

Community Health Worker National Education Collaborative Promising Practices Menu Overview List

This document provides an overview of the elements that the CHW-NEC project team is considering as potential Promising Practices to be recommended for college –supported CHW educational programs. “College staff” referenced throughout the document are presumed to be engaged in developing a CHW educational program unless otherwise indicated.

A. Workforce Assessment and Market Development:

- 1. Completing Labor Market Assessments; the First Step in Program Feasibility Study**
College staff considering a CHW program should evaluate the current and potential job market for CHWs in their service area to assure there is a demand.
- 2. Carrying Out Employment Market Development**
In collaboration with other CHWs and CHW advocates, college staff should participate in developing CHW employment, volunteer, and internship opportunities for CHWs.
- 3. Promoting CHW Leadership – CHW Association Development**
College staff is encouraged to support the development of CHW networks through their own direct contributions and through promoting student participation in this emerging workforce.
- 4. Addressing State and Related Certification Requirements**
College staff and CHW students should contribute to the debate about state and related CHW certification requirements and work to assure that, as needed, the CHW curriculum is contributing to CHWs acquiring any identified certifications.
- 5. Supporting and Developing CHW Fieldwork Preceptors**
College staff should work to develop CHW preceptors as adjunct faculty in the community, potentially opening up new work settings for CHWs and solid learning opportunities for students.

B. Program Development and Institutional Climate:

- 1. Identifying a Program Home/Best Fit Within the Institution**
Identify a Department (social work, nursing, allied health, public health, etc.) within the college that will be the most supportive of the development of a CHW program/curriculum. Orient college administrators and faculty who are connected to the CHW Program Department with the CHW workforce concept and the developing curriculum to ensure optimal integration of the program within the educational institution.
- 2. Engaging Active/ Experienced CHWs and Employers as Advisors to Program Development**
Experienced CHWs and employers in the service area of the college can help to guide faculty and others who are just now learning about the CHW workforce/field of practice.
- 3. Starting with an Entry-Level Basic Certificate Program**
Begin with the development of a simple entry-level curriculum that is well informed by practicing/experienced CHWs and which focuses on core CHW competencies. .
- 4. Avoiding Pre-Requisite Requirements for Admission to an Entry-Level Basic Course of Study**
Seek to develop a “door-of entry” to the program that does not include academic prerequisites.
- 5. Evaluating Existing College Courses to Support the CHW Curriculum**
Carefully evaluate existing college courses that may or may not support an entry-level program of study.

6. Marketing the Program

Involve active/employed CHWs and employers in creating the program and sharing it widely with the health and human services industry.

C. Curriculum:

1. Implementing a Competency-Based and Basic Core Skills Curriculum

Begin with the development of a simple entry-level curriculum that focuses on core CHW competencies and, as possible, create career ladder and career lattice articulation to related fields of study building upon that entry-level basic core certificate of study.

2. Integrating a Performance-Driven Assessment Process

Include fieldwork as a part of assessing CHW learning and validating competence.

3. Selecting Appropriate Elective Courses for CHW Students

Allow students freedom to select elective courses that may lead them to understanding other related career tracks.

4. Developing Specialty Health Track Modules

Create specialty educational/training tracks responsive to the health needs and job opportunities in the CHW workforce arena.

5. Including Health Issues Content for a Broad Student Orientation to First Aid/CPR, General Health Issues, and Bio/Social Determinants of Health

Create CHW courses that orient student to basic health concepts as well as the biological and social determinants of health.

D. Instructional Approaches:

1. Using Flexible Scheduling Like Block Scheduling & Weekend Classes

Use flexible scheduling to reach the students where they live and work.

2. Providing Instruction Which is Student-Centered

Deliver the instruction to limited English speakers, if this is needed within the service region of the institution.

3. Addressing Institutional Requirements for Instructor Credentials

Provide Adjunct and Associate Faculty status for experienced and expert CHWs, CHW Program Coordinators, and CHW Employers so they can participate in providing learning activities, fieldwork, and classroom instruction in the college program

4. Selecting & Developing Direct Employment Community-Based Teaching Sites

Develop and/or utilize community sites that offer CHW opportunities for students to practice and demonstrate their skills.

5. Integrating Popular Education/Adult Learning Approaches into Instruction

Integrate adult learning approaches that are “liberating” and “participatory” (“popular”) to foster optimal learning, including interactive activity skills.

6. Assessing Prior Learning for Credit

Create systems that allow CHWs to document and/or demonstrate relevant prior experience in serving the community so they can receive advanced college placement and credits by assessment in the CHW educational program.

E. Recruiting and Retaining Students:

1. Using Proactive Student Recruitment Strategies Suitable for Adult, Non-Traditional Students

Work actively to recruit potential and existing CHWs to participate in the CHW educational program.

2. Providing Entry-Level Counseling for Students Regarding the CHW Field

Ensure that incoming students fully understand the broad scope of the CHW practice model and options for paid and volunteer work in the local service area.

3. Addressing Student Participation Barriers (child care, transportation, academics, technology access)

Work to make the educational program accessible to students by providing needed supportive services to facilitate participation in classes and related assignments.

4. Assessing and Addressing Financial Aid and Funding Needs

Work actively with students to determine financial needs and to help them secure needed funding; as possible, work with community advocates to develop funding strategies that can be made available to students on an as needed and emergency basis to support retention and completion rates.

5. Using Lessons Learned from CHWs in Navigating College Systems

Based on input from CHW students in existing educational programs, include alumni where possible as mentors, and develop guides for new students to effectively navigate the college system.

6. Addressing Literacy & Language Issues in the Classroom, Including Computer Literacy

Create a teaching/learning environment where students support each other in verbal and written communication through activities such as simultaneous or consecutive translation and through assigning cooperative learning opportunities. To the extent feasible “bilingual materials” should be utilized.

7. Providing Tutors & Mentors

Work to assure that CHW students have access to experienced, active, working CHWs and other mentors and tutors to support their success in coursework.

F. Evaluation

1. Evaluating the Effectiveness of the CHW Educational Program

Evaluate process and outcome measures related to the planning and implementation of the CHW educational program.

2. Assessing the Comprehensiveness of the Curriculum

Assess content in courses to assure that content adequately addresses the core roles and competencies needed in CHW work/practice.

3. Conducting Performance-based Evaluation of Instructional Approaches

Evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching/learning style fit for the CHW students in the field with regular input from students, other active CHWs, other instructors, etc.

4. Gathering Student Feedback/Satisfaction Surveying

As in other college courses, routinely gather feedback from students regarding their satisfaction with what they are learning in the classroom, as well as feedback on the program/curriculum overall.

5. Soliciting Employer Feedback /Survey

Solicit input from employers about their assessment of both the appropriateness of the CHW curriculum and CHW student performance on the job.

6. Doing Student Follow-up

Follow-up with students who complete (or leave) CHW educational programs, to review how they believe the curriculum contributed to their experience/success in their current work and to document any “rewards” associated with participation in the program such as salary increases, higher position rank, promotion in grade, as well as to evaluate changes in self perception and self-efficacy.

7. Conducting Client Follow-up

Create opportunities for CHW clients to give feedback to students and to faculty about the preparedness and performance of CHW students.

8. Assessing Student Learning

Use creative adult learning-based approaches to assess growth in student knowledge and skills.

9. Evaluating Community Impact

Participate in assessing the impact of CHW students on the community and on policy change.

G. Sustainability:

1. Developing a Community/Employer/CHW Advisory Group

Integrate a community-based advisory group, including active, experienced CHWs into the program to assist in both start-up activities and efforts to sustain the program.

2. Cultivating Workforce Development /Education Funds

Develop diverse funding streams that can help to address student financial needs.

3. Sustaining Efforts to Match Student Needs to Relevant Financial Aid Programs & Private Support

Assure that the educational program is designed to maximize student access to Federal Financial Aid and other funding sources.

4. Publicizing and Celebrating Student Successes

Share student and program success with others including student families, college administrators, policy-makers, employers, and the community at-large.

5. Integrating Alumni into Teaching & Mentoring Students

Involve CHW graduates in the on-going life of the program.

6. Sustaining Faculty Contact with Experienced CHWs

Work to build CHW educational program faculty capacity and understanding of the CHW field.

7. Exposing Administration to the CHW Field, Classes, and Publicity

Assure that college administrators and policy makers understand the contributions CHWs make and the overall dynamics of the field.

8. Providing Specialty Training Linked to Payers (Medicaid/ CHIP, WIC, Chronic Disease Management, etc.)

Integrate current health insurance payers, who do or may pay for CHW services, into the planning of CHW educational programs; integrate payer information into the learning activities.

9. Creating Curriculum Exchange Opportunities

Seek out opportunities to share curricula and review other CHW educational and training strategies/methodologies to ensure that the program is taking advantage of the best available approaches and materials.

10. Documenting Student Contributions and Cost-Effectiveness of CHWs in General

Stay informed and participate, as feasible, in documenting CHW student contributions in the field, including cost-benefit assessments.

11. Establishing Educational Programs as a Point of Entry into Employment and/or Advancement

Work to develop career paths for students where their completion of educational requirements is recognized and rewarded in the workplace, i.e., leads to opportunities for advancement; do not set "credit education" at the college level as the required point of entry for all people to work as CHWs.

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