

FAQs About Home Visitation

Fact sheet #2



Alberta Home Visitation Network Association

Q: What impact does adequate, competitive funding have on home visitation program agencies and staff?

“With adequate, competitive funding, workers would be more willing to enter the non-profit sector field and fewer would leave for other sector jobs.”

A: Adequate funding will help ensure sustainability of a positive, healthy, and competent workforce devoted to the development and well being of Alberta children, families, and communities. What is becoming commonplace, however, is increased staff burnout and stress, and inability to offer services. Why? While many reasons contribute to this human resource crisis, one major factor is funding.

Although staff are devoted and committed to providing support to parents and parents-to-be in raising their children, more and more are moving to better paying jobs in other sectors. This negatively affects remaining staff and agencies, who cannot find and retain skilled home visitation workers.

Due to rapidly rising living costs and salaries that are 25% lower in the non-profit sector than those of provincial counterparts, staff are finding it difficult to make ends meet. “I have to work at three jobs to pay the bills,” says one home visitation worker. Others rely on food banks to extend their salaries, not unlike some of the clients they are serving.

Furthermore, surveys indicate that non-profit sector workers receive fewer benefits,² such as days of vacation and opportunities for career development, than equivalent workers in the public sector. Appropriate funding would help eliminate this significant difference.

Staff are taking on greater caseloads to meet

the increasing demand for services. Fatigue, injury, and frustration are being observed more frequently.

Supervisors are spending more resources on recruiting and hiring staff and fundraising rather than on program operations and supervision. This is affecting quality of services.

With changes to current funding levels and structure, agencies could offer more competitive salaries and benefits. This would help resolve recruitment and retention issues. Ultimately, this will have positive impacts on children, families, and communities.

Challenges

- Decreased quality and quantity of services
- Fewer families being helped
- More staff positions cut
- Positions going unfilled
- Increased demand for services with influx of people to Alberta
- Government contributes 33% of funding to the non-profit sector, the lowest of all provinces¹

Action

- Obtain adequate core funding rather than project funding
- Ensure competitive salaries and compensation benefits to attract and retain staff
- Work cooperatively with funders and stakeholders to resolve the HR crisis

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¹ Voluntary Sector Framework Initiative (VSFI). (March 2006).

² Alberta Association of Rehabilitation Centres. Retrieved from www.workforce2010.com/action on Dec. 14, 2006.