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*Supporting the workforce of Indiana's CHWs as part of the health care delivery system.*

# Information when considering becoming a CHW

## What is an Authentic CHW?

INCHWA supports the importance of authentic CHWs in the workforce, ensuring that the profession isn't reduced to mere certification. An authentic CHW embodies all the characteristics outlined below.

An authentic Community Health Worker (CHW) is someone who:

- **Expert by Experience** – Understands the struggles, barriers, and challenges the community faces because they have personally experienced them or have deep knowledge of them.
- **Is a Natural Helper** – Has a genuine passion for assisting and uplifting others, often serving as a trusted resource within their community.
- **Leverages Community Assets**—Knows local resources, services, and networks to connect individuals with the help they need effectively.
- **Builds Trust and Relationships** – Forms meaningful, long-term relationships with community members based on mutual respect and understanding.
- **Advocates for Equitable Healthcare**—Advocates for the rights and well-being of individuals and communities to ensure fair access to care.

## The Landscape of the Community Health Worker (CHW) Profession in Indiana

Indiana's Community Health Worker (CHW) profession is evolving as the state increasingly acknowledges the essential role of CHWs in enhancing health outcomes, addressing social determinants of health, and lowering healthcare costs. This profession is gaining traction in healthcare, public health, and social service sectors, with organizations incorporating CHWs into care teams to bolster support for patients and communities. Funding primarily comes from grants, Medicaid/Medicare reimbursements, and sometimes foundation funds. A passion for service motivates most individuals to pursue a career as a CHW. This role significantly impacts both individual lives and the broader public health landscape. The profession is fulfilling for those possessing the following personal qualities:

- Strong community connection
- Interpersonal warmth
- Trustworthiness and maturity
- Open-mindedness



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- Objectivity
- Competence
- Commitment to social justice
- Good psychological health
- Self-awareness and understanding

We invite CHWs to embrace self-care and connect with others who share similar values, joining a supportive community that recognizes their challenges. Therefore, we offer the CHW community through INCHWA Community Connectors. We encourage you to join for just \$20.00 a year.

## What Does Certification Mean in Indiana?

By law, certification is not required to work as a CHW in Indiana. However, it is highly recommended. Your designation as a Certified Community Health Worker (CCHW) proves you have demonstrated a foundational mastery of the CHW Core Competencies defined nationally and in Indiana. Being certified could offer more employment opportunities since employers are looking for ways to fund the position through reimbursement of services.

*[Additionally, your certification means that Medicaid could reimburse your employer for your services as a CHW if they are carried out as defined by Indiana Health Coverage Programs \(IHCP\).](#)*

## Are CEUs required to maintain my CHW Certification?

- Indiana does not mandate CHW certification or require continuing education units (CEUs) to maintain certification. While no formal continuing education requirements exist for an INCHWA-issued CHW certification, ongoing learning is strongly encouraged. Pursuing continued education helps you stay current with best practices, enhance the quality of care you provide to clients, and increase your value to employers.
- INCHWA provides ongoing education options for all CHWs. Our CHW Community can access these resources; membership is only \$20 annually. Join INCHWA Community Connectors to take advantage of classes, workshops, and community resources.



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## The Importance of a Code of Ethics for Community Health Workers (CHWs)

A **Code of Ethics** is essential for **Community Health Workers (CHWs)** as it provides a **guiding framework** that ensures professionalism, integrity, and accountability. CHWs are a vital link between communities and healthcare systems, and ethical standards help maintain **trust, credibility, and effectiveness** in their roles.

Key Reasons Why a Code of Ethics is Important for CHWs:

1. Establishes Professional Standards
2. Builds Trust with the Community
3. Promotes Cultural Humility & Equity
4. Protects Client Rights & Confidentiality
5. Strengthens Collaboration & Teamwork
6. Encourages Continuous Learning & Growth
7. Reduces Ethical Dilemmas & Conflicts
8. Enhances the Credibility of the CHW Workforce

By adhering to a **Code of Ethics**, CHWs **demonstrate professionalism, protect their clients, and elevate their standard of care.**