

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

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I. Purpose

This policy establishes certification and renewal criteria for promotores/ community health workers (CHWs), CHW Instructors (CHWIs), and CHW training programs.

II. Background

[Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 48](#), requires the Texas Department of State Health Services (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.

III. Cost of Certification

DSHS certifications for promotores/CHWs, CHWIs, and CHW training programs covered in this policy are free of charge.

IV. Definitions

The following definitions apply to this policy only.

Certified CHWI – An individual approved by DSHS to provide instruction and training in one or more core competencies to promotores/CHWs; who has in-depth knowledge of the role of a promotor(a)/ CHW; and proficiency in adult education methods, CHW eight core competencies, curriculum development and assessment, as well as culturally relevant facilitation of diverse topics.

Certified Promotor(a)/CHW – An individual approved by DSHS to act as a liaison and provide cultural mediation between health care providers, social services, and the community. A promotor(a)/CHW is a trusted member of the community served, and has a close understanding of the ethnicity, language, socio-economic status, and life experiences.

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

Core Competencies – The set of knowledge, key skills, and abilities all

promotores/CHWs and CHWIs must show. It is the evidence of mastery through training or significant experience. Current core competencies include communication, interpersonal, service coordination, capacity-building, advocacy, teaching, organizational and knowledge base on specific health issues.

DSHS-certified CEU – Continuing education unit from material that has been reviewed and approved by DSHS and taught by a certified CHWI under an approved training program.

Initial Certification -The initial process of certifying a promotor(a)/CHW, a CHWI, or an organization as a training program by DSHS. It is based on specific initial certification requirements stipulated further in this policy. The initial certification is valid for two years.

Non-certified CEU – Continuing education unit obtained through education or training from material that has not been reviewed by DSHS but is still within the scope of a promotor(a)/CHW or CHWI and covers at least one of the core competencies.

Renewal of Certification -The process of renewing the certification of a promotor(a)/CHW, CHWI, or training program every two years by the DSHS based on specific renewal certification requirements.

Training Program – An organization approved by DSHS to provide training to promotores/CHWs and/or CHWIs.

V. Application Processing Timelines

Training Program Applications

The DSHS CHW or Promotor(a) Training and Certification Program (CHW Program) takes up to 120 business days to process training program applications and send notice of approval or disapproval of certification. If an application is incomplete (deficient), the CHW Program will notify the applicant of how to complete their application. The CHW Program's 120-day processing time will restart once the applicant has corrected any application deficiencies.

DSHS may require a training program to submit a new application if additional materials and revisions are not submitted within 120 business days.

The process is complete when DSHS has mailed the approval packet or emailed a notification of disapproval. An approval packet consists of:

- Approval Letter
- Certificate

CHW Instructors and Promotores/CHWs Applications

The CHW Program takes up to 90 business days to process promotor(a)/CHW or CHWI applications and send notice of approval or disapproval of certification. If an application is incomplete (deficient), the CHW Program will notify the applicant of how to remedy their application. The CHW Program's 90-day processing time will restart once the applicant has corrected any application deficiencies.

DSHS may require an applicant to submit a new application if additional materials and revisions are not submitted within 21 business days from the notification date.

The process is complete when DSHS mails the approval packet, or emails a notification of disapproval. An approval packet consists of:

- Approval Letter
- Certificate
- CHW or CHWI badge

Competency Verification of Promotores/CHWs and CHWIs

Verification based on Completion of Initial Certification Course

The CHW Program verifies the completion of an approved Promotor(a)/CHW or CHWI initial certification course by checking the applicant's name on a training report provided by a training program.

Competency Verification based on Experience

The CHW Program verifies experience over phone with the supervisor(s) or professional references listed in the "Experience" section of the application.

- Verification cannot be done through email or notarized letter.
- The phone number listed for the supervisor(s) in the "Experience" section of the application must be for a place of business or business cellular number. The CHW Program will not call personal home or cellular numbers.
- The CHW Program will not verify any single experience less than 300 hours. Each experience must meet at least half of the skills

under each core competencies. The applicant must demonstrate skills in all core competencies across all the experience listed.

- For CHWIs – Verification focus is on experience teaching/training CHWs or other health service providers (“train-the-trainer”), not direct training of community members.
- For CHWs – Verification focus is on experience working in a CHW role consisting of direct contact with the community.

VI. Certification of Training Programs

Initial Application Requirements

When an application is submitted for a training program to be certified for the first time, organizations must include the following:

- A complete initial certification application provided by DSHS.
- A plan to provide trainings on an annual basis.
 - Possible locations
 - Training schedule
 - Procedures related to recruitment and registration/enrollment
 - Cost of class
 - Training methodology (classroom or distance learning)
 - Outlines requirements for course completion/graduation
 - Training evaluation
- A curriculum consistent with the type of training that will be provided.
 - Certification course for CHWs or CHWIs
 - Continuing education for CHWs or CHWIs

An organization may submit an application that includes using a certified curriculum from another approved training program that has agreed to share the certified curriculum. In this situation, the application must include:

- Description of changes, if any, to the previously certified curriculum.
- Documentation stating the approved training program agrees to share the certified curriculum with the organization applying for certification.

Renewal Requirements

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

- A complete renewal application provided by DSHS

- A record of the trainings offered during the two-year certification cycle
- List of instructors affiliated with the training program
- Training plan to provide annual trainings that include
 - Possible locations
 - Training schedule
 - Procedures related to recruitment and registration/enrollment
 - Cost of class
 - Training methodology (classroom or distance learning)
 - Outlines requirements for course completion/graduation
 - Training evaluation
 - If applicable, submission and competency breakdown of new curriculum

Curricula

A certification curriculum for CHWs or CHWIs must:

- Be at least 160 hours
- Cover all core competencies with equal time
- Include appropriate citations and references documenting sources of information detailed in the curriculum
- 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
- Demonstrate cultural sensitivity and literacy level appropriate to the topic and target audience
- Include a translation of the curriculum if the curriculum will be provided in a language other than English
- Specify the method or methods by which training will be delivered, including classroom instruction and use of distance learning
- Include a method or process to evaluate and document the knowledge gain and increased skills by the training attendees
- Include any pre or post-test to evaluate acquisition of knowledge by the individual trained
- Be reviewed and approved by DSHS
- Be provided within Texas if offered in person

Amending Existing Certified Curriculum

A training program may submit a request to revise a current certified curriculum. However, if more than 45 percent of content in the 160 hours in the curriculum is changed, the training program will need to resubmit the curriculum for certification.

All continuing education for CHWs or CHWIs curricula must:

- Cover one or more of the core competencies
- Identify the title, total contact hours, and hours per core competency
- Include specific learning objectives
- Include the name and organization of the curriculum developer
 - If curriculum was developed by another entity, include public domain information or documentation of approval by the curriculum developer
- Include the participation of a certified CHWI in the review or development of the curriculum
- Include appropriate citations and references documenting sources of information detailed in the curriculum
- Include activities or other strategies consistent with adult learning theory and principles
- Demonstrate cultural sensitivity and literacy level appropriate to the topic and target audience
- Include a translation of the curriculum if the curriculum will be provided in a language other than English
- Specify the method or methods by which training will be delivered, including classroom instruction and use of distance learning
- If applicable, include any pre or post-test or other process used to evaluate acquisition of knowledge by the individual trained
- If applicable, include an evaluation by the training attendees of the training experience
- Submit all material that will be used for training, including but not limited to, PowerPoint presentations, lesson plans, handouts, scenarios, or other activity materials
- Be reviewed and approved by DSHS
- Be offered within Texas if training is offered in person

Course Completion Certificates

Approved training programs must provide a certificate as proof of completion for a CHW/CHWI certification course or for DSHS-certified continuing education CHW/CHWI courses offered. DSHS will provide the templates of the certificates to the training program, at request.

All certificates of course completion must include the following information:

- Name of the approved training program offering the course
- Title and date of the course
- Name of the certified instructor who taught the course
 - If instructor signature line is on the certificate, signature must be included
- Type of course: certification course (CHWs or CHWIs) or continuing education (CHWs, CHWIs or both)
- Name of the participant/attendee

Training Rosters

All training programs must submit a roster to the CHW Program to CHW@dshs.texas.gov within seven business days after the completion of a DSHS-certified CHW/CHWI certification course or CHW/CHWI DSHS-certified continuing education course. The roster must include the following:

- Name of approved training program offering the course
- Title of the course
- Date(s) the course was offered
- Total CEUs offered
- Competencies covered
- Location where course took place, including the city
- Name of certified CHW Instructor(s) who taught the course
- Type of course: certification course (CHWs or CHWIs) or continuing education (CHWs, CHWIs or both)
- Full name of participants who attended the course with certification status (CHWs or CHWI)

Training Announcements

Certified training programs may send information on future trainings to the CHW Program. As a courtesy, the CHW Program will send it statewide through the DSHS GovDelivery notification system or to the CHWs in the specified Texas counties to help disseminate the announcement. The

training notification should include the following information:

- Name of certified training program offering the course
- Title of the course
- Date of the course
- Time the course will start and end
- Location where the course will take place
- Number of DSHS-certified CEUs offered and if they're for CHWs or CHWIs
- Cost of the course
- Language of the course
- Registration information (web link, email address, phone number)
 - Information of who to contact for questions (name, email address, phone number)

Training information should be sent by e-mail to CHW@dshs.texas.gov at least 14 business days prior to training date.

VII. DSHS Certification of CHWIs

Initial Application Requirements

Applicants for CHWI certification must submit the following:

- Complete initial certification application provided by DSHS
- Current photo, in color, that clearly shows all facial features
- A resume
- A copy of the CHWI course certificate of completion
 - If applying based on completion of training
- Complete experience verification form
 - If applying based on teaching/training experience

CHWI Renewal Requirements

CHWIs must renew their certificate every two years. To renew a certificate, CHWIs must submit the following:

- A complete renewal application provided by DSHS
- Current color photo that clearly shows all facial features
- Proof of completion of the required continuing education, including, but not limited to:
 - Certificates

- Rosters
- Emails confirming participation and completion

Continuing Education Requirements for Renewal CHWIs

Certified CHWIs are required to complete at least 20 hours of continuing education. Duplicate training certificates are not accepted, such as certificates for the same training taken in Spanish and English, or the same training taken from two different CHWIs or training centers.

Continuing education requirement can be fulfilled as follows:

- Course or activity must be at least 30 consecutive minutes in length (0.5 CEUs), and within the scope of a CHWI
- Course or activity must also cover at least one of the core competencies
- At least 10 mandatory hours of DSHS-certified CEUs
 - A minimum of five DSHS-certified CEUs for CHWIs can be combined with one of the options below:
 - Option 1 - maximum of five DSHS-certified CEUs for CHWIs from another Texas health care certification/license; other than CHW certification
 - Option 2 - maximum of five DSHS-certified CEUs for CHWIs related to instruction of an approved curriculum under an approved training program. One CEU = two hours of instruction. Requires copy of a roster that includes:
 - ❖ Name of approved training program
 - ❖ Title of course
 - ❖ Date(s) course is offered
 - ❖ Total CEUs offered
 - ❖ Competencies covered
 - ❖ Location of training including the city
 - ❖ Name of the CHWI who taught the class
 - ❖ Designation if course was for CHWs or CHWIs
 - ❖ List of participants

Note: Can have either five CEUs from another Texas health care certificate/license or five CEUs from instruction, not a combination of both.

- At least 10 hours of non-DSHS certified CEUs
 - Attending CHWI related conferences
 - Attending trainings from an organization other than a certified training program, but still cover at least one core competency and are within the scope of a certified CHWI
 - Trainings with a DSHS-certified designation for CHWs count as non-certified CEUs for CHWIs
- Can have all continuing education be DSHS-certified
- All certificates must include:
 - Name of applicant
 - Title and date of the course
 - Name of training program (or organization if non-certified CEUs)

Note: For CHWI applicants renewing their certification with both CHW and CHWI 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.

VIII. Certification of Promotores/CHWs

Initial Application Requirements

Persons interested in applying to be certified as a Promotor(a)/CHW for the first time must submit the following:

- A complete initial certification application provided by DSHS
- Current color photo that clearly shows all facial features
- A Copy of the CHW certification course certificate of completion
 - If applying based on completion of training
- Complete experience verification form
 - If applying based on experience in a CHW role
- Proof of Texas residency

Renewal Requirements

Promotores/CHWs must renew their certificate every two years. To renew a certificate, Promotores/CHWs must submit the following:

- A complete renewal application provided by DSHS
- Current color photo that clearly shows all facial features
- Proof of completion of the required continuing education, including

certificates and emails confirming participation and completion

Continuing Education Requirements for Renewal – Promotores/CHWs

Certified Promotores/CHWs are required to complete at least 20 hours of continuing education. Duplicate training certificates are not accepted, such as certificates for the same training taken in Spanish and English, or the same training taken from two different CHWIs or training centers.

Continuing education must be acceptable if the course or activity is at least 30 consecutive minutes in length (.5 CEUs) and addresses at least one core competency.

Continuing education can be fulfilled through the following DSHS-certified and non-certified options:

- At least 10 mandatory hours of DSHS-certified CEUs from completion of a DSHS-certified continuing education course
 - Can be a minimum of five CEUs if combined with continuing education for another Texas health care certification/license
 - Maximum of five CEUs from continuing education for another Texas health care certification/license; other than CHWI certification
- At least 10 hours of non-DSHS certified CEUs
 - Attending CHW related conferences
 - Attending trainings from an organization other than a certified training program but still cover at least one core competency and are within the scope of a CHW
- All continuing education may be DSHS-certified CEUs
- All certificates must contain:
 - Name of applicant
 - Title and date of the course
 - Name of training program (or organization if non-certified CEUs)

Note: For those with 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.

IX. Certification Extension

CHWIs and promotores/CHWs can request one 90-day extension per certification cycle by emailing their request to CHW@dshs.texas.gov. When an eligible certification is renewed, the expiration date will be two-years

from the original expiration date, prior to the extension.

A CHWI or promotor(a)/CHW certification can be renewed up to a year from the original expiration date.

X. Alternative Certification for Military Service Members, Military Veterans, and Military Spouses^{1,2}

A military service member, military spouse, or military veteran may apply for CHW or CHWI certification if the individual:

- Is currently certified in another state with certification requirements substantially equivalent to the requirements of a certification in Texas, and the certification is in good standing
- Held the same certification in Texas within the preceding five years

A military service member or military spouse must provide proof of residency in this state. This requirement is satisfied by providing a copy of the permanent change-of-station order assigning the military service member to a military installation in Texas.

An applicant requesting a certification under this section must meet all requirements for obtaining CHW and CHWI certification, including receiving appropriate credit for training, education, and professional experience.

XI. Certification Exemptions^{3,4}

A military service member or military spouse may act as a CHW or CHWI, as if certified in Texas, without applying for certification from this state if the individual:

- Is currently certified in good standing by another jurisdiction that has CHW and CHWI certification requirements substantially equivalent to the requirements in this state
- Notifies DSHS, in writing, of the military service member's or military spouse's intent to practice in this state
- Submits proof of the military service member's or military spouse's residency in this state and a copy of the military service member or military spouse's military identification card

¹ Authorized by [Texas Occupations Code, Section 55.004](#).

² View [25 Texas Administrative Code, Section 1.91](#) for additional information.

³ Authorized by [Texas Occupations Code, Section 55.0041](#).

⁴ View [25 Texas Administrative Code, Section 1.81](#) for additional information.

- Receives from DSHS a verification letter that:
 - DSHS has verified the military service member's or military spouse's CHW or CHWI certification in another jurisdiction
 - The military service member or military spouse is authorized to engage in the business or occupation in accordance with the Texas statutes and rules for that business or occupation
- To receive a verification letter, the military service member or military spouse, must submit:
 - A request to DSHS CHW Program for recognition of the military service member's or military spouse's CHW or CHWI certification issued by the other jurisdiction, on the [DSHS Reciprocity Application Form](#)
 - Proof of residency in this state, which may include a copy of the permanent change-of-station order for the military service member
 - A copy of the military service member's or military spouse's military identification card
 - Proof the military service member is stationed at a military installation in Texas

DSHS can take up to 30 days from the date a military service member or military spouse submits a request that complies with Section XI to verify that the certification is in good standing in the granting jurisdiction. Once verification is complete, DSHS will issue a verification letter recognizing the licensure as the equivalent certification in Texas.

Expiration of Verification Letter

The verification letter will expire three years from date of issuance or when the military service member is no longer stationed at a military installation in Texas, whichever comes first. The verification letter may not be renewed.

In the event of a divorce or similar event that affects a person's status as a military spouse, the former military spouse that received a verification may continue to engage in the business or occupation under the authority of this section until the third anniversary of the date the spouse received the verification letter.

Conditions

The military service member or military spouse must comply with all applicable Texas laws, rules, and standards, including applicable Texas Health and Safety Code, Texas Occupations Code, and all relevant Texas Administrative Code provisions.

DSHS may revoke the verification letter at its discretion. Grounds for revocation include:

- The military service member or military spouse fails to comply with these conditions
- The military service member's or military spouse's certification required for this exemption expires or is suspended or revoked in another jurisdiction

XII. Change of Information

Certified training programs, Promotores/CHWs, CHWIs, and out-of-state military service members or military spouse acting as a CHW or CHWI, as if certified in Texas must notify DSHS, in writing by email to CHW@dshs.texas.gov, of any changes to their contact information, such as:

- Street or mailing address
- Phone number
- Email address

Changes to names must be requested in writing by email to CHW@dshs.texas.gov and include a legal document noting the change in name. Legal documents accepted are:

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

XIII. Protected Information

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

- The 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

This applies to open records requests and other requests for information.

[Government Code, Section 552.138](#) also allows 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 CHW or CHWI certification, to request personal information be confidential.

In addition to the information above, the following information will not to be released or shared if the CHW or CHWI submits the [Texas Government Code Section 552.138 Public Access Notice Form](#) available on the Office of Attorney General website to restrict public access to the information.

- Name
- Mobile or work phone
- Place of current employment
- Work address
- Course locations