Healthy Opportunities for Parents to Experience Success (HOPES) Annual Report SFY 2026

Healthy Families Iowa (HFI)

Healthy Opportunities for Parents to Experience Success - Healthy Families Iowa (HOPES-HFI) is an evidence-based home visiting program for families that begins during pregnancy or at the birth of a child and can continue until the child reaches preschool age. The program follows the national Healthy Families America (HFA) model of home visiting. A standard tool is used to identify level of risk and performs screens to evaluate family conditions and characteristics that impact child development growth, development, and health. Screens evaluate areas that include family coping skills, parenting skills, and family functioning. Following a screen, families that are identified as "high-risk" are offered HOPES-HFI services and can voluntarily participate in the program.

HOPES-HFI Program Overview

HOPES-HFI is available in six Iowa counties: Black Hawk, Clinton, Tama, Floyd, Des Moines, and Lee Counties. Both programs providing HOPES-HFI with state grant funds have been awarded national accreditation by Healthy Families America. Iowa has an in-state trainer, Dawn Holz.

Funding and support for HOPES-HFI was established in 1992 through legislation with funds distributed to ten counties identified as having the highest needs. State funds at that time were allocated to the Iowa Department of Public Health for contract management. In Fiscal Year 2005 (FY04) the Iowa Health and Human Services initiated a contract with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) for $200,000 of federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to expand the HOPES-HFI grant after a reduction in state grant allocation for HOPES-HFI. As an effort to promote collaborative efforts to integrate all Early Childhood programs, in FY06 legislation was changed requiring transfer of funds from IDPH to the Office of Empowerment. In this fiscal year, funds for the HOPES-HFI program were once again allocated to the Iowa Department of Public Health for contract management. In 2019, Iowa's legislative session enacted a change in the appropriations of HOPES - HFI funding. With this

change, the Iowa Department of Public Health was required to open applicant eligibility and transition to a fully competitive application process.

In 2022, IDPH and the Iowa Department of Human Services merged, creating the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (Iowa HHS) which is now responsible for contract management.

Currently. HOPES-HFI falls under the Division of Family Well-Being and Protection within Iowa HHS. There has been no impact on the procurement and provision of services for HOPES-HFI families with these changes. HOPES-HFI remains the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) for Iowa's MIECHV Program grant funding.

Program Goals

- Promote optimal child health and development.
- Improve family coping skills and functioning.
- Promote positive parenting and family interaction.
- Prevent child abuse and neglect, as well as infant mortality and morbidity.

Program Offerings

- Provide voluntary home visiting services that follow HFA standards (critical elements).
- Support overburdened (high risk) families with children during the prenatal to preschool years.
- Identify qualifying families through a standardized screening process.
- Identify barriers and develop an individual family support plan (family goals) based on the family's strengths and needs.

Program Statistics 2025-2026

- 106 Participating children
- 98 Participating caregivers
- 23 Pregnant Participants
- 1452 Home visits to participating families
- $471.07 Cost per visit

Program Efficiency

- 94% Maternal depression screenings completed.
- 98% Children screened for developmental delays with ASQ3.
- 91% Children screened for developmental delays with ASQSE.

- 92.9% of families have an identified medical home.
- 83% of families had a CHEERS check-in completed.

For more information, please contact HOPES-HFI Program Manager, Alexius Aguiar, at alexius.aguiar@hhs.iowa.gov.