



Home Visiting Research and Evaluation Supported by the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program

Introduction

Since 2010, the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) has significantly expanded evidence-based home visiting services for families with young children. A cornerstone of MIECHV is a learning agenda that includes a portfolio of research, evaluation, performance measurement, and quality improvement efforts. In September 2017, the NHVRC [highlighted five projects](#) in MIECHV's learning agenda. This brief introduces five additional projects:

- ✔ Multisite Implementation Evaluation of Tribal Home Visiting (MUSE)
- ✔ Home Visiting Career Trajectories
- ✔ Assessment and Mapping of Community Connections in Home Visiting (AMC-HV)
- ✔ Touchpoints for Addressing Substance Use in Home Visiting (Touchpoints)
- ✔ Family-Level Assessment and State of Home Visiting (FLASH-V)

Together, these efforts address pressing topics in the home visiting field and generate new information on how to support programs and families. All projects are funded by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and are jointly administered by OPRE and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

The NHVRC is led by James Bell Associates in partnership with the Urban Institute. Support is provided by the Heising-Simons Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the foundations.

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Multisite Implementation Evaluation of Tribal Home Visiting

About: MUSE is a 5-year study to gather information on how home visiting programs are planned and implemented by Tribal MIECHV grantees. It is the first multisite, multimodel evaluation of home visiting in tribal communities.

Goals and Purpose: MUSE examines factors such as community context, staffing, supervision, and referral systems that influence the planning and implementation of home visiting programs in tribal communities.

MUSE will pilot the use of the Home Visit Rating Scales-Adapted and Extended to Excellence (HOVRS-A+) with a few of the Tribal MIECHV grantees. HOVRS-A+ is an observational measure to help home visiting programs improve their practices and help caregivers support their children's early development. The measure emphasizes a [developmental parenting](#) approach that respects each family's strengths and encourages them to value and respond to their children's developmental needs.

Who is Involved: MUSE was launched in 2016 by OPRE, in collaboration with HRSA. MUSE is conducted by James Bell Associates in partnership with the Centers for American Indian and Alaska Native Health at the Colorado School of Public Health.

Accomplishments: To date, MUSE has recruited 17 Tribal MIECHV grantees to participate in the study. Grantees range from individual tribal organizations to urban organizations and consortiums representing multiple tribes.

The team has also begun an extensive and iterative process of stakeholder engagement and study planning by—

- ✔ Engaging grantees and technical workgroups in the co-creation of the MUSE conceptual model and study design
- ✔ Developing draft data collection instruments and beginning related approval processes
- ✔ Creating the MUSE Family Resources Check-In, a measure of family economic strain designed to be responsive to tribal contexts (see sidebar)
- ✔ Presenting an overview of the MUSE stakeholder engagement process at the Seventh National Summit on Quality in Home Visiting Programs

What is the MUSE Family Resources Check-In?

Researchers often use screeners to measure economic strain among study participants. However, available tools may not adequately capture the level of need among families in American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

The [MUSE Family Resources Check-In](#) is a screener designed to more adequately reflect economic experiences in tribal communities. The screener is ready for use in the MUSE study but is still under development. Data collected by MUSE will help inform how well the screener works.

Implications: By asking tribal communities about the complexities and realities of implementing home visiting programs, MUSE moves beyond thinking about model fidelity toward a more nuanced understanding of how program models are successfully implemented in diverse contexts. The information gathered will offer insight into how to support programs and address health disparities among vulnerable and diverse populations.

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Upcoming Activities: MUSE plans to release several interim reports before the study ends in 2021. A final study report will be released in 2021. The team will also speak about the project during [ACF's National Research Conference on Early Childhood in June 2018](#).

For More Information: See the ACF web page on [MUSE](#).

Home Visiting Career Trajectories

About: Home Visiting Career Trajectories examines the home visiting workforce and its professional development opportunities. Results can help promote a qualified and well-supported home visiting workforce.

Goals and Purpose: Home Visiting Career Trajectories seeks to build knowledge of the home visiting workforce and its professional development opportunities by—

- ✔ Documenting home visitor characteristics, background information, and job experiences
- ✔ Learning the characteristics of home visiting jobs and their required qualifications
- ✔ Identifying geographic areas with a shortage of qualified professionals and where qualified professionals are more available
- ✔ Understanding how current professional development opportunities support home visitors and whether they align with identified home visitor needs

Who is Involved: The project is led by OPRE, in collaboration with HRSA. Urban Institute was awarded the contract to carry out the study. The study includes a technical workgroup with experts in the field of home visiting, workforce issues, and human resources. The study team also works with the National Alliance of Home Visiting Models, which promotes collaborative leadership to elevate and advance the home visiting field, to gain input and feedback on study plans and data collection instruments.

Accomplishments: Home Visiting Career Trajectories is still in its early stages. The study team will launch data collection efforts after finalizing the study design, developing data collection instruments, and obtaining clearance from the Office of Management and Budget. Data collection efforts will include—

- ✔ A survey of program managers in all MIECHV-funded local agencies and a staff survey of home visitors and supervisors in participating agencies
- ✔ Case studies of 8 states to include site visits with up to 40 local agencies across selected states, including home visitor focus groups and interviews with program managers and supervisors
- ✔ Key informant interviews with home visiting experts to support qualitative analysis of professional development opportunities

Implications: Home Visiting Career Trajectories aims to provide a clearer picture of home visitors' backgrounds and experiences and identify ways to best support them. Results from the case studies of select states and qualitative analysis of professional development opportunities will help the field better understand issues related to workforce recruitment, retention, and professional development. Additionally, analyses of secondary data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics will shed light on how home visiting jobs are situated within the larger job market.

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Upcoming Activities: Data collection efforts are scheduled to begin in fall 2018. The study team plans to release a series of policy briefs based on interim findings prior to completing a final study report in 2019. The team will also speak about the project during [ACF's National Research Conference on Early Childhood in June 2018](#).

For More Information: See the ACF web page on [Home Visiting Career Trajectories](#).

Assessment and Mapping of Community Connections in Home Visiting

About: AMC-HV develops a means of better understanding the community-level systems and networks in which MIECHV operates.

Goals and Purpose: AMC-HV seeks to identify innovative methods for understanding community-level connections in MIECHV. The project will synthesize and apply information from past efforts to inform the development of a logic model and a dynamic method of analyzing community

connections, including potential referral sources for home visiting participants. AMC-HV will also assess existing relationships between home visiting programs and community resources.

Who is Involved: ACF and HRSA conceptualized the AMC-HV project. In 2017, OPRE, in collaboration with HRSA, awarded a contract to Child Trends and Trilogy Interactive to support its implementation.

Accomplishments: Child Trends and Trilogy Interactive have completed a scan of the field to document available and emerging methods for identifying and mapping connections in child and family service domains. The project is currently engaging stakeholders to ensure that the tool or process developed best meets the needs of those most likely to use it.

Implications: AMC-HV can help the home visiting field better understand the community-level networks needed to provide referrals for families. Such information can help states identify service gaps and opportunities for making services more accessible to families.

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Upcoming Activities: AMC-HV will develop prototypes for the final proposed tool by winter 2018. A final project report will be submitted in December 2018.

For More Information: See the ACF web page on [AMC-HV](#).

Touchpoints for Addressing Substance Use in Home Visiting

About: Home visiting programs are well-positioned to help address substance use, but there is limited agreement on how to effectively engage participants in this area and connect them to services and treatment. The Touchpoints project investigates how home visiting programs can support families around substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery.

Goals and Purpose: The Touchpoints project aims to identify evidence-informed practices for addressing substance use issues through home visiting, as well as gaps in knowledge. Study findings will support the development of conceptual models to guide home visiting programs as they work with families, support their staff, and collaborate with referral sources.

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Who is Involved: The Touchpoints project is funded by OPRE, in collaboration with HRSA. The project contract was awarded to Mathematica Policy Research in 2017, with subcontracts to Northwestern University and the Institute for Health and Recovery.

Accomplishments: To date, the Touchpoints project has engaged state and tribal grantees, federal partners, model developers, and programmatic technical assistance providers to refine a conceptual model for the project and plan for its upcoming review of current practices in the field.

Implications: The project will identify opportunities (“touchpoints”) for home visiting programs to enhance their efforts around substance use.

Upcoming Activities: The Touchpoints project will release a series of reports and practitioner-focused briefs by March 2019. The team will also speak about the project during [ACF’s National Research Conference on Early Childhood in June 2018](#).

For More Information: See the ACF web page on [Touchpoints](#).

Family-Level Assessment and State of Home Visiting

About: FLASH-V aims to understand how families are selected for MIECHV services and to explore how these selection processes align with the evidence on how home visiting affects different families.

Goals and Purpose: FLASH-V seeks to help the field better understand how to target home visiting services to those who need them the most. The project includes two data collection phases:

- ✔ Phase one explores how family-level factors influence home visiting’s impact and how programs make decisions about enrollment.
- ✔ Phase two seeks to understand which families receive or do not receive home visiting services.

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Who is Involved: FLASH-V is funded by OPRE, in collaboration with HRSA. The contract was awarded to James Bell Associates in 2016, with a subcontract to MDRC.

Accomplishments: The project team is finalizing a literature review examining family-level factors that influence the impact of home visiting services.

Implications: FLASH-V may serve as a first step toward helping home visiting programs enroll families most likely to benefit from services. Results may also help programs address existing

service gaps by highlighting eligible families who are not enrolled in services due to selection processes.

Upcoming Activities: FLASH-V will release a final report summarizing its literature review within the coming year.

For More Information: See the ACF web page on [FLASH-V](#).

Summary

MIECHV not only expands the availability of evidence-based home visiting services. It also supports an ongoing [learning agenda](#) that generates new information on pressing topics ranging from serving tribal communities to addressing substance use issues. Findings from these efforts will provide valuable insights for the entire home visiting field. See the [NHVRC Reference Catalog](#) for information and updates on federally funded projects.