Promising Practices For CHW Employers

NACHW's Workforce Committee has compiled a set of promising practices for Community Health Worker (CHW) employers intended to improve the workplace satisfaction, retention and quality of services of CHWs. The practices serve as a starting point for employers to consider how they might best create a productive and supportive work environment for CHWs. The Workforce Committee identified five categories, based on CHW feedback gathered in 2024.

Promising Practices for CHW Employer Readiness

- **Alignment with Goals:** Ensure the employment of CHWs aligns with the organization's mission and objectives. [🔍]

- **Leadership Buy-In:** Secure support from senior leadership; identify CHW allies and champions within the organization. [🔍]

- **Policy Landscape:** Understand state and federal policies that may influence CHW program operations and funding availability. [🔍]

- **Resource Assessment:** Determine whether the organization has the necessary resources to effectively support CHWs, including paying CHWs a living wage. [🔍]

- **Community Engagement:** Develop a stakeholder engagement process that includes community members to inform program design, implementation, and evaluation. [🔍]

REFERENCES: If viewing this document online, please click the 🔍 icon to access reference cited.

Promising Practices for CHW Career Advancement

- **Career Ladders:** Establish a clearly defined career ladder that aligns with CHW skills and competencies, guides upskilling, and enables upward mobility within the organization. [🔍]

- **Advancement Criteria:** Allow advancement within the CHW profession based on lived experience, competencies (skills and qualities), quality of work and seniority. [🔍]

- **Comprehensive Training:** Create a robust training pathway for CHWs, including continuing education after initial onboarding. [🔍]

- **Incentives for Advancement:** Incorporate salary increases for career progression, specialization, and program development opportunities. [🔍]

Promising Practices for CHW Supervision

- **Clear Communication:** Foster clear communication practices and understanding the cultural context of the served community. [🔍]

- **Empower Independence:** Trust CHWs to work independently, allowing flexible schedules and encouraging innovation. [🔍]

- **Inspiration and Motivation:** Lead by example, acknowledge achievements, promote continuous learning, and set achievable goals. [🔍]

- **Trauma-Informed Environment:** Provide consistent supervision; complete training in trauma-informed approaches; offer resources and support that promote mental health and wellness. [🔍]

Promising Practices for Integrating CHWs within Healthcare Teams

- **Respect and Recognition:** Promote respect for CHWs among all team members and leadership. [🔍]

- **Inclusive Engagement:** Ensure CHWs are involved in planning, implementation, and management processes. [🔍]

- **Communication Channels:** Establish frequent communication channels between CHWs and other members of the healthcare team, including CHWs in team meetings. [🔍]

- **Electronic Health Record:** Ensure CHWs have access to and use of the electronic health record and determine what level of access. [🔍]

Promising Practices for CHW Training

- **Facilitation:** Training should be facilitated or co-facilitated by CHWs themselves and individuals with diverse lived and professional experience. [🔍]

- **Partnerships:** Employers should collaborate with established training programs, including state CHW associations, to provide quality training and professional development[🔍]and ensure training meets state requirements for certification. [🔍]

- **Diverse Modalities:** Offer training modalities in virtual and in person settings, including self-study, classroom discussions, case studies, and on-the-job learning. [🔍]

- **Evidence-Based Information:** Provide comprehensive and evidence-based information on specific health conditions. [🔍]

- **Adult Learning Principles:** Apply adult learning principles and culturally responsive education methods, such as popular education. [🔍]

Cross-Cutting Promising Practices

- **Role Definition:** Align the CHW's scope of work, training, and measures of success with the CHW Core Consensus (C3) Council and fully articulate their roles to stakeholders. [🔍]

- **Evaluation:** Create systems for evaluating CHW interventions [🔍]; utilize data to inform decision making and quality improvement efforts. [🔍]; include mechanisms for soliciting feedback from participants to refine training.[🔍]

- **Diversity & Inclusion:** Ensure employment practices prioritize lived experience to match the diversity of the community served and remove barriers to entering the workforce. [🔍]