

Informational Resource: Considerations for Organizations Recruiting for a SBHC Community Health Worker (CHW)

Disclaimer

This document was developed in response to requests from School-Based Health Centers and with input from SBHC leaders across the Commonwealth. It is provided for informational and educational purposes only. It does not constitute legal, human resources, employment, or compliance advice; does not establish requirements or obligations for School-Based Health Centers or sponsoring agencies; and is not a required job description or policy guidance for DPH-contracted SBHCs.

Use of this document does not substitute for consultation with an organization's human resources department, legal counsel, or applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including those governing Community Health Workers (see [G.L. c. 112, § 259-262](#) and [272 CMR 2.00-9.00](#)) in addition to the [MDPH School-Based Health Center Program Quality Standards](#), as applicable. Organizations are strongly encouraged to consult appropriate internal and external experts before implementing any suggestions or considerations described herein.

Community Health Worker Job Description

Job descriptions typically contain the following sections; below are some suggestions for each section for a CHW job description. These suggestions are optional and provided for informational purposes only.

About the Organization

When drafting a job description or informational posting, organizations may consider including:

- A detailed description of the hiring organization
- Information about the organization's mission, vision and values

About the Role

When exploring how a CHW might fit into an SBHC, organizations may find it helpful to consider how they can value and reward lived experience, work experience, and/or language diversity. This will allow organizations to attract a more diverse pool of candidates that is reflective of the community they are serving, promoting meaningful connection. This provision recognizes the expertise of those from communities that are disproportionately impacted by inequities and historical disinvestment, helping to create a more equitable workplace where all employees are valued for their unique abilities.

- Describe what makes the SBHC CHW role unique rather than repurposing other CHW job descriptions.
 - Context and setting of the school-based health center
 - Brief description of [the CHW role](#), including the boundaries and limits of this role as it pertains to the SBHC setting
 - Purpose of the CHW role and how the role fits into the larger mission of the SBHC
 - Description of the community that this role is hired to work with (priority populations, including but not limited to students of color, students who are immigrants/refugees, students who are LGBTQIA+, students who experience poverty, and/or students who live rurally)

Responsibilities

Some organizations have found it useful to outline responsibilities that align with the CHW scope of practice, the SBHC Quality Standards, and community-facing work. Responsibilities listed below are examples and should be adapted to align with organizational policies and applicable laws:

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- Ensuring the CHW role is considered a full-time community-facing support staff role, integrated into the SBHC model in such a way that they are working to their full capacity of practice, as described in the Massachusetts School Based Health Center Quality Standards and the Policy Statement on CHWs.
 - Avoid assignments that are solely clerical or that fall outside the CHW scope (see [CHW Core Competencies](#)).
 - For example, the CHW could engage students as they first arrive at the SBHC, creating a safe and welcoming space and providing support.
 - Identify ways a CHW might build trusting relationships with youth and community partners:
 - Engaging with youth groups to bring awareness and youth leadership to lift youth voices to the SBHC.
 - Engaging with youth to understand their individual needs, career goals, and personal aspirations. Actively listen to their challenges and goals, providing guidance and support.
 - Connecting youth with appropriate resources, programs, and opportunities to help them achieve their career objectives and address their personal needs. Foster an ongoing relationship to ensure continued progress and access to the necessary support.
 - Participating in school and community events as the face of the SBHC.
 - Seeking and integrating feedback from the student population.
 - Creating a culture of youth friendliness at the SBHC.
 - Integrating a strong racial equity lens in SBHC activities.
 - Participating in quality improvement projects that improve access to the SBHC for youth most impacted by inequity, including for students of color, students who are immigrants/refugees, students who are LGBTQIA+, students who experience poverty, and/or students who live rurally.
 - Participating in outreach activities that are culturally appropriate and engage the diversity of the student body.
 - Recognizing and validating the traumatic impact of racism and discrimination on children and youth
 - Using effective strategies for communicating with students and families with low health literacy and limited English proficiency
 - Offering social needs screenings to assess students/family barriers to care, with the goal to address social, cultural, environmental, and behavioral factors affecting their health. The sponsoring agency must provide the screening tools (for example, [PRAPARE](#)) to assess the needs of both youth and their families.
 - Documenting activities, care plans, and results in appropriate data collection tools and/or Electronic Medical Records in a clear and concise manner.
 - Ensuring progress of patient caseload through appropriate monitoring and tracking.
 - Conducting home visits in alignment with sponsoring agency protocols and appropriate consents from patient/family as per your sponsor agency/legal departments policy.
 - Participating in regular supervision sessions with the designated CHW supervisor.
 - Participating in meetings with the SBHC clinical staff for care coordination.
 - Coordinating with school staff, such as the school adjustment counselor, to not duplicate efforts and maximize resources in general, and/or for specific students/families with appropriate consent as per your sponsor agency/legal departments policy.

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Experience and Qualifications

Organizations may wish to consider the following when determining qualifications for an SBHC-based CHW:

- Whether CHW certification, [Core Competencies of a Community Health Worker](#), or willingness to obtain training are important for the role.
- The value of cultural and linguistic representation reflective of the student population.
- The importance of lived experience or community connection in addition to—or instead of—traditional academic or professional credentials.
 - Skills and experiences relevant to youth-centered and school-based work
 - Public/community health background
 - Youth-centered, youth advocacy experience
 - Experience with youth work and/or student engagement with a commitment to a strengths-based resiliency model
 - Collaborative, innovative, creative
 - Team player
 - Systems thinker
 - Stays informed about policy changes and actively advocate for those that will benefit the youth population
 - Bilingual and cross-cultural fluency
 - Demonstrated commitment to health equity and racial justice
 - Willingness to maintain a community presence, attend events, speak on behalf of the SBHC
 - Experience in assessing families with health-related social needs and providing linkage, referral and navigation to access community resources
 - Continuously expand knowledge of and experience with community resources and health-protective social infrastructure programs that provide income or material support, such as SNAP, WIC, TANF and EITC/CTC to help families have the tools and resources to adequately care for their children

Compensation

- Some organizations may consider exploring compensation practices recommended by the Office of CHW, such as offering a pay differential for multilingual applicants, those with lived experience, and/or those with experience in CHW or similar roles. **Please contact your entity's human resources department and/or legal counsel to discuss whether your entity has the ability to offer pay differentials.** If an organization chooses to explore this, it may wish to:
 - Review internal policies on differential pay
 - Consider how lived experience, language capacity, and community relationships may inform compensation
- Note that multilingual CHWs are not replacements for certified medical interpreters.

Optional Sample Interview Questions

These sample questions are provided for informational purposes only and are not intended as employment guidance, required interview questions, or a substitute for consultation with human resources or legal counsel.

- Tell me about yourself and why you are interested in this CHW position.
- How does the position fit with your future goals or plans?
- How do you stay organized and prioritize tasks and plan your day?
- How do you stay current and up to date with community resources?

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- Is there a group of people you don't feel comfortable working with?
- Can you tell us about a recent time you had a stressful situation at work- and how you managed it? What did you do? What was the outcome?
- Tell us about your experience working with diverse communities, particularly with youth most impacted by inequity, including students of color, immigrants/refugees, LGBTQIA+ students, students experiencing poverty, and students living in rural areas.
- Tell us about a recent time you had to build and maintain trusting relationships with youth and community partners. How would you do so within the school-based health center setting?
- Can you provide an example of a recent time when you effectively engaged with a youth group to bring awareness and youth leadership to a program or initiative?
- How have you ensured that your work reflects a strong racial equity lens, particularly in activities and projects aimed at improving access for marginalized youth?
- Describe a situation where you had to communicate complex health information to individuals with low health literacy and limited English proficiency. How did you ensure they understood the information?
- How do you approach marketing and outreach activities to ensure they are culturally appropriate and engage diverse stakeholders?
- Can you share an experience where you validated the traumatic impact of racism and discrimination on children and youth? How did you address this impact?
- Describe a time when you collaborated with a team to implement a policy change or quality improvement project. What was your role, and what was the outcome?
- How do you stay current with health equity and racial justice issues, and how do you integrate this knowledge into your work within the school-based health center?

Optional Case Scenario Example

Organizations may choose to use case scenarios during interviews to better understand how candidates think through real-world situations that align with the values and typical activities of a CHW in an SBHC setting. The following scenario is provided solely as an example to help illustrate the types of youth-centered, equity-informed considerations a CHW might encounter. It should not be interpreted as required content, a standard of practice, or guidance on how to respond in any employment or clinical context.

Scenario: Cameron is a 15-year-old boy who has not been eating well, often hungry, and falling asleep in class. His teacher, Ms. Fountaine, makes a referral to you for CHW services. In the referral, Ms. Fountaine states that Cameron shared with her that he eats breakfast and lunch at school. At home, he shares his meals with his four other siblings who are younger than him because his mom can't afford to buy enough food for everyone. He also shared that his mom seems sad most of the time. He feels he wants to stop going to school to work and get more money to help his mom. Cameron dreams of becoming a firefighter one day and helping others in need. **What do you do in this case?**

Possible responses a candidate might suggest:

- Huddle with Ms. Fountaine to discuss Cameron's case and the teacher's observations.
- Screen Cameron for SDOH needs and ask Cameron for permission to connect with his mom to provide additional resources/referrals.
- Connect Cameron/and his family with resources. (Food, financial resources, mental health services, National Junior Firefighter Program or Youth Fire Explorer Program)