



ARKANSAS RURAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

JULY 2024

Community Health Worker Advance

An ARHP initiative to increase health equity for rural Arkansans

STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES

Rural Arkansans experience a broad **range of structural challenges that negatively impact access** to needed health and wellness resources and services. Factors include poor and/or lacking infrastructure related within the following sectors: roads & transit, education, information technologies, healthcare, workforce, and the economy.

PERSONAL HEALTH LITERACY

According to Healthy People 2030, "Personal health literacy is the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others." **Approximately 37% of Arkansas residents have low health literacy.**¹

To access a CHW in your local community, contact
1-870-632-7299



What if rural residents had unhindered access to needed health-related information, resources, and services?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), health equity is the attainment of the highest level of health for all people.² Unfortunately, individuals living in rural settings do not experience the same access to needed healthcare and related supports as their urban peers. Rural Arkansans have higher rates of socioeconomic barriers (i.e. low educational attainment, unemployment, poverty, lack of transportation, etc.) than their urban counterparts.³ Nearly 1 in every 2 residents are children (0-17 years) or seniors (65 years and above), representing a demographic that requires additional support (often including caregiving).⁴ Health factors, structural challenges, and poor personal health literacy all contribute to a

significant need for personalized support for rural residents.

Since the inception of the non-profit organization (2008), the Arkansas Rural Health Partnership has utilized the Community Health Worker (CHW) model as an evidence-based approach to conducting meaningful education, outreach, and connection to resources for rural residents. In rural Arkansas, CHWs bridge critical gaps left by health workforce shortages and the tailored support community members and patients need to thrive. ARHP Community Health Workers meet various patient needs including prescription assistance, insurance enrollment, interpretation for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) speakers, patient navigation, and more.

SOURCES: 1: Mumford, Q., Miller, W., Wheeler, E., Christenberry, P., and Howell, R. Arkansas Department of Health, *Primary Care Needs Assessment of Arkansas*. p. 8. 2020. · 2: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *What is Health Equity?* <https://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/learn/index.html>. Accessed February 2, 2024. · 3: University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, *County Health Rankings and Roadmaps*, 2023. 4: U.S. Census Bureau, *Population Estimates Program (PEP)*. 2023.

EXPANDING RURAL ACCESS TO CRITICAL HEALTH RESOURCES



In 2023, the Arkansas Rural Health Partnership became an approved Community Health Worker (CHW) training site for the state of Arkansas. Individuals that enroll in and complete all required course components will receive a completion certificate as a Community Health Worker. In order to become a certified CHW, the trainee must then complete a detailed application which is submitted to the Arkansas Community Health Worker Commission for review and approval (once a year, October-December). Currently, the state of Arkansas does not require continuing education credits or practice hours to maintain CHW certification, although this may change in the future.

Course Description: Community Health Workers play a vital role in connecting community members and patients to needed health and health-social information, resources, and services. The Rural Arkansas Community Health Worker Training Institute will prepare participants to serve as Community Health Workers within their own rural Arkansas communities. ARHP staff and guest speakers representing diverse racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, and health workforce backgrounds will engage trainees throughout the 8-week course. Participants will also benefit from in-person Basic Life Support (BLS) and Stop the Bleed certification training.

Training Modalities: The course features blended learning, which includes in-person classes, remote instruction (via Zoom conferencing and pre-recorded video sessions), and practical application within local, rural communities.

Time Commitment: Trainees should plan to dedicate 120 hours to successfully complete course requirements over an 8-week period (approximately 15 hours per week). This includes class sessions (in-person and/or virtual), assessments, assignments, discussion boards, and/or time spent within the community.

Next Steps: The course fee is \$1499/person. Scan the QR code or follow the link to complete an interest form: <https://bit.ly/495QmDj>. ARHP members access the training for free as a member benefit.



RURAL ARKANSAS COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER TRAINING INSTITUTE



COURSE COMPONENTS:

- The Roles of a Community Health Worker
- The Evolution of the Community Health Worker Field
- An Introduction to Public Health
- Health for All: Promoting Health Equity
- Introduction to Health Care and Health Policy in the U.S.
- Practicing Cultural Humility
- Guiding Principles
- Conducting Initial Client Interviews
- Centered Counseling for Behavior Change
- Care Management
- Home Visiting
- Management and Self Care
- Conflict Resolution Skills
- Professional Skills
- Promoting the Health of Formerly Incarcerated People
- Chronic Conditions Management
- Promoting Healthy Eating and Acting Living (HEAL)
- Understanding Trauma and Supporting the Recovery of Survivors
- Health Outreach
- Facilitating Community Health Education Trainings
- Group Facilitation
- Community Diagnosis
- Community Organizing and Advocacy