

Home Visiting with Justice System-Involved Expectant Mothers Pilot

Start Early (formerly the Ounce of Prevention Fund), through the Home Visiting and Doula Network, has partnered with the Cook County Sheriff's Office and six community-based organizations, with whom they have a well-established relationship, to deliver Doula and home visiting services to expectant mothers who are involved in the criminal justice system (incarcerated, on electronic monitoring or recently discharged). Participation in services is entirely voluntary and mothers may choose to receive one or both of these services. Ideally, participating mothers will enroll in both services. We hope that by beginning these services while the women are incarcerated/on electronic monitoring, and continuing to support mothers after they have been released, we can improve the parent-child relationship and the developmental trajectories of the children who are immersed in a highly vulnerable and at-risk environment. Additionally, we hope to identify systemic and policy issues that need to be addressed on a larger scale while also collecting data that can inform current home visiting models for future adaptations to the population's needs. The partnering organizations are:

- Catholic Charities-Roseland
- Family Focus Lawndale
- Family Focus Englewood
- Marillac St. Vincent
- New Moms
- YWCA (south side site)**

*This program solely provides home visiting services. It partners with Marillac St. Vincent to provide doula services

Services to be offered as part of this pilot include prenatal meetings with a doula aimed at preparing the mother for childbirth and supporting the attachment process between the mother and her unborn child, support of the doula during the labor and delivery process, and long-term (up to five years) home visiting services aimed at strengthening the parent-child relationship.

Doula Services: Doula services will be the “front door” for all women enrolled in this pilot. These services will be delivered by the program to which they are referred (with the exception of the YWCA, which will partner with Marillac St. Vincent in order to deliver doula services to their referred participants). Women will either receive doula services at Cook County jail and/or in the mother's home. Doulas will also accompany mothers during child labor.

Home Visiting Services: Each program employs an evidence-based home visiting model. At this time, all of the partner organizations use the Parents as Teachers (PAT) model. Home visits will primarily be delivered in the home with the baby present. We anticipate this will be feasible since the majority of the women we are targeting for this intervention are released shortly from custody on bail. In some instances, the initial home visits might be delivered in the jail prior to the woman's release.

Referrals: Referrals are made by the Cook County Sheriff's Office. The main factors which determine whether a woman will be referred are her anticipated length of incarceration and whether she will retain custody of her child. Women who will be caring for their children immediately or soon after birth, will be given priority for services. Women who will likely remain incarcerated for long periods of time after her baby is born and/or are otherwise unable to retain custody of their child are not the target

population for this pilot, but will still be offered Doula services. The program will receive the referral based on the match between its catchment area and the community where the mother is likely to return after her release. All of the participating programs, with the exception of the YWCA, offer doula services. In order to ensure that all participating mothers receive doula services, the YWCA is partnering with Marillac St. Vincent.

Clinical Consultation: A clinical consultant has been contracted throughout the duration of the pilot to provide clinical support to the Doulas and home visitors working with participants. The consultant leads monthly clinical consultation groups, providing a space where challenges, questions, and successes can be shared and processed.

Group Services: A Doula will visit the mothers who are in custody on the pregnancy tier of Cook County Jail approximately once per week to provide group support. In facilitating these prenatal sessions, the Doula will offer information related to pregnancy, nutrition, labor and delivery, childrearing, and more, to the mothers who wish to take part in this group, irrespective of their participation in the pilot's services.