District of Columbia
Home Visiting Council

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

The District of Columbia Home Visiting Council

dchomevisiting.org

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INTRODUCTION

The DC Home Visiting Council (HV Council) is made up of home visiting providers, local government agency representatives, early childhood advocates, managed care organizations, and other partners.

Established in 2000 to coordinate the home visiting sector in the District of Columbia, the DC Home Visiting Council continues to strengthen the understanding, implementation, and sustainability of home visiting as a strategy to support positive child and family outcomes. DC Action has chaired the Home Visiting Council since 2016.

The 2023 Home Visiting Annual Report celebrates the hard work of the District's dedicated home visitors and their impact on their communities. The report provides updates on the home visiting sector, including data collected from home visiting programs and analysis of policy and funding changes, and highlights challenges to implementing and coordinating home visiting in the District. Also included in the annual report is the Home Visiting Council's work to address the collective needs of home visiting programs, the providers who staff them, and the families who could most benefit from them.

We applaud the efforts of all the members of the Home Visiting Council on the progress they have made this year to improve the system. We thank every home visitor who made a positive difference in the lives of District families. In 2024, big strides in home visiting are possible, from policies to increase home visiting sustainability to finally supporting the home visiting workforce as never before. May this be the year that leaves no doubt: home visiting is an effective and needed strategy for the early childhood system to support DC's expectant parents and families with young children.

Mary Katherine West
Home Visiting Program Coordinator

About Home Visiting

Home visiting is an early intervention and prevention strategy for expecting parents and families of young children from before birth until kindergarten entry. Home visiting services are free and voluntary for families. In the home or another comfortable location chosen by the family, the home visitor assesses family needs, educates and supports parents, and connects families with community resources.

Many home visiting programs use evidence-based models for addressing specific maternal, family, and child outcomes through education, counseling, coaching, and other services. Home visiting is a holistic approach to family support, addressing both parental and child needs. Home visitors often bring resources like diapers and wipes to home visits, and support families to access social services like child care subsidies, and food or rental assistance.

Why the District Needs Home Visiting

Home visiting programs occupy a unique role in DC's broader early childhood system because home visitors actively attend to both children and parents' needs to meet family's goals.

Over months or years in the program, home visitors support families using curricula that focus on common goals for families with young children. These may include getting a child ready for kindergarten or ensuring a pregnant parent makes it to their prenatal visit.

The long-term and trusting relationship between home visitors and families makes programs so effective because participants feel comfortable sharing their experiences and challenges, many of which are created by racist and inequitable systems. When a home visitor has a clear understanding of what a family is experiencing, they can provide effective guidance and direction to resources. A home visitor may advise parents through a variety of situations, including translating complex immigration paperwork, seeking out more stable and affordable housing options, navigating the next steps after a car accident, or needing support dealing with domestic violence.

One participant, Rosa, shared her experience working with her Home Visitor: "As I spent time with my Home Visitor, I saw how helpful and knowledgeable she was and began to open up. Through her support, I learned about many resources that were available to my family and gained confidence in advocating for myself and navigating the unknown."

While helping families meet their needs and goals, home visiting impacts span far beyond the duration of program participation. Studies and data show that home visiting improves school readiness, positive maternal outcomes, child health and development, family economic self-sufficiency, and parent confidence in caring for their child. Home visiting reduces child abuse and neglect, intimate partner violence and preventable childhood health conditions like low-weight births and preterm births. In the long-term, home visiting is associated with reductions in foster care placements, need for food and income assistance, interactions with the juvenile justice system, and special education placement or grade repetition.

While the District invests in the region's youngest residents through a variety of early childhood strategies, home visiting programs offer a personal and holistic early intervention and prevention resource that helps families create a stable and safe foundation in a child's first few years of life.

HOME VISITING COUNCIL OVERVIEW

Home Visiting Council Strategic Plan

In 2023, the Home Visiting Council concluded implementation of its strategic plan for 2021-2023. This plan outlined the Council's vision, mission, theory of change, and values. In the latter half of 2023, the Home Visiting Council worked to create a new strategic plan for 2024-2026. The 2024-2026 plan can be found on the Home Visiting Council's website.

VISION

All families in the District of Columbia have full access to responsive systems that facilitate quality education, safety and stability, and the resources they need to flourish in their communities.

MISSION

The Home Visiting Council convenes, mobilizes, and informs DC families and early childhood stakeholders to strengthen home visiting to support the needs and outcomes of families with expectant parents or young children.

THEORY OF CHANGE

Expectant parents and families with young children across the District have the strong will to care for their children and support their development. Yet all families need extra support during this strenuous period to parent and prosper in a safe and secure environment. Some families are also further burdened by external factors such as economic and racial injustices.

Home visiting supports families to have healthy babies and young children who receive the care they need to meet their highest potential, and guides parents and caretakers to address their own challenges so that they are better able to meet their goals and do the important work of caring for their young children.

VALUES

In partnership with parents and families, home visiting uses evidence-based strategies to improve parent-child attachment, child school readiness, health care utilization, family health outcomes, address challenges that affect parenting capacity, identify and support children with developmental concerns, and reduce child abuse and neglect.

- We believe in a strengths-based approach that honors the knowledge and skills of communities we work alongside.
- We will direct the knowledge and skills of home visiting programs and the Home Visiting Council to inform systems change that eases the burdens on families navigating institutional barriers such as sexism, discrimination, capitalism, racism, etc., and their intersections.
- We commit to developing a home visiting workforce that is well-supported, fairly compensated, and reflects the communities we work alongside.
- We commit to support home visiting programs in being accessible; in language, location, ability, and more.
- We commit to a continuous effort of reconciliation and accountability, by addressing the traumatic experiences that health care, nonprofits, advocates, and governmental services have inflicted on certain communities.
- We commit to developing ethical standards of engagement with partners and funders in both success and dilemma.

MEMBERSHIP

The following organizations participated as members of the Home Visiting Council in 2023

- AmeriHealth Caritas District of Columbia
- Bright Beginnings
- CentroNía
- Children's National Hospital
- Children's Law Center
- Community Family Life Services
- Community of Hope
- DC Action
- DC Child and Family Services Agency
- DC Department of Health
- DC Department of Health Care Finance
- DC Fiscal Policy Institute
- Educare DC
- Generation Hope
- Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development
- Healthy Babies Project Inc.
- Howard and Geraldine Polinger Family Foundation
- Mamatoto Village
- Martha's Table
- Mary's Center
- Parents as Teachers National Center
- Rosemount Center
- SPACEs In Action
- The Family Place
- United Planning Organization

HOME VISITING COUNCIL WORK IN 2023

Members of the Home Visiting Council join subcommittees to work toward its goals. Visit the Home Visiting Council website to learn more about the four subcommittees and their goals. In 2023, this body:

- Hosted a home visiting program town hall to better understand program's challenges with compensation and staffing
- Activated a universal R=referral form for providers to refer families through Help Me Grow
- Led a robust advocacy approach in the FY24 budget season through engaging home visitors and family participants (Advocacy Committee only)
- Hosted training on the opportunities to leverage and build sustainable funding streams for home visiting through Medicaid reimbursement
- Created a 2024-2026 strategic plan with input from two full-council strategic planning sessions

Advocacy Committee*

- Built and strengthened relationships with DC Councilmembers and committee staffers
- Hosted three home visitor engagement sessions
- Facilitated two advocacy and budget trainings for home visiting program representatives
- Created a budget toolkit of advocacy talking points and information for FY 24 advocacy
- Created a video to increase engagement with home visiting advocacy
- Coordinated two social media campaigns
- Won $300K for Child and Family Services Agency home visiting funding
- Won a $75K increase to Home Visiting for First Time Mothers funding transferred from DC Health to the Department of Health Care Finance
- Created a toolkit and talking points for the Home Visiting Services Reimbursement Act of 2023
- Mobilized 35 public witnesses for the hearing on the Home Visiting Services Reimbursement Act of 2023

**the members Advocacy Committee operate independently from the whole Home Visiting Council*

C-Intake Committee

- Aligned committee goals with DC Health goals
- Created a short and accessible universal referral form for providers
- Gained approval from DC Health for the universal referral form
- Activated the universal referral form in Help Me Grow

Compensation and Workforce Committee

- Published a policy recommendations brief

Data Committee

- Coordinated with and strengthened DC Health partnership and leadership
- Updated the annual report survey to include additional variables to better understand the home visiting sector
- Surveyed home visiting programs on compensation and benefits
- Set 2024 committee goals

HOME VISITING IN THE DISTRICT

Program Accomplishments

In 2023, the District's 17 home visiting programs continued to provide needed support to families. Thirteen organizations operate these 17 programs. Programs employed over 72 home visitors who delivered 22,799 home visits. Programs had 1,242 individual families enrolled in services. Home visiting programs supported an additional 122 families who were not enrolled by assessing their needs and connecting them with other services. In total, home visiting touched 1,364 families or 2,628 parents and children.

Every family navigates a unique set of stressors and concerns throughout the period of early childhood. Programs offer insight into the types of challenges home visitors support families with most in 2023. Out of the 17 programs, 14 reported income, employment, or financial stress, 12 reported finding safe, stable or affordable housing, 8 reported food insecurity, 6 reported mental health, and 4 reported immigration and domestic violence as some of families' primary concerns. Home visitors respond to these concerns and work to support families as they navigate through the systems that surround these stressors.

Home visiting programs work to make their services accessible to all DC residents and beyond. Home visitors meet with families across all eight wards in the District and with District families experiencing homelessness, as well as using private funding or other funding streams to serve families in Virginia and Maryland.

In addition to visits in the home or other chosen location, 15 programs offer virtual sessions. When reporting the locations where they serve the highest number of cases, 12 programs included Ward 8 or Ward 5, 11 programs included Ward 7, and 7 programs included Ward 4 as highly concentrated areas.

Programs also work to be accessible by language. Beyond English, 10 programs provide services in Spanish, 4 provide services in Amharic, and 2 programs provide services in French.

HOME VISITING IN THE DISTRICT

Program Challenges

The challenges programs face ultimately impact their ability to seamlessly provide services to District families. In FY23, programs most commonly reported that obstacles to hiring and retaining staff were challenges. Nine programs cited retaining staff, and eight programs cited challenges to hiring, increased levels of stress for home visitors, and difficulty reporting required data as hindering their service delivery.

While the total number of families served across all DC programs remained stable between FY22 and FY23, year-to-year participant enrollment varied widely among individual programs.[1] Some programs faced decreased enrollment due to challenges in retaining and hiring staff. Other programs that reported increased or stable staffing levels had the capacity to increase their enrollment by focusing on implementing new referral systems and outreach and engagement opportunities. At the end of the fiscal year, programs reported a total of 270 open slots for families, many of which cannot be filled due to home visitor vacancies.

Challenges with retaining and hiring staff stem from the high demands of the profession for low pay. Home visitors often leave fulfilling work as home visitors seeking higher pay or less stressful work. When home visitors leave programs struggle to find workers that have the qualifications for the job and are willing to work for the wages programs are able to offer. In 2021, 81% of DC home visitors had a Bachelor's degree or higher, and programs look for candidates who have experience and skill working directly with families. Some positions remain vacant for months and postings attract few applications. Even when a home visitor is hired, it may take months for them to work up to the caseload of an established home visitor due to required training and onboarding processes. Ultimately, the families face the consequences and may be disenrolled or transferred to an already overburdened home visitor.

A Note on Data

The Home Visiting Council collects information for the annual report through a series of surveys and interviews with programs and agency representatives. The Home Visiting Council continues efforts to improve our data collection and coordination process across the District. While the HV Council attempts to gather the same information from programs, the data they are able to supply may vary slightly in how or what it represents. These differences ultimately are due to the data required by the reporting agencies and program models requirements. This report notes differences in reporting, when relevant.

[1] Home visiting programs served 1,364 families in FY23 and 1,374 families in FY22.

DC HOME VISITING PROGRAMS

Organization	Program	Model/ Curriculum	Primary Population	Capacity	Funding Sources
Bright Beginnings	Home-Based Program	Parents as Teachers	Expectant parents and families with children up to 3 years old experiencing homelessness	40 families at a time	Federal: Head Start
CentroNía	Early Head Start Home-Based Program	Creative Curriculum and March of Dimes	Expectant parents and families with children up to 3 years old who have low incomes or experience multiple overlapping adversities	56 families at a time	Federal: Head Start
Community Family Life Services	Parent Education and Home Visitation Program	Nurturing Skills for Families	Returning citizens reunified or seeking to reunify with children and parents experiencing homelessness or domestic violence	125 families annually	Local: CFSA
Community of Hope	Healthy Families America Program	Healthy Families America	Expectant parents and families living in wards 5, 7, 8 or homeless who are experiencing a high number of stressors.	48 families at a time	Private
	Parents as Teachers Program	Parents as Teachers	Expectant parents and families with children 3 and under living in wards 5, 7, 8 or who are experiencing homelessness and experiencing a high number of stressors.	60 families at a time	Local (DC Health)
Family Place	HIPPY Home Visiting	Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)	Immigrant and displaced families with low incomes that are expecting or have children under 5 years old	50 families annually	Federal: Community Based Child Abuse Prevention and private
Generation Hope	Next Generation Academy	Parents as Teachers	Teen parents in college at a 2- or 4-year university with children 5 and under	35 families annually	Private
Georgetown	Parent Support Program	Parents as Teachers	Parents with developmental and intellectual disability who are expecting or have children 5 years old and under	40 families annually	Local: DC Health

Healthy Babies Project Inc	Healthy Babies Project Home Visiting Program	Growing Great Kids, Nurturing Parent	Pregnant teens and parenting youth and families experiencing homelessness with children 5 years old and under	42 families at a time	Private
Mamatoto Village	Mothers Rising	Mothers Rising	Medicaid-eligible pregnant and parenting people less than 12 weeks postpartum	450 families annually	Medicaid Managed Care coverage and private funding
Martha's Table	Family Visiting	Parents as Teachers	Expectant parents or families with children 3 years old and under who live in wards 7 or 8	33 families at a time	Federal (Head Start)
Mary's Center	Father-Child Attachment Program	24/7 Dad Curriculum and Parents As Teachers	Any caregiving father or father figure with a child 5 and under who resides in the District	50 families at a time	Local: CFSA
	Healthy Families America Program	Healthy Families America	Expectant parents and families with children 5 years old and under who are experiencing complex needs	100 families at a time	Federal: MIECHV, American Rescue Plan,
	Nurse Family Partnership of DC	Nurse Family Partnership	First-time pregnant people within the first 28 weeks of gestation	100 families at a time	Local: DC Health, Private
	Parents as Teachers Program	Parents as Teachers	Any caregiver who is pregnant or has a child 5 years old and under in the District	90 families at a time	Federal: MIECHV, American Rescue Plan,
Rosemount Center	Early Head Start Home-Base Program	Parents as Teachers	Expectant parents and families that have low incomes, with children 3 years old and under	77 families at a time	Federal: Head Start
United Planning Organization	Home-Based Program	Parents as Teachers	Expectant families that have low incomes, are experiencing homelessness, are in foster care, or are receiving public assistance, with children under 3 years old	94 families at a time	Federal: Head Start

FUNDING

Federal, local, and private sources all fund home visiting efforts in the District. Some programs are funded through a single source of funding, while others have unique combinations of funding. In 2023, local funding supported six home visiting programs. Federal funding supported eight programs, either directly or administered through local sources. Private funding, including foundations, donors, or managed care organizations, supported six home visiting programs. Below is the breakdown of public funders.

Local Funding

Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)

Home visiting is a preventative strategy in the Child and Family Service Agency's (CFSA) portfolio to reduce child abuse and neglect, promote positive health outcomes, and empower families to support their children's growth and development.

In FY23, CFSA provided $380,500 in local funding to two home visiting programs: Community Family Life Services and Mary's Center Father-Child Attachment Program. This amount increased from the $310,000 allocated in FY22 due to an additional investment of $70,500 gained through advocacy with the DC City Council.

In addition to allocating local funds, CFSA also administered federal funds to home visiting programs. CFSA allocated $50,000 from the Community Based Child Abuse Precention Grant to The Family Place's HIPPY home visiting program through Collaborative Solutions for Communities.

CFSA also receives funding from the Families First Prevention Act, which focuses on preventing foster care placements by ensuring child safety and parental support. In FY23, CFSA diverted $160,471 to DC Health to support the Parents as Teachers and Healthy Families America home visiting services.

DC Health

The DC Department of Health funds home visiting as part of its strategy to "ensure that all children and families have access to a continuum of comprehensive, high-quality early childhood programs and services that promote child well-being and school readiness." In FY23, DC Health awarded five locally funded programs $1,549,514.69. This represents a $343,746 decrease in funding between FY22 and FY23.[2]

DC Health granted local funds to Mary's Center Healthy Families America program and to Mamatoto's Village for evaluations of their home visiting programs.

DC Health funds three home visiting programs as part of implementation of the Birth-to-Three for All DC Act, which was passed by the DC Council in 2018 to strengthen the District's early childhood system. The programs created and supported by the Birth-to-Three law are Community of Hope's Parents as Teachers Program, Georgetown University's Parenting Support Program, and Mary's Center's Nurse Family Partnership Program (NFP). In FY24, NFP administration will move under the Department of Health Care Finance.

Federal Funding

Early Head Start

The Federal Administration of Children and Families' Office of Head Start provides direct federal funding to five home visiting programs in the District. Early Head Start is an evidence-based program that supports families with children from birth to age three. The home-based programs provide the same resources as center-based programs. These programs promote school readiness for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers from families with low incomes.

In FY23, Early Head Start funded 355 home-based seats for children in the District across five organizations: Bright Beginnings, CentroNia, Martha's Table, Rosemount Center, and the United Planning Organization.

[2] DC Health reported granting 1,893,260 to these home visiting programs in FY22.

Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First)

The Family First Prevention Act, which focuses on strategies to ensure children can stay safely with their families and avoid the foster care or child welfare system, funds one home visiting program in the District. In FY23, CFSA diverted $160,471 of Family First funding to DC Health to support the Parents as Teachers and Healthy Families America home visiting services.

Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)

The federal MIECHV program funds states and territories to develop and implement evidence-based home visiting programs that meet the needs of their communities. The Health Resources and Services Administration partners with the Administration for Children and Families to administer MIECHV to states and territories.

The MIECHV program awarded the District $1,853,810 in FY 2023. DC Health awarded $461,622 of MIECHV funding to Mary's Center Parents as Teachers program and $642,878.50 in MIECHV funding to Mary's Center Healthy Families America program. In addition, DC MIECHV programs received $74,990 in American Rescue Plan funding to support both families and staff due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2023
HOME VISITING TAKEAWAYS

13 **ORGANIZATIONS** operated 17 home visiting programs

over **72** **HOME VISITORS** supported families

Home Visitors delivered **22,799** home visits

1,242 **FAMILIES** were enrolled in home visiting programs

Home visiting services impacted **2,628** parents & children

PROGRAMS served the most families in

Ward 8 | Ward 5 | Ward 7 | Ward 4

Home visitors supported families in navigating:

EMPLOYMENT | FINANCIAL STRESS | IMMIGRATION | INCOME | FINDING SAFE, STABLE OR AFFORDABLE HOUSING | FOOD INSECURITY | MENTAL HEALTH | DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

LANGUAGES programs provide services in:

2 FRENCH | 4 AMHARIC | 10 SPANISH

15 of 17 **PROGRAMS** continue to offer virtual services

PROGRAMS REPORTED CHALLENGES IN hiring and retaining staff, collecting required data, and increased stress for home visitors.

CONCLUSION

In 2023, home visiting programs continued to provide important support to the District's children and families. Despite limited and fluctuating budgets, home visiting programs and home visitors make a significant impact on children's and families' lives.

The Home Visiting Council will continue to work to strengthen and uplift home visiting as a vital resource in DC's early childhood system in 2024 by bringing programs and DC agencies together to foster coordination in the sector, ensuring adequate support for the home visiting workforce, and gathering and sharing compelling data and stories.

District of Columbia
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Council