

ORCHWA'S POLICY PRIORITIES

In order to maximize CHWs' contributions, ORCHWA has identified the following policy priorities:

General Policy Recommendations

- State policy should support CHWs in both clinical and community-based settings.
- State policy should ensure that CHW programs promote job development in communities most affected by health inequities.
- CHWs should be guaranteed a minimum of 51% representation on any group that governs CHW policy and practice.
- CHWs can be effectively supervised by a variety of professions including: experienced CHWS, medical professionals, social workers, public health practitioners, and others depending on the setting. ORCHWA supports the development of a process of credentialing CHW supervisors.

Certification & Education

- CHWs should be hired for the following characteristics:
 - A trusted member of and/or has an unusually close understanding of the community served
 - Has a basic level of competency in: communication skills, interpersonal skills, teaching, knowledge of community resources, and organizational skills.
 - Has the following qualities: motivated and capable of self-directed work, personal strength and resilience, committed/dedicated, dependable/responsible/reliable, honest, flexible, desire to help the community.
- State policy should support training for CHWs that:
 - Prepares CHWs to play a variety of roles
 - Involves CHWs as trainers
 - Uses popular education
 - Confers academic credit
 - Promotes professional development
 - Includes field-based learning and mentoring opportunities
 - Expands CHW skills
 - Includes consideration of the social determinants of health.
 - Includes curricula for training supervisors
- CHWs and members of communities served by CHWs should be involved in developing and implementing any potential statewide certification process. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPCOT>



Scope & Professional Development


- State policy should support CHWs to play a full range of roles including:¹
 - Bridging cultural mediation between communities and the health and social service systems
 - Providing culturally appropriate health education and information, Assuring that people get the services they need
 - Providing informal counseling and social support
 - Advocating for individual and community needs
 - Providing direct services
 - Building individual and community capacity
- CHWs should have opportunities for professional development and advancement both within and outside of their field. Career ladders should allow them to progress within their own profession and enter other professions as they desire.

Financing

- CHWs should be remunerated in a way that fully recognizes their unique skills and contributions.
- State policy should ensure robust and varied funding streams for CHW programs including but not limited to reimbursement in the context of global budgeting, block grants, etc.

1. Rosenthal E, Wiggins N, Brownstein J, R R, Johnson S, Koch E. *Summary of the National Community Health Advisor Study*; 1998.

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