

THE LOUISIANA BOARD OF REGENTS UNIFORM POLICY ON THE PREVENTION OF UNPLANNED PREGNANCIES PURSUANT TO ACT 321 OF 2017

I. POLICY STATEMENT

Act 321 of the 2017 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature (Act 321) requires that, effective Fall 2018, “each public postsecondary management board, in conjunction with the Commissioner of Higher Education and the president of each public university and community college system . . . shall adopt a policy requiring each institution under its supervision and management to address the prevention of unplanned pregnancies among unmarried students as part of an institution's freshman orientation activities.”

Act 321 further requires that “as part of freshman orientation, each institution shall, as deemed appropriate, provide information to students that is recognized as medically accurate by the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists regarding the prevention of unplanned pregnancy, including without limitation, abstinence education.”

Act 321 prohibits, in all instances, the dissemination of any information regarding abortion methods, techniques, or providers, nor shall any student be directed to information or services provided by Planned Parenthood or any abortion provider.

II. INTRODUCTION

To aid in the state’s efforts to establish a uniform policy on the prevention of unplanned pregnancies by disseminating information to freshmen enrolled in postsecondary institutions and in accordance with ACT 321, the Louisiana Board of Regents hereby adopts this Uniform Policy on the Prevention of Unplanned Pregnancies applicable to all Louisiana public postsecondary education institutions. This Policy gives public

postsecondary institutions some options to explore opportunities and provide information for the prevention of unplanned pregnancies as part of their freshman orientation activities.

Since peaking in 1991, teen pregnancy nationally has declined by more than half. However, unplanned pregnancy among unmarried young adults in their 20's has remained high. As colleges strive to improve student retention and graduation rates, unplanned pregnancy and the responsibility of parenting has important implications for colleges.

Nationally, federal and state engagement in the dissemination of information to prevent unplanned pregnancies could assist colleges and universities by providing a platform from which to inform students. Some states have already taken action to address unplanned pregnancies at community colleges and public institutions. In 2014, Mississippi adopted a law requiring all public colleges and universities to develop unplanned pregnancy-prevention action plans. Arkansas passed a similar law in 2015.

III. MANDATORY STATE REQUIREMENTS

All Louisiana Postsecondary education institutions shall address the prevention of unplanned pregnancies among unmarried students as part of the institution's freshman orientation activities.

Optional activities such as those listed below are encouraged in order to supplement the information disseminated during freshman orientation activities.

1. Identify opportunities to raise awareness of and provide information for the prevention of unplanned pregnancies.
2. Identify opportunities for postsecondary students to serve as mentors or role models of successful behaviors and healthy choices for high school students
3. Identify public and private grants available to address the prevention of unplanned pregnancy and to promote student success.

4. Collaborate with community healthcare providers and federally qualified health centers to promote access to care
5. Identify challenges faced by students who are single parents (i.e., childcare, transportation); and
6. Identify other topics or issues related to the prevention and reduction of unplanned pregnancies.

IV. OPTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Postsecondary institutions are encouraged to provide information about unplanned pregnancy in the following manner:

- Incorporate information about unplanned pregnancy into student support services (first-year experience, and other college courses)
- Integrate information about unplanned pregnancy into academic courses as appropriate.
- Provide resources that show the connection between unplanned pregnancy and college completion through college website and student activities; and
- Connect students to health services