
HEALTHY FAMILIES MASSACHUSETTS SALARY AND STAFF TURNOVER STUDY

IDENTIFYING MONETARY AND NON-MONETARY DRIVERS OF TURNOVER AT HFM

PREPARED FOR
THE CHILDREN'S TRUST MASSACHUSETTS
BY JESSICA H. GREENSTONE

JULY 1, 2022

Suggested citation: Greenstone, J.H. (2022). *Healthy Families Massachusetts Salary and Staff Turnover Study*. Jessica Greenstone Consulting.

Jessica Greenstone Consulting

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction	3
II. Methods and Samples.....	3
III. Findings	6
III.1. Reasons for turnover	6
Major reasons for leaving and considering leaving.	7
III.1A. MONETARY FACTORS INFLUENCING ACTUAL AND PROSPECTIVE TURNOVER	9
Salary.....	9
Staff priorities for compensation modifications.	10
Recognition of Excellence bonuses.....	11
Benefits.	12
III.1A.1. Perceptions of a fair pay rate for home visitors and supervisors.....	12
Living wages in Massachusetts	13
What home visitors earn.....	15
What home visitors believe they should earn	16
What supervisors earn.	18
What supervisors believe they should earn.....	18
Rationale for higher pay.....	20
III.1B. NON-MONETARY FACTORS INFLUENCING ACTUAL AND PROSPECTIVE TURNOVER	22
Non-monetary pandemic-related challenges	23
Burnout and documentation.	24
Lack of growth opportunities.....	26
Desired changes to job experiences.	27
IV. Conclusions	28
V. References	29
APPENDICES	30

TABLES

Table 1. Current and Former HFM Staff Participation in Staff Salary and Turnover Study Interviews and Surveys	4
Table 2. Agency and Program Participation in HFM Staff Salary and Turnover Study Components.....	5
Table 3. <i>Survey Sample</i> : Changes to Compensation that would Influence <i>Home Visitors</i> to Stay (n = 12) 10	
Table 4. <i>Survey Sample</i> : Changes to Compensation that would Influence <i>Supervisors</i> to Stay (n = 12)....	11
Table 5. Monetary difference between hourly base rates for home visitors and supervisors and county living wages.....	14
Table 6. Approximation of <i>New Home Visitors’</i> Monthly Take-Home Pay	15
Table 7. Approximation of <i>Senior Home Visitors’</i> Monthly Take-Home Pay	16
Table 8. <i>Survey and Interview Samples</i> : Discrepancy between Current and Desired Pay of Home Visitors (n = 19)	17
Table 9. Approximation of <i>New Supervisors’</i> Monthly Take-Home Pay	18
Table 10. <i>Survey and Interview Samples</i> : Discrepancy between Current and Desired Pay of Supervisors (n = 23)	19
Table 11. <i>Survey Sample</i> : Changes to Job Experiences that would Influence <i>Home Visitors</i> to Stay (n = 12)	27
Table 12. <i>Survey Sample</i> : Changes to Job Experiences that would Influence <i>Supervisors</i> to Stay (n = 11) 28	

FIGURES

Figure 1. <i>Interview Sample</i> : Current and Former Staff Reasons for Leaving or Considering Leaving (n = 73)	7
Figure 2. <i>Survey Sample</i> : All Reasons for Considering Leaving Among Current Home Visitors and Supervisors (n = 27)	8
Figure 3. <i>Survey and Interview Samples</i> : Home Visitors’ Desired Hourly Rate (n = 26)	17

APPENDIX

Appendix A. Percentage of Insurance Premiums Covered by Agencies, and Resulting Bi-Weekly Costs to HFM Full Time Employees.....	31
Appendix B. Annual Paid Time Off in Days and Paid Lunch	33
Appendix C. Other Agency Benefits: Retirement, Continuing Education, and Mobile Phone	34

I. INTRODUCTION

Consistent with a nationwide trend driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in human services professions (Van Buskirk, 2021), Healthy Families Massachusetts (HFM) has experienced a dramatic increase in staff turnover over the previous two years, with turnover rates increasing by 10-15% since the start of the pandemic.

The Children’s Trust (CT) is interested in exploring reasons for this increase and incentives that might help to offset this trend. With the opportunity to use American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support a “financial relief initiative”—an interim strategy for achieving appropriate wages and benefits (Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2020)—The Children’s Trust’s primary aim for this study was to determine whether an increase in the hourly rate for home visitors and/or potential modifications to the current Children’s Trust merit-based “Recognition of Excellence” bonus program could improve staff retention.

This report summarizes the findings from Phase I of a two-phase study of HFM staff turnover and retention. Phase I was aimed at understanding monetary and non-monetary drivers of staff turnover and the potential for incentives with monetary value (i.e., hourly rate increase, bonuses, and benefits) to improve staff retention. Phase II will explore the range of factors that have influenced supervisor and home visitor job satisfaction and retention, and attempt to identify potential features of HFM programs that have enabled them to retain staff long-term and throughout the pandemic.

This report begins with an overview of participant samples recruited for this study and data collection methods used. The findings present major reasons for turnover identified in the study samples, reviewing reasons that are driven by monetary and non-monetary factors; each section includes a review of key takeaways that may guide modifications to programming, policy or practice.

II. METHODS AND SAMPLES

Beginning in February 2022, I conducted a mixed methods study to examine the reasons former HFM home visitors and supervisors have left their jobs at HFM over the past two-plus years since the start of the pandemic, and to explore risk factors for leaving among current staff.

The primary method of data collection for this study was 36 in-depth qualitative interviews with current and former HFM home visitors, supervisors, and coordinators, including one-on-one interviews (n = 27) and two group interviews—one with members of the home visitors think tank (n = 4), and one with members of the supervisors think tank (n = 5). All interviewees received a retail gift card as an incentive.

Interviews explored a wide range of topics to identify potential patterns of factors (e.g., feeling valued, pandemic-related challenges, compensation, impact of job on emotional well-being) that contribute to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and subsequently to turnover, across staff members. Interviewees were also asked about their current compensation packages, features of their jobs that would improve their satisfaction, desire for and perceptions of growth opportunities at HFM, perceptions of the

supervision they receive, and qualities of successful home visitors. Most one-on-one interviews were one hour in length, and group interviews were 90 minutes. All interviewees were promised anonymity.

I also collected anonymous electronic survey data from current home visitors (n = 14) and supervisors (n = 17) to gather information across programs about required and actual hours worked, current and desired salaries, work tasks that are compensated across agencies, work-related expenses that are reimbursed by agencies, factors that influence respondents to consider leaving, and changes that would influence respondents to stay in their jobs.

To contextualize HFM salaries across the state, base hiring rates for home visitors and supervisors across HFM programs were compared with county-level living wage data. Living wage data offers a standard measurement against which current HFM hiring salaries can be assessed.

Qualitative data were analyzed thematically using Excel, and survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Participation from current and former HFM home visitors, supervisors and coordinators in the qualitative interviews for this study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Current and Former HFM Staff Participation in Staff Salary and Turnover Study Interviews and Surveys

	Interview Sample	Survey Sample	Total N
Current home visitors	9	14	23
Former home visitors	7	--	7
Current supervisors	9	17	26
Former supervisors	4	--	4
Current coordinators	6	--	6
Former coordinators	1	--	1
Total	36	31	67

NOTE: Interviews included one-on-one and group interviews.

To gather formal information about benefits and potential variation in benefits packages across agencies, fiscal coordinators from eight agencies (housing 16 HFM programs) were asked to report on: health, dental, vision and life insurance offerings at their agencies, percentage of insurance premiums paid for by the agency and costs to employees for premiums; paid time off; retirement offerings; paid lunch; postsecondary education reimbursement; mobile phone reimbursements; and existence of a union at the agency. Benefits data from agencies are represented in tabular format in Appendices A, B, and C of this report.

Participation from agencies and programs in all types of data collection is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Agency and Program Participation in HFM Staff Salary and Turnover Study Components

Agency	Program	Interviews	Surveys	Benefits Data	Program N
Catholic Charities (CC)	North Shore	1	1	1	3
	Haverhill	--	3	1	4
Child Care of the Berkshires (CCB)	Berkshire County	3	--	--	3
Community Action Pioneer Valley (CAPV)	Hampshire County	3	--	1	4
	Franklin County	2	--	1	3
Criterion Child Enrichment (CCE)	Framingham Milford	2	4	--	6
Family & Children's Services of Greater Lynn (FCSGL)	Harbor area	--	1	--	1
GVNA HealthCare Inc. (GVNAHC)	North Worcester	3	1	1	5
Health Imperatives Hyannis (HI)	Cape & Islands	--	--	1	1
Health Imperatives Weymouth (HI)	Blue Hills	--	--	1	1
Jewish Family & Children's Service	Central Middlesex	2	--	--	2
Kennedy Donovan Center (KDC)	New Bedford	1	--	1	2
	Greater Plymouth	--	--	1	1
Melrose Wakefield Healthcare Inc. (MWH)	Melrose Wakefield	1	1	--	2
MSPCC Eliot CHS (MSPCC)	Boston area	2	--	1	3
	Greater Worcester	4	--	1	5
	Holyoke	1	2	1	4
	Lawrence	3	2	1	6
	Lowell	--	1	1	2
People Incorporated (PI)	Fall River	1	1	1	3
Southeast Family Services (SFS)	Taunton/Attleboro	--	1	--	1
	Brockton	1	2	--	3
Square One (SO)	Springfield	5	--	--	5
Worcester Community Action Council (WCAC)	South Worcester	--	1	1	2

NOTE: Five current staff members who completed the survey did not report what program they work for.

III. FINDINGS

This review of findings will begin with a categorization of the core reasons for leaving shared by current and former HFM staff, and then examine both monetary and non-monetary causes in depth. Monetary factors including wages, bonuses and benefits are examined as potential contributors to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and therefore actual and prospective reasons for turnover and retention. In addition, current pay rates are explored through the lens of living wages in Massachusetts counties, as well as home visitors’ and supervisors’ perspectives about what they should be earning given the responsibilities of their roles. Finally, non-monetary factors that may influence turnover and retention are presented, including pandemic-related challenges, causes of burnout, and lack of growth opportunities.

III.1. REASONS FOR TURNOVER

.....

IN THIS SECTION...

Features

- Categorization of reasons for leaving and considering leaving

Key Findings

- About half of the staff whose reasons for leaving and considering leaving are represented in this study cited concerns about their pay as a driving factor, and about half cited reasons other than pay.
- The COVID-19 pandemic seems to have intensified—not to have caused—staff dissatisfaction with certain aspects of their jobs, including workload and salary.

.....

Thirty current staff members from the interview and survey samples indicated that they have considered leaving their jobs as HFM home visitors and supervisors, and eight indicated they have not¹. In the context of the pandemic, HFM has experienced significantly higher staff attrition rates compared with years before the pandemic. The current and former staff members who were interviewed for this study were asked about reasons for the increase in turnover at HFM programs across the state since the start of the pandemic. Former staff members were asked about why they chose to leave their position as a home visitor or supervisor, current staff members were asked about reasons they have considered leaving their positions as well as reasons their colleagues reported leaving, and supervisors and coordinators were asked why staff at their programs reported leaving.

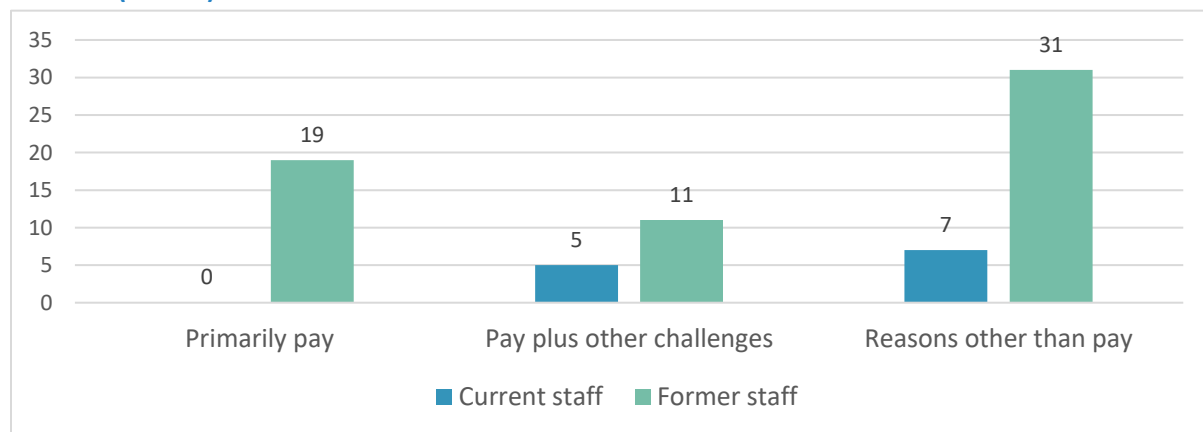
¹ To protect anonymity of interview participants, I do not report the discrete numbers on how many current interview and survey participants reported that they have considered leaving.

One of the goals of this study was to determine whether the pandemic was a primary driving force behind past and potential future HFM staff departures. Although some current and former staff began thinking about leaving since the COVID-19 pandemic began, among those who did, some of them also reported that they had considered leaving one or more times prior to the start of the pandemic. As one staff member pointed out, many staff seemed to have developed a new awareness of opportunities for securing jobs with higher pay over the past couple of years, which has been a driving factor in “The Great Resignation.” HFM staff were likely influenced by this and other societal level shifts in the way people think about professional work and work-life balance (Hsu, 2021).

It seems that for most staff whose perspectives are represented in this study, it is not so much that specific conditions of the pandemic have propelled them to seek new jobs or entertain job offers, but rather that their experience of pre-existing conditions of their jobs have changed—most notably dissatisfaction with their pay and their workloads. Reasons for staff leaving or considering leaving that are pandemic-related are discussed in detail in the section of this report entitled *Non-Monetary Reasons for Actual and Potential Turnover*.

Major reasons for leaving and considering leaving. Figure 1 depicts the number of current and former staff members who were reported by interview participants about themselves, direct reports or coworkers at their programs, to leave or to consider leaving for reasons that fell into one of three categories: (1) primarily pay, (2) pay in combination with other challenges, and (3) reasons other than pay. Among current and former home visitors and supervisors, 35 individuals (48%) left or have considered leaving for reasons that include concerns about their pay—19 former staff cited their salaries as the primary reason and 16 current and former staff cited pay in combination with other challenges of their jobs. Thirty-eight current and former staff (52%) cited reasons other than pay that have led them to leave or contemplate leaving. No current staff members indicated that their pay rate was the exclusive or paramount reason they have contemplated leaving.

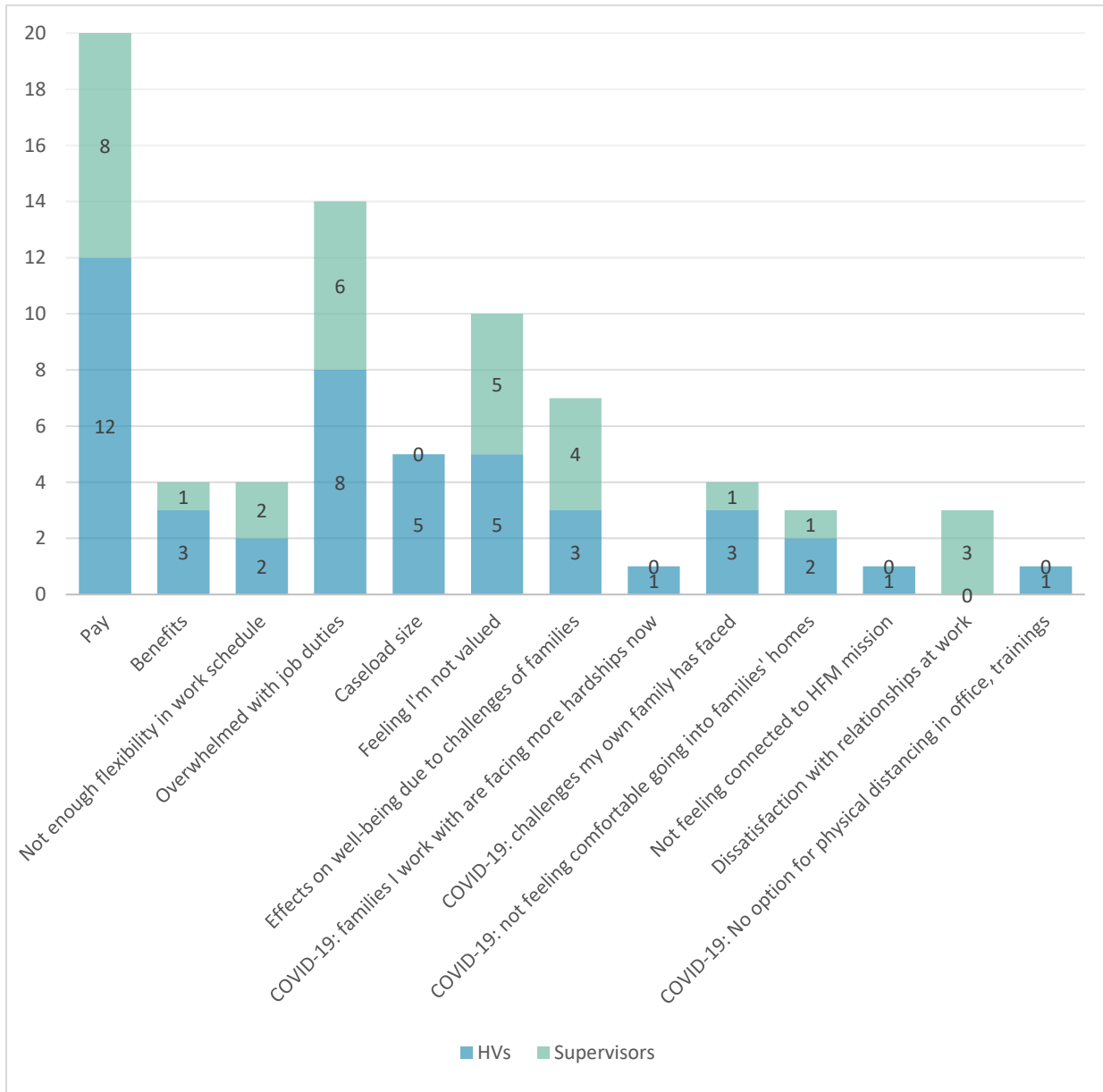
FIGURE 1. INTERVIEW SAMPLE: CURRENT AND FORMER STAFF REASONS FOR LEAVING OR CONSIDERING LEAVING (N = 73)



NOTE: Reasons for leaving or considering leaving were tallied from interview data, including reasons reported to the author from those who left or considered leaving, and reasons reported to managers or coworkers of staff who have left which were shared with the author by interview participants.

Twenty current home visitors and supervisors in the current staff survey sample selected their pay as a reason they would consider leaving their jobs. Fourteen respondents indicated that feeling overwhelmed with their job duties (i.e., how much they are responsible for accomplishing) is among the factors that would make them consider leaving their job and ten selected feeling that they are not valued for the work they do (see Figure 2).

FIGURE 2. SURVEY SAMPLE: ALL REASONS FOR CONSIDERING LEAVING AMONG CURRENT HOME VISITORS AND SUPERVISORS (N = 27)



NOTE: "Dissatisfaction with relationships at work" was only included on the Supervisor Survey, as this theme arose during interviews after the home visitor survey had been distributed.

III.1A. MONETARY FACTORS INFLUENCING ACTUAL AND PROSPECTIVE TURNOVER

IN THIS SECTION...

Features

- Current and former staff concerns about their salaries, and modifications to compensation that would positively influence their job satisfaction
- Current and former staff perspectives about the relative importance of compensation components other than salary, including bonuses and benefits packages

Key Findings

- Overall, staff reported an appreciation of bonuses but noted that bonuses do not positively impact their financial stability, so they favor salary increases that are dependably regular.
- Some staff reported concerns about “Recognition of Excellence” bonuses, indicating that their ability to achieve excellence was more dependent on the attendance rates of families in their caseloads than their job performance.
- Although some staff appreciate the high-quality benefits they are offered through their agencies, many cannot afford to purchase them on their HFM salaries, and overall, benefits were not a sway factor in staff’s likelihood of staying or leaving.

Salary. Among current and former staff members in the interview sample, 35 reported that pay was the key factor or one of the key factors leading them to consider leaving or to have left their position at HFM (see Figure 1); this includes 19 former employees who cited pay as the primary reason they left their HFM job as a home visitor or supervisor and 16 current and former staff who cited it as a key factor in combination with other perceived problems.

Current and former staff have contended with three main types of challenges relating to their salaries. First, they have experienced financial hardships due to their wages, such as difficulty funding mortgages or other expenses including agency-offered insurance, not being able to save for emergencies, or directing all their earnings to childcare expenses. In addition, a number of home visitors and supervisors are reportedly on MassHealth, receive food stamps, and live in public housing. Second, most home visitors in the interview sample indicated that their pay is not commensurate with the nature, intensity, or difficulty level of the work they do. Third, many cited awareness of 1) the salaries of coworkers in other HFM programs, and 2) their earning potential at other similar jobs which they have learned about through job postings or offers they have received, most which would come with less responsibility; this awareness has contributed to their dissatisfaction with their salaries. Several home visitors also expressed frustration at learning that some of the families they work with earn more than they do.

Several former home visitors who indicated that pay was their primary reason for seeking a different position expressed disappointment at having to do so; they liked the job and wanted to stay but were unable to support themselves and their families on their HFM salaries. These individuals noted other positive features of their positions at HFM that were compatible with their lives or met some of the criteria they look for in an ideal job, including flexible schedules, good relationships with coworkers and managers, an appreciation for the mission of HFM, and the experience of gratification from working with and supporting families.

STAFF PERSPECTIVES ON... Leaving their Jobs at HFM

How long would I have stayed [at HFM] if the pay was right? I wanted to stay there permanently. I wanted that to be my job. I was there one year and eight months and went from \$13.89 to \$14.86. At my new job, I started at \$22 I'm now at \$22.66; that's within four months of working there. And I'm getting another raise when I reach six months at my new job. – **Former Home Visitor**

It was bittersweet. This is what I always wanted to do. It broke my heart when I had to tell families I was leaving. You build connections with them; some families said I'm not gonna stay in the program if you're leaving. I told my coordinator, if you need help when you're doing groups, I would volunteer to do babysitting. The program was great, I enjoyed my time there. I feel like if the pay was better I would still be there. – **Former Home Visitor**

Staff priorities for compensation modifications. As seen in Tables 3 and 4, home visitors and supervisors in the survey sample were asked to rank the two most important changes to their compensation—encompassing salary and benefits—that would be influential in keeping them in their current jobs at HFM. Home visitors and supervisors in the survey sample reported that monetary compensation in the form of salary increases and/or bonuses was the foremost aspect of their compensation needing alteration for them to stay, which is in line with the sentiments of staff in the interview sample.

Table 3. Survey Sample: Changes to Compensation that would Influence Home Visitors to Stay (n = 12)

<i>Changes to compensation</i>	Number of home visitors who ranked this change as the primary or secondary most important change
<i>Higher hourly pay</i>	9
<i>Bonuses</i>	7
<i>Reimbursement for expenses related to use of my vehicle to travel to visits</i>	2
<i>Getting paid for overtime hours</i>	1
<i>Better benefits</i>	1
<i>Better PTO² allowance</i>	1
<i>Getting paid for time spent traveling to visits</i>	1
<i>I am satisfied with current compensation and benefits</i>	0
<i>A change in compensation or benefits would not influence me to stay</i>	0

² PTO is paid time off

Table 4. Survey Sample: Changes to Compensation that would Influence Supervisors to Stay (n = 12)

<i>Changes to compensation</i>	Number of supervisors who ranked this change as the primary or secondary most important change
<i>Higher pay</i>	10
<i>Bonuses</i>	9
<i>I am satisfied with current compensation and benefits</i>	2
<i>Better PTO allowance</i>	1
<i>Improvement in concerns about management</i>	1
<i>Better benefits</i>	0
<i>Getting paid for time spent traveling to visits</i>	0
<i>Reimbursement for expenses related to use of my vehicle to travel to visits</i>	0
<i>A change in compensation or benefits would not influence me to stay</i>	0

Overall, current staff in the interview sample indicated that they would prefer salary increases over bonuses because they are more dependable and amount to greater earnings, thus having the most potential to improve financial stability. A common sentiment was that a one-time rate increase would be problematic, and regular increases would be important to reflect ongoing cost-of-living escalation and continue to make employees feel valued and satisfied. Most staff who commented on bonuses, though, agreed that they are a welcome perk and have the effect of making staff feel noticed and appreciated for their efforts.

STAFF PERSPECTIVES ON... Annual and Holiday Bonuses

I would prefer \$1,500 split up quarterly. It gives you a little boost. It gives you an incentive to make it to the next one, it makes you feel good about how far you've gone and how much you've accomplished. – **Current Home Visitor**

Bonuses are good but it would be more impactful if they were more frequent--maybe less money each time but do it every couple months. When bonus time comes, everyone's excited, but you tend to forget about how great that felt when it was six months ago. – **Current Supervisor**

Recognition of Excellence bonuses. Current and former staff in the interview sample expressed varied opinions about the “Recognition of Excellence” (ROE) bonuses offered annually by The Children’s Trust to incentivize and reward home visitors who demonstrate high job performance relative to their peers. Those who have received the bonuses were pleased at having received the extra money and the appreciation of their hard work. A point of concern for many staff, though, was the idea that their likelihood of being recognized for their effort and job performance was dependent on the actions of families they work with, such as their no-show rates or the frequency with which they would answer their phones to schedule a visit. Thus, they believe that certain home visitors are more or less likely to receive the bonus based on the composition of their caseloads.

STAFF PERSPECTIVES ON... CT Recognition of Excellence Bonuses

CT usually has a bonus, but some of us, even if we do home visits and don't do PDS [Participant Data System] on time, we don't get the bonus. It doesn't make us want to do the job. Other people get it all the time and not me; they have less clients and quicker documentation. The rest of us have so many weekly visits; a lot of participants don't like to have weekly visits, so we wouldn't get a bonus even though we have no control over what clients do. Sometimes we reschedule a visit for the same week, but they may cancel and not want to meet until next week. – **Current Home Visitor**

With CT, it was always about what the home visitors were doing as part of their job. So the supervisor doesn't have a lot of control over that—we can hold home visitors accountable but it's really in their hands. If they're not meeting their marks, supervisors don't have chance for a bonus. If there was a way for supervisors to strive for bonuses on their own that would have been helpful. – **Former Supervisor**

Benefits. Home visitor and supervisor survey responses indicate that modifications to benefits offered at their agencies would not have a powerful influence on their decision to leave or stay. Similarly, most current staff in the interview sample were very satisfied with their paid time off, were either satisfied with their retirement benefits or did not place a high value on them, and many did not purchase agency-offered health insurance for themselves and their families. Most current and former staff who did opt into agency-offered health insurance plans or who commented on opting out of them noted that it was difficult to afford on their salaries, while several indicated finding them affordable.

Overall, benefits were not a push or pull factor when it came to contemplating leaving or deciding to leave HFM. See Appendices A, B, and C, which present *Percentage of Insurance Premiums Covered by Agencies, and Resulting Bi-Weekly Costs to HFM Full Time Employees; Annual Paid Time Off in Days and Paid Lunch; and Other Agency Benefits: Retirement, Continuing Education, and Mobile Phone*, respectively.

III.1A.1. PERCEPTIONS OF A FAIR PAY RATE FOR HOME VISITORS AND SUPERVISORS

IN THIS SECTION...

Features

- HFM base salaries and living wages in Massachusetts counties
- Home visitor and supervisor current earnings and perceptions of appropriate earnings
- HFM staff rationale for higher pay rates

Key Findings

- 63% of HFM program home visitor base salaries position home visitors to earn below the living wage in the county in which they work, if they are single earners with no children. Not surprisingly, the most expensive areas of the state to earn in are also those with the greatest differential between the HFM home visitor starting salary and the county living wage.

- There is a wide range in home visitor starting salaries across programs, with new home visitors earning between \$15.00 and \$23.00 for comparable work. Likewise, supervisor starting salaries range from \$21.63 to \$28.75 per hour.
- On average, home visitors felt that \$23.00 (range \$19 - \$28) was a fitting hourly rate for their HFM job duties. Their desired hourly rate of pay is an average of \$4.05 per hour more than they currently earn.
- On average, supervisors felt they should be earning \$52,768, which is, on average, \$7,791 more than they currently earn.
- Home visitors do not view their roles as “entry-level,” and feel that a combination of (1) the skills required in their work, (2) the emotional intensity of the work, and (3) the amount of work associated with their jobs justifies higher pay rates. Most home visitors do not feel that they earn enough money to be financially stable.



Living wages in Massachusetts. MIT’s Living Wage Calculator is a useful tool for gauging an individual’s or family’s capacity to meet basic needs—including food, childcare, health insurance, housing, transportation, and basic necessities—using only their income and no government assistance. In contrast to federally defined poverty thresholds, the living wage approach accounts for costs of living beyond a basic food budget (Glasmeier, 2020).

Living wage rates drawn from the MIT Living Wage Calculator indicate how much a sole provider working full time (2,080 hours per year) needs to earn to support themselves in the county of Massachusetts (MA) in which they live in 2022; living wages are updated annually (Glasmeier, 2020). Although HFM staff’s county of residence data were not collected for this study, in most cases staff should arguably be able to afford living in the county in which they work to sustain reasonable commute times and car expenses. In Massachusetts, with the exception of Bristol County, there is a regional pattern in the expense of living, with the western part of the state having a lower cost of living and the eastern part of the state having a higher cost of living. For HFM staff working in the eastern part of the state, then, if they work in a high-cost county and live in an adjoining county, their cost of living would likely still be on the higher end of the spectrum.

In Table 5, the living wage rates for a one adult, zero children household were used to establish a baseline point of comparison for HFM employees’ salaries in programs across the state. The living wage model does not incorporate costs of living beyond basic necessities, such as leisure activities or accumulation of assets; this should be considered when interpreting Table 5.

Nine programs (38% of the 24 HFM programs in the state) offer starting salaries for home visitors above the living wage, if they are supporting only themselves and no children. It is noteworthy that in two of these programs (Programs 16 and 17), the positive salary differential above the living wage is less than \$1.00, and in four of these programs (Programs 18, 19, 20 and 21) the positive differential above the living wage is not much higher than \$1.00. Fifteen programs (62% of programs in the state) offer starting salaries for home visitors that are below the living wage. In eight programs, negative hourly differentials below the living wage are each greater than \$4.00.

Nineteen programs' supervisor starting salaries (79%) are above the living wage. Two program starting salaries (8%) are below the living wage, though negative differentials for both of these are minor (Program 2 is only \$-0.03, and Program 1 is \$-0.85). No salary data were available for the three remaining programs.

Table 5. Monetary difference between hourly base rates for home visitors and supervisors and county living wages

Program	County Living Wage	HV Differential	Supervisor Differential
1	\$22.48	-\$5.48	-\$0.85
2	\$21.66	-\$4.66	-\$0.03
3	\$21.66	-\$4.66	\$3.34
4	\$21.66	-\$4.66**	\$7.34**
5	\$22.48	-\$4.58**	No data
6	\$21.02	-\$4.02	\$7.98**
7	\$21.02	-\$4.02	\$0.61
8	\$21.02	-\$4.02	\$2.98
9	\$20.05	-\$3.05	\$1.95
10	\$17.27	-\$2.27	\$4.47**
11	\$20.05	-\$2.05	\$2.95
12	\$15.93	-\$0.93	\$2.30**
13	\$16.41	-\$0.41	No data
14	\$17.27	-\$0.27	\$4.36
15	\$17.27	-\$0.27	\$8.08
16	\$16.69	\$0.21**	\$9.31**
17	\$16.69	\$0.31	\$5.31
18	\$15.93	\$1.07	\$5.70
19	\$22.32	\$1.18	\$6.43
20	\$16.69	\$1.31	\$7.31
21	\$16.86	\$1.32	\$5.14**
22	\$17.27	\$1.73	\$14.73**
23	\$15.93	\$2.25	\$6.07**
24	\$18.26	\$5.24	No data

**Differentials were calculated using HV or supervisor self-reported wage data, rather than program-reported wage data.

NOTE: Cells highlighted in red depict the amount of the hourly base rate below the county living wage, and cells highlighted in green depict the amount of the hourly base rate above the living wage.

The Living Wage Calculator also provides living wages for various family constellations (e.g., one adult with one child, one adult with two children, two working adults with one child, etc.). Living wages for one adult, one child households are at least double those of one adult, zero children households, leaving all 24 HFM programs to have significant negative salary differentials for newly hired home visitors who live in a single income household with one child. The range of these negative differentials is \$16.62 (Program 23) to \$28.84 (Program 1).

What home visitors earn. Hourly base pay rates for newly hired home visitors are determined by agencies and vary significantly across programs, resulting in home visitors who work for different programs earning different pay rates for almost identical fundamental role responsibilities (e.g., completion of CT core trainings, program benchmarks and other requirements, documentation). Variations in home visitor job duties across programs may include caseload sizes, manager-to-home visitor ratios, average travel time to home visits, and additional duties home visitors are responsible for (e.g., outreach). Factors that inform home visitor base rates may include the minimum rate in The Children’s Trust’s RFR, language capacity of the new staff member (multilingual home visitors earn between \$0.25 and \$2.00 more per hour), postsecondary education (at least seven agencies offer pay rate increases for home visitors’ education credentials), and whether a union has formed at the agency³.

Among the 12 agencies that reported current base hourly rates for home visitors, the range is \$15.00 to \$23.50 (or \$31,200 to \$42,770 annually), with \$17 being the most common rate (n = 5). Two agencies offer \$15, one agency offers \$18, one agency offers \$18.18, and one agency each offers the following hourly rates: \$16, \$19, and \$23.50. Current home visitors and supervisors may earn more than the base rates due to their qualifications, agency-wide increases over time, or tiered salary structures.

Table 6 presents an approximation of new home visitors’ net monthly wages after accounting for fees deducted when purchasing the lowest-premium health insurance plan offered by the agency and federal tax deductions. Weekly take-home earnings for new home visitors across the nine programs represented in Table 6 range from ranging from \$474.37 (Program J) to \$712.33 (Program C).

Table 6. Approximation of New Home Visitors’ Monthly Take-Home Pay⁴

Program	Base hourly rate (Hours per week)	Approximate Gross Monthly Earnings	Approximate monthly health insurance cost ⁵ to employees	Net monthly earnings after deducting health insurance costs and federal tax
B	\$18.00 (40)	\$3,120.00	\$156.91	\$2,730.92
C	\$23.50 (35)	\$3,664.17	\$191.75	\$3,086.75
D	\$18.18 (37.5)	\$2,954.25	\$41.21	\$2,700.37
G	\$17.00 (40)	\$2,946.67	\$149.33	\$2,585.67
H	\$19.00 (37.5)	\$3,087.50	\$146.97	\$2,711.87
J	\$16.90 (35)	\$2,563.17	\$341.88	\$2,055.62
K	\$17.00 (37.5)	\$2,762.50	\$140.70	\$2,432.13
L	\$17.00 (37.5)	\$2,762.50	\$153.62	\$2,419.22

NOTE: The estimated federal taxes reflected in the net payments are based on filing as a single individual with no dependents and a standard deduction. State taxes are not accounted for in these approximations.

NOTE: Only agencies from which this author collected benefits data are included in this table.

³ Of the sample of agencies who reported these data, only one agency reported having a union.

⁴ This table uses the base pay rate assuming that the newly hired home visitor is not multilingual and does not have an advanced degree, or other credentials that may earn them a higher starting rate of pay at some programs.

⁵ Using the agency-offered plan with the lowest available premium (and thus, likely the highest deductible).

Table 7 presents an approximation of a senior home visitor’s monthly take-home pay, after health insurance premiums and estimated federal taxes are deducted. Based on these approximations, weekly take-home earnings for veteran home visitors who purchase agency-offered health insurance would be between \$542.14 (Program CC) and \$765.33 (Program GG).

Table 7. Approximation of Senior⁶ Home Visitors’ Monthly Take-Home Pay

Program	Highest hourly rate (Hours per week)	Approximate Gross Monthly Earnings	Approximate monthly health insurance cost ⁷ to employees	Net monthly earnings after deducting health insurance costs and federal tax
AA	\$21.00 (40)	\$3,640.00	\$156.91	\$3,188.42
BB	\$21.50 (37.5)	\$3,493.75	\$146.97	\$3,069.62
CC	\$19.10 (35)	\$2,896.83	\$341.88	\$2,349.28
DD	\$18.02 (40)	\$3,123.47	\$149.33	\$2,741.47
EE	\$19.50 (40)	\$3,380.00	\$156.91	\$2,959.42
FF	\$23.50 (35)	\$3,564.17	\$191.75	\$3,086.75
GG	\$21.79 (40)	\$3,776.93	\$149.33	\$3,316.44
HH	\$19.10 (40)	\$3,310.67	\$149.33	\$2,850.17
II	\$20.00 (37.5)	\$3,250.00	\$153.62	\$2,848.22
JJ	\$19.81 (37.5)	\$3,219.13	\$41.21	\$2,933.75
KK	\$19.00 (37.5)	\$3,087.50	\$153.62	\$2,705.22
LL	\$25.00 (35)	\$3,791.67	\$191.75	\$3,286.75
MM	\$19.10 (40)	\$3,310.67	\$149.33	\$2,906.17
NN	\$19.61 (37.5)	\$3,186.63	\$140.70	\$2,805.76

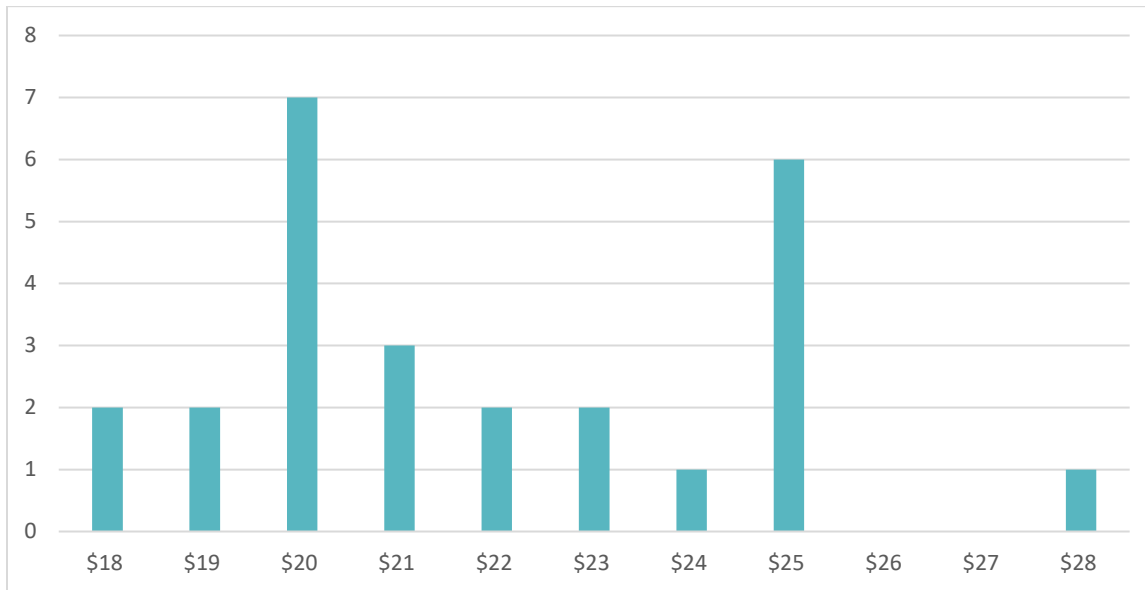
NOTE: Only agencies for which the author collected benefits data are included in this table.

What home visitors believe they should earn. Twenty-six home visitors in the survey and interview samples reported the hourly rates they felt home visitors should be earning; as seen in Figure 3, seven home visitors felt they should be earning \$20, six home visitors felt they should earn \$25, and an additional eight home visitors felt hourly rates should be between \$21 and \$24.

⁶ “Senior” here is refers to an existing home visitor who earns the current maximum hourly rate reported by the program. Language capacity, education credentials, and longevity in the program reflected in these rates are unknown.

⁷ Using the agency-offered plan with the lowest available premium (and thus, likely the highest deductible).

FIGURE 3. SURVEY AND INTERVIEW SAMPLES: HOME VISITORS' DESIRED HOURLY RATE (N = 26)



Among the 19 home visitors who reported their current and desired hourly wages, as seen in Table 8, they felt they should be earning between \$0.67 and \$7.00 more than they currently earn. On average, these home visitors felt that \$23.00 (range \$19 - \$28) was a fitting hourly rate for home visitors. Their desired hourly rate of pay is an average of \$4.05 per hour more than they currently earn.

Table 8. Survey and Interview Samples: Discrepancy between Current and Desired Pay of Home Visitors (n = 19)

Current pay	Desired pay	Difference
\$15.91	\$19.00	\$3.09
\$15.91	\$22.00	\$6.09
\$16.49	\$20.00	\$3.51
\$17.00	\$19.00	\$2.00
\$17.35	\$21.00	\$3.65
\$17.90	\$22.00	\$4.10
\$17.94	\$21.00	\$3.06
\$18.02	\$20.00	\$1.98
\$18.02	\$20.00	\$1.98
\$18.25	\$23.00	\$4.75
\$18.38	\$25.00	\$6.62
\$18.56	\$20.00	\$1.44
\$18.91	\$25.00	\$6.09
\$19.00	\$25.00	\$6.00
\$19.10	\$25.00	\$5.90
\$19.33	\$20.00	\$0.67
\$20.00	\$23.00	\$3.00
\$20.00	\$24.00	\$4.00
\$21.00	\$28.00	\$7.00

What supervisors earn. As is true of home visitor salaries, supervisor salaries vary among the six agencies who reported salary data for supervisors. Programs have different education requirements of supervisors—typically either Bachelor’s or a Master’s degree is required, but at least one program does not have postsecondary degree requirements for supervisors and instead has a prerequisite of seven years of experience as a HFM home visitor. Base rates for supervisors range from \$21.63 to \$28.75 per hour, or \$44,990 to \$52,325 per year. Current maximum rates for “senior” supervisors are between \$24 and \$37 per hour.

Table 9 shows estimates of monthly take-home earnings for new supervisors working for four agencies who purchase agency-offered health insurance. Following estimated federal tax deductions, new supervisors weekly take-home earnings would be between \$759.74 (Program G) and \$874.04 (Program C).

Table 9. Approximation of New Supervisors’ Monthly Take-Home Pay

Program	Base hourly rate (Hours per week)	Approximate Gross Monthly Earnings	Approximate monthly health insurance cost ^a to employees	Net monthly earnings after deducting health insurance costs and federal tax
C	\$28.75 (35)	\$4,360.42	\$191.75	\$3,787.50
G	\$21.63 (40)	\$3,749.20	\$149.33	\$3,292.21
K	\$25.35 (37.5)	\$4,119.38	\$140.70	\$3,626.51
M	\$24.00 (40)	\$4,160.00	\$156.91	\$3,645.92

NOTE: Take-home earnings for only four programs are included in this table because benefits data were not collected for the other two programs for which supervisor base salary data were available.

What supervisors believe they should earn. Twenty-three supervisors reported that they should be earning between \$0 and \$14,000 more than they currently earn. As presented in Table 10, the average salary supervisors reported they should be earning with HFM is \$52,768 (range: \$44,000 - \$65,000), which is, on average, \$7,791 more than they currently earn. Two supervisors felt that their current salary was fair, and one reported that their salary would be fair if they did not regularly exceed the hours they were expected to work.

⁸ Using the agency-offered plan with the lowest available premium (and thus, likely the highest deductible).

Table 10. Survey and Interview Samples: Discrepancy between Current and Desired Pay of Supervisors (n = 23)

Current pay	Desired pay	Difference
\$36,000	45,000	\$9,000
\$38,000	\$44,000	\$6,000
\$45,219	\$55,000	\$9,781
\$46,800	\$58,500	\$11,700
\$47,000	\$52,000	\$5,000
\$47,209	\$50,700	\$3,491
\$47,840	\$47,840	\$0
\$47,840	\$50,000	\$2,160
\$48,000	\$55,000	\$7,000
\$48,000	\$57,500	\$9,500
\$49,566	\$52,000	\$2,434
\$50,000	\$58,000	\$8,000
\$50,350	\$60,350	\$10,000
\$50,960	Unsure	N/A
\$51,000	\$51,000	\$0
\$51,552	\$60,000	\$8,448
\$52,000	\$62,400	\$10,400
\$52,146	\$65,000	\$12,854
\$52,800	“The salary would be fine if it were really a 40hr/week job”	N/A
\$57,486	Unsure	N/A
\$61,000	\$75,000	\$14,000
\$61,954	\$75,000	\$13,046
\$62,000	\$75,000	\$13,000

STAFF PERSPECTIVES ON... Their HFM Salaries

The insurance rates were high for the amount of pay we were getting—over \$117 every paycheck; I was taking home \$600 every two weeks. I can't survive on that. – **Former Home Visitor**

Although I am bilingual pay, the pay is no longer a livable wage. I get a dollar more than most of my non-bilingual coworkers and I still am living check by check. The agency wants us to be social workers to these parents, therapists, teachers and advocates which is way more than what we are getting paid to do. Another thing I would like to add is gas prices are sky rocketing, and we still are getting the same mileage as we were when gas was below \$3. It seems like one third of our paycheck simply goes to gas for our job, which is not right at all. – **Current Home Visitor**

I truly enjoy my job and the work I do with Healthy Families. But I do see the pay rate and flexibility in hours being a problem. The work we do is case management, and case managers in this field and within the surrounding areas are making significantly more. The work we do is also pretty high risk as we put ourselves in situations that can be dangerous, hazardous, and generally unsafe at times. – **Current Home Visitor**

Rationale for higher pay. When commenting on the desire or need for a higher salary for home visitors, study participants in the interview and survey samples expressed the feeling that their pay rate is not commensurate with the demands and expectations of their role. Three staff members mentioned that the home visitors' role is presented as an entry level position, a classification which one supervisor described as insulting to home visitors because their job requires complex skills and an expertise in balancing multiple types of tasks. Three common themes staff members used to justify their proposed higher pay rates were (1) the skills required in their work, (2) the emotional intensity of the work, and (3) the volume of their work duties. These three themes are intricately intertwined.

The staff in the interview sample stated that HFM home visitors do the work of multiple support specialists, likening home visitors to social workers, case managers, therapists, parent educators, and Early Intervention specialists. A recurring theme expressed by current and former home visitors was that although home visitors are not intended to be therapists, the families they work with may view them as individuals in a position to, and whom they trust to, play that role. As described by home visitors, many families have complex mental health challenges and the nature of the relationships they develop with families is that topics outside of the HFM curriculum—including stressors and traumatic experiences—are the unavoidable backdrop of families' lives or arise during visits, sometimes brought about by questions raised during the intake process. When families are experiencing tumult and adversity, it can be difficult or impossible for home visitors to divert the family's attention away from those challenges and toward parent education or program requirements. Due to the focus on families' current pressing needs home visitors reported having to increase their service levels, both to work toward addressing those challenges and because the home visitor was unable to accomplish the tasks required of them (e.g., completion of a six-month update) during visits at the original service level.

Home visitors described being impacted in two major ways by these "intense" cases. First, many home visitors are emotionally impacted by exposure to the trauma and hardship families face. They described a sense of personal responsibility they feel for families' well-being; they make themselves available after work hours to families about whose safety they are concerned, "take their work [i.e., a family's stories] home" with them, and sometimes seek therapy for themselves to cope with the effects of families' experiences on their own mental health. Second, the more complicated cases increased home visitors' already daunting workloads. Most staff members in the interview sample described the amount of documentation home visitors must complete as being overwhelming. While many staff did see the value in many of these requirements, given the size of their caseloads they felt it was too much for them to realistically accomplish. Home visitors indicated that they were frequently behind in their documentation requirements and felt no choice but to use their time off to maintain timely completion or catch up on past-due deadlines. When home visitors have multiple families with higher service levels in their caseloads, the amount of documentation becomes even more unmanageable, with more time being spent in visits, making referrals and follow-ups, and in transit to and from visits.

Home visitors' jobs come with notable levels of stress and require significant skill, and home visitors largely feel that their pay rates do not reflect these conditions.

STAFF PERSPECTIVES ON... Higher Salaries for HFM Home Visitors based on the Nature of the Job

[The starting rate] should have been nothing less than \$17 because of the amount of work. As you get more experienced, your pay should be increasing, because your caseload gets heavier, so there's more people and more intensity, more PDS. My caseload was ten [families]—five weekly, three biweekly, and two monthly. The caseload was as if I had 14 because of the intensity of the cases. I was seeing some families two or three times a week because of their issues. – **Former Home Visitor**

I get paid \$20 per hour; I got a raise in February 2020. People who started after us got the same rate of pay even though we've been there longer. It's not fair. – **Current Home Visitor**

I'm bilingual. ...Puerto Rican and Guatemalan are two different Spanishes [sic]; that's extra work I have to do. Google Translate is not adequate. Words actually have different meaning [in each dialect]. Translating materials is a big task. I have a big caseload. I'm looking for curriculum, not just in Spanish but in their dialect. Registering it [in my mind] from Spanish to English is a lot, when you have to digest something, and then reformulate it to communicate it to the participant. – **Current Home Visitor**

I come in early in the morning and stay late, hours I don't get paid for, just to do the paperwork they want. ...I put in 48-50 hours a week. I'm barely getting by, so imagine someone new coming in. – **Current Home Visitor**

It's not really a paraprofessional model, it's a clinician model. When you're in a home and inevitably you're talking about these sensitive topics, and you're reassuring and stuff, working on goals, by definition you're a therapist and you're getting paid the same amount as someone running a playgroup. ...Certainly during the pandemic it was harder; we were dealing with stuff that was harder in our own families too. But the consistent crisis was ongoing, not pandemic-specific. We lost a lot of services in our communities over time. There were not the supports there used to be so it changed the dynamic. I felt like the mental health support I was providing to families was a replacement for community services. – **Former Home Visitor**

III.1B. NON-MONETARY FACTORS INFLUENCING ACTUAL AND PROSPECTIVE TURNOVER

IN THIS SECTION...

Features

- Current and former staff concerns about aspects of their jobs that do not pertain to compensation
- Current staff perspectives about the relative importance of job satisfaction components that would impact their likelihood of staying or leaving
- Exploration of pandemic-related challenges, documentation-related burnout, and growth opportunities within HFM

Key Findings

- Staff were challenged to cope with the impacts of increasingly complicated family circumstances that arose during the pandemic, but this led only one staff member to seriously contemplate leaving.
- The centrality of documentation requirements to home visitors' jobs and to assessments of their success in their jobs is a source of great frustration to many home visitors and a primary source of burnout.
- Features of documentation-related aspects of home visitors' jobs that many staff expressed a desire to change are:
 - the volume of required documentation, some of which is not in electronic format;
 - concern that staff's efforts and successes are overshadowed by difficulty meeting task completion deadlines due to factors they believe to be out of their control;
 - a disproportionate emphasis on the deadlines that may be in tension with HFM's and staff's missions to best serve the individual needs of families; and
 - the frequent reminders about pending or past-due deadlines, which are generally perceived by staff as a source of additional stress rather than a helpful time management tool.
- Staff turnover at the program where one works can be destabilizing but can also lead to opportunities for advancement for current staff who are committed to the mission of HFM and want to continue working for the program.
- Many staff perceive limited or no opportunity for professional growth within HFM, either in terms of advancement into different positions or salary.

No current staff members in the interview sample reported that pay was their only concern, or the ultimate cause of them considering leaving their jobs, and most current staff in the survey sample also

reported a combination of pay and other influences on their job dissatisfaction. This suggests an opportunity to improve work experiences and thereby job satisfaction of those current staff members who have remained in their jobs throughout the pandemic. Reasons given by both current and former staff that have driven them to consider leaving their HFM roles can be insightful in understanding shared stressors experienced by home visitors and supervisors. This section will explore non-monetary reasons for turnover or risk for turnover that were commonly raised by staff in this study.

Figure 1, *Interview Sample: Current and Former Staff Reasons for Leaving or Considering Leaving* shows that for 38 current and former home visitors and supervisors, compensation was not a primary reason for them leaving or considering leaving. Reported reasons for leaving or considering leaving⁹ that did not relate to compensation included:

- *personal reasons* such as having a baby, moving, alternative career goals, or changing perceptions about ideal work arrangements (n = 13)
- the *workload* or job expectations feeling unmanageable (n = 11)
- *pandemic-related difficulties* such as increased stressors on participant families and fewer resources to respond to them, pandemic-related staff turnover (including of supervisors whom home visitors trusted), decreased referrals of families to the program, new personal challenges for HFM staff and their families, and the vaccine mandate (n = 9)
- *conflict with program or agency management*, workplace dynamics, practices, or policies (n = 5)
- *staff turnover unrelated to the pandemic* (n = 3)

Non-monetary pandemic-related challenges. Several staff members in the interview sample noted changes in their work experiences that resulted from staff turnover at their programs that came about during the pandemic, including responsibilities to train or support new hires, an increase in their caseloads, or their sense of stability at their programs being compromised due to staff departures—especially when those departures were their supervisors.

Four current and former staff members noted that the increase in the stressors being faced by families they worked with during the pandemic made their own jobs more challenging, especially in the context of their own emotional responses to the pandemic and its effects on their own families. It also led several staff to contend with feelings of frustration and disappointment about not being able to meet families' needs sufficiently due to limited resources, a change that can be especially hard-hitting for staff who are motivated to enter the human services field to positively impact people's lives (Gause, 2016). These staff tried to compensate by increasing the frequency of their visits and providing direct mental health support to families. Only one of these staff members, though, was led to seriously contemplate leaving because of the additional stress brought about by program participants' increasing challenges. For the remaining staff who noted either exposure to families' pandemic-related crises or the challenges of being restricted to virtual visits, these hardships did not bring them to a breaking point in their HFM job tenures.

⁹ Some participants reported more than one reason for leaving or considering leaving.

STAFF PERSPECTIVES ON... Pandemic-Related Challenges

It became more challenging. Virtual [visits] topped it off for me. I think if they would have given us a raise during pandemic there would not have been so many turnovers. The amount of work was double or triple because we had to look for things virtually that it was already hard to look for in person (e.g., safety stuff, how mom is interacting with the baby). It made things more time-intensive and emotionally intensive. And we were working with a population of people who can't afford internet or a cell phone that enables Zoom. Those challenges were not understood during that period of time. – **Former Home Visitor**

The pandemic has had a huge role in staff turnover. That was a big piece of me being indecisive about staying or going, for a week or two. It wasn't necessarily the job itself as far as home visiting tasks. It was about watching how COVID had affected families and feeling helpless. It was draining, and I didn't feel like I was helping people the way I wanted to. A lot of the home visiting services are related to parent-child interactions and promoting the parenting piece. During the pandemic, at the height of isolation, parents just wanted to talk about their mental health. It was very challenging to get kids involved in visits and discuss parenting. I felt like an unlicensed therapist during that time. Every visit was about depression, anxiety, and other mental health stuff that came with COVID. – **Current Home Visitor**

Burnout and documentation. High-intensity workloads and the emotional toll on home visitors of exposure to the considerable challenges experienced by the families they serve were two reasons cited as justification for higher pay rates for home visitors (see *Monetary Factors Influencing Actual and Prospective Turnover*). These themes also featured prominently in the survey and interview samples as aspects of home visitors' jobs that cause a significant degree of stress and job dissatisfaction and contribute to feelings of burnout among staff. In addition, as seen in Figure 2, *Survey Sample: All Reasons for Considering Leaving Among Current Home Visitors and Supervisors*, three of the reasons endorsed by current home visitors and supervisors included those that attribute to feelings of burnout: feeling overwhelmed with job duties (n = 14), caseload size (n = 5), and effects on well-being due to challenges of families (n = 7).

Burnout is not an uncommon problem in human services work, but it is cited as a major cause of employee turnover (Gause, 2016). Ten of the 12 former home visitors and supervisors in the interview sample identified burnout as a significant cause of stress or contributor to their decisions to leave; all ten of these former staff members cited documentation-related stress (as opposed to emotional stress) as a driving factor in their departures or the departure of a home visitor they supervised.

There were specific elements of the documentation requirements, that home visitors and supervisors described as overwhelming and causing “a lot of pressure” on them. One of these elements is the volume of documentation and paperwork (e.g., intakes, PDS, ASQs, CHEERS, PICCOLO, six-month update, the family profile summary) each staff member is responsible for completing, especially in the context of large caseloads. In the survey sample, nine supervisors and three home visitors reported that they typically work more hours than the standard work week at their program, reporting a range of two to eight hours more for home visitors, and 2.5 to ten hours more for supervisors.

A second concern is the deadlines for completing these tasks. The turnaround times associated with program requirements were perceived as unrealistic, particularly having seven days to complete the PDS for a visit; some viewed ten days as more achievable. Some of a home visitors' ability to meet benchmark requirements is viewed as being tied to heavy caseloads (and thus not having time to make up visits, during which benchmarks could be addressed). Staff also pointed out that if a family has goals and priorities that are not aligned with their documentation requirements (e.g., getting their child vaccinated), this also makes it difficult for them to complete requirements and meet deadlines.

In addition to impacts on their stress levels, a recurring theme among home visitors and supervisors was other consequences of falling behind on documentation requirements and benchmarks. One consequence that matters a lot to home visitors and supervisors was the belief that it reflects poorly on them if they are behind. Most home visitors who referred to this did not know of any concrete consequences they would face, with the exception of two interview participants who said that they have been written up in the past for not having PDS documentation completed within the seven-day time limit. The absence of penalties seemed to matter less to home visitors than the idea that their efforts and successes would be overshadowed by the challenges they had meeting the task completion deadlines, especially because their investment in the families and effort to successfully manage their caseloads were typically the reasons for these challenges. Many home visitors also noted the increase in stress that comes with falling behind on documentation; one home visitor stated that she is reluctant to take a vacation because timelines do not get adjusted, so it puts her behind in her work and her *“service level takes a huge hit.”*

Third, and related to task completion deadlines, some staff find the persistent reminders about approaching deadlines or past-due requirements to be excessive and stress-inducing. Supervisors also noted discontentment about the aspect of their job involving reminding home visitors they supervise about their paperwork and deadlines, viewing it as having to *“discipline”* the home visitors and feeling that it comprised a disproportionate amount of their supervision duties.

Fourth, logistical issues that made these tasks feel inefficient were noted. Several staff wished that some of the paperwork requirements could be completed during visits with families—including families in the process—to reduce the amount of time spent on a single task related to just one component of a visit with one family in their caseload. Several staff also mentioned challenges related to creating color-coded copies of paperwork each year, and related to filing paper forms (e.g., filing being time consuming; forms that had been filed found to be missing during the CT audit and having no electronic version to prove that it had been completed).

Finally, some staff felt that the volume of documentation and associated deadlines competed with a focus on the families, with time spent doing parent education, and with the rewarding work of supporting families and enjoying time working with them, which is what drew many staff to the role of home visitor.

STAFF PERSPECTIVES ON... Burnout

There was one time I had a complete breakdown and had to take time off work, I couldn't take it. I had two really intense moms and my cases were off the charts. It took a toll on me. I would take that home with me. They would train us to leave it at work but it was hard; it's hard for me to set boundaries with people. If participants would call me at 8 or 9 at night I wouldn't pick up except for two girls I was highly concerned about because I didn't want to be responsible for something happening to them. – **Former Home Visitor**

I felt compassion fatigue. I don't feel burnout in my current job. It's a new position so that's part of it, but I don't see myself getting to that point. The job I'm in now is a team. It's not a team at HFM – you're independent in your cases. At my current job, every client has a team – a clinician, a family partner, a peer mentor, and a youth support worker. At HFM I had my supervisor for support but I was doing everything on my own—paperwork, referrals, curriculum, parent education. I did everything by myself that is done by separate people at my new job. ... [At HFM] I didn't have enough time in day to do everything, and they were just like *"find a way, this is what you have to do."* There was never a discussion of 'how can we make this more manageable?' I think if they would have looked at our caseloads...that's why we have case weights. I would have wanted to keep the families, but it should have been a consideration that some of them require more hours than a simple case; it's not just an hour a week for a visit, there's tons of additional work. When handing out other tasks such as outreach [which I was also asked to do], that should have been taken into consideration. – **Former Home Visitor**

This job has dramatically shifted over the years. The responsibilities of a supervisor are never ending. I believe supervisors receive the least amount of support and recognition. Additionally the paperwork is beyond reasonable and leaves at times little or no time to address participant needs and/or home visitor's professional development and support. It is impossible to do it all well without burning out and working beyond the workday. This impedes on self-care and a healthy approach to work. I often feel there is little consideration for all that a supervisor must do to keep things going on a daily basis and more focus on reports, numbers etc. This emphasis diminishes the effort and quality of the work. – **Current Supervisor**

Lack of growth opportunities. Nine current and former home visitors and one supervisor indicated that lack of professional growth opportunities within HFM is a contributing factor to them deciding to leave or consider leaving. Some of these home visitors had envisioned themselves advancing into the supervisor position within their programs but were discouraged from staying at their agencies to pursue that goal because (1) the existing supervisors seemed to intend to stay long-term, (2) the supervisor position required advanced degrees, or (3) the supervisor position comes with an increase in responsibility, but a negligible salary increase.

Other home visitors felt that there was no growth pathway available because they were not interested in becoming a supervisor, since the role is comprised of duties that do not interest them, involves only minimal interaction with families, or would not support their salary goals. One home visitor who earned her BA while she was working as a HFM home visitor explained, *"With my BA they were gonna keep me at \$15.38 I think. Over a five-year period I went from \$13 to \$15 per hour. ...I told myself when I get my BA if I don't move up [to the supervisor position] I will have to leave."*

Desired changes to job experiences. Home visitors in the current staff survey sample were asked to rank the two most important changes in their job experiences that would influence them to stay in their jobs. The three categories that received the most endorsements, as shown in Table 11, were increased flexibility in work hours, being allowed to do more virtual visits during this phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a reduction in workload. Eleven home visitors endorsed one of these three factors, and four selected two of these factors.

Table 11. Survey Sample: Changes to Job Experiences that would Influence Home Visitors to Stay (n = 12)

<i>Changes to job experiences</i>	Number of home visitors who ranked this change as the primary or secondary most important change
<i>Increased flexibility of work hours</i>	5
<i>Being allowed to do more virtual visits</i>	5
<i>A reduction in my workload (e.g., documentation requirements, program requirements)</i>	5
<i>A change in job experiences would not influence me to stay</i>	3
<i>More efforts to address the impacts of our work on our mental health</i>	1
<i>More efforts to make me feel valued for the work I do (e.g., being thanked, special "perks" for staff such as catered lunches)</i>	1
<i>Flexibility to reduce hours to accommodate professional development</i>	1
<i>I am satisfied with my current experience in my job</i>	1
<i>Being allowed to do more in-person visits</i>	0
<i>Being provided with high-quality personal protective equipment</i>	0
<i>A reduction in the size of my caseload</i>	0

Table 12 shows that five current supervisors indicated that a reduction in their workload would influence them to stay in their jobs, while three supervisors endorsed increased flexibility of their work hours and three expressed a desire for increased efforts to address impacts of their work on their mental health.

Table 12. Survey Sample: Changes to Job Experiences that would Influence Supervisors to Stay (n = 11)

<i>Changes to job experiences</i>	Number of supervisors who ranked this change as the primary or secondary most important change
<i>A reduction in my workload (e.g., in documentation and benchmark requirements that I oversee)</i>	5
<i>Increased flexibility of work hours</i>	3
<i>More efforts to address the possible impacts of our work on our mental health</i>	3
<i>Additional training on how to support home visitors I supervise with the emotional impacts of their jobs</i>	2
<i>More efforts to make me feel valued for the work I do (e.g., being thanked, special "perks" for staff such as catered lunches)</i>	2
<i>I am satisfied with my current experience in my job</i>	2
<i>An improvement in relationship quality with home visitors, managers, or agency staff</i>	1
<i>A reduction in the size of my caseload</i>	1
<i>A change in job experiences would not influence me to stay</i>	1
<i>Being provided with high quality personal protective equipment</i>	0

Four home visitors and supervisors indicated that changes to their job experiences would not influence them to stay. In contrast, when asked about changes in compensation, no home visitors or supervisors endorsed the selection “a change in my compensation would not influence me to stay,” suggesting that staff view compensation advancements as a higher priority than job experience improvements.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This study found support for using ARPA funds to increase HFM home visitor and supervisor salaries as a strategy for mitigating potential ongoing turnover that was spurred on during the COVID-19 pandemic by an intensification of staff’s experiences with challenging aspects of their jobs. The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment suggests two ways to use ARPA funds for direct cash payments to employees: premium pay (payment above the base rate “for the duration of the grant or until funds are exhausted;” sometimes called hazard pay), and retention and recruitment allowances (a one-time flat rate payment recommended to be no less than \$2,400 for current staff or at the time of hire “in recognition of service and hardships resulting from the COVID-19 crisis”) (Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2021, p. 4). There is also evidence in this study that policy or administrative improvements in documentation-related procedures have the potential to alleviate burnout, enhance job satisfaction, and reduce likelihood of future turnover.

Although the interview and survey data collected for this study revealed sources of job dissatisfaction among HFM staff, each of these sources presents an opportunity to create modifications that will encourage the many staff members who are committed to the mission of HFM to be able to stay in their jobs and to feel good about doing so. A future report will focus on reasons for staff retention and opportunities for The Children’s Trust to capitalize on these while working to address sources of dissatisfaction.

V. REFERENCES

Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (2020). *Increased Compensation for Early Educators: It's Not Just "Nice to Have"—It's a Must-Have*. Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/blog/increased-compensation-for-early-educators-its-not-just-nice-to-have-its-a-must-have/>

Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (2021). *The American Rescue Plan: Recommendations for Addressing Early Educator Compensation and Supports*. Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/publications/commentary/arpa-recommendations-ece-workforce/>

Gause, S. (2016, October 18). What's Happening to Human Services? Why Employee Attrition is Off the Charts. *American Network of Community Options and Resources*. <https://www.ancor.org/resources/publications/links/whats-happening-human-services-why-employee-attrition-charts>

Glasmeier, A.K., (2020). Living Wage Calculator. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. livingwage.mit.edu

Hsu, A. (2021, June 24). As the pandemic recedes, millions of workers are saying 'I quit.' *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/2021/06/24/1007914455/as-the-pandemic-recedes-millions-of-workers-are-saying-i-quit>

Van Buskirk, C. (2021, December 6). Human services sector struggling amid wage competition. *WBUR*. <https://www.wbur.org/news/2021/12/06/human-services-sector-struggling-amid-wage-competition>

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Percentage of Insurance Premiums Covered by Agencies, and Resulting Bi-Weekly Costs to HFM Full Time Employees

Program	Percentage of Premiums Paid for by Agency			Cost to Employees for Insurance Premiums				% employees who purchased agency-offered health insurance FY22
	Health insurance	Dental insurance	Vision insurance	Basic health insurance	Premium health insurance	Dental insurance	Vision insurance	
B	75%	75%	75%	\$72.42	\$121.64	\$7.16	\$2.94	No data
C	76%	50%	0%	\$88.50	N/A	\$10.70	\$7.54	50% of supervisors 50% of home visitors
D	80%, plus first 50% of deductible	50%	0%	\$19.02	\$50.78	\$5.68	\$3.52	100% of supervisors 100% of home visitors
G	81%	75%	0%	\$68.92	\$112.47	\$5.24	\$2.91	73% of supervisors 57% of home visitors
H	74%	54%	0%	\$67.83	\$72.93	\$8.11	\$3.20	100% of supervisors 50% of home visitors
J	53%	53%	0%	\$157.79	\$175.33	\$5.37	\$8.21	0% of supervisors

Program	Percentage of Premiums Paid for by Agency			Cost to Employees for Insurance Premiums				% employees who purchased agency-offered health insurance FY22
	Health insurance	Dental insurance	Vision insurance	Basic health insurance	Premium health insurance	Dental insurance	Vision insurance	
								50% of home visitors
K	83%	75%	0%	\$64.94	\$71.74	\$5.15	\$3.42	50% of HFM staff
L	78%	21%	0%	\$70.90	N/A	\$17.56	\$4.40	100% of supervisors 62% of home visitors

NOTE: Some agencies offer three levels of health insurance; the two lower priced options are presented here.

NOTE: Some agencies offer two levels of dental insurance; the lower-priced options are presented here.

Appendix B. Annual Paid Time Off in Days and Paid Lunch

Agency, Program	Holidays	Home Visitors		Managers		Personal time	Paid lunch
		Vacation time (present in same units)	Sick time	Vacation time	Sick time		
B	10	Years 0-2: 13 days Years 3-9: 18 days Years 10+: 23 days Years 20+: 28 days	5	Years 0-2: 18 days Years 3-9: 23 days Years 10+: 28 days Years 20+: 33 days	5	3	No
C	12	10 days (increases based on years of employment)	10 (increases based on years of employment)	10 (increases based on years of employment)	10 (increases based on years of employment)	2 (increases based on years of service)	No
D	12	Years 1-3: 15 days Years 4-5: 18 days 6-10 years: 20 days 10 years+: 25 days	12	Years 1-3: 15 days Years 4-5: 18 days 6-10 years: 20 days 10 years+: 25 days	12	3	No
G	12	Years 0-1: 15 days Years 1-2: 20 days Year 3+: 25 days	2.22	1st year: 20 days 2nd year: 25 days	2.22	0	No
H	6	Years 0-4: 10 days Years 5+: 15 days Year 10: 20 days	5.3 days	Years 0-4: 15 days Years 5+: 20 days Year 10: 25 days	5.3 days	7	No
J	11	One bank of PTO days: Day 91-year 4: 20 days Years 5-9: 25 days Years 10+: 30 days	Yes				
K	15	Years 0-2: 10 days Years 3-4: 15 days Years 4+: 20 days	10	Years 0-2: 10 days Years 3-4: 15 days Years 4+: 20 days	10	2	No
L	14	Years 0-3: 3 weeks Years 4+: 4 weeks	10	Years 0-3: 3 weeks Years 4+: 4 weeks	10	2	No

Appendix C. Other Agency Benefits: Retirement, Continuing Education, and Mobile Phone

Agency, Program	Retirement Fund Offerings	Agency Retirement Contribution	Education/Professional Development Benefits	Mobile phone benefits
B	403(b)	Discretionary match at end of alternating fiscal years based on company's financial health. In FY22, agency made 2% match for those who completed 1,000 hours of employment.	Tuition reimbursement program	Agency provided phone
C	403(b)	Agency may make discretionary matching contributions for employees who have contributed for one year. In the past several years, the contributions have been made in equal amounts to each participants' account (\$2,000-\$3,000 match), resulting in employees that have the lowest salaries receiving the highest percentage of their salary as a contribution.	None	Agency provided phone
D	403(b)	100% match of employee contribution up to 2% of employee's wages, for employees who work 1,000 hours during first year or a subsequent plan year	Covers fees for professional development, dependent on availability of funds	\$15 per month for use of personal phone for work
G	401(k)	50% up to the first 3%, for employees who made a contribution	\$3,000 per employee per fiscal year for professional development or tuition reimbursement	Agency provided phone
H	403(b)	5% of employees' annual salary once employee makes a one-time contribution to open the account.	Up to \$2,000 tuition reimbursement per employee per calendar year	Agency provided phone
J	403(b)	Agency matches employee's contribution up to \$500 per fiscal year	Up to \$1,358 per employee per fiscal year	Agency provided phone
K	403(b)	3% for all employees regardless of how	Pays for trainings,	Agency provided cell phone

Agency, Program	Retirement Fund Offerings	Agency Retirement Contribution	Education/Professional Development Benefits	Mobile phone benefits
		much the employee contributes	workshops and at times courses for professional development	or \$25 per month for use of personal phone for work
L	403(b) and Roth	3% of gross annual income after 1 year of employment and a minimum of 1,000 hours, even if employee does not contribute	Almost all professional development opportunities are paid for by the program or agency, including conferences, workshops, certification programs, etc. Staff are able to attend these events on work time when necessary and not required to use vacation and/or personal time.	\$40 per month for use of personal phone