



## WASHINGTON

### Washington Sexuality Education Law and Policy

School districts in Washington are not required to implement comprehensive sexuality education; rather, the decision to implement sex education or human sexuality instruction in schools is made by the local school board. When developing “instruction in sexual health education,” Washington law states that school districts must involve parents and other community members “in the planning, development, evaluation, and revision.”<sup>1</sup> The law also requires every Washington public school that offers sexual health education to assure that instruction is medically and scientifically accurate, age-appropriate, “appropriate for students regardless of race, gender, disability status, or sexual orientation,” and includes information about abstinence and other methods of preventing unintended pregnancy.<sup>2</sup> It also states that “[a]bstinence may not be taught to the exclusion of other materials and instruction on contraceptives and disease prevention.”<sup>3</sup>

Schools are required to teach sexually transmitted disease (STD)- and HIV/AIDS- prevention education and to “stress that abstinence from sexual activity is the only certain means for the prevention of the spread or contraction of the AIDS virus through sexual contact.”<sup>4</sup> HIV/AIDS- prevention instruction must be given at least once each school year beginning in grade five and must “teach that condoms and other artificial means of birth control are not a certain means of preventing the spread of the AIDS virus and reliance on condoms puts a person at risk for exposure to the disease.”<sup>5</sup> Information must be current and medically accurate. In order to verify medical accuracy, the Washington Department of Health Office on HIV/AIDS must review and approve all HIV/AIDS curricula and supporting materials.<sup>6</sup>

The Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Department of Health developed voluntary guidelines titled the *Guidelines for Sexual Health and Disease Prevention*. These guidelines promote broad, comprehensive, positive sexuality education programs that provide information about both abstinence and contraception, and are consistent with characteristics of programs that have been rigorously evaluated using quantitative research and shown to be effective in reducing risk-taking behaviors. Washington also provides a voluntary curriculum, *KNOW HIV/STD Prevention Curriculum*, for use in grades five through 12, as well as a thorough list of other curricula that have been reviewed and approved by the Department of Health.

Parents or guardians may remove their children from HIV/AIDS-prevention education if they have attended one information session about the HIV/AIDS curriculum and presentation.<sup>7</sup> If a school district chooses to provide sexuality education, parents may also remove their children from the class with written notification. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.<sup>8</sup>

See Revised Code of Washington §§ 28A.230.020, 28A.230.070, and 28A.300.475; Washington Administrative Code § 392-410-140; *Guidelines for Sexual Health and Disease Prevention*; *KNOW HIV/STD Prevention Curriculum*; and *HIV/AIDS Curriculum and Supplementary Materials Reviewed for Medical Accuracy by the Washington State Department of Health Office on HIV/AIDS*.

## Recent Legislation

### *Law Prohibits State from Applying for Federal Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funds*

Senate Bill 5629, introduced in January 2009, prohibits the state from seeking federal abstinence-only-until-marriage funds. An identical bill, HB 1612, was introduced in the House. The bills require state agencies to apply only for sexual health education funding for programs that are medically and scientifically accurate, including, but not limited to, programs on abstinence, the prevention of STDs, and the prevention of unintended pregnancies. The bills passed and were signed into law on April 30, 2009 by Governor Christine Gregoire.

## Washington's Youth: Statistical Information of Note<sup>9</sup>

Washington did not participate in the 2009 Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance Survey.

### *Seattle, Washington*

- In 2009, 87% of high school students in Seattle, Washington reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 87% of high school students nationwide.

## Washington Youth Sexual Health Statistics

### *Teen Pregnancy, Birth, and Abortion*

- Washington's teen pregnancy rate ranks 35<sup>th</sup> in the U.S., with a rate of 59 pregnancies per 1,000 young women ages 15–19 compared to the national rate of 70 pregnancies per 1,000.<sup>10</sup> There were a total of 12,810 pregnancies among young women ages 15–19 reported in 2005, the most recent year for which data are available, in Washington.<sup>11</sup>
- Washington's teen birth rate ranked 40<sup>th</sup> in the U.S. in 2005, with a rate of 31.1 births per 1,000 young women ages 15–19 compared to the national rate of 40.5 births per 1,000.<sup>12</sup> In 2005, there were a total of 6,746 live births reported to young women ages 15–19 in Washington.<sup>13</sup>
- In 2006, the U.S. teen birth rate increased for the first time in 15 years by 3% from 40.5 to 41.9 births per 1,000 young women ages 15–19, after having steadily declined between 1991 and 2005.<sup>14</sup> In contrast, Washington's teen birth rate increased 7% between 2005 and 2006, from 31.1 to 34.4 births per 1,000 young women ages 15–19.<sup>15</sup>
- Washington's teen abortion rate ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in the U.S., with a rate of 19 abortions per 1,000 young women ages 15–19 which is equal to the national rate of 19 abortions per 1,000. In 2005, there were a total of 4,424 abortions reported among young women ages 15–19 in Washington.<sup>16</sup>

### *HIV and AIDS*

- Washington ranks 20<sup>th</sup> in cases of HIV infection diagnosed in the U.S. among all age groups. In 2007, there were a total of 386 new cases of HIV infection diagnosed in Washington.<sup>17</sup>
- Washington's AIDS rate ranks 28<sup>th</sup> in the U.S., with a rate of 6.6 cases per 100,000 population compared to the national rate of 12.5 cases per 100,000.<sup>18</sup>
- Washington ranks 22<sup>nd</sup> in number of reported AIDS cases in the U.S. among all age groups. In 2007, there were a total of 427 new AIDS cases reported in Washington.<sup>19</sup>
- Washington ranks 22<sup>nd</sup> in number of reported AIDS cases in the U.S. among young people ages 13–19. In 2007, there were a total of 4 AIDS cases reported among young people ages 13–19 in Washington.<sup>20</sup>

*Sexually Transmitted Diseases*

- Washington ranks 36<sup>th</sup> in reported cases of Chlamydia among young people ages 15–19 in the U.S., with an infection rate of 14.85 cases per 1,000 compared to the national rate of 19.51 cases per 1,000. In 2008, there were a total of 6,552 cases of Chlamydia reported among young people ages 15–19 in Washington.<sup>21</sup>
- Washington ranks 39<sup>th</sup> in reported cases of gonorrhea among young people ages 15–19 in the U.S., with an infection rate of 1.48 cases per 1,000 compared to the national rate of 4.52 cases per 1,000. In 2008, there were a total of 655 cases of gonorrhea reported among young people ages 15–19 in Washington.<sup>22</sup>
- Washington ranks 31<sup>st</sup> in reported cases of primary and secondary syphilis among young people ages 15–19 in the U.S., with an infection rate of 0.01 per cases 1,000 compared to the national rate of 0.04 cases per 1,000. In 2008, there were a total of 5 cases of syphilis reported among young people ages 15–19 in Washington.<sup>23</sup>

**Comprehensive Approaches to Sex Education**

*SIECUS has identified some examples of model programs, policies, and best practices being implemented in Washington public schools that provide a more comprehensive approach to sex education for young people.*<sup>24</sup>

*Comprehensive Sex Education Programs in Public Schools*

Washington Healthy Youth Act

In 2007, the Washington legislature passed into law the *Healthy Youth Act* which was signed by Governor Christine Gregoire on May 26, 2007. The law requires school districts that choose to teach sexuality education to provide medically and scientifically accurate information that teaches about both abstinence and contraception as well as a variety of other topics. Among those school districts that do provide sexuality education in compliance with state law (approximately half of the state’s 304 school districts), 47 report using the *FLASH* curriculum.<sup>25</sup>

*FLASH* is a comprehensive sexuality education curriculum developed by the Seattle & King County, Washington public health department. The curriculum is designed for students in grades five through 12 and “rests on a foundation of positive and healthy sexuality across the lifespan.” It “focuses on the needs of public schools and diverse communities” and includes a “strong family involvement component.”<sup>26</sup> *FLASH* addresses such issues as physical development, sexual health, disease prevention, affection, interpersonal relationships, body image, and gender roles among other topics. The instruction focuses on abstinence while also providing information on the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV, and pregnancy. An examination of the most recent version of the curriculum showed that it closely mirrored “the characteristics of sex education programs that have been rigorously evaluated and found to be effective.”<sup>27</sup>

Through the Healthy Youth Alliance, a statewide sex education coalition, organizations and supporting members assist with implementation efforts across the state. For example, Planned Parenthood affiliates in Washington provide education and teacher training in schools, the Center for Health Training focuses on providing sexual health education trainings to trainers and teachers, the Seattle & King County public health department has sexual health educators on staff who make presentations in every school district in King County, and NARAL Pro-Choice Washington Foundation works to organize community support for comprehensive sex education to assist with implementation efforts. Areas of the state that have succeeded in implementing comprehensive and medically accurate programs including, Skagit and Whatcom counties, and communities including Ellensburg, Kennewick/Tri Cities, Spokane, and Yakima, among others.<sup>28</sup>

### School Districts Adopt Comprehensive Sexuality Education Policies and Curriculum

The Puyallup school district has worked to implement more comprehensive sex education programming in schools over the past few years. In the spring of 2009, the school board officially eliminated funding for an abstinence-only-until-marriage guest lecturer that had been allocated in previous school years. In March 2010, the school board voted to revise the district's sexual health education policy and adopted the *Healthy Youth Act* as its official policy for human sexuality instruction. The following month the school board adopted the *FLASH* curriculum, which had been recommended by the district's review committee, for use in grades four through 12. (See the previous section, "Washington Healthy Youth Act," for more information on the *FLASH* curriculum.)

The Yakima school district also officially adopted the Healthy Youth Act as the district's sex education policy and implemented *FLASH* in district schools.<sup>29</sup>

*We encourage you to submit any updated or additional information on comprehensive approaches to sex education being implemented in Washington public schools for inclusion in future publications of the SIECUS State Profiles. Please visit SIECUS' "Contact Us" webpage at [www.siecus.org](http://www.siecus.org) to share information. Select "state policy" as the subject heading.*

### **Federal Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs**

Community-based organizations in Washington received \$1,563,773 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2009.<sup>30</sup>

#### *Title V Abstinence-Only-Until Marriage Funding*

- Washington chose not to participate in the Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage program in Fiscal Year 2009. The state was eligible for approximately \$814,633 in funding. Due to the expiration of the grant program on June 30, 2009, three months prior to the end of the federal fiscal year, the state would have received three quarters of the total funding allocated for the full fiscal year.

#### *Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE) Funding*

- Public and private entities in Washington received \$1,563,773 in CBAE funding for Fiscal Year 2009.
- There are three CBAE grantees in Washington, including two community-based organizations and one school district.

#### *Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Funding*

- There are no AFLA grantees in Washington.

### **Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Curricula Used by Grantees**

*Some abstinence-only-until-marriage grantees in Washington use commercially available curricula. These include, but are not limited to:*

- *Me, My World, My Future*
- *Sexuality, Commitment & Family*

*To read reviews of abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula commonly used by federal grantees please visit the "Curricula and Speaker Reviews" webpage of SIECUS' Community Action Kit at [www.communityactionkit.org](http://www.communityactionkit.org).*

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Federal Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2009<sup>31</sup>

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Title V	CBAE (Length of Grant)	AFLA (Length of Grant)
AWARE, Inc. <a href="http://www.awareprogram.net">www.awareprogram.net</a>		\$499,849 (2008–2013)	
Clarkston School District <a href="http://www.csdk12.org">www.csdk12.org</a>		\$464,162 (2008–2013)	
Teen-Aid, Inc. <a href="http://www.teen-aid.org">www.teen-aid.org</a>		\$599,762 (2008–2013)	

**Adolescent Health Contact<sup>32</sup>**

Marla Russo, MPH  
 Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Coordinator  
 Washington State Department of Health  
 P.O. Box 47880  
 Olympia, WA 98501  
 Phone: (360) 236-3515

**Washington Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

ACLU of Washington  
 P.O. Box 4115  
 Seattle, WA 98194  
 Phone: (206) 624-2184  
[www.aclu-wa.org](http://www.aclu-wa.org)

Equality Rights Washington  
 The Vance Building  
 1402 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. Ste. 201  
 Seattle, WA 98101  
 Phone: (206) 324-2570  
[www.equalrightswashington.org](http://www.equalrightswashington.org)

League of Women Voters of Washington  
 4730 University Way NE, Suite 720  
 Seattle, WA 98105  
 Phone: (206) 622-8961  
[www.lwvwa.org](http://www.lwvwa.org)

Lifelong AIDS Alliance  
 1002 East Seneca  
 Seattle, WA 98122  
 Phone: (206) 328-8979  
[www.lifelongaidsalliance.org](http://www.lifelongaidsalliance.org)

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NARAL Pro-Choice Washington  
811 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Suite 456  
Seattle, WA 98104  
Phone: (206) 624-1990  
[www.prochoicewashington.org](http://www.prochoicewashington.org)

Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest  
2001 East Madison  
Seattle, WA 98122  
Phone: (206) 328-7734  
[www.plannedparenthood.org/  
westernwashington](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/westernwashington)

Planned Parenthood of the Inland Northwest  
123 East Indiana Avenue, Suite 100  
Spokane, WA 99207  
Phone: (509) 326-2142  
[www.ppinw.org](http://www.ppinw.org)

Washington Education Association  
P.O. Box 9100  
Federal Way, WA 98063  
Phone: (253) 941-6700  
[www.washingtonea.org](http://www.washingtonea.org)

Washington State Medical Association  
2033 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 1100  
Seattle, WA 98121  
Phone: (206) 441-9762  
[www.wsma.org](http://www.wsma.org)

Washington State Parent-Teacher  
Association  
2003 65<sup>th</sup> Avenue, W  
Tacoma, WA 98466  
Phone: (253) 565-2153  
[www.wastatepta.org](http://www.wastatepta.org)

### **Washington Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

Human Life of Washington  
P.O. Box 6532  
Bellevue, WA 98008  
Phone: (425) 641-9345  
[www.humanlife.net](http://www.humanlife.net)

### **Newspapers in Washington**<sup>33</sup>

*Bellingham Herald*  
Newsroom  
1155 North State Street  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
Phone: (360) 715-2260  
[www.bellinghamherald.com](http://www.bellinghamherald.com)

*The News Tribune*  
Newsroom  
P.O. Box 11000  
Tacoma, WA 98411  
Phone: (253) 597-8686  
[www.thenewstribune.com](http://www.thenewstribune.com)

*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*  
Newsroom  
P.O. Box 1909  
Seattle, WA 98111  
Phone: (206) 448-8000  
[www.seattlepi.com](http://www.seattlepi.com)

*Seattle Times*  
Newsroom  
P.O. Box 70  
Seattle, WA 98111  
Phone: (206) 464-2200  
[www.seattletimes.com](http://www.seattletimes.com)

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*Spokesman-Review*  
Newsroom  
P.O. Box 2160  
Spokane, WA 99210  
Phone: (509) 459-5000  
[www.spokesmanreview.com](http://www.spokesmanreview.com)

*Tacoma Daily Index*  
Newsroom  
P.O. Box 1303  
Tacoma, WA 98401  
Phone: (253) 627-4853  
[www.tacomadailyindex.com](http://www.tacomadailyindex.com)

*The Columbian*  
Newsroom  
P.O. Box 180  
Vancouver, WA  
(360)699-6006  
[www.columbian.com](http://www.columbian.com)

**Political Blogs in Washington**

*Hominid Views*  
[www.hominidviews.com](http://www.hominidviews.com)

*Majority Rules Blog*  
[www.majorityrules.org/blog](http://www.majorityrules.org/blog)

*Northwest Progressive Institute Advocate*  
[www.nwprogressive.org/weblog](http://www.nwprogressive.org/weblog)

*Washblog*  
[www.washblog.com](http://www.washblog.com)

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<sup>1</sup> Wash. Admin. Code § 392-410-140(4).

<sup>2</sup> Wash. Rev. Code § 28A.300.475(1), <<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.230.020>>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Wash. Rev. Code § 28A.230.070(7).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Wash. Rev. Code § 28A.230.070(3).

<sup>7</sup> Wash. Rev. Code § 28A.230.070(4).

<sup>8</sup> Wash. Rev. Code § 28A.300.475(6).

<sup>9</sup> Danice K. Eaton, et. al., “Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2009,” *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 59, no. SS-5 (4 June 2010): 98–109, accessed 4 June 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss5905.pdf>>. Note: Seattle, Washington participated in the 2009 YRBS; however, the city did not participate in the full survey.

<sup>10</sup> *U.S. Teenage Pregnancies, Births, and Abortions: National and State Trends and Trends by Race and Ethnicity*, (Washington, DC: Guttmacher Institute, January 2010), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/USTPtrends.pdf>>, Table 3.1.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Table 3.2.

<sup>12</sup> Joyce A. Martin, et. al, “Births: Final Data for 2006,” *National Vital Statistics Reports*, vol. 57, number 7 (Hyattsville, MD: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 7 January 2009), accessed 5 March 2010, <[http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr57/nvsr57\\_07.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr57/nvsr57_07.pdf)>, Table B.

<sup>13</sup> *U.S. Teenage Pregnancies, Births, and Abortions: National and State Trends and Trends by Race and Ethnicity*, Table 3.2.

<sup>14</sup> Martin, et. al, “Births: Final Data for 2006,” 4.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., Table B.

<sup>16</sup> *U.S. Teenage Pregnancies, Births, and Abortions: National and State Trends and Trends by Race and Ethnicity*, Table 3.5.

<sup>17</sup> “Cases of HIV Infection and AIDS in the United States and Dependent Areas, 2007,” *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report*, vol. 19, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, February 2009), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/reports/2007report/pdf/2007SurveillanceReport.pdf>>, Table 18.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.; “AIDS Case Rate per 100,000 Population, All Ages, 2007,” (Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://www.statehealthfacts.org/comparetable.jsp?ind=513&cat=11&sub=120&yr=62&typ=1&sort=a>>.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Table 16.

<sup>20</sup> Slide 15: “Reported AIDS Cases among Adolescents 13 to 19 Years of Age, 2007—United States and Dependent Areas,” *HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Adolescents and Young Adults (through 2007)*, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 2009), accessed 25 March 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/slides/adolescents/index.htm>>.

<sup>21</sup> “Wonder Database: Selected STDs by Age, Race/Ethnicity, and Gender, 1996-2008 Results,” (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), 30 June 2009, accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://wonder.cdc.gov/>>; see also Table 10: “Chlamydia: Reported Cases and Rates Per 100,000 Population by Age Group and Sex: United States, 2004–2008,” *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2008*, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of STD Prevention, November 2009), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats08/surv2008-Complete.pdf>>, 95.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid; see also Table 20: “Gonorrhea—Reported Cases and Rates per 100,000 Population by Age Group and Sex: United States, 2004–2008,” *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2008*, 106.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid; see also Table 33: “Primary and Secondary Syphilis—Reported Cases and Rates per 100,000 Population by Age Group and Sex: United States, 2004–2008,” *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2008*, 121.

<sup>24</sup> This is by no means a complete list of all comprehensive programming and policies related to sexuality education, but rather some examples of best practices and model programs that SIECUS identified.

<sup>25</sup> Information provided by Caitlin Safford, program organizer for NARAL Pro-Choice Foundation of Washington, 3 June 2010.

<sup>26</sup> “Questions About the Family Life and Sexual Health (F.L.A.S.H.) Curriculum,” Public Health – Seattle and King County, accessed 3 May 2010, <<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/personal/famplan/educators/FLASH/questions.aspx>>.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Information provided by Caitlin Safford, 3 June 2010.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> This refers to the federal government’s fiscal year, which begins on October 1<sup>st</sup> and ends on September 30<sup>th</sup>. The fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends; for example, Fiscal Year 2009 began on October 1, 2008 and ended on September 30, 2009.

<sup>31</sup> Through the Fiscal Year 2010 appropriations process, Congress eliminated all discretionary funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs, including the entire CBAE program and the abstinence-only-until-marriage portion of AFLA. The grant years listed in the chart reflect the years for which funding was originally approved; however, the grants effectively ended in Fiscal Year 2009.

<sup>32</sup> SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

<sup>33</sup> 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](#).