

New England Community Health Worker Coalition

Profile: Rhode Island



Strength in Unity

The New England Community Health Worker Coalition aims to promote unity and advance the visibility of Community Health Workers (CHWs) across the region. Based on a common national understanding of CHW roles that has grown out of decades of consensus-building, the American Public Health Association (APHA) and the National Association of Community Health Workers (NACHW) have recognized a framework that states can use to advance their CHW workforce. Grounded in the CHW Core Consensus (C3) Project, this framework helps states to develop their own CHW definition, scope of practice and core competencies to both be in alignment with national efforts and to best fit the unique needs of their own CHW workforce. This document highlights state-specific activity from the New England Region.



Community Health Workers in Rhode Island

CHW DEFINITION: Rhode Island draws from the American Public Health Association's definition of CHW.

CHW ASSOCIATION: The [Community Health Worker Association of Rhode Island](#) (CHWARI) was formed in 2009 and is housed at Rhode Island College's Institute for Education in Healthcare. CHWARI connects CHWs to training, networking, employment and advocacy opportunities.

TRAINING: CHWARI, Clinica Esperanza, RIPIN, and Community Health Innovations-RI all provide versions of the CHW Core Competency training that align with the Rhode Island Certification Board. CHWARI delivers other trainings that enjoy state certification: Cardiovascular Health/Diabetes Management for CHWs, CHW Training: Building Holistic Partnerships Among Older Adults (in English and Spanish), and HIV. CHWARI also delivers these specialty trainings for CHWs: CHW Supervisor Training, Racial and Social Justice Training, and Public Health Training.

CERTIFICATION: In 2016, the Rhode Island Certification Board (RICB) approved of a Community Health Worker Certification structure that had been developed by CHW subject matter experts and population/community health stakeholders. RI's CHW certification strives to ensure the highest degree of access, offering a personal "portfolio" element instead of a written exam, and payment of the application fee for graduates of CHWARI core trainings funded through the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH).

HEALTH DEPARTMENT CHW INFRASTRUCTURE: RIDOH convened state agency leadership to establish a robust CHW association and position CHWs in RI's health system transformation initiatives, including work in Rhode Island's Health Equity Zones. RIDOH formed the CHW Strategy Team in 2021 which works to align and facilitate the coordination of efforts among public health topics and programs as they relate to CHWs.

FINANCING: RIDOH supports sustainable financing for CHWs through federal grants, working with health plans, state agencies, and community-based organizations. The RI Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) was authorized in 2022 to offer Medicaid reimbursement for CHWs' services on a fee-for-service basis.

WORKFORCE SURVEY(S): RIDOH works with EOHHS and Department of Labor on healthcare workforce initiatives that assess the workforce capacity. CHWARI, under Rhode Island College, has conducted CHW workforce and CHW Employer surveys in the last five years that have helped inform CHW policy, programs, and collaboration. (Surveys: [2018](#), [2021](#))

CODE OF ETHICS: Through the content of CHW trainings, CHWARI and RIDOH promote the Code of Ethics that was developed by the American CHW Association and then adopted by the National Association of CHWs.

SCOPE OF PRACTICE: CHW practice is most widely standardized through the Rhode Island Certification Board domains of certification.



Rhode Island Contact Information

Community Health Worker Association of RI
chwari.org

Rhode Island Certification Board
ricertboard.org

Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) CHW Webpage
health.ri.gov/chw



Community Health Workers Across the Nation

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. (APHA, 2016)

NATIONAL RESOURCES:

American Public Health Association (APHA) CHW Section:
Apha.org/apha-communities/member-sections/community-health-workers/resources

Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO):
astho.org/community-health-workers

Bureau of Labor Statistics CHW Standard Occupational Classification:
bls.gov/soc

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) CHW Resources:
cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/chw/index.html

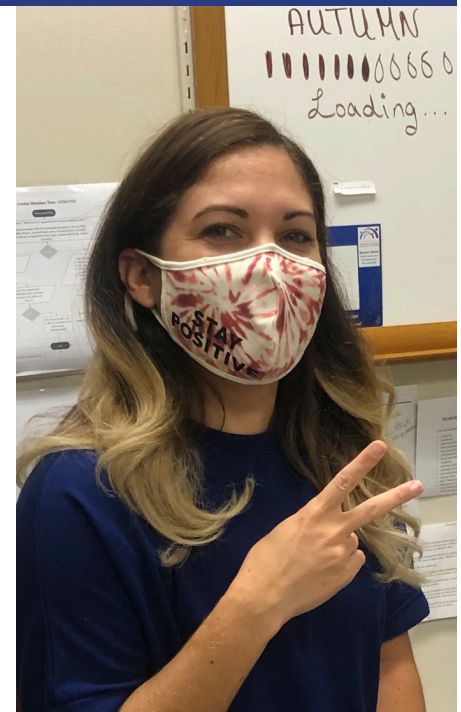
Community Health Worker Central
chwcentral.org

Community Health Worker Core Consensus Project (C3):
c3project.org

National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP) State Community Health Worker Models:

nashp.org/state-community-health-worker-models

National Association for Community Health Workers:
nachw.org



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