

Population Reproductive Health Program

United States Strategy Brief

The David & Lucile Packard Foundation's Population and Reproductive Health program is committed to promoting reproductive health and rights and stabilizing population growth. The United States subprogram supports efforts at the national level and in Louisiana and Mississippi to advance reproductive health and rights, especially for women and young people.

The Challenge

Today, more than half of all U.S. women of reproductive age (15-44) live in a state that is hostile to abortion rights. Opposition to comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), contraception and abortion continues unabated. Further, relative to most other regions in the United States, there is a clear dearth of policies and programs to advance reproductive health and rights in the American South. The longstanding and stark health inequities in the South are a product of the unique history of the region, including its legacy of ongoing racial discrimination, current politics and neglect. Restrictive policies and meager investments of public resources have severely limited access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services. The results are poor SRH outcomes. Louisiana and Mississippi in particular and the South in general have some of the worst reproductive health indicators and policies in the country.

Our Strategy

The U.S. subprogram supports efforts at national, state and local levels to advance reproductive health and rights for women and young people by improving access to quality comprehensive sexuality education, voluntary family planning/contraception and safe abortion care.

Our Approach

The US subprogram funds nongovernmental organizations and networks at the national level and in Louisiana and Mississippi. At the national level, we support policy advocacy, litigation and innovative strategies not only to defend reproductive rights, but to pilot more pro-active strategies and policies.

At the state-level we aim to:

- Expand access to CSE and youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services through youth-focused advocacy and the establishment and evaluation of model programs;
- Improve the quality and reach of family planning services by strengthening local clinics that reach vulnerable populations and by testing innovative education and service delivery strategies; and
- Protect and advance access to safe abortion by building state-based advocacy capacity and addressing the clinic and provider shortage in these states.

At both the national and state-level, we aim to strengthen the capacity of key organizations and leaders so they can sustain and/or expand women's access to quality reproductive health care.

Where We Work

The U.S. subprogram seeks to advance reproductive health and rights in the United States and in Louisiana and Mississippi, especially for women and young people from low-income and vulnerable communities. These groups bear the brunt of poor reproductive health outcomes and face the greatest barriers to accessing vital information and services.

Progress

The Foundation's longstanding commitment to comprehensive sexuality education, family planning/contraception, and safe abortion, combined with our experience and credibility in the U.S. provides us with an opportunity to make a significant difference.

The Foundation's Population and Reproductive Health program has been instrumental in seeding and accelerating progress on reproductive health and rights, often under the most challenging of circumstances. Mobilizing political and financial commitment in the U.S., for example, contributed to U.S. grantees'

success in blocking many efforts to restrict access to safe abortion and, through a multi-donor initiative, increased support for comprehensive sexuality education programs in several school districts over ten states.

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What We Don't Fund

While we coordinate and work closely with public sector stakeholders, we generally do not fund governmental institutions or direct services.

To Learn More

To learn more about the U.S. subprogram, our strategies and funding, visit our website at www.packard.org/population-reproductive-health.