



SIECUS

State Profile

OHIO

Community-based organizations in Ohio received \$6,376,091 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2008.¹

Ohio Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Ohio does not require schools to teach sexuality education. However, the board of education of each school district must establish a health curriculum for “all schools under their control.” The health education curriculum must include “venereal disease education.” Venereal disease education must emphasize that, “abstinence from sexual activity is the only protection that is one hundred percent effective against unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, and the sexual transmission of a virus that causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.” Additionally, it must:

- stress that students should abstain from sexual activity until after marriage;
- teach the potential physical, psychological, emotional, and social side effects of participating in sexual activity outside of marriage;
- teach that conceiving children out of wedlock is likely to have harmful consequences for the child, the child’s parents, and society;
- stress that sexually transmitted diseases are serious possible hazards of sexual activity;
- advise students of the laws pertaining to financial responsibility of parents to children born in and out of wedlock; and
- advise students of the circumstances under which it is criminal to have sexual contact with a person under the age of sixteen pursuant to section 2907.04 of the Revised Code.

These points closely mirror the federal definition of “abstinence education.”

Upon written request of a parent or guardian, a student may be excused from taking any or all of this instruction. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See Ohio Revised Code Sections 3313.60 and 3313.60.11.

Recent Legislation

Legislation to Ensure Contraceptive Availability; Amend Sexual Education Requirements

Senate Bill 179 and House Bill 251, both introduced in May 2007, would have required health insurers to provide coverage for prescription contraception if the policy provided coverage for other prescription drugs, devices, or services. Senate Bill 179 required the same terms, conditions, and co-payments as for similar coverage. The house bill also required that hospitals providing emergency services have qualified medical personnel available 24 hours a day to provide medical care to victims of sexual assault and that

victims be provided information about and offered emergency contraception (EC). Furthermore, HB 251 aimed to revise sexual education instruction so that the value of abstinence is promoted while those who have already engaged in sexual intercourse are not ignored. Programs designated as abstinence-only would have been ineligible for grants under HB 251. Senate Bill 179 was sent to the Committee on Health, Human Services and Aging on May 31, 2007; House Bill 251 was sent to the Committee on Health on June 12, 2007. Both bills failed to move again and died.

Ohio's Youth: Statistical Information of Note²

- In 2007, 44% of female high school students and 45% of male high school students in Ohio reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 50% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 4% of female high school students and 9% of male high school students in Ohio 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 Ohio 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, 36% of female high school students and 34% of male high school students in Ohio 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, 55% of females and 65% of males in Ohio 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 16% of males in Ohio 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 27% of males in Ohio 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, 89% of high school students in Ohio reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 90% of high school students nationwide.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

- Ohio was eligible for \$1,547,254 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.
- Ohio, 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 March 2007, Governor Ted Strickland (D) of Ohio announced that his state had no plans to reapply for Title V after the Fiscal Year 2007 funding ran out.³ Keith Dailey, spokesman for the governor, explained, “The governor believes that continuing to pay for a program that has not been proven to work is an unwise use of tax dollars, particularly when we’re facing a very challenging or constrained budget environment.”⁴

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

- There are seven CBAE grantees in Ohio: one abstinence-only-until-marriage industry leader, one crisis pregnancy center, one hospital, and four community-based organizations (two faith-based).
- There are two AFLA grantees in Ohio: Saint Vincent Mercy Medical Center (also a CBAE grantee) and Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley.

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

ATM Education, Inc., \$600,000 (CBAE 2006–2011)

ATM (Abstinence ‘Til Marriage) Education, Inc. conducts abstinence-only-until-marriage programming in 17 counties in north-central Ohio.⁵ In Fiscal Year 2006, 90 percent of the organization’s funding came from CBAE dollars.⁶ The organization provides classroom presentations, school assemblies, teacher seminars, billboards, promotional items, and a resource library. ATM also operates a website (www.MisstheMess.com) that “provides a party atmosphere where participants can see the consequence of behavior through games, movies, and resources.”⁷

In the “Party Room” section of the website, ATM Education offers a story about students at a party. One of the students, Rochelle, claims to have been raped by Jason when she drove him home from the party. Jason justifies his actions stating, “Rochelle has had it bad for me since we were in sixth grade.” Another student, Monica, who has just broken up with Jason, explains: “Every guy wants Rochelle since she has a reputation for ‘putting out,’” and “Rochelle was considered a slut, so when they left together, I figured they were going to do more than talk.” Jason acts upset about his breakup with Monica. Rochelle recalls the drive home, saying, “When he started bawling, I hugged him. He immediately started kissing me and within five seconds, he was pressing down on me. That’s when I got the feeling I was going to be raped.” After Rochelle goes home and calls the police with her father, Jason is arrested. Monica states, “I don’t think he raped Rochelle. He always asked me to have sex with him, but he never forced me to do anything I wasn’t comfortable with.” ATM Education gives several other statements from students at the party and then concludes the scenario by shaming and judging the alleged victim, stating, “Did you think a rape occurred? Answer: We don’t really know if Rochelle consented to have sex with

Jason... Unfortunately, we are left judging Ro's honesty by her character and her actions... Monica implied Rochelle had a promiscuous reputation and the whole school seemed to know it."⁸

ATM is hosting its first annual "Father/Daughter Purity Ball" in which daughters pledge to remain abstinent until marriage.⁹ Research found that 88 percent of young people who took a virginity pledge ultimately had sexual intercourse before marriage. 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.¹⁰

Elizabeth's New Life Center, \$800,000 (CBAE 2005–2008) and \$600,000 (CBAE 2008–2013)

Elizabeth's New Life Center is a crisis pregnancy center with the mission to, "Empower individuals to make healthy life choices respecting the value of each person created by God."¹¹ Crisis pregnancy centers 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. In Fiscal Year 2006, the organization was 26 percent funded by CBAE dollars.¹²

The organization uses its CBAE grant to support its abstinence-only-until-marriage program "Empowered by Truth."¹³ Empowered by Truth uses several abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula, including *RSVP*, *Chastity by Choice*, *Go for the Gold*, and *S.T.A.R.S. Mentoring Program*.¹⁴ Part of the *RSVP* program for eighth grade students includes the activity "Gender Approach Project" where males and females are separated for discussion. The discussion topics for young ladies is, "Do you want to be treated liked a Treasure or a Target?," whereas young men discuss, "Do you want to act like a Protector or a Predator?"

The website for Elizabeth's New Life Center lists several anti-choice organizations as resources.¹⁵ Additionally, the organization is an affiliate of the Abstinence Clearinghouse.¹⁶ As an affiliate of the Abstinence Clearinghouse, Elizabeth's New Life Center has access to a network of nearly 70 abstinence-only-until-marriage organizations. Affiliates gain access to resources, including abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula and invitations to the Abstinence Clearinghouse conference self-titled as the "most prestigious abstinence-until-marriage event of the year."¹⁷ The founder of the Abstinence Clearinghouse is Leslee Unruh, one of the industry's leaders, who began her career working in a South Dakota crisis pregnancy center and has deep ties to the anti-choice movement.

Operation Keepsake, Inc., \$578,071 (CBAE 2006–2011)

Operation Keepsake describes itself as, "A sex education program that seeks to empower and encourage young people to remain sexually abstinent until marriage."¹⁸ The organization's abstinence-only-until-marriage programming includes the *For Keeps* curriculum, a media campaign titled "Virgin By Choice," and the "represent!" magazine.¹⁹

The RIDGE Project, Inc. (Reality Instruction Developing Generations of Excellence), \$600,000 (CBAE 2007– 2012)

The RIDGE Project’s mission is, “To empower today’s teens to overcome obstacles in their journey to becoming healthy and productive adults.”²⁰ The organization works in collaboration with several other groups including Program REACH, a New York-based CBAE grantee that describes itself as, “A pro-life organization providing support programs and information to these pregnancy centers throughout the New York metropolitan area. We think that a fair hearing of the facts, the statistics, the stories and the aftermath of abortion is needed for women to make a true and informed CHOICE.”²¹ (See the New York Profile for more information on Program REACH). The Ridge Project also collaborates with Women’s Resource Center of Hancock County and the Community Pregnancy Centers of Northwest Ohio, both of which are crisis pregnancy centers.²² In Fiscal Year 2007, 90 percent of the organization’s funding came from CBAE dollars.²³

The organization includes links to the National Abstinence Education Association (NAEA) and the Medical Institute in the Resources section of its website.²⁴ Both are leaders in the abstinence-only-until-marriage industry.

The NAEA is the lobbying arm of the abstinence-only-until-marriage movement. Its mission reads, “The NAEA exists to serve, support and represent individuals and organizations in the practice of abstinence education.”²⁵ Since its inception the NAEA has undertaken a number of media campaigns that use fear and misinformation in an attempt to discredit comprehensive sexuality education.

The Medical Institute (formerly the Medical Institute for Sexual Health) describes itself as a “medical, educational, and research organization” founded “to confront the global epidemics of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).”²⁶ It is a national organization that provides assistance to abstinence-only-until-marriage educators and providers. The Medical Institute was founded in 1992 by Joe McIlhane, a Texas physician with close ties to the Bush administration. The organization receives federal grants from a number of different government agencies, and its staff and board members have held seats on high-level advisory panels in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the President’s Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (PACHA).

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

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Length of Grant		
Abstinence the Better Choice, Inc. 2006–2011 www.abstinencebetterchoice.com	\$600,000	CBAE
Abstinence ‘Til Marriage Education, Inc. 2006–2011	\$600,000	CBAE

O H I O

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Central Ohio Youth for Christ 2007–2012	\$600,000	CBAE
Elizabeth’s New Life Center 2005–2008 DUAL GRANTEE 2008–2013 www.elizabethhelps.com www.empoweredbytruth.org	\$800,000 \$600,000	CBAE CBAE
Operation Keepsake, Inc. 2006–2011 www.operationkeepsake.com	\$578,071	CBAE
The RIDGE Project, Inc. (Reality Instruction Developing Generations of Excellence) 2007–2012	\$600,000	CBAE
Saint Vincent Mercy Medical Center 2005–2008 TRIPLE GRANTEE 2008–2013 2004–2009	\$627,285 \$600,000 \$300,000	CBAE CBAE AFLA
Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley 2007–2012 www.cssmv.org	\$470,735	AFLA

Adolescent Health Contact²⁷

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Ohio Department of Health
Office of Abstinence Education
246 North High Street, 7th Floor
P.O. Box 118
Columbus, OH 43216
Phone: (614) 728-4761

Ohio Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

The AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland
3210 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44115
Phone: (216) 621-0766
www.aidstaskforce.org

Family Planning Association of Northeast Ohio
54 South State Street
Painseville, OH 44077
Phone: (440) 352-0608
www.fpaneo.org

NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio
12000 Shaker Boulevard
Cleveland, OH 44120
Phone: (216) 283-2180
www.prochoiceohio.org

Ohio AIDS Coalition
48 West Whittier Street
Columbus, OH 43206
Phone: (614) 444-1683
www.ohioaidscoalition.org

Ohio Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
P.O. Box 82204
Columbus, OH 43202
Phone: (614) 221-3636
www.ohiorc.org

Planned Parenthood Affiliates of Ohio
35 E. Gay Street
Columbus, OH 43215
Phone: (614) 224-0761
www.ppao.org

Ohio Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Abstinence Educators' Network
P.O. Box 30
Westville, OH 43083
Phone: (937) 408-5992
members.tripod.com/abednet

Abstinence Resource Centre
1 Elizabeth Place, Suite 400 E
Dayton, OH 45408
Phone: (937) 223-5250
www.abstinence.biz

Citizens For Community Values
11175 Reading Road, Suite 103
Cincinnati, OH 45241
Phone: (513) 733-5775
www.ccv.org

Ohio Christian Alliance
P.O. Box 3076
Akron, OH 44309
Phone: (330) 887-1922
www.ohioca.org

O H I O

Ohio Policy Roundtable
11288 Alameda Drive
Strongsville, OH 44149
Phone: (800) 522-VOTE
www.aproundtable.org

Ohio Right to Life Society
665 East Dublin-Granville Road, Suite 200
Columbus, OH 43229
Phone: (614) 547-0099
www.ohiolife.org

Newspapers in Ohio²⁸

Akron Beacon Journal
Newsroom
44 East Exchange Street
Akron, OH 44308
Phone: (330) 996-3000
www.ohio.com

The Blade
Newsroom
541 N. Superior Street
Toledo, OH 43660
Phone: (419) 724-6000
www.toledoblade.com

The Cincinnati Enquirer
Newsroom
312 Elm Street
Cincinnati OH 45202
Phone: (513) 768-8000
news.enquirer.com

The Cincinnati Post & Kentucky Post
Newsroom
P.O. Box 2678
Covington, KY 41012
Phone: (859) 292-2600
www.kypost.com

Cleveland/ Akron Family
Newsroom
35475 Vine Street, Suite 224
Willoughby, OH , 44095
Phone: (440) 510-2000
www.neohiofamily.com

The Columbus Dispatch
Newsroom
34 S. 3rd Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: (614) 461-5200
www.dispatch.com

Dayton Daily News
Newsroom
1611 S. Main Street
Dayton, OH 45409
Phone: (937) 222-5700
www.daytondailynews.com

The News-Herald
Newsroom
115 West Second Street
Port Clinton, OH 43452
Phone: (419) 734-3141
www.portclintonnewsheald.com

The Plain Dealer
Newsroom
1801 Superior Avenue E
Cleveland, OH 44114
Phone: (216) 999-5000
www.cleveland.com

The Canton Repository
Newsroom
500 Market Avenue South
Canton, OH 44702
Phone: (330) 580-8300
www.cantonrep.com

The Vindicator
 Newsroom
 107 Vindicator Square
 Youngstown, OH 44503
 Phone: (330) 747-1471
www.vindy.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 Laura Bischoff, "Ohio won't seek abstinence-only funds," *Dayton Daily News*, 22 March 2007, accessed 22 September 2008, <<http://www.daytondailynews.com/n/content/oh/story/news/local/2007/03/21/ddn032207sexed.html>>.

⁴ Leila Atassi, "Ohio Could Become 8th State To Reject Abstinence-Only Money," *The Plain Dealer*, 27 March 2007, accessed 27 March 2007.

⁵ Who We Are: ATM Education," Miss the Mess, accessed 20 September 2008, <<http://www.missthemess.com/who/index.php>>.

⁶ ATM Education, Inc., 990 Form, 2006, p. 1.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ "Father/ Daughter Purity Ball," ATM, accessed 15 October 2008, <[http://www.missthemess.com/location/view.php?slide=/slides\[1\]/data\[1\]/topic\[1\]/slide\[1\]](http://www.missthemess.com/location/view.php?slide=/slides[1]/data[1]/topic[1]/slide[1])>.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ "Elizabeth's New Life Center," Elizabeth's New Life Center, accessed 15 October 2008, <<http://www.elizabethnewlife.org/>>.

¹² Elizabeth's New Life Center, 990 Form, Fiscal Year 2006, p. 1.

¹³ "Curricula Guide," Empowered by Truth, accessed 20 September 2008, <<http://www.empoweredbytruth.org/curricula.html>>.

¹⁴ Outline for the Responsible Social Values Program, 8th Grade," Empowered by Truth, accessed 20 September 2008, <http://www.empoweredbytruth.org/8th_grade_rsvp.pdf>.

¹⁵ "Links for Life," Elizabeth's New Life Center," accessed 15 October 2008, <<http://www.elizabethnewlife.org/links.html>>.

¹⁶ "Affiliate Center," Abstinence Clearinghouse, accessed 15 October 2008, <<http://www.abstinence.net/affiliates/faith.php>>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ "History and Philosophy," Operation Keepsake, Inc., accessed 15 October 2008, <<http://www.operationkeepsake.com/parents.html>>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ "The Ridge Project," The Ridge Project, accessed 15 October 2008, <<http://www.theridgeproject.com/doc/about>>.

²¹ "About Us," Project Reach, accessed 15 October 2008, <<http://www.projectreach.org/about.shtml>>.

²² "The Ridge Project," The Ridge Project, accessed 15 October 2008, <<http://www.theridgeproject.com/doc/about>>.

²³ The Ridge Project, 990 Form, Fiscal Year 2007, p. 1.

²⁴ "Resources," The Ridge Project, accessed 15 October 2008, <<http://www.theridgeproject.com/doc/resources/links>>.

²⁵ "About Us," National Abstinence Education Association, accessed 10 October 2008, <http://www.abstinenceassociation.org/about_us/index.html>.

²⁶ "About Us: What is the Medical Institute?" Medical Institute for Sexual Health, (2007), accessed 4 April 2008, <<http://www.medinstitute.org/content.php?name=aboutmi>>.

²⁷ SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

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²⁸ 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](#).