



Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C. received \$770,000 in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2003.¹

Washington, D.C. Sexuality Education Law

Washington, D.C. regulations state that District public schools must provide comprehensive school health education, including instruction on human sexuality and reproduction. The instruction must be age-appropriate and taught in grades pre-kindergarten through 12.

This instruction must include information on the human body, intercourse, abstinence, contraception, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), pregnancy, abortion, childbirth, sexual orientation, decision-making skills regarding parenting and sexuality, and awareness and prevention of rape and sexual assault.

The Superintendent of District of Columbia Public Schools is charged with ensuring that sexuality education is taught in schools and that students have a minimum proficiency in this area. Accordingly, the superintendent must provide systematic teacher trainings and staff development activities for health and physical education instructors. A list of all instructional materials for students and teacher training must be included in the list of textbooks submitted annually to the District Board of Education. The board of education must then approve these materials.

See District of Columbia Municipal Regulations Sections 2304 and 2305.

Recent Legislation

SIECUS is not aware of any recent legislation in Washington, D.C. regarding sexuality education.

Events of Note

Public Opinion and Funding in Washington, D.C.

Common Sense, a publication from the D.C. Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, includes the results of a 2000 survey of 1,600 Washingtonians ages 11 and older. This survey found that less than one in ten D.C. residents (seven percent) believe that sexuality education should focus solely on abstinence. Two-thirds of survey participants thought that it was more realistic and effective to encourage youth to postpone sex until they are more mature, not until they are married.²

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 2003 begins on October 1, 2002 and ends on September 30, 2003.

² *Common Sense: Teens and Adults Speak Out About Teen Pregnancy in the District of Columbia.* (Washington, D.C.: D.C. Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy). Accessed online on May 13, 2004 at <http://www.teenpregnancydc.org/tabs/publications/pdf/FILES/CommonSense.pdf>

D.C. Returns Federal Grant

In 2001, the D.C. Department of Health (D.C. DOH) received approval for a SPRANS–CBAE grant. The D.C. DOH planned to contract out some of this funding to the D.C. Black Church Initiative and Catholic Charities. The remaining funding would have been used by the Department of Human Services to support their *Courage to Wait* campaign. This campaign had several parts, including media, curriculum, and faith-based outreach that was slated to be implemented in 21 D.C. churches and include a peer-led education program, a mentor program, a train-the-trainers program, and a high school drama troupe. This campaign would also have targeted Boys & Girls Clubs as well as the Latino community.

However, the D.C. DOH had concerns about some aspects of the federal eight-point definition of abstinence-only-until-marriage programs. After extended negotiations with the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) during which the D.C. DOH questioned whether the program must be in accordance with all eight points of the federal definition, the D.C. DOH determined that they could not implement the SPRANS–CBAE grant for ideological reasons.

The D.C. DOH has since sent a letter to HHS in which they returned the funding and sought to have it used instead by Covenant House. Covenant House is a faith-based organization that already provides abstinence-only-until-marriage programs to homeless and other at-risk youth.

In testimony before the D.C. Council’s Committee on Public Oversight on February 26, 2003, Ron Lewis, then-deputy director and now director of the D.C. DOH, stated that the Department of Health had not yet implemented the SPRANS–CBAE grant due to its concerns over the eight-point definition. He stated that the Department was uncomfortable with tying abstinence to marriage and pointed out that less than one-quarter of District residents are married, heterosexual couples.

Washington, D.C.’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note³

- In 2003, 56% of female high school students and 74% of male high school students in the District of Columbia reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 45% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, 6% of female high school students and 25% of male high school students in the District of Columbia 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 2003, 16% of female high school students and 36% of male high school students in the District of Columbia reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 11% of female high school students and 18% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, 42% of female high school students and 49% of male high school students in the District of Columbia reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 35% of females and 34% of males nationwide.

³ Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from: J. Grunbaum, et. al., “Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance — United States, 2003,” *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 53, no.SS-2, May 21, 2004, pp. 1-95. Available online at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/yrbs/>.

- In 2003, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 11% of females and 28% of males in the District of Columbia reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 30% of males nationwide.
- In 2003, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 71% of females and 84% of males in the District of Columbia reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 57% of females and 69% of males nationwide.
- In 2003, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 9% of females and 13% of males in the District of Columbia reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 13% of males nationwide.
- In 2003, 12% of female high school students and 9% of male high school students in the District of Columbia reported ever having been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant compared to 5% of female high school students and 4% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, 88% of high school students in the District of Columbia reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.
- In 2000, Washington D.C.'s abortion rate was 55 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.⁴

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

Washington, D.C. received \$120,000 in federal Title V funding in Fiscal Year 2003. 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 can be provided in part or in full by local groups. The District of Columbia matches the federal funding with \$120,000 in D.C. funds.

The D.C. Department of Health, Maternal and Child Health Division administers the *I'm Worth the Wait* campaign with this funding. The campaign consists of a peer education program, a media campaign, school-based abstinence-only-until-marriage programs, and a parent/ youth advisory board. The program targets nine to 14-year olds and is run in schools and communities.

Special Projects of Regional and National Significance—Community Based Abstinence Education (SPRANS—CBAE) and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees

There are no SPRANS—CBAE or AFLA grantees in Washington, D.C. (The D.C. Department of Health was awarded a \$763,583 SPRANS—CBAE implementation grant in 2001, but returned the funding for ideological reasons. See “Events of Note” for more information.)

Several organizations in Washington, D.C. have received federal earmarks for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs. The Best Friends Foundation received a \$300,000 grant from the U.S.

⁴ U.S. *Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information*, (New York: Alan Guttmacher Institute, February, 2004). Available online at www.guttmacher.org.

Department of Health and Human Service's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in 2003. The one-year grant will fund Best Friends' Youth Development Program as well as its *Marriage Is Manly* media campaign. This is a single source grant, which means that Best Friends did not have to compete for it and that no other groups will receive this funding. Also, Project Reality received \$100,000 for work in D.C. and the Best Friends Foundation received an additional \$250,000 from the federal Fiscal Year 2003 Omnibus Appropriations Bill.

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2003

Abstinence –Only-Until-Marriage Program Grantee Web Address	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS- CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
D.C. Department of Health www.dchealth.dc.gov	\$120,000 federal/ \$120,000 state	Title V
Best Friends Foundation 2003 DUAL GRANTEE 2003 www.bestfriendsfoundation.org	\$300,000 \$250,000	Single Source Grant from SAMHSA FY03 Omnibus Appropriations Bill
Project Reality 2003 www.projectreality.org	\$100,000	FY03 Omnibus Appropriations Bill

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

Margaret Copemann
Government of the District of Columbia
Department of Health
Office of Maternal and Child Health
825 North Capitol St., NE
Washington, D.C. 20002
Phone: (202) 576-6694

Washington, D.C. Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

D.C. Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy
1112 Eleventh St., NW, Suite 100
Washington, D.C. 20001
Phone: (202) 789-4666
www.teenpregnancydc.org

Metro TeenAIDS
651 Pennsylvania Ave., SE
Washington, D.C. 20003
Phone: (202) 543-9355
www.metroteenaid.org

Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan
Washington
1108 16th St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
Phone: (202) 347-8500
www.ppmw.org

Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League
(SMYAL)
410 7th St., SE
Washington, D.C. 20003-2707
Phone: (202) 546-5940
www.SMYAL.org

Washington, D.C. Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Best Friends Foundation
4455 Connecticut Ave., NW
Suite 310
Washington, D.C. 20008
Phone: (202) 237-8156
www.bestfriendsfoundation.org

Newspapers in Washington, D.C.

The Washington Monthly
Stephanie Mencimer
Social Opinion Editor
733 15th St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20005
Phone: (202) 393-5155

The Washington Monthly
Joshua Green
Social Opinion Editor
733 15th St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20005
Phone: (202) 393-5155

The Washington Post
Sari Horwitz
Social Issues Reporter
1150 15th St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20071

The Washingtonian
Diane Granat
Education Senior Editor
1828 L St. NW #200
Washington, D.C. 20033
Phone: (202) 296-3600