



OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma received \$705,105 in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2004.¹

Oklahoma Sexuality Education Law

Oklahoma does not require schools to teach sexuality education. If a school district chooses to teach sexuality education, all curricula and materials must be approved by the superintendent. All materials must also be available to parents for review.

All sexuality education classes must have as one of their “primary purposes the teaching of or informing students about the practice of abstinence.”

Schools are required to provide HIV/AIDS prevention education. This education must be limited to the “discussion of the disease AIDS and its spread and prevention.” The class must be taught once in either fifth or sixth grade, once in grades seven through nine, and once during grades ten through twelve. All curricula and materials must be checked for medical accuracy by the Oklahoma Department of Health and must only include “factual medical information for AIDS prevention.” HIV/AIDS education must specifically teach that:

1. Engaging in homosexual activity, promiscuous sexual activity, intravenous drug use or contact with contaminated blood products is now known to be primarily responsible for contact with the AIDS virus;
2. Avoiding the activities specified in paragraph 1 of this subsection is the only method of preventing the spread of the virus; and
3. Sexual intercourse, with or without condoms, with any person testing positive for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) antibodies, or any other person infected with HIV, places that individual in a high risk category for developing AIDS.

HIV/AIDS-prevention education must also teach that “abstinence from sexual activity is the only certain means for the prevention of the spread or contraction of the AIDS virus through sexual contact. It shall also teach that artificial means of birth control are not a certain means of preventing the spread of the AIDS virus and reliance on such methods puts a person at risk for exposure to the disease.”

A school district must provide written notification of all sexuality and HIV/AIDS prevention classes. Parents or guardians can submit written notification if they do not want their children to participate in such classes. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See Oklahoma Statutes 70-11-105.1 and 70-11-103.3.

Recent Legislation

SIECUS is not aware of any recent legislation related to sexuality education in Oklahoma.

Events of Note

Tea Parties for Abstinence

December 2004; Muskogee, OK

Every year the Crisis Pregnancy Support Center in Muskogee, Oklahoma holds a “Tea Party for Abstinence” for eighth-grade girls in the area. At the Crisis Pregnancy Support Center’s Spring Abstinence Tea in 2002, 840 girls from 21 schools were told the “three why’s and a how” of abstinence. The three “why’s” include pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, and mental anguish. The “how” involves declaring a line and “defending it.”

A featured speaker from To Know Christ Ministries told the audience that “girls lose their virginity before marriage because of peer and media pressure, low self-esteem, and sexual attraction.” After sharing that she was a virgin on her wedding night, the speaker told them that teens should refrain from premarital sexual activity “because they will lose their ability to bond with other people if they have sex with multiple partners.”

She ended by offering the girls the following retort to use with boyfriends who are pressuring them into sexual activity: “don’t let the screen door whack you where the good Lord cracked you.”²

At the Tea Party in 2004, Erika Harold, Miss America 2003, was the featured speaker for the more than 900 girls attending.³ The Crisis Pregnancy Center Director explained, “each year the girls hear a speaker who encourages them to enjoy their teen years with freedom from guilt and fear of pregnancy by postponing sexual activity until marriage. This gives them the opportunity to pursue an education and reach their potential.”⁴

The abstinence teas have been very successful and have expanded to take place in neighboring counties. A separate Boys’ Bash event was started in 1999.⁵ These events are not paid for with any federal or state abstinence-only-until-marriage funds.

Oklahoma’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note⁶

- In 2003, 49% of female high school students and 51% of male high school students in Oklahoma reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 45% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, 2% of female high school students and 9% of male high school students in Oklahoma 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 2003, 13% of female high school students and 19% of male high school students in Oklahoma reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 11% of female high school students and 18% of male high school students nationwide.

- In 2003, 38% of female high school students and 37% of male high school students in Oklahoma reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 35% of females and 34% of males nationwide.
- In 2003, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 20% of females and 31% of males in Oklahoma reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 30% of males nationwide.
- In 2003, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 61% of females and 67% of males in Oklahoma reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 57% of females and 69% of males nationwide.
- In 2003, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 20% of females and 16% of males in Oklahoma reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 13% of males nationwide.
- In 2003, 6% of female high school students and 3% of male high school students in Oklahoma reported ever having been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant compared to 5% of female high school students and 4% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, 86% of high school students in Oklahoma reported having been taught about HIV/AIDS in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.
- In 2000, Oklahoma's abortion rate was 12 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.⁷
- In 2002, Oklahoma's birth rate was 58 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen birth rate of 43 per 1,000 nationwide.⁸

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

Oklahoma received \$705,105 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. Oklahoma matches federal funding with \$166,124 from the state, the remainder of the match comes from sub-grantees.

The funding is administered by the Oklahoma Department of Health. The majority of the funding is divided among four sub-grantees. In addition, a project evaluation by the Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Oklahoma receives \$128,595, and the Oklahoma State Department of Health Central Office uses \$113,943 for program and fiscal administration.

Three grantees use a combination of curricula, including *Choosing the Best*, *WAIT Training*, *Responsible Social Values Program (RSVP)*, and *Facing Reality*. One grantee has designed its own curriculum.

SIECUS reviewed *WAIT Training* and found that it contained little medical or biological information and almost no information about STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases), 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 on 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

SIECUS reviewed *Choosing the Best LIFE* and found that it names numerous physical and psychological consequences of premarital sexual activity, suggests that sexually active teens will never have a happy future, and implies that only teens with low self-esteem and poor judgment become sexually active. For example, *Choosing the Best LIFE* states: “relationships often lower the self-respect of both partners—one feeling used, the other feeling like the user. Emotional pain can cause a downward spiral leading to intense feelings of lack of worthlessness.”¹⁰

According to the Oklahoma Family Policy Council’s KEEP Program’s (Kids Eagerly Endorsing Purity) website, over one-third of Oklahoma’s 77 counties currently use an abstinence-only curriculum. Its program focuses on youth between the ages of 12 and 18 and includes one session on STDs led by a physician from the Oklahoma Physicians Resource Council (OPRC), an organization formed in association with Focus on the Family’s Physicians Resource Council.

The Family Policy Council’s website includes a prayer guide with Bible quotations. Its other projects include the Marriage Initiative, the Fatherhood Campaign (in partnership with the National Center for Fathering), Character Education, and the Pro-Life Campaign. No Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funds are used for these projects or website activities.

Special Projects of Regional and National Significance—Community Based Abstinence Education (SPRANS–CBAE)¹¹ and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees

There are no SPRANS–CBAE or AFLA grantees in Oklahoma.

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

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS–CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Length of Grant		
Oklahoma State Department of Health www.health.state.ok.us/program/oaep/index.html	\$705,105 federal \$329,907state	Title V
Pushmataha County Health Department	\$121,700	Title V sub-grantee

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS–CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Length of Grant Hope Outreach Inc.	\$75,000	Title V sub-grantee
Oklahoma Family Policy Council www.okfamilypc.org	\$125,000	Title V sub-grantee
Pregnancy Resource Center	\$74,322	Title V sub-grantee

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

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 Oklahoma State Department of Health
 1000 NE Tenth St.
 Oklahoma City, OK 73117
 Phone: (405) 271-9444, Ext. 56711

Oklahoma Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

NARAL Pro-Choice Oklahoma
 PO Box 702503
 Tulsa, OK 74170
 Phone: (918) 494-9585
www.okchoice.org

Oklahoma Religious Coalition for
 Reproductive Choice
 PO Box 35194
 Tulsa, OK 74153
 Phone: (918) 481-6444
www.okrcrc.org

Planned Parenthood of Arkansas and
 Eastern Oklahoma
 5870 S. Peoria
 Tulsa, OK 74105
 Phone: (918) 658-5200

Planned Parenthood of Central
 Oklahoma
 619 NW 23rd
 Oklahoma City, OK 73103
 Phone: (405) 528-2157
www.plannedparenthood.org/centralok/

Oklahoma Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Oklahoma Family Policy Council
 3908 N. Peniel Ave.
 Bethany Bank Tower, Suite 100
 Bethany, OK 73008
 Phone: (405) 787-7744
www.okfamilypc.org

Oklahomans for Life
 3105 E. Skelly Dr., Room 605
 Tulsa, OK 74105
 Phone: (918) 749-5022

Newspapers in Oklahoma

Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise
Susan Albert
Community News Editor
4125 Nowata Rd.
Bartlesville, OK 74006
Phone: (918) 335-8243

Enid News and Eagle
Scott Fitzgerald
Medical/Health Reporter
227 W. Broadway Ave.
Enid, OK 73701
Phone: (580) 233-6600

Muskogee Daily Phoenix
Julie Hubbard
Community News Reporter
214 Wall St.
Muskogee, OK 74401
Phone: (918) 684-2926

The Norman Transcript
Melissa Wabnitz
Education Reporter
215 E. Comanche St.
Norman, OK 73069
Phone: (405) 321-1800

The Oklahoman
Jim Killackey
Health & Medicine Reporter
PO Box 25125
Oklahoma City, OK 73125
Phone: (405) 475-3690

The Ponca City News
Kristi Hayes
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300 N. 3rd St.
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The Daily Ardmoreite
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Ardmore, OK 73401
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The Lawton Constitution
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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 R. Bradshaw, "Eighth-Grade Girls Learn How to Say 'No'," *Muskogee Daily Phoenix*, 4 April 2002.

³ "10 questions for Crisis Pregnancy Center Director Arleta Dennis," *Muskogee Daily Phoenix*, 13 December 2004, < <http://www.muskogee phoenix.com/news/stories/20041213/localnews/1736699.html>>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from: Jo Anne Grunbaum, et. al., "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2003," *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 53.SS-2 (21 May 2004): 1-95, accessed 28 January 2005, <<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/yrbs/>>.

⁷ *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>.

⁸ *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>>.

⁹ *WAIT Training-Workshop Manual* (Longmont, CO: Friends First, 1996), 39.

¹⁰ Bruce Cook, *Choosing the Best LIFE-Student Workbook* (Marietta, GA: Choosing the Best Inc., 2000), 9.

¹¹ 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).