



Tennessee

Tennessee received \$3,182,397 in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2003.¹

Tennessee Sexuality Education Law

Tennessee Code outlaws the teaching of any sexuality education class unless it has been approved by the state board of education and the local school board, and is taught by instructors deemed to be qualified by the local school board. The Code allows teachers to answer any questions that are initiated by students. Additionally, any course in sexuality education must “include presentations encouraging abstinence from sexual intercourse during the teen and pre-teen years.” Violation of the law is considered a Class C misdemeanor.

If any county in Tennessee has pregnancy rates higher than 19.5 pregnancies per 1,000 females ages 15 to 17, then every school district in that county must implement family life education in accordance with curriculum guidelines provided by the state board of education. This education must emphasize abstinence-until-marriage and must include HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted disease (STD) prevention.

According to Tennessee Code, “In developing the plan, the state board shall consider such programs and materials as ‘Sex Respect,’ ‘Teen-Aid,’ and the ‘3-R Project’ of the South Carolina departments of education and health.”

The plan for curriculum development includes building community and parental support for family life education. At least one public hearing must be held. If upon implementation of family life education in a school district, more than 50 parents or guardians with children enrolled in the school district complain about the program, the state department of education must audit the school district “for the purpose of evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the plan of family life instruction.” The state department of education must then recommend how to make the instruction more effective and how to build parental and community support for the program.

Additionally, school districts may use health care professionals and social workers to assist in family life education. Such instructors must be individuals “upright of character and of good public standing.”

Family life education must be taught for four years after the release of the initial teen pregnancy rates. If the school district fails to implement family life education, then the county must do so. If the school board does not implement family life education, the commissioner of education for the state is instructed to withhold state funding.

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 2003 begins on October 1, 2002 and ends on September 30, 2003.

According to Tennessee law, HIV/AIDS-prevention courses may not be required for graduation. All instruction and materials related to HIV/AIDS prevention must place “primary emphasis on abstinence from premarital intimacy and on the avoidance of drug abuse in controlling the spread of AIDS.”

Tennessee Code allows students to be removed from sexuality education classes upon written request of their parent or guardian. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See Tennessee Code Sections 49-6-1005, 49-6-1008, 49-6-1301, 49-6-1302, and 49-6-1303.

Recent Legislation

SIECUS is not aware of any recent legislation in Tennessee regarding sexuality education.

Events of Note

Sexuality Education Teacher Comes Under Fire for Comments

June 2003; Clarksville, TN

The Clarksville-Montgomery County School District dropped charges against a Richview Middle School health teacher after the teacher was accused of making “statements that were inappropriate with regard to race, gender and sex acts.” The comments were made after showing an abstinence video entitled *Sex, Lies, and Truth* to her seventh-grade class in February 2003.² Although the specific comments have not been made public, the charges against the teacher included incompetence, inefficiency, neglect of duty, unprofessional conduct, and insubordination.³

The school system agreed to reassign her to an elementary school if she completed a training program. The school’s director said, “The school system is committed to ensuring students receive quality instruction, while making every effort to give employees the opportunity to correct errors in judgment. We believe this action will accomplish both of those goals.”⁴

Past job evaluations of the teacher showed a strong performance record over her 30-year career at six area schools.

Tennessee’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note⁵

- In 2003, 49% of female high school students and 52% of male high school students in Tennessee reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 45% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, 4% of female high school students and 11% of male high school students in Tennessee reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 4% of female high school students and 10% of male high school students nationwide.

² C. Collins, "RMS Teacher Faces Dismissal," *The Leaf-Chronicle* (TN), April 16, 2003.

³ Ibid.

⁴ C. Collins, "Deal Halts Teacher's Dismissal," *The Leaf-Chronicle* (Clarksville, TN), June 21, 2003.

⁵ Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from: J. Grunbaum, et. al., “Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance — United States, 2003,” *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 53, no.SS-2, May 21, 2004, pp. 1-95. Available online at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/yrbs/>.

- In 2003, 13% of female high school students and 18% of male high school students in Tennessee 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, 37% of female high school students and 34% of male high school students in Tennessee 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, 17% of females and 26% of males in Tennessee 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, 53% of females and 66% of males in Tennessee 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 12% of males in Tennessee 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, 7% of female high school students and 4% of male high school students in Tennessee 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, 90% of high school students in Tennessee reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.
- In 2000, Tennessee's abortion rate was 16 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.⁶
- In 2001, Tennessee's birth rate was 57 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen birth rate of 45 per 1,000 nationwide.⁷

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

Tennessee received \$630,355 in federal Title V funding in Fiscal Year 2003. 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. In Tennessee, the state match is made in full by local groups. The

⁶ U.S. *Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information*, (New York: Alan Guttmacher Institute, February, 2004). Available online at www.guttmacher.org.

⁷ A. Papillo, et.al., *Facts at a Glance*, (Washington, DC: Child Trends, February, 2004).

Tennessee Department of Health oversees this funding. The department awards grants ranging from \$12,200 to \$92,600 to 18 sub-grantees and runs a state-wide media campaign.

The 18 sub-grantees target youth ages 10 to 17 and their parents. They use a variety of abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula, including *Sex Can Wait*, *Choices*, *Smart Moves*, *Postponing Sexual Involvement*, and *Sex Respect*. The media campaign focuses on parent-child communication about the importance of remaining abstinent before marriage.

There is no evaluation of the sub-grantees' programs or the media campaign.

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

There are six SPRANS–CBAE grantees in Tennessee: AAA Women's Services, Inc./ Why Know Abstinence Education Program, Boys to Men, Inc., Christ Community Medical Clinic, Inc., Creative Life, Inc., Hope Resource Center, and Life Choices, Inc. Centerstone Community Mental Health Centers, Inc. is a past SPRANS–CBAE grantee. There are no AFLA grantees in Tennessee.

According to AAA Women's Services, Inc.'s website, it teaches the *Why Know Abstinence Education Program* in 24 Tennessee counties, 19 states, and six foreign countries. The program has courses for middle school and high school students as well as for Christian schools and churches. The in-class instruction is supplemented by a voluntary after-school group as well as a drama group called *One Night Stand*.

The Christian-based curriculum emphasizes themes such as sexual purity and being made in the image of God. In this curriculum, sex is described as sinful. Unit titles include, "Why It Is Not Good For a Man to Be Alone," "The Devastation of Buying The Lie," "Setting Standards in a World Gone Mad," and "Taking a Stand for Purity." Marriage, family, and children are emphasized as being the ultimate goal of a healthy civilization.

The curricula used in public schools emphasize goal setting and refusal skills, STDs, the influence of media and peer pressure, and the progressive and addictive nature of sex. They also focus on gender expectations and the hope of a second virginity.

Life Choices, Inc. describes itself as a Christian organization that counsels on Biblical principles. The website emphasizes a ruined reputation as one of the consequences of premarital sex. It goes on to provide hints for avoiding sex such as not spending too much time parking or sitting on the couch in the dark. Instead, the website suggests staying in public areas with your date and carefully choosing movies viewed during a date so as not to be influenced to have sex.

The website also includes information on abortion and adoption. The abortion section emphasizes the possible negative emotional consequences of abortion, including "Post Abortion Stress Syndrome." The organization suggests that there is a high rate of "Post Abortion Stress Syndrome" and attributes this to the assertion that many women are "forced to have an abortion." It then suggests support groups and Bible study as a way to overcome grief.

Life Choices, Inc. is also a state-licensed adoption agency. Couples must be of the same local "Bible-believing" church and must sign doctrinal and pro-life statements before qualifying as adoptive parents.

T E N N E S S E E

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2003⁸

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS-CBAE, AFLA, and Title V)
Length of Grant		
Tennessee Department of Health www2.state.tn.us/health/MCH/abstinenceeducation.htm	\$630,355 federal	Title V
A Women's Place		Title V sub-grantee
Boys and Girls Club of Pulaski		Title V sub-grantee
Boys to Men, Inc. Right for Me Program		Title V sub-grantee
DUAL GRANTEE 2002-2003	\$99,224	SPRANS-CBAE (Planning Grant)
Catholic Charities of Tennessee		Title V sub-grantee
Concerned Neighbors United		Title V sub-grantee
Creative Life, Inc.		Title V sub-grantee
DUAL GRANTEE 2002-2005	\$580,957	SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)
Crisis Pregnancy Support Center		Title V sub-grantee
Dede Wallace Center		Title V sub-grantee
Hope Resource Center		Title V sub-grantee
DUAL GRANTEE 2003-2006 www.hoperc.org	\$317,282	SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)

⁸ SIECUS was not able to obtain exact funding information for all grantees.

T E N N E S S E E

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS-CBAE, AFLA, and Title V)
Length of Grant		
Jackson-Madison Co. Schools		Title V sub-grantee
LaBonheur Center for Children and Parents		Title V sub-grantee
Moccasin Bend Girl Scout Council, Inc		Title V sub-grantee
REACHS		Title V sub-grantee
Refuge Temple Church Ministries		Title V sub-grantee
St. Andrews AME Church		Title V sub-grantee
Warren Co. Schools and Health Services		Title V sub-grantee
Women's Care Center		Title V sub-grantee
Woods Memorial Hospital		Title V sub-grantee
AAA Women's Services, Inc./ <i>Why Know Abstinence Education Program</i> 2001-2004 www.whyknow.org	\$254,530	SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)
Christ Community Medical Clinic, Inc. 2002-2005 www.cchf.org	\$611,940	SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)
Life Choices, Inc. 2003-2006 DUAL GRANTEE 2002-2003 www.life-choices.org	\$534,339 \$79,703	SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant) SPRANS-CBAE (Planning Grant)

Past Federal Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS-CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Centerstone Community Mental Health Centers, Inc. 2001-2002 www.centerstone.org	\$74,067	SPRANS-CBAE (Planning Grant)

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

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Tennessee Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

American Civil Liberties Union of Tennessee
 PO Box 120160
 Nashville, TN 37212
 Phone: (615) 320-7142
www.aclu-tn.org

Knoxville Chapter of NOW
 P.O. Box 5332
 Knoxville, TN 37928
 Phone: (865) 281-8075
www.kornet.org/knoxnow

Tennessee Association of Planned Parenthood Affiliates
 50 Vantage Way, Suite 102
 Nashville, TN 37228
 Phone: (615) 345-0952

Tennessee Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education:

Center for Bio-Ethical Reform, Southeast
P.O. Box 20115
Knoxville, TN 37940
Phone: (865) 609-9033
<http://abortionno.org/CBRSEsoutheast/>

Tennessee Right to Life
State Central Office
4802 Charlotte Ave.
Nashville, TN 37209
Phone: (877) 246-6735
www.tennesseerighttolife.org

Newspapers in Tennessee

The Chattanooga Times & Free Press
Chris Vass
Community News Editor
400 E. 11th St.
Chattanooga, TN 37403
Phone: (423) 757-6317

The City Paper
Craig Boerner
Community News Writer
1 Burton Hills Blvd.
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Phone: (615) 298-9833

The Commercial Appeal
Jerome Wright
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495 Union Ave.
Memphis, TN 38103
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307 E. Harper Ave.
Maryville, TN 37804
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