

# Ongoing & Emerging Issues in Home Visiting

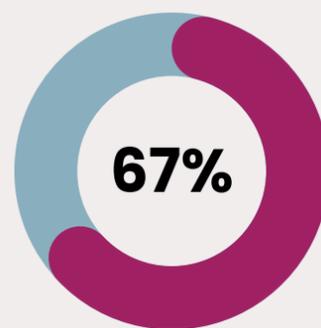
In January 2026, HARC invited its members and partnering organizations to identify ongoing and emerging issues via a brief online survey. Of the 555 survey respondents, 49% were home visitors, 34% were home visiting program managers or supervisors, 12% were researchers or evaluators, 5% were state leads, 3% were model representatives, 2% were families enrolled in home visiting, and 1% were federal program staff. In the survey, respondents were given a list of 21 issues and asked to select the seven issues of most concern to them currently. Respondents were asked to explain why their top two issues<sup>1</sup> were the most concerning and to rate the extent to which research is needed.

**Below is a summary of the top three issues identified across all respondents.**

# 1

## Supporting families without adequate resources in the community

Survey respondents commented that in many communities, critical resources are not available or are at capacity, and many families are turned away or placed on waitlists. Complex eligibility requirements make it difficult to access some resources. Program staff emphasized that it is “nearly impossible to focus on long-term parenting goals” when needs for resources have not been met. This contributes to staff feeling frustrated and helpless.



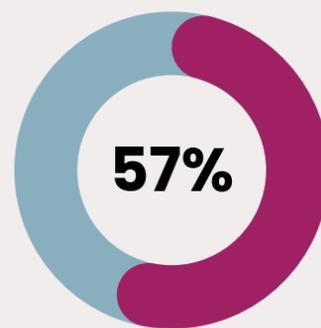
Selected this as one of their top 7 issues

*“Families are struggling with a myriad of environmental challenges in their lives: housing stability and affordability, poor housing options, food deserts, lack of transportation, lack of reliable caring medical care [...] while also combating emotional and mental health issues.” - Program supervisor/manager*

# 2

## Funding, including funding methods and funding stability

Many programs lack adequate, stable funding or have experienced funding loss leading to “cut programs or staff [...] regardless of how important they are.” Inadequate funding leaves staff feeling stressed and uncertain about their job security, creates barriers to hiring and retaining staff, and threatens delivery of high-quality services. Some staff emphasized the need to diversify funding streams.



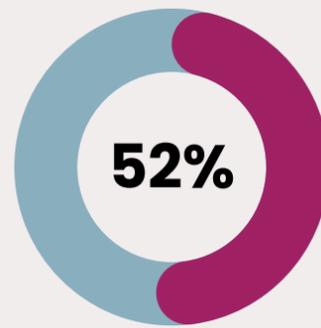
Selected this as one of their top 7 issues

*“The lack of stable, predictable funding undermines meaningful progress in a number of ways including an inability to think and act strategically for long-term.” - State, tribal, or territory home visiting network leader or staff*

# 3

## Family engagement and retention

Respondents noted that families may be hesitant to engage in home visiting initially due to lack of trust. Once enrolled, some families disengage if the program isn’t responsive to their needs, whereas other families disengage when their basic needs are met. Frequent cancellations and rescheduling leave staff feeling frustrated or disrespected. Some staff expressed the need for training and strategies to improve family engagement.



Selected this as one of their top 7 issues

*“Family engagement and retention [...] is essential to achieving positive outcomes for families and children. When families disengage or discontinue services early, they miss out on ongoing education, developmental support, and connection to critical resources.” - Home visitor*

Home visiting providers, researchers, and network leaders all selected “supporting families without adequate resources in their community” among their top 3 issues.<sup>2</sup> “Workforce” was a top issue for researchers and network leaders, whereas “funding and administrative burden” was a top issue for home visiting providers. For each of the top 3 issues, 40 - 45% of respondents indicated that research was very much needed.<sup>1</sup>

Survey findings highlight the critical role of context in shaping home visiting practice and outcomes. HARC will soon share a more detailed summary of the full survey results and is planning webinars and other activities to highlight recent research and spark conversation addressing these issues to inform practice and policy solutions.

We hope you will join us.

1. Due to a survey error, “top two” rankings may not have been captured accurately for early respondents. Qualitative and research need summaries are based on 161 participants who ranked supporting families without adequate resources, 146 who ranked funding, and 87 who ranked family engagement among their top 2 issues. 2. Some groups (e.g., federal staff, enrolled families) were too small to compare with other groups.