



SIECUS

State Profile

COLORADO

Community-based organizations in Colorado received \$3,727,332 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2008.¹

Colorado Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Colorado schools are not required to teach sexuality or sexually transmitted disease (STD) education. Colorado law states that districts can decide whether to teach sexuality education and may address the subject in preschool through 12th grade. Colorado law also states that when offered, sexuality education classes must use curricula that are science-based, age-appropriate, culturally sensitive, medically accurate, and address the topics of both abstinence and contraception, including emergency contraception (EC).

The Colorado Department of Education is charged with providing guidelines as to the length of courses, the subjects included, and the manner in which these subjects are addressed. The department also provides guidelines on teacher training in sexuality education that include information about high-risk behaviors. Under Colorado law, whenever sexuality education and/or human reproduction are taught, teachers must emphasize abstinence.

Parents or guardians must be notified if a sexuality education course is taught and given an opportunity to review the curriculum. Parents or guardians may remove their children from sexuality education or STD/HIV education classes by sending written notice to the school. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See Colorado Statutes 22-25-104, 22-25-106, 22-25-110 and 25-4-1405.

Recent Legislation

Bill Requires Sex Education to be Scientifically and Medically Accurate

House Bill 1292, introduced in February 2007, requires schools that offer sexuality education to develop scientifically and medically accurate curricula which stress abstinence and also discuss the health benefits of using contraception. It applies to all Colorado district schools, charter schools, and institute schools that offer curricula on human sexuality. However, it allows charter schools to appeal to the state board of education in order to be allowed to create a narrower sexuality education curriculum. The Colorado law also includes an “opt-out” clause, allowing parents to remove their children from sexuality education classes. Governor Bill Ritter, Jr. (D) signed the bill into law on May 14, 2007.

Colorado's Youth: Statistical Information of Note²

- In 2005, 37% of female high school students and 41% of male high school students in Colorado reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 2% of female high school students and 7% of male high school students in Colorado reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 4% of female high school students and 9% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 9% of female high school students and 14% of male high school students in Colorado reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 12% of female high school students and 17% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 29% of female high school students and 29% of male high school students in Colorado reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 35% of female high school students and 33% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 60% of females and 79% of males in Colorado reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 56% of females and 70% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 22% of females and 10% of males in Colorado reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 15% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 22% of females and 31% of males in Colorado reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 19% of females and 28% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, 85% of high school students in Colorado reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

- Colorado was eligible for \$488,314 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.
- Colorado, however, chose not to apply for these funds due to the extraordinary restrictions placed upon how the money must be spent. Therefore, the state does not match funds nor does it have organizations supported by this type of federal money.

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

- There are four CBAE grantees in Colorado: Friends First, Life Network, WAIT Training, and the Young Men’s Christian Association of Pueblo, Colorado.
- There are three AFLA grantees in Colorado: Friends First, Inc., Colorado State University - Cooperative Extension, and Colorado State University at Fort Collins.

SIECUS has compiled some examples of the use of CBAE and AFLA funding in Colorado:

Life Network, \$402,700 (CBAE 2008–2013)

Life Network is a faith-based organization in Colorado Springs that operates outreach programs and two crisis pregnancy centers. Crisis pregnancy centers typically advertise as providing medical services to women facing unintended pregnancies but use anti-abortion propaganda, misinformation, and fear and shame tactics to dissuade women from exercising their right to choose. Life Network identifies as a “sanctity of life ministry” and has as its mission “[to] impact and transform people with the love of Christ.” Life Network’s CBAE grant increased its overall budget by more than 200 percent.³

On its website, Life Network states that it “exists to enforce the value placed on human life by our Creator, from conception to natural death. We desire to reclaim the fact that our individual worth is firmly established on the basis of the nature of God, who has left his impression on us.” Some of the organization’s main objectives include “actively representing and presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ;” “providing positive alternative choices to abortion with the specific goal of preserving the lives of the unborn;” “actively heightening awareness of the sacredness of human life through our prevention, intervention, restoration and education out-reaches;” and “encouraging, equipping and partnering with the local body of Christ to promote sexual integrity, the value of human life and restoration of the family unit.”⁴

The president of Life Network, Raul Reyes, was the president of the Pregnancy Center of Pinellas County in Pinellas Park, Florida for 14 years and was also one of the organization’s founding board members. He has also worked for the national Far Right organization Focus on the Family as the assistant to the president in the public affairs department. His wife, Christie Reyes, is the executive director of Life Network and was another founding board member of the Pregnancy Center of Pinellas County. She worked as the abstinence director for the Pregnancy Center of Pinellas County and has also worked for a crisis pregnancy center in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Life Network operates the “Education for a Lifetime (EFL)” abstinence-only-until-marriage program, which is used in schools in seven public school districts as well as private and alternative schools. EFL began in 1992 when a volunteer of the Colorado Springs Pregnancy Center began teaching abstinence classes to students. Life Network received an early CBAE grant to develop and sustain its abstinence-only-until-marriage program. The grant provided \$1,895,619 over three years to the program.

The *Life Network 2007 Annual Report* states that the abstinence-only-until-marriage program was delivered to 7,789 students and 3,090 American soldiers.⁵ EFL relies on volunteers and teachers trained in the EFL program to deliver their program. It is taught over a four-day period, with each class lasting 50 minutes; it uses the *ASPIRE* curriculum.⁶

SIECUS reviewed the *ASPIRE: Live your life. Be free* curriculum and found that it is based on one set of values and opinions—that marriage should be everyone’s ultimate goal and that sex outside of marriage is wrong—which it tries to pass off as universally held truths. In an effort to convince students that these opinions are facts, the curriculum provides incomplete and biased information, promotes fear and shame, and undermines young people’s confidence in their own decision-making abilities. For example, students are asked which life decision—college, career, or marriage—will have the most impact on their life. The

answer is marriage because “College is for a few years, and you may have a number of careers. But marriage is for life.”⁷

EFL also runs Team Engage for high school students. The program involves youth who have committed “to a lifestyle free of illegal drugs, underage alcohol consumption, and sexual activity of all kinds until marriage.” Each participant must sign a contract stating their commitment to a lifestyle of abstinence in order to join the group. An adult leadership team mentors the high school students and hosts events for members. Team Engage also works to develop “En-groups” at local high schools, which serve as accountability groups for students.

WAIT Training, \$599,450 (CBAE 2006–2011)

WAIT Training is a Colorado-based organization that provides abstinence-only-until-marriage programs and skills training for healthy marriages. Founded by Joneen Mackenzie RN, BSN, the organization receives grants from five different federal funding streams for a number of projects including a Healthy Marriage Project, community-based abstinence-only-until marriage programs, and the development of its *WAIT (Why Am I Tempted?) Training* curriculum. The *WAIT Training* curriculum is used by abstinence-only-until-marriage programs across the country.⁸

SIECUS reviewed *WAIT Training* and found that it contains little medical or biological information and almost no information about STDs, including HIV/AIDS. Instead, it contains information and statistics about marriage, many of which are outdated and not supported by scientific research. It also contains messages of fear and shame and biased views of gender, sexual orientation, and family type. For example, *WAIT Training* explains, “men sexually are like microwaves and women sexually are like crockpots....A woman is stimulated more by touch and romantic words. She is far more attracted by a man’s personality while a man is stimulated by sight. A man is usually less discriminating about those to whom he is physically attracted.”⁹

WAIT Training’s CBAE grant funds the “Healthy Futures, Healthy Families” abstinence-only-until-marriage program, which targets African-American youth, Latino/a youth, and youth in rural areas of Colorado. The program follows a Community Saturation Model, which involves community stakeholders, parents, teachers, and schools in efforts to promote abstinence until marriage for youth. Through Healthy Future, Healthy Families, WAIT Training partners with school districts and community-based organizations, including HIV prevention organizations, faith-based organizations, community health clinics, and hospitals to disseminate its abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula. Staff members from many partner organizations receive certification as *WAIT Training* instructors and assist with trainings and school assemblies. Other partner organizations refer youth for the program and conduct advocacy for community mobilization.

WAIT Training’s abstinence-only-until-marriage program is conducted in many areas throughout the state. In Denver’s urban metro area alone, WAIT Training partners with 24 community-based organizations, health centers, and faith and government institutions. These organizations include three public school systems.

WAIT Training also partners with the Archdiocese of Denver and serves on the executive committee to organize the annual Pure by Choice youth rally. Pure by Choice brings together Christian ministries and other faith-based groups, community organizations, and schools that provide abstinence-only-until-marriage programs. The rally claims to promote a “counter-cultural purity revolution” for youth and families, which encourages young people to honor “God’s plan for life, love and healthy relationships” through choosing to remain abstinent until marriage.

Pam Stenzel served as the keynote speaker for the 2008 Pure by Choice Rally. Stenzel is a well-known abstinence-only-until-marriage speaker. SIECUS reviewed her video “Sex Still Has a Price Tag,” in which Stenzel delivers two 40-plus-minute monologues to a studio audience of high school students. She uses a preacher’s cadence and often yells at her audience in attempts to emphasize her points. Stenzel focuses on

C O L O R A D O

unintended pregnancy, STDs, and other negative outcomes of sex such as emotional pain and the inability to bond. Her presentation relies on fear, promotes shame, and mandates decisions for young people. For example, Stenzel tells her audience “If you forget everything else I told you today, and you can only remember one thing, this is what I want you to hear. If you have sex outside of one permanent monogamous—and monogamy does not mean one at a time—that means one partner who has only been with you—if you have sex outside of that context, you will pay.”¹⁰

During the rally youth attendees also make a purity pledge and are given a chastity ring to symbolize their commitment to remain pure.¹¹ Research has found that 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. 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.¹²

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)
Friends First, Inc. 2008–2013 DUAL GRANTEE 2007–2012 www.friendsfirst.org	\$599,939 \$414,800	CBAE AFLA
Life Network 2008–2013 www.elifenetwork.com	\$402,700	CBAE

C O L O R A D O

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
WAIT Training 2006–2011 www.waittraining.org www.communitybasedabstinenceeducation.com	\$599,450	CBAE
Young Men’s Christian Association of Pueblo 2008–2013 www.puebloymca.org	\$599,600	CBAE
Colorado State University-Cooperative Extension 2007–2012 www.welcome.colostate.edu	\$410,843	AFLA
Colorado State University-Fort Collins 2008–2013 www.welcome.colostate.edu	\$700,000	AFLA

Adolescent Health Contact¹³

Carla Adams
 Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
 4300 Cherry Creek Drive South
 Denver, CO 80246
 Phone: (303) 692-2376

CO L O R A D O

Colorado Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

ACLU of Colorado
400 Corona Street
Denver, CO 80218
Phone: (303) 777-5482
www.aclu-co.org

Colorado AIDS Project
2490 West 26th Avenue
Denver, CO 80211
Phone: (303) 837-0166
www.coloradoaidsproject.org

Colorado Organization on
Adolescent, Pregnancy, Parenting,
and Prevention
2785 North Speer Boulevard, Suite
348
Denver, CO 80211
Phone: (303) 225-8870
www.coapp.org

Colorado Religious Coalition for
Reproductive Choice
P.O. Box 370414
Denver, CO 80237
Phone: (303) 756-9996
www.corcrc.org

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and
Transgender Community Center
of Colorado
1050 Broadway
Denver, CO 80203
Phone: (303) 733-7743
www.glbtcOLORADO.org

NARAL Pro-Choice Colorado
1905 Sherman Street, Suite 800
Denver, CO 80203
Phone: (303) 394-1973
www.prochoicecolorado.org

Planned Parenthood of the Rocky
Mountains
950 Broadway
Denver, CO 80203
Phone: (303) 321-PLAN
www.pprm.org

Colorado Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Colorado Right to Life Committee
1535 Grant Street, #303
Denver, CO 80203
Phone: (303) 753-9394
www.coloradorighttolife.org

Independence Institute
13952 Denver West Parkway, Suite
400
Golden, CO 80401
Phone: (303) 279-6536
www.i2i.org

Rocky Mountain Family Council
8704 Yates Drive, Suite 205
Westminster, CO 80030
Phone: (303) 292-1800
www.rmfc.org

Youth for Christ
7670 South Vaughn Court
Englewood, CO 80112
Phone: (303) 843-9000
www.yfc.net

Newspapers in Colorado¹⁴

Daily Camera

Newsroom
1048 Pearl Street
Boulder, CO 80302
Phone: (303) 473-1365
www.dailycamera.com

Daily Sentinel

Newsroom
734 S. 7th Street
Grand Junction, CO 81501
Phone: (970) 256-4229
www.gjsentinel.com

Denver Post

Newsroom
1560 Broadway
Denver, CO 80202
Phone: (303) 954-1201
www.denverpost.com

Fort Collins Coloradoan

Newsroom
1300 Riverside Avenue
Fort Collins, CO 80524
Phone: (970) 493-6397
www.coloradoan.com

The Gazette

Newsroom
30 S. Prospect Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
Phone: (719) 633-5511
www.gazette.com

Pueblo Chieftain

Newsroom
825 W. 6th Street
Pueblo, CO 81003
Phone: (719) 544-5897
www.chieftain.com

Rocky Mountain News

Newsroom
400 W. Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80204
Phone: (303) 954-5201
www.rockymountainnews.com

¹ 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.

² Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from: Danice K. Eaton, et al., "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2005," *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 55, no. SS-5 (9 June 2006): 1-108, accessed 26 January 2007, <<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>>. Note: Colorado did not participate in the 2007 YRBSS.

³ Life Network, IRS 990 Form, Fiscal Year 2006, p.1.

⁴ "About Us," Life Network, accessed 12 October 2008, <http://www.elifenetwork.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4&Itemid=6>.

⁵ *Life Network 2007 Annual Report*, Life Network, accessed 12 October 2008, <http://www.elifenetwork.org/images/stories/PDF/annualreport_2007_web.pdf>.

⁶ "Aspire: Outline," Education for Life, accessed 12 October 2008, <http://www.eflonline.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=21&Itemid=7>.

⁷ Scott Phelps, *Aspire. Live your life. Be Free.* (Arlington, IL: Abstinence & Marriage Resources, 2006). For more information, see SIECUS' review of *Aspire* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.

⁸ "Welcome to WAIT Training," WAIT Training, accessed 9 October 9, 2008, <<http://www.waittraining.com/>>.

⁹ Joneen Krauth-Mackenzie, *WAIT (Why Am I Tempted) Training, Second Edition* (Greenwood Village, CO: WAIT Training, undated). For more information, see SIECUS' review of *WAIT Training* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.

¹⁰ Pam Stenzel, *Sex Still Has a Price Tag* (Littleton, CO: Enlighten Communications, Inc., 2006).

COLORADO

¹¹ Jennifer Voelker, "Pure by Choice Rally Energizes Youth about Chastity as a Virtue," *Denver Catholic Register*, (week of March 19), accessed 11 October 2008, <<http://www.archden.org/dcr//news.php?e=463&s=4&a=9740>>.

¹² Peter Bearman and Hannah Brückner "Promising the Future: Virginitly 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 virginitly pledges," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 36.4 (2005): 271-278.

¹³ SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

¹⁴ 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](#).