



SIECUS PUBLIC POLICY OFFICE

STATE PROFILE

OREGON

Oregon received \$3,022,534 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2006.¹

Oregon Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Oregon does not mandate sexuality education. However, Oregon does require instruction in infectious diseases including HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B and C throughout elementary school, middle school, and high school. Students in grades six through twelve must receive instruction in HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B and C at least annually. Oregon does not suggest or recommend a curriculum; however, Oregon statutes state that when sexuality education courses are taught, they must:

- Be age-appropriate;
- Enhance students' understanding of sexuality as a normal and healthy aspect of human development;
- Include information about how responsible sexual behavior reduces the risk for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), HIV, and pregnancy;
- Teach about abstinence, but not to the exclusion of other material and instruction on contraception and disease reduction measures;
- Acknowledge the value of abstinence while not devaluing or ignoring those young people who have had or are having sexual intercourse;
- Provide the latest medical information regarding the success and failure rates of all forms of contraception;
- Validate through course material and instruction the importance of honesty with oneself and others, respect for each person's dignity and well-being, and responsibility for one's actions; and
- Encourage family communication.

In 2002, the Oregon State Board of Education unanimously voted to revise the Oregon Administrative Rule focusing on HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B and C. The rule is now more focused on educational efforts and states:

- Each school district shall teach an age-appropriate plan of instruction focusing on infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B and C as an integral part of health education and other subjects;
- Instruction must occur through elementary, middle, and senior grade levels;
- Instruction must occur on at least an annual basis and include the latest scientific information;
- Curricula must include information about abstinence, contraception, and other disease reduction measures; and

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- Instruction must be culturally and gender sensitive.

Parents or guardians may remove their children from sexuality education and/or STD/HIV education classes. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See Oregon Statutes 336.35, 336.455, and 336.465 Oregon State Board of Education. Oregon Administrative Rules 581-022-1210 and 581-022-1440, Revised October 17th, 2002: *Infectious Diseases Including Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), and Hepatitis B and C.*

Recent Legislation

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

Events of Note

Family Diversity Photo Exhibit Goes On, Despite Criticism

August 2004; Beaverton, OR

A group of parents, led by a local minister, fought against a photo exhibit on family diversity that was organized by the Beaverton School District. The exhibit, titled “In Our Family: Portraits of All Kinds of Families,” displayed 20 photos of different types of families and included essays by the family members. The school district decided to bring such an exhibit to the community in an attempt to address a controversy the previous year when posters for a local support group for gay teenagers were removed from a classroom. Although the school district originally contemplated creating its own exhibit, ultimately it decided to use one created by the nonprofit group Family Diversity Projects of Amherst, Massachusetts.

The parents who protested were outraged by the three photos of gay and lesbian families included in the exhibit. More than 20 parents attended a school board meeting in December 2003 to demand that the exhibit be cancelled. One parent said, “I’m here to voice my outrage and sadness at this ridiculous idea of forcing this agenda on our children.... I believe homosexuality is morally wrong. You will not teach this to my kids. I will opt out.... It just boils my blood, to be honest.”²

Many parents at the meeting, however, supported the exhibit. One parent, who is also a school psychologist, said that he felt there was a painful silence on the issue at the school, “when we start picking on one group, every group is vulnerable. This is not a gay issue, it’s a people issue.”³

Despite the opposition, the school district went ahead with the exhibit, which was shown to area students and open to the public. The chairman of the board said, “I don’t think its right to focus on any one piece of the overall project. It doesn’t bother me at all. It is truly a very broad quilt of what makes a family.”⁴

Many students, after seeing the exhibit, could not understand why the photos of the gay and lesbian families had caused so much controversy. One high school student said, “It’s just another one of the different types of families. They’re normal.”⁵ A photography teacher at a local magnet school decided to have students create their own version of the exhibit with photos of Beaverton families. The show was displayed at the Beaverton School District’s central office in August through October 2004. The exhibit displayed photos of different types of families in the area, including gay parents, parents in wheelchairs, and interracial couples.

Oregon's Youth: Statistical Information of Note

- In 2000, Oregon's abortion rate was 25 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.⁶
- In 2003, women ages 15–19 accounted for 17% of the 12,622 total abortions performed in Oregon.⁷
- In 2004, Oregon's birth rate was 33 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen birth rate of 41 per 1,000 nationwide.⁸
- In 2002, young people ages 19 or younger accounted for 6% of the 125 new HIV cases reported in Oregon.⁹
- In Oregon, the highest rate of reported Chlamydia infections occurs in young people ages 15–19.¹⁰
- Since instituting a comprehensive approach to sexuality education, the teen pregnancy rate in Oregon has fallen 27% from 19 pregnancies per 1,000 young women ages 10–17 in 1995 to 14 pregnancies per 1,000 girls ages 10–17 in 2000.¹¹
- Between 1995 and 2001, the number of students in grades nine through twelve in Oregon who reported never having sexual intercourse increased by 8%.¹²
- The percentage of current sexually active students in grades nine through twelve who used contraception the last time they had intercourse increased by 12% between 1997 and 2001.¹³

Eleventh-Grade Students¹⁴

- In 2004, 43% of female eleventh-grade students and 40% of male eleventh-grade students in Oregon reported ever having had sexual intercourse.
- In 2004, 2% of female eleventh-grade students and 4% of male eleventh-grade students in Oregon reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13.
- In 2004, 9% of female eleventh-grade students and 10% of male eleventh-grade students in Oregon reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners.
- In 2004, 32% of female eleventh-grade students and 26% of male eleventh-grade students in Oregon reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey).
- In 2004, among those eleventh-grade students in Oregon who reported being currently sexually active, 25% reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse.

- In 2004, among those eleventh-grade students in Oregon who reported being currently sexually active, 64% reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse.
- In 2004, 71% of eleventh-grade students in Oregon reported having been taught about HIV/AIDS in school.

Eighth-Grade Students¹⁵

- In 2004, 12% of female eighth-grade students and 19% of male eighth-grade students in Oregon reported ever having had sexual intercourse.
- In 2004, 5% of female eighth-grade students and 9% of male eighth-grade students in Oregon reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13.
- In 2004, 2% of female eighth-grade students and 4% of male eighth-grade students in Oregon reported having had four or more sexual partners in their lifetime.
- In 2004, 8% of female eighth-grade students and 13% of male eighth-grade students in Oregon reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey).
- In 2004, among those eighth-grade students in Oregon who reported being currently sexually active, 25% reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse.
- In 2004, among those eighth-grade students in Oregon who reported being currently sexually active, 71% reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse.
- In 2004, 82% of eighth-grade students in Oregon reported having been taught about HIV/AIDS in school.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

Oregon received \$487,695 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. Oregon provides \$75,000 in state funds and the remainder of the match is provided by sub-grantees. This money is used by the Oregon Department of Human Services as part of its larger sexuality education program.

The Oregon Department of Human Services' Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program, called "Talk to Them," offers teens and their parents information regarding sexuality. The media campaign accompanying the initiative uses televised public service announcements, billboards, and brochures designed to encourage parents to have a conversation with their teenage children about important issues in life.¹⁶

There are three sub-grantees in Oregon: the Lane Pregnancy Support Center (formerly the Eugene Pregnancy Support Center), Northwest Family Services, and the STARS Foundation. (See the CBAE and AFLA section for information on Lane Pregnancy Support Center.) STARS, administered by the Oregon Department of Human Services, focuses on sixth graders and uses *Postponing Sexual Involvement* (PSI). The STARS Foundation's objectives are:

- To promote a statewide and sustainable base for the program *Students Today Aren't Ready for Sex*; and
- To provide advocacy and resources to the statewide program.¹⁷

The Oregon Department of Human Services emphasizes that the abstinence programs funded by Title V grants are only part of what is needed to prevent teen pregnancy. A memorandum from Sue Abrams of the Department's Adult and Family Services Division to school districts, county health departments, and local teen pregnancy prevention groups discussed how the abstinence programs may be helpful as part of a larger comprehensive program. Abrams stated:

While we believe abstinence education is an important strategy, recent studies have shown that it is most effective as part of a comprehensive sex education program. This is certainly one of the principles strongly expressed by the *Coordinating Team in the Oregon Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Action Agenda 2000*. Oregon's four abstinence programs do not provide information on contraception or reproductive health issues; therefore, they are only part of a comprehensive strategy.

Title V Evaluation

Oregon evaluated its Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in the spring of 2000. The evaluation targeted seventh- and eighth-grade students using the *STARS* curriculum. Oregon's review involved pre-and post-test surveys, but did not include a comparison group. The results suggested that, "the *STARS* program had no influence on behavioral intentions."¹⁸ It concluded that there was "no evidence of a program effect on students' intention to be sexually involved in the future."¹⁹

A subsequent evaluation found similar results. The second evaluation, contracted by the Oregon Department of Human Services, found that "participation in the *STARS* program had the intended short-term impact on student knowledge and attitudes about sexual abstinence."²⁰ However, as in Oregon's previous evaluation, the authors state that "no measurable change in behavioral improvement occurred as a result of exposure to the *STARS* curriculum for the treatment group."²¹

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

There are three CBAE grantees in Oregon: Lane Pregnancy Support Center (formerly the Eugene Pregnancy Support Center), Multnomah County Health Department, and Northwest Family Services (receives two grants). There is one AFLA grantee in Oregon: Northwest Family Services.

Lane Pregnancy Support Center, formerly Eugene Pregnancy Support Center, is a crisis pregnancy center. Crisis pregnancy centers typically advertise as providing medical services and then use anti-abortion propaganda, misinformation, and fear and shame tactics to dissuade women facing unintended pregnancy from exercising their right to choose. Lane Pregnancy Center also runs the "Stop and Think" abstinence-only-until-marriage program.²² Stop and Think has three different age-specific presentations: *DECISION*, which is geared towards junior high students; *REALITY*, which is geared towards high school students; and *LISTEN*, which is geared towards parents and teachers.²³ Stop and Think conducts classroom presentations in junior high schools and small group presentations in high schools.²⁴ Stop and Think does not produce or use a written curriculum.

Northwest Family Services has been conducting abstinence-only-until-marriage programming for nearly 20 years. The organization created the *FACTS* (Family Accountability Communicating Teen Sexuality) curricula which it describes as “a highly successful abstinence project developed under a federally funded demonstration project through a grant from the Department of health (sic) and Human Services (Title XX).”²⁵ SIECUS reviewed the *FACTS: Family Accountability Communicating Teen Sexuality* curricula and found that 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 list of negative consequences of premarital sex:

Pregnancy, financial aspect of fatherhood, abortion, HIV/AIDS, STDs, 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.

FACTS also tells young people in no uncertain terms that life begins when sperm and egg meet: “At conception, the baby came into being. Even though he or she was only the size and appearance of a pencil dot, the baby was a separate, genetically unique individual.”²⁶

Northwest Family Services targets some of its programming to parents and young people in Latino communities. It created the Spanish-language version of *FACTS*, called *DATOS*, and holds assemblies entitled *Promises*.

The organization’s teen website, www.youthsolutions.info, reiterates many of the messages in *FACTS*. Its home page explains, “They [teens] know that abstinence is the only way to avoid all sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancies, and painful heartbreaks.”²⁷ The website also provides a list of emotional responses to sexual activity outside of marriage, including: regret, shame, guilt, worry, heartbreak, anger, and depression.²⁸

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)
Oregon Department of Human Services, Office of Child and Family Health, Adolescent Health Section www.dhs.state.or.us/ publichealth/ah/index.cfm	\$487,695 federal \$75,000 state	Title V
Lane Pregnancy Support Center (formerly Eugene Pregnancy Support Center)	\$37,500	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)
DUAL GRANTEE 2004–2007	\$368,560	CBAE
Northwest Family Services QUADRUPLE GRANTEE 2003–2006	\$37,500 \$789,839	Title V sub-grantee CBAE
QUADRUPLE GRANTEE 2006–2011	\$600,000	CBAE
QUADRUPLE GRANTEE 2002–2007 <u>www.nwfs.org</u>	\$225,000	AFLA
Students Today Aren't Ready for Sex (STARS) <u>www.stars-foundation.org</u>	\$412,695	Title V sub-grantee
Multnomah County Health Department 2006–2011 <u>www.mchealth.org</u>	\$551,440	AFLA

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

John McDaid
 Department of Human Services
 Prevention Services Manager
 500 Summer St., NE
 Salem, OR 97308
 Phone: (503) 280-6781

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Oregon Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Basic Rights Oregon
P.O. Box 40625
Portland, OR 97240
Phone: (503) 222-6151
www.basicrights.org

Cascade AIDS Project
620 South West 5th Ave., Suite 300
Portland, OR 97204
Phone: (503) 223-5907
www.cascadeaids.org

Planned Parenthood of the Columbia
Willamette
3231 South East 50th Ave.
Portland, OR 97206
Phone: (503) 775-4931
www.plannedparenthood.org/ppcw/

Planned Parenthood Health Services of
Southwestern Oregon
360 East 10th, #104
Eugene, OR 97401
Phone: (541) 344-9411
www.pphsso.org

Oregon Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Oregon Right to Life
4335 River Rd. N
Salem, OR 97303
Phone: (503) 463-8563
www.ortl.org

Stronger Families for Oregon
P.O. Box 948
Salem, OR 97308
Phone: (503) 585-9383
www.oregonfamily.org

Newspapers in Oregon

The Oregonian
Andy Dworkin
Health & Medicine Reporter
1320 S.W. Broadway
Portland, OR 97201
Phone: (503) 221-8239

The Oregonian
Michael Rollins
Health & Medicine Editor
1320 S.W. Broadway
Portland, OR 97201
Phone: (503) 294-7612

Statesman Journal
280 Church St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
Phone: (503) 399-6611

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 D. Anderson, "Minister Decries School Exhibit," *The Oregonian*, 10 December 2003.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ David R. Anderson, "Students Don't See Fuss of Photo Exhibit," *The Oregonian*, 3 February 2004.

⁶ 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>>.

⁷ *Oregon Vital Statistics Annual Report 2003, Volume 1* (Portland, OR: Oregon Department of Human Services, Center for Health Statistics, 2004), Table 3-3, accessed 26 January 2007, <<http://www.dhs.state.or.us/dhs/ph/chs/data/arpt/03v1/3-03.pdf>>.

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- ⁸ *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>.
- ⁹ Mark Loveless, et al., *Oregon HIV/AIDS Epidemiologic Profile 2002* (Portland: Oregon Department of Human Services, Data and Analysis Section, 2002), 10, accessed 26 January 2007, <<http://www.dhs.state.or.us/publichealth/hiv/2002.pdf>>.
- ¹⁰ “Sexually Transmitted Disease: Chlamydia,” Oregon Department of Human Services, (2002), accessed 26 January 2007, <www.dhs.state.or.us/publichealth/std/chlamydia.cfm>.
- ¹¹ “Oregon Teen Pregnancy Prevention Action Agenda 2002 Revision,” Oregon Department of Human Services, (March 2002), accessed 26 January 2007, <http://www.dhs.state.or.us/children/teens/tpp/action_agenda/2002/actionagenda2002.pdf>.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ *Oregon Healthy Teen-11th Grade Statewide Survey Results* (Portland, OR: Oregon Department of Human Services, Center for Health Statistics, 2004), 37-45, accessed 26 January 2007, <<http://www.dhs.state.or.us/publichealth/chs/ohteens/2004/11/statewide.pdf>>.
- ¹⁵ *Oregon Healthy Teen-8th Grade Statewide Survey Results*, (Portland, OR: Oregon Department of Human Services, Center for Health Statistics, 2004), 85-91, accessed 26 January 2007, <<http://www.dhs.state.or.us/dhs/ph/chs/youthsurvey/ohteens/2004/8/statewide.pdf>>.
- ¹⁶ “Media Campaign,” Talk to Them, (2003), accessed 31 January 2007, <<http://www.talktothem.org/media-campaign.htm>>.
- ¹⁷ “About Us,” STARS Foundation, (2002), accessed 31 January 2007, <<http://www.stars-foundation.org/about.htm>>.
- ¹⁸ D. Dowler, *Short-Term Impact of STARS (Students Today Aren’t Ready for Sex)* (Portland, OR: Oregon Health Division, Program Design and Evaluation Services, 2000) 10.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Dennis Deck and Christopher Heaps, *Evaluation of the Students Today Aren’t Ready for Sex (STARS) Program* (Portland, OR: RMC Research Corporation, 2004), ix.
- ²¹ Ibid, 13.
- ²² “More Info: Our History,” Stop and Think, (2006), accessed 5 February 2007, <<http://www.stopthink.net/history.html>>.
- ²³ “Programs,” Stop and Think, (2006), accessed 5 February 2007, <<http://www.stopthink.net/program.html>>.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ “Facts,” Northwest Family Services, accessed 6 April 2007, <<http://www.nwfs.org/facts.htm>>.
- ²⁶ Rose Fuller, et al., *FACTS and Reason* (Portland, OR: Northwest Family Services, 2000); Rose Fuller, et al., *I’m in Charge of the FACTS* (Portland, OR: Northwest Family Services, 2000). For more information, see SIECUS’ review of FACTS at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.
- ²⁷ “Teen Talk: Saving Sex,” Northwest Family Services, (2006), accessed 24 January 2007 <<http://www.youthsolutions.info>>.
- ²⁸ Ibid.