



Office Of Health Promotion

**COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER
CERTIFICATION PROGRAM UPDATE**

Sarahjini Nunn, EdD, MPA, MBA
Program Manager

Lori Weiselberg, MPH
Consultant

SESSION OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Identify key aspects of the CHW Certification and Reimbursement Act
- ✓ Describe CHW Certification Program model and status of program development
- ✓ Identify ways to participate in program development
- ✓ Ask questions and discuss topics of interest related to the program

CHW CERTIFICATION AND REIMBURSEMENT ACT

CHW CERTIFICATION AND REIMBURSEMENT ACT (PUBLIC ACT 410 ILCS 67)

- ✓ Signed into law on April 27, 2021
- ✓ Sponsored by the Illinois Black Caucus as part of equity-driven health care and human services reform
- ✓ Takes sweeping action to address health inequities and obstacles to improving health and human service outcomes



Olsen, Dean. *Gov. JB Pritzker Signs Sweeping Health Care Equity Reform Bill at Memorial Medical Center*, State Journal Register, 27 Apr. 2021,

CHW CERTIFICATION AND REIMBURSEMENT ACT



- **Creates the IL CHW Certification Program**
 - ✓ To ensure high quality, comprehensive, and ongoing professional development to CHWs
- **Calls for IDPH to serve as regulatory body**
 - ✓ Charged with development and oversight of initial CHW certification and renewals for individuals and training programs
- **Establishes the CHW Certification Program Review Board**
 - ✓ To provide recommendations on program development
- **Calls for Medicaid reimbursement for services provided by certified CHWs**

LEGISLATIVE APPOINTMENTS TO REVIEW BOARD

Director of Public Health*

Director of Healthcare and Family Services*

Secretary of Human Services*

Secretary of Financial and Professional Regulation*

Member from Governor's Office (Governor appointment)

Members (n=3) appointed by Senate President

Member appointed by Senate Minority Leader

Members (n=3) appointed by Speaker of the House of Representatives

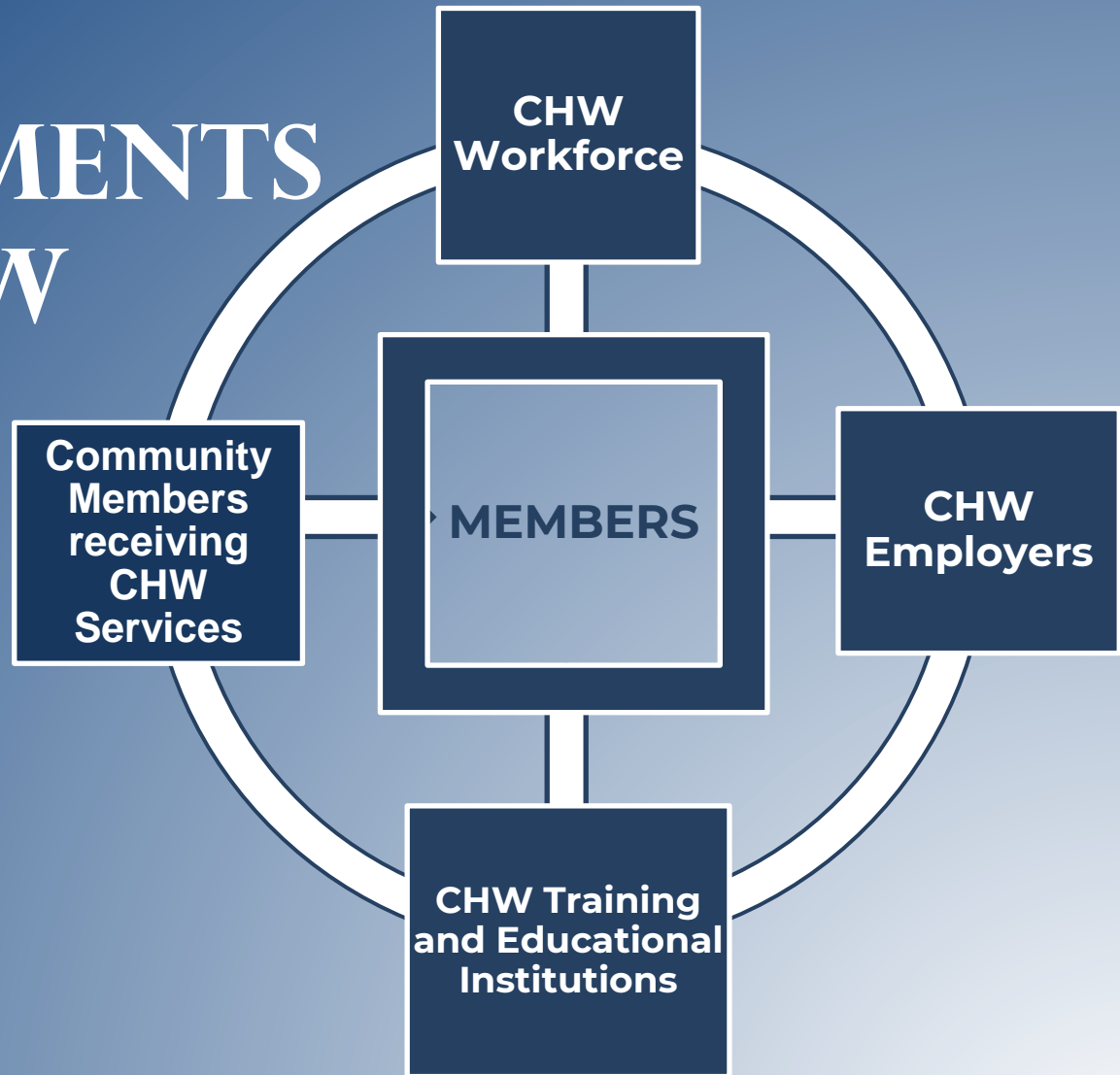
Member appointed by Minority Leader of the House of Representatives

Member from statewide CHW association (Speaker of the House of Representatives appointment)

Member from statewide association of CHWs (Senate President appointment)

* Or designee

IDPH APPOINTMENTS TO REVIEW BOARD



REVIEW BOARD MEMBERSHIP

CO-CHAIRS	Wandy Hernandez, IL CHW Association	Dr. Janice Phillips, IL Dept of Public Health
MEMBERS	Leticia Boughton Price	Ashley Colwell
	Ryan Croke	Monica Cuevas
	Angela Ellison	Ofelia Figueroa
	Dr. Shami Goyal	Rep. LaToya Greenwood
	Kristin Hartsaw	Ket Herena
	Rep. Maura Hirschauer	Rep. Camille Lilly
	Kathryn Gunter	Noelle Moore
	Lubia Nunez-Montelongo	David Sanders
	Ester Sciammarella	Tracey Smith
	Emma Villarreal	Kevin Wood

RESEARCH TO INFORM WORK OF THE REVIEW BOARD

- University partner (UIC Cancer Center) developed: *Best Practices in State CHW Certification Programs*
- Included **cross walk of all 24 states with certification programs** -- requirements such as training hours, work experience hours, statewide exam, background checks, number of continuing education credits, formal education
- **Example:** 15 states shared the number of required CHW core competency training hours in their state:

Classroom Hours	Average: 102	Range: 24-200
Field Experience Hours	Average: 96	Range: 40-200

RESEARCH TO INFORM WORK OF THE REVIEW BOARD

- Conducted interviews with other state CHW certification programs to identify lessons learned: IN, MA, OR, RI, AK, SD, KY, AZ, CA, CT
- Reviewed other certification program requirements in the State of Illinois, for example:
 - Certified Recovery Support Specialist
 - Certified Nursing Assistant
 - Certified Peer Recovery Specialist
 - Certified Medical Assistant

REVIEW BOARD

FOCUS ON ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

- State agencies carry out laws through administrative rules
- Review Board has spent most of its time reviewing draft rules
- CHW rules are divided into sections, for example:
 - ✓ CHW Core Competencies
 - ✓ CHW Certification Requirements
 - ✓ Continuing Education Requirements and Processes
 - ✓ CHW Registry
 - ✓ CHW Training Program and Instructor Requirements
- The Board made several recommendations to fundamentally change direction of aspects of the certification program

STEPS AND TIME FRAME TO FINALIZE RULES AND LAUNCH THE PROGRAM

- Review Board Recommendations January 2025
- IDPH Final Review January/February 2025
- State Board of Health Rules Committee May 2025
- Joint Committee on Administrative Rules May 2025
- Certification Program Go-Live **EARLY 2026**

TIME FRAME HAS MANY DEPENDENCIES AND IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.



INTENDED IMPACT ON THE CHW WORKFORCE

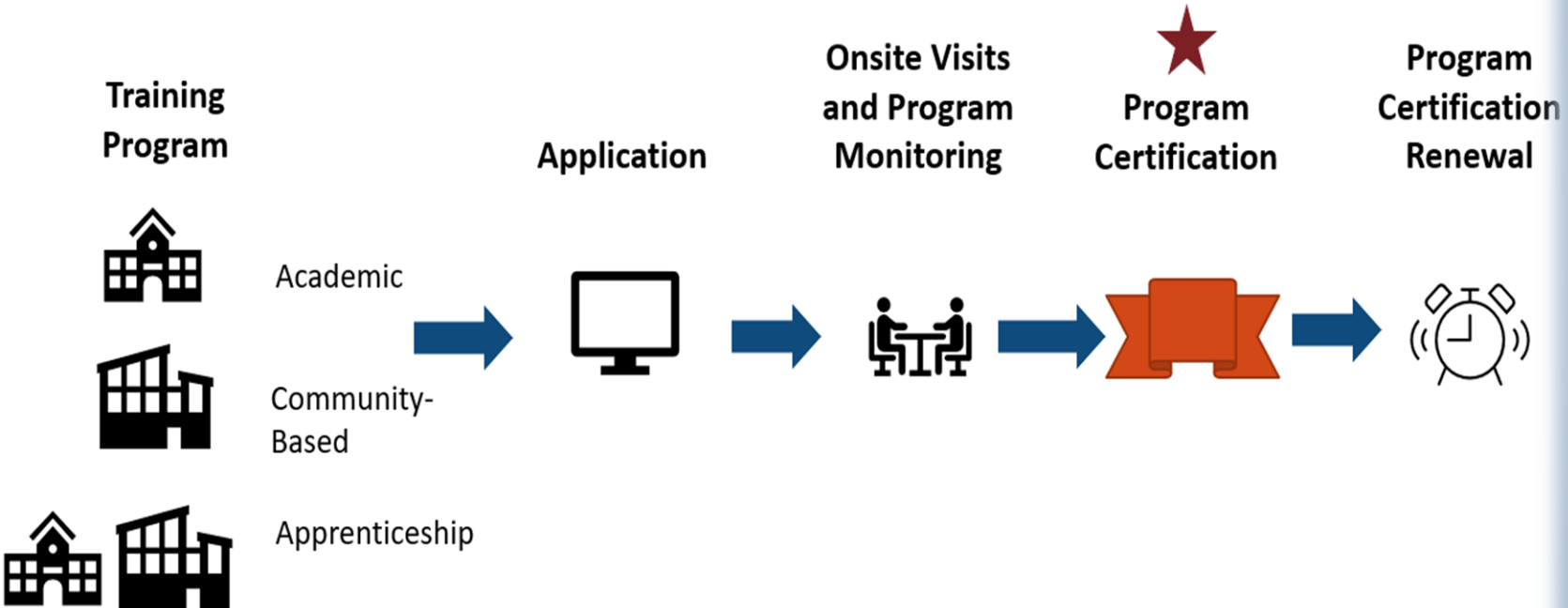


TRAINING PROGRAM CERTIFICATION

CORE COMPETENCIES DRIVE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

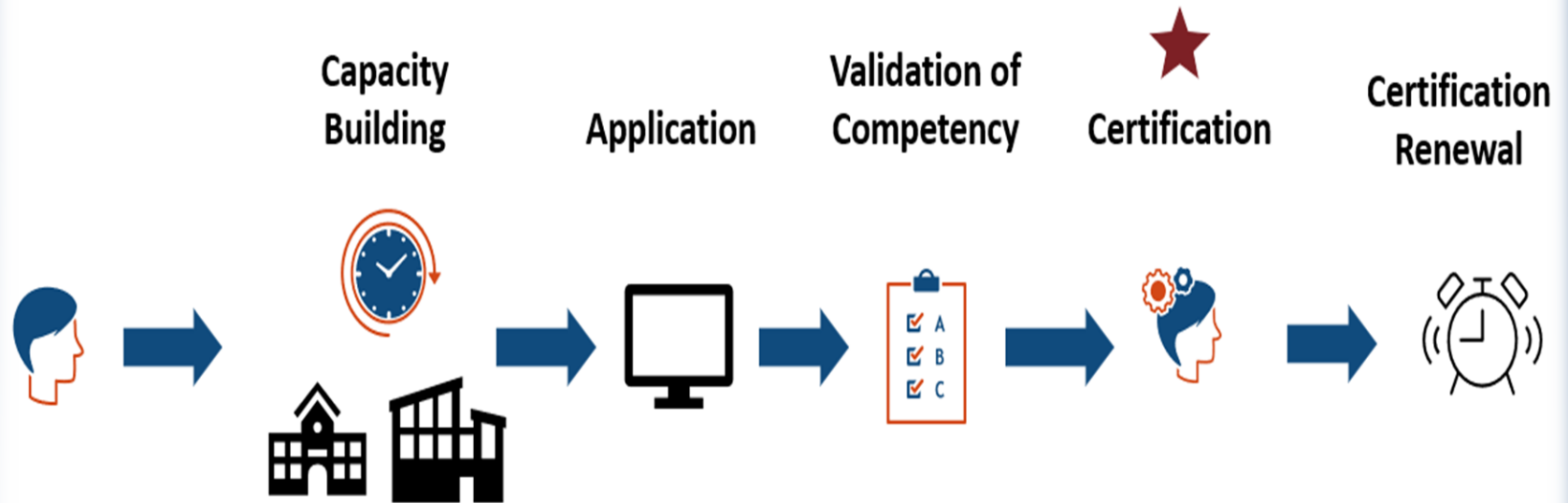
- The law sets forth these minimum core competencies:
 - communication
 - interpersonal skills and relationship building
 - service coordination and navigation skills
 - capacity-building
 - advocacy
 - presentation and facilitation skills
 - organizational skills
 - cultural competency
 - public health knowledge
 - understanding of health systems and basic diseases
 - behavioral health
 - field experience

CHW TRAINING PROGRAM CERTIFICATION MODEL



CHW CERTIFICATION

CHW CERTIFICATION MODEL



CERTIFICATION PATHWAYS

- **Work Experience**
 - Complete minimum number of paid or volunteer hours of CHW (or related) work experience
- **Academic or Community-Based Training Program**
 - Successfully complete a certified CHW training program
- **Equivalence**
 - CHWs will be considered for certification, for example, completion of a pathway such as CHW certification in another state that meets Illinois requirements

REIMBURSEMENT FOR CHW SERVICES BY PUBLIC PAYERS

KEY STATE AGENCY PARTNER: ILLINOIS MEDICAID

- Develop and submit Medicaid State Plan Amendment (SPA) for federal approval to reimburse for CHW services for Medicaid enrolled individuals
- The SPA will include:
 - Specific CHW services to be reimbursed
 - Reimbursement rates
- Process
 - Workgroup began September 2024 to provide input on SPA
 - Align timeline for reimbursement with Certification Program launch



MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT

- CHWs will need to be employed by or affiliated with a Medicaid enrolled organization
- The Medicaid enrolled organization will refer individuals for specific CHW services
- The Medicaid enrolled or affiliated organization will determine who will supervise the CHW



MEDICARE REIMBURSEMENT

- As of January 1, 2024, the federal Medicare program issued billing codes for CHW services for Medicare enrollees.
- **Medicare providers in Illinois can now bill for selected CHW services, focused on addressing unmet social determinants of health needs.**
- Medicare CHW services, billing codes, rates can be found here:

<https://www.astho.org/topic/resource/changes-to-2024-medicare-physician-fee-schedule-for-chi-services/>

UNIVERSITY PARTNERS

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS CHICAGO (UIC) CANCER CENTER

- Developed Report:
Best Practices in State Certification Programs
- Conducted:
Environmental Scan of CHW Training Assets in Illinois
 - Through statewide networking of CHW orgs:
 - Identified 18 CHW basic training programs and 9 under development
 - Identified 95 organizations providing CHW continuing education

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, CHICAGO (UIC) CANCER CENTER

- Conducted: **CHW Survey 2024**
 - 450 completed surveys represent 51% of Illinois' 102 counties
- Examples of survey findings and implications:
 - **High proportion of new CHWs in the workforce**
 - ✓ 73% reported working as a CHW for fewer than 5 years; 33% reported working 2 years or less
 - **Many CHWs have not had formal training**
 - ✓ 38% reported never having taken a basic CHW trainin
 - **Sizable group of CHWs w/ Spanish language preference**
 - ✓ 18% chose to complete the survey in Spanish

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, CHICAGO (UIC) CANCER CENTER

- Sub-contracted with **Sinai Urban Health Institute (SUHI)** to develop in English and Spanish:
 - Model CHW Basic Core Competency Course
 - CHW Refresher Course for selected applicants
 - CHW Instructor Training Course
- Developing a model CHW student assessment
- Developing processes for training program approval, on-site visits, preapproving continuing education courses

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY (SIU) CARBONDALE

- Sub-contracted with **Breakthrough Technologies** -- a highly experienced vendor -- to build an IT Platform
 - One-stop shop website for CHWs, Training Programs, Instructors, Employers
- Some platform functions will include:
 - Online applications with uploading capability
 - Reminder capabilities for certification renewals
 - Resources for CHWs, training programs, employers (many linking to other Illinois/national websites)
 - CHW registry look-up to confirm current certification

FORUM TO PROVIDE INPUT



- Attend CHW Review Board meetings. Agendas, dial-in info, minutes posted here: [Review Board webpage](#)
- Request for public comment at Review Board meeting: Sarahjini.R.Nunn@illinois.gov
- Reach out to Review Board members if they represent you or your organization

COMMENTS & QUESTIONS



THANK YOU!!