



SIECUS

State Profile

MARYLAND

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and community-based organizations in Maryland received \$3,245,408 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2007.¹

Maryland Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Maryland education code requires each local school board to work with the county health department in establishing a school health education program with a number of specified goals. Sexuality education falls under Goal F, which is designed to help students “recognize the family as a basic unit of society that perpetuates life and promotes healthy growth and development.” Under Goal F, schools must help students “develop and use skills for making responsible decisions about sexual behavior based on its consequences for the individual and others” and “develop and use skills for making responsible decisions about family planning and preventing pregnancy.” Goal F also includes teaching students about “[a] variety of family structures and roles of family members,” “male and female roles in American society,” “sexual variations,” “contraception,” and “family planning.”

Maryland education code requires that health education classes be taught in kindergarten through twelfth grade, in mixed gender groups. It also states when certain topics may and may not be addressed. For example, the code says, “Direct teaching of human reproduction may not begin earlier than age 10 or later than age 12.” Regulations also state that an elective sexuality education course must be offered in middle and high schools. This course must be designed with an appointed citizen advisory committee that broadly represents the views of the community and must cover a number of topics including contraception, family planning, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

The code states that teachers of sexuality education classes may have additional preparation for this class and that any teacher who feels “inadequate or uncomfortable” with the curriculum does not have to teach the class. Maryland State Regulations also mandate that “local school systems shall provide annual instruction in AIDS to all students at least once in grades three to six, six to nine, and nine to twelve.” Each local school board determines the actual grade.

Parents or guardians may remove their children from any or all sexuality education classes. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy. The elective courses offered in middle and high schools require parental permission in order for a student to participate, this is known as an “opt-in” policy.

See Maryland Regulations 13A.04.18.02, 13A.04.18.03, and 13A.04.18.04.

Recent Legislation

SIECUS is not aware of any proposed legislation regarding sexuality education in Maryland.

Events of Note

Comprehensive Curriculum's New Foothold is Uncertain While Opponents Consider New Strategy
 March 2008; Montgomery County, MD

A protracted battle over whether to teach students about sexual orientation spanned three years in Montgomery County, MD.

The Montgomery County School Board originally approved a curriculum update for middle and high school health classes in November 2004. The program included a video in tenth-grade health classes that showed students how to put on a condom and a pilot program for selected schools to discuss homosexuality in the eighth and tenth grade Family Life Curriculum.

A small group of parents and community members disagreed with the changes and formed an organization called Citizens for Responsible Curriculum (CRC). The group campaigned against the curriculum and brought in representatives from national conservative organizations such as Concerned Women for America and Family Research Council to speak against it.

When the district pushed ahead with its plan to pilot the program despite the opposition, CRC and its new allies, Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays (PFOX) and the Liberty Council, brought a federal lawsuit against the school system. The lawsuit claimed that allowing discussions about homosexuality to take place in the schools and distributing resource materials that included information on gay-positive churches and religious groups gave preference to religions that are tolerant of homosexuality and ignored those churches that teach that homosexuality is wrong. In addition, the lawsuit claimed the school board has an "irrational phobia of the ex-gay community."²

The case was eventually settled when the school board voted to scrap the controversial curriculum and begin building a second curriculum from the ground up. Though the lessons on condoms and sexual orientation ultimately made it into the second revision of the curriculum, many parents felt that the new tightly scripted lessons were neither comprehensive nor youth-friendly. Students in the pilot program were similarly unimpressed "Our teacher... she read straight from the manual...It was very strict. Like, you couldn't ask questions," one 14-year-old explained to a reporter at the *Washington Post*.³

Still, opposition groups worked desperately throughout the summer of 2007 to postpone implementation of the curriculum. First, they appealed to the Maryland State School Board asking it to step in and halt the lessons. When the state school board refused to get involved, the groups filed an administrative appeal in circuit court in hopes of overturning its ruling. A circuit court judge ended the delay tactics in October 2007 when he ruled that the lessons could be implemented. Nonetheless opponents vowed to continue their crusade against the program.⁴

Parents Believe In Free Speech, But Not In Controversial Books
 April 2007; Harford County, MD

A group of forty parents compelled the Hartford County school system, which enrolls approximately 13,000 high school students, to remove an award-winning novel from the curriculum.⁵

The controversy revolved around Robert Cormier's 1974 novel *The Chocolate War* which details the harsh realities of teenage bullying, including extortion and a complicit school administration. The book was slated for a class called "Living in a Contemporary World," a course meant to help students transition from middle to high school.

Last fall some parents raised objections to the book's profanity, mentions of homosexuality, and other sexual content. One parent said the fact that the book is controversial warrants its removal from the curriculum. The parent added, "I'm not an advocate for stopping free speech, but I am very pleased the school system isn't advocating the book as part of the curriculum."⁶

The Chocolate War was the target of similar parental discontent in an Illinois school, where the principal defended the book's place due to the "complex themes it covers, including conformity and the ethical implications of choices we make."⁷

Committee Adamant about Bringing Comprehensive Sex Education to Carroll County
March 2007; Carroll County, MD

In March 2007, the Carroll County School Board once again rejected the proposal of the Family Life and Human Sexuality Committee, which recommended revising the eighth-grade curriculum to include information about contraceptives and sexually transmitted diseases.⁸

The current curriculum for eighth-grade students focuses on abstinence. High school students receive information on the efficacy of contraceptives, although abstinence is still stressed. The county has an opt-in policy for its sexuality curriculum lessons, meaning that parents must give written permission in order for their children to attend the classes.

The committee, composed of parents, teachers, students, and health officials, first approached the board suggesting a more comprehensive sexuality education curriculum for eighth-grade students in July 2006. Despite the committee's report, the board decided to continue to use the abstinence-only-until-marriage curriculum that was in place.⁹

Toward the end of 2006, the committee once again recommended changes after news surfaced that teenagers in Carroll County were participating in sex parties. Committee members stressed the importance of a comprehensive sexuality education for young people in their community. One resident who attended the committee meeting voiced her support of a new curriculum: "The more the kids are informed, the better off we are."¹⁰ In fact, a local poll found that over 75 percent of parents favored comprehensive sex education¹¹ Opponents of the changes, however, believed comprehensive information in middle school is "too much, too soon."¹²

In March 2007, the board once again voted down the committee's recommendation for a "family life and human sexuality" unit that would have included information on contraceptives and their effectiveness in the context of STD and pregnancy prevention.

Crisis Pregnancy Center Evicted from Schools Over Gum-Sharing Activity
February 2007; Montgomery County, MD

The Rockville Pregnancy Center, a crisis pregnancy center that works to dissuade women facing unintended pregnancies from exercising their right to choose, was ejected from the Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) district after parents complained.

For nearly a decade, volunteers from the center have used "Worth the Wait," an abstinence-only-until-marriage curriculum that tells students that premarital sex results in physical and emotional consequences, such as pregnancy and low self-esteem.

The parents' complaints centered in part around "the gum game," an exercise in which presenters have students offer one another chewed gum. Students invariably refuse. The lesson is intended to show how easily STDs are spread.

A spokesperson for the MCPS called the lesson "unsanitary and completely inappropriate." He explained that the center "will not be invited back into our schools because of the tremendous lack of judgment this activity demonstrated."¹³

PFOX Flier Distribution Stirs Controversy
November 2006; Silver Spring MD

The group Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays (PFOX) caused an uproar when it handed out fliers that promoted the organization's anti-gay message at Montgomery Blair High School.

Students responded to PFOX's handouts by exposing the group's homophobia, but administrators could do little to stop the flier circulation. In 2005, the 4th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that the Montgomery County Public School System could not discriminate against any non-profit group's distribution of materials.¹⁴

A spokeswoman for PFOX defended the organization: "What we're saying is that if you have unwanted same sex attraction—and there is a difference—then there are alternatives, and homosexual feelings can be overcome."¹⁵

Maryland's Youth: Statistical Information of Note

- In 2007, 85% of high school students in Maryland reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 90% of high school students nationwide.¹⁶

*Baltimore, Maryland*¹⁷

- In 2007, 59% of female high school students and 76% of male high school students in Baltimore, Maryland reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 50% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 8% of female high school students and 32% of male high school students in Baltimore, Maryland 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, 17% of female high school students and 45% of male high school students in Baltimore, Maryland 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, 43% of female high school students and 57% of male high school students in Baltimore, Maryland 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, 67% of females and 82% of males in Baltimore, Maryland 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, 10% of females and 7% of males in Baltimore, Maryland 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, 8% of females and 16% of males in Baltimore, Maryland 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 Baltimore, Maryland 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 Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene received \$569,675 in federal Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage 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 Maryland, the federal funding is matched with \$498,288 from state funds.

The funding is used to run the Maryland Abstinence Education and Coordination Program (MAECP), which is administered by the Center for Maternal and Child Health. The MAECP provides grants to local health departments in addition to providing them with *Managing Pressures Before Marriage: An Educational Series for Young People*, a curriculum developed by Marion Howard, Ph.D., and Marie Mitchell, R.N., that targets three age groups; pre-teens (fifth and sixth grade), young teens (seventh and eighth grade), and older teens. It provides age-appropriate information and skill-building strategies for youth in an effort to assist them in making positive decisions. Local programs use the pre-teen, young teen, and teen manuals as well as the accompanying video tapes. Some programs also supplement their lessons with other curricula such as the *Developmental Assets Profile (DAP)*.

MAECP also funds 14 local departments of health and two other organizations: the Campaign for our Children and the Maryland School of School Work. This school provides training, professional development, parent and community education, and holds youth-oriented conferences.

The Campaign For Our Children (CFOC) conducts a statewide media campaign. The newest initiative from the grantee is “Marriage Works USA,” an effort “aimed at promoting one of the world’s most cherished institutions: marriage.”¹⁸ CFOC says, “The campaign’s core message is a practical, added-value approach that can be summed up in just two words: Marriage Works.” Using messages such as “Married people live longer” and “Married people are happier,” the website promotes marriage as a solution to teen pregnancy problems.¹⁹

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Evaluation

The Maryland Center for Maternal and Child Health evaluated its Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage program in 2002. This evaluation process was reviewed by Advocates for Youth in its 2004 report, *Five Years of Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Education: Assessing the Impact*.²⁰ Advocates for Youth was forced to cite only an abstract of the full evaluation because the Center for Maternal and Child Health chose not to release the final report. From the information available, however, Advocates for Youth determined that participants’ pre- and post-test scores showed no significant change in attitudes or practices regarding abstinence.²¹ In addition, the proportion of youth who reported that they would remain abstinent until the completion of high school and the proportion of youth who reported abstinent behavior in the year prior to the survey both declined between pre- and post-test.²²

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

There are three CBAE grantees in Maryland: Morning Star Baptist Church, Young Men’s Christian Association of Cumberland, MD, Inc., and ZOPSmgmt Firm, Inc. There are three AFLA grantees: Hope Worldwide, University of Maryland, and YMCA of Cumberland County.

Morning Star Baptist Church describes its mission by saying, “We have been called by God to be His light, leading persons out of darkness through Worship, Service, Education, Discipleship, and Stewardship.”²³

On its website, “I Have Standards,” ZOPSmgmt Firm, Inc. explains that the purpose of its CBAE grant is “to teach young people the truth about condom use, STDs and HIV/AIDS.”²⁴ ZOPSmgmt Firm uses *A.C. Green’s Game Plan* and *Navigator*, two popular, fear-based abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula that disparage use²⁵

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.”²⁶

SIECUS conducted a similar review of *Navigator*. We found that this curriculum 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.”²⁷

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)
Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene www.dhmh.state.md.us	\$569,675 federal \$427,256 state	Title V
Allegany County, Local Health Department	\$30,000	Title V sub-grantee
Baltimore City, Local Health Department	\$66,700	Title V sub-grantee

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Calvert County, Local Health Department	\$20,000	Title V sub-grantee
Campaign for our Children www.cfoc.org	\$200,000	Title V sub-grantee
Cecil County, Local Health Department	\$43,048	Title V sub-grantee
Charles County, Local Health Department	\$20,000	Title V sub-grantee
Dorchester County, Local Health Department	\$20,000	Title V sub-grantee
Frederick County, Local Health Department	\$48,557	Title V sub-grantee
Garret County, Local Health Department	\$37,195	Title V sub-grantee
Prince George's County, Local Health Department	\$20,000	Title V sub-grantee
Talbot County, Local Health Department	\$20,000	Title V sub-grantee
University of Maryland, School of Social Work www.ssw.umaryland.edu	\$225,000	Title V sub-grantee
Talbot County, Local Health Department	\$20,000	Title V sub-grantee
Washington County, Local Health Department	\$26,685	Title V sub-grantee
Wicomico County, Local Health Department	\$47,204	Title V sub-grantee
Worcester County, Local Health Department	\$48,574	Title V sub-grantee

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Morning Star Baptist Church 2007–2011	\$599,800	CBAE
Young Men’s Christian Association of Cumberland, MD, Inc. 2007–2011	\$600,000	CBAE
ZOPSmgmt Firm, Inc. 2007–2011	\$600,000	CBAE
Hope Worldwide 2007–2011	\$474,955	AFLA
University of Maryland 2002–2007 medschool.umaryland.edu/community/reach.asp	\$228,924	AFLA
YMCA of Cumberland County 2002–2007 www.cumberlandymca.org	\$172,054	AFLA

Adolescent Health Contact²⁸

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Maryland Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Equality Maryland
1319 Apple Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone: (301) 587-7500
www.equalitymaryland.org

Maryland National Organization for Women
P.O. Box 7216
Silver Spring, MD 20907
Phone: (301) 984-5831
www.marylandnow.org

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland
8121 Georgia Ave., Suite 501
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone: (301) 565-4154
www.prochoicemaryland.org

Planned Parenthood of Maryland Inc.
330 North Howard St.
Baltimore, MD 21201
Phone: (410) 576-1400
www.plannedparenthoodmd.org

Maryland Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Association of Maryland Families
P.O. Box 106
Annapolis, MD 21404
Phone: (440) 760-9166
www.ccmaryland.org

Maryland Right to Life
P.O. Box 2994
Annapolis, MD 21404
Phone: (410) 269-6397
www.mdrtl.org

Newspapers in Maryland²⁹

The Baltimore Sun
Newsroom
501 N. Calvert St.
Baltimore, MD 21202
Phone: (410) 332-6000
www.baltimoresun.com/

The Washington Post
Newsroom (MD)
1150 15th St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20071
Phone: (202) 334-7313
www.washingtonpost.com

The Capital
Newsroom
2000 Capital Dr.
Annapolis, MD 21401
Phone: (410) 280-5919
www.hometownannapolis.com/

Carroll County Times
Newsroom
201 Railroad Ave.
Westminster, MD 21157
Phone: (410) 857-7861
www.carrollcountytimes.com

The Frederick News-Post
Newsroom
200 E. Patrick St.
Frederick, MD 21701
Phone: (301) 662-1177
www.fredericknewspost.com/

The Morning Herald
Newsroom
100 Summit Ave.
Hagerstown, MD 21740
Phone: (301) 733-5131
www.herald-mail.com

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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 2007 begins on October 1, 2006 and ends on September 30, 2007.

² Daniel. de Vise, "Md. Judge Backs Montgomery Sex-Ed Curriculum," *Washington Post*, 1 February 2008, accessed 1 February 2008, <www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/politics/polls/?nid=roll_polls>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Marcus. Moore, "'We're Not Leaving,' Say Sex-Ed Critics," *Montgomery Gazette*, 6 February 2008, accessed 7 February 2008, <www.gazette.net/stories/020608/montnew62627_32359.shtml>.

⁵ "Harford Schools Remove Novel From Curriculum," *WJZ.com* (CBSNews Baltimore, MD), 10 April 2007, accessed 10 April 2007, <http://wjz.com/local/local_story_099090443.html>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Carlos. Sadovi, "Parents Pushing For Ban On Book For 7th Graders," *Chicago Tribune*, 20 September 2007, accessed 25 September 2007, <www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/north/chi-banbook20sep20,0,7389665.story>.

⁸ Kelsey. Volkmann, "Early Teens Engage in Group Sex, Infection Rising," *The Examiner*, 15 November 2006, accessed 5 December 2006, <http://www.examiner.com/a-399623~Early_teens_engage_in_group_sex_infection_rising.html>.

⁹ Kelsey Volkmann, "School Board Asked to Review Sex Education Curriculum," *The Examiner*, 27 July 2006, accessed 1 August 2006, <http://www.examiner.com/a-196344~School_Board_asked_to_review_sex_education_curriculum.html>.

¹⁰ Megan. McIlroy, "School Board Asks for Proof of Activity Before Topics Added," *The Examiner*, 22 November 2006, accessed 30 November 2006, <http://www.examiner.com/a-413876~School_Board_asks_for_proof_of_activity_before_topics_added.html>.

¹¹ Arin Gencer, "Sex-Ed Course Update Nixed," *Baltimore Sun*, 11 March 2007, accessed 12 March 2007, <www.baltimoresun.com/news/local/carroll/bal-ca.health11mar11,0,4994775.story?coll=bal-local-carroll>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ "Flier About 'Ex-Gays' Ignites Firestorm at School," *NBC News*, 11 November 2006, accessed 13 November 2006, <<http://www.nbc4.com/news/10296097/detail.html>>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ 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>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Marriage Works," Campaign For Our Children, accessed 5 April 2008, <<http://www.marriageworksusa.com/>>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Debra. Hauser, *Five Years of Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Education: Assessing the Impact* (Washington, D.C.: Advocates for Youth, 2004), 11.

²¹ Ibid.

²² L.K. Olsen and D. Agle, "Analysis of Four Years of Abstinence-Only Human Sexuality Programs in Maryland," abstract of paper presented at 130 the Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association, 13 November 2002.

²³ "About Us: Vision and Mission Statement," Morning Star Baptist Church Ministries, (2002), accessed 18 March 2008, <<http://www.msbcministries.org/main.htm>>.

²⁴ "Welcome," I Have Standards, (2007), accessed 18 March 2008, <<http://www.ihavestandards.net/>>.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ 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>.

²⁷ 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>.

²⁸ SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

²⁹ 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](#).