

State Profiles **FISCAL YEAR 2018**

A PORTRAIT OF SEX EDUCATION IN THE STATES

SIECUS is pleased to publish the 16th edition of the *SIECUS State Profiles*. The fiscal year (FY) 2018 edition of the *SIECUS State Profiles* includes individual profiles for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the outer United States territories and associated states. This 16th edition contains information from FY 2018 (October 1, 2017–September 30, 2018).

Background

SIECUS strongly advocates for adolescent sexual health promotion—including advances for comprehensive sexuality education and opposition to abstinence-only-until-marriage (AOUM) programs—at the state and federal level to ensure that all young people have access to high-quality sex education. SIECUS asserts that sexual health promotion must include comprehensive sexuality education programs that provide young people in grades K-12 with opportunities to learn information, explore their attitudes and values, and develop healthy life skills. SIECUS believes that sexuality instruction must be age- and developmentally appropriate, science-based, culturally inclusive, and medically accurate, and cover a broad set of topics related to sexuality, including human development, healthy relationships, decision-making and communication skills, sexual behaviors and health, and society and culture. This not only recognizes the diversity of young people, but also respects their rights to explore their values and beliefs. It promotes honest, accurate information that builds a foundation for young people’s lifelong health and wellbeing.

This annual publication clarifies how federal funds for adolescent sexual health promotion and AOUM programs are being utilized and implemented across the country and provides the information educators and advocates need to continue to learn and strategize with each other to advance sex education.

As in recent years’ editions, the overall status of states’ policies, health data, and federal programs in the FY 2018 *SIECUS State Profiles* illustrates the progress advocates and educators have made in improving sex education laws, policies, and implementation. However, like previous editions, this year’s *SIECUS State Profiles* also shows an all too prominent presence of AOUM programs in schools and communities around the country. Although there has been a rebranding of certain AOUM programs as “Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE),” the original intention of AOUM programs remains – to focus on a limited aspect of prevention and deprive young people from receiving the information and education they have a right to and need to lead healthy lives.

Recent Developments

Unfortunately, this year, there has been a lack of transparency regarding the allocation of funds for federal adolescent sexual health promotion programs, including the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program (TPPP) and the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP). This year, SIECUS has been unable to obtain any data regarding the allocation of FY 2018 PREP funding. In addition, there has been a deliberate lack of transparency regarding how the FY 2018 TPPP dollars have been spent. As of February 13, 2019, FY 2019 award amounts for State PREP and Title V SRAE were released, but the FY 2018 data remain missing. These data are invaluable in understanding how this critical federal funding is used, and the lack of publicly available information raises concerns about

how and whether the Trump administration is conforming to Congressional intent for these important sexual health promotion programs.

Revealingly, the Trump administration has also shown consistent support for AOUM programs—including by appointing many leading abstinence-only advocates to positions of decision-making authority within the administration—despite the evidence that these programs disproportionately harm the most marginalized and vulnerable populations of young people, including young people of color and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning (LGBTQ) youth. These programs often provide misleading or inaccurate information that deepens health disparities in communities already facing the barriers of significant systemic inequities.

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Thus, this year, the *SIECUS State Profiles* not only includes a federal funding overview of the year's trends at the federal and state levels, a historical summary of federal funding for adolescent programs related to sexual health and AOUM programs; a table of the states' laws and policies related to sex education; and summaries of the curricula or programs used across the country—it also provides resources to understand the Trump administration's ongoing efforts to transform federal sexual health promotion programs into harmful AOUM funding streams.

At the same time, SIECUS recognizes that many schools and communities are advancing sex education without the assistance of federal funds. The *SIECUS State Profiles* has remained a unique tool for knowledgeable and empowered advocacy efforts among educators, advocates, and policymakers to advance comprehensive sexuality education.

Each FY 2018 SIECUS State Profile includes:

- Current laws and policies related to sex education;
- Adolescent sexual health data including race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation breakdown (as available);
- Information on the recipients and their use of federal DASH, TPPP Tier 2, Title V SRAE, and competitive SRAE grant program funding (data for all other adolescent sexual health promotion programs is unavailable); and
- Where available, contact information for the state or territory's relevant program coordinators.

How to Use the State Profiles

We encourage supporters of comprehensive sexuality education to use the *SIECUS State Profiles* in their efforts to inform, shape, and improve sex education policies and practices. It is SIECUS' hope that we can collectively build from all of these best practices and varying models of success to advance sex education and support the lifelong health of young people in our nation.

SIECUS is committed to helping advocates in states and communities secure sex education policies and programs that are based on sound science, public health expertise, and ensure the rights of all people. We hope that the *State Profiles* will be of great value in our collective efforts to promote adolescent sexual health and hold the Trump administration accountable for its attacks on young people.

Please contact us if you have any questions or would like to offer suggestions on how the *SIECUS State Profiles* can better help you advocate for comprehensive sexuality education and lifelong sexual health for all.

Acknowledgements

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Finally, to our many donors and funders who support our work and believe in the rights of all people to access quality sex education, we extend our deep appreciation for your support.

Sincerely,



Christine Soyong Harley
Interim President & CEO
SIECUS