

## 2018 Community Health Worker Training and Education Project

The Department of Health (DOH) will reconvene the Community Health Worker (CHW) Task Force to develop guidelines for implementing the Task Force’s recommendations on CHW training and education. DOH will submit a final report on this work to the Legislature by June 30, 2019.

### Background

A community health worker is a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of and/or has an unusually close understanding of the community served. This trusting relationship enables the worker to serve as a liaison, link, or intermediary between health and social service systems and the community to support access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery.

CHWs unique capabilities include: 1) having strong relationships and trust with communities of color, underserved, and low income populations, 2) the ability to facilitate valuable communication between providers and patients or community members and decision-makers, and 3) skill at addressing the social determinants of health at the individual and community level.

In 2015, a CHW Task Force was convened as part of the state’s [Healthier Washington initiative](#) to develop actionable policy recommendations to align the CHW workforce with other projects under the initiative. The 55 CHW Task Force members represented multiple sectors from across the state, including legislators, physical and behavioral health care delivery systems, local health jurisdictions, community-based organizations, managed care organizations, tribes, education, professional associations, labor, philanthropy, regional support networks and government. More than 30 percent of Task Force members were community health workers. The Task Force released a report in 2016 with recommendations about CHW roles, skills, and qualities, training and education needs, and finance and sustainability considerations for long-term CHW integration into Washington’s health and human service systems. Task Force members voted unanimously in support of all the recommendations.

By developing guidelines for CHW training and education this project will contribute to:

- ***Increased Access*** to CHW services
- ***Standardized training*** guidelines for CHWs
- ***Continuous quality improvement*** methods for supporting an effective CHW workforce
- ***A CHW workforce with increased access to information and resources***

## About the CHW Training & Education Project

This project will:

- Engage CHWs in community conversations at locations across the state to learn about their work and priorities for education and training.
- Reconvene CHW Task Force members to develop guidelines for implementing the CHW training and education recommendations from the 2016 Task Force Report.
- Submit a final report to the Legislature by June 30, 2019

## Expected outcomes

Guidelines on:

- A CHW training and education framework to prepare CHW generalists to support the health and well-being of individuals and communities, and provide continuing education opportunities to prepare CHWs with expertise to be successful in specific roles
- The content that should be included in a core CHW training
- How CHW training and education should be provided
- Educating organizations and agencies to effectively support CHWs to achieve outcomes

## Next steps

- Hold community conversations with CHWs in four sites across the state to better understand CHW priorities.
- Invite Task Force members to work on the CHW Training and Education Project.
- Recruit new Task Force members to fill vacated seats and identified gaps.
- Convene Task Force members multiple times in the next six months to develop CHW training and education guidelines.
- Contract with the Foundation for Healthy Generations (Healthy Gen) to provide historical perspective as well as administrative and logistical support.

## Questions and Answers

### **What is the state's role in this project?**

The state Legislature set aside funds under what's called a budget proviso for the Department of Health to develop guidelines on CHW training and education. These guidelines will build on the 2015 CHW Taskforce recommendations. DOH will reconvene members of the initial Task Force to participate. DOH will submit a final report to the Legislature by June 30, 2019.

### **How will CHWs be involved in this work?**

There will be multiple opportunities for CHWs to support the project, including as organizers and participants in the CHW community conversations, as members of Leadership Planning Team and as members of the reconvened Community Health Worker Task Force. All CHWs who participated in the Task Force and are currently active CHWs will be invited to join the reconvened Task Force. There will also be an opportunity for a small number of CHWs that were not previously involved to join.

### **Is the goal of this project to create a CHW certification?**

No. The goal of the project is to develop a set of guidelines on the training and education of CHWs in Washington State.

### **How does this affect the existing DOH CHW Core Competency training?**

In the short term, this project does not affect the DOH training program. Core competency training will continue to be offered quarterly across the state. The DOH training curriculum may be updated to reflect the recommendations of this project as outlined in the final report submitted to the Legislature.

### **How will CHW Associations, Coalitions and Collaboratives work with the project?**

These groups are not directly linked to the project. However, members of these groups were on the initial Task Force and will be invited to participate in this effort. CHWs do not have to be a member of these groups to participate in this project.

### **As a CHW or interested stakeholder, how do I get involved in the Training and Education Workgroup?**

DOH will reach out to individuals who participated in the initial Task Force are still in their positions to join the reconvened Task Force. There will also be an opportunity for a small number of CHWs who were not previously involved to join the Task Force. The DOH is seeking to have a diverse and representative group of CHWs, therefore we have identified underrepresented groups and will recruit widely for CHWs who represent these missing voices.

### **Who do I get more information?**

For questions, send an email to [chwts@doh.wa.gov](mailto:chwts@doh.wa.gov). For updates and to join our email list go to [our page on the Department of Health website](#).