

RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT
ONE UNION STATION
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02903
401/351-9400 • 401/351-1758 (FAX)

Testimony Re: H-6073, Family Home Visiting House Finance Committee

April 24, 2025

Leanne Barrett, Director of Early Childhood Policy & Strategy



Rhode Island KIDS COUNT coordinates the Right from the Start Campaign, a state policy coalition led by eight organizations to advance state policies and budget priorities that help babies and young children get off to the right start.

Both Rhode Island KIDS COUNT and the Right from the Start Campaign **strongly support Rep. Giraldo's bill, H-6073, that would amend the RI Family Home Visiting Act** to include the First Connections program, update the reporting requirements to include more information on enrollment, staffing, and financing trends, and require the state to meet federal match requirements so they can access all available Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECVH) funding.

Since 2021, the number of Rhode Island families participating in First Connections, the state's rapid response home visiting program has declined by 42% and the number of families enrolled in multi-year, evidence-based programs, which improve long-term outcomes for both mothers and babies, has dropped by 37%.

Federal reauthorization of MIECHV funds occurred in December 2022 and will provide level funding for 5 years. **Currently Rhode Island is level funded at \$8.5 million/year in federal MIECHV grant funds.** Newly authorized funds to sustain and strengthen the program require a 25% state match to draw down increased funds – a match rate that is significantly better than Medicaid. The match is being phased in to give states time to adjust. In 2024, federal authorities shared **that Rhode Island is one of only three states and territories that were not able to make the full state match and thus were unable to draw down all their federal funds** to support these proven programs.

Estimated Rhode Island MIECVH Match Funding Needed

Federal Fiscal Year	State Match Required	Federal Funding Available with Match	Total New Funding
FFY2024 (application due May 29, 2024)	\$242,000	\$762,000	\$968,000
FFY2025	\$356,000	\$1,080,000	\$1.4 million
FFY2026	\$535,000	\$1,620,000	\$2.2 million
FFY2027	\$787,000	\$2,384,000	\$3.2 million

The current state match required for Rhode Island is estimated at \$356,000 to draw down \$1.1 million in federal MIECHV funding. This funding is needed

to help programs recruit and retain staff and work toward restoring access to evidence-based programs.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. **We urge the General Assembly to pass this legislation and allocate sufficient funds in the FY26 budget and beyond to allow the state to draw down the full MIECVH federal funding available** so we can sustain the existing programs and restore access to these proven, relationship-based, comprehensive, multi-generational services.

Fund Family Home Visiting 2025

H-6073 (Giraldo) & S-0677 (Valverde)



Right from the
Start

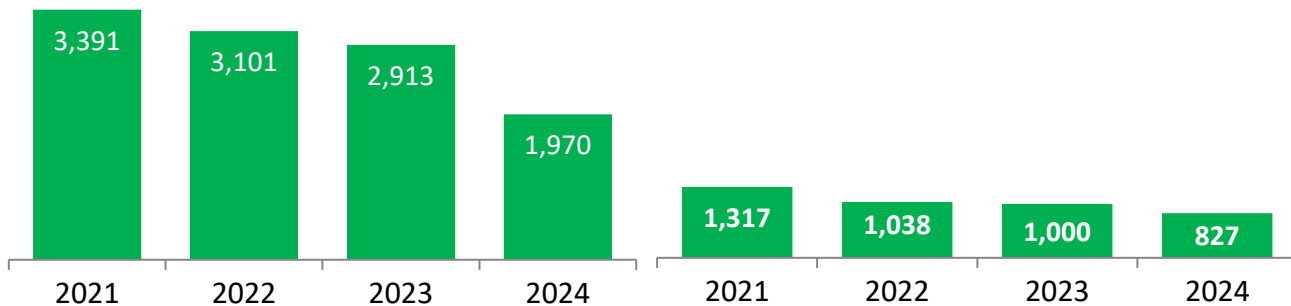
Rhode Island's Evidence-Based Family Home Visiting programs are multi-year, relationship-based interventions designed to help pregnant and parenting families with high needs navigate the challenges of raising babies and young children. These programs follow rigorous research models and produce improved outcomes for children and families including significant reductions in child maltreatment, language delays, and emergency room visits; and improvements in maternal mental health, parental education/employment, and school readiness.

First Connections is Rhode Island's frontline, rapid-response home visiting service for families with newborns statewide. It is designed to identify babies' and families' needs as early as possible and connect them with services, including maternal mental health services, WIC, Early Intervention, and comprehensive evidence-based family home visiting programs.

Financing & Staffing Problems Mean Fewer Rhode Island Babies & Families Get Help

**Families Receiving First Connections
Home Visits (Calendar Year)**

**Families Enrolled in Evidence-Based
Home Visiting (October 1)**



Since 2021, the number of families served by **First Connections** has **dropped by 42%** and the number of **families enrolled in a multi-year, evidence-based program has dropped by 37%**. In March 2025, the state's Nurse-Family Partnership program closed permanently.

The Family Home Visiting 2025 bill will:

1. Require the state to **invest sufficient funds every year to meet the match for the federal Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program** to bring in \$3 in federal funds for every \$1 in state funds. In 2024, Rhode Island was one of only three states and territories in the U.S. that did not meet the full federal match (\$242K for RI), forfeiting some federal funding. Rhode Island's state match needed in 2025 is \$356K (generating \$1.1M in federal funds), in 2026 is \$535K (generating \$1.6M in federal funds), and in 2027 is \$787K (generating \$2.4M)
2. Revise the Department of Health's annual reporting requirements for Family Home Visiting programs to include enrollment and funding trends and an **analysis of how other states have combined Medicaid and federal MIECHV funds to support and sustain home visiting programs.**

City/Town	# Received First Connections Visit in 2024	# Enrolled in Evidence-Based Home Visiting on October 1, 2024
Barrington	5	6
Bristol	16	4
Burrillville	23	0
Central Falls	85	84
Charlestown	8	5
Coventry	55	20
Cranston	167	70
Cumberland	21	7
East Greenwich	10	5
East Providence	33	14
Exeter	9	1
Foster	9	0
Glocester	8	1
Hopkinton	6	9
Jamestown	4	1
Johnston	33	8
Lincoln	11	0
Little Compton	3	2
Middletown	23	8
Narragansett	6	1
New Shoreham	1	1
Newport	43	8
North Kingstown	28	8
North Providence	28	11
North Smithfield	11	1
Pawtucket	139	89
Portsmouth	16	1
Providence	690	330
Richmond	10	1
Scituate	10	0
Smithfield	18	1
South Kingstown	40	9
Tiverton	13	7
Warren	16	3
Warwick	154	36
West Greenwich	8	2
West Warwick	63	21
Westerly	29	31
Woonsocket	112	21
<i>Missing Residence</i>	6	0
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>1,026</i>	<i>827</i>