

# BEST PRACTICES HIRING GUIDE FOR INCREASING AFRICAN AMERICAN HOME VISITING STAFF



A JOINT EFFORT FROM THE BEST  
PRACTICES WORKGROUP AND  
AFRICAN AMERICAN HOME  
VISITING ENGAGEMENT  
WORKGROUP



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# JOINT WORKGROUP STATEMENT

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The murder of George Floyd and many others spurred the Consortium individually and collectively to reflect upon issues of equity in our world and in home visitation specifically. Out of these reflections, a decision to focus on increasing recruitment of Black home visiting staff was made in order to fully realize our shared commitment of anti-racist and culturally-affirming services.

This guide is the culmination of multiple months of discussions and reflections on behalf of the Consortium's Best Practices and African American Home Visiting Engagement Workgroups. The guide is meant to be a living document that is edited regularly to reflect our new findings and lived best practices. While the guide is focused on Los Angeles County, California, it is scalable to the field of home visiting as a whole.

As you utilize this guide, we encourage you to reflect upon your personal and organization's commitment to equity and what that means for the population you serve. Introspection is the necessary first step in this work. We hope you make time to expand your knowledge of anti-racism and anti-Blackness.

# JOB DESCRIPTION CONSIDERATIONS

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## **Removal of bilingual requirement/bilingual preferred language**

Home visitor job descriptions that include a bilingual requirement or reflect a preference towards bilingual applicants can discourage Black applicants from applying.

## **Stronger emphasis on experience working with families over education**

Consider your organization's approach to applicants' experience. Applicants with experience working with families may need to be prioritized over applicants with education. Grants for any wanted college courses or education should be made available for staff.

## **Inclusion of population and neighborhoods to be served**

Language in job description should include populations the home visitor will be serving as well as neighborhoods and cities. For example, "Home visitor will be serving Black communities of Inglewood, Compton, and Hawthorne." Specifically listing the population and areas served will generate more applicants familiar with the community of interest.

## **Inclusion of Fathers and LGBTQ+ Families**

The term maternal and child health no longer fits home visiting. As the field expands to include fathers and families that identify as LGBTQ+, we must be intentionally inclusive when describing communities that will be served in job descriptions.

## **Add Criteria Thresholds**

Most job descriptions include a list of skills or education a successful applicant must have. These thresholds may leave out applicants who are close to the community. Consider a "3 out of 5" or similar approach to desired skills and education.

## **Sample Job Description**

See Appendix A for a sample job description for home visitors.

# HOME VISITOR

## Tips for targeted recruitment

### REACH OUT TO HBCUS

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are a good resource for human resources departments and home visiting teams to raise awareness of home visiting career opportunities. Expand outside of California to other areas of the country. HBCUs attract students from all over, including Los Angeles County.



### INSPIRE HOME VISITING CLIENTS

Home visiting clients have the asset of lived experience and can be invaluable to home visiting teams. Offer home visitation as a career option for current clients and graduates.



### PARTNER WITH LIBRARIES

Libraries offer a myriad of services to the community such as job preparation and reading time with infants. Drop off recruitment flyers and promotional materials for home visiting.



### GET OUT AND ABOUT

You know your community best. Think about where people shop, eat, and hang out. Be strategic about where you place promotional materials.



### COMMUNICATE WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Community colleges dedicate resources to job preparation and hosts events such as job fairs for students. Meet with college counselors to spread the word and set up booths at job fairs.



### KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN

Building new partnerships takes time. Keep your eyes open for new opportunities to spread awareness of home visiting.



# SUPPORTING AFRICAN AMERICAN STAFF

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## **Encourage Participation**

The African American Home Visiting Engagement Workgroup of the Consortium is dedicated to increasing engagement of Black families in home visiting, as well as increasing the number of Black home visitors and parent coaches. The monthly workgroup meetings serve as a way to connect home visiting staff across Los Angeles County, address issues, and create solutions. Make time for and encourage staff to participate in the workgroup.

## **Center Staff**

Home visiting is hard work. Home visitors and parent coaches are tasked with navigating systems on behalf of families and meeting families where they are. This often means addressing trauma of families. In some cases, multiple traumas are flagged. Burnout and compassion fatigue are great concerns for home visiting staff. Leadership should take extra steps to educate staff on the symptoms of burnout and support staff who are experiencing symptoms.

## **Encourage Mental Health Days**

Schedule paid days off from work for staff and encourage them to spend the day taking care of themselves.

## **Connect African-American Staff**

Pairing up African-American staff on a 1:1 basis can help ease transitions into the work and provide an outlet for staff to raise concerns and ask questions.



# HR TRAINING IN DEI

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## •Blind review of resumes

- When considering an applicant, have the name removed from materials prior to your review.
  - This step eliminates potential implicit bias against a candidate based on their name.

## Panel of interviewers

- Ask individuals within your organization and outside your organization to interview candidates.
  - Individuals outside your organization bring a different perspective that will aid in your decision-making process.
- Rate candidates before discussing as a group.
  - This step eliminates bias of one person affecting whole group.
- Develop Pre-screening checklist of applications
  - Rate before you meet person/interview
- Bring in a supervisor from another agency to be part of interview panel
  - Different/outside perspectives
  - Disrupt culture of agency

## Use a List of Interview Questions

- Agree upon a list of interview questions that are culturally appropriate for candidates.
- Focus on interviewing skills that do not turn African American candidates away.
  - Ask any African American staff you currently have to review your list of interview questions and inquire about suggestions for improvement for the interview phase. "What would you think if this question was asked of you?"
  - Initial screenings often impact the hiring of African American staff