



NEW MEXICO

New Mexico received \$1,050,119 in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2004.¹

New Mexico Sexuality Education Law

New Mexico does not mandate that schools teach sexuality education; however, it does mandate that schools “provide instruction about AIDS and related issues in the curriculum of the required Comprehensive Health Education Program.” This instruction must include “ways to reduce the risk of getting AIDS, stressing abstinence” and must be taught to all students in all grades. In addition, “each school district shall provide instruction about AIDS and related issues in the curriculum of the required Comprehensive Health Education Program to all students in the elementary grades, in the middle/junior high school grades, and in the senior high school grades.”

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 the involvement of parents, staff, and students in the development of policies and the review of instructional materials.”

New Mexico does not have a policy by which parents or guardians are notified or can remove their children from sexuality education classes.

See New Mexico Administrative Code 6.12.3.

Recent Legislation

Bill Would Fund Pregnancy Prevention

Senate Bill 409, introduced in January 2005 and referred to both the Senate Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Finance, would appropriate \$2,600,000 to teen pregnancy prevention and family strengthening programs. One million dollars would be used to fund in-school pregnancy-prevention, parenting, family-strengthening, and career development programs for teen mothers and fathers. One million dollars would be used at state universities to provide programs to prevent teen pregnancy and aid at-risk youth. The remaining \$600,000 would be used by the Human Services Department for community-based young fatherhood and teen pregnancy prevention programs.

Events of Note

Parents Not Allowed To Attend Their Child's Sexuality Education Class April 2003; Zuni, NM

The parents of a Zuni Elementary School fifth grader were upset when the school principal would not allow them to attend their son's sexuality education class video and discussion. The parents said they had attended the class five years earlier when their daughter was enrolled and could not understand why they were now barred. According to the mother, "we just want to be there so we can discuss this with our son at home."²

The principal said she denied the parents' request because her priority is to make sure her students "... feel comfortable, for them to ask questions and to give answers. And to have a stranger in their midst is not a way to build that comfort," she said.³

The parents appealed to school district leaders who upheld the principal's decision. They said that students are encouraged to talk with their parents about what is discussed in their sexuality education class but that having parents present would create an uncomfortable environment for the students.

New Mexico's Youth: Statistical Information of Note

- In 2000, New Mexico's abortion rate was 22 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.⁴
- In 2002, New Mexico's birth rate was 62 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen birth rate of 43 per 1,000 nationwide.⁵

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

New Mexico received \$513,536 in federal Title V funding in Fiscal Year 2004. 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 can be provided in part or in full by local groups. The state match is provided through in-kind services by New Mexico's Title V sub-grantees. The Title V funds are controlled by the New Mexico Department of Health and distributed to nine sub-grantees.

Best Choice Education Services, Inc. (BCES) receives \$75,000 in Title V funding. In November 2004, BCES hosted the 4th annual Father/Daughter Purity Ball – "A Night of Promise." The Purity Ball website (www.purityball.org) describes the event as "Christ-centered" and encourages attendees to promote it at their churches.⁶ The highlight of the ball is "a short program where both fathers and daughters will be encouraged to make a pledge of purity to one another and to God."⁷ BCES also runs abstinence education programs in public and private schools in the Albuquerque area. The other Title V sub-grantees include a crisis pregnancy center, a school district, and marketing and advertising firms.

A portion of the Title V funding supports a media campaign, *Mission Possible*, that targets teenagers ages 13 and older with television commercials, radio spots, billboards, essay and poster contests, and a website. The website opens up to a page that states, "Mission Possible: Have you exercised your freedom to choose a healthy lifestyle?" From there visitors can see a list of local groups that support abstinence, read where youth rallies are being held, or view a section entitled "Our Stars," which features four racially diverse women explaining why abstinence is important to them. One explains "the Abstinence-Only campaign is important to me because I can educate

others that abstinence is the only way to be. I also believe that in order to be truly safe from diseases and emotional scars is to be (sic) abstinent.”⁸

Special Projects of Regional and National Significance–Community Based Abstinence Education (SPRANS–CBAE)⁹ and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees

There is one SPRANS–CBAE grantee in New Mexico: Best Choice Educational Services, Inc. There are no AFLA grantees in New Mexico.

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Program in FY 2004

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS–CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Length of Grant		
New Mexico Department of Health/ Mission Possible www.health.state.nm.us	\$513,536 federal	Title V
Apple Tree Education Center	\$50,000	Title V sub-grantee
Best Choice Educational Services, Inc.	\$75,000	Title V sub-grantee
DUAL GRANTEE 2004-2007	\$536,583	SPRANS–CBAE (Implementation Grant)
Cottonwood Prevention Services	\$59,528	Title V sub-grantee
Griffin and Associates	\$79,561	Title V sub-grantee
La Clinica de Familia	\$5,011	Title V sub-grantee
Mesilla Valley Pregnancy Resource Center	\$64,300	Title V sub-grantee
Roswell Independent School District – SBHC	\$72,000	Title V sub-grantee
Socorro General Hospital	\$75,000	Title V sub-grantee

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

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New Mexico Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

NARAL Pro-Choice New Mexico
PO Box 97
Albuquerque, NM 87103
Phone: (505) 243-4443
www.naralnm.org

New Mexico NOW
PO Box 642
Santa Fe, NM 87504
[www.hal-pc.org/~ginger/now complete/](http://www.hal-pc.org/~ginger/now_complete/)

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

New Mexico Teen Pregnancy Coalition
PO 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.ppnewmex.org

New Mexico Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

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 Mexico

Albuquerque Journal
Carolyn Flynn
Women's Interests Editor
PO Box J
Albuquerque, NM 87103
Phone: (505) 823-3870

Albuquerque Journal
Charlie Moore
Medical/Health Editor
7777 Jefferson St., NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109
Phone: (505) 823-3841

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The Daily Times
Mark Lewis
Medical/Health Editor
201 N. Allen Ave.
Farmington, NM 87401
Phone: (505) 564-4620

The Santa Fe New Mexican
Bruce Krasnow
Medical/Health Editor
202 E. Marcy St.
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: (505) 986-3034

¹ 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 2004 begins on October 1, 2003 and ends on September 30, 2004.

² K. Christopher, "Parents Upset School Won't Let Them Sit In on Sex Ed," *KOBTV.com*, 25 April 2003.

³ K. Christopher, "Parents Barred From Child's Sex Ed Class," *The New Mexico Channel*, 25 April 2003.

⁴ *U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information* (New York: Alan Guttmacher Institute, February, 2004), accessed 28 January 2005, <www.guttmacher.org>.

⁵ *National Vital Statistics Reports 52.10* (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2003), 48, accessed 4 February 2005, <<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/births.htm#stat%20tables>>.

⁶ *Purity Ball*, Best Choice Education Services, Inc. (2004), accessed 8 February 2005, <<http://www.purityball.org/>>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Mission Possible, *Our Stars* accessed 18 February 2005, <<http://www.missionpossible-nm.com/ourstars/index.htm>>.

⁹ In FY 2004 SPRANS-CBAE was administered within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau. In FY 2005 this funding stream was moved to HHS' Administration for Children and Families and is now referred to simply as Community Based Abstinence Education (CBAE).