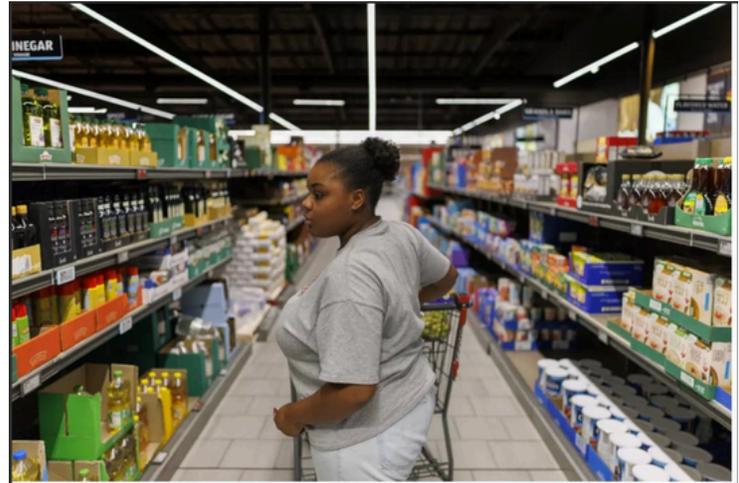


# CHW Academy Newsletter

## CalFresh benefits arrive amid uncertainty

Many people in Los Angeles who receive SNAP (CalFresh) benefits got them November 6 or 7, despite an initial delay caused by a federal government shutdown. A federal judge ordered the administration to fully fund the program, which led to benefits being restored, after which the shutdown ended.

- **Continued uncertainty:** Community Health Workers have reported patients being confused. While many people have received benefits, some experienced delays. Contact Los Angeles Dept of Public Social Services for updates [\[Link\]](#)



Zuri Crawford, 20, shops for groceries in Riverside for her and her 1-year-old son using gift cards supplied by a local college, where she is studying to be a nurse.. (Gina Ferazzi / Los Angeles Times)

### The truth about food benefits

To combat misinformation, the New York Times reported important facts about SNAP:

- Eligibility is based on income limits.
- Participants are subject to reporting and work requirements.
- Unauthorized immigrants are ineligible for the program, although they may have family members who are eligible.
- 90% of recipients are native-born Americans.
- Increases in SNAP recipients tend to coincide with economic impacts, such as increases in unemployment and food inflation, not fraud or abuse.
- Monthly participation was highest under President Trump's first administration, after hurricanes in Texas and Florida.

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# CHW ACADEMY

Providence  Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science

## Winter Academy Mixer

Please join us for an afternoon of fun, food, networking, raffles and our Holiday Bake-Off with prizes!



DJ Rosie will spin your favorite songs!

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6TH**  
**12:00 - 4:00 PM**

CHARLES R. DREW UNIVERSITY  
Student Center Lounge  
Park at 1736 E 118th St, Los Angeles, CA 90059

**RSVP!**  
**More details here!**



Special Guest:



CDU President, Dr. Carlisle

<https://forms.gle/kvpsgbnjxJRnK6Vy7>

# Jobs, Continuing Ed Are Top Alumni Needs

## What 18 Academy alumni are asking for most

Big theme	What it looks like on the ground	How many mentioned it*
<b>Career-mobility &amp; clearer pathways</b>	Promotions inside their current orgs, titles such as Case Manager, Senior CHW, Program/Operations Coordinator, leadership tracks, permanent (non-grant) roles.	14
<b>Help with the job-search toolkit</b>	Finding openings that fit, navigating job boards, writing résumés/cover letters, mastering LinkedIn, interview prep, pay-or-benefit negotiation, spotting scam listings.	16
<b>Networking &amp; professional connections</b>	Building peer networks, mentorship, co-presenting workshops, guidance on “who to talk to” in the field.	13
<b>Continuing education &amp; skills credentials</b>	CEUs, certificates, in-depth CHW role training, research/evaluation skills, leadership courses, specialty certs (e.g., pharmacy tech, nursing prerequisites).	15
<b>Special-topic clinical &amp; social trainings</b>	Trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, housing navigation, food insecurity resources, diabetes / heart-disease education, health-education techniques.	12
<b>Workload &amp; workplace supports</b>	Lower caseloads, better team communication, clearer expectations during leadership changes, individual coaching/check-ins.	7
<b>Compensation &amp; stability</b>	Higher pay scales, full-time status, grant-to-permanent transitions, benefits packages	11

## Results of the CHW Academy Needs Assessment

The Academy’s recent survey of Community Health Worker (CHW) alumni highlights the key areas where support is most needed as they grow in their careers. Alumni expressed strong interest in job-search support—including résumé and cover letter guidance, LinkedIn tips, interview prep, and pay negotiation—closely followed by continuing education opportunities like CEUs, leadership training, and specialized skills.

Other top priorities include career mobility through clearer pathways and promotions, networking and mentorship, and special-topic training in areas such as trauma-informed care and resource navigation. Alumni also noted the importance of workplace support and compensation stability, emphasizing the need for manageable caseloads, leadership clarity, pay raises, and full-time roles beyond grant funding.

These insights help us tailor Academy programs and resources to meet the real-world needs of CHWs, ensuring that alumni are equipped to thrive in the field.

# Beyond the Clinic Walls: How a Community Health Worker Turns Barriers into Bridges



Lesley Moreno of CHW Academy Cohort 1 meets with a patient while conducting a home visit for Cedars Sinai

## When Lesley Moreno first considered a healthcare career, she knew she didn't want to be a doctor.

"I always had a passion for people and health," she said. "But the clinical side wasn't for me."

It wasn't until she discovered the Community Health Worker (CHW) Academy that everything fell into place. Unlike medicine or nursing—with their years of schooling and expensive clinical training—the CHW role offered a pathway to the human side of healthcare without the long academic tract required of doctors, and nurses. "I was drawn to the community aspect of health and the ability to address barriers," she explained. "I wanted to help patients."

Although CHWs earn less than clinical professionals, joining the 1st Cohort of the Academy and interning with Cedar Sinai's Healthy Habits program opened unexpected doors and inspired an interest in social work. "It gave me a deeper understanding of the many unique ways people in the community need help," she said. "People are going through a lot often don't know where to turn. Learning how CHWs can be that bridge to help break down barriers—changed everything for me."

Through her internship with Healthy Habits, Lesley worked with Hispanic and undocumented families on health education and disease prevention.

"Many families live in fear," she stressed. "But when they saw someone speaking Spanish and willing to listen, they open up. It reminds me how much trust and language access matter in healthcare."

For Lesley, this experience highlighted what she brought as a Latina, Spanish-speaking woman. Patients didn't worry about translation errors or provider bias; they spoke openly and felt understood. Reminding her how representation and cultural connection can transform patient care.

## Lesley believes advocacy, empathy, and even a sense of humor are essential tools for better patient outcomes.

Today, Lesley brings her knowledge to Cedars-Sinai's Community Connect Program, which bridges the gap between medical care and the daily challenges of patients.

"For many patients, navigating healthcare is overwhelming," Lesley states. "Having someone guide you makes all the difference. Without that support, people get lost in the system."

# Meet Cohort 9

## 17 CHW Interns Across LA and Orange County

The CHW Academy was thrilled to welcome and connect with our 9th cohort of CHW trainees. These trainees are spread across various clinical sites in Los Angeles and Orange county, including federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), hospitals, other community health clinics, and our newest partner

They provide a wide range of services at their respective locations including health insurance and social service enrollment, maternal and pediatric care coordination, health education, data collection, and ECM coordination.



### Spotlights:



Erika B.

**Internship Site:** Wilmington Community Clinic

"I am passionate about health education because it empowers communities to make better and healthier decisions for themselves."



Erik S.

**Internship Site:** Lawndale Wellness and Activity Center

"I am passionate about both mental and physical health. Many do not realize that those two go hand in hand, so I would like to help educate community members on how to improve both."



Maria C.

**Internship Site:** Behavioral Health Services Inc.

"The CHW Academy has shown me how powerful communication and compassion can be in building trust and making a real difference."



John C.

**Internship Site:** Torrance Memorial Medical Center

"I am passionate about the fact that I can make a difference in an individual's life. Whether their needs require resources for housing, insurance, mental health, etc, I am grateful I am helping patients of all ages by connecting them to necessary resources."



Victoria C.

**Internship Site:** Choice Health Network

"I am passionate about helping others, being able to build bridges for patients for their health care, and helping patients be less stressed by connecting them to resources."

# Cohort 10 Registration



## Become a Community Health Worker!



**COHORT 10  
APPLICATIONS  
NOW OPEN!**

### REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ High School Diploma/GED
- ✓ Authorized to work in the U.S.
- ✓ Bilingual English/Spanish preferred
- ✓ Driver's License & Reliable transportation
- ✓ 4-Month commitment: 40hrs/week
- ✓ Live within LA County or Orange County
- ✓ 18-24 years old
- ✓ Successful clearing through background check, health screening, and drug test

### WHY JOIN?

- Paid, online training through Zoom!
- In-person, work-based learning experience!
- Graduates will earn a CHW certificate!
- Career coaching & job placement support!

**DON'T MISS OUT!**

**Next Cohort Begins  
January 26, 2026!**

More info &  
application  
here!



<https://forms.office.com/r/ZTCqM1yQFh>

# 2025 Highlights



The CDU CHWA expanded to 6 team members!

The Academy trained 3 cohorts--a total of 45 CHWs!



By December 2025, the CHWA will have 116 total alumni!

CDU staff conducted 39 Organizational Readiness interviews with our 41-question assessment



CDU staff expanded our team of student interns.



The CHWA expanded our Instagram presence, now averaging over 5,100 visits per month!



The CHWA also improved their website. [Click here to see the updates!](#)

The CHWA published 4 new editions of our newsletter!



In December 2025, the CHWA will host their first ever Winter Academy Mixer!

The CHWA and HCOP continued their summer & year-long partnerships



# Stay Connected

## What is Self Care?

Cohort 9 photos express ways to maintain wellness.



“Hiking gives us a chance to take a break from our phones, get some fresh air, and just enjoy being outside together.”

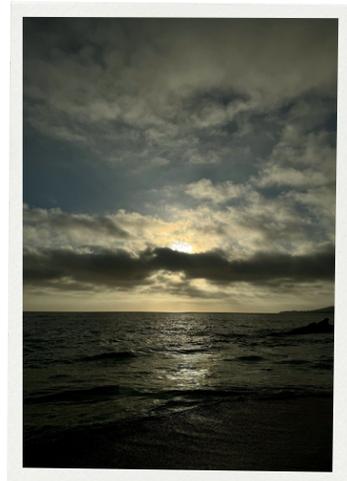


“Blue Monday” - Annie Lee, 1985

“We cannot give parts of ourselves to others if we are not whole. There is not enough to pass around. First, we must know how to feed into ourselves in order to feed into others.”



“Self care is giving yourself the same patience and gentleness you’d give to a flower.”



“My self care is nature.”

Follow the CHW Academy on social media for updates, opportunities, and more!



[@cdu.communityhealthwork](https://www.instagram.com/cdu.communityhealthwork)

Email: [chwacademy@cdrewu.edu](mailto:chwacademy@cdrewu.edu)

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