

OKLAHOMA: TEEN PREGNANCY

April 2015



JUST THE FACTS

Teen pregnancy and childbearing are closely linked to various economic and social issues, such as education, income and poverty, child well-being and health. Adolescent childbearing also carries considerable public costs. Teen mothers are less likely to finish high school than women who delay pregnancy and parenthood. Close to half of teen mothers ages 15 through 19 have incomes below the poverty line and nearly two thirds depend on public assistance within the first year of their child's life. Children of teen mothers are more likely to suffer health and cognitive disadvantages, come in contact with the child welfare and correctional systems, live in poverty, drop out of high school and become teen parents themselves. While all states have experienced significant declines in recent years, teen pregnancy and birth rates in the United States remain among the highest in the industrialized world. Nationwide, roughly one in four teens will become pregnant at least once by age 20. One in five births to girls ages 15 to 19 is not the teen's first. Teen pregnancy and birth rates in Oklahoma are declining, but remain among the highest in the nation with 42.9 births per 1,000 teenage girls in 2013.

Disparities Exist

A closer look at pregnancies and births among teenagers in Oklahoma finds differences based on age and race.

Older teens experience pregnancy and birth at much higher rates than their younger peers. In Oklahoma,

69 percent of teen pregnancies in 2010 and 70 percent of teen births in 2013 were to older teens (18- and 19-year-olds). The rate of pregnancy among 18- and 19-year-olds is more than three times that of 15- to 17-year-olds. In addition, at 76.1 per 1,000 females, Oklahoma had the second highest birth rate among older teens of any of the 50 states in 2013. While rates of pregnancies and births have been dropping in all age groups, older teens have not seen the same sharp declines as younger teens. Pregnancy rates among 18- and 19-year-olds have declined 26 percent between 1988 and 2010, compared to 47 percent among teens ages 15-17.

Birth rates vary by race and ethnicity as well. Hispanic, black and Native American teens have higher rates of births than white and Asian teens. Hispanic teens have the highest birth rates of any racial or ethnic group—69.2 births per 1,000 girls in 2013. This group has seen slower declines as well; the birth rate decreased 25 percent between 1991 and 2012, compared to 33 percent among non-Hispanic whites. This decline among Hispanic teens in Oklahoma is also slower than the declines seen by Hispanic teens nationwide. However, Oklahoma has made some progress in reducing disparities, with declines in all racial and ethnic groups' teen birth rates reaching at least 25 percent between 1991 and 2012. At 57 percent, non-Hispanic black teens have seen the greatest reductions in birth rates during this time period.

For More Information

State and local agencies and others are working to reduce teen pregnancy in Oklahoma, and federal funding is also available for teen pregnancy prevention activities. See NCSL's other fact sheets for additional information on how teen pregnancy relates to various issues, as well as policy options for the state to consider, available here: <http://www.ncsl.org/Default.aspx?tabid=28980>.

Resources

Teen Pregnancy Prevention, National Conference of State Legislatures <http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=23141>

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy: www.thenationalcampaign.org

The 152,467 children born to teens in Oklahoma between 1991 and 2010 **cost taxpayers approximately \$4.1 billion** over that period. During the same period, the state teen birth rate **declined 30 percent, saving taxpayers an estimated \$95 million** in 2010 alone.

Source: *Counting it Up: The Public Costs of Teen Childbearing in Oklahoma in 2010*, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, April 2014.

\$169 million

The public cost of teen childbearing in Oklahoma in 2010.

Teen childbearing costs at least \$9.4 billion each year nationally. Between 1991 and 2010, teen childbearing in Oklahoma cost \$4.1 billion. With the declines in teen birth rates—30 percent from 1991 to 2010—it is estimated that the savings was \$95 million in 2010. Despite the drop, teen childbearing in Oklahoma cost at least \$169 million the same year.

The majority of costs are related to the children of teenage parents, who are more likely to experience poor health, difficulties in educational attainment and lower socioeconomic status over their lifetimes. The costs include use of public health care and involvement in the child welfare and criminal justice systems. In addition, these children, as well as their teen parents, typically achieve lower levels of education, which can result in lost tax revenue due to lower earnings and spending. Teen childbearing also has significant implications and human costs for parents and children that are more challenging to quantify.

Source: [Counting it Up: The Public Costs of Teen Childbearing in Oklahoma in 2010](#), The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, April 2014.

Teen Pregnancy

- In Oklahoma, there were **8,860 pregnancies**, or approximately 69 pregnancies for every 1,000 girls ages 15 through 19, in 2010, the most recent year for which data are available.
- Although the state's teen pregnancy rate **declined 34 percent** between 1988 and 2010, Oklahoma still had the **sixth highest** teen pregnancy rate in the nation in 2010.

Teen Birth

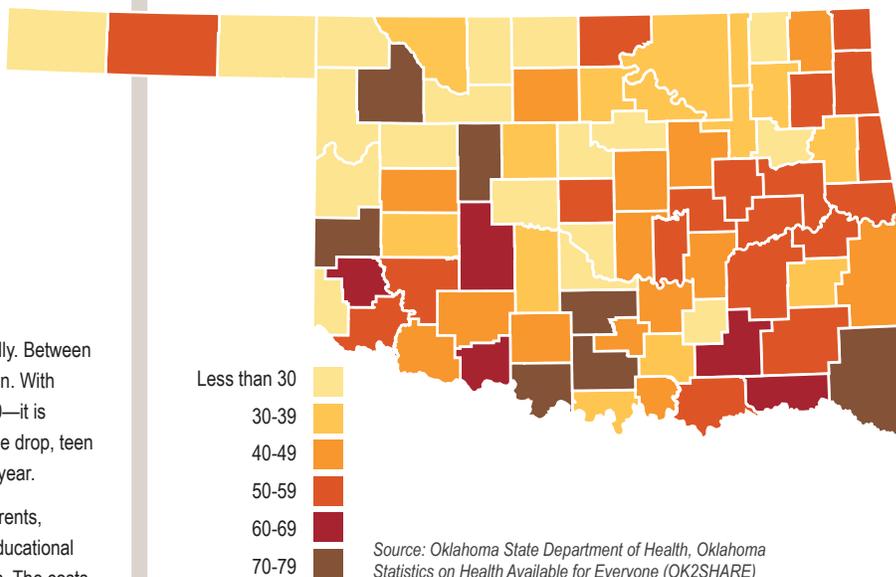
- Oklahoma had the **third highest** teen birth rate in the United States in 2013.
- In 2013, Oklahoma saw **5,310** births among girls ages 15 through 19—that's approximately 14 births every day.
- In 2013, **19 percent** of teen births were not the teen's first. Among girls ages 18-19, **23 percent** of births in 2013 were not their first.
- Among teen births in 2013, **82 percent** were to unmarried teens.
- Between 1991 and 2013, the state's teen birth rate **declined by 40 percent**.

Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

- According to the 2013 YRBS, **50 percent** of high school students in Oklahoma have had sexual intercourse. This ranges from almost **31 percent of freshmen**, to **65 percent of high school seniors**.

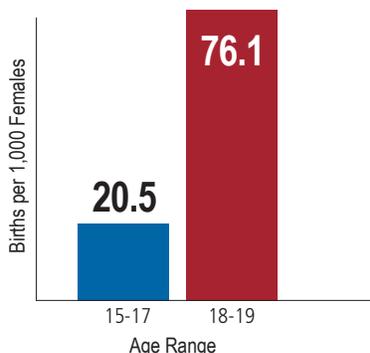
Teen Birth Rate by County, 2013

Per 1,000 girls ages 15-19



Oklahoma Teen Birth Rate by Age, 2013

Source: Oklahoma State Department of Health, Oklahoma Statistics on Health Available for Everyone (OK2SHARE)



Percentage of Oklahoma Teen Births by Race/Ethnicity, 2013

