



Priorities for the 117th Congress

The Home Visiting Coalition is a diverse group of organizations committed to the well-being of children, working to promote federal support of home visiting to strengthen families in communities across the country. As part of the continuum of support for families with young children, our Coalition will work to expand federal home visiting programs during the 117th Congress.

The Home Visiting Coalition grounds its work in promoting the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program (MIECHV), a federal grant program to states, territories, and Tribes that supports evidence-based early childhood home visiting for families with children from the prenatal period through kindergarten entry. MIECHV is frequently referred to as the gold standard for evidence-based policymaking, and home visiting has received bipartisan support for decades.

The MIECHV program shows outcomes in six benchmark areas critical to strengthening at-risk families: improved maternal and newborn health; prevention of child injuries, child abuse, neglect, or maltreatment, and reduction of emergency department visits; improvement in school readiness and achievement; reduction in crime or domestic violence; improvements in family economic self-sufficiency; and improvements in the coordination and referrals for other community resources and supports.

The Home Visiting Coalition's priorities for the 117th Congress are:

1) Expand the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program to reach more families.

Enacted in 2010 as part of the Affordable Care Act, MIECHV has been funded at \$400 million annually since 2013. Based on pre-pandemic estimates, this funding reaches three to five percent of eligible families each year. To reach more eligible families and meet anticipated increased need brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Home Visiting Coalition recommends scaling up MIECHV over the next five years with increases of \$200 million annually, arriving at \$1.4 billion. The Home Visiting Coalition also recommends doubling the tribal set-aside within MIECHV from three percent to six percent to reach more families in American Indian and Alaska Native communities, which endure disproportionately high levels of hardship, including the impacts of COVID-19 and maternal mortality and morbidity.

2) Provide \$150 million in emergency pandemic-related funding.

Like nearly every sector of society right now, families served through MIECHV are facing new challenges. To address challenges with reaching all MIECHV families during times of social distancing, the Home Visiting Coalition recommends a one-time supplemental investment of \$150 million for MIECHV. These funds can be used to train home visitors to deliver services through technology that enables home visits from a distance, as well as tangible needs for families including technology, formula, diapers, etc. during this crisis.

3) Include MIECHV in maternal mortality-related initiatives.

Proper prenatal care, early maternal support, and planning to care for a new baby are essential to healthy births and positive maternal and infant outcomes. Black, Tribal, Indigenous and other women of color face persistent barriers during the prenatal and postpartum periods and experience significantly disparate rates of maternal mortality and severe morbidity. Home visiting programs can help reduce maternal mortality and severe morbidity by fostering human-to-human relationships that enable home visitors to provide supports based on the very specific needs of each family; promoting interventions to reduce pregnancy-induced hypertensive disorders and pre-term birth; creating connections between mothers and health practitioners in the community; providing screening for perinatal depression and connecting mothers in need with appropriate community-based behavioral health care; providing referrals for mothers when certain risk factors, including trauma or domestic violence, are present in the home; providing resources to children who experience trauma and toxic stress; and, targeting the social determinants of health affecting families, such as social support, parental stress, access to health care, income and poverty status, and environmental conditions.

MIECHV is more important now than ever, as families who already faced complex needs have been thrust into chaos due to COVID-19. Home visitors are a critical link of support for families who are facing a variety of challenges, the underbelly of which includes cyclical poverty, structural racism, inter-generational abuse, and addiction. The Home Visiting Coalition is committed to preserving the invaluable relationships that have already been established between home visitors and families and expanding home visiting to help bolster families facing significant hardship.