

Home Visiting Workforce: Burnout, Stressors, & Supports



2023 IDHS-DEC HOME VISITING STAFF SURVEY REPORT

THE SURVEY

The MIECHV and IDHS State Home Visiting Program Staff Survey is conducted each year by the Center for Prevention Research and Development (CPRD) at the University of Illinois in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Early Childhood (IDHS-DEC). This year the survey was administered to IDHS State home visiting staff for the first time, in addition to MIECHV home visiting staff. The goals of the survey are to obtain feedback and better understand the needs of the Illinois MIECHV and IDHS Home Visiting workforce. In 2023, the survey was open for 5 weeks in August to September, and 153 out of 254 MIECHV and IDHS staff members responded to the survey, a 60% response rate. To learn more about IDHS-DEC Home Visiting, including the communities served and benchmark achievements, see the [IDHS-DEC Home Visiting Statewide Data Summary Report 2023](#). This brief does not include a comparison to prior surveys as they encompassed only MIECHV funded staff.

BURNOUT

Home visitor professional well-being is critical for strengthening them to work with families. Professional well-being includes areas such as **job satisfaction, psychological well-being, job meaning and fulfillment, and self-efficacy and confidence** (Sparr, Johnson, & Quigley Clark, 2022). While promoting these factors is important, it is equally as important to proactively address feelings of stress and burnout that often occur among professionals who work with families that experience multiple stressors, including poverty, food and housing insecurity, intimate partner violence, substance use, and mental illness.

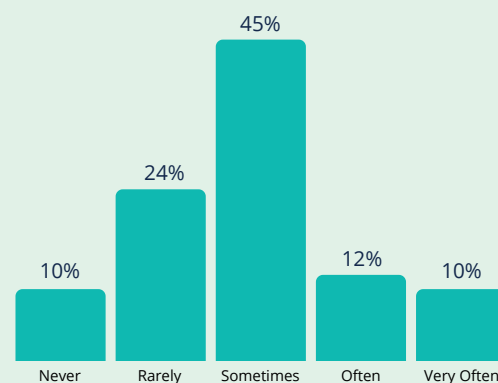
Burnout among the home visiting workforce remains a significant challenge due to their recurring exposure to family stressors and trauma, which can contribute to feelings of burnout. And **burnout can lead to turnover if not addressed**. Unlike work stress, where you can imagine feeling better, burnout is typically defined as including feelings of hopelessness. Additionally, chronic stress can lead to burnout.

- When measuring burnout using the ProQol scale, **almost four out of ten home visitors and supervisors (40%) revealed moderate burnout**.
- **All survey respondents scored in the moderate or low burnout levels**. No one scored in the high category of burnout. Lower ProQol scores may indicate stronger feelings of effectiveness in job performance (Stamm, 2010, The Concise Manual for the Professional Quality of Life Scale).
- Moderate levels of burnout seem to peak in survey respondents working at agency for 6-9 years.

"Sometimes home visiting...can lead to extreme burnout...It's nice to have time off, but coming back can be just as overwhelming trying to get in all the required visits. It's often more stressful to have multiple days in a row off when you come back. Also the pay does not equal the amount of stress involved in the job."

-Home Visitor

Example of ProQol Question: "I feel overwhelmed because my workload seems endless" for home visitors, supervisors, CI, and doulas

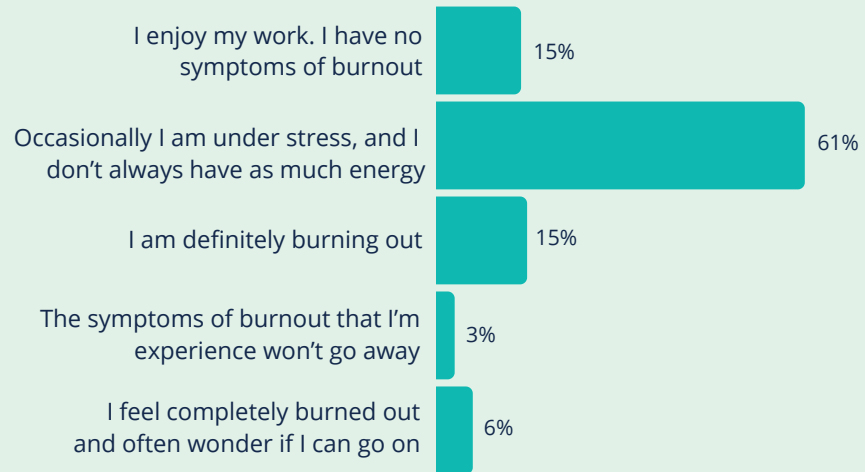


BURNOUT (cont.)

- An alternative way to ask about burnout is the single item burnout scale on the right.
- **Twenty-four percent of all survey respondents disclosed a degree of burnout** through their response to the MBI-EE (Maslach Single-Item Burnout Measure).
- Nine survey respondents report feeling “completely burned out and often wonder if [they] can go on.” Out of the 9, more than half are in the supervisor role.



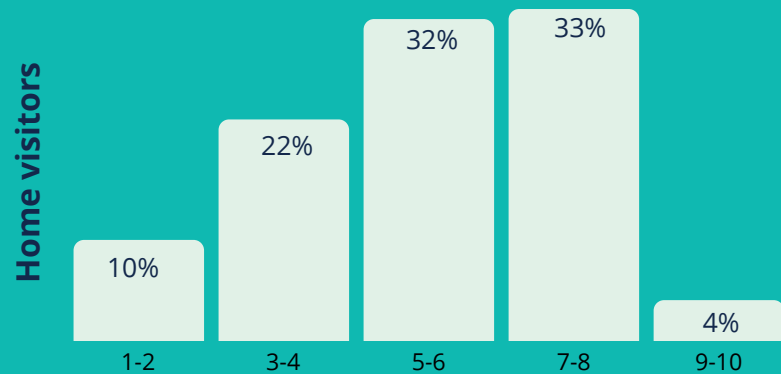
Maslach Single-Item Burnout Measure



WORK STRESS

- Sixty-four percent of home visitors self-rate themselves at 6 or lower for work stress compared to 37% that self-rate themselves at 7 or higher.
- Supervisors stress is higher. **Fifty percent of supervisors self-rate 7 or higher.**
- Overall, survey respondents under 35 years old (34%) reported lower stress levels than respondents 35 and older (43%).

On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being lowest (not at all stressed) and 10 being the highest (extremely stressed), how would you rate your overall work stress level in the past year?



My biggest work challenges that cause me stress are “having more things I have to do than I can do in my work time. Trying to figure out where to start. Having to let go of things I want to be doing to do the thing that I have to do right now. Not being able to stay on top of everything. Making mistakes from having too much I'm trying to balance.”

-Supervisor/Manager

BURNOUT AND WORK STRESS

Biggest Work Challenges That Cause Stress

- Respondents answered the question: *“What were your biggest work challenges that caused stress over the past year?”*
 - Requirements- too much paperwork, home visits, and documentation
 - Upper Management- concerned about not having support from supervisor, transition to different supervisor, and supervising tasks
 - Monitoring- multiple audits from funders and too much paperwork
 - Caseload- staff having high caseloads
 - Situations during home visit- mental health, crisis, and items home visitors not able to address
 - Turnover- read more about this in the first workforce brief [here](#)



“There is too much emphasis on the data, getting the data in and on time, the benchmarks and not the families needs. There is no empathy or concern about burnout or the stress its causing the workers to want to leave the job.”
-Home Visitor

Additional work challenges that cause stress are learning the work, changes in policy, required meetings/trainings, burnout, accreditation, scheduling visits, and workplace environment.

MOST HELPFUL STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING WORK STRESS

- Respondents answered the question: *“What was most helpful in managing your work stress?”*
 - Supervisors relationship and reflective supervision
 - Coworkers support and ability to talk about situations
 - Self-care (time with friends/family, working out, and leaving work at end of the day)
 - Vacation/time off
 - Mental Health Consultant
 - Organization time for home visitor (to organize home visiting schedule and visits)
 - Spiritual/religious
 - TA/outside support from agencies



SUPPORTS FOR HOME VISITORS

DHS-DEC provides multiple levels of support to home visiting professionals in Illinois.

Professional Development System



- Start Early Professional Learning Network
- Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants
- MCH Nurse Consultants
- Start Early Communities of Practice and Reflective Supervision

IDHS-DEC State Level Supports



- Aligned Program requirements and Data for both MIECHV and State funded grantees
- Salary Floor for home visitors
- Program monitoring/support staff and regular “Office Hours” meeting with home visiting programs

Data and Quality Supports



- Home Visiting Collaboration Improvement and Innovation Network (HV CollIN) and TARC CQI Practicum
- CPRD TA and support for CQI, Coordinated Intake (CI), and data

ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS NEEDED

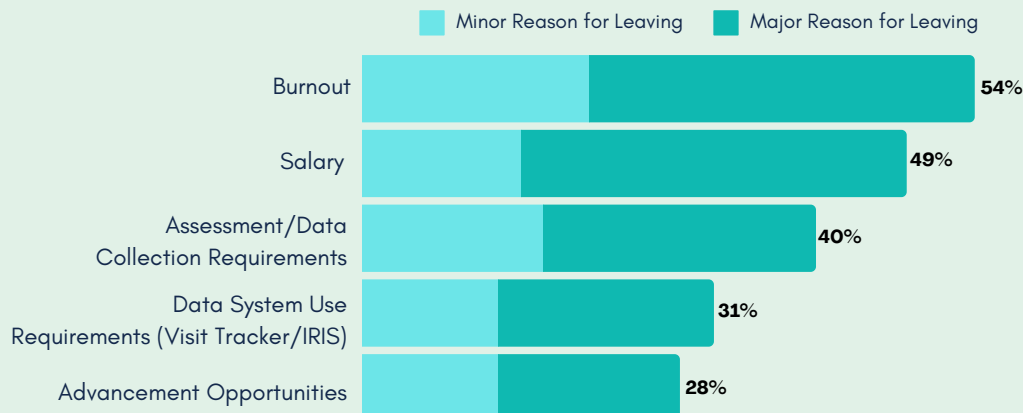
When respondents were asked about additional supports they need, they mentioned the items below:

- Employee Benefits- more salary, incentives, meals for staff luncheon
- Leaders- leaders to do training, more effective leaders
- Documentation Burden- less paperwork so home visitors have more time with families, work with different funders
- Increasing Workforce- more staff and staff who speak other languages

STAYING & LEAVING

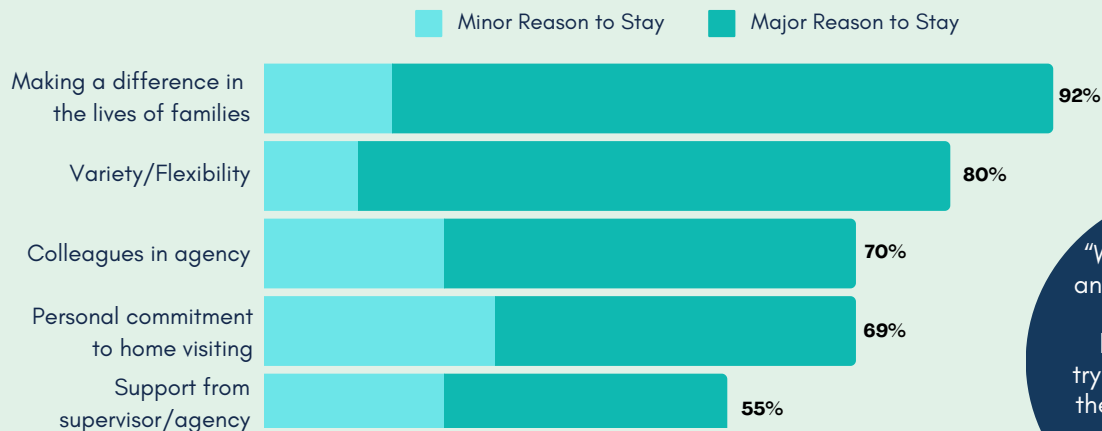
The two graphs below are showing results from home visitors, supervisors, CI, and doulas.

Top 5 reasons for considering leaving



When looking at responses for home visitors only, the top 5 reasons to leave are salary, burnout, assessment requirements, caseload requirements, and data system requirements.


Top 5 reasons for staying



“Working with families and helping them out in every possible way brings me joy. Also, trying not to think about the workload and to do my best.”
-Home Visitor

For More Reports on the 2023 IDHS-DEC Staff Survey:

- [Parent Engagement & Caseload Capacity Report](#)
- [Professional Development Report](#)
- [Assessing Disparities in Home Visiting Report](#)
- [Home Visiting Workforce: Demographics, Salaries, & Turnover Report](#)



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