

# Adolescent Sexuality Education

Why comprehensive sex education is vital now more than ever



The Massachusetts Adolescent Sexuality Education (ASE) program provides comprehensive sexuality education and positive youth development programming, with the aim to increase life opportunities and decrease health inequities for youth. As of Fiscal Year 20 (FY20), ASE programs are in 17 agencies in 20 cities and towns throughout Massachusetts with higher teen birth rates and Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) rates than state averages.

**Due to COVID-19, many programs located in community based organizations have modified or transitioned to virtual programming. Many are continuing to serve their communities in various ways, as well.**

## Sex Education is Still Important During COVID-19 in Massachusetts



Even during COVID-19, young people need the knowledge and skills to prevent pregnancy and STIs, especially **how to safely access testing and birth control**. ASE programs have gone above and beyond to serve young people in a variety of ways.

## Young People Need Trusted Adults Now More Than Ever

Due to COVID-19, **45% of ASE programs report youth have more responsibilities** to care for their families.

Since the COVID-19 emergency began in March 2020, staff at **13 ASE-funded agencies started providing daily or weekly wellness check-ins for youth**. In addition, **10 agencies began virtual youth development programs**.

Over the course of programming, ASE participants report a **5% statistically significant increase** in connection with a trusted adult\*.

Statistical significance indicates how likely something is not due to random chance - in this case the data show a high probability that **the ASE program has a positive, definite relationship in young people having a connection with a trusted adult**.



\*Source: ASE FY19 Pre and Post Survey data

## ASE Organizations are Providing Vital Resources to Their Communities

Due to needs identified as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, ASE staff are currently providing their communities with critical resources during COVID-19, including **rental assistance, access to birth control, and diapers and wipes**.

- 8 agencies are providing youth with academic support and mentoring

- 7 agencies are providing concrete supports such as food and supplies to youth and their families



## ASE Connects Youth to Critical Community Services

Part of ASE is connecting young people to services across the Commonwealth. ASE programs are committed to making sure all youth in MA have access to what they need, in addition to comprehensive sex education.

**73% of ASE participants reported that ASE helped them learn about youth programs in their community**

In FY20, the percent of ASE participants connected to community resources:

Family Planning



Youth Programs



Primary Care



## ASE Organizations Employ Members of the Community



Many of the communities ASE is offered in have disproportionate rates of unemployment and poverty.

In FY20, ASE provided funding to **17 community agencies, employing 66 individuals**.

