

WHATCOM COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER NETWORK

CHARTER

Who are we? What do we do? Who do we serve? How is our group run?

We are a network of Community Health Workers (CHWs), which are defined in Washington State as:

"... a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of and/or has an unusually close understanding of the community served. This trusting relationship enables the worker to serve as a liaison/link/intermediary between health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery."

Titles could include Promotores, Community Health Representatives, Faith Community Nurses, Peer Counselors, Resource Navigators, Family Liaisons, Community Connectors, Community Health Advocates, Care Coordinators, Case Managers and others. All are considered CHWs if their role meets the definition.

1. Background

The Whatcom CHW Network was formed in April 2018 under the umbrella of the Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement (WAHA). The Network emerged from WAHA's 2017 community health worker assessment, which found that though many organizations had staff doing some aspect of CHW work, there was no local structure to support CHWs, facilitate training or capacity building, or advocate for a collective CHW voice.

2. Network Purpose

We work toward growth and unification of CHWs in Whatcom County by:

1) Supporting CHWs

- Build understanding of the many different CHW roles and how they can collaborate.
- Develop connections among CHWs so they have a wide network of people doing similar work, and know the resources available for clients.
- Recognize and elevate the role of trusted community members as CHWs.
- Help CHWs get education and training that increases their knowledge and skills.

2) Helping organizations better serve our communities

- Drive organizations, programs and services to strengthen relationships and coordination to better serve clients.
- Expand organizations' outreach capacity to serve more people outside of clinic or program settings, rather than expecting clients to go to them.
- Be a link/bridge between leaders and ~~real~~ people in the community so leaders hear personal stories in addition to data.

3) Engaging in advocacy

- Provide opportunities that empower clients and communities to assess and speak about their true needs.
- Create two-way communication between Whatcom CHWs and the CHW Association of WA State.
- Advocate for legislative and local policy changes that support CHWs and their communities.

2. Meetings

- General meetings are held monthly.
- The meeting locations are rotated among the Network members.
- Meeting minutes and the locations of upcoming meetings are posted on the CHW webpage. <https://wfcn.org/whatcom-community-health-worker-network/>
- Meetings are open to all. However, guests who wish to make a presentation to the group must seek approval from the Coordinating Committee to be added to the agenda.

3. Membership

- All self-identified CHWs may attend meetings and be on the Network Contact List to receive information about meetings and other Network communications.
- Allies (supervisors, managers, interested community members, etc.) may also attend meetings and request to be on the Network Contact List.
- The Network Contact List is made public via the CHW webpage <https://wfcn.org/whatcom-community-health-worker-network/> and lists the person's name, role/title, organization, and email address.

4. Leadership Structure and Decision-Making

The Whatcom CHW Network has a Coordinating Committee (CC), which is a committee of *service to, not power over* the Network. No decisions are solely made by the CC, without input from or criteria set by the larger group.

CC Membership:

- Five seats.
- Community Health Workers.
- Self-nominated.
- One-year terms.

CC Role/Responsibility:

- Set the agenda for the general meetings, with input from members.
- Consider requests from outside people and organizations to do presentations or be on the general meeting agenda. Approval will depend on if the request aligns with the Network, other agenda items or meeting priorities, etc.
- Facilitate the general meetings.
- Act as the thread of ideas and momentum between general meetings.
- Have a bird's eye view of the Network's purpose, goals, and growth.
- Identify issues and concerns, and bring them to the general membership for discussion and decision-making.
- If requested by the general membership, research issues or discuss them more in depth, then return to the full group with more information or a proposal.
- Guide the membership in growing and unifying our CHWs. For example, the CC will research ideas for outreach and recruitment to general members and employers.
- Ensure ongoing, reciprocal communication among the Whatcom and statewide networks, the Washington State Community Health Worker Association (WACHWA), and other relevant work at the state level.

5. Fiscal Sponsor

The Whatcom Family and Community Network (WFCN) serves as the Network's fiscal sponsor. WFCN holds the CHW Network's funds in a restricted account, so the money can only be used by and for the CHW Network. Because it is a non-profit 501c-3 organization, the WFCN can receive grants or donations on behalf of the CHW Network. This relationship and agreement between the CHW Network and WFCN are detailed in a separate Fiscal Sponsor Agreement.