

Background

Staff retention in home visiting programs has been a longstanding challenge. Low retention results in not only higher training costs, but also in lower program effectiveness since families are more likely to withdraw from a program the same time as their home visitor, to whom they have become attached. Despite the varying levels of training, competencies and expertise offered by home visitors in the various home visiting models offered across Connecticut (CT); staff in programs often encounter similar challenges in working with families with complex issues such as trauma, substance abuse and domestic violence. To address these needs, the CT Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program chose to develop and retain a highly skilled home visiting workforce through an innovative video-based intervention designed to address the particular challenges of working with complex, multi-need families.

This project aimed to demonstrate improvement in the following priority area(s):

- Priority #1: Recruitment, engagement, and retention of eligible families to MIECHV-funded home visiting programs.
- Priority #2: Development and retention of a trained, highly skilled MIECHV-funded home visiting workforce.

Resources

[CT MIECHV Program](#)
[Online Learning Modules](#)
[MIECHV Innovation Awards](#)

Project Activities and Highlights

CT MIECHV collaborated with Eastern CT State University (ECSU) to develop nine online, video-rich training modules that addressed issues of serving families with complex needs. Aligning closely with the CT Core Knowledge and Competency (CKC) Framework for Early Childhood Professionals, the modules allowed home visiting staff to participate in trainings that met their learning needs and styles, while promoting efficiency in time management.

Project Activities

- Developed nine modules, available in English and Spanish, that were released between January and November of 2018 - topics included Talking with Families about Safe Sleep, Trauma Informed Care, and Infant Mental Health.
- Taped and edited 368 videos for inclusion in the modules, including ten home visits in eight different communities.

Lessons Learned

- Allow a substantial amount of time for training module development and release to avoid home visitor fatigue.
- Encourage “collective care” at the agency level and self-care at the individual level to address burnout among staff.

Evaluation Summary

Evaluation Findings

- Home visitors with less experience and with more (and more difficult) cases are less likely to continue in their position compared to their more experienced peers with lower and less difficult caseloads.
- Trainings were strengthened (modestly, but significantly) by the experience of group discussion.

Sustainability

- As of 2019, all home visitors and supervisors have access to the modules and resources and additional training modules are currently being designed. The free modules are designed for self-paced professional learning.

Recommendations for the Home Visiting Field

- Policymakers should consider ways to allow for pilot studies in order to direct larger efforts where they are most relevant.
- Effective communication among the various governmental entities that deal with early childhood services is vital.