



SIECUS

State Profile

ALASKA

Community-based organizations in Alaska received \$1,558,215 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2008.¹

Alaska Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Alaska does not have a law that governs sexuality education; therefore, schools are not required to teach sexuality or sexually transmitted disease (STD) education. However, “the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development’s health education team is committed to providing teachers and school staff within the state of Alaska with current and scientifically sound research in health education and violence and disease prevention.”² The department endorses “Programs that Work,”³ a list compiled by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), though it “does not endorse specific curricula, but seeks to provide districts with the most up-to-date materials and research-based programs so schools can evaluate what best meets the needs of their student population.”⁴

In addition, the Alaska content standards, *Skills for a Healthy Life*, state that students should, among other things:

- understand the physical and behavioral characteristics of human sexual development and maturity;
- develop an awareness of how personal life roles are affected by and contribute to the well-being of families, communities, and cultures;
- understand how respect for the rights of self and others contributes to relationships; and
- take responsible actions to create safe and healthy environments.

Alaska neither requires parental permission for students to participate in sexuality or HIV/AIDS education nor does it say whether parents or guardians may remove their children from such classes.

See *School Health: Health Education Program*, Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

Recent Legislation

Legislation Includes Desired Results for Sex Education and Teen Health Outcomes

Senate Bill 279, introduced in February of 2006, aimed to set the mission and desired results when departments within the state spent money. Desired results for the department of education and early development would have included ensuring that parents had easy and ready access to all sexuality education materials taught at their children’s schools, that parents were provided the opportunity to remove their children from sexuality education courses, and that all students attend mandatory classes that explain the benefits of sexual abstinence. Desired results for the department of health

and social services would have included informing all minors of the benefits of delaying sexual activity and limiting the number of sexual partners, minimizing sexual intercourse by unmarried minors, and ensuring that sexual abstinence is taught to all minors. Desired outcomes for the governor's office would have included reducing the number of teen pregnancies by seven percent per year until teen pregnancies represented not more than two percent of all pregnancies each year. The bill was referred to the Committee on State Affairs in February 2007 but failed to move again and died.

Legislation Relating to Notice and Consent for a Minor's Abortion

Senate Bill 279, introduced in February 2008 and referred to the Health, Education, and Social Services Committee as well as the Judiciary Committee, would have amended the judicial bypass law for abortion performed on a minor by stating that a parent or legal guardian must be notified at least 48 hours in advance of an abortion performed on a minor and must give written consent for the abortion unless the minor files a complaint to not notify a parent or legal guardian or unless the minor is a victim of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse by a parent or guardian. The bill failed to be read and died in committee.

Alaska's Youth: Statistical Information of Note⁵

- In 2007, 46% of female high school students and 44% of male high school students in Alaska reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 50% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 4% of female high school students and 5% of male high school students in Alaska reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 4% of female high school students and 10% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 14% of female high school students and 13% of male high school students in Alaska reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 12% of female high school students and 18% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 35% of female high school students and 27% of male high school students in Alaska reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 36% of female high school students and 34% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 22% of females and 23% of males in Alaska reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 18% of females and 28% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 59% of females and 63% of males in Alaska reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 55% of females and 69% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 27% of females and 18% of males in Alaska reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 19% of females and 13% of males nationwide.

- In 2007, 86% of high school students in Alaska reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 90% of high school students nationwide.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

- Alaska was eligible for \$88,501 in federal Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funding in Fiscal Year 2008.
- The Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage grant requires states to provide three state-raised dollars or the equivalent in services for every four federal dollars received. The state match may be provided in part or in full by local groups.
- Alaska, however, chose not to apply for these funds due to the extraordinary restrictions upon how the money must be spent. Therefore, the state does not match funds nor does it have organizations supported by this type of federal money.

Alaska's Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage program ended when the state's single sub-grantee, Kids Are People, said it could no longer comply with both the short extensions of the program and the tight restrictions placed upon it.⁶ The Kids Are People abstinence program did not meet all eight points of the A-H guidelines and could no longer operate under Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage requirements. The state of Alaska was unable to find another program to use the funds. Moreover, Alaska's Department of Health and Human Services is dedicated to a comprehensive approach to sexuality education and those programs continue to operate today.⁷

Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE) and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees

- There are two CBAE grantees in Alaska: Care Net Pregnancy Center of the Tanana Valley and Crisis Pregnancy Center of Anchorage and Eagle River.
- There are no AFLA grantees in Alaska.

Care Net Pregnancy Center of the Tanana Valley, \$541,444 (CBAE 2008–2013)

The Care Net Pregnancy Center of the Tanana Valley is a faith-based crisis pregnancy center. Crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs) typically advertise as providing medical services and then use anti-abortion propaganda, misinformation, and fear and shame tactics to dissuade women facing unintended pregnancy from exercising their right to choose. The center describes itself as “an arm of the Church” whose mission is to “reach women at risk of abortion” through partnering with the Christian community to share with them “the truth and the love of Christ” so that “every unborn child in [the] community be spared from abortion.”⁸

Its services include pregnancy tests, limited ultrasound pregnancy confirmation tests, options counseling, adoption information and referrals, need assistance referrals, post abortion help services, and a mother's group. The center does not provide referrals for abortion. The Care Net Pregnancy Center of the Tanana Valley is affiliated with the national Care Net organization and the National Institute of Family and Life Advocates (NIFLA)⁹. NIFLA works to increase the number of crisis pregnancy centers across the country and to expand the services provided by CPCs by helping the organizations to establish themselves as medical facilities. Both these organizations are key leaders in the anti-choice movement.

Crisis Pregnancy Center of Anchorage and Eagle River, \$663,845 (CBAE 2005–2008) and \$352,926 (CBAE 2008–2013)

The Crisis Pregnancy Center of Anchorage and Eagle River runs the “Let’s Talk” abstinence program. A sample message to clients on the organization’s website explains that the Center “has a dedicated team of volunteers and staff who are committed to sharing God’s love...”¹⁰

The website also includes misleading and medically inaccurate information regarding pregnancy, contraception, and abortion. Under the section titled, “Am I Pregnant?,” the website answers the question, “When does pregnancy begin?” with the following response: “From the moment the sperm and egg unite, the genetic make-up of your tiny baby is complete.” Similarly, in a section on emergency contraception (sold under the brand name Plan B®, the site states, “Conception or fertilization is the term used when the sperm joins the egg. (Sperm can fertilize an egg as early as 15 minutes after intercourse.) When this happens, human life has begun... If Plan B® is taken after an egg has been fertilized it may not allow the embryo to implant in the uterus. This would be a very early abortion.”¹¹ This information is deliberately misleading. Medical science recognizes pregnancy as beginning when a fertilized egg implants into a woman’s uterus.¹² Further, if a pregnancy has already been established, emergency contraception will not end that pregnancy or harm the developing embryo.¹³

Nonetheless, the Crisis Pregnancy Center of Anchorage and Eagle River seems intent on dissuading women from using this form of birth control. The website states “You can only get pregnant on certain days of the month—around the time that you ovulate,” and goes on to say: “Unfortunately, most women looking for the morning-after pill are panicked because they think (or perceive) the clock is ticking, and as a result they don’t take the time to evaluate their situation. If you weren’t fertile when you had sex because you were nowhere near ovulation, it is senseless to take the drug.”¹⁴ While it is true that not all acts of unprotected sexual intercourse carry an equal risk of pregnancy, women’s cycles vary and many women do not know exactly when they ovulate each month. Messages such as this can only serve to discourage women from utilizing this safe and effective form of birth control thereby leading to more unintended pregnancies and perhaps more abortions.

The Crisis Pregnancy Center of Anchorage and Eagle River also provides biased information about abortion on its website. For example, the site includes suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, and “spiritual/moral consequences” as potential risks of abortion. The site also states that, “there is a spiritual side to abortion that deserves to be considered. Having an abortion may affect more than just your body and your mind—it may have an impact on your relationship with God. What is God’s desire for you in this situation? How does God see your unborn child? These are important questions to consider.”¹⁵ Such information is clearly meant to instill fear and shame in women who may be considering abortion.

The “Let’s Talk” Healthy Relationships Education Program, funded through the organization’s CBAE grant, targets young people ages 12–18. The program is “dedicated to helping teens within Alaska refrain from sexual activity until marriage.”¹⁶ Let’s Talk provides abstinence-only-until-marriage programs and presentations to public and private schools and church youth groups. The program’s three objectives are: 1) “to share a healthy relationships message with all Alaskan youth,” 2) “to recruit and assist 20 communities across Alaska to develop abstinence programs,” and 3) “to create a resource center for community abstinence programs.”

The organization also runs a community-based abstinence program, “YoungWarriors,” which is implemented in rural areas and focuses on delivering a message of abstinence to Native People of Alaska.¹⁷

The “Let’s Talk” website features commercials for teens that discuss the value of abstinence. The commercials rely on gender stereotypes that narrowly define the role of women and men. For example, in the commercial titled “Abstinence,” a female voice states, “I want to give that gift of purity to my husband to show that I’m faithful.”¹⁸ In another video commercial, “Animal or Honorable,” a male teenager says, “There’s two sides to a man. One side is the animal—nothing but selfish pleasure. You know, the kind

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that leaves women and children alone. But the other side, now that's honorable.”¹⁹ These videos rely on social stereotypes that require women to remain pure and chaste and categorize men as naturally promiscuous.

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2008

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
“Let’s Talk” Abstinence Program/Crisis Pregnancy Center of Anchorage and Eagle River 2005–2008 DUAL GRANTEE 2008–2013 www.cpcanchorage.com www.letstalkalaska.com	\$663,845 \$352,926	CBAE CBAE
Care Net Pregnancy Center of the Tanana Valley 2008–2013 www.carenetfairbanks.com	\$541,444	CBAE

Adolescent Health Contact²⁰

Stephanie Wheeler
 Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
 Division of Public Health, Section of Women’s, Children’s and Family Health
 4701 Business Park Boulevard
 Anchorage, AK 99503
 Phone: (907) 269-3461

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Alaska Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

ACLU of Alaska
P.O. Box 201844
Anchorage, AK 99520
Phone: (907) 276-2258
www.akclu.org

Alaska Alliance for Reproductive Justice
P.O. Box 232676
Anchorage, AK 99523
Phone (907) 334-3055
www.alaskaprochoice.org

Juneau Pro-Choice Coalition
P.O. Box 22860
Juneau, AK 99802
Phone: (907) 463-1548
juneauchoice.com

Planned Parenthood of Alaska
4001 Lake Otis Parkway
Anchorage, AK 99508
Phone: (907) 563-2229
www.plannedparenthoodalaska.org

Alaska Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Alaska Interior Right to Life
P.O. Box 81566
Fairbanks, AK 99708
Phone: (907) 479-LIFE
www.righttolifeinterior.com

Alaska Right to Life
3400 Spenard Road, Suite 4
Anchorage, AK 99503
Phone: (907) 276-1912
www.alaskarighttolife.org

Newspapers in Alaska²¹

Anchorage Daily News
Newsroom
P.O. Box 149001
Anchorage, AK 99514
Phone: (907) 257-4300
www.adn.com

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner
Newsroom
200 N. Cushman Street
Fairbanks, AK 99701
Phone: (907) 459-7572
www.newsminer.com

Juneau Empire
Newsroom
3100 Channel Drive
Juneau, AK 99801
Phone: (907) 586-3740
www.juneauempire.com

Ketchikan Daily News
Newsroom
501 Dock Street
P.O. Box 7900
Ketchikan, AK 99901
Phone: (907) 225-3157
www.ketchikandailynews.com

Kodiak Daily Mirror
Newsroom
1419 Selig Street
Kodiak, AK 99615
Phone: (907) 486-3227 ext. 1037
www.kodiakdailymirror.com

Peninsula Clarion
Newsroom
Kenai, AK 99611
Phone: (907) 283-7551
www.peninsulaclarion.com

¹ This refers to the federal government’s fiscal year, which begins on October 1 and ends on September 30. The fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends; for example, Fiscal Year 2008 began on October 1, 2007 and ended on September 30, 2008.

² State of Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, “School Health: Other Health Education Programs and Related Information,” 31 October 2006, accessed 26 January 2007, <<http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/schoolhealth/otherhealthprograms.html>>.

³ The CDC no longer sponsors “Programs That Work.” Although these programs were proven effective, information about them has been removed from the CDC website. For more information, contact the SIECUS Public Policy office.

⁴ State of Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, “School Health: Other Health Education Programs and Related Information.”

⁵ Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from: Danice K. Eaton, et. al., “Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2007,” Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 57.SS-4 (6 June 2008), accessed 4 June 2008, <<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>>.

⁶ Personal conversation between Stephanie Wheeler and Catherine Morrison, 18 March 2008.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ “Care Net Pregnancy Center of the Tanana Valley,” Care Net Pregnancy Center of the Tanana Valley, accessed 14 October 2008, <<http://www.carenetfairbanks.com/>>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ “About CPC: A Message to Our Clients,” Crisis Pregnancy Center – Anchorage, Alaska, accessed 4 September 2008, <http://www.cpcanchorage.com/about_cpc.html>.

¹¹ “Morning After Pill: How Does the Morning After Pill Work?” Crisis Pregnancy Center – Anchorage, Alaska, accessed 4 September 2008, <http://www.cpcanchorage.com/morning_after_pill.html>.

¹² “How Pregnancy Happens,” Planned Parenthood, accessed 24 November 2008,

<<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-topics/pregnancy/how-pregnancy-happens-4252.htm>>.

¹³ “Emergency Contraception (Morning After Pill),” Planned Parenthood, accessed 24 November 2008,

<<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-topics/emergency-contraception-morning-after-pill-4363.htm>>.

¹⁴ “Morning After Pill: Facts about the Morning After Pill,” Crisis Pregnancy Center – Anchorage, Alaska, accessed 4 September 2008, <http://www.cpcanchorage.com/morning_after_pill.html>.

¹⁵ “Considering Abortion?: Abortion Risks,” Crisis Pregnancy Center – Anchorage, Alaska, accessed 4 September 2008,

<http://www.cpcanchorage.com/considering_abortion.html>.

¹⁶ “Resources for Teens,” Let’s Talk Healthy Relationships, accessed 4 September 2008,

<http://www.letstalkalaska.com/resources/teen_resources.html>.

¹⁷ “Young Warriors,” Let’s Talk Healthy Relationships, accessed 4 September 2008,

<http://www.letstalkalaska.com/programs/commun_outreach_prog/youngwarriors.html>.

¹⁸ “Multimedia: ‘Abstinence,’” Let’s Talk Healthy Relationships, accessed 4 September 2008,

<<http://www.letstalkalaska.com/multimedia/index.html>>.

¹⁹ “Multimedia: ‘Animal or Honorable,’” Let’s Talk Healthy Relationships, accessed 4 September 2008,

<<http://www.letstalkalaska.com/multimedia/index.html>>.

²⁰ SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

²¹ This section is a list of major newspapers in your state with contact information for their newsrooms. This list is by no means exhaustive and does not contain the local level newspapers which are integral to getting your message out to your community. SIECUS strongly urges you to follow stories about the issues that concern you on the national, state, and local level by using an internet news alert service such as [Google alerts](#), becoming an avid reader of your local papers, and establishing relationships with reporters who cover your issues. For more information on how to achieve your media goals visit the [SIECUS Community Action Kit](#).