

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma received \$690,342 in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2005.¹

Oklahoma Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Oklahoma does not require schools to teach sexuality education. However, the state Departments of Education and Health must develop curricula and materials and keep them current. If a school district chooses to teach sexuality education, all curricula and materials must be approved for medical accuracy by the state and by the district superintendent. All materials must also be available to parents for review. Each public school must establish an advisory committee to make recommendations regarding health education. In addition, 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 during either grade 5 or 6, once during grades 7 through 9, and once during grades 10 through 12. 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:

- 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;
- 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;
- Avoiding the activities specified in paragraph 1 of this subsection is the only method of preventing the spread of the virus; and
- 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.

In addition, the *Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) Integrated Curriculum: Health, Safety, and Physical Education* includes standards for HIV/AIDS education in seventh through twelfth grades. These standards outline that instruction must:

- Investigate and examine current information about HIV/AIDS in order to differentiate related facts, opinions, and myths;
- Examine and identify the importance of sexual abstinence in adolescent relationships;

- Demonstrate refusal skills (saying “no”), negotiation skills and peer resistance skills related to sexual health;
- Analyze the transmission and methods of prevention for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV;
- Identify risk behaviors and situations involving possible exposure to HIV;
- Examine the relationships between injecting drug use (IDU) and contact with contaminated blood products and the transmission of HIV; and
- Analyze the efficiency of artificial means of birth control in preventing the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

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 70-11-103.3 and 70-11-105.1 and *the Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) Integrated Curriculum: Health, Safety, and Physical Education*.

Recent Legislation

Legislation Would Segregate Sexuality-Related Materials in Public Libraries

House Resolution 1039, introduced in May 2005, would require libraries to put all books dealing with sexuality in an adults-only section of the library. The bill would also require that no public funds be used in “the distribution of such materials to children.” The bill was passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate has taken no action on it. For more information, see the Events of Note section.

Events of Note

Oklahoma House of Representatives Passes Anti-Gay Book Ban May 2005; Tulsa, OK

The Oklahoma House of Representatives voted 81-3 to pass House Resolution 1039, which calls on Oklahoma libraries to “confine homosexually themed books and other age-inappropriate material to areas exclusively for adult access and distribution.”² The bill, introduced in May 2005 by state Representative Sally Kern, (R-Oklahoma City) also requires that no public funds be used in “the distribution of such materials to children.”³ Representative Kern explained, “there are some issues little children aren’t emotionally equipped to tackle and many parents believe the issue of sexual preference is one of them....Parents have a right to know that certain books deal with age-sensitive issues and decide for themselves if their child is ready to read those materials.”⁴

The three democratic representatives who voted against the measure, however, said it would strip power from local library boards and would strain their already stretched resources.⁵ Darrell Gilbert (D-Tulsa) explained his outrage saying, “if this is a book that you want to have in, quote, an adult-only access part of the library—which there aren’t any such things—you’re going to have to take every anatomy book and put it in there, too, because it has nude bodies in it, pictures of body parts. Where does it stop?”⁶

Kern argued, “this isn’t censorship, because I’m not asking that they be thrown away, be burned. I’m asking that they just be put in with adult collections and then if a parent wants their child to see a book like that they can check it out.”⁷

The debate over books dealing with sexual orientation followed a controversy in Kern’s district in March over the children’s book *King and King*,⁸ which tells the story of a character named Prince Bertie who falls in love with a character named Prince Lee. It is written for readers ages six and up by two Dutch authors and has been the subject of several controversies around the country. Kern called the book “obscene.”⁹

Tea Parties for Abstinence
December 2004; Muskogee, OK

Every year the Crisis Pregnancy Support Center in Muskogee, OK holds a “Tea Party for Abstinence” for eighth-grade girls in the area. At the event in 2002, 840 girls from 21 schools were told the “three why’s and a how” of abstinence. The three “why’s” were pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, and mental anguish. The “how” was 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.”¹⁰

At the Tea Party in 2004, Erika Harold, Miss America 2003, was the featured speaker for the more than 900 girls attending.¹¹ The organization’s 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.”¹²

The abstinence teas have been very successful and have expanded to take place in neighboring counties. A separate “Boys’ Bash” event was started in 1999.¹³ These events are not paid for with any federal or state abstinence-only-until-marriage funds.

Oklahoma’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note¹⁴

- In 2005, 48% of female high school students and 50% of male high school students in Oklahoma reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 4% 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 9% of male high school students nationwide.

- In 2005, 14% of female high school students and 21% of male high school students in Oklahoma reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 12% of female high school students and 17% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 37% of female high school students and 35% 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 female high school students and 33% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 54% of females and 69% of males in Oklahoma reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 56% of females and 70% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 20% of females and 13% of males in Oklahoma reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 15% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 17% of females and 29% of males in Oklahoma reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 19% of females and 28% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, 85% of high school students in Oklahoma reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV 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.¹⁵
- 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.¹⁶

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

Oklahoma received \$690,342 in federal Title V funding in Fiscal Year 2005. 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. Oklahoma provides \$167,237 of state funds and sub-grantees provide the remainder of the match. The money is administered by the Oklahoma Department of Health. The majority of the funding is divided among four sub-grantees. A total of \$175,658 (\$100,359 state and \$75,299 federal) is used for program and fiscal administration at the Oklahoma State Department of Health Central Office. In addition, the Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Oklahoma receives \$152,570 (\$77,811 federal and \$74,759 state) to a conduct a project evaluation.

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

SIECUS reviewed two of the curricula produced by Choosing the Best, Inc.—*Choosing the Best LIFE* (for high school students) and *Choosing the Best Path* (for middle school students). These reviews found that the curricula name numerous negative consequences of pre-marital sexual activity and suggest that teens should feel guilty, embarrassed, and ashamed of sexual behavior. For example, *Choosing the Best LIFE* states that, “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.” *Choosing the Best PATH* says, “sexual activity also can lead to the trashing of a person’s reputation, resulting in the loss of friends.”¹⁷

SIECUS reviewed *Facing Reality* and found that it includes very little information about sexual behavior, STDs, HIV/AIDS, condoms, or contraception. Instead, the curriculum focuses almost exclusively on the negative consequences of premarital sexual activity. These discussions include messages of fear and shame as well as biased statements about gender and sexual orientation. *Facing Reality* tells parents and teachers that “many homosexual activists are frustrated and desperate over their own situation and those of loved ones. Many are dying, in part, due to ignorance. Educators who struggle to overcome ignorance and instill self-mastery in their students will inevitably lead them to recognize that some people with AIDS are now suffering because of the choices they made.”¹⁸

SIECUS reviewed *WAIT Training* and found that it contained little medical or biological information and almost no information about 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.”¹⁹

The Oklahoma Family Policy Council runs the KEEP (Kids Eagerly Endorsing Purity) Program. According to the program’s website, over one-third of Oklahoma’s 77 counties currently use an abstinence-only curriculum. The program focuses on young people between the ages of 12 and 18 and includes one session about 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.

Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE)²⁰ and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees

There are no CBAE or AFLA grantees in Oklahoma.

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2005

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, and AFLA)
Length of Grant Oklahoma State Department of Health www.health.state.ok.us/program/oaep/index.html	\$690,342 federal \$167,237 state	Title V
Oklahoma Family Policy Council ²¹	\$125,000	Title V sub-grantee
Pushmataha County Health Department	\$125,000	Title V sub-grantee
Hope Outreach Inc ²² www.hopeoutreach.org	\$75,000	Title V sub-grantee
Pregnancy Resource Center of S.W. Oklahoma ²³ www.prcswok.org	\$74,322	Title V sub-grantee

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

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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
5780 S. Peoria
Tulsa, OK 74105
Phone: (918) 858-5200
<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/pp2/okark/>

Planned Parenthood of Central
Oklahoma
619 N.W. 23rd
Oklahoma City, OK 73103
Phone: (405) 528-0221
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., Suite 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

The Daily Ardmoreite
Andrea Perry
Education Reporter
117 W. Broadway St.
Ardmore, OK 73401
Phone: (580) 223-2200

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

The Lawton Constitution
Philip Muse
Medical/Health Reporter
102 SW 3rd St.
Lawton, OK 73501
Phone: (580) 585-5139

Muskogee Daily Phoenix
Julie Hubbard
Community News Reporter
214 Wall St.
Muskogee, OK 74401
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News-Capital & Democrat
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500 S. 2nd St.
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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 2005 begins on October 1, 2004 and ends on September 30, 2005.

² Oklahoma House of Representatives Media Division, "Lawmakers Vote to Restrict Access to Homosexual-Themed Children's Books," Press Release published 9 May 2005, accessed 11 May 2005, <<http://www.lsb.state.ok.us/house/news7551.html>>.

³ *State Sexual and Reproductive Health Legislative Reports* (Washington, DC: SIECUS, 2005), accessed 11 May 2005, <<http://www.siecus.org/policy/legislative/legis0000.html>>.

⁴ "Lawmakers Vote to Restrict Access."

⁵ United Press International, "Okla. Lawmakers Vote to Restrict Gay Books," *The Washington Times*, 10 May 2005, accessed 11 May 2005, <<http://washingtontimes.com/upi-breaking/20050510-094222-7146r.htm>>.

⁶ "Oklahoma House Passes Gay Book Ban," *365Gay.com*, 10 May 2005, accessed 11 May 2005, <<http://www.365gay.com/newscon05/05/051005okBooks.htm/>>.

⁷ "Okla. Lawmakers Vote to Restrict Gay Books."

⁸ "Oklahoma House Passes Gay Book Ban."

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ R. Bradshaw, "Eighth-Grade Girls Learn How to Say 'No'," *Muskogee Daily Phoenix*, 4 April 2002.

¹¹ "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>>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from: Danice K. Eaton, et. al., "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2005," *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 55, no. SS-5 (9 June 2006): 1-108, accessed 8 June 2006, <<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>>.

¹⁵ *U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information* (New York: Guttmacher Institute, February 2004), accessed 28 January 2005, <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/state_pregnancy_trends.pdf>.

¹⁶ *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>>.

¹⁷ Bruce Cook, *Choosing the Best LIFE* (Marietta, GA: Choosing the Best Inc., 2000); Bruce Cook, *Choosing the Best PATH* (Marietta, GA: Choosing the Best Inc., 2000). For more information, see SIECUS' reviews of *Choosing the Best LIFE* and *Choosing the Best PATH* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.

¹⁸ James R. Coughlin, *Facing Reality* (Golf, IL: Project Reality, 1998). For more information see, *Toward a Sexually Healthy America, Abstinence-only-until-marriage programs that Try to Keep Our Youth Scared Chaste* at <http://www.siecus.org/pubs/tsha_scaredchaste.pdf>.

¹⁹ *WAIT Training* (Longmont, CO: Friends First, 1996). For more information see, *Toward a Sexually Healthy America, Abstinence-only-until-marriage programs that Try to Keep Our Youth Scared Chaste* at <http://www.siecus.org/pubs/tsha_scaredchaste.pdf>.

²⁰ In Fiscal Year 2004 SPRANS–CBAE was administered within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau. In Fiscal Year 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).

²¹ Funded July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2008

²² Ended June 2005.

²³ Ended June 2005.