



## **Community Health Worker Program**

Office of Population Health Improvement

### **Community Health Worker Background:**

A community health worker (CHW) is a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of, or has an unusually close understanding of the community served. This trusting relationship enables a CHW to serve as a liaison to, link to, or intermediary between health and social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery.

The [Community Health Worker Act](#) (Health-General Article §§ 13-3701-3709) and supporting regulations, [COMAR 10.68.01](#) and [COMAR 10.68.02](#), guide the processes to certify individual CHWs and accredit CHW certification training programs, respectively. The [CHW Program](#) manages these voluntary processes which are based on the nine [Maryland CHW core competencies](#):

1. Advocacy and community capacity building skills
2. Effective oral and written communication skills
3. Cultural competency
4. Understanding of ethics and confidentiality issues
5. Knowledge of local resources and system navigation
6. Care coordination support skills
7. Teaching skills to promote health behavior change
8. Outreach methods and strategies
9. Understanding of public health concepts and health literacy

### **Community Health Worker Certification:**

Individuals may apply at any time for CHW certification based on the completion of an accredited CHW certification training program. A CHW certificate is effective for two years. Twenty hours of professional development are required to renew a CHW certificate. More information on CHW certificate renewal can be found [here](#). Contact information [MDH.CHWApplications@Maryland.gov](mailto:MDH.CHWApplications@Maryland.gov).

**Community Health Worker Training Program Accreditation:**

CHW training programs may apply for accreditation at any time. Accreditation includes the provision of a minimum of 100 hours of instruction which employ a curriculum framework based on the Maryland nine CHW core competencies and an additional 40 hour supervised practicum. Information on CHW certification training programs accredited by the Department can be found [here](#). Contact information [mdh.chw@maryland.gov](mailto:mdh.chw@maryland.gov).

**State Community Health Worker Advisory Committee:**

The State CHW Advisory Committee includes 18 members appointed by the Governor. Nine of the Committee members (50%) are CHWs. The Committee meets quarterly to advise the Department on the CHW certification and training program accreditation processes and implementation.

**For more information contact:**

Tina Backe

Coordinator

Maryland Department of Health

Community Health Worker Program

Telephone: 410-767-5971

Email: [mdh.chw@maryland.gov](mailto:mdh.chw@maryland.gov)

Website:

<https://health.maryland.gov/pophealth/Community-Health-Workers/Pages/Home.aspx>