



Rhode Island's
Community Health Workers:

Your bridge to better health

Building on CCR: Future Directions for CHW Programs in Rhode Island

By placing more trained Community Health Workers (CHWs) in the communities most affected by COVID-19, the CDC's *Community Health Workers for COVID Response and Resilient Communities (CCR)* initiative aimed to strengthen local capacity to respond to COVID-19 and future public health emergencies. In Rhode Island, this effort established a strong foundation for sustaining the CHW workforce and supporting equity-driven practices. Looking ahead, these recommendations outline practical, evidence-informed steps to further strengthen the workforce, deepen partnerships, and ensure that CHWs remain central to advancing health equity. Each recommendation draws on lessons learned during the grant period and provides a roadmap for future programs to build on this momentum.



health.ri.gov/chws

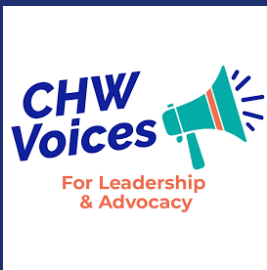


Anchor Partnerships in CHW-Led, Equity-Driven Governance

Formally integrate CHWs and People with Lived Experience in cross-sector teams, designating them as co-chairs or steering-committee leads to ensure power-sharing.

Sustain and Expand the Statewide Workforce Hub

Explore opportunities to continue funding the Community Health Worker Association of Rhode Island (CHWARI) as the state's CHW association for training, networking, and mentorship to create a supportive career pathway for CHWs.



Strengthen CHW Voices for Leadership & Advocacy

Formalize CHW Voices as the space where CHWs can set the advocacy agenda, review policies, and develop unified positions.

Deepen Place-Based Partnerships

Invest in Health Equity Zones and community-based organizations as local anchors that embed CHWs in initiatives like food security, housing, and transportation.





Build a Unified Platform for Workforce Development and Tracking

Integrate shared language around core roles, competencies, and values (based on National C3 Council recommendations), promote peer-mentorship networks, and track training in a unified system to support the CHW workforce and employers.

Embed Real-Time, Nationally Recognized Evaluation into Everyday Practice

Use established tools—such as the CHW Functionality Matrix, the Pathways to Population Health Compass, organizational readiness surveys, and the Common Indicators framework—alongside participatory, CHW-driven feedback loops to guide continuous improvement.



Adopt and Adapt Proven Data Tools Statewide

Scale data tools across agencies to streamline measurement and demonstrate impact. Provide technical assistance for tailoring.

Protect CHW Well-Being, Compensation, and Sustainability

Implement well-being surveys, maintain a workforce dashboard, and secure dedicated funding beyond grants to ensure sustainability.



Rhode Island's CCR initiative demonstrated that when Community Health Workers (CHWs) lead, equity and resilience follow. Over four years, CHWs and their allies influenced statewide decisions, strengthened partnerships, and advanced policies that elevated the CHW workforce across the state. The transformative infrastructure created—ranging from CHWARI's training hub to CHW Voices for Leadership and Advocacy and the Alliance for CHW Employers—continues to support and sustain this vital workforce. By applying nationally recognized standards and evaluation tools, coordinating community infrastructures such as Health Equity Zones, and investing in CHW leadership, Rhode Island has developed a blueprint for turning crisis response into lasting systems change.

By implementing these recommendations, Rhode Island can transform its grant successes into a durable, equity-first framework for community health. Thriving, healthy communities are within reach when CHWs remain at the center.

For more information, please contact James Day at james.day@health.ri.gov or visit health.ri.gov/community-health-workers



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