



## Who Are Promotoras and Why Do They Matter?

### ? Who are promotoras?

Promotoras, a predominantly women-led Latina workforce, are *puentes de la comunidad*, community bridges, and **essential workers who know how to connect low-income and traditionally underserved communities** to information, resources, public health, social services, education, housing, and legal systems.

### ? Are promotoras Community Health Workers?

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics describes community health workers (CHWs) as those who “promote health within a community by assisting individuals to adopt healthy behaviors” and access health care services.<sup>1</sup> Promotoras provide those health-related services and many other areas affecting families including education, behavioral health, youth, aging and more. Additionally, while CHWs may be from the community and share the culture, traditions and language of the communities they serve, those are essential attributes of promotoras.

### ? How many promotoras are in the United States?

**There are no estimates as to the number of promotoras in the United States.** The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimate there are 61,010 community health workers.<sup>2</sup> This is an underestimate of CHWs because not all CHWs are paid and some work groups, like promotoras, may not use the CHW title. Promotoras may be affiliated with smaller community-based organizations who lack stable funding to hire them.

### ? What language is used to provide services?

In one survey of CHWs, 27.3% of services were provided in Spanish only.<sup>3</sup> However, promotoras provide **services to Spanish, indigenous, and English-speaking** Latino communities.

### ? Are promotoras effective?

In a systematic review of 17 studies of trained health worker programs serving the Latino community, including promotoras, results showed that the **programs “can achieve significant changes in a variety of health-related factors for the Latino populations”** including healthy behaviors, increased health care use, and improvement of health status. The review also found these programs **had high retention rates for participants.**<sup>4</sup>

### ? Are promotoras cost effective?

Several studies show that CHW **services are cost-effective.**<sup>5</sup> One randomized controlled trial of a community health worker intervention found that \$2.47 was saved for every \$1 spent.<sup>6</sup>

### ? How are promotoras important solutions to community health problems?

During the pandemic, for example, promotoras/CHWs proved to be “essential workers” providing education, outreach, and coordination of COVID services to those who otherwise could not be reached.<sup>7</sup>

1 <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes211094.htm#st>

2 <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes211094.htm#st>

3 [https://nachw.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/CHW\\_sheet\\_diversity\\_2.pdf](https://nachw.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/CHW_sheet_diversity_2.pdf)

4 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2948840/#bib2>

5 <https://nachw.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/ASTHO-CHWs-summary-evidence-11-28-22-2.pdf>

6 <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2019.00981>

7 [https://visionycompromiso.org/wp\\_new/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Bestpractices\\_covid\\_oct21.pdf](https://visionycompromiso.org/wp_new/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Bestpractices_covid_oct21.pdf)