

#NCHWAW

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

National Community Health Worker Awareness Week

AUGUST 28 - SEPTEMBER 1, 2023 *Toolkit*

COLLABORATE | COMMEMORATE | CELEBRATE

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Table of Contents



- 03 [Roadmap to National CHW Awareness Week](#)
- 04 [About National CHW Awareness Week](#)
- 05 [About the National Association of Community Health Workers](#)
- 06 [Who Are CHWs?](#)
- 07 [The Six Pillars of Community Health Workers](#)
- 08 [Suggested Talking Points and Key Messages](#)
- 09 [National CHW Policy Platform](#)
- 10 [Tools for Preparation and Planning for Raising Awareness](#)
 - Timeline/Checklist*
 - Template Letter/ Email*
 - Sample Agenda*
 - Social Media Checklist*
- 19 [Connect with NACHW](#)
 - Sign up to receive NCHWAW updates*
 - Share your NCHWAW Plans with NACHW*
- 20 [Message from Executive Director](#)

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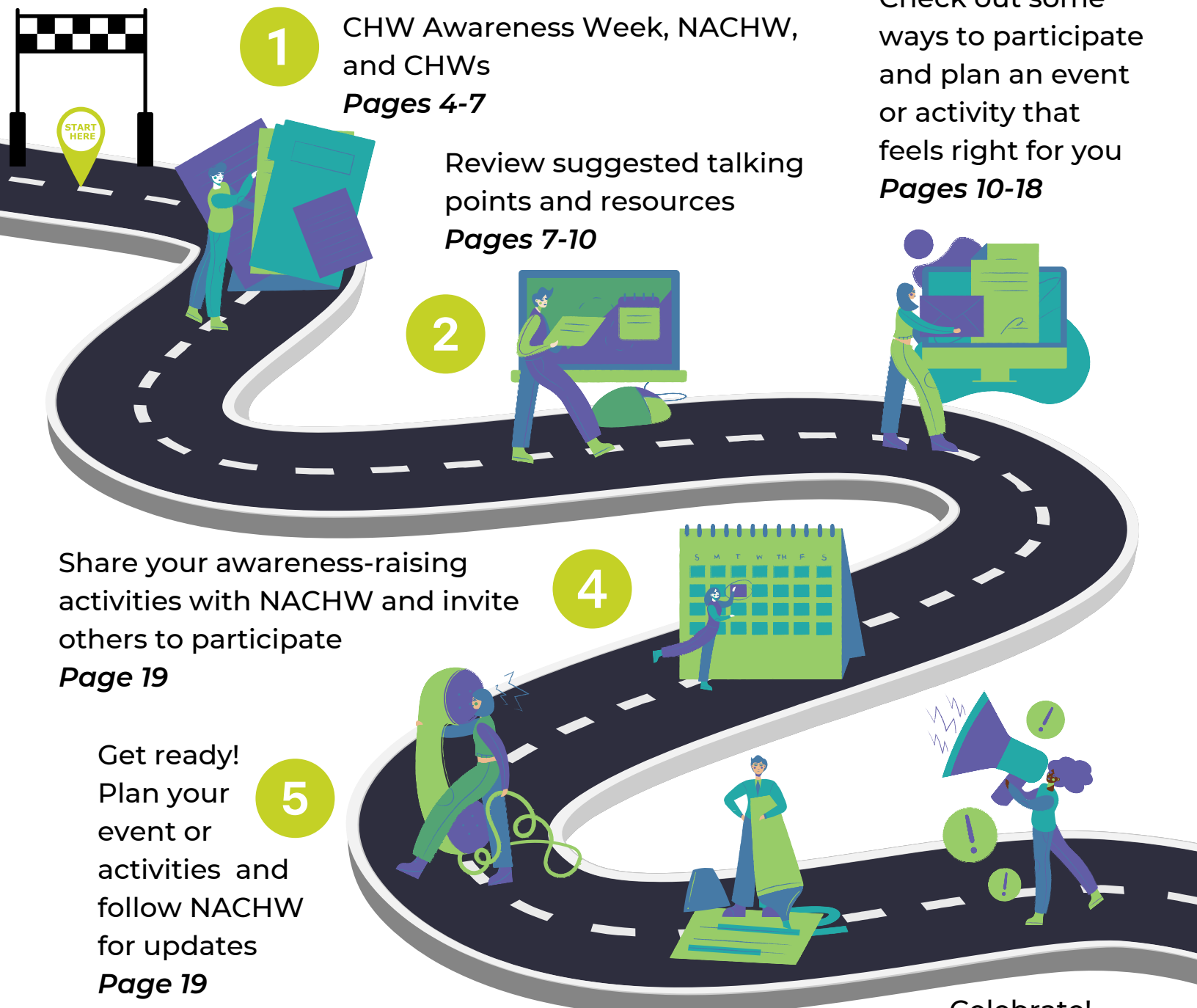


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Roadmap to National CHW Awareness Week

What's inside this toolkit:



1

Start here: Learn about National CHW Awareness Week, NACHW, and CHWs
Pages 4-7

Review suggested talking points and resources
Pages 7-10

2



3

Check out some ways to participate and plan an event or activity that feels right for you
Pages 10-18



4

Share your awareness-raising activities with NACHW and invite others to participate
Page 19



5

Get ready! Plan your event or activities and follow NACHW for updates
Page 19



6

Take action! National CHW Awareness Week is August 28-September 1

Celebrate! Share your experience with NACHW



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CELEBRATE COMMEMORATE COLLABORATE



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About National CHW Awareness Week

National CHW Awareness Week (NCHWAW) is the first-ever national campaign to celebrate and commemorate CHWs. This week of collaboration and action unites CHWs across our diverse identities.

NCHWAW is an opportunity to increase decision-makers awareness and understanding of CHWs. We want everyone to know about CHWs' capacity for leadership, our core roles and unique identities, and our contributions to community health and wellbeing. Let's work together to promote policies that respect, protect, and authentically partner with CHWs!

This toolkit includes resources to prepare, stay connected, and make an impact before, during, and beyond NCHWAW.

NCHWAW is a time for CHWs, allies, and partners to:

CELEBRATE

Celebrate the work we do together as a profession, workforce, and movement! NCHWAW is a time to take pride in who we are, what we do, and how and why we do it. Connect with fellow CHWs and share stories and milestones for the CHW profession in your state or region.



COMMEMORATE

Honor the CHW workforce, our mentors, and allies for their lifetime achievements, special services, and contributions to the CHW profession and the health and wellbeing of our communities. There are many ways to commemorate CHWs and raise awareness- with your state or regional CHW network or association, in person, online, at your state Capitol, in the park, at the library- the possibilities are endless!



COLLABORATE

Partnerships and collaboration are central to the CHW profession. The diversity of our field is a major strength, and we work together toward unity while we respect and honor each other's unique qualities and identities. Invite all CHWs, promotoras, community health representatives (CHRs), and allies from your geographic area to take part in your NCHWAW events and activities. We are stronger together than we are apart!



About the National Association of Community Health Workers (NACHW)

NACHW is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in April 2019, thanks to the sustained commitment and organizing efforts of CHWs, community health representatives (CHRs), promotoras, and allies.

NACHW is the national voice for CHWs. "CHW" is an umbrella term that can include promotoras, CHRs., and over 90 other job titles. As a member-driven organization, NACHW unites CHWs across geography, race, ethnicity, sector, identities, and experiences to support communities in achieving health equity and social justice. We have more than 3000 active individual and organizational members from all 50 states, along with over 8,000 people in our national email listserv and over 15,000 in our COVID listserv.



Promote policies that respect, protect, and partner with CHWs and CHW-led networks and associations.

Collect and leverage data on CHW workforce trends, experiences, skills, and opportunities.

Disseminate innovations in CHW research and practice from the workforce through tools, webinars, and convenings.

Amplify the authentic identity of the CHW profession.

Partner with and support the capacity of CHW-led networks and association leaders.

Build a national feedback loop (database, communications, engagement) to activate members and build community resilience and capacity.

Center racial equity, social justice, diversity, and inclusion in our values and approach.



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Who are CHWs? Definition and more

The American Public Health Association (APHA) definition: 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 CHWs to serve as a link between health/social services and the community they serve, facilitating access to services and improving the quality and cultural competence of service delivery. CHWs also build individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency through a range of activities such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support, and advocacy (APHA, 2009).

Over many decades, CHWs, CHRs, promotoras, and other members of our community-based, frontline workforce have advocated and organized to articulate the CHW identity. Yet CHWs' identities, origins, and capacities are still not well understood in the U.S. – resulting in strategies, policies, and programs that often do not respect, protect, or authentically partner with us.

NACHW, in partnership with CHWs, CHW Networks, and allies across the country has developed the **Six Pillars of Community Health Workers** – to communicate clearly and succinctly who we are, where we are, what we do, and our capacity and needs for sustainability.

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1. CHWs ARE A UNIQUE WORKFORCE

Community Health Workers are a one-of-a-kind group of public health workers. CHWs as a profession have a designated workforce classification by the US Department of Labor and are recognized health professionals by the ACA. When the COVID-19 pandemic began, the US Department of Homeland Security deemed CHWs essential and critical infrastructure workers. With a unique set of core competencies recognized by local, state, and federal governmental organizations, CHWs are an underappreciated yet crucial workforce that promote social justice and help to achieve health equity and well-being for all.



3. CHWs ARE A HISTORIC AND DIVERSE WORKFORCE

The history of CHWs goes back hundreds of years in the US. They've been here since the very beginning, in the form of tribal healers, and today are known by many different titles — community health representatives, promotoras, aunties, peers, outreach workers, and many others. As a reflection of the country they call home, they are diverse in ethnicity, language, and culture — the majority of CHWs are female people of color. These health workers have lived experience and cultural alignment, and deal with similar issues and suffer from many of the same chronic conditions as their ancestors, which makes them uniquely qualified to tackle community-based health problems.



5. CHWs ARE A PROVEN WORKFORCE

In terms of effectiveness, CHWs have proven how integral they are to clinical, public health, and social systems. 60 years worth of evidence of their effectiveness has been acquired through the study of CHWs in maternal and child health, chronic disease interventions, immunization, oral health, HIV, primary care, and many other disciplines. The results are clear: CHWs play a crucial role in societal healthcare efforts, as documented in countless randomized control trials, systematic reviews, and ROI studies of CHW interventions. In recent years, CHWs have increasingly been recognized for their contributions to addressing racial equity and the social determinants of health – by connecting individuals to basic needs and by organizing communities to address inequitable social conditions.



The Six Pillars of Community Health Workers



2. CHWs ARE A COMMUNITY-BASED WORKFORCE

Grounded in and committed to community advocacy, CHWs build relationships with those around them and help build treatment capacity in underserved areas. Trust, respect, and dignity for all human beings are core values among CHWs, and these public health workers are central to efforts to address clinical and community integration and the social determinants of health. CHW Networks and Associations help train and mobilize CHWs and provide support for local communities, from low-income city neighborhoods to remote rural villages, tribal nations, and territories.



4. CHWs ARE A CROSS-SECTOR WORKFORCE

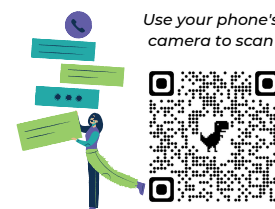
CHWs reduce barriers to healthcare and build capacity in underserved communities, helping their communities achieve optimal health and wellbeing. The social determinants of health are of particular interest to CHWs — they approach health with a holistic philosophy, considering socioeconomic and cultural factors in their attempt to achieve true health equity. CHWs establish formal and informal networks in local contexts and beyond to better leverage their collective strength and to serve their communities to the best of their abilities.



6. CHWs ARE A PRECARIOUS WORKFORCE

As a majority-female workforce, CHWs face similar challenges to other female-dominated fields. They are among the lowest paid public health professionals, and frontline community work exposes them to communicable diseases, violence, and other forms of secondary trauma. Exacerbating these issues are an inconsistent professional identity and lackluster state and national-level legislation. Given the field's issues, it's not surprising that the CHW profession lacks sustainability in many areas such as recruitment, training, legislation, professional development, career ladders, and financing.

To learn more about the Six Pillars of Community Health Workers scan this QR Code



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Suggested Talking Points and Key Messages

Everyone is welcome to use the following statements and recommendations with lawmakers and decision-makers

Ways employers can support CHWs:

- Pay CHWs thriving wages that include competitive, fair market pay scales, comprehensive benefits, paid time off, access to self-care support, and overtime and sick pay.
- Ensure CHWs have access to professional development and career advancement or promotion opportunities.
- Integrate the 10 CHW core roles into CHW job descriptions, hiring processes, and work responsibilities according to the recommendations of the [CHW Core Consensus \(C3\) Project](#).

State-level policy

- Pass state legislation that recognizes and protects CHWs' authenticity as a profession with lived experience and unique core roles and competencies.
- Align state CHW training and/or certification requirements with the ten CHW core roles and competencies recommended by the [CHW Core Consensus \(C3\) Project](#).
- Require CHW policy and workforce development working groups to be comprised of at least 50% of CHW workforce members from a diverse range of geography, backgrounds, and identities.
- Appropriate level funding to CHW-led networks and associations to lead and sustain CHW workforce development at local, state, and regional levels.

Payers/Funders (public and private)

- Prioritize CBOs and state/local CHW-led Networks, and associations as eligible entities for CHW policy and workforce development grants and contracts.
- Distribute CHW-focused funding and resources directly to local CBOs that employ CHWs and CHW-led networks, and associations.
- Ensure CHW funding preserves, promotes, and sustains a diverse CHW workforce across employment sectors, race, ethnicity, identity, and experience.



Federal-level policy

- Align CHW-focused legislation with the CHW policies approved by the American Public Health Association (APHA) ([2022](#), [2014](#), [2001](#)) and the full APHA CHW definition ([2009](#)).
- Fund CHW-led networks and associations, CBOs, and other organizations with CHW leadership and expertise to consistently measure CHW and community wellbeing through the use of evidence-informed processes and outcome indicators developed in partnership with CHWs through national consensus-driven practices, such as those recommended by the [CHW Common Indicators Project](#).
- Ensure CHW funding sustains a full range of core CHW roles, including those that address community-level priorities and strengths as well as the health and well-being of individuals and families.



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National CHW Policy Platform

Respect, Protect, and Partner with CHWs

Despite nearly [60 years of research](#) on CHW [effectiveness](#), two decades of [public health recognition](#), landmark [workforce development studies](#), and a [national labor classification](#), CHWs still lack a national professional identity, protective state and federal policies for the profession, and equitable models for sustainable funding.

The NACHW [National CHW Policy Platform](#) is a collection of policy recommendations for public and private institutions to respect, protect, and authentically partner with members of the CHW profession. It represents the voices of hundreds of CHWs, promotoras, CHRs, individual and organizational CHW leaders, and their allies. It was developed during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when global health leaders, [health providers](#), [legislators](#), policymakers, and [funders](#) called for the rapid scale-up and integration of CHWs (“CHWs” include promotoras and community health representatives and over 90 other work titles) to strengthen public health and local and state COVID response plans.

Discussions about CHW policies should be led by local CHWs and CHW-led Networks and associations, who can match their real-life circumstances with the policy recommendations in the National CHW Policy Platform. The full range of CHW core [roles](#) and leadership capabilities should be supported across settings. CHW infrastructure must be sustained to co-create and implement CHW programs, practices, and policies that achieve health, racial equity, and social justice.



To learn more visit: www.nachw.org/nchwaw





Tools for Preparation and Planning for Raising Awareness



The first annual NCHWAW is August 28 – September 1, 2023! During this week of action, NACHW invites CHWs, allies, and partners across the US to amplify CHW strengths and priorities and promote unity for our diverse workforce.

NCHWAW is a time to is a time for CHWs and allies everywhere to get to know their elected officials and increase the visibility of the CHW profession. Whether virtual or in-person, meetings with lawmakers and leaders in your community are a way to build relationships across sectors, raise awareness about the CHW profession, and discuss local issues that impact CHWs and the communities we serve. When possible, meet with elected officials in community-based spaces and organizations in their district.

Many CHW-led Networks and CBOs have long-standing and important partnerships and connections with the CHW workforce, and they should have a primary leadership role in these meetings. NACHW encourages allies to collaborate and authentically partner with CHW Networks and associations, as these organizations are often closest to the CHW workforce. It's equally important to partner with CBOs that employ CHWs as they are often part of the communities CHWs serve. In general, partnerships should bring various sectors together. CHWs work in many kinds of organizations and settings and this diversity is one of our strengths as a profession, workforce, and movement. Cross-sectoral meetings can be especially important in areas where representatives have overlapping districts.

A note for CHWs: Please contact your local, state, or regional CHW Network or association for support in your awareness-raising efforts. You can also request support and resources from NACHW at info@nachw.org.

Reminder for allies and partners: CHWs in your state should lead NCHWAW efforts! Your first step should be to contact your local, state, or regional CHW Network and/or CBOs where CHWs work.

To learn more visit: www.nachw.org/nchwaw





Timeline/Checklist

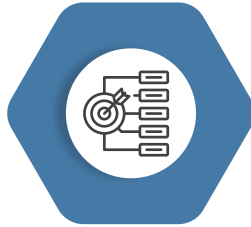
For a successful NCHWAW event, meeting, or activity:



2

MONTHS BEFORE

Partner with CHWs to co-design NCHWAW events and activities



2

MONTHS BEFORE

Set NCHWAW objectives, schedule the event, and invite your elected officials

1.5

MONTHS BEFORE

Develop the meeting agenda and prepare talking points for the NCHWAW event, meeting, or activities



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1

MONTH BEFORE

Final meeting/event preparations

**DAY OF THE
EVENT**

Share your experience with NACHW



Within **1**

WEEK AFTER

Follow up with your representatives and participants



2 MONTHS BEFORE

Partner with CHWs to co-design NCHWAW events and activities



“Nothing about us without us!” CHWs must have leadership roles in NCHWAW events, meetings, and activities. Cross-sectoral partnerships that prioritize CHW leadership can be effective routes for CHWs and allies to collectively raise awareness about the profession. CHW-led networks and associations and CBOs are essential partners for NCHWAW events, meetings, and activities. Ask them what they need (funding, resources, relationships, etc.) to lead NCHWAW in your area and leverage your connections to fill in the gaps.

Decide what kinds of awareness-raising activities feel realistic for you as an individual, your organization, and/or collectively with your partners. What do you have the capacity to do? Whether you plan to co-organize a large event at your state Capitol or simply take a few moments by yourself to call your representatives, everyone can raise awareness. No contribution is too small!



2 MONTHS BEFORE

Set NCHWAW objectives, schedule the event, and invite your elected officials



Set NCHWAW objectives

By the end of the NCHWAW, what do you want participants of the event, meeting, or activity to have accomplished, understand, or be able to do? If you want, use the following example objectives for inspiration.

- By the end of NCHWAW, participants will be able to describe the process of preparing to meet with their lawmakers.
- By the end of NCHWAW, I will have shared information about CHWs with two or more elected officials.
- By the end of NCHWAW, participants will be able to apply Suggested Talking Points to conversations with employers, funders, and elected officials.
- By the end of NCHWAW, participants will be able to explain the Six Pillars of CHWs to their lawmakers.
- By the end of NCHWAW, at least five representatives in my state will have received information about the identity and effectiveness of CHWs.
- By the end of NCHWAW, participants will report feeling increased confidence in their ability to communicate with their lawmakers as a result of NCHWAW activities.

To learn more visit:
www.nachw.org/nchwaw



Schedule NCHWAW events, meetings, or activities



Convene with your partners and determine the best date, time, and location for the event. Keep in mind: in-person meetings at locations that highlight CHWs' work in the community can go a long way toward building relationships with your lawmakers and raising awareness. Be sure to choose a location that can accommodate all expected participants comfortably.

Invite your elected officials



Email your legislators to invite them to the event or ask for a meeting with them to discuss the critical role CHWs play in promoting health and well-being within their district (see sample letter on page 16).

Tip: If you have trouble reaching your legislator or their staff, call their office to confirm the invitation has been received. Or identify someone in your network who has a relationship with that legislator who can provide additional outreach.

Good to know: Legislators can also receive communication via social media direct messages.



1.5 MONTHS BEFORE

Develop the meeting agenda and prepare talking points for the NCHWAW event, meeting, or activities



Develop the event or meeting agenda

Put together a concise event or meeting agenda that accomplishes your NCHWAW objectives. CHW constituents of any elected officials present should have priority time on the agenda to speak about their experiences as a CHW. A co-facilitated event/meeting can make room for multiple participants to lead various agenda items.

For meetings with lawmakers, be sure to explain who CHWs are and what we do. Take a moment to speak to the CHW evidence base and address one or two issues that matter most to CHWs in your area, state, or region. Close the meeting with a specific ask that your representative commits to supporting the priorities discussed. You might also ask if there is anything your organization can do to help further any of your shared values. *Lastly, remember to thank the representatives for their time and provide your contact information so they can follow up with any additional questions or concerns.* See sample agenda on page 17.

To learn more visit:
www.nachw.org/nchwaw



Prepare talking points for the NCHWAW event, meeting, or activities



If you're not sure where to start, check out the Suggested Talking Points featured in this toolkit. Explore the statements and build upon one or two that are most relevant to your local CHW community.

If you're a CHW, which of these statements caught your attention? Why? Practice sharing some examples of how that issue impacts you or the community you serve.

If you're an ally, learn from CHWs in your area about what their workforce development priorities are. Which of the Suggested Talking Points are most relevant to the CHWs you've partnered with for this NCHWAW event or meeting?

Other questions to consider as you develop talking points:

- What issues or situations impact your well-being as a CHW?
- How might CHWs' well-being impact their work?
- What solutions do you have in mind as a CHW?
- What would you change about the situation if you could?
- How many CHWs do you know who experience similar issues?



1 MONTH BEFORE Final meeting/event preparations



In-person meetings are encouraged when possible. If you opt for a virtual meeting, please be sure to assign someone to run the virtual meeting platform during the meeting. Ensure someone will be a timekeeper while another person takes notes. Record the meeting, and with participants' permission, take pictures of the event so you can share your experience with NACHW and CHWs broadly.

If you host the meeting in person, offer participants light refreshments and snacks. This can encourage participants to attend and engage.

To learn more visit:
www.nachw.org/nchwaw



 **DAY OF THE EVENT**
Share your experience with NACHW



Tell NACHW about how you participated in NCHWAW! Include any feedback from participants and legislators and relevant media. We love to see photos of CHWs raising awareness with their elected officials and partners.

 *Within*
1 WEEK AFTER
Follow up with your representatives and participants



Keep the discussions and relationships going with a warm thank you note or email to participants and legislators. This could include any media/communications that will be distributed by your organization, fact sheets, or any other materials for representatives and participants to reference. Good luck and have fun!

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Template Letter/Email for Outreach to Legislators

EMAIL SUBJECT LINE: Invitation to [REP or SEN] for the [ORGANIZATION NAME] "[NAME OF EVENT]" at [LOCATION] on [DATE]

DATE

The Honorable [STATE REP or SENATOR NAME]

[ADDRESS]



Dear Representative [or Senator]:

[YOUR ORGANIZATION'S NAME] would like to invite you to join your constituents and community for a [virtual/in-person] meeting on [DATE/TIME OF MEETING] at [LOCATION] to discuss the vital work of CHWs in your district.

This will be an opportunity for your constituents to familiarize you with the CHW workforce and our priorities for 2023. We are also excited to share with you some of our recent accomplishments and discuss how we might work together toward our shared goals and values.

[2-3 SENTENCES ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION. INCLUDE MISSION/ CORE VALUES, YOUR REACH OR NUMBER OF MEMBERS – if applicable]

We look forward to seeing you at [DATE OF MEETING]. We respectfully ask that you confirm your in-person attendance at this meeting by [DATE TWO WEEKS BEFORE MEETING].

Sincerely,

[EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR]
[BOARD CHAIR]

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Sample Agenda

**** PLEASE MAKE SURE TO CONFIRM THE TIME ALLOCATED TO THIS MEETING BY THE REPRESENTATIVE'S OFFICE AND STRUCTURE THE AGENDA TO MEET THAT TIME ALLOCATION****

1 **Introductions**

2 **Set the context**

a. Overview of the organization's purpose

3 **Explanation of 1 or 1 priority issue that impacts CHWs**

- a. Summarize who CHWs are and what we do.
- b. If possible, a CHW should share a personal story related to the issue.
- c. Provide information about potential solutions to the issue.
- d. Directly ask for the representative's support for the CHW workforce with the proposed solution.

4 **Open the floor to the elected official**

- a. Now that they've heard from their constituents & CHWs, turn it over to the elected for a chance to ask any questions they have, and share their reaction and initial thoughts.
- b. For supportive legislators
 - i. Will you support the CHW workforce in this session and in the fiscal year 2024 budget?
 - ii. Will you talk to [LEADERSHIP MEMBER] about these priorities?
- c. For on-the-fence or unsupportive legislators
 - i. Is there any information you need or any questions you have?
 - ii. How do you believe we should address _____?

5 **Wrap up**

- a. Thank the legislator for taking the time to meet with you.
- b. Explain any follow-up that the legislator should expect on your behalf.
- c. Take a picture!



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Social Media Checklist:

Take action during National CHW Awareness Week on social media



Download our 7 Social Media Shareable Graphics [Here](#)



Select the social media channels you would like to use to raise awareness



Use the copy provided by NACHW as a description for your post (make sure to use the different *#hashtags*) OR feel free to create your own copy/description for each post

Tag NACHW on your post!



- Instagram: [@CHWNational](#)
- Facebook: [@CHWNational](#)
- Twitter: [@CHWNational](#)
- LinkedIn: [@National Association of Community Health Workers](#)



Engage in the comments section to drive more traffic to your post



Share about your plans for NCHWAW on social media in the months and weeks leading up to your event and invite participants to join you!



Add a call-to-action to the description of your post for others to engage with. This will allow you to reach a broader audience.



Encourage others to take action by sharing your experience of meeting with your legislator on your social media channels.



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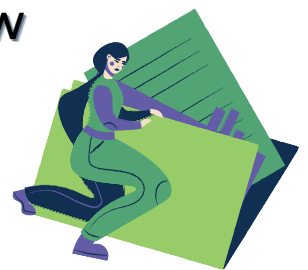
SIGN UP TO RECEIVE NCHWAW UPDATES

[SIGN UP NOW!](#)

Anyone interested in this initiative is invited to join the NCHWAW email list to access the NCHWAW Toolkit, Kickoff Webinar, and NCHWAW updates and inspiration from NACHW.

SHARE YOUR NCHWAW PLANS WITH NACHW

[Register Your Activities](#)



We want to hear about how you plan to collaborate, celebrate, and commemorate during NCHWAW 2023! All public NCHWAW events, activities, and engagements will be added to the NACHW advocacy calendar and shared with various CHW and ally networks. Let's all share in the excitement of the first-ever NCHWAW!

**Please indicate if the event will take place virtually or in person.*



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MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Denise Octavia Smith

CHW, MBA, PN



In the last three years, I have had the honor – and the responsibility – to connect with individual CHWs and CHW organizational leaders from across the country. Amazing CHW leaders who have shared their hearts, their struggles, their innovations, and their strategies to create a local community – and a world – where health, equity, and social justice are the norm!

A common thread among all CHWs I have spoken with - regardless of race, ethnicity, geography, gender, language, or lived experience - every authentic CHW has a story to tell. About how they grew up. Who motivated them to love and be committed to their communities. How their own struggle positioned them to help others heal, grow, and thrive.

I have also had the pleasure of partnering with authentic allies. People who walk the walk and use their expertise, research, policy, positions, and opportunities to advance the CHW profession and improve community lives.

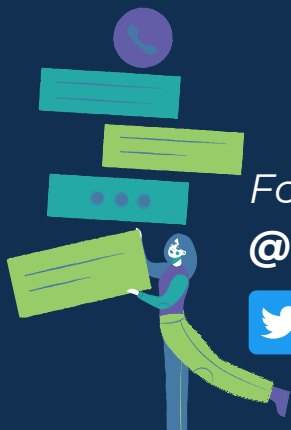
National CHW Awareness Week calls for CHWs and allies to come together.

Let's show the world what it looks like to center equity and CHW voices in real community partnerships. Let's celebrate our collective vision, our values, and our narrative – of a valuable, unique, capable CHW workforce. Let's tell our stories about our communities. They are not just stories of pain and problems – although there are lots of those. They are stories of overcoming! Of innovation. Of hope and advancement.

We matter to the future. Our voices, stories, and leadership should define, describe, and develop the future that we see.



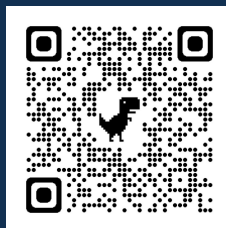
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