

SIECUS PUBLIC POLICY OFFICE

STATE PROFILE

IOWA

Iowa received \$318,198 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2006.

Iowa Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Iowa mandates that health education be taught in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Iowa law details what must be included in health education by grade. In first through sixth grade, "the health curriculum shall include the characteristics of communicable diseases including acquired immune deficiency syndrome [AIDS]." In seventh and eighth grade, health education must "include the characteristics of sexually transmitted disease and acquired immune deficiency syndrome." In ninth through twelfth grade (students must take health education at least once during these four grades), health education must include information on "the prevention and control of disease, including sexually transmitted diseases [STDs] and acquired immune deficiency syndrome." Iowa law also allows school districts to teach age-appropriate, science-based, comprehensive sexuality education as part of the health curriculum.

Parents or guardians may remove their children from any part of health education courses if the course conflicts with the student's religious beliefs. This is referred to as an "opt-out" policy.

See Iowa Code 279.50, 256.11, m and Iowa Administrative Code 281-12.5.

Recent Legislation

Legislation Expands Civil Rights to LGBTO Individuals

Senate Bill 427, introduced in March 2007, would prohibit discriminatory employment, public accommodation, housing, education, and credit practices based upon a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. However, bona fide religious institutions will be allowed to impose certain qualifications based on sexual orientation or gender identity if related to a bona fide religious purpose. This bill passed in both the Senate and the House and was sent to Governor Chet Culver who is expected to sign the bill.

Legislation Expands Health Education for K-12 to Include Comprehensive Sexual Health Education

House Study Bill 87 and Senate File 43, introduced in January 2007, would amend state law to allow for school districts and non-public schools to provide age-appropriate, science-based, comprehensive sexual health education as part of the health, human growth and development, and family education curricula taught in kindergarten through grade 12. In addition, these bills require students enrolled in a school district to receive comprehensive sexual health education unless a parent or guardian chooses to excuse him/her from instruction. This is referred to as an "opt-out" policy. If a school district or non-public school decides not to provide comprehensive sexual health education, parents or guardians must be made aware that sexual health instruction is not being offered to students even though it has been authorized by

the state. The bill passed in both the Senate and the House, and was signed into law by Governor Chet Culver.

Events of Note

A High School Reacts to High Pregnancy Rates June 2006; Charles City, IA

In response to the rising rates of teenage pregnancy, Charles City High School has implemented a parenting course designed to prepare pregnant students for motherhood. Whereas other schools in the state saw their pregnancy rates drop, the Charles City pregnancy rate grew to approximately 5.7 percent of female high school students.

The curriculum includes information about child development and family financial planning. In its first year, nine students participated in the class, which received positive feedback.

The county's sexuality education begins in the fifth grade with discussion of pregnancy prevention and human development. The school district had previously invited staff from abstinence-only-until-marriage programs to speak to students, but funding for this has been cut. A spokeswoman from the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Center suggested that contraception education is a necessary tool for teenagers and their families: "One thing that often helps is if a community wants its kids to be aware of birth control options."

Students Ask for More Accurate Sexuality Education February 2006; Des Moines, IA

Students from school districts around Iowa, concerned about the lack of accurate sexual health information presented in their classrooms, urged state legislators to consider implementing a science-based sexuality education curriculum for all schools.

The students received assistance from FutureNet, an Iowa-based organization that advances sexual health, to proceed with the initiative after several students complained of the inaccuracies they had learned in school. One student from Waterloo said that her teacher claimed that 99 percent of all high school girls who are sexually active will become pregnant, a statistic that is incorrect.³

Although Iowa mandates that reproductive health be discussed in middle school and high school, there are currently no curriculum guidelines.

Despite Parents' Objections, Books Dealing with Homosexuality Will Remain October 2004; Solon, IA

A middle school teacher in Solon, IA, came under fire from a group of parents demanding that she stop using stories with gay, lesbian, or transgender characters in her classroom. Students in the eighth-grade language arts class read two short stories: "Am I Blue?," about a boy who is confused about his sexual orientation, and "In the Time I Get," about a man who befriends a young man dying of AIDS. The teacher explained that both books are intended to promote tolerance and teach respect for all people.

Seven parents filed complaints; however, only one of them had a child in the class. The parents argued that the stories had no instructional value and were about controversial issues that should be left up to families to discuss. One father wrote, "The material directly contradicts and undermines the beliefs and teachings of our faith. It introduces a very adult and mature subject to an inappropriately young audience. It is likely to introduce sexual confusion to a group of children who are just becoming sexually aware."

The teacher argued that the material has been used on and off for the past five years and that parents have the option of excusing their children from reading the stories. The teacher explained, "I'm trying to

teach tolerance and respect for all people. And I can't do that and ignore a whole group of people. Furthermore, I wouldn't present a curriculum that ignored women or African-Americans or Hispanics. How can I possible teach my students to embrace diversity if I systematically exclude an entire group from my literature?"

A meeting was held in late October 2004 at which parents presented their complaints to a nine-member material reconsideration committee. Over 100 people, mostly parents, attended the meeting. One parent accused the district of being "disrespectful" and criticized administrators for not having told parents that the stories would be used. He said the materials promote a "gay agenda" and advocate promiscuity and gay fantasies. Another parent suggested the school hire a new teacher.

Many people, however, spoke in support of the teacher, including both former and current students who wore rainbow buttons that read "Stop Bullying." Some said that the material had spurred important discussions at home and in the classroom. One alum remarked, "It seems Solon still has an atmosphere of hostility toward gay people." The committee chairwoman discussed the speakers and said, "the students who spoke requested respect for their innate intelligence to be able to deal with controversial material in a mature manner. What struck me most was their repeated admonition, 'Do not underestimate our intelligence." She went on to say, "I hope that the teachers in the Solon school district continue to stretch our children, and not underestimate their intelligence."

Eight of the nine committee members voted to keep the material in the eighth grade curriculum. All nine members recommended instituting a policy to inform parents of controversial materials before the school year. Several parents have filed an appeal.

School District in Iowa Approves Sexual Orientation Policy Despite Objection September 2004; Clinton, IA

The Clinton, IA school board voted to adopt an equal access to education policy, despite one school board member's objection to the policy's inclusion of "sexual orientation." According to the school board president, the policy change was recommended by the Iowa Board of Education "to promote a safe school environment free of discriminatory and harassment practices." The school policy had last been updated in 1997 and since then legal changes require public school districts to protect students of all backgrounds (including gay and lesbian students) from harassment.

The school board member disagreed with the proposal to add "sexual orientation" to the policy and read a statement during a prior board meeting announcing that his "conservative and moral values are in conflict with this policy amendment." He said that the change would help bring, "[w]idespread acceptance–legitimization—of sexual orientation as a unique and protected class.... Anything that smoothes the path to public acceptance, legitimization and eventual legalization is morally wrong. I also believe that most religions represented in our community believe and teach that gay and lesbian sexual activity is morally wrong, and therefore the majority of our constituents will agree with me on this issue." ¹²

The school superintendent supported the proposal and said the issue really "comes down to what is right for kids," which he said is making school a safe environment. He said, "It's really about sending a message to all kids, regardless of who they are, that you can come here and should expect a safe environment, regardless of who you are, what you think, how you feel."

Iowa's Youth: Statistical Information of Note¹⁴

➤ In 2005, 44% of female high school students and 43% of male high school students in Iowa reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.

- ➤ In 2005, 3% of female high school students and 5% of male high school students in Iowa 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, 12% of female high school students and 14% of male high school students in Iowa 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, 35% of female high school students and 31% of male high school students in Iowa 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 64% of males in Iowa 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, 32% of females and 28% of males in Iowa 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, 18% of females and 28% of males in Iowa 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, 86% of high school students in Iowa reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.
- ➤ In 2000, Iowa's abortion rate was 12 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.¹⁵
- ➤ In 2002, women ages 15–19 accounted for 19% of the 6,230 total abortions performed in Iowa. 16
- ➤ In 2004, Iowa's birth rate was 32 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen birth rate of 41 per 1,000 nationwide.¹⁷

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

Iowa received \$318,198 in federal Title V funding in Fiscal Year 2006. 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 Iowa, the sub-grantees go beyond the federal requirement by providing a one-to-one match. In addition, the Iowa Department of Public Health contracts with a production company for its state-wide media campaign and this production company provides a portion of the state match through additional in-kind services.

Iowa's state-wide media campaign uses the logo *I Am*, which stands for "Iowa's Abstinence Mission." Sub-grantees use the logo on posters and billboards locally. The Iowa Department of Public Health also conducts outreach at all high-school state championship sporting events as part of the *I Am* campaign.

The overall goal of Iowa's initiative is to increase the number of Iowa youth who make the choice to abstain from premarital sexual activity. The initiative also seeks to:

- enhance the infrastructure for abstinence-only education by implementing four strategies to support community-based projects for adolescents ages 12-18;
- > expand community-based abstinence-only education programs to 85 additional communities; and
- strengthen and sustain community level integration and/or coalition building in each of three project sites. 18

There are 9 sub-grantees in Iowa: Allen Memorial Hospital (Women's Health Department); Bethany Christian Services; Community Opportunities, Inc.; the Crittenton Center; Hillcrest Family Services; North Iowa Community Action Organization; University of Iowa; Webster County Health Department; and Young Parents Network. The sub-grantees use a variety of abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula, including: Abstinence: Pick and Choose; A.C. Green's Game Plan; Aspire; Bring It On Home; the Choosing the Best series; Contraception and Teens; Girl Talk, Guy Talk; It Takes Two: Pregnancy Prevention Programming; No Apologies. The Truth About Life, Love and Sex, Parents and Kids Can Talk; Navigator; RSVP: Responsible Social Value Program; Sex Can Wait; Wise Guys: Male Responsibility Curriculum; Worth The Wait; and Why kNOw. Subgrantees also use the videos: Mike Long's Everyone Is Not Doing It and Focus on the Family's Sex, Lies, and Truth.

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 (sic)." *Choosing the Best PATH* says, "Sexual activity also can lead to the trashing of a person's reputation, resulting in the loss of friends." ¹⁹

SIECUS reviewed *Game Plan* and found that, in order to convince high school students to remain abstinent until marriage, the curriculum relies on messages of fear and shame, inaccurate and misleading information, and biased views of marriage, sexual orientation, and family structure. In addition, *Game Plan* fails to provide important information on sexual health, including how students can seek testing and treatment if they suspect they may have an STD. Finally, the format and underlying biases of the curriculum do not allow for cultural, community, and individual values, and discourage critical thinking and discussions of alternate points of view in the classroom. For example, *Game Plan* states that "even if you've been sexually active, it's never too late to say no. You can't go back, but you can go forward. You might feel guilty or untrustworthy, but you can start over again."²⁰

SIECUS reviewed *Worth the Wait* and found that it covers some important topics related to sexuality such as puberty, anatomy, and sexual abuse, and that the curriculum is based on reliable sources of data. Despite these strengths, *Worth the Wait* relies on messages of fear, discourages contraceptive use, and promotes biased views of gender, marriage, and pregnancy options. For example, the curriculum claims that "teenage sexual activity can create a multitude of medical, legal, and economic problems not only for the individuals having sex but for society as a whole."

SIECUS reviewed *Why kNOw* and found that it offers limited information about important topics in human sexuality such as puberty, anatomy, and human reproduction, and no information about sexual orientation and gender identity. The information that is included is outdated, inaccurate, and misleading. In addition, *Why kNOw* relies on negative messages, distorts information, and presents biased views of gender, marriage, family structure, sexual orientation, and pregnancy options. For example, the curriculum tells students that the tradition of lifting the bride's veil during a wedding shows that "the groom [is] the only man allowed to uncover the bride," and demonstrates "her respect for him by illustrating that she [has] not allowed any other man to lay claim to her."²²

One sub-grantee, Bethany Christian Services of Northwest Iowa, through its Teen Legacy Program which also operates in Michigan, South Dakota, and Wisconsin, reports teaching abstinence-only-until-marriage in 17 counties of northwest Iowa: "Today we serve over 40 schools and approximately 2500 students a year!" Headquartered in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Bethany Christian Services describes itself as, "a not-for-profit, pro-life, Christian adoption and family services agency." Its mission statement announces that "Bethany Christian Services manifests the love and compassion of Jesus Christ by protecting and enhancing the lives of children and families through quality social services." ²⁴

Title V Evaluation

The University of Iowa is currently evaluating Iowa's Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage programs on a yearly basis. The evaluation, called *Evaluation of Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Education in Iowa*, provides the results of the pre- and post- tests administered in classrooms. The results are used to inform subgrantees of ways they can better implement their programs. No results from the *Evaluation of Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Education in Iowa* have been made public.

Separately, the Iowa Department of Public Health evaluated its Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage programs during the 2002–2003 academic year. The programs targeted young people ages 10–17 and used multiple curricula that included *Choosing the Best* and *A.C. Green's Game Plan*.

Iowa's review involved pre- and post-test surveys of students in abstinence-only-until-marriage programs and data from a comparison group of 4,954 students who participated in comprehensive sexuality education programs. Students in the abstinence-only programs were slightly more likely to feel strongly about postponing sex; however, in four of the five programs, the number of participants reporting having had sex increased between the pre- and post-test. In addition, students in the comprehensive sexuality education programs were found to be more knowledgeable about body changes during puberty and more comfortable asking questions about sex. According to the Iowa Department of Public Health report, "APP [comprehensive sexuality education] programs also had higher scores among youth who understood how their decisions about sex could change their futures and felt their goals should not include teen pregnancy."

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

There are no CBAE grantees or AFLA grantees in Iowa.

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2006

Abstinence-Only-Until- Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Iowa Department of Health www.idph.state.ia.us	\$318,198 federal	Title V
Allen Memorial Hospital (Women's Health Department) www.allenhsopital.org	\$27,244	Title V sub-grantee
Bethany Christian Services www.bethany.org	\$58,000	Title V sub-grantee
Community Opportunities, Inc. www.iowacommunityaction. com/COInc/community opportunities.htm	\$11,225	Title V sub-grantee
The Crittenton Center www.crittentoncenter.org	\$18,591	Title V sub-grantee
Hillcrest Family Services www.hillcrest-fs.org/	\$13,167	Title V sub-grantee
North Iowa Community Action Organization www.nicao-online.org	\$25,491	Title V sub-grantee
University of Iowa www.uiowa.edu	\$37,500	Title V sub-grantee

Abstinence-Only-Until- Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Webster County Health Department http://webstercountyia.org/ Health%20Department.htm	\$16,142	Title V sub-grantee
Young Parents Network	\$35,000	Title V sub-grantee

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

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Iowa Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Iowa National Organization for Women Iowa Religious Coalition for Reproductive

P.O. Box 41114 Choice

Des Moines, IA 50311 P.O. Box 41307

www.iowanow.org Des Moines, IA 50311

Phone: (515) 279-2936

Neveln Community Resource Center Planned Parenthood of Greater Iowa

1171 7th St. 406 SW School St.

Ankeny, IA 50023 Des Moines, IA 50314 Phone: (515) 280-7004 Phone: (515) 965-9606

www.ankeny.k12.ia.us/Neveln/Home.html www.ppgi.org

Iowa Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Iowa Christian Alliance Iowa Family Policy Center

P.O. Box 65066 1100 North Hickory Blvd., Suite 105

West Des Moines, IA 50265 Pleasant Hill, IA 50327 Phone: (515) 971-7363 Phone: (515) 263-3495 www.iowachristian.com www.iowaprofamily.org Iowa Right to Life Committee 1500 Illinois St.

Des Moines, IA 50314 Phone: (515) 244-1012

www.irlc.org

Newspapers in Iowa

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Des Moines Register
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Globe-Gazette
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The Messenger Sandy Mickelson Medical/Health Editor 713 Central Ave. Fort Dodge, IA 50501 Phone: (515) 574-4467 The Daily Nonpareil
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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 2006 begins on October 1, 2005 and ends on September 30, 2006.

² Staci Schwickerath, "Kids Having Kids: Number of Teen Mothers at High School Tripled This Year," *Charles City Press*, 6 June 2006, accessed 7 June 2006, http://www.charlescitypress.com/articles/2006/06/06/news/news01.txt.

³ Tim Higgins, "Students Lobby for Sex Education Changes," *Des Moines Register*, 10 February 2006, accessed 14 February 2006, http://desmoinesregister.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060210/NEWS02/602100357/1001/NEWS.

⁴ Deidre Bello, "Parents Want Gay Literature Removed," *Ioma City Press-Citizen*, 23 October 2004, accessed 26 October 2004, http://www.press-Citizen.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20041023/NEWS01/410230322/1079>.

⁵ Thia

⁶ Deidre Bello, "Solon Debates Class Material," *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, 27 October 2004, accessed 23 November 2004, http://www.press-citizen.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20041027/NEWS01/410270308/1079>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Deidre Bello, "School Group OKs Gay Literature," *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, 29 October 2004, accessed 23 November 2004, http://www.press-citizen.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20041029/NEWS01/410290311/1079>.

⁹ Dave Vickers, "Orientation Policy Gets OK," The Quad-City Times, 13 October 2004,

http://www.qctimes.com/internal.php?t=Search&doc=/2004/10/13/stories/gatetms/1037124.txt.

¹⁰ K. Luna, "School Board Member Speaks Against Sexual Orientation Policy," *The Quad-City Times*, 30 September 2004, accessed 21 March 2006, http://www.qctimes.net/articles/2004/09/30/gatetms/export77995.txt>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ 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/vrbs/index.htm>.

¹⁵ U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information (New York: The Guttmacher Institute, February 2004), accessed 26 January 2007,

< http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/2006/09/12/USTPstats.pdf>.

Ingjing Chen, et. al., 2002 Iowa Termination of Pregnancy Report, (Iowa: Iowa Department of Public Health State Center for Health Statistics, 2002), accessed 26 January 2007, http://www.idph.state.ia.us/common/pdf/publications/itoprept02.pdf.
 National Vital Statistics Reports 55.01 (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2006), 10, accessed 26 January 2006, http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr55/nvsr55 01.pdf

¹⁸ "Abstinence Education," Iowa Department of Health, accessed 31 January 2007,

http://www.idph.state.ia.us/hpcdp/abstinence_education.asp>.

¹⁹ Bruce Cook, *Choosing the Best LIFE* (Marietta, GA: Choosing the Best Inc., 2000); Bruce Cook, *Choosing the Best PATH* (Marietta, GA: Choosing the Best Inc., 2000). For more information, see SIECUS' reviews of *Choosing the Best LIFE* and *Choosing the Best PATH* at

< http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.

²⁰ Scott Phelps and Libby Gray, A.C. Green's Game Plan (Golf, IL: Project Reality, 2001). For more information, see SIECUS' review of A.C. Green's Game Plan at http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula-reviews.html>.

²¹ Patricia Sulak, *Worth the Wait* (Temple, TX: Scott & White Memorial Hospital, 2003). For more information, see SIECUS' review of *Worth the Wait* at http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.

²² Kris Frainie, *Why kNOw Abstinence Education Program Teacher's Manual* (Chattanooga, TN: Why kNOw Abstinence Education Programs, A Division of AAA Women's Services, 2002). For more information, see SIECUS' review of *Why kNOw* at http://www.communityactionkit.org/reviews/WhyKnow.html>.

²³ "History," Bethany Christian Services, accessed 4 February 2007,

http://www.bethany.org/A55798/bethanyWWW.nsf/0/D57C84B44FEB389C852571630060E494?OpenDocument>.

²⁴ "Mission," Bethany Christian Services, (2007), accessed 4 February 2007, <http://www.bethany.org/A55798/bethanyWWW.nsf/0/289FFAED95576A9685256E3C00602C5E>.

²⁵ E.J. Saunders et al., Evaluation of Abstinence Only Education in Iowa: Year Five Report (Iowa City, IA: Iowa Department of Public Health, October 2003).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid, 80.