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## **Community Health Worker Supervisor Hiring Model**

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## Supervising Community Health Workers

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Supervising Community Health Workers (CHWs) is often different than managing typical health care employees. The unique nature of work CHWs perform requires flexibility and providing hands-on support in the community. When supervising CHWs, managers should recognize these characteristics and provide CHWs with the tools, training, and support needed to be successful.

### **Integrating CHWs into the organization: Make sure CHWs are part of the team**

Since the work of CHWs is out in the community and most of their work will be conducted away from the organization, it is important that CHWs are well integrated into the organization. This integration helps CHWs better represent the organization and connect their role with the organization's mission and value. It also helps CHWs more effectively collaborate and communicate with other staff, such as providing better and more timely information to clinicians.

Additionally, it is important that CHWs are well-integrated into the organization so they can best serve their clients. To maximize the CHW's role, they need to be equipped with the tools and knowledge that allow them deliver good services to their clients. This means making sure CHWs are working alongside and with other staff members, and have the tools needed to make referrals, update clinicians, and directly connect clients to services (i.e. use of telehealth, access to EHR systems, etc.).

### **Providing support to CHWs: Check-in with CHWs regularly**

CHWs have an immense understanding of their community and surrounding areas, with a passion for helping those in need—this is what makes their role so unique and important. However, this can also create opportunities for conflict in the role. For example, CHWs should *empower* community members to access health resources, rather than community members *relying* on CHWs. This professional line can be easy to cross and CHWs might find themselves in difficult scenarios. This is where the role of the supervisor is important—weekly check-ins with CHWs can help mitigate these situations and ensure CHWs are upholding their roles appropriately. Consistent check-ins also give CHWs a space to share any larger problems that might be happening within the community (i.e. families are afraid to get services due to public charge). These regular meetings help establish a healthy working relationship between CHWs and supervisors.

## **Flexibility in supervision: Understanding that CHWs do not work a typical job**

Many times CHWs conduct home visits or work at public spaces like resource centers, local parishes, or schools, which means they seldom work Monday through Friday from 9am to 5pm. Supervisors should understand the flexible nature of CHW roles when setting expectations, meetings, and goals. This might mean CHWs do not use typical timesheet reporting; they meet with supervisors virtually instead of in-person because they do a lot travelling throughout the day; or supervisors should not micromanage CHWs' day-to-day schedule because it fluctuates due to the nature of their work. This helps ensure a fruitful working relationship between both parties, while also establishing a strong foundation for CHWs to accomplish work.

## **Mentoring CHWs: professional development to ensure CHWs excel and retention**

Supervisors should help CHWs set and achieve professional goals. These goals might not always programmatic, but instead focus on continuing education on relevant health topics (i.e. diabetes management, hypertension, emergency preparedness, etc.). Ideally, supervisors will have firsthand experience working in the community that will allow them to understand challenges faced by CHWs. Regardless, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to provide guidance to CHWs and ensure they feel supported by both the organization and leadership. It is important that supervisors provide the necessary support to CHWs because this will help them excel in their role by providing an avenue for professional development. This also helps increase retention rates for the organization.

As your organization considers these best practice items for supervising CHWs, many of the same values can be used in the hiring process for CHWs. The next section lays out a helpful checklist for creating CHW job positions and hiring.

# Community Health Worker Supervisor Hiring Pre-Check List

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As part of the recruitment process, the decision-maker must get several components clarified that will help hire and retain the position successfully. It is best to always provide candidates with clear expectations of the position to avoid problems down the road. It is better to complete one checklist per position title; however, several positions with the same title could be completed on the same checklist. Check off each item as completed before beginning a job search.

Position Title: \_\_\_\_\_

- The budget for the project or program calls for:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ position (s)
  
- The number/type of position(s) will be modified (as follows):
  - Cannot be modified and must proceed as budgeted
  - Can be modified but will proceed as budgeted
  - Will be modified in the following manner (specify) and  does or  does not require a budget amendment to the  funder and/or  organization:
  
- The funding source of the position(s) is (are) \_\_\_\_\_
  - There are no pertinent restrictions on funding use for these position(s) OR on the qualifications of the position
  - The restrictions on use are as follows \_\_\_\_\_
  
- The position(s) need to exist
  - between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ period of time
  - begins on \_\_\_\_\_ but has no expected end date
  
- The position (s) will be (check all that apply):
  - # Full Time \_\_\_\_
  - # Part Time \_\_\_\_
  
  - # Temporary \_\_\_\_
  - # Permanent or Regular \_\_\_\_\_
  
  - # Benefitted \_\_\_\_\_
  - # Non-benefitted \_\_\_\_

- # Exempt \_\_\_\_\_
- # Non-Exempt \_\_\_\_\_

- # Hourly \_\_\_\_\_
- # Salaried \_\_\_\_\_

The location (work site) of the position (s) is \_\_\_\_\_ and the service area is \_\_\_\_\_

The goals and objectives of the position are as follows: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Which will require the following skill set to be included in the job description \_\_\_\_\_.

- The job description:
  - Already exists and can be used “as is”
  - Exists but requires modification
  - Must be written

The position will exist in the organization in the \_\_\_\_\_ division/program/area and will be supervised by the \_\_\_\_\_ position

After you have reviewed and answered the checklist questions above, you can move forward to the next steps in recruiting.

# A Guide to Hiring Qualified Supervisors for CHWs

Supporting CHWs in a Supervisory role requires unique skills and qualities. Hiring managers can utilize the activities in this guide to create a specialized application process that will allow organizations to fully understand if candidates are qualified for the position.

## Job Descriptions

Is the current job description up to date? If not, update the job description in the following areas:

Create an opening statement and provide as much information that the job description explains the role and job responsibilities of the CHW Supervisor to performing the job.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities examples are:	Required Education and Experience examples are:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coordinates all day-to-day aspects of assigned program and works in partnership with other staff to achieve program and organizational goals and organizational objectives.</li><li>• Coordinates all activities within given program(s) to ensure quality and completion of activities.</li><li>• Coordinates staff development needs and makes recommendations to the Program Director for appropriate professional development opportunities for staff.</li><li>• Works with supervisor to recruit, hire, and provide orientation and evaluation of full time, part time, and temporary staff, interns, and volunteers either directly or through oversight of activity.</li><li>• Effectively and proactively uses technology and assists staff as needed in program for optimal use of technology.</li><li>• Reviews and provides supervisor with feedback on program budgets.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Earned Bachelor's degree preferred. Earned Associates required.</li><li>• 1-2 years' experience as a CHW or in community based/outreach work</li><li>• Computer literacy with proficiency in spreadsheet, database, presentation, and word processing software.</li><li>• Knowledge or ability to quickly obtain knowledge, of population served, community resources, and program outcomes.</li><li>• Read, write, and speak English and Spanish required.</li></ul>

## Create a Job Ad

Job ads are used as an additional tool, to provide the hiring manager an avenue to seek qualified applicant(s). It also ensures that applicant(s) have a clear understanding of what the job entails, including job requirements.

- ▶ Include the organization mission statement
- ▶ Provide a list of location(s) of open positions
- ▶ Full-Time Regular, Part-Time, Temporary; exempt/nonexempt
- ▶ Provide a non-discrimination statement. If the organization does not have one but would be a good time to create one.
- ▶ Provide an overview of benefits offered by the organization
- ▶ Include salary range for position
- ▶ Provide website address for applying for the position and/or state how to apply for the position
- ▶ Current Resume
- ▶ Professional References

*Examples of professional references are former direct supervisors, and managers. The applicant should provide you with references who have firsthand knowledge of how they work.*

- ▶ Include any additional components that the organization is requesting, this provides a better filter when screening applications.

### ▶ Completed Application

*State incomplete applications will not be considered. You can make the application simply the resume if desired but placing this statement with clear directions helps the hiring manager/committee see that the applicant can follow directions.*

- ▶ Provide dates that will cover the following:

- Review date of complete applications
- Interview date
- Expected start date

## Job Ad Placement

When advertising the open position; the hiring manager should be familiar with the job sites that will receive the most exposure for the position. Consider job sites that cater to the community in which the open position will be in. Examples include, but are not limited to:

Glassdoor

Local Workforce  
Office

Indeed

Social Media  
Platforms

## Hiring Committee

The hiring manager has the responsibility of forming the hiring committee. The members of the committee are members with an understanding of the job requirements and skills needed for the position. The committee should be formed with experienced peers within the organization. The committee should have experience with the population served, provide a diversity of viewpoints, and be active participants. An example of a committee consists of the following:

**A current director/manager with several years of experience working with Community Health Workers, including at least two (2) years working with the organization.**

Current directors/hiring managers have firsthand knowledge and experience of what is required by supervisors that will be working with Community Health Workers. They understand the challenges faced by CHWs in the community. CHWs are strong individuals who are integrated into the communities that they serve and do not perceive obstacles in accomplishing set goals. Supervisors coming into the position need to be able to manage CHWs and meet them halfway in understanding the larger picture. Communication is key in this position, because you do not want to lose CHWs momentum or morale. Supervisors need to have excellent communication skills to function in this role.

**Program Director and Program Managers with experience in hiring.**

Program Directors and Program Managers that have a clear understanding of how the goals and objectives are implemented and how they should be reached. They also understand the barriers in the community and are able to provide updates on how the work is carried out and implemented in the community.

The committee should be familiar with the job description and job ad and aware of the requirements of the position. Once the committee has been selected, move on to the next steps, developing interview questions.

Things to consider if the applications that are being completed do not meet the criteria in the job ad:

- ▶ Form and meet with a hiring committee (more information on forming a hiring committee can be found on the next page) to review and revise the job ad in detail. Discuss the following questions:
  - What is missing?
  - What is possibly being misunderstood?
  - Where can we improve?
- ▶ It can also be beneficial to have colleagues from another department or division review the job ad and provide feedback on any components that are unclear or where additional information is required.
- ▶ Analyze which job sites brought in the most complete applications. Repost the ad on those sites. The sites that were not successful should not be used; however, this is at the discretion of the hiring manager.

## Interview Questions

The interview questions should be created by the hiring manager and reviewed by hiring committee. The questions used for the interview, should provide the hiring committee with a sense of the applicant's qualifications and skills for the position and match the actual job duties that will be required to be performed. The questions to be used should include the following:

**Understanding of the organizational culture:** The organizational culture question is used to gauge the applicant(s) understanding of the organization's culture and determine if the applicant and organization would be a good fit for each other.

**Question(s) based on job description:** These questions are to provide feedback on the applicant(s) understanding of the position and whether they believe they are qualified. The hiring committee should be well prepared to ask follow-up questions from the applicant(s) if the answers provided by the applicant(s) were not clearly stated to the satisfaction of the hiring committee.

**Questions based on Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:** For example, CHW Supervisors need to have the following:

- Must be well organized, detail oriented, and can multi-task in a demanding and constantly changing environment.
- Must be able to analyze and synthesize information.
- Must work independently, creatively, and be self-motivated.
- Must be able to analyze databases and provide basic evaluation as needed.
- Ability to work collaboratively and facilitate teams.
- Demonstrate supervision skills with ability to maintain confidentiality and accessibility.
- Must be able to convey information, guidance and work directions, instilling a sense of mission, service, cooperation, and collaboration with staff and within assigned work areas.
- Must have excellent oral and written communication skills.

**Set dates for screening of applications:** Each committee member can screen applications from a different point of view and coming together to select the best applications for interview.

## Testing of Applicant(s)

Tests provide insight into the abilities of the applicant. The hiring manager should create a test that would highlight the desired skill set that is being sought for the program. The test should be simple and not cumbersome or time consuming.

One option is to create a test which can demonstrate supervision skills, communication (written/oral), technology and data to analyze.

- This provides the hiring committee insight into the applicant(s) critical thinking skills.
- It also will provide insight into the technology skills of the applicant(s).

## Closing the interview

When closing the interview both the hiring committee should have a clear understanding of the applicant(s) knowledge, skills and abilities required for the position. The applicant(s) should have a clear understanding of the job duties, requirements and qualifications needed for the position. As a final step in the interview process the hiring committee should include time for:

- A time for asking questions to the hiring committee
- Provides the opportunity to provide next steps to the applicant(s)

## Hiring Committee Next Steps

Once the interviews have been completed and test received the hiring committee should meet to discuss the following:

- Review answers provided during interview
- Review submitted test responses
- Discuss the applicant(s) responses in detail
- Discuss any red flags that a committee member might have
- Discuss the applicant's behavior during the interview

## Selecting the Candidate

After the hiring committee has met, the hiring manager and committee decide which applicant(s) are best suited for the position. Once selected, send an offer letter that includes the following:

- Starting date
  - Status (Full Time, Part Time, Temp)
  - Salary
  - Benefits (health insurance, retirement, etc.)
  - Name of supervisor
  - Add acceptance date deadline
- Including other documentation required for on-boarding*
- Attach a copy of the organization's personnel manual
  - Background Check form if required by the organization

Once the background check has been returned and is clean provide applicant(s) with their **official hire letter**. The letter should include all the items listed on the offer letter and provide verification that the candidate has been officially hired by the organization.

## Storage of Documentation

All incoming applications and documentation related to the hiring process should be stored according to your organization's retention policy; a good measure is three years.

Create a file folder for each applicant and include all components such as:

- Interviewers feedback
- Submitted Test
- Others feedback
- Application
- Resume
- References

### **A Guide to Hiring Qualified Supervisors for CHWs**

Considering all of the qualifications needed to support CHWs as a Supervisor, making a final hiring decision can be difficult. Hiring Managers should never rush into hiring applicants for a position that they are not qualified for. Doing so will only create additional challenges for all parties involved.

A good candidate for a CHW Supervisor position will have the skills needed to perform the duties, the ability to meet all requirements needed for the job, and a deep understanding of how CHWs operate in the community. Creating a plan with the activities in this resource will help to ensure that the hiring process checks for all of these components so that the hiring committee can create a strategy on how to pick a candidate that is both qualified and a good fit within the organization.

## About **MHP Salud**



MHP Salud offers training and consulting services for organizations committed to implementing Community Health Worker (CHW) programs. We have over 35 years of knowledge on how to design, implement, and evaluate CHW programs to share with CHWs, their supervisors, and professionals or grant writers working with CHW programs. Our offerings are affordable and can be tailored to meet the needs of any organization. Services are available in-person or virtually. Learn more by visiting our [\*\*CHW Products and Support Page\*\*](#)

# Starting a **Community Health Worker Program**: A Resource Guide



## About this Map

This collection of resources provides guidance, information, and tips for organizations interested in or already invested in starting a Community Health Worker program. Click on a number or title to access the resource.



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