



SIECUS

State Profile

VIRGINIA

The Department of Health and community-based organizations in Virginia received \$3,023,483 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2008

Virginia Sexuality Education Law and Policy

The Virginia Administrative Code states that all curriculum decisions are to be left to local school boards. Virginia gives permission for local school boards to develop sexuality education programs with the “goals of reducing the incidence of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases [STDs] and substance abuse among teenagers.” However, the state board of education is also required to develop standards and curriculum guidelines for kindergarten through 12th grades. The guidelines set standards for “comprehensive, sequential family life education curriculum” that include age-appropriate instruction in “family living and community relationships, abstinence education, the value of postponing sexual activity, the benefits of adoption as a positive choice in the event of an unwanted pregnancy, human sexuality, human reproduction, steps to take to avoid sexual assault, and availability of counseling and legal resources.”

Virginia Code requires each local school board to “place special emphasis on the thorough evaluation of materials related to controversial or sensitive topics such as sex education, moral education, and religion.”

In addition, every school board must establish a school health advisory board with no more than 20 members. These members should include parents, students, health professionals, educators, and others. The purpose of this advisory board is to “assist with the development of health policy in the school division and the evaluation of the status of school health, health education, the school environment, and health services.”

Each school board must create a summary of the family life education program available for distribution to parents and guardians for review. The law states that parents or guardians may remove their students from any class. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy. Virginia laws also state, “Parents should be required to justify their requests.”

See Virginia Administrative Code 8VAC20-131-170; Virginia Administrative Code 8VAC20-170-10; Code of Virginia 22.1-102-7.1, 22.1-207.2 and 22.1-275.1; and Virginia *Guidelines on Family Life Education*.

Recent Legislation

HPV Vaccine Required for Female Students

House Bill 2035, introduced in January 2007, requires female students 11 years of age or older who are in school to receive the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine series. The student’s parents or guardians

may object to vaccination on religious or moral grounds. The bill was signed into law by Governor Tim Kaine (D) in April 2007 as Chapter No. 858.

Bill Requires Family Life Education to Include Dating Violence

House Bill 1916, introduced in January 2007 and referred to the House Committee on Education, amended the state code to require that instruction on dating violence and the characteristics of abusive relationships be included in family life education. The bill passed in the Virginia House of Representatives on January 18, 2007 and the Senate on February 5, 2007. Governor Kaine approved the measure on February 19, 2007 and it became law on July 1, 2007.

Virginia’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note

Virginia did not participate in the 2007 Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance Survey.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

- Virginia was eligible for \$841,329 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.
- Virginia, however, does not apply for these funds due to the extraordinary restrictions placed upon how the money must be spent. Therefore, the state does not match funds nor does it have organizations supported by this type of federal money.

In October 2007, Governor Kaine released the commonwealth’s Fiscal Year 2008 budget, which included a statement that Virginia would not be applying for federal Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funds. Specifically, the governor’s budget states, “Eliminate general funding match for federal Abstinence Grant...Formal program evaluations at the federal level have indicated that this particular program is no more effective than any other birth control education effort.”² The decision went into effect for Fiscal Year 2008.

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

- There are four CBAE grantees in Virginia: Charlottesville Pregnancy Center, Educational Guidance Institute, Lighthouse Outreach Incorporated, and Rappahannock Teen Abstinence Program.
- There is one AFLA grantee in Virginia: James Madison University.

SIECUS has compiled some examples of the use of CBAE and AFLA funding in Virginia:

The Pregnancy Centers of Central Virginia/Charlottesville Pregnancy Center, \$645,545 (CBAE 2005–2008) and \$548,843 (CBAE 2008–2013)

The Charlottesville Pregnancy Center, which has also received abstinence-only-until-marriage funds under the name The Pregnancy Centers of Central Virginia, 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, CBAE dollars accounted for nearly half of the organization's budget.³ The former director of client services at Charlottesville Pregnancy Center is Moira Gaul. Gaul is now the director of women's and reproductive health at the Family Research Council, a national Far Right organization that "champions marriage and family as the foundation of civilization, the seedbed of virtue, and the wellspring of society...Believing that God is the author of life, liberty, and the family, FRC promotes the Judeo-Christian worldview as the basis for a just, free, and stable society."⁴

Charlottesville Pregnancy Center uses the *Why kNOW* curriculum.⁵ SIECUS reviewed *Why kNOW* and found that it offers limited information about important topics in human sexuality such as puberty, anatomy, and human reproduction, and no information about sexual orientation and gender identity. The information that is included is outdated, inaccurate, and misleading. In addition, *Why kNOW* relies on negative messages, distorts information, and presents biased views on gender, marriage, family structure, sexual orientation, and pregnancy options. For example, the curriculum tells students that the tradition of lifting the veil shows that "the groom [is] the only man allowed to uncover the bride," and demonstrates "her respect for him by illustrating that she [has] not allowed any other man to lay claim to her."⁶

Educational Guidance Institute, \$698,840 (CBAE 2005–2008)

The mission of the Education Guidance Institute (EGI) is, "To present the philosophical, learning theory and curriculum implementation principles underlying the 'Whole Person' approach to character, abstinence, and marriage education."⁷ In Fiscal Year 2007, but for \$10,000, the organization was funded entirely with CBAE dollars.⁸

The organization was founded by Onalee McGraw, Ph.D., a former policy analyst for the Heritage Foundation.⁹ Founded in 1973, The Heritage Foundation is a research and educational institute—a think tank—whose mission is "to formulate and promote conservative public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense."¹⁰ The Heritage Foundation frequently produces research that attempts to link premarital sexual activity and out-of-wedlock childbearing to a host of social and emotional problems including suicide and poverty. This research is not subject to peer review.

McGraw created an abstinence curriculum, *Love and Life at the Movies*, used by EGI.¹¹ She described the program in the Catholic newsletter *Women for Faith & Family*:

Some years ago, I realized that the 'story of how things work'—when the subject is love, marriage and sexuality—can be effectively taught through visually powerful classic films that appeal to the heart as they model the moral norm of sex within marriage. Educational Guidance Institute's *Love and Life at the Movies* curriculum series has been piloted in Catholic and public schools as well as detention homes and after-school programs. God Himself inspired the creation of these film stories, and their messages of self-giving love and virtue go right to the hearts of young people hungry for truth, goodness and beauty.¹²

Lighthouse Outreach Incorporated, \$600,000 (CBAE 2007–2012)

Located in the Norfolk area of Virginia, the Lighthouse Project's guiding philosophy states that "to be effective, a program must not just focus on a city, but on the individuals who live in them."¹³ Its program targets African-American teenagers and sexually active youth for "secondary virginity." The Lighthouse Project utilizes a variety of abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula and faith-based programs, in addition to conducting community forums and a media marketing campaign.¹⁴ The organization was incorporated in 2005 and no tax forms were filed before then (not-for-profits with incomes under \$25,000 are not

required to file). Therefore, public records are not yet available to determine the percentage of the organization's budget that is made up by CBAE funding.

The Lighthouse Project uses three curricula: *Aspire*, the *Choosing the Best* series, and *WAIT (Why Am I Tempted?) Training*. SIECUS reviewed all of these curricula. *ASPIRE: Live your life. Be free.* 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.”¹⁵

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.”¹⁶

WAIT Training contains 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.”¹⁷

The Lighthouse Outreach Project uses these curricula with pregnant and parenting teens to encourage “secondary virginity.”¹⁸ Teen mothers are asked to bring the father of their child to participate in “fatherhood services” in order to “promote responsible fatherhood and marriage as the appropriate context for fathering future children.”¹⁹ Teens participating in this program are also asked to commit to secondary virginity by signing a commitment card titled “V.I.S.A.” which looks like a credit card and includes a bar code for scanning.

Research found that 88 percent of young people who took a virginity pledge ultimately had sexual intercourse before marriage. Under certain conditions these pledges may help some adolescents delay sexual intercourse. When they work, pledges help this select group of adolescents delay the onset of sexual intercourse for an average of 18 months—far short of marriage. Researchers found that pledges only worked when taken by a small group of students. Pledges taken by a whole class were ineffective. More importantly, the studies also found that those young people who took a pledge were one-third less likely to use contraception when they did become sexually active than their peers who had not pledged. These teens are therefore more vulnerable to the risks of unprotected sexual activity such as unintended pregnancy and STDs, including HIV/AIDS. Further research has confirmed that although some students who take pledges delay intercourse, ultimately they are equally as likely to contract an STD as their non-pledging peers. The study also found that STD rates were higher in communities where a significant proportion (over 20 percent) of the young people had taken virginity pledges.²⁰

In its application for CBAE funding, the organization described its number one barrier to program implementation as, “Safe Sex Message/ Planned Parenthood.” It went on to say: “Planned Parenthood of

Hampton offers safe sex education, free condoms and stresses the message of abstinence ‘plus’ and services can be accessed without parental consent.”²¹

Also included in the application is a logic model for its program implementation titled, “Healthy Marriage Transitional Chart.”²² The chart progresses, “Girlhood → womanhood → wife hood → motherhood” and “Boyhood → manhood → husband hood → fatherhood.”²³

One page on the organization’s website is titled, “The Benefits to Abstinence: Statistics and Graphs.”²⁴ However, the graphs on the page have nothing to do with abstinence or its success rates. Instead, the graphs represent prevalence rates for Chlamydia, Syphilis, and HIV/AIDS in the area. No further explanation is offered.

Rappahannock Teen Abstinence Program, \$261,224 (CBAE 2007–2012)

The Rappahannock Teen Abstinence Program (RappTAP)’s vision is to, “Prevent teen pregnancies and promote abstinence by encouraging responsible decision making through educating and empowering youth.”²⁵ The addition of CBAE dollars in Fiscal Year 2007 increased the organization’s total budget by 86 percent. The organization’s abstinence-only-until-marriage program is centered on the popular curriculum *Worth the Wait*.

SIECUS reviewed *Worth the Wait* and found that it covers some important topics related to sexuality such as puberty, anatomy, and sexual abuse, and that the curriculum is based on reliable sources of data. Despite these strengths, *Worth the Wait* relies on messages of fear, discourages contraceptive use, and promotes biased views of gender, marriage, and pregnancy options. For example, the curriculum explains, “teenage sexual activity can create a multitude of medical, legal, and economic problems not only for the individuals having sex but for society as a whole.”²⁶

In its June 2008 newsletter, the organization’s president claimed the *Worth the Wait* program is very different from those reviewed by Mathematica in its evaluation of federally funded abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.²⁷ She is referring to a federally sponsored study that found that abstinence-only-until-marriage programs are ineffective. The programs evaluated were hand-picked because they were among the “best” of the federally funded abstinence-only-until-marriage programs and still they showed no impact on young people’s behavior.²⁸ There is no reason to believe that *Worth the Wait* differs from these programs as it, too, is bound to follow the federal government’s highly restrictive definition of “abstinence education.”

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) |
|---|-----------------|---|
| Educational Guidance Institute 2005–2008 www.educationalguidance.org | \$698,840 | CBAE |

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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) |
|--|--------------------------------|--|
| Lighthouse Outreach Incorporated 2007–2012 www.lighthouse-outreach.org | \$600,000 | CBAE |
| The Pregnancy Centers of Central Virginia/Charlottesville Pregnancy Center 2005–2008 DUAL GRANTEE 2008–2013 www.virginiapregnancy.org | \$645,545 \$548,843 | CBAE CBAE |
| Rappahannock Teen Abstinence Program 2007–2012 www.imworththewait.com | \$261,224 | CBAE |
| James Madison University 2004–2009 www.jmu.edu | \$269,031 | AFLA |

Adolescent Health Contact²⁹

Anne Rollins
 Virginia Department of Health
 Office of Family Health Services
 1500 East Main Street, Suite 104
 P.O. Box 2448
 Richmond, VA 23218
 Phone: (804) 864-7685

Virginia Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Equality Virginia
403 N. Robinson Street
Richmond, VA 23220
Phone: (804) 643-4816
www.equalityvirginia.org

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Virginia
P.O. Box 14791
Richmond, VA 23221
Phone: (804) 355-4358
www.ppav.org

Virginia Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

American Life League
P.O. Box 1350
Stafford, VA 22555
Phone: (540) 659-4171
www.all.org

The Family Foundation
One Capital Square
830 East Main Street, Suite 1201
Richmond, VA 23219
Phone: (804) 343-0010
www.familyfoundation.org

Newspapers in Virginia³⁰

Daily Press
Newsroom
P.O. Box 746
Newport News, VA 23607
Phone: (757) 247-4600
www.dailypress.com

The Free Lance-Star
Newsroom
616 Amelia Street
Fredericksburg, VA 22401
Phone: (540) 368-5055
www.fredericksburg.com

Richmond Times-Dispatch
Newsroom
P.O. Box 85333
Richmond, VA 23293
Phone: (804) 649-6990
www.timesdispatch.com

The News & Advance
Newsroom
101 Wyndale Drive
Lynchburg, VA 24501
Phone: (434) 385-5440
www.newsadvance.com

The Roanoke Time & World News
Newsroom
P.O. Box 2491
Roanoke, VA 24010
Phone: (540) 981-3340
www.roanoke.com

The Virginian-Pilot
Newsroom
150 W. Brambleton Avenue
Norfolk, VA 23510
Phone: (757) 446-2319
www.hamptonroads.com

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 *Governor's FY08 Budget Reduction Plan: Detailed Report*, (Richmond, VA: Department of Planning and Budget, 1 October 2007), p. 35, accessed 7 April 2008, <<http://www.governor.virginia.gov/TempContent/2008BudgetReductionPlan10-01-2007.pdf>>.

³ Charlottesville Pregnancy Center, 990 Formal, Fiscal Year 2006.

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- ⁴ “Home: Biography: Moira Gaul,” Family Research Council, (2008), accessed 19 September 2008, <<http://www.frc.org/get.cfm?i=BY07B02>>; “About FRC,” Family Research Council, (2008), accessed 19 September 2008, <http://www.frc.org/get.cfm?c=ABOUT_FRC>.
- ⁵ Lucie Stone, “No-sex ed: Abstinence-only aims for local support,” *The Hook*, (3 May 2007), accessed 3 October 2008, <<http://www.readthehook.com/stories/2007/05/03/news-worthyourwait-E.rtf.aspx>>.
- ⁶ Kris Frainie, *Why kNOW Abstinence Education Program Teacher’s Manual*, (Chattanooga, TN: Why kNOW Abstinence Education Programs, A Division of AAA Women’s Services, 2002). For more information, see SIECUS’ review of *Why kNOW* at <<http://www.communityactionkit.org/reviews/WhyKnow.html>>.
- ⁷ “About Educational Guidance Institute,” Educational Guidance Institute, accessed 3 October 2008, <<http://www.egionline.com/about.html>>.
- ⁸ Educational Guidance Institute, 990 Form, Fiscal Year 2007.
- ⁹ “Voices Contributing Editor,” Women for Faith and Family, accessed 3 October 2008, <<http://www.wf-f.org/bd-omcgraw.html>>.
- ¹⁰ About the Heritage Foundation, The Heritage Foundation, accessed 19 January 2005, <<http://www.heritage.org/about/>>.
- ¹¹ “About Us,” Educational Guidance Institute, accessed 3 October 2008, <<http://www.egionline.com/about.html>>.
- ¹² Onalee McGraw, “Helping Parents Teach God’s Plan for Human Love in a Sexualized Culture,” *Women for Faith & Family*, (February 2004), accessed 3 October 2008, <<http://www.wf-f.org/04-2-SexEd.html>>.
- ¹³ Lighthouse Outreach Incorporated Application to the ACF, FY2007, p. iii.
- ¹⁴ “About Us,” Lighthouse Outreach, Inc., accessed 15 October 2008, <<http://www.lighthouse-outreach.org/about.html>>.
- ¹⁵ 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>.
- ¹⁶ Bruce Cook, *Choosing the Best* (Marietta, GA: Choosing the Best, Inc., 2001-2007).
- ¹⁷ Joneen Krauth-Mackenzie, *WAIT (Why Am I Tempted) Training, Second Edition* (Greenwood Village, CO: WAIT Training, undated). For more information, see SIECUS’ review of *WAIT Training* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.
- ¹⁸ Lighthouse Outreach Incorporated, p. 6.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 7.
- ²⁰ Peter Bearman and Hannah Brückner “Promising the Future: Virginity Pledges and the Transition to First Intercourse.” *American Journal of Sociology* 106.4 (2001): 859-912; Peter Bearman and Hannah Brückner, “After the promise: The STD consequences of adolescent virginity pledges,” *Journal of Adolescent Health* 36.4 (2005): 271-278.
- ²¹ Lighthouse Outreach Incorporated, p.10.
- ²² *Ibid*, p.12.
- ²³ *Ibid*.
- ²⁴ “The Benefits of Abstinence,” Lighthouse Outreach, Inc., accessed 15 October 2008, <<http://www.lighthouse-outreach.org/facts.html>>.
- ²⁵ “RappTAP,” Rappahannock Teen Abstinence Program, accessed 15 October 2008, <<http://www.imworththewait.com/>>.
- ²⁶ Patricia Sulak, *Worth the Wait* (Temple, TX: Scott & White Memorial Hospital, 2003). For more information, see SIECUS’ review of *Worth the Wait* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.
- ²⁷ “Abstinence Update,” Rappahannock Teen Abstinence Program, (June 2008), accessed 15 October 2008, <<http://www.imworththewait.com/media/june2008.pdf>>.
- ²⁸ For more information on this study see, SIECUS’ Research Update: *Study Shows Federal Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs are Ineffective in Delaying Sexual Activity among Young People*, SIECUS, at <<http://www.siecus.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Feature.showFeature&featureid=1035&pageid=682&parentid=478>>.
- ²⁹ SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.
- ³⁰ 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](#).