

Idaho Home Visiting: Strengthening Families



FY2022 Legislative Ask:

- ☑ **Continue to provide Medicaid reimbursement of home visiting services and state general funds** to increase the reach of local home visiting programs and better meet the needs of Idaho communities and families.

What are Home Visiting Services?

Home visiting is a **voluntary, proven, support and coaching service that strengthens families** during critical times of early life development. Trained home visitors, such as nurses or parent educators, work with expecting parents and parents of children under age 5 to provide necessary resources and skills to raise physically, socially, and emotionally healthy children.

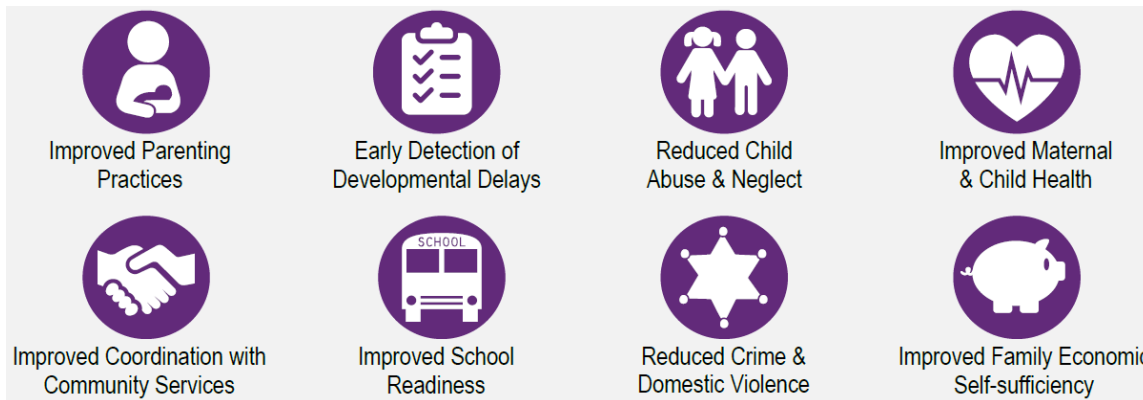
Through the trusting relationships formed with home visitors, vulnerable Idaho parents are empowered to build self-sufficiency and achieve stable, healthy futures for their families.

Importance of Home Visiting During COVID-19

During these difficult times, home visitors have continued to meet the needs of the Idaho families they serve. With in-person visits not possible, home visitors quickly pivoted to providing virtual visits to support families. Throughout the state, families are relying on their home visitors for help with challenges made more difficult by the pandemic, such as isolation, economic challenges, addiction and substance misuse, intimate partner violence, and other challenges that add to the stress of children and families.

Home Visiting Outcomes for Idaho Families

Decades of research show home visiting to impact the following child and family outcomes:



Home visiting programs offer returns on investment ranging from **\$1.26 to \$5.70 for every dollar spent**, based on the level of risk the family faced.¹

¹Karoly, L., Kilburn, M. R., Cannon, J. Proven results, future promise. RAND Corporation 2005.

Current Landscape of Home Visiting in Idaho

In Idaho, local public health districts and nonprofit organizations provide home visiting services using three evidence-based models: **Nurse-Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, and Early Head Start-Home Based.**



Home visiting in Idaho is funded primarily with federal dollars through the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program and Early Head Start grants. The Idaho State Legislature provided a one-time appropriation of \$1.6 million in state general funds in SFY19, and SFY20 for home visiting services delivered locally through Idaho's Public Health Districts. With these funds, home visiting services expanded from being available in 12 counties to over 30 counties, with an additional 218 families receiving home visiting services in SFY20. Beginning in SFY21, \$1 million in home visiting funding was included in the Governor's Executive Budget and appropriated by the Legislature.

One Canyon County home visitor's experience

My client had her baby when she was a junior in high school. Her living situation was not ideal at this time, as there was not a heat source in her current home and her boyfriend's family did not treat her well. After several discussions about the importance of caring for her baby and herself, my client gained the courage to move out of her boyfriend's home to a safer location.

Once there, she was able to refocus on her goals for the future. We set goals together, with her main goal being to find a place of her own where she could live with her boyfriend and baby. We discussed how to set up a bank account and created a budget so she could start saving money. My client knew she would need a job and the ability to get to and from work in order to meet her goal, so we started doing practice questions for her driver's test at each visit. Since then, my client has obtained her driver's license, acquired a full time job, and is now living in her own home with her toddler and her boyfriend.

Strengthening Services by Leveraging State Dollars for Medicaid Reimbursement

As instructed by the Legislature during the 2020 Legislative Session, the Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) secured approval from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services for a State Plan Amendment permitting eligible home visiting programs to bill Medicaid for services rendered. The process of building the necessary billing systems at the local and state levels is proceeding successfully. DHW completed preparations for the state billing process to go into effect on December 1, 2020, and has continued to provide guidance. The local programs offering services are updating their administrative practices to include Medicaid reimbursement for home visiting. Medicaid dollars are beginning to flow to support home visiting services.

The need to serve more families in Idaho is still great. According to the National Home Visiting Resource Center, **only 1.26% of the families in Idaho who could benefit from home visiting received services in 2019.**² Leveraging Medicaid funds with our state home visiting dollars efficiently uses resources to allow services to expand where they are needed most. Families benefit when our programs are able to braid dollars from Medicaid, MIECHV, and state funds.

²National Home Visiting Resource Center, retrieved from https://nhvrc.org/state_profile/idaho-2020/