



# CHICAGO HOME VISITING PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This document answers some frequently asked questions about the Chicago Home Visiting Partnership Project.

The teams at the Center for the Economics of Human Development (CEHD) and Preparing for Life (PFL) welcome any additional questions you have. Please reach out to the team at [CEHDhomevisiting@uchicago.edu](mailto:CEHDhomevisiting@uchicago.edu) for more information.

### ELIGIBILITY

#### **Will my organization be considered if we do not currently offer home visiting services or other services to children under 5?**

Yes. Organizations do not need to currently offer home visiting or any other specific services in order to be eligible. We are searching for a partner that is willing to add home visiting to the list of services they currently offer their clients **or** expand their home visiting program to include the families recruited for this project. The partner organization will be possibly be able to include families from this study in other, non-home visiting programming it offers. Because of the research aspect of this initiative, these details would have to be worked out with the partners in the design phase of this project. However, please contact us if you wish to discuss specific scenarios in advance.

#### **What are the eligibility criteria for recruiting families?**

This project is unlike many home visiting programs because we are not bound by strict eligibility guidelines for enrolling families. The nature of our funding means that the partners can work together to decide on eligibility criteria that best serve the communities we will be working in.

For this project, families will be recruited and enrolled during pregnancy and served until the target child enters kindergarten at age 5. Parents expecting their first or subsequent child are eligible. We will aim to serve families that live within a reasonable area of the partner organization.

During the design phase of this project, CEHD, PFL, and the Community-Based Organization (CBO) partner selected will work through many of the details of the initiative, including family eligibility criteria beyond what is required by the PFL model.

#### **Can the families recruited for this program and study be existing clients of ours?**

It will depend on which services these existing clients receive from your organization. For this research study, we will need to recruit and randomize newly enrolled families during pregnancy. Families already enrolled in home visiting programming within your organization will not be eligible for this initiative. However, if your organization serves expectant

parents in ways other than home visiting, those families can be enrolled and served within this program.

### **What type of information will the CBO partner be required to collect for each family?**

This is also a detail that will be covered in our design phase with the three partners. The documentation required for each family will depend on input from the home visitors, supervisors and families on what is appropriate to collect as well as the needs of the research study.

Because the structure of this project is flexible, we don't have any external data collection requirements. We have the ability to collaboratively create the guidelines and requirements to fit our workflow and the families in this project.

## **PREPARING FOR LIFE METHODOLOGY AND MATERIALS**

### **How is the home visiting curriculum to be used in this project?**

Home visitors use the PFL Curriculum to guide discussion with families on key parenting and family topics. The PFL Curriculum covers seven categories:

- Cognitive Development
- Social and Emotional Development
- Nutrition, Rest and Routine
- Safety and Supervision
- Parental Supports
- Transitions to School

Information is presented in colorful, animated, accessible tip sheets. Some of them are matched with activities and they are easily translated to suit the needs of the audience.

Home visitors aim to stay one step ahead of a child's developmental trajectory so they can introduce tip sheets to support and prepare parents as much as possible for what potentially lies ahead. Materials serve as a guide and can be used as a teaching tool. They also create scope for goal setting and action planning.

The selected partner will have a key role in helping to adapt the material to ensure it is representative of the local community.

### **Does PFL include other methods or approaches?**

Yes. Triple P (a parenting and family support curriculum) is part of the services offered in the current program in Ireland. PFL also delivers a program called Circle of Security (a program designed to give home visitors guidance in supporting attachment).

For this project, we believe it is important to have a formal, evidence-based curriculum for any parenting program used, but we are open as to what specific program will be implemented. As part of the design phase with our partner, we will discuss supplemental curriculum options.

### **Is PFL an MIECHV approved model?**

Preparing for Life has submitted an application to become a HomVEE approved model, but has not yet received a decision. It is our hope that PFL is accepted as a HomVEE approved model so that a program using it could be eligible for MIECHV funding. This could help to underwrite part of this project, and/or scale and sustain the services beyond this project.

We believe the case is strong for approval since the original PFL study was a randomized control trial that found positive outcomes in several domains tracked by HomVEE.

### **Will the tip sheets be revised to be made culturally sensitive for the population in Chicago?**

Yes, this is critically important. We understand that a model created in Ireland for Irish families and has been shown to work well with Irish families, should not just be used in Chicago without adaptation. The tip sheets and other materials provide an excellent foundation for the approach. The evidence they are based on is solid and there will be more similarities than differences between the work in Ireland and in Chicago. However, there is important work to be done in tailoring how the information is presented so that it resonates with families here. We are committed to working closely with the selected CBO partner to ensure that the materials are appropriate.

Some of the specific adaptations that we anticipate include updating the social service organizations that home visitors can refer families to in the community, changing the imagery and photos in the materials to be representative of diverse families and translating materials to the languages used by the families.

The tip sheets are written currently for about a sixth grade reading level. Our adaptations will retain this level to make sure that the materials are accessible to all.

### **Are the tip sheets and other materials available in other languages?**

They are not yet translated into other languages. Part of our design and adaptation phase will be to understand the language requirements in the area we are serving and to translate the materials as needed.

### **How is home visitor training provided and who is responsible for it?**

PFL has a formal training program for new home visitors. PFL staff will travel to Chicago to deliver training when the CBO partner is identified. The training covers the PFL approach, logic model and practice principles as well as how to use PFL tip sheets and materials. The training models the PFL approach of coaching and reflective practice and is very participatory. The PFL Implementation Team will work with the CBO partner to adapt the training to the needs of the CBO partner.

## SERVICE DELIVERY AND IMPLEMENTATION

### **What are the expected caseload sizes and visit frequencies?**

The Preparing for Life model requires home visitors to meet with each family on a monthly basis. Families with more immediate needs can have more frequent visits. Home visitors are also encouraged to check in with families via text or other platforms between visits.

Because of the monthly visit schedule, caseloads are between 25–30 families per full-time home visitor. For this project, we will keep caseloads as close to 25 per visitor as possible considering the additional work involved in participating in the research study. This is a point to be confirmed in the design phase, as we don't have strict requirements and we value the expertise that our community-based partner organization brings.

### **Will there be potential to extend this project beyond the five years?**

Yes. We are committed to the sustainability of this program for the CBO partner organization to further serve families. PFL has applied for HomVEE status so that a home visiting program using their model will be eligible for MIECHV funding. We are also open to working with our service delivery partner on ways to make this program sustainable in their portfolio of services.

### **What happens if COVID restrictions limit the ability to conduct in-person visits again?**

PFL (and other home visiting models) have adapted to covid restrictions by developing a variety of creative tactics to engage families. Some of these tactics include contacting families through a variety of online platforms (Zoom, FaceTime, Whatsapp, etc.) and meeting in outdoor settings. This allows home visitors and families to maintain their relationship during restrictions. The type of contact will vary from family to family depending on their wishes and their access to equipment.

During the design phase of this project, the partners will develop a contingency plan based on the experiences of the PFL team and the CBO partner during previous COVID waves. This plan will provide guidance to all of the partners on how to move forward and continue to provide the families with high quality service in the event of new COVID restrictions.

### **How will the three partners (CEHD, PFL and the CBO partner) communicate and collaborate?**

We expect that there will be weekly check-in meetings in the beginning of the partnership to build relationships, get to know the teams and gain an understanding of how to approach the work.

Outside of the weekly meetings, there will be regular update emails. We also can and will adopt other forms of communication that work well for the team.

We understand that some organizations may be very engaged in this work, and others would like to be more hands-off. We can be flexible with the preferences and needs of the organization.

## RESEARCH

### **How much time will project staff need to commit to research data collection and reporting?**

Many of the details of the project, especially the research study, will be designed with significant input from the CBO partner. Both PFL and CEHD are committed to making sure that this project respects home visitors' time and expertise.

The first home visitor(s) hired will have an opportunity to participate in the adaptation of the curriculum and the overall design of the program. Once families are recruited for the pilot, home visitors will work together and with the project partners to assess how well the adapted curriculum works with families. As the project progresses to full implementation, the research team will ask home visitors to complete periodic surveys and participate in interviews one or two times annually.

After full implementation is rolled out, home visitors will serve families as they would in most home visiting programs. There will be some data collection responsibilities, but likely no more than is normally required in this type of work. Typically home visitors will administer developmental screenings, as well as assess family needs and strengths using standardized tools one to four times annually.

### **What tools or assessments will be used with families as a part of the research study?**

This is something we are currently assessing and will continue to work on with our service delivery partner during the design phase. The majority of these decisions will be made with input from the three partners involved as well as our research advisors.

We are committed to using validated measures to track children's development in several different domains. These will come from a combination of parental surveys and direct child assessment. PFL has identified evaluation tools and measures that are designed to support the delivery of the program and provide real time feedback for families as well as gathering research data.

We are also planning to ask home visitors to video record home visits periodically with each family. The frequency of the recordings will be one of the many details we would like to decide in partnership with the CBO and the home visitors. The purpose of the videos will be to assess parent-child interactions, as well as for the home visitors to use as professional development resources during reflective supervision sessions.

### **What's the difference between the treatment and control groups?**

In a randomized control trial (RCT) the participants are randomly placed into two groups, treatment and control, to understand how the practice leads to changes in the groups. The treatment group receives some kind of intervention, in our program, it will be home visits. The control group generally does not receive the intervention, but may have other benefits. In our program, the control group might get developmentally appropriate toys, informational material or be able to participate in group sessions, but will not get home visits.

PFL's original RCT had a "high treatment" and a "low treatment" group instead of a traditional "treatment" and "control" group. Our study and the benefits available to the low-treatment or control group will be designed in collaboration with the three partners with guidance from the original study researchers. All families, regardless of treatment status, will be compensated for taking part in separate research activities, such as annual interviews, or interim surveys administered by CEHD.

## FUNDING AND PARTICIPATION

### How many new staff members will the CBO partner have to hire with the \$250,000 funding?

This will depend on the structure and need of the organization. We are planning to enroll 200 families in the home visiting study (100 treatment and 100 control) and we currently anticipate that once the program is at full enrollment, the organization will have hired one supervisor and four full-time equivalent home visitors. This and many other details will be worked out in the design phase. We are fortunate to have flexibility with this project and we value the expertise, preferences and goals of the CBO partner.

The CBO partner will not be enrolling 200 families right away. The first year of partnership will focus on adaptation of the curriculum and recruiting and enrolling a small number of families for the pilot program. During this time, one supervisor and one or two home visitors will be needed. Hiring additional home visitors won't be necessary until the program has enrolled more than 50 families in the treatment group.

### Is \$250,000 year sufficient to cover costs of the program?

We have a flexible \$1.25M in funding, and are raising additional resources. We are committed to the project's success. Also, we at CEHD and PFL are committed to equitable pay for the early childhood workforce. We understand how important it is to be compensated fairly for this crucial work. In that respect, we expect to work closely with our CBO partner to develop a pay schedule for staff that is fair, equitable, and competitive to find and retain the right staff.

### What can I use the funding for?

The funding is intended to cover costs incurred by the CBO partner that are directly related to this partnership project. These costs include, but may not be limited to: home visitor and supervisor salaries, benefits, transportation, materials and other administrative costs such as data management systems. CEHD will work closely with the CBO partner to determine the budget during the design phase. As the project evolves the two partners will also work closely to adapt the budget to the project's changing needs.

We are committed to the project's success, and would like to support the CBO partner in what they need to implement this program. You can consider this funding as something between a gift and a grant, as while some financial reporting will be

required by the University of Chicago, we will not have restricted categories per se as long as the need advances the work of this project.

### This isn't a fit for my organization now but we would like to stay in touch and help if we can. How can we do that?

Please send an email to [CEHDhomevisiting@uchicago.edu](mailto:CEHDhomevisiting@uchicago.edu). CEHD is tapped into many opportunities at the University and around the city that we can share with our networks. Also, as this project grows and evolves, there may be ways that your organization can be involved in resource connections or referral partnerships.

Also, please keep us updated on your work. We try to stay current on best practices in the early childhood field, new research and opportunities for collaboration.