North Carolina Community Health Worker Survey

Summer 2017

Table of Contents

Background and Motivation 2

Survey Process 2

Findings 3

- Demographics 3
- Employment 5
- Roles and Responsibilities 6
- CHW Network 7

Next Steps 8

Appendix A: Survey 9

Appendix B. List of Represented Counties 15

Appendix C: Additional CHW Surveys 16

Background and Motivation

Community Health Workers (CHWs) work with both individuals and communities to improve health and address the social determinants of health. CHWs have long played a role in the American healthcare system, and they operate under a diverse set of labels, including promotor(a) de salud, outreach educator, patient navigator, home visitor, parent aide, family service coordinator, and peer support worker. The American Public Health Association's defines a CHW as:

> *A frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of and/or has an unusually close understanding of the community served. This trusting relationship enables the worker to serve as a liaison/link/intermediary between health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery. A community health worker also builds individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency through a range of activities such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support and advocacy.*

Several stakeholders in North Carolina have been working to include CHWs as key members of the integrated healthcare team. The first step in the process was to conduct the CHW Program Inventory, created in January 2015 by representatives from the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The inventory identified and described existing programs that utilize CHWs. Information collected included organizational demographics, CHW scope of services, skills and abilities, funding sources, as well as the challenges and benefits of CHW services. Approximately 290 program managers and supervisors received the survey, and a total of 117 participants completed it.

Now that we understand more about CHW *programs*, the next step in integrating CHWs into the health care system is to learn from *individual* CHWs. From May to August of 2017, staff in the Chronic Disease and Injury (CDI) Section of the NC Division of Public Health developed, distributed, and analyzed results from the *North Carolina Community Health Worker Survey* to: 1) identify the roles CHWs fill in their communities; and 2) learn about CHWs' attitudes towards forming a CHW Network. The contents of this report detail the survey process, findings, and the next steps we can take to support the work of CHWs in North Carolina.

Survey Process

In May 2017, a team from NC DPH developed the *North Carolina Community Health Worker Survey*. The team grounded the survey in the need to understand what North Carolina CHWs do, who they are, where they are, and their attitudes about forming a CHW Network.

The survey was informed by similar questionnaires conducted in Massachusetts, New York, Indiana, and Michigan (Appendix C). The team developed the survey in English, translated it to Spanish, and posted both language versions to an online survey platform—SurveyMonkey®.

Once the team developed the survey, they emailed the survey links (English and Spanish) to 130 CHW program directors who were identified by the 2015 CHW Program Inventory. The team requested the directors forward the survey to CHWs in their programs. The team also employed a snowball sampling technique whereby SurveyMonkey® prompted CHWs who completed the survey to share the survey with other CHWs. Additionally, the team sent the surveys to 10 individual CHW contacts and requested that these individuals complete the survey and forward it to any CHWs they know. In each correspondence, the team stated they could provide paper versions of the surveys to individuals if someone preferred a non-electronic version. The survey distribution and data collection process began in mid-May and continued through mid-July.

At the close of data collection, the team downloaded survey responses from SurveyMonkey® and analyzed results in Excel®. Below, we detail major findings from these analyses.

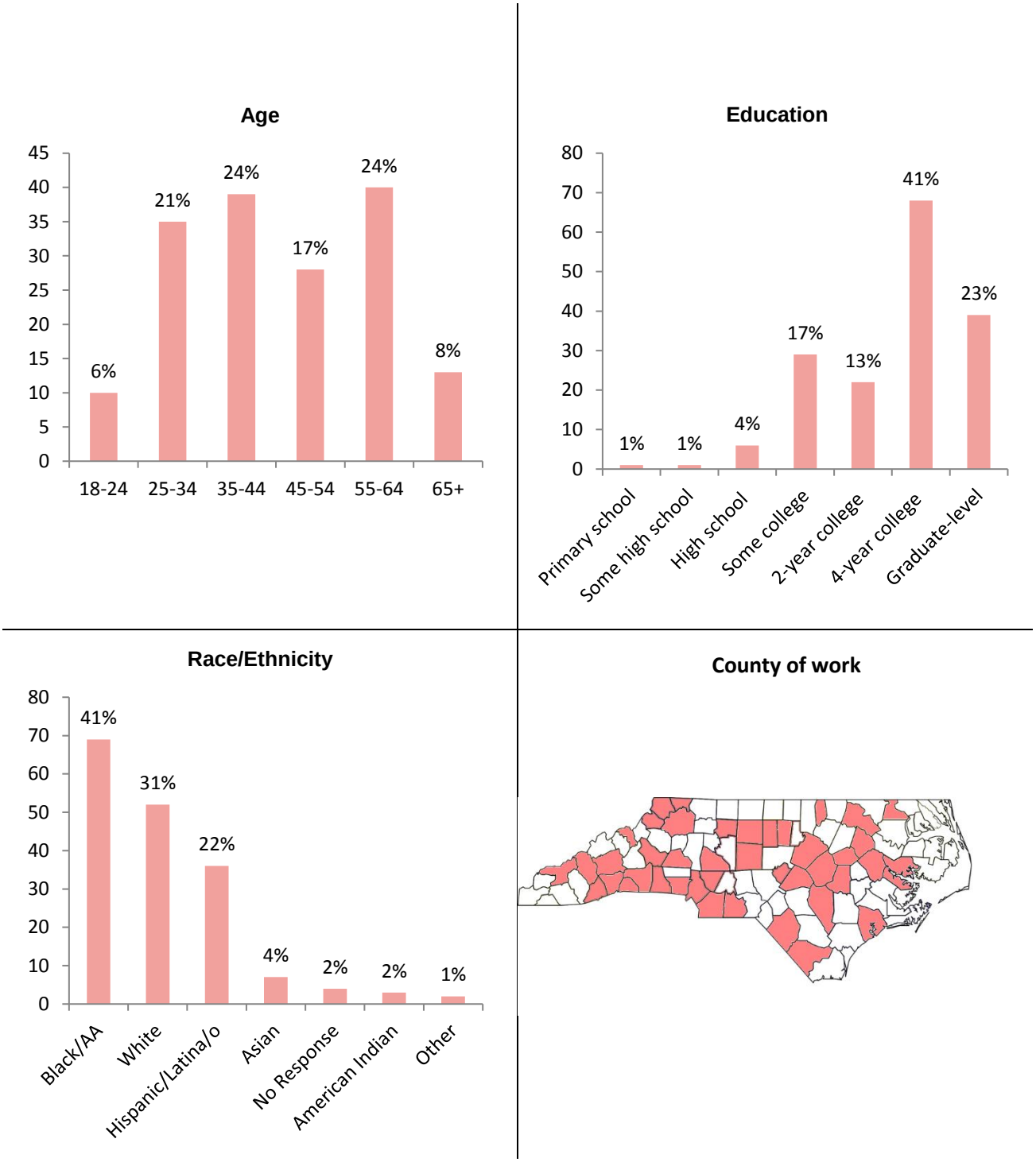
Findings

In total, 168 CHWs from 42 different counties responded to the survey (including 10 Spanish surveys and 15 hard-copy surveys). As detailed below, CHWs responding to this survey were diverse in age, education, pay, and scope of work. While CHWs are a heterogenous workforce, most respondents believed a CHW Network would be useful to further support and promote their profession.

Demographics

As detailed in Figure 1, age, education, and racial identity varied across CHWs. The majority of surveyed CHWs identified as female (90%). The survey population represented the entire adult life-course, and modal age groups included 25-34 years and 55-64 years. While the majority of CHWs had a four-year college degree (41%), many CHWs had no college degree (21%). Most respondents identified as Black or African American (41%). Most respondents (95%) were fluent in English, 28% were fluent in Spanish, and 4% were fluent in another language. In total, the survey represented CHWs in 42 of the 100 North Carolina counties.

Figure 1. Select demographic characteristics of CHW survey respondents

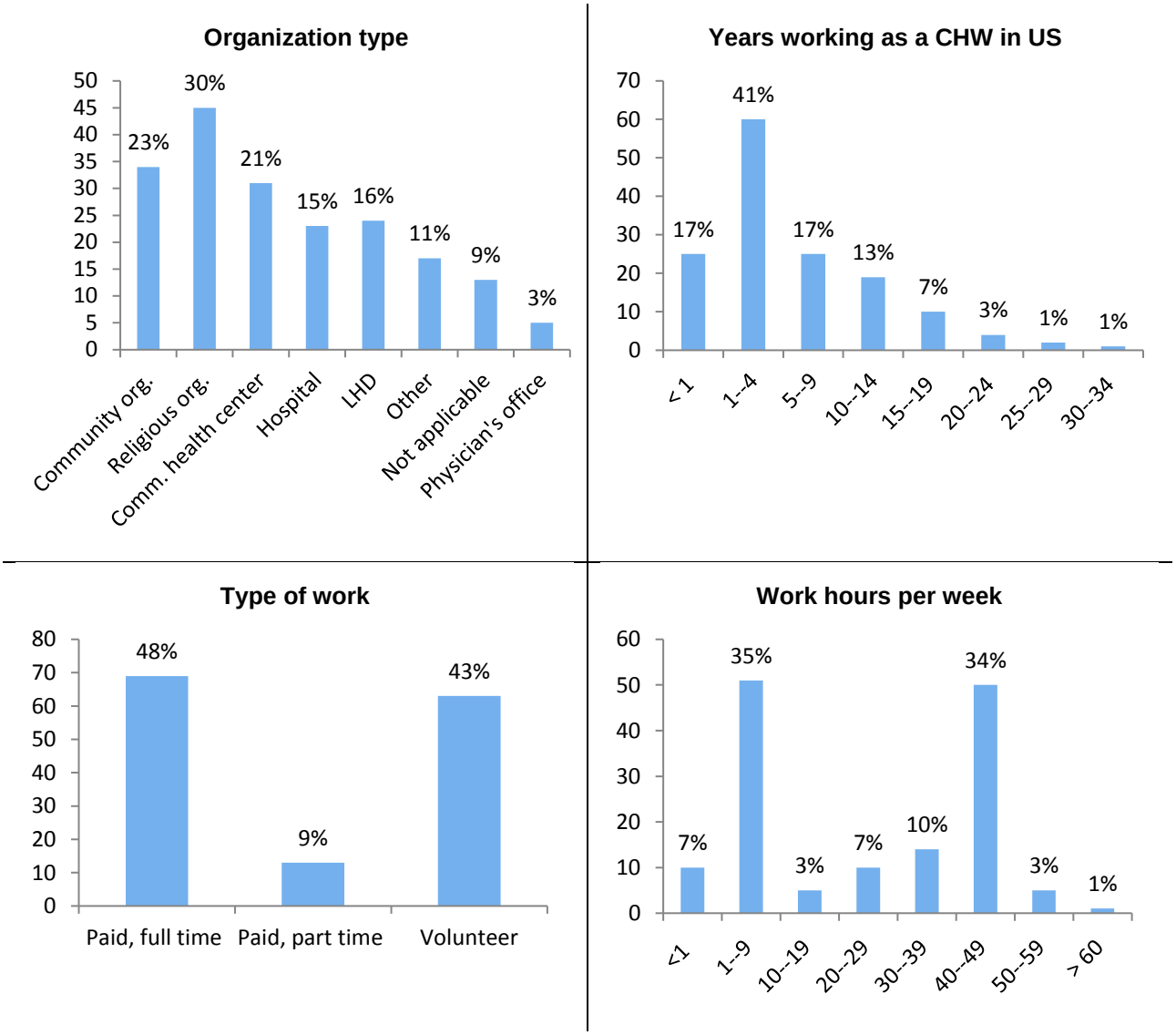


Note: Vertical axis represents *number* of respondents, labels represent *percent* of total respondents.

Employment

Survey respondents varied in type of employer, years of experience, being paid versus volunteer, and weekly work load (Figure 2). Of the 93 respondents who provided information regarding wages, 43 reported being unpaid for their work. Of the 50 respondents who provided information on their wages who reported being paid for work, wages ranged from $100 to $69,000 annually, with a median of $34,500 annually.

Figure 2. Select employment information of CHW survey respondents.



Note: Vertical axis represents *number* of respondents, labels represent *percent* of total respondents.

Roles and Responsibilities

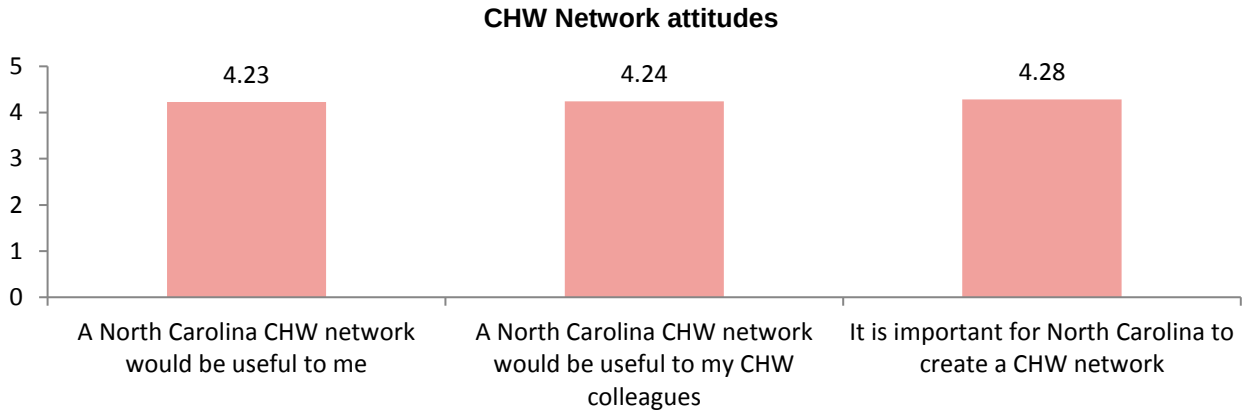
The scope of work of surveyed CHWs is broad. As illustrated below, respondents address a range of health issues, connect clients to various resources, relate to clients in a multitude of ways, and work with diverse populations. The scope of work is not only broad across CHWs, but also within individual CHWs. Most respondents reported that they worked on multiple health issues and with various populations.

Figure 3. Roles and responsibilities of CHW survey respondents.

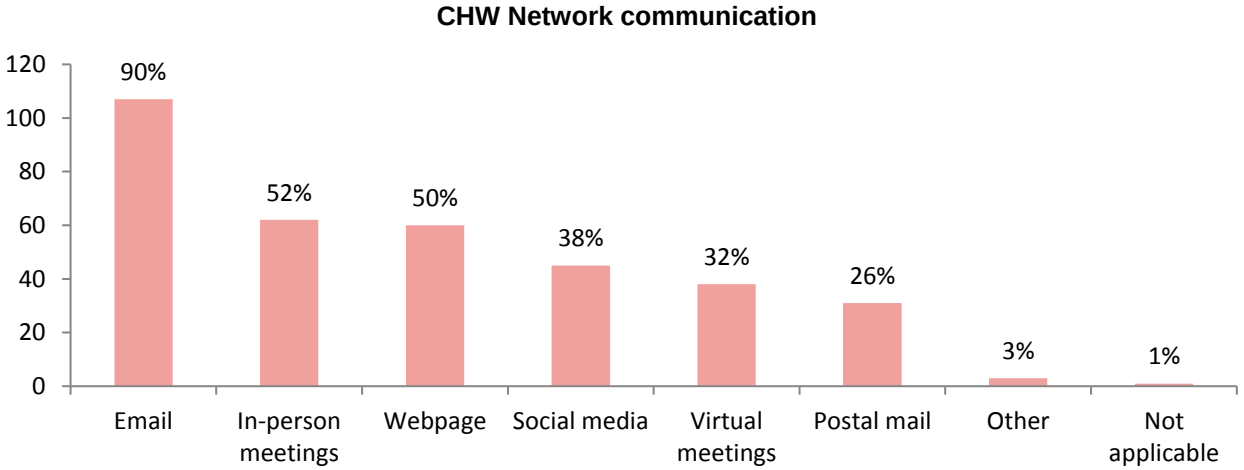
Note: Vertical axis represents *number* of respondents, labels represent *percent* of total respondents.

CHW Network

Some states have developed CHW networks that: 1) provide training; 2) facilitate research, policy, and advocacy on behalf of CHWs; 3) coordinate community outreach and events; and/or 4) connect CHWs to each other and potential jobs. The survey asked respondents about their attitudes towards a Network. Most survey respondents favorably viewed a CHW Network, with an average positive attitude rating of 4.2 on a 5-point scale. Given the presence of a Network, most respondents (90%) noted they would prefer to maintain communication via email. Over 75% of respondents reported being willing to serve in a leadership role within a CHW Network.



	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
A North Carolina CHW Network would be useful to me	8	1	13	60	61
A North Carolina CHW Network would be useful to my CHW colleagues	7	3	14	55	63
It is important for North Carolina to create a CHW Network	8	1	10	58	65



Next Steps

The *North Carolina Community Health Worker Survey* allows us to identify the roles CHWs fill in their communities and learn about CHWs' attitudes towards forming a CHW Network in North Carolina. From this survey, we have gathered the names and contact information of nearly 100 CHWs in North Carolina. From this contact information, we have created an internal, informal North Carolina CHW contact registry for use by the CDI Section of the North Carolina Division of Public Health.

Because respondents viewed a North Carolina CHW Network favorably, next steps include learning what specific roles a Network should serve and how a Network should be created. The CDI Section will use the informal contact registry created from the *North Carolina Community Health Worker Survey* to identify and connect with CHWs so that the Section can continue to support their work in North Carolina. These CHWs may also provide more in-depth information and guidance to inform the formation of a North Carolina CHW Network.

Appendix A: Survey

North Carolina CHW Survey

Thank you for filling out the North Carolina Community Health Worker (CHW) Survey. It should only take 5-10 minutes of your time. Information gathered by this survey will be used for internal purposes at the North Carolina Division of Public Health (DPH), and identifying information will not be shared with any outside parties without your prior approval. DPH is conducting this survey to learn more about:

- **The roles CHWs fill in their communities; and**
- **CHWs' attitudes towards forming a CHW network in North Carolina**

Please note:

- **CHWs are frontline public health workers who are trusted members of and/or have a close understanding of the community**
- **The term "CHW" is used in this survey to refer to Community Health Workers and similar titles, including but not limited to Patient Navigator, Peer Supporter, Community Health Navigator, Promotor/a, and Doula**

- **Please only complete this survey if you identify as a CHW (or similar title)**

Section A. Demographics

First, we have a few questions about you.

1. What is your age now, in years?

2. What is your gender identity?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Transgender male
- ☐ Transgender female
- ☐ Other

3. What is the highest level of school that you have completed?

- ☐ Primary school
- ☐ Some high school, but no diploma
- ☐ High school diploma (or GED)
- ☐ Some college, but no degree
- ☐ 2-year college degree
- ☐ 4-year college degree
- ☐ Graduate-level degree
- ☐ None of the above

4. What is your race/ethnicity? Please select all that apply.

- [ ] American Indian
- [ ] Asian
- [ ] Black or African American
- [ ] Hispanic or Latina/o
- [ ] Pacific Islander
- [ ] White
- [ ] Other
- [ ] Prefer not to respond

5. What languages do you speak fluently? Please select all that apply.

- [ ] English
- [ ] Spanish
- [ ] French
- [ ] Chinese
- [ ] German
- [ ] Vietnamese
- [ ] Russian
- [ ] Other (please specify)

Section B. Employment

This set of questions asks about your general employment as a Community Health Worker (CHW)

6. In what county of North Carolina do you currently work as a CHW? Select the county where you complete most of your work as a CHW if you work in more than one county.

7. What type(s) of organization(s) do you work for as a CHW (if applicable)? Please select all that apply.

- [ ] Hospital
- [ ] Community Health Center
- [ ] Physician's office
- [ ] Department of Public Health
- [ ] Community based organization
- [ ] Religious organization (e.g. church, mosque)
- [ ] Not applicable/I do not work for an organization as a CHW
- [ ] Other (please specify)

8. What is/are the name(s) of the organization(s) that you work for as a CHW, if applicable?

- [ ] Not applicable/I do not work for any organization as a CHW
- [ ] Prefer not to respond

Organization name (please specify)

9. For how many years have you been working as a CHW in the United States?

- [ ] Less than 1 year
- [ ] 1-4 years
- [ ] 5-9 years

- [ ] 10-14 years
- [ ] 15-19 years
- [ ] 20-24 years
- [ ] 25-29 years
- [ ] 30-34 years
- [ ] 35-39 years
- [ ] More than 40 years

10. Which of the following best describes your work as a CHW?

- [ ] Paid, full time (at least 30 hours per week)
- [ ] Paid, part time (less than 30 hours per week)
- [ ] Unpaid/volunteer

11. How many hours do you work as a CHW in a typical week, including both paid and unpaid work? Please select your best estimate.

- [ ] Less than 1 hour
- [ ] 1-9 hours
- [ ] 10-19 hours
- [ ] 20-29 hours
- [ ] 30-39 hours
- [ ] 40-49 hours
- [ ] 50-59 hours
- [ ] More than 60 hours

12. How much are you paid for your work as a CHW in a typical year? Please provide your best estimate. Enter 0 if you are not paid for your work as a CHW.

- [ ] Prefer not to respond

Annual income as a CHW

Section C. Roles and Responsibilities

This next set of questions asks about your role as a CHW.

13. Is your work as a CHW related to any of the following health issues? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Asthma
- ☐ Cancer
- ☐ Diabetes
- ☐ Obesity
- ☐ Heart disease/hypertension
- ☐ Injury prevention
- ☐ Substance use (e.g. alcohol, opiod use)
- ☐ Tobacco cessation
- ☐ HIV/AIDS
- ☐ Mental/behavioral health
- ☐ Maternal and child health
- ☐ Oral Health

Other (please specify)

14. What resources do you connect to the people you serve? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Health care
- ☐ Health insurance enrollment
- ☐ Child care
- ☐ Education assistance
- ☐ Employment
- ☐ Food assistance
- ☐ Fuel assistance
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Income assistance
- ☐ Legal services
- ☐ Translation/interpretation
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Violence prevention
- ☐ Not applicable/I do not connect people to resources
- ☐ Other (please specify)

15. How do you personally relate to the people you serve? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ We live in the same neighborhood
- ☐ We share the same race/ethnicity
- ☐ We attend the same church
- ☐ We share the same spoken language
- ☐ We have experience with the same health condition
- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Other (please specify)

16. Which of the following populations do you work with? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Pregnant or postpartum women and infants
- ☐ Children/adolescents
- ☐ Farm workers
- ☐ Foreign national/immigrants/refugees
- ☐ Homeless individuals
- ☐ Individuals who are sexual minorities (e.g. gay, lesbian, or bisexual)
- ☐ Individuals who are transgender
- ☐ Individuals living with a disability
- ☐ Rural residents
- ☐ Seniors (ages 65 and older)
- ☐ Uninsured individuals
- ☐ Not applicable/I do not work with any specific populations
- ☐ Other (please specify)

17. Which of the following specific race/ethnicity groups do you work with primarily? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ American Indian
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic or Latina/o
- ☐ Pacific Islander
- ☐ White
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Not applicable/I do not work with a specific race/ethnicity group

Section D. CHW Network

Some states have developed CHW networks that connect CHWs to each other, to jobs, to trainings, and to the community. The questions in the next section are about forming a CHW network in North Carolina.

18. How much do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
A North Carolina CHW network would be useful to me	○	○	○	○	○
A North Carolina CHW network would be useful to my CHW colleagues	○	○	○	○	○
It is important for North Carolina to create a CHW network	○	○	○	○	○

19. How would you like information to be shared through the CHW Network? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Email
- ☐ Postal mail
- ☐ Webpage
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐ Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)
- ☐ In-person meetings
- ☐ Virtual meetings
- ☐ Not applicable/I do not want a North Carolina CHW network

20. Would you be willing to serve in a leadership role within a North Carolina CHW network?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Maybe
- ○ Not applicable/I do not want a North Carolina CHW network

21. Please provide any additional comments you have about a North Carolina CHW network. Comments *might* include thoughts on how the network should be organized, what role(s) a network should serve, your attitude towards a network, or anything else related to forming a CHW network in North Carolina.

Section E. Contact Information

If you are willing to be added to a CHW contact list at the North Carolina Division of Public Health, please provide contact information below.

22. First name

23. Last name

24. Phone number (with area code)

25. Email

Thank you for participating in the North Carolina Community Health Worker Survey.
We appreciate your time and efforts!

Please consider helping us by providing the link to this survey with other CHWs in North Carolina:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NorthCarolinaCHW

Appendix B. List of Represented Counties

Alamance
Alleghany
Anson
Ashe
Beaufort
Buncombe
Burke
Cabarrus
Catawba
Cleveland
Columbus
Edgecombe
Forsyth
Gaston
Guilford
Halifax
Harnett
Haywood
Henderson
Hertford
Johnston
Lee
Mecklenburg
Mitchell
Onslow
Orange
Pitt
Polk
Randolph
Robeson
Rowan
Rutherford
Sampson
Swain
Transylvania
Union
Vance
Wake
Watauga
Wayne
Wilkes
Wilson

Appendix C: Additional CHW Surveys

Indiana: http://connect.iu.edu/p33npiumu9u/

Massachusetts: http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/com-health/com-health-workers/comm-health-workers-append.pdf

Michigan:

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/REVISED_MICHIGAN_COMMUNITY_HEALTH_WORKER_SURVEY-1.final_2_373703_7.pdf

New York: http://www.chwnetwork.org/Default.aspx?ssid=80&NavPTypeId=1278/#