



SIECUS

State Profile

WEST VIRGINIA

The Department of Health and Human Services and community-based organizations in West Virginia received \$985,852 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2007.¹

West Virginia Sexuality Education Law and Policy

West Virginia law does not require sexuality education, but does require HIV/AIDS-prevention education in sixth through twelfth grades. According to a West Virginia legislative rule, “the goal of this policy is to assist in the protection of students by providing them with the knowledge and skills necessary to avoid behaviors that will put them at the risk of infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).”

Each county board must integrate HIV-prevention education into health courses and may also include it in science, development, and social studies courses. Educators conducting classroom instruction about HIV/AIDS must be qualified professionals who participate in staff development to ensure they teach current AIDS information. West Virginia does not require any specific curriculum; however, the Board of Education’s *Health Content Standards and Objectives* curriculum framework includes sexuality education.

Parents or guardians may remove their children from any part of this instruction by written notification to the principal. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See Legislative Rule of the West Virginia Board of Education 126-50A and 126-50B, West Virginia Board of Education Policies 2422.4, 2422.45, and 2520.5.

Recent Legislation

Bill Introduces Standards for Faith-Based, Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs

House Bill 2312, introduced in January 2007, would require faith-based, abstinence-only-until-marriage, and anti-choice facilities to give full information to “pregnant girls and women” regarding sex education, contraception, abortion, and other subjects. The bill is currently in the House Committee on Health and Human Resources.

Legislation to Allow Counseling of Students in Sex Education

House Bill 2538 would allow employees of the state board of education or county board to counsel a student in “basic sex education, societal expectations and roles of men and women, and birth control methods, including abstinence, medications, devices, and abortion,” upon the request of the student or when it appears to be in the student’s best interest. This counseling must remain confidential. The bill was introduced in January 2007 and currently resides in the Committee on Education.

Events of Note

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

West Virginia's Youth: Statistical Information of Note ²

- In 2007, 53% of female high school students and 54% of male high school students in West Virginia reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 50% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 4% of female high school students and 9% of male high school students in West Virginia reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 4% of female high school students and 10% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 14% of female high school students and 19% of male high school students in West Virginia reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 12% of female high school students and 18% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 43% of female high school students and 40% of male high school students in West Virginia reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 36% of female high school students and 34% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 57% of females and 66% of males in West Virginia reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 55% of females and 69% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 31% of females and 18% of males in West Virginia reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 19% of females and 13% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 20% of females and 24% of males in West Virginia reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 18% of females and 28% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, 88% of high school students in West Virginia reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 90% of high school students nationwide.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services received \$385,852 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. In West Virginia, the match is provided by sub-grantees through in-kind services.

The Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funding is distributed by the West Virginia Abstinence Education Project (WVAEP) to five sub-grantees: Community Action of South Eastern

West Virginia, The Gabriel Project of West Virginia (The Northern Panhandle Coalition for Abstinence Education), Rainelle Medical Center, Regeneration, Inc., and the Women’s Care Center. All curricula used by sub-grantees must be approved by the WVAEP after publishers confirm in writing that materials have been reviewed by a medical team.

The Gabriel Project of West Virginia’s mission statement describes the organization as, “an ecumenical network of congregations committed to safeguarding and honoring life by offering immediate and practical support to pregnant women and families with infants and young children.”³ The organization funds an abstinence educator who is available to schools, school board meetings, and other community events.⁴ The Gabriel Project’s abstinence program includes a virginity pledge.

Research has found that 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.⁵

Regeneration, Inc. runs “Project CHAT (Communities Hearing Abstinence Truth).” This program focuses on “six pillars of good character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.”⁶ The program has expanded in recent years to stretch across the state. In addition, Regeneration, Inc. sponsors a conference celebrating marriage.⁷

The Women’s Care Center 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. The organization describes itself as, “a Christian, pro-life ministry existing for the purpose of presenting the love and gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed. It is staffed by volunteers, known as advocates, who have received training in crisis intervention.”⁸ The organization also receives support from the First United Methodist Church of Parkersburg, West Virginia.⁹

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

There is one CBAE grantee in West Virginia: Mission West Virginia, Inc. There are no AFLA grantees in West Virginia.

Mission West Virginia, Inc. collaborates with public and private entities, especially faith communities, with the goal of “building stronger communities in West Virginia.”¹⁰ Mission West Virginia, Inc. runs several different programs, including E-Impact, a technology initiatives program, and One Church, One Child for adoptive and foster parent recruitment.

WEST VIRGINIA

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)
West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services www.wvdhhr.org	\$385,852 federal \$289,389 state	Title V
Community Action of South Eastern West Virginia www.casewv.org	\$47,667	Title V sub-grantee
The Gabriel Project of West Virginia (The Northern Panhandle Coalition for Abstinence Education) www.gabrielwv.org	\$44,667	Title V sub-grantee
Rainelle Medical Center www.rmchealth.org	\$44,667	Title V sub-grantee
Regeneration, Inc. www.regenerationministries.org	\$89,334	Title V sub-grantee
Women's Care Center www.yourpregnancychoices.com	\$34,667	Title V sub-grantee
Mission West Virginia 2007–2011 www.missionwv.org	\$600,000	CBAE

WEST VIRGINIA

Adolescent Health Contact¹¹

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West Virginia Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

ACLU of West Virginia
P.O. Box 3952
Charleston, WV 25339
Phone: (304) 345-9246
www.acluwb.org

Inside and OUT
P.O. Box 5835
Huntington, WV 25703
Phone: (304) 523-3121
www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/6273/Lr.htm

Rainbow Pride of West Virginia
P.O. Box 2624
Charleston, WV 25329
Phone: (304) 345-9938
www.pridewv.org

West Virginia Lesbian and Gay Coalition
P.O. Box 11033
Charleston, WV 25339
Phone: (304) 343-7305

West Virginia Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

West Virginia Family Foundation
P.O. Box 3421
Charleston, WV 25334
Phone: (304) 965-6700
www.wvfamily.org

West Virginians for Life
427 Spruce St.
Morgantown, WV 26505
Phone: (304) 291-LIFE
www.wvforLife.org

Newspapers in West Virginia¹²

Charleston Daily Mail
Newsroom
1001 Virginia St. E
Charleston, WV 25301
Phone: (304) 348-4830
www.dailymail.com

Charleston Gazette
Newsroom
1001 Virginia St. E
Charleston, WV 25301
Phone: (304) 348-5100
www.wvgazette.com

Dominion Post
Newsroom
1251 Earl L. Core Rd.
Morgantown, WV 26505
Phone: (304) 291-9425
www.dominionpost.com

Herald-Dispatch
Newsroom
946 5th Ave.
Huntington, WV 25701
Phone: (304) 526-2773
www.herald-dispatch.com

WEST VIRGINIA

News and Sentinel

Newsroom
519 Juliana St.
Parkersburg, WV 26101
Phone: (304) 485-1891
www.nesandsentinel.com

Wheeling News-Register

Newsroom
1500 Main St.
Wheeling, WV 26003
Phone: (304) 233-0100
www.news-register.com

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>.

³ "Our Mission and History," The Gabriel Project of WV, accessed 25 March 2008, < <http://www.gabrielwv.org> >.

⁴ "The Gabriel Project of WV," The Gabriel Project of WV, accessed 25 March 2008, < <http://www.gabrielwv.org> >.

⁵ 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.

⁶ "Project CHAT," Regeneration, Inc., accessed 24 March 2008, <<http://www.regenerationwv.org/ProjectCHAT/tabid/168/Default.aspx>>.

⁷ "Regeneration, Inc.," Regeneration, Inc., accessed 24 March 2008, <<http://www.regenerationwv.org/Home/tabid/132/Default.aspx>>.

⁸ "Women's Care Center," Women's Care Center, accessed 25 March 2008, <<http://www.yourpregnancychoices.com/about.html>>.

⁹ "Missionary Outreach," First United Methodist Church, accessed 25 March 2008, <<http://www.fumcparkersburg.org/missions.html>>.

¹⁰ "Home," Mission West Virginia, (2007), accessed 4 April 2008, <<http://linux.missionwv.org/>>.

¹¹ SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

¹² 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](#).