

# sex education: advancing equity & making an impact

**answer**  
*strategic plan*  
**2018 - 2021**



**answer**  
sex ed, honestly



# strategic plan

## 2018 - 2021



## table of contents

introduction	3
strategic priority #1 <i>expand answer's reach</i>	5
strategic priority #2 <i>develop &amp; strengthen answer's partnerships</i>	6
strategic priority #3 <i>build answer's capacity</i>	7
contact us	8

## our vision

Answer envisions a nation in which *sexuality is recognized as a normal, healthy part* of development and every young person's right to high-quality sex education is fulfilled.

## our mission

To provide and promote *unfettered access to sex education* for young people and the adults who teach them.

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# looking toward the future

## introduction

For nearly 40 years, Answer has worked to create a nation where sexuality is recognized as a normal, healthy part of development and every young person receives high-quality sex education. Yet **threats to federal investments** in sex education and the proliferation of abstinence-only programs and crisis pregnancy centers, which peddle biased information masquerading as sex education, are jeopardizing Answer's vision of a nation where young people receive the accurate information they need and deserve. We see **the toll misinformation takes on people's lives** in our national conversations about sexual harassment and assault, high rates of sexually transmitted diseases and a teen pregnancy rate that remains higher than rates in other industrialized nations—all of which disproportionately affect young people of color and those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ).

### Answer's mission remains critical.

While our work began in 1981 to support New Jersey's groundbreaking sex education mandate, **Answer has since expanded its reach nationwide, training thousands of educators each year** both in person and online, building the capacity of school districts

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## our values

- Answer is committed to ensuring **equitable access to sex education** to all young people in the United States, regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, ability, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other characteristic.
- Answer is committed to **amplifying young people's voices** through platforms that educate and empower their peers.
- Answer is committed to **shaping the conversation** about adolescent sexual health and the future of sex education in the U.S.
- Answer is committed to a **culture that respects, values and embraces diversities** of all kinds.



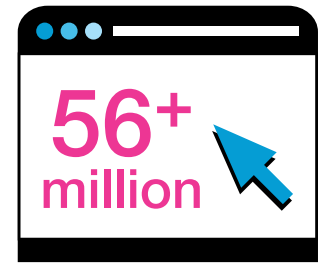


across the country and reaching millions of young people through youth-focused resources like *Sex, Etc.* and AMAZE. Despite the progress we have made in ensuring access to sex education, significant inequities persist and young people are inundated daily with conflicting messages about sex and sexuality.

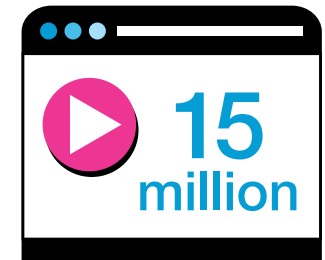
Answer is committed to cutting through the clutter of misinformation in our current media landscape. To do this, we must leverage our strengths, including centering young people's voices and our innovative use of technology. Answer's meaningful collaborations with young people distinguish our work—their perspectives inform the educational resources we create as well as the trainings we develop for educators. Answer's close collaborations with young people also ensure that we stay abreast of social, cultural and technological trends that affect their lives, allowing us to nimbly respond to their sexual health questions and concerns. Answer has a long track record as an early adopter of new technologies to meet young people where they are online and to provide accessible and convenient training for educators. These strengths have positioned us to strategically adapt to the changing media landscape, including leveraging traditional and social media to

actively engage in—and shape—the public narrative on teen sexuality and sexual health.

As we look toward the future, Answer will continue to partner with young people and leverage technology to ensure our vision becomes a reality. Yet we know that to be truly effective, we must expand beyond the current confines of our programs. We must pursue partnerships with allied groups across social justice movements and seek to apply an intersectional lens to our work. Specifically, in order to ensure the most marginalized groups have access to and can benefit from our programs and to guard against reinforcing historical biases and injustices, we must examine the intersections of racial equity and sexual and reproductive health. In the coming years, we will invest in our own learning and development in the area of racial justice, contribute to the development of a diverse leadership pipeline for the field and seek out organizations with complementary missions to collaborate and amplify our impact. This intersectional approach is a moral and ethical imperative.




unique visitors to  
**sexetc.org**  
since launch in 1999



**AMAZE**  
video views  
since launch in 2016

**1,500**  
teachers trained in  
**Foundations Core  
Skills Training for  
Sex Ed** since 2017

  
**280,000**  
young people reached  
by **Foundations-trained  
teachers** since 2017

## our strategic priorities

Answer's 2018-2021 strategic plan lays out Answer's priorities for the next three years, which build upon these strengths and set an ambitious agenda toward achieving our long-term goals.

# strategic priority #1

## expand answer's reach

Answer aims to reach **young people from early childhood through adolescence** with tools and resources that support their healthy sexual development and to equip **educators and other caring adults** with the knowledge and skills they need to be effective in their roles. Over the next three years, Answer will expand and enhance its programs to ensure we support young people through every stage of their development.

- Grow and evolve Answer's **signature teen-written publication, *Sex, Etc.***, to ensure its continued relevance and viability by incorporating video content and developing an innovative new curriculum that centers the teen staff's writing.
- Expand Answer's bank of **innovative and engaging animated videos** for 10-to 14-year-olds through the AMAZE initiative, in partnership with Advocates for Youth and Youth Tech Health, and launch AMAZE, Jr. to provide parents with resources for talking with their younger children.
- Grow the cadre of **certified trainers** for the Foundations: Core Skills Training for Sex Ed initiative, in partnership with Cardea, thereby building infrastructure for training educators across the country.
- Provide **online professional development workshops** to educators and begin offering an online certificate in sex education through Rutgers University in order to improve the accessibility, affordability and quality of teacher training nationwide.
- Explore developing **programs to reach new groups** such as younger children and college students and work to seamlessly bridge our audience from one program to the next.



# strategic priority #2

## develop & strengthen answer's partnerships

In order to achieve truly lasting and transformative progress on sex education in the U.S., Answer must **collaborate with diverse partners**. Over the next three years, Answer will strengthen existing partnerships, establish new connections and leverage collective resources to achieve shared goals across movements and disciplines.

- Help convene and play an active role in **national networks of sexual and reproductive health organizations** to scale our collective efforts and advocate for sex education policies and programs that advance adolescent sexual health.
- Reach across **social justice movements** to establish partnerships with organizations whose missions and goals intersect with our own, with a particular emphasis on supporting **communities of color and LGBTQ communities**.
- Leverage these partnerships to help build a pipeline of **diverse new leaders** for the field and to develop resources or trainings that take an intersectional approach to meet the needs of **underserved communities**.
- Establish relationships with **faculty and researchers** across Rutgers' varied schools to evaluate our programs and apply the findings to enhance our impact.



### our guiding principles

- Answer's professional development for adults supports our work with and for young people, and *what we learn from young people* informs what we teach adults.
- Answer partners with *young people as equal contributors* in the development of our resources and compensates and credits them accordingly.
- Answer incubates, disseminates and implements *innovative approaches to reach underserved communities* with sex education.



# strategic priority #3

## *build answer's capacity*

In order to achieve our bold vision for sex education across the country, Answer must invest in our **internal capacity and sustainability**. In addition to enhancing our infrastructure, we must ensure our team has the knowledge and skills to design and implement **culturally relevant programs** that meet the needs of young people, with a particular emphasis on reaching young people of color and LGBTQ youth. Over the next three years, Answer will seek diverse resources that align with our mission and enable us to respond to political and cultural shifts.

- Grow and diversify Answer's **funding sources** by attracting new institutional and individual donors and developing additional earned income streams to achieve our goals and expand our reach.
- Leverage a range of **resources available at Rutgers University** to strengthen our infrastructure such as online learning tools, fundraising capacity and interdisciplinary collaborations with faculty and students.
- Launch a **staff development initiative** to increase our understanding of how racial bias intersects with sexual and reproductive health and work towards applying a racial justice framework to our programs to ensure we address the full range of lived experiences for the young people we reach.
- Invest in **learning and development opportunities** that enhance our team's capacity to carry out our strategic objectives and meet our mission.



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