



# SIECUS

State Profile

## NEVADA

*The State Health Division and community-based organizations in Nevada received \$851,532 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2008.<sup>1</sup>*

### **Nevada Sexuality Education Law and Policy**

Nevada mandates that each school district's board of trustees "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.

### **Nevada's Youth: Statistical Information of Note<sup>2</sup>**

- In 2007, 40% of female high school students and 45% of male high school students in Nevada reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 50% of male high school students nationwide.

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- In 2007, 3% of female high school students and 8% of male high school students in Nevada 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, 10% of female high school students and 16% 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 18% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 30% 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 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 81% of males in Nevada 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, 19% of females and 15% of males in Nevada 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, 18% of females and 25% of males in Nevada 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, 82% of high school students in Nevada 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 Nevada State Health Division received \$280,174 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 Nevada, the state match is provided by the Nevada Broadcaster's Association through in-kind donations.
- There are two sub-grantees in Nevada: Nevada Broadcaster's Association and Nevada Institute for Children's Research & Policy, UNLV School of Public Health.

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

- There is one CBAE grantee in Nevada: The Crisis Pregnancy Center.
- There is one AFLA grantee in Nevada: Southern Nevada Area Health Education Center (AHEC).

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

The Crisis Pregnancy Center, \$371,358 (CBAE 2005–2008)

The Crisis Pregnancy Center is based in Reno. 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. On its site, the agency offers after-abortion counseling saying: “Abortion is not just a simple medical procedure. For many women, it is a life-changing event with significant physical, emotional, and spiritual consequences. Most women who struggle with past abortions say that they wish they had been told all of the facts about abortion and its risks.”<sup>3</sup> Specifically, the agency offers “P.A.C.E. - Post Abortion Counseling and Education” which it describes as a program “designed to bring healing and freedom for those experiencing various P.A.S., Post-Abortion Stress, symptoms.”<sup>4</sup>

There is no sound scientific evidence linking abortion to subsequent mental health problems, termed “post-abortion stress syndrome” by anti-abortion groups. Neither the American Psychological Association nor the American Psychiatric Association recognize “post-abortion stress syndrome” as a legitimate medical condition.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, abortion opponents often refer to studies that have been found to have severe methodological flaws or cite anecdotal evidence of this condition in an effort to scare women out of exercising their right to choose.

The agency’s website also promotes gender stereotypes about young men. In its section, “For the Men: Take a Minute to Think,” it reads: “If your girlfriend were to become pregnant would you leave her? (Unfortunately, many boyfriends do)” and “Will you put pressure on her to have an abortion? (The majority of boyfriends will.)”<sup>6</sup>

The agency has an additional website, Worth the Wait ([www.wtnv.com](http://www.wtnv.com)), which is focused on “Relationship Education.”<sup>7</sup> Its mission is to “Equip individuals with strategies to cultivate healthy relationships, with an emphasis on honoring marriage and reserving sexual expression for the marriage relationship.”<sup>8</sup> This website includes “commitment cards” which look very similar to a credit card and read “Expiration Date: Wedding Date.” On the back of the card, it says: “Sex outside of marriage is an indebtedness that can produce negative returns (unwanted memories, broken heart) and all assets can potentially be lost (death).”<sup>9</sup>

Such cards are similar to virginity pledges. 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. 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>10</sup>

The Crisis Pregnancy Center uses the popular curriculum *Aspire* in its abstinence-only-until-marriage programming.<sup>11</sup> SIECUS reviewed *ASPIRE: Live your life. Be free.* 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

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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.”<sup>12</sup>

**Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2008**

| <b>Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee</b><br><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<br><a href="http://health2k.state.nv.us">health2k.state.nv.us</a>                         | \$280,174 federal<br>\$210,131 state | Title V  |
| Nevada Broadcaster’s Association   | \$45,000                             | Title V sub-grantee  |
| Nevada Institute for Children’s Research & Policy, UNLV School of Public Health  | \$100,000                            | Title V sub-grantee  |
| The Crisis Pregnancy Center<br>2005–2008<br><a href="http://www.wtwnv.com">www.wtwnv.com</a>                           | \$371,358                            | CBAE   |
| Southern Nevada Area Health Education Center (AHEC)<br>2003–2008<br><a href="http://www.snahec.org">www.snahec.org</a> | \$200,000                            | AFLA   |

**Adolescent Health Contact<sup>13</sup>**

Janet Serial, Health Program Specialist I  
 Abstinence Education Coordinator, Adolescent Reproductive/Sexual Health  
 Nevada State Health Division  
 Bureau of Child, Family and Community Wellness  
 4150 Technology Way, Suite 101  
 Carson City, NV 89706  
 Phone: (775) 684-4232

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**Nevada Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

Aid for AIDS of Nevada  
2300 South Rancho Drive, 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 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  
[www.plannedparenthood.org/rocky-mountains](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/rocky-mountains)

**Nevada Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

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

**Newspapers in Nevada<sup>14</sup>**

*Las Vegas City Life*  
Newsroom  
1385 Pama Lane, Suite 111  
Las Vegas, NV 89119  
Phone: (702) 871-6780  
[www.lasvegascitylife.com](http://www.lasvegascitylife.com)

*Las Vegas Review-Journal*  
Newsroom  
P.O. Box 70  
Las Vegas, NV 89125  
Phone: (702) 383-0211  
[www.lvrj.com](http://www.lvrj.com)

*Las Vegas Sun*  
Newsroom  
P.O. Box 98970  
Las Vegas, NV 89193-8907  
Phone: (702) 385-3111  
[www.lasvegassun.com](http://www.lasvegassun.com)

*Las Vegas Tribune*  
Newsroom  
P.O. Box 14446  
Las Vegas, NV 89114  
Phone: (702) 366-9310  
[www.lasvegastribune.com](http://www.lasvegastribune.com)

*Reno Gazette-Journal*  
Newsroom  
P.O. Box 22000  
Reno, NV 89520  
Phone: (775) 788-6200  
[www.rgj.com](http://www.rgj.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> "After Abortion Counseling," The Crisis Pregnancy Center, accessed 1 October 2008, <<http://www.renopregnancycenter.com/afterabortioncounseling.nxg>>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Brenda Major et al, "Report of the APA Task Force on Mental Health and Abortion," *American Psychological Association*, (13 August 2008) accessed 8 October 2008, <<http://www.apa.org/releases/abortion-report.pdf>>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> "Relationship Education of Northern Nevada," Worth the Wait, accessed 1 October 2008, <<http://www.wtwnv.com/index.html>>.

<sup>8</sup> "Commitment Cards: Don't Leave Home Without It," Worth the Wait, accessed 1 October 2008, <<http://www.wtwnv.com/commitment-cards.html>>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</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>11</sup> "Aspire," Worth the Wait, (9 September 2008), accessed 1 October 2008, <<http://blog.wtwnv.com/>>.

<sup>12</sup> 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](http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html)>.

<sup>13</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>14</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.