

# Chicago Community Health Worker / Promotor de Salud Survey & Mapping Pilot Project

Laura Bahena, Chicago CHW Local Network Coordinator (Community Co-Investigator)

Daniel Block, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Northwestern University Dept. of Preventive Medicine (Academic Co-Investigator)

Sheri Cohen, Senior Policy Analyst, Chicago Department of Public Health; Marisela Moreno, Survey Data Coordinator, HealthConnect One

Sef Okoth, Community and Technical Assistance Planner, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning; RoiAnn Phillips, Communications and Program Associate, HealthConnect One

## Background

*"You are a valuable asset to the community. You may come and do outreach here anytime, and continue to save more lives."*  
~ Covenant Bank to Frances Nance, Community Health Worker

Community Health Workers (CHWs)/ *Promotores de Salud* are vital links between communities and the healthcare and social service system. The Chicago CHW/*Promotor de Salud* Survey and Mapping Project was initiated by the Chicago Partnership for Public Health (CDPH), HealthConnect One, and the Chicago CHW Local Network – in order to collect data on CHWs and the organizations that employ them to identify, support, strengthen, and expand their work. Since its inception in June 2008, the Project has involved over 26 community organizations, coalitions and universities.

In 2009, Rogers Park was selected as the pilot community area to test the CHW/*Promotor* Survey and Mapping Project's methodology. Findings from this pilot will be available to local organizations to strengthen and promote current resources, and will also be used to assure effectiveness of the Project's methods when the survey is conducted citywide.

Through an ARCC seed grant, pilot data is being analyzed, stored, shared, and mapped with input from collaborating organizations and stakeholders.



## Problem

To support CHWs and *Promotores* through increased training, networking, funding and policy development, and to strengthen the role of CHWs and *Promotores* in carrying information to and from under-served Chicago communities, **concrete data is needed on the work, strengths and needs of CHWs and *Promotores* and CHW/*Promotor* programs.**

## Method

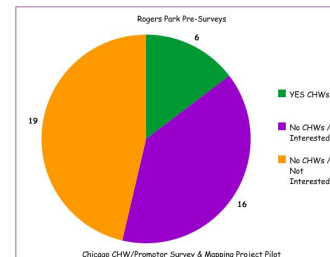
**Survey Development:** Surveys for CHWs, *promotores* and program supervisors were developed by a committee that included academics, CHWs, public health researchers and practitioners, and included questions about what type of services CHWs provide, what topics they cover, what kinds of organizations employ CHWs, the kinds of funding they receive, CHW training, and program needs and strengths. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was received through Northwestern University. Surveys were available in both English and Spanish.

**Community Outreach:** Although Rogers Park outreach began in Fall 2009, the pilot project kicked-off formally at United Church of Rogers Park in September 2010 with over 30 people. "Si Se Puede" radio then interviewed CHW Network Coordinator Laura Bahena and Surveyor Grant Vitale about the goals of the project, and 110 organizations in Rogers Park were identified as having any potential of employing CHWs. Each group was contacted at least two times, and many not reached by phone were visited in-person.

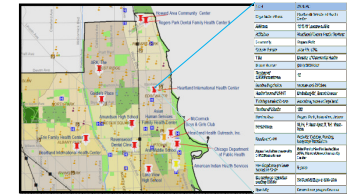
**Status:** Data collection in the pilot community of Rogers Park is now complete.

### Preliminary Results:

- 41 pre-surveys were conducted to identify agencies with CHWs.
- 6 of those pre-surveyed said "Yes" they have CHWs.
- 35 of those pre-surveyed said "No" they do not have CHWs.
- Of the 35 agencies which said "No," 16 wanted more information about CHWs, and 19 responded that they would not be interested in any more CHW information at this time.
- 11 Administrator Surveys were completed.
- 31 CHW Surveys were completed.
- 9 of the CHW surveys were conducted in Spanish.
- 37 organizations have not responded.



**Mapping & Data Analysis:** The Project team still needs to (1) map public data, (2) conduct community-based data analysis with Rogers Park residents and Chicago-area community health workers, and (3) evaluate the pilot process to prepare for citywide expansion.



## Preliminary Conclusions

During the outreach to community agencies, the surveyor and other team members reported that community agencies had trouble identifying if their employees met the criteria of a "community health worker," as it was developed through a year-long collaboration among Chicago-area CHWs, supervisors, academics and policymakers.

The project team has also recognized the need for adequate funding of deeper community outreach prior to data collection.

Finally, the pilot project has benefited greatly from an active community advocate and the involvement of two lead agencies in the community: Heartland Alliance and Howard Area Community Center.

## Future Work

Having developed methods, tools and relationships through implementation of the pilot project, the team must now seek additional funding for a citywide survey (e.g., through NIH), re-energize the 23 community partners outside Rogers Park who were actively involved in development of goals and project tools, leverage these relationships to expand the collaborative, and continue to build the capacity of community health workers and academics to participate jointly in developing and conducting research to reduce health disparities in Chicago.