

Wisconsin State Snapshot: Community Health Worker (CHW) Workforce Development

CHWs are instrumental in achieving public health goals and are an integral component in the Wisconsin Department of Health Services [Division of Public Health](#) strategy around chronic disease prevention and coordination. The Division of Public Health is also collaborating with partners across agencies and sectors to advance CHW training programs as a mechanism to demonstrate to employers that CHWs are a viable and valuable workforce.



Wisconsin has two CHW associations (the Wisconsin CHW Alliance and United Voices Collaborative), who are actively engaged in policy and legislative discussions. A central priority for Wisconsin continues to be coalition-building within the state. Wisconsin CHW agencies are interested in creating a leadership body or coalition that is fully representative of the CHWs and communities across the state (as per [APHA policy statement](#)). The leadership body would address professionalization, policy, and reimbursement needs and reflect the voices of all interested parties.

Although CHW certification is not required by the state and legislation has not formally been introduced, CHW stakeholders have drafted legislative language for CHW certification to potentially further the possibility of CHW reimbursement. The resulting discussions around the drafted legislation led the state to decide not to pursue certification at this point. Stakeholders, including some CHWs themselves, expressed concern that certification (as presented in the draft legislation) could create barriers to entry due to literacy, documentation, and other challenges.

As an alternative, Wisconsin stakeholders have proposed that a training certificate could be a mechanism to make CHWs attractive to employers and to serve as a foundation for conversations on reimbursement and financing with managed care organizations and health systems. Wisconsin's CHW training program is the AHRQ-recognized "bright spot" - [Pathways Community Hub](#) model CHW training. The state also has an approved CHW apprenticeship program funded through the [Wisconsin State Department of Workforce Development](#).

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