

The Common Health Challenge: Catalyst Award Recipient Projects

South Louisville Community Ministries

Organization type: Community-based organization

Location: Kentucky

Partnership focus: Health and housing systems

Topic area: Community health worker (CHW) integration in public health and health care partnerships supporting underserved populations impacted by housing insecurity.

Project description: Through innovative cross-sector partnerships, South Louisville Community Ministries (SLCM) is coordinating placements for individuals and families experiencing housing instability through an initiative called the “Neighbor Network”. The Neighbor Network leverages Community Health Workers in hospitals and health clinics, as well as partnerships between nonprofits, government, CBOs and others, to provide an interconnected, comprehensive referral system to meet all participants’ basic needs. SLCM will use their Catalyst Award to pilot a project to address service gaps for individuals and families impacted by housing instability, strengthen network partnerships, and formalize data sharing processes and analysis to better understand who needs housing support services and improve the effectiveness of referral outcomes through the Neighbor Network.

Tennessee Community Health Worker Association

Organization type: Community-based organization

Location: Tennessee

Partnership focus: CHW membership engagement (individual & organizational); partnerships with community-based organizations, state government agencies, hospitals, clinics, academic institutions, and other CHW-serving organizations.

Topic area: Implementation of standards for CHW certification to support statewide CHW workforce development and network building.

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Project description: The Tennessee Community Health Worker Association (TNCHWA) is building partnerships with public health and community healthcare organizations to establish standards for CHW training to support workforce sustainability. These partnerships strive to ensure CHWs and CHW employer organizations feel supported while consistently delivering effective and high quality CHW services to Tennessee communities. TNCHWA will use its Catalyst Award to convene a CHW Credentialing Board in partnership with community-based organizations, state government agencies, hospitals, clinics, academic institutions, and other CHW-serving organizations to advance pathways for individual CHW certification. TNCHWA will also work to strengthen CHW engagement in local health initiatives, including participation in County Health Councils, to elevate the role of social drivers of health in shaping community health improvement and planning efforts.

MaineGeneral Health

Organization type: Nonprofit health care organization

Location: Maine

Partnership focus: Health care teams and CHW programs

Topic area: Evaluation and systems improvement of clinical workflows for CHWs delivering diabetes care improvement.

Project description: MaineGeneral's CHW Program cultivates collaborative partnerships with health care teams and community partners to advance CHW integration into workflows for vulnerable populations, such as those with uncontrolled diabetes. Via referrals from MaineGeneral health care teams and community partners, the CHW Program delivers interventions for patients and works collaboratively with public health and health care partners to coordinate care across Maine communities, leading to fewer adverse health outcomes as patients take control of their health. MaineGeneral Health will use its Catalyst Award to amplify the collective impact of its CHW Programs. They will analyze data from the CHW Program for participants with uncontrolled diabetes to develop best practices, improved workflows, and impactful data metrics which can be implemented to enhance new and existing referral partnerships and shared for replication by other CHW Programs.

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Henry Ford Health

Organization type: Nonprofit health care organization

Location: Michigan

Partnership focus: Medicaid health plans and FQHCs

Topic area: CHW practice standards and career pathways.

Project description: At Henry Ford Health (HFH), CHWs play a crucial role in linking healthcare services with the community. The HFH CHW Hub provides a centralized model for care coordination, training standards, CHW support, and integration of CHWs across clinical and community settings. Through this approach, the HFH CHW Hub is able to promote and deliver effective, high-quality care practices while providing a strong foundation for CHW career pathways. Henry Ford Health will use its Catalyst Award to strengthen public health collaborations and further fortify the CHW role in local health departments and Medicaid health plans. The CHW Hub will lead partnerships with county health departments, the Michigan Primary Care Association (MPCA), and HAP CareSource to standardize CHW scopes of practice, evaluate CHW recruitment and training approaches, and further establish development and career pathways for CHWs.

MCV Foundation

Organization type: Nonprofit Academic Medical Institution

Location: Virginia

Partnership focus: Health department and health system collaboration

Topic area: Establishing a clinic to community continuum of care for cardiovascular health equity and high-need patient navigation

Project description: VCU Health (VCUHS) integrates CHWs in health care and community settings to extend CHW services beyond the walls of the health system and overcome patient health access challenges. In partnership with the Virginia Health and Hospital Association (VHHA) and the Richmond Henrico Health District (RHHD), VCUHS will use its Catalyst Award to coordinate a continuum of CHW services for high need cardiovascular patients, leveraging care coordination and data-sharing across institutions to ensure the successful transition from hospital to home to community, improving outcomes for cardiovascular patients.

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IMPACT

Organization type: Public benefit corporation

Location: Indiana

Partnership focus: Community-based organizations and public health systems

Topic area: Formalizing evidence-based practices for CHW integration, including financing mechanisms to support care models for older adults and people living with disabilities

Project description: IMPACT Care supports evidence-based CHW programs all over the country, advancing collaborative partnerships with social services, health care, and public health organizations. In Indiana, IMPACT and CICOA Aging & In-Home Solutions – Indiana’s largest Area Agency on Aging – are partnering to enhance CICOA's capacity to serve older adults, people living with disabilities, pre-aged and disabled individuals, and family caregivers through delivery of short-term, high-intensity CHW interventions that improve outcomes, address inequities, address social determinant of health needs, and allow people to remain in their communities longer. With the Catalyst Award funds, IMPACT will continue to partner with CICOA to standardize components of its evidence-based CHW model, such as training and deployment, through data-driven workflows and performance assessment. IMPACT will also support the integration of sustainable financing mechanisms into CICOA’s model to ensure CHWs remain an integral part of community-based healthcare organizations and public health systems.

AIRnyc

Organization type: Community-Based Nonprofit Organization

Location: New York

Partnership focus: Community-based organizations and health systems

Topic area: Integrating community-based CHWs into clinical care settings and billing systems to improve patient outcomes.

Project description: AIRnyc is a CHW-led organization dedicated to advancing health equity for low-income families by addressing social determinants of health and reducing disparities in chronic disease and maternal health outcomes. Guided by its mission to improve the health and well-being of New Yorkers through community-based care, AIRnyc embeds Community Health Workers (CHWs) into both neighborhoods and healthcare systems to bridge gaps between clinical care and everyday life. AIRnyc’s CHW intervention strengthens care coordination, supports chronic and maternal health management, and ensures families have access to essential resources like housing, food, and transportation.

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Through collaborative partnerships with clinical care teams, CHWs work alongside providers to address medical, behavioral, and social needs—resulting in improved access to care, reduced avoidable hospitalizations, and better patient engagement. With support from the Catalyst Award, AIRnyc will deepen CHW integration into clinical workflows and electronic health record (EHR) systems, while piloting Medicaid Fee-for-Service reimbursement for CHW services. This effort will help develop a sustainable funding model that ensures CHWs remain a vital link between healthcare and the communities they serve—advancing AIRnyc’s mission to build a more equitable and responsive health system.

Sueños Sin Fronteras de Tejas

Organization type: Community-Based Organization

Location: Texas

Partnership focus: Local healthcare providers / students and undocumented communities

Topic area: CHW-led activities to increase community capacity to address the reproductive health needs of undocumented people.

Project description: Sueños Sin Fronteras de Tejas (SSFTX) has been at the forefront of bridging health gaps and advancing health equity alongside undocumented communities. With the Catalyst Award, SSFTX will further develop and formalize relationships with healthcare providers, as well as strengthen “Know Your Rights” supports to empower clients to self-advocate while navigating healthcare systems. SSFTX’s philosophy is that CHW-led partnerships can significantly improve care competency for undocumented birthing people, increase health literacy, and bolster self-advocacy, creating a more equitable and inclusive healthcare system that improves community health outcomes over time.

RIPIN (Rhode Island Parent Information Network)

Organization type: Community-Based Organization

Location: Rhode Island

Partnership focus: Patient-centered healthcare navigation

Topic area: CHW-led care coordination for complex health and social needs, with a focus on special needs and disability.

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Project description: Established in 1991 by families seeking better outcomes for children with special needs, RIPIN now serves as Rhode Island's largest employer of Certified Community Health Workers (CHWs). Building off longstanding partnerships with the Rhode Island Department of Health and other cross-sector stakeholders, the Catalyst Award funding will enhance RIPIN's efforts to grow the capacity of the Alliance of Community Worker Employers (Alliance), a network that seeks to address gaps and increase the capacities of employers to integrate CHWs into their organizations, to help sustain a healthy CHW sector for Rhode Island.

Mni Wichoni Health Circle

Organization type: Tribal Health Organization

Location: North Dakota (Standing Rock)

Partnership focus: Indigenous health and community-led models

Topic area: Traditional healing and CHW-supported navigation on tribal lands.

Project description: Mni Wichoni Health Circle (MWHC) is deeply rooted in community-centered health and wellness, guided by Indigenous ancestral knowledge systems while integrating contemporary public health practices. MWHC's programs and services span key areas of public health, including birth and end-of-life support, land stewardship for food sovereignty and nutritional well-being, and community education on holistic health. With the Catalyst Award funds, MWHC will continue formalizing CHW partnerships within these lifespan-based initiatives by: a) embedding CHWs into maternal health, elder care, food sovereignty, and mental health programs; b) strengthening collaboration between traditional and modern healthcare systems, ensuring culturally competent, Indigenous-led health interventions; and c) building CHW capacity through training, mentorship, and formal integration into health systems, ensuring sustainable career pathways for Indigenous CHWs. These efforts advance MWHC's aim of reducing health disparities by addressing root causes of inequity, including historical trauma, lack of culturally relevant care, and geographic barriers.

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Tacoma Pierce County Health Department

Organization type: Health department

Location: Washington

Partnership focus: Accountable Communities of Health (ACH) organizations, healthcare systems, and community-based organizations

Topic area: Tacoma Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) builds systems and policies that promote health equity, health literacy and access to preventive care.

Project description: TPCHD understands the instrumental role of CHWs in building partnerships and implementing care models to promote health equity, health literacy and access to preventive care. Building off of existing collaborations like the Potentially Preventable Hospitalizations (PPH) initiative, the Pierce County CHW collaborative, and Washington State's Accountable Communities of Health (ACH) organizations, TPCHD will use the Catalyst Award funds to conduct outreach to health care systems and providers, deliver education about CHWs and their impact, establish referral pathways between health care and community-based organizations, and coordinate services and data sharing - supporting a CHW hub that improves care for providers and patients.

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