

NHF's CalFresh Connection – Promotores Best Practices

Background:

Marginalized and/or minority communities face many barriers when trying to access social services. Often their language, customs and traditions, and socioeconomic status serve as the barriers for access information on healthcare and health services. Community Health Workers, or *Promotores de Salud* in Spanish, have been shown by various research studies as the solution to delivering culturally competent healthcare.

What are Promotores?

Promotores come from and are part of the communities that they serve. They share a language and have common culture, values, and knowledge of their community resources.¹ Their ability to build personal relationships with patients, promote self-management, and model behavior allow CHWs to connect with and engage patients. The model is most effective when Promotores are members of the target population, not just people who speak the same language or share some characteristics with the communities they serve. Promotores are able to use personal contacts, trust and respect to address sensitive topics, counter misinformation, and advocate for quality care.² In English, Promotores are often referred to as Community Health Workers or CHWs.

Seven Core Roles of Promotores:

1. Cultural mediation between communities and social service system
2. Culturally appropriate and accessible health education
3. Assure people get the services they need (Enrollment)
4. Provide informal counseling and social support
5. Advocating for individuals and communities within social service systems
6. Provide direct services and administer health screening tests
7. Build Individual and community capacity

Promotor Model:

A successful program hires, entrusts, trains, and empowers Promotores to create healthy communities through three stages:

1. **Relationship Building** – the quality of relationships is what has the potential to create community change. Promotores develop social support networks and teach system navigation.
2. **Share information and local resources** – the information shared needs to reflect the circumstances in which people live, i.e. other SDOHs not just CalFresh
3. **Create opportunities for community participation** – through individual and collective action to improve services, ex. Teaching families how to advocate for access to healthy food

How can the organization support Promotores?

Professional Development:

- Strengthen the professional identity of promotores by allowing promotores time to attend trainings associated with professional networks, advocacy, and education
- Partner with education/training providers and funders to advocate for lower-cost bilingual professional development
- Provide cross trainings with agencies and promotores

Supervision:

- Programmatic activities should allow for relationship building, community education, engagement, community mobilization and support an expanded role
- Important to treat the position as an equal and respected partner, value their unique skills and expertise, include promotores in the development and evaluation of program strategies, work plans and evaluation tools
- The work of promotores can be difficult and emotionally taxing. Ongoing guidance and supervision is necessary to ensure that promotores feel supported and encouraged
- Remove barriers that limit the promoter's role and community impact such as requiring they only work on one issue, only in office, or only within inflexible hour

Relationship within organization:

- Promote interagency and cross program collaboration in order to respond more effectively to community needs
- Create institutional mechanisms for promotores to inform the organization in an ongoing way about what they're learning from their interactions with community members

Barriers that limit Promotor Model:

- Limiting the amount of time promotores spend with people, promotores need time to build relationships with people
- Limiting the issues that they can discuss with families and the type of training they can attend
- Feeling undervalued by the organization, promotores need respect, dignity, and recognition for their work

Program Evaluation – How to effectively evaluate the Promotor Model:

It is best to conduct process and outcome evaluation, using pre- and post-surveys.

Process evaluation: ensures the program is working and planned activities are getting done (Ex. Number of people made contact with number of appointments, applications filled).

Outcome evaluation: measures the program's effectiveness. Ex.: Did the program lead to increased CalFresh enrollment or decreased food insecurity?

Process indicators:

- Number of visits/encounters
- Number of phoned cases
- Number of appointments set
- Number of reminder cards given for appointments and recertification
- Number enrolled
- Retention number
- Number of people assessed/screened
- Number of applications filled
- CI/Team Meetings

Data Collection Tools:

- Tracking sheets
- Pre, post surveys
- Phone/card reminders for appointments, calling clients
- Directory with resources and referrals for information provided when educating/counseling

Tips for training Promotores for Data Collection:

Computers/Data tracking may be a new skill to Promotores, make sure to train:

1. Hold group trainings as well as individual meetings with each promotor to ensure everyone is comfortable with forms and tech
2. Have each promotor practice filling out forms, entering data, or using any technology
3. Do a role-play activity in which Promotores must identify mistakes in forms or in different digital processes (such as an incomplete form)
4. Stress the importance of documentation and remind that that if there is no record its as if their work never happened

* Promotores play a large role in collecting data for evaluation. It is important that they understand the importance of tracking and recording their daily activities. *

References:

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6. MHP Salud (2011). *Evaluation Toolkit for Promotor(a) de Salud Programs*.