

## Addressing Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy In Juvenile and Family Courts

As part of its efforts to address both teen pregnancy and unplanned pregnancy, especially among single young adults, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy (National Campaign) provided grants to jurisdictions overseeing child abuse and neglect cases, also known as dependency cases, either as jurisdictions participating in the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) Model Courts project, or jurisdictions for whom a judicial officer has volunteered time on the NCJFCJ Board of Trustees. This partnership has been established because many young people at risk of teen and/or unplanned pregnancy are seen in the courtrooms and dependency systems that the NCJFCJ serves.

The goals of the Judge's Benchcard pilot are to (1) increase the overall presence and profile of pregnancy planning and prevention in the juvenile justice system, (2) assess the usefulness of a newly developed "bench card" and its companion Technical Bulletin that address how judges and their staff can address pregnancy planning and prevention in appropriate ways, and (3) stimulate action and innovation in the juvenile and family court system that might help reduce teen and unplanned pregnancies, especially among single young adults who may have contact with the child welfare system as parents of a child in foster care, or may themselves be a foster child in care up to age 23.

The selected jurisdictions, Miami, Florida and Los Angeles, California identified community partners with whom they planned to work to achieve their goals. Pilot outcomes are expected to include relevant activities including but not limited to co-locating services, new cooperative agreements, joint staff training, and developing of new materials (including online materials) that can be used in a range of systems and services, and other ideas that applicants determine hold strong promise for reducing teen and unplanned pregnancy.

Both jurisdictions were asked to demonstrate through their pilots the following:

- Pilot should be anchored in the relevant science and data, including community-specific data if available;
- Use of the "bench card" and its companion, the Technical Assistance Bulletin, in ways that generate some data on the usefulness of these new materials; Include good measurement metrics so that the activity can be tracked and a reasonable assessment can be made of its probable value and results (evidence of impact on pregnancy or birth rates is *not* required as these are hard to document - other metrics that are closely related, such as successful referrals to local health services, should be included);
- Attract additional public or private resources and funding either as part of the proposed activity itself or to support future sustainability; and
- Determine if the pilot can be replicated in other jurisdiction and contribute to nation-wide learning about how to make progress on reducing teen pregnancy within the child welfare system.