



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 2008.¹

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 12, 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 12.

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. (R), on March 9, 2007.

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 2008.
- 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.
- In Utah, the sub-grantees make up the match.
- There are six sub-grantees in Utah: one crisis pregnancy center, two health departments, and three community-based organizations.

SIECUS has compiled some examples of the use of federal Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funding in Utah:

Pregnancy Resource Center of Salt Lake, \$82,336 (2008)

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. In Fiscal Year 2006, one-fourth of the organization’s funding came from Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage dollars.³

On its website, the Pregnancy Resource Center of Salt Lake discourages abortion: “Following abortion, many women experience initial relief. The perceived crisis is over and life returns to normal. For many women, however, the crisis is not over. Months and even years later, significant problems develop.”⁴ The site continues, “Women who have experienced abortion may develop the following symptoms: Guilt, Grief, Anger, Anxiety, Depression, Suicidal Thoughts, Difficulty Bonding with Partner or Children, Eating

Disorders.”⁵ There is no sound scientific evidence linking abortion to subsequent mental health problems, termed “post-abortion stress syndrome” by anti-abortion groups. Neither the American Psychological Association nor the American Psychiatric Association recognize “post-abortion stress syndrome” as a legitimate medical condition.⁶ Nevertheless, abortion opponents often refer to studies that have been found to have severe methodological flaws or cite anecdotal evidence of this condition in an effort to scare women out of exercising their right to choose.

The site also contains religious messages. For example, it suggests that women considering abortion think about the following: “Having an abortion may affect more than your body and your mind, it may have an impact on your relationship with God. What is God’s desire for you in this situation? How does God see your unborn child?”⁷

In its abstinence-only-until-marriage programming, the organization uses a locally developed curriculum entitled *Why Wait?*

Worldwide Organization of Women, \$20,336 (2008)

The Worldwide Organization of Women uses the fear-based abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula, *FACTS (Family Accountability Communicating Teen Sexuality)*. 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.”⁸

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, \$600,000 (CBAE 2006–2011)

Weber-Morgan Health Department conducts the “Future Method: It’s Your Choice” abstinence-only-until-marriage program.⁹ This program incorporates the *FACTS: Family Accountability Communicating Teen Sexuality* and *Choosing the Best* curricula.¹⁰

The *Choosing the Best* series is one of the more popular abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in the country. The series is comprised of a number of curricula for students from sixth grade through high school: *Choosing the Best WAY*, *Choosing the Best PATH*, *Choosing the Best LIFE*, *Choosing the Best JOURNEY*, and *Choosing the Best SOULMATE*. The series has been recently revised and the information about STDs is now medically accurate. However, *Choosing the Best* curricula continue to promote heterosexual marriage, rely on messages of fear and shame, and include biases about gender, sexual orientation, and pregnancy options. For example, *Choosing the Best PATH* asks students to brainstorm the “emotional consequences” of premarital sex. Suggested answers include “guilt, feeling scared, ruined relationships, broken emotional bonds.”¹¹

The grantee also hosts the website, Futuremethod.org (in English and Spanish), which presents fear-based statistics such as: “Sexually active teen girls are more likely to feel depressed than abstinent girls,” and “Teen girls who have had sex are far more likely to think about or attempt suicide.”¹² The website does not, however,

provide citations for this information. While it may be true that there is a correlation between sexual activity and depression, particularly in young girls, it is inaccurate to suggest that becoming sexually active will cause an otherwise healthy and happy young woman to become suicidal.

The website also offers a personal story:

I have been pregnant for six months and I am so scared. I have no idea who the father is... I went to my brother's BFF's party and got pregnant. I don't know who the guy is because I was so drunk I can't remember anything about that night. My parents kicked me out so I am living with my best friend, Skyy. I feel horrible because my baby will never know who the father is and will grow up with just me. I'm trying to tell all teenage girls to BE CAREFUL!!!! It isn't a great as it seems. Hold on to your virginity it is a very special thing.¹³

Stories such as this are clearly designed to scare young people rather than educate them.

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2008

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	Title V
Colors of Success www.colorsofsuccess.com	\$25,136	Title V sub-grantee
Community Building Community Initiative of Midvale City www.midvalecity.org/cbc.main.html	\$58,128	Title V sub-grantee
Pregnancy Resource Center of Salt Lake pregnancyresource.net/index.html	\$82,336	Title V sub-grantee
Tooele County Health Department www.tooelehealth.org	\$79,872	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)
Wasatch City-County Health Department	\$22,336	Title V sub-grantee
Worldwide Organization of Women www.wowinfo.org	\$20,336	Title V sub-grantee
Weber-Morgan Health Department 2006–2011 www1.co.weber.ut.us/health	\$600,000	CBAE

Adolescent Health Contact¹⁴

Jennifer Mayfield
Adolescent Health Coordinator
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 Street
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 Utah¹⁵

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

Daily Spectrum
Newsroom
275 E. Saint George Boulevard
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 federal government's fiscal year, 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 2008 began on October 1, 2007 and ended on September 30, 2008.

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 YRBS.

³ Pregnancy Resource Center of Salt Lake, 990 Form, Fiscal Year 2006.

⁴ "Post Abortion," Pregnancy Resource Center of Salt Lake, accessed 3 October 2008, <<http://www.pregnancyresource.net/post-abortion>>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Brenda Major et al, "Report of the APA Task Force on Mental Health and Abortion," *American Psychological Association*, (13 August 2008) accessed 8 October 2008, <<http://www.apa.org/releases/abortion-report.pdf>>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ 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.

⁹ Weber-Morgan Health Department, "What to Say When the Subject of the Spears Sisters Comes Up," Press Release published 7 January 2008, accessed 14 September 2008, <http://www1.co.weber.ut.us/health/view_press.php?press_id=8&id=1>.

¹⁰ "Classes," Future Methods, accessed 3 October 2008, <<http://www.futuremethod.org/Classes.html>>.

¹¹ Bruce Cook, *Choosing the Best* (Marietta, GA: Choosing the Best, Inc., 2001-2007).

¹² "Get the Facts," Future Methods, accessed 3 October 2008, <<http://www.futuremethod.org/Emotional.html>>.

¹³ "Personal Story #1," Future Method, accessed 3 October 2008, <<http://www.futuremethod.org/Personal1.html>>.

¹⁴ SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

¹⁵ This section is a list of major newspapers in your state with contact information for their newsrooms. This list is by no means exhaustive 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](#).