



## POLICY ADVOCACY NETWORKS AND PARTNERS

### WHO ARE PROMOTORAS?

**A predominantly women-led workforce**, promotoras are *puentes de la comunidad*, community bridges, and essential workers who know how to connect low-income and traditionally underserved communities to information, resources and public health, social services, education, housing, and legal systems. Known by various titles including outreach workers, systems navigators, peer educators, resource specialists, and many more titles, **they are local experts of particular importance to communities of color, immigrant communities, and underserved and under-resourced communities.**

Visión y Compromiso is the largest promotora-led organization in the country dedicated to providing comprehensive and ongoing leadership development, capacity building, advocacy, training, and support to promotoras, CHWs, and partners nationally.

Our delegation of promotoras, CHWs and partners representing communities multiple states and across various sectors including healthcare, social services, education, public health and more have identified workforce and various policy priorities needing urgent attention and support from congressional representatives. This delegation has tirelessly worked at the frontlines and is equipped with first-hand insight, testimonies and critical policy advocacy recommendations to continue to support healthy and thriving communities, from their respective communities and states. We carry the voices of the most systemically vulnerable and underserved communities and are equipped with powerful testimonies and urgent policy and systems change priorities.

Our policy advocacy work prioritizes the support of the community-centered promotora, CHWs and the grassroots CBOs that have a longstanding commitment to training, supporting, and employing this workforce. We also have a strong commitment to advocacy in policy and social issues that impact our workforce, CBOs, and communities more broadly such as health, immigration, and education. Visión y Compromiso supports the coordination of local and national advocacy alongside partners through our Red de Promotoras y Trabajadores Comunitarios and La Alianza.

### NETWORKS & PARTNERS

**The California Network of Promotoras and Community Health Workers (Network)** was established as a forum for promotoras to participate in diverse trainings, exchange support, best practices, resources, and advocacy related to healthcare, social determinants of health, immigration, education, and the workforce. Visión y Compromiso's Network is led and coordinated by promotoras and CHWs through 14 regional groups, or *comités*, throughout California and Nevada and provides support in numerous other states. Promotoras and CHWs identify issues, needs, organize, and mobilize to inform policy and systems change

**La Alianza (The Alliance)** is a coalition of 13 CBOs in California which employ and support promotoras and community health workers. Each CBO has a long history of recruiting, training, and supporting the promotora and CHW workforce in sectors from health care, housing, environmental justice, education, and more. This coalition coordinates and advocates to elevate the needs of grassroots CBOs that support, train and employ promotoras and CBOs. La Alianza also supports the workforce needs and promotes policy and systems change to better support promotoras, CHWs and the communities they serve.

**National Network of Promotoras and CHWs** currently includes networks and CBOs from multiple states throughout the U.S. Visión y Compromiso's National Network connects organizations and coalitions to advocate for greater national recognition and support of community-centered promotoras, CHWs and grassroots CBOs.



## KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE PROMOTOR WORKFORCE

### WHAT IS THE PROMOTOR MODEL?

The **promotor model** is a social change model that can be implemented with any issue (i.e., diabetes, neighborhood safety, breast cancer) because it is the **quality of the relationships**, not a particular issue area, which has the potential to create community change. Promotor programs have the potential to **reduce costs, use fewer resources, improve outcomes, reduce disparities, impact social determinants, and bring justice to many communities**. It requires a long-term commitment to elevate the promotor as an equal and respected partner throughout the organization.



**Promotoras and community health workers (CHWs) are highly skilled community experts and trusted members of their communities.**

These community-centered promotoras, CHWs and the community-based organizations (CBOs) that support and employ them are **often misrepresented or excluded from long-term sustainable funding**. As the U.S. public health infrastructure continues to evolve in response to current and emerging health crises, policies that will support this essential workforce and ensure that the largest minority group in the U.S. will thrive are needed and may include:



### WORKFORCE SUSTAINABILITY

The promotora and CHW workforce has been supported primarily by short-term grants from local and state public health jurisdictions and public and private foundations. In order to ensure that promotoras achieve the greatest impact there must be a focus on what could sustain the workforce. It is essential to create workforce opportunities for community-centered promotoras and CHWs including **long-term stable employment**, thriving wages and equitable pay, generous benefits, and support for professional development.



### WORKFORCE EXPANSION

Promotoras and CHWs are critical team members of the health workforce but they also have a long history of work in social services, public health, emergency and disaster response, education, family resource centers, and faith-based communities. The success of promotoras is based on their relationships in their communities, not a specific project or program. The promotor model must be **considered in all programs** that include outreach to individuals and communities.



### ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

Long-term sustainability can be a challenge for the promotor model, a model supported by many small and medium-sized CBOs with a long history of training, recruiting, and employing promotoras and CHWs. The promotor model supports promotoras and CHWs to build trusting relationships, provide ongoing education and offer peer support. These activities (including support for infrastructure building and general operating costs) **cannot be sustained by fee for service reimbursements**.

A detailed report on workforce priorities can be found at [www.visionycompromiso.org/workforce-report](http://www.visionycompromiso.org/workforce-report)



## COMMUNITY-CENTERED PRIORITIES

Visión y Compromiso, promotoras and community health workers (CHWs) work in communities and are trusted partners of communities often neglected in public policy. Our delegation representing communities across the country urge representatives to support legislation that improves the quality of life for the most vulnerable communities they serve:

### IMMIGRATION REFORM

The overarching cry of 35 years for **federal comprehensive immigration reform** impacts undocumented and mixed status communities in employment, health care, education, housing, social services and more. Essential workers who have worked at the frontlines of pandemic response are not eligible for funds or support in federal grants such as HRSA and CDC funds. DACA recipients need permanent protection through passage of a comprehensive DACA law.

### HEALTHCARE ACCESS

In California, Visión y Compromiso and partner organizations have accomplished recent wins to expand healthcare access to undocumented families through expanded Medi-Cal and CalFresh nutrition programs. Visión y Compromiso urges representatives to **remove healthcare resource barriers** for low-income families.

### HOUSING

Increased numbers of families, especially with cultural and linguistic barriers, are being evicted because they do not know their rights as tenants and can't find affordable housing or access rental assistance programs. Promotoras and CHWs have lobbied for **eliminating credit history requirements** after qualifying for Section 8 housing vouchers.

### YOUTH, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Promotoras and CHWs **provide a critical** link for children, youth and families to much needed information and services such as childcare, childcare provider training, children's mental health services, drug and alcohol prevention and treatment, pregnancy prevention, youth development, college preparation, child abuse and neglect, foster care and more. We advocate for reduced barriers to culturally attuned and accessible social services.

### EDUCATION ACCESS

Immigrant families in our public school systems experience linguistic, and cultural barriers. Youth with different disabilities and special education needs have disproportionate and detrimental long-term impacts. Visión y Compromiso advocates for local, state, and federal education policies that will **increase cultural and linguistically diverse programs**.

### CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Communities served by promotoras and CHWs are often those hardest hit by climate change. Climate change impacts the health and economic security of diverse communities, especially those already living in poverty. These **communities need to be at the center** of the green economy and mitigation of the impacts of climate change.

### FARMWORKER COMMUNITIES

Visión y Compromiso advocates for **policies and protections that protect the farmworker workforce** from workplace violence, labor rights violations, exploitation, stolen wages, benefits, and healthcare coverage and increase uniform workplace protections that protect against heat, smoke, and wildfire exposure and in extreme cases death. We support comprehensive policies and programs that create safety nets, mechanisms of monitoring workplace violence and protections for this essential workforce.

### JUSTICE INVOLVED

Low-income and systemically marginalized communities are disproportionately impacted by incarceration, which exacerbates health disparities. Communities of color are disproportionately impacted by the incarceration system. Socially responsible practices for community safety need to be prioritized. **Services need to support individuals and families** prior to incarceration, during incarceration, and after release to reduce recidivism, to ensure family connections and bonds are secure, and communities are not torn apart.