

Region X Innovation Grant Overview: NEAR@Home

What is NEAR@Home?

In the last three decades, scientific research has demonstrated how deeply adversity in childhood becomes embedded into biology, behavior, and risk, and how these can be passed on to future generations. This body of science – Neuroscience, Epigenetics, Adverse Childhood Experiences, and Resilience research, or NEAR – is one of the largest public health discoveries of our time, and parents have the right to know the most powerful determinant of their children’s future health, safety, and productivity.

Because home visiting is relationship-based and occurs within each family’s comfort zone, home visitors are uniquely positioned to talk with parents about NEAR and how their histories may be impacting their lives and influencing their parenting. The NEAR@Home Toolkit was created *by* home visitors *for* home visitors to provide strategies for engaging parents in discussing childhood trauma in a safe, respectful, and effective way for both home visitor and family. The detailed NEAR@Home Theory of Change can be accessed [here](#).

The NEAR@Home toolkit was published online in early 2015, and as of December 31, 2017 had been downloaded 3,600 times by 2,860 unique users from all 50 states, including Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, and 11 countries. In 2017, two years after its initial publication, the toolkit averaged 85 downloads per month.

What is happening under the Innovation Grant?

In 2017, Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington were awarded a federal Innovation Grant to pilot a regional expansion of the NEAR@Home toolkit. Under this grant, a NEAR@Home Facilitator was hired from each of the four states and trained extensively by Thrive Washington on the process for introducing NEAR@Home to home visiting programs. In 2018, these facilitators are piloting this process with at least four programs in their state, sharing best practices and lessons learned with each other and with Thrive with the ultimate goal of developing formal, comprehensive guidelines that can be scaled to other communities. The pilot is being evaluated by Portland State University to measure how the NEAR@Home process is supporting home visiting programs.

How does the NEAR@Home process work?

The process for integrating NEAR@Home into a home visiting program’s practice was developed using both Implementation Science and trauma-informed lenses. It is a deliberate and paced process, prioritizing the “do no harm” principle to ensure the success of the intervention with families, but also to protect the psychological, social, and moral safety of the home visitors themselves. There are currently four steps to the process, as outlined in the document *Steps for Learning NEAR@Home*. Throughout the process, NEAR@Home facilitators use their expertise as reflective practitioners to create a safe and nurturing atmosphere for home visitors and supervisors that mimics the atmosphere home visitors will create for their families to discuss trauma.

What’s Next?

The Innovation Grant initially provided for each state’s NEAR@Home Facilitator to guide four home visiting programs in their state through the NEAR@Home process, but a 2017 regional survey showed that there were at least 63 programs across Region X that would like to receive these supports. In the spring of 2019, a facilitator’s handbook will be completed that can be used to scale this process to more programs across Region X and the country and the Innovation Grant Governance committee will be working with Thrive staff to explore ways of expanding and sustaining the work of its regional NEAR@Home facilitators.