



GEORGIA

Georgia received \$7,783,596 in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2004.¹

Georgia Sexuality Education Law

Since 1989, schools in Georgia have been required to teach sexuality education and sexually transmitted disease (STD)/HIV-prevention education. Local school boards are largely responsible for deciding which subjects this education must cover and the grade level in which topics are introduced. However, certain subjects are mandated by state law including abstinence, community values, the legal consequences of pregnancy, STDs, HIV/AIDS, and conception. No discussion of condoms or other forms of contraception is required. Such discussion is, however, allowed.

If a local school board does not have sexuality and AIDS education, state funds are withheld until a program is implemented.

Parents may send written notice that they do not want their child to attend all or part of sexuality and/or HIV/AIDS education. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, 20-2-143.

Recent Legislation

SIECUS is not aware of any recent legislation related to sexuality education in Georgia.

Events of Note

*Bruce Cook Appointed Chairman of the Georgia Department of Human Resources Board; Works to Cut Teen Pregnancy Prevention and Family Planning Services
November 2003*

Bruce Cook, the founder and CEO of Choosing the Best, Inc., an abstinence-only curricula provider, was appointed the new chairman of the Georgia Board of Human Resources in September 2003. The board oversees and sets policy for the Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR). Some of the projects that the Board oversees include teen pregnancy prevention and family planning services.

Through his new position, Cook is working to cut family planning and teen pregnancy prevention programs. In October, the board of human resources approved budgets for Fiscal Years 2004 and 2005 that cut approximately \$4.7 million from the Adolescent Health and Youth Development Program (AYHD), including teen pregnancy prevention. As a result of the cuts, the 39 Teen Centers around the state will be closed. These centers provide a number of important services to young people, including the distribution of contraception and

information on preventing pregnancy. Under the new plan, five of these centers would be reopened as part of a pilot program to explore new methods of pregnancy prevention, which critics speculate may have an abstinence-only focus. Family planning services are also cut by \$1.2 million in the proposed budget. This proposed cut will lead to approximately 64,000 women in Georgia losing access to family planning services.²

Governor Sonny Perdue (R) ordered cuts across-the-board of 2.5 percent to the current budget and 5 % to the budget for the next fiscal year. The preventive programs were cut because, according to the board, the programs lacked “measurable results.”³ However, critics argue that the success of these programs is already evident. According to the Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (G-CAPP), teen pregnancy rates in counties with an AYHD program have dropped more sharply than in others since 1997, and counties with a Teen Center have made the most progress.⁴

In the DHR’s original budget proposal released in September 2003, funding for the Teen Centers was preserved. However, according to Ann Mintz, G-CAPP’s Policy Director, “they reconsidered that budget after the governor appointed Bruce Cook as the new DHR board director.”⁵ Critics speculate that these proposed cuts are partly due to Cook’s strong abstinence-only philosophy. Choosing the Best, Inc. produces abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula, including *Choosing the Best LIFE*, *Choosing the Best PATH*, and *Choosing the Best WAY* for high school, upper middle school, and lower middle school students, respectively. SIECUS’ review of these curricula found that they rely on fear and shame to influence young people’s behavior, suggest that premarital sexual activity is inevitably harmful, and discourage the use of condoms and other contraceptives by providing misleading information about their failure rates. These curricula are also written exclusively for heterosexual students, rely on gender stereotypes, and include biased information about abortion.

The Board of Human Resources held transitional meetings throughout Georgia in November and December of 2003 to get the public’s perspective. Bruce Cook explained, “we want to hear from the people served by the agency, and we want to tap the expertise of advocates statewide.”⁶

One school principal responded to the proposed cuts to the adolescent health and youth development program saying, “the youth development money is used by several United Way agencies to provide social services not just at our school, but at high schools throughout the county. Cutting the funding would be a huge loss to our community.”⁷

Greg Bautista, director of El Puente, the Gainesville G-CAPP affiliate, remarked that, “the system apparently is working. Rates are going down....Cutting the money is a step in the wrong direction.”⁸

*Macon, Georgia Mayor Calls for Sex Education
September 2003; Macon, GA*

In September 2003, after returning from a trip to Africa, Macon Mayor Jack Ellis called for better sexuality education and HIV/AIDS-prevention programs that include condom distribution in public schools.⁹

Georgia currently prohibits the distribution of condoms or other contraceptives on public school property.

Georgia's Youth: Statistical Information of Note

- In 2003, 94% of high school students in Georgia reported having been taught about HIV/AIDS in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.¹⁰
- In 2000, Georgia's abortion rate was 18 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.¹¹
- In 2002, Georgia's birth rate was 56 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen birth rate of 43 per 1,000 nationwide.¹²

*DeKalb County, Georgia*¹³

- In 2003, 45% of female high school students and 61% of male high school students in DeKalb County reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 45% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, 7% of female high school students and 23% of male high school students in DeKalb County 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 2003, 13% of female high school students and 29% of male high school students in DeKalb County reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 11% of female high school students and 18% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, 32% of female high school students and 38% of male high school students in DeKalb County reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 35% of females and 34% of males nationwide.
- In 2003, among those high school students in DeKalb County who reported being currently sexually active, 14% of females and 20% of males reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 30% of males nationwide.
- In 2003, among those high school students in DeKalb County who reported being currently sexually active, 65% of females and 79% of males reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 57% of females and 69% of males nationwide.
- In 2003, among those high school students in DeKalb County who reported being currently sexually active, 9% of females and 8% of males reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 13% of males nationwide.

- In 2003, 6% of female high school students and 5% of male high school students in DeKalb County reported ever having been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant compared to 5% of female high school students and 4% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, 93% of high school students in DeKalb County reported having been taught about HIV/AIDS in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

Georgia received \$1,450,083 in federal funding for Title V programs in Fiscal Year 2004. 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 can be provided in part or in full by local groups. In Georgia, \$272,156 comes from state funds and the rest is provided by Title V sub-grantees.

Title V funds are received by the Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Public Health, Office of Adolescent Health and Youth Development (AHYD). AHYD is primarily responsible for running a public awareness initiative and evaluation as well as for providing technical assistance. The media campaigns, entitled *Wait While You Date* and *You Are Worth the Wait*, began in 2000 and receive \$385,196. The campaigns focus on males and females ages 10 and older.

AHYD gives the remainder of the funding to the Children and Youth Coordinating Council (CYCC), which distributes the money to community-based groups. Currently, 55 groups receive this funding with grants that range from \$7,000 to just over \$100,000. The programs focus on at-risk males and females ages 10 to 19. Grantees include youth development organizations, county social service agencies, school districts and school boards, and crisis pregnancy centers. (A full list of grantees was not available.)

One sub-grantee, the Crisis Pregnancy Center of Coastal Georgia, runs the *BRAVEheart Teen Initiative* which is described on their website as “a non-profit Christian organization that promotes an abstinent lifestyle to reduce the risks of unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and emotional trauma.” The website also states that the Crisis Pregnancy Center of Coastal Georgia promotes abstinence-only-until-marriage because “it is in God’s plan to stay pure until marriage.” It conveys this message through teen drama presentations, peer mentoring, school clubs, and media campaigns.

Grantees are required to evaluate their own programs and can choose to join in the larger, state-run evaluation. The state-run evaluation is being conducted by researchers at the University of Nebraska. AHYD will be evaluating both the project process and the outcomes of the participating youth. The outcome component will include the rates of sexual intercourse, pregnancy rates, STD rates, and attitudes about abstinence among participants.

Special Projects of Regional and National Significance—Community Based Abstinence Education (SPRANS—CBAE)¹⁴ and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees

There are seven SPRANS—CBAE grantees in Georgia: Choosing the Best Inc., Augusta-Richmond County Community Partnership for Children and Families, East Metro Health District, Communities in Schools in Georgia, Wholistic Stress Control Institute, Carrollton Housing Authority, and Friends of Cobb County Community Children and Youth. There are two AFLA grantees in Georgia: Wheeler County Board of Education and Morehouse School of Medicine.

SIECUS has reviewed two of the curricula created by Choosing the Best—*Choosing the Best LIFE and Choosing the Best PATH*. SIECUS found that *Choosing the Best LIFE* names numerous physical and psychological consequences of premarital sexual activity, suggests that sexually active teens will never have a happy future, and implies that only teens with low self-esteem and poor judgment become sexually active. For example, *Choosing the Best LIFE* states, “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.”¹⁵

SIECUS found that *Choosing the Best PATH* provides endless information on the negative consequences of premarital sexual activity and utilizes a variety of tactics to suggest that teens should feel guilty, embarrassed, and ashamed of sexual behavior. For example, *Choosing the Best PATH* states, “couples who use condoms for birth control experience a first-year failure rate of about 15 % in preventing pregnancies. This means that over a period of five years, there could be a 50% chance or higher of getting pregnant with condoms used as the birth control method.”¹⁶ “A Mint for Marriage,” exercise from *Choosing the Best PATH*, clearly relies on shame:

A peppermint patty is unwrapped and passed around the class. Once returned, the teacher asks if a student would like to eat it. The teacher is instructed to ask, “why is this patty no longer appealing?” The answer they give is “no one wants food that has been passed around. Neither would you want your future husband or wife to have been passed around.”¹⁷

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2004

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS-CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Georgia Department of Human Resources http://health.state.ga.us/programs/adolescent/index.shtml	\$1,450,083 federal \$272,156 state	Title V
A Friend’s House, Inc.	\$7,358	Title V sub-grantee
Brantley County Dept. of Family and Children Services http://members.surfsouth.com/~dfcs/Brantley.html	\$86,057	Title V sub-grantee

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS-CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Carrollton Housing Authority DUAL GRANTEE 2002-2005 http://carrolltonhousingath.tri pod.com/housing/	\$22,500 \$345,308	Title V sub-grantee SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)
Catoosa Board of Education www.catoosa.k12.ga.us	\$61,450	Title V sub-grantee
Chattahoochee County Board of Education www.chattahoochee.k12.ga.us	\$30,900	Title V sub-grantee
City Schools of Decatur www.decaturn-city.k12.ga.us	\$56,200	Title V sub-grantee
Coffee County Board of Education	\$21,066	Title V sub-grantee
Crisis Pregnancy Center of Coastal Georgia, Inc. www.cpccoastalga.org www.braveheart.org	\$70,582	Title V sub-grantee
Early County Board of Education	\$84,000	Title V sub-grantee
Floyd Health Care Foundation www.floydmed.org	\$25,745	Title V sub-grantee
Forsyth County School System www.forsyth.k12.ga.us	\$20,334	Title V sub-grantee

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS-CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Gilmer County Board of Education	\$26,020	Title V sub-grantee
GSU Research Foundation, Inc. www.gsu.edu/%7Ewwwosp/gsurf/index.htm	\$75,000	Title V sub-grantee
Housing Authority of the City of Jesup	\$36,549	Title V sub-grantee
Jenkins County Dept. of Family and Children Services	\$20,000	Title V sub-grantee
Johnson County Board of Education	\$119,077	Title V sub-grantee
Lamar County School System www.lamar.k12.ga.us	\$15,970	Title V sub-grantee
Macon-Bibb County Health Department	\$41,500	Title V sub-grantee
McIntosh Trail MH/MR/SA Community Service Board	\$20,000	Title V sub-grantee
Metro Atlanta Youth for Christ, Inc. DUAL GRANTEE 2003-2006	\$91,500 \$363,936	Title V sub-grantee SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)
Mitchell County Board of Education	\$61,689	Title V sub-grantee
Morgan County Board of Education	\$20,000	Title V sub-grantee
Newton County Board of Commissioners	\$72,302	Title V sub-grantee

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS-CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Pickens County Board of Education	\$9,600	Title V sub-grantee
Pierce County Board of Education	\$18,183	Title V sub-grantee
Taylor County Board of Education	\$22,299	Title V sub-grantee
The Family Y	\$17,500	Title V sub-grantee
Thomaston-Upson School System www.upson.k12.ga.us	\$43,449	Title V sub-grantee
Tifton Housing Authority	\$93,046	Title V sub-grantee
Toccoa Life, Inc.	\$23,020	Title V sub-grantee
Toombs County Board of Commissioners	\$74,258	Title V sub-grantee
Twiggs County Board of Education	\$80,300	Title V sub-grantee
Union Mission, Inc. www.unionmission.org	\$31,550	Title V sub-grantee
Valdosta City Schools http://wildcat.gocats.org	\$25,000	Title V sub-grantee
Washington-Wilkes Parks and Recreation Commission	\$53,715	Title V sub-grantee

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS-CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Wheeler County Board of Education DUAL GRANTEE 2004-2005 www.wheelercountyschools.org/boe.htm	\$119,324 \$225,000	Title V sub-grantee AFLA
Wholistic Stress Control Institute, Inc. DUAL GRANTEE 2002-2005 www.wholistic1.com	\$112,500 \$316,487	Title V sub-grantee SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)
YWCA of Greater Atlanta, Inc. 2003-2004 www.ywcaatlanta.org	\$87,444	Title V sub-grantee
Choosing the Best, Inc. 2001-2004 DUAL GRANTEE 2004-2007 www.choosingthebest.org	\$593,422 \$799,910	SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant) SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS-CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Communities in Schools in Georgia 2002-2005 www.cisga.org	\$697,246	SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)
East Central Georgia Consortium	\$799,814	SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)
Friends of Cobb County Community Children and Youth 2002-2005	\$304,061	SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)
Rockdale Hospital and Health System 2003-2006	\$177,809	SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)
Medical College of Georgia 2003-2006	\$436,000	SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)
Emory University 2004-2005	\$299,520	AFLA
Heritage Community Services 2004-2005 DUAL GRANTEE 2004-2005	\$200,000 \$300,000	AFLA AFLA

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS-CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Morehouse School of Medicine 2004-2005	\$250,000	AFLA
Wheeler County Board of Education 2004-2005 www.wheelercountyschools.org	\$225,000	AFLA

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

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 Children & Youth Coordinating Council
 10 Park Pl., Suite 410
 Atlanta, GA 30303
 Phone: (404) 657-2868

Georgia Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Emory University School of Medicine
 Regional Training Center
 United Way Building
 100 Edgewood Ave., NE, Suite 802
 Atlanta, GA 30303
 Phone: (404) 523-1996
www.med.emory.edu/rtc

Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy
 Prevention (G-CAPP)
 100 Auburn Ave., Suite 200
 Atlanta, GA 30303
 Phone: (404) 524-2277
www.gcapp.org

Planned Parenthood of Georgia
 100 Edgewood Ave., Suite 1604
 Atlanta, GA 30303
 Phone: (404) 688-9300
www.ppga.org

Georgia Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Christian Coalition of Georgia
8975 Roswell Rd.
Atlanta, GA 30350
Phone: (770) 998-3541
www.gachristiancoalition.org

Georgia Family Council
5550 Triangle Pkwy., Suite 116
Norcross, GA 30092
Phone: (770) 242-0001
www.georgiafamily.org

Georgia Right to Life
PO Box 927
Lawrenceville, GA 30046
Phone: (770) 339-6880
www.grtl.org

Teen Advisors – A Peer Counseling Group
that Works
PO Box 6468
Columbus, GA 31917
www.teenadvisors.org

Newspapers in Georgia

Atlanta Journal-Constitution
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The Macon Telegraph
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Savannah Morning News
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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 2004 begins on October 1, 2003 and ends on September 30, 2004.

² Planned Parenthood of Georgia Action Alert, "What's At Stake! Georgia Budget Cuts," accessed online November 2003 <<http://www.ppaction.org/campaign/gabudget2003/explanation>>.

"Our Opinions: State Can't Afford to Cut Family Planning Programs," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* (GA), 23 October 2003.

³ "Our Opinions: State Can't Afford to Cut Family Planning Programs."

⁴ Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention, "Action Alert: Contact Governor Perdue and Youth State Legislators - Teen Centers Slated For Closure."

⁵ D. Gilbert, "Pregnancy Prevention May Be Cut: Teen Programs Across Georgia Could Be Closed," *Gainseville Times* (GA), 31 October 2003.

⁶ H. Franklin, "DHR Board Will Meet Here, Albany," *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer* (GA), 13 November 2003.

⁷ D. Gilbert, "Pregnancy Prevention May Be Cut: Teen Programs Across Georgia Could Be Closed."

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Gray Beverley, "Mayor: Provide condoms to teens," *The Macon Telegraph*, 11 September 2003, accessed 28 January 2005, <<http://www.macon.com/mld/macon/news/6742011.htm>>.

¹⁰ Jo Anne Grunbaum, et. al., "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2003," *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 53.SS-2 (21 May 2004): 1-95, accessed 28 January 2005, <<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/yrbs/>>.

¹¹ *U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information* (New York: Alan Guttmacher Institute, February, 2004), accessed 28 January 2005, <www.guttmacher.org>.

¹² *National Vital Statistics Reports 52.10* (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2003), 48, accessed 4 February 2005, <<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/births.htm#stat%20tables>>.

¹³ Jo Anne Grunbaum, et. al., "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2003," *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 53.SS-2, (21 May 2004): 1-95, accessed 28 January 2005, <<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/yrbs/>>. Georgia did not participate in the 2003 YRBS, however, DeKalb County (including Atlanta) did.

¹⁴ In FY 2004 SPRANS–CBAE was administered within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau. In FY 2005 this funding stream was moved to HHS' Administration for Children and Families and is now referred to simply as Community Based Abstinence Education (CBAE).

¹⁵ Bruce Cook, *Choosing the Best LIFE-Student Workbook* (Marietta, GA: Choosing the Best Inc., 2000), 9.

¹⁶ Bruce Cook, *Choosing the Best PATH-Leader Guide* (Marietta, GA: Choosing the Best Inc., 2000), 18.

¹⁷ *Choosing the Best PATH-Leader Guide*, 25.