



SIECUS

State Profile

COLORADO

The Department of Public Health and Environment and community-based organizations in Colorado received \$2,138,407 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2007.¹

Colorado Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Colorado schools are not required to teach sexuality or sexually transmitted disease (STD) education. Colorado law states that districts can decide whether to teach sexuality education and may address the subject in preschool through twelfth grade. Colorado law also states that when offered, sexuality education classes must use curricula that are science-based, age-appropriate, culturally sensitive, medically accurate, and address the topics of both abstinence and contraception, including emergency contraception.

The Colorado Department of Education is charged with providing guidelines as to the length of courses, the subjects included, and the manner in which these subjects are addressed. The department also provides guidelines on teacher training in sexuality education that include information about high-risk behaviors. Under Colorado law, whenever sexuality education and/or human reproduction are taught, teachers must emphasize abstinence.

Parents or guardians must be notified if a sexuality education course is taught and given an opportunity to review the curriculum. Parents or guardians may remove their children from sexuality education or STD/HIV education classes by sending written notice to the school. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy. However, if a school receives state funding to teach sexuality education, then parents and guardians must receive written notification about the topics and materials to be presented and must give prior written approval before their child can participate in “any program discussing or teaching sexuality and human reproduction.” This is referred to as an “opt-in” policy.

See Colorado Statutes 22-25-104, 22-25-106, 22-25-110 and 25-4-1405.

Recent Legislation

Bill Requires Sex Education to be Scientifically and Medically Accurate

House Bill 1292, introduced in February 2007, requires schools that offer sexuality education to develop scientifically and medically accurate curricula which stress abstinence and also discuss the health benefits of using contraception. It applies to all Colorado district schools, charter schools, and institute schools that offer curricula on human sexuality. In addition, it allows charter schools to appeal to the State Board of Education in order to be allowed to create a narrower sexuality education curriculum. The Colorado law also includes an “opt-out” clause, allowing parents to remove their children from sexuality education classes. The Governor signed the bill into law on May 14, 2007.

Legislation Aims to Create an Opt-Out Policy in Schools

House Bill 1300, introduced in February 2007, would eliminate the requirement that school officials in Colorado receive written consent from a parent and/or guardian before his and/or her child may participate in an educational program that discusses human sexuality. School officials would still be required to provide parents and/or guardians the option to excuse a student (without penalty) from the portion of a curriculum that concerns human sexuality. This bill only applies to schools receiving funding from the state. This would constitute a move from an “opt-in policy” to an “opt-out policy.” The bill is scheduled for a second reading in spring 2007.

Events of Note

SIECUS is not aware of any recent events regarding sexuality education in Colorado.

Colorado’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note²

- In 2005, 37% of female high school students and 41% of male high school students in Colorado reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 2% of female high school students and 7% of male high school students in Colorado reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 4% of female high school students and 9% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 9% of female high school students and 14% of male high school students in Colorado reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 12% of female high school students and 17% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 29% of female high school students and 29% of male high school students in Colorado reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 35% of female high school students and 33% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 60% of females and 79% of males in Colorado reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 56% of females and 70% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 22% of females and 10% of males in Colorado reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 15% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 22% of females and 31% of males in Colorado reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 19% of females and 28% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, 85% of high school students in Colorado reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment received \$488,314 in federal Title V funding in Fiscal Year 2007. 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. In Colorado the state match is provided by local sub-grantees and event partners. The Colorado Abstinence Education Program (CAEP) oversees the program.

The CAEP's goal is to reduce teen pregnancy rates, out-of-wedlock births, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) among teens. The CAEP uses community meetings as a forum to receive feedback on the current year's programming and input for the development of future strategies.

There are four sub-grantees in Colorado: Center Consolidated Schools, FACT Foundation, Friends First, and Weld County Health Department. The sub-grantees use three curricula: *Choosing the Best*, *Friends First Quinceañera Program*, and *WAIT (Why Am I Tempted) Training*.

SIECUS reviewed two of the curricula produced by Choosing the Best, Inc.—*Choosing the Best LIFE* (for high school students) and *Choosing the Best PATH* (for middle school students). These reviews found that the curricula name numerous negative consequences of premarital sexuality activity and suggest that teens should feel guilty, embarrassed, and ashamed of sexual behavior. For example, *Choosing the Best LIFE* states that, "Relationships often lower the self-respect of both partners—one feeling used, the other feeling like the user. Emotional pain can cause a downward spiral leading to intense feelings of lack of worthlessness." *Choosing the Best PATH* says, "Sexual activity also can lead to the trashing of a person's reputation, resulting in the loss of friends."

The FACT Foundation uses Keith Deltano, a national motivational speaker, in its community outreach.³ Mr. Deltano is a Christian comedian who has given talks on abstinence-until-marriage and drug abuse around the country in middle schools and high schools. SIECUS attended one of Mr. Deltano's most popular presentations, "The New Sexual Revolution or Abstinence is Cool," and found that he uses a loud, aggressive style, reminiscent of a football coach to badger students into accepting his abstinence-only-until-marriage ideology. Deltano relies on messages of fear and shame, inaccurate and misleading information, and biased views of marriage and gender. The highlight of Deltano's performance includes an activity designed to illustrate the ineffectiveness of condoms in which he suggests that condoms fail 10% of the time and then he dangles a cinderblock over the genitals of an unsuspecting male student yelling, "Is 10 percent good enough for you?!?! Is it good enough?!?"⁴

See the CBAE and ALFA section for more information on *WAIT Training*.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding Status

In October 2007, state officials decided no longer to participate in the Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage program due to the mounting evidence that abstinence-only-until-marriage programs are ineffective in preventing sexual activity among students. This decision went into effect for Fiscal Year 2008.

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

There is one CBAE grantee in Colorado: *WAIT Training*. There are two AFLA grantees in Colorado: Colorado State University- Cooperative Extension (receives two grants), and Friends First, Inc.

WAIT Training runs several abstinence-only-until-marriage websites, including www.waittraining.org, the organization's main website; www.why-abstinence.org, a site dedicated to training and curriculum;

www.marry-well.org, a site designed to help enhance marriages throughout Colorado, and www.coloradoabstinence.org, a site specifically for citizens of Colorado who want to attend or sponsor a training.⁵ WAIT Training also maintains a separate website for its programming conducted through its CBAE grant.

On the “Why Abstinence” webpage, WAIT Training lists as one of its organizational goals, “To increase the value of marriage.”⁶ WAIT Training uses its CBAE funding to run the “Healthy Futures, Healthy Families” initiative in Colorado.⁷ This initiative uses the organization’s own fear-based, abstinence-only-until-marriage curriculum, *WAIT (Why Am I Tempted) Training*.

SIECUS reviewed *WAIT Training* and found that it contains little medical or biological information and almost no information about STDs, including HIV/AIDS. Instead, it contains information and statistics about marriage, many of which are outdated and not supported by scientific research. It also contains messages of fear and shame and biased views of gender, sexual orientation, and family type. For example, *WAIT Training* explains, “men sexually are like microwaves and women sexually are like crockpots....A woman is stimulated more by touch and romantic words. She is far more attracted by a man’s personality while a man is stimulated by sight. A man is usually less discriminating about those to whom he is physically attracted.”⁸

Friends First, Inc., which is both a Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage sub-grantee and an AFLA grantee, provides several initiatives including STARS (Students Teaching Abstinence, Relationships and Self-Control) Mentoring program, the Quinceañera program, and The Art of Loving Well. The STARS Mentoring Program is an abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula to accompany the Friends First program in rural and urban areas. The program works by pairing older students with younger ones to develop meaningful relationships. The Quinceañera Program is an abstinence-only-until-marriage program for “Hispanic girls ages 11-15 and their families.” The Art of Loving Well, a “literature-based character education curriculum for today’s teenagers.”⁹

In the “Frequently Asked Questions” of the Friends First website, fathers are advised to “give a chastity ring to their daughters to represent the gift of sexuality to be given to her future husband on her wedding day.”¹⁰ Research has found that under certain conditions virginity pledges may help some adolescents delay sexual intercourse. When they work, pledges help this select group of adolescents delay the onset of sexual intercourse for an average of 18 months—far short of marriage. More importantly, the studies also found that those young people who took a pledge were one-third less likely to use contraception when they did become sexually active than their peers who had not pledged. These teens are therefore more vulnerable to the risks of unprotected sexual activity such as unintended pregnancy and STDs, including HIV/AIDS. Further research has confirmed that although some students who take pledges delay intercourse, ultimately they are equally as likely to contract an STD as their non-pledging peers. The study also found that STD rates were higher in communities where a significant proportion (over 20%) of the young people had taken virginity pledges.¹¹

C O L O R A D O

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2007

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment www.cdphe.state.co.us	\$488,314 federal	Title V
Center Consolidated Schools www.center.k12.co.us	\$39,500	Title V sub-grantee
FACT Foundation www.thefactfoundation.org	\$45,000	Title V sub-grantee
Friends First, Inc. DUAL GRANTEE 2007–2011 www.friendsfirst.org	\$65,000 \$414,800	Title V sub-grantee AFLA
Weld County Health Department www.co.weld.co.us/departments/health/publichealth.html	\$65,000	Title V sub-grantee
WAIT Training 2006–2011 www.waittraining.org www.communitybasedabstinenceeducation.com	\$599,450	CBAE

C O L O R A D O

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Colorado State University-Cooperative Extension	\$225,000	AFLA
2002–2007	\$410,843	AFLA
DUAL GRANTEE		
2007–2011		
www.welcome.colostate.edu		

Adolescent Health Contact¹²

Carla Adams
 Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
 4300 Cherry Creek Dr. South
 Denver, CO 80246
 Phone: (303) 692-2376

Colorado Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

ACLU of Colorado
 400 Corona St.
 Denver, CO 80218
 Phone: (303) 777-5482
www.aclu-co.org

Colorado AIDS Project
 2490 West 26th Ave.
 Denver, CO 80211
 Phone: (303) 837-0166
www.coloradoaidsproject.org

Colorado Organization on
 Adolescent, Pregnancy, Parenting,
 and Prevention
 2785 North Speer Blvd., Suite 348
 Denver, CO 80211
 Phone: (303) 225-8870
www.coapp.org

Colorado Religious Coalition for
 Reproductive Choice
 P.O. Box 370414
 Denver, CO 80237
 Phone: (303) 756-9996
www.corcrc.org

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and
 Transgender Community Center
 of Colorado
 1050 Broadway
 Denver, CO 80203
 Phone: (303) 733-7743
www.glbtcOLORADO.org

NARAL Pro-Choice Colorado
 1905 Sherman St., Suite 800
 Denver, CO 80203
 Phone: (303) 394-1973
www.prochoicecolorado.org

COLORADO

Planned Parenthood of the Rocky
Mountains
950 Broadway
Denver, CO 80203
Phone: (303) 321-PLAN
www.pprm.org

Colorado Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Colorado Right to Life Committee
1535 Grant Street, #303
Denver, CO 80203
Phone: (303) 753-9394
www.coloradorighttolife.org

Independence Institute
13952 Denver West Pkwy., Suite 400
Golden, CO 80401
Phone: (303) 279-6536
www.i2i.org

Rocky Mountain Family Council
8704 Yates Dr., Suite 205
Westminster, CO 80030
Phone: (303) 292-1800
www.rmfc.org

Youth for Christ
7670 South Vaughn Court
Englewood, CO 80112
Phone: (303) 843-9000
www.yfc.net

Newspapers in Colorado¹³

Daily Camera
Newsroom
1048 Pearl St.
Boulder, CO 80302
Phone: (303) 473-1365
www.dailycamera.com

Daily Sentinel
Newsroom
734 S. 7th St.
Grand Junction, CO 81501
Phone: (970) 256-4229
www.gjsentinel.com

Denver Post
Newsroom
1560 Broadway
Denver, CO 80202
Phone: (303) 954-1201
www.denverpost.com

Fort Collins Coloradoan
Newsroom
1300 Riverside Ave.
Fort Collins, CO 80524
Phone: (970) 493-6397
www.coloradoan.com

The Gazette
Newsroom
30 S. Prospect St.
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
Phone: (719) 633-5511
www.gazette.com

Pueblo Chieftain
Newsroom
825 W. 6th St.
Pueblo, CO 81003
Phone: (719) 544-5897
www.chieftain.com

COLORADO

Rocky Mountain News
Newsroom
400 W. Colfax Ave.
Denver, CO 80204
Phone: (303) 954-5201
www.rockymountainnews.com

¹ This refers to the fiscal year for the federal government 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 2007 begins on October 1, 2006 and ends on September 30, 2007.

² Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from: Danice K. Eaton, et al., "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2005," *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 55, no. SS-5 (9 June 2006): 1-108, accessed 26 January 2007, <<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>>. Note: Colorado did not participate in the 2007 YRBSS.

³ "Our Mission," The Fact Foundation, (2008), accessed 17 March 2008, <<http://www.thefactfoundation.org/>>.

⁴ SIECUS' review is based an hour long version of "The New Sexual Revolution" which SIECUS staff attended at a public high school in Loudoun County, Virginia in February 2007 as well as information from Deltano's website and newspaper articles about his other appearances.

⁵ "Welcome!" WAIT Training, accessed 12 March 2008, <<http://www.waittraining.org/index.asp>>.

⁶ "About Us," WAIT Training, accessed 14 May 2008, http://www.waittraining.com/about_building_healthy_marriage_relationships_sexual_abstinence_education.asp.

⁷ "Overviews," WAIT Training: A Community Based Abstinence Education Program, accessed 12 March 2008, <http://www.communitybasedabstinenceeducation.com/overviews_colorado_community_based_abstinence_education.asp>.

⁸ Joneen Krauth-Mackenzie, *WAIT (Why Am I Tempted) Training, Second Edition* (Greenwood Village, CO: WAIT Training, undated). For more information, see SIECUS' review of *WAIT Training* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.

⁹ "Programs: STARS Mentoring Program," Friends First, accessed 12 March 2008, <<http://www.friendsfirst.org/starsmentoring.asp>>; "Programs: The Quinceañera Program," Friends First, accessed 12 March 2008, <<http://www.friendsfirst.org/quinceanera.asp>>; "Programs: The Art of Loving Well," Friends First, accessed 12 March 2008, <<http://www.friendsfirst.org/artoflovingwell.asp>>.

¹⁰ "FAQ's," Friends First, accessed 12 March 2008, <<http://www.friendsfirst.org/faqs.asp>>.

¹¹ Peter Bearman and Hannah Brückner "Promising the Future: Virginity Pledges and the Transition to First Intercourse." *American Journal of Sociology* 106.4 (2001): 859-912.; Peter Bearman and Hannah Brückner, "After the promise: The STD consequences of adolescent virginity pledges," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 36.4 (2005): 271-278.

¹² SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

¹³ This section is a list of major newspapers in your state with contact information for their newsrooms. This list is by no means inclusive 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](#).