



### WEST VIRGINIA

*The Department of Health and Human Services and community-based organizations in West Virginia received \$985,852 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2008.<sup>1</sup>*

#### **West Virginia Sexuality Education Law and Policy**

West Virginia law does not require sexuality education, but does require HIV/AIDS-prevention education in sixth through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. According to a West Virginia legislative rule, “the goal of this policy is to assist in the protection of students by providing them with the knowledge and skills necessary to avoid behaviors that will put them at the risk of infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).”

Each county board must integrate HIV-prevention education into health courses and may also include it in science, development, and social studies courses. Educators conducting classroom instruction about HIV/AIDS must be qualified professionals who participate in staff development to ensure they teach current AIDS information. West Virginia does not require any specific curriculum; however, the board of education’s *Health Content Standards and Objectives* curriculum framework includes sexuality education.

Parents or guardians may remove their children from any part of this instruction by written notification to the principal. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See Legislative Rule of the West Virginia Board of Education 126-50A and 126-50B, West Virginia Board of Education Policies 2422.4, 2422.45, and 2520.5.

#### **Recent Legislation**

##### *Bill Introduces Standards for Faith-Based, Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs*

House Bill 2312, introduced in January 2007, would have required faith-based, abstinence-only-until-marriage, and anti-choice providers and organizations to give full information to “pregnant girls and women” regarding sex education, contraception, abortion, and other subjects. The bill was sent to the House Committee on Health and Human Resources but failed to move and died.

##### *Legislation to Allow Counseling of Students in Sex Education*

House Bill 2538 would have allowed employees of the state board of education or county boards to counsel a student in “basic sex education, societal expectations and roles of men and women, and birth control methods, including abstinence, medications, devices, and abortion,” upon the request of the student or when it appears to be in the student’s best interest. This counseling would have been required to remain confidential. The bill was introduced in January 2007 and sent to the Committee on Education but failed to move and died.

**West Virginia's Youth: Statistical Information of Note<sup>2</sup>**

- In 2007, 53% of female high school students and 54% of male high school students in West Virginia reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 50% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 4% of female high school students and 9% of male high school students in West Virginia 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, 14% of female high school students and 19% of male high school students in West Virginia 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 40% of male high school students in West Virginia 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, 57% of females and 66% of males in West Virginia 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, 31% of females and 18% of males in West Virginia 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, 20% of females and 24% of males in West Virginia 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 West Virginia reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 90% of high school students nationwide.

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

- The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services received \$385,852 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 West Virginia, 25 percent of the match is provided by the state and the remaining 75 percent is made up by sub-grantees through in-kind services.
- There are five sub-grantees in West Virginia: one medical center, two crisis pregnancy centers, and three community-based organizations (including one faith-based).

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

The Gabriel Project of West Virginia, \$47,667 (2008)

The Gabriel Project of West Virginia is a crisis pregnancy center. Crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs) 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. The organization describes itself as, “an ecumenical network of congregations committed to safeguarding and honoring life by offering immediate and practical support to pregnant women and families with infants and young children.” In 2006, Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage dollars made up 21.6 percent of the organization’s funding.<sup>3</sup>

The organization keeps an abstinence educator on staff who is available to schools, school boards, and other community events. The Gabriel Project’s abstinence-only-until-marriage program includes a virginity pledge.<sup>4</sup>

Research has found that 88 percent of young people who took a virginity pledge ultimately had sexual intercourse before marriage. Under certain conditions these pledges may help some adolescents delay sexual intercourse. When they work, pledges help this select group of adolescents delay the onset of sexual intercourse for an average of 18 months—far short of marriage. Researchers found that pledges only worked when taken by a small group of students. Pledges taken by a whole class were ineffective. More importantly, the studies also found that those young people who took a pledge were one-third less likely to use contraception when they did become sexually active than their peers who had not pledged. These teens are therefore more vulnerable to the risks of unprotected sexual activity such as unintended pregnancy and STDs, including HIV/AIDS. Further research has confirmed that although some students who take pledges delay intercourse, ultimately they are equally as likely to contract an STD as their non-pledging peers. The study also found that STD rates were higher in communities where a significant proportion (over 20 percent) of the young people had taken virginity pledges.<sup>5</sup>

The Women’s Care Center, \$47,667 (2008)

Also a crisis pregnancy center, The Women’s Care Center describes itself as a, “Christian, pro-life ministry existing for the purpose of presenting the love and gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed. It is staffed by volunteers, known as advocates, who have received training in crisis intervention.”<sup>6</sup> The organization receives support from the First United Methodist Church of Parkersburg, West Virginia.<sup>7</sup> The Women’s Care Center uses virginity pledges.<sup>8</sup> In 2006, the organization was 14 percent funded by Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage dollars.

Rainelle Medical Center, \$44,667 (2008)

The Rainelle Medical Center’s abstinence-only-until-marriage program reaches four middle and high schools in West Virginia. The program consists of a “Prom Promise Abstinence Pledge.”<sup>9</sup>

Regeneration, Inc., \$95,334 (2008)

Regeneration, Inc. runs “Project CHAT (Communities Hearing Abstinence Truth),” which is both an abstinence-only-until-marriage and character education program. Its slogan is, “Abstinence only education and character education in our communities is improving the quality of life.”<sup>10</sup> The program focuses on “six pillars of good character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship,” and has expanded in recent years to stretch across the state. In 2006, the organization was 89 percent funded by Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage dollars.<sup>11</sup>

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In addition, Regeneration, Inc. operates the West Virginia Marriage Enrichment Initiative.<sup>12</sup> Its mission is to, “Promote activities that support and enhance the well being of West Virginia Children and Families through the development and maintenance of marriage and family skills education.”<sup>13</sup>

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

- There is one CBAE grantee in CBAE: Mission West Virginia.
- There are no AFLA grantees in West Virginia.

Mission West Virginia, \$600,000 (CBAE 2007–2012)

Mission West Virginia describes itself as a “Non-profit organization that collaborates with public and private entities, particularly faith communities, equipping them to utilize existing resources to form new partnerships, encouraging innovative social change, and building stronger communities in West Virginia.”<sup>14</sup> The organization runs several different programs, including E-Impact, a technology initiatives program, and One Church, One Child for adoptive and foster parent recruitment.

**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)
West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services  <a href="http://www.wvdhhr.org">www.wvdhhr.org</a>	\$385,852 federal \$96,463 state	Title V
Community Action of South Eastern West Virginia  <a href="http://www.casewv.org">www.casewv.org</a>	\$47,667	Title V sub-grantee
The Gabriel Project of West Virginia (The Northern Panhandle Coalition for Abstinence Education)  <a href="http://www.gabrielwv.org">www.gabrielwv.org</a>	\$47,667	Title V sub-grantee
Rainelle Medical Center  <a href="http://www.rmchealth.org">www.rmchealth.org</a>	\$44,667	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)
Regeneration, Inc.  <a href="http://www.regenerationministries.org">www.regenerationministries.org</a>	\$95,334	Title V sub-grantee
Women's Care Center  <a href="http://www.yourpregnancychoices.com">www.yourpregnancychoices.com</a>	\$47,667	Title V sub-grantee
Mission West Virginia  2007–2012  <a href="http://www.missionwv.org">www.missionwv.org</a>	\$600,000	CBAE

**Adolescent Health Contact<sup>15</sup>**

Patty McGrew  
Project Coordinator  
West Virginia Abstinence Education Project  
1316 Kanawha Boulevard, Room 39  
Charleston, WV 25301  
Phone: (304) 558-5722

**West Virginia Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

ACLU of West Virginia  
P.O. Box 3952  
Charleston, WV 25339  
Phone: (304) 345-9246  
[www.acluww.org](http://www.acluww.org)

Inside and OUT  
P.O. Box 5835  
Huntington, WV 25703  
Phone: (304) 523-3121  
[www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/6273/Lr.htm](http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/6273/Lr.htm)

Rainbow Pride of West Virginia  
P.O. Box 2624  
Charleston, WV 25329  
Phone: (304) 345-9938  
[www.pridewv.org](http://www.pridewv.org)

West Virginia Lesbian and Gay Coalition  
P.O. Box 11033  
Charleston, WV 25339  
Phone: (304) 343-7305

## West Virginia Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

West Virginia Family Foundation  
P.O. Box 3421  
Charleston, WV 25334  
Phone: (304) 965-6700  
[www.wvfamily.org](http://www.wvfamily.org)

West Virginians for Life  
427 Spruce Street  
Morgantown, WV 26505  
Phone: (304) 291-LIFE  
[www.wvforLife.org](http://www.wvforLife.org)

## Newspapers in West Virginia<sup>16</sup>

*Charleston Daily Mail*  
Newsroom  
1001 Virginia Street E  
Charleston, WV 25301  
Phone: (304) 348-4830  
[www.dailymail.com](http://www.dailymail.com)

*Charleston Gazette*  
Newsroom  
1001 Virginia Street E  
Charleston, WV 25301  
Phone: (304) 348-5100  
[www.wvgazette.com](http://www.wvgazette.com)

*Dominion Post*  
Newsroom  
1251 Earl L. Core Road  
Morgantown, WV 26505  
Phone: (304) 291-9425  
[www.dominionpost.com](http://www.dominionpost.com)

*Herald-Dispatch*  
Newsroom  
946 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Huntington, WV 25701  
Phone: (304) 526-2773  
[www.herald-dispatch.com](http://www.herald-dispatch.com)

*News and Sentinel*  
Newsroom  
519 Juliana Street  
Parkersburg, WV 26101  
Phone: (304) 485-1891  
[www.nesandsentinel.com](http://www.nesandsentinel.com)

*Wheeling News-Register*  
Newsroom  
1500 Main Street  
Wheeling, WV 26003  
Phone: (304) 233-0100  
[www.news-register.com](http://www.news-register.com)

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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>>.

<sup>3</sup> The Gabriel Project of West Virginia, 990 Form, 2006, p.1.

<sup>4</sup> "Abstinence Program," The Gabriel Project of West Virginia, accessed 12 October 2008, <<http://www.gabrielwv.org/>>.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Bearman and Hannah Brückner "Promising the Future: Virginitiy Pledges and the Transition to First Intercourse." *American Journal of Sociology* 106.4 (2001): 859-912; Peter Bearman and Hannah Brückner, "After the promise: The STD consequences of adolescent virginitiy pledges," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 36.4 (2005): 271-278.

<sup>6</sup> "About Us," Women's Care Center, accessed 12 October 2008, <<http://www.yourpregnancychoices.com/about.html>>.

<sup>7</sup> "Missionary Outreach," First United Methodist Church, accessed 12 October 2008, <<http://www.fumcparkersburg.org/missions.html>>.

<sup>8</sup> "Women's Care Center," Guidestar, (2006), accessed 12 October 2008, <<http://www.guidestar.org/pqShowGsReport.do?partner=guidestar&npold=418075>>.

<sup>9</sup> "State of West Virginia Plan for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families," State of West Virginia, accessed 12 October 2008, <[http://www.wvdhhr.org/bcf/family\\_assistance/documents/stateplan\\_2006\\_2008\\_tanf.pdf](http://www.wvdhhr.org/bcf/family_assistance/documents/stateplan_2006_2008_tanf.pdf)>.

<sup>10</sup> "Project CHAT," Regeneration, Inc., accessed 12 October 2008, <<http://www.regenerationwv.org/ProjectCHAT/tabid/168/Default.aspx>>.

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<sup>11</sup> “Regeneration, Inc.,” Guidestar, accessed 12 October 2008, <<http://www.guidestar.org/pqShowGsReport.do?partner=guidestar&npId=100767760>>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> “About Us,” Mission West Virginia, accessed 12 October 2008, <<http://linux.missionwv.org/?q=node/4>>.

<sup>15</sup> SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

<sup>16</sup> 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](#).