



## NEVADA

*Nevada received \$851,532 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2006.<sup>1</sup>*

### Nevada Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Nevada mandates that each school district's board of trustees must "establish a course or unit of a course of: (a) Factual instruction concerning Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome [AIDS]; and (b) Instruction on the human reproductive system, related communicable diseases and sexual responsibility." Such classes cannot be a requirement for graduation. Furthermore, each board of trustees must appoint an advisory committee consisting of five parents with children in the school district and four representatives from medicine, counseling, religion, students, or teaching. Nevada law also mandates that:

The parent or guardian of each pupil to whom a course is offered must first be furnished written notice that the course will be offered. The notice must be given in the usual manner used by the local district to transmit written material to parents, and must contain a form for the signature of the parent or guardian of the pupil consenting to his attendance. Upon receipt of the written consent of the parent or guardian, the pupil may attend the course. If the written consent of the parent or guardian is not received, he must be excused from such attendance without any penalty as to credits or academic standing.

This is referred to as an "opt-in" policy.

See Nevada Revised Statutes 389.065.

### Recent Legislation

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

### Events of Note

*Debate Over Abstinence-Only Video Shown in Schools  
January 2005; Sparks, NV*

In mid-January 2005, the School District's Board of Trustees in Washoe County, NV, voted to reject a new abstinence-only video proposed for use in the seventh grade. Board members felt that the video was "fear-based" and could be "harmful" to students.<sup>2</sup> The video, titled *The Rules Have Changed: The Teen STD Epidemic*, was produced by abstinence-only proponent Meg Meeker. Last year the district's sexuality education advisory committee rejected the video in an 8–2 vote; however, nearby Carson City schools adopted the video.

In a letter to the Board of Trustees, one of the advisory committee members explained her opposition, saying that “the over-hyped, fear-based tone was felt to be a turnoff for many teens who most needed to heed the abstinence message.” Examples of the alarmist format included blood dripping into a sink when a link was drawn between teen suicide rates and teen sexuality. Another member explained, “In several instances throughout the film...kids could be led to believe that if you’re sexually active, depression can follow and also suicide.”<sup>3</sup>

The one trustee who voted in favor of the video said that she felt it would be an improvement over the video that was being used in the seventh grade, which was created in the late 1980s. Defending the drama of the film, she said, “I think the issue should be as real as possible. I don’t think you can overly frighten someone if you tell them the truth.”<sup>4</sup>

### **Nevada’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note**<sup>5</sup>

- In 2005, 40% of female high school students and 49% of male high school students in Nevada reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 4% of female high school students and 12% of male high school students in Nevada 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, 12% of female high school students and 19% of male high school students in Nevada 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, 31% of female high school students and 31% of male high school students in Nevada 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, 58% of females and 67% of males in Nevada 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, 21% of females and 12% of males in Nevada 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, 19% of females and 26% of males in Nevada 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 Nevada reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.

- In 2000, Nevada’s abortion rate was 36 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.<sup>6</sup>
- In 2004, Nevada’s birth rate was 51 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen birth rate of 41 per 1,000 nationwide.<sup>7</sup>

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

Nevada received \$280,174 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. Nevada matches the federal funds with \$210,131 of state funding.

This funding is given to four community-based organizations as well as the Governor’s Youth Advisory Council. The four organizations are: Crisis Pregnancy Center, Goshen Community Development Coalition, Area Health Education Center of Southern Nevada, and Sunrise Children’s Foundation. Funded programs focus on young people ages 9–14 and their parents and use four popular abstinence-only-until-marriage programs: *Positive Choices*, *Positive Futures*; *Not Me, Not, Now*; *Worth the Wait*; and *Baby Think It Over*.

The Governor’s Youth Advisory Council consists of nine young people who travel across the state and facilitate “Abstinence Works” workshops. The workshops were developed by the council and have already been attended by over 4,000 students ages 9–14.<sup>8</sup>

The Goshen Community Development Coalition has numerous programs, one of which is the “Not Me, Not Now” abstinence-only-until-marriage program which has its own website. The website offers information for parents and teens, games, live chat sessions, and links to organizations that offer additional information on teen pregnancy and adolescent health.

Another sub-grantee, the Sunrise Children’s Foundation, has a teen-pregnancy prevention program called *Baby Think It Over*. *Baby Think It Over* is a prevention curriculum that includes computerized dolls designed to help young people understand the challenges of parenthood. Evaluations have found that *Baby Think It Over* is not effective. The Foundation uses the curriculum in the Clark County and Washoe County School Districts with high schools and middle schools. The focus of its program is to educate students about the “the unhealthy effects of teen pregnancy, early parenthood and FAS (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome).”<sup>9</sup>

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

There is one CBAE grantee in Nevada: Crisis Pregnancy Center. There is one AFLA grantee: Southern Nevada Area Health Education Center.

Crisis pregnancy centers, such as the one funded in Nevada, 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. According to LifeWay Christian Resources, Crisis Pregnancy Center provides the *Worth the Wait* abstinence-only-until-marriage program.<sup>10</sup>

SIECUS reviewed *Worth the Wait* and found that it incorporates some of the important topics suggested by SIECUS’ *Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education; K-12*, such as puberty, anatomy, sexual abuse, and legal issues related to sexuality, and the curriculum is based on reliable sources of data. Despite these strengths, *Worth the Wait* relies on messages of fear, discourages contraceptive use, and promotes

biased views of gender, marriage, and pregnancy options. For example, *Worth the Wait* states, “Males will often have their first intercourse experience with a woman to whom he feels no particular attachment while females tend to have their first sexual experience with a man they love and may want to marry.”<sup>11</sup>

*Worth the Wait* also encourages students to carry a pledge card, a reminder “of your commitment to abstinence. It’s a lot easier to stick to your decision when you’ve made a pledge.”<sup>12</sup> Research has found that under certain conditions such pledges, most commonly called virginity 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 just as likely to contract an STD as their non-pledging peers. The study also found that the STD rates were higher in communities where a significant proportion (over 20%) of the young people had taken virginity pledges.<sup>13</sup>

Crisis Pregnancy Center also brings Pam Stenzel, a national abstinence-only-until-marriage speaker, to high schools in the Reno area with federal dollars. Ms. Stenzel visited Carson High School and spoke about the consequences of sexual activity, asking, “Is it worth it, ladies? Are the consequences worth it because he told you he loved you?”<sup>14</sup> Ms. Stenzel speaks to thousands of youth “about the consequences—both physical and emotional—of sex outside of marriage.”<sup>15</sup> She also produces books, curricula, CDs, jewelry, and videos with the abstinence-only-until-marriage message. Ms. Stenzel relies on a message of fear and shame regarding sexuality instead of giving young people accurate information. For example, during her video “Sex-Ed—No Screwin’ Around,” Ms. Stenzel states, “If you have sex outside of one permanent monogamous—that means one partner who has only been with you—if you have sex outside of that context, then you will pay.”<sup>16</sup>

Southern Nevada Area Health Education Center’s abstinence-only-until-marriage program focuses solely on parents with children ages eight–16.<sup>17</sup> It trains parents to educate their children about how to remain abstinent.

**Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2006**

<b>Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee</b>  <b>Length of Grant</b>	<b>Amount of Grant</b>	<b>Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)</b>
Nevada State Health Division  <a href="http://health2k.state.nv.us/">http://health2k.state.nv.us/</a>	\$280,174 federal \$210,131 state	Title V
Area Health Education Center of Southern Nevada  <a href="http://www.snahec.org">www.snahec.org</a>	\$23,000	Title V sub-grantee

NEVADA

<b>Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee</b>  <b>Length of Grant</b>	<b>Amount of Grant</b>	<b>Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)</b>
Crisis Pregnancy Center  DUAL GRANTEE  2005–2008	\$46,000  \$371,358	Title V sub-grantee  CBAE
Goshen Community Development Coalition  <a href="http://www.goshenonline.org">www.goshenonline.org</a>	\$23,000	Title V sub-grantee
Sunrise Children’s Foundation  <a href="http://www.sunrisechildren.org">www.sunrisechildren.org</a>	\$46,000	Title V sub-grantee
Southern Nevada Area Health Education Center (AHEC)  2003–2008  <a href="http://www.snahec.org">www.snahec.org</a>	\$200,000	AFLA

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

Jessica Cowee  
 Abstinence Education Coordinator  
 Bureau of Family Health Services  
 Nevada State Health Division  
 3427 Goni Rd., Suite 108  
 Carson City, NV 89706  
 Phone: (775) 684-4256

**Nevada Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

Aid for AIDS of Nevada  
 2300 South Rancho Dr., Suite 211  
 Las Vegas, NV 89102  
 Phone: (702) 382-2326  
[www.afanlv.org](http://www.afanlv.org)

GLSEN of Southern Nevada  
 P.O. Box 61351  
 Las Vegas, NV 89160  
 Phone: (702) 731-3811

NEVADA

Nevada Public Health Foundation  
3579 Hwy. 50 E, Suite C  
Carson City, NV 89701  
Phone: (775) 884-0392  
[www.nphf.org](http://www.nphf.org)

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

**Nevada Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

Nevada Policy Research Institute  
1700 East Desert Inn Rd., Suite 405A  
Las Vegas, NV 89109  
Phone: (702) 222-0642  
[www.npri.org](http://www.npri.org)

**Newspapers in Nevada**

*Las Vegas CityLife*  
Education Editor  
1385 Pama Ln.  
Las Vegas, NV 89119  
Phone: (702) 871-6780

*Las Vegas Review-Journal*  
Antonio Planas  
K-12 Reporter  
P.O. Box 70  
Las Vegas, NV 89125  
Phone: (702) 383-0211

*Las Vegas Sun*  
Mary Manning  
Medical/Health Reporter  
2275 Corporate Circle  
Henderson, NV 89074  
Phone: (702) 383-0300

*Las Vegas Tribune*  
Education Editor  
610 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> St.  
Las Vegas, NV 89101  
Phone: (702) 868-8887

*Reno Gazette-Journal*  
Ray Hagar  
Education Reporter  
P.O. Box 22000  
Reno, NV 89520  
Phone: (775) 788-6304

---

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> "Washoe County, Nev., School Board Rejects New Sex Education Video, Citing 'Fear-based' Abstinence Message," *Kaiser Daily Reproductive Health Report*, 14 January 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Associated Press, "Washoe School Board Opposes Abstinence-Only Sex Ed Video," *Las Vegas Sun*, 12 January 2005, accessed 14 January 2005, <<http://www.lasvegassun.com>>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

- 
- <sup>5</sup> 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>>.
- <sup>6</sup> 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>>.
- <sup>7</sup> *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](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr55/nvsr55_01.pdf)>.
- <sup>8</sup> “Abstinence Works,” Nevada State Health Division, accessed 9 February 2007, <<http://health2k.state.nv.us/cah/programsactivities.htm>>.
- <sup>9</sup> “Baby Think It Over,” Sunrise Children’s Foundation, accessed 12 February 2007, <<http://www.sunrisechildren.org/babythinkitover.htm>>.
- <sup>10</sup> “LifeWay Student Ministry: True Love Waits,” LifeWay Christian Resources, (2001-2007), accessed 3 April 2007, <[http://www.lifeway.com/tlw/leaders/coop\\_ministries.asp#](http://www.lifeway.com/tlw/leaders/coop_ministries.asp#)>.
- <sup>11</sup> Patricia Sulak, *Worth the Wait* (Temple, TX: Scott & White Memorial Hospital, 2003). For more information, see SIECUS’ review of *Worth the Wait* at <[http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula\\_reviews.html](http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html)>.
- <sup>12</sup> “Teens,” Scott & White’s *Worth the Wait*, accessed 25 January 2007, <<http://www.worththewait.org/pledgecard.html>>.
- <sup>13</sup> Peter Bearman and Hannah Brückner “Promising the Future: Virginity 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 Virginity Pledges,” *Journal of Adolescent Health* 36.4 (2005): 271-278.
- <sup>14</sup> Jarid Shipley, “Let’s Talk About (the Cost of) Sex,” *The Nevada Appeal*, 13 February 2007, <<http://www.nevadaappeal.com/article/20070213/NEWS/102130100>>.
- <sup>15</sup> “About Pam,” Pam Stenzel, (2007), accessed 30 January 2007, <<http://www.pamstenzel.com/aboutpam.asp>>.
- <sup>16</sup> “Sex-Ed—No Screwin’ Around: Video Clip 1,” Pam Stenzel, (2007), accessed 30 January 2007, <<http://www.pamstenzel.com/clip1.html>>.
- <sup>17</sup> “Adolescent Family Life Programs,” Area Health Education Center of Southern Nevada, accessed 23 January 2007 <<http://www.snahec.org/afl/afl.php>>.