

Introduction to Community Health Workers

Community Health Workers (CHWs) are frontline public health workers and trusted community resources

CHWs facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competency of service delivery



Also known as:

- Promotores de salud
- Lay health advisors
- Community health representatives
- Peer mentors and navigators

CHWs are not defined by training or licensure but by who they are and what they do

What Do CHWs Do?

Improve health outcomes

Advance health equity

Reduce health care costs

CHWs address social determinants of health and root causes of poor health, including:

- Unstable housing
- Racial discrimination
- Employment
- Food insecurity
- Intimate partner violence

Examples of services CHWs provide:



A Snapshot of the CHW Workforce

Today:

There are **86,000 CHWs** in the United States

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts:

The number of CHWs to increase **15%** by 2029

More dramatic growth possible:

Policymakers and health care leaders have called for the rapid scale up and integration of CHWs to strengthen COVID-19 response plans and address longstanding inequalities

The White House proposed adding **100,000 CHWs** as part of the American Rescue Plan

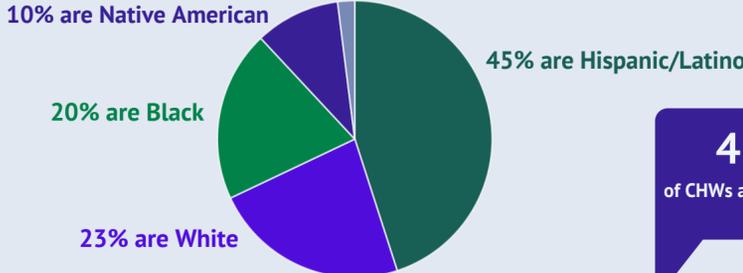
Partners in Health estimated **640,000 CHWs** are needed to stop the pandemic and bolster resilience and recovery

The American Rescue Plan allocated **\$7.66 billion** to support the public health workforce, including CHWs

Who are CHWs and where do they work?

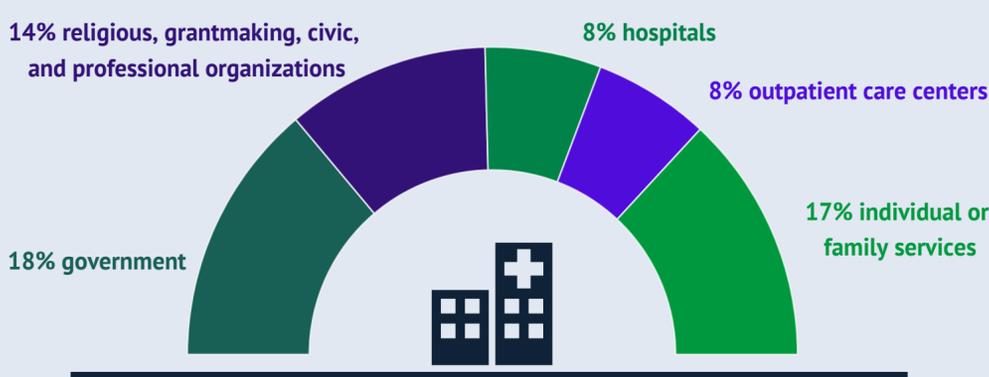
CHWs usually share ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, and life experiences with the community members they serve

CHW race and ethnicity:



45% of CHWs are bilingual

The largest employers of CHWs are:



CHW employment is moving away from community-based organizations as CHWs become more integrated into health care organizations

Evidence of CHWs' Effectiveness

High Return on Investment

\$2.47 : 1 ROI to Medicaid payers



findings from a randomized control trial

Reduce Hospitalizations

Reduced total number of hospital days per capita by



findings from a pooled analysis

Reduce Burden of Illness

Improved blood sugar control among people with diabetes

findings from a systematic review

Support Mental Health

CHW-supported interventions show promise in terms of feasibility and effectiveness

findings from a systematic review

Role of CHWs in the COVID-19 Response



Vaccine Advocates

Ensuring racial equity in vaccine development, confidence-building and distribution



Trusted Messengers

Building community trust and strengthening public health response



Building Capacity

Increasing capacity for testing, contact tracing and community rebuilding



Addressing Social Needs

Responding to the social determinants of poor health that are magnified by the pandemic



Ensuring Care

Facilitating health system access and providing psychosocial support

How to Support CHWs:

Provide Sustainable Funding

Integrate into Health Systems

Formalize Training and Certification Process

Promote CHWs' Diverse Skill Set

Combat Compassion Fatigue

Research and Build Evidence Base