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## **Section #1: Questions 1 - 4 CHW Certification**

### ***1. What is the Board of Certification of Community Health Workers (BOCCHW) and who are its members?***

In 2010, “An Act Establishing a Board of Certification of Community Health Workers,” was signed into law, and took effect in 2012. The purpose of the Board is to create a competency-based process for certification that recognizes and strengthens the work of CHWs, while simultaneously reducing barriers for qualified CHWs to becoming certified.

Since 2012, the Board of Certification of CHWs has been making policy decisions to inform the drafting of regulations on certification of individual CHWs and approval of CHW core competency training programs. The Board is chaired by the Commissioner of DPH (or his or her designee) and includes ten additional members appointed by the governor who represent diverse constituencies named in statute. CHWs have 4 designated seats on the Board.

### ***2. What is the definition and scope of a Community Health Worker (CHW)?***

The Massachusetts CHW definition is included in the certification regulations. CHWs are public health workers who apply their unique understanding of the experience, language, and culture of the populations they serve to carry out one or more of the following roles:

- Providing culturally appropriate health education, information, and outreach in community-based settings such as homes, schools, clinics, shelters, local businesses, and community centers
- Bridging and/or culturally mediating between individuals, communities and health and human services, including actively building individual and community capacity
- Assisting people to access the services they need
- Providing direct services, such as informal counseling, social support, care coordination and health screenings
- Advocating for individual and community needs

### ***3. What are the pathways to CHW Certification?***

There are two pathways to CHW certification in Massachusetts:

(1) The Work Experience Pathway requires applicants to document at least 4,000 hours of CHW work over the past 10 years. Work done as a volunteer (not paid) can be included in the 4,000 hours. This pathway will be available until June 30, 2023. There is no training requirement for the Work Experience Pathway. (Available immediately)

(2) The CHW Training and Work Experience Pathway requires applicants to demonstrate at least 2,000 hours of CHW work over the past 10 years and successful completion of a Board Approved CHW Education and Training Program.

### ***4. What are the 10 Core Competencies for CHWs?***

#### **10 Core Competencies**

***The 10 Core Competencies for CHWs, as established by the MA Board of Certification of Community Health Workers, are:***

1. Outreach Methods and Strategies
2. Individual and Community Assessment
3. Effective Communication
4. Cultural Responsiveness and Mediation
5. Education to Promote Healthy Behaviors
6. Care Coordination & Systems Navigation
7. Public Health Concepts and Approaches
8. Advocacy and Community Capacity Building
9. Documentation
10. Professional Skills and Conduct

### **Section #2: Questions 5 - 7 Approved Education & Training Programs**

#### ***5. Why are CHW Education & Training Programs Important to Certification?***

CHW Education and Training Programs play a critical role in supporting CHW workforce development; CHW core roles and skills are the foundation of the CHW scope of practice.

#### ***6. What do Approved CHW Education & Training Programs Do?***

CHW Education and Training programs that are approved by the Board will provide CHW Education and Training in the 10 Core Competencies for community health workers. The successful completion of an approved CHW Education & Training program will count towards the training requirement in the application of CHWs who applies through the CHW Training and Work Experience Pathway. In addition to providing core competency training, CHW training programs may offer continuing education for CHWs and CHW supervisor training.

#### ***7. How did the Board develop the standards for CHW Training Programs?***

Standards for training have been in development for several years by members of the public, the CHW workforce, allies, partners, employers, funders, training programs and DPH's internal stakeholders who also provided feedback via Board meetings and public hearings. The regulatory review process allowed for the engagement of stakeholders and the public through the public hearing process.

### **Section #3: Questions 8 - 15 Eligibility for Education & Training Program Approval**

#### ***8. What are the requirements or criteria to be eligible to apply to be an Approved CHW Education and Training Program in MA?***

Please review carefully the regulations found at [272 CMR 5.00](#), which outline the eligibility standards for CHW Education and Training Programs. The "Criteria" for Education and Training Programs approval identifies how applications will be evaluated and approved by the Board.

#### ***9. If a CHW Education and Training Program provides more than 80 hours of core training, how many hours can be taught online?***

A maximum of 70% of 80 hours (56 hours in total) can be taught online, regardless of the total number of hours offered by the program. During the COVID-19 pandemic the Board voted to waive the cap on the number of online hours. The waiver currently remains in place through July 31, 2022. The Board will deliberate retaining or rescinding this in the coming months.

#### ***10. My training program does not offer 80 hours of 10 core competencies outlined; is my program eligible to apply?***

No, the regulation mandates the Education and Training program must offer a minimum 80 hours of CHW Education and Training on the 10 core competencies.

#### ***11. According to the regulations, at least 40% of the hours of instruction must be taught or co-taught by faculty who are Community Health Workers. Who qualifies as a CHW instructor?***

Any instructor who meets the [definition](#) of a CHW in the regulations will count as a CHW faculty. All faculty teaching core competency training at approved Education and Training Programs must have the knowledge and skills to effectively teach the proposed curriculum. Both CHW and non-CHW faculty must be qualified in this way.

40% of the total hours of instruction must be taught or co-taught by at least 1 CHW.

#### ***12. Which CHW Education and Training Programs can provide continuing education for certified CHWs?***

All CHW Education and Training Programs with approval status can offer continuing education credits to satisfy the CHW renewal requirements for certification. Other continuing education providers must also be approved to offer specific continuing education credits. The CHW Education and Training Program Application is available on the board's website.

***13. What does my CHW Education and Training Program need to give CHWs who successfully complete the core competency training?***

CHW Education and Training programs must provide a certificate of completion to all successful graduates. A sample is provided by the Board to the Training Programs. The certificate must include the name of the organization, name of the course, name of the participant, and date of successful completion.

***14. What if a CHW took our CHW Training before my training program was approved?***

The Board of Certification of Community Health Workers maintains a webpage of [Approved Education & Training Programs](#) with a listing of the current programs approved by the Board. Each CHW applicant should refer to this webpage to ensure that any program they completed is on the list of approved programs as of their application date. The listing will note the start date for their approved programs. If the Community Health Worker does not have a certificate for the approved training program, the Community Health Worker can request the approved program him/her with a certificate of completion. If a program is not approved as of the CHW's application date, then a program does not qualify and does not count towards the certification.

**Section #4: Questions 15 -17 CHW Education and Training Program Application**

***15. How can we apply to be an approved Education and Training Program?***

The CHW Education and Training Program approval process is two-fold, because it requires approval from two separate state agencies. As part of your application to the Board, you will need to submit proof of licensure or exemption from licensure by the Massachusetts Division of Occupational Licensure which is separate from DPH.

You can do this by submitting the [Licensure Determination Form](#) available on [DOL's website](#). You will receive DOL's decision, including approval of exemption, if applicable. The Board recommends obtaining your "proof of licensure" or "exemption" from DOL in order to submit a completed application to the Board.

The CHW Education and Training Program application can be found via the Board's webpage.

Completed applications can be submitted via US Mail presently. In the future applicants will be able to submit the application electronically once some automation enhancements have been completed. Please review the application instructions carefully to ensure submission of a completed application.

You must review and agree to adhere to the Attorney General's regulations specific to for-profit and occupational schools outlined in [940 CMR 31.00](#).

***16. Approximately how long will the CHW Education and Training program application review process take?***

The Board anticipates the review process to take 2-3 months if the submitted application that is complete. A completed application **must** have DOL Licensure Determination. The Board may ask representatives from the CHW Education and Training Program to meet with the Board and answer any questions Board members may have about the application.

***17. Once approved by the Board, how long does CHW Education and Training Program approval last?***

Per [regulation \[272 CMR 5.05\(7\)\(a\)\]](#), once approved, the CHW Education and Training Program approval can be maintained through submission of a completed annual status report.

***18. What is the process for reviewing my application to the Board and our application to DOL?***

Once you have verified your licensure with DOL, you can submit a completed CHW Education and Training program application to the Bureau of Health Professions Licensure (BHPL), the Board of Certification of Community Health Workers (BOCCHW). A completed CHW Education and Training Application will be submitted to the Board for review and decision.

***19. How will I know the status of our application?***

CHW Education and Training Programs will be notified by the Board of application status. If approved, it will be listed on the Board's website in the list of "Approved CHW Education and Training Programs."

***20. How will CHWs know if our program was approved?***

A list of Approved CHW Education and Training Programs will be published and maintained by the Board once the Board starts to approve CHW Education and Training Programs.

***21. Can my CHW Education and Training Program lose its approval?***

Yes, if the Board receives information indicating that an approved program does not meet one or more minimum standards, the Board may re-evaluate the program's approval status which may become suspended or revoked.

**Section #5: Questions 22-23 BOCCHW Contact Information**

***22. What if there is a change to the organization's name, address, leadership, or approved program?***

A CHW Education and Training program must notify the Board in writing of any changes in name, address, or leadership personnel within thirty (30) days after the change to ensure you receive materials about any status change and other information released by the Board and the Board's evaluation of program curriculum changes. You may submit updates by contacting the Board.

***23. How do I contact the Board?***

The Board can be contacted via the following methods:

Toll Free: 1-800-414-0168

Telephone: (617) 973-0800

TTY: (617) 973-0988

Fax: (617) 973-0980

E-mail: [multiboard.admin@mass.gov](mailto:multiboard.admin@mass.gov)

Web Page: <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/board-of-certification-of-community-health-workers>

US Mail: Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
Bureau of Health Professions Licensure  
Board of Certification of Community Health Workers  
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