



## WASHINGTON, DC

***Washington, DC received \$949,830 in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2004.<sup>1</sup>***

### **Washington, DC Sexuality Education Law**

Washington, DC 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 twelve.

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 related to sexuality education in Washington, DC.

### **Events of Note**

#### ***DC Returns Federal Grant 2003***

In 2001, the DC Department of Health (DC DOH) received approval for a SPRANS–CBAE grant. The DC DOH planned to contract out some of this funding to the DC 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 DC churches and include a peer-led education program, a mentor program, a train-the-trainers program, and a high school drama troupe. The campaign would also have targeted Boys and Girls Clubs as well as the Latino community.

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

The DC DOH 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 Council’s Committee on Public Oversight on February 26, 2003, Ron Lewis, then-deputy director and now director of the DC DOH, 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.

*Public Opinion and Funding in Washington, DC  
2001*

*Common Sense*, a publication from the DC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, includes the results of a 2000 survey of 1,600 Washingtonians ages 11 and older. This survey found that fewer than one in 10 DC residents (7%) believes 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.<sup>2</sup>

**Washington, DC’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note<sup>3</sup>**

- 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.
- 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 HIV/AIDS in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.
- In 2000, Washington DC's abortion rate was 55 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.<sup>4</sup>
- In 2002, Washington DC's birth rate was 69 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen birth rate of 43 per 1,000 nationwide.<sup>5</sup>

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

Washington, DC received \$145,045 in federal Title V funding in Fiscal Year 2004. 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 DC funds.

The DC Department of Health, Maternal and Child Health Division uses these funds to administer the *I'm Worth the Wait* campaign, which 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 youth ages 9-14 and is run in schools and communities.

### **Special Projects of Regional and National Significance—Community Based Abstinence Education (SPRANS—CBAE)<sup>6</sup> and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees**

There is one SPRANS—CBAE grantee in Washington, DC, the Best Friends Foundation. There are no AFLA grantees in Washington, DC. The Best Friends Foundation runs a number of programs, including the *Marriage is Manly* media campaign, after school groups, and peer mentoring programs.

**Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2004**

<b>Abstinence –Only-Until-Marriage Program Grantee</b> <b>Length of Grant</b>	<b>Amount of Grant</b>	<b>Type of Grant (includes SPRANS–CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)</b>
DC Department of Health <a href="http://www.dchealth.dc.gov">www.dchealth.dc.gov</a>	\$145,045 federal \$120,000 state	Title V
Best Friends Foundation 2004-2007  DUAL GRANTEE <a href="http://www.bestfriendsfoundation.org">www.bestfriendsfoundation.org</a>	\$754,785   \$50,000	SPRANS–CBAE (Implementation Grant)   FY04 Omnibus Appropriations Bill

**Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator**

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Government of the District of Columbia  
Department of Health  
Office of Maternal and Child Health  
825 North Capitol St., NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
Phone: (202) 541-6306

**Washington, DC Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

DC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy  
1112 Eleventh St., NW, Suite 100  
Washington, DC 20001  
Phone: (202) 789-4666  
[www.teenpregnancydc.org](http://www.teenpregnancydc.org)

Metro Teen AIDS  
651 Pennsylvania Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20003  
Phone: (202) 543-9355  
[www.metroteenaids.org](http://www.metroteenaids.org)

Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan  
Washington  
1108 16th St., NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: (202) 347-8500  
[www.ppmw.org](http://www.ppmw.org)

Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League  
(SMYAL)  
410 7th St., SE  
Washington, DC 20003  
Phone: (202) 546-5940  
[www.SMYAL.org](http://www.SMYAL.org)

**Washington, DC Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

Best Friends Foundation  
5335 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Suite 440  
Washington, DC 20015  
Phone: (202) 478-9677  
[www.bestfriendsfoundation.org](http://www.bestfriendsfoundation.org)

**Newspapers in Washington, DC**

*Washington City Paper*  
Sean Daly  
Assistant Editor  
2390 Champlain St., NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
Phone: (202) 332-2100

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

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

*The Washington Post*  
Ceci Connolly  
Health & Medicine Reporter  
1150 15th St., NW  
Washington, DC 20071  
Phone: (202) 334-5684

*The Washington Post*  
Sari Horwitz  
Social Issues Reporter  
1150 15th St., NW  
Washington, DC 20071  
Phone: (202) 334-7284

*The Washington Post*  
Marc Kaufman  
Health & Medicine Reporter  
1150 15th St., NW  
Washington, DC 20071  
Phone: (202) 334-7469

*The Washington Post*  
Caryle Murphy  
Religion Reporter  
1150 15th St., NW  
Washington, DC 20071  
Phone: (202) 334-7572

*The Washington Post*  
Eric Pianin  
Congress Editor  
1150 15th St., NW  
Washington, DC 20071  
Phone: (202) 334-7426

*The Washington Post*  
Laura Stepp  
Family & Parenting Staff Writer  
1150 15th St., NW  
Washington, DC 20071  
Phone: (202) 334-7945

*The Washington Times*  
Cheryl Wetzstein  
Social Issues Reporter  
3600 New York Ave., NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
Phone: (202) 636-3189

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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 2004 begins on October 1, 2003 and ends on September 30, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> *Common Sense: Teens and Adults Speak Out About Teen Pregnancy in the District of Columbia* (Washington, DC:DC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy), accessed 13 May 2004, <<http://www.teenpregnancydc.org/tabs/publications/pdf/files/CommonSense.pdf>>.

<sup>3</sup> Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from: Jo Anne Grunbaum, et. al., “Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2003,” *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 53.SS-2 (21 May 2004): 1-95, accessed 28 January 2005, <<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/yrbs/>>.

<sup>4</sup> *U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information* (New York: Alan Guttmacher Institute, February, 2004), accessed 28 January 2005, <[www.guttmacher.org](http://www.guttmacher.org)>.

<sup>5</sup> *National Vital Statistics Reports 52.10* (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2003), 48, accessed 4 February 2005, <<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/births.htm#stat%20tables>>.

<sup>6</sup> In FY 2004 SPRANS–CBAE was administered within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau. In FY 2005 this funding stream was moved to HHS’ Administration for Children and Families and is now referred to simply as Community Based Abstinence Education (CBAE).