



Colorado: Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program

By the Center for Law and Social Policy
and the Center for American Progress

February 9, 2015

In Colorado, the federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting, or MIECHV program provides funding for the state to expand evidence-based home visiting services to at-risk families and children. Colorado uses the funds to establish connections between home visiting and other early childhood programs. MIECHV helps integrate home visiting into the community of services that support early childhood development, forge new relationships among state agencies and community stakeholders, and increase the state's capacity to effectively use both data analysis and evaluation to improve service delivery.

Success and innovation

Developed capacity for using data effectively

The Office of Early Childhood worked with partners at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to develop and provide data workshops to increase the capacity of local early childhood partners to access and use data effectively. The local hosts for the workshops were the Early Childhood Councils, which exist to support a comprehensive system of early childhood services in local communities across the state. The day-long workshop was designed to help provide information and resources for collecting and working with data, as well as to help participants understand the importance of using data to provide effective services. Additionally, Colorado administrators incorporated use of the Program to Analyze, Record, and Track Networks to Enhance Relationships, or PARTNER, Tool—an analysis software used to collect, analyze, and interpret data to support better collaboration within networks—into their continuous quality improvement, or CQI, process and evaluation methods for the local communities.



Colorado MIECHV at a glance

Total federal MIECHV funding:
\$8.2 million, divided between \$1.4 million in formula grants and \$6.8 million in competitive grants

Lead agency:
Colorado Department of Human Services

Number of communities served:
10 counties

MIECHV-funded home visiting models:
Healthy Steps for Young Children; Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters, or HIPPY; Nurse Family Partnership, or NFP; and Parents as Teachers, or PAT

Leveraged existing partnerships for effective implementation

Colorado used MIECHV funds to expand services to families and children through evidence-based home visiting by using existing relationships with state intermediary organizations that represent each of the four models. The state contracted with the intermediaries to support effective expansion and to provide programmatic monitoring, training, technical assistance, and consultation in order to ensure model implementation with fidelity. Local organizations in the highest risk communities had already implemented Healthy Steps, HIPPI, NFP, and PAT prior to MIECHV, so expansions were accomplished relatively quickly. Additionally, state administrators created a subcommittee of the larger stakeholder advisory group to serve as an implementation team. This group has been instrumental in ensuring that Colorado's MIECHV project benefits from true partnership and collaboration with stakeholders.

Increased the visibility of home visiting as a partner in early childhood systems

Funding from MIECHV raised the profile of home visiting in the early childhood community and continues to promote the importance of prevention in addressing the challenges that face low-income children and families. Funding from MIECHV helped Colorado better integrate home visiting within the existing systems of early childhood services through improved coordination and collaboration among state and local resources that support children and families.

- Colorado used MIECHV funds to invest in the state system of Early Childhood Councils and, in turn, required participation in the Councils from local implementing agencies representing the home visiting models.
- State MIECHV administrators coordinated work with a private funder focused on investing in health system integration to leverage support for additional early childhood councils to benefit from the social network analysis and technical assistance provided through the University of Colorado School of Public Affairs by the PARTNER team.
- MIECHV staff participated in ongoing efforts to enhance coordination across the early childhood community in order to increase its collective effect and to leverage funding from various sources such as Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health, or Project LAUNCH; Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge fund; and the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems, or ECCS, grant. MIECHV allowed the home visiting community to play a major role in coordinated systems-building work and added financial support to these efforts.

Colorado MIECHV at a glance

Families served:

2,300 families
4,500 children

Additional funding for home visiting:

\$14.4 million in state tobacco funds services to 2,800 additional children

Identified risks targeted by MIECHV:

poverty, child abuse and neglect, lack of school readiness, and child and maternal mental health

Challenges

The quick implementation timeline was challenging for the state, primarily due to state procurement rules. Both state administrators and local implementing agencies were challenged by data collection requirements. The state's challenge was in developing a benchmark plan that could be supported across four models, and it has been a challenge to local agencies to incorporate additional and significant data collection into program protocols. The state's biggest hurdle was the process of transitioning the administration of the MIECHV program from one state agency to another. This process required a significant amount of coordination and planning that delayed aspects of implementation and reporting. The end result has been a stronger and more integrated home visiting program with deep roots in two major state agencies—public health and human services—and improved cross-sector collaboration.

Looking ahead

Continue expanding high quality services

Colorado plans to continue expanding evidence-based programs and demonstrate the impact of prevention in the analysis of benchmark data. If the state is awarded FY 15 competitive MIECHV grant funds, the number of families served will increase by over 60 percent.

Strengthen and enhance partnerships

With the goal of increasing their collective impact, state administrators and implementing agencies will continue to integrate existing early childhood networks and connect stakeholders working to alleviate child poverty and support families. State-level stakeholders are planning to enhance their system of service delivery by implementing Help Me Grow, a system that connects children with the services they need, expanding the availability of professional development opportunities that support core competencies for home visitors and other early childhood workers, as well as supporting the implementation of the state's early learning and development guidelines.

Additional information

Colorado's MIECHV program on the Office of Early Childhood's MIECHV website:
<http://www.coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.com/#!miechv/c1xpj>

Colorado's Benchmark Plan: http://media.wix.com/ugd/97dde5_abfa72b4ce2d4decb2ef105d1a5c3212.pdf

Source: Interview with Mary Martin, director, division of community and family support and former home visiting programs manager, Office of Early Childhood, Colorado Department of Human Services, September, 2014.

“MIECHV has given home visiting a meaningful seat at the early childhood table.”
– Colorado MIECHV 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 or americanprogress.org.