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OF HEALTH SERVICES

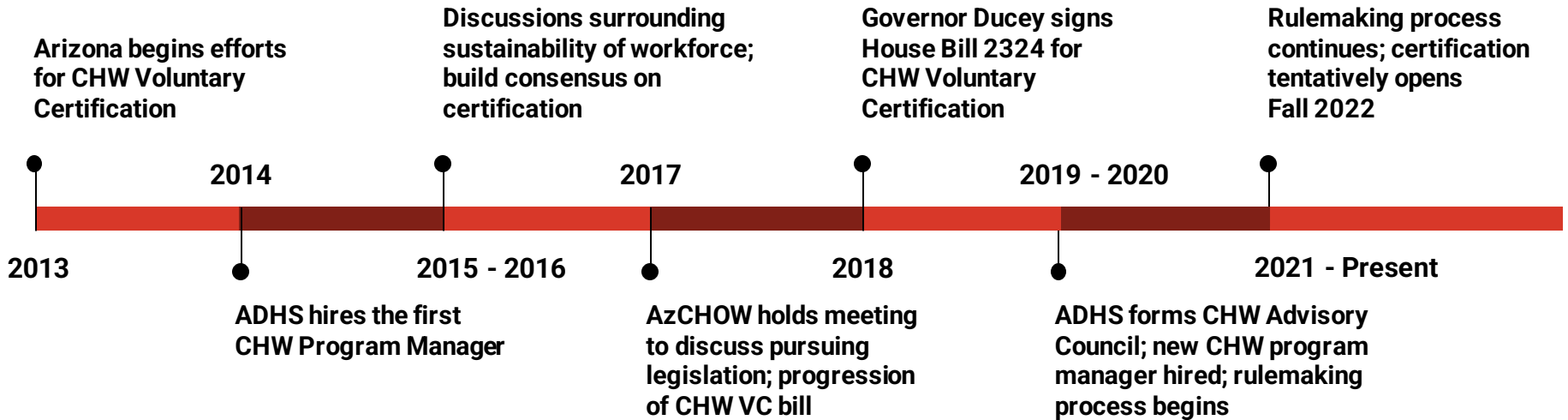
Power & Promise of CHW Voluntary Certification

Arizona Department of Health Services Plans & Perspectives

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History of CHW Voluntary Certification in Arizona



(Ingram et al., 2020)



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A National Trend

Status of state-level CHW certification (as of February 2020):

- **State operated certification program:** Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Maryland, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Texas, New Mexico, Nevada, and Oregon
- **Privately operated certification program:** Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Virginia, South Carolina, Florida, Michigan, and Missouri
- **Certification program under development:** Arizona, Minnesota, and Illinois
- **Certification program under consideration:** New Hampshire, District of Columbia, West Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Iowa, Arkansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Montana, Colorado, Utah, and Alaska

(RHIhub, n.d.)



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Benefits of Certification

- Legislated voluntary certification provides a pathway for further professionalization of the CHW workforce offering an avenue to increase the recognition, compensation, training, and standardization of the workforce.
- CHWs that have been certified will have their education, work experience, and other qualifications verified and receive a certification issued by the state health department.
- The general public may receive a significant benefit by receiving necessary health services from certified CHWs that their residents may not have received otherwise.
- Many other valuable benefits for the communities serves, employers, and the workforce as a whole.



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Sustainability of the Workforce - A Collective Effort

- National support
- State support
- Movement toward Medicaid and/or health plan reimbursement for CHW services.
- Organization and CHW employer support
- Associations/coalitions
- Allies/partners



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National Support

Increase in grant funding to support workforce infrastructure growth and development

- **COVID-19 Public Health Workforce Supplemental Funding:** Establish, expand, train, and sustain the public health workforce; including funds to directly support the CHW workforce
- **COVID-19 Health Disparities Grant:** Build and expand an inclusive public health workforce, including hiring people from the community (e.g., community health workers) who are equipped to assess and address the needs of communities disproportionately affected by COVID-19
- **Community Health Workers for COVID Response and Resilient Communities Grant:** Training and deployment of community health workers (CHWs) to support the building and strengthening of community resilience to fight COVID-19 through addressing existing health disparities in the population.



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State Support

Increase opportunities to grow and sustain the workforce and the organizations and associations that support the workforce.

- Grant funding to support CHW initiatives:
 - CHW Training Program Approval
 - Training and other professional development opportunities
 - CHW Voluntary Certification efforts, including establishment of a database
 - Workforce/organizational assessments
 - Coalition and conference support
 - Certification fees and training program tuition expenses
- Development of the CHW Voluntary Certification application and process
- Integration of CHW strategies into the 2021 - 2025 Arizona Health Improvement Plan (AzHIP)



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Future Plans

- Continue to integrate CHWs into our plans to grow the public health workforce and initiatives to support our communities.
- Continue to identify funding opportunities to advance and develop CHWs and expand the capacity of those that support the workforce
- Promote CHW Voluntary Certification as a vital step to ensuring sustainability of the workforce.
- Advocate for reimbursement of CHW services through state health programs/plans.



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Websites and Resources

- ADHS CHW Webpage <https://www.azdhs.gov/prevention/tobacco-chronic-disease/community-health-workers>
- Administrative Rules CHW Voluntary Certification Rulemaking Webpage <https://azdhs.gov/director/administrative-counsel-rules/rules/index.php#rulemakings-community-healthworkers>
- List of Approved CHW Training Programs: <https://www.azchow.org/approved-arizona-chw-training-programs/>
- Resources for organizations interested in CHW Training Program Approval, including application guidelines: <https://www.azchow.org/training-program-approval/>



References

- Ingram, M., Sabo, S., Redondo, F., Soto, Y., Russell, K., Carter, H., Bender, B., & de Zapien, J. G. (2020). Establishing voluntary certification of community health workers in Arizona: A policy case study of building a unified workforce. *Human Resources for Health*, 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12960-020-00487-7>
- Rural Health Information Hub. (n.d.). *State certification programs - RHIHUB community health workers toolkit*. State Certification Programs - RHIhub Community Health Workers Toolkit. Retrieved from <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/community-health-workers/4/training/certification>



Thank you!

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