

# **Teen REACH**

## FY2019 Program Standards

### **Section I - Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to specify the standards of practice for the Teen REACH program, funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services (Department).

### **Section II - Mission Statement**

The mission of the Teen REACH program is to expand the range of choices and opportunities that enable, empower and encourage youth to achieve positive growth and development, improve expectations and capacities for future success, and avoid and/or reduce risk-taking behavior.

### **Section III - Program Services and Outcomes**

Based on emerging research, the goals of the Teen REACH program are to provide youth with safe environments and caring adult role models, and to guide them toward marketable skills and opportunities to serve their communities. In order to meet these goals, the Teen REACH program provides six prevention-focused core services. It is the expectation of the Department that every Teen REACH program will plan and implement activities that address each of the outcomes associated with the six core services. In addition, it is the expectation of the Department that every activity planned and implemented by the provider for the Teen REACH program will address at least one of the outcomes associated with a core service.

#### **A. Improving educational performance**

Includes time to do homework, tutoring in basic skills, and enrichment programs that encourage creativity. The following participant outcomes are associated with this core service:

1. Maintain or improve school attendance.
2. Maintain or improve grades or progress reporting in school.
3. Develop or improve career aspirations and choices.

#### **B. Life skills education**

Encompasses training and education that promotes the development of healthy lifestyles, and encourages abstinence from risk-taking behaviors in the areas of alcohol and/or substance use, criminal activity, violence and sexual activity. The following participant outcomes are associated with this core service:

1. Increase knowledge of harmful effects of alcohol and substance use and abuse.
2. Increase knowledge of harmful effects of early sexual activity and pregnancy.
3. Increase anger management and conflict resolution skills.
4. Increase decision-making and problem-solving skills.

#### **C. Parental involvement**

Includes opportunities for parents and/or guardians to meet with staff to discuss their children's activities, and to participate in events that strengthen parent/child bonds and community involvement. The Teen REACH program utilizes information obtained from families and participants in decisions related to overall program design and activities. The following participant outcomes are associated with this core service:

1. Increase in parental monitoring of academic performance.
2. Increase in parental understanding of child and adolescent developmental stages and appropriate expectations.

3. Increase in positive and effective parental communication with children and teens regarding alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, sexual activity, abstinence and other life skills.
4. Increase in structured activities that promote positive family interaction.

D. Recreation, sports, cultural and artistic activities

Includes providing activities and arranging safe outlets for youth to try new skills and develop new interests, to build friendships, find their place in a group, and gain developmentally relevant experiences. The following participant outcomes are associated with this core service:

1. Participants increase their level of physical activity through program offerings.
2. Participants demonstrate sportsmanship and athletic skills.
3. Participants engage in cultural enrichment and fine art activities.

E. Positive adult mentors

Programs must allow opportunities for youth to develop and maintain positive, sustained relationships with caring adults through mentoring and other programs that emphasize one-on-one interactions. The following program outcomes are associated with this core service:

1. Increase support to participants during times of personal or social stress.
2. Increase support for decision making.
3. Increase access to support with academic tasks and/or homework.
4. Increase opportunities for career awareness and mentoring.

F. Service learning activities

Service-learning is a method of teaching and learning that connects classroom lessons with meaningful service to the community. Students build academic skills while strengthening communities through service. Service learning combines service tasks with structured, youth-driven opportunities that link the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills and knowledge content with service tasks. The following participant outcomes are associated with this core service:

1. Youth determine and meet real, defined community needs through program offerings.
2. Youth learn beyond the classroom through active participation in service experiences.
3. Youth develop and use skills and knowledge in real-life situations.
4. Youth increase the amount of time spent to reflect by thinking, discussing and/or writing about service experiences.
5. Youth experience a sense of belonging to a community and an awareness of their responsibility to that community.

#### **Section IV - Eligibility Requirements**

Teen REACH program services are provided for at-risk children and youth, ages 6 to 17.

#### **Section V - Organizational Capacity**

A. The administrative organization has the capacity to develop and implement a Teen REACH Program that:

1. Has adequate technology, including computers with email and Internet access for Teen REACH staff.
2. Has an organizational chart that includes the Teen REACH program and it's organizational structure.

3. Has working relationships with community collaborative partners, evidenced by written linkage agreements. Linkage agreements are updated yearly, and kept on file at the agency. Community collaborative partners may include:
  - Law enforcement
  - Mental health providers
  - Substance abuse providers
  - Physical health providers
  - Transportation providers
  - Nutrition/Food programs
  - Adult/Parent Education programs
4. Orientation for new organizational staff includes review of Teen REACH program goals.
5. Roles and responsibilities of Teen REACH Program staff are clearly defined.
  - There are written job descriptions for all Teen REACH staff, including the Teen REACH Coordinator and volunteers.
  - All program staff know and thoroughly understand their own project-related responsibilities.
  - A Teen REACH-specific organizational chart exists and is reviewed with all new organizational staff.
  - Agendas that include programmatic planning are developed for staff meetings, resulting in organizational leadership being well-informed about program and participant issues.
  - Performance reviews are done annually for all Teen REACH program staff, and are maintained on file.
  - Performance reviews are based upon job description and role.
6. The program has a culture of collaboration, trust and respect.
  - Staff are representative of the community served.
  - Program environment reflects organization and structure, but maintains flexibility to meet individual needs.
7. Procedures are in place related to program recruitment, enrollment and attendance.
  - A marketing plan is in place that promotes participation and awareness of Teen REACH in the community.
  - A clear program enrollment process is in place.
  - Orientation is provided for new youth and their parents/guardians.
  - Individual level program participant records are maintained and daily attendance is monitored.
  - Procedures are in place for following up with participants/families for unexpected or chronic absences.
  - Program attendance data is reviewed to identify patterns of attendance and potential issues.
  - Recruitment strategies are in place for enrolling underserved populations.
  - All staff have received training, which includes the provision of written procedures related to recruitment, enrollment and attendance.
  - Staff have input into refining local procedures to promote program attendance and enrollment.
8. A transportation plan exists, if the agency provides transportation.
  - There is a written plan/procedure for transporting youth describing how youth are transported safely to and from the program regardless of distance.

- Family needs are assessed to determine need for transportation services, and these needs are considered in development of transportation plans.
  - There is a written plan that covers transportation policies during inclement weather.
  - All persons designated as drivers have a valid driver's license appropriate to the type of vehicle used. Evidence of current licensure is on file.
  - Liability insurance is covered either by the program or the subcontractor, and verification of current coverage is on file at the agency. Liability insurance is not limited to transportation, but is adequate to ensure coverage of all Teen REACH activities and events.
9. Procedures are in place related to discipline/conflict resolution, supervision of participants during arrival/departure, visitors, child abuse/neglect reporting and staff background checks.
- The program has a formal process for hiring and screening staff.
  - The program has implemented the necessary staff background checks, and verification is on file.
  - All staff receive ongoing training on policies and procedures related to Teen REACH program operations.
  - All procedures are reviewed on an annual basis and refined as needed and additional procedures are developed as needed.
  - All procedures are approved by appropriate boards and administrators.
- B. An agency may choose to subcontract a portion of their grant. A sub-contractor is an entity with which the provider enters into an agreement for the subcontractor to provide all or a specified portion of the services required in the original contract, and is bound by all contractual obligations of the original DHS contract. If the agency utilizes sub-contractors:
1. All sub-contracts have been signed by both parties and are renewed every year.
  2. All Sub-contracts have been pre-approved by DHS.
  3. The agency has a monitoring process and procedures in place to ensure compliance by the sub-contractor to all DHS requirements.
- C. The agency has a written policy concerning participant fees, with appropriate justification for collecting the fee, documentation that the fee is non-discriminatory, and allows for the inclusion of youth who are unable to pay the fee.
- D. The agency has written protocols for the following activities and situations:
- Staff communication
  - Serving snacks/meals
  - Administering medication
  - Treating head lice
  - Treating asthma
  - Resolving conflict
  - Disciplining participants
  - Terminating participants from the Teen REACH program
  - Emergency procedures
  - Reporting suspected family abuse/neglect
  - Reporting suspected agency abuse/neglect
  - Screening backgrounds of adult staff, interns and volunteers

- Tracking inventory
  - Internet blocking software for youth-accessible computers
- E. The administrative agency has written protocols for the maintenance of records.
1. There is a procedure to maintain all Teen REACH documents for a period of 5 years following the completion of the contract period.
  2. There is a procedure in place that all Teen REACH sites utilize and maintain daily “sign-in” and “sign-out” logs.
  3. There is a procedure in place that the agency collects data and keeps records in the electronic data system designated by the Department.
  4. There is a procedure in place that attendance data is accurately recorded at each site, within the time frames specified by the DHS contract.
  5. The agency submits all required fiscal and program reports within the specified time frames.
  6. Individual participant and staff/volunteer files are kept in a locked file cabinet.
  7. Every Teen REACH participant has a complete file that includes:
    - A current (signed within the last 365 days) completed Participant Enrollment form.
    - Information on specific dietary and/or medical needs of the participant.
    - Current (signed within the last 365 days) written/signed consent and/or release of information form(s) giving parent/guardian consent for youth to participate in Teen REACH activities, including permission for field trips, photography release, medical release, data collection release, collection of grades
    - Electronic data system consent form
    - Academic performance data
  8. Personnel files of staff include the job description, the staff member’s resume/application, evidence of background check(s), documentation of Teen REACH orientation, and documentation of training.

## **Section VI - Staff Qualification Standards**

- A. Educational attainment, training and experience of program staff is appropriate to the level of responsibilities assigned. The Program Administrator/Director has:
- A Bachelor’s degree plus a minimum of one year’s experience with youth in the areas of child development, recreation, education or related fields;
- or
- An Associate’s degree plus a minimum of 3 years’ experience with youth in the stated areas;
- or
- A High School diploma or equivalent plus a minimum of 5 years experience with youth in the stated areas.
- B. Educational and/or training requirements are in place for all staff, including group leader/coordinator, site director and volunteers.
1. A written training plan exists, listing the types of training to be provided to Teen REACH staff, both as new employee orientation, and as on-going training. The training plan includes life-saving techniques, such as dealing with choking hazards, CPR, and First Aid.
  2. The training plan is revisited annually and updated as needed based on the assessment of training needs.

- C. Demographic makeup of the Teen REACH Program staff reflects the demographic makeup of the community in which the Teen REACH Program is implemented.

## **Section VII - Community Involvement Standards**

- A. The Teen REACH Program has a local focus, based on a needs and resources assessment, that reflects community involvement and collaboration around Teen REACH development and implementation.
1. Teen REACH programming is designed to meet the specific needs of the community/neighborhood in which it is located. Community-specific risk factors are addressed and may include:
    - Rate of violent crime within the community to be served.
    - Percent of youth ages 6 to 17 in working families.
    - Rate of teenage pregnancy within the community to be served.
    - Number of single-parent households in the community to be served.
    - Number of households receiving TANF funds in the community.
    - High-school dropout rate in the community.
    - Chronic truancy rate in the community.
  2. A comprehensive needs and resources assessment is utilized and problems are targeted based on priorities.
    - The assessment utilizes existing data sources that reflect the target population.
    - The assessment uses multiple data sources and is broad in scope.
    - The assessment is specific to the site locations at which the agency delivers direct services to participants.
    - The assessment data is reviewed and updated as needed annually.
    - Decisions to maintain or change programming are based on the results of the assessment and review.
  3. An advisory council is in place to provide input into the program.
    - Parents and youth are active partners and decision makers in the advisory council.
    - Membership of the council mirrors the makeup of the community in which the program is located.
    - School representatives participate in the council.
    - The advisory council meets quarterly. Subcommittees meet monthly to network, identify resources, and discuss issues around the Teen REACH program.
    - The council includes at least 2 youth participants.
    - The council includes at least 2 parent representatives.
    - Monthly communication among council members occurs through meeting minutes and other standard updates.
    - Work, activities and accomplishments of the council are communicated to the community.
- B. Linkages between the school and the Teen REACH program are developed and maintained.
1. Formal linkage agreements with the schools are on file, updated annually and include coordinated use of facilities and resources where necessary, and the school's agreement to furnish grades/academic progress information for all students enrolled in Teen REACH.
  2. The Teen REACH program receives referrals from schools.
  3. The Teen REACH program and schools work collaboratively to identify, attract and reach at-risk youth.

- C. Teen REACH providers ensure that youth are referred for needed services that are not available with the provider agency via linkage agreements and collaborations with other community programs. Such services may include, but are not limited to, substance abuse and/or mental health treatment, developmental services, medical needs, and homeless youth services.
- D. Program staff and families share and exchange information.
  - 1. The program provides basic information to the parents regarding program activities and events.
  - 2. Written policy and procedures are given to staff and families regarding communication about program contact information, and program and child specific information.
  - 3. Program staff have regularly planned home or in-person meetings to exchange child-specific information and individualized feedback to families regarding their child's progress.
  - 4. Regularly scheduled family informational meetings occur regarding programs, policies and procedures.
  - 5. Staff regularly provide individualized feedback to families regarding their child's progress.

### **Section VIII - Monitoring and Evaluation Standards**

- A. The administrative organization has evaluation and information systems in place to ensure continuous program improvement and accountability to the program's constituencies.
  - 1. Understanding the program's evaluation system is a component of orienting/training new program staff.
  - 2. There is a policy and procedure in place to collect and review data on a regular basis to monitor attainment of program goals.
  - 3. There is a policy and procedure in place to use evaluation results/findings to identify interests, challenges and satisfaction with the program.
  - 4. There is a policy and procedure in place to use evaluation results/findings to improve program practices.
  - 5. Evaluation results/findings are shared among program leadership.

### **Section IX - Program Service Standards**

- A. A written program plan that encompasses all six core services is in place.
- B. The program is comprehensive and offers a variety of age-appropriate, youth-centered, engaging and enriching activities.
- C. There is documentation that at least one community awareness event is provided annually at each Teen REACH site.
- D. Efforts are made to ensure high levels of program dosage.
  - 1. The program is offered five days per week and is available to youth during summer and recognized school breaks.
  - 2. Written policies and procedures exist regarding program attendance. The policies and procedures acknowledge that the Teen REACH program does not provide drop-in services, but reserves enrollment for participants whose intent is to attend the full program.

3. Families are oriented to Teen REACH and its expectations concerning attendance, academic progress, transportation, and all other services.
- E. Program staff use positive techniques to guide behavior of participants and handle conflict in positive ways.
1. Specific training on conflict resolution and appropriate discipline techniques is provided to all staff during orientation, and on an on-going basis.
  2. Problem solving approaches, including peer mediation and formal conflict resolution, are utilized to reduce peer conflict.
- F. The Teen REACH program utilizes best or promising practice program models and guidelines.
1. The staff tailor program content to the culture, language and developmental needs of participants and families while maintaining program fidelity.

## **Section X - Program Environment Standards**

- A. The Teen REACH site is safe and secure, and supports the developmental and activity needs of the participants.
1. The facility meets local standards and codes for public facilities.
  2. The facility is in good repair.
  3. The facility is ADA compliant.
  4. The facility is non-hazardous and has adequate lighting.
  5. The outdoor and/or indoor space is suitable for a wide variety of gross motor activities suitable for the sizes and abilities of the youth in the program.
  6. Participants are supervised at all times by program staff when engaged in all activities, indoor and outdoor.
- B. The Teen REACH site maintains appropriate policies and procedures related to safety and security.
1. Policies and procedures in regard to participant health and safety have been developed and implemented, and include (but are not limited to):
    - Medication
    - Emergency procedures
    - Personnel background checks
    - Reporting of suspected abuse/neglect
    - Hand washing
    - Visitor sign-in
  2. Health and safety policies and procedures are reviewed annually and revised as needed.
  3. Staff receive ongoing and refresher training on safety procedures.
- C. Food and drinks are served to meet the needs of participants.
1. The Teen REACH program offers nutritious snacks to the participants in accordance with the USDA/CACFP nutritional guidelines.
  2. Snacks are served in accordance with all relevant local and state health standards for food preparation and handling.
  3. Drinking water is available at all times.

4. The program integrates snacks/food into a nutritional curriculum/educational program involving both youth and their families. The program's snacks/food and nutritional education are designed to address childhood obesity, and includes components on:
  - Increasing physical activity
  - Increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables
  - Limiting television viewing
  - Participation in regular family meals