

Embedding Community Health Workers in Public Housing— A Place-Based Approach to Health (CHW PATH)

Background: Community health workers (CHWs) are trusted community members who help bridge the gap between healthcare providers and patients. CHWs are trained to provide various services, such as health education, healthcare navigation, and linkages with community resources. Although CHWs often work in low-resource settings, they are underutilized in public housing communities in the U.S.

Program Description: The **CHW Place-Based Approach to Health (CHW PATH)** is a pilot program launched on October 1, 2019. The goal of CHW PATH is to leverage Jobs Plus, an existing grant program of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), to create CHW job opportunities for public housing residents and to assess the benefits of embedding CHWs within their own public housing communities to provide peer-to-peer support for health and social needs.

CHW PATH will be piloted at two public housing communities: Nickerson Gardens in Watts, Los Angeles, CA; and Gilmore Homes in Sandtown-Winchester, Baltimore, MD. In both communities, CHWs will be hired using a cost-sharing model with local health partners.

Key Partners:

- Office of Minority Health (OMH), Department of Health and Human Services
- Office of Public and Indian Housing, HUD
- Baltimore Field Office, Office of Field Policy and Management, HUD
- Office of Environmental Justice, Environmental Protection Agency
- Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC)
- Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA)
- Health and other community partners in Baltimore and Los Angeles

Timeline:

Jul-Sept 2019—Needs assessments conducted in Baltimore and Los Angeles

Oct 2019—Interview and initiate the hiring process for at least two CHWs each in Baltimore and Los Angeles; Develop CHW training program and evaluation plan with vendor

Apr 2020—Conduct in-person CHW trainings in both cities; CHWs commence work with HABC/HACLA

May-Sept 2020—Continue implementation of CHWs in public housing; Solicit feedback and collect other data for program evaluation (e.g., CHW encounter forms, Jobs Plus data, focus groups of residents)

Products to be Completed During Year One:

- CHW curriculum tailored for public housing settings
- Training implementation assessment
- Final report, including preliminary evaluation findings

Federal Funding: OMH supported CHW PATH with FY19 funds and plans to provide additional funding upon receipt of FY20 Congressional appropriations. HUD is leveraging resources and in-kind support from Jobs Plus investments (total of \$6.2M allocated for both sites over 4 years) to support CHW PATH.

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