



NEW MEXICO

Community-based organizations in New Mexico received \$1,349,883 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2008.¹

New Mexico Sexuality Education Law and Policy

New Mexico does not mandate that schools teach sexuality education; however, it does mandate that “each school district shall provide instruction about HIV and related issues in the curriculum of the required health education content area to all students in the elementary grades, in the middle/junior high school grades, and in the senior high school grades.” This instruction must include “ways to reduce the risk of getting AIDS, stressing abstinence.” Outcomes of such instruction should include the “ability to demonstrate refusal skills, overcome peer pressure, and use decision-making skills.”

Educational materials and the grade levels at which they will be introduced are determined by local school districts. All instruction must be age-appropriate. Local school boards must “insure (sic) the involvement of parents, staff, and students in the development of policies and the review of instructional materials.” The state neither suggests curriculum nor limits what may or may not be included in sexuality education instruction.

New Mexico offers *Content Standards for Health Education* that includes abstinence and reproductive health beginning in grades three and four. Beginning in seventh and eighth grade, performance standards in health education include understanding “how healthy alternatives can replace unhealthy behaviors (i.e. abstinence, condom use, and other pregnancy prevention methods).”

New Mexico’s *Health Education Standards with Benchmarks and Performance Standards* states that each school district must have a policy allowing parents to “request that their child be exempted from the parts of the health education curriculum that addresses the sexuality performance standards.” In addition, alternative lessons must be created for exempted students. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy. Local school boards must include parents, staff, and students in developing their own opt-out policy.

See New Mexico Administrative Code 6.12.2.10, 6.30.2.19, and *Health Education Standards with Benchmarks and Performance Standard*.

Recent Legislation

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

New Mexico's Youth: Statistical Information of Note²

- In 2007, 4% of female high school students and 11% of male high school students in New Mexico 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, 12% of female high school students and 16% of male high school students in New Mexico 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, 33% of female high school students and 30% of male high school students in New Mexico 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, 49% of females and 63% of males in New Mexico 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, 22% of females and 17% of males in New Mexico 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, 20% of females and 29% of males in New Mexico 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, 83% of high school students in New Mexico reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 90% of high school students nationwide.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

- New Mexico was eligible for \$502,785 in 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.
- New Mexico, however, does not 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.

In December 2007, Governor Bill Richardson (D) decided no longer to participate in the Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage program. The governor's health secretary, Alfredo Vigil, announced the decision, citing several reasons. "There has never been a scientific consensus about this," Dr. Vigil said. "It had an ideological base from people who just wanted this to happen for all kinds of reasons," he continued.³

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

- There is one CBAE grantee in New Mexico: Socorro General Hospital.
- There are no AFLA grantees in New Mexico.

Socorro General Hospital, \$799,883 (CBAE 2005–2008) and \$550,000 (CBAE 2008–2013)

Socorro General Hospital conducts an abstinence-only-until-marriage program under the hospital's "Healthy Family Initiative." Operating in the Socorro County, Alamo Navajo, Magdalena, La Promesa in Veguita, and Otero County areas, the Healthy Family Initiative makes presentations about abstinence-only-until-marriage, tobacco prevention, sun safety awareness, family outreach, and youth development.⁴

Healthy Family Initiative also runs the "Wake Up and Drive – Abstinence Works!" website. In both Spanish and English, this website offers a section comparing marriage, sexuality, and car buying, and states, "Becoming physically intimate may sound like a good idea, like taking a 'test drive,' but it can lead to real problems in a relationship. Having sex before marriage to determine if the relationship will work out, is not taking a 'test drive'! It is more like driving recklessly!"⁵ This section also answers questions from young readers. One asked, "How much physical contact is okay when I'm dating someone?" The answer: "Remember that holding hands leads to kissing, deep kissing leads to petting, and petting can lead straight to sexual intercourse in moments of passion."⁶ Suggesting that sexual behavior is a force outside of young people's control actually discourages them from making wise sexual decisions and from taking responsibility for their actions. Young people need to know that at any point in a relationship, and at any point during sexual activity, they have the right and the ability to set their own sexual boundaries and that it is their responsibility to do so.

The Healthy Family Initiative uses two popular, fear-based curricula: *Aspire* and *WAIT (Why Am I Tempted) Training*.⁷ 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 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."⁸

SIECUS also reviewed *WAIT Training*. We found that it contained little medical or biological information and almost no information about sexually transmitted diseases (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

The hospital contracts with Dr. Stan Weed to evaluate its program.¹⁰ Stan Weed was the only witness at the U.S. House of Representative's April 2008 Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

hearing to investigate the effectiveness of federally funded abstinence-only-until-marriage programs who defended the government’s investment in those programs. By his own account, Weed has spent more than 20 years working on these issues, interviewed more than 500,000 teens, and studied more than 100 abstinence-only programs. Yet, Weed has only one published study in a peer-reviewed journal showing that abstinence-only-until-marriage programs can have any impact on sexual behavior.¹¹ (The program studied showed a modest impact in helping seventh graders delay sex.) Despite Weed’s insistence that abstinence-only-until-marriage funding continue, he admitted that they have not, up to this point, “done abstinence well” and repeatedly backed away from the legislatively mandated abstinence-only-until-marriage approach. Instead, he preferred the term “abstinence-centered.”

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)
Socorro General Hospital 2005–2008 DUAL GRANTEE 2008–2013 www.phs.org/facilities/socorro/index.shtml	\$799,883 \$550,000	CBAE CBAE

Adolescent Health Contact¹²

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 Social and Community Services Coordinator
 Substance Abuse Prevention
 New Mexico Department of Health
 1190 St. Francis Drive, Suite 1050
 P.O. Box 26110
 Santa Fe, NM 87502
 Phone: (505) 827-2625

New Mexico Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

ACLU of New Mexico P.O. Box 566 Albuquerque, NM 87103 Phone: (505) 266-5915 www.aclu-nm.org	New Mexico National Organization for Women P.O. Box 642 Santa Fe, NM 87504
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NARAL Pro-Choice New Mexico
P.O. Box 97
Albuquerque, NM 87103
Phone: (505) 243-4443
www.prochoicenewmexico.org

New Mexico Religious Coalition for
Reproductive Choice
P.O. Box 66433
Albuquerque, NM 87193
Phone: (505) 890-1010
www.nmrcrc.org

New Mexico Teen Pregnancy Coalition
P.O. Box 35997
Albuquerque, NM 87176
Phone: (505) 254-8737
www.nmtpc.org

Planned Parenthood of New Mexico
719 San Mateo NE
Albuquerque, NM 87108
Phone: (505) 265-5976
www.plannedparenthood.org/new-mexico/

New Mexicans for Responsible Sexuality
Education (NMRSE)
PO Box 35997
Albuquerque, NM 87176
Phone: (505) 254-8737
www.nmrse.org

Southwest Women's Law Center
1410 Coal Avenue SW
Albuquerque, NM 87104
Phone: (505) 244-0502
www.swwomenslaw.org

New Mexico Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

New Mexico Abstinence Education
Coalition
www.nmaec.org

Right to Life Committee of New Mexico
2800 San Mateo NE, Suite 107
Albuquerque, NM 87110
Phone: (505) 881-4563
www.rtlnm.org

Newspapers in New Mexico¹³

Albuquerque Journal
Newsroom
7777 Jefferson Street NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109
Phone: (505) 823-3800
www.abqjournal.com

Current-Argus
Newsroom
P.O. Box 1629
Carlsbad, NM 88221
Phone: (505) 887-5501
www.currentargus.com

Clovis News Journal
Newsroom
521 Pile
Clovis, NM 88101
Phone: (505) 763-3431
www.cnjonline.com

The Daily Times
Newsroom
P.O. Box 450
Farmington, NM 87499
Phone: (505) 325-4545
www.daily-times.com

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Hobbs News-Sun
Newsroom
201 N. Thorp Street
Hobbs, NM 88240
Phone: (505) 391-5440
www.hobbsnews.com

Independent
Newsroom
500 N. 9th Street
Gallup, NM 87305
Phone: (505) 863-6811
www.gallupindependent.com

Las Cruces Sun-News
Newsroom
P.O. Box 1749
Las Cruces, NM 88004
Phone: (505) 541-5400
www.lcsun-news.com

Roswell Daily Record
Newsroom
P.O. Box 1897
Roswell, NM 88202
Phone: 505-622-7710
www.roswell-record.com

The Santa Fe New Mexican
Newsroom
P.O. Box 2048
Santa Fe, NM 87504
Phone: (505) 983-3303
www.santafenewmexican.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, 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>>.

³ "State Abstains From Funds," *Clavis News Journal*, 19 December 2007, accessed 31 March 2008, <http://www.cnjonline.com/news/abstinence_24283_article.html/education_new.html>.

⁴ "Maternal Child Health Is Now 'Healthy Family Initiative'" *Mountain Mail Newspaper*, 21 December 2006, accessed 4 April 2008, <<http://www.mymountainmail.com/stories/heahealth12-21-0620061221.php>>.

⁵ "Car Sales," Wake Up and Drive – Abstinence Works! (2006), accessed 4 April 2008, <<http://wakeupanddrive.net/en/page.php?p=Car%20Sales>>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Socorro General Hospital Application to the ACF, 2005, Semi Annual CBAE progress Toward Goal Achievement Report, p.4.

⁸ 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>.

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 Socorro General Hospital Application to the ACF, 2005, Semi-Annual Program Progress Report.

¹¹ For more information on the hearing see SIECUS' Policy Update, "Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Holds First-Ever Hearings on Abstinence Only Until Marriage Programs," at <<http://www.siecus.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Feature.showFeature&featureid=1144&pageid=483&parentid=478>>.

¹² SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

¹³ 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](#).