

THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR



Vital statistics

PUBLIC PAYS

Teen births have been significantly declining in Indiana, but overall costs to taxpayers were at least \$247 million in 2008, according to a recently released national study.

Most public sector costs of teen child-bearing are associated with negative consequences for children of teen mothers, during both childhood and young adult years, says the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.

These costs include public health care, child welfare, increased rates of incarceration among adolescents or young adults and lost tax revenue due to decreased earnings and spending.

The data updates 2004 research, done by the University of Delaware and released by the National Campaign.

“Reducing teen pregnancy not only improves the well-being of children, youth and families, it saves taxpayer dollars,” said Sarah Brown, CEO of the National Campaign.

Here are more results:

» Of Indiana’s \$247 million costs to taxpayers, 36 percent were federal costs and 64 percent were state and local costs.

» From 1991 to 2008, a total of 196,245 teen births occurred in Indiana, costing taxpayers \$5.6 billion.

» These costs would have been higher had it not been for a substantial decline, 28 percent in the teen birth rate from 1991 to 2008 — saving Indiana taxpayers \$155 million in 2008 alone.

— Barb Berggoetz