

Illinois Early Learning Council (ELC) Health and Home Visiting Committee (HHVC)
Monday, December 11, 2023
12:30 pm – 2:00 pm

MINUTES

Participants

Co-Chairs: Joanna Su, Diana Rauner

Staff: Jean Davis, Kayla Goldfarb

Participants: Tracy Small, Lisa Masinter, Susana Marchan-Ochoa, Lisa Mani, Catrena Lones, Lisa Cohen, Sandra Cartagena, Lori Orr, Lesley Schwartz, Lisa Weah, Ticorral Tolliver, Beth Wise, Abby, Elizabeth Rodgers, Jennie Pinkwater, Jon Korfmacher, Naomi Black, Laronda Castine, Sadie Ruholl, Jennifer Vidis, Delreen Schmidt-Lenz, Tracy Patton, Ann Whalen, Aasta Ziegler, Kristian Wanland, Jessica Wilkerson, Saima Hasnin, Laura Beavers, Ireta Gasner, Donna Emmons, Adrienne Patterson-Green, Glendean Burton, Cassidy, Brittney Hale, Kathleen Kurtz, Ann Erickson, Sarah Boburka, Taylor Seal, Jaime Russell, Megan Adamczewski, Alli Lowe-Fotos, Katelyn Kanwischer, Penny Smith, Vanessa Iguess, Tamara Doyle, Tamara Sanders-Carter, Kim Hanes, Nancy Flowers, Brenda Eastham, Viviana Deltas, Melina Le, Peter Byrne, Cool Baby Doula Services Representative, Mandy Bernard.

Welcome and Agenda Review

The meeting was called to order at 12:33 pm. Co-Chair Diana Rauner provided a welcome and read the racial equity definition. She reviewed the agenda, including the notice of public comment at the end of the meeting. Attendees were asked to enter their name and organization into the chat for attendance.

Review of the minutes

No corrections or changes were noted. Present voting members approved the minutes.

Home Visiting Funding Alignment

Early Childhood Updates

Co-Chair Joanna Su provided an update on Governor Pritzker's announcement of the transition to a unified early childhood state agency. Early education and care services will move to the new agency, and broader family and school support will remain at their home agencies. The transition will take place over several years and includes planning and building critical infrastructure to serve families and children. The state has hired a transition director and established a Transition Advisory Committee.

The Illinois State Board of Education had shared updates on Prevention Initiative planning at the last Early Learning Council meeting: highlights from that presentation were shared. In FY24, 428 Prevention Initiative home-based slots were added. For FY25 a request for proposals for Early Childhood Block Grant Smart Start programs is anticipated in early 2024. All those interested in applying must complete an intent to apply by December 30, 2023.

In FY24 IDHS-DEC added approximately 310 home visiting slots, which are anticipated to serve 440 additional families. In FY25 IDHS-DEC will expand slots into new communities in partnership with ISBE, with a plan to expand service to approximately 500-650 additional families. IDHS-DEC has identified priority communities from the 2020 MIECHV Statewide Needs Assessment. The priority counties are Cass-Morgan, Cook (Southern), Douglas-Coles-Moultrie, DuPage, Lake, Pope-Hardin-Gallatin, Rock Island. Community readiness assessments will be conducted in these communities, facilitated by Illinois Action for Children. Using the process described in *Community Readiness: A Toolkit to Support Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program Awardees in Assessing Community Capacity*, a broad range of local stakeholders will be engaged. Based on readiness assessment results, IDHS-DEC will issue a notice of funding opportunity in the selected counties.

The co-chairs requested more information on how PI desert maps will be constructed and strategies for building capacity in communities where no home visiting programs currently exist.

Home Visiting Funding Coordination Recommendations

The previous ELC Home Visiting Task Force made recommendations to encourage coordination and program administration alignment on future funding opportunities. The recommendations focused on 7 areas: assessment and prioritization of community risk and capacity, preparatory support for programs, application requirements and process, funding allocation and adequacy, approach to priority populations and racial equity, community collaboration, and approach to promising practices. The status of each recommendation was assessed. Some potential priorities were identified among those that had not been fully implemented. Committee members were asked to review the recommendations and suggested priorities and provide comments following the meeting, and the co-chairs noted that draft recommendations would be shared with IDHS and ISBE before year end, while HHVC brings them to the ELC for approval.

Home Visiting Workforce

Diana Rauner noted that several recent reports on the home visiting workforce have highlighted the importance of compensation. Low salaries were one of the biggest work challenges that cause stress and the second highest reason for home visitors to consider leaving. Supervisors reported that low compensation contributes to staff turnover, which impacts family recruitment and retention.

Sarah Boburka, Executive Vice President and CFO of Easterseals of Chicago and Rockford presented on Easterseals' work to develop an equitable compensation plan. Their process leadership commitment, a compensation philosophy and structure, aligning roles with the compensation structure, developing administration guidelines and developing and implementing a communications plan. The approach was designed to ensure equity and competitiveness. Significant time was spent aligning roles with the compensation structure which required reviewing each job description, identifying market matches and placing positions in salary grades. A compensation administration guide was developed and includes a pay increase matrix that explains the percent increase an employee can expect based on where in the pay range their salary falls. Communication was emphasized with an overall plan, individualized letters for each team member, talking points for supervisors and individual conversations with each employee.

Joanna Su described the IDHS-DEC home visiting compensation plan. In FY23, IDHS-DEC grantees were required to adopt a minimum salary based on the Home Visiting Cost Model Narrative which was developed in 2020. The minimum salary in Chicago, Cook County and collar counties is \$46,800. In the rest of the state the minimum is set at \$37,485. Grantees were given until FY25 to reach that level. MIECHV grantees were also given the same requirement. In the most recent annual survey of MIECHV grantees, the median home visitor salary increased by 31% and the average home visitor salary increased by 23% in the previous year. This represents an average increase of \$5,500 or more. Start Early is conducting an analysis of IDHS-DEC state-funded home visiting salaries and IDHS is working with Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies to update the Home Visiting Cost Model.

Agency Updates

Cassidy Chambers, Title V Coordinator with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), reported that they are in the beginning stages of the next Title V Needs Assessment, which will guide the Title V plan for the next 5-year period. They are working with University of Illinois at Chicago. There will be opportunities to provide input. They will develop working groups for each of the priority areas in the plan. Joanna Su noted that IDHS-DEC may need to initiate its next MIECHV needs assessment in the next year or two and will communicate with IDPH when information is available, to coordinate and collaborate.

Lisa Mani, Maternal and Child Health Manager with the Department of Health Care and Family Services (HFS), gave an update on Medicaid. The agency is in the process of onboarding several new Medicaid provider types. Lactation consultants will be effective January 1, 2024, and they will be required to enroll as individual providers. The provider letters will go out very soon, if they have not already been sent. Doula will be effective February 1, 2024. HFS is

working with Southern Illinois University to coordinate the doula certification verification process. Doulas will enroll as individual providers. Home visitors will be effective April 1, 2024. HFS is working with the Medical Technical Assistance Center (MTAC) to provide training and technical assistance on enrolling as a provider and billing Medicaid. Lisa Mani asked if the Committee would help get out the word to providers. Joanna Su asked her to share the HFS messaging and/or provider notices when they are available, so that they can be distributed through the committee. In addition, the co-chairs noted the interest in providing input on the training and technical assistance from MTAC.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

The slides from the meeting can be found here: [Illinois Early Learning Council](#). The meeting adjourned at 1:50 pm

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