



# 2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT

## A Message From Answer's Executive Director

*For nearly 40 years, Answer has provided the training and youth-centered resources that educators need to deliver medically accurate, LGBTQ-inclusive sex education to their students. Given the unprecedented challenges our nation faces, Answer's expertise and innovative use of technology have proven more important than ever.*

This past fiscal year, Answer's work continued unabated, even in the face of a global pandemic. We are fortunate that our staff is well and most of our work continues remotely. **Answer's many years using technology**—in both remote training for educators and digital resources for young people—**have been invaluable in supporting sex education in virtual learning environments.**

In addition to dealing with a global pandemic, our country has started a long overdue racial reckoning. As laid out in our strategic plan—*Advancing Equity & Making an Impact, 2018-2021*, **Answer's staff has been increasing its understanding of how racial bias intersects with sexual and reproductive health.** We examined the impact racist ideas have on the provision of health care for people of color as well as the exploitation of subjects of color in unethical research. This important work has laid the foundation for the launch of our racial and reproductive justice initiative. Our staff is now positioned to apply a reproductive justice lens to the work we do training educators and providing resources for young people and adults.

**Last year was also a year of transitions at Answer.** The position of digital media associate was eliminated due to budget constraints, and a University-wide hiring freeze in response to the pandemic has prevented Answer from hiring a new business assistant. In spite of these staffing losses, in early December 2019, we increased our capacity in the areas where there is the greatest need by welcoming Dr. Tracie Gilbert as the new training and technical assistance manager.

In this annual report, you will see that in spite of the many transitions and challenges faced by Answer, **we continued to work toward our long-term goal of creating a nation where every young person receives the high-quality sex education they need and deserve.** We continue to prioritize expanding young people's access to sex education, developing and leveraging partnerships to reach the most vulnerable young people, and sustaining and developing culturally relevant programs that provide sex education at every stage of young people's development.

**Thank you to our generous foundation and individual donors.** Your support makes our work possible.

With much appreciation,

Dan Rice, M.Ed.  
Executive Director





## strategic priority #1

Expand young people's access to age-appropriate, medically accurate, LGBTQ-inclusive sex education

### Sex, Etc.

**Sex, Etc.** — Answer's flagship publication—continued to center the voices of young people in sex education. We recruited an energetic and diverse group of 17 high school students from across New Jersey and worked with six national contributors from around the country. Together, they developed three issues of *Sex, Etc.* magazine and the content for Sexetc.org, which averaged 55,000 unique visitors per month in the U.S.

As part of Answer's racial and reproductive initiative, the Answer staff provided training for the 2019-2020 teen staff on reproductive justice, including a session on intersectionality and its impact on the sexual and reproductive health of young people. These trainings laid the groundwork for the *Sex, Etc.* teen staff to create content that addresses reproductive justice.

### AMAZE

In addition to engaging a teen audience, Answer and our partners, Advocates for Youth and YTH, have made tremendous progress through AMAZE in reaching 10-to 14-year-olds with short, animated videos that cover a range of puberty and adolescent development topics. At the end of June 2020, the AMAZE YouTube channel had 154,000 subscribers, and the videos had been viewed over 39 million times. With few sex education resources available for very young adolescents, AMAZE has grown in popularity among educators and parents looking to provide medically accurate, developmentally appropriate information to this age group. In response to the isolation many young people may feel as a result of social distancing, AMAZE produced "Does #SocialDistancing Have You Feeling Isolated?," one of our latest videos that addresses the stress young people may be experiencing and how they can get support if needed.

### National Training Initiative

During 2019, through Answer's robust suite of online professional development workshops, we continued to increase educators' knowledge in the areas of consent, healthy relationships, best practices for creating LGBTQ-inclusive classrooms and curricula, and many other topics outlined in the *National Sexuality Education Standards, Second Edition*. Participants from around the country completed 449 online workshops. Answer's online workshops were an important source of virtual training as schools adjusted their professional development plans and educators navigated implementing remote learning in the spring of 2020.

This year Answer also applied and was approved to have its series of online professional development courses offered as a Rutgers certificate program in adolescent sex education basics. Given that there are educators who are charged with teaching sex education who have no training in this content area, Answer's certificate in adolescent sex education basics will fill a widely unmet need for educators charged with implementing the subject in the classroom.

### Foundations: Core Skills Training for Sex Ed

Through the Foundations: Core Skills Training for Sex Ed initiative, Answer and Cardea Services continue to expand access to affordable, high-quality, skills-based training for educators. By the end of 2019, we expanded the Foundations training cadre to over 100 trainers working with partner organizations in 19 states across the country, reaching 3,600 teachers who teach 800,000 young people each year.



## Future of Sex Education (FoSE)

As part of the Future of Sex Education (FoSE) partnership, Answer, Advocates for Youth and SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change released the *National Sexuality Education Standards, Second Edition* in March 2020. The updated standards use the lenses of LGBTQ-inclusivity; trauma-informed practices; intersectionality; and social, racial and reproductive justice and equity to reflect the latest research and best practices in the field of sex education.

## Sex Education Collaborative (SEC)

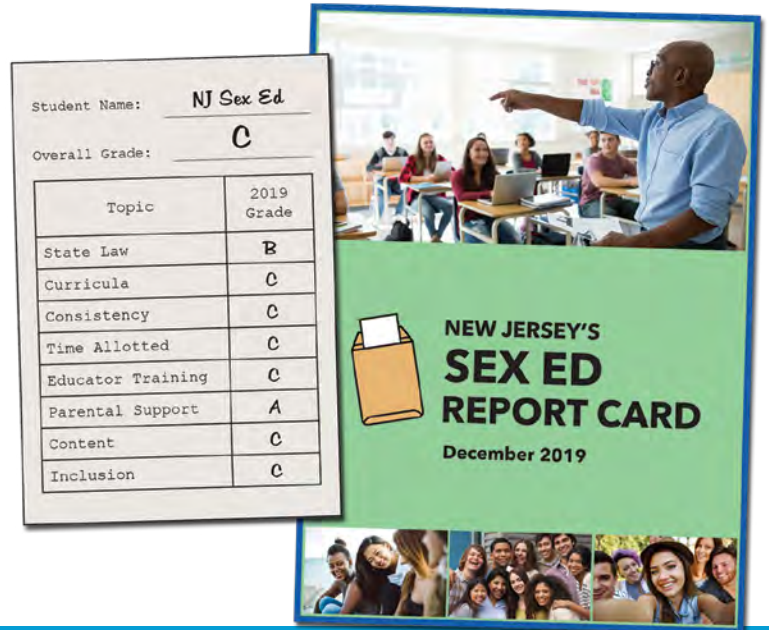
Answer also participates in the Sex Education Collaborative (SEC)—a group of 19 national, regional and state-based organizations that leverage their collective networks and resources to provide professional development for educators and ultimately advance and scale K–12 school-based sex education across the U.S. In May 2020, the SEC launched its website and Training Hub, which gives K–12 educators and administrators access to trusted sex education resources, training, policy and technical assistance, aligned to the Professional Learning Standards for Sex Education.

## State Sex Ed Summit

Answer also collaborated with Advocates for Youth, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change and the Women of Color Sexual Health Network (WoCSHN) in expanding access to sex education through the 13th annual State Sex Education Summit, a conference for leaders in the field of school-based sex education. Over 140 participants from schools and leading sex education agencies across the country attended this year's summit, which focused on racial justice in sex education.

## Thrive NJ

On the state level, Answer participates in Thrive NJ, a coalition of nearly 70 New Jersey-based organizations that released the NJ Sex Ed Report Card in December 2019. In preparing the report, Thrive NJ surveyed New Jersey educators, administrators, students and parents and found sex education is being provided inconsistently and some schools are still using ineffective, stigmatizing materials in the classroom. In response to these findings, Answer was one of the leading organizations in Thrive NJ that worked with the New Jersey Department of Education on drafting revisions to the sexual health indicators in the 2020 Student Learning Standards for Comprehensive Health and Physical Education. In June 2020, the New Jersey State Board of Education approved the revised standards, which removed language that is stigmatizing and employs other fear-based tactics, eliminated the reliance on the gender binary and reintegrated standards around pregnancy and pregnancy options, among other changes.



## Racial and Reproductive Justice Initiative

In developing and sustaining culturally relevant programs, Answer must understand the historical context and the impact of systemic racism, white supremacy and intersectionality on sex education and the young people we serve. To this end, in 2018 we launched a staff development initiative focused on racial and reproductive justice. After a year of learning and unlearning, Answer has moved into the action phase of applying our knowledge

to our work. As you may have noticed in this report, we have integrated racial and reproductive justice into the work we've done on all of our strategic priorities. In the upcoming year, we plan to release a collection of resources to assist teachers in having these important conversations in the classroom. We also plan to host events for young people and adults to further the conversations around racial and reproductive justice and keep the national dialogue moving forward.



## Staff

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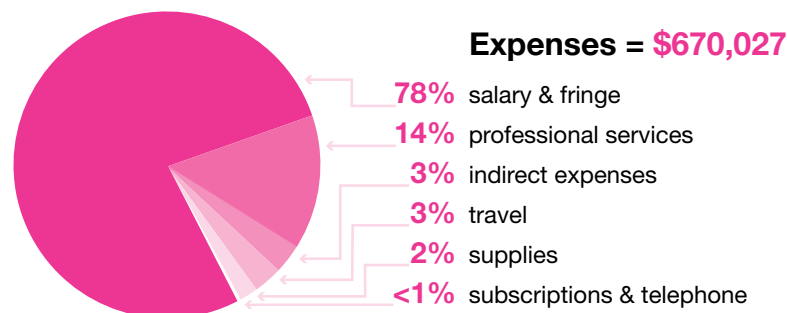
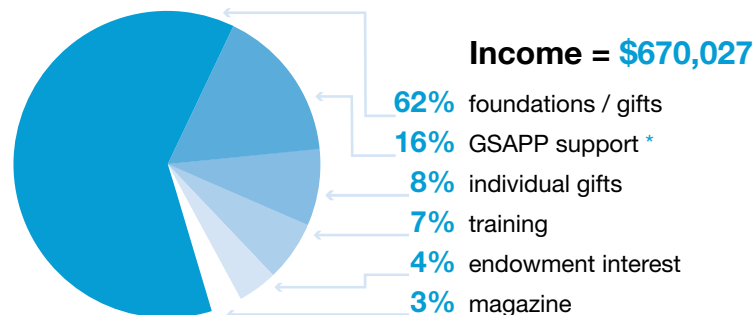
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- Susan N. Wilson, MS.Ed. — Senior Advisor, Answer

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sex ed, honestly

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