



# Ohio: Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program

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The federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting, or MIECHV, program provides Ohio with the means to expand home visiting services to additional families and children. Prior to MIECHV, Ohio had an existing statewide system of home visiting. With the existing system as a foundation, administrators used MIECHV funds to expand evidence-based models and provide services to at-risk communities that would otherwise not have access without supplemental funding. Additionally, MIECHV funds support systems-building initiatives, quality improvement processes, partnership development, targeted outreach, and public education across Ohio.

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## Success and innovation

### Strategic outreach—community connector

One of Ohio's home visiting providers used MIECHV funds to create a community connector position—a home visiting employee embedded directly within the at-risk community. The community connector's role is to build strategic relationships within the community—such as in churches, nail salons, or grocery stores—and to promote the merits of participating in home visiting. The outreach conducted by the community connector increased participation and familiarity with the local home visiting provider and also garnered philanthropic support for local community development initiatives. As a result, Ohio administrators are considering funding similar positions and approaches to outreach in other areas of the state.



## Ohio MIECHV at a glance

**Total federal MIECHV funding:**  
\$3 million a year for 2 years in competitive grant funds awarded in 2012; \$3.8 million in 2014 formula funds

**Lead agency:**  
Ohio Department of Health

**Number of communities served:**  
23 counties

**MIECHV-funded home visiting models:**  
Healthy Families America, or HFA; Parents as Teachers, or PAT

**Families served:**  
1,388 families

### Increased access to home visiting

Ohio administrators identified the increased access to home visiting services as one of the greatest successes realized through MIECHV funding. Ohio had a robust system of evidence-based home visiting that utilized a focused eligibility system for services. Because of MIECHV, Ohio expanded the eligibility base of its evidence-based models to encompass additional families who previously could not participate in the home visiting services funded by the state.

### Statewide marketing strategy

Ohio directed a significant amount of its MIECHV funds toward a statewide marketing strategy for home visiting. The state contracted a public relations firm in Ohio to conduct focus groups around key messaging for home visiting in order to identify messages that resonated with various communities. Administrators also used funds to buy strategic media placements for communities around the state. Due to the broad scope of these marketing efforts, tens of thousands of prospective clients who may not have been aware of home visiting learned about available services in their area.

### Collaborative professional development

MIECHV funds provided Ohio with the opportunity to bring together the home visiting community, the Ohio Domestic Violence Network, and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction to provide joint professional development training and identify potential occasions for collaboration. This cross-training allowed each department to better understand the work being done in other sectors, as well as how to more effectively connect families to available services. Training also allowed providers to integrate specialized screenings into their programs to more accurately direct families to available services.

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### Challenges

One of the most significant challenges that Ohio faced with the MIECHV funds was the quick timeline for implementation. Back-to-back grant applications and a short time frame for distributing funds caused administrators to feel rushed. It has taken time for administrators to catch up on the workload, which has delayed elements of their state plan, such as the development of the data system and metrics reporting. Despite these challenges, Ohio has been able to expand services and work toward successful implementation of their state plan.

## Ohio MIECHV at a glance

### **Additional funding for home visiting:**

state appropriations for a statewide home visiting program

### **Identified risks targeted by MIECHV:**

maternal health; child maltreatment; family economic security; crime and domestic violence; child abuse and neglect; infant and post-neonatal mortality; school readiness and school drop out; and mental health

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## Looking ahead

### Build on existing data collection system

Prior to MIECHV, Ohio had a comprehensive data system called Early Track, which is used for the state's early intervention programs. Administrators used MIECHV funds to augment the existing system and to incorporate the data collected from home visiting services. Moving forward, administrators plan to integrate the home visiting data system with other early childhood databases in Ohio and develop a single identifier that can be used to access data across agencies. This will allow administrators to track outcomes from the early years through pre-K and into the K-12 system.

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## Additional information

Ohio's MIECHV program on the Help Me Grow, Ohio Department of Health MIECHV website: <http://www.helpmegrow.ohio.gov/Home%20Visiting/Ohio%20MIECHV.aspx>

Ohio's Benchmark Plan: <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/~media/ODH/ASSETS/Files/mch/miechvphase3updatedstateplan.ashx>

Source: Interview with Jeffrey Wynnyk, program manager, Help Me Grow Home Visiting, Ohio's Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, Ohio Department of Health, October 2014.

"[MIECHV] really put together a system. We want families to seamlessly enter home visiting and stay as long as possible if it's appropriate."  
– Ohio state administrator

This profile was written as part of a larger study to identify how states are using Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting, or MIECHV, funds to advance state home visiting systems. For a summary report and additional profiles about home visiting, visit [clasp.org](http://clasp.org) or [americanprogress.org](http://americanprogress.org).