



# Arizona Community Health Worker Voluntary Certification Updates

Arizona Rural Health Conference

June 7, 2023

Carin Watts, MPH  
Health Disparities Program Manager  
Arizona Department of Health Services

# Status of CHW Voluntary Certification

- Number of CHWs certified as of May 23, 2023: 131
- The online application for voluntary certification opened November 7, 2022, when the [final rules](#) went into effect.
- To see a list of certified CHWs visit the [AZ Care Check](#) database.
- The [Special Licensing CHW Licensing](#) website features a variety of materials to support applicants with the application process, including a documentation [checklist](#), [portal guide \(application assistance\)](#), [FAQs](#) and other support materials.
- CHW Voluntary Certification [FAQ](#) document (how to apply, documentation, request support with application, Notice of Deficiency or Request for Information, application denial, renewal, etc.).





# Certification Eligibility

An individual is eligible to practice as a certified CHW, if ([R9-16-802](#)):

- 18 years of age or older
- Documentation of citizenship or alien status
- High school diploma, equivalent diploma, or higher education degree
- Documentation of training and/or paid or volunteer experience
- Completion of initial CHW certification application
- Submission of nonrefundable fees
- No examination/testing requirement set by ADHS to obtain certification

# Diploma/Degree Requirement

- Applicants are required to submit documentation that the applicant received a high school diploma, a high school equivalency diploma, or higher education degree.
- Documentation from countries other than the US (including Mexico) are accepted as long as the department can clearly identify the documents as such.
  - If the documentation is not clear, the applicant will receive a Request for Information (RFI) that will explain what additional documentation is required (certified transcript translation) to process their application.
- If an applicant does not have a copy of their high school diploma or other degree, it is suggested that they reach out to their school, or school district, to obtain a copy of their diploma/degree, or of their transcript showing that they received that diploma/degree.
- If not available, it is suggested that the applicant acquire a US GED. More information can be found at the [GED Testing Service](#) website.
  - [Rio Salado College](#) offers in-person and online GED preparation courses (English only)
  - [Chicanos Por La Causa](#) offers preparation courses in Spanish

# CHWs Certified in Another State

- If a CHW has been licensed in another state for **at least one year** they can qualify for reciprocity.
- In lieu of documentation of training and/or paid or volunteer hours (on the next slide) an applicant can provide the information outlined in section [R9-16-804 - B](#) of the final rules.
  - A copy of the professional certificate or license by each state.
  - A completed and signed [Attestation of Licensure in Another State](#) form.
- For more information on recognition of out-of-state licenses, see [A.R.S § 32-4302](#)

# Documentation of Training & Experience Hours



If a CHW does not qualify under reciprocity, they are required to provide documentation of:

- **Pathway 1:** 960 hours of paid or volunteer experience providing CHR or CHW services in the core competencies specified in the final rules and completed during the previous three-year time period; **OR**
- **Pathway 2:** Completion of a CHW certificate program, including core competencies, provided by an accredited college **AND** 480 hours of paid or volunteer experience completed during the previous three-years; **OR**
- **Pathway 3:** Completion of a CHW training program provided by an organization (approved through the AzCHOW Training Approval Process) or certified CHW trainer(s), including core competencies, **AND** 480 hours of paid or volunteer experience completed during the previous three-years; **OR**
- **Pathway 4:** Completion of a Community Health Representative National Training Program (provided by IHS):
  - Basic training program **AND** 480 hours of paid or volunteer experience completed during the previous three-years, or
  - Advanced training program **AND** 380 hours of paid or volunteer experience completed during the previous three-years

**\*A CHW only needs to provide documentation for one of the four pathways above.**

# Core Competencies




- Communication skills
- Interpersonal and relationship-building
- Service coordination and navigation
- Capacity building
- Advocacy
- Education and facilitation
- Individual and community assessment
- Outreach
- Professional skills and conduct
- Evaluation and research skills
- Knowledge base

# Certified CHW Scope of Practice

## (R9-16-802 - C)

- Providing cultural mediation among individuals, communities, and health and social systems
- Providing culturally appropriate health education and information
- Providing care coordination, case coordination and system navigation;
- Providing coaching and social support
- Advocating for individuals and communities
- Building individual and community capacity
- Providing direct services
- Implementing individual and community assessments
- Conducting outreach
- Participating in evaluation and research






# Other Role & Activities

## ([R9-16-802 - D](#))

- 
- Diabetes education
  - Disease intervention
  - Nutrition, specifically food prep and purchasing
  - Parenting education
  - Community wellness partner
  - Connect clients to health education and community resources
  - Blood pressure education
  - Delivery of medical supplies and equipment
  - Outreach to clients who are out of care
  - Hearing and vision screenings
  - Other similar health and social services provided on behalf of health and behavioral health service providers



# Requirements to Maintain Certification

- Certification is valid for two years ([R9-16-805](#))
  - Submit a renewal application and fees at least 30 days before the expiration date of certification (valid for two years).
  - Complete a minimum of 24 hours of [continuing education](#) hours within the two years prior to renewal([R9-16-806](#)).
  - Notify the department of updates to name or contact information.
- 



# ADHS Fee Waivers

- At this time no applicant is paying more than \$1.
- Fee Waiver \$0 (AZ Statute 41-1080.01): - The agency shall waive any fee charged for an initial license for any of the following individuals: those whose family income does not exceed 200% of the federal poverty guidelines, active duty military spouse, or any honorably discharged veteran (no more than 2-years).
  - Both the application and certification fees will be waived for qualifying individuals who are applying for certification for the first time. These individuals will be required to fill out and submit a Fee Waiver Attestation
- Reduced Fee \$1: This reduced fee is available until the funding is spent or the expiration date for the funding is reached.
  - For applicants that do not qualify for the first waiver (above - AZ Statute 41.1080.01)
  - The first 180 individuals to apply for certification will receive a discounted fee and be required to pay only \$1.00. This waiver will be given on a first come basis. (Less than 60 remaining as of 5.23.23)





# Benefits of CHW Certification



- Provides a pathway for further professionalization and sustainability of the CHW workforce
- Certified CHWs will be issued a certification and have their education, work experience, and other qualifications verified by the state health department
- Increase in reimbursement opportunities for CHW services
- Many other valuable benefits for the communities served, employers, and the workforce as a whole.





# Arizona CHW Workforce Coalition

- A network of organizations collaborating with AzCHOW and ADHS to support the sustainability of the Arizona CHW workforce.
- Meets quarterly and is composed of CHWs, including Promotores de Salud, Community Health Representatives, Community Health Advisors and other related titles, as well as the University of Arizona, Local Health Departments, Community Health Centers, Area Health Education Centers, and other workforce allied partners.
- To join please reach out to Ramses Sepulveda @ [ramses@arizona.edu](mailto:ramses@arizona.edu)

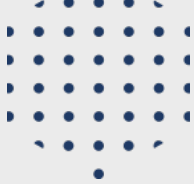
**Next meeting: Friday, July 7, 2023 10:00am - 12:00pm**

# AzCHOW Roots Conference



June 21 - 22, 2023 @ Wild Horse Resort, Chandler AZ

For more information visit the [Roots at a Glance](#) webpage



# Resources

- **ADHS CHW Webpage:** <https://www.azdhs.gov/prevention/tobacco-chronic-disease/community-health-workers>
- **Special Licensing CHW Licensing:** <https://www.azdhs.gov/licensing/special/index.php#community-health-workers>
- **ADHS CHW Portal Guide:** <https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/licensing/special-licensing/applications/bsl-licensee-provider-reference-guide.pdf>
- **ADHS CHW Application Checklist:** <https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/licensing/special-licensing/applications/chw-checklist.pdf?v=20221220>
- **CHW Hours Worked/Volunteered Attestation Form:** <https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/licensing/special-licensing/applications/record-hours-employment-volunteer-form.pdf?v=20230127>
- **AZ Care Check Database - List of all CHWs certified in the State of Arizona:**  
<https://azcarecheck.azdhs.gov/s/?programType=Community%20Health%20Worker&licenseType=All>
- **AzCHOW CHW Training Approval Process:** <https://azchow.org/training-program-approval>
- **AzCHOW Approved Training Programs:** <https://azchow.org/approved-az-chw-training>



# Thank you!

Carin Watts

Health Disparities Program Manager

[carin.watts@azdhs.gov](mailto:carin.watts@azdhs.gov) 480.826.8574

Special Licensing

[speciallicensing@azdhs.gov](mailto:speciallicensing@azdhs.gov) 602.364.2079

[azhealth.gov](http://azhealth.gov)



# Community Health Worker (CHW) Updates

Alex Demyan, Interim Assistant Director

# Community Health Worker/ Community Health Representative

A **frontline public health worker** who is a trusted member of the community to help people:

- Navigate health care system,
- Encourage preventive care,
- Manage chronic illnesses,
- Maintain healthy lifestyles, and
- Assist in culturally and linguistically relevant ways.



# CHW Voluntary Certification Rule

- The final [CHW Voluntary Certification Rules](#) were approved by the Governor's Regulatory Review Council (GRRC) and were filed with the Secretary of State on September 7, 2022.
- The rules are effective as of November 6, 2022.
- The ADHS Special Licensing department is accepting applications as of November 7, 2022 through an online portal.

# CHW Services - SPA Language

Arizona state certified Community Health Workers (CHW) may provide AHCCCS-covered patient education and preventive services to individuals with a chronic condition or at risk for a chronic condition or for individuals with a documented barrier that is affecting the individual's health. CHW services must be recommended by a physician or other licensed practitioner of the healing arts acting within the scope of authorized practice under State law. Services must be documented in the member's medical record and may include:

- Health system navigation and resource coordination,
- Health education and training. The purpose of this service is to train and/or increase the member's awareness of methods and measures that have been proven effective in avoiding illness and/or lessening its effects. The content of the education must be consistent with established or recognized healthcare standards, or
- Health promotion and coaching. The purpose of this service is to provide information and training to members that enables them to make positive contributions to their health status.





# Reimbursement Pathways

## Phase 1 - **Effective April 1, 2023**

CHW/CHR obtains certification → CHW/CHR is employed by a currently registered provider. → CHW/CHR delivers a covered service within their scope of practice. → Registered provider submits a claim for the covered service provided by the CHW/CHR.



**Medicaid Claim Reimbursement**



## Phase 2- **Anticipated effective date: fall 2023**

CHW/CHR obtains certification → CHW/CHR is employed by a CHW/CHR organization. → CHW/CHR delivers a covered service within their scope of practice. → CHW organization submits a claim for the covered service provided by the CHW/CHR.

CHW/CHR organization will enroll with AHCCCS through the AHCCCS provider enrollment process.

# List of Eligible Providers for Phase 1

- Attendant Care Providers (PT 40)
- BH Outpatient Clinic (PT 77)
- Chiropractor (PT 16)
- Clinic (PT 05)
- Community/Rural Health Center (PT 29)
- Dentist (PT 07)
- Dialysis Clinic (PT 41)
- DO-Physician Osteopath (PT 31)
- Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) (PT C2)
- Habilitation Providers (PT39)
- Hospital (PT 02)
- Integrated Clinic (PT IC)
- MD-Physician (PT 08)
- Naturopath (PT 17)
- Optometrist (PT 69)
- Physicians Assistant (PT 18)
- Registered Nurse Practitioner (PT 19)

# CHW/CHR Employer Roles and Responsibilities

- Once an employer is registered with AHCCCS, it must ensure any CHW/CHR it submits Medicaid claims for are certified.
- The employer can submit claims using the allowed codes for the covered services provided by its CHWs/CHRs.
- The employer must maintain accurate and current records of all CHW/CHR certification document.
- Providers may employ CHWs/CHRs who are not certified, but they **will not** be able to bill Medicaid for service provided by non-licensed CHWs/CHRs.

# Reimbursable Service Codes

- Education and training for patient self-management by a qualified, nonphysician health care professional using a standardized curriculum, face-to-face with the patient (could include caregiver/family) each billed in 30 minutes increments.
  - 98960- education and training provided for an individual patient for each 30 minutes of service.
  - 98961- for a group of two to four patients.
  - 98962- or a group of five to eight patients.
- AHCCCS is currently developing guidance to establish per member per month billing limits.
  - If additional services are medically necessary, prior authorization would be required.



## Services Provided by a CHW/CHR

- A certified CHW/CHR can perform the full scope of practice as specified in A.A.C. R9-16-802; **however**,
- For Medicaid covered services to be billed, when serving Medicaid members:
  - CHW/CHR services must be medically necessary and recommended by a physician or other licensed practitioner.
  - The certified CHW/CHR must work under the direction of an eligible AHCCCS-registered provider.

# AHCCCS Next Steps

- Finalization of a CHW Policy. While this policy is in development, the AHCCCS FAQ Document ([HERE](#)), is available as a point of reference for community stakeholders.
- Development of a CHW Provider Type for Community Based Organizations (CBO). Our team is currently working on this and expect to have more details in the upcoming months.

# Resources

- CHW/CHR web page and FAQs  
[azahcccs.gov/CHW](http://azahcccs.gov/CHW)
- Additional guidance in the FFS Provider Billing Manual and AHCCCS Medical Policy Manual (AMPM) will be forthcoming.

# Open Discussion