

PROMOTORA OR COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER
TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
2021 ANNUAL REPORT



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Department of State
Health Services

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Introduction

In 2001, Texas was the first state to put in place statewide training and credentialing standards for promotores or community health workers (CHWs). As mandated by **Health and Safety Code, Chapter 48**, the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) established the Promotor(a) or Community Health Worker Training and Certification Program (CHW Program) to develop and implement statewide training and certification standards, guidelines, and requirements for individuals who are certified as CHWs, community health worker instructors (CHWIs), and CHW training programs.

This report will evaluate the CHW Program certification and renewal rates and trends, as well as initial certification and continuing education courses for CHWs and CHWIs. This report also tracks data on CHW and CHWI demographic characteristics and the location of certified CHWs and training programs in Texas.

Background

Community Health Workers (CHWs), also known as Promotores de Salud, are individuals who serve as liaisons and cultural mediators between health care and social services in the communities they serve. CHWs are members of the community that have a deep understanding of the ethnicity, language, socio-economic status, and life experiences of community members. As trusted members of their community, CHWs help people access services and improve the cultural competency of those services. CHWs build individual, community, and system capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency.

CHWs have skills in the following eight core competencies: communication, interpersonal skills, service coordination, capacity building, advocacy, teaching, organizational skills, and knowledge base in specific health issues. The **Summary of the National Community Health Advisor Study** gives a detailed summary of the core competencies.

The Promotor(a) or Community Health Worker Training and Certification Program (CHW Program) at the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) operates and oversees the development and implementation of statewide training and certification standards, guidelines, and requirements for certified CHWs.

Individuals wanting to become a certified CHW must either complete a DSHS core competency certification course or show verified CHW experience (at least 1,000 hours in the last three years). All certified CHWs must show that they have mastered the eight CHW core competencies.

The CHW Program also oversees certification for Community Health Worker Instructors (CHWIs) and training programs. Training programs are typically operated through community colleges (and other academic institutions), Area Health Education Centers, Federally Qualified Health Centers, CHW networks, and community-based organizations. [The program](#) reviews and approves certification, training, and continuing education for CHWs and CHWIs.

More information on the CHW Program can be found at dshs.texas.gov/chw.aspx.

Commented [C(1)]: Do CHWs have to be certified by DSHS in order to practice as a CHW?

Commented [L(2R1)]: DSHS requires certification for CHWs that are paid. Not all employers require CHWs to be certified. CHWs may or may not be paid by employers.

Commented [C(3)]: The training program?

Commented [L(4R3)]: Yes, the CHW program reviews and approves as stated.

Program Milestones and Outcomes

In order to evaluate program implementation, the Promotor(a) or Community Health Worker Training and Certification Program (CHW Program) tracks the following key statistics:

- The number of DSHS-certified CHWs,
- The number of DSHS-certified CHWIs,
- The number of certification renewals,
- The number of DSHS-certified training programs, and
- The number of DSHS-certified continuing education.

DSHS-Certified Community Health Workers

DSHS CHW certification is based on either

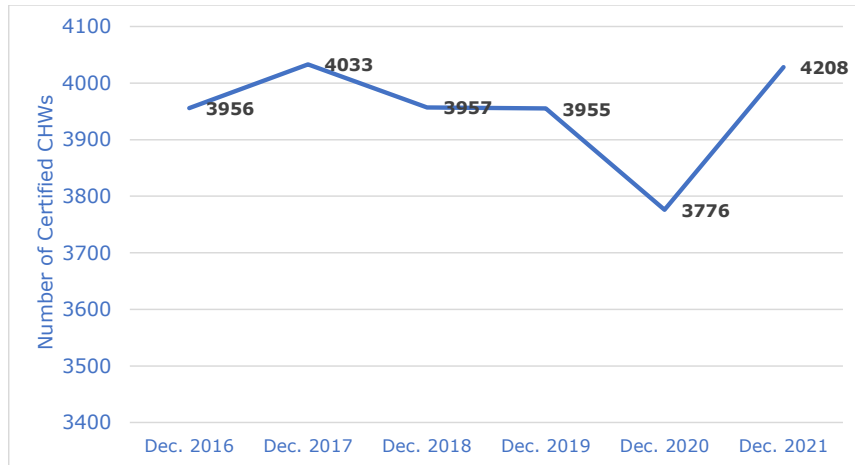
- The successful completion of a DSHS-certified training course of at least 160 hours, or
- Verification of at least 1,000 hours of community health work experience demonstrating mastery in the eight core competencies in the most recent three years.

The CHW Program approves applications for initial CHW certification based on training or experience. Program staff enter application data into the DSHS Regulatory Automated Services (RAS) Portal and Versa Regulatory (VR) database to track the numbers of DSHS-certified CHWs across the state.

At the end of 2021, there were 4,208 certified CHWs in Texas, which is an increase of 11 percent compared to 3,776 DSHS-certified CHWs at the end of 2020 (**Figure 1**).

A total of 1,287 new CHWs were certified in 2021, a 73 percent increase from the previous year. Out of all the new CHWs certified in 2021, 779 (61 percent) were certified through completing a DSHS-approved training course.

Figure 1. Number of DSHS-Certified CHWs, 2016-2021ⁱ



ⁱ Source: DSHS RAS Portal and VR Database

Community Health Worker Certification Training Graduates

DSHS-approved CHW certification training programs graduated 897 individuals in 2021. The number of graduates increased significantly compared to 2020 when 723 individuals graduated from a DSHS-approved CHW certification training program. The number of certification training courses and graduates by county can be found in **Appendix A**.¹

DSHS-Certified Community Health Worker Instructors

CHW Instructors (CHWIs) can be certified in Texas by completing a DSHS-certified instructor training course of at least 160 hours or based on experience through verification of at least 1,000 hours of providing training to CHWs or other health care professionals and paraprofessionals in the last three years.

Community Health Worker Instructors Newly Certified in 2021

As of December 31, 2021, there were 384 DSHS-certified CHWIs, compared to 295 at the end of 2020. In 2021, DSHS certified 116 new CHWIs, an increase of 84 percent from the 63 newly certified instructors in 2020. Of the newly certified CHWIs, 35 (30 percent) were certified

¹ In Texas, the Medicaid Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment service (EPSDT) is known as Texas Health Steps, which includes the preventive care components, or Early and Periodic Screening, of the total EPSDT service.

based on experience and 81 (70 percent) were certified through training. The percentage of new CHWIs certified through training increased from 59 percent to 70 percent in 2021.

Community Health Worker Instructor Certification Training Graduates

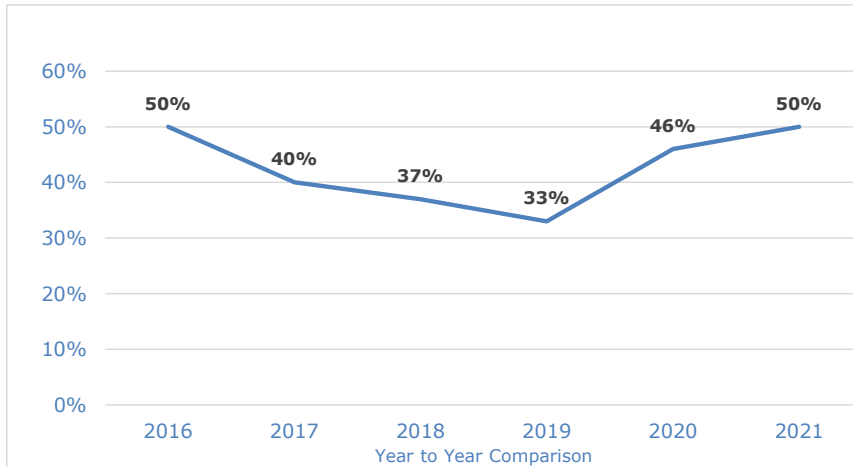
In 2021, 66 individuals graduated from DSHS-approved CHWI certification training programs., an increase of 74 percent from the 38 that graduated in 2020.

CHW and Instructor Certification Renewals

CHWs must complete at least 20 hours of continuing education every 2 years to renew their certificates, including at least 10 DSHS-certified contact hours. CHWs may renew a certificate that has been expired for less than one year if the applicant submits a renewal application documenting the completion of the required continuing education. The percentage of CHWs renewing their DSHS certifications increased from 46 percent in 2020 to 50 percent in 2021 (Figure 2).

A total of 986 CHW certifications expired in 2021, a slight decrease from 2020 when 1,059 certifications expired. Certifications that expired in 2021 were mostly for CHWs initially certified in 2019 (58 percent). Of those expired in 2021, 49 percent of individuals were certified based on experience.

Figure 2. CHW Renewal Rates, 2016-2021¹



¹ Source: DSHS RAS Portal and VR Database

Commented [C(5)]: What are contact hours?

Commented [L(6R5)]: One contact hour is measured as 60 minutes of instruction.

As was the case in previous years, the number of expired certifications in 2021 differs by language preference (**Table 1** and **Table 2**). Expired CHW certification based on training where Spanish was the preferred language accounted for a higher percentage (77 percent) of expired certifications than those with English as a preferred language (47 percent). Expired CHW certifications initially certified based on experience were higher for those with English as the preferred language (53 percent) than those with Spanish as a preferred language (23 percent).

Table 1. 2021 Expired CHW Certifications by Preferred Language (English)ⁱ

CHW Certification	English	English Percentage
Experience	451	53
Training	402	47
Total	853	100

ⁱ Source: DSHSRAS Portal and VR Database

Table 2. 2021 Expired CHW Certifications by Preferred Language (Spanish)ⁱ

CHW Certification	Spanish	Spanish Percentage
Experience	31	23
Training	102	77
Total	133	100

ⁱ Source: DSHS RAS Portal and VR Database

Community Health Worker Instructor Renewals and Expired Certificates

A CHWI may renew their DSHS certification if they submit a renewal application within one year of their certification’s expiration date and include documents that show they completed the required continuing education.

Of those CHWIs who needed to renew their DSHS certification in 2021, 65 percent renewed their certification, compared to 75 percent in 2020. For those CHWIS that first certified in 2019, 47 percent allowed their certification to expire in 2021. In 2020, 43 DSHS-certified CHWIs did not renew their instructor certifications, compared to 38 in 2020.

DSHS-Approved Training Programs

Organizations approved to provide training for DSHS-certified CHWs and CHWIs include community colleges, other academic centers (such as health science centers), Area Health Education Centers, Federally Qualified Health Centers, regional CHW associations, and community-based programs.

CHWs residing in rural areas may be unable to attend on-site training located in urban areas. To address this, some training programs provide in-person training in areas other than their primary locations. Additionally, several training programs have implemented training through distance learning to increase access for CHWs in all parts of the state.

Training programs have expanded the availability of certification training courses and continuing education opportunities for CHWs and CHWIs. As of December 31, 2021, there were 49 DSHS-approved training programs in Texas.

In 2021, training programs provided both CHW and CHWI certification training courses and continuing education to fulfill continuing education requirements. **Table 3** breaks down the number of training programs by type of certified training provided: CHW and/or CHWI certification course and CHW and/or CHWI continuing education.

Table 3. 2021 Type of Training Delivered by DSHS-Approved Training Programs

Type of Approved Training	# Training Programs
CHW Certification Training Course and Certified Continuing Education	17
CHW Certification Training Course and CHW and CHWI Certified Continuing Education	6
CHW and CHWI Certification Training Courses and CHW and CHWI Certified Continuing Education	7
Certified CHW Continuing Education Only	10
Certified CHW and CHWI Continuing Education Only	9
Total	49

Texas Health Steps offers free online modules for healthcare providers, including CHWs and CHWIs.² These courses offer updated clinical, regulatory, and best practice guidelines for a range of topics, including preventive health, oral health, mental health, and case management.

² In Texas, the Medicaid Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment service (EPSDT) is known as Texas Health Steps, which includes the preventive care components, or Early and Periodic Screening, of the total EPSDT service.

Commented [C(7)]: Is approved or certified? Make sure it is consistent throughout.

In 2021, DSHS approved Crew Wellness LLC, Dell Medical School Department of Population Health, Texas Association of CHWs, Texas Southern University, and Valley AIDS Council to provide continuing education for both CHWs and CHWIs.

DSHS approved Texas Education Agency, Region 10 Education Service Center, and Umemba Health, LLC, to provide certification training courses and continuing education to both CHWs and CHWIs. DSHS also approved University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth to provide certification training courses and continuing education to CHWs.

Opportunities for DSHS-Approved Continuing Education

In 2021, DSHS-approved training programs provided 294 continuing education opportunities for CHWs, offering over 800 DSHS-certification hours in the form of face-to-face events and mostly distance learning continuing education.

Appendix B provides a breakdown of organizations who provided continuing education in 2021 and the number of continuing education hours they provided. Training occurred in six counties through distance learning. ~~These CEU courses reached far beyond our certified CHWs in Texas.~~ Over 14,687 unduplicated participants attended DSHS-approved continuing education in 2021. While all participants included in this total self-identified as a CHW during registration, they were not all DSHS-certified CHWs. This total includes non-certified/expired CHWs and workers in fields that closely align with the work of CHWs, as well as groups.

DSHS-approved training programs provided 104 continuing education opportunities for CHWIs in 2021, offering 247.5 DSHS-certified CHWI contact hours.

Distance learning opportunities were available for instructor continuing education. **Appendix C** shows additional information about certified continuing education for CHWIs provided in 2021.

Commented [C(8)]: Stands for?

Commented [L(9R8)]: Continuing Education Unit, also known as CE (Continuing Education).

Commented [C(10)]: I don't understand what this sentence is trying to communicate. Is it saying that the courses were also utilized by CHWs outside of the state?

Commented [L(11R10)]: The statement is not necessary. We can remove.

Community Mapping

Location of DSHS-Certified Community Health Workers

As of December 31, 2021, Texas had 4,208 DSHS-certified CHWs in 143 counties (by county of residence). Harris County has the most certified CHWs (1,071), and Dallas County has the second largest number of DSHS-certified CHWs (363).

Appendix D shows a map of counties with certified CHWs.

Certified Community Health Worker Demographics

Approximately 89 percent of DSHS-certified CHWs are women and 11 percent are men. DSHS-certified CHWs are racially and ethnically diverse. Table 4 breaks down DSHS-certified CHW demographics by race ethnicity and gender.

Table 4. Race/Ethnicity Breakdown for DSHS-Certified CHWs, by Genderⁱ

Ethnicity	Percentage	Male	Female	Total
Hispanic	61	63	2,502	2,565
Black	22	89	829	918
White	11	68	380	448
Asian	5	5	214	219
Native American	(<1)	4	12	16
Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islander	(<1)	0	1	1
Other	1	3	38	41
Total		232	3,976	4,208

ⁱ Source: DSHS RAS Portal and VR Database

DSHS-Certified Instructors Location and Demographics

Texas had 384 DSHS-certified CHWIs in 41 counties (based on county of residence) as of December 31, 2021. Approximately 90 percent of DSHS-certified CHWIs are women and 10 percent are men. DSHS-certified CHWIs are racially and ethnically diverse:

- Hispanic – 52 percent
- White – 20 percent
- Black – 25 percent
- Asian – 2 percent
- Other – 1 percent

DSHS-Approved Training Programs

There were 49 DSHS-approved CHW and CHWI training programs in 20 counties across the state by the end of 2021. **Appendix E** shows a map of counties with a DSHS-approved CHW training program.

Conclusion

Community Health Workers (CHWs) and Community Health Worker Instructors (CHWIs) are essential to increasing positive health outcomes, changing health behaviors, and encouraging healthy lifestyles in Texas communities.

To support this essential workforce, the Promotor(a) or Community Health Worker Training and Certification Program (CHW Program) at the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) operates and oversees the development and implementation of statewide training and certification standards, guidelines, and requirements for certified CHWs. The CHW Program also raises awareness of and promotes the CHW and CHWI workforce to the public and employers.

Because Texas was the first state in the nation to establish a CHW certification and training program, many other states routinely seek guidance from us in establishment of their own programs. DSHS-CHW continues to receive high marks from other state contacts about the assistance provided in support of running successful programs. Texas employers continue to see the benefit of a CHW workforce which is quite strong in Texas. The numbers of training centers and CHWs continues to grow which is reflective of a strong statewide program.

Commented [C(12)]: By doing what?

Commented [L(13R12)]: DSHS-CHW supports Texas employers with promotion of job opportunities to CHWs statewide. We assist with employer surveys and monthly updates to our website about important topics like COVID-19 resources, continuing education, and training opportunities, etc.

Commented [L(15R14)]: Statement added, please review.

Commented [C(14)]: Add a sentence or two about the general state of the CHW CHWI workforce in Texas. Is it strong? Is it increasing? Is there a goal we are reaching for?

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Full Name
CEU	Continuing Education Unit
CHW	Community Health Worker
CHWI	Community Health Worker Instructor
DSHS	Texas Department of State Health Services
HHSC	Texas Health and Human Services Commission
RAS	Regulatory Automated Services
VR	Versa Regulatory

Commented [C(16)]: Add full name

Commented [L(17R16)]: Request completed.

Appendix A. CHW Certification Training¹

Health Service Region	County	Name of Training Program	Graduates
2/3	Dallas	Baylor Scott & White Health and Wellness Center	21
2/3	Tarrant	Baylor Scott & White Health and Wellness Center	11
6/5S	Harris	Baylor Scott & White Health and Wellness Center	6
8	Bexar	Baylor Scott & White Health and Wellness Center	3
11	Hidalgo	South Texas College	9
11	Hidalgo	Texas A&M University Colonias Program Training Academy	6
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Baylor Scott & White Health and Wellness Center	57
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Community Health Training Institute, Inc.	4
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Dallas College (El Centro)	6
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Día de la Mujer Latina, Inc.	59
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Empowering the Masses	10
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Familias Triunfadoras, Inc.	32
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	LW School of Pharmacy	2
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Houston Community College	8
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Northwest Vista College	15
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Center for Community Health Development, National CHW Training Center, Texas A&M School of Public Health	114
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Area Health Education Center - Capital	21
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Area Health Education Center - DFW	5
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Area Health Education Center East – Coastal	7
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Area Health Education Center East – Greater Houston	25
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Area Health Education Center East – Piney Woods	18

Health Service Region	County	Name of Training Program	Graduates
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Area Health Education Center South – Coastal	147
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Tech Health Sciences Center – School of Nursing	7
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Umemba Health, LLC	8
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	University of Houston Honors College CHW Program	145
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler	63
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	University of Texas School of Public Health, Houston	52
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	West Texas Area Health Education Center	36
		Total CHW Graduates	897

ⁱ Source: DSHS Share Point Site, CHW Training Site

Appendix B. Certified Continuing Education for CHWs in 2021ⁱ

Health Service Region	County	Name of Training Program	# of CEU Classes Offered	# of CEU Contact Hours	# of Participants
2/3	Tarrant	Familias Triunfadoras, Inc.	2	3	40
2/3	Tarrant	Community Health Training Institute, Inc.	1	2	3
4/5N	Tyler	University of Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth	1	1	24
4/5N	Tyler	University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler	3	17	19
9/10	El Paso	Día de la Mujer Latina, Inc.	2	6	23
9/10	El Paso	Adults and Youth United Development Association, Inc.	8	96	198
9/10	El Paso	Familias Triunfadoras, Inc.	7	10	160
9/10	El Paso	DSHS Office of Border Public Health (OBPH)	2	10	9
9/10	El Paso	Texas A&M University Colonias Program Training Academy	12	51	412
11	Cameron	South Texas Promotor(a) Association, Inc.	8	9	164
11	Hidalgo	South Texas Promotor(a) Association, Inc.	2	9	20
11	Hidalgo	Texas A&M University Colonias Program Training Academy	9	24	284
11	Hidalgo	Valley AIDS Council	2	28	37
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Cardea Services	37	146	4,641
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Baylor Scott & White Health and Wellness Center	7	15.75	181
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Community Health Training Institute, Inc.	2	8	31
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Center for Community Health Development, National CHW Training Center	8	12	611
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Día de la Mujer Latina, Inc	10	41	618

Health Service Region	County	Name of Training Program	# of CEU Classes Offered	# of CEU Contact Hours	# of Participants
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	DSHS Office of Border Public Health	19	82.5	355
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Empowering the Masses, Inc.	3	4.5	209
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Familias Triunfadoras, Inc.	4	6	49
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	HHS Early Childhood Intervention	1	1	26
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Northwest Vista College	10	15	266
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas A&M Colonias Program Training Academy	3	8	159
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas A&M School of Public Health, Office of Special Programs	15	43	1,344
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Area Health Education Center East – Coastal	6	9	282
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Area Health Education Center DFW	9	12	211
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Area Health Education Center South – Coastal	28	49	907
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Association of CHWs	17	19	1,191
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Health Steps	30	41.75	904
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Tech Health Sciences Center – School of Nursing	4	13	235
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	University of Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth	1	1	10
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler	2	10	38
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	University of Texas School of Public Health, Houston	12	16	622
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	University of Houston Honors College, CHW Program	4	8.5	306

Health Service Region	County	Name of Training Program	# of CEU Classes Offered	# of CEU Contact Hours	# of Participants
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Valley AIDS Council	1	6	26
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	West Texas Area Health Education Center	2	18	72
Totals			294	852	14,697

ⁱ Source: DSHS Share Point Site, CHW Training Site

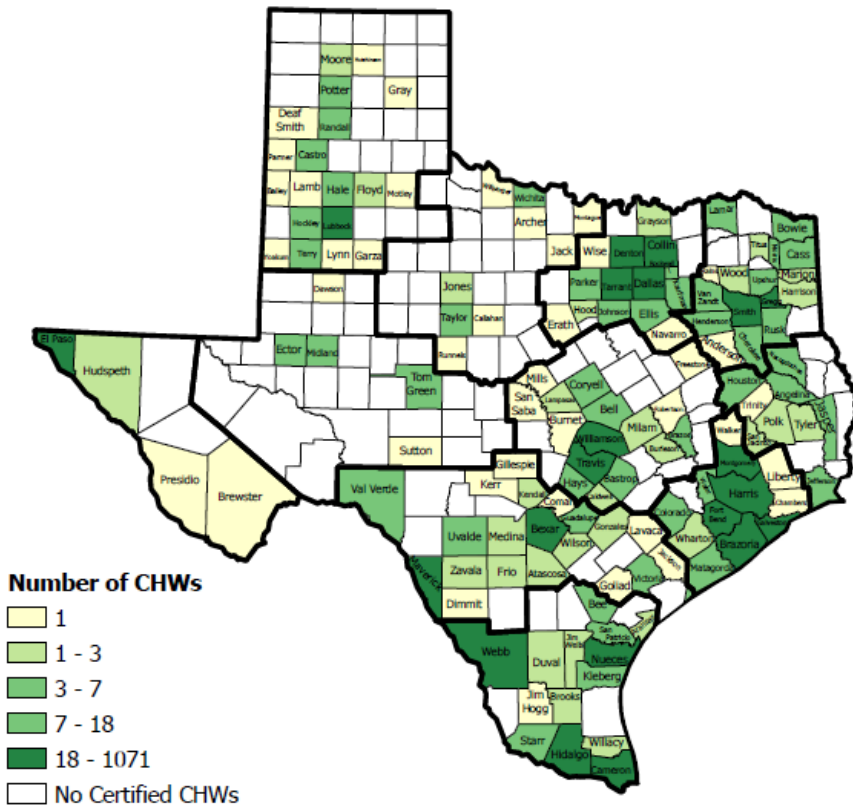
Appendix C. Certified Continuing Education for Instructorsⁱ

Health Service Region	County	Name of Training Program	# of CEU Classes Offered	# of CEU Contact Hours	# of Participants
9/10	El Paso	Día de la Mujer Latina, Inc.	1	3	1
9/10	El Paso	DSHS Office of Border Public Health	1	3	1
9/10	El Paso	Texas A&M University Colonias Program Training Academy	3	9	6
11	Cameron	South Texas Promotora Association, Inc.	8	10	14
11	Hidalgo	Texas A&M University Colonias Program Training Academy	3	6	8
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Cardea Services	9	13	185
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Día de la Mujer Latina, Inc.	1	3	2
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	DSHS Office of Border Public Health	16	103.5	78
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Empowering the Masses	1	1.5	9
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Houston Community College	1	1	7
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas A&M University Colonias Program Training Academy	6	21	57
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Area Health Education Center - DFW	6	8	29
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Area Health Education Center East– Coastal	2	3	46
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Association of CHWs	13	15	67
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	University of Houston Honors College CHW Program	2	5.5	22
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	University of Texas Health Science Center Fort Worth	1	1	6
Distance Learning	Not Applicable	Texas Health Steps	30	41	ii
		Totals	104	247.5	538

ⁱ Source: DSHS Share Point Site, CHW Training Site
ⁱⁱ Counted in Appendix B.

Appendix D. Map of Counties with Certified CHWs

Certified CHWs by County of Residence



Data as of January, 2022.
 Data Source: Community Health Worker Training and Certification Program, Community Health and Wellness Branch, Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Section, Texas Department of State Health Services.

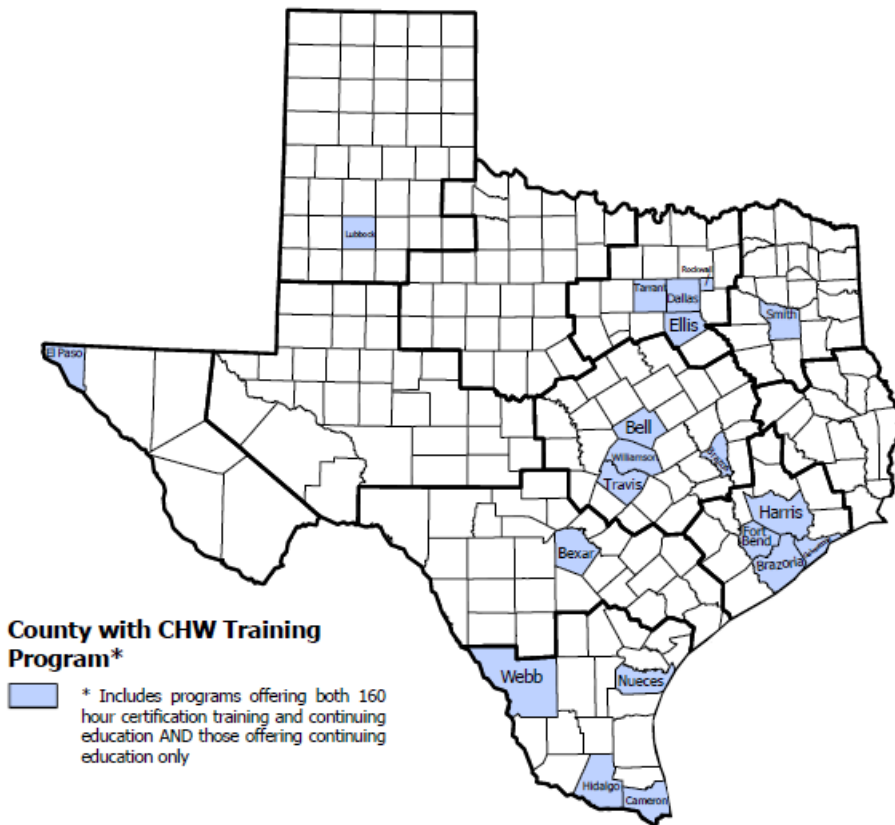


Texas Department of State Health Services

Map Created 02/22/2022 by the Chronic Disease Epidemiology Branch, Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Section, Texas Department of State Health Services.

Appendix E. Map of Counties with CHW Training Programs

Location of CHW Certification and Continuing Education Training Programs

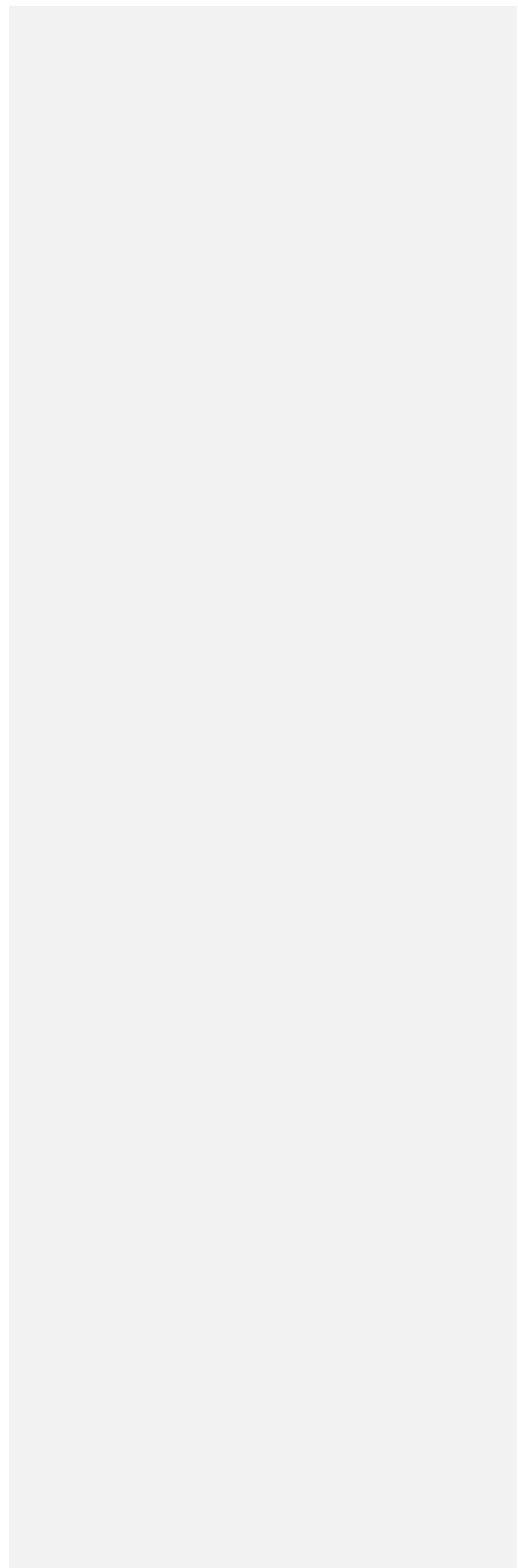


Data as of January, 2022.
Data Source: Community Health Worker Training and Certification Program, Community Health and Wellness Branch, Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Section, Texas Department of State Health Services.



Texas Department of State Health Services

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Promator or Community Health Worker Training and
Certification Program

dshs.texas.gov/CHW