



SIECUS

State Profile

UTAH

The Department of Health and community-based organizations in Utah received \$888,156 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2007.¹

Utah Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Utah state code mandates that the State Board of Education establish curriculum requirements in grades eight through twelve for the prevention of communicable diseases. This instruction must stress “the importance of abstinence from all sexual activity before marriage and fidelity after marriage as methods for preventing certain communicable diseases; and personal skills that encourage individual choice of abstinence and fidelity.”

Among other limitations on what can be taught, the code states that:

At no time may instruction be provided, including responses to spontaneous questions raised by students, regarding any means or methods that facilitate or encourage the violation of any state or federal criminal law by a minor or adult.

Utah state code further requires that materials used for instruction in health do not include “the advocacy of homosexuality; the advocacy or encouragement of the use of contraceptive methods or devices; or the advocacy of sexual activity outside of marriage.”

Utah state code requires that each newly hired or newly assigned educator who teaches or who will be teaching any part of a sexuality education class must attend a state-sponsored course offered annually that outlines the state designed curriculum and Utah Code regarding the teaching of human sexuality.

The Utah *Health Education Core*, a suggested curriculum framework produced by the Utah State Office of Education, provides greater detail regarding grade level and topics to be included. The *Health Education Core* states that in grades three through twelve, students should receive disease prevention and HIV/AIDS education. Beginning in grade seven, students should receive instruction that abstinence is the best way to prevent unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. Also, an annual presentation about adoption should be given to students in grades seven through twelve.

Schools are not required to follow this framework. However, the Utah State Code requires that local school districts have a curriculum materials review committee. This Committee must make sure that all instructional material complies:

[W]ith state law and state board rules emphasizing abstinence before marriage and fidelity after marriage, and prohibiting instruction in:

- the intricacies of intercourse, sexual stimulation, or erotic behavior;
- the advocacy of homosexuality;
- the advocacy or encouragement of the use of contraceptive methods or devices; or
- the advocacy of sexual activity outside of marriage.

Curricula must be adopted after “an open and regular” school board meeting in which parents and guardians have an opportunity to testify about the curricula.

Parents or guardians must give written permission in order for a student to participate in any form of sexuality education. This is referred to as an “opt-in” policy.

See Utah State Code 53A-13-101, Utah Administrative Rule R277-474, and the *Health Education Core*.

Recent Legislation

Legislation Restricts Existence of Clubs Related to “Human Sexuality” on School Grounds

House Bill 236, introduced in January of 2007, allows schools to limit or deny authorization of school building use to a club if the club involves “human sexuality.” The bill defines clubs that “involve human sexuality” as “presenting information in violation of laws governing sex-education, advocating or engaging in sexual activity outside of legally recognized marriages or forbidden by state law, or presenting or discussing information relating to the use of contraceptive devices or substances, regardless of whether the use is for purposes of contraception or personal health.” The bill passed in both the House and the Senate and was signed into law by Governor Jon Huntsman, Jr., on March 9, 2007.

Events of Note

SIECUS is not aware of any recent events regarding sexuality education in Utah.

Utah’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note

- In 2007, 83% of high school students in Utah reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 90% of high school students nationwide.²

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

The Utah Department of Health received \$288,156 in federal Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funding in Fiscal Year 2007. 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. Utah matches the federal funding with \$196,595 in state funds.

The Utah Department of Health oversees this funding and provides grants to seven sub-grantees: Bear River Health Department, Colors of Success, Community Building Community Initiative of Midvale City, Pregnancy Resource Center of Salt Lake, Tooele County Health Department, Wasatch City-County Health Department, and Worldwide Organization of Women. An advisory council consisting of staff from the Utah Department of Health and sub-grantee organizations provides guidance on the programs. Utah’s sub-grantees are required to perform a self-evaluation of their programs.

Bear River Health Department provides abstinence programming to young people ages 9–14 using the commercially available curricula, *ASPIRE: Live your life. Be free*. SIECUS reviewed *ASPIRE* and found that it is based on one set of values and opinions—that marriage should be everyone’s ultimate goal and that sex outside of marriage is wrong—which it tries to pass off as universally held truths. In an effort to convince students that these opinions are facts, the curriculum provides incomplete and biased information, promotes fear and shame, and undermines young people’s confidence in their own

decision-making abilities. For example, students are asked which life decision—college, career, or marriage—will have the most impact on their life. The answer is marriage because, “College is for a few years, and you may have a number of careers. But marriage is for life.”³

The Pregnancy Resource Center of Salt Lake is a crisis pregnancy center. 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. This sub-grantee uses a locally developed curriculum entitled “*Why Wait?*”

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

There is one CBAE grantee in Utah: Weber-Morgan Health Department. There are no AFLA grantees in Utah.

Weber-Morgan Health Department conducts the “Future Method: It’s Your Choice” abstinence-only-until-marriage program.⁴ This program incorporates the *FACTS: Family Accountability Communicating Teen Sexuality* curricula.⁵ SIECUS reviewed the *FACTS: Family Accountability Communicating Teen Sexuality* curricula and found that they provide incomplete and inaccurate medical information; present opinions and beliefs as universal truths; and portray a biased view of gender, marriage, family structure, sexual orientation, and pregnancy options. For example, *FACTS* includes the following list of negative consequences of premarital sex: “Pregnancy, financial aspect of fatherhood, abortion, HIV/AIDS, STDs, guilt, rejection, loss of reputation, inability to bond in the future, challenge to not compare future sexual partners, alienation from friends and family, poverty, and the inability to complete school.” *FACTS* also tells young people in no uncertain terms that life begins when sperm and egg meet: “At conception, the baby came into being. Even though he or she was only the size and appearance of a pencil dot, the baby was a separate, genetically unique individual.”⁶

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2007

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Utah Department of Health health.utah.gov	\$288,156 federal \$196,595 state	Title V
Bear River Health Department www.brhd.org	\$50,000	Title V sub-grantee
Colors of Success www.colorsofsuccess.com	\$14,800	Title V sub-grantee

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Community Building Community Initiative of Midvale City www.midvalecity.org/cbc.main.html	\$47,790	Title V sub-grantee
Pregnancy Resource Center of Salt Lake http://pregnancyresource.net/index.html	\$58,000	Title V sub-grantee
Tooele County Health Department www.tooelehealth.org	\$69,536	Title V sub-grantee
Wasatch City-County Health Department	\$12,000	Title V sub-grantee
Worldwide Organization of Women www.wowinfo.org	\$10,000	Title V sub-grantee
Weber-Morgan Health Department 2006–2011 www1.co.weber.ut.us/health	\$600,000	CBAE

Adolescent Health Contact⁷

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 Child, Adolescent and School Health Program
 Utah Department of Health
 P.O. Box 142001
 Salt Lake City, UT 84114
 Phone: (801) 538-9317

Utah Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

ACLU of Utah
355 North 300 W
Salt Lake City, UT 84103
Phone: (801) 521-9862
www.acluutah.org

Planned Parenthood Action Council
551 East South Temple
Salt Lake City, UT 84102
Phone: (801) 328-8939
www.ppacutah.org

Planned Parenthood Association of Utah
654 South 900 E
Salt Lake City, UT 84102
Phone: (801) 533-2759
www.plannedparenthood.org/utah/

Utah National Organization for Women
P.O. Box 57816
Murray, UT 84157
Phone: (801) 268-0363
www.utahnow.org

Utah Progressive Network
P.O. Box 521391
Salt Lake City, UT 84152
Phone: (801) 466-0955

Utah Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Right to Life of Utah
2390 West 450 S, #8
Springville, UT 84663
Phone: (801) 491-9742

Sutherland Institute
Gateway Tower West, Suite 1600
15 West South Temple St.
Salt Lake City, UT 84101
Phone: (801) 355-1272
www.sutherlandinstitute.org

Utah Eagle Forum
2486 West Winding Way
South Jordan, UT 84095
www.utaheagleforum.org

Newspapers in Utah⁸

Daily Herald
Newsroom
1555 N. Freedom Blvd.
Provo, UT 84604
Phone: (801) 373-5050
www.heraldextra.com

Daily Spectrum
Newsroom
275 E. Saint George Blvd.
Saint George, UT 84770
Phone: (435) 674-6200
www.thespectrum.com

Salt Lake Tribune
Newsroom
90 S. 400 W
Salt Lake City, UT 84101
Phone: (801) 257-8742
www.sltrib.com

Deseret Morning News
Newsroom
30 E. 100 S
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
Phone: (801) 236-6000
www.deseretnews.com

Standard-Examiner
Newsroom
332 Standard Way
Ogden, UT 84404
Phone: (801) 625-4270
www.standard.net/digital

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 2007 begins on October 1, 2006 and ends on September 30, 2007.

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>>. Note: Utah did not participate in the full 2007 YRBSS.

³ Scott Phelps, *Aspire. Live your life. Be Free.* (Arlington, IL: Abstinence & Marriage Resources, 2006). For more information, see SIECUS’ review of *Aspire* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.

⁴ Weber-Morgan Health Department, “What to Say When the Subject of the Spears Sisters Comes Up,” Press Release published 7 January 2008, accessed 14 March 2008, <http://www1.co.weber.ut.us/health/view_press.php?press_id=8&id=1>.

⁵ Lori Prichard, “Two Counties Conduct Sex Education Survey,” 26 November 2007, accessed 14 March 2008, <<http://www.ksl.com/?nid=148&sid=2223606>>.

⁶ Rose Fuller et al., *FACTS and Reason* (Portland, OR: Northwest Family Services, 2000); Rose Fuller, et al., *I’m in Charge of the FACTS* (Portland, OR: Northwest Family Services, 2000). For more information, see SIECUS’ review of *FACTS* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.

⁷ SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

⁸ This section is a list of major newspapers in your state with contact information for their newsrooms. This list is by no means inclusive 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](#).