

Report Summary

Recommendations for Community Health Worker Training and Education

Evidence-based research has shown community health workers (CHWs) are important members of the health care workforce who improve access to health care, health outcomes, and quality of life for underserved communities.

Although multiple options for CHW education and training exist across the state, there is an inconsistent landscape of resources for people seeking to raise their skill levels as community health workers and to find opportunities for career advancement.

Convened by Washington State, a Community Health Worker Task Force released a report in 2016 with recommendations about the roles of community health workers in health systems, the skills and qualities possessed by community health workers, training and education needs, and finance and sustainability considerations for long-term community health worker integration into Washington's health and human services systems.

In 2018 the task force was reconvened to implement training and education recommendations described in the previous report. As the organizer for the second task force, the Department of Health supported a process that was again informed by CHWs, and expanded to include statewide community conversations, and decision-making that was driven by community health workers.

The work of the reconvened task force supports the continued development of a strong CHW workforce. This task force developed recommendations related to:

- **Community health worker abilities:** What every community health worker should be able to do upon completion of a core community health worker training.
- **Methodology:** How the core training should be taught and who should develop the training.
- **Employer support:** Parameters for employer support of community health worker employment, education, and training.
- **Infrastructure:** A statewide, multi-stakeholder leadership group that would continue to meet and build recommendations for the CHW workforce.

Investment in infrastructure is the first and most critical step to move the CHW training and education recommendations. This group should be focused on CHW workforce development, including training and education.

2019 Task Force Recommendations

Below is a summary of the recommendations included in the 2019 CHW Task Force report required by the state Legislature.

Recommendations for Community Health Worker Abilities

The task force recommends that core training include activities that build on these essential abilities:

- Communication and Interpersonal and Relationship Building
- Individual and Community Assessment and Direct Services
- Cultural Humility/Cultural Responsiveness
- Education and Facilitation
- Service Coordination and Navigation
- Advocacy and Capacity Building
- Experience and Knowledge Base
- Professional Skills and Conduct
- Evaluation and Research
- Outreach

Recommendations for a Training and Education Methodology

The task force recommends community health worker trainings use multiple teaching methods, be led by community health workers, and be accessible.

Recommendations for Employer Support

The task force recommends that the engagement of community health workers by employers be sustainable and community health worker training and education organizations meet standards.

In addition to recommendations, the 2019 CHW Task Force Report includes the following components:

- Profiles offered by task force members
- Equity and Inclusion statement
- Task Force membership list
- Task Force structure and processes
- Community conversations summary
- Task Force goals, objectives, and key considerations
- Topics for future discussion
- Recommendations for community health worker abilities from 2016
- 2016 Task Force training & education recommendations