

CHW Program Start Up

Key steps to starting a community health worker program

Elements of successful CHW programs	
1. Leadership buy-in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership buy-in is essential because a new CHW program requires an upfront investment. When speaking with leadership, emphasize how health systems can recoup costs in the long run by connecting patients to preventive care and helping them manage chronic disease, reducing preventable ED visits and/or readmissions.
2. Program budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the program budget, which should include personnel costs, equipment/supplies, training and data tracking/management expenses. Identify internal and/or external funding sources.
3. Job essentials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine what equipment and supplies a CHW might need to deliver expected services, both in the office and out in the community, such as a cell phone, transportation reimbursement and a way to securely record patient interactions.
4. Identify patient population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with your HANYS Project Manager to review hospital and ED utilization data and identify the target patient population.
5. Set program goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define what you want to accomplish by creating a CHW program. For example, “CHWs will refer 20 patients with diabetes living in zip code 11212 to the hospital’s diabetes management program by December 2026” or “connect patients in the ED with food insecurity and one or more chronic diseases to CHWs.” Include program milestones; for example, “recruit five CHWs by April 1.”
6. Defining the CHW role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly define the role of the CHW from the perspective of the CHW, health system and state. Develop a job description for CHWs.
7. Referral Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define the services a CHW can provide. Develop referral criteria and list the markers for a patient to be eligible for CHW support. Define the process to document and track referrals.

<p>8. Documentation and information management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine how the CHW will document progress notes, home visits and services provided. • Set documentation requirements (i.e. notes should be entered within 3 days of service/communication occurring).
<p>9. Quality checks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the person who will be responsible for chart reviews for quality purposes. • Determine how to use data from chart reviews to enhance patient care.
<p>10. Training and education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop onboarding and training materials, including any requirements specific to the CHW position. • Develop disease-specific resources. • Develop training materials for health system staff on the role of the CHW and the referral process.
<p>11. CHW recruitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With approval from leadership, share the job description. Consider physically posting the job description in neighborhoods where your target populations live and work, including local organizations such as community centers, libraries and businesses to reach potential applicants.
<p>12. Supervision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish regular check-ins with CHWs to provide guidance, feedback, case reviews and skill development.
<p>13. Community Involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the ways the CHW can be supportive of the populations they serve, • Connect CHWs with community events to facilitate outreach to specific populations.
<p>14. Program performance evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate program performance against goals and performance indicators regularly.