

MATERNAL, INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD HOME VISITING PROGRAM (MIECHV) TOOLKIT

SUMMER 2022





Photo: Ross Courtney / Save the Children

SUMMER FOR KIDS

Dear Save the Children Action Network (SCAN) Volunteer,

Every child, no matter where they live, deserves to have the best possible start in life and access to the nutrition they need to grow and thrive. But for thousands of children living in rural communities across America, that right could be taken away this fall.

That's one reason why it's so crucial for Congress to continue to fund MIECHV, which ensures home visiting programs – a critical safety net that hundreds of thousands of at-risk caregivers and children rely on – stay in place.

In 2020, MIECHV served:

- 900,000 home visits
- 140,000 at-risk children and parents
- 71,000 families

The funding for these essential programs will end on September 30th, 2022. In 2017, SCAN Advocates mounted a huge push for a bipartisan MIECHV reauthorization – and succeeded! This summer, let's continue to invest in kids by securing this program for years to come.

In this Toolkit, you will find:



Information about MIECHV and Home Visiting Programs.



How to take action with the SCAN Community



How to amplify your message online

SOME BASICS ON MIECHV AND HOME VISITING PROGRAMS



What is MIECHV?

The **Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)** provides federal funds to states, territories and tribal entities for voluntary home visiting services. Home visits are carried out by professionals who visit the homes of identified at-risk families and children, helping them navigate parenthood by promoting child health and development and connecting them to support services as needed. Home visiting services are offered to at-risk families from pregnancy through their child's entry into kindergarten. During the COVID-19 pandemic, home visits were transitioned to virtual visits, so families could still access these vital services.

The benefits of home visiting are far-reaching, affecting parents, children and communities. Some benefits include:

- Improving maternal and infant health.
- Supporting a child's early learning.
- Providing referrals when certain risk factors – such as domestic violence – are present in the home.
- Helping families understand and navigate supports available to them.

The problem?

MIECHV funding expires on September 30th. Not only does funding need to be reauthorized – it also needs to increase. More funding will allow MIECHV to:

- **Reach more families:** Unfortunately, estimates show MIECHV only reached three to five percent of eligible families – and that was before COVID-19 exacerbated issues for so many families across the country. Now, even more families desperately need the support that MIECHV offers.
- **Retain and incentivize the MIECHV workforce:** Like the child care workforce, the MIECHV workforce needs to be better supported. Low wages, poor benefits and burnout are significant drivers for high turnover in the field. We must better compensate vital workers who are caring for our youngest, ensuring they survive and thrive.

The Solution

Congress must reauthorize MIECHV before it expires on September 30th. We support reauthorization with the following recommendations:

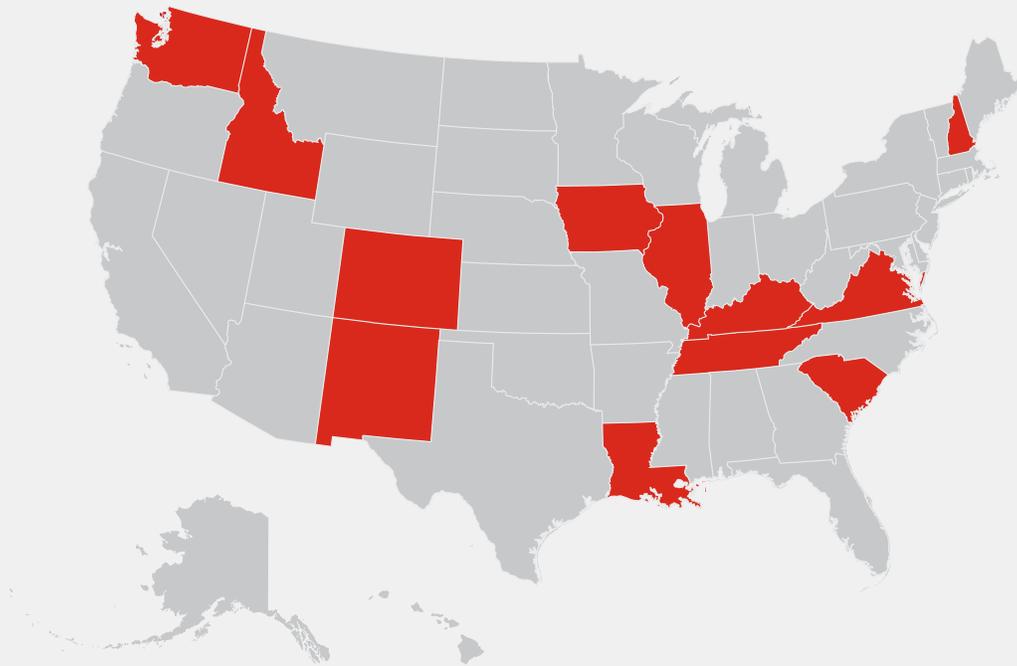
- **Increase funding** over the next 5 years to reach more families and better support the MIECHV workforce. We are asking for increases of \$200 million annually, arriving at a total of \$1.4 billion by 2027.
- **Increase access to MIECHV for American Indian and Alaskan Native (AIAN) communities** by tribal set-aside from three to six percent.

- **Continued virtual home visiting** as an option for service delivery. The flexibility of the virtual home visiting option allows for increased access, particularly for families in rural areas.

TAKE ACTION

The Basics:

1. Not sure who represents you?
You can look it up at [Members of the United States Congress - GovTrack.us](#)
2. Check out their websites to find your member of congress phone number, email, addresses and social media handles.
3. Contact your SCAN State Manager to let them know about your advocacy and join the community of advocates in your area.



WASHINGTON

Christina Ko
cko@savechildren.org

IDAHO

Ryan Murphy
rmurphy@savechildren.org

COLORADO

Annalise Romoser
aromoser@savechildren.org

NEW MEXICO

Lacey Daniell-Miller
ldaniellmiller@savechildren.org

IOWA

E.J. Wallace
ewallace@savechildren.org

LOUISIANA

Scott Tippet
stippet@savechildren.org

ILLINOIS

John Gaudette
jgaudette@savechildren.org

KENTUCKY

Omar Salinas Chacon
oschacon@savechildren.org

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Dellie Champagne
dchampagne@savechildren.org

TENNESSEE

Katie Growden
kgrowden@savechildren.org

VIRGINIA

Austin Walker
awalker@savechildren.org

SOUTH CAROLINA

Hafeezah Yates
hyates@savechildren.org

ALL OTHER STATE SUPPORT

East: Lindsay Hanson
lhanson@savechildren.org

Heartland: Courtney Mott
cmott@savechildren.org

West: Ryan Murphy
rmurphy@savechildren.org

TAKE ACTION CONTINUED

Call Your Member of Congress

Here's a good script to follow when you make a call or leave a message:

Hello,

I am a constituent calling to express my support for the reauthorization of the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program. As a [PARENT, GRANDPARENT, TEACHER, ETC.], I know how important a child's early years are. Those crucial years are the most important in ensuring children are set up for success in school and in life. But not all children and families have the necessary supports to provide their children with the tools they need to thrive during those early years. That's why MIECHV is so vital for hundreds of thousands of children across the country.

I am calling to urge [lawmaker's name] to support the bipartisan reauthorization of MIECHV that will support best practices in the field of home visiting and expand access to more families, including American Indian and Alaskan Native communities.

Tips for a Successful Call

1. If someone picks up your call, it won't be your Member of Congress – it'll be a staff member who will take down your message and relay it to your Senator or Representative.
2. You don't have to be an expert! The staff will listen to your "ask," thank you for calling and ask for your address.
3. Express that you are a constituent who is passionate about helping kids!
4. Be brief and polite. The staff member speaking with you receives many phone calls each day.
5. Let your State Manager know that you made the call and raise any questions the staffer might have had on the phone.

Write Your Member of Congress

Dear [Member of Congress],

I am writing to express my support for the bipartisan reauthorization of the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV).

These proven programs are vital, but their funding expires on September 30th. Unfortunately, estimates show MIECHV only reached 71,000 families – just three to five percent of eligible families across the country – and that was before COVID-19 exacerbated issues for so many. Now, even more families desperately need the supports that MIECHV offers.

The benefits of home visiting are far-reaching, affecting parents, children and communities. These programs improve maternal and infant health, increase support for early learning and diagnose hard-to-see risk factors – such as domestic violence – in the home. I urge you to support the reauthorization of MIECHV for the next 5 years with an increase of \$200 million annually, arriving at a total of \$1.4 billion by 2027.

Tips for a Successful Letter to Congress

1. Start with your legislative "ask." Tell them what you want your elected officials to do.
2. Keep it simple and short- no longer than one page!
3. Make it personal by including a sentence about why you care about kids' mental health.
4. Always include your address so their office knows you are a constituent and knows where to send a response.



TAKE ACTION CONTINUED

Get Published

Writing an LTE for your local or regional newspaper is a great way to get the attention of your elected officials and reach a large audience in your community. Elected officials' staff monitor their local newspapers every day and track the mood and views of voters.

To the Editor:

As a [PARENT, GRANDPARENT, TEACHER, ETC.], I know how important a child's early years are. Those crucial years are the most important in ensuring children are set up for success in school and in life. [INSERT EXAMPLE OR STORY OF WHY ECE IS IMPORTANT TO YOU AND HOW IT HAS HELPED YOUR FAMILY].

But not all children and families have the necessary supports to provide their children with the tools they need to thrive during those early years. That's why the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) is so vital. This program has a proven track record, and the benefits are far reaching: at-risk parents and children who receive voluntary home visits have better health, education and economic outcomes.

Unfortunately, funding for MIECHV ends in September. It must urgently be reauthorized to meet the growing need and ensure families keep getting critical support. Estimates show MIECHV reached less than five percent of eligible families – and that was before COVID-19 exacerbated issues for so many across the country. Now, even more families desperately need the support MIECHV offers.

Join me and Save the Children Action Network in urging [NAME OF POLICYMAKER] to increase funding for MIECHV. All children – no matter their socio-economic background – deserve to get the best possible start in life. And home visiting ensures that they do.

[NAME]

[CITY]

Tips for a Successful Letter to the Editor

1. Keep it between 150-250 words long.
2. Include a personal story that demonstrates why you're passionate about the issue.
3. Make an "ask" to your Members of Congress, in this case: reauthorizing MIECHV.
4. Many newspapers have submission forms on their website.
5. Ask for support! You can reach out to your State Manager to support you every step of the way: writing, editing, submitting and more!

Lobby Your Members of Congress

Work with your State Manager to set up a meeting with your elected Members of Congress this summer. They'll put you in touch with other advocates interested in lobbying, help set up a meeting and prep the team beforehand.

Amplify Your MIECHV Message

While you're taking actions, grab your SCAN t-shirt and take a quick photo or video. Share your actions on social media – and don't forget to tag your Members of Congress! Use the hashtag #InvestInKids in your posts.

