



# Supporting Tribal Home Visiting Grantees in Meeting the MIECHV Evaluation Requirements

## Rigorous Evaluation in Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting

Brief 2 | June 2020



### Rigorous Evaluation in Tribal Home Visiting

The legislation that led to the creation of the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) in 2010 set the stage for the rigorous evaluation requirement of the Tribal Home Visiting Program. A systematic, transparent, and ongoing review of the evidence of home visiting models, known as HomVEE (Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness), was at the core of the MIECHV evidence-based policy. Essentially, once HomVEE had established which home visiting models were evidence based, MIECHV grantees could choose one of those models to implement. If a grantee wanted to implement a “promising” home visiting model that was not on the list, the grantee was required to rigorously evaluate that model. In 2010, eight home visiting models were determined to be evidence based. For more information on HomVEE and the current list of evidence-based home visiting models, see the [HomVEE](#) website.

The Tribal Home Visiting Program is a federally funded initiative that supports the provision of maternal, infant, and early childhood services to American Indian and Alaska Native families. Grantees that received 5-year awards beginning in 2010, 2011, and 2012 conducted local evaluations to strengthen the evidence base for home visiting in tribal communities and to answer locally relevant questions. The evaluations combined scientific and cultural rigor to ensure results that are valid for both researchers and communities.

This brief, the second in a series about the local evaluations, describes federal and technical assistance supports for meeting the evaluation requirements. The series is designed to help federal staff and leadership support tribal communities to build local evaluation capacity. It may also be of interest to other policymakers and researchers in the human services field. For more information, visit the [Tribal Home Visiting Program](#) website.

In 2010, the results of HomVEE determined that no home visiting models were evidence based for tribal communities. Thus, any home visiting model implemented was considered promising and required rigorous evaluation. The legislation for the 3 percent tribal set-aside of the MIECHV Program stipulated that these requirements, along with other requirements unique to MIECHV, were to be applied to the tribal set-aside to the extent practicable. Thus, the federal Tribal Home Visiting Team, comprising early childhood program staff from the Office of Child Care and the Children’s Bureau and research staff from the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, began working together to decide what was practicable for Tribal Home Visiting grantees and what would build knowledge about home visiting in tribal communities.

Given the history of outside research and evaluation conducted in tribal communities, the Tribal Home Visiting Team wanted the Tribal Home Visiting grantees to build capacity and interest in evaluation. Thus, the team created a set of expectations for designing and implementing small-scale local evaluations that supported the grantees in focusing on questions of interest to the grantees themselves and that built the broader knowledge base of home visiting in tribal communities. The Tribal Home Visiting Team also hoped this experience would move the broader field of evaluation of home visiting in tribal communities towards the design and implementation of evaluation

studies that met HomVEE standards for evidence-based. As of December, 2019, 21 models have been determined to be evidence based, and one model met this criteria for evidence of effectiveness in tribal settings. For more information on Tribal HomVEE, the current list of evidence-based home visiting models for tribal communities, and standards of evidence for becoming an evidence-based home visiting model, see the [HomVEE](#) website.

ACF set a rigorous evaluation expectation for grantees to develop a local evaluation that addressed either a cross-group or within-group comparison, using an experimental design or a quasi-experimental design. This type of standard allowed for maximal flexibility at the grantee level while maintaining a consistent standard across grantees. ACF also required grantees to develop a strategy for community participation in and tribal oversight of evaluation plans and activities in their community.



## Supporting Tribal Home Visiting Grantees

For each Tribal Home Visiting grantee, the process for moving toward these requirements began with a facilitated discussion during a site visit and continued with strong evaluation technical assistance. The initial discussion at the grantee sites focused on what grantees themselves would like to learn about their home visiting program. The participants included Tribal Home Visiting grantee staff and leadership, their evaluators, the Tribal Home Visiting Team, and the program and evaluation technical assistance providers. The evaluation technical assistance provider, the Tribal Home Visiting Evaluation Institute

(TEI), specializes in engagement of tribal communities and evaluation science and skills. TEI worked with each grantee to help them design and implement a local evaluation. TEI's approach was grounded in the Tribal Home Visiting Team's priority that the experience of carrying out the MIECHV data and evaluation requirements would build the ongoing data system and evaluation infrastructure for grantees. Thus, TEI provided high levels of support while sharing the best approaches for measurement, research design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination. For more information, see the [TEI](#) website.

## Key Takeaways

This brief reviews the context that informed the implementation of the rigorous evaluation requirement for Tribal Home Visiting grantees from a federal perspective, including the Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) decision making about expectations and provision of supports. Federal program staff and leadership working with tribal communities on evaluations may benefit from the following lessons learned:



Tribal grantees can meet rigorous evaluation requirements.



With flexibility and technical support, grantees can have a positive experience with local evaluation.



Local evaluation can provide valuable knowledge for grantees and for the broader field of home visiting.



Technical assistance providers with experience and skill supporting tribal communities in program evaluation can support grantees to meet evaluation requirements in locally meaningful ways.

### Submitted to

Nicole Denmark, Project Officer  
Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation  
Administration for Children and Families  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Contract Number: HHSP233201500133I  
[www.acf.hhs.gov/opre](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre)

### Prepared by

James Bell Associates  
3033 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 650  
Arlington, VA 22201  
(703) 528-3230  
[www.jbassoc.com](http://www.jbassoc.com)

Julie Morales, Project Director

This report is in the public domain. Permission to reproduce is not necessary. Suggested citation: Meyer, A., & Denmark, N. (2020). *Supporting Tribal Home Visiting grantees in meeting the MIECHV evaluation requirements: Rigorous evaluation in Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting* (OPRE Report No. #2020-48). Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

### Disclaimer

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, the Administration for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This report and other reports sponsored by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation are available at [www.acf.hhs.gov/opre](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre).



[Sign-up for the OPRE Newsletter](#)



Follow OPRE on Twitter  
[@OPRE\\_ACF](https://twitter.com/OPRE_ACF)



Like OPRE on Facebook  
[facebook.com/OPRE.ACF](https://facebook.com/OPRE.ACF)



Follow OPRE on Instagram  
[@opre\\_acf](https://instagram.com/opre_acf)

