

HEALTHY START COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER COURSE



Healthy Start Community Health Worker Course Frequently Asked Questions

General Information about the Healthy Start Community Health Worker (CHW) Course

1. What is the purpose of the Healthy Start CHW Course?

The purpose of the Healthy Start CHW Course is to provide baseline (introductory) training toward the achievement of core competencies and perinatal health competencies needed to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of a CHW in the Healthy Start program. The course is intended to serve as a standardized training element of Healthy Start workforce development and is designed to provide a common foundation, shared across all Healthy Start programs nationwide, of basic perinatal health knowledge and skills needed to effectively serve Healthy Start participants.

2. Who is the audience for the Healthy Start CHW Course? Who can take this course?

The primary audience for this course is CHWs working in Healthy Start programs, whether they are directly employed or subcontracted by the Healthy Start program. CHWs (trusted, frontline but usually non-licensed staff who work directly with participants) go by many names in local Healthy Start programs, including navigator, parent advocate, family educator, male involvement coordinator, fatherhood engagement specialist, and outreach worker, among others—and this course is for all of them. That said, the course is open to any Healthy Start staff member who wants to take it, including supervisors, nurses and social workers, trainers, and managers.

3. How is the Healthy Start CHW Course structured and delivered?

The Healthy Start CHW Course is a self-paced, online course accessible through the Healthy Start EPIC Center website, healthystartepic.org. The course is composed of 11 modules that include both interactive online activities and supplemental offline activities to provide real world practice. Each of the eleven modules focuses on one of the [core competencies for Healthy Start Community Health Workers](#).

The first five modules cover the knowledge-based competencies related to Healthy Start itself and the four perinatal phases: Healthy Start 101, Preconception/Interconception Health, Prenatal Health, Postpartum Health and Parenting & Child Development. The remaining six modules cover Scope of Practice & Core Values as well as the core competencies related to key CHW roles in Healthy Start: Outreach, Participant Screening & Community Assessment, Health Education, Care Coordination, and Participant Empowerment & Community Engagement.

Each module begins with a statement of learning objectives and ends with a knowledge check to assess the user's understanding of key concepts covered in the module. Each module is composed of 10-15 "units" covering important subtopics or interactive learning activities. Units take anywhere from 5 minutes to 60 minutes to complete, depending on what kind of content they include.

4. Are Healthy Start CHWs required to take this course?

Currently there is no requirement from the Division of Healthy Start and Perinatal Services (HRSA) to take the course, but it is strongly recommended that all Healthy Start CHWs take the course—both as part of their own professional development, and to help ensure that all Healthy Start CHWs, no matter what local program they are in, share a common foundation of basic knowledge and skills needed to effectively serve Healthy Start participants. As a reminder, this is a self-paced course and does not need to be completed all at once. It is recommended that CHWs check with their supervisor to see if their program has any requirements about which modules to take when.

5. What sort of credit or certification is granted to users who successfully complete the Healthy Start CHW Course?

Users who pass the knowledge check at the end of each module with a score of 80% or better will receive a badge for that module. Users who complete all Part 1 module units and earn all 5 badges will receive a Part 1 certificate of course completion. Users who complete all Part 2 module units and earn all 6 badges will receive a Part 2 certificate of course completion. Users who complete all Part 1 and Part 2 units and earn all 11 badges will receive an overall certificate of course completion. Users can let their supervisors know when they have received a badge or course certificate. At present, the course does not offer continuing education units (CEUs) or credit toward state-level CHW certification.

Access and Logistics

6. How do I access the Healthy Start CHW Course?

Course portal: You can access the course through the Healthy Start CHW Course page on the Healthy Start EPIC Center website, healthystartepic.org.

Registration: You must register as a user on the healthystartepic.org website in order to take the course, track your progress through each module, and receive your badges as you earn them. You can register by filling out [the registration form](#) (also linked to from the Healthy Start CHW Course page). In addition to your name, job title and email, the following Healthy Start program information is also requested: Program Name, Level, and Grant # to help us assess how many Healthy Start programs are using the course. Please ask your supervisor for this information before registering.

Log In: You will receive an email from the EPIC Center (wordpress@healthystartepic.org) confirming your registration within 48 hours of submitting the registration form. Please mark this email address as safe and check your junk/spam folders if you do not see the message in your inbox. This email will include your personal login that you can use to access the course at your convenience. You can [log in to the site here](#) (also linked to from the Healthy Start CHW Course page).

Access the Course Modules: You can start Part 1 of the course from the [Healthy Start CHW Course Part 1 - Table of Contents](#) page (also linked to from the Healthy Start CHW Course page). You can start part 2 of the course from the [Healthy Start CHW Course Part 2 – Table of Contents](#) page (also linked to from the Healthy Start CHW Course page). If you are logged in to the website the unit titles will be blue - you will be able to click on a unit title and enter the course at that point.

Platform: It is recommended that you view this course using a desktop computer, laptop or tablet. The course can also be viewed on a smartphone.

See the attached flowchart illustrating the steps to register for and access the course.

7. How long does it take to complete the Healthy Start CHW Course?

There are 11 modules in the course. Each module takes 2-4 hours to complete, with most of them closer to 2 hours. Total time to complete the course if you work through all of the modules will likely be in the range of 25-30 hours. The course is “on demand” (meaning available to you at any time) and self-paced, so you can take it on your own schedule.

8. Do I have to take all the modules/units in the Healthy Start CHW Course?

There is no requirement from HRSA for you to take all of the modules, although as noted in Question 4, it is strongly recommended that you take the entire course—both as part of your own professional development, and to help ensure that all Healthy Start CHWs, no matter which local program they are in, share a common foundation of basic knowledge and skills needed to effectively serve Healthy Start participants. However, you can select which modules to take based on core competency areas for which you want to strengthen or refresh your knowledge and skills, or based on your main duties or activities in your Healthy Start program. Check with your supervisor to see whether your program has recommendations about which modules to take in what order.

9. Do I have to take the Healthy Start CHW Course modules/units in order?

The modules and units follow one another in a logical sequence and build upon each other so that taking them in the suggested order will help to reinforce learning. However, you do not have to take the modules in order. You can select which modules to take when based on core competency areas for which you want to strengthen or refresh your knowledge and skills, or you can select modules based on your main duties or activities in your Healthy Start program. Check with your supervisor to see whether your program has recommendations about which modules to take in what order.

10. Do I have to finish a module in one sitting or can I stop and pick up where I left off?

As noted in Question 8, each module takes 2-4 hours to complete. You do not have to finish a module in one sitting; you can stop part way through a module and pick up where you left off at a later time.

It is recommended that once you are in the course you navigate from one unit to the next using the “Previous Unit” and “Next Unit” buttons at the bottom of the page, not the “back” (←) and “forward” (→) buttons on your browser toolbar. In order for the course software to keep track of where you left off, you need to be sure to click the “Mark as Complete” button at the end of each unit that you finish. Please note that if you have marked a unit as completed, but then use the “back” (←) browser button, the “mark as complete” becomes unchecked, so that you have to click “Mark as Complete” again.

Some modules include recorded webinars for you to watch covering important topics. If you stop watching in the middle of a webinar, you will need to make a note of the time stamp on the webinar at the point you left off, so that you can resume watching from that point.

11. How do I access my Healthy Start CHW Course badges?

At the end of each module there is a knowledge check, a multiple choice quiz, for you to complete. If you pass the knowledge check with a score of 80% or better you will automatically receive an email from the EPIC Center (wordpress@healthystartepic.org) with a link to your badge for the module you passed. Please mark this email address as safe and check your junk/spam folders if you do not see the message in your inbox. The email will be sent to the address you provided on your registration form. You can track your progress on the [Healthy Start CHW Course Badges page](#). Badge icons will appear grayed out until achieved.

See the attached flowchart illustrating the steps to collect your Healthy Start CHW Course badges.

12. Can several of us take the course together as a group?

While there is great benefit to Healthy Start team members discussing the course materials and activities together, we recommend that each person take the course modules individually, so that they can engage with the course materials at their own pace, take the post-module knowledge check and earn their own badge for completion of the modules. One way to facilitate group discussion of the course modules would be to recommend that all CHWs (and any other staff who want to) on your Healthy Start team take a specific course module within a defined period of time (for example, March 1-31) and then get together for a discussion of what was covered in the module at the end of that time period.

Development of the Healthy Start CHW Course

13. How was the Healthy Start CHW Course developed?

The course was developed by the Healthy Start EPIC Center and the Healthy Start CHW Course Development Advisory Group, composed of Healthy Start grantees, Healthy Start CHWs and representatives of the Division of Healthy Start and Perinatal Services (HRSA). Prior to developing the course a lot of background research was done including [a survey of all Healthy Start grantees](#), discussion groups with CHWs and CHW supervisors in Healthy Start programs around the country, interviews with Healthy Start program directors, a literature review, and an environmental scan. The objectives of this research were to identify what kind of training is in place for CHWs at Healthy Start programs, understand CHW activities and roles within Healthy Start teams, identify CHW training needs and day to day challenges, and understand the national landscape of CHW roles and impact, competencies, training, and certification.

Based on the results of this background research, the Advisory Group first developed and approved a [CHW definition and core competencies](#) specifically for CHWs working in Healthy Start programs. The core competencies provide a framework and foundation for the course, with each course module being based on one of the competencies. (See Question 15). The Healthy Start EPIC Center course development team outlined each module and developed draft content and learning activities, which were reviewed by the Advisory Group and revised based on their feedback. The course modules were user tested by Healthy Start CHWs.

14. Were community health workers involved in the development of the course?

Yes, Healthy Start CHWs were involved in many aspects of course development. Healthy Start CHWs participated in the discussion groups conducted to inform course focus and content (see Question 13), and others agreed to be interviewed on videotape so that the course could include the perspective and experience of Healthy Start CHWs. Healthy Start CHWs also participated in course development as representatives on the course Advisory Group and as user testers.

15. How is the course related to the core competencies for Healthy Start CHWs?

The [Healthy Start CHW core competencies](#) represent the fundamental knowledge, experience, and skills needed to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of a CHW in Healthy Start, and effectively serve Healthy Start participants. The 13 core competencies fall into three groupings:

- 5 basic knowledge competencies related to perinatal health: Healthy Start 101, Preconception/Interconception Health, Prenatal Health, Postpartum Health, and Parenting & Child Development
- 5 competencies related to key CHW roles: Outreach, Participant Screening & Community Assessment, Health Education, Care Coordination, and Participant Empowerment & Community Engagement
- 3 foundational skills competencies: Effective Communication, Cultural Responsiveness and Mediation, and Public Health

The competencies provide the framework for the CHW course. The Part 1 modules are each based on the Healthy Start and perinatal health knowledge competencies, and the Part 2 modules are each based on one of the CHW roles competencies. The three foundational skills competencies are woven throughout all the modules as a series of tips and call-out boxes. The learning objectives and the core content for each module are based on the specific knowledge and skills prescribed by the core competencies.

16. My program already provides trainings for CHWs. How does the Healthy Start CHW Course fit in?

Almost all Healthy Start programs provide both introductory training to their CHWs when they are hired, and continuing education and training on a broad range of topics and issues that CHWs encounter in their work with Healthy Start participants. The online Healthy Start CHW Course is intended to supplement and support the training provided to Healthy Start CHWs by their own programs, and to provide a standardized training element for all programs. As noted in Question 1, the Healthy Start CHW Course is an introductory-level course designed to provide a common foundation, shared across all Healthy Start programs nationwide, of basic perinatal health knowledge and skills needed to effectively serve Healthy Start participants. This basic training can complement local Healthy Start program trainings which provide greater depth and are tailored to focus on the particular community and populations they serve, as well as the particular service system of which they are a part.

Other Questions

17. Where can I find more information about community health workers in Healthy Start?

Visit the [Community Health Workers in Healthy Start page](#) on healthystartepic.org. On this page you will find a report on the findings of the grantee survey on CHWs in Healthy Start, the Healthy Start Community Health Worker Definition and Core Competencies document, videos of Healthy Start CHWs talking about their work, and a brief description and links to the Healthy Start Community Health Worker Course.

18. Who should I contact if I have questions about the course?

Please contact the Healthy Start EPIC Center, by email: healthystartepic@jsi.com or by phone: EPIC Helpline 1-844-225-3713.



HOW TO ACCESS THE HEALTHY START COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER (CHW) COURSE


Start Here
healthystartepic.org

Healthy Start CHW Course Page
healthystartepic.org/training-and-events/healthy-start-community-health-worker-course/

Registered?

NO

YES

Register Here
healthystartepic.org/training-and-events/healthy-start-community-health-worker-course/site-registration/

Logged In?

NO

YES

Log In Here
bit.ly/HSTLogIn

Access CHW Course Modules Here

Course Part 1 Table of Contents
bit.ly/CHWCourseTOC

Course Part 2 Table of Contents
bit.ly/CHWCourseTOC2

Passed Module Knowledge Checks with 80% or Greater?

Yes

No

Collect Badges Here
bit.ly/CHWCourseBadges



- HS101
- PRECONCEPTION
- PRENATAL
- POSTPARTUM
- PARENTING
- OUTREACH
- SCREENING
- HLTH EDUCATION
- COORDINATION
- ENGAGEMENT
- SCOPE & VALUES

When you register, it can take up to 48 hours to get a username.

If you are already registered with healthystartepic.org, you already have access to the course. You do not need to register again.