



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Office of the Assistant Secretary | 330 C Street, S.W., Suite 4034
Washington, DC 20201 | www.acf.hhs.gov

Tuesday, August 26, 2025

Ms. Darla Dexter, Community Health Section Supervisor
Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
14 East Broadway, Room A116
Helena, MT 59601

RE: State Personal Responsibility Education Program for Fiscal Years 2023
(#2301MTPREP), 2024 (#2401MTPREP), and 2025 (#2501MTPREP).

Dear Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services:

On April 14, 2025, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) requested that Montana provide current curricula and programmatic materials in use or in any way relevant to your state Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) grant for a medical accuracy review in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of the grant. We appreciate your timely response to ACF's request.

While preparing Montana's PREP content for the medical accuracy review, ACF identified content in the curricula and other program materials that fall outside of the scope of PREP's authorizing statute at 42 U.S.C. § 713. Specifically, the following subjects and language are outside the scope of the authorizing statute and all references to it must be removed from Montana's PREP curricula and program materials:¹

¹ ACF initiated a medical accuracy review to determine if Montana's approach to biological sex in its PREP curricula is medically accurate and in compliance with the program statute and the terms and conditions of the award. In preparing the materials that we received, we saw that the curricula include gender ideology which is not authorized by the statute. As per this letter, Montana will need to remove this content from its PREP curricula and program materials. In light of this, we are changing our planned course of action and are no longer conducting a review for medical accuracy because the content that we were going to review for medical accuracy is outside of the subjects that are statutorily authorized in this program.

Draw the Line/Respect the Line

- Page 6 (“How to Use the Curriculum”): “While some young people may feel more comfortable or be able to be more honest when discussing sexuality-related issues in single-gender groups, we do not recommend dividing the class in this way, as it can cause trauma for transgender, gender non-conforming, and non-binary youth. . . .

The use of integrated, mixed-gender groups is considered best practice for current-day classrooms and youth groups, and is something sexuality educators are trained to facilitate. Use of mixed-gender groups can help promote gender equity, build understanding of different perspectives, and increase inclusivity for transgender, gender nonconforming, and non-binary youth.”

- Lesson 1, Activity 4.5 (page 59) and Lesson 4, Activity 4.4 (page 92):

Teacher’s Note

During the roleplay practice, youth may roleplay pressure situations with a partner of a different or the same gender. This may be awkward for teens who are sensitive to the suggestion of same-sex romance, for teens who identify as gay or lesbian, or for teens who are transgender or gender nonconforming. It’s important to address this situation directly and proactively.

Here are some tips:

- Explain the situation in a matter-of-fact way. Let youth know that they may be doing the roleplays with a partner of a different or the same gender.
- Emphasize that they are playing roles. Doing the roleplay to practice the skill doesn’t say anything about the sexual attraction of the people doing the roleplay or mean that anyone is expressing a real-life attraction toward the other person in the roleplay.
- Explain that they need to take their role seriously because teens of all sexual orientations and gender identities need to learn how to draw the line to resist sexual pressure and protect themselves. This will help ensure that they and their classmates get the most out of the roleplay activities.

Making Proud Choices!

- Page 36 (Module 1, Activity B Procedure): “Facilitator’s Note: Asking participants to tell you their pronouns is a way of creating a safe space for transgender or gender nonconforming youth. Reinforce that sharing pronouns is optional; some youth may not feel comfortable sharing their pronouns and thus ‘outing’ themselves. Model what you want participants to say by giving your own pronouns. Some transgender youth might have typical pronouns (he/she/his/her/their) or they might request more creative pronouns such as hir or zir. Pronouns don’t always line up with what observers might expect based on a

person's perceived biological sex. The simple act of requesting pronouns sends the message that transgender and gender nonconforming youth are welcome and respected in the group."

- Page 39 (Module 1, Activity C Procedure): "**Respect diversity:** Let's keep in mind that there's diversity in society and in the group. Individuals come from different family backgrounds, different racial and cultural groups and different living situations. Some young people have already had romantic relationships; others aren't even thinking about it. Some have had sexual intercourse. Some have had sex because they choose to; other's may have had sex against their will. Some may identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or straight. Some may identify as male, female or transgender.

Young people may express themselves in ways that don't conform with their biological sex. There are many ways that youth can express their gender identity. . .

Define terms related to diversity as needed.

I want to be sure everyone understands some of the terms we use when talking about diversity.

Gender refers to the ideas in a culture or society about the appropriate ways for men and women to dress, behave, think and feel. Ideas about what gender behavior is appropriate change in different cultures and at different times in history. Sometimes one gender is given more power or status than another.

Gender identity is peoples' inner understanding of what gender they identify with. It may be man, woman, something in between, or something that doesn't fit these labels. It may be the same as (cisgender) or different from (transgender) the sex they were assigned at birth. Gender identity is unique for each person.

Gender expression is how a person represents or expresses gender identity to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, voice or body characteristics."

The "purpose" of a PREP grant award is for states to "carry out personal responsibility education programs consistent with this subsection." 42 U.S.C. § 713(b)(1). The statute defines PREP as "a program that is designed to educate adolescents on -- (i) both abstinence and contraception for the prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, consistent with the requirements of subparagraph (B); and (ii) at least 3 of the adulthood preparation subjects described in subparagraph (C)." 42 U.S.C. § 713(b)(2).

The statute includes no mention of gender ideology, which is both irrelevant to teaching abstinence and contraception and unrelated to any of the adult preparation subjects

described in section 713(b)(2)(C).² The statute neither requires, supports nor authorizes teaching students that gender identity is distinct from biological sex or that boys can identify as girls and vice versa; thus, gender ideology is outside the scope of the authorizing statute and any expenditures associated with gender ideology are not allowable, reasonable, or allocable to the PREP grant. See 45 C.F.R. §§ 75.403-405.

We are aware that these curricula and other program materials were previously approved by ACF. However, the prior administration erred in allowing PREP grants to be used to teach students gender ideology because that approval exceeded the agency's authority to administer the program consistent with the authorizing legislation as enacted by Congress.

Montana's current PREP curricula and program materials are out of compliance with the PREP statute and HHS regulations and must be modified. See 45 C.F.R. § 75.303(b) (requiring compliance with all Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award), §§ 75.403-405 (requiring grant expenditures to be reasonable and allocable in order to be allowable). ACF may impose additional conditions on grantees that fail to comply with any Federal statutes, regulations or terms and conditions that apply to their awards. See 45 C.F.R. § 75.371.

Therefore, ACF instructs Montana to remove all content concerning gender ideology from its curricula, program materials and any other aspects of its program delivery within 60 days of receipt of this letter and provide a copy of the modified materials to ACF for approval.

The content flagged on the pages of this letter provides examples of gender ideology content that does not adhere to the PREP statute;³ Montana is directed to remove these and all similar language throughout their curricula and program materials. Should Montana fail to make the appropriate modifications to its PREP curricula and program materials, ACF may take additional enforcement action. See 45 C.F.R. § 75.371 (allowing HHS to withhold, disallow, suspend, or terminate Federal awards if imposing additional conditions on a grantee does not cure noncompliance).


Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please submit the modified curricula and materials by uploading to the Dropbox links previously provided to you within sixty (60)

² 42 U.S.C. § 713(b)(2)(C) lists the following adult preparation subjects: "(i) Healthy relationships, including marriage and family interactions; (ii) Adolescent development, such as the development of healthy attitudes and values about adolescent growth and development, body image, racial and ethnic diversity, and other related subjects; (iii) Financial literacy; (iv) Parent-child communication; (v) Educational and career success, such as developing skills for employment preparation, job seeking, independent living, financial self-sufficiency, and workplace productivity; (vi) Healthy life skills, such as goal-setting, decision making, negotiation, communication and interpersonal skills, and stress management."

³ We are not setting forth all of the problematic language in this letter but are providing a general description and examples so that you understand what needs to be removed from the curricula and program materials. If you have any questions about whether language needs to be removed, please contact the Federal Project Officer, Arlisa Britt at arlisa.britt@acf.hhs.gov.

days, and no later than **Monday, October 27, 2025**, at 11:59 pm. You may email your FYSB Federal Project Officer if you need clarification regarding this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew K. Gradison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'A' and 'G'.

Andrew Gradison
Acting Assistant Secretary
Administration for Children and Families