

Community Health Workers in Vermont

Workforce Snapshot: Demographics, Education, Skills, and Training

March 2022

Introduction

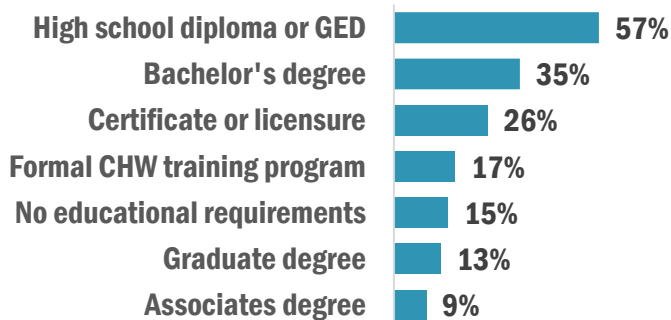
This brief provides a summary of key results describing the workforce from a May 2021 surveyⁱ of 128 community health workers (CHW) and 33 CHW employers from across Vermont. The survey, conducted by the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) in collaboration with the Vermont CHW Steering Committee, is the second iteration of a survey first conducted in 2020. It is part of an effort to collect information about the roles, scope of work, skills, and training of the CHW workforce in the state.

Employment and Education

Most respondents (64%) are employed full-time as a CHW, with an additional 16% employed part-time. Most (63%) have been working as a CHW for over 4 years, and 27% have been working as a CHW for 1-3 years.

About half (54%) of CHW employers have employed CHWs at their organization for more than 10 years. Over half of CHW employers reported that their organizations require a high school diploma or GED for CHWs (see below).

Minimum Level of Education Required by Organizations



When hiring CHWs, the top three characteristics that employers look for are: prior experience with the population served (70%), knowledge of community services or resources (70%), and shared background with the population served (52%).

Highlights

CHW Profile

63% have served as a CHW for 4+ years

64% work full-time

87% identify as female

91% identify as White

76% make <\$45,000/yr

94% live in or near the communities they serve

Top Funding Sources for CHW Positions

\$ Grants

\$ Organizational operating budgets

\$ Community Health Team / Blueprint for Health

\$ OneCare VT

Essential CHW Skills



Communication



Interpersonal



Advocacy

Source: 2021 Vermont Community Health Worker Survey

Learn more at healthvermont.gov/CHWs

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Demographics

Most CHWs identify as female (87%) and White (91%). A quarter (25%) are younger than 35, 38% are 35-54 years of age, and 38% are 55 years and older.

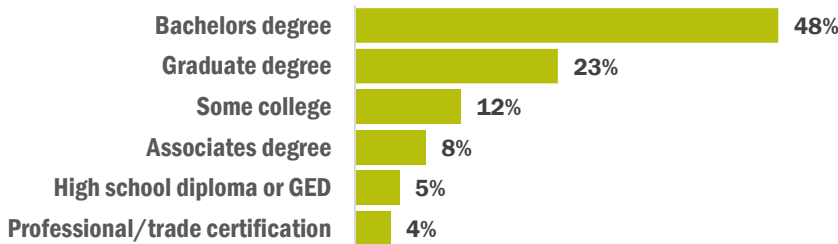
Most CHWs live in or near the communities they serve (94%) and share a similar identity to the communities they serve (95%).

In terms of education, 71% of CHWs have a bachelors or graduate degree, and 29% reported being licensed health professionals.

95% of CHWs share a similar identity to the communities they serve

29% of CHWs are licensed health professionals

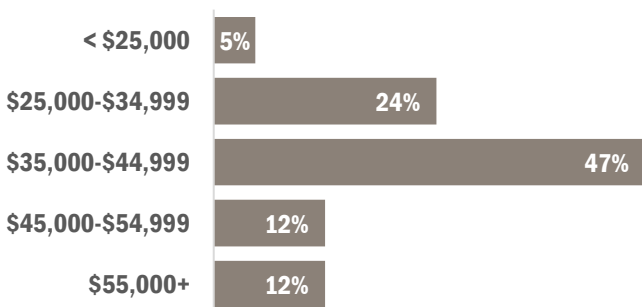
Highest Level of Education Completed



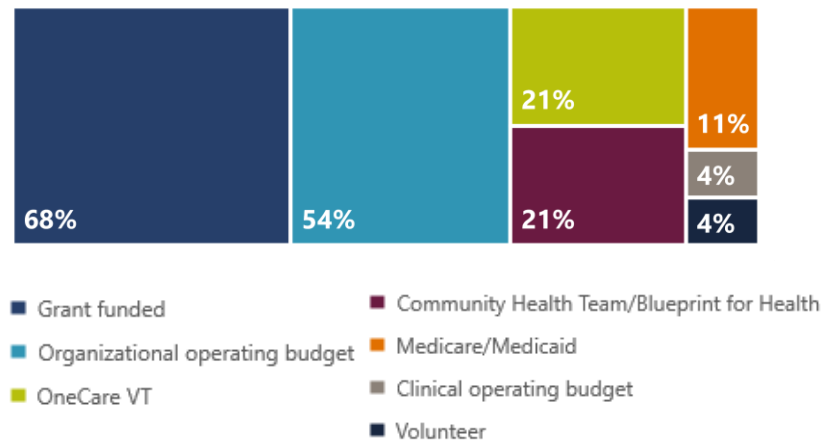
Salary and Position Funding

Among CHWs working full-time (64% of CHW respondents), 83% reported making between \$25,000-\$55,000 per year. According to CHW employers, the most cited funding sources for CHW positions are grants (68%) and organizational operating budgets (54%); 45% of CHW employers reported more than one funding source for CHW positions at their organization.

Self-Reported Salary Range of CHWs Working Full-Time



Employer-Reported CHW Funding Sources



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Essential Skills and Training

The vast majority of CHWs believed the following to be **essential skills**: communication (98%), interpersonal and relationship-building skills (98%), advocacy (93%), and service coordination and navigation (91%).

The top five skills in which CHWs received training were communication (75%), interpersonal skills (71%), legal and ethical standards (66%), individual and community assessment skills (64%), and service coordination and navigation skills (62%). The top skills areas identified as **training needs** were cultural and linguistic competency (45%) and capacity building skills (42%).

CHWs reported that they received training for specific health conditions, including mental/behavioral health (61%) and substance use (47%).

CHW employers reported that their organizations have provided training in several areas, including service coordination and navigation (64%) and legal and ethical standards (64%).

Top essential skills



Communication



Interpersonal skills



Advocacy

Top training needs



Cultural and linguistic competency



Capacity building



Public health concepts and approaches

Training for health conditions received (Top 5), reported by CHWs

Mental/behavioral health	61%
Substance use	47%
COVID-19	44%
Diabetes	41%
Falls prevention	41%

Skills training provided (Top 5), reported by CHW employers

Service coordination and navigation	64%
Legal and ethical standards (i.e., HIPAA)	64%
Communication	61%
Education and facilitation/coaching	61%
Cultural and linguistic competency	58%

Opportunities for Education and Advancement

CHW employers were asked if their organization provides tuition reimbursement for CHWs to participate in certification or other educational programs; only 44% said that this was offered at their organization. In terms of opportunities for promotion, only 29% of CHWs agreed that opportunities are available at their organization.

Only 29% of CHWs agreed that they have opportunities for promotion at their organization

Next Steps

The Vermont Community Health Worker Steering Committee directs efforts to accomplish sustainable change in promoting and supporting the work of Community Health Workers in Vermont. The committee plans to conduct ongoing surveys to collect critical information to inform the statewide priorities to recognize and advance the work of Community Health Workers in Vermont.

For more information: Visit [Healthvermont.gov/CHWS](https://healthvermont.gov/CHWS) or contact Jennifer Woolard, jennifer.woolard@vermont.gov



ⁱ **A note about survey methods and respondents:** Data for this brief was gathered from a web-based survey (administered 05/03/2021–05/28/2021) of a convenience sample of CHWs and CHW employers across Vermont. A total of 145 CHWs and 33 CHW employers responded to the survey. Upon analysis, VDH and PDA excluded 17 participants as they did not appear to be CHWs. This was the second year VDH gathered information via surveys about CHW professionals and organizations that engage CHWs. It is not clear the extent to which the responses are representative of all CHWs or all organizations that engage CHWs in Vermont.

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