



Region X Innovation Grant

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Growing Together to Support Our Home Visiting Workforce

Region X Home Visiting Workforce Study



RESEARCH BRIEF #3

Professional Development, Workplace Quality,
and Retention within the Region X Home
Visiting Workforce

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This research brief is the third in a series that are part of the *Region X Home Visiting Workforce Study* funded by the *Region X Innovation Grant* at the Washington Department of Children, Youth, and Families, in partnership with The Alaska Division of Public Health, The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, and the Oregon Health Authority. The study was designed to identify the current strengths, gaps, and unmet needs in the home visiting workforce¹ in Region X to inform workforce recruitment, retention, and professional development efforts. For more information about the study, please see *The Region X Home Visiting Workforce Study: Introduction*.^x

Key Findings

The majority of Region X home visitors and supervisors report participation in reflective supervision training and practices that support their work, such as opportunities to reflect on the emotional impact of the work.

Across the region, both home visitors and supervisors report strong learning cultures that include staff collaboration and opportunities for peer-to-peer reflections about the work.

Home visitors and supervisors across Region X feel that their safety is supported; home visitors in Oregon have a particularly strong sense of value and support for their personal safety.

Supervisors and home visitors generally reported a strong sense of autonomy, importance, justice, support, role clarity, and opportunities for taking on challenges and innovations in their workplace. Supervisors, especially, rated the presence of some of these workplace factors highly.

Reported average annual turnover rates for home visitors and supervisors in Region X were 23% and 20%, respectively.

Eighty-seven percent of home visitors and 91% of supervisors plan to stay in their jobs for at least the next two years. Primary reasons for staying include a desire to help children and families and work schedules that meet personal needs.

Of the 12% of home visiting professionals who plan to leave their jobs in the next two years, the most common reasons are low pay, a lack of promotion opportunities, excess paperwork, and inadequate supervisory support.



Introduction

Home visitors tend to experience a reduction in job satisfaction and high emotional exhaustion and burnout over time,ⁱ both of which are associated with increased intentions of leaving and higher turnover rates.^{ii,iii} Burnout can also result from high workloads and too many demands on home visitors' time. However, strong factors that reduce burnout for home visitors include satisfaction with supervisors, feelings of empowerment or control over work, and organizational task-orientation or an emphasis on planning and efficacy.^{iv} Other contributing factors to high retention rates include limited alternative employment opportunities and higher wages or benefits.^v


Similarly, training, staff support, and supervision have been shown to provide home visitors with the skills needed to feel effective and confident in their jobs, regardless of their educational or training background.^{vi} Additionally, reflective supervision provides supplementary support by providing home visitors with reflective thinking skills and coping mechanisms and contributes to a supportive work climate.^{vii} Reflective supervision refers to a supportive relationship-based practice between supervisors and

Reflective Supervision

Definition:

Reflective supervision is a form of ongoing intentional, scheduled professional development that focuses on enhancing the reflective practice skills of home visitors for purposes of program quality, including staff wellness & retention.

Source: Region X Reflective Supervision/Consultation Collaborative. (2018). *Reflective supervision: A guide from Region X to enhance reflective practice among home visiting programs*. Olympia, WA: Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families.



supervisees that emphasizes reflection, collaboration, and regular, consistent meetings, and that supports home visitors in exploring the experiences and emotions they bring to their work with families. Because home visiting professionals can experience substantial work-related stress, a positive work climate that includes supervisory support can mitigate burnout and combat high turnover rates in the field.^{viii}

Recent evidence has found several benefits of reflective supervision for the home visiting workforce, including benefits to program implementation, feelings of self-efficacy, and an overall increased knowledge of reflective practices. In particular, home visitors have reported a sense that reflective supervision benefits their coping abilities related to work stress, ability to manage emotional responses to family conflict, relationships with coworkers, overall professional development, and overall job satisfaction.^{ix}

Research Questions

The purpose of this research brief is to address the following questions based on a sample of home visitors and home visiting supervisors in Region X:

- ① How do home visitors and supervisors experience training and reflective supervision?
- ② How do home visitors and supervisors perceive the quality of their work environments?
- ③ What factors are driving turnover among home visitors and supervisors?
- ④ What are the future job intentions of the sample of home visitors and supervisors?

Sample

The sample used for this research brief includes 468 home visitors who provide home visiting services directly to families and 161 home visiting supervisors, 29% of whom conduct home visits with the families they serve. These home visitors and supervisors were drawn from 148 programs in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, collectively known as Region X. Within the sample, 202 (43.2%) home visitors and 76 (47.2%) home

visiting supervisors work in home visiting programs that receive MIECHV funding. Thirty-eight percent of programs in the sample reported receiving MIECHV funding. This brief also includes data from a sub-group of 27 home visitors and 6 supervisors who left their jobs within six months of taking the original survey. For more information about the measures used for this study, please see *The Region X Home Visiting Workforce Study: Introduction*.^x

Results

Research Question 1: How do home visitors and supervisors experience reflective supervision?

Training and reflective supervision are important components of professional development within the home visiting profession. This section describes the questions the Region X Home Visiting Workforce Survey asked about these topics and presents the results by state and job role.

REFLECTIVE SUPERVISION

The workforce survey included seven items about the presence of various aspects of reflective supervision (Figure 3.1).



For all items, the majority of home visitors responded that they “agreed” or “strongly agreed,” indicating a trusting relationship with their supervisor, a consistent supervision schedule, and opportunities to reflect upon their work and how it relates to their emotions. Most home visitors also reported that their supervisor helps them explore cultural considerations in their work, though the endorsement of this item was slightly lower.

Home visitors from Alaska typically endorsed the reflective supervision items at the highest rates. Notably, 91% of Alaska’s home visitors reported a trusting relationship with their supervisor, versus 70–80% of respondents from other states. Alaska’s home visitors were also more likely to indicate that their supervisor improves their ability to be reflective compared with those from other Region X states.

TRAINING

Three survey questions asked about home visitors’ perceptions of training they receive as part of their job. As shown in Figure 3.2, about two-thirds (or more) of home visitors agreed or strongly agreed that training prepared them for the job, that they received observation and coaching, and that they have support to help families with challenging issues. Idaho had the highest rate of home visitors who reported that their training prepares them well for the job (87%), while Alaska had the greatest proportion

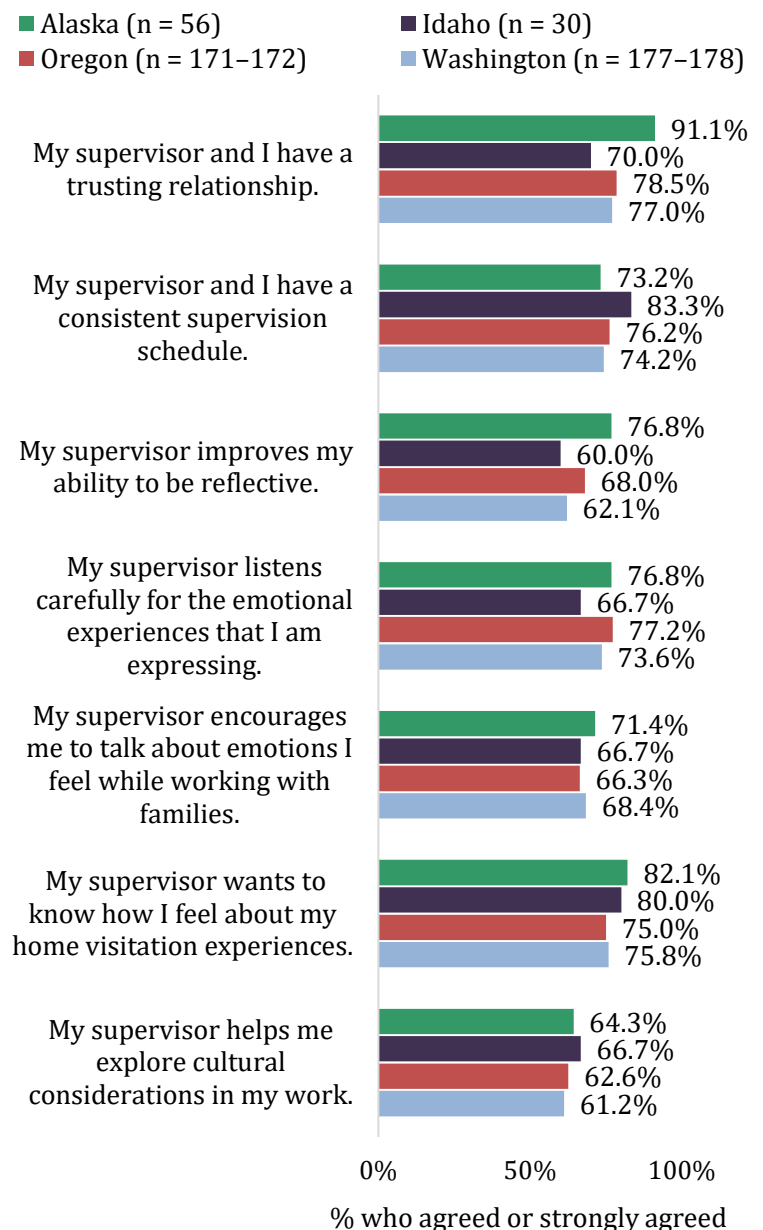


Figure 3.1. Home visitors’ perceptions of reflective supervision: Item endorsement by state

reporting having tools and training to help families with challenging issues (87%). Responses pertaining to observation and coaching were fairly similar across states, with about 65–75% of home visitors reporting that their agency used these strategies to help them improve their practice.

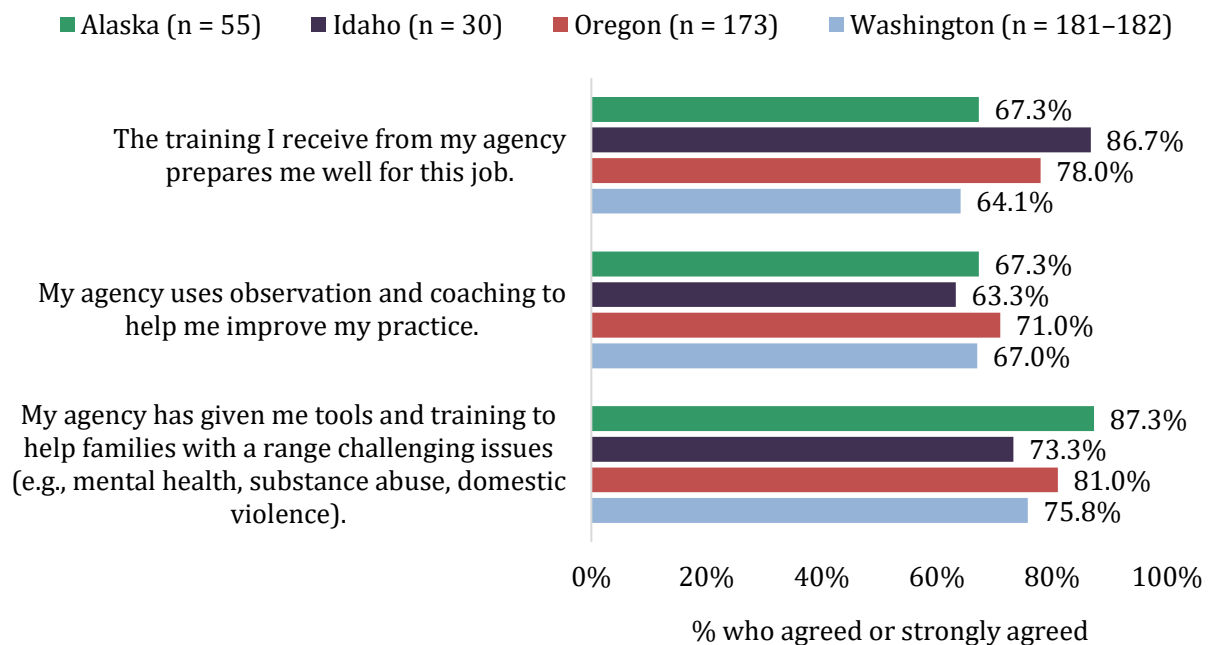


Figure 3.2. Home visitors' perceptions of training: Item endorsement by state




Analyses of reflective supervision and training scales showed no significant differences between Region X states.



GROUP DIFFERENCES IN REFLECTIVE SUPERVISION AND TRAINING

To examine differences by state in participants' overall ratings of reflective supervision and training, we computed scale scores, which represent the averages across the individual items. Results of statistical analyses showed no statistically significant differences between states.

In summary, the majority of home visitors across Region X reported having a trusting relationship with a supervisor who helped them to reflect upon the emotional aspects of their work. Most home visitors also felt that they received the necessary training to do their job and help families with a range of challenging issues. However, it is important to note that about one-quarter to one-third of home visitors did not endorse the reflective supervision and training items, suggesting some variation in the implementation of professional development supports such as reflective supervision and training across the region.



“[We have been] learning and getting a little more education on reflective supervision and that process. I understand more now that it’s a time for [home visitors] to come in and talk about what’s happening, what’s on their mind.”

- Home visiting supervisor



Research Question 2: How do home visitors and supervisors perceive the quality of their work environments?

Across all work sectors, the quality of employees' work environment and culture can play a strong role in workforce retention.^{xi} This is also true for the home visiting profession, where the emotional toll of the work with children and families makes a supportive organizational climate especially important. This section explores how home visitors and supervisors perceive the quality of their work environments, with a focus on perceptions of organizations' learning cultures, emphasis on home visitor safety, and provision of a psychologically supportive environment.

LEARNING CULTURE

Three learning culture items assessed the extent to which staff collaborate, reflect about the work together, and seek support from one another. Home visitors and supervisors in Region X reported strong learning cultures within their work environments, with mean scores of 4.17 and 4.37, respectively, on a scale of 1–5. Scores did not differ significantly by state; however, there were significant differences by job role,¹ with supervisors rating the learning culture more positively than home visitors.

Table 3.1. Learning culture scale scores by state and job role

Measure	Items	Scale means by job role and state				
Learning Culture	Home visiting staff . . .	Home visitors				
		AK n = 56	ID n = 30	OR n = 174	WA n = 182	Region X n = 442
		4.32	4.32	4.19	4.08	4.17
	Work together to find new and better ways to meet the needs of families.	Supervisors				
		AK n = 15	ID n = 11	OR n = 57	WA n = 65	Region X n = 148
		4.64	4.51	4.29	4.36	4.37
	Take time together to reflect about the work.					
	Feel comfortable seeking support from colleagues.					

^a Rating scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree

SAFETY

By nature, home visiting is a profession that requires professionals to enter the homes of the families they serve. This study explored whether home visitors feel that their organizations support their personal safety during home visits by giving them adequate training in personal safety and by communicating an organizational value for personal safety.

As shown in Figure 3.3, ratings of safety were high for Region X home visitors and supervisors, with means for the two-item scale of 4.0 and 4.1, respectively. While scores were high overall, there was a statistically significant difference between states' overall mean ratings of safety,² with home visitors in Oregon having a particularly strong sense of value and support for their personal safety.

¹ $F(1, 355.32) = 12.45, p < .001$

² Tukey HSD post-hoc follow-up to ANOVA, $p = .03$.

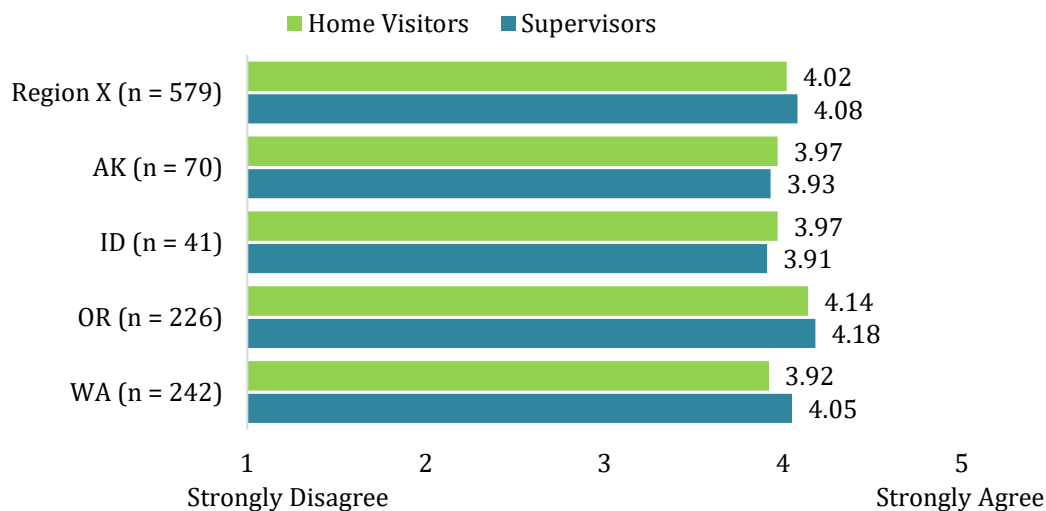


Figure 3.3. Average scores for safety scale, by state and job role

PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE

Psychological climate refers to employees' individual perceptions of their work environment.^{xii} This study included items adapted from the Parker Psychological Climate scale, which measure eight components, including their sense of autonomy, importance, justice, support, role clarity, interpersonal conflict, and opportunities for taking on challenges and innovations. See Table 3.2 for the overall scales and subscales related to psychological climate.

Results indicate that ratings of psychological climate were relatively high across positions for overall scale scores and for most subscales, as mean scores of about 4.0 roughly correspond with the "agree" category. (Note: for the conflict subscale, lower scores are preferable). Overall, the highest-rated aspects of climate included importance (e.g., making a meaningful contribution) and challenge. Home visitors tended to rate role clarity highly ($M = 4.11$), while supervisors generally endorsed autonomy highly ($M = 4.21$).

Analyses revealed several statistically significant differences in views of climate across job roles and states. As shown in Table 3.2, supervisors had more favorable perceptions of their psychological climate overall, and their sense of autonomy, challenge, importance, innovation, and justice, than did home visitors. So, although scores for

psychological climate and its subscales were relatively high for both supervisors and home visitors, they were especially high for supervisors.

There were also statistically significant differences between states for the innovation and support psychological climate subscales, with Alaska home visitors and supervisors endorsing these factors more highly, on average, than other states in the region (see text box below).^{3,4}

Psychological climate ratings: differences by state

Innovation: Alaska ($M = 4.13$) had significantly higher ratings than did Oregon ($M = 3.83$) and Washington ($M = 3.71$).

Support: Alaska ($M = 4.11$) had significantly higher ratings than did Washington ($M = 3.71$).



³ Innovation: Mann-Whitney nonparametric tests: Alaska vs. Oregon ($Z = -2.73, p = .01$); Alaska vs. Washington ($Z = -3.87, p < .001$)

⁴ Support: Tukey post-hoc follow-up to ANOVA, Alaska vs. Washington, $p = .01$.

Table 3.2.Mean scores for psychological climate scale and subscales, by job role^a

Measure Items	Home visitors (n = 439-442)	Supervisors (n = 145-147)	Significant differences by job role?
Psychological Climate – Overall Scale	3.94	4.10	Yes ⁵
Autonomy I have a great deal of freedom to decide how to do my job.	3.89	4.21	Yes ⁶
Challenge I am able to make full use of my knowledge and skills in my job.	4.10	4.27	Yes ⁷
Clarity My job responsibilities are clearly defined. I know what is expected of me in my organization.	4.11	4.06	No
Conflict* I have to do things for my job that are against my better judgment. I am held responsible for things over which I have no control.	2.24	2.18	No
Importance I feel that my job is important to the functioning of my team. I feel that my work makes a meaningful contribution.	4.29	4.57	Yes ⁸
Innovation My agency encourages me to find new ways around old problems.	3.76	4.03	Yes ⁹
Justice Decisions about my job are made in a fair manner.	3.67	3.88	Yes ¹⁰
Support My agency really cares about my well-being. My agency cares about my general satisfaction at work.	3.77	3.93	No

^a Rating scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree

* A lower score on conflict subscale is preferable.

⁵ $F(1, 585) = 8.52, p = .001$ ⁶ $Z = -4.06, p < .001$ (Mann-Whitney nonparametric test)⁷ $Z = -2.27, p = .02$ (Mann-Whitney nonparametric test)⁸ $F(1, 583) = 29.71, p < .001$ ⁹ $Z = -3.17, p = .002$ (Mann-Whitney nonparametric test)¹⁰ $Z = -2.79, p = .01$ (Mann-Whitney nonparametric test)

Research Question 3: What factors are driving turnover among home visitors and supervisors?

One of the most pressing problems across early childhood and family support professions, including home visiting, is how to retain a highly qualified workforce. This section describes the average turnover rate for Region X home visiting programs whose administrators participated in this study. In addition, we provide results of an exit survey that was administered to 27 home visitors and 7 supervisors/administrators across the region who left their jobs within the six months following administration of the full home visiting workforce study (March–July 2018).

TURNOVER

For this study, program administrators were asked to report their total number of home visitors and supervisors on staff and the number of home visitors and supervisors who had left their jobs in the previous twelve months. We used these data to calculate turnover rates by position and state. As shown in Table 3.3, average turnover rates varied by state, but these differences were not statistically significant (this may be because of small response rates that tend to make statistically significant differences hard to detect). Differences between the average turnover rates for home visitors and supervisors in Region X (23% and 20% respectively) also were not statistically significant. For Alaska, however, turnover differences between job roles were statistically significant ($p = .05$).

“I, right now, would say the hardest part [of my job] is figuring out a way to make the work environment more—I’m trying to figure out the word to say here—a little more cohesive . . . [or] collaborative when it comes to leadership and [other home visitors].”

- Home visiting supervisor

Table 3.3. Average 12-month turnover rates

	Alaska n = 10	Idaho n = 9	Oregon n = 39–41	Washington n = 43–46	Region X n = 101–106
Home visitors	40.2%	21.9%	24.2%	17.6%	23%
Supervisors	13.4%	22.2%	26.7%	15.3%	20%

Within the broader early childhood workforce, turnover rates of 30% or higher are typical.^{xiii} Similarly, a recent study of the home visiting workforce turnover in Illinois identified average turnover rates between 27–31%.^{xiv} Average turnover rates from this

study are similar or slightly lower; however, small sample sizes and use of administrator reporting mean that results should be interpreted with caution.

EXIT SURVEYS

All respondents to the Region X Home Visiting Workforce Survey who left their jobs within six months of completing the original survey were invited to participate in an exit survey. Twenty-seven home visitors and 7 supervisors/administrators participated. See the text box for demographic details about the exit survey participants.

Exit Survey Demographics *

STATE DISTRIBUTION

Alaska: 23.5%
Idaho: 0.0%
Oregon: 35.3%
Washington: 41.2%

RACE/ETHNICITY

People of color: 32.4%
White: 67.6%

LANGUAGE

English: 79.4%
Spanish/Other: 20.5%

AGE

20–29: 17.6%
30–49: 67.6%
50+: 14.7%

EDUCATION

Bachelor's or less: 58.8%
Some graduate school: 20.6%
Master's degree: 20.6%

WORKER EXPERIENCE (AVERAGE # OF YEARS)

Most recent position: 3.5
Direct home visiting: 6.3
Early childhood field: 9.4

WAGES

Average hourly wage: \$21.76
Time since last pay increase: 1.7 years

* To protect anonymity, some data categories have been merged due to small cell sizes.

Twenty-eight home visitors and supervisors who left their jobs did so by choice. Six were laid off or asked to leave. All of those who were laid off said they would have stayed in their jobs if they could have. Of the full sample of exited home visitors and supervisors, 77% identified home visiting as their preferred profession.

Home visitors and supervisors had similar reasons for leaving the profession. For both, the top reason for leaving was personal and unrelated to home visitation work. Both also identified low pay and excessive paperwork as primary drivers for exiting their jobs.

In addition to these common reasons for leaving, home visitors specifically identified wanting more promotion opportunities and the drain of travel and work with families as top reasons for leaving their positions. For supervisors, turnover among home visitors, feelings of ineffectiveness, and unsupportive work environments were top drivers of their decisions to leave (see Table 3.4). More than half of exiters (60.7%) reported that they felt comfortable sharing their job concerns with supervisors or leadership.

Table 3.4. Top reasons for leaving home visiting job (ranked by most common)

Home Visitors	Supervisors
1. Personal reasons not specific to home visitation work	1. Personal reasons not specific to home visitation work
2. The low pay	2. The instability/turnover among home visitors in my program was draining
3. There was excessive paperwork and reporting	3. I was not feeling effective in the job
4. I wanted a job with greater responsibility/promotion	4. The low pay
5. The travel was draining	5. There was excessive paperwork and reporting
6. The work with families was draining	6. There was a punitive/unsupportive work environment

Home visitors and supervisors most frequently reported the following as changes to their jobs or work environments that they would have needed to stay in their jobs:

- Higher pay
- More supportive leadership/supervisor
- Better communication in the organization
- More promotion opportunities
- Less paperwork
- Better relationships with coworkers
- Reduced caseloads

Exit survey respondents who took new employment (see sidebar) most frequently reported that


Exit survey respondents employed in new positions: 62%

Of these...

24% were re-employed in the home visiting field

43% were working in early childhood or with older children, but not in home visitation

33% had changed fields altogether




their new jobs offer higher pay, less travel and paperwork, better schedules, increased promotion opportunities, and more supportive leadership. Respondents had the following suggestions for what their supervisors might have done to be more supportive:

1. Clarify job roles, responsibilities, and expectations
2. Be more consistent and effective in providing reflective/clinical supervision
3. Understand supervisee's job duties and challenges better

Of respondents who had not yet taken new positions, nearly half (46%) did not intend to stay within the home visiting or broader early childhood field.

Research Question 4: What are the job intentions of home visitors and supervisors within Region X?

To better understand the future professional plans of the current home visiting workforce in Region X, this section explores the job intentions of home visitors and home visiting supervisors in the survey sample. In particular, participating home visitors and supervisors answered questions about their intent to either stay in or leave their current positions and identified factors driving their anticipated plans.



“The only thing that is a little frustrating about this particular job is that there’s not much room for advancement because home visiting, it’s like you’re a home visitor. We have a program lead, we have a program director. . . . You kind of have to be a lead or some sort of other supervisory role before you can be the program director. You know what I mean? So, there’s not a ton of room for advancement.”

- Home visitor



INTENT TO STAY

Overall, 87.2% of surveyed home visitors and 91.2% of supervisors in Region X plan to stay in their jobs for at least the next two years (Table 3.5). There were no statistically significant differences in intent to stay by state or by position.

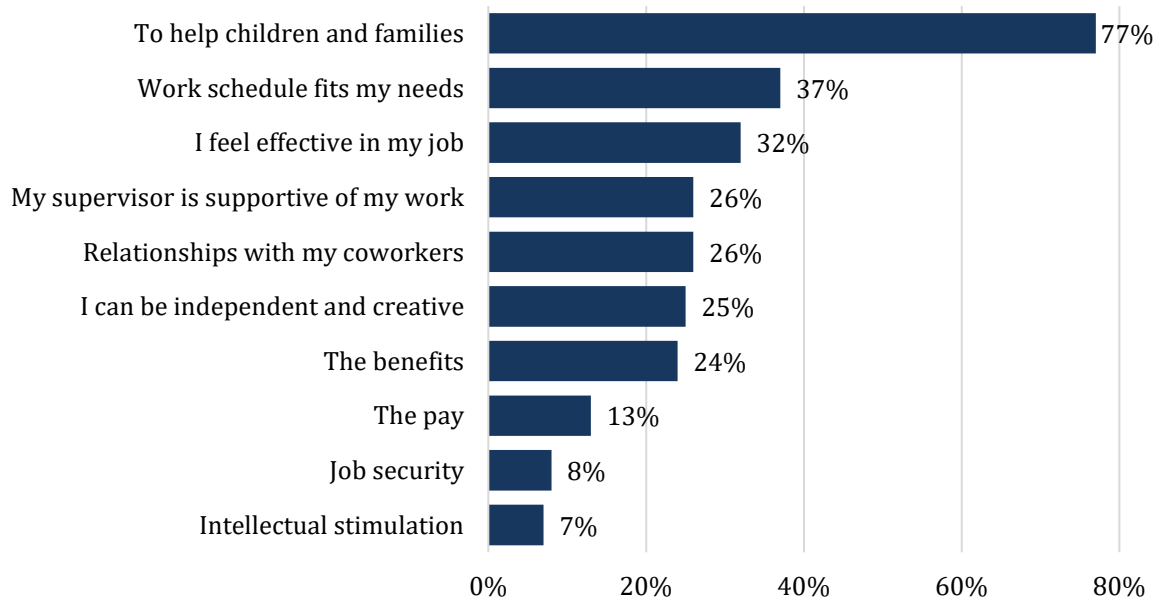
Table 3.5. Percent of home visiting professionals who intend to stay for at least the next two years

	Alaska	Idaho	Oregon	Washington	Region X
Home visitors	n = 55	n = 30	n = 175	n = 184	n = 444
	90.9%	93.3%	86.3%	85.9%	87.2%
Supervisors	n = 16	n = 11	n = 56	n = 65	n = 148
	100.0%	100.0%	89.3%	89.2%	91.2%

Among those who plan to stay in their jobs, the most frequently cited reason is to help children and families. Following this, home visiting professionals indicate that the work schedule fits their needs and they feel effective, have a supportive supervisor and/or positive working relationships with coworkers, and can be independent/creative. Figure 3.4 lists the top ten reasons home visiting professionals provided for staying in their jobs.¹¹

¹¹ Additional reasons for staying included: It would be too hard to change jobs (6%); no other jobs in my area are appealing to me (4%); there are no other jobs as good in my community (4%); I've been here too long to leave (2%); advancement or promotion opportunities (2%); I don't feel qualified for any other job (1%). Twenty respondents wrote in an "other" response not captured by the provided response options; examples include: "*I love my job*," "*personal growth*," "*mak[ing] a partnership between agencies*," and "*the philosophy of my agency inspires me*."

Figure 3.4. Top 10 reasons Region X home visiting professionals stay in their jobs



Across states and job roles, there were some variations in the most frequently reported reasons home visiting professionals had for staying in their positions (Table 3.6). Bolded text indicates a response other than the top 3 reasons indicated for the full sample. These variations largely reflect positive supervisor or coworker relationships that contribute to workers' desire to stay in their positions.

Table 3.6. Top 3 reasons for intent to stay by state and position

	Alaska n = 55	Idaho n = 30	Oregon n = 175	Washington n = 184	Region X n = 444
Home visitors	1. To help children & families (70%)	1. To help children & families (96%)	1. To help children & families (83%)	1. To help children & families (78%)	1. To help children & families (80%)
	2. Work schedule fits my needs (50%)	2. Work schedule fits my needs (46%)	2. Work schedule fits my needs (35%)	2. Work schedule fits my needs (42%)	2. Work schedule fits my needs (41%)
	3. (tie) I feel effective in my job (30%) (tie) My supervisor is supportive of	3. The benefits (36%)	3. My supervisor is supportive of my work (30%)	3. I feel effective in my job (31%)	3. I feel effective in my job (29%)

my work (30%)					
Supervisors	n = 16	n = 11	n = 56	n = 65	n = 148
	1. To help children & families (63%)	1. I feel effective in my job (82%)	1. To help children & families (70%)	1. To help children & families (71%)	1. To help children & families (69%)
	2. (tie) Relationships with my co-workers (44%)	2. To help children & families (64%)	2. I feel effective in my job (40%)	2. I feel effective in my job (34%)	2. I feel effective in my job (42%)
	(tie) I feel effective in my job (44%)	3. Work schedule fits my needs (45%)	3. Relationships with my co-workers (36%)	3. Work schedule fits my needs (29%)	3. Relationships with my co-workers (32%)

INTENT TO LEAVE

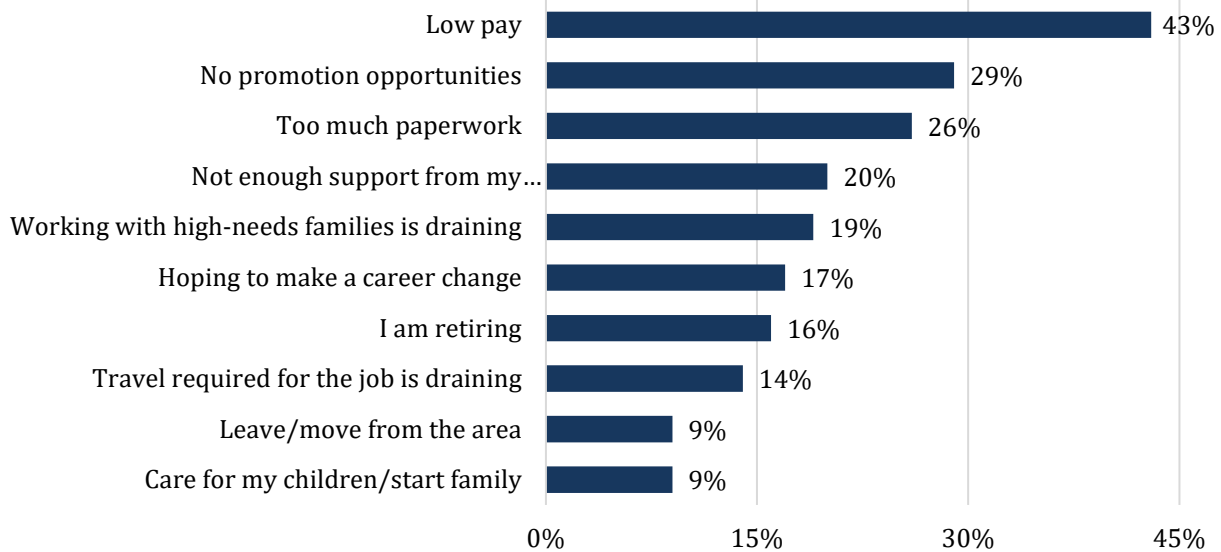
Across Region X, 12% of home visiting professionals in the sample indicated that they plan to leave their jobs within the next two years. The most common reason provided for wanting to leave was low pay, followed by the lack of promotion opportunities, excess paperwork, and inadequate supervisory support. Figure 3.5 shows the top ten reasons home visiting professionals in Region X provided for intending to leave their jobs.¹²

“I’m just saying it—they don’t pay us enough. They really don’t. But I have such an amazing team, and we do the best we can.”

- Home visitor

¹² Additional reasons for intending to leave were reported by fewer than 5 respondents; these included: lack of/poor benefits; it is challenging to follow a home-visiting model; conflict among coworkers; not enough autonomy or independence in the job; for my spouse’s or partner’s job; to care of sick or aging relatives; to care for my own health; I do not feel effective in my job; I do not feel physically safe doing my job; I do not like working evenings and/or weekends; funding for my job is ending. Also, 12 respondents wrote in an “other” response not captured by the provided response options; examples include: “workload is too high,” “got a promotion at current job,” and “pursuing a graduate degree.”

Figure 3.5. Top 10 reasons for intending to leave job (n = 70)



Of the 70 home visiting professionals
who plan to leave their jobs . . .

only 24% plan to keep working
in the home visiting field.



Policy Considerations

This brief has explored perceptions of home visiting professionals across Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington regarding their opportunities for professional development, the quality of the home visiting work environment, and workforce turnover and retention.

Results suggest generally positive perceptions of professional support and organizational practices. Nevertheless, turnover in the home visiting workforce remains relatively high. This section provides some policy considerations for maintaining and even growing some of the positive components of the home visiting profession, while improving factors that may increase workforce retention and reduce turnover.

Reflective Supervision


Reflective supervision practices emphasize reflection, collaboration, and regular, consistent meetings between home visitors and their supervisors and encourage home visitors to explore the experiences and emotions they bring to their work with families. Survey data and interviews with home visiting professionals suggested that many organizations are incorporating elements of these supervision practices into the home visitor-supervisor relationship and that home visitors generally find the support to be beneficial.

Because poor supervision is a leading reason that home visitors and supervisors give for leaving their jobs or the field, agencies can help mitigate this problem by providing, financially supporting, and/or instituting guidance around reflective supervision training for home visiting supervisors in the field. Higher education programs that prepare professionals for home visiting careers and similar human service professions might also consider adding endorsements or courses for students that focus on the core elements of reflective supervision.

Organizational Practices

Home visiting professionals who participated in the current study identified a number of strong organizational factors that support their work, including an attention to home visitor safety as well as work cultures that promote learning, autonomy, innovation, and role clarity and minimize interpersonal conflict.

Developers of specific home visiting models and the government agencies that either fund or support home visiting programs can play a role in promoting these practices by building in selection or continuation criteria related to the presence of these organizational factors and by developing organizational support and training offerings



that help home visiting organizations build work cultures that foster these characteristics.

Turnover

One of the most pressing problems within the home visiting sector is the prevalence of workforce turnover. While lower than some other early childhood fields, the turnover rates of 23% and 20% for home visitors and supervisors in Region X, respectively, are still too high. Results from this study identify pay, promotional opportunities, excessive paperwork, and lack of support from supervisors as key factors driving turnover.

Governmental programs that have been successful for other workforce sectors, such as teachers, might be considered to improve the financial status of home visitors. These might include programs that provide student loan forgiveness for professionals who enter and stay within the home visiting profession for at least three to five years, housing purchase programs that lower interest rates or provide down payments for home visiting professionals, or priority health insurance rates on the open market for home visiting organizations.

Similarly, home organizations within the sector might consider staffing structures that build in a career ladder with more growth opportunities and positions that take on some leadership roles to provide a bridge between home visitors and the program lead or director. With an aging workforce among current supervisors (results from this study indicate 40% of supervisors nearing retirement; see *Brief 1: Demographic and Educational Characteristics of the Region X Home Visiting Workforce*), this strategy provides for succession planning to keep qualified home visitors in the workforce while growing their management and leadership skills.

To combat turnover resulting from excessive paperwork, home visiting organizations should explore opportunities for streamlining reporting and utilizing technology to reduce paperwork burden. Investing in tablets can be an effective strategy to reduce data entry that can otherwise be necessary when using paper forms.

Finally, because poor supervision can be a key factor in driving home visitors out of the field, a continuation or expansion of leadership and management trainings for supervisors may be warranted. In addition to existing opportunities for reflective supervision training, leadership and management training and coaching may help many home visiting program leads or directors learn the skills that are needed to develop the kind of positive work culture that has already been emphasized here.

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