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*GBAPP: Dedicated to reducing unintended pregnancy and HIV/AIDS in the Greater Bridgeport area*

**DATE:** December 3, 2009  
**TO:** Connecticut Legislative Appropriations Committee  
**SUBJECT:** Teen Pregnancy Prevention, proposed cuts impact Bridgeport

Hello, my name is Sara Nichols. I am the Assistant to the Executive Director for GBAPP, the Greater Bridgeport Adolescent Pregnancy Program.

**THE IMPACT:**

- The proposed budget cuts directly impacts the services to reduce teen pregnancy in Greater Bridgeport.
- GBAPP is a community-based agency and has been a cornerstone in Bridgeport for 30 years, one of few organizations in the state dedicated to addressing teen pregnancy issues.
- GBAPP has offered TPP direct services since 1997 (12 years) with funding from the Department of Social Services.
- In early 2009, an open RFP process was release to which GBAPP applied for to support the Life Choices Project utilizing the Carrera Model and Service Learning Model.
- If awarded, the contract was to begin July 1, 2009.
- With the absence of any notice, the project serving hundreds of urban youth was closed.
- Over six months of waiting to see if any response (favorable or not) to the submitted applications has left a large void in service delivery for the youth and families in Bridgeport.
- The pattern of cuts proposed in the Governors deficit mitigation plan leaves us with a fear of all money will be lost.
- Direct services to our urban youth will be lost. The rates of teen pregnancy will continue the upward trend and the long term costs to tax payers would continue to rise.

**WHY IT MATTERS:**

- Teen pregnancy is at the root of a number of important public health and social challenges.
- Estimated 1,500 teen mothers age 20 and under living in Bridgeport. Teen childbearing **cost taxpayers on average \$1,430 per teen mother annually**. The public sector costs of young teens (17 and under) having children average \$4,080 per teen mother annually.
- Consequently, teen pregnancy should be viewed not only as a reproductive health issue, but as one that works to improve all of these measures. Teen pregnancy is closely linked to a host of other critical social issues:
  - **poverty** - 52% of all mothers on welfare had their first child as a teenager.
  - **child well-being** - Children of teen mothers are more likely to be born prematurely and at low birth weight and are two times more likely to suffer abuse and neglect compared to older mothers;
  - **education** - drop out of the teen mother and high potential of school failure for the child;
  - **child welfare** - teen girls in foster care are two and a half times more likely than their peers not in foster care to experience a pregnancy by age 19; children born to teen parents are more likely than those born to older parents to end up in foster care or have multiple caretakers throughout their childhood ;
  - **violence** – adverse childhood experiences such as physical abuse, verbal abuse, and witnessing intimate partner violence are linked with having sex at an early age (before the age of 15); approximately 50-60% of adolescents who become pregnant have a history of childhood sexual or physical abuse; four to six girls in high school reported experiencing dating violence.