

# **Community Health Worker or Promotor(a) Training and Certification Program Policy**

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## 1. Purpose

To establish Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) certification and renewal criteria for promotores/ community health workers (CHWs), CHW Instructors (CHWIs), and CHW training programs.

## 2. Background

[Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 48](#), requires DSHS to establish and operate a training and certification program for promotores/CHWs, CHWIs, and CHW training programs. This policy is in compliance with standards and guidelines established in Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 48; [25 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 146](#); and other applicable state laws and regulations.

## 3. Cost of Certification and Renewal

DSHS certifies promotores/CHWs, CHWIs, and CHW training programs free of charge.

## 4. Definitions

The following definitions apply to this policy only.

**Certified Community Health Worker Instructor (CHWI)** – An individual certified by DSHS who provides instruction and training in one or more core competencies to promotores/CHWs. A CHWI has in-depth knowledge of the role of a promotor(a)/CHW, proficiency in adult education methods, understanding of [core competencies](#), skills in curriculum development and assessment, and facilitates culturally relevant diverse topics.

**Certified Promotor(a)/Community Health Worker (CHW)** – An individual certified by DSHS to promote wellness by helping individuals in a community adopt healthy behaviors and advocating for those who have limited resources or need additional help. A promotor(a)/CHW is a trusted member of the community and understands the communities primary language, culture, and life experiences.

**Certified Training Program** – An organization certified by DSHS that provides training to promotores/CHWs and/or CHWIs.

**Continuing Education Unit (CEU)** – Also known as Continuing Education (CE), is a measure to track continuing education and training completion. Measured in 15-minute increments of instruction: 0.25 CEU = 15 minutes, 0.5 CEU = 30 minutes, 0.75 CEU = 45 minutes, 1 CEU = one hour.

**Core Competencies** – A set of skills, knowledge, and qualities a promotor(a)/CHW and CHWI must demonstrate.

**DSHS-certified CEU** – Earned when a DSHS certified CHWI teaches a DSHS certified curriculum from a DSHS certified training program.

**Non-DSHS certified CEU** – Earned when non-DSHS certified curriculum from a CHWI related conference or training is taught and covers at least one of the core competencies.

## 5. Application Processing Timeframes

### Training Program Application

A training program application outlines an organization's experience, qualifications, and type of training (certification course, CEUs, or both) for CHWs and CHWIs. The application also includes a training curriculum and a plan for delivering future training.

DSHS will process training program applications and email a notice of approval or disapproval within 120-business days of receiving the application. DSHS will notify the applicant of how to complete an application if an application is missing materials or needs correction. The 120-business day processing time will restart once the applicant resubmits a complete application.

DSHS may require submission of a new application if additional materials and corrections are not returned within 120-business days.

### Training Program Curriculum Application

A training program curriculum application includes a structured plan with resources outlining training goals for CHWs and CHWIs and a performance evaluation.

DSHS will process training program curriculum applications and email a notice of approval or disapproval within 120-business days of receiving the application. DSHS will notify the applicant of how to complete an application if an application is missing materials or needs correction. The 120-business day processing time will restart once the applicant resubmits a complete curriculum application.

DSHS may require submission of a new curriculum application if additional materials and corrections are not returned within 120-business days.

DSHS may extend the 120-business days timeframe if a subject matter expert (SME) cannot be promptly identified for the training topic, if the SME requests additional time to review, or another need arises. A SME is an expert of a training topic who provides feedback and insights during curriculum review and approval.

### Promotores/CHWs and CHW Instructors Application

A CHW or CHWI application is based on training or experience and required for DSHS certification.

DSHS will process promotor(a)/CHW and CHWI applications and email a notice of approval or disapproval within 90-business days of receiving the application. DSHS will notify the applicant of how to complete an incomplete application if an application

is missing materials or needs correction. The 90-business day processing time will restart once the applicant resubmits a complete application.

DSHS may require submission of a new application if additional materials and corrections are not returned within 90-business days.

## **6. Certification Requirements for Training Programs**

### **Initial Application Requirements**

Training programs applying for the first time must include:

- A complete [initial certification application](#) provided by DSHS
- A plan to provide trainings on an annual basis which includes:
  - Locations
  - Training schedule
  - Recruitment and registration/enrollment procedures
  - Cost of classes
  - Training methodology (classroom or distance learning)
  - Completion/graduation requirements
  - Training evaluation
- A curriculum consistent with the type of training provided
  - Certification course for CHWs or CHWIs
  - CE for CHWs or CHWIs

A training program applying for the first time may include a DSHS certified curriculum from a DSHS certified training program that has agreed to share their curriculum. In this situation, the training program application must include:

- Description of changes, if any, to the DSHS certified curriculum
- Documentation from the DSHS certified training program agreeing to share their DSHS approved curriculum with the training program applying for certification.

### **Renewal Requirements**

DSHS certified training programs must renew certification every two years. To renew a certification, DSHS certified training programs must submit the following:

- A complete [renewal application](#) provided by DSHS
- Record of trainings offered during the previous two-year certification cycle
- List of instructors
- A plan to provide trainings on an annual basis which includes:
  - Locations
  - Training schedule

- Recruitment and registration/enrollment procedures
- Cost of classes
- Training methodology (classroom or distance learning)
- Completion/graduation requirements
- Training evaluation
- List of each DSHS certified curriculum used by the DSHS certified training program and the last date of certification.
- An assurance statement stating the curricula is accurate and relevant with the most current research available and complies with current CHW Program Policy.

If a DSHS certified training program applying for renewal submits a new curriculum with their application, the DSHS certified training program must follow Certification Requirements for Training Curricula below.

## **7. Certification Requirements for Training Curricula**

DSHS certified curricula are approved to be offered only in the state of Texas. Curricula need to be certified by DSHS before offering it as a training or as a meeting/conference presentation. A CHW or CHWI will only receive DSHS-certified CEUs for approved training offered in Texas.

All initial, continuing, amended and renewing curricula submitted for DSHS certification must not include promotional items including but not limited to a business, product, or service. The curricula must remain purely educational on the health topic presented.

The quality of the curricula submitted should be high and professional as outlined in this section. All curricula submitted must meet DSHS standards and requirements in this policy.

Continuing education curricula must be educational on one health topic. Curricula with more than one health topic will not be certified. Curricula must meet core competency standards and requirements as stated in this DSHS policy. If DSHS finds the content not in alignment with state priorities or appropriate for the audience, DSHS has the right to deny certification.

DSHS reserves the right to certify or deny, full or partial curricula based on federal and state priorities, and this DSHS policy.

### **Initial Curricula**

Curricula designed for the initial certification course for CHWs or CHWIs must:

- Be 180 hours of instruction at minimum
- Include at least 20 hours in each of the core competencies in Power Point format
- Cover all core competencies with equal time
- Include nine modules, one per each of the nine core competencies
- Include 14 hours of instruction or lecture time and six hours of interactive or

engagement activities in a 20-hour module

- Include lessons and activities in each module aligning with the learning objectives in each of [CHW Core Competencies Update](#)
- Include citations and references for the information detailed in the curricula
  - Citations and references should be at the bottom of each PowerPoint slide
- Include a component of hands-on learning, such as field practice, internship, or practicum
- Include activities and other strategies consistent with adult learning theory and principles
- Contain language relevant to the topic and target audience
- Contain a literacy level appropriate to the topic and target audience
- Include a translation if curricula are in a language other than English
- Specify training methodology (classroom or distance learning)
- Include pre- and post-knowledge tests with answer keys
- If applicable, include an evaluation of the training experience

In addition to the above requirements, curricula designed for the CHWI initial certification course must:

- Include lessons and activities preparing CHWIs to train core competencies
- Include training in curricula development, assessment, and facilitation of culturally relevant diverse topics
- Include interactive teaching methods and engagement activities appealing to multiple learning styles including role-playing, skills demonstration, group facilitation, practice sessions for skill-building, and opportunities to measure competence

## **Continuing Education Curricula**

All continuing education curricula for CHWs or CHWIs must:

- Cover one or more of the core competencies in Power Point format
- Identify the title, total contact hours, and hours of each core competency
- Include specific learning objectives
  - Explain how CHWs and CHWIs will benefit and can apply the information provided
- Include the name and organization of the curriculum developer
- Include a statement issued by the training program stating the curricula is public domain or an approval letter to use the curricula from the training program if curricula was developed by a DSHS certified training program
- Include the participation of a certified CHWI in the review or development of the

curricula

- Include citations and references for the information detailed in the curricula
  - Citations and references should be at the bottom of each PowerPoint slide
- Include activities or other strategies consistent with adult learning theory and principles
- Contain language relevant to the topic and target audience
- Contain a literacy level appropriate to the topic and target audience
- Include a translation if curricula is in a language other than English
- Specify training methodology (classroom or distance learning)
- If applicable, include pre- and post-knowledge tests with answer keys
- If applicable, include an evaluation of the training experience
- Include all materials used for training, including but not limited to, PowerPoint presentations, lesson plans, handouts, scenarios, or other materials

### **Amending or Renewing DSHS Certified Curricula**

DSHS certified training programs must update curricula to ensure content is accurate and relevant with current research. If a certified curriculum is changed, the DSHS certified training program must resubmit the curricula for recertification.

The DSHS certified training program that owns the curricula must submit an assurance statement every two years with the training center certification renewal packet stating the curricula is accurate and relevant with the most current research available and complies with the curriculum standards in the current CHW Program Policy. It is also the training program's responsibility to proactively make any updates or revisions needed and resubmit the curriculum for certification before offering it.

DSHS certified training programs must re-submit certified curricula every five years from the date it was certified to renew certification, if the curricula are still being used in any method.

## **8. DSHS Certified Training Program Requirements**

### **Course Completion Certificates**

DSHS certified training programs must provide a certificate to participants as proof of completion. DSHS provides certificate templates on the [CHW Program Training Curricula](#) webpage.

Training programs not using the DSHS certificate templates must include the following information on all certificates of completion:

- Name of the DSHS certified training program offering the course
- Title and date of the course
- Name of the DSHS certified CHWI who taught the course

- If instructor signature line is on the certificate, signature must be included
- Type of course:
  - Certification course (CHWs or CHWIs)
  - Continuing education (CHWs, CHWIs or both)
- Full name of the participant
- Number of CEUs awarded

## **Training Rosters**

All DSHS certified training programs must submit a roster to DSHS at [CHW@dshs.texas.gov](mailto:CHW@dshs.texas.gov) within seven business days of a DSHS-certified CHW/CHWI certification course or CHW/CHWI DSHS-certified continuing education course.

The roster must include the following:

- Name of certified training program offering the course
- Title of the course
- Date(s) the course was offered
- Total CEUs offered
- Competencies covered
- Location and city
- Name of certified CHWI(s) who taught the course
- Type of course:
  - Certification course (CHWs or CHWIs)
  - Continuing education (CHWs, CHWIs or both)
- Full name of participants with certification status (CHWs or CHWI)

## **Training Announcements**

DSHS certified training programs may email training announcements to DSHS at [CHW@dshs.texas.gov](mailto:CHW@dshs.texas.gov) for promotion in the publication, the Friday Digest. The training announcement must include the following course information in this order:

- Name of certified training program
- Title
- Date(s)
- Start and end time
- Location and city
- Number of DSHS certified CEUs offered for CHWs or CHWIs
- Cost
- Language

- Registration information

- Web link
- Email address
- Phone number

**Note:** Registration information must be active and direct participants to the person leading the training.

- Point of contact for questions

- Name
- Email address
- Phone number

The certified training program must email the training announcement to [CHW@dshs.texas.gov](mailto:CHW@dshs.texas.gov) at least two weeks before the training program wants to have the announcement published.

DSHS reserves the right to approve, disapprove or delay request for announcements based on capacity, federal and state priorities, and executive direction.

## 9. Certification Requirements for CHWIs

### Initial Application

Persons applying as a CHWI for the first time must submit:

- Complete [initial certification application provided by DSHS](#)
- Current color photo showing all facial features
- Resume
- CHWI course certificate of completion
  - If applying based on completion of training
- Complete [experience verification form](#)
  - If applying based on teaching/training experience
- Proof of Texas residency

### Renewal of Certification

CHWIs must renew their certification every two years by submitting:

- Complete [renewal application provided by DSHS](#)
- Current color photo showing all facial features
- Proof of completion of required continuing education, including, but not limited to:
  - Certificate of completion
  - Training roster

- Emails from the DSHS certified training program confirming participation and completion
- Proof of Texas residency

Certificates of completion must include:

- Name of participant
- Title and date of the course
- Name of certified training program (or organization if non-certified)
- Number of CEUs awarded

## Continuing Education for Certified CHWIs

Certified CHWIs are required to complete a minimum of 20 hours continuing education. Duplicate training certificates are not accepted, this includes but is not limited to:

- Certificates for the same training taken in Spanish and English
- Certificates for the same training taken from two different CHWIs or training centers

Continuing education must:

- Be 30 consecutive minutes (0.5) or more and within the scope of a CHWI
- Cover at least one of the core competencies

Continuing Education Unit (CEU) options:

- DSHS-Certified Continuing Education – At least ten (10) CEUs of the 20 total CEUs must come from participation in a DSHS-certified CHWI training course. Five DSHS-certified CEUs for CHWIs can be combined with one of the options below:
  - Option 1: Five (5) CEUs completed for a Texas license or certification in another health profession, OR
  - Option 2: Five (5) CEUs completed through the instruction of a DSHS-certified training course for CHW or CHWIs.

One CEU = two hours of instruction. This option requires submission of a roster that includes:

- Name of certified training program offering the course
- Title of course
- Date(s) the course was offered
- Total CEUs offered
- Competencies covered
- Location and city
- Name of certified CHWI(s) who taught the course
- Type of course:

- Certification course (CHWs or CHWIs)
- Continuing education (CHWs, CHWIs or both)
- Full name of participants with certification status (CHWs or CHWI)
- Non-Certified Continuing Education - Ten (10) hours of the 20 total CEUs may come from training programs and instructors not certified by DSHS but still covers one core competency within the scope of a certified CHWI.

All 20 CEUs may be completed by participating in a DSHS certified training program that provides CEUs.

**Note:** CHWI applicants renewing their certification with both CHW and CHWI certification, cannot use the same continuing education activities for both CHW and CHWI renewal. Different continuing education activities must be completed for each certification.

## 10. Certification Requirements for Promotores/CHWs

### Initial Application

Persons applying as a Promotor(a)/CHW for the first time must submit:

- A complete [initial certification application provided by DSHS](#)
- Current color photo showing all facial features
- CHW course certificate of completion
  - If applying based on completion of training
- Complete [Employment/Volunteer History Verification Form](#)
  - If applying based on experience in a CHW role
- Proof of Texas residency

### Renewal of Certification

Promotores/CHWs must renew their certification every two years by submitting:

- Complete [renewal application provided by DSHS](#)
- Current color photo showing all facial features
- Proof of completion of required continuing education, including but not limited to:
  - Certificates of completion
  - Emails from the DSHS certified training program confirming participation and completion

Proof of Texas residency

Certificates of completion must include:

- Name of participant
- Title and date of the course
- Name of certified training program (or organization if non-certified)
- Number of CEUs awarded

### Continuing Education Requirements for Certified Promotores/CHWs

Certified Promotores/CHWs are required to complete a minimum of 20 hours continuing education. Duplicate training certificates are not accepted, this includes but is not limited to:

- Certificates for the same training taken in Spanish and English
- Certificates for the same training taken from two different CHWIs or training centers

Continuing education must:

- Be 30 consecutive minutes (0.5 CEUs) or more

- Cover at least one of the core competencies

Continuing Education Unit (CEU) options:

- DSHS-Certified Continuing Education – At least ten (10) CEUs of the 20 total CEUs for CHWs must come from participation in a DSHS-certified CHW training program. The other ten (10) hours may include five (5) CEUs completed for a Texas license or certification in another health profession. These must be related to the CHW core competencies.
- Non-Certified Continuing Education – Ten (10) hours of the 20 total CEUs may come from training programs and instructors not certified by DSHS that relate to one or more of the CHW core competencies.

**Note:** All 20 CEUs may be completed from participating in a DSHS certified training program that provides CEUs.

**Note:** For dual certification, the same continuing education activities cannot be used for both CHW and CHWI renewal. Different continuing education activities must be completed for each certification.

## 11. Competency Verification of Promotores/CHWs and CHWIs

Applicants for promotor(a)/CHW or CHWI certification must show evidence of mastery of the [CHW core competencies](#) through completion of an initial certification course or experience.

### Completion of Initial Certification Course

DSHS verifies the applicant gained core competencies through completion of an initial certification course by reviewing the initial certification course report provided by the certified training program. The applicant's name on the application and the certificate of completion must match the report from the certified training program.

### Experience

DSHS requires the [Request for Experience Verification](#) form to verify the applicant has gained core competencies. The supervisor(s) or professional references listed in the "Experience" section of the application must email this form directly to the CHW Program at [chw@dshs.texas.gov](mailto:chw@dshs.texas.gov). DSHS will call the submitter if additional verification or follow up is needed. The phone number provided for verification must be a place of business. DSHS will not call personal numbers. DSHS will not accept Request for Experience Verification forms submitted directly by applicants.

The applicant must show at least 1,000 cumulative hours of experience covering all core competencies. DSHS will verify each experience that:

- Totals 300 hours or more
- Meets at least half of the skills under each core competency

- Occurred in the last three years

DSHS will verify the promotor/CHW certification applicant worked directly with the community (volunteer or paid) in the past three years and demonstrates mastery in core competencies.

DSHS will verify the CHWI certification applicant instructed or trained promotores, CHWs, or other health care professionals in the past three years and demonstrates teaching or training in core competencies.

## **12. Certification Extension**

Promotores/CHWs and CHWIs may request one 90-day extension if needed to extend the timeframe given to submit renewal documentation. Promotores/CHWs and CHWIs must email a request to [CHW@dshs.texas.gov](mailto:CHW@dshs.texas.gov).

After all documentation is received and certification is renewed, the expiration date will be two-years from the original expiration date, prior to the extension.

Promotores/CHWs and CHWIs can renew certification within 12 months of the original expiration date. If the certification has been expired for more than 12 months, the requirements for an initial application must be met.

## **13. Alternative Certification for Military Service Members, Military Spouses, and Military Veterans**

A military service member, military spouse, or military veteran may apply for Promotores/CHW or CHWI certification.

For requirements and procedures, please read DSHS [Texas Administrative Code, Section 1.91](#)

## **14. Military Certification Exemptions**

A military service member or military spouse may act as a Promotora/CHW or CHWI, as if certified in Texas, without applying for certification.

For requirements and procedures, please read [Texas Occupations Code, Section 55.0041](#) and refer to the [DSHS Community Health Worker Program webpage](#).

## **15. Change of Information**

Certified training programs, Promotores/CHWs, CHWIs, and out-of-state military service members or a military spouse acting as a Promotores/CHW or CHWI, must notify DSHS, by email to [CHW@dshs.texas.gov](mailto:CHW@dshs.texas.gov), of any contact information changes, including but not limited to:

- Physical mailing address
- Phone number
- Email address

Changes to legal names must be submitted by email to [CHW@dshs.texas.gov](mailto:CHW@dshs.texas.gov) and include legal documentation noting the name change. Acceptable legal

documentation:

- Driver license
- Marriage or divorce certificates
- Social security card

## **16. Applicants and Certification Holders with a Criminal Conviction**

DSHS may deny, suspend, or revoke a CHW or CHWI certification for a person imprisoned for a felony conviction, in accordance to [Government Code, Section 53.021 \(b\)](#).

## **17. Protected Information**

The following information will not be released or shared, as required by Texas [Government Code, Section 552.11765](#):

- CHW or CHWI application
- Home address, city, and zip
- Home phone (unless the home phone is also the business phone)
- Email address (unless the email address is also the business email address)
- Date of birth

The above information will not be shared in open records requests or other requests for information.

Survivors of family violence, domestic violence, and sexual assault, including current or former clients of a family violence shelter center, victims of trafficking shelter center, or sexual assault programs who previously held, or are applicants for Promotores/CHW or CHWI certification may complete [Texas Government Code Section 552.138 Public Access Notice Form](#) to restrict personal information from public access per [Texas Government Code, Section 552.138](#).

Protected personal information includes but is not limited to:

- Name
- Telephone Number
- Place of employment
- Physical address
- Email address