HVWFD
INSTITUTE FOR HOME VISITING
- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT -

& Jackie Walorski Center for Evidence-Based Case Management



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Recruiting, Supporting, and Retaining a Qualified Home Visiting Workforce: State of the Field and Current Trends

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Executive Summary

The Institute for Home Visiting Workforce Development (Workforce Institute) examined workforce dynamics within the home visiting field. It was one of four focal areas examined; others included workforce data, compensation, and preparation. The workforce dynamics focal area examined five interrelated topics critical to building, supporting, and retaining a qualified workforce: recruitment, career advancement, workplace environment, well-being, and retention. This report presents findings from a narrative literature review of 47 publications, engagement with more than 700 professionals and administrators, and an environmental scan of 31 existing resources to identify pressing workforce challenges and opportunities for improvement.

State of the Literature

Existing research on home visiting workforce dynamics is predominantly descriptive and correlational, limiting the field's ability to draw causal conclusions about the effectiveness of interventions. The literature skews toward examining workplace environment (56% of studies) and well-being (52% of studies), while career advancement remains the least examined topic (13%). Most primary research studies are small in scale—53% include fewer than 100 participants—and rely on quantitative survey methods. No studies employed quasi-experimental or experimental designs, underscoring a significant gap in evidence-based workforce support strategies.

Key Findings by Topic Area



Recruitment:

Recruitment challenges are widespread, with 61% to 75% of programs nationally reporting difficulty hiring qualified home visitors. Contributing factors include the absence of formal university pathways into home visiting, a lack of a clear public-facing definition of the field, and low pay. Informal and formal advertising strategies—including word-of-mouth and online postings—and job descriptions that emphasize the helping nature and mission of home visiting programs show promise for strengthening recruitment efforts.



Career Advancement:

Career advancement is both under researched and underutilized. Approximately 37% to 52% of home visitors report dissatisfaction with their promotion prospects, and only 16% have ever received a formal promotion. Programs that use performance reviews, competency frameworks, and career ladder structures report greater clarity around advancement expectations. Despite these findings, no existing resources provide concrete, actionable guidance on how to develop career ladders in home visiting.



Workplace Environment:

Home visitors generally report positive work environments, with strong supervisory relationships, team cohesion, and communication cited as key drivers of satisfaction. However, staff in direct service roles rate their working conditions less favorably than supervisory or administrative staff, reporting lower organizational support, greater job hazards, and fewer promotional opportunities. Having a voice in program decisions emerged as a consistent predictor of intent to stay.



Well-Being:

Home visitors experience significant occupational stress. In one statewide study, 74% had medium or high levels of burnout and 69% had medium or high levels of secondary traumatic stress. Depressive symptoms affect an

estimated 10% to 25% of the workforce nationally. Despite high overall job satisfaction—particularly with the nature of the work and schedule flexibility—satisfaction related to pay, working conditions, and promotional opportunities is low. Administrative burden, safety concerns, and high job demands are key contributors to stress. Workplace supports, including reflective supervision, mental health support, and employer-sponsored benefits, are associated with better well-being outcomes. The existing literature largely emphasizes deficits rather than home visitor strengths, representing a gap in a strengths-based understanding of the workforce.

Retention:

Between 53% and 75% of programs experience at least one staff turnover annually, and across the field, an estimated 20% to 29% of home visitors leave each year. At the same time, average tenure for home visitors is approximately five years and 51% to 91% report an intent to stay. Key factors associated with retention include positive relationships with families and colleagues, supportive supervision, flexibility, and opportunities for performance-linked pay and promotion. Low pay, limited advancement, and lack of voice in decision-making are the commonly cited reasons for leaving.



Field Engagement Highlights

To hear directly from home visiting professionals and administrators, the Workforce Institute provided informational webinars, queried Association of State and Tribal Home Visiting Initiatives (ASTHVI)[1] meeting participants, disseminated a workgroup interest form, convened "World Cafes" at the 2025 National Home Visiting Summit, and disseminated a workforce survey. These revealed several consistent priorities:

- Home visitor safety—both psychological and environmental—was a frequently cited concern across engagement touchpoints, although home visitors themselves did not report safety as a top daily challenge.
- Staff well-being, burnout prevention, and mental health support were identified as urgent professional development needs.
- Career advancement pathways, including leadership academies and connections to higher education credentials, were identified as critical gaps.
- Administrative burden, particularly documentation requirements, high caseloads, and data entry—was a top daily challenge.
- Inadequate compensation was cited as both a recruitment and retention barrier, with calls for competitive salaries and livable wages across program types.

State of Existing Resources

An environmental scan of 31 resources revealed that most address workforce well-being and retention, while career advancement receives virtually no dedicated attention. Resources are predominantly designed for Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program awardees, written in English only, and tend to cover multiple topics broadly without providing actionable, specific implementation guidance. The evidence base underlying many resources is unclear, with 54% providing references but few describing the source of recommended strategies. There is a notable absence of resources targeted to direct service staff or adapted for diverse literacy needs.

[1] The Association of State and Tribal Home Visiting Initiatives (ASTHVI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan collaboration of state and Tribal administrators of home visiting programs.

Overarching Gaps and Priorities

Across the literature review, field engagement, and scan of existing resources, several cross-cutting gaps emerge:

A weak evidence base limits confidence in existing workforce strategies; most are descriptive rather than evaluative.

Home visitor safety is a pressing field priority that is significantly *underrepresented* in the research literature.

Career advancement—both as a research topic and a resource area—is the most neglected dimension of workforce dynamics.

Existing resources are not sufficiently specific, actionable, or differentiated by audience to be readily usable by programs.

The workforce's strengths, assets, and innovations are underrepresented relative to challenges and deficits in both research and resources.

Introduction

The Institute for Home Visiting Workforce Development (Workforce Institute/we) is committed to strengthening the home visiting workforce, a vital component in advancing child and family well-being across the nation. Through foundational research and active field engagement, we examined the systems of support available to the workforce and identified opportunities for improvement. This report, part of a series covering four key focal areas (workforce data, dynamics, compensation, and preparation), provides a summary of evidence, field input, and resource analysis related to workforce dynamics.

Our findings reveal significant challenges and gaps affecting recruitment, retention, well-being, and career advancement for home visitors—those professionals central to delivering evidence-based family support and early childhood prevention programs. These insights are the culmination of a literature review, an environmental scan of existing resources, and nationwide engagement activities, reflecting the lived experience of more than 700 home visiting professionals and administrators across 43 states.

This report demonstrates foundational work already accomplished and offers evidence-based recommendations and next steps for strengthening the workforce. Our goal is to provide foundational knowledge to inform ongoing project decisions by identifying pressing needs and scalable solutions that will enable a more effective and sustainable home visiting workforce.



Overview of Workforce Dynamic Focal Area Goals and Tasks

The workforce dynamics focal area aims to summarize and synthesize existing literature, research, and resources on workforce dynamics in the home visiting context. It is important to note that while workforce dynamics is defined and operationalized in the context of childcare and early education (see Bernardi et al., 2024), there are no agreed upon conceptualizations or definitions of workforce dynamics in home visiting. Thus, to guide our work, we identified five interrelated topics related to building, supporting, and retaining a qualified home visiting workforce: recruitment, career advancement, workplace environment, well-being, and retention (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1. Topics Addressed within Workforce Dynamics to Expand, Support, and Retain a Qualified Workforce

Topic	What do we mean?
Recruitment	Identifying, recruiting, interviewing, hiring, and onboarding staff.
Career advancement	Opportunities to be promoted to a higher position within an organization, take on additional responsibilities, and/or receive pay raises.
Workplace environment	In home visiting, this includes families' homes as well as local program work environments.
Well-being	Physical, intellectual, financial, and spiritual health and well-being. In home visiting research, commonly measured as burnout, job satisfaction, or psychological well-being.
Retention	Staff retention. In home visiting research, this is commonly measured as intent to stay, intent to leave, or turnover rates.

Our exploration of these five areas was guided by these questions:

- What is the state of existing literature on workforce dynamics in home visiting?
- What types of research exist within home visiting?
- What topics are commonly examined in existing research?
- What key findings emerged from our review of existing literature?
- What are the identified gaps in existing research?
- What workforce needs are state home visiting systems and local home visiting programs experiencing?
- What is the nature of existing resources to support workforce dynamics in home visiting?
- What types of resources exist?
- What topics are commonly examined in existing resources?
- What are identified gaps in existing resources?

Roadmap of the Report

The report begins with a summary of existing literature examining topics related to workforce dynamics in home visiting. Next, we summarize emerging themes and priorities from our active engagement touchpoints. Finally, we present findings from an environmental scan of existing resources and materials designed to support workforce dynamics.

Literature Review on Workforce Dynamics

We completed a narrative literature review (Sukhera, 2022) to examine existing knowledge on workforce dynamics in home visiting. Below, we summarize our literature review methods, including the types of literature reviewed and the primary research study participants described in the literature, followed by a summary of key findings from the review. Detailed methods are available upon request.

Literature Review Methods

We completed a web-based search using three scholarly databases to identify relevant literature. We also disseminated a public call for information to home visiting model representatives; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)[2] awardees and Tribal MIECHV grantees; and organizations, entities, and individuals with expertise in the areas of technical assistance (TA), professional development, and the home visiting workforce.

We reviewed 139 items for inclusion in the review, including literature published between 2014 and February 2025 that focused on a topic relevant to workforce development specifically in home visiting. We also searched reference lists of literature identified in the web-based search to identify additional items. This resulted in 47 items identified for inclusion. We summarized standardized information about the included items, including basic descriptors (e.g., publication year), focal areas (e.g., workforce dynamics), and research characteristics (e.g., study design).

Type of Literature Reviewed

Most of the literature included in our review was in the form of reports (34%) and peer-reviewed journal articles (32%). We also reviewed briefs (28%), dissertations (4%), and a book chapter (2%).

[2] The Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA's) MIECHV Program supports voluntary, evidence-based home visiting services for expectant and new parents with children up to kindergarten entry age who live in communities that are at risk for poor maternal and child health outcomes. For more information on the MIECHV Program, visit www.mchb.hrsa.gov/programs/homevisiting.

Most literature is publicly available (77%). This allowed us to locate and read literature without restriction. Public research reports were available on the websites of the organizations funding workforce studies, including state and federal governments, or on the websites of the organizations conducting the research. The literature that was not publicly available included items submitted by authors through our call for information, academic dissertations that required payment to access, and many of the journal articles we reviewed. Journal articles that required a fee to download, ranged in cost from $27.95 to $56.00 per article.

Sixty-eight percent of the literature described primary research, 19% described secondary data analyses, and 13% were research reviews (see sidebar). All primary research and secondary analysis studies represented in the literature used descriptive or correlational study methods to describe the workforce or examine associations between workforce dynamic topics. None of the research presented in the literature used quasi-experimental or experimental designs, which limits the ability to draw causal conclusions (see box below). Only one study described actively engaging the workforce to co-develop the evaluation. See Exhibit 2 for specific details on the types of studies reviewed.

What is the difference between primary research, secondary data analyses and research reviews?

Primary research involves collecting original data through methods like surveys, interviews, or observations.

Secondary data analysis entails analyzing existing datasets or administrative databases.

Research reviews summarize existing information or data.

The studies described in the literature used quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods data collection. Half of the primary research studies used quantitative methods (e.g., surveys). Very few primary research studies (16%) used qualitative methods (e.g., interviews, focus groups). Some (34%) used both quantitative and qualitative methods.

A note on research methods

Descriptive research provides information about individuals and topics. It can help answer what, where, when and how questions, but not why questions.

Correlational research examines associations between topics. It looks at the degree to which variables are related to one another but cannot determine cause and effect relationships.

Quasi-experimental research evaluates cause and effect without randomly assigning participants to groups. Instead, it uses pre-existing groups.

Exhibit 2. Summary of Literature Included in Review

Extraction category	Total
Literature type (*n* = 47)	
Primary research	32
Secondary data analysis	9
Research review	6
Study design used in primary research (*n* = 32)	
Quantitative (e.g., surveys, administrative data)	16
Qualitative (e.g., interviews, focus groups)	5
Quantitative and qualitative	11
Study methods in primary research and secondary data analysis (*n* = 41)	
Descriptive statistics	32
Correlations	7
Regressions	9
Hierarchical linear modeling	2
Qualitative	18

Note: Study design is reported only for primary research, and study methods are reported only for primary research and secondary data analysis. Study methods are not mutually exclusive, as some studies use multiple methods. Hierarchical linear modeling is a correlational research method that accounts for nested data (e.g., home visitors within programs).

Study Participants Described in the Literature

Many (53%) of the 32 primary research studies included fewer than 100 participants. Eighty-eight percent of the primary research studies reported sample sizes; these ranged from 6 (an exploratory study of coaching at one Early Head Start [EHS] program; Walsh et al., 2021) to 894 (a statewide study of California's home visiting workforce; Crowne et al., 2021).

Nearly all primary research studies included home visitors as study participants.[3] Some studies also included home visiting supervisors, administrators, and program directors, among other roles. Many of the studies reported participant background characteristics, including education level (63%) and years of experience (44%).

Most primary research study participants had a bachelor's degree or higher and at least five years of experience in home visiting. Specifically, 50% to 100% of research participants reported having a minimum of a bachelor's degree. Sixteen percent to 81% of research participants had more than five years of experience in home visiting.

Literature Review Findings

Existing knowledge on workforce dynamics primarily focuses on the workplace environment (56%) and/or workforce well-being (52%). The least examined workforce dynamic topic is career advancement (13%) (Exhibit 3). Below, we provide a summary of key findings in existing literature organized by workforce dynamic topic.

[3] Two studies only examined program-level characteristics and factors.

Exhibit 3. Workforce Dynamic Topics Addressed in Existing Literature



Most literature focused on workplace environment and well-being.

Note: Percentages represent publications with at least one finding related to the topic; topics are not mutually exclusive.

Recruitment



Recruitment includes the process of identifying, recruiting, interviewing, hiring, and onboarding new employees. Ten publications (mostly primary research studies, with some secondary analysis studies and reviews) reported findings related to recruitment. Below, we provide a summary of key findings related to recruitment.

The absence of university degrees in home visiting (Wechsler, 2016), a lack of a clear definition of home visiting (Walsh et al., 2024), and low pay (Akamani et al., 2024; Marshall et al., 2015) contribute to recruitment challenges. Sixty-one percent of programs in California (Crowne et al., 2021) and 65% of programs in Illinois reported recruitment challenges (Akamani et al., 2024). Nationally, Jones and colleagues (2022) found that

75% of EHS programs have difficulty hiring highly qualified home visitors. Programs in California report challenges finding applicants with experience working with families (Crowne et al., 2021). Some of these recruitment challenges may be due to the absence of university degrees as a pathway into home visiting (Wechsler, 2016), a lack of a clear definition or understanding of home visiting (Walsh et al., 2024), and low pay (Akamani et al., 2024; Marshall et al., 2015).

Well-written job descriptions that are widely advertised can help recruit job candidates. The national Home Visiting Career Trajectories project (Career Trajectories) found that program managers consistently described the importance of clearly written and accurate job descriptions for recruitment (Benatar et al., 2020). Additionally, advertising positions formally (e.g., on agency websites) and informally (e.g., through word of mouth, professional networks, or internally) can help recruit new home visitors (Crowne et al., 2022; Sandstrom et al., 2020a). Relatedly, home visitors report that they find their job through informal and formal methods, including online searches, word of mouth, and professional networks (Kett et al., 2022).

Job descriptions highlighting the helping nature of home visiting may promote recruitment. The Career Trajectories project found that the most common reasons participants entered the field were to help families (90%) and to feel a sense of purpose (81%) (Sandstrom et al., 2020a).

Career Advancement



We define career advancement as providing employees with opportunities for promotion and pay raises, taking on additional job responsibilities, and learning new skills and knowledge needed for advancement opportunities. Only six of the reviewed publications included findings related to career advancement. These publications included primary research studies and secondary analysis studies using either descriptive statistics or qualitative analysis. Below, we provide a summary of findings related to career advancement.

Approximately 37% of home visitors are not satisfied with their chances for promotion, and receipt of a promotion is rare. In the First 5 California Home Visiting Workforce Study, Crowne et al. (2022) found that over half of the workforce (63%) was somewhat or completely satisfied with their chances for promotion, while nationally, Sandstrom et al. (2020a) found that more than half of home visitors (52%) were somewhat or completely dissatisfied with their chances for promotion. The Career Trajectories project found that only 16% of home visitors had ever received a promotion, though receipt of a promotion was higher for supervisors (64%) (Sandstrom et al., 2020a).

Performance reviews, competency frameworks, credentialing, and professional development are promising pathways for advancement. Using data from the Career Trajectories project, Lou and colleagues (2021) found that 64% of programs use annual performance reviews for salary and promotion decisions. Annual performance reviews can help home visitors understand the expectations and competencies required for advancement (Lou et al., 2021). Relatedly, programs find competency frameworks, career ladders, and/or credentialing that provide clearly defined steps and expectations for advancement to be beneficial (Lou et al., 2021; Peters et al., 2021). Additionally, home visitors express that professional development opportunities help them grow as professionals within their current roles (District of Columbia Home Visiting Council, 2021).

Workplace Environment



Workplace environment includes the contexts in which the workforce carries out its job roles and responsibilities. In home visiting research, workplace environment is commonly measured as organizational culture and climate. It was the most addressed topic in our review, with 27 publications reporting workplace environment findings. These publications were mostly original research studies, with some secondary analyses and reviews. Findings came from descriptive statistics, correlational methods, and qualitative analysis. In this section, we summarize research findings related to workplace environment.

Research findings about the quality of workplace environments are mixed. Home visitors generally report positive work environments, although reports of work environment vary by staff role (Kuhns et al., 2024; Sandstrom et al., 2020a). The Career Trajectories study found that more than 90 percent of home visitors reported having

caring supervisors, receiving opportunities to learn and grow in the past year, having someone at work who encourages their development, and having someone at work to talk to when they are stressed (Sandstrom et al., 2020a). However, Landsman (2017) found that in Iowa, staff in direct service roles rated aspects of their work environment less favorably compared to staff in supervisory or administrative roles. Specifically, those in direct service roles reported lower organizational support, agency fairness, job security, and promotional opportunities (Landsman, 2017). They also reported higher job hazards (Landsman, 2017).

Perceived quality of workplace environment is associated with increased job satisfaction and retention (Sandstrom et al., 2020a). In two nationally representative EHS studies, home visitors who perceived strong communication and cohesion in their programs reported higher job satisfaction (Jones et al., 2022; Kuhns et al., 2024). In multiple large studies, having a voice in program decisions—a key aspect of the workplace environment—was associated with the intention to stay (Crowne et al., 2021; Lou et al., 2021).

Having a supportive workplace, positive workplace culture, and relationships with co-workers and supervisors can mitigate burnout and promote retention. Studies show that engaged and empathetic supervision can prevent staff burnout (Begic et al., 2019; Eaves et al., 2021). Having a supportive workplace is also statistically significantly associated with intent to stay (Franko et al., 2019). Similarly, positive workplace culture and supportive relationships with supervisors have been found to be negatively correlated with home visitors' intention to quit (Begic et al., 2019). Home visitors have also reported a need for more support when it comes to managing their workloads, safety concerns, using personal resources, and prioritizing self-care (District of Columbia Home Visiting Council, 2021).

Well-Being



In home visiting research, well-being is commonly measured as burnout, job satisfaction, or psychological well-being. We reviewed 25 publications with findings related to well-being. These publications were predominantly primary research studies, with a few secondary analysis and reviews. Most of the studies used descriptive statistics or correlational methods to analyze home visitor well-being and its correlates, such as workplace conditions. In this section, we summarize findings related to workforce well-being.

Home visitors experience medium to high levels of burnout and secondary traumatic stress, and varying levels of depressive symptoms. In one statewide study, 74% of home visitors had medium or high levels of burnout, while 69% had medium or high levels of secondary traumatic stress (Begic et al., 2019). In a survey of 77 MIECHV workforce members in Illinois, more than one-third of respondents rated their stress level as 7 or higher on a scale of 1 to 10 (Illinois Home Visiting Collaborative, 2023b). The prevalence of clinically significant depressive symptoms among home visitors ranges from approximately 10% to 25% (Crowne et al., 2022; First 5 Center for Children's Policy, 2022; Franko et al., 2019; Kuhns et al., 2024).

Home visitors are generally satisfied with the nature of their work and flexible schedules but are less satisfied with pay, work conditions, and opportunities for promotion. Across studies, home visitors report high job satisfaction overall but vary in their satisfaction with specific workplace factors (Jones et al., 2022; Nathans et al., 2019; Radcliff et al., 2017; Sandstrom et al., 2020a). Areas of high satisfaction include the nature of the work and flexibility of schedules. Areas of low satisfaction include pay, working conditions, and opportunity for promotion (Radcliff et al., 2017, Sandstrom et al., 2020a).

Home visitors experience unique job stressors, including administrative work, job demands, and concerns about their personal safety, that negatively impact well-being. Home visitors are burdened by administrative work, reporting requirements, and job demands in general (Alitz et al., 2018; District of Columbia Home Visiting Council, 2020). In one study of EHS home visitors, job demands were significantly associated with burnout (West et al., 2018). Home visitors also report concerns about their personal safety during visits (District of Columbia Home Visiting Council, 2020). When asked how often they felt

unsafe when conducting home visits, almost half of EHS home visitors nationally reported feeling threats to personal safety at least some of the time (Kuhns et al., 2024).

Workplace factors—such as relationships, supportive work-life policies and benefits, and safety—promote job satisfaction and well-being. Factors associated with higher levels of job satisfaction include weekly or more often one-on-one or group supervision meetings, high team cohesion, and high communication in the workplace (Jones et al., 2022, Sandstrom et al., 2020a). Lack of personal safety is associated with lower job satisfaction (Kuhns et al., 2024). Similar factors (e.g., supportive workplaces, benefits) have been found to promote health and well-being broadly in both quantitative and qualitative home visiting research (Alitz et al., 2018; Begic et al., 2019; Chazan-Cohen et al., 2021; Eaves et al., 2021; Franko et al., 2019). The Region X home visiting workforce study found that specific workplace supports, including greater access to behavioral health services, more supportive reflective supervision, and more employer-sponsored benefits, were associated with lower rates of depression in home visitors (Franko et al., 2019).

Mitigating job stress and promoting well-being are important for workforce retention and quality service delivery. There are many negative outcomes associated with job stress and burnout. In an EHS-only study, burnout, dissatisfaction with salary and benefits, and perceptions of employers not being committed to their personal safety predicted job withdrawal (West et al., 2018). Conversely, aspects of job satisfaction have been found to be statistically significant predictors of retention in three state studies (Begic et al., 2019; Crowne et al., 2021; Ross et al., 2023).

In general, research on workforce dynamics does not recognize and address the strengths of home visitors. Using a strengths-based approach to research means identifying participants' existing strengths and positive attributes, rather than solely focusing on their challenges or deficits. While this scan did not formally assess whether research studies used a strengths-based approach, our review, like previous reviews, found that most literature on home visitor well-being focuses on outcomes associated with a lack of well-being, such as burnout, depression, and indirect trauma (Sparr et al., 2022).

Retention



Retention describes an organization's ability to keep employees from leaving. In home visiting research, this is commonly measured as intent to stay, intent to leave, or turnover rates. We reviewed 23 publications with retention findings. These publications included primary research, secondary analysis, and one research review. They used descriptive statistics, correlational methods, and qualitative analysis. In this section, we summarize findings related to retention.

Between 50 and 75 percent of programs experience staff turnover; however, most home visitors have been in their role for at least five years and do not intend to leave (Akamani et al., 2024; Franko et al., 2019; Illinois Home Visiting Collaborative, 2023a; Jones et al., 2022; LaCasse et al., 2021; Sandstrom et al., 2024a). In 2023, 75% of programs in Illinois experienced turnover of at least one home visitor in the previous two years (Akamani et al., 2024). This was higher than EHS programs nationwide in 2018, where 53% experienced turnover of at least one home visitor (Jones et al., 2022), and home visiting programs in Maryland in 2021, where 55% experienced turnover of at least one home visitor (LaCasse et al., 2021). Research shows that 20% to 29% of staff turnover annually (Franko et al., 2019; Illinois Home Visiting Collaborative, 2023a; LaCasse et al., 2021; Sandstrom et al., 2024b). However, many staff remain in their roles for extended periods of time (Crowne et al., 2021), with multiple studies finding that home visitors stay in their role for an average of five years (Akamani et al., 2024; Jones et al., 2022). Similarly, while some home visiting staff report an intent to leave their role, many more say they intend to stay, with 51% to 91% of study samples indicating that they plan to stay in their role for the next year or two (Begic et al., 2019; Franko et al., 2019; Kett et al., 2022; Landsman, 2017; Sandstrom et al., 2020b).

Home visitors report many reasons for staying in their role, such as positive relationships with families and colleagues. Home visitors' love for the work and wanting to support children and families are key reasons they stay in their jobs (Benatar et al., 2020; Crowne et al., 2021; District of Columbia Home Visiting Council, 2021; Franko et al., 2019; Sandstrom et al., 2020a; Sparr et al., 2021). Other statistically significant predictors of and agency in carrying out their job roles and responsibilities, and frequent opportunities for performance reviews connected to promotions and pay raises (Benatar et al., 2020; Crowne et al., 2021; Franko et al., 2019; Sandstrom et al., 2020a).

Challenges such as low pay and lack of voice in decision making contribute to home visitors' decisions to leave the field. Low pay, little room for advancement, and lack of voice in decision making are common reasons home visitors give for thinking about or leaving their positions (Begic et al., 2019; District of Columbia Home Visiting Council, 2021; First 5 Center for Children's Policy, 2022; First 5 San Joaquin, 2022–2025; Franko et al., 2019; Plagge, 2021). Working with MIECHV families for longer periods of time is correlated with greater intent to quit (Begic et al., 2019). Satisfaction with pay, positive workplace culture, and strong relationships with supervisors are negatively correlated with intent to quit (Begic et al., 2019). Additionally, having little influence in program decisions is significantly associated with home visitors' likelihood to leave their current position (Lou et al., 2021).

Key reasons home visitors stay in their position	**Key reasons home visitors leave their position**
Positive relationships with families and colleagues	Low pay
Love for the work	Little room for advancement
Wanting to support	Lack of voice in decision making



Active Engagement Activities

Throughout the first year of the Workforce Institute, we facilitated a variety of active engagement activities to better understand emerging needs and priorities of the workforce. This section describes our active engagement methods and key findings related to workforce dynamics.



Active Engagement Methods

Engagement touchpoints included informational webinars, a meeting of the Association of State and Tribal Home Visiting Initiatives (ASTHVI), a workgroup interest form, multiple engagement activities at the 2025 National Home Visiting Summit, and a workforce survey.

Informational Webinars

In June 2024, we held two informational webinars. The webinars introduced the Workforce Institute's goals and aims and obtained input on proposed focal areas and key activities. A total of 278 participants joined the webinars from 41 states, six Indigenous communities, two U.S. territories, and two countries outside the U.S. Participants were predominantly home visitors (39 percent), followed by supervisors (21 percent), and program leaders (19 percent). During the webinar, an open-text poll asked participants to identify pressing workforce issues and needs. Written responses to this poll were manually coded for themes.

ASTHVI Meeting

In November 2024, we asked the approximately 70 administrators attending ASTHVI's in-person meeting the following question: "What are the big questions or areas of need related to home visiting workforce development in your state, territory, or tribal community?" Meeting attendees provided responses in writing or online via Padlet. Written data were transcribed and combined with data from Padlet. All data was deidentified and analyzed for themes.

Workgroup Interest Form

To identify potential members for a project workgroup, we disseminated a brief interest form that included the question, "In 1-2 sentences, please share what you see as the most pressing challenge(s) for the home visiting workforce." There were 333 responses related to workforce dynamics. Eighty-five percent of respondents were home visiting program staff (home visitors, supervisors, or program directors/managers), some of whom reported multiple roles within their programs. Other respondents included TA providers, professional development providers, state/territory/tribal lead/director, and subject matter specialists. Written responses were manually coded for themes.

Home Visiting Summit

We held several in-person engagement opportunities at the National Home Visiting Summit in February 2025. We had a meeting with 20 members of the Workforce Institute and Case Management Center Technical Working Group (TWG) to gather feedback on how the Workforce Institute can provide actionable information to support and strengthen the workforce. We also sought their input on how to ensure that our work reflects the full range of workforce experiences and contexts.

In addition, we hosted a gathering of workforce members to learn about current workforce development research, evaluation, and continuous quality improvement (CQI) initiatives they are involved in. We asked the members about the biggest gaps, needs, and priorities for further research and evaluation.

Finally, we engaged Summit participants in two World Café Sessions. We asked two discussion questions related to home visitor well-being: "What makes home visitors and supervisors feel valued and supported?" and "How have home visiting programs made staff feel valued and supported?"

Participants in these engagements sat with staff from the Workforce Institute to discuss these questions. Some also provided their responses in writing. Notes from staff and written responses were reviewed and summarized.

Workforce Survey

We disseminated a workforce survey from February to May 2025. The survey was advertised at the Home Visiting Summit and through relevant listservs and was open to any member of the home visiting field. It included closed- and open-ended questions about the role of a home visitor, challenges home visitors face, needed support, and innovative workforce support strategies.



Active Engagement Findings

This section presents top themes from each of the active engagement touchpoints. Callout boxes throughout the section display exemplary quotes from participants.

A pressing professional development need for the home visiting workforce is "dealing with secondary trauma."

– *Webinar participant*

Informational Webinars

Webinar participants identified several pressing workforce issues and needs (Exhibit 4). The most frequently reported concern was the safety of home visitors while in the field. Participants also reported the need to address the well-being of home visiting staff and the need for mental health support, improvements in workplace environments, and support to address or prevent burnout.

Exhibit 4. Top Workforce Issues Identified by Webinar Participants

Question: Based on our focal areas, what do you think is missing? What workforce issues need to be addressed?	
Workforce issue	**Number of responses**
Home visitor safety (e.g., psychological and environmental safety)	12
Mental health support for home visitors	7

Webinar participants also identified areas of need for professional development (Exhibit 5). Home visitor safety was the most frequently reported professional development need and included psychological and environmental safety as well as safety scenarios. Mental health was another frequently reported need; this included infant and early childhood mental health, mental health consultations, and how to address mental health challenges. Professional development needs associated with trauma were also mentioned, including secondary trauma, vicarious trauma, and trauma-informed care.

Exhibit 5. Top Professional Development Needs Identified by Webinar Participants

Question: What are pressing professional development needs for the home visiting workforce?	
Professional development need	**Number of responses**
Home visitor safety (e.g., psychological and environmental safety)	22
Supporting families with mental health concerns	12
Trauma (e.g., vicarious trauma, trauma-informed care)	9

Finally, participants were asked to identify questions or concerns related to workforce compensation (Exhibit 6). Themes centered on offering incentives, the relationship between education and level of compensation, establishing salary ranges in the home visiting field, and increasing compensation to better align with similar fields.

Exhibit 6. Top Compensation Questions Identified by Webinar Participants

Question: What are the big questions about compensation that are top of mind?	
Compensation question	**Number of responses**
Incentives	8
Impact of level of education on pay	7
Establishing salary ranges and/or wage gap with similar fields	6



An area of need related to the home visiting workforce is "recruitment of a [home visiting] workforce that reflects the population served (and providing the pay, training, support) to keep them in the field."

– *ASTHVI participant*

ASTHVI Meeting

The ASTHVI meeting attendees identified many areas of need related to home visiting workforce dynamics (Exhibit 7). Most common was the need for training and preparation, including both foundational and advanced learning opportunities for both new and experienced home visitors. ASTHVI members expressed that training should align with program priorities and address workforce development in a holistic way.

The second most common need was related to career advancement pathways, including guidance to support home visitors in mapping out career trajectories, identifying opportunities for advancement, and acquiring the requisite skills for achieving long-term success in the field.

The third most common need was for greater coordination and collaboration. Specifically, ASTHVI members expressed the need for cross-agency and cross-model collaboration and for workforce development strategies that are consistent across different home visiting models and programs. They also identified the need for retention initiatives that promote staff retention by offering advanced training, certifications, and post-secondary educational opportunities.

Exhibit 7. Top Workforce Needs Identified by ASTHVI Members

Question: What are the big questions or areas of need related to home visiting workforce development in your state, territory, or tribal community? (*N* = 70)		
Theme	**Number of responses**	**Example responses**
Training and preparation	26	"Innovative or effective approaches to engage home visitors in a way that enhances their confidence in meeting program requirements while reducing the time spent on tasks, making the process more inviting than overwhelming, and ultimately leading to improved program efficiency."
Career advancement pathways	18	"Helping states to create leadership academies or providing a leadership academy specifically for home visitors to prepare them for the next level of their career (e.g., supervisor, transitioning to other types of positions)."
Coordination and collaboration within the field	17	"National opportunities for leadership inclusive of ground level advisory committees."
Retention initiatives	17	"Pathways for connecting professional development courses (or certification) to credits for higher ed courses/majors."

Note: Participants could submit multiple responses.

"One of the most pressing challenges for the home visiting workforce is managing high caseloads while ensuring personalized and effective support for each family."

– *Potential workgroup member*

Workgroup Interest Form

Potential workgroup members identified several pressing workforce challenges (Exhibit 8). The most common challenge was related to workforce stressors, including home visitor safety; the burden of documentation, data collection. and reporting; and caseload size. The second most common challenge was the limited availability of resources for families. The third most common challenge was staff well-being and inadequate compensation.

Exhibit 8. Top Workforce Challenges Identified by Potential Workgroup Members

Question: In 1-2 sentences, please share what you see as the most pressing challenge(s) for the home visiting workforce (*N* = 303)

Theme	Number of responses	Example responses
Workforce Stressors • Home visitor safety (29) • Burden of documentation, data collection and reporting (20) • Caseload size (18) • Broad focus of the work, balancing expectations (17)	81	• "Safety concerns (little to no agency-sponsored self-defense or community safety awareness trainings)." • "It's challenging when the work requires a 'jack of all trades, master of none' type of service. Staff feel that often they are case workers and not able to really focus on parent-child interactions and child development, and struggle to meet the requirements as the job becomes broader in focus. • "Managing high caseloads while ensuring personalized and effective support for each family."

Question: In 1-2 sentences, please share what you see as the most pressing challenge(s) for the home visiting workforce (*N* = 303)		
Availability of resources or access to resources for families	75	• "Trying to connect families that have a need for services that don't exist or are not available." • "Lack of resources negatively impacts the ability to effectively serve families and limits the scope of care." • "Resources available in the rural communities."
Staff well-being (including secondary trauma, burnout, emotional health and mental health)	63	• "Secondary trauma that comes from listening to people's stories of their own trauma or helping to advocate and provide support for families dealing with DV [domestic violence], poverty or substance and mental health issues." • "I believe burnout due to secondary traumatic stress as one pressing challenge."
Inadequate compensation	63	• "The lack of funding for livable salaries, which makes it difficult to attract and retain a knowledgeable and experienced workforce." • "The lack of pay also presents a barrier to accessing quality mental health services for ourselves, resulting in burnout and high turnover rates." • "Being able to provide a living wage, including for part time employees."

Note: Participants could submit multiple responses.

Home Visiting Summit

World Café participants shared several factors that make them feel valued and supported in their jobs. The most common factors were receiving reflective supervision that facilitates brainstorming and problem solving and having autonomy in their jobs. Other salient themes included having a sense of purpose in the work, maintaining balance between flexibility and structure in their work, strong connections with families, having safety protocols, and access to mental health consultations.

> **"I make sure to acknowledge successes with families that my supervisees may miss— because sometimes change with families happens gradually."**
>
> *–World Café attendee*

Participants also shared the ways their home visiting programs made them feel valued and supported. Having someone advocate on behalf of staff was the most common theme, and included examples of involving all staff in larger conversations and having staff play a role in the organization's growth and development. Participants also mentioned that acknowledgment of success, including acknowledging when a family in their caseload has success, helps staff feel valued.

Workforce Survey

A total of 415 respondents completed the workforce survey; more than half of these respondents served in some capacity as home visitors (Exhibit 9). Below, we summarize responses from the 243 home visitors to better understand the challenges they face in their work. The following section is drawn from Joraanstad et al. (2026).

Exhibit 9. Workforce Survey Respondents' Roles

Role	Number (%) of respondents
Home visitor / parent educator / family support worker	243 (59%)
Home visiting supervisor	85 (20%)
Home visiting program leader (e.g., manager, director)	50 (12%)
Other (e.g., technical assistance provider, home visiting model representative, researcher, evaluator)	37 (9%)

Note: *N* = 415. First, if respondents indicated that their role included any type of home visitor, they were included in the home visitor role group. Then, if their role indicated any type of home visiting supervisor and NOT a home visitor, they were included in the supervisor role group. If their role indicated any type of home visiting program leader and NOT a home visitor or supervisor, they were included in the program leader role group. Lastly, if they indicated any other role excluding home visitors, home visiting supervisors, or home visiting program leaders, they were included in the other role group.

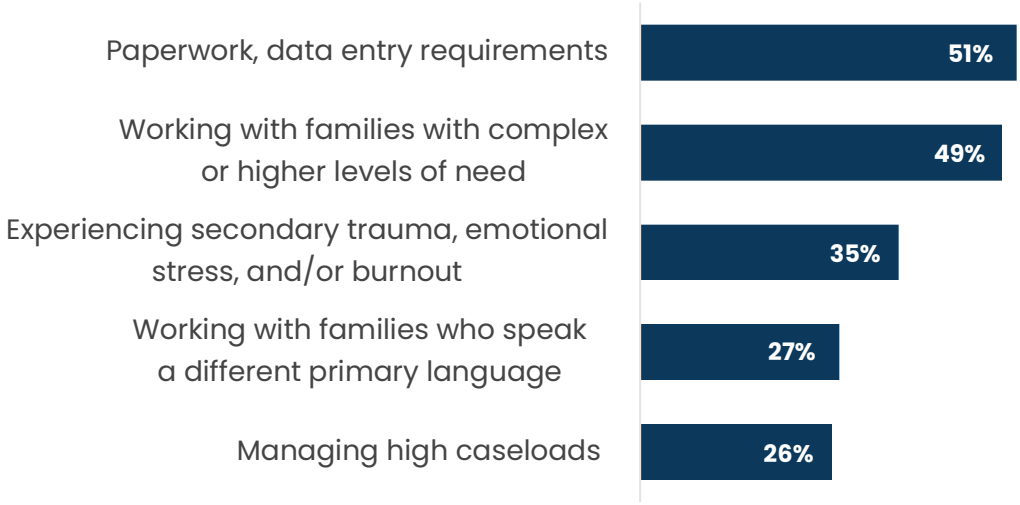
Challenges Home Visitors Face in Their Daily Work With Families

Half of home visitors report that *completing paperwork and data entry requirements* and *working with families with complex or higher levels of need* are the biggest challenges they face in their daily work (Exhibit 10).



Exhibit 10. Most and Least Common Challenges in Daily Work

Most common challenges



Note: Multiple selections were allowed so percentages do not add up to 100.

Home visitors are least likely to identify their biggest daily challenges as feeling safe at work and in communities where home visits take place (7 percent), having clarity about their job expectations and role (5 percent), and working with families from a variety of backgrounds (4 percent). The relatively low concern about daily workplace safety conflicts with prior Workforce Institute engagement activities that identified safety as a pressing professional development need and research suggesting that home visitors may experience unsafe situations in the workplace (Cachat et al., 2026). Similarly, while prior research indicates that the role of home visitors can be unclear, few home visitors identify having clarity about job expectations and role as one of the biggest challenges they face when working with families (Benatar et al., 2020).

Home visitors indicate that they need resources in the form of structural supports (e.g., integrated data systems, lower caseloads), community services (e.g., context-specific services, mental health care), and professional development (e.g., family challenges, stress management) to address their biggest daily challenges. The resources identified by home visitors—namely, structural supports, community services, and professional development—align with previous research indicating that high caseloads and data entry burden can increase job stress (Alitz et al., 2018) and that the workforce desires professional development on topics such as trauma-informed practices and knowledge of community services (Crowne et al., 2021; Sandstrom et al., 2020a).

Summary of Active Engagement Findings

We conducted multiple engagement activities to better understand the needs and priorities of the workforce. Home visitors; supervisors; local program leaders; leaders of state, territory, and tribal home visiting programs; model representatives; and researchers participated in these activities.

Across the engagement touchpoints, pressing workforce challenges and concerns include:

- Completing paperwork, data collection, and data reporting requirements
- Home visitor safety while in the field
- Caseload size
- Working with families with complex or higher levels of need
- Workforce well-being, specifically mental health and burnout

Participants identified key resources to support the workforce, including:

- Structural supports such as integrated data systems and lower caseloads
- Community services, including context-specific services and mental health care
- Professional development opportunities to address family challenges, stress management, and home visitor safety
- Career advancement pathways
- Coordination and collaboration within the field

Environmental Scan of Resources to Support Workforce Dynamics

We completed a targeted environmental scan to identify and review existing resources to support workforce dynamics. This section provides a summary of our methods and findings, including the type of resources reviewed and content addressed in existing resources.

Environmental Scan Methods

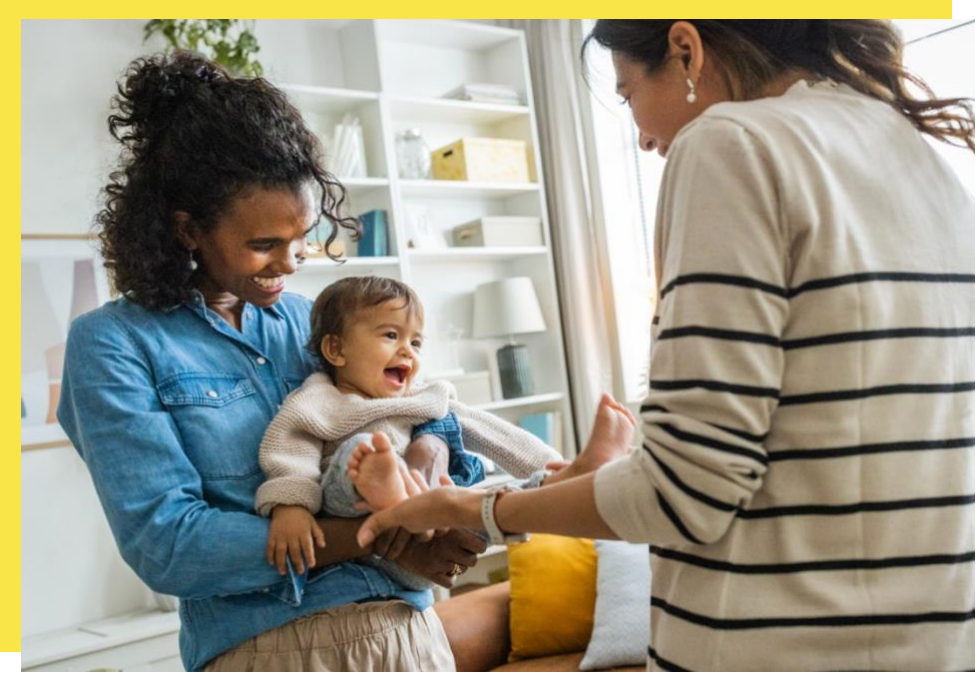
To identify relevant resources, we completed a Google search, a search of 31 targeted websites,[4] and released a public call for information. All results were reviewed against our inclusion criteria: that the resource address a topic relevant to workforce dynamics in the home visiting context, and that the resource was concrete, accessible, and could be reviewed for key information. This process resulted in 31 resources for inclusion.

Environmental Scan Findings

Existing resources on workforce dynamics include blog posts, briefs, checklists, guides, plans, and tip sheets. Some resources were downloadable PDF documents while others were web pages. All resources were published between 2017 and 2024, with most resources (80 percent) published in or after 2020. Resources were developed by researchers, policy experts, state-level staff, and TA providers.

Nearly all the resources (90%) included in the scan are publicly available. This allowed us to locate and read these materials without restriction. Resources are available on the websites of organizations that conduct home visiting research and that provide TA to states and programs. Three resources included in the scan are not publicly available; these are located on a website that requires membership to access, with a membership fee of $120 per year.

[4] We searched the websites of 31 specific organizations, entities, and efforts identified as potentially relevant to the home visiting workforce.



Many resources were developed for the MIECHV program. Most resources (75%) do not identify an intended audience, but among those that do, most state that the resource is intended to support MIECHV awardees (i.e., state- and territory-level program administrators) and their local implementing agencies.

Many resources do not meet the literacy needs of all users. All the resources included in the scan are written in English. Many of the PDF resources[5] (45%) are more than 10 pages long, with an average length of 26 pages (although the average was reduced to 20 pages after removing one 150-page resource).

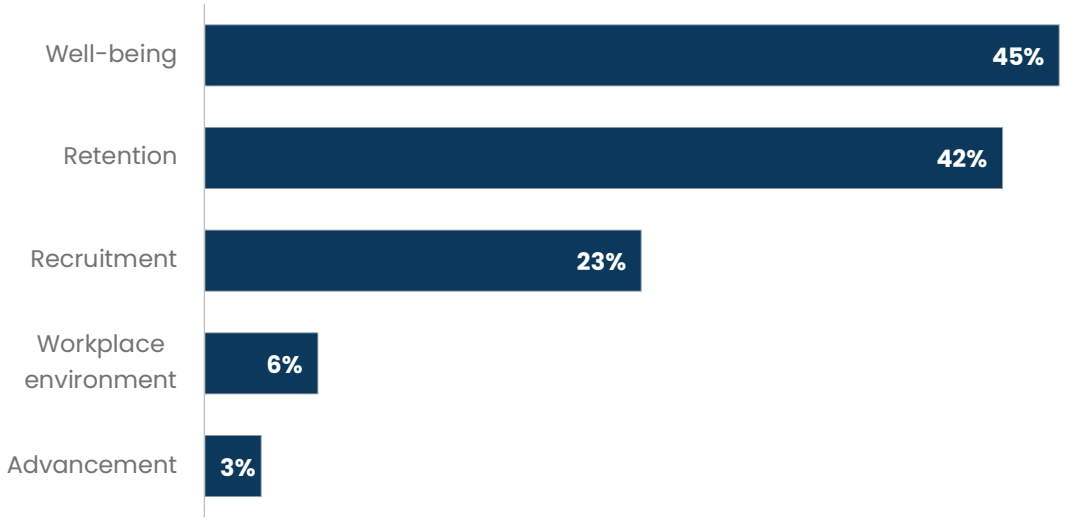
It is not always clear whether resources are evidence-based, practice-based, both, or neither. Many resources (54%) provide a reference list, but many do not describe the source of their information. Some authors describe gleaning lessons learned from working with or providing TA to home visiting programs, but few describe evidence to support the strategies.

The most common workforce dynamic topic addressed in existing resources is home visitor well-being. The least common topic is career advancement (see Exhibit 11).

[5] We did not assess the length of text on web pages.

Exhibit 11. Percent of Resources that Address Workforce Dynamic Topics

Most resources focus on workforce well-being and retention.



Note: Topics are not mutually exclusive.

Many of the resources (48%) cover more than one topic. Often, staff well-being, retention, and recruitment are discussed together. These resources typically discuss workforce needs and challenges broadly and provide guidance and solutions that lack specificity. For example, a resource might offer several strategies to recruit and retain home visitors, such as developing career pathways or ensuring adequate compensation, but the resource does not explain how a program would implement the strategies.

Existing resources have a strong focus on supporting workforce well-being and retention. Many existing resources recognize the need for home visiting programs to promote workforce well-being, address job stress, and improve staff retention, especially in the wake of COVID-19. Resources provide state- and program-level guidance related to strengthening well-being, addressing workforce shortages, and addressing common barriers and practices that contribute to staff attrition.

There are no existing resources that explicitly address career advancement. Some resources acknowledge the need for career advancement opportunities and the development of career ladders, but none provide concrete strategies or approaches for how to develop these ladders.

Summary and Implications for Future Work

Findings from the literature review, active engagement, and environmental scan highlight several gaps in existing research, resources, and strategies related to workforce dynamics. Below, we provide a summary of key findings and preliminary implications for the Workforce Institute.

Key Findings

- Existing research on workforce dynamics is largely descriptive and correlational, limiting the ability to draw causal conclusions about the impact of various factors or improvement efforts. Approximately half of workforce support strategies are research-based but lack empirical testing, and the other half lack a cited source entirely Overall, most existing resources and strategies to support workforce dynamics lack supporting research and a solid evidence base.
- **There is a lack of research on home visitor safety.** Home visitor safety emerged as a pressing priority in our active engagement. Research identifies the importance of program support for home visitor safety (District of Columbia Home Visiting Council 2021; West et al., 2018). However, we found only one study that examined associations with safety, finding that threats to personal safety were associated with lower job satisfaction (Kuhns et al., 2024).
- **There is a lack of research on recruitment.** Only 10 studies included findings related to workforce recruitment. There is a need for additional research to better understand the degree and nature of recruitment challenges that home visiting programs experience. Additionally, it is not clear how programs might improve existing job descriptions to attract strong job candidates.
- **There is a lack of research and resources on career advancement.** Research indicates that many home visitors are dissatisfied with their chances of ever advancing in their career (Crowne et al., 2022; Sandstrom et al., 2020a). However, there are limited resources on how to create opportunities for career advancements and career ladders.
- **There is a lack of information on retention rates.** While there is research on staff turnover in home visiting, there is much less research on retention rates, specifically.

Two studies find that the average tenure for a home visitor is approximately five years (Akamani et al., 2024; Jones et al., 2022). More research is needed to understand how many home visitors stay in their roles from year to year and if there are more positive reasons for turnover (e.g., home visitors being promoted to supervisors or leadership roles in the home visiting field).

- **Across literature and resources, most workforce support strategies operate at the program level.** Few strategies are implemented at the systems level, such as expanding federal financial incentives (e.g., student loan forgiveness), or at the individual level, such as practicing mindfulness and self-care.
- **Promising strategies for improving workforce dynamics include workplace support, cohesion, and communication.** Multiple large studies find that these factors are positively associated with workforce well-being (Franko et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2022; Kuhns et al., 2024; Sandstrom et al., 2020a). Strategies that focus on improving these aspects of the workplace environment may promote well-being and retention.
- Attention to reducing administrative burden, ensuring home visitor safety, and including workforce voice in programmatic decisions are also promising workforce support strategies. In our active engagement, home visiting staff identified these as areas where more support and resources are needed. Co-designing resources with members of the workforce may also help to ensure that resources are useful and practical.
- **There is a need for workforce support strategies that are accessible and available at a low cost, and that have a high impact.** While complex solutions like salary increases and benefit expansions are vital, they can overshadow simpler, more immediate actions to improve workforce dynamics. Promising strategies such as recognizing home visitors for their work, ensuring home visitors have a voice in programmatic decisions, and fostering a culture that values flexibility can enhance well-being, job satisfaction, and retention.
- **There are a limited number of resources that are specific and action oriented.** While some existing resources offer strategies to support home visitors, most do not explain or provide detailed guidance around *how* to implement these strategies. In addition, current resources are written for unspecified audiences and cover multiple topics, making it difficult for readers to recognize their relevance.

Implications for Future Work

Findings point to a set of actionable priorities for the Workforce Institute, organized below around three interconnected goals: creating career pathways for home visitors, strengthening the workforce infrastructure and systems that support daily practice, and promoting home visitor well-being. Implications for practice, policy, and research within each goal area are summarized below.

Creating Pathways for Home Visiting Careers

The home visiting field lacks clear entry points and advancement structures. The absence of formal university degrees as a pathway into home visiting, the limited visibility of the field among prospective employees, and the scarcity of structured career ladders contribute to ongoing recruitment difficulties and a workforce with limited upward mobility. Addressing these gaps requires coordinated action at the practice, policy, and research levels.

Implications for Practice

- Develop and disseminate clearly written, purpose-forward job descriptions that accurately capture the role of home visitors and highlight the field's value to families and communities.
- Implement competency frameworks and career ladder structures that define explicit steps, skills, and requirements for advancement within and across home visiting roles—from home visitor to supervisor, program leader, and beyond.
- Create formal mentorship and leadership development opportunities, including leadership academies, that prepare home visitors for advancement.
- Partner with community colleges, universities, and professional credentialing bodies to create pathways that allow home visitors to earn academic credit for field experience and professional development, lowering barriers to higher education.
- Prioritize recruitment from within communities served, including hiring parents who have participated in home visiting programs, to reflect the lived experience of families and build a more representative workforce.

Implications for Policy

- Advocate for the development of home visiting-specific educational credentials and degree programs at the university level, positioning home visiting as a recognized profession with a defined academic pathway.
- Support policies that tie career advancement and credentialing to compensation increases, making career ladder progression financially meaningful and incentivizing professional development.
- Expand federal and state financial incentives, including student loan forgiveness and tuition assistance, to home visitors pursuing higher education or professional credentials in fields aligned with home visiting practice.
- Encourage cross-agency and cross-model coordination to standardize career advancement frameworks, so that home visitors can move across programs and models without having to restart career progression.

Implications for Research

- Conduct research on the degree, nature, and root causes of recruitment challenges across program types, geographic contexts, and population groups to better understand barriers to field entry.
- Study the design and effectiveness of career ladder models in home visiting, including how different structures influence recruitment, retention, job satisfaction, and service quality.
- Examine how partnerships with higher education institutions, including internship programs, can serve as pipelines into the home visiting workforce.
- Explore how home visiting can be better defined and communicated to the broader public and prospective employees.

Strengthening the Workforce



Strengthening the home visiting workforce requires building systems of support, professional development, and organizational capacity that allow home visitors to do their best work over the long term. This includes reducing administrative burden, improving workplace culture and supervisory practice, and ensuring that training and resources are evidence-based, actionable, and accessible.

Implications for Practice

- Invest in structured onboarding programs and ongoing coaching that help new home visitors build competency and confidence, reduce early attrition and improve long-term performance.
- Provide professional development tailored to the full range of workforce needs—from foundational training for new home visitors to advanced learning for experienced staff, including training on trauma-informed practices, supporting families with complex needs, and community resource navigation.
- Streamline data systems and documentation requirements to reduce administrative burden, including reviewing reporting requirements for redundancy and investing in user-friendly technology tools that support, rather than add to, home visitors' workloads.
- Foster workplace cultures that involve staff in program decisions, recognize their contributions, and provide opportunities for voice and influence—factors consistently linked to higher retention and well-being.
- Develop and refine supervision models that are reflective, tailored to individual staff needs, and structured to support both professional growth and well-being, including access to regular individual and group supervision.
- Create and disseminate resources that are specific, action-oriented, and designed for distinct audiences—including home visitors themselves, not just program administrators—with clear implementation guidance.

Implications for Policy

- Review and reform federal and state reporting requirements to reduce duplication and administrative burden, aligning data collection with program goals.
- Ensure adequate and stable funding for professional development, supervision, and workforce support activities, not just direct service delivery, so programs have the resources to invest in their staff.
- Support cross-model and cross-agency collaboration to develop shared training resources, competency frameworks, and workforce development tools that reduce redundancy and increase access for smaller programs.
- Examine caseload standards and make policy-level adjustments where evidence indicates that current caseload requirements contribute to unsustainable workloads.

Implications for Research

- Partner with programs and states to co-develop and evaluate new workforce support strategies, incorporating the perspectives and expertise of home visitors as active participants—not just research subjects—in knowledge generation.
- Draw on evidence from related fields, including early childhood education, child welfare, and organizational psychology, to identify transferable strategies and test their applicability in the home visiting context.
- Examine the relationship between specific workplace practices (e.g., supervision models, decision-making structures, professional development approaches) and measurable workforce outcomes including retention, burnout, and service quality.
- Investigate what constitutes adequate caseload size and administrative time across different program types and families served to inform workforce planning and policy.

Supporting Workforce Well-Being

The well-being of home visitors is both a workforce and quality-of-service issue. High rates of burnout and secondary traumatic stress, inadequate safety protocols, low compensation, and limited recognition all undermine the sustainability of the workforce and ultimately affect the families they serve. A comprehensive well-being strategy requires attention to individual, organizational, and systemic conditions, and must recognize and build on the strengths home visitors bring to their work.

Implications for Practice

- Implement evidence-informed practices to prevent and address burnout, including access to mental health consultation, peer support groups, reflective supervision, and opportunities for staff to process vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue.
- Establish and communicate clear safety protocols for home visitors working in the field, including safety training, check-in systems, and protocols for managing unsafe or high-risk situations during home visits.
- Provide access to employer-sponsored benefits including health insurance, paid leave, and mental health services—not only as recruitment tools, but as concrete support for workforce well-being.
- Create formal mechanisms for recognizing the contributions and achievements of home visitors, including celebrating family and program successes, acknowledging milestones, and involving staff in organizational growth and development.
- Foster a strengths-based organizational culture that identifies and builds on what home visitors do well, rather than focusing exclusively on challenges, deficits, or performance gaps.
- Ensure that flexibility and autonomy, including flexible scheduling, telework options where feasible, and meaningful involvement in decision-making, are treated as core components of workforce well-being.



Implications for Policy

- Advocate for compensation structures that reflect the complexity, skill, and community value of home visiting work, including living wages, salary ranges tied to experience and credentialing, and equity with comparable fields such as early childhood education and social work.
- Support policies that address safety risks for home visitors working in community settings, including guidelines for safety training, equipment, and employer accountability for staff safety.
- Ensure that workforce well-being is an explicit and funded component of federal and state home visiting policy frameworks and not treated as secondary to model fidelity or family outcome metrics.
- Promote policies that address the structural drivers of home visitor stress, including manageable caseload standards, reasonable documentation expectations, and access to adequate community resources for the families they serve.

Implications for Research

- Prioritize research on home visitor safety in the field—an area identified as a pressing concern by the workforce but largely absent from the existing literature—including prevalence of safety incidents, risk factors, and the effectiveness of safety protocols.
- Expand the well-being research agenda beyond burnout and psychological distress to include positive dimensions of well-being such as compassion satisfaction, resilience, purpose, and professional identity.
- Adopt strengths-based research frameworks that recognize and document what supports home visitors to thrive, not only what places them at risk.
- Examine the relationship between compensation, benefits, and workforce well-being outcomes, including the extent to which pay affects recruitment, retention, and burnout.
- Engage home visitors as partners in research design and knowledge exchange, creating opportunities to document and share innovative practices developed at the program level that the broader field can learn from.

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