



TEXAS

Health and Human Services

Texas Department of State
Health Services

2020 Annual Report

Promotora or Community Health Worker Training and Certification Program

April 2021

Prepared by DSHS Promotora
or Community Health Worker Training
and Certification Program

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Executive Summary

This annual report presents data related to Community Health Worker (CHW) and CHW Instructor (CHWI) certification, renewal rates, and trends, as well as a description of initial certification and continuing education courses for CHWs and CHWIs. This report also provides information on CHW and CHWI demographic characteristics, the location of certified CHWs and training programs in Texas, and program outcomes. The CHW Program supports the Promotor(a) or Community Health Worker Training and Certification Advisory Committee as mandated by [Health and Safety Code, Chapter 48](#).

In 2020, the Department of State Health Services' (DSHS) Promotora or Community Health Worker Training and Certification Program (CHW Program) led the following activities:

- Solicitation process to fill vacancies in the Promotora or Community Health Worker Training and Certification Advisory Committee.
- Conducted the [2020 CHW Statewide Employer Survey](#) to understand the role, training, funding and job scope of CHWs.

In 2021, the CHW program plans the following activities:

- Maintain and make improvements to the online application when appropriate. The CHW team will ensure the online application is user-friendly and updated as needed to complete the online process.
- Develop guidelines for creating quality CHWI continuing education curricula.

As of December 31, 2020, there were 3,776 certified CHWs in Texas. This is a decrease of 4.5 percent compared to 3,955 certified CHWs at the end of 2019. The percentage of CHWs renewing their DSHS certifications increased from 33 percent in 2019 to 46 percent in 2020.

In 2020, there were a total of 295 certified CHWIs, including 63 newly certified CHWIs. This is an increase from the 55 newly certified CHWIs in 2019. The number of CHWIs who did not renew their certification decreased from 56 in 2019 to 39 in 2020.

DSHS-approved CHW certification training programs graduated 723 individuals in 2020.

DSHS-approved training programs provided 234 continuing education opportunities for CHWs, offering over 700 DSHS-certified contact hours to 14,345

participants. Training programs also provided 59 continuing education opportunities for CHWIs both in-person and via distance learning.

The CHW Program helps to increase awareness of CHW roles in Texas and the positive impact CHWs have on creating healthier communities. The CHW Program expects the number of certified CHWs to grow as CHWs are increasingly integrated in health and social service systems across the state.

1. Introduction

In 2001, Texas was the first state to put in place statewide training and credentialing standards for promotores or community health workers (CHWs). As mandated by [Health and Safety Code, Chapter 48](#), The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) established the Promotor(a) or Community Health Worker Training and Certification Program (CHW Program). More information on the CHW Program can be found at dshs.texas.gov/chw.aspx.

The CHW Program operates and oversees the development and implementation of statewide training and certification standards, guidelines, and requirements for individuals who are certified as CHWs, community health worker instructors (CHWIs), and CHW training programs.

This report will evaluate the CHW Program certification and renewal rates and trends, as well as initial certification and continuing education courses for CHWs and CHWIs. This report also tracks data on CHW and CHWI demographic characteristics and the location of certified CHWs and training programs in Texas.

2. Background

Community Health Workers (CHWs), also known as Promotores de Salud, are individuals who serve as liaisons and cultural mediators between health care and social services and the communities they serve. CHWs are members of the community and have a deep understanding of the ethnicity, language, socio-economic status, and life experiences of the community members. CHWs assist people with access to needed services and build individual, community, and system capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency through various activities. CHWs have skills in the following eight core competencies: communication, interpersonal skills, service coordination, capacity building, advocacy, teaching, organizational skills, and knowledge base in specific health issues. A more detailed summary of the core competencies can be found using [this link](#).

[House Bill 1864, 76th Legislature, Regular Session, 1999](#), directed the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to establish a temporary committee to study issues related to the development of outreach and education programs for CHWs, making Texas the first state to pass legislation towards creating a statewide CHW training and certification program.

[Senate Bill 1051, 77th Legislature, Regular Session, 2001](#), DSHS established the CHW Program in May 2001. Senate Bill 1051 directed DSHS to develop the program to enhance the development and implementation of statewide training and certification standards.

The CHW Program is overseen by the Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention (HPCDPS) Section in the Division for Community Health Improvement at DSHS. The CHW Program is supported by Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant funding to the state. There are currently six full time employees who support the functions of the program.

CHW certification is based on completing a Texas DSHS core competency certification course or through verified CHW experience of at least 1,000 hours in the last three years. All certified CHWs must show that they have mastered the eight CHW core competencies.

The CHW Program also oversees certification for CHWIs and training programs. Training programs include community colleges, other academic institutions, Area Health Education Centers, Federally Qualified Health Centers, a CHW network, and

community-based organizations that train CHWs, and CHWIs. Another function of the CHW Program is reviewing and approving all certification, training, and certified continuing education in-person or distance learning courses and curricula for CHWs and CHWIs.

As required by [Government Code, Section 2001.039](#), DSHS reviews the rules governing the administration of the CHW Program ([25 Texas Administrative Code, Rules 146.1-146.8](#)) every four years. The administrative rules provide the guidelines for operating the training and certification program for CHWs, CHWIs, and training programs. The most recently adopted rules were implemented in September 2019. Key revisions of the CHW certification standards include CHW certification eligibility at 16 years old and requiring experience used for certification to have occurred in the previous three years. The certification eligibility specific to age 16 aligns with Texas work laws and allows adolescents to seek CHW status to support health initiatives for their peers. Reducing certification eligibility based on experience to the previous three years ensures applicant's experience and skills align with current practices and standards.

DSHS is committed to enhancing training and professional development of CHWs and supporting CHW services across Texas. Dr. John Hellerstedt, Commissioner of DSHS, acknowledged CHWs and promotores as an instrumental workforce in public health in a video developed by DSHS (this video can be viewed at youtube.com/watch?v=hfpGKmA1aNE.) CHWs are essential in bringing positive health outcomes, changing health behaviors and encouraging healthy lifestyles in Texas communities.

3. Program Milestones and Outcomes

This section presents information on the following key statistics regarding the volume of initial and renewal applications, continuing education courses certified by the CHW Program, and continued growth of the CHW infrastructure in Texas:

- The number of DSHS certified CHWs;
- The number of DSHS certified CHWIs;
- The number of certification renewals;
- The number of DSHS certified training programs; and,
- Certified continuing education.

DSHS-Certified Community Health Workers

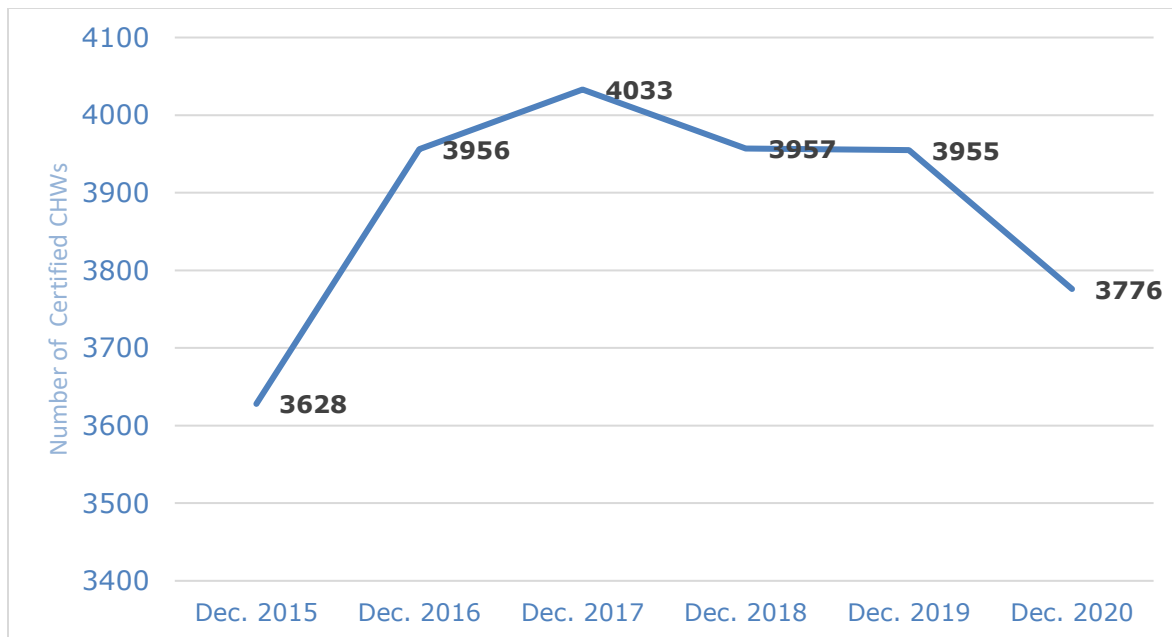
CHWs are eligible to be certified in Texas by completing a DSHS-certified training course of at least 160 hours or based on experience through verification of at least 1,000 hours of community health work experience demonstrating mastery in the eight core competencies in the most recent three years.

The CHW Program approves applications for initial CHW certification based on training or experience. The CHW application data is entered and collected into the DSHS Regulatory Automated Services (RAS) Portal and Versa Regulatory (VR) database. This is an internal database for processing of applications and running reports on the number of CHWs certified by DSHS each year.

The number of DSHS-certified CHWs in Texas remains consistent. As of December 31, 2020, there were 3,776 certified CHWs, which is a decrease of 4.5 percent compared to 3,955 certified CHWs at the end of 2019 ([Figure 1](#)).

A total of 742 new CHWs were certified in 2020 compared to 2019 when 898 CHWs received their certification. Of the new CHWs certified in 2020, 366 (49 percent) were certified through training. The remaining 376 (51 percent) were certified based on experience.

Figure 1. Number of Certified CHWs, 2015-2020ⁱ



ⁱ Source: DSHS RAS Portal and VR Database

Community Health Worker Certification Training Graduates

CHW certification training programs graduated 723 individuals in 2020. The number of graduates increased significantly compared to 2019 when 647 individuals graduated from a DSHS-approved CHW certification training program. See [Appendix A](#) for information about the number of certification training courses and graduates by county.¹

DSHS-Certified Community Health Worker Instructors

CHW Instructors (CHWIs) can be certified in Texas by completing a DSHS-certified instructor training course of at least 160 hours or based on experience through verification of at least 1,000 hours of providing training to CHWs or other health care professionals and paraprofessionals in the most recent three years.

¹ Some graduates from DSHS-approved training programs did not apply for certification, therefore, the number of graduates is not the same as the number that applied for certification based on training.

Community Health Worker Instructors Newly Certified in 2020

As of December 31, 2020, there were 295 certified CHWIs as compared to 282 at the end of 2019. There was a total of 63 newly certified CHWIs in 2020 - an increase from the 55 newly certified Instructors in 2019. Of the newly certified CHWIs, 26 (41 percent) were certified based on experience and 37 (59 percent) were certified based on completion of training.

The percentage of newly certified CHWIs based on completion of training increased from 40 percent to 50 percent in 2020.

Community Health Worker Instructor Certification Training Graduates

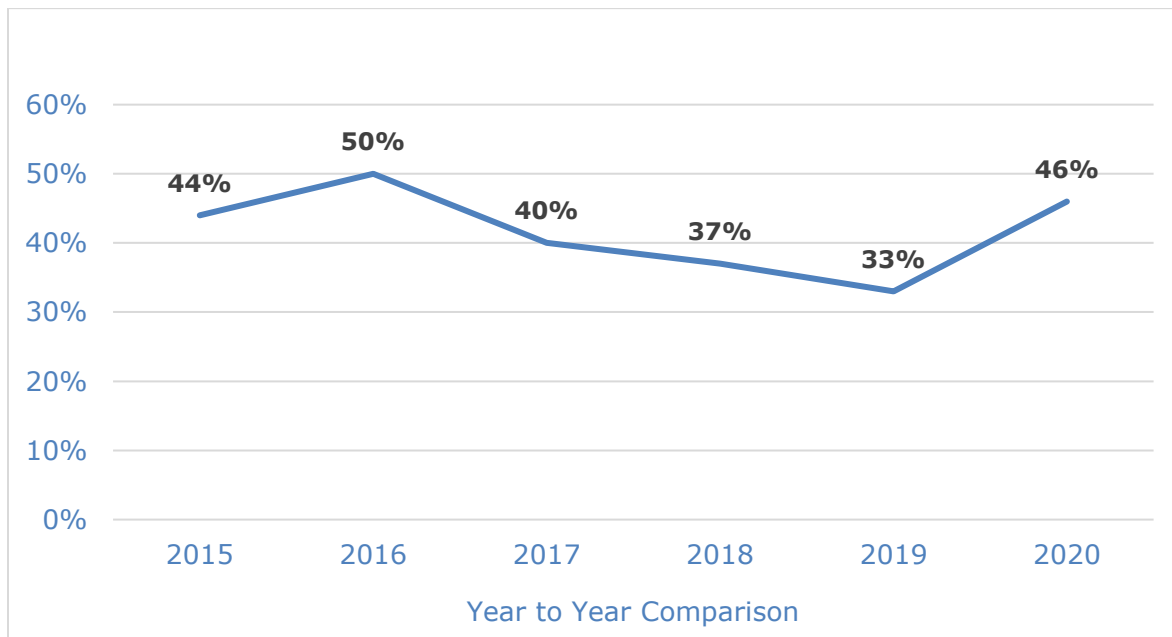
In 2020, there were 38 graduates of DSHS-approved CHWI certification training programs. This an increase of 150 percent from the 15 graduates from DSHS-approved instructor certification training programs in 2019.

CHW and Instructor Certification Renewals and Expirations

CHWs must complete at least 20 hours of continuing education every two years to renew their certificates, including at least 10 DSHS-certified contact hours. CHWs may renew a certificate that has been expired for less than one year by submitting a renewal application documenting the completion of the required continuing education. The percentage of CHWs renewing their DSHS certifications increased from 33 percent in 2019 to 46 percent in 2020 ([Figure 2](#)).

A total of 1,059 CHW certifications expired in 2020 - a slight increase from 2019 when 982 certifications expired. Most certifications that expired in 2020 were for CHWs initially certified in 2018 (58 percent). Of those expired in 2020, 53 percent of individuals were certified as CHWs based on experience, while 47 percent of expired certifications were initially certified based on completion of training programs.

Figure 2. CHW Renewal Rates, 2015-2020ⁱ



ⁱ Source: DSHS RAS Portal and VR Database

There is a pattern in the number of expired certifications in 2020 when comparing CHWs based on language preference ([Table 1](#) and [Table 2](#)). Expired CHW certification initially based on training where Spanish was the preferred language accounted for a higher percentage (77 percent) of expired certifications than those with English as a preferred language (41 percent). Expired CHW certifications initially certified based on experience were higher for those with English as the preferred language (59 percent) than those with Spanish as a preferred language (23 percent).

Table 1 2020 Expired CHW Certifications by Preferred Languageⁱ (English)

CHW Certification	English	English Percentage
Experience	526	59
Training	360	41
Total	886	100

ⁱ Source: DSHSRAS Portal and VR Database

Table 2 2020 Expired CHW Certifications by Preferred Languageⁱ (Spanish)

CHW Certification	Spanish	Spanish Percentage
Experience	40	23
Training	173	77
Total	173	100

ⁱ Source: DSHSRAS Portal and VR Database

Community Health Worker Instructor Renewals and Expired Certificates

A CHWI may renew a certificate if a renewal application is submitted within one year of the expiration date and documents the completion of the required continuing education.

In 2020, 75 percent of CHWIs renewed their certification compared to 54 percent in 2019. CHWIs who were first certified in 2018 comprised 41 percent of those who allowed their certification to expire in 2020. There were 39 certified CHWIs who did not renew their instructor certifications in 2020, compared to 56 in 2019.

DSHS-Certified Training Programs

Organizations approved to provide training for CHWs and CHWIs include community colleges, other academic centers such as health science centers, Area Health Education Centers, Federally Qualified Health Centers, regional CHW associations, and community-based programs.

CHWs residing in rural areas may be unable to attend on-site training located in urban areas. Some training programs provide training in areas other than their primary locations to address this. Additionally, several training programs have implemented training through distance learning to increase access for CHWs in all parts of the state.

Training programs have expanded the availability of certification training courses and continuing education opportunities for CHWs and CHWIs. As of December 31, 2020, there were 43 DSHS certified training programs in Texas.

In 2020, the training programs provided both CHW and CHWI certification training courses and continuing education to fulfill continuing education requirements. See Table 3 [below](#) for breakdown of number of training programs by type of certified training provided: CHW and/or CHWI certification course and CHW and/or CHWI continuing education.

Table 3: 2020 Type of Training Delivered by DSHS-Certified Training Programs

Type of Certified Training	# Training Programs
CHW Certification Training Course and Certified Continuing Education	17
CHW Certification Training Course and CHW and CHWI Certified Continuing Education	6
CHW and CHWI Certification Training Courses and CHW and CHWI Certified Continuing Education	6
Certified CHW Continuing Education Only	10
Certified CHW and CHWI Continuing Education Only	4
Total	43

[Texas Health Steps](#) offers free online modules for healthcare providers, including CHWs and CHWIs.² These courses offer updated clinical, regulatory, and best practice guidelines for a range of topics including preventive health, oral health, mental health, and case management.

In 2020, Texas Area Health Education DFW region was approved to provide continuing education for CHWIs. Umemba Health, LLC was approved to provide continuing education for both CHWs and CHWIs. Empowering the Masses was

approved to provide certification training courses and continuing education to CHWs. Texas A&M Colonias Program Training Academy was also approved to provide certification training courses and continuing education to CHWIs.

Opportunities for Certified Continuing Education

In 2020, DSHS-approved training programs provided 234 continuing education opportunities for CHWs, offering over 700 DSHS-certified contact hours in the form of face-to-face events and mostly distance learning continuing education.

[Appendix B](#) provides a breakdown of providers and continuing education hours provided. Training occurred in 11 counties and through distance learning. Over 14,345 participants attended continuing education in 2020. Not all participants attending continuing education events were certified CHWs.

DSHS-approved training programs provided 58 continuing education opportunities for CHWIs in 2020, offering 131 DSHS-certified CHWI contact hours.

² In Texas, the Medicaid Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment service (EPSDT) is known as Texas Health Steps, which includes the preventive care components, or Early and Periodic Screening, of the total EPSDT service.

Distance learning opportunities were available for instructor continuing education. See [Appendix C](#) for additional information about certified continuing education for CHWIs provided in 2020.

Community Mapping

Location of DSHS-Certified Community Health Workers

As of December 31, 2020, Texas had 3,776 certified CHWs in 140 counties (by county of residence). Harris County has the most certified CHWs with 932 and Bexar County has the second largest number of certified CHWs with 366.

See [Appendix D](#) for a map of counties with certified CHWs.

Certified Community Health Worker Demographics

Approximately 90 percent of Texas certified CHWs are women and 10 percent are men. Certified CHWs in Texas are racially and ethnically diverse. See [Table 4](#) below for a breakdown of CHW demographics by race ethnicity and gender.

Table 4 Race/Ethnicity Breakdown for Certified CHWs, By Genderⁱ

Ethnicity	Percentage	Male	Female	Total
Hispanic	63	233	2,156	2,389
Black	22	86	730	816
White	10	49	330	379
Asian	4	17	135	152
Native American	(<1)	2	11	13
Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islander	(<1)	0	3	3
Other	1	2	22	24
Total		389	3,387	3,776

ⁱ Source: DSHSRAS Portal and VR Database

DSHS-Certified Instructors Location and Demographics

As of December 31, 2020, Texas had 295 certified CHWIs in 41 counties (based on county of residence). Approximately 89 percent of Texas CHWIs are women and 11 percent are men. Certified CHWIs in Texas are also racially and ethnically diverse:

- Hispanic, - 59 percent;
- White – 17 percent;
- Black, 22 – percent;
- Asian, 1 – percent;
- Other, less than one percent; and
- Native American, less than one percent.

DSHS-Certified Training Programs

By the end of 2020, there were 43 CHW and CHWI training programs in 43 counties across the state. See [Map of Counties with CHW Training Programs](#) for a map of counties with a CHW training program.

4. Conclusion

The Promotor(a) or Community Health Worker Training and Certification Program continues to create awareness and promote its workforce to the public and employers. Texas CHWs and CHWIs have well qualified representation in communities both rural and urban. Texans benefit from this highly effective and robust program statewide. Access to education, training, certification, and resources continues to be a hallmark of this seasoned program.

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Full Name
CHW	Community Health Worker
CHWI	Community Health Worker Instructor
DSHS	Department of State Health Services
HHSC	Health and Human Services Commission
RAS	Regulatory Automated Services
VR	Versa Regulatory

Appendix A. CHW Certification Trainingⁱ

Health Service Region	County	Name of Training Program	Graduates
1	Lubbock	Texas Tech Health Sciences Center – School of Nursing	7
2/3	Dallas	Baylor Scott & White Health and Wellness Center	40
2/3	Tarrant	Baylor Scott & White Health and Wellness Center	14
2/3	Tarrant	Community Health Training Institute, Inc.	4
2/3	Tarrant	Familias Triunfadoras, Inc.	18
4/5N	Gregg	LW School of Pharmacy	1
4/5N	Nacogdoches	Texas Area Health Education Center East – Piney Woods	8
6/5S	Harris	Baylor Scott & White Health and Wellness Center	11
6/5S	Harris	Día de la Mujer Latina, Inc.	19
6/5S	Harris	Texas Area Health Education Center East – Coastal	8
6/5S	Harris	Texas Area Health Education Center East – Greater Houston	7
6/5S	Harris	University of Houston Honors College CHW Program	43
6/5S	Harris	University of Texas School of Public Health, Houston	5
8	Bexar	Northwest Vista College	4
9/10	El Paso	Familias Triunfadoras, Inc.	26
11	Hidalgo	South Texas College	12
11	Hidalgo	South Texas Promotora Association, Inc.	11
11	Hidalgo	Texas A&M University Colonias Program Training Academy	49

Health Service Region	County	Name of Training Program	Graduates
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Baylor Scott & White Health and Wellness Center	33
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Community Health Training Institute, Inc.	4
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Día de la Mujer Latina, Inc.	16
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Houston Community College	31
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Northwest Vista College	2
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas A&M University Colonias Program Training Academy	19
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Center for Community Health Development, National CHW Training Center, Texas A&M School of Public Health	32
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Area Health Education Center - Capital	5
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Area Health Education Center - DFW	7
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Area Health Education Center East – Coastal	65
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	University of Houston Honors College CHW Program	68
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler	75
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	University of Texas School of Public Health, Houston	6
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	West Texas Area Health Education Center	73

Total CHW Graduates: 723

ⁱ Source: DSHS Share Point Site, CHW Training Site

Appendix B. Certified Continuing Education for CHWsⁱ

Health Service Region	County	Name of Training Program	# of CEU classes offered	# of CEU contact hours	# of participants
2/3	Tarrant	Día de la Mujer Latina, Inc.	7	70	342
4/5N	Tyler	University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler	2	3	25
6/5S	Fort Bend	Dia de la Mujer Latina, Inc.	4	32	33
6/5S	Harris	Día de la Mujer Latina, Inc.	2	16	18
6/5S	Harris	University of Texas School of Public Health, Houston	2	2	44
7	Travis	Cardea Services	5	28	75
7	Travis	Día de la Mujer Latina, Inc.	1	6	13
8	Bexar	Día de la Mujer Latina, Inc.	2	16	17
9/10	El Paso	Día de la Mujer Latina, Inc.	4	20	30
9/10	El Paso	Familias Triunfadoras, Inc.	3	3	29
11	Cameron	DSHS Office of Border Public Health (OBPH)	4	4	47
11	Hidalgo	Texas A&M University Colonias Program Training Academy	3	7	64
11	Maverick	DSHS Office of Border Public Health	1	14	11
11	Nueces	Texas Area Health Education Center South – Coastal	1	4	15

Health Service Region	County	Name of Training Program	# of CEU classes offered	# of CEU contact hours	# of participants
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Cardea Services	18	28.5	3,745
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Center for Community Health Development, National CHW Training Center, Texas A&M School of Public Health	25	84.5	700
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Día de la Mujer Latina, Inc.	17	86	2,653
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	DSHS Office of Border Public Health	13	39	172
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Harris Health System	1	1	17
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	HHS Early Childhood Intervention	1	1	14
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Northwest Vista College	2	3	339
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	South Texas Promotor(a) Association, Inc.	1	7	110
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas A&M Colonias Program Training Academy	4	7	105
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas A&M School of Public Health, Office of Special Programs	15	43	1,404
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Area Health Education Center East – Capital	1	1	1
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Area Health Education Center East – Coastal	2	3	86
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Area Health Education Center DFW	18	24	767
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Area Health Education Center South – Coastal	14	21.5	441

Health Service Region	County	Name of Training Program	# of CEU classes offered	# of CEU contact hours	# of participants
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Health Steps	29	40.5	1,021
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas HHS Substance Abuse Program	1	1	63
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Tech Health Sciences Center – School of Nursing	2	4	244
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Umemba Health, LLC	4	16	734
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	University of Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth	1	2.5	39
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler	5	20	76
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	University of Texas School of Public Health, Houston	18	41.5	896
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	West Texas Area Health Education Center	1	1	26

TOTALS: Classes – 234, Contact Hours – 701, Participants – 14,416

ⁱ Source: DSHS Share Point Site, CHW Training Site

Appendix C. Certified Continuing Education for Instructorsⁱ

Health Service Region	County	Name of Training Program	# of CEU classes offered	# of CEU contact hours	# of participants
6/5S	Fort Bend	Día de la Mujer Latina, Inc.	1	8	3
9/10	El Paso	Día de la Mujer Latina, Inc.	1	8	1
Distance Learning	N/A	Cardea Services	5	6.5	97
Distance Learning	N/A	Center for Community Health Development, National CHW Training Center, Texas A&M School of Public Health	3	17	41
Distance Learning	N/A	Día de la Mujer Latina, Inc.	6	25	119
Distance Learning	N/A	DSHS Office of Border Public Health	3	9	4
Distance Learning	N/A	South Texas Promotora Association, Inc.	1	7	3
Distance Learning	N/A	Texas A&M University Colonias Program Training Academy	2	3	13
Distance Learning	N/A	Texas Area Health Education Center - DFW	2	2	18
Distance Learning	N/A	Umemba Health, LLC	2	2	33
Distance Learning	N/A	University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler	3	3	26
Distance Learning	N/A	Texas Health Steps	30	41	Counted in Appendix B.

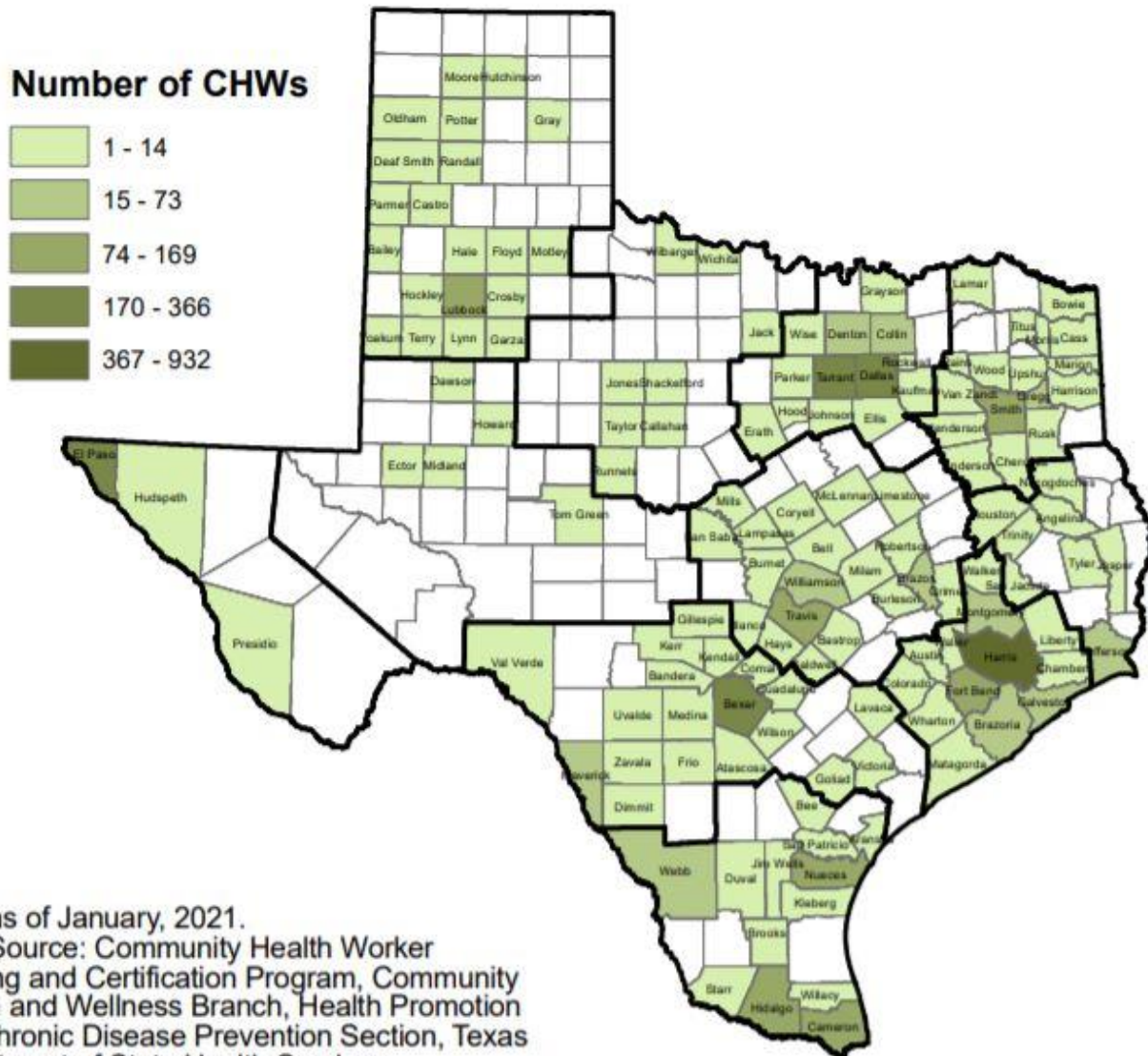
TOTALS: Classes – 59, Contact Hours – 131.5, Participants – 358

ⁱ Source: DSHS Share Point Site, CHW Training Site

Appendix D. Map of Counties with Certified CHWs and Training Programs

Promotor(a) or Community Health Worker (CHW) Training and Certification Program, 2020

Certified CHWs, by County of Residence



Data as of January, 2021.
Data Source: Community Health Worker
Training and Certification Program, Community
Health and Wellness Branch, Health Promotion
and Chronic Disease Prevention Section, Texas
Department of State Health Services .

Map Created 03/29/2021 by the Chronic Disease Epidemiology
Branch, Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Section,
Texas Department of State Health Services.



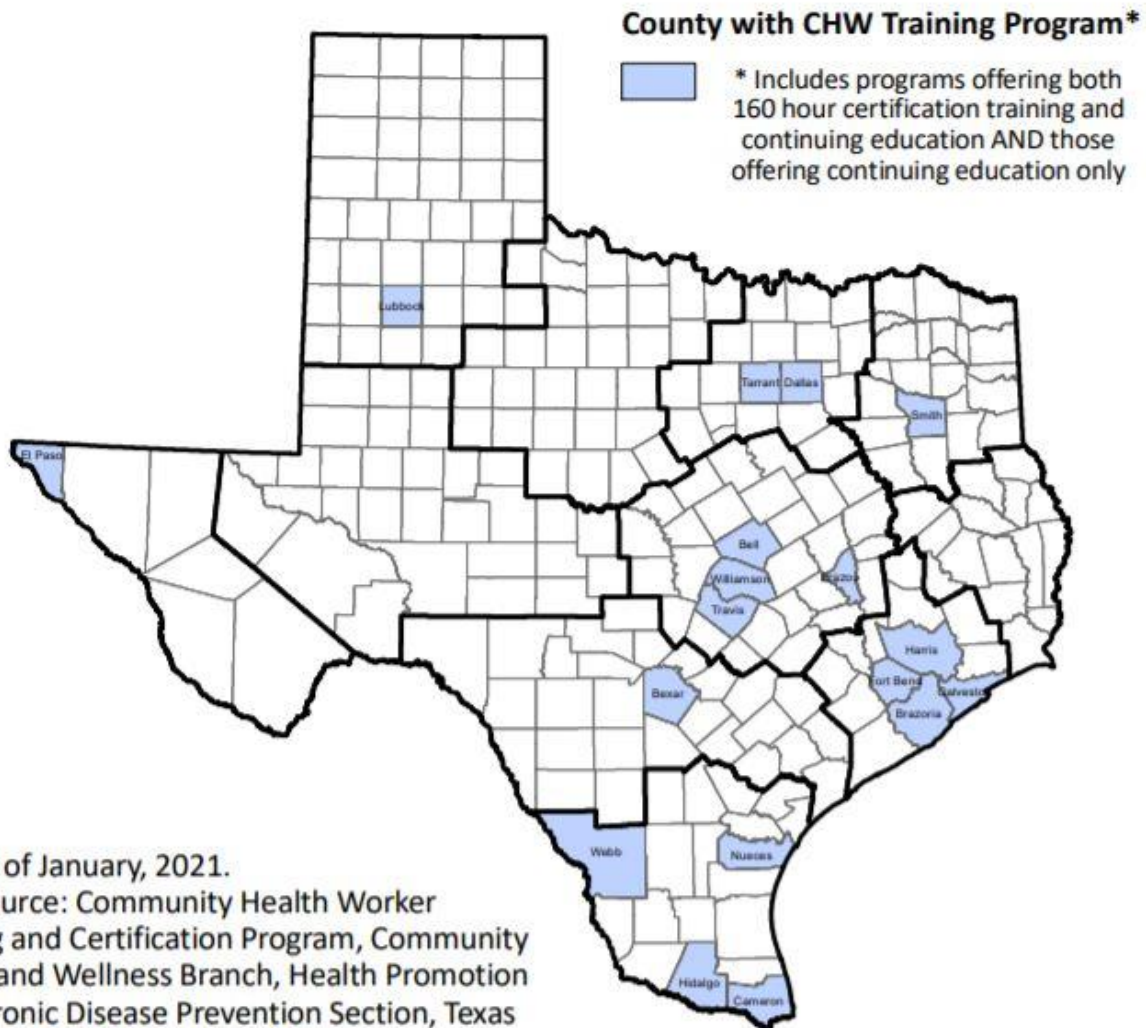
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Appendix E. Map of Counties with CHW Training Programsⁱ

Promotor(a) or Community Health Worker (CHW) Training and Certification Program, 2020

Location of CHW Certification and Continuing Education
Training Programs



Map Created 03/29/2021 by the Chronic Disease Epidemiology Branch, Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Section, Texas Department of State Health Services.



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