



Recognizing Home Visitor Accomplishments

Strategies to Support the Home Visiting Workforce

Research-to-Practice Brief | November 2025

Introduction

Home visitors juggle multiple responsibilities and navigate complex issues to support children and families, often with limited time and resources. Yet this critical work often goes unrecognized by program leadership, local communities, and society at large.

Regular and meaningful recognition can help home visitors feel valued for their work with families, potentially making their jobs feel more fulfilling and sustainable over time. Retaining a qualified home visiting workforce reduces costs and disruption related to frequent staff turnover and retraining and can also improve services for families.

This brief describes how home visiting programs can support staff well-being and retention by recognizing home visitor accomplishments. It aims to—

- Define staff recognition in the context of the home visiting workforce
- Describe why it is important to recognize the work of home visiting staff
- Share concrete strategies that home visiting programs can use to foster feelings of staff recognition

This brief can help leaders of local home visiting programs support and strengthen their workforce by implementing effective recognition strategies. Opportunities for state

About This Brief

This brief highlights the need to recognize home visitor efforts, and the strategies program leaders can use to help staff feel validated and appreciated. It is primarily based upon a scan of existing literature and resources conducted by the [Institute for Home Visiting Workforce Development](#) (Workforce Institute). It also incorporates voices from the home visiting field gathered through Workforce Institute engagement activities.

leaders, network leaders, model developers, and researchers to facilitate and promote staff recognition are also shared.

Definition and Importance

Staff recognition refers to how an organization shows appreciation for employee efforts to support its goals and values. Staff recognition can take many forms. Recognition can be public, such as celebrating a home visitor's success during a team meeting, or private, such as expressing appreciation for a home visitor during a one-on-one supervision session. Recognition can also include rewards like bonus pay or extra paid time off.

Recognizing staff for their work can help them feel valued and supported; these feelings, in turn, can help staff maintain their emotional and physical well-being. The Institute for Healthcare Improvement's [Joy in Work](#) framework identifies recognition and rewards as one of nine system components critical to ensuring a joyful, engaged workforce.ⁱ Research shows that when staff feel appreciated at work, they report higher motivation, higher engagement, higher job satisfaction, and are less likely to say they will quit in the next year compared to when they don't feel appreciated.^{ii,iii,iv}

Despite the potential benefits of staff recognition, members of the U.S. workforce generally report feeling dissatisfied with how their work is acknowledged. A national Gallup workplace survey found that only one in three workers in the United States strongly agreed they received recognition or praise for doing good work in the past week.^v A national study of the home visiting workforce found similar patterns. Although more than half of home visitors reported receiving recognition or praise in the past week, only one third were completely satisfied with how their accomplishments were acknowledged.^{vi}

"Home visiting programs play a crucial role in our community and deserve to be recognized for their valuable contributions."

—Home visiting supervisor (Kansas)



Program Strategies

There are many different types of staff recognition, and they all have value. Program leaders should consider how staff can be recognized in different ways and by different people. This section presents strategies for programs to consider organized by four types of recognition: public praise, private praise, physical or monetary incentives, and flexibility.

Public Praise

Public praise can foster a positive workplace environment and motivate the entire home visiting team. Potential strategies include—

- Using team meetings to reflect on and acknowledge home visitor successes.
- Creating a physical or virtual board for home visitors to post successes and accomplishments.
- Featuring home visitor contributions in emails, newsletters, or social media posts.
- Inviting home visitors to showcase their work and raise awareness of the importance of home visiting. Provide opportunities for home visiting staff to join meetings with organizational leadership and external partners, take on leadership roles on committees, and present work at annual conferences.
- Participating in [National Home Visiting Week](#) and nominating team members to be Home Visitor of the Year.

Private Praise

Some individuals prefer private recognition to public attention. Consider these one-on-one strategies:

- Writing a handwritten letter sharing gratitude for a home visitor's performance.
- Sending an email thanking and recognizing a home visitor.
- Scheduling a private meeting to express appreciation.

Physical or Monetary Incentives

Program leaders can reward home visitors with financial incentives such as—

- Bonus pay, gift cards, or merchandise (e.g., company swag).
- Extra paid time off.



Flexibility

Program leaders can think beyond physical or monetary rewards and offer home visitors such perks as—

- Flexible schedules.
- Work-from-home opportunities.

Considerations

When adopting a strategy to recognize home visitors, there are important considerations for planning, implementing, and evaluating the strategy. For example, before deciding which strategies to consider, program leaders should have conversations with staff to understand their needs and priorities. Conversations can be used to—

- Examine staff perceptions of current strengths and gaps related to recognition.
- Ask home visitors how they would like to be recognized for their achievements based on their personal values, preferences, and motivations.
- Develop an understanding of home visitors' daily work lives, career goals, and professional development needs.

Based on these conversations, program leaders can develop a staff recognition plan that outlines how they will implement and sustain staff recognition strategies in a fair and transparent way (see box on next page). Consider factors such as—

- **Who will provide the recognition?** Employees report that the most impactful recognition comes from an employee's manager, followed by a high-level leader (e.g., executive).^{vii,viii}
- **What behaviors will be recognized?** Clearly communicate standards and expectations for receiving incentives and rewards for job performance.
- **How will staff be recognized?** Choose recognition strategies based on individual staff preferences, career goals, and alignment of their work with the organization's purpose. No matter what strategy a program selects, research^{ix} indicates that recognition is most meaningful when it is authentic, personalized, and specific.
- **When will staff be recognized?** Research indicates that recognition is most meaningful when it is timely. Provide recognition shortly after a success or win, not only during annual performance reviews.



Finally, home visiting programs can collect data to inform what strategies work best at their program. Starting points include—

- Gathering home visitor perspectives on which recognition strategies are most effective at making them feel appreciated.
- Examining what recognition strategies are most effective at improving home visitor outcomes, such as job satisfaction and/or intent to stay (see sidebar).
- Comparing existing recognition strategies in terms of implementation, cost effectiveness, and outcomes.

Measuring Outcomes

Programs can use the [job satisfaction survey](#) and [turnover intention scale](#) to measure the potential effects of recognition strategies on related workforce outcomes.





Example From the Field: Cheers for Peers

At Russell Child Development Center (RCDC) in Garden City, Kansas, home visiting staff have gone to great lengths—and even gotten stuck on muddy dirt roads—to support families. Serving families across 19 counties in a vast frontier community, home visitors often drive long distances to conduct home visits, sometimes missing out on time at home. As home visitor Dannah Schatz explains, “We really strive to meet families when, and where, it’s easier for them. So if that means we need to work on a Sunday or a Saturday or way after hours . . . our goal is to really help make parents and their kids’ lives less stressful.”

To recognize staff for these efforts, Chief Executive Officer Rebecca Clancy developed an employee recognition program called Cheers for Peers. Every quarter, program leadership, staff, and families can fill out an outline submission form to nominate staff members in one of three categories: Heart of Gratitude, Sparkle & Shine, and Team Extreme. These awards recognize outstanding teamwork, commitment, and high-quality work. Cheers for Peers recipients are recognized by RCDC board members during all-staff meetings and can select a prize such as a mug, backpack, or jacket.

While the resources needed to implement Cheers for Peers are relatively small, the program’s impact looms large. “It’s very nice to be seen and appreciated for some of these things that we are willing to do to make our families lives a little bit better,” Dannah explains. “Just feeling heard and seen and appreciated in any way, is huge. And that’s something that we teach our families, you know. If your kids are doing something well, give them positive praise for that, because that will make them want to do more of that. And that’s the same for adults, too.”

Opportunities for Research

There is limited research on employee recognition in home visiting. Researchers can design studies to understand the impact of recognition strategies on program, community, and systems-level outcomes. Suggestions include—

- Examining if and how home visitor recognition strategies impact service delivery and/or family outcomes.



- Examining if and how home visitor recognition strategies impact awareness, understanding, and appreciation of home visiting as a career.

Opportunities for Funders and Policymakers

Funders and policymakers can help drive home visitor recognition efforts. Specifically, they might consider—

- Allocating adequate funding for home visitor compensation, including rewards and incentives.
- Including home visitors in the federal Standard Occupational Classification system.
- Driving public campaigns to increase awareness of home visiting as a profession.

Conclusion

Better recognizing home visitor accomplishments shows promise for improving job satisfaction and retention in the field. Home visiting program leaders can implement simple, cost-effective strategies to recognize and celebrate home visitor accomplishments. By providing meaningful and consistent recognition, programs can help home visitors feel valued, appreciated, and motivated to continue their essential work. This investment can enhance not only home visitor well-being, but also program stability and the quality of services delivered to families.



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INSTITUTE FOR HOME VISITING
- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT -

& Jackie Walorski Center for Evidence-Based Case Management

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