sessions for eight to 10 weeks. Services are offered to young men and women separately, as classes are segregated per Orthodox Jewish tradition.

Length of time program has been offered

Shalom Task Force has offered the eight-hour Facing Forward curriculum since 2008. A shorter program was utilized prior to 2008.

Texas State University—San Marcos

Program Name

Strengthening Relationships Program

Contact Information

601 University Drive
San Marcos, TX 78666

www.ccf.txstate.edu

Organization Description

Texas State University–San Marcos, established in 1899, is a comprehensive, culturally diverse university offering graduate and undergraduate instruction in a largely rural and small community area. It houses the Center for Children and Families (CCF), which was established by the School of Social Work in 1998 and moved to university status in 2002. CCF's vision is to serve as a nationally recognized interdisciplinary resource and educational center that enhances services to children and families while providing educational opportunities to university students.

Use of ACF Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant Funds

The goal of the program is to assist adolescent parents in building and maintaining healthy relationships by helping them develop their personal and relationship skills. Services are offered to adolescent parents and family members in the Austin/San Marcos, TX, area.

Curriculum

Love Notes

Participants/Recipients

Predominantly Hispanic adolescent parents (ages 17–18) and family members enrolled in pregnancy, education and parenting programs.

Approximate Number of Youth Served

Between 100 and 200 youth are served per year.

Format of program

Between eight and 12 hours of curriculum are offered to teen parents enrolled in various high schools in Austin and San Marcos. The program also reaches out to teen fathers and parents' family members to deliver relationship skills education.

Length of time program has been offered

Information was not available.

The Dibble Institute

Program Name

Healthy Marriage Discretionary Grants

Contact Information

P.O. Box 7881
Berkeley, CA 94707-0881

(800) 695-7975

www.dibbleinstitute.org

Organization Description

The Dibble Institute for Marriage Education is a nonprofit organization, helping young people navigate their romantic relationships now and in the future.

Use of ACF Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant Funds

The Dibble Institute leads a public advertising campaign on the value of marriage and the skills needed to increase marital stability and health, and provides education on the value of marriage, relationship skills and budgeting in high schools by training Family and Consumer Sciences high school teachers across the country in a variety of relationship education curricula.

Curriculum

Connections: Dating and Emotions
Connections: Relationships and Marriage
Essential Disciplines
Healthy Choices, Healthy Relationships
Love U2: Baby Smarts
Love U2: Communication Smarts
Love U2: Relationship Smarts
Love U2: Relationship Smarts PLUS
Love Notes
The Art of Loving Well

Participants/Recipients

Services are offered to a diverse high school youth population (between the ages of 14 and 19) in 17 states across the country.

Approximate Number of Youth Served

More than 3,000 youth are served per year.

Format of program

Family and Consumer Sciences high school teachers are trained each year to deliver relationship education curriculum as part of their classroom instruction. Teachers provide at least eight hours of curriculum instruction, and some offer up to 20. The majority of the students receive between nine and 15 hours of relationship education curriculum in a class setting.

Length of time program has been offered

The Dibble Institute has been delivering services in this capacity since 2006.

Trinity Church, Inc.

Program Name

Healthy Relationships

Contact Information

P.O. Box 680820, N.
Miami, FL 33168
(786) 888-4774

www.peacemakers.com

Organization Description

Trinity Church, based in Miami, is one of the city's most ethnically diverse churches, serving Caucasian, African American, Caribbean, Haitian and Hispanic families. Trinity Peacemakers Family Center (PFC) serves as the base for all social service programs, including the youth department that serves more than 500 youth weekly.

Use of ACF Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant Funds

Trinity Church provides education in high schools centered around the knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the benefits of marriage; balanced communication in healthy marriage; characteristics of abusive relationships; and the importance of developing sound financial habits before getting married and having children. Services are also provided at Trinity Church, Trinity Family Peacemakers Center and other faith-based sites.

Curriculum

Love U2: Relationship Smarts, Becoming a Responsible Teen

Participants/Recipients

Predominantly African American and Hispanic high school students (ages 14–18) in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties, FL.

Approximate Number of Youth Served

Nearly 2,000 youth have been served to date.

Format of program

Services are provided through various formats, including in high schools, at faith-based organizations and at youth summer camps in South Florida.

Length of time program has been offered

Trinity Church, Inc. has been providing services since 2006.

University of Louisville

Program Name

Promoting Healthy Relationships for At-Risk Adults and Youth

Contact Information

University of Louisville
Kent School of Social Work
Oppenheimer Hall
Louisville, KY 40292
(502) 852-2917

www.louisvillerelationships.org

Organization Description

The Kent School of Social Work of the University of Louisville is committed to knowledge development that informs social work practice, recognizing the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration to solve complex social problems.

Use of ACF Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant Funds

The Kent School works with at-risk adults involved with various social service agencies and with youth through the Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.) Program of the Jefferson County Public Schools to deliver relationship education to at-risk students.

Curriculum

Love U2: Communication Smarts

Participants/Recipients

Primarily students in the Y.O.U. Program workforce development program (ages 16–21) who are at risk due to their educational status and other community risk factors.

Approximate Number of Youth Served

Approximately 450 students over a five-year period.

Format of program

Services are typically provided through two-day seminars held onsite at workforce development facilities. An average of 12–14 students participating in GED classes and/or other job training programming elect to participate in each seminar.

Length of time program has been offered

The University of Louisville has been offering these services since 2006.

YWCA of San Antonio

Program Name

Familia Unida Initiative

Contact Information

314 N. Hackberry, #101
San Antonio, TX 78202
(210) 228-9922, ext. 235

www.ywca.org/sanantonio

Organization Description

The YWCA is the nation's oldest and largest autonomous women's membership organization. The YWCA of San Antonio was formed in 1910 and now provides an array of programs to assist women and their families in developing personal empowerment and sufficiency. YWCA of San Antonio is part of The Familia Unida Initiative, a coalition of agencies that provide healthy marriage education to youth and single adults living on the Westside of San Antonio.

Use of ACF Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant Funds

YWCA provides education in high schools on the value of marriage, relationship skills and budgeting, as well as providing premarital education and marriage skills training for engaged couples or couples and individuals interested in marriage.

Curriculum

Active Relationships for Young Adults

Participants/Recipients

Predominantly Hispanic high school students (ages 14–19) in San Antonio, TX.

Approximate Number of Youth Served

More than 2,000 youth have been served.

Format of program

Services are typically provided in high schools in credit retrieval courses, health classes and Family and Consumer Sciences classes on a weekly basis for 11 weeks. The classes range between 12 to 30 hours of curriculum plus domestic violence/abuse prevention content. The average dosage of instructional contact is 16 hours.

Length of time program has been offered

The YWCA has been offering these services since 2006.

Appendix C. Electronic Data Gathering Questions

1. Program name
2. Name of person completing the form
3. Program role of person completing the form
4. Approximate number of young people served annually
5. Does your program receive funding/support from any source other than the federal grant?
6. Are services delivered in schools? If yes, when? If no, where do you deliver services to youth?
7. How do you recruit youth for your services? Check all that apply.
8. What are the ages of the youth you serve?
9. Are services delivered to mixed age groups?
10. Are services delivered to mixed gender groups?
11. Have you used your current curriculum since the beginning of your program? If no, why did you change?
12. What components of the curriculum do you feel are most relevant (select all that apply)?
13. How many hours do youth/students spend learning curriculum concepts and skills?
14. Do you feel that the length of the curriculum is (too short) (too long) (just right)?
15. What has been the reaction of youth to the length (too short) (too long) (just right)?
16. Is there anything that you feel isn't covered in the curriculum that would have been helpful to address?
17. How much training did you receive or offer? Do you think your training was adequate? If no, what would you add to the training?
18. Who facilitates services?
19. What is the most important quality of the facilitator or setting that you believe enhances the student's learning?
20. What do you think is the most valuable aspect of youth relationship education?

Appendix D. Small Group Discussion Questions

1. What is your name, and your role in your program?
2. What are three words you would use to describe your program? What words would youth/students say?
3. How has your school or organization integrated this class into its existing structure?
4. What about the curriculum do young people like the best? What do they like the least?
5. What changes did you see in the young people/students as a result of this class?
6. In what ways have you heard that the young people are looking at or handling money, friendships, relationships with parents, etc., differently as a result of skills they've learned in class?
7. What, if any, challenges have you experienced implementing the program? How did you address these challenges?
8. If you could do it all over again, what would you do differently to make this class experience better for you or for the youth participants?
9. What do you see for the future of the relationship education (RE) program after the federal grant cycle ends?
10. Generally speaking, what about offering RE did you like/dislike?
11. Are there any other program staff/volunteers that you think we should talk to who might have different perspectives/info about these questions?

Appendix E. Video interview questions

The following questions were used in one-on-one discussions with the facilitators and program administrators:

1. What is one word you would use to describe the program? What word would young people use?
2. (If offering services in schools) What is the general reaction of other teachers/school administrators to RE being offered?
3. What, if any, specific skills/concepts presented in the curriculum have you seen young people/students utilize outside of the RE program?
4. What changes did you see in your participants as a result of this class?
5. What examples of experiences/decisions have you seen that you believe were influenced by the information the young people learned in the RE class (i.e., handling money, friendships, relationships with parents, etc.)?
6. What have you told others about what youth are learning in this class?
7. What happened as a result of teaching this class that you did not expect?

A similar set of questions was used in one-on-one discussions with students:

1. Why did you decide to participate in the RE program?
2. What did you like and not like about the curriculum that was used in this class?
3. What aspect of relationships was not covered in class that you would still like to know about?
4. What are examples of decisions you've made (i.e., with partners, friends, parents, money) that you believe were influenced by the information you learned in your relationship education (RE) class?
5. What is the most important thing you've learned that you wish others knew about?
6. How has the class impacted your view of relationships with other family members, friends or romantic interests?
7. What happened as a result of taking this class that you did not expect?

Appendix F. Curriculum List		Grantee						
		Best Friends Foundation	Boonville School District	Character Counts in Maine	CJH Educational Grants	Future Foundation	Operation Keepsake	Pregnancy Support Center
Curriculum	Active Relationships for Young Adults							
	Becoming a Responsible Teen							
	Choice Game		✓					
	Connections: Dating & Emotions		✓		✓			
	Connections: Relationships & Marriage		✓			✓		
	Connections: Healthy Choices, Healthy Relationships							✓
	Diamond Girl Leadership/ Best Men Leadership	✓						
	Essential Disciplines							
	Facing Forward							
	For Keeps						✓	
	Love U2: Baby Smarts							
	Love U2: Communication Smarts							
	Love U2: Relationship Smarts							
	Love U2: Relationship Smarts PLUS							
	Love Notes				✓			
	Maine Teen Talk			✓				
	PAIRS for Peers							
	Rise to Your Dreams		✓					
	The Art of Loving Well							
	Vessels of Honor & Capturing Vision							

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Appendix F. Curriculum List		Grantee							
		ReCapturing the Vision	Rockdale Medical Center	Shalom Task Force	Texas State University	The Dibble Institute	Trinity Church	University of Louisville	YWCA of San Antonio
Curriculum	Active Relationships for Young Adults								✓
	Becoming a Responsible Teen						✓		
	Choice Game								
	Connections: Dating & Emotions					✓			
	Connections: Relationships & Marriage					✓			
	Connections: Healthy Choices, Healthy Relationships					✓			
	Diamond Girl Leadership/ Best Men Leadership								
	Essential Disciplines					✓			
	Facing Forward			✓					
	For Keeps								
	Love U2: Baby Smarts					✓			
	Love U2: Communication Smarts					✓		✓	
	Love U2: Relationship Smarts					✓	✓		
	Love U2: Relationship Smarts PLUS					✓			
	Love Notes				✓	✓			
	Maine Teen Talk								
	PAIRS for Peers		✓						
	Rise to Your Dreams								
	The Art of Loving Well					✓			
	Vessels of Honor & Capturing Vision	✓							

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Family Assistance

Real Families
Real Strengths

This document was developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (www.acf.hhs.gov), Office of Family Assistance under a contract with ICF International, Contract No. HHSP233370004T.