

# USU Awarded \$7.6 Million Grant for Fatherhood Education

**Julene Reese**

**11/09/2015**



Utah State

University was recently awarded a \$7.6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Family Assistance. The grant will be distributed over a five-year period and will fund relationship and fatherhood education programs.

Brian Higginbotham, Utah State University Extension associate vice president and professor in the Family, Consumer and Human Development (FCHD) Department in the College of Education and Human Services, will direct the project. He will be assisted by Linda Skogrand, USU Extension family relations/diversity specialist and Kay Bradford, an FCHD faculty member. Higginbotham said USU Extension has been providing relationship education for nearly 10 years and has served more than 20,000 individuals.

"This new grant will build on our past successes, strong partnerships with state agencies and research-based programs," he said. "The funding will help provide the Utah Healthy Marriage Handbook to couples applying for marriage licenses and to high schools that offer adult roles and responsibilities courses. In addition, we will serve at-risk youth who have not historically been a focus of our services."

Higginbotham said "Love Notes," a research-based curriculum, will be provided to youth in detention facilities, alternative high schools and the Youth in Custody program.

"Many of these youth have grown up in homes where there was abuse, neglect, high discord or poor relationship skills," he said. "We proposed to work with these youth in an effort to instill in them the knowledge and skills necessary for healthy interpersonal relationships. These youth are currently receiving the core state education requirements, but our partnering organizations felt additional relationship and life skills could be helpful."

Youth will receive eight hours of instruction in such areas as decision making, conflict management, communication and recognizing abusive and unhealthy behaviors. Classes will be taught by USU Extension educators in many locations in Utah, and undergraduate and graduate students will be involved with the research component. The grant will help fulfill the three aspects of the university's land-grant mission of teaching, research and service.

USU Extension Vice President Ken White said the grant funding will be a tremendous help to youth in need of relationship education.

"We commend Brian and Linda and others involved for their work in securing this grant so these essential skills can be taught," he said. "The grant will help extend the research-based information from the university to an at-risk population and will have a positive ripple effect for generations."

Information about Extension's relationship education programs is available at <http://HealthyRelationshipsUtah.org>. The site includes information on a variety of grant-funded classes available for singles, couples, parents and stepfamilies.

Writer: Julene Reese, 435-757-6418,  
Julene.Reese@usu.edu

Contact: Brian Higginbotham, 435-797-7276,  
Brian.H@usu.edu What Next? Get useful tips like this as soon as we release them. Sign up here.