

The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program

Why a State Match is Bad for West Virginia's Children & Families

The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program supports voluntary, evidence-based home visiting models in West Virginia and every state as well as many territories and tribal communities. Home visiting breaks multi-generational cycles of poverty and puts families on the path to good health, educational success and economic stability.

Despite strong bipartisan support and decades of evidence that MIECHV-funded home visiting programs work, Congress allowed MIECHV to expire on September 30. One funding renewal proposal would undermine West Virginia's home visiting program by imposing a dollar-for-dollar state match.

West Virginia may be forced to cut home visiting services if required to match federal MIECHV money.

The state match requirement works by limiting the state's use of their MIECHV grants to 50 percent of the home visiting services supported by MIECHV. States must come up with the other half of the money needed to provide MIECHV services.

To meet the required funding match, West Virginia may be forced to cut other programs or services, to divert money to meet the match. This "rob Peter to pay Paul" approach is likely to negatively impact the health, education and well-being of West Virginia's children and families.

West Virginia may be forced to cut existing non-MIECHV-funded home visiting programs to divert funding to MIECHV-supported home visiting, potentially leaving thousands of children and families without home visiting services. West Virginia should not be penalized for implementing home visiting programs in communities across the state in a way that meets the needs of its residents.

If West Virginia is unable to meet the match, the state may be forced to cut MIECHV home visiting services in part or entirely, causing local programs to shut down, home visitors to lose or leave their jobs, and families to lose the services they rely on. And once the home visitor-family relationships at the heart of program – the very relationships that make it so successful – are lost, the damage will be irreversible.

Even if West Virginia meets the state match, the imposition of the requirement will restrict the flexibility the state has to do what is needed for its residents. Currently, West Virginia has the freedom to invest in and implement early childhood programs, including home visiting, in a way that best serves West Virginia's children and families. The state match will prevent West Virginia from helping residents in communities across the entire state by placing new restrictions on how the money is used for home visiting.



What Sen. Joe Manchin said about MIECHV:

"Programs like these give children and families the resources and information that they need to thrive. Given our current budget constraints, it is more important than ever that we work together across party lines to invest in proven, evidence-based programs that strengthen our families and help our children succeed."

Source: constituent email