

Project Title: The Massachusetts Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Initiative
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Changing state demographics, economic impacts of the recession, and emerging social and health issues have contributed to unmet needs among vulnerable families in Massachusetts (MA). To address service gaps and improve maternal and early childhood health and development, MA Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MA MIECHV) will serve high-need populations including immigrants, homeless and impoverished families, teens, and families impacted by substance use, mental health issues, and domestic violence. Program goals are to: 1) strengthen activities aligned with State Title V; 2) provide comprehensive evidence-based home visiting (EBHV) services to improve outcomes for pregnant and parenting families; and 3) strengthen a statewide system of care for families and children.

Using a strength-based approach, MA MIECHV will support three EBHV models (Healthy Steps, Early Head Start, and Healthy Families) in five communities: Chelsea, Fall River, Holyoke, Lynn, and Southbridge. MA MIECHV will: 1) expand core and advanced training for staff on Title V identified issues; 2) standardize screening within Title V programs and activities; 3) develop strategies to effectively recruit, enroll and retain families to expand home visiting programs; 4) support families experiencing social isolation and mental health stressors through program enhancements; 5) support home visitors and workforce development through training and networking; 6) promote inclusion of fathers in home visiting services; 7) conduct data analysis of home visiting services to inform and improve program effectiveness; 8) collaborate with state and community initiatives to strengthen and enhance family support services and early childhood systems of care; and 9) establish fiscal strategies to ensure sustainability.

Current enrollment in MA MIECHV is 763 in fiscal year 2014 (FY2014). Total annual state capacity for the Formula grant is 892. MA MIECHV will serve 938 continuing and 1,513 new families with FY2015 Formula funds.

MA MIECHV collaborates with state and community agencies, service providers, and content experts including the state's Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems team (ECCS); Department of Early Education and Care (EEC); Department of Children and Families (DCF), Children's Trust (Title II); and EBHV model developers. Using three EBHV models MA MIECHV will strive to improve health and developmental outcomes of the most vulnerable families. MA MIECHV will collaborate with other state agencies and service providers to enhance a sustainable statewide system of care.

Contracted vendors are mandated to comply with federal program requirements. Home visiting agencies must serve between 85-100% of annual caseload capacity and participate in required data collection. Quarterly financial reports will verify appropriate spend down of funds.

MA is well positioned to expand and enhance its current home visiting programs, strengthen its early childhood system of care, and contribute to the body of knowledge for evidence-based practices.