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## New Report: Mississippi's High Teen Birth Rate Costs Taxpayers \$155 Million

*Report offers solutions to reduce teen birth rate in Mississippi and also presents county-level cost data*

JACKSON—The Women's Fund of Mississippi has released a new report (a summary and copy may be reviewed at [www.womensfundms.org](http://www.womensfundms.org)) describing the economic costs of teen births for every county in Mississippi. These taxpayer costs, which were calculated for the Women's Fund of Mississippi by the Mississippi Economic Policy Center, can be attributed primarily to the lost tax revenue from lower wages among teen parents and their children, incarceration costs of sons of teen parents, and foster care costs.

The report makes clear that lower educational outcomes associated with teen mothers and their children limit the overall skill levels of the state's workforce. Mississippi's economic health will be impacted until the teen birth rate declines.

The report also suggests a variety of ways that policymakers, teens, schools, and parents can reduce the prevalence of teenage pregnancy. These solutions include: "abstinence-plus" sex education in public schools that is evidence-based and medically accurate; access to school nurses and youth-friendly preventive health services; access to educational opportunities and youth employment; and helping parents succeed in their role as sex educators.

### **About the Women's Fund of Mississippi**

The Women's Fund of Mississippi is a public, statewide, nonprofit foundation dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls in communities statewide by promoting social change and economic self-sufficiency through advocacy and strategic grantmaking. The Women's Fund of Mississippi is the only grantmaking and advocacy organization in Mississippi entirely dedicated to funding programs that improve the lives of women and girls statewide. The Fund operates with the belief that when women are economically secure, safe, and healthy, then families and communities are economically secure, safe, and healthy. More information can be found at [www.womensfundms.org](http://www.womensfundms.org).