



2018 Positive Alternatives Grant Program

PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT, ENCOURAGE AND ASSIST WOMEN IN CARRYING THEIR PREGNANCIES TO TERM AND CARING FOR THEIR BABIES AFTER BIRTH

Overview

The Positive Alternatives Grant Program was established in 2005 (Minnesota Statute 145.4235) and now provides \$6,714,000 per biennium to non-profit organizations promoting healthy pregnancy outcomes and assisting pregnant and parenting women in developing and maintaining family stability and self-sufficiency.

Background

Through a competitive grant process, and in response to identified community needs, the Positive Alternatives (PA) program funds services and activities that support health pregnancies and healthy babies. Grantees provide a range of services and supports, working in collaboration with other community resources. Grants support healthy pregnancy and parenting outcomes through the provision of activities such as prenatal services, nutritional education and parenting classes. Funding supports services that reduce the financial pressures a pregnancy may cause such as lack of medical care, food or housing. The PA program also assists women by focusing on long-term solutions to self-sufficiency including help achieving education and employment goals.

Positive Alternatives grantees are required to provide clients/women with information

on, referral to, and assistance with securing necessary services to promote having a successful pregnancies and caring for their babies after birth, or in making an adoption plan. Necessary services include, but are not limited to:

- Medical care
- Nutrition services
- Housing assistance
- Adoption services
- Education and employment assistance, including services that support the continuation and completion of high school
- Childcare assistance
- Parenting education and support services

Grant Programming

For the 2016-2019 grant cycle, 34 grantees are providing services at 41 sites throughout Minnesota. In addition, one grantee (through a network of several hundred organizations) serves the entire state providing safe sleep information and cribs to families who do not have a safe place for their infants to sleep, and rent assistance to women with pregnancy-related financial needs.

Positive Alternatives activities include educating participants on pregnancy and parenting topics that benefit themselves and their children, and strengthen families. Medical services range from providing pregnancy verification to prenatal care. 80% of grantees provide comprehensive pregnancy

education along with material support. Parenting education, provided by 86% of grantees, facilitates maternal bonding and optimal infant development, contributing to a number of improved parenting behaviors and childhood outcomes.

Grant Services and Activities

For the first two years of the current grant cycle, state fiscal years 2017 and 2018, 14,745 women/clients received 163,732 separate grant funded services. Among these were:

- 4,213 women attended car seat safety classes and/or were provided a car seat
- 13,691 women received infant sleep safety education
- 5,038 women who did not have a crib were provided a safe crib for their infants
- 6,031 women received shaken baby prevention education
- 5,834 women received child abuse prevention information

Grantee Evaluation

Grantees were required to evaluate their program activity outcomes annually by tracking indicators and reporting the findings. Grantees submitted their findings at the conclusion of the evaluation studies which informed program quality improvement work for funded services.

Highlights of Grantees' Evaluation Reports

- One grantee's evaluation project reviewed their life coaching program. Tools used for program evaluation included *The Perceived Stress Scale* and *The Canadian Occupational Performance Measure*. Clients committed to an 8-week coaching program and were measured on outcomes based on pre and post-coaching surveys. Surveys included client responses to perceived self-efficacy, perceived stress and overall performance and satisfaction. Results

demonstrated statistically significant changes for participating clients on each of the four outcome measures from pre-coaching to post-coaching. The sizes of these effects statistically were in the moderate to large range.

- Another grantee evaluated their *Buckle Up Baby* car seat safety program by assessing the impact of their educational component and resulting client compliance. Results of the evaluation affirmed both the grantee's efforts in car seat safety education and for the importance of continuing one-month follow-up calls for the reinforcement/education appointments.
- "Shaken Baby Syndrome" (SBS) is a component of most grantees' educational programming. One grantee evaluated their SBS program using a pre- and post-education survey. The session included using a model life-sized doll specifically created to visually exhibit and reinforce the effects of SBS along with informative videos and materials. Through the evaluation the grantee identified specific needs of clients including language barriers and low literacy and education levels. In addition, the need for additional time for engaging conversations and questions with clients was confirmed through the evaluation.

Child and Family Health
 Minnesota Department of Health
 Positive Alternatives Grant Program
 PO Box 64882,
 St. Paul, MN 55164-0882
 651-201-3760
HEALTH.positivealternatives@state.mn.us

February 2019

To obtain this information in a different format,
 call: 651-201-3760