# CHW Training Program Approval Guidelines

## For CHW Voluntary Certification through the Arizona Community Health Worker Association.

August 2021

This document outlines the requirements and process for CHW Training Program approval through the Arizona Community Health Worker Association (AzCHOW). Training programs that wish to apply for program approval through AzCHOW should read these guidelines carefully.

# Contact and Application Information

**Please direct questions to:**

info@azchow.org

http://www.azchow.org/contact-us/

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# Definitions and Acronyms

**AzCHOW**: Arizona Community Health Workers Association

**ADHS:** Arizona Department of Health Services

**AzPHA**: Arizona Public Health Association

**AzPRC:** Arizona Prevention Research Center, a CDC-funded research center at the University of Arizona Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health

**C3 Project**: Community Health Worker Core Consensus Project based at the University of Texas Houston, which produced recommendations for CHW Scope of Practice and Core Competencies.

**CHW:** Community Health Worker, a frontline public health worker with a close relationship to the community served. CHW is a blanket term that encompasses many different health worker titles, including CHRs and *promotor/as.*

**CHR**: Community Health Representative, a community-based health outreach worker in Native American and Alaska Native communities.

**Promotor/a de Salud:** Health Promoter, a community-based health outreach worker in Latino/Hispanic communities.

# What is a Community Health Worker?

The Arizona Community Health Worker Association (AzCHOW) and Arizona Public Health Association (AzPHA) have adopted the American Public Health Association definition of a Community Health Worker: "A community health worker is a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of and/or has an unusually close understanding of the community served. This trusting relationship enables the worker to serve as a liaison/link/intermediary between health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery. A community health worker also builds individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency through a range of activities such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support and advocacy." (APHA, 2017)

The professional term Community Health Worker encompasses those who work in a variety of organizations and communities in Arizona. CHWs may work under a variety of different job titles, including *promotor/a,* Community Health Representatives, Community Health Advisors, Peer Support Specialists, Health Navigators and Community Outreach workers, among others. All of these job titles are united under the "umbrella" of Community Health Workers because they share common core competencies and skills. For the purposes of this application and the training program approval process, the term "Community Health Workers" is inclusive of all individuals that work in the capacities outlined by the American Public Health Association definition of a CHW, regardless of job title.

# CHW Core Competencies

The Community Health Worker Workforce Coalition, a collaboration of community-based organizations, clinics, universities and government organizations, has adapted the 10 Core Competencies outlined in the Progress Report of the Community Health Worker Core Consensus (C3) Project in 2016 (Rosenthal, Rush & Allen, 2016). The 10 Core Competences of a CHW in Arizona as well as the skills associated with each competency are outlined in Table 1:

Table I: Community Health Worker Core Competencies and skills for Arizona.

| Core Competencies | Associated Skills |
|---|---|
| Communication | Use language confidently |
| | Use language in ways that engage and motivate |
| | Communicate using plain and clear language |
| | Communicate with empathy |
| | Listen actively |
| | Prepare written communication including electronic communication |
| | Document work |
| | Communicate with the community served |
| Relationship-Building | Provide coaching and social support |
| | Conduct self-management coaching |
| | Use interviewing techniques (e.g. motivational interviewing) |
| | Work as a team member |
| | Manage conflict |
| | Practice cultural humility |
| | Understand the culture of institutions |
| Service Coordination | Coordinate care (includes identifying and accessing resources and overcoming barriers) |
| | Make appropriate referrals |
| | Facilitate the development of an individual and/or group action plan and goal attainment |
| | Coordinate CHW activities with clinical and community services |
| | Follow-up and track care and referral outcomes |
| Capacity Building | Help others to identify goals and develop to their fullest potential |
| | Work in ways that increase individual and community empowerment |
| | Network, build community connections, and build coalitions |
| | Teach self-advocacy skills |
| | Conduct community organizing |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Advocacy** | Contribute to policy development |
| | Advocate for policy change |
| | Speak up for individuals and communities |
| **Education and Facilitation** | Use empowering and learner-centered teaching techniques |
| | Use a range of appropriate and effective educational techniques |
| | Facilitate group discussions and decision-making |
| | Plan and conduct classes and presentations for a variety of groups |
| | Seek out appropriate information and respond to questions about pertinent topics |
| | Find and share requested information |
| | Collaborate with other educators |
| | Collect and use information from and with community members |
| **Assessment** | Participate in individual assessment through observation and active inquiry |
| | Participate in community assessment through observation and active inquiry |
| **Outreach** | Conduct case-finding, recruitment and follow-up |
| | Prepare and disseminate materials |
| | Build and maintain a current resource inventory |
| **Professional Conduct** | Set goals and develop and follow a work plan |
| | Balance priorities and manage time |
| | Apply critical thinking techniques and problem-solving |
| | Use pertinent technology |
| | Pursue continued education and lifelong learning opportunities |
| | Maximize personal safety while working in community and/or clinical setting |
| | Observe ethical and legal standards (e.g. CHW Code of Ethics, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)) |
| | Identify situations for mandatory reporting and carry out reporting requirements |
| | Participate in professional development of peer CHWs and in CHW networking groups |
| | Set boundaries and practicing self-care |
| **Knowledge Base** *(Show understanding of these concepts)* | Social determinants of health and related disparities |
| | Pertinent health issues |
| | Healthy lifestyles and self-care |
| | Mental/behavioral health issues and their connection to physical health |
| | Health behavior theories |
| | Basic public health principles |

| | Community served |
|---|---|
| | United States health and social service systems |

The Core Competencies outline the core skills and abilities that all Community Health Workers must have in order to effectively fulfill their roles. The core competencies will be complemented by other training, such as disease-specific management and care, which builds upon the core competencies of a CHW so that he or she can effectively fulfill his or her role in an organization or community.

**Figure 1: CHW Core Competencies and Specific Training**
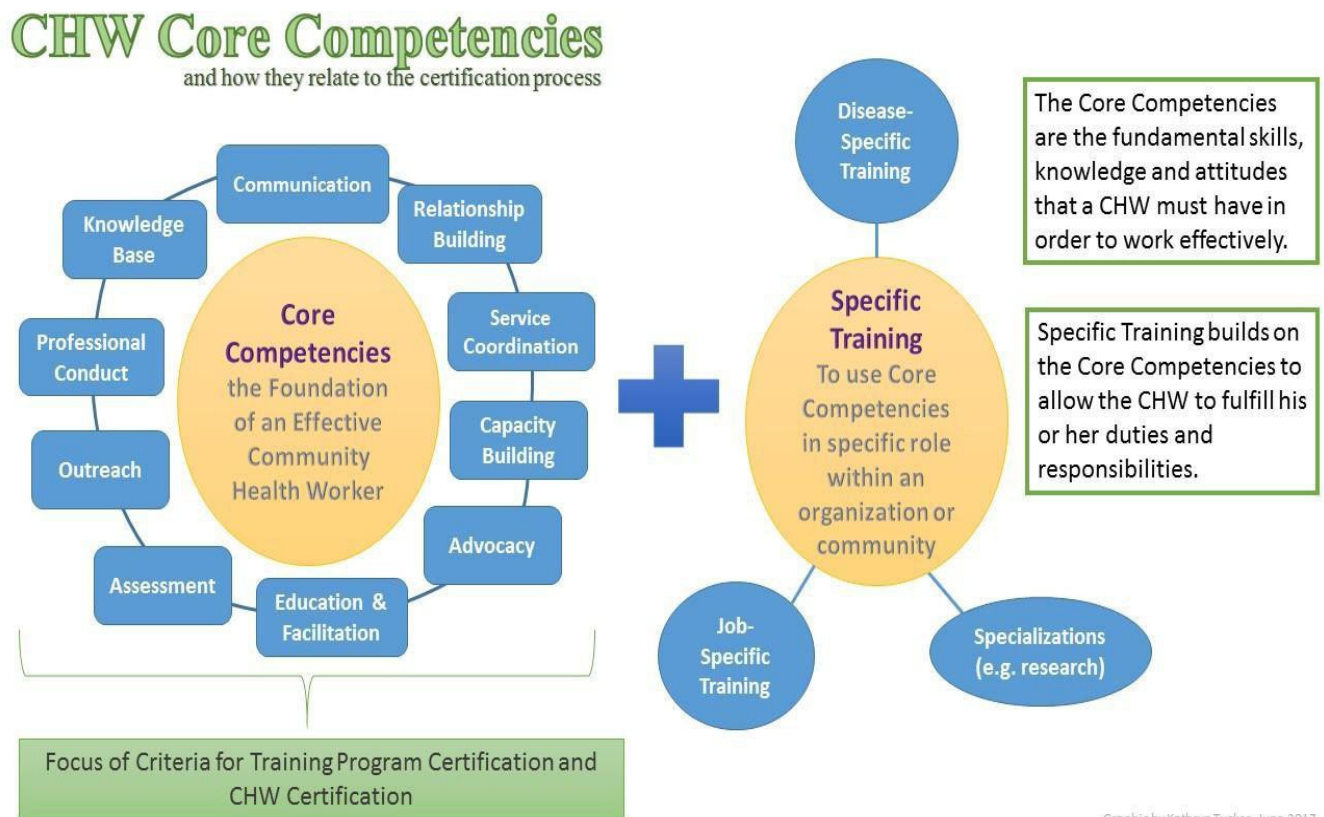


This training program approval process, which was approved by AzCHOW and the Arizona CHW Workforce Coalition, focuses on the CHW core competencies with the acknowledgement that further training will occur depending on the specific duties and role of the CHW in an organization.

# CHW Scope of Practice

Community Health Workers work in a variety of different organizations in different capacities. The Scope of Practice outlines the capacities in which a CHW can work in an organization. The Core Competencies are based on the Scope of Practice and ensure that a CHW has the training to carry out his or her responsibilities.

AzCHOW, the CHW Workforce Coalition and the AzPHA adopted the roles and scope of practice outlined in the C3 Project, which include the following:

- Cultural mediation among individuals, communities and social service systems
- Provide culturally appropriate health education and information
- Care coordination, case management and system navigation
- Provide coaching and social support
- Advocate for individuals and communities
- Build individual and community capacity.
- Provide direct service
- Implement individual and community assessment
- Participate in evaluation and research

# History of the CHW Voluntary Certification Movement in Arizona

The goal of the CHW Voluntary Certification Movement in Arizona is to facilitate the development of a strong and competent workforce. CHWs serve a vital in health care linkage, patient advocacy and cultural mediation of health services. The increased recognition of the CHW workforce through certification and advocacy will allow CHWs to work to their full capacity as vital members of the health care and social service sectors.

The Arizona Community Health Workers Association (AzCHOW) is a statewide organization of community-based advocates. AzCHOW provides an opportunity for CHWs to speak with a collective voice, and has been advocating for the work of CHWs in Arizona since 2001. AzCHOW has worked to unify the diverse groups within the CHW workforce, including *promotor/as* who work primarily with Hispanic/Latino communities, and Community Health Representatives who work in 22 Native American reservations across Arizona.

In 2013, AzCHOW and the Arizona Prevention Research Center (AzPRC) at the University of Arizona convened the CHW Workforce Coalition. The first meeting included about 20 individuals in Tucson, Arizona. As on July 2017, the Coalition has grown to include over 200 academic, public health, health care, tribal and nonprofit organizations.

In June 2014, the Arizona Department of Health Services hired a CHW Program manager in the Bureau of Tobacco and Chronic Disease. The Coalition grew with increasing participation from Universities,

health centers, nonprofit organizations, and other networks of CHWs, *promotores* and CHRs across the state.

The Coalition recognized the need for increased workforce development and recognition, and prioritized the development of a voluntary certification process in Arizona. In 2016, the Coalition introduced legislation in the Arizona State Legislature to establish a CHW Certification Board. The original legislation did not pass out of the state legislature.

In 2018, the Coalition worked with legislative allies to introduce legislation to create Voluntary Certification for Community Health Workers in Arizona. The bill passed and was signed in to law by Governor Doug Ducey in May 2018. The bill established a CHW Advisory Council to create the rules for CHW voluntary certification through the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS).

## Benefits of Training Program Approval

The Training Program Approval process reflects a state-wide collaborative effort to recognize the skills and competencies of CHWs in Arizona. Approved programs will become the "gold standard" for CHW training, and CHWs who graduate from a certified training program will be well positioned to apply for Voluntary Certification through ADHS. Training Program Approval and Voluntary Certification includes benefits for CHWs, CHW clients, CHW employers, and the health system as a whole.

| Benefits for CHWs |
| --- |
| <ul><li>increased professional recognition among hundreds of agencies and organizations within Arizona</li><li>increased opportunities for funding sustainability, including the potential for reimbursement through insurance companies</li><li>ability to advocate for themselves and their profession within an organization</li><li>standardized training that will allow CHWs to gain employment in a variety of organizations and projects.</li></ul> |
| **Benefits for CHW Clients** |
| <ul><li>Knowledge that the CHW has standardized knowledge and training for better care</li><li>Knowledge that certified CHWs must abide by a Code of Ethics which will support a trustworthy and respectful relationship</li><li>Cost saving and better health outcomes</li></ul> |
| **Benefits for Communities Served by CHWs** |
| <ul><li>Increased funding and recognition of CHWs can support more projects that help communities link to social services and improve the social determinants of health.</li></ul> |
| **Benefits for CHW Employers** |

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|---|
| ● Knowledge that the CHW has standardized knowledge and training for increased job performance and effectiveness |
| ● Increased opportunities for CHW project sustainability and funding |
| ● Ability to provide better care and support for patients and clients |
| ● Increased understanding of the roles and competencies of a CHW, which will allow a CHW to work to his or her fullest potential in an organization |

**Benefits for Health System as a Whole**

- Improve social determinants of health for vulnerable populations
- Research has shown that CHWs improve health outcomes and reduce healthcare costs

# Training Program Approval Process

The training program approval process is designed to ensure that CHW training programs are based on the 10 Core Competencies, equip CHWs with the skills and knowledge to work in a variety of areas, and prepare CHWs to express their professional identity and unique competencies.

## CHW Training Program Approval Application

The Training Program Approval Application is a mechanism for approval of Community Health Worker (CHW) Training Programs. This application can be submitted by any agency or institution that offers a CHW Training Program.

The Training Program Approval Review has two components: an application outlining the program and how it prepares CHWs in the core competencies, and a site visit to discuss the training program and provide opportunities for technical assistance.

The Training Program Review will take place within three months of submission of the application. The Training Program Approval process is outlined in the following flowchart:

## AzCHOW CHW Training Program Approval Process
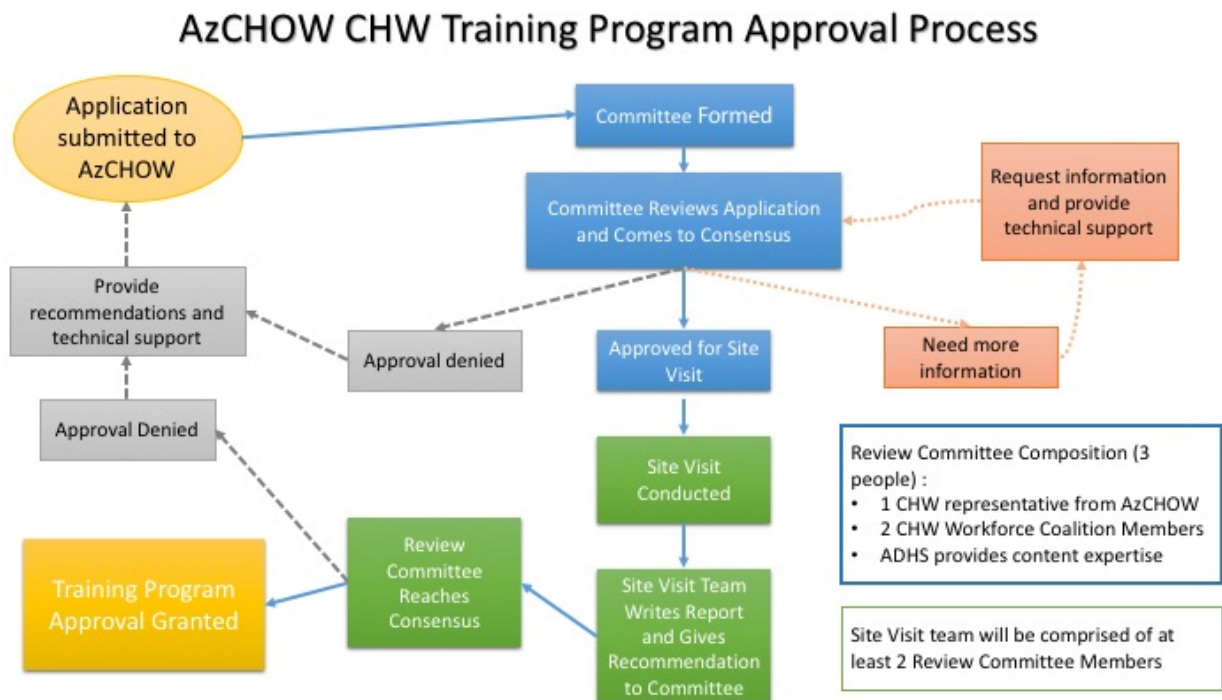


The entire process takes between 10-12 weeks, depending on the schedule of the site and the review committee.

Once the application is submitted to AzCHOW, a point person will be assigned to help the training site with any technical questions or concerns. AzCHOW will form the training program review committee, made up of 3 individuals: 1 CHW representative from AzCHOW and 2 representatives from the CHW Workforce Coalition with extensive experience with the CHW workforce. A representative from ADHS will be invited to provide support as a content expert during the review process.

Once formed, the Training Program Review Committee will review the documents submitted with the site's application. If approved, the site will be notified and begin to plan for the site visit. If more information or clarification is needed, the committee will notify the site and work with them to answer any questions. If the application is denied, the Committee will inform the site and provide a reason for denial. If denied, the Committee will offer the site ongoing technical support, and the site will have up to a year from the date of the denial notification to re-submit the application without having to pay the $500 application fee again. The Application Review should be completed within 45 days of application submission.

Once the application is approved, the training program will prepare for the site visit. The Training Program Review Committee will choose 2-3 of its members (including at least 1 CHW) to conduct the site visit, which should take around 4 hours. During the site visit, the Site Visit Committee will meet with program leadership, trainers/instructors, current and former students, and community experience/internship coordinators.

The purpose of the site visit is twofold: to evaluate the site and ensure that there is a strong understanding of and commitment to the Core Competencies of a CHW, and open a dialogue to build relationships and provide technical support to the site. The site visit should be completed within one month of the Application Review decision.

Within two weeks of the site visit, the Site Visit Committee will compare findings and provide recommendations to the entire Training Program Review Committee. At this point, the Training Program Review Committee will make its final decision and communicate that decision to the site. If the site is approved, approval will be granted. If the site is not approved, the Committee will inform the site and provide a reason for denial. The site will have up to year from the time of the denial notification to re- submit the application free of charge. An organization can re-submit an application after a denial up to twice in a year (three total application submissions) without repayment. After one year, the site would have to pay the $500 application fee again.

AzCHOW maintains a list of certified CHW training programs on its website.

The Training Program Approval will be valid for 5 years, after which time the training program will complete the reapproval process.

## Training Program Approval Application Components

The Training Program Application is composed of three parts: Program Description and Background,

Supporting Documents, and Core Competency Checklist.

*Program Description and Background:*

In this section, the site will provide basic background information on the agency/institution, including type of agency/institution, a history of the agency/institution, the classroom and community experience hours provided by the agency/institution, and a brief description of the community experience/internship component of the training program.

*Supporting Documentation*

The following documents should be submitted with the Training Program Approval Application:

*Table 1: Required Supplemental Materials for the CHW Training Program Approval Application*

| Training Schedule/Syllabus | This attachment should provide information about the order of the training sessions. This schedule should include the title, number of hours, and instructor name for each session. |
|---|---|
| Session Descriptions | This attachment should include a brief description of each course or training session, including the specific topics covered in each session and the learning objectives. The learning objectives describe the knowledge and skills that the student should have after the session (example below). This should include the community experience/internship component<br><br>*Learning Objectives Examples:*<br>*The CHW student will know how to use strategies to provide social support for clients.*<br>*The CHW student will understand the most important health issues that face the population she or he will serve.*<br><br>*Note: you can use the competencies to complete the learning objectives.* |
| CHW Learning Evaluation Process | Include a description of how CHWs are evaluated to show their knowledge and competencies. Describe the requirements that the CHW must meet to complete the training program, and how the CHW demonstrates that they meet these requirements.<br><br>The evaluation methods should include information about the philosophy that the trainers use to evaluate the learning and skills of CHW trainees during their training program. It should also clearly indicate how the CHW trainees and program coordinators determine whether the CHW trainee is prepared to advance in the program or complete the program. |
| Trainer/Instructor Training and Experience | Provide information about the training and experience of the program instructors, focusing on their experience with and knowledge of CHWs. This can include a brief description of relevant experience in a resume or CV format. Please indicate which classes/sessions are taught by each instructor |
| Program Director/Coordinator training and experience | Provide information in a resume or CV format outlining the qualifications and experience of the program director to work with CHWs. |

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|---|---|
| CHW training tracking methods | Provide information about how the program tracks the progress of the CHW trainees as they progress through the program. The requirements and progression of the training should be clearly delineated for both the CHW trainee and the training program staff/instructors. |

***Training and Core Competency Checklist, a required component of the CHW Training Program Approval Application***

The training and Core Competency checklist ensures that the training prepares a CHW for voluntary certification, connects the trainees to the wider CHW workforce, covers at least 90% (53 out of 59) of the Core Competency skills and knowledge. The site will have to indicate which session includes content on each of the Core Competencies.

The checklist is included in Appendix A.

# Site Visit Guidelines

The site visit will take place after the Training Program Application has been completed and approved. The site visit will be completed by a smaller group within the Training Program Review Committee, consisting of 2-3 Committee members, one of which will be a CHW.

The program coordinator/director will work with the Application Point Person to schedule the site visit, which should take around four hours. During the Site Visit, the Site Visit Committee should meet with the following representatives of the CHW Training Program:

- A small group of current and former students (3-5 students)--
- Program Director/Coordinator. The Program Director/Coordinator is the individual who is directly responsible for the training program, including facilitating the community experience/internship component
- Program Trainers/Instructors. The number of trainers/instructors will vary by program, but this meeting should include a sample of trainers and instructors that teach a variety of sessions-20 minutes
- Community Experience/Internship Coordinators. The community experience/internship coordinators supervise the CHW students in the practical field work part of the training program. The community experience/internship coordinators may be from within the organization, or they may be from partner organizations. If there are several partner organizations, this meeting should include at least 2 of them.
- Agency/Institution Leadership. The agency/institution leadership should include individuals that have a leadership role in the organization and supervises the program director/coordinator. For example, the dean of an academic program, CEO or Executive Director of a small organization, or other managerial or executive position.

In some instances, one person may have several of these roles (for example, the program director/coordinator may also be a trainer/instructor). In this case, the individual might be included in several meetings, or the interview with them might be longer to accommodate the additional questions that will be asked of the individual.

The Program Coordinator/Director should also plan to tour the facilities with the Site Review Committee. The Site Review Committee may also request additional meetings or activities.

The organization's Training Program Coordinator/Director is responsible for organizing these meetings

during the 4-hour visit window. If necessary, we will accommodate individual meetings with Zoom Meeting calls on a case-by-case basis.

One of the major purposes of the site visit is to open the lines of communication between the training programs, AzCHOW representatives, ADHS and other CHW Workforce Coalition members. The site should be prepared with questions or requests for technical assistance, if they would like to receive this.

The Site Visit Committee will use the Site Visit Evaluation Instrument to evaluate the site and guide their conversations with the site representatives during the site visit. The Site Visit Evaluation Instrument contains questions and an evaluation tool that each individual Site Visit Commitee member will fill out throughout the Site Visit. The Evaluation Instrument contains Likert Scale Statements such as the following:

| | Strongly Disagree 0 | Disagree 1 | Neutral 2 | Agree 3 | Strongly Agree 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Current and Former Students have a strong understanding of the CHW Core Competencies | | | | | |

The Site Visit Review Committee will fill out the Evaluation Instrument based on their meetings during the Site Visit. Each statement has a numerical value that the Committee Member will use to create an average that can be compared by different Site Visit Review Committee members.

After the site visit, the Site Visit Committee will review the Site Visit Evaluation Instruments and report their findings to the Program Review Committee. The Program Review Committee will reach consensus, and provide its determination to AzCHOW. AzCHOW will inform the site of their decision within two weeks of the site visit. If the Training Program Approval Application is denied, the site will be offered technical support, and the site will have up to a year from the date of denial to re-schedule a site visit without paying the $500 fee again.

References

American Public Health Association, 2017. "Community Health Workers." Retrieved May 5, 2017 from https://www.apha.org/apha-communities/member-sections/ community-health-workers .

Rosenthal, E.L., Rush, C.H. & Allen, C.G. (2016). Understanding Scope and Competencies: A Contemporary Look at the United States Community Health Worker Field. Progress Report of the CHW Core Consensus (C3) Project: Building National Consensus on CHW Core Roles, Skills and Qualities. Retrieved June 28, 2017 from https://sph.uth.edu/dotAsset/28044e61-fb10-41a2-bf3b-07efa4fe56ae.pdf

# Appendix: Training and Core Competency Checklist

## CHW Training Checklist

*An approved training program should include the following components. Please use the table below to indicate in which part of the curriculum each of the following topics is discussed. Please note that technical assistance and resources are available to help you incorporate these topics into your training program. Please contact AzCHOW for more information.*

| The CHW training program must include content on: | Indicate the session(s) or class(es) where this content is included. |
|---|---|
| The history of the CHW workforce in Arizona | |
| An overview of the CHW profession, including the diverse job titles and responsibilities that encompass the workforce | |
| An overview of the CHW core competencies including examples of each one. | |
| An orientation to voluntary certification, including the requirements and process for obtaining certification. | |
| | |

## Core Competency Checklist

*Instructions: use the table below to map the CHW core competencies to specific sessions in the training program. Please use the session titles or used in the attached training schedule. The training program should include content that meets at least 90% (53 out of 59) of the core competencies in the table below.*

| Communication | |
|---|---|
| *The CHW training program must include content on:* | *Indicate the session(s) or class(es) where this content is included* |
| Using language confidently | |
| Using  language in ways that engage and motivate | |
| Communicating using plain and clear language | |
| Communicating with empathy | |
| Listening actively | |
| Preparing written communication including electronic communication | |
| Documenting work | |
| Communicating with the community served | |
| Relationship-Building | |
| *The CHW training program must include content on:* | *Indicate the session(s) or class(es) where this content is included* |
| Providing coaching and social support | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Conducting self-management coaching | |
| Using interviewing techniques (e.g. motivational interviewing) | |
| Working as a team member | |
| Managing conflict | |
| Practicing cultural humility | |
| Understanding the culture of institutions | |
| Service Coordination | |
| *The CHW training program must include content on:* | *Indicate the session(s) or class(es) where this content is included* |
| Coordinating care (includes identifying and accessing resources and overcoming barriers) | |
| Making appropriate referrals | |
| Facilitating the development of an individual and/or group action plan and goal attainment | |
| Coordinating CHW activities with clinical and community services | |
| Follow-up and tracking care and referral outcomes | |
| Capacity Building | |
| *The CHW training program must include content on:* | *Indicate the session(s) or class(es) where this content is included* |
| Helping others to identify goals and develop to their fullest potential | |
| Working in ways that increase individual and community empowerment | |
| Networking, building community connections, and building coalitions | |
| Teaching self-advocacy skills | |
| Conducting community organizing | |
| Advocacy | |
| *The CHW training program must include content on:* | *Indicate the session(s) or class(es) where this content is included* |
| Contributing to policy development | |
| Advocating for policy change | |
| Speaking up for individuals and communities | |
| Education and Facilitation | |
| *The CHW training program must include content on:* | *Indicate the session(s) or class(es) where this content is included* |
| Using empowering and learner-centered teaching techniques | |
| Using a range of appropriate and effective educational techniques | |
| Facilitating group discussions and decision-making | |
| Planning and conduct classes and presentations for a variety of | |

| | |
|---|---|
| groups | |
| Seeking out appropriate information and responding to questions about pertinent topics | |
| Finding and sharing requested information | |
| Collaborating with other educators | |
| Collecting and using information from and with community members | |
| **Assessment** | |
| *The CHW training program must include content on:* | *Indicate the session(s) or class(es) where this content is included* |
| Participating in individual assessment through observation and active inquiry | |
| Participating in community assessment through observation and active inquiry | |
| **Outreach** | |
| *The CHW training program must include content on:* | *Indicate the session(s) or class(es) where this content is included* |
| Conducting case-finding, recruitment and follow-up | |
| Preparing and disseminating materials | |
| Building and maintaining a current resource inventory | |
| **Professional Conduct** | |
| *The CHW training program must include content on:* | *Indicate the session(s) or class(es) where this content is included* |
| Setting goals and developing and following a work plan | |
| Balancing priorities and managing time | |
| Applying critical thinking techniques and problem-solving | |
| Using pertinent technology | |
| Pursuing continued education and lifelong learning opportunities | |
| Maximizing personal safety while working in community and/or clinical setting | |
| Observing ethical and legal standards (e.g. CHW Code of Ethics, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)) | |
| Identifying situations for mandatory reporting and carry out reporting requirements | |
| Participating in professional development of peer CHWs and in CHW networking groups | |
| Setting boundaries and practicing self-care | |
| **Knowledge Base** | |
| *The CHW training program must include content on:* | *Indicate the session(s) or class(es)* |

| | where this content is included |
|---|---|
| Social determinants of health and related disparities | |
| Pertinent health issues | |
| Healthy lifestyles and self-care | |
| Mental/behavioral health issues and their connection to physical health | |
| Health behavior theories | |
| Basic public health principles | |
| Community served | |
| United States health and social service systems | |