



SIECUS

State Profile

IOWA

The Department of Public Health and community-based organizations in Iowa received \$1,438,648 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2008.¹

Iowa Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Iowa mandates that health education be taught in kindergarten through 12th 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 12th 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.” Additionally, health curricula must include information about Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and the HPV vaccine. Iowa law mandates that the curricula use materials that are up-to-date, age-appropriate, and research-based/medically accurate; furthermore, all information must be free of biases based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender. School districts may teach age-appropriate, science-based, comprehensive sexuality education as part of the health curriculum, but may also use abstinence-only materials so long as those materials fall within the parameters of the law.

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, and Iowa Administrative Code 281-12.5 and House File 611.

Recent Legislation

Bill would Require Increased Funding for HIV/AIDS Assistance for Ethnic Minorities

House Bill 205, introduced in February 2007, sought to increase HIV/AIDS assistance for racial and ethnic minority populations in the state. The bill called for \$600,000 “to supplement funding provided through the federal Ryan White Care Act” in order to help improve HIV-related outcomes amongst these populations. The bill was sent to the Committee on Appropriations where it died.

Legislation Expands Civil Rights to LGBT Individuals

Senate Bill 427, introduced in March 2007, prohibits 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 restrictions 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 signed by Governor Chet Culver (D) on May 25, 2007.

Legislation Calls for HPV Awareness and Vaccine Assistance

House Bill 661, introduced in March 2007, would have required the department of public health to enact a Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination public awareness program. Using medically accurate materials, the program would have conveyed information regarding the link between HPV and cervical cancer, as well as information about the availability, effectiveness, and risks of HPV vaccination. Furthermore, the bill would have appropriated funds to the department of human services for providing the HPV vaccination to persons below 250 percent of the federal poverty level who are not covered for HPV vaccination by insurance. The bill died.

Iowa's Youth: Statistical Information of Note²

- In 2007, 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 50% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 3% of female high school students and 4% of male high school students in Iowa 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, 13% of female high school students and 13% 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 18% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 35% of female high school students and 32% 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 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, 59% of females and 74% of males in Iowa 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, 24% of females and 23% of males in Iowa 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, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 16% of females and 20% of males in Iowa 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, 88% of high school students in Iowa reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 90% of high school students nationwide.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

- Iowa received \$238,648 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.
- In Iowa, funds are matched by sub-grantees with in-kind services.
- There are eight sub-grantees in Iowa: one crisis pregnancy center, one hospital, one university, and five community-based organizations.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Evaluation

The University of Iowa was granted Title V funds to conduct an evaluation of six sub-grantees in the state. The evaluation, completed between 2006 and 2007, used pre- and post- tests to measure students' change in attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs. The study did not measure change in behavior or sexual health outcomes.

The pre- and post- test questions used in the evaluation varied greatly between sub-grantees. Most participants were asked, "I understand more about the benefits of waiting until marriage to have sex" and "I am more sure that from now on I will say no to sex until I get married." While some of the measures changed significantly between pre- and post- tests, in five of the programs evaluated, students did not plan to abstain from sex in the future (at significant levels).

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding Status

In February 2008, Governor Culver decided no longer to participate in the Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage program. His press secretary explained that the strict restrictions in the Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage program led to the decision.³ The Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage program relies on an eight-point federal definition of "abstinence education." All programs that receive abstinence-only-until-marriage funds must adhere to this definition which specifies, in part, that "a mutually faithful monogamous relationship in the context of marriage is the expected standard of all human sexual activity" and that "sexual activity outside the context of marriage is likely to have harmful psychological and physical effects." The decision goes into effect for Fiscal Year 2009.

SIECUS has compiled some examples of the use of federal Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funding in Iowa:

State Media Campaign: "i am (iowa's abstinence mission)"

Iowa's statewide abstinence-only-until-marriage campaign is titled "I am" or "Iowa's Abstinence Mission." The campaign is broadcast throughout the state and at sporting events with messages created by students. Many of the messages rely on fear and shame. For example, one ad uses a message from TJ, age 14: "I am the one who said 'no' because I know what the risks are. I know what could happen if I get an STD. I also know by having sex my friends might not respect me anymore." Similarly, a billboard used by the "I am" campaign warns "Wait for the bling" alongside a pregnant woman without a ring on her left hand.

Crittenton Center of Sioux City, \$22,479 (2008)

The Crittenton Center of Sioux City uses its Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage monies to conduct its own media campaign.⁴ Based on the state effort, the organization creates a competition in local schools to design the next "I am" message. One winning billboard designed by a local student displayed a picture of a pregnancy test with the wording, "Tired of waiting for results? Try abstinence." In addition to its media campaign, the Crittenton Center works with Bethany Christian Services on its "Plan A" campaign.⁵ (See the CBAE and AFLA section for more information on "Plan A.")

Webster County Health Department, \$20,407 (2008)

The Webster County Health Department in the Fort Dodge area of Iowa uses the *Choosing the Best* curricula series. This series is one of the more popular abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in the country. The series is comprised of a number of curricula for students from sixth grade through high school: *Choosing the Best WAY*, *Choosing the Best PATH*, *Choosing the Best LIFE*, *Choosing the Best JOURNEY*, and *Choosing the Best SOULMATE*. The series has been recently revised and the information about STDs is now medically accurate. However, *Choosing the Best* curricula continue to promote heterosexual marriage, rely on messages of fear and shame, and include biases about gender, sexual orientation, and pregnancy options. For example, *Choosing the Best PATH* asks students to brainstorm the “emotional consequences” of premarital sex. Suggested answers include “guilt, feeling scared, ruined relationships, broken emotional bonds.”⁶

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

- There are two CBAE grantees in Iowa: Bethany Christian Services and Sexual Health Education, Inc., doing business as Equipping Youth.
- There are no AFLA grantees in Iowa.

Bethany Christian Services, \$600,000 (CBAE 2007–2012) and \$44,788 (2008)

Bethany Christian Services is headquartered in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and describes itself as “a not-for-profit, pro-life, Christian adoption and family service agency.”⁷

The organization’s abstinence-only-until-marriage program is called “Plan A (for Abstinence)” and targets pregnant and parenting teens.⁸ The goal is to reduce repeat pregnancies in teens living in Iowa, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

Plan A (for Abstinence) uses two curricula, *A.C. Green’s Game Plan* and *Navigator*, with pregnant and parenting teens in foster care, maternity homes, and alternative schools. Both curricula are produced by Project Reality, one of the oldest leaders in the abstinence-only-until-marriage industry.⁹

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* compares sex to fire and says: “In a fireplace, fire is beautiful and gives warmth to a home. Outside of the fireplace, it can cause serious harm.” It continues, “What about sex? In a marriage relationship, sex can be beautiful. Outside of marriage, it can cause serious harm.”¹⁰

In our review of *Navigator*, SIECUS found that it relies on messages of fear and shame, inaccurate and misleading information, and biased views of marriage, sexual orientation, and pregnancy options. *Navigator* fails to provide important information on sexual health and the format and underlying biases of the curriculum dictate specific values and discourage critical thinking. For example, the authors explain, “Navigator does not promote the use of contraceptives for teens. No contraceptive device is guaranteed to prevent pregnancy. Besides, students who do not exercise self-control to remain abstinent are not likely to exercise self-control in the use of a contraceptive device.”¹¹

Bethany Christian Service suggests that facilitators make adaptations to the curricula: “The course needs to be more discussion orientated and student focused. Facilitators needs to meet members where

they are at and build at trusting relationship (Navigator especially is too wordy).” It goes on to suggest: “Emphasize throughout the entire program that your decisions affect your child as well as yourself (this is not included in either curriculum).”¹²

Sexual Health Education, Inc., doing business as Equipping Youth, \$600,000 (CBAE 2007–2012)

Equipping Youth describes itself as, “A non-profit organization committed to promoting character education through our Powerful Choices abstinence program for youth and their families.”¹³ “Powerful Choices” is a ten-lesson program that includes teacher training, curricula, and supplies, and incorporates special presentations from members of the Abstinence Education Initiative (AEI) Coalition.¹⁴ With the addition of its CBAE grant, Equipping Youth increased its overall budget by 593 percent.¹⁵

Equipping Youth is the fiscal agent and facilitator of the AEI Coalition, which is comprised of non-profit agencies and the Prairie Schools public school district in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.¹⁶ According to the AEI Coalition’s website, “Prairie Schools is providing the AEI Coalition with a unique opportunity to implement an abstinence-until-marriage-program in a school that does not teach forms of sex education that include contraceptive use.”¹⁷ It adds that this project serves as a model site for other school districts in Iowa that are interested in adding an abstinence-only-until-marriage program.

The AEI Coalition uses a number of curricula including *Powerful Choices*, *Choosing the Best*, and *Creating Positive Relationships*. (See the Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage section for more information on the *Choosing the Best* series.)

The AEI Coalition offers examples of interactive media for the lessons, including the “Ride the Rollercoaster” game.¹⁸ Ride the Rollercoaster presents numerous stories about two young people, Jack and Jill, who engage in various sexual activities. After each activity, a box pops up showing a cartoon rollercoaster and “the STD meter,” which “illustrates the increased risk you take at each level of affection you share with your partner.” According to the meter, one activity, “long kissing,” includes the risks of “HPV (Genital Warts), Herpes 2, and Syphilis.” Another activity, “touching over clothes,” translates to “more risks than long kissing because it leads to touching under clothes.” “Touching under clothes” invites the risks of “HPV (Genital Warts), Herpes 2, Syphilis, and Public Lice.” The activity “sexual intercourse” is described as, “It’s all downhill from here. Risks: Take your pick of over 25 STDs and even pregnancy.”¹⁹

Equipping Youth is an affiliate of the Abstinence Clearinghouse, a leader in the abstinence-only-until-marriage industry.²⁰ As an affiliate Equipping Youth has access to a network of nearly seventy abstinence-only-until-marriage organizations. Affiliates gain access to resources, including abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula and invitations to the Abstinence Clearinghouse conference self-titled as the “most prestigious abstinence-until-marriage event of the year.”²¹ The Abstinence Clearinghouse was founded by Leslee Unruh. Ms. Unruh is also the President and Founder of the Alpha Center, a crisis pregnancy center, which is housed at the same location as the Abstinence Clearinghouse. The organization has been investigated by the federal government several times for misusing funds.²² Most recently, in July 2006, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) filed an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) complaint against the Abstinence Clearinghouse. The complaint suggests that the organization has violated federal tax law by failing to report on lobbying efforts and endorsing candidates. The IRS complaint outlines several examples of violations, including Unruh’s efforts to lobby lawmakers on behalf of a South Dakota law, authored by Unruh herself, which would have banned all abortions in the state.²³

I O W A

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)
Iowa Department of Health www.idph.state.ia.us	\$238,648 federal	Title V
Allen Memorial Hospital (Women's Health Department) www.allenhospital.org	\$17,212	Title V sub-grantee
Bethany Christian Services of Northwest Iowa DUAL GRANTEE 2007–2012 www.bethany.org	\$44,788 \$600,000	Title V sub-grantee CBAE
The Crittenton Center www.crittentoncenter.org	\$22,479	Title V sub-grantee
North Iowa Community Action Organization www.nicao-online.org	\$24,564	Title V sub-grantee
University of Iowa www.uiowa.edu	\$20,867	Title V sub-grantee
Webster County Health Department webstercountyia.org/HealthDepartment.htm	\$20,407	Title V sub-grantee
Young Parents Network	\$32,456	Title V sub-grantee

I O W A

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Sexual Health Education, Inc. d/b/a Equipping Youth 2007–2012 www.equippingyouth.org	\$600,000	CBAE

Adolescent Health Contact²⁴

Lindsay Miller
 Iowa Department of Public Health
 Division of Planning and Administration
 Lucas State Office Building
 321 E. 12th Street
 Des Moines, IA 50319
 Phone: (515) 281-7721

Iowa Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Iowa National Organization for Women
 P.O. Box 41114
 Des Moines, IA 50311
www.iowanow.org

Iowa Religious Coalition for Reproductive
 Choice
 P.O. Box 41307
 Des Moines, IA 50311
 Phone: (515) 279-2936
www.rcrc.org

FutureNet, The Iowa Network for
 Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention,
 Parenting, and Sexual Health
 3839 Merle Hay Road, Suite 228
 Des Moines, IA 50310
 Phone: (515) 276-6788
www.iowafuturenet.org

Planned Parenthood of Greater Iowa
 1171 7th Street
 Des Moines, IA 50314
 Phone: (515) 280-7004
www.ppgi.org

Family Planning Council of Iowa
 108 3rd Street, Suite 220
 Des Moines, IA 50309
 Phone: (515) 288-9028
www.fpcouncil.com

Planned Parenthood of East Central Iowa
 3425 1st Avenue, SW, Suite 100
 Cedar Rapids, IA 52402
 Phone: (319) 363-8572
www.plannedparenthood.org/ppeci

Planned Parenthood of Southeast Iowa
620 N 8th Street
Burlington, IA 52601
Phone: (319) 753-6209
www.plannedparenthood.org/ppsi

Iowa Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Iowa Christian Alliance
939 Office Park Road, Suite 115
West Des Moines, IA 50265
Phone: (515) 225-1515
www.iowachristian.com

Iowa Family Policy Center
1100 North Hickory Boulevard, Suite 105
Pleasant Hill, IA 50327
Phone: (515) 263-3495
www.iowaprofamily.org

Iowa Right to Life Committee
1500 Illinois Street
Des Moines, IA 50314
Phone: (515) 244-1012
www.irlc.org

Newspapers in Iowa²⁵

Courier
Newsroom
501 Commercial Street
Waterloo, IA 50701
Phone: 1-800-798-1741
www.wfcourier.com

The Daily Nonpareil
Newsroom
535 W. Broadway
Council Bluffs, IA 51503
Phone: (712) 328-1811
www.nonpareilonline.com

Des Moines Register
Newsroom
715 Locust Street
Des Moines, IA 50309
Phone: (515) 284-8590
www.desmoinesregister.com

The Gazette
Newsroom
500 3rd Avenue SE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401
Phone: (319) 398-8254
www.gazetteonline.com

Globe-Gazette
Newsroom
300 N. Washington Avenue
Mason City, IA 50401
Phone: (641) 421-0500
www.globegazette.com

The Hawk Eye
Newsroom
800 S. Main Street
Burlington, IA 52601
Phone: (319) 754-8461
www.thehawkeye.com

The Messenger
 Newsroom
 713 Central Avenue
 Fort Dodge, IA 50501
 Phone: (515) 573-2141
www.messengernews.net

Quad-City Times
 Newsroom
 500 E. 3rd Street
 Davenport, IA 52801
 Phone: (563) 383-2244
www.qctimes.com

The Sioux City Journal
 Newsroom
 515 Pavonia Street
 Sioux City, IA 51101
 Phone: (712) 293-4210
www.siouxcityjournal.com

Telegraph Herald
 Newsroom
 801 Bluff Street
 Dubuque, IA 52001
 Phone: (563) 588-5611
www.thonline.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 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>>.

³ Lynda Waddington, "Iowa Refuses Abstinence-Only Sex Ed Funding," *Iowa Independent*, 29 February 2008, accessed 7 March 2008 <http://www.iowaindependent.com/showDiary.do?diaryId=2022>>.

⁴ Kathy Bruyere, Crittenton Center of Iowa, Personal communication, 21 February 2008.

⁵ Bethany Christian Services, Application to the ACF, 2006, Letter of Support from Crittenton Center.

⁶ Bruce Cook, *Choosing the Best* (Marietta, GA: Choosing the Best, Inc., 2001-2007).

⁷ "About Us: Bethany's history," Bethany Christian Services, (2008), accessed 20 September 2008, <<http://www.bethany.org/A55798/bethanyWWW.nsf/0/C232C8DA99A0BA8685256CF200083E24>>.

⁸ Bethany Christian Services, CBAE Application, Fiscal Year 2006, p. 3.

⁹ Ibid; "About Us," Project Reality, accessed 17 October 2008, <<http://www.projectreality.org/about/index.php?id=10>>.

¹⁰ *A.C. Green's Game Plan* (Golf, IL: Project Reality, 2007). For more information, see SIECUS' review of *A.C. Green's Game Plan* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.

¹¹ Scott Phelps and Libby Gray, *Navigator: Finding Your Way to A Healthy and Successful Future* (Golf, IL: Project Reality, 2003). For more information, see SIECUS' review of *Navigator* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "Equipping Youth," Equipping Youth, accessed 18 October 2008, <<http://www.equippingyouth.org/>>.

¹⁴ "What is Powerful Choices?" AEI Coalition, (2003), accessed 11 February 2008, <http://www.aicoalition.org/powerful_choices/choices.htm>.

¹⁵ Equipping Youth, IRS 990 Form, Fiscal Year 2007, p. 1.

¹⁶ "Who We Are," Equipping Youth, (2004), accessed 11 February 2008, <<http://www.equippingyouth.org/who.htm>>.

¹⁷ "Prairie Schools (College Community)," AEI Coalition, (2003), accessed 11 February 2008, <http://www.aicoalition.org/aei_coalition/prairie.htm>.

¹⁸ "Powerful Choices," AEI Coalition, (2003), accessed 11 February 2008, <http://www.aicoalition.org/powerful_choices/challenge.htm>.

¹⁹ "The Adventures of Jack and Jill," accessed 11 February 2008, <<http://www.choosetoday.org/thrillRide/page7.asp?ident=>>>.

²⁰ "Affiliate Center," Abstinence Clearinghouse, accessed 18 October 2008, <<http://www.abstinence.net/affiliates/nonfaith.php>>.

²¹ "Affiliate Center," Abstinence Clearinghouse, accessed 23 November 2008, <<http://www.abstinence.net/affiliates/benefits.php>>.

²² Danielle Knight, "Bias Claimed in U.S. Abstinence-Only Review," *US News and World Report*, 8 October 2005, accessed 13 February 2007.

²³ “CREW Files IRS Complaint Against Anti-Choice Abstinence-only Orgs—Alpha Center and National Abstinence Clearinghouse,” Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, Press Release published 26 July 2006, accessed 13 February 2007, <<http://www.citizensforethics.org/press/newsrelease.php?view=141>>.

²⁴ SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

²⁵ 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](#).