

Why GAO Did This Study

The MIECHV program provides grants to states to support evidence-based home visiting services for at-risk pregnant women and parents with young children. HHS was appropriated \$400 million per year for the MIECHV grant program for fiscal years 2018 through 2022. Families volunteer to participate in the MIECHV program and are provided regular home visits and support services from a nurse, social worker, or other professional. According to HHS, the program builds upon decades of scientific research showing that home visits during pregnancy and early childhood can improve the lives of children and families. States began receiving federal MIECHV program funds in fiscal year 2010, but many states provided home visiting services prior to the MIECHV program using state or other funds. To meet the program's MOE requirement, states are required to maintain home visiting spending that meets MIECHV program criteria. GAO was asked to review the MIECHV program's MOE requirement.

GAO examined (1) what is known about the MOE spending reported by states that receive federal MIECHV program funds and (2) how HHS monitors states to ensure the MOE requirement is met. GAO reviewed MIECHV program notices of funding opportunity for fiscal years 2013 through 2018 and state grant applications for fiscal years 2016 through 2018, the most recent three years available. GAO also reviewed HHS grants monitoring documentation and interviewed HHS officials.

View [GAO-19-645](#). For more information, contact Kathryn A. Larin at (202) 512-7215 or larink@gao.gov.

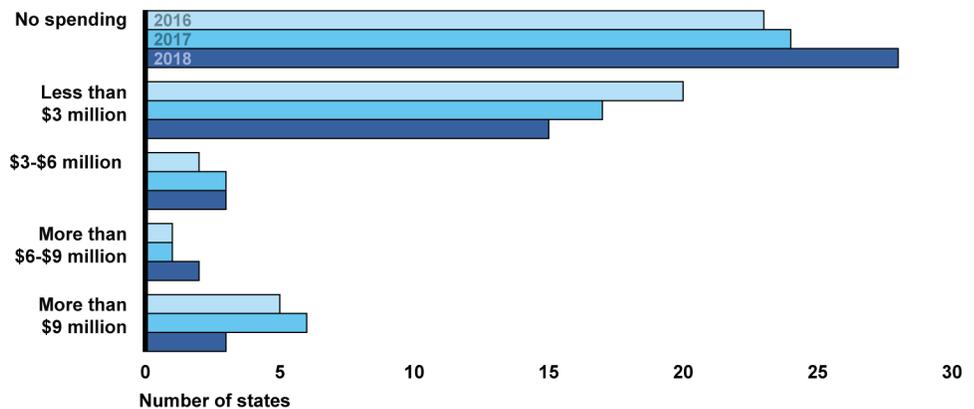
MATERNAL AND CHILD HOME VISITING PROGRAM

HHS Determined That States Generally Met the Maintenance of Effort Requirement

What GAO Found

From fiscal years 2016 through 2018, state reported maintenance of effort (MOE) spending varied from \$0 to more than \$25 million for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program, according to GAO's review of MIECHV program grant applications. The program's authorizing statute requires states to meet an MOE requirement. MOE requirements in federal programs generally require grantees to maintain a certain level of spending to ensure grantee dollars are not replaced with federal dollars. To demonstrate their compliance with the MIECHV program's MOE requirement, states report in their annual grant applications their MOE spending for the prior fiscal year.

Range of Maintenance of Effort Spending Reported by States in the MIECHV Program, Federal Fiscal Years 2016 through 2018



Source: GAO analysis of the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grant applications. | GAO-19-645

HHS determined that states generally met the MIECHV program's MOE requirement because states did not replace state funds with federal funds, including states that reported no MOE spending or decreased MOE spending. States may be permitted to report \$0 in MOE spending in certain circumstances; for example, if a state's only home visiting spending was on programs that did not meet MIECHV program criteria. According to HHS officials, state-reported decreases in MOE spending were due to errors in calculations that were subsequently corrected, clarifications to HHS's MOE guidance, or because of circumstances outside of the state agency's control.

HHS uses multiple methods to monitor state compliance with the MOE requirement, according to GAO's review of HHS documentation and interviews with HHS officials. The agency's monitoring strategy includes reviews of grant applications, reviews of state single audits, and operational site visits, among other techniques. According to HHS officials, grant application reviews are the primary mechanism used to monitor state compliance, through which HHS compares state-reported MOE spending in grant applications across two fiscal years to determine if states maintained their level of spending. In addition, HHS identifies and resolves issues with state-reported MOE spending through its operational site visits and the agency's review of state single audits.