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[www.mass.gov/dph/boards](http://www.mass.gov/dph/boards)

**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 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 to continue working as a CHW.
* The Board of Certification of Community Health Workers (the Board) also establishes standards for core CHW Education and Training Programs.
* New bullet to list the value of the core competency.

**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**

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| **Pathway** | **Eligibility Criteria** |
| Work Experience Only | 4000 hours CHW work experience over 10 years  \* This option is only available for the first 3 years of certification |
| Combined Training & Work Experience | 80 hours of a board approved core competency training program  2000 hours of CHW work experience over 10 years  \* Will become available when the Board begins to approve CHW Training Programs. |

**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 is inclusive, accessible and culturally competent

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