



PENNSYLVANIA

*Pennsylvania received \$6,731,542 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2005.*¹

Pennsylvania Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Schools in Pennsylvania are not required to teach sexuality education. Primary, intermediate, middle, and high schools are, however, required to teach sexually transmitted disease (STD)/HIV education. Schools must use materials that are age-appropriate, discuss prevention, and stress abstinence as “the only completely reliable means of preventing sexual transmission.”

The state has created the *Academic Standards for Health, Safety, and Physical Education*, which include STD- and HIV-prevention education. All decisions regarding HIV-prevention curricula and materials must be made by local school districts. School districts do not have to follow specific curriculum, but they must use these standards as a framework for the development of their curriculum.

School districts must publicize the fact that parents and guardians can review all curriculum materials. Parents and guardians whose principles or religious beliefs conflict with instruction may excuse their children from the programs. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See Pennsylvania Code Title 22, Chapter 4, Section 29 and the *Academic Standards for Health, Safety, and Physical Education*.

Recent Legislation

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

Events of Note

Federally Funded Abstinence-Only Program Using Money to Promote Religion August 2005; PA

On August 23, 2005, the Bush Administration suspended a federal grant to the Silver Ring Thing (SRT), a faith-based abstinence-only-until-marriage program, saying that it appeared the program was using tax money for religious activities. Officials at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) ordered the group to submit a “corrective action plan” if it wishes to receive the remainder of its \$75,000 grant. In a letter to SRT’s program director, Harry Wilson of HHS’ Family and Youth Services Bureau said the project “includes both secular and religious components that are not adequately safeguarded.”²

The action came three months after the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed a lawsuit against HHS, accusing the Administration of using tax dollars to promote Christianity. In documents filed in federal court in Boston, the ACLU alleged that the activities, brochures, and website of SRT were “permeated with religion” and use “taxpayer dollars to promote religious content, instruction and indoctrination.”³

The program’s teenage graduates sign a covenant “before God Almighty” to remain virgins until marriage and earn a silver ring inscribed with a Bible passage reminding them to “keep clear of sexual sin.” Many of the events are held in Churches and, in filings with the Internal Revenue Service, the organization describes its mission as “evangelical ministry” with an emphasis on “evangelistic crusade planning.”⁴

The ACLU declared a partial victory but said it will continue to monitor the group’s activities. “We’re really pleased the government has recognized Silver Ring Thing was misusing public dollars to promote its own faith over all others,” said senior staff attorney Julie Sternberg. “It’s improper for the federal government to underwrite a national roadshow designed to convert teenagers to a particular faith.”⁵

In the past three years, the Pennsylvania-based Silver Ring Thing has received close to \$1.2 million in earmarks arranged for by Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), who chairs the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, the subcommittee that oversees two of the largest abstinence-only-until-marriage funding streams—Community-Based Abstinence Education and Adolescent Family Life Act.

Pennsylvania’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note

- In 2000, Pennsylvania’s abortion rate was 17 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.⁶
- In 2001, Pennsylvania’s birth rate was 33 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen birth rate of 45 per 1,000 nationwide.⁷

*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*⁸

- In 2003, 57% of female high school students and 71% of male high school students in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 45% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, 6% of female high school students and 27% of male high school students in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 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, 16% of female high school students and 42% of male high school students in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 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, 43% of female high school students and 53% of male high school students in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 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 34% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 10% of females and 17% of males in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 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, 64% of females and 76% of males in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 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, 13% of females and 5% of males in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 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, 9% of female high school students and 9% of male high school students in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 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, 85% of high school students in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania reported having been taught about HIV/AIDS in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

Pennsylvania was eligible for \$1,693,422 in federal Title V funding in Fiscal Year 2005; however, the state chose not to apply for these funds due to the extraordinary restrictions placed on how the money must be spent. Pennsylvania uses those state funds that previously supported abstinence-only-until-marriage programs to instead fund programs focused on general youth development.

Numerous organizations in Pennsylvania do, however, receive federal earmarks for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs. In total, organizations in the state received \$3,100,000 in federal earmarks in Fiscal Year 2005. In Fiscal Year 2003, Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) set a new precedent for the federal funding of abstinence-only-until-marriage programs when he secured earmarks of approximately \$3.15 million within the federal Omnibus Appropriations Bill for individual abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Pennsylvania. This was the first time a member of Congress earmarked money for specific abstinence-only-until-marriage programs outside of traditional federal funding streams. These earmarks continued for Fiscal Years 2004 and 2005.

Title V Evaluation

Pennsylvania evaluated its Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in 2003. The evaluators found that nine of the 13 abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in the state had little to no effect on reducing “early sexual onset,” and that the effects of all programs had faded

by the time students reached ninth grade.⁹ The programs served youth 12 and older and used a number of curricula including *Me, My World, My Future* and *WAIT (Why Am I Tempted) Training*.

Pennsylvania’s evaluation involved pre- and post-test surveys, comparison groups, and focus groups. In both urban and rural test sites, results yielded either mixed or negative effects on youth behaviors. Even at the two most effective urban sites, 11.5% and 25% of participating youth reported having engaged in sexual intercourse by post-test. One rural site reported attitudes towards abstinence declined while the proportion of students “who experienced sexual intercourse for the first time” increased and “only about half of these sexually active youth used any form of contraception.”¹⁰

The focus groups revealed young people’s frustration with a lack of information surrounding contraception and the lack of respect for their ability to make decisions.¹¹ The authors of the study conclude that, “this initiative was largely ineffective in reducing sexual onset and promoting attitudes and skills consistent with sexual abstinence.”¹²

Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE)¹³ and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees

There are five CBAE grantees in Pennsylvania: HOPE Worldwide; Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America; Pennsylvania Association of Latino Organizations; To Our Children’s Future with Health, Inc.; and Women’s Care Center of Erie County Inc. There are three AFLA grantees in Pennsylvania: Crozer-Chester Medical Center (receives two grants), Mercy Hospital of Pittsburgh, and To Our Children with Health.

The Women’s Care Center of Erie County uses two curricula: *R.S.V.P* and *WAIT Training*. 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.”¹⁴

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

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Amount of Grant Money	Type of Grant (includes FY05 Earmarks, CBAE, and AFLA)
Length of Grant		
A+ for Abstinence	\$45,000	FY05 Earmark
Catholic Social Services, The Bridge	\$46,000	FY05 Earmark

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant Money	Type of Grant (includes FY05 Earmarks, CBAE, and AFLA)
City of Chester, Bureau of Health, SABER Project www.chestercity.com/health.php#abstinence	\$105,000	FY05 Earmark
Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries DUAL GRANTEE www.diakon.org	\$136,000 \$95,000	FY05 Earmark FY05 Earmark
George Washington Carver Community Center, Project A.C.E.	\$86,000	FY05 Earmark
Greater Calvary Community Development Corporation	\$50,000	FY05 Earmark
Guidance Center, Project RAPPORT	\$74,000	FY05 Earmark
Heart Beat	\$51,000	FY05 Earmark
Keystone Central School District, Central Mountain Middle School East www.kcsd.k12.pa.us/cmms	\$79,000	FY05 Earmark
Keystone Economic Development Corporation	\$88,000	FY05 Earmark
L.V.C.P.T.P., St Luke's Health Network, CHOICE program www.slhn-lehighvalley.org	\$92,000	FY05 Earmark
Lackawanna Trail School District www.ltsdhs.org	\$74,000	FY05 Earmark

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant Money	Type of Grant (includes FY05 Earmarks, CBAE, and AFLA)
LaSalle University www.lasalle.edu	\$112,000	FY05 Earmark
Mercy Hospital of Pittsburgh DUAL GRANTEE 2005–2006 www.mercylink.org	\$111,000 \$225,000	FY05 Earmark AFLA
Neighborhood United Against Drugs	\$136,000	FY05 Earmark
New Brighton School District www.nbsd.k12.pa.us	\$23,000	FY05 Earmark
Nueva Esperanza	\$72,000	FY05 Earmark
Partners for Healthier Tomorrows www.easd.k12.pa.us	\$50,000	FY05 Earmark
Partners in Family and Community Development www.pfcd.org	\$72,000	FY05 Earmark
Perseus House, Inc. www.perseushouse.org	\$50,000	FY05 Earmark
Potter County Human Services www.pottercountyhumansvcs.org	\$50,000	FY05 Earmark
Rape and Victim Assistance Center of Schuylkill County	\$71,000	FY05 Earmark

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant Money	Type of Grant (includes FY05 Earmarks, CBAE, and AFLA)
Real Alternatives www.realalternatives.org	\$150,000	FY05 Earmark
Real Commitment www.realcommitment.org	\$82,000	FY05 Earmark
School District of Lancaster, Project IMPACT www.lancaster.k12.pa.us	\$101,000	FY05 Earmark
School District of Philadelphia	\$102,000	FY05 Earmark
Shepherd's Maternity House Inc. www.shepherdsmaternityhouse.org	\$50,000	FY05 Earmark
Silver Ring Thing www.silverringthing.com	\$75,000	FY05 Earmark
To Our Children's Future with Health, Inc. TRIPLE GRANTEE 2005-2008 TRIPLE GRANTEE 2005-2006 http://tocfwh.org	\$109,000 \$485,524 \$225,000	FY05 Earmark CBAE AFLA
Tuscarora Intermediate Unit www.tiu11.org	\$84,000	FY05 Earmark
Urban Family Council www.urbanfamily.org	\$126,000	FY05 Earmark

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant Money	Type of Grant (includes FY05 Earmarks, CBAE, and AFLA)
Victim Resource Center Inc. www.titusvillepa.com/Org/vrci.htm	\$41,000	FY05 Earmark
Washington Hospital Teen Outreach, Academy for Adolescent Health www.healthyteens.com	\$136,000	FY05 Earmark
Women's Care Center of Erie County, Inc., Abstinence Advantage Program www.wccerie.org	\$136,000	FY05 Earmark
York County Human Life Services, Inc.	\$50,000	FY05 Earmark
HOPE Worldwide 2004–2007 www.hopeww.org	\$798,418	CBAE
Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America 2004–2007 www.oicofamerica.org	\$799,500	CBAE
Pennsylvania Association of Latino Organizations 2004–2007 www.paloweb.org	\$799,569	CBAE
Crozer-Chester Medical Center 2005–2006	\$234,337	AFLA
DUAL GRANTEE 2005–2006	\$154,194	AFLA

State Contact Information¹⁵

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Health & Welfare Building
Harrisburg, PA 17108
Phone: (717) 772-2762

Pennsylvania Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

American Civil Liberties Union of
Pennsylvania
PO Box 40008
Philadelphia, PA 19006
Phone: (215) 592-1513
www.aclupa.org

Family Health Council, Inc.
960 Penn Ave., Suite 600
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Phone: (412) 288-2130
www.fhcinc.org

Family Health Council of Central PA
3461 Market St., Suite 200
Camp Hill, PA 17011
Phone: (717) 761-7380
www.fhccp.org

The Family Planning Council of
Southeastern Pennsylvania
260 S. Broad St., Suite 100
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Phone: (215) 985-2600
www.familyplanning.org

NARAL Pro-Choice Pennsylvania
PO Box 58174
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Phone: (215) 546-4666
www.prochoicepennsylvania.org

Pennsylvania Coalition to Prevent Teen
Pregnancy
200 Strawberry Sq.
Harrisburg, PA 17101
Phone: (717) 236-3366

Planned Parenthood Pennsylvania
Advocates
231 State St.
2nd Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101
Phone: (717) 234-3024
www.plannedparenthoodpa.org

Statewide Pennsylvania Rights Coalition
(SPARC)
30 Forgedale Rd.
Fleetwood, PA 19522
Phone: (717) 920-9537
www.sparc-pa.org

Pennsylvania Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Pennsylvania Family Institute
23 N. Front St.
Harrisburg, PA 17101
Phone: (717) 545-0600
www.pafamily.org

Pennsylvanians for Human Life
590 Snyder Ave.
West Chester, PA 19382
Phone: (610) 610-0780
www.pennlife.org

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Pennsylvania Pro Life Federation
4800 Jonestown Rd., Suite 102
Harrisburg, PA 17109
Phone: (717) 541-0034
www.paprolife.org

People for Life
1625 W. 26th St.
PO Box 1126
Erie, PA 16512
Phone: (814) 459-1333
www.peopleforlife.org

The Physicians Consortium
23 N. Front St.
Harrisburg, PA 17101
Phone: (612) 827-9552
www.physconsortium.com

Newspapers in Pennsylvania

Bucks County Courier Times
Tom Haines
Health & Medicine Editor
8400 Route 13
Levittown, PA 19057
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Erie Times-News
Jeff Hileman
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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 Ceci Connolly, "Federal Funds for Abstinence Group Withheld," *Washington Post*, 23 August 2005, A05.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *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>.

⁷ Angela Papillo, et.al., *Facts at a Glance* (Washington, D.C.: Child Trends, February, 2004).

⁸ 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/>>. Pennsylvania did not participate in either the 2005 or 2003 YRBS but Philadelphia participated in the 2003 YRBS.

⁹ Debra Hauser, *Five Years of Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Education: Assessing the Impact* (Washington, D.C.: Advocates for Youth, 2004), 16.

¹⁰ E. Smith, J. Dariotis, S. Potter, *Evaluation of the Pennsylvania Abstinence Education and Related Services Initiative: 1998-2002* (Philadelphia, PA: Maternal and Child Health Bureau of Family Health, Pennsylvania Department of Health, January 2003).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹² *Ibid.*, 10.

¹³ 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).

¹⁴ *WAIT Training-Workshop Manual* (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>.

¹⁵ There is no Title V Coordinator in Pennsylvania, the person included in this section is the former abstinence-only-until-marriage coordinator.