



Collaborating with Model Developers to Enhance Subrecipient Monitoring and Provide Support for LIAs



As recipients of MIECHV grant funding, awardees are required to monitor the fiscal and program activities of the subrecipients or local implementing agencies (LIAs) they fund. They are also required to obtain assurance that MIECHV-funded LIAs maintain fidelity to the evidence-based home visiting model(s) they deliver.

There are many areas of monitoring that are common to both the MIECHV program and models, such as workforce staffing and support, and participant enrollment and retention. These shared areas offer awardees opportunities to streamline their monitoring processes and subsequently reduce the monitoring burden on LIAs. They also present opportunities for LIAs to see how awardee and model requirements fit together, and how implementing these requirements can strengthen program outcomes.

A best practice strategy for making the most of the monitoring process is for awardees to develop and sustain productive relationships with home visiting model developers. Awardees and model developers share two key goals: (1) optimal outcomes for families, and (2) reduced burden for home visitors and other staff, so they can focus their efforts on the families. By working together, awardees and model developers are more likely to achieve both of these goals in ways that meet

The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program supports voluntary, evidence-based home visiting services for at-risk pregnant women and parents with young children up to kindergarten entry. Home visiting helps prevent child abuse and neglect, supports positive parenting, improves maternal and child health, and promotes child development and school readiness.

[Visit the MIECHV Program website to learn more!](#)

their MIECHV grant requirements, reduce LIA data burden, and address families' needs.

Benefits of Collaboration

Specific benefits of collaboration between awardees and model developers include the following:

- **Improved fidelity:** One of the primary monitoring goals of awardees is to assure that each LIA initiates and implements a home visiting model with fidelity—that is, as it is intended based on current model research and best practice requirements. Fidelity of implementation helps to ensure that the model will achieve its expected outcomes. However, models vary considerably in their implementation standards, as well as in the amount of technical assistance (TA) and oversight they can provide to support implementation. Similarly, awardees vary greatly in their infrastructures and capacities to provide necessary implementation supports. LIAs are best supported when awardees and model developers work collaboratively and have a shared understanding of the strengths—and challenges—that LIAs bring to implementation. This shared understanding can help both entities determine who is best positioned to provide support, and how they can provide that support.
- **Improved problem-solving:** Coordinated support can accelerate progress when challenges arise for LIAs. For example, if an LIA consistently struggles to enroll and retain families, both the awardee and the model developer would have concerns. Lack of coordination could lead one entity to suggest that the LIA enroll as many families as possible, while the other might suggest a better process for determining fit (so as not to enroll families that are unlikely to stay in the program). Since there is no one-size-fits-all solution for this challenge, the LIA would benefit from both entities coordinating their TA and action planning efforts.



- **Better aligned and streamlined service delivery:** By working together, awardees and model developers can help LIA staff see and understand where MIECHV and model requirements align; they can also take steps to improve alignment and reduce redundancy. For example, collaboration can reveal opportunities for joint professional development, alignment of screening requirements, and/or the development of joint data collection forms. Without consideration of these areas, LIA staff might be required to complete duplicate trainings, administer multiple screenings more frequently than is recommended, and/or maintain two sets of similar data collection forms. Aligning requirements for LIAs can thus go a long way toward streamlining service delivery and maximizing limited resources and time.
- **Improved outcomes for families:** There is much overlap between MIECHV and model developers' expected outcomes for families. Where LIAs face challenges, the awardee and model developer can coordinate to support CQI projects, as well as accompanying professional development and TA.

When Collaboration Is Especially Helpful

Collaboration between awardees and model developers is especially helpful at the following junctures:

- **When model developers implement changes in service delivery:** LIAs often use tools chosen by model developers to meet their MIECHV requirements. Collaboration can help to ensure that awardees know in advance about any changes model developers make to these tools; this can help to reduce any adverse consequences of these changes. For example, if the model makes a required change to the tool it uses for observing parent-child interactions, the awardee may be able to revise its performance measurement plan

Collaboration in Action



Over the past few years, Florida's awardee has collaborated with the three model developers in a variety of ways. Examples include:

- Promoting continuous quality improvement (CQI), including asking model developer staff to participate as faculty on learning collaboratives and provide input to the awardee on CQI projects
- Conducting joint site visits to LIAs, including reviewing files and interviewing staff
- Problem-solving challenges faced by LIAs and determining how best to address their needs

These efforts were supported by the presence of state-level model representatives. But, even in states or territories where these representatives are not available, federal model developer staff may be able to provide support.

to change the tool to match what the model is using, as long as it still meets requirements for the annual performance measures.

- **When MIECHV awardees consider policy or protocol changes:** Discussions among awardees and model developers—initiated as soon as changes are considered—can help to reveal how these changes may impact service delivery or fidelity, as well as identify innovative ways to address or absorb these impacts. For example, if an awardee decides to change its intimate partner violence screening tool, involving the model developer can ensure that the new tool meets model requirements.
- **When LIAs experience service delivery implementation challenges or require corrective action:** Model developers and awardees want LIAs to be successful. Collaboration can help to ensure that TA is coordinated and all required actions are taken. For example, if an LIA is not meeting a specific screening requirement, the awardee and model developer can work together to develop clear goals and timelines, and to deliver the TA needed to improve compliance.
- **When new LIAs are established (or LIAs are introducing new models):** It is important for the awardee to notify the model developer prior to the LIA starting services. This helps to ensure that the program will be on track to meet model fidelity. Additionally, these junctures present ideal opportunities for awardees and models to identify and communicate their shared expectations and enthusiasm for the new LIAs, to develop the training and data collection tools the LIAs need to meet both their MIECHV and model requirements, to convey that both sets of requirements are equally important, and to model how they will work together to support each LIA's future success. For example, awardees and model developers can partner to develop realistic goals for how many families a new LIA can serve during the first year and thereafter.



- **When awardees want to introduce an innovation that may be a model enhancement:** As we learn more about what works in home visiting and areas that could benefit from innovative strategies, there are times when those innovations require approval from the model developer as an enhancement. HRSA states in *FY2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity*: "For the purposes of the MIECHV Program, an acceptable enhancement of an evidence-based model is a variation to better meet the needs of families served that does not alter the model's core components, as defined by the model. Prior to implementing a model enhancement, the model developer must determine that it does not alter the core components related to program impacts." It is imperative that the awardee bring in the model developer as early in the process as possible when considering an innovation that may require their approval as their input is critical.
- **When LIAs expand their services:** Collaboration at these points helps to ensure that the awardee and model developer communicate shared expectations for growth (e.g., how many additional families will be served and by when, or whether an expanded geographic area may require model approval or adjustments to fees).

Collaboration in Action



After discovering how much easier expansion planning and service initiation and implementation was with input and support from model developers, the awardee from Pennsylvania included the model developers in their most recent request for information as they considered options for expansion.



Developing shared intermediate goals, such as the dates by which new staff should be hired and trained or interim enrollment expectations, also provides opportunities for awardees and models to better monitor progress and identify/deliver joint technical assistance, when needed.

Partnering Tips

Building and maintaining strong partnerships between awardees and model developers requires intentional and ongoing effort. Below are some tips for doing so.

- **Establish clear communication channels.** Regular communication helps to ensure that all key players are on the same page and are up to date on how service delivery is progressing. Clear communication is especially important when changes in service delivery are implemented by the model or required by MIECHV shifts in policy or protocols (such as the rapid protocol and policy changes necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic). Model developers also need to know when: (1) new home visiting sites are added or expanded, (2) home visiting funding is expanded or reduced, (3) state/territory funding is being competitively rebid or eligibility for funding is changing, and (4) corrective action can best be achieved with model developer and awardee support. One way to ensure regular and meaningful communication is to designate an awardee staff member as the primary liaison for each funded model. Another is to schedule regular check-in calls with the model representative assigned to your state/territory. (If you are unsure of your model representative, a contact list is available in the MIECHV Awardee Learning Library). These strategies will help to ensure that communications are bidirectional and challenges are addressed quickly and efficiently.



- **Explore opportunities for joint subrecipient monitoring visits.** With the LIA's agreement, it may be helpful to have awardee staff participate in a model's fidelity monitoring site visit (either in person or virtually) or have model developer staff participate in awardee subrecipient monitoring visits. Cross-representation can help to ensure that LIAs receive consistent messaging and the support they need to be successful. Awardees and model developers should work together in advance to clarify requirements, generate monitoring questions, and identify the types of documentation to review.
- **Share data to reduce the amount of data collection needed and limit reporting redundancies.** Awardees and models require sites to collect much of the same data, including data on family recruitment, enrollment, and retention. Data collection on these elements could be streamlined such that it meets both awardee and model requirements. Models also routinely collect data from LIA annual reports, self-assessments, periodic credentialing statements, and performance outcomes; awardees could use these to document implementation fidelity. Data-sharing agreements between models, awardees, and LIAs can help to ensure that partners have access to key pieces of data. It can also reduce reporting redundancies, with LIAs spending less time entering data and awardees being better positioned to meet established standards.
- **Coordinate professional development plans and TA activities.** Awardees and model developers can work together to ensure that LIA staff receive the required trainings they need to begin serving families, and that they receive these trainings within the designated time frames. Coordination on additional professional development and TA can reduce redundancy and ensure optimal use of limited resources. For example, if an awardee and model developer are both working with an LIA who is challenged with enrollment, the two entities can work together to develop a joint plan for providing

Collaboration in Action



As part of an improvement plan to increase enrollment in home visiting slots, the Pennsylvania MIECHV awardee coordinated with models to provide training and TA to program staff on enrollment expectations.



TA on this topic. They might provide joint TA calls, or one entity could lead the effort and keep the other informed. Awardees and models can also collaborate to provide professional development to LIAs on advanced topics such as intimate partner violence or supporting participants with mental health disorders. Finally, model developers are an important source of information on their respective model's fidelity requirements, and they can support awardee TA in this area.

Conclusion

Collaboration between awardees and model developers offers a variety of benefits, including but not limited to monitoring efficiencies, increased capacity to provide coordinated support, greater fidelity of implementation, and ultimately, improved program outcomes. While it may take time to build and maintain these relationships, model developers and awardees are equally invested in doing so. There are concrete steps awardees can take to create open lines of communication, limit redundancies, and streamline reporting requirements.

