

## A Self-Assessment Tool for States

A growing body of evidence demonstrates that home visitation can be an effective method of delivering family support and child development services. For several decades, national home visiting models have been evolving. Home visitors have been honing their practice through ongoing research, evaluation, and innovation to meet the growing and ever-changing needs of our nation’s families and young children.

Recent home visiting funds allocated by the 2010 *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* present a tremendous opportunity to help meet the needs of the most at-risk infants, toddlers, and their families. While the new funds will expand evidence-based home visiting programs, they will also create inevitable challenges as states wrestle with how to replicate high-quality programs and maintain model fidelity. Strong and collaborative home visiting state systems provide the infrastructure to support these important decisions.

### Tips for Using the Self-Assessment Tool

- **Involve key stakeholders:** This tool is most relevant when completed by and shared with a diverse group of stakeholders involved in home visiting efforts across the state. In states where multiple home visiting models exist, it is beneficial to involve representatives from all models so that the completed tool reflects the full breadth of home visiting efforts in the state.
- **Divide responsibility for the self-assessment:** The tool covers a broad range of content areas, from administration to evaluation. It is important to ensure that appropriate individuals complete the relevant content areas. This division of labor could be accomplished through multiple methods; however, a single entity that coordinates the process, synthesizes the information, and disseminates the results is important.
- **Use the results:** The tool has been designed to be action-oriented. Each component provides space for both next steps and an opportunity to rank the priority of that component for the state. This format will encourage states to create a plan for prioritizing and embarking upon those key next steps.

This self-assessment tool, developed by ZERO TO THREE, helps states:

- Define the home visiting system
- Assess the home visiting system’s capacity
- Prioritize areas for improvement

In addition to assisting states in preparing for the federal home visiting grant application process, the tool will be useful for ongoing assessment and continuous quality improvement.

If your state uses the self-assessment tool, ZERO TO THREE would like your feedback on the tool, the process, and the results in your state. If you would like to share your experience, please contact Barbara Gebhard at [bgebhard@zerotothree.org](mailto:bgebhard@zerotothree.org).



National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families

### GETTING STARTED: HOME VISITING INVENTORY

*Please list the state’s existing home visiting program models, populations served, geographic area covered, and basic services provided.*

Program Models	Populations Served	Geographic Area Covered	Basic Services Provided
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			



## NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM PLANNING

**Vision:** A system is in place to identify service gaps and plan for program expansion and growth.

Questions to Consider	Yes	If Yes, Is It Sufficient?	No	If No, Where Is a Place to Start?
1. If the state has multiple home visiting models, does it have centralized intake and assessment mechanisms in place or established criteria that determine how families are assigned to particular program models?				
2. Do centralized data systems collect information on key home visiting indicators and statistics?				
3. Has the state completed an assessment of gaps in service delivery?				
4. Is there a state plan to determine a process for program expansion?				
5. Is there a mechanism in place to provide funding, technical assistance, and support to new program sites?				

### State Status and Notes

### Next Steps

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Priority Ranking**  
(on a scale of 1–10)



## EVALUATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

**Vision:** *The system collects, analyzes, and monitors data about home visiting to identify program strengths and weaknesses and improve programs.*

Questions to Consider	Yes	If Yes, Is It Sufficient?	No	If No, Where Is a Place to Start?
1. Does the home visiting state system have a quality assurance plan?				
2. Are program-specific quality assurance efforts integrated with state- or federal-level regulations and monitoring?				
3. Has the state identified common outcome or evaluation indicators across multiple program models?				
4. Do the state and individual programs allocate resources to enable rigorous, independent evaluation efforts?				
5. Does the system have an established method to disseminate evaluation results and determine implications for program implementation?				

### State Status and Notes

### Next Steps

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Priority Ranking**  
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**PROGRAM STANDARDS**

*Vision: The system promotes adherence to a common set of program standards that ensure model fidelity and a high-quality system of services for young children and their families.*

Questions to Consider	Yes	If Yes, Is It Sufficient?	No	If No, Where Is a Place to Start?
1. Is there a system to track what standards monitor program fidelity in the state?				
2. Has the state made an effort to “cross-walk” program standards or create a common set of standards to assist local programs that may integrate multiple models?				
3. Do program standards address key program implementation areas, such as professional development, technical assistance, supervision, and cultural relevance?				

**State Status and Notes**

**Next Steps**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

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**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

*Vision: The state system maintains a highly skilled and competent home visiting workforce and provides useful technical assistance to program sites.*

Questions to Consider	Yes	If Yes, Is It Sufficient?	No	If No, Where Is a Place to Start?
1. Has the state determined core competencies for home visiting providers?				
2. Are training systems in place that meet home visiting model requirements but also allow for appropriate training across models?				
3. Does the system provide adequate resources and support to home visiting supervisors?				
4. Are incentives in place to link professional development with course credit and higher compensation?				
5. Does the home visiting system identify and address the technical assistance needs of individual program sites?				

**State Status and Notes**

**Next Steps**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

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## EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

**Vision:** *The home visiting system formally partners and collaborates with other early childhood services to create a comprehensive system of care for young children and their families.*

Questions to Consider	Yes	If Yes, Is It Sufficient?	No	If No, Where Is a Place to Start?
1. Does state leadership bring together key stakeholders from an array of early childhood and related services to inform home visiting system development efforts?				
2. Are transition policies or MOUs in place to create seamless continuity of services for families enrolled in multiple early childhood programs?				
3. Are funding streams coordinated to streamline administrative requirements and minimize competition?				
4. Does the state think holistically and consider home visiting to be a strategy connected to and dependent upon an array of early childhood services?				
5. Does the state integrate home visitation planning with other early childhood planning efforts?				

### State Status and Notes

### Next Steps

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Priority Ranking**  
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**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

*Vision: The state system engages a broad range of champions to create the public and political will for home visiting services to be part of a continuum of support for young children and their families.*

Questions to Consider	Yes	If Yes, Is It Sufficient?	No	If No, Where Is a Place to Start?
1. Are efforts underway to educate the public and cultivate champions to support home visitation?				
2. Are marketing and outreach efforts underway to craft and frame a message to promote home visiting?				
3. Does the state proactively engage the media to highlight the benefits of home visiting?				
4. Are state-level legislative hearings, national or state conferences, and other venues seized upon to engage the public?				

**State Status and Notes**

**Next Steps**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
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**ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE**

*Vision: The entity or entities that administer and fund the home visitation system are inclusive, responsive, and adaptable to the needs of the programs.*

Questions to Consider	Yes	If Yes, Is It Sufficient?	No	If No, Where Is a Place to Start?
1. Does a state-level entity coordinate home visiting efforts in the state?				
2. Do coalitions exist at the local level to connect with the state level on key home visiting issues?				
3. Are key stakeholders engaged in home visiting planning and implementation efforts?				
4. Does a strategic plan or financial plan exist and guide home visiting planning efforts?				

**State Status and Notes**

**Next Steps**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Priority Ranking**  
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## FINANCING AND SUSTAINABILITY

*The home visiting state system is supported by a diverse and stable funding base that ensures the viability and sustainability of both local programs and systems-level support.*

Questions to Consider	Yes	If Yes, Is It Sufficient?	No	If No, Where Is a Place to Start?
1. Does the state collect in one place all available information about sources of home visiting funding?				
2. Is adequate funding available to support the existing program sites?				
3. Is funding available for program expansion?				
4. Is funding designated for technical assistance and systems-level support to programs?				
5. Are the sources of funding diverse and stable enough to enable the home visiting system to plan for sustainability?				

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- 1.
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**STATE-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS**

*Given that each state has its own unique constellation of home visiting services, the following templates provide an opportunity to add state-specific home visiting components to the state’s self-assessment.*

**COMPONENT**

**Vision:**

Questions to Consider	Yes	If Yes, Is It Sufficient?	No	If No, Where Is a Place to Start?
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

**State Status and Notes**

**Next Steps**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Priority Ranking**  
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**COMPONENT**

**Vision:**

Questions to Consider	Yes	If Yes, Is It Sufficient?	No	If No, Where Is a Place to Start?
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

**State Status and Notes**

**Next Steps**

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**Priority Ranking**  
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## SUMMARY OF PRIORITY RANKINGS

**To help determine your state’s priority areas for improvement, list the components based on their priority rankings in the checklists above.**

Priority Ranking	State System Component
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

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## About Us

The ZERO TO THREE Policy Center is a nonpartisan, research-based, nonprofit organization committed to promoting the healthy development of our nation’s infants and toddlers. To learn more about this topic or about the ZERO TO THREE Policy Center, please visit our website at <http://www.zerotothree.org/policy>.



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