

# Supporting Healthy Start Performance Project NEWSLETTER



*Strengthening Healthy Start to support family health and well-being*

## TA & Support Center News & Updates

### **Deadlines:**

Mar 15 HSMED-II Report (CSV or XML) Due

### **Events:**

Feb 24 StoryWork Project Workshop – *StoryWork Project members only*

Feb 27 Fourth Trimester Cohort – *Fourth Trimester Cohort members only*

Feb 28 Fatherhood Cohort – *Fatherhood Cohort members only*

Feb 28 Community Engagement Learning Academy Session 1

Mar 6 Region 6 Regional Meeting Day 1 – *Region 6 event registrants only*

Mar 7 Region 6 Regional Meeting Day 2 – *Region 6 event registrants only*

Mar 10 StoryWork Project Workshop – *StoryWork Project members only*

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### **Regional Meeting - Request for Speakers**

On behalf of the Division of Healthy Start and Perinatal Services (DHSPS), the Healthy Start TA & Support Center (TASC) will be hosting five **Healthy Start (HS) Regional Meetings from March through May 2023**. Regional Meetings provide an opportunity for HS grantees to come together with other grantees in their region over the course of 1.5 days. In addition to connecting with each other and their Project Officers, grantees will attend plenary sessions and participate in skill-building sessions and engagement activities. For more information about the Regional Meetings, please [click here](#).

As the TASC team prepares for these meetings and identifies speakers for the various sessions, the TASC would like to hear from YOU! Are there any speakers that you would like us to consider for the Regional Meetings? If so, please send their name, their topic(s) of expertise, and email address (if available) to [TASCevents@nichq.org](mailto:TASCevents@nichq.org).

Additionally, we are seeking grantees who would like to share their experiences around the CAN or program sustainability during a plenary. If your CAN is thriving or if you have had success with sustainability in terms of building partnerships, building capacity, innovations/creativity, or cultivating diversity, please email us at [tascevents@nichq.org](mailto:tascevents@nichq.org) to discuss an opportunity to speak during your regional meeting.

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### **Community Engagement Learning Academy Session 1**

The Healthy Start TA & Support Center (TASC) is excited to announce the launch of its inaugural Community Engagement Learning Academy! Community engagement is fundamental to the success of Healthy Start's Community Action Networks (CANs). The Community Engagement Learning Academy allows Healthy Start grantees to participate in an extensive study into community engagement, including strategies for practical application in local contexts. Using several evidence-based frameworks, participants will identify approaches to support their project and community in spurring systemic change. With assistance from the Learning Academy's Dean, Danette McLaurin Glass of First TEAM America, grantees will develop concrete strategies for establishing and implementing their community engagement plan. Participants will also have the opportunity to apply basic community engagement principles, culminating in a tool to empower their community to achieve sustainable and systemic change.

The first session will be held on **Tuesday, February 28th from 3-4:30 p.m. ET**. The Community Engagement Learning Academy will meet each month from 3-4:30 p.m. ET from February through June. **To register for the first session, please [click here!](#)**

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## In Case You Missed it...

### Fatherhood Talk Tuesday

The TASC kicked off the new year with January's Fatherhood Talk Tuesday, where attendees learned about the TASC's upcoming fatherhood-related activities and offerings. Grantees also had an opportunity to share what they're looking forward to this year and how the TASC can further support them in their fatherhood work. To view the webinar recording, [please click here](#).

In February, Fatherhood Talk Tuesday expanded upon the skill-building from our [previous webinar](#) featuring TASC's Kenn Harris and the National Healthy Start Association's (NHSA) Ken Scarborough. This session further explored SWOT and TOWS analyses (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats), program timelines, sustainability tools, and other helpful resources. We will also provide an opportunity for grantees to share how the TASC can further support them in their fatherhood work. To view the webinar recording, [please click here](#).

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### CIGNAL for Hypertension

The Healthy Start TASC – in partnership with Dr. Divya Mallampati of the Division of Fetal Medicine and Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences at the University of California San Francisco – hosted the **CIGNAL: Change Ideas to Grow, Nurture, and Lift for Hypertension** webinar for all grantees on Wednesday, February 22. The CIGNAL for Hypertension webinar aimed to enhance and strengthen HS grantees' capacity to identify and execute strategies to assure improved and equitable hypertension services for the women and birthing people they serve. During this webinar, the group explored best practices and challenges associated with addressing hypertension among pregnant and postpartum people; highlighted stories from HS grantees doing the work around hypertension; and provided participants with resources and tools for testing strategies in their own communities.

The group worked to identify and explore potential change ideas, as part of a discussion focused on questions including:

1. How do hypertensive disorders affect pregnant people in your community?  
Are there specific stories that stand out to you?
2. What are the components of your Healthy Start Program that address hypertensive disorders (e.g., blood pressure cuff kits, centering pregnancy, community health workers)?
3. What aspects of your program work well and why?
4. Do you have a success story from your program?
5. What do you think pregnant/postpartum people with hypertension in your communities struggle with the most?
6. What challenges do you feel your program faces in addressing the needs of

pregnant/postpartum people?

7. How has your organization attempted to overcome or mitigate those challenges?

To view the session recording, please [click here](#).

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### Co-Parenting Learning Academy Session 1

The TASC hosted the first session in the Co-Parenting Learning Academy on February 16<sup>th</sup>. For the first-ever Co-Parenting Learning Academy, we invited back our Fatherhood Learning Academy Dean, [Dr. Jeffrey Johnson](#), CEO of the [National Partnership for Community Leadership](#) (NPCL), to serve as the Dean for the Co-Parenting Learning Academy!

Throughout the Co-Parenting Learning Academy, participants will:

- Explore how social welfare policies have historically shaped MCH and other family support services in the U.S.
- Learn how co-parenting can be integrated into current MCH practices to potentially improve pregnancy, birth, and child health outcomes.
- Hear about community-based strategies to advance fatherhood and co-parenting service delivery.
- Discover various co-parenting and shared parenting models and their impact on children at different stages.
- Learn about strategies for preparing and implementing fatherhood and co-parenting services in HS programs for impact evaluation.

The Co-Parenting Learning Academy is held on the **third Thursday of each month from 3-4:30 p.m. ET** from February through May. To view the recording of the first session, please [click here](#). To register for the next session, please [click here](#)!

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### New Episode! Power Podcast for Justice

The TASC, in partnership with Dr. Linda Henderson-Smith, a consultant with the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, was thrilled to release the second episode in our very first podcast series – **Power Podcast for Justice!** Hosted by the TASC's Kenn Harris and Dr. Linda, Power Podcast for Justice is a vehicle to uplift conversations aimed to move the Healthy Start community – and others in the maternal and child health field – towards action. In each episode, Kenn and Dr. Linda will discuss topics and issues that lead to liberation – liberation of ideas, liberation of action, liberation towards a better America, a better world.

In the second episode, Kenn and Dr. Linda are joined by Dr. Arthur James and Mr. LaShaun Carter, who share their thoughts on the impact of exposure to racism. Dr. James is a retired OBGYN and pediatrician with a life-long commitment to equity work. Mr. Carter is the Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina who has focused on equity work for over 20 years. Dr. Linda, Kenn, Dr. James, and Mr. Carter discuss the devaluation of humans through racism, how it shows up in society today, the collateral impacts and social consequences of racism

and devaluation, and what we can do in our everyday interactions to mitigate its impact.

[Click here to listen to Episode 2 of the Power Podcast for Justice now.](#) We can't wait for you to join the conversation!

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## **A Letter from Kenn Harris, TASC Director**

Dear Healthy Start Grantees,

It is both a pleasure and an honor to serve as your Healthy Start TA & Support Center (TASC) here at the National Institute for Children's Health Quality (NICHQ). On behalf of the TASC staff, I would like to congratulate you on the eve of the fifth and final year of this funding cycle. As you prepare to wrap up Year 4 by March 31<sup>st</sup>, I wanted to pause and acknowledge all of your hard work during one of the most challenging times in our history, the COVID pandemic. We know the pandemic has had dramatic impact on the implementation of the Healthy Start program throughout this funding cycle. But in true Healthy Start fashion, you all demonstrated agility in your responsiveness to Healthy Start families and delivered the innovation that these unprecedented times demanded. You all reminded the country about the power of authentic community engagement.

### *Acknowledging the Loss*

Looking back at the start of COVID, our team was in the throes of planning the first Healthy Start Grantees' Meeting but had to pivot as the country went into lockdown in March 2020. The biggest disappointment about canceling the in-person meeting was not knowing when we would have a chance to connect the 101 Healthy Start grantees with each other. In-person meetings are like lifeblood for grantees, providing opportunities for you all to connect with your colleagues and share experiences and best practices. COVID took this opportunity away and looking back, it is important to acknowledge the huge loss associated with not being able to convene the Healthy Start community. But again, demonstrating resilience and resolve, you helped us plan the first-ever Virtual Grantees Meeting in June 2020 and because of you, it was a tremendous success!

### *Celebrating What Is Ahead & Opportunities for Connection*

We are excited to continue building on that success throughout the upcoming Healthy Start Regional Meetings. Over the next few months, the TASC will continue working with you in your respective regions to co-create a regional meeting that is reflective of your unique needs. Although we have not had the pleasure of being in-person until now, it will make these in-person Regional Meetings all the more valuable. We are looking forward to seeing you and connecting you with your fellow Healthy Start grantees in person for the first time in this grant cycle. It is truly exciting.

The Healthy Start community proved what it is to be #healthystartstrong throughout the pandemic. You all exemplified what the power of connection looks like on the ground level as you kept your Healthy Start participants engaged in the services that they needed. The upcoming Regional Meetings are also about restoring connection for the Healthy Start community. I know that you are going to attend these meetings and experience the type of connection that restores all that was lost during the

pandemic. We are pleased to be designing these meetings to accommodate your needs as you move your programs into the final year of this funding cycle.

#### *Excited to Support NHSA's Upcoming Conference*

We also want to congratulate the National Healthy Start Association (NHSA) on its upcoming conference, which celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This organization has meant so much to the Healthy Start community over the years. We are confident that the offerings at this conference are going to fortify your work moving forward. Working with NHSA as a key partner has been tremendous. I want to take this time to acknowledge Deborah Frazier, NHSA, CEO and the entire NHSA Board of Directors for its leadership as a membership organization.

#### *Finishing Strong for Healthy Start Families*

Finally, why do you do this work? You work each day on behalf of mothers, infants, fathers, families, and the many communities across this country to ensure optimal pregnancy and birth outcomes. As we look at the disparities in infant and maternal mortality, especially among African Americans and American Indians/Alaskan Natives, this work can truly be described as lifesaving. So many things in our country breed fragmentation and disconnection, but Healthy Start communities demonstrate that we truly are stronger together. As you approach your final year of this cycle, we hope that you are clear about what you need to finish strong. The TASC is here to support your success and whatever your needs are, we want to meet them. We are committed to helping you finish strong for your Healthy Start families. We hope that you take advantage of all that TASC has to offer you this year.

As I said in the beginning, it has been a pleasure to serve as your TASC during this cycle. My team and I look forward to continuing to support your technical assistance needs. As a former Project Director, I am keenly aware of the many challenges that arise as you approach your final year, but I am tremendously confident to that you will achieve your goals. We wish you great success!

In wellness and gratitude,  
Kenn L. Harris, Director of Healthy Start TASC

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### **Other Resources:**

#### **National Healthy Start Association Fatherhood Summit**

Registration is now open for the NHSA's Annual Fatherhood Summit and Annual Education Conference! The Summit on Fatherhood and Health & Wellness of Boys & Men will be held on March 26-27 and the Education Conference will be held on March 28-30. For more information, including conference registration, hotel details, and the Schedule at a Glance, please click the links below:

- [Summit & Conference Registration](#)
  - [Hotel Information](#)
  - [Schedule at a Glance](#)
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## CityMatCH Call for Abstracts

CityMatch will be hosting their 2023 MCH Leadership Conference on September 20-22 in New Orleans. They are now accepting submissions for abstracts, workshops, symposia, and facilitated discussions via their [online submission system](#) through March 10, 2023.

CityMatCH welcomes and encourages submissions on a variety of parent and child health topics, including but not limited to data use, equity, policy & advocacy, intersectionality, ongoing MCH issues, collateral damage of COVID, and more.

Professionals from local health departments, health systems, academic institutions, community members, community-based organizations, and students are all welcome to submit content.

If you have any questions, please reach out to [citymatchconference@unmc.edu](mailto:citymatchconference@unmc.edu).



## Hosting or attending an exciting event or webinar?

We will use the EPIC Center [Training Calendar](#) to share information about events specifically planned for Healthy Start projects, as well as other relevant webinars, trainings, and other events that are open to the public. If you know of events or trainings that you think other Healthy Start projects should be aware of, please feel free to send information to [healthystart@nichq.org](mailto:healthystart@nichq.org).

Have questions? Either respond to this email or contact the sender on [healthystart@nichq.org](mailto:healthystart@nichq.org)

National Institute for Children's Health Quality (NICHQ), 308 Congress Street, 5th Floor, Boston, Massachusetts 02210, United States, 617-391-2700

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