



Frequently Asked Questions **About State CHW Certification**

What is a Community Health Worker, (CHW)?

CHWs, also known as a tribal community health representative or promotor/a, are frontline public health workers who are trusted members of the community. They may live in the same community and/or have an unusually close understanding of the community they serve. They are critical members of health care delivery teams who may focus on the social aspects of care that support and enhance critical clinical activities such as diagnosis, treatment, or clinical procedures. Because CHWs are trusted members of the community they serve and may face the same barriers as the individuals and families they serve, and because they often share the same language, ethnicity, cultural, educational, and class background, they are uniquely positioned to act as bridges between their communities and the health and social community service systems.

What are the job duties of the CHW?

A CHW provides support services and assists individuals to navigate the health care system. A CHW encourages self-sufficiency by providing education on self-care and strategies to improve health by helping them understand their health condition(s) and optimize individual, family and community outcomes. As members of care delivery teams, CHWs can assist individuals in managing their own health by keeping medical appointments, screenings, treatment and follow up care. A CHW must deliver health information using culturally appropriate terms and concepts. Many CHWs community outreach includes traveling to individual homes or meeting with clients outside of the clinical setting. Job duties may vary depending on the requirements of the employer.

What is the role of the NM Department of Health (NMDOH), Office of Community Health Workers (OCHW)?

The Office of Community Health Workers (OCHW) is charged with developing a statewide training and certification process for CHWs, processing applications and issuing certificates. The mission of the OCHW is to fully integrate CHWs into New Mexico health and social systems of care by providing training, certification, advocacy, and support.

What are core competencies?

A combination of qualities, practical skills and knowledge essential to the provision of services by community health workers, demonstration of which is required for certification.



What are the required competencies?

The CHW Profession, Effective Communication, Interpersonal skills, Health Coaching, Service Coordination, Advocacy, Technical Teaching, Community Health Outreach, Community Knowledge & Assessment. Clinical Support Skills is optional for those who desire to enhance their skills or whose jobs require it. (A description of the competencies is attached to the application).

What does “Grandfathering” mean?

Grandfathering is a process by which experienced CHW professionals will obtain certification, if they were practicing CHWs before the Community Health Workers Act became law.

Will there be a grandfathering option for experienced CHWs?

Yes.

What are the criteria to apply for state certification through the grandfathering process?

- Proof that applicant is at least 18 years of age
- Verification of proficiency in the core competencies through training or experience
- Two letters of reference
- 2000 hours of work or volunteer experience as a CHW in the Two (2) years prior to application or at least half-time paid or volunteer employment as a CHW in the last five (5) years prior to application

Will certification or licensure be required?

Voluntary state certification will be offered to those meeting the core competencies and who apply for certification. Licensure is not offered or required.

Is U.S. citizenship required?

No, citizenship is not required; however, applicants have to submit to a national background check and may be required to meet the requirements of an employer, which may include proof of citizenship.

Do you have to be a New Mexico resident to be certified in New Mexico?

No.



Is there reciprocity between states?

Not at this time; however, the NMDOH, OCHW is working on revising the NMAC governing the CHW statute to include reciprocity between bordering states and towns.

Will there be a fee for certification?

Yes. A \$45.00 fee for initial certification as a Generalist is required to be submitted with the application. Specialty tracks will require an additional \$10.00 per Specialty. Fees are non-refundable.

What type of payment will be accepted?

Personal check, money orders or cashier's check. No cash will be accepted.

Will a background check be required?

Yes, approved applicants will be sent instructions by the Department for completing the background check process. A \$44.00 fee will be required and paid to the entity conducting the background check.

What levels of certification will be offered?

- Generalist
- Specialist I

Certification as a Specialist I in Basic Clinical Support Skills is available for applicants applying for certification through grandfathering.

Who determines eligibility requirements for CHW certification?

The New Mexico CHW Certification Board.

What type of credential will a community health worker receive?

Individuals who meet all eligibility requirements, including a background check, will receive a Certified Community Health Worker (CCHW) certificate. A CCHW shall carry the CCHW card and present it upon request.



For further information regarding state CHW certification, please contact the Office of Community Health Workers (OCHW):

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