



ARKANSAS

Arkansas Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Arkansas law does not require schools to teach sexuality education or sexually transmitted disease (STD)/HIV education. If a school offers sexuality or STD/HIV education, it must stress abstinence, as “it is the policy of the State of Arkansas to discourage . . . sexual activity by students.”¹ Furthermore, every public school sex education and HIV/AIDS-prevention education program must “emphasize premarital abstinence as the only sure means of avoiding pregnancy and the sexual contraction of acquired immune deficiency syndrome and other sexually transmitted diseases.”²

In order to be accredited by the Arkansas Board of Education, public schools must offer health and safety education, and students are required to complete one-half unit of health and safety in order to graduate high school. Arkansas maintains curriculum standards for physical and health education which address STDs and HIV beginning in grade five. The standards stress the importance of abstinence as well as the possible physical, emotional, and social consequences of sexual activity. Specific course content is left to the discretion of the local school districts.

Local school boards are empowered to establish school-based health clinics, which may provide sexuality education. Such education must include instruction on abstinence.³ School-based health clinics may also prescribe and distribute contraceptives with written parental consent; however, no state funds may be used to purchase condoms or contraceptives.⁴ Whether or not a school-based health clinic teaches sexuality education or distributes contraceptives is left to the discretion of the school board. Clinics must not provide abortion referrals.⁵

Arkansas does not require 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 Arkansas Code § 6-18-703, the *Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts*, the *K–8 Physical Education and Health Curriculum Framework*, and the *Health and Safety Curriculum Framework* for grades nine through 12.

Recent Legislation

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

Arkansas’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note⁶

- In 2009, 51% of female high school students and 56% of male high school students in Arkansas reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 46% of male high school students nationwide.

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- In 2009, 7% of female high school students and 14% of male high school students in Arkansas reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 3% of female high school students and 8% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2009, 16% of female high school students and 21% of male high school students in Arkansas reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 11% of female high school students and 16% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2009, 40% of female high school students and 38% of male high school students in Arkansas 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 33% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2009, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 47% of females and 72% of males in Arkansas reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 54% of females and 69% of males nationwide.
- In 2009, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 23% of females and 16% of males in Arkansas reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 23% of females and 16% of males nationwide.
- In 2009, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 20% of females and 21% of males in Arkansas reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 17% of females and 26% of males nationwide.
- In 2009, 82% of high school students in Arkansas reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 87% of high school students nationwide.

Arkansas Youth Sexual Health Statistics

Teen Pregnancy, Birth, and Abortion

- Arkansas's teen pregnancy rate ranks 8th in the U.S., with a rate of 80 pregnancies per 1,000 young women ages 15–19 compared to the national rate of 70 pregnancies per 1,000.⁷ There were a total of 7,670 pregnancies among young women ages 15–19 reported in 2005, the most recent year for which data is available, in Arkansas.⁸
- Arkansas's teen birth rate ranked 5th in the U.S. in 2005, with a rate of 59.1 births per 1,000 young women ages 15–19 compared to the national rate of 40.5 births per 1,000.⁹ In 2005, there were a total of 5,646 live births reported to young women ages 15–19 in 2005 in Arkansas.¹⁰
- In 2006, the U.S. teen birth rate increased for the first time in 15 years by 3% from 40.5 to 41.9 births per 1,000 young women ages 15–19, after having steadily declined between 1991 and 2005.¹¹ In contrast, Arkansas's teen birth rate increased 5% between 2005 and 2006, from 59.1 to 62.3 births per 1,000 young women ages 15–19.¹²
- Arkansas's teen abortion rate ranks 34th in the U.S., with a rate of 9 abortions per 1,000 young women ages 15–19 compared to the national rate of 19 abortions per 1,000. In 2005, there were a total of 910 abortions reported among young women ages 15–19 in Arkansas.¹³

HIV and AIDS

- Arkansas ranks 30th in cases of HIV infection diagnosed in the U.S. among all age groups. In 2007, there were a total of 180 new cases of HIV infection diagnosed.¹⁴
- Arkansas ranks 20th in cases of HIV/AIDS diagnosed among young people ages 13–19 out of the 34 states with confidential, name-based HIV infection reporting. In 2007, there were a total of 13 young people ages 13–19 diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in Arkansas.¹⁵
- Arkansas’s AIDS rate ranks 26th in the U.S., with a rate of 6.9 cases per 100,000 population compared to the national rate of 12.5 cases per 100,000.¹⁶
- Arkansas ranks 33rd in number of reported AIDS cases in the U.S. among all age groups. In 2007, there were a total of 196 new AIDS cases reported in Arkansas.¹⁷
- Arkansas ranks 29th in number of reported AIDS cases in the U.S. among young people ages 13–19. In 2007, there were a total of 2 AIDS cases reported among young people ages 13–19 in Arkansas.¹⁸

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

- Arkansas ranks 5th in reported cases of Chlamydia among young people ages 15–19 in the U.S., with an infection rate of 27.37 cases per 1,000 compared to the national rate of 19.51 cases per 1,000. In 2008, there were a total of 5,408 cases of Chlamydia reported among young people ages 15–19 in Arkansas.¹⁹
- Arkansas ranks 7th in reported cases of gonorrhea among young people ages 15–19 in the U.S., with an infection rate of 7.57 cases per 1,000 compared to the national rate of 4.52 cases per 1,000. In 2008, there were a total of 1,496 cases of gonorrhea reported among young people ages 15–19 in Arkansas.²⁰
- Arkansas ranks 10th in reported cases of primary and secondary syphilis among young people ages 15–19 in the U.S., with an infection rate of 0.06 cases per 1,000 compared to the national rate of 0.04 cases per 1,000. In 2008, there were a total of 11 cases of syphilis reported among young people ages 15–19 in Arkansas.²¹

Comprehensive Approaches to Sex Education

SIECUS is not aware of any examples of model programs, policies, or best practices being implemented in Arkansas public schools that provide a more comprehensive approach to sex education for young people.

We encourage you to submit any updated or additional information on comprehensive approaches to sex education being implemented in Arkansas public schools for inclusion in future publications of the SIECUS State Profiles. Please visit SIECUS’ “Contact Us” webpage at www.siecus.org to share information. Select “state policy” as the subject heading.

Federal Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs

The Department of Health and community-based organizations in Arkansas received \$3,157,291 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2009.²²

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Title V Abstinence-Only-Until Marriage Funding

- Arkansas received \$440,850 in federal Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funding in Fiscal Year 2009. Due to the expiration of the grant program on June 30, 2009, three months prior to the end of the federal fiscal year, the state received three quarters of the total funding allocated for the full fiscal year.
- The Arkansas Department of Health distributes federal Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funds to six sub-grantees, including five community-based organizations and one school district.
- The Title V abstinence-only-until marriage grant required states to provide three state-raised dollars or the equivalent in services for every four federal dollars received. The state match could have been provided in part or in full by local groups.
- In Arkansas, sub-grantees contributed to the match through a combination of direct revenue and in-kind services.

Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE) Funding

- Organizations in Arkansas received \$2,362,500 in CBAE funding for Fiscal Year 2009.
- There are five CBAE grantees in Arkansas, including two community-based organizations, two faith-based organizations, and one school district.

Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Funding

- There is one AFLA grantee in Arkansas, Healthy Connections, which received \$353,941 in AFLA funding for Fiscal Year 2009.

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Curricula Used by Grantees

Some abstinence-only-until-marriage grantees in Arkansas use commercially available curricula. These include, but are not limited to:

- *Choosing the Best*

To read reviews of abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula commonly used by federal grantees please visit the “Curricula and Speaker Reviews” webpage of SIECUS’ Community Action Kit at www.communityactionkit.org.

Federal Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2009²³

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Title V	CBAE (Length of Grant)	AFLA (Length of Grant)
Arkansas Department of Health www.healthyearkansas.com	\$440,850 (federal grant)		
Boys and Girls Club of El Dorado, Inc. www.bgceldorado.com	\$16,612 (sub-grant)		

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Title V	CBAE (Length of Grant)	AFLA (Length of Grant)
CALEB Initiative/Greater Fellowship Ministries		\$350,000 (2006–2011)	
Earle School District — Abstinence Education Program www.youthempowermentinitiative.org	\$15,699 (sub-grant)	\$300,000 (2007–2012)	
Excel Upward, Inc.	\$34,890 (sub-grant)		
Healthy Connections www.healthy-connections.org			\$353,941 (2007–2012)
Prim N Proper, Inc./Choosing to EXCEL www.choosingtoexcel.com	\$11,699 (sub-grant)	\$600,000 (2008–2013)	
Prevention Education Programs	\$34,761 (sub-grant)		
Reality Check, Inc. www.realitycheckinc.org		\$600,000 (2007–2012)	
Tree of Life Preventive Health Maintenance, Inc. (d.b.a. Hannah House) www.hannahhouseark.org		\$512,500 (2008–2013)	
Yorktown Community Development Center	\$12,000 (sub-grant)		

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Adolescent Health Contact²⁴

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Arkansas Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

ACLU of Arkansas
904 West 2nd Street
Little Rock, AR 72201
Phone: (501) 374-2660
www.acluarkansas.org

NWA Center for Equality
PO Box 9014
Fayetteville, AR 72703
Phone: (479) 966-9014
www.nwacenterforequality.org

Planned Parenthood Greater
Memphis Region
1407 Union, Suite 300
Memphis, TN 38104
Phone: (901) 725-1717
www.plannedparenthood.org/memphis

Arkansas Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Family Council of Arkansas
414 South Pulaski Street, Suite 2
Little Rock, AR 72201
Phone: (501) 375-7000
www.familycouncil.org

Greater Fellowship Ministries
2401 South Main Street
Pine Bluff, AR 71601
Phone: (870) 850-7447

Reality Check, Inc.
903B North Bloomington
Suite 102
Lowell, AR 72745
Phone: (479) 631-7885
www.realitycheckinc.org

Tree of Life Preventative Health Maintenance
412 South 17th Street, Suite 3
Fort Smith, AR 72910
Phone: (479) 782-3309

Newspapers in Arkansas²⁵

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
Newsroom
P.O. Box 2221
Little Rock, AR 72203
Phone: (501) 378-3568
www2.arkansasonline.com

Jonesboro Sun
Newsroom
518 Carson Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401
Phone: (870) 935-5525
www.jonesborosun.com

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The Morning News
Newsroom
2560 N. Lowell Road
Springdale, AR 72764
Phone: (479) 872-5036
www.nwaonline.net

The Sentinel-Record
Newsroom
300 Spring Street
Hot Springs National Park, AR 71901
Phone: (501) 623-7711
www.hotsr.com

Times Record
Newsroom
3600 Wheeler Avenue
Fort Smith, AR 72901
Phone: (479) 785-7748
www.swtimes.com

Political Blogs in Arkansas

Arkansas Blog
www.arktimes.com/blogs/arkansasblog

Street Jazz
www.arktimes.com/blogs/streetjazz

¹ Ark. Code § 6-18-703(d), <<http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/assembly/ArkansasCode/6/6-18-703.htm>>.

² Ibid.

³ Ark. Code § 6-18-703(a)(3).

⁴ Ark. Code § 6-18-703(c)(1).

⁵ Ark. Code § 6-18-703(a)(3).

⁶ Danice K. Eaton, et. al., “Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2009,” *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 59, no. SS-5 (4 June 2010): 98–109, accessed 4 June 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss5905.pdf>>.

⁷ U.S. *Teenage Pregnancies, Births, and Abortions: National and State Trends and Trends by Race and Ethnicity*, (Washington, DC: Guttmacher Institute, January 2010), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/USTPtrends.pdf>>, Table 3.1.

⁸ Ibid., Table 3.2.

⁹ Joyce A. Martin, et. al., “Births: Final Data for 2006,” *National Vital Statistics Reports*, vol. 57, number 7 (Hyattsville, MD: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 7 January 2009), accessed 5 March 2010, <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr57/nvsr57_07.pdf>, Table B.

¹⁰ Ibid., Table 12.

¹¹ Martin, et. al., “Births: Final Data for 2006,” 4.

¹² Guttmacher Institute, Table 3.2.

¹³ U.S. *Teenage Pregnancies, Births, and Abortions: National and State Trends and Trends by Race and Ethnicity*, Table 3.5.

¹⁴ “Cases of HIV Infection and AIDS in the United States and Dependent Areas, 2007,” *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report*, vol. 19, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, February 2009), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/reports/2007report/pdf/2007SurveillanceReport.pdf>>, Table 18.

¹⁵ Slide 6: “Estimated Numbers of HIV/AIDS Cases among Adolescents 13 to 19 Years of Age, 2007—34 States,” *HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Adolescents and Young Adults (through 2007)*, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 2009), accessed 25 March 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/slides/adolescents/index.htm>>.

¹⁶ Ibid.; “AIDS Case Rate per 100,000 Population, All Ages, 2007,” (Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://www.statehealthfacts.org/comparetable.jsp?ind=513&cat=11&sub=120&yr=62&typ=1&sort=a>>.

¹⁷ Ibid., Table 16.

¹⁸ Slide 15: “Reported AIDS Cases among Adolescents 13 to 19 Years of Age, 2007—United States and Dependent Areas,” *HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Adolescents and Young Adults (through 2007)*, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 2009), accessed 25 March 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/slides/adolescents/index.htm>>.

¹⁹ “Wonder Database: Selected STDs by Age, Race/Ethnicity, and Gender, 1996-2008 Results,” (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 30 June 2009), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://wonder.cdc.gov/>>; see also Table 10: “Chlamydia: Reported Cases and Rates Per 100,000 Population by Age Group and Sex: United States, 2004–2008,” *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2008*, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of STD Prevention, November 2009), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats08/surv2008-Complete.pdf>>, 95.

²⁰ Ibid; see also Table 20: “Gonorrhea—Reported Cases and Rates per 100,000 Population by Age Group and Sex: United States, 2004–2008,” *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2008*, 106.

²¹ Ibid; see also Table 33: “Primary and Secondary Syphilis—Reported Cases and Rates per 100,000 Population by Age Group and Sex: United States, 2004–2008,” *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2008*, 121.

²² This refers to the federal government’s fiscal year, which begins on October 1st and ends on September 30th. The fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends; for example, Fiscal Year 2009 began on October 1, 2008 and ended on September 30, 2009.

²³ Through the Fiscal Year 2010 appropriations process, Congress eliminated all discretionary funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs, including the entire CBAE program and the abstinence-only-until-marriage portion of AFLA. The grant years listed in the chart reflect the years for which funding was originally approved; however, the grants effectively ended in Fiscal Year 2009.

²⁴ SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

²⁵ 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](#).