



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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Dating Matters™ Grantee Profiles

Baltimore

Baltimore has a long history of addressing violence among Baltimore's young people through innovative public health programming and policy initiatives, such as *Safe Streets*. These successful initiatives build on community mobilization, outreach, public education, faith-based leader involvement, and criminal justice participation, which will set the stage for preventing teen dating violence in Dating Matters. Through Dating Matters Baltimore City Health Department will work with approximately 12 middle schools.

For more information about Dating Matters in Baltimore City contact Byron A. Pugh at byron.pugh@baltimorecity.gov (<mailto:byron.pugh@baltimorecity.gov>).

Chicago

Chicago has established a unique network of partners dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of youth that will work together to implement Dating Matters. Chicago's experience in youth violence prevention, through the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention, and adolescent health, through the Illinois Caucus on Adolescent Health make them ideally suited to lead Dating Matters in their community. The city has demonstrated a strong commitment to violence prevention, including teen dating violence, via an integrated public health and public safety partnership that includes strong collaborations between the Chicago Public Health Department and Chicago Public Schools. Chicago will work with approximately 12 middle schools for Dating Matters.

For more information about Dating Matters in Chicago contact Erica Davis at Erica.Davis@cityofchicago.org (<mailto:Erica.Davis@cityofchicago.org>).

Ft. Lauderdale (Broward County)

The Broward County Health Department and Broward County Public Schools have an extensive history partnering on school-based and community-wide adolescent health and violence prevention programs, ranging from bullying prevention to sexually transmitted disease prevention. In particular, Broward County engaged parents, youth, and community leaders in the Youth Anti-Violence Coalition. These diverse partnerships and experience in multiple areas of youth health and safety make Broward County poised to lead dating violence prevention in their communities through Dating Matters. Broward County will implement prevention programs in approximately 12 middle schools through Dating Matters.

For more information about Dating Matters in Broward County contact Lenny Mujica at Lenny_Mujica@doh.state.fl.us (mailto:Lenny_Mujica@doh.state.fl.us).

Oakland (Alameda County)

For over 50 years, the Alameda County Public Health Department has worked to improve the health

and safety of County residents and the neighborhoods in which they live. Since 2007, they have been a core member of the Alameda County Teen Dating Violence Task Force, a group of government agencies, community-based organizations (CBOs) and community members, that work together to produce institutional change within schools and school districts. Alameda County Public Health Department will continue to be a leader in teen dating violence prevention through Dating Matters, and will work to implement prevention programs in approximately 9 middle schools in Oakland.

For more information about Dating Matters in Alameda County contact Caroline Miller at Caroline.Miller@acgov.org (<mailto:Caroline.Miller@acgov.org>)

Strengthening Ties Between the Health Department and Schools

Because several components of Dating Matters are implemented through the schools, several grantee sites have taken steps for the health department to become a visible, positive, and collaborative presence in the Dating Matters schools. For example, health department staff attend and volunteer at school activities and lend a hand to the schools in other helpful ways. By being present and available to assist the schools in their activities, the health departments have become resources to the schools thereby facilitating collaboration on Dating Matters activities.

Building a Community Voice for Dating Matters

Although the core program activities involved in Dating Matters are consistent across cities, each site is working with participating communities to make Dating Matters their own. This process involves fostering community ownership and engagement. A key part of this involves the formation of community advisory boards (CAB). At each site, the health department has assembled a board of representatives from multiple sectors including education, law enforcement, parents, and youth. CABs may be newly formed for Dating Matters or may be a dating violence prevention arm of an existing CAB. CAB members are not only working to build community support and engagement in Dating Matters activities but also have played a critical role in Dating Matters by reviewing and providing feedback on program components. CABs are working to ensure that Dating Matters meets each participating community's unique needs and is integrated into existing adolescent health or violence prevention activities. In addition, the CAB will be actively involved in planning for the sustainability of Dating Matters in each community and for leveraging Dating Matters for other health promotion opportunities.

Engaging Multiple Influencers

As part of the comprehensive approach of Dating Matters, programmatic components engage multiple influencers who have the opportunity to prevent dating violence among middle school youth. These influencers include influential high school youth, teachers, and parents. Across funded communities, health departments are using a variety of innovative strategies to engage these individuals. For example, parents are being recruited from schools, faith-based and other community organizations. Parent programs are being offered in Spanish and English to engage parents from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Through Dating Matters programs, parents' positive parenting skills are enhanced in order to improve parent-child communication and relationships and increase parental monitoring and supervision. High school youth are being trained as ambassadors to promote healthy, respectful relationships. Teachers are participating in dating violence training to

better recognize and prevent dating violence in school in addition to participating as program implementers in some communities. Communities' use of multiple influencers ensures that middle school youth receive consistent and cohesive healthy relationship skills and information and that older teens, teachers, and parents can be role models of healthy relationships for these youth.

Page last reviewed: February 4, 2013

Page last updated: February 4, 2013

Content source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

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