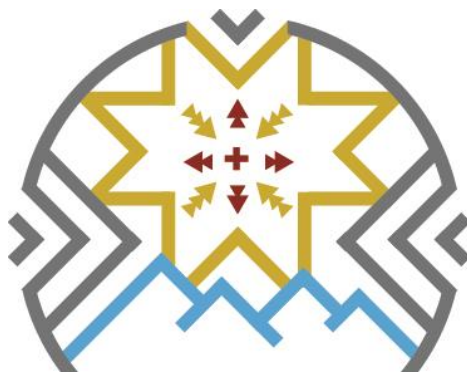


TRIBAL  
HOME  
VISITING

## Data Collection in the Home

*A TEI Toolkit*

*Introduction*



TRIBAL  
EVALUATION  
INSTITUTE

Supporting Community Decision Making by  
Strengthening Data Collection and Use

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Please contact us with any questions related to this toolkit and its use.



**PREFACE:** The development of this toolkit was funded by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) at the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) under Contract Number HHSP23320095644WC. ACF is a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In 2011, OPRE funded the Tribal Home Visiting Evaluation Institute (TEI) to provide guidance, leadership, and support to promote excellence in community-based research and evaluation of the initiatives that serve American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) children and families through the Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (Tribal MIECHV) Program. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, or U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

This toolkit was developed in response to needs and questions related to data collection that emerged through TEI’s work with Tribal MIECHV grantees. TEI members from two institutions collaborated to create this toolkit: **James Bell Associates, Inc. (JBA)**, and **Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health**.

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**James Bell Associates, Inc.**—JBA is an evaluation and research services consulting firm specializing in evaluating and supporting innovative health and human services programs throughout the country. JBA plans and conducts independent program evaluation and applied research and provides practical technical assistance and training to enhance performance measurement capacity for federal, state, tribal, and local agencies. Throughout JBA’s 30-year history, JBA has supported many tribal communities receiving federal grants to conduct their own evaluations and has conducted multiple descriptive studies of federally funded multisite social services programs throughout Indian Country. Over the past four years, JBA staff have worked closely with Tribal MIECHV grantees to provide technical assistance on performance measurement, evaluation, continuous quality improvement, and data systems. In these years, TEI has identified a fundamental need for data collection tools and strategies to help prepare home visitors for high-quality data collection in tribal contexts.

**Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health**—Since 1991, the Center has worked in partnership with American Indian communities to raise health status, self-sufficiency, and health leadership to the highest possible level. This mission is achieved through three core activities: service, research, and training. To accomplish research objectives, the Center has implemented numerous evaluation studies that require data collection from American Indian families in their homes. This type of data collection can be both complex and sensitive, and staff must be rigorously trained and supported to ensure all data collection activities are respectful and of high quality. The Center has developed many training and quality assurance tools to prepare paraprofessional staff for home-based data collection.

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** TEI would like to thank the dedicated federal Tribal MIECHV team, grantees, home visitors, and enrolled families throughout the Tribal MIECHV initiative who have taught us many lessons about data collection and its use in AIAN communities. We benefitted greatly from Doug Novins, Nancy Whitesell, and Michelle Sarche at the University of Colorado’s Centers for American Indian Health for their careful review of the toolkit. We would also like to extend great thanks to the following Tribal MIECHV grantees who supported tool development or provided tools and forms as templates:

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## INTRODUCTION

The Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (Tribal MIECHV) Program provides grants to tribal entities to develop, implement, and evaluate home visiting programs in American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) communities.

The goals of the Tribal MIECHV Program are to:

- Support the development of happy, healthy, and successful AIAN children and families through a coordinated home visiting strategy that addresses critical maternal and child health, development, early learning, family support, and child abuse and neglect prevention needs.
- Implement high-quality, culturally relevant, evidence-based home visiting programs in AIAN communities.
- Expand the evidence base around home visiting interventions with Native populations.
- Support and strengthen coordination and linkages between various tribal early childhood programs, resulting in coordinated, comprehensive early childhood systems.

Achieving these goals requires a firm understanding of what Tribal MIECHV programs are doing, what impact they are having on children and families, and how they can be adapted and expanded. This toolkit was prepared by a team of individuals brought together through Tribal MIECHV who are committed to research, evaluation, and high-quality implementation of early childhood home visiting services in AIAN communities.

For more information on the federal Tribal MIECHV Program, visit the website at

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/home-visiting/tribal-home-visiting>

You can find out more about the research supporting evidence-based home visiting programs in AIAN communities by visiting the Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness (HomVEE) website at

<http://homvee.acf.hhs.gov/>

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## BACKGROUND

As is the case with most federal funding recipients, Tribal MIECHV grantees are required to collect various types of data to help ensure the program is being implemented in a systematic and informed way. Tribal MIECHV grantees must collect demographic, performance measurement, continuous quality improvement (CQI), and evaluation data. The grantees must develop comprehensive data collection practices that not only meet the requirements of the funding agency but also work in their local community. (For more information on Tribal MIECHV's data collection requirements, see Module 1.) In addition to these data collection

requirements, grantees must collect the data required by the developers of home visiting models. These requirements vary by model.

Indigenous communities have a unique and often negative history with data collection and research founded in Western science, a European system of knowledge that relies on the scientific method to verify particular assertions. (Cochran et al., 2008; Pontes Ferreira & Gendron, 2011). Many of these negative experiences may be attributed to research that ignored community concerns or tribal sovereignty, applied improper data collection and data-sharing principles, failed to honor informed consent processes, and disregarded the negative implications that research findings could have on the community. Too often, indigenous peoples have been looked at by Western researchers as objects of study rather than partners or even drivers of the research. As such, research and data collection has become a sensitive issue, leaving many communities feeling distrustful of the intentions of researchers and the data being collected.

In spite of this history, quality data collection has never been more important than it is today. Service providers in Indian Country face increasingly competitive funding opportunities, ambitious grant reporting requirements, and the need for effective, evidence-based strategies tailored to address the array of challenges facing tribal communities. Recognizing the challenges for home visiting programs to collect the required data, we argue that there are many advantages of using data in an appropriate way to build knowledge and improve the health and well-being of AIAN communities. It is our hope that this toolkit will support culturally responsive data collection techniques that can be used to strengthen and benefit tribal communities.

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## ABOUT THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit is intended to support Tribal MIECHV and other home visiting program managers, evaluators, home visitors, and other staff in establishing and implementing successful data collection strategies in their local programs. It specifically addresses data collection that takes place within homes throughout AIAN communities. We hope that by using this toolkit, programs will be able to plan and execute data collection with the goal of ensuring the highest quality services to the community's children and families. This toolkit aims to simplify the data collection process by providing easy-to-understand explanations and tools you can tailor to meet your data collection needs. The tools included are examples; it is essential to consider local context, including culture, language, and prior experience with data throughout the data collection process. We encourage sites to engage with this toolkit in the way that makes the most sense for them and to freely adapt it and the tools included in it.

We want this toolkit to support your work whether you are a home visitor, supervisor, data coordinator, evaluator, or some combination of these roles. Sometimes “you” in this toolkit will fit you perfectly, sometimes it might suit someone else on your team, and sometimes it might not fit any of your program’s staff.

## Toolkit Aims

After using this toolkit, you will be able to:

- Better understand what data are and why data collection is valuable for your home visiting program.
- Describe the essential elements needed to prepare for data collection.
- Establish processes to ensure high-quality data collection is an ongoing part of your program.
- Identify ways in which high-quality data collection leads to valuable information for your program and others outside your program.
- Use a variety of tools to help you prepare for data collection, improve the data collection process for your program, train staff, and disseminate the data you collect.

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## INTENDED AUDIENCES

This toolkit is intended to support Tribal MIECHV program teams in their data collection efforts. It also may be used more generally by staff of home visiting and early childhood programs and staff who collect and use data throughout AIAN communities.

We'd like to recognize that there are many different tribal nations with unique languages, cultures, traditions, and ceremonies. The modules in this toolkit are meant to be broadly applicable, and any examples provided in the text do not intentionally reflect a particular tribe, community, or region of Indian Country.

While staffing varies significantly across programs, Tribal MIECHV teams generally include program managers, evaluators, and home visitors. Some programs also have data coordinators or other staff involved in data collection, entry, and reporting. Each team member has a critical role to play in the data collection process. That role is determined locally and is often based on program and community needs, individual skills, and program management considerations. Below are some data collection responsibilities that are typically associated with the four primary roles:

- **Program managers:** Program managers often deal with data collection at multiple levels ranging from broad planning and oversight to direct data entry and analysis. They are generally responsible for decision making around data collection and for ensuring that all staff members understand their role in data collection and are appropriately trained and supported to successfully fulfill requirements. Staff are likely to experience challenges with the data collection process, and open communication with program managers is crucial for troubleshooting these challenges as they arise. Additionally, program managers are often the ones asked to present data to community stakeholders



and funders, so they must have a solid understanding of why data collection is important and how it works within in their program.

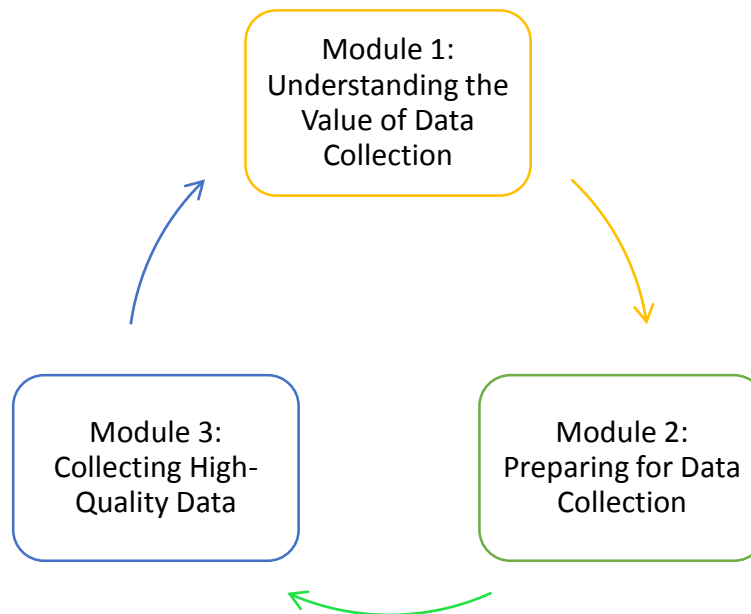
- **Data coordinators:** Data coordinators (also called data managers) play a critical role in supporting programs in collecting, entering, managing, and reporting data. Data coordinators help home visitors keep track of which forms need to be filled out and when. They typically do data entry, run data quality checks, and help with reporting. Having a data coordinator to focus on data-related tasks maximizes the time home visitors and program managers can spend providing services to families.
- **Evaluators:** Like program managers, evaluators ensure staff are supported in proper data collection techniques so they can appropriately use, interpret, and store data that are collected. Evaluators play a fundamental role in developing and implementing guidelines for administering and interpreting evaluation instruments. Examples include writing data collection protocols, establishing consent processes, identifying and reviewing instruments, and/or selecting data systems. Evaluators can also provide ongoing support through data entry and analysis, data quality reviews, and the sharing of program data. Program evaluators should be knowledgeable of the community context as it relates to data collection and promote collaborative community-based evaluation practices.
- **Home visitors:** Home visitors are the faces of the home visiting program in the community and they are typically responsible for collecting data from program participants. Home visitors play a critical role in ensuring the program is collecting quality data in a way that is comfortable to families; they are often tasked with administering the data collection instruments, entering the data into databases, and communicating and translating data collection for the community and the families served by the program.

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## ORGANIZATION OF THE TOOLKIT

The toolkit is organized into three modules, each representing broad topic areas that follow the key stages of a standard data collection process.

### Toolkit Modules Representing Stages of Data Collection



#### Module 1: Understanding the Value of Data Collection

In this section of the toolkit, we will discuss the basics of data and how they can be collected and used to inform the services provided to families in your program. It's not only about having the tools to collect good, quality data. It's also about getting buy-in from program staff and stakeholders around the value of data collection.

#### Module 2: Preparing for Data Collection

A variety of tools in this module will assist you as you begin to prepare for data collection. From creating a data collection protocol and schedule to training staff on the process, the tools in this module are intended to help you build a foundation to begin collecting quality data.

#### Module 3: Collecting High-Quality Data

Now you are ready to start collecting data. It is important to ensure that staff follow an informed consent process and collect the correct data in a timely manner. Throughout this module, we will introduce and discuss tools to support supervision through data quality assurance and data quality checking. We will also introduce the process of choosing a data collection software and database system that fit the needs of your program.

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## HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit is meant to serve as a reference program staff can use throughout home visiting program planning and implementation. Many of the activities and materials provided in each module were designed as guides for training program staff. Depending on whether your program is planning data collection activities, currently collecting data, or preparing to analyze data, specific sections within the toolkit may be more useful to you than others.

Because we assume that home visitors will be collecting data, we use the term “home visitor” throughout the document when referring to data collectors. For some programs, someone other than a home visitor will collect data. For example, some programs use external evaluators to collect data, and some have specific data collectors on staff. Decisions about who will collect data are often made on a case by case basis. The Information provided in this toolkit will support data collection, regardless of who is assigned the role of data collector.

At the beginning of each module, you will find a list of learning objectives, activities, and tools. At the conclusion of each module, you will find an Activity Index and Tool Index that briefly describe the activities and tools that follow in the module’s appendix. Please feel free to make copies of the activities and tools to use on your own or while training home visiting staff. The toolkit is meant to be used and tailored to meet the unique situations of each program, no matter where you are in the data collection process. Use this toolkit in the way that makes the most sense for you.

Lastly, as you read through this toolkit, you may have questions or concerns about the tools presented. You may also need support implementing some of the tools. If you are part of a Tribal MIECHV grantee, your TEI technical assistance provider will be happy to support you in your use of this toolkit, including its tools. If you are not part of a Tribal MIECHV grantee, you may contact the toolkit authors to ask questions or provide suggestions or additional strategies for collecting data in tribal communities. We welcome any feedback on the content and use of this toolkit and hope we can improve the quality and usefulness of this toolkit and other related technical assistance tools and resources over time.

**Tribal MIECHV grantees:**  
Your TEI technical assistance provider can support you in your use of this toolkit.

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## REFERENCES

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