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Association for State and Territorial Health Officials Request for Applications: Community Health Worker (CHW) Learning Community

I. Summary Information

Purpose: The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), with support from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), invites states to apply for a 24-month Community Health Worker Learning (CHW) Community, which will offer technical assistance on issues surrounding CHW certification, training, strategic planning, coalition building, evaluation, and financing.

Request for Applications Released: December 14, 2017

Applications Due: January 31, 2018

Selection Announcement: Week of February 12, 2018

Estimated CHW Learning Community Period: Year 1 technical assistance from February-August 2018 (full period of performance to be a 24-month learning community contingent on funder approval).

Number of Learning Community States: Four state/territorial health agencies

ASTHO Point of Contact: Anna Bartels, Analyst, Health Systems Transformation (abartels@astho.org)

II. Project Description

ASTHO is pleased to invite you to participate in a technical assistance (TA) opportunity. Through this TA opportunity, ASTHO will identify up to four state and/or territorial health agencies (S/THAs) to participate in a 24-month CHW Learning Community to share perspectives on how multidisciplinary teams are used and successful efforts to promote workforce development and coordination across the spectrum of care. This opportunity will provide direct TA to four priority S/THAs on issues related to certification, training, and reimbursement, as well strategic planning, coalition building, and evaluation.. S/THAs using CHWs to increase access to care among vulnerable and underserved populations, such as rural communities, adolescents, and maternal child health (MCH) populations, will be prioritized in the selection process.

Background:

The use of multi-disciplinary teams is a central focus for increasing access to primary care, eliminating health disparities, and achieving the Triple Aim of improved quality of care, improved health for populations, and lower costs. One way of meeting the Triple Aim is by improving population health in a geographic area through CHWs. (CHWs are employed under dozens of job titles, including integrators, navigators, *promotoras de salud*, and, when serving tribal nations, Community Health Representatives.)

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CHWs are shown to reduce health inequities and increase the cultural competence and quality of care by providers.

ASTHO has a history of working with S/THAs to advance the use of CHWs to increase access to care among vulnerable and underserved communities. Last year, ASTHO provided TA to several states and convened a series of webinars featuring subject matter experts presenting on CHW topics such as certification and financing strategies. ASTHO's CHW resources, tools, and webinars are available online (www.astho.org/community-health-workers/). This year, ASTHO plans to expand its CHW TA to additional states and territories interested in implementing new or scaling existing CHW programs.

Project Description:

ASTHO will form a learning community of up to four S/THAs at varying stages of CHW workforce development and will work with subject matter experts, including HRSA experts, to provide state-specific TA on issues of certification, training, strategic planning, coalition building, evaluation, and financing.

This project is designed to:

1. Increase states' and territories' implementation and utilization of CHWs and integrated care teams to improve access and health outcomes; and
2. Improve S/THAs' understanding of policies and mechanisms to support reimbursement for community-based prevention services.

This Learning Community is supported through a cooperative agreement with HRSA for National Organizations for State and Local Officials (NOSLO). In the first year, ASTHO will host a virtual kick-off meeting for the four learning community members and collect information on individual S/THA needs and priorities. ASTHO plans to convene site visits and additional TA calls with and between S/THA in the second year, concluding Aug. 31, 2019.

Project Requirements for Participation:

Four (4) S/THAs will be selected to participate in this CHW Learning Community TA opportunity, which will include regular calls to identify needs and tailor TA in preparation for virtual or on-site meetings. S/THAs will also have the opportunity to partner with other learning community members who have common interests or TA needs through peer-to-peer learning or shared TA sessions.

State teams taking part in this CHW Learning Community TA must include the following members:

- CHW director or designated staff responsible for managing CHW activities;
- Senior Deputy or State/Territorial Health Official;
- CHW champions and/or CHW association members; and
- Additional stakeholder(s) critical to CHW work in the state (teams should include appropriate parties to help implement state-specific plans, such as key S/THA staff, Medicaid officials, patient or consumer advocates, representatives of accountable health organizations, hospital

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systems, community health centers, payers, primary care associations, training programs, partners from other sectors of state/territorial government, etc.).

S/THA teams chosen for the CHW Learning Community must also commit to the following:

- S/THA teams must select a point person for ASTHO correspondence.
- It is critical that the required team members listed above coordinate with each other on future state/territorial work around CHW implementation and utilization in regular workgroup meetings or other mechanisms.

III. Selection Process

To indicate your interest in participating in this Community Health Worker Learning Community TA opportunity, please send a Letter of Interest (LOI) to **Anna Bartels, analyst, Health Systems Transformation**, at abartels@astho.org by **January 31, 2018**. LOI must be signed by your **State/Territorial Health Official** indicating his/her support of your agency's participation in this CHW Learning Community TA opportunity.

Please include the following information in your LOI:

- **Name, title, and contact information for project leader** (point person for ASTHO correspondence, per above).
- **List of proposed team members**, as described above, including name, title, and contact information (email/phone) for each.
- **Brief description of CHW-related TA needs**. If your agency has received ASTHO technical assistance related to CHWs over the past year, please explain how participation in this CHW Learning Community TA opportunity will complement those efforts.
- **Brief description of how the use of CHWs align with strategic priorities for the S/THA**, including Medicaid or other payment policies, legislation passed or pending, credentialing initiatives, etc.
- **Summary of CHW development work done to date, including planning and stakeholder engagement**. Please explain whether and how CHWs are involved in planning. Please identify CHW champion(s) in your state/territory (e.g., state health official, state CHW coalitions, network, provider, or hospital association representative).

Letters of Interest should be concise (approximately 3 pages) and may include attachments. Upon receipt of completed LOIs, the following criteria will be used to select the final S/THAs for participation in this CHW Learning Community TA opportunity:

- S/THAs using CHWs to increase access to care among vulnerable and underserved populations, such as rural communities, adolescents, and MCH populations;
- S/THAs with clearly articulated TA needs;
- S/THAs with effective stakeholder engagement processes and/or plans; and
- S/THAs with health policy designs and/or planning processes in which CHW integration features significantly.

We look forward to your response and participation in this important TA initiative.