



ALASKA

The Department of Health and Social Services and community-based organizations in Alaska received \$752,346 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2007.¹

Alaska Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Alaska does not have a law that governs sexuality education; therefore, schools are not required to teach sexuality or sexually transmitted disease (STD) education. However, “the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development’s health education team is committed to providing teachers and school staff within the state of Alaska with current and scientifically sound research in health education and violence and disease prevention.”² The Department endorses “Programs that Work,”³ a list compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), though it “does not endorse specific curricula, but seeks to provide districts with the most up-to-date materials and research-based programs so schools can evaluate what best meets the needs of their student population.”⁴

In addition, the Alaska content standards, *Skills for a Healthy Life*, states that students should, among other things:

- understand the physical and behavioral characteristics of human sexual development and maturity;
- develop an awareness of how personal life roles are affected by and contribute to the well-being of families, communities, and cultures;
- understand how respect for the rights of self and others contributes to relationships; and
- take responsible actions to create safe and healthy environments.

Alaska neither requires parental permission for students to participate in sexuality or HIV/AIDS education nor does it say whether parents or guardians may remove their children from such classes.

See *School Health: Health Education Program*, Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

Recent Legislation

Legislation Includes Desired Results for Sex Education and Teen Health Outcomes

Senate Bill 279, introduced in February of 2006 and referred to the Senate Committees on Finance and State Affairs, aims to set the missions and desired results when departments within the state spend money. Desired results for the Department of Education and Early Development would include ensuring that parents have easy and ready access to all sexuality education materials taught at their schools, that parents are provided the opportunity to remove their children from sexuality

education courses, and that all students attend mandatory classes that explain the benefits of sexual abstinence. Desired results for the Department of Health and Social Services would include informing all minors of the benefits of delaying sexual activity and limiting the number of sexual partners, minimizing sexual intercourse by unmarried minors, and ensuring that sexual abstinence is taught to all minors. Desired outcomes for the Governor's office would include reducing the number of teen pregnancies by seven percent per year until teen pregnancies represent not more than two percent of all pregnancies each year. The bill was referred to the Committee on State Affairs in February 2007 but has not been heard.

Events of Note

SIECUS is not aware of any recent events regarding sexuality education in Alaska.

Alaska's Youth: Statistical Information of Note⁵

- In 2007, 46% of female high school students and 44% of male high school students in Alaska 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 5% of male high school students in Alaska 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 13% of male high school students in Alaska 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 27% of male high school students in Alaska 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, 22% of females and 23% of males in Alaska 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, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 59% of females and 63% of males in Alaska 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, 27% of females and 18% of males in Alaska 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, 86% of high school students in Alaska 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 Alaska Department of Health and Social Services received \$88,501 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 Alaska, the state provides part of the match with direct state revenues. In addition, the single sub-grantee matches its grant with in-kind donations.

In Fiscal Year 2007, there was one Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage sub-grantee in Alaska, Kids are People (KAP). This organization then disbursed funds to six schools in Alaska to provide abstinence-only-until-marriage programs to junior and high school students. The programs use two curricula: *Postponing Sexual Involvement (PSI)* and *Managing Pressures Before Marriage*.

The KAP program operated until January 2007 when it decided no longer to run its abstinence-only-until-marriage program. The decision was made because of the tightened requirements for the Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage grant. Due to a lack of applicants for the funds, the future of Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Alaska is unclear.

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

There is one CBAE grantee in Alaska: the Crisis Pregnancy Center of Anchorage and Eagle River. There are no AFLA grantees in Alaska.

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.

Crisis Pregnancy Center of Anchorage and Eagle River has a video on its website entitled “Call Us for Answers.” The video lists a series of questions specifically about abortion, including:

- Will it work?
- What are the health risks? Emotional risks?
- Are you really even pregnant?
- Is it even a viable pregnancy?

The video also states that the CPC is neither pro-choice nor pro-life, but “Pro-Woman.” However, when listing “your options,” the video only details adoption and parenting, thereby showing a bias against abortion. This bias is clear on other portions of the website as well. . For example, CPC of Anchorage states “abortion may, at first, seem like the easiest way to deal with an unplanned pregnancy; however, abortion is not just a simple procedure. For many women, it is a life-changing event with significant physical, emotional, and spiritual/moral consequences.”⁶

The organization offers several abstinence-only-until-marriage programs. One program, “Sex, Love & Relationships,” is for “teens that are making first-time sexual integrity decisions and those needing help to recommit to sexual integrity by ‘starting over.’”⁷ The program consists of two, one-hour sessions with a CPC peer counselor and a follow-up parent packet.

Another abstinence-only-until-marriage program, “Wise Choices,” is aimed at older teens and singles in their twenties who “ want to preserve or recommit to sexual integrity until marriage.”⁸ This program also consists of two, one- hour sessions with a CPC peer counselor.

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The “Let’s Talk” abstinence-only-until-marriage program is conducted throughout Alaska in public and private groups. “Let’s Talk” involves speaker programs in middle schools and high schools, parents counseling, and community outreach. The schools program is also available in Spanish.⁹

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)
The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services www.hss.state.ak.us	\$88,501 federal \$66,000 state	Title V
Kids Are People (KAP)	\$42,000	Title V sub-grantee
“Let’s Talk” Abstinence Program/Crisis Pregnancy Center of Anchorage and Eagle River 2005–2008 www.cpcanchorage.com www.letstalkalaska.com	\$663,845	CBAE

Adolescent Health Contact¹⁰

Stephanie Wheeler
Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
Division of Public Health, Section of Women’s, Children’s and Family Health
4701 Business Park Blvd.
Anchorage, AK 99503
Phone: (907) 269-3461

Alaska Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

ACLU of Alaska
P.O. Box 201844
Anchorage, AK 99520
Phone: (907) 276-2258
www.akclu.org

Alaska Alliance for Reproductive Justice
P.O. Box 232676
Anchorage, AK 99523
Phone (907) 334-3055
www.alaskaprochoice.org

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Juneau Pro-Choice Coalition
P.O. Box 22860
Juneau, AK 99802
Phone: (907) 463-1548
<http://juneauchoice.com>

Planned Parenthood of Alaska
4001 Lake Otis Parkway
Anchorage, AK 99508
Phone: (907) 563-2229
www.plannedparenthoodalaska.org

Alaska Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Alaska Interior Right to Life
P.O. Box 81566
Fairbanks, AK 99708
Phone: (907) 479-LIFE
www.righttolifeinterior.com

Alaska Right to Life
3400 Spenard Rd., Suite 4
Anchorage, AK 99503
Phone: (907) 276-1912
www.alaskarighttolife.org

Newspapers in Alaska¹¹

Anchorage Daily News
Newsroom
P.O. Box 149001
Anchorage, AK 99514
Phone: (907) 257-4300
www.adn.com

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner
Newsroom
200 N. Cushman St.
Fairbanks, AK 99701
Phone: (907) 459-7572
www.newsminer.com

Juneau Empire
Newsroom
3100 Channel Dr.
Juneau, AK 99801
Phone: (907) 586-3740
www.juneauempire.com

Ketchikan Daily News
Newsroom
501 Dock ST.
P.O. Box 7900
Ketchikan, AK 99901
Phone: (907) 225-3157
www.ketchikandailynews.com

Kodiak Daily Mirror
Newsroom
1419 Selig St.
Kodiak, AK 99615
Phone: (907) 486-3227 ext. 1037
www.kodiakdailymirror.com

Peninsula Clarion
Newsroom
Kenai, AK 99611
Phone: (907) 283-7551
www.peninsulaclarion.com

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 State of Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, "School Health: Other Health Education Programs and Related Information," 31 October 2006, accessed 26 January 2007, <<http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/schoolhealth/otherhealthprograms.html>>.

³ The CDC no longer sponsors "Programs That Work." Although these programs were proven effective, information about them has been removed from the CDC website. For more information, contact the SIECUS Public Policy office.

⁴ State of Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, “School Health: Other Health Education Programs and Related Information.”

⁵ 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>>.

⁶ “Considering Abortion?” Crisis Pregnancy Center Anchorage, accessed 28 January 2008, <http://www.cpcanchorage.com/considering_abortion.html>.

⁷ “Wise Sexual Choices,” Crisis Pregnancy Center Anchorage, accessed 4 April 2008, <http://www.cpcanchorage.com/wise_sexual_choices.html>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ “Programs,” Let’s Talk, accessed 4 April 2008, <<http://www.letstalkalaska.com/programs/index.html>>.

¹⁰ SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

¹¹ 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](#).