



SIECUS

State Profile

WASHINGTON, DC

Community-based organizations in Washington, DC received \$793,538 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2008.¹

Washington, DC Sexuality Education Law and Policy

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 12.

This instruction must include information on the human body, intercourse, 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 training and staff development activities for health and physical education instructors. A list of all instructional materials for student and teacher training must be included in the list of textbooks submitted annually to the District Board of Education. The board of education must approve these materials.

Parents or guardians may submit a written note to the principal to remove their children from sexuality education and/or STD/HIV education classes. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See District of Columbia Municipal Regulations Sections 2304 and 2305.

Recent Legislation

Legislation to Extend Anti-Discrimination Laws

D.C. Bill 330, introduced in July 2007, would amend the district’s nondiscrimination statutes to include gender identity or expression as a protected category from unlawful discrimination. The bill was sent to the Council Committee on Workforce Development and Government Operations on July 10, 2007.

Bill Creates HPV Education Campaign

D.C. Bill 17-0030, introduced in January 2007, establishes a public education campaign meant to raise awareness about the Human Papillomavirus (HPV), HPV’s relationship with cervical cancer, and the availability of an HPV vaccine. It also establishes a vaccination program for female students entering grade six, and requires the department of health to track implementation.² The bill passed and was assigned Law Number 10 on July 12, 2007.

Washington, DC's Youth: Statistical Information of Note³

- In 2007, 51% of female high school students and 64% of male high school students in District of Columbia reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 50% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 5% of female high school students and 22% of male high school students in 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 2007, 14% of female high school students and 29% of male high school students in District of Columbia 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, 39% of female high school students and 42% of male high school students in District of Columbia 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, 68% of females and 72% of males in District of Columbia 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, 14% of females and 4% of males in District of Columbia 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, 15% of females and 21% of males in District of Columbia 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, 86% of high school students in District of Columbia reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

- Washington, DC was eligible for \$142,008 in federal Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funding in Fiscal Year 2008.
- The Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage grant requires the District to provide three District-raised dollars or the equivalent in services for every four federal dollars received. The District match may be provided in part or in full by local groups.
- Washington, DC, however, did not apply for these funds in Fiscal Year 2008 because the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) failed to issue a new Request for Proposal during the year. (States using the same program as in their Fiscal Year 2007 applications did not have to wait for a new RFP and continued to receive funds.) Therefore, the District did not match funds nor did it have organizations supported by this type of federal money.

- Mayor Adrian Fenty's (D) office has applied for Fiscal Year 2009 funds with a science-based comprehensive health curriculum that embraces abstinence education as a component of a broader, more comprehensive set of health promotion strategies for youth, which is required by the District's new comprehensive sex education guidelines. It remains to be seen whether ACF will accept the application.⁴

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

- There is one CBAE grantee in Washington, DC: Best Friends Foundation.
- There is one AFLA grantee in Washington, DC: National Organization of Concerned Black Men.

SIECUS has compiled some examples of the use CBAE and AFLA funding in Washington, DC:

Best Friends Foundation, \$550,000 (CBAE 2008–2013)

The Best Friends Foundation describes itself as, “A nationwide network of programs that is dedicated to the physical and emotional well-being of adolescents.”⁵ The organization runs two abstinence-only-until-marriage programs: Best Friends for young women in grades six through 12 and Best Men for young men. In ninth grade, girls enter the “Diamond Girls Leadership program.” All Diamond Girls are required to participate in either the Diamond Girls Jazz Choir or the Performance Dance Troupe.⁶ In 2006, 16 percent of the organization's funding came from CBAE dollars.⁷ In Fiscal Year 2008, the organization also received federal funding under the government's “Healthy Marriage” program in the amount of \$500,724.

Elayne Bennett, the wife of William Bennett, a former Reagan and Bush administration official and conservative pundit, founded the Best Friends Foundation.⁸ Mr. Bennett said of his wife's program, “Let me just tell you, when it comes to abortion, my wife's program, Best Friends, has kept more young women from having abortions because they don't get pregnant because they take her good counsel.”⁹

In the summer of 2008, controversy erupted over the Best Friends Foundation's grant award of \$1.1 million from the Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice.¹⁰ During the grant review, the Foundation's grant was ranked 53rd out of 104 total applications. It was noted during the review that the organization refused to participate in Mathematica's congressionally-mandated study to determine the effectiveness of abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.¹¹ The section chief of the Office of Juvenile Justice, J. Robert Flores, created a new grant category to ensure the Foundation received an award despite the grant's poor review. This new category was titled, “Utilizing school based outreach efforts directed at preventing high-risk activity (out-of-wedlock pregnancy).”¹²

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2008

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Best Friends Foundation 2008–2013 www.bestfriendsfoundation.org	\$550,000	CBAE
National Organization of Concerned Black Men 2004–2009 www.cbmnational.org	\$243,538	AFLA

Adolescent Health Contact¹³

Letitia Black
Government of the District of Columbia, DC Department of Health
301 Douglas Street, NE
Shaed Elementary School
Washington, DC 20002
Phone: (202) 541-6306

Washington, DC Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

DC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy
1112 11th Street NW, Suite 100
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: (202) 789-4666
www.teenpregnancydc.org

Metro Teen AIDS
651 Pennsylvania Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20003
Phone: (202) 543-9355
www.metroteenaid.org

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

Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League
410 7th Street SE
Washington, DC 20003
Phone: (202) 546-5940
www.smyal.org

WASHINGTON, DC

City Year
918 U Street
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: (202) 776-7780
www.cityyear.org

Young Women's Project
1328 Florida Avenue NW, Suite 2000
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: (202) 332-3399
www.youngwomensproject.org

Washington, DC Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

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

Newspapers in Washington, DC¹⁴

Washington City Paper
Newsroom
2390 Champlain Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: (202) 332-2100
www.washingtoncitypaper.com

Washington Post
Newsroom
1150 15th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20071
Phone: (703) 469-2500
www.washingtonpost.com

Washington Times
Newsroom
3600 New York Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002
Phone: (202) 636-3000
www.washtimes.com

¹ This refers to the federal government's fiscal year, 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 2008 began on October 1, 2007 and ended on September 30, 2008.

² "HPV Vaccination and Reporting Act of 2007," accessed 6 May 2008, <www.dccouncil.washington.dc.us/images/00001/20070126124422.pdf>.

³ 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>>.

⁴ Personal conversation between Carter Hewgley and Morgan Marshall, 23 March 2009.

⁵ "Our Mission," Best Friends Foundation, accessed 12 October 2008, <<http://www.bestfriendsfoundation.org/>>.

⁶ "What is Best Friends?," Best Friends Foundation, accessed 12 October 2008, <<http://www.bestfriendsfoundation.org/BFWhatIsBF.html>>.

⁷ Best Friends Foundation, 990 Form, 2006, p. 1.

⁸ Murray Waas, "Questions Surround Government Funded Abstinence Program," (12 June 2008), *ABC News*, accessed 12 October 2008, <<http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/Story?id=5054210&page=1>>.

⁹ Max Blumenthal, "Bill Bennett, White Savior," *Huffington Post*, (1 October 2005), accessed 12 October 2008, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/max-blumenthal/bill-bennett-white-savior_b_8162.html>.

¹⁰ Murray Waas, "Questions Surround Government Funded Abstinence Program."

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

¹⁴ 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](#).