

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS: CERTIFICATION IN MASSACHUSETTS

The Important Role of CHWs

Community Health Workers (CHWs):

- Are frontline public health workers
- Are hired primarily for their understanding of the communities they serve
- Build individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency
- Provide a range of services such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support and advocacy

Why Certify CHWs?

- The purpose of certification is to create a better understanding and recognition of the value of community health workers.
- It is a voluntary, competency-based certification that defines the CHW scope of practice in order to promote effective integration of CHWs into public health and health care.
- Certification legislation resulted from planning and advocacy by CHWs and CHW advocates.
- The State does not require certification of CHWs. CHWs do not need to be certified to work or continue working as a CHW.
- The Board of Certification of CHWs (the Board) also establishes standards for core CHW Education and Training Programs.
- Certification is based on ten well-defined core competencies.

How Do I Apply for Certification?

To qualify for certification, you must:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Be competent in each of the 10 core competencies
- Satisfy the work and training requirements
- Provide at least 3 professional references
- Be able to demonstrate "Suitability for Certification" (see link below)

View the application <https://www.mass.gov/community-health-worker-certification>.

Two Pathways to Certification

Pathway	Eligibility Criteria
Work Experience Only	<ul style="list-style-type: none">4000 hours of CHW work experience over 10 years <p>* This option is only available for the first 3 years of certification</p>
Combined Training & Work Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">80 hours of Board approved core competency training2000 hours of CHW work experience over 10 years

Guidelines for CHW Training Programs to Gain Board Approval

- Training programs must provide 80 hours of core training:
 - 80% core competencies (64 hours)
 - 20% special health topics (16 hours)
- 40% of the training must be taught or co-taught by CHWs
- Training methodology must be inclusive, accessible and culturally responsive

For More Information

- Board of Certification of Community Health Workers
<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/board-of-certification-of-community-health-workers>
- The Office of Community Health Workers at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health
<https://www.mass.gov/community-health-workers>
- Contact us via email at chwinfo@state.ma.us