



## NEBRASKA

*Nebraska received \$1,121,781 in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2004.<sup>1</sup>*

### Nebraska Sexuality Education Law

Nebraska law does not require sexuality education, indeed it explicitly states that this is a matter of local control. Nebraska does not limit or prescribe what can be taught in such classes. However, in its *Nebraska Health Education Frameworks*, the Nebraska Department of Education does recommend that schools emphasize an abstinence approach including telling students that “sexual activity outside of marriage is likely to have harmful psychological and physical effects.”

Nebraska does not have a policy by which parents are notified or can remove their children from sexuality education classes.

See the *Nebraska Health Education Frameworks*.<sup>2</sup>

### Recent Legislation

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

### Events of Note

*Nebraska Returns CDC Grant Because it Doesn't Emphasize Abstinence*  
2000

A statewide controversy in Nebraska began with a rule passed by the board of education in 1997. The policy stated that any program receiving state funds must teach abstinence from sexual activity as the only appropriate option for students.<sup>3</sup> Initially, however, there was an understanding that the statewide HIV-prevention education program supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) was exempt from this rule. Educators and health professionals agreed that it would be impossible to provide effective HIV-prevention education without mentioning prevention methods other than abstinence, such as condoms.

When this exemption was brought to the attention of some board of education members in 2000, they asked the coordinator of the program to draft and defend a policy officially exempting her program from the abstinence-only approach. Despite testimony from numerous experts, parents, and people living with HIV/AIDS, the board rejected the proposal and demanded that the program follow a strict abstinence-only-until-marriage approach. In response to this ruling, the Nebraska Department of Education declared that they could not find any secular materials that followed the abstinence-only-until-marriage dictate without discussing condoms or other birth control options. The commissioner, therefore, decided that the department would make no attempt to renew the CDC grant when it expired. This decision meant that the department would

no longer offer the HIV-prevention trainings and programs for teachers and school districts sponsored by the grant.<sup>4</sup>

### **Nebraska's Youth: Statistical Information of Note<sup>5</sup>**

- In 2003, 42% of female high school students and 44% of male high school students in Nebraska reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 45% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, 2% of female high school students and 8% of male high school students in Nebraska 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, 10% of female high school students and 14% of male high school students in Nebraska 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, 33% of female high school students and 30% of male high school students in Nebraska 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 who reported being currently sexually active, 26% of females and 35% of males in Nebraska 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 who reported being currently sexually active, 56% of females and 65% of males in Nebraska 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 who reported being currently sexually active, 29% of females and 14% of males in Nebraska 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, 3% of female high school students and 3% of male high school students in Nebraska 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, 85% of high school students in Nebraska reported having been taught about HIV/AIDS in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.
- In 2000, Nebraska's abortion rate was 12 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.<sup>6</sup>

- In 2003, women ages 15-19 accounted for 17% the 3,990 total abortions performed in Nebraska.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2002, Nebraska's birth rate was 37 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen birth rate of 43 per 1,000 nationwide.<sup>8</sup>

### **Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding**

Nebraska received \$223,418 in federal Title V funding 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 Nebraska, the state provides \$184,633 in funding. The Nebraska Department of Health oversees the funding.

Nebraska's Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funding is divided between sub-grantees and a media campaign. There are seven sub-grantees, each of which receives a grant of \$25,000. These grantees use a variety of programs and curricula including *Friends First*, *FACTS*, and *All Stars*. The media campaign is aimed at all youth and stresses the message of being friends first and staying abstinent. Both the media campaign and the sub-grantees target high-risk youth, parents, and other young people.

SIECUS reviewed the *FACTS* curricula and found that in order to convince students to remain abstinent until marriage, they provide incomplete and inaccurate medical information; present opinions and beliefs as universal truths; and portray a biased view of gender, marriage, family structure, sexual orientation, and pregnancy options. For example, *FACTS* includes the following as the negative consequences of premarital sex: "pregnancy, financial aspect of fatherhood, abortion, HIV/AIDS, STDs (sexually transmitted diseases), guilt, rejection, loss of reputation, inability to bond in the future, challenge to not compare future sexual partners, alienation from friends and family, poverty and the inability to complete school."<sup>9</sup> *FACTS* also includes the following as an emotional consequence of sex: "you know people talk about you behind your back because you've had sex with so many people. It so empty too (sic). Finally you get sick of it all and attempt suicide."<sup>10</sup>

One sub-grantee, Youth for Christ youth ministry chapter of Columbus, states that its vision is "to see every young person in every people group in every nation have the opportunity to make an informed decision to become a follower of Jesus Christ and to become a part of a local church."<sup>11</sup> The local Columbus chapter is affiliated with a program called Teen Moms that lists under its goals stressing abstinence until marriage and communicating "the gospel of Jesus Christ to every teenage mother."<sup>12</sup>

Another sub-grantee, Family First, is a conservative public policy think tank that works to censor pornography, lobby for anti-choice legislation, support the federal marriage amendment, and promote alternative options to teaching Darwinian evolution in public schools.<sup>13</sup> Also listed on their activities and accomplishments webpage is a speech they sponsored which focused on "the importance of modesty as a prized virtue for today's young women" and the generation of youth "in the midst of fashion at war with God's design for a woman's beauty."<sup>14</sup>

### *Title V Evaluation*

Nebraska completed the evaluation of their Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in 2002. Nebraska's review of its programs involved pre- and post-test surveys administered to two groups: one group participated in the abstinence-only programs and the other received only the regular health and sexuality curricula. The results revealed that "abstinence-only education did

not significantly change young adolescents’ values and attitudes about premarital sexual activity, nor did it significantly change their intentions whether or not to engage in premarital sexual activity.”<sup>15</sup> In addition, the authors of the evaluation found that favorable attitudes toward abstinence expressed by youth could not be attributed to the programs.<sup>16</sup>

This evaluation was reviewed by Advocates for Youth (AFY) in its 2004 report *Five Years of Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Education: Assessing the Impact*.<sup>17</sup> AFY found that the Nebraska’s abstinence-only-until-marriage program encouraged little statistically significant change in youth attitudes toward abstinence.

The evaluations focused on seventh and eighth graders using the curricula *FACTS* and *WAIT Training*. These curricula were also reviewed by U.S. Representative Henry Waxman in his report *The Content of Federally Funded Abstinence-Only Education Programs* and all of them were found to have “major errors and distortions of public health information.”<sup>18</sup>

**Special Projects of Regional and National Significance–Community Based Abstinence Education (SPRANS–CBAE)<sup>19</sup> and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees**

There are two SPRANS–CBAE grantees in Nebraska: City of Norfolk/Community Character Development Coalition and Omaha/Council Bluffs Metropolitan YMCA. There are no AFLA grantees in Nebraska.

According to Omaha/Council Bluffs Metropolitan YMCA’s website, its abstinence-only-until-marriage program teaches junior high and high school students “how to have the best sex” by waiting until marriage. The program also teaches how to reject sexual advances and that alcohol and drugs may increase vulnerability to sexual advances.

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

| <b>Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee</b>   | <b>Amount of Grant</b>               | <b>Type of Grant (includes SPRANS–CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)</b> |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Length of Grant</b>  |                                      |  |
| Nebraska Department of Health<br><a href="http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/ash/ashindex.htm">www.hhs.state.ne.us/ash/ashindex.htm</a> | \$223,418 federal<br>\$184,633 state | Title V  |
| Alliance Area Family YMCA   | \$25,000                             | Title V sub-grantee  |
| Antelope Memorial Hospital  | \$25,000                             | Title V sub-grantee  |
| Family First  | \$25,000                             | Title V sub-grantee  |
| North Central District Public Health Department   | \$25,000                             | Title V sub-grantee  |

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| <b>Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee</b>   | <b>Amount of Grant</b> | <b>Type of Grant (includes SPRANS-CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)</b> |
|---|------------------------|--|
| <b>Length of Grant</b>  |                        |  |
| Pierce Public Schools   | \$25,000               | Title V sub-grantee  |
| St. Elizabeth Health Resources/dba Lancaster County Abstinence Coalition  | \$25,000               | Title V sub-grantee  |
| Youth for Christ, Columbus  | \$25,000               | Title V sub-grantee  |
| City of Norfolk/Community Character Development Coalition<br><br>2002-2005  | \$298,620              | SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)                             |
| Omaha/Council Bluffs Metropolitan YMCA Successful Futures Adolescent Project<br><br>2003-2006<br><br><a href="http://www.metroymca.org">www.metroymca.org</a> | \$599,743              | SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)                             |

**Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator**

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**Nebraska Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

ACLU of Nebraska  
 941 O St., Suite 706  
 Lincoln, NE 68508  
 Phone: (402) 476-8091  
[www.aclunebraska.org](http://www.aclunebraska.org)

Nebraska Planned Parenthood Voters for Choice  
 2246 O St.  
 Lincoln, NE 68510  
 Phone: (402) 441-3328

Religious Coalition for Reproductive  
Choice  
PO Box 31395  
Omaha, NE 68131  
Phone: (402) 320-0070

**Nebraska Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

Family First  
645 M St., Suite 21  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
Phone: (402) 435-3210  
[www.familyfirst.org](http://www.familyfirst.org)

Nebraska Right to Life Committee  
PO Box 80410  
Lincoln, NE 68501  
Phone: (402) 438-4802  
[www.Nebraskartl.org](http://www.Nebraskartl.org)

**Newspapers in Nebraska**

*Columbus Telegram*  
Assignment Editor  
1254 27th Ave.  
Columbus, NE 68601  
Phone: (402) 564-2741

*Fremont Tribune*  
Beverly Lydick  
Education Reporter  
135 N. Main St.  
Fremont, NE 68025  
Phone: (402) 721-5000

*The Grand Island Independent*  
Mike Bockoven  
Medical/Health Reporter  
422 W. 1st St.  
Grand Island, NE 68801  
Phone: (308) 381-9439

*The Hastings Tribune*  
Linda Garcia  
Education Reporter  
908 W. 2nd St.  
Hastings, NE 68901  
Phone: (402) 462-2131

*Kearney Hub*  
Carol Fettin  
Medical/Health Reporter  
13 E. 22nd St.  
Kearney, NE 68847  
Phone: (308) 237-2152

*Lincoln Journal Star*  
Mark Andersen  
Health & Medicine Reporter  
PO Box 81689  
Lincoln, NE 68501  
(402)473-7238

*Lincoln Journal Star*  
Colleen Kenney  
Community News Reporter  
926 P St.  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
Phone: (402) 473-2655

*Norfolk Daily News*  
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525 Norfolk Ave.  
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Phone: (402) 371-1020

*The North Platte Telegraph*  
 Assignment Editor  
 621 N. Chestnut St.  
 North Platte, NE 69101  
 Phone: (308) 532-6000

*Omaha World-Herald*  
 Nichole Aksamit  
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 1334 Dodge St  
 Omaha, NE 68102  
 Phone: (402) 444-1069

*Star-Herald*  
 Maunette Loeks  
 Medical/Health Reporter  
 1405 Broadway  
 Scottsbluff, NE 69361  
 Phone: (308) 632-9054

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> *Nebraska Health Education Frameworks* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Department of Education, 1998), accessed 28 January 2005, <<http://www.nde.state.ne.us/HEALTH/framework.pdf>>.

<sup>3</sup> M. Stoddard, "State Says Abstinence Only Option," *Lincoln (NE) Journal Star*, 13 December 1997.

<sup>4</sup> Martha Kempner, "Fewer Debates About Sexuality Education As Abstinence-Only Programs Take Foothold," *SIECUS Report* 29.6 (2001): 4-5.

<sup>5</sup> Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from: 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/>>.

<sup>6</sup> *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](http://www.guttmacher.org)>.

<sup>7</sup> Mark Miller, et. al., *Nebraska 2003 Statistical Report of Abortions* (Lincoln: Nebraska Health and Human Services System, March 2003), 3, accessed 4 February 2005, <<http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/srd/2003Abortion.pdf>>.

<sup>8</sup> *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>>.

<sup>9</sup> Rose Fuller et al., *FACTS-Middle School Teacher's Edition* (Portland, OR: Northwest Family Services, 2000), 10.

<sup>10</sup> Rose Fuller *FACTS-Middle School Teacher's Edition Appendix* (Portland, OR: Northwest Family Services, 2000), 98.

<sup>11</sup> *USA Ministries*, Youth for Christ, (2004), accessed 13 January 2005, <<http://community.gospelcom.net/Brix?pageID=6552>>.

<sup>12</sup> *Teen Moms*, Youth For Christ Columbus, accessed 13 January 2005, <<http://www.megavision.net/efc/TeenMoms/>>.

<sup>13</sup> *Activities and Accomplishments*, Family First (2003), accessed 13 January 2005, <<http://www.familyfirst.org/activities.shtml>>.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> L. Sather and K. Zinn. "Effects of abstinence-only education on adolescent attitudes and values concerning premarital sexual intercourse," *Family & Community Health* 25 (2002): 12.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Debra Hauser, *Five Years of Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Education: Assessing the Impact* (Washington, D.C: Advocates for Youth, 2004), 14.

<sup>18</sup> *The Content of Federally Funded Abstinence-Only Education Programs*, prepared for Representative Henry A. Waxman, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Government Reform—Minority Staff Special Investigations Division (December 2004), accessed 10 December 2004, <<http://www.democrats.reform.house.gov/Documents/20041201102153-50247.pdf>>.

<sup>19</sup> 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).