



Region X Innovation Grant

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Growing Together to Support Our Home Visiting Workforce



Region X Advancing Racial Equity Brief





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Key Terms

Home Visitor: An individual who provides support to children and families in the participating family's home or other community location, carrying out the program model, goals, or curriculum for their home visitation program.

Home Visiting Supervisor: Individual responsible for the assignment of children and families to home visitors, as well as the ongoing training, support, and supervision of the home visitor. For some programs, the home visiting administrator and home visiting supervisor may be dual roles. Some home visiting supervisors carry home visiting caseloads themselves.

Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program: A funding source administered through the U.S. Department of Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) that facilitates collaboration and partnership at the federal, state, and community levels to give pregnant women and families, particularly those considered at risk, necessary resources and skills to raise children who are physically, socially, and emotionally healthy and ready to learn. The goals of all MIEHV home visiting programs are to improve maternal and child health, prevent child abuse and neglect, encourage positive parenting, and promote child development and school readiness.

Microaggressions: "Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color. Perpetrators of microaggressions are often unaware that they engage in such communications when they interact with racial/ethnic minorities." (Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, & Esquilin, 2007)

Racial Equity: Occurs when racial identity no longer predicts how someone will fare in outcomes.

Region X: The standard federal region as defined by the federal Office of Management and Budget Circular A-105, "Standard Federal Regions." Region X includes the states of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

White Fragility: A state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions, such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors, such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium. Racial stress results from an interruption to what is racially familiar. These interruptions can take a variety of forms and come from a range of sources. (DiAngelo, 2011)

White Privilege: The unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it. (McIntosh, 2001)

Introduction: Overview of Study Findings Related to Race and Ethnicity

Background

Recognizing the importance of the home visiting workforce to effective service delivery and improved child and family outcomes, HRSA awarded the four states that comprise Region X of the Health Resource and Services Administration (Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington) with an innovation grant in 2016. The purpose of this grant was to develop, implement, and evaluate innovations to strengthen and improve the delivery of coordinated and comprehensive high-quality home visitation services to eligible families. In addition, the Region X partners contracted with the Butler Institute for Families at the University of Denver to conduct a study to identify the current strengths, gaps, and unmet needs in the home visitor workforce across the four states. Researchers and Region X partners designed the study to help inform workforce recruitment, retention, and professional development needs to help ensure the well-being and effectiveness of home visitors in the region.

The study identified key research findings related to race and pay equity. This brief is intended to address these findings and provide actionable recommendations that support the advancement of racial equity strategies. Advancing racial equity is critical to home visitors' work with families, as well as within the broader workplace. Racially equitable work environments and working conditions can help home visitors navigate stressors and support effective recruitment and retention of the home visiting workforce.

Key Findings on Race and Ethnicity

As a part of the *Region X Innovation grant*, the Butler Institute for Families, in collaboration with the University of Colorado Denver and Public Consulting Group, conducted a study to identify the current strengths, gaps, and unmet needs in the home visitor workforce in Region X. In particular, the study was intended to help inform workforce recruitment, retention, and professional development needs and help ensure the well-being and effectiveness of home visitors in the region. The study identified the following regarding the Region X home visiting workforce:

- Demographic and educational characteristics of the workforce – Brief 1
- Job characteristics of the workforce – Brief 2
- Professional development opportunities available to the workforce, and how the workforce rates workplace quality and their intent to stay – Brief 3
- The health and well-being of the workforce – Brief 4

- Predictors of job role, pay, intent to stay, and health status of the workforce – Brief 5

Across the study, the following are key findings specific to race and ethnicity:

① Race and Ethnicity of the Workforce ([Brief 1](#))

Home visitors and supervisors most commonly identified as white and of European origin. Across the region, 38.2% of home visitors and 21.7% of home visiting supervisors identified as people of color. These figures varied somewhat by state, with 31.7% of home visitors in Alaska, 23.3% in Idaho, 38.7% in Oregon, and 42.7% in Washington identifying as people of color. The most common racial/ethnic background, other than white, across states varied somewhat, with 16.7% of home visitors in Alaska identifying as Indigenous Americans / Alaska Natives, and nearly a quarter identifying as Hispanic/Latina in Oregon (24.7%) and Washington (22.9%).

② Family Characteristics and Shared Traits with Workforce ([Brief 2](#))

Research has shown that families were more engaged in home visiting when programs matched a greater proportion of home visitors to families in terms of sociodemographic characteristics, including race or ethnicity (Daro, McCurdy, Falconnier, & Stojanovic, 2003). Home visitors share common racial, ethnic, or cultural traits with fewer than half (46.7%) of the families they serve. Across the region, 15% of home visitors and 11.1% of home visiting supervisors indicated speaking a primary language other than English; approximately one-third of families speak a different language than their home visitors.

③ Racial Pay Disparities ([Brief 5](#))

The association between race and pay was found after controlling for educational attainment, area of study, years of experience, and job role. In other words, all else being equal, individuals of color make \$1.35 less per hour than white individuals, a difference of nearly \$3,000 per year. Overall, this suggests racial pay disparities among this sample. Most home visitors in the region (62.1%) earn between \$15.00 and \$25.00 per hour, although a small percentage (8.1%) earn less than \$15.00/hour and a third (29.7%) earn more than \$25.00/hour. Salaries for supervisors trend higher, with 41.9% of supervisors reporting wages of \$30.00/hour or more. On average, supervisors earned between \$5.00 and \$8.00 per hour more than home visitors. Home

visitors averaged \$22.65 per hour, while supervisors averaged \$28.40 hourly. Median wages were \$19.22 per hour and \$26.08 respectively.

STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT PREDICTORS OF HIGHER PAY:

- › Higher educational attainment
- › A degree in a clinical content area
- › More years of ECE experience
- › More years of home visiting experience
- › Being a supervisor
- › Being white

Pay:

Significant predictors of hourly pay



This analytic model accounts for: educational attainment, area of study, years of experience, job role, and race.

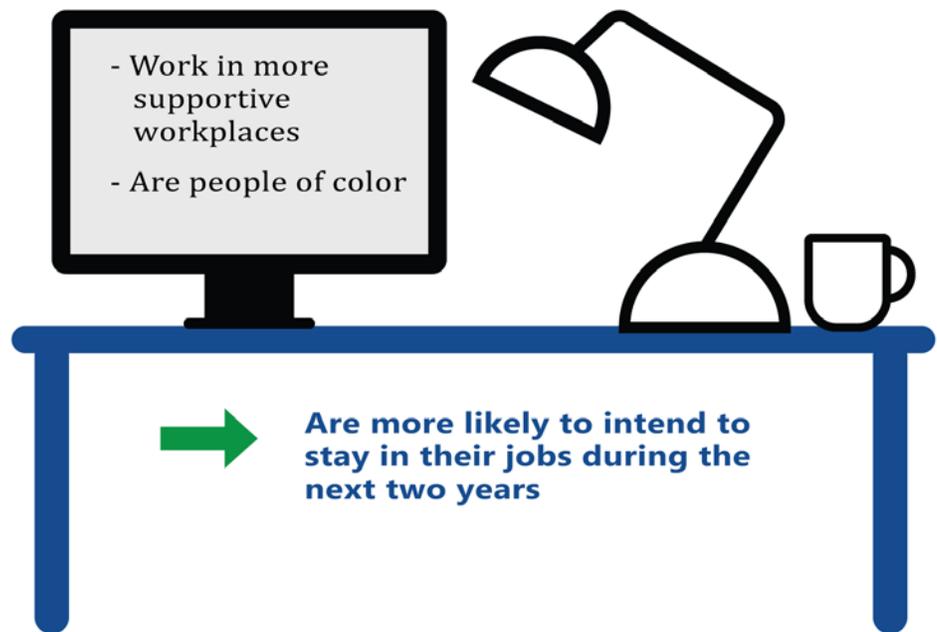
④ Turnover of the Workforce ([Brief 5](#))

Home visitors and supervisors who identified as persons of color were significantly more likely to report intention to stay in their jobs, holding a variety of other factors constant (e.g., pay, job role, hours worked, etc.). Specifically, staff of color were 86% more likely to report intention to stay in their jobs, which could suggest greater job satisfaction—or less job mobility.

Intent to Stay:

Home visiting professionals who:

- Work in more supportive workplaces
- Are people of color



This analytic model accounts for adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), reflective supervision, psychological climate, pay, hours work per week, hours spent doing paperwork, caseload, age, job role, and race

Foundations of Racial Equity

Race, income, and wealth are closely connected in the United States. However, racial inequities are not just about income. When we hold income constant, there are still large inequities based on race across multiple indicators for success, including education, health, jobs, incarceration, and housing. The very definition of racial equity is that race would not predict these outcomes. For us to advance racial equity, first and foremost, it is vital that we are able to talk about race. We have to both normalize conversations about race and operationalize strategies for advancing racial equity (Nelson, Spokane, Ross, & Deng, 2015).

Racial equity means that outcomes are not determined by race.

In the Region X Home Visiting Workforce Study, race predicted pay, even after holding education, job role, and experience constant, suggesting racial inequity. This brief provides a call to action for leaders of home visiting programs to further examine racial equity issues, including the influence of white fragility and white privilege on sustaining the status quo (see Key Terms).

Effective leaders within organizations intentionally examine and improve policies, practices, programs, and organizational cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes for the workforce and the children, youth, and families served, based on race. Applying a racial equity lens across organizational practices supports the ethical and legal responsibility to take action to promote racial equity.

Within this key role, program leaders should stay attuned to the four levels of racism (Bridgespan, 2018):



Personal: Private beliefs, prejudices, and ideas that individuals have about the superiority of whites and the inferiority of people of color. Among people of color, it manifests as internalized oppression. Among whites, it manifests as internalized racial superiority.



Interpersonal: The expression of racism between individuals. It occurs when individuals interact and their private beliefs affect their interactions.



Institutional: Discriminatory treatment, unfair policies and practices, and inequitable opportunities and impacts within organizations and institutions, based on race, that routinely produce racially inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people. Individuals within institutions take on the power of the institution when they reinforce racial inequities.



Structural: A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing, ways to perpetuate racial group inequality. It is racial bias among institutions and across society. It involves the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of societal factors, including the history, culture, ideology, and interactions of institutions and policies that systematically privilege white people.

Structural racism is deeply rooted in our country’s history and our current culture. It supports and routinely advantages whites and creates poorer outcomes for people of color. Structural racism encompasses the entire system of white domination, diffused and infused in all aspects of society, including its history, culture, politics, economics, and entire social fabric. Structural racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism—all other forms of racism emerge from structural racism (Lawrence & Keleher, 2004).

For home visiting programs, advancing racial equity means joining in transformative change that examines organizational mind-sets, the policies that guide the workforce, and the practices that support culturally centered work with families and their children. While the study results relevant to race focused on the workforce, there are other areas such as best practices in working with families in a culturally centered manner that Region X may also want to give attention to.

“Recently, a complicated and difficult part of my job has been recognizing the systemic racism that’s built into healthcare and education programs, including mine, and trying to think of how I name that, work with that, try to work to undo it within myself and others.”

—Home Visitor

The home visiting programs should explore where their program is along a continuum of becoming an anti-racist multicultural organization and commit to a plan for how to move forward along the continuum. An organization may find themselves anywhere on the continuum, with the far extreme being a state in which there is a monocultural structure, meaning the organization is exclusionary and openly maintains the dominant group’s power and privilege. Over time, with intention, the organization can move to the other end



of the continuum, in which the organization has become fully inclusive and multicultural, viewing racial and cultural differences as assets to the organization. For a visual representation of what a continuum can look like, see [Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization](#). The resources noted on pages 14–16 will support an organization in moving along the continuum toward positive change.

Leaders in an agency or organization must be at the forefront of courageous conversations and planning to challenge institutional and structural racism that contribute to worse outcomes for diverse members of the workforce, such as experiences of microaggressions that create a hostile workplace. Leaders can also improve how the workforce serves families and children of color or tribally affiliated children by supporting culturally responsive home visiting programs.

Inclusive guided discussions are a helpful place to begin this process because they can assist in creating a transparent culture and engaging all perspectives to address racial equity challenges in the workplace and within the workforce. The [Race Matters Toolkit](#) referenced on page 16 provides a useful guide to holding these important discussions. It is also helpful to reflect on the Four Agreements of Courageous Conversations and to review these four agreements with the workforce, preferably before starting courageous conversations. Singleton and Linton (2006) explored the difficulties that can exist around difficult conversations related to race and ethnicity and found that discussions guided by the Four Agreements of Courageous Conversations can help participants stay engaged, transparent, and open. These four agreements can help an agency stay on task as they work toward racial equity. The four agreements are (Singleton & Linton, 2006):

1. **Stay engaged:** This means “remaining morally, emotionally, intellectually, and socially involved in the dialogue.”
2. **Experience discomfort:** This norm acknowledges that discomfort is inevitable, especially in dialogue about race, and that participants make a commitment to bring issues into the open. Talking about these issues does not create divisiveness. The divisiveness already exists in society and in our systems. It is through dialogue, even when uncomfortable, that healing and change begin.
3. **Speak your truth:** This means being open about thoughts and feelings and not just saying what you think others want to hear.
4. **Expect, respect, and accept non-closure:** This means everyone is asked to “hang out in uncertainty” and not rush to quick solutions, especially in relation to racial understanding, which requires ongoing dialogue.

Senior program leaders, including supervisors, have a key role in building an organizational culture that advances racial equity. To advance racial equity, leaders should guide their programs to understand history and the racialized impacts of organizational



actions, change organizational practices, and repair relationships with the goal of building trust, particularly with those who have been harmed by past actions (Borgonovi, 2019). For leaders in Region X, the following strategies and related recommendations can provide a useful roadmap for moving racial equity forward.

Advancing Region X Racial Equity Strategies

The workforce within home visiting programs has an important role in dismantling racism. Home visitors and leaders, including supervisors, can develop self-awareness about their implicit bias and the impact it has on interpersonal interactions with colleagues and with families. At an organizational level, home visiting programs can implement strategies in an effort to begin addressing institutional and systemic racism. The following recommendations, linked to study findings outlined on pages 6 and 7, are offered to Region X to support efforts that advance racial equity. Each recommendation includes an icon that shows the level of racism it may address. Each recommendation *section* includes suggested resource links.

Ensure Pay Equity

Recommendation 1: Conduct internal pay audits to determine if, in fact, individuals of color are paid less than their white counterparts in this workforce. If pay disparities are identified, as these preliminary analyses suggest, steps must be taken to assure equitable pay by increasing wages, especially among home visitors who experience the most economic instability and for workers of color.



Recommendation 2: Form a state-level workgroup to provide standards and guidelines for creation of formal compensation structures, promoting greater pay transparency and incentivizing managers to fix pay disparities.



Resources:

- [Seven Steps to an Effective Pay Equity Audit](#)
- [Achieving Pay Equity](#)

Recruit and Retain Home Visitors

Recommendation 1: Develop and implement a recruitment plan that attracts and maintains a workforce that matches the racial and ethnic diversity of the families served, including recruiting a diverse student body into educational majors or apprenticeship programs. The plan should identify action steps to readily and effectively onboard new home visitors into the profession and address the impact of impending retirements.



Recommendation 2: Develop a scholarship pool targeted toward supporting home visitors in articulating their A.A. degree to a B.A. degree in a relevant field and working with colleges and universities to foster articulation agreements. Create new partnerships to identify potential funding to support greater educational attainment for the workforce, including creating pathways for master's level degrees.



Recommendation 3: Provide training for hiring managers and supervisors on recruitment strategies that promote a diverse candidate pool and includes skill development on writing job descriptions/position postings and enhancing the protocols for conducting screening, interviewing, and selection



Recommendation 4: Conduct additional intent-to-stay analyses for home visitors and supervisors, by race/ethnicity, to learn what influences their intent to stay (i.e., job satisfaction, less job mobility) to inform a retention plan.



Resources:

- [Infusing Cultural and Linguistic Competence into the Recruitment and Retention of Home Visitors](#)
- [Strengthening the MIECHV Home Visiting Workforce](#)
- [Building the Public Workforce of the Future](#)

Enhance Professional Development

Recommendation 1: Provide training to develop confidence of home visitors and home visiting supervisors across the region by improving their knowledge and skills for supporting families through culturally and linguistically responsive home visiting practices. This training should include caseload assignment strategies for supervisors to maximize the extent to which home visitors serve families with common language, race, ethnic, and cultural traits.



Recommendation 2: To advance equitable access to education and professional development opportunities across racial and socioeconomic groups, provide paid professional development time that allows for tuition reimbursement and covers training and coursework costs.



Recommendation 3: Provide training for supervisors and higher education partners that will improve technical and adaptive leadership supervisory skills and strengthen the application of reflective supervision and coaching supports for the workforce. Partners should add endorsements or courses for students on core components of reflective supervision and cultural responsiveness.



Resources:

- [Reflective Supervision: A Guide from Region X to Enhance Reflective Practice Among Home Visiting Programs](#)
- [Culture Card: A Guide to Build Cultural Awareness](#)
- [Conscious & Unconscious Biases in Health Care](#)
- [Developing Culturally Responsive Approaches to Serving Diverse Populations: A Resource Guide for Community-Based Organizations](#)

Cultivate Multicultural Supportive Workplaces

Recommendation 1: Conduct a comprehensive organizational assessment from the lens of racial equity to help raise organizational awareness, start focused conversations, contribute to the development of equity action plans, and track organizational change.



Recommendation 2: Conduct implicit bias training and create learning circles to advance self-awareness in decision-making and foster an organizational climate of transparency, trust, and effective communication.



Recommendation 3: Create work cultures that promote learning, autonomy, innovation, and role clarity and minimize interpersonal conflict. This includes training and ongoing supports to develop comfort in discussions about race and ethnicity and address interpersonal and organizational conflict resulting from microaggressions in the workplace.



Resources:

- [Ten Lessons for Taking Leadership on Racial Equity](#)
- [Race Matters: Organizational Self-Assessment](#)

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- [Race Matters Toolkit](#)
 - [The Implicit Association Test](#)

Closing Summary

The Region X Home Visiting Workforce Study revealed that race predicted pay, even after holding education, job role, and experience constant, suggesting racial inequity. Given this, and other findings related to race and ethnicity, leaders of home visiting programs have a call to action to further examine racial equity issues and implement recommendations that will mitigate inequities. The recommendations provided will guide improvements in practices, professional supports, and organizational actions and will promote racial equity.

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