



April 24, 2025

Re: Support for H-6073 - Family Home Visiting

Dear Chair Abney and Committee Members,

I write to request the state invests \$355,374 in order to receive \$1.6 million to fund Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) programs. In 2024, Rhode Island was one of only 3 states and territories in the U.S. that did not meet the full federal match, forfeiting some federal funding. I also support the increased reporting requirements included in H-6073 so that the general assembly can help ensure the ongoing sustainability of these important programs.

My name is Fiona Nicholson, the Director for the Healthy Families of America (HFA) program at Family Service of Rhode Island, a MIECHV funded program. HFA is an evidence based, long-term home visiting program designed to prevent child abuse and neglect, reducing the need for involvement with DCYF. HFA supports pregnant and parenting families with high needs navigate the challenges of daily living while raising healthy babies and young children. Nationally, families who receive HFA support witness improved birth outcomes, more likely to reach developmental milestones and increase school readiness. Notably, HFA not only addresses babies and children individual needs but has also been proven to support maternal/caretaker behavioral health.

One story in particular stands out to me. At an initial appointment for a mother who was prenatal, I learned she had had postpartum depression with her second child. During my visits with the newborn, she shared with me current behavioral health concerns. I was able to get immediate assistance which stabilized her and supported her ability to parent her children. Throughout our journey over 2 years while watching her children thrive she referred to me and our program as her savior.

This is one story of many. Attached are a few other quotes from clients. I encourage you to pass H-6073 for Family visiting funding to enable me and my colleagues to continue this valuable work.

Thank you,

Fiona Nicholson
Program Director, Healthy Families America



Healthy Family America clients from Family Service of RI supporting Bill H-6073 - Family Home Visiting

“This agency has helped me become a better mother. I am a single mother of 2, so when times are hard, it is very helpful that the agency is able to help me with diapers wipes, and gift cards without this help my children would go without I appreciate all the help I receive from this agency also my provider is very nice and does well at her job.”

“To whom this may concern, I am one of the many families that has had the pleasure of being part of this amazing program. It has helped my family in so many ways. Ever since being part of HFA I have seen the difference in my kids whether its reaching milestones or just a simple task. I am grateful and hopeful that this program can stay and work with more families.”

“I appreciate Isabel so much and am so grateful for all the support I receive meeting with her. She helps me through challenges of being a young mother and dealing with many other struggles.”

“Isabel thank you we appreciate everything you do for us ad for our family. You do so much to support us as a refugee family and connecting us with so many resources and help.”