

North Carolina Early Home Visiting Landscape Analysis

Executive Summary

All families need support to be stable, secure, and healthy. For many families, help is available from other family members, friends, and the community. Yet most families, especially those with newborns, can benefit from resources delivered through health care and human service systems. Home visiting programs offer additional support directly in the context of families' lives to improve the health and well-being of both children and parents. Along with many states, North Carolina is in the process of expanding the availability of home visiting services. This expansion is driven by research indicating that the positive benefits of home visiting outweigh the costs.

Expansion of home visiting service has occurred in specific geographic areas, with a patchwork of funding streams, leaving the current system fragmented, disconnected, and inefficient in meeting the needs of North Carolina families. Further, home visiting services are optimized when programs are part of coordinated system of family support services. The answers to many basic questions regarding home visiting in North Carolina have been largely unknown, including *How many families receive home visiting? What program models are operating and where? How large is the home visiting workforce in our state? Where are the largest areas of unmet need? What are the facilitators and barriers to statewide implementation?*

The purpose of this landscape study is to fill this gap in knowledge. With better information about the state of home visiting in North Carolina, policymakers and leaders are in a better position to make informed strategic decisions. This study used three evaluation methods: (1) literature review, (2) statewide survey, and (3) key informant interviews. The survey response was strong. The study sample represents over 70,000 home visits statewide in 2017, with over 5,300 families served, and a workforce of over 400 home visitors and supervisors. The methods and results are detailed in this report.

Based on the findings, a primary recommendation is to establish a statewide home visiting leadership structure. This leadership structure is required to further define goals for and carry out the remaining recommendations. Recommendations include the following:

- 1. Identify and implement a sustainable statewide leadership structure that is responsive to local communities.**
- 2. Develop a statewide home visiting strategic vision and action plan that is completely integrated with a comprehensive system of care.**
- 3. Identify new funding streams to support an integrated family support system anchored by early home visiting.**
- 4. Build and support a well-trained, well-resourced workforce by developing a shared educational platform, providing continuing education, creating regional learning collaboratives, and providing skill-building opportunities for core competencies.**
- 5. Report annually on a set of common indicators across all programs to provide information about the families served, outcomes achieved, and return on investment.**
- 6. Assess community capacity, fit, need, and usability in the selection of models.**
- 7. Improve coordination among programs and with other services, including medical homes and social services to comprehensively address family needs.**

These recommendations are achievable and this landscape study provides a strong foundation of knowledge for the path forward. Next steps should include both "bottom-up" and "top-down" approaches. Although leadership structures are needed, the next efforts must include the voices of families, home visitors, and local program leaders to understand implementation "on the ground."



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