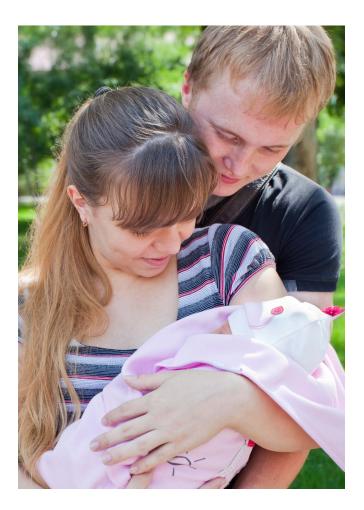
Sustaining Programs for Expectant and Parenting Teens

The Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is supporting a study to understand whether and how programs are sustained after federal grant funding ends. This brief discusses key lessons learned from a set of grantees funded through the Pregnancy Assistance Fund (PAF) program whose initial grant period ended. Former PAF grantees highlighted five key lessons related to program sustainability: 1) diversify funding sources; 2) communicate regularly with key stakeholders in the community; 3) join or form a partnership of like-minded programs; 4) consider choosing an evidence-based intervention; and 5) begin planning for sustainability as early as possible in the grant period. The purpose is to share lessons learned and tips about sustainability with current and future grantees so they can plan appropriately.



Lessons Learned from Former Pregnancy Assistance Fund Grantees



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Introduction

Identifying the key elements that affect the sustainability of a program is an increasing priority for funders and practitioners. Federal grants are not designed to fund programs indefinitely, and institutionalizing a program or seeking funds for its continued implementation takes time. It is therefore important for organizations to think ahead and take effective measures to sustain their programs beyond the grant funding period.

Even with careful planning, program sustainability depends on a number of factors. To continue operating in the face of shifting priorities, community needs, local political environments, and funding opportunities, programs can modify their goals, adjust the populations they serve, eliminate activities or components, or even move to another organization. The end result might be a program that looks quite different from what was initially funded.

To better understand the challenges grantees face in sustaining their programs, and to learn from the successful efforts of former grantees, the Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) launched a sustainability study. OAH's sustainability study examines whether—and in what form—programs first funded in 2010 to support expectant and parenting youth and families have continued operating beyond the federal grant, and the types of strategies and resources they found useful in attempting to sustain their programs (About OAH's sustainability study, p. 9). This brief presents the first set of findings from the sustainability study. It describes early lessons and recommendations about sustainability planning based on the experiences of seven former OAH Pregnancy Assistance Fund (PAF) grantees funded from 2010 to 2013. These findings are based on one round of interviews and a review of grantees' documents, including funding proposals and interim and final reports¹.

Five of the seven former PAF grantees sustained their programs in some form after their grant ended (Appendix A: Table 1). The PAF grant boosted capacity for most grantees and enabled them to expand programming using federal funds. However, to continue operating after the end of the grant, grantees had to secure additional resources and adjust their program structure, their target population, or both (Appendix A: Table 2). All grantees that sustained their programs were able to identify alternate forms of federal or local funds and modify the reach of their programs as needed. Some chose programs with evidence behind them to increase their chances of receiving federal money. Most also developed strong networks and leveraged relationships with key stakeholders. This brief provides an overview of the former grantees and the lessons learned, many of which mirror factors identified by OAH as being important to sustaining programs (Supporting program sustainability, p. 4).

About the 2010 OAH PAF grantees

OAH leads the Pregnancy Assistance Fund (PAF) Program, which was established in 2010 to help expectant and parenting youth and families get the support they need. Created by the Affordable Care Act, the OAH PAF Program seeks to improve the educational, health, and social outcomes of expectant and parenting teens, women, fathers, and families. The OAH PAF Program funds competitive grants totaling \$25 million each year to states and tribal entities to implement a seamless and integrated network of supportive services. In 2010, OAH awarded, through a competitive process, the first cohort of 17 PAF grantees for a three-year project period (August 1, 2010, to July 31, 2013). These grantees consisted of a mix of state and tribal agencies, including 11 departments of health, one department of justice, two education departments, two tribal agencies, and one state child abuse prevention board. For this first cohort of grantees, sustainability planning was not a key component of the grant, and OAH did not provide sustainability planning guidance until the last year of the three-year project period.

Seven grantees from the first cohort were not able to renew their PAF grant in the second round. Under the 2010–2013 PAF grant, these seven former grantees delivered a mix of program types in varied settings, with grant awards ranging from \$500,000 up to \$2,000,000 (Appendix A: Table 1). Three former grantees implemented programs that provided case management and referrals in the home; three offered services such as one-on-one counseling, case management, educational workshops or referrals in high schools or in community-based settings; and one partnered with community colleges and universities to deliver peer counseling and referrals to college-age youth. Two grantees focused on mainly urban areas and one served mostly rural communities; the rest served a mix of rural and urban populations.

In implementing their programs, all former grantees relied on subrecipients to deliver services. During the PAF grant period, grantees had up to 10 subrecipients, including university-affiliated programs, school districts, and community-based agencies. One grantee (a local health department) partnered with multiple high schools and charter schools to deliver the program. Another worked with tribal sites and an urban Indian health center to provide services.

Diversify funding sources.

A critical element affecting program sustainability is an organization's ability to identify and secure continued funding. The former PAF grantees that sustained their programs did so by relying on a mix of federal, state, and private funding streams, both during the PAF grant period and after funding ended (Appendix A: Table 2). Grantees also received substantial in-kind support to maintain the day-to-day operations of their programs.

By diversifying sources of financial and in-kind assistance, most former grantees could continue some form of programming when their PAF grant period ended.

A number of grantees looked for alternative federal grants to sustain the programs and services they provided to expectant and parenting youth. Two grantees whose programs had a home visiting component both applied to the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECH-V) program. One, which was implementing the Healthy Families model, received an MIECH-V grant midway through its PAF grant period, whereas the other received an MIECH-V grant one year after its PAF grant ended. During the year between these grants, the latter grantee sustained its program through a Healthy Start Home Visiting grant and by claiming third-party reimbursement for qualifying services, such as home visits to women and children enrolled in Medicaid (Grantee Spotlight 1). Some grantees leveraged longstanding funding sources for their programs. For example, one organization continued operating in two schools by relying on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families dollars that provided services to pregnant and parenting students. Smaller grant awards from the Department of Justice and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration also helped one grantee continue to fund specific components of its program. By securing funding from various federal sources, organizations filled gaps in their budgets and continued offering some or all of their services after their PAF grants ended.

Grantee Spotlight 1. Grantee B used the PAF grant to provide home visiting services to teen parents in tribal communities. Since the end of the PAF grant period, the organization has successfully sustained and expanded its homevisiting program using a combination of alternative funding sources. Among the strategies they used to sustain the program, one innovative approach was to have sites apply for Medicaid reimbursement for qualifying home-visiting services. Home visitors submit the information they collect from clients to a newly designed state database and can claim reimbursement through Medicaid. Even though the process required significant planning and additional documentation, this long-term strategy allowed the grantee to continue supporting the program once the grant ended. The organization also uses the MIECH-V grant, general funds from the state, a long-standing Healthy Start home visiting grant, and a private grant from the Kellogg Foundation to develop an integrated network of health services for families with young children in tribal communities.

In addition to federal grants, funding from state and local governments, as well as private funders, was vital to sustaining programs. For example, in one state, the money collected from the state's marriage license fee was earmarked for the grantee, which used this money to support trainings and other forms of technical assistance (TA) for its subrecipients during and after the PAF grant period. In another case, the grantee's school-based teen pregnancy prevention program was absorbed into the district's budget, enabling program delivery to continue in most schools. A private funder, the Kellogg Foundation, approached a grantee because the Foundation had an interest in supporting programs for families with young children in tribal communities. This grantee used the Foundation grant for its local home visiting programs and to develop a unified referral network to connect services for families with young children, including home visiting, pre-kindergarten, and medical services. Although none of these state, local, and private awards were large enough on their own to support the full scope of services funded by PAF, grantees combined these smaller awards to support different program components and enhance the sustainability of their overall programs.

Grantees also relied on in-kind support during and after the PAF grant period. In some cases, staff managing or supervising the PAF program were not paid through the PAF grant, which enabled grantees to save on operating costs. For example, one grantee used community nurse practitioners and community health directors to supervise home visitors without reimbursement from the PAF grant. In another case, the program director overseeing the PAF grant was also a school district employee paid through local district funds, rather than the grant. Grantees also relied on contributions of meeting space for trainings and other community events. One used churches and other local organizations to host trainings for its facilitators and meetings with its community partners; another relied on high schools to provide free office space for its in-school coordinators and classrooms to host workshops for students. Programs often offered essential parenting supplies to youth-such as diapers, formula, baby wipes, and so onthat the community donated, and continued to be offered after PAF funding ended. Overall, the strategy of financial diversification, both during and after the PAF grant period, was essential for grantees' ability to sustain programs in the absence of funding from PAF. Those that secured multiple types of support emphasized that the funding streams complemented and supported one another, enabling each to have greater impact than one grant alone.

Supporting program sustainability

OAH defines a sustained program as one in which organizations "effectively leverage partnerships and resources to continue programs, services, and/or strategic activities that result in improvements in the health and well-being of adolescents." Based on grantees' early experiences and input from experts, in 2011 OAH designed a toolkit to support programs' ability to sustain themselves. The sustainability toolkit is based on a framework that identifies eight key factors to assist grantees in developing a sustainability plan and creating sustainable impacts: (1) create an action strategy, (2) assess the environment, (3) be adaptable, (4) secure community support, (5) integrate program services into local infrastructures, (6) build a leadership team, (7) create strategic partnerships, and (8) secure diverse financial opportunities. The toolkit comprises an assessment tool, a resource guide, and an e-learning module. OAH began disseminating these tools to grantees in 2014 (as the first round of PAF grants was ending).

Communicate regularly with key stakeholders in the community.

Grantees emphasized that communicating regularly with key stakeholders in the community, including those being served and community leaders, was critical to identify funding and keep programming relevant. Organizations that maintained open lines of communication, through focus groups and community meetings, were able to build broad support and develop a local network of engaged supporters and potential funders. Most importantly, this strategy enabled grantees to stay abreast of the needs of the local population and use that to keep their programs relevant and sustainable. For example, one grantee held regular focus groups with teens and tribal elders to discuss the role of the PAF program in the community and other related topics. The grantee used feedback from these meetings to obtain vital information about how tribal members viewed the program and to brainstorm ideas for improving service delivery. As another grantee put it, "A key sustainability strategy is to monitor population-level indicators in order to be aware of and make the case for need.... There has to be demand, an impetus, and support for the services and program outside the funding opportunity." Grantees that sustained their programs worked closely with local stakeholders in their communities to identify gaps in existing services and develop solutions for filling those gaps.

Grantees also used information from program participants and community leaders to highlight the benefits of their programs when talking with potential funders, as well as youth and their families. Programs engaged in numerous outreach activities, including workshops for high school-age youth and college students and social media campaigns, to demonstrate the value of the program to their target population.

Gaining the buy-in of people who were likely to benefit from the program, and other key decision makers, helped grantees develop a network of engaged supporters.

In turn, grantees leveraged this community support to secure local funding. Some program managers attended city council and school board meetings to inform local Grantee Spotlight 2. Grantee C partnered with its local school district to secure a PAF grant to implement a newly redesigned program in 11 public high schools. Under the grant, a dedicated and trained coordinator provided case management, Title IX education and training for staff and youth, weekly workshops, and incentives to expecting and parenting students to improve school attendance and graduation rates and delay subsequent pregnancies. A year before the grant ended, program staff began communicating monthly with a team of key stakeholders from the school district, local community providers, the Department of Human Services, and the mayor's office to strategize about sustaining the program in all of the schools. They developed a sustainability plan and a strong network of service providers, youth, and school principals who believed in the program and publicly advocated for it. When the PAF grant ended, the program successfully leveraged these relationships and its collaborative planning efforts to obtain \$900,000 in school district funding to continue operating on the same scale for one year. A year later, even though budget cuts led to reduced funding, the program sustained itself by making two significant changes: (1) eliminating four staff positions and limiting the scope of services in some schools with lower caseloads and (2) pulling out of 2 alternative schools for older students. As of 2016, the program operates in 9 public high schools.

stakeholders about their program, its support among participants, and its positive impact in the community (Grantee Spotlight 2). One subrecipient even brought current and former PAF participants to testify before city council members about how the program affected their lives. The local visibility and support that resulted from these efforts enabled grantees to secure monetary and in-kind donations for their programs during the PAF grant period and after the grant ended.

In contrast, for two grantees that lacked support from their local communities, sustainability was more challenging. During the PAF grant period, one grantee experienced a shift in government leadership at the state level, which diminished political and community support for the program. This grantee, which did not sustain its program after the PAF grant ended, expressed regret over not doing more to mobilize support at the community level and build investment from key stakeholders. In the case of another grantee serving youth in schools, district leaders did not always recognize the importance of the PAF program as an academic intervention it should prioritize. Although outside the school system the program had widespread support from teen service providers and youth, the grantee faced challenges in getting buy-in from key district leadership, which might have contributed to cuts in local funding in the years following the PAF grant.

Join or form a partnership of like-minded programs.

For the former PAF grantees, the likelihood of sustainability increased when they built formal partnerships outside their own organizations. Two of the five grantees that sustained their programs joined existing coalitions of local organizations providing similar services to similar populations. The first grantee joined a coalition of home-visiting service providers, which together received funding from the MIECH-V program. After the PAF grant period, this grantee used MIECH-V funds to continue financing its Healthy Families program for all of its subrecipients. The second grantee joined a coalition of programs broadly focused on improving the lives of families with young children, including home visitation programs, education programs, and health service providers. When its PAF grant was not renewed, this grantee obtained funding through a federal grant awarded to the coalition and used it to continue offering case management services to families in the community.

Joining a coalition raised the profile of these programs among potential funders and increased the chances of securing future resources. Grantees felt that coalitions generally have more success obtaining funding than one organization acting on its own. One grantee pointed out that funders are interested in getting "the biggest bang for their buck." Supporting a coalition instead of a single organization enables funders to contribute to multiple entities and get the biggest impact from their investment. This trend might be particularly true for private funders or foundations.

Grantees stressed that joining a coalition enabled them to collaborate instead of compete with similar organizations to look for and avail funding opportunities.

In the realm of limited funding options, relying on cooperation within a coalition could strengthen funding applications and help several like-minded programs sustain their programs.

Among the grantees that did not join coalitions, many forged formal partnerships in the community, which ultimately helped them sustain their programs beyond the grant period. For example, one grantee that provided school-based programming partnered with other local service providers to implement workshops for students in schools. As more partner organizations and their staff became directly involved with the program, they developed a personal connection to the program and its participants. This firsthand knowledge of the program's importance motivated staff from these partner organizations to become champions for the program in the community, which in turn helped the grantee obtain local funding after the PAF grant ended.

Consider choosing an evidence-based intervention.

Although the first round of PAF funding did not require use of an evidence-based intervention (EBI), two grantees-both of which provided home visiting services-felt strongly that making the switch to an EBI was essential for procuring future funding. One organization received a MIECH-V grant one year into its PAF grant, which required use of an EBI. In light of its new award, the grantee decided to implement the Healthy Families America evidence-based home visiting model for all of its subrecipients, regardless of the federal grant that funded them. The grantee, whose program has continued to grow in the years following its PAF grant, attributed its success largely to its decision to switch to an EBI, stating that, "The writing was on the wall. The federal government was going to be funding evidence-based models and our [other] model didn't have evidence."

The second grantee worked with tribal communities and switched to an EBI after its PAF grant ended. At the time of its PAF award there were no federally approved, evidencebased home visiting programs for tribal populations. When the first such program, known as Family Spirit, was approved, this grantee quickly decided to switch to this model, which it continues to implement today. This grantee felt that using an EBI was instrumental in securing new federal funding (MIECH-V) after PAF, and will continue to be an asset for sustaining the program going forward. Along with being valued at the federal level, these grantees felt that using an EBI that fit the needs of the local population helped them gain buy-in with local stakeholders. Although neither conducted an impact evaluation to test whether their programs met targeted outcomes, implementing an EBI enabled grantees to cite evidence about the effectiveness of the intervention model, which they felt improved their sustainability chances beyond the PAF grant.

Although implementing an EBI might require more effort and resources than other types of interventions, grantees emphasized that it can offer greater rewards in terms of sustainability.

EBIs can often be expensive to implement, as costs related to affiliation, accreditation, and staff training can be significant. Some EBIs also require programs to collect data on program operations, participation, and participants' outcomes, which requires a heightened commitment from staff. The use of EBIs is growing in the areas of home visiting and teen pregnancy prevention, but the evidence base is not as robust in other fields and choices for relevant and appropriate EBIs could be sparser. Nevertheless, both grantees felt that their choice of EBIs helped develop a strong foundation for sustainability and led to continued funding for their programs.

Begin planning for sustainability as early as possible in the grant period.

Grantees reported that timing and planning were also important factors for sustaining programs. The strategies that could most benefit program sustainabilitydiversifying funding sources, communicating with key stakeholders, forming partnerships, and implementing an EBI-ideally had to be planned and implemented well before the end of the PAF grant. For example, one grantee that joined a broad coalition of home visiting programs did so roughly one year into its PAF grant period, and continued to rely on this coalition for funding and support both during and after the grant. Another grantee worked with local partners, including staff from the mayor's office and school district officials to form a sustainability team about a year before its PAF grant ended. At monthly meetings, the team established a vision for the program and identified potential alternatives for funding from federal, local, and private agencies, which helped the organization build a network of supportive stakeholders. When the PAF grant ended, decision makers at the mayor's office and school district leadership were aware of the need for the program and stepped in with the necessary support to fund programming in all schools for at least one more year before their budget was re-evaluated in subsequent years.

Grantees that waited to begin sustainability planning until late in the grant period faced significant challenges. A few described being too focused on the services they provided to youth in their communities, so much so that they did not entertain the idea of their PAF funding ending until it became a reality. As one grantee put it, "What we needed to do was start planning for sustainability from the beginning and we did not.... We got caught up in the cool stuff that was happening and didn't plan for sustainability, particularly for the worst case that we didn't get funded again." After the end of the PAF grant period, the grantees that did not plan ahead for sustainability experienced long interruptions in services or discontinued their programs altogether. All of them felt that earlier planning would have been prudent and advised future grantees to build time for sustainability planning into the grant period.

Grantees that started sustainability planning relatively early in their grants were more successful in transitioning from the PAF grant to other funding streams with limited or no disruptions.

Several grantees suggested that technical assistance and other forms of support related to sustainability planning would have been useful, especially at the start of their grant period. OAH now formally requires its grantees to plan for sustainability and provides targeted technical assistance for this purpose. Grantees suggested topics that would be beneficial, such as guidance on how to present a case for program sustainability to local funders and decision-makers, or concrete steps grantees can take to work on sustainability planning during the grant period. OAH's recently developed sustainability toolkit (Supporting program sustainability, p. 4) identified key strategies that grantees can employ and offers a checklist and timeline for sustainability planning activities. Given the needs identified by former PAF grantees, current and future grantees are likely to find these resources useful as they plan for sustainability during their grant period.

Conclusion

OAH's sustainability study is ongoing and will continue to yield insights into the successes and challenges experienced by former grantees as they worked to sustain their programs. The interviews with former PAF grantees described in this brief highlight five important lessons for current and future grantees related to sustainability (see the Tip Sheet on the next page). To create a sustainable program, grantees should communicate with key stakeholders in the community to learn about local needs, increase the program's visibility, and garner support from potential funders. Joining or forming partnerships with like-minded programs fosters sharing of common funding opportunities and creates a network of individuals and organizations invested in the program's success. As funding opportunities increasingly require evidence of a program's effectiveness, choosing to implement an EBI will likely become more important to program sustainability. Grantees that follow these steps to establish strong partnerships and develop an effective program that addresses local needs are likely to be ideally positioned to pursue a wide range of federal, state, and private funding opportunities when their grant period ends. Finally, to further strengthen their chances for sustainability, grantees should begin developing and implementing their sustainability plan as early as possible during the grant period.

About OAH's sustainability study

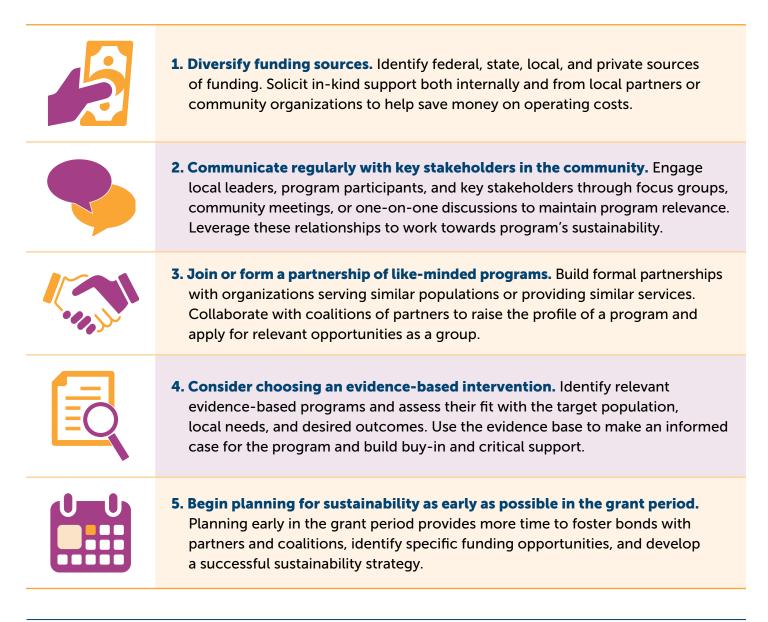
In September 2015, the Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services funded a three-year study designed to help OAH understand whether and how programs were sustained after federal funding ends. The study focuses on programs designed to prevent or delay teen pregnancy, and examines whether (and how) grantees sustained programming. Two OAH initiatives in 2010 initially funded the programs or services in the study: the Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) Program and the Pregnancy Assistance Fund (PAF) Program.

Of the 111 grantees that received funds in 2010, 71 (more than 60 percent) did not receive renewed funding in the second round, either because they did not reapply or because their application was not re-funded. The study consists of a review of grantees' documents and at least two rounds of interviews with up to 50 former grantees over a three-year period. The experiences and lessons learned from these former grantees will help inform current and future efforts to sustain federally funded programs after funding ends.

OAH SUSTAINABILITY TIP SHEET

In September 2015, the Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services funded a three-year study designed to better understand whether and how programs once supported by federal funding were sustained after their grant funding period ends. Our first brief (Sustaining Programs for Expectant and Parenting Teens) highlights lessons informed by former OAH Pregnancy Assistance Fund (PAF) grantees' sustainability efforts.

The strategies described here summarize the lessons from the Brief, and could be useful for future grantees in planning for sustainability beyond the Federal grant period.





APPENDIX A

Table 1: Summary of former PAF grantees

| 2010 Grantee | Amount of PAF grant | Types of services provided | Program setting | Population served | Urban/ rural | Number of subrecipients | Program sustained |
|-----------------|------------------------|--|--|---|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Α | \$\$ | Case management Parent education Referrals Transportation to medical appointments | Home | EPT (women only) and wom- en over 18 currently enrolled in an educational program | Rural | 10 | |
| В | \$ | Case management Referrals Medical assessments Educational workshops | Home, community centers | EPT (women only) and young expectant and parenting women without a GED | Urban and rural | 9 | V |
| C | \$\$\$ | Case management Referrals Academic support Educational workshops Incentive programs | High schools | EPT in the public school dis- trict or foster care system | Urban | 2 | |
| D | \$\$ | Case management Educational workshops Incentive programs | High schools, home, and community centers | ЕРТ | Urban | 5 | V |
| E | \$ | Job readiness programs Academic support Counseling services Child care | High schools and community centers | ЕРТ | Unknown | 15 | V |
| F | \$\$\$ | Educational workshops Academic support Community outreach events | High schools, community centers | ЕРТ | Urban and rural | 4 | × |
| G | \$\$ | Peer counseling servicesReferrals | Colleges and universities | Expectant and parenting youth aged 18-29 enrolled in post-secondary education | Urban and rural | 3 | × |

Notes: EPT = expectant and parenting teens; GED = General Education Development; PAF = Pregnancy Assistance Fund

Key

Amount of PAF grant: \$ = Less than \$1 million. \$\$ = \$1 million to \$1.5 million. \$\$\$ = More than \$1.5 million.

🗹 Yes 🗵 No

Table 2: Status of former PAF grantees that sustained their programs (as of August 2016)

| 2010 Grantee | Alternative funding sources obtained by grantee ^{2,3} | Changes to program after end of grant | | |
|-----------------|---|---|--|--|
| Α | MIECH-V grant State marriage license fee | 9 of 10 subrecipients still operating Broadened population to serve pregnant and parenting women up to 25 years old Dropped requirement that women older than 18 must be enrolled in an education program | | |
| В | MIECH-V grant Healthy Start Home Visiting grant Medicaid reimbursement State general funds Kellogg Foundation grant | All sub-grantees still operating Adopted evidence-based intervention Continued services to families with children up to age 5, rather than up to age 2 | | |
| C | School district funds TANF reimbursement | 1 subrecipient closed 11 public high schools are still implementing program, including 3 with limited services; 2 charter schools were dropped Budget cuts led to reduced staff and restructured staffing model to accommodate staff changes | | |
| D | SAMHSA grant Department of Justice grant Department of Education grant United Way grant | All subrecipients still operating Altered program focus to offer wraparound services for all families in target communities Increased emphasis on educational outcomes Collected more data on birth outcomes of teen mothers Reduced incentives for completing program milestones | | |
| E ⁴ | • Unknown | • Unknown | | |

Notes: MIECH-V = Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program; SAMHSA = Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; TANF = Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

² Funding sources listed here are based on those reported by grantee, and are not intended to be a comprehensive list of all funding sources that may have been used. ³ Grantees F and G did not sustain their programs and are therefore not included in this table.

⁴ Grantee E did not participate in the first round of interviews with PAF grantees. Further information on program status or funding sources for this grantee was not available.