Community Health Workers in Missouri

Community health workers (CHWs) are frontline public health workers who are trusted members of and/or have a personally informed understanding of the communities they serve. They serve as a link between health and social services and their communities.

- CHWs work across several sectors and at a variety of organizations, including but not limited to community-based organizations, health centers, hospitals, local public health agencies or health departments, pharmacies, and schools.

- Many specialize in working with specific populations, such as: people in recovery from addiction, those managing a chronic disease, gun violence survivors, people with justice system involvement, or children in the foster care system.

**1,800+ CHWs were working in Missouri in 2022.**

**The CHW workforce in Missouri is expected to grow 9% by 2030.**

**There are currently 15 state-certified curriculum providers, several of which are community or technical colleges.**

**What challenges do they face?**

- **Inconsistent job responsibilities.** In some ways this can be a strength, but this variability can create confusion on when and how CHWs are incorporated.

- **Inadequate pay, lack of career advancement, and burnout.** These factors are all holding back the role and increasing turnover.

- **Lack of sustainable funding.** This limits employers’ ability to fully integrate CHWs into their organizational strategies.

**Recommendations**

- Provide additional infrastructure support and funding to the workforce to promote long-term employment.

- Employers should implement the CHW role into their overall strategies instead of making them ad hoc resources.

- The field must promote increased understanding of the roles that CHWs play and their importance.

**Interested in learning more?**

Visit the [Community Health Workers Association of Missouri](https://www.communityhealthworkers.org).

**Read our full report, Growing and Sustaining Community Health Workers in Missouri.**