



Oklahoma

Project HOPE works to ensure equitable access to health services and healthy development opportunities for children under five and their families by partnering with states and local organizations on policies and programs that result in systems change.

Background

Since 2018, Nemours has been working with a diverse group of stakeholders to implement Project HOPE in Oklahoma. Led by the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR), state and local partners are collaborating to focus on reducing infant mortality rates in partner communities, as well as eliminating the gap in services for children ages birth to three years old. Prior to Project HOPE, OPSR's objective of strengthening families and school readiness for all children led to the development of an Early Learning Equity and Diversity (E-LEaD) Team. The E-LEaD Team works toward a more equitable system of early care and education, advancing the vision that every child, regardless of race, ethnicity, or family income, has the best opportunity to achieve optimal health and well-being.

To ensure that community voice informs this work, OPSR has partnered with the University of Kansas to use a story-gathering tool to allow community members to gather stories directly from parents and community providers. This customized version of the Sensemaker Framework is known as "Hopeful Futures." This ability to share lived experience with a more trusted surveyor strengthens the feedback loop, allowing trained community members to collect qualitative data around basic needs, equity, and access to vital services for those in Oklahoma.

Cross Sector State Stakeholder Group (CSSSG)

The Early Learning Equity and Diversity (E-LEaD) Team serves as the CSSSG for Oklahoma. This group is led by the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) and includes representatives from:

- Oklahoma Educational Television Authority (OETA)
- Oklahoma Health Care Authority
- Oklahoma State Department of Education
- Oklahoma State Department of Health
- Oklahoma University Children's Physicians Latino Clinic

Community Partners

Community Development Support Association, Inc.
Community Service Council
Latino Community Development Agency
Kids' Space Muskogee County Child Advocacy Center
Lilyfield
Northern Oklahoma Youth Services

To support state efforts, Nemours provides support in the following Infrastructure Areas:

- Communication
- Data
- Finance
- Governance
- Leadership

Complementary Initiatives

In addition to Project HOPE, state partners are engaged in several other initiatives focused on improving the health and wellbeing of young children.

- Oklahoma Preschool Development Grant (OKFutures)
 - OKFutures Birth Through Five Preschool Development Grant is designed to improve Oklahoma's early childhood mixed delivery system by illuminating and addressing unmet needs, especially for vulnerable and underserved children and families.
- Alliance for Early Success
 - With a grant from the Alliance for Early Success, OPSR is working to coordinate an early childhood system focused on strengthening families and school readiness for all children.

Community Engagement Activities

Since 2019, Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) led several activities to increase the capacity of parents and stakeholders to establish feedback loops and incorporate community voice in local/state initiatives.

Community Action Lab

Community stakeholders, including parents and child care providers, were convened by Boston Medical Center's Vital Village, Community Action Agency (Oak Grove) and OPSR to determine the priority areas that children and families in Oak Grove need to thrive, including:

- Quality activities that lead to high quality education
- Technical Assistance for community development

Equity and Diversity Training

The E-LEaD team and community stakeholders participated in an Equity Workshop, led by the Institute for Public Health Innovation, which aimed to increase stakeholders' capacity to improve policies and reduce inequities in early childhood.

Sensemaker Framework "Hopeful Futures"

OPSR partnered with the University of Kansas to develop a customized story gathering tool. This version of their Sensemaker Framework has been deemed "Hopeful Futures." Select community members are trained to collect responses from providers and families, allowing for a more confidential sharing process. Lieutenant Governor Matt Pinnell championed the tool and commissioned its use for recording the impact of COVID-19 on families across the state.



Action Plan Strategies

OPSR has begun implementing a comprehensive action plan to address several policies and health inequities. To increase access to responsive prenatal and infant health services, partners in Oklahoma are implementing strategies, including:

Infrastructure Areas: Data

Action Step: Utilize Data Report and Needs Assessment data to determine which communities in Oklahoma experience the most significant health disparities.

Infrastructure Areas: Leadership, Communication

Action Step: OPSR will provide assistance to communities throughout the story gathering process, to inform access to health services.

Infrastructure Areas: Leadership, Communication

Action Step: Communities will convene stakeholders for SenseMaking workshop, to ensure the establishment of an effective feedback loop.

Achievements

- Community Action Labs with six communities across the state, which allowed for the expanded utilization of community voice and data gathered
- Collection of 152 stories using the "Hopeful Futures" Sensemaker story-gathering tool
- Equity Impact Review Tool Webinar for E-LEaD Team
- "Building Equitable Futures for Oklahoma's Children" webinar, highlighting policy priorities around state early care and education

Support for this State Profile was provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Foundation.