

Cross-Site Evaluation of the Supporting Evidence-Based Home Visiting Grantees: Early Efforts to Build Infrastructure

Patricia Del Grosso, Debra Strong, Margaret Hargreaves, Diane Paulsell, Cheri Vogel, Heather Zaveri, Megan Hague Angus, Brandon Coffee-Borden, and Kimberly Boller

PROGRAM FEATURES

The Supporting Evidence-Based Home Visiting (EBHV) project is designed to build knowledge about how to develop the infrastructure and service delivery systems necessary to implement, scale up, and sustain evidence-based home visiting programs as a strategy to prevent child maltreatment. The grantee cluster, funded by the Children's Bureau within the Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, includes 17 diverse grantees from 15 states. Each grantee selected one or more home visiting programs it planned to enhance, adapt, expand, or implement for the first time in its state or community.

OBJECTIVE

The national cross-site evaluation, conducted by Mathematica Policy Research and its partner Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, is designed to identify successful strategies for supporting the adoption, implementation, scale-up, and sustainability of evidence-based home visiting programs.

METHODS

- Site visits to 10 EBHV grantees to gather in-depth data on state-level implementation, the initiation of home visiting services, and the infrastructure development to support home visiting.
- Telephone interviews with 7 EBHV grantees to get an update on implementation.
- A partner survey of all 17 EBHV grantees and their partners to learn about how home visiting systems develop, the barriers to creating a system, and patterns of communication and collaboration.

FORMING PARTNERSHIPS

During the planning period, the EBHV grantees engaged a range of partners to support their work (see table). To form partnerships, they worked with existing community- and state-level collaborative groups and developed new partnerships and cross-agency steering communities.

Partnerships formed during the planning period were intended to support:

- Service provision
- Sustainability
- The development of statewide systems of home visiting programs (including using common screening tools and creating central intake systems)

| Organization Type | Percentage of Partners |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Local or state government agency | 36 |
| Community-based service provider | 11 |
| University | 9 |
| National model developer | 7 |
| Health care organization | 6 |
| Other | 31 |
| Total Number of Partners | 241 |

BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE

- Grantees starting new home visiting programs reported focusing on building organizational-level operational and workforce development-related infrastructure. This included recruiting and hiring a qualified workforce, training and certifying supervisors and home visitors, and obtaining approval from their national program model developers to start their operations.
- Grantees with existing home visiting programs tended to focus efforts on developing statewide assessment, referral, intake, training, or evaluation-related data systems. They were actively building infrastructure at both the organizational and state levels.
- Some grantees do not directly manage home visiting programs. These grantees built broad-based systems to provide training, coaching, operational technical assistance, evaluation, and ongoing funding streams to support local evidence-based home visiting services.
- In response to changes in local, state, and federal economic circumstances, which affected the availability of public and private funding, grantees spent more time than planned on building fiscal capacity. As a result, they reported spending less time building communications and evaluation capacities than originally planned.

IMPLEMENTING SERVICES

Before the EBHV grantees could begin delivering home visiting services to families, they worked with national program model developers to ensure that their agencies were ready to implement the programs. Recruiting and training home visitors was an important step in preparing to implement services. Despite the support they received from the developers, agencies faced these challenges recruiting and training staff:

- Finding bilingual home visitors
- Identifying culturally competent home visitors
- Offering competitive salaries (particularly for agencies implementing models that required specialized staff, such as nurses)
- Allocating time and resources for preservice training for home visitors, especially when agencies faced turnover among home visitors
- Addressing staff resistance to training and supervision requirements specified by the national model developers

LOOKING FORWARD

In future years of the study, the EBHV national cross-site evaluation team will examine the processes grantees adopt as they develop strategies for supporting evidence-based home visiting programs. In addition, the team is assessing fidelity and costs and reviewing local evaluation findings about family and child outcomes. Additional information about the evaluation and grant program is available at www.supportingebhv.org.