

# COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER Career Gateways, Requirements, Pathways, and Barriers

The National Association of Community Health Workers (NACHW) implemented a Community Health Worker (CHW) survey in 2021 to advance the national professional identity, policy leadership and organizational capacity of CHWs in the United States. This infographic highlights responses to our national survey from 867 CHWs (772 English and 95 Spanish respondents) from 859 unique zip codes.

This infographic explores training, requirements for continuing education, barriers to success as a CHW and their desired options to include in their career paths.

Despite CHWs' completion of numerous training related to nationally endorsed competencies, CHWs express challenges of employment and career advancement that include funding, certification, and higher education requirements. CHWs want access to continuing education related to the social determinants of health, advocacy and health and racial equity. Offering free certification and continuing programs can increase CHWs professional development.

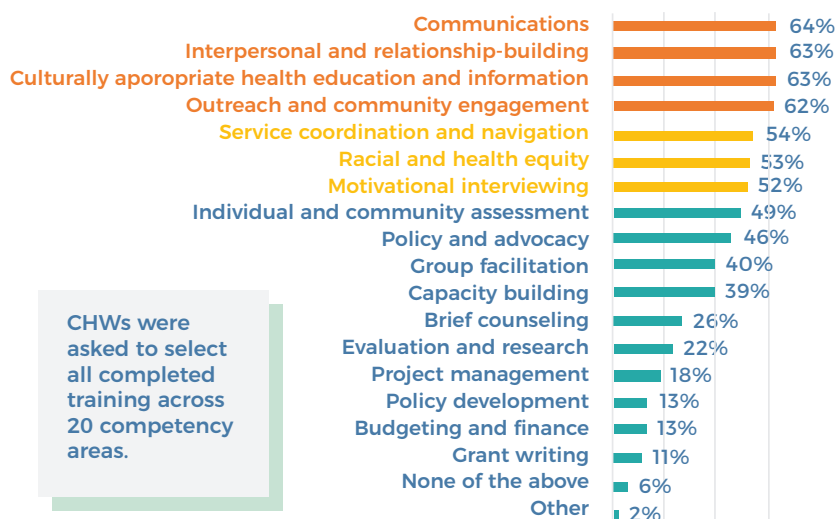
The NACHW Advance CHWs project began in 2021 and is funded by Johnson and Johnson to advance the national professional identity, policy leadership and organizational capacity of Community Health Workers. CHWs is used as an umbrella term to describe community health representatives, promotores, aunties, outreach workers, peers and dozens of different work titles. CHWs are a diverse, capable, proven, frontline public health workforce, whose trust and cultural alignment with marginalized communities facilitates their roles as community educators, capacity builders, advocates and liaisons between under-resourced communities and health and social services systems (APHA, 2014).

CHWs' integration within medical, public health and social service initiatives are essential to eradicate racial and social injustice and health inequities disproportionately experienced by people of color. This data should be used for action to reverse harmful practices and barriers to CHW self-determination, leadership advancement and sustainability.

The survey, analysis and narratives were developed by NACHW staff and CHW leaders from across the country who are part of the Advance CHWs Project. Special thanks to our advisors and contributors to project phases. To learn more about the CHWs in this project and download all infographics and the full report please visit <https://nachw.org/>

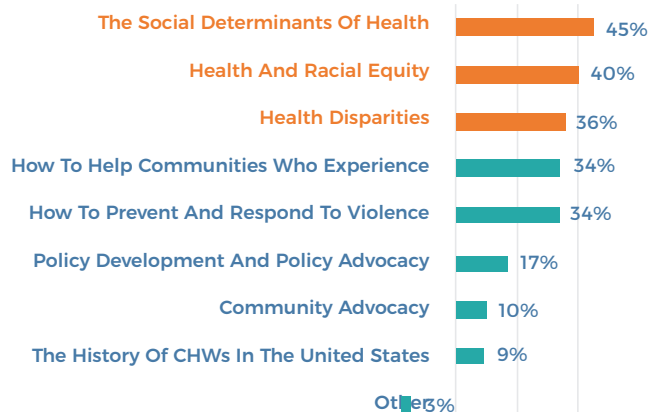


## I have completed training in the following competencies



CHWs were asked to select all completed training across 20 competency areas.

## The following trainings should be available to all CHWs

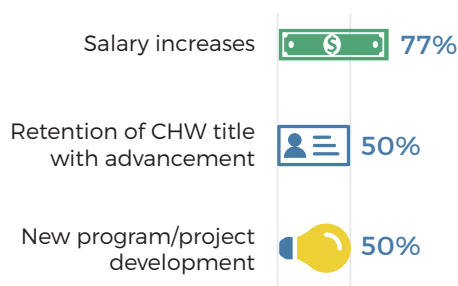


**NACHW**  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

Johnson & Johnson  
**OUR RACE TO  
HEALTH  
EQUITY**

# CAREER GATEWAYS, REQUIREMENTS, PATHWAYS, AND BARRIERS (CONTINUED)

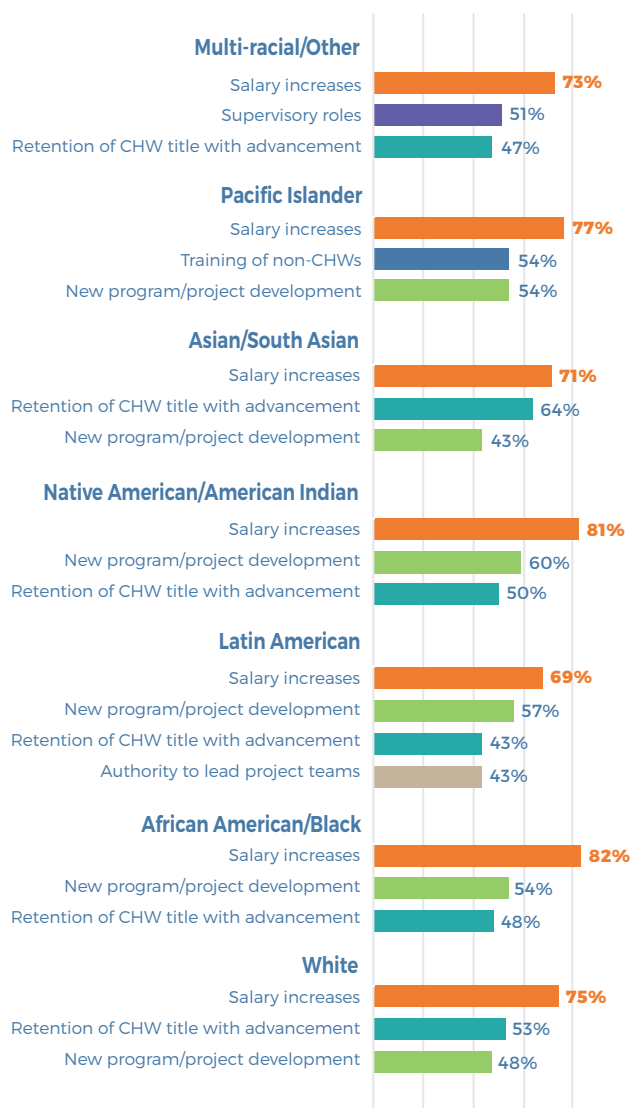
## Top 3 options that should be included in a career path



CHWs selected the top 3 options that they believe should be included in career advancement:

- Salary increases: 76.2%
- New program/project development: 50.3%
- Retention of CHW title with advancement: 49.6%

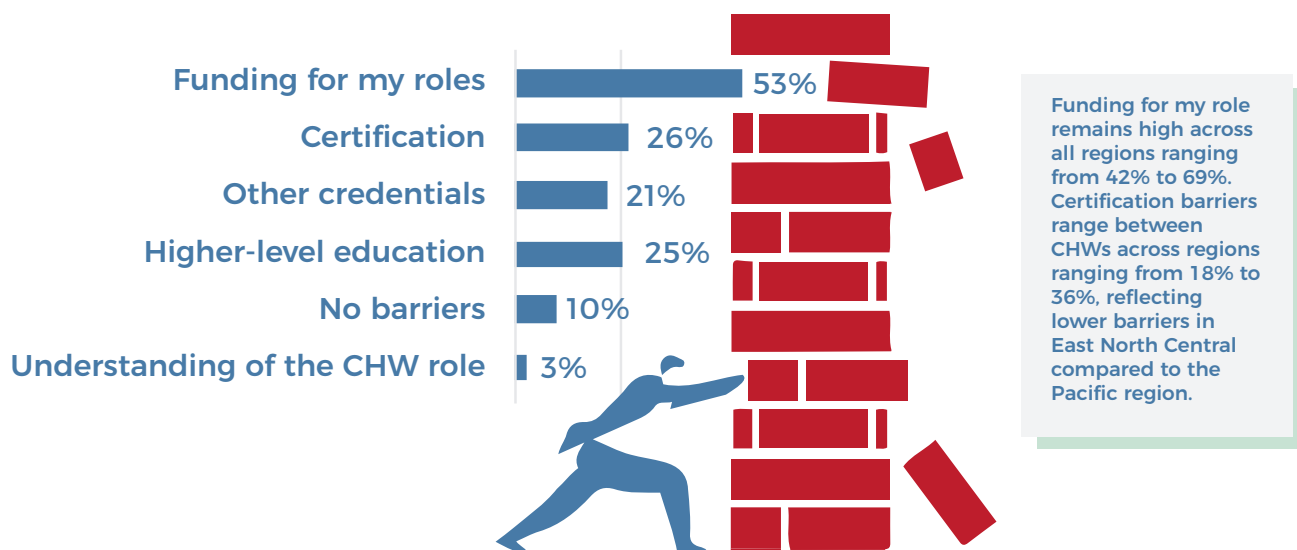
## Top 3 Options in Career Path by Race/Ethnicity



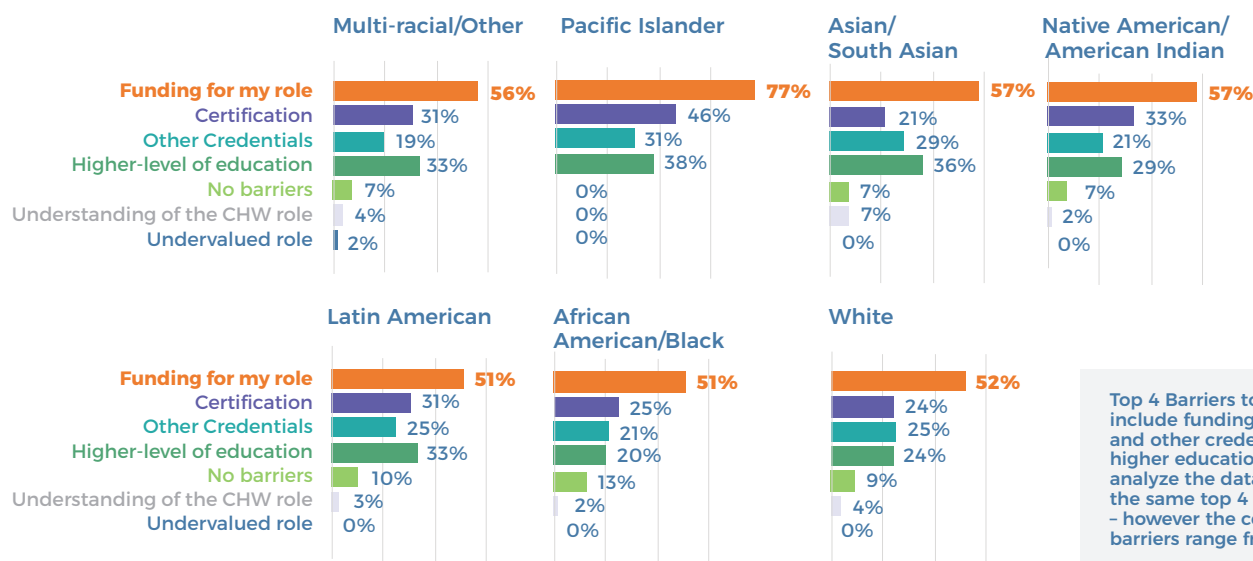
In disaggregating the data by race/ethnicity, we find that the same top three emerge, however supervisory roles was also regarded as critical among Asian/South Asian respondents. And among CHW Pacific Islanders, CHWs want to include the role of training non-CHWs in their career advancement.

# CAREER GATEWAYS, REQUIREMENTS, PATHWAYS, AND BARRIERS (CONTINUED)

## Top 4 Barriers to success as a CHW



## Barriers to success as a CHW by Race/Ethnicity

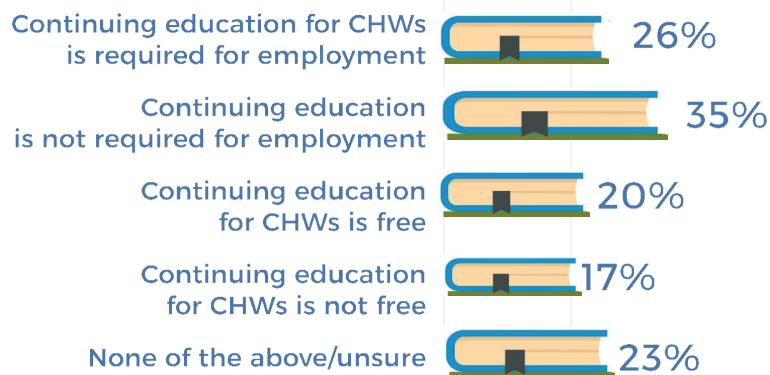


# CAREER GATEWAYS, REQUIREMENTS, PATHWAYS, AND BARRIERS (CONTINUED)

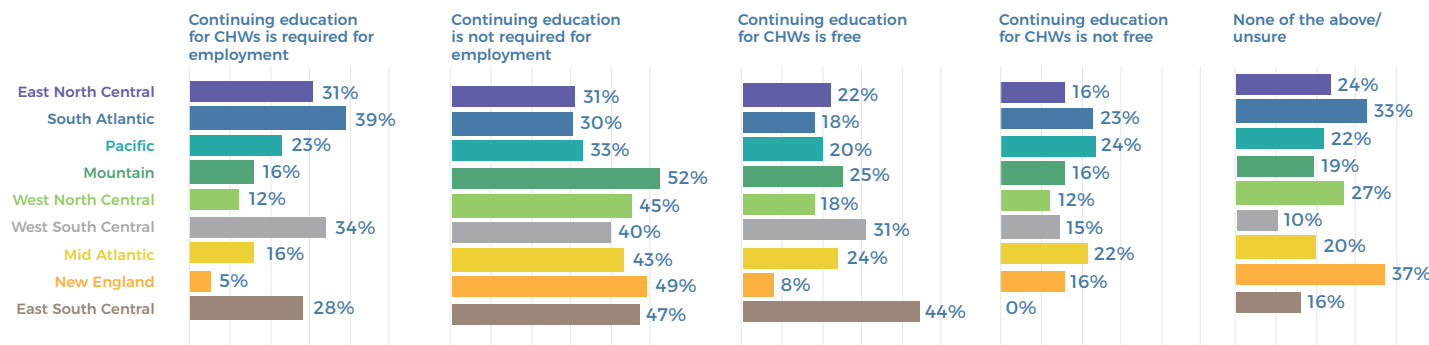


**In the state where I live,  
continuing education is...**

Though CHWs complete these training competencies, CHWs still experience barriers to career advancement.



## Continuing Education by Region



## OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

- CHW Employers should retain the CHW title in work promotions
- CHW payers and funders must eliminate short-term grants and restricted reimbursement for CHW roles
- CHW workforce development should adopt APHA policies to ensure CHW self-determination and 50% or more CHW participation in all workforce decision-making processes (APHA 2014)
- CHW training and certification programs should ensure inclusion of community advocacy, health and racial equity and social determinants of health focus
- CHW research should further explore certification barriers could include lack of certification in the region, state and local certification barriers could include language interpretation, transportation, criminal background check and income to pay for certification.
- Policy level and practice level - Increase cultural fluency to include LGBTQ+, race/ethnicity, language preference SES, belief systems, citizenship status, and regardless of background histories