Idaho State University | Community Health Worker Training Academy

CHW Apprenticeship Competencies and Skills

CHW Apprenticeship Competencies

The following is a list of 10 CHW trainee competency areas. Each area has more specific objectives. As part of the CHW apprenticeship experience, trainees will need to show competency in each of the 10 areas during their apprenticeship experience. The student is responsible for tracking their competency activities, which the apprenticeship site will sign off on at objective completion.

1) Provides cultural mediation among individuals, communities and health and social service systems
2) Provides culturally appropriate health education and information
3) Coordinates care, provides case management support and assists individuals and communities in navigating health and social service systems
4) Provides coaching and social support
5) Advocates for individuals and communities
6) Helps build individual and community capacity
8) Implements individual and community assessments
9) Conducts outreach to individuals, communities, service providers and groups
10) Participates in evaluation and research

The list below shows objectives for each of the 10 competency areas.

1) Provides cultural mediation among individuals, communities and health and social service systems
A. Educates individuals and communities about how to use health and social service systems (including explaining how systems operate)
B. Educates health and social service systems and providers about community perspectives and cultural norms (including supporting implementation of Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards
C. Expands health literacy among constituents served
D. Facilitates cross-cultural communication among individuals, communities and health/social service system workers
2) Provides culturally appropriate health education and information
A. Conducts health promotion and disease prevention education in a matter that matches linguistic and cultural needs of participants or community
B. Provides necessary information and support to help individuals and communities learn the etiology, pathology and likely outcomes of health conditions, as well as appropriate
3) Coordinates care, provides case management support and assists individuals and communities in navigating health and social service systems
A. Participates in care coordination or case management, including as part of a team
B. Provides referrals and follow-up support to ensure that services were obtained
C. Facilitates, obtains or coordinates transportation to services and helps ameliorate other barriers to services
D. Documents and tracks individual- and population-level data
E. Identifies and informs people and systems about community assets and challenges
4) Provides coaching and social support
A. Provides individual support and coaching
B. Motivates and encourages people to obtain care and other services
C. Supports self-management of disease prevention and management of health conditions, including chronic disease

D. Plans, organizes and/or leads support groups
5) Advocates for individuals and communities
A. Assists in advocating for the needs and perspectives of communities
B. Assists individuals or communities in connecting to resources and advocating for basic needs (e.g. food and housing)
C. Conducts policy advocacy at an institutional, local community or city/regional/state/national level
6) Helps build individual and community capacity
A. Assists individuals in building and expanding their personal capacity to identify and manage their health conditions, obtain services as needed, identify opportunities to help others, and represent their needs through communication and advocacy
B. Assists communities in building capacity by identifying resources, coordinating service and support providers, linking groups or systems that provide synergistic support, and implementing advocacy strategies to address unmet needs
C. Identifies and works with CHW peers to help others grow professionally, act ethically and meet the needs of the individuals and communities served
7) Provides direct health and social service assistance
A. Conducts and accurately reports and communicates results and implications of basic screening tests (height, weight, blood pressure, glucose level, etc.)
B. Provides basic health support services (e.g. first aid, diabetic foot checks)
C. Collects and distributes materials that meet basic needs (e.g. provides food, blankets, clothing to those in need
8) Implements individual and community assessments
A. Participates in design, implementation and interpretation of individual-level assessments (e.g. home environmental assessment)
B. Participates in design, implementation and interpretation of community-level assessments (e.g. windshield survey of community assets and challenges, community asset mapping)
9) Conducts outreach to individuals, communities, service providers and groups
A. Identifies and recruits individuals, families and community groups to services and systems
B. Follows up on health and social service encounters with individuals, families and community groups
C. Conducts home visits to provide education, assessment and social support
D. Presents at local agencies and community events to share information and educate individuals and communities about information and educate individuals and communities about health and social service concerns and resources
10) Participates in evaluation and research
A. Evaluates CHW services and programs
B. Identifies and engages community members as research partners, including community consent processes
C. Identifies priority issues and evaluation/research questions
D. Develops evaluation/research design and methods
E. Collects and interprets data
F. Shares results and findings
G. Engages stakeholders to take action on findings

CHW Trainee Skills

In addition to CHW competencies, preceptors will evaluate trainees on CHW skills that are demonstrated. These skill areas are:

1. Communication Skills
a. Ability to use language confidently

b. Ability to use language in ways that engage and motivate
c. Ability to communicate using plain and clear language
d. Ability to communicate with empathy
e. Ability to listen actively
f. Ability to prepare written communication including electronic communication (e.g., email, telecommunication device for the deaf)
g. Ability to document work
h. Ability to communicate with the community served (may not be fluent in language of all communities served)
2. Interpersonal and Relationship-Building Skills
a. Ability to provide coaching and social support
b. Ability to conduct self-management coaching
c. Ability to use interviewing techniques (e.g. motivational interviewing)
d. Ability to work as a team member
e. Ability to manage conflict
f. Ability to practice cultural humility
3. Service Coordination and Navigation Skills
a. Ability to coordinate care (including identifying and accessing resources and overcoming barriers)
b. Ability to make appropriate referrals
c. Ability to facilitate development of an individual and/or group action plan and goal attainment
d. Ability to coordinate CHW activities with clinical and other community services
e. Ability to follow-up and track care and referral outcomes
4. Capacity Building Skills
a. Ability to help others identify goals and develop to their fullest potential
b. Ability to work in ways that increase individual and community empowerment
c. Ability to network, build community connections, and build coalitions
d. Ability to teach self-advocacy skills
e. Ability to conduct community organizing
5. Advocacy Skills
a. Ability to contribute to policy development
b. Ability to advocate for policy change
c. Ability to speak up for individuals and communities
6. Education and Facilitation Skills

a. Ability to use empowering and learner-centered teaching strategies
b. Ability to use a range of appropriate and effective educational techniques
c. Ability to facilitate group discussions and decision-making
d. Ability to plan and conduct classes and presentations for a variety of groups
e. Ability to seek out appropriate information and respond to questions about pertinent topics
f. Ability to find and share requested information
g. Ability to collaborate with other educators
h. Ability to collect and use information from and with community members
7. Individual and Community Assessment Skills
a. Ability to participate in individual assessment through observation and active inquiry
b. Ability to participate in community assessment through observation and active inquiry
8. Outreach Skills*
a. Ability to conduct case-finding, recruitment and follow-up
b. Ability to prepare and disseminate materials
c. Ability to build and maintain a current resource inventory
9. Professional Skills and Conduct
a. Ability to set goals and to develop and follow a work plan
b. Ability to balance priorities and to manage time
c. Ability to apply critical thinking techniques and problem solving
d. Ability to use pertinent technology
e. Ability to pursue continuing education and lifelong learning opportunities
f. Ability to maximize personal safety while working in community and/or clinical settings
g. Ability to observe ethical and legal standards (e.g. CHW Code of Ethics, Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA], Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act [HIPAA])
h. Ability to identify situations calling for mandatory reporting and carry out mandatory reporting requirements
i. Ability to participate in professional development of peer CHWs and in networking among CHW groups
j. Ability to set boundaries and practice self-care
10. Evaluation and Research Skills*
a. Ability to identify important concerns and conduct evaluation and research to better understand root causes
b. Ability to apply the evidence-based practices of Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) and Participatory Action Research (PAR)
c. Ability to participate in evaluation and research processes including:

i) Identifying priority issues and evaluation/ research questions
ii) Developing evaluation/research design and methods
iii) Data collection and interpretation
iv) Sharing results and findings
v) Engaging stakeholders to take action on findings