

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS



## What is a Community Health Worker (CHW)?

CHWs are frontline public health workers who are trusted members of and/or have an unusually close understanding of the community served. This trusting relationship enables the CHW to serve as a liaison/link/intermediary between health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery. - [APHA](#)



## Are there other names for CHWs?

Yes! There are many job titles under the CHW umbrella such as:

- Community health advisor, advocate, representative or navigator
- Community liaison
- Outreach worker/specialist
- Patient navigator
- Peer educators or specialists
- Promotor/a de salud
- Case worker



## Where do CHWs work?

CHWs work in:

- Community-based organizations
- Health systems
- Medicaid managed care organizations (MCOs)
- Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)
- City and state health agencies
- Social service agencies
- Schools and universities



## What do CHWs do?

CHWs promote health equity by working in collaboration with health care and social services teams. They have many roles including:

- Providing culturally appropriate health education
- Conducting outreach
- Helping people navigate health and social services
- Providing social support
- Advocating for change on specific issues or causes



## How is a CHW different from other health professionals?

CHWs do not provide clinical services. Because they are often from the communities they serve, they have a unique ability to reach and communicate effectively with populations that may otherwise may not access health services. CHWs work collaboratively with many public health and health care professionals.



## Are CHWs effective?

Yes! There is scientific evidence that CHWs:

- Improve outcomes for many health issues including chronic conditions
- Address social determinants of health
- Reduce unnecessary use of health care services
- Reduce costs of care

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## What types of training do CHWs need?

Regardless of where they work, CHWs should be trained in core competencies such as:

- Communication skills
- Conducting individual and community assessments
- Service coordination skills
- Relationship-building
- Health information relevant to their position



## Do CHWs need to be certified in Louisiana?

Requirements differ by state. Louisiana does not offer or require CHW certification. Instead, it is recommended that CHWs complete core competency training. More information about Louisiana CHWs can be found [here](#).



## How much are CHWs paid?

CHW wages vary depending on experience and location. They make unique contributions to professional teams and should be compensated equitably. Employers should provide CHWs with a living wage and full benefits, just as they do for other staff members.



## Can CHWs work part-time?

Whenever possible, it is best to hire CHWs to work full-time to ensure they are able to carry out all of their duties. Part-time CHWs may need to have multiple jobs to support themselves and their family, which can lead to burnout and turnover.



## How can I identify someone to work as a CHW?

Remember that the most important quality of a CHW is their connection to the community they serve. Recruit through word of mouth whenever possible. Avoid requirements such as high educational attainment or background checks that can create barriers for the most qualified applicants.



## Where can I find additional resources on CHWs?

- [National Association of Community Health Workers](#)
- [American Public Health Association CHW Section](#)
- [CHW Core Consensus \(C3\) Project](#)
- [CDC CHW Toolkit](#)
- [Louisiana Community Health Outreach Network](#)
- [Louisiana CHW Institute at LSU](#)



## Language matters!

It's important to use equitable language when talking about CHWs. For example, choose "partner, employ, engage, collaborate" instead of "use, utilize, or deploy."

**For more information, please contact:**

Ashley Wennerstrom, PhD, MPH  
Director, [Louisiana CHW Institute](#)  
awenne@lsuhsc.edu

Catherine Haywood, BSW  
Louisiana Community Health Outreach  
Network ([LACHON](#))  
lachws@gmail.com