

Community Health Workers (CHWs) as Public Health Leaders

Adapting a National Framework for CHW Integration in Wisconsin

Chronic Disease Prevention Partner Call
July 22, 2025



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
of **HEALTH SERVICES**



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Today's Agenda

- Wisconsin CHW landscape
- Process: toolkit creation
- Exploring the CHW Integration Toolkit
- Q & A
- Wrap up



Local and Tribal Health Department Landscape

- Additional local and Tribal health departments (LTHDs) began hiring CHWs
 - Organizational readiness
 - Role recognition
- Workforce sustainability needs
 - Data collection and documentation
 - CHW supervisor and HR guidance
 - County-level funding approval and support

CHW Empowerment Collaborative

A dedicated CHW space established and led by a CHW providing opportunities for networking and capacity building among Wisconsin CHWs.



- **Established in November 2022**
- **Originally for CHWs funded through the 2109 grant**
- **Opened later to all CHWs in Wisconsin**

CHW Supervisor Peer Group

An advisory group supporting CHW supervisors who were not well-acquainted with the work of CHWs.



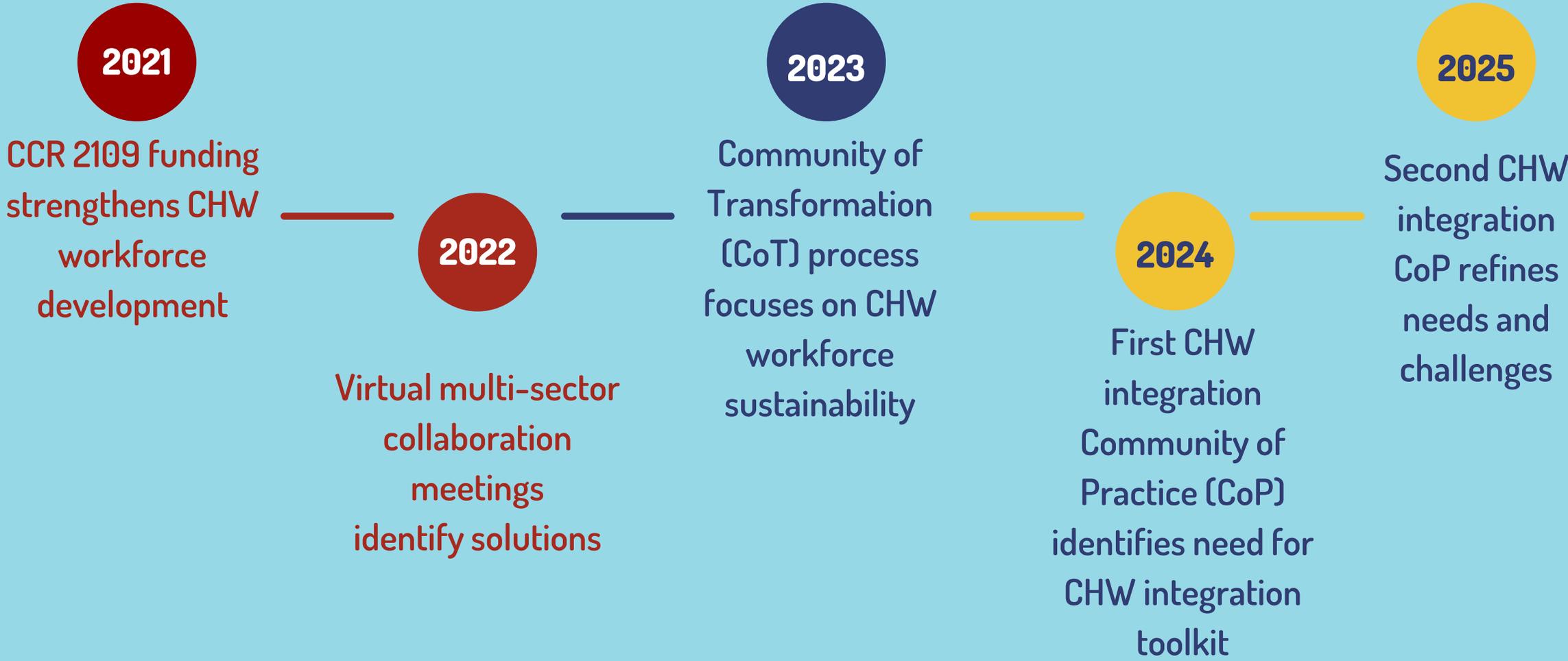
- **Established in December 2022**
- **Support for supervisors if CHWs funded through the 2109 grant**
- **Expanded later to include other CHW supervisors**

CHW Integration into LTHDs in Wisconsin Community of Practice Lessons Learned

- Overview
 - Strong interest to hire and learn more about CHWs
 - Registration by 25 LTHDs
 - Average attendance by 10 LTHDs
 - CHWs employed by five out of the 25 LTHDs
 - Hiring in process at one LTHD
- Challenges
 - Inconsistent recognition of CHW roles
 - Absence of a sustainability plan

Process: Toolkit Creation

How Did We Get Here?



Adapting a National Framework

envision's Financial Sustainability Toolkit (FST)

CHW sustainability

CHW financial sustainability toolkit (FST)

The CHW Financial Sustainability Planning Toolkit, created by **envision** in collaboration with national experts, is a comprehensive resource designed to help CHWs and CHW allies achieve financial sustainability.

GET THE FST

**COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER
Financial Sustainability
Toolkit**

Authors:
Lesley Wolf, Sara Elise Bristol,
Carl Rush, Sherri Ohly

Adapting a National Framework

envision's Approach to CHW Sustainability



Toolkit: CHW Integration into LTHDs in Wisconsin

- Community of Practice (CoP)
 - Identified barriers and challenges
 - Highlighted successes
 - Determined focus areas
- Focus groups and 1:1s
 - CHWs
 - CHW allies
 - LTHD supervisor or managers
- Drafting the toolkit
 - Reviewed by focus groups
 - Incorporated Wisconsin-specific perspectives
 - Included CHW-specific examples

Exploring the CHW Integration Toolkit

The Toolkit Includes:

- Organizational assessment tools and frameworks.
- Overview of CHW qualities, skills, and roles.
- Examples of CHW leadership and CHW allyship.
- Program or initiative implementation guidelines.
- CHW insights about recruiting, interviewing, hiring, training, and development.

Using the Toolkit:

- Explore “real world” stories and examples.
- Read the section summaries to reinforce key concepts.
- Complete action items to apply learning directly to your context.
- Use the reflection prompts to assess your progress.

Content Preview (from the toolkit)

Best practices for supervising CHWs:

- Supervisors should plan and support opportunities for CHWs to advance in their careers through professional development and growth initiatives. Having experienced CHWs serve as supervisors can also help create clear career pathways.
- Supervisors should meet regularly (for example, weekly) with CHWs to discuss progress, challenges, and support needs. Regular mentoring and feedback, such as quarterly or annual performance assessments, can strengthen CHW skills and enhance their effectiveness.
- Supervisors and team members should recognize that CHWs often operate outside traditional office settings and hours. Their work may include visiting client homes, conducting outreach, or meeting with community members in the evenings or on weekends. It is important to manage expectations about their physical presence in the office during standard work hours.

Content Preview (from the toolkit)

Section 1 review

Use this guide to review and reflect on key concepts from this section:

Terms

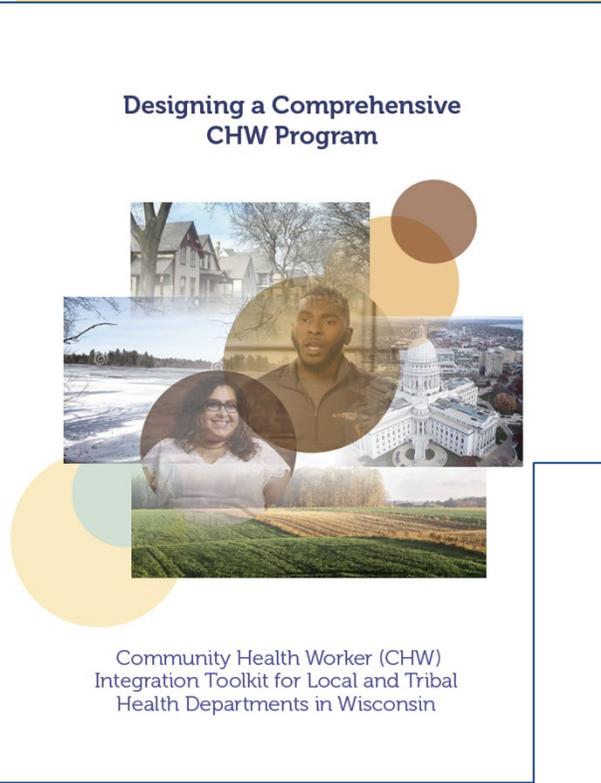
CHW qualities are attributes that hiring managers identify and make note of during job interviews. CHW qualities come from personal experiences and strong connection to the communities CHWs serve; they are not something you can teach and cannot be measured quantitatively

CHW skills are behaviors or abilities that CHWs learn during core competency or other training. In other words, it is what CHWs do (for example: outreach, advocacy). CHW skills can be measured

CHW roles are functions that CHW serve in communities and the health care system; what organizations refer to when writing CHW scope of practice and job descriptions

Let's Practice!

1. Review the CHW Integration Toolkit.
 2. Complete the CHW integration readiness checklist.
- What do you notice?
 - Where is there opportunity for improvement in your organization?



Designing a Comprehensive CHW Program

Community Health Worker (CHW) Integration Toolkit for Local and Tribal Health Departments in Wisconsin

The objectives of the toolkit are:

1. Introduce the CHW workforce
2. Support organizational readiness for CHW integration
3. Facilitate CHW program development by providing practical tools for planning and implementing CHW programs, including guidance on hiring, onboarding, and creating career pathways
4. Highlight CHW leadership and impact; elevate the role of CHW allies to uplift CHW leadership and voice
5. Strengthen workforce sustainability by addressing structural challenges for CHW programs and provide best practices and recommendations to address those challenges

Whether your organization is in the early stages of planning, maintaining or seeking additional support for a CHW program, this toolkit provides practical strategies, tools, and resources for program planning, implementation, and evaluation.

3
Designing a Comprehensive Community Health Worker Program

Next Steps

Adoption and dissemination



- Raising awareness of the toolkit
- Training users to apply the learnings
- Advocating for broad adoption of the toolkit

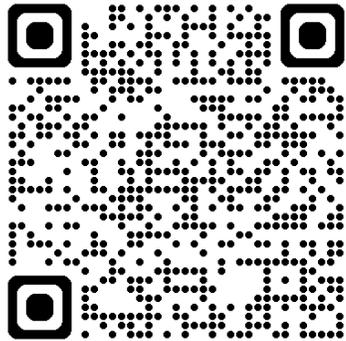
Addressing challenges



- Insufficient sustainability funding
- Limited impact research

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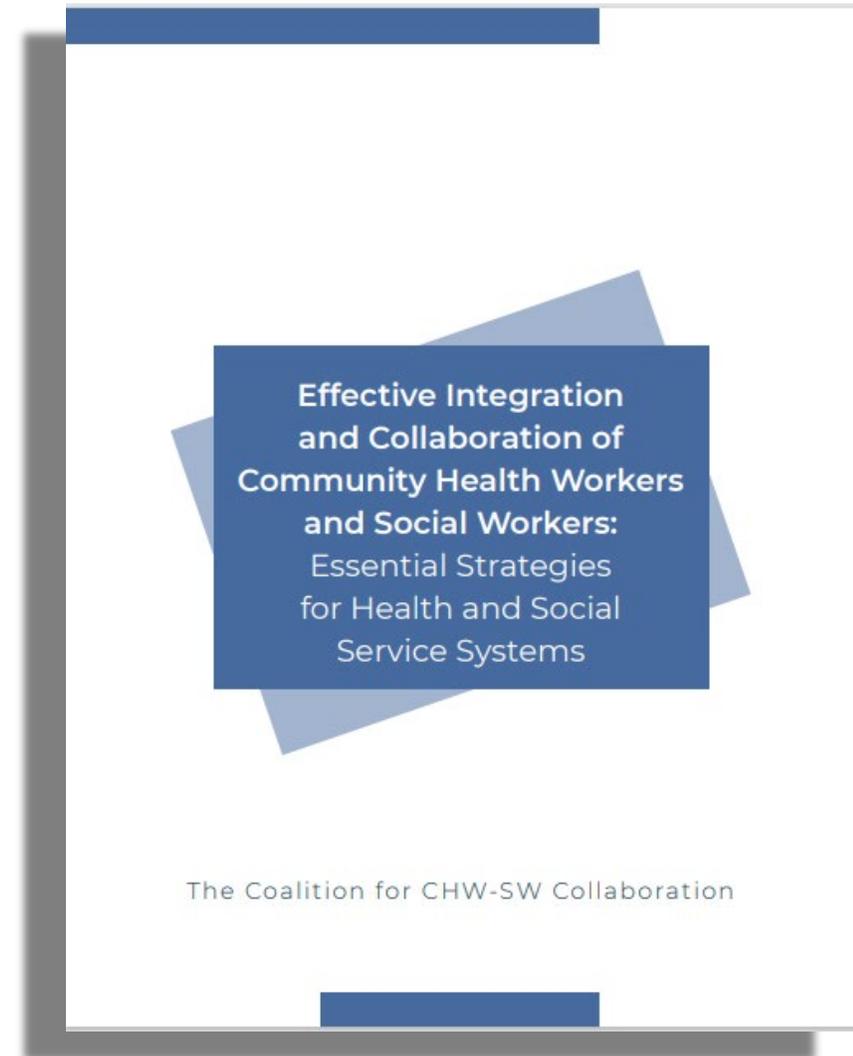
Designing a Comprehensive CHW Program



Community Health Worker (CHW)
Integration Toolkit for Local and Tribal
Health Departments in Wisconsin

Other Resources

Center for Community Health Alignment (CCHA) [integration toolkit for CHWs and social workers](#)





learn more about envision



Thank you!

To learn more about the impact of community health workers in Wisconsin, visit the [CHW pages on the DHS website](#).

Get in touch!

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