

# CalAgrAbility *Spotlight*

Ability Solutions for Agricultural Communities



## Promotores de Salud

*Promotores de salud*, or *promotores*, are community health volunteers or public health professionals who do a variety of health promotion, case management, and health services in communities. Following the original Mexican model, they come from the communities in which they work, and are advocates of their communities. They link community members with needed health care and help them understand and navigate a very complex health care system. They also offer education and information about health care issues. In California, *promotores* lead education activities at health centers and churches. In border communities, they are vital to outreach activities encouraging cross-border sharing of environmental health information, increasing public participation, and empowering residents to prevent health risks.

The first *promotora* model was developed in Mexico in 1973. Its goal was to help provide medical care and education to marginalized communities in Juárez. From there, the *promotora* model spread across Mexico to other Latin American countries and eventually to the United States. The model has become very well respected, making *promotores* notable community leader. It is easier for them to communicate information with cultural sensitivity and experiential knowledge of community values, leading to faster rapport.

California AgrAbility has adapted much of this system, including the educational aspect of *promotores* services. Bilingual California AgrAbility staff help consumers get connected to assistive technologies, transportation services, and other health services. They also facilitate communication and assist with limited interpretation with rehabilitation specialists and other medical providers.

This enables a large sector of our program participants to access materials and case management services in their native language and culture. We have found this to be essential to increasing the general health, health literacy, and disability and injury management skills of our program participants.



Conferencia *Promotoras* in Yolo County, March 2019.

## Types of *Promotores* working or affiliated with agencies

There is a distinction between community-based *promotores*/ Community Health Workers (CHW) and clinic-based CHWs. The *clinic-based* group is focused almost solely on health services working in hospitals, health centers, and public health departments.

*Community-based* CHW/ *promotores* work with the larger community, not solely focus on health care issues. They are not housed in health care institutions and they often work house-to-house providing social-worker-like help similar to community organizers.

*Training* for CHW and *promotores* vary depending on the need, from on-the-job training to formal academic programs. There are about 5 California community colleges offer CHW certification programs. Specific on-the-job training, related to community needs is typical in the community-based model.

*Promotores* are generally not affiliated with an agency but rather are trusted in their community because he/she is always willing to help.

### Primary Characteristics and Values of *Promotores*

1. *Promotores* create and cultivate helpful relationships based on mutual trust, understanding and respect.
2. *Promotores* are committed to sharing information and resources.
3. *Promotores* approach the community with empathy, love, and compassion.
4. *Promotores* are accessible and trusted members of the community where they live and work.
5. *Promotores* share similar living experiences as the community.
6. *Promotores* have a profound desire to serve the community, are tireless in their service, and limitless in their generosity of spirit.
7. *Promotores* communicate in the language of the community and are knowledgeable about the communities cultural traditions.
8. *Promotores* are a two-way bridge connecting the community to resources and ensuring that institutions respond to community needs.
9. *Promotores* are natural advocates who are committed to social justice.
10. *Promotores* are effective role models for community change.

Source: The Promotor Model, A Model for Building Healthy Communities: A Framing Paper, 2011, funded by The California Endowment.

## Range of health issues covered by *promotoras*

*Promotoras* provide a wide range of support for all types of health issues. Research suggests that the areas of highest need in the United States are the following:

- Chronic disease management (e.g., diabetes, asthma, arthritis)
- Lifestyle behavioral change (e.g., smoking cessation, eating more healthy foods, increased physical activity)
- Cancer prevention/screening
- HIV/AIDS and any other Sexually Transmitted Infection prevention
- Injury prevention (especially for farmworkers and those working in construction/ high-injury-risk employment)
- Environmental health (e.g., pesticide education, use of safety measures on the job)

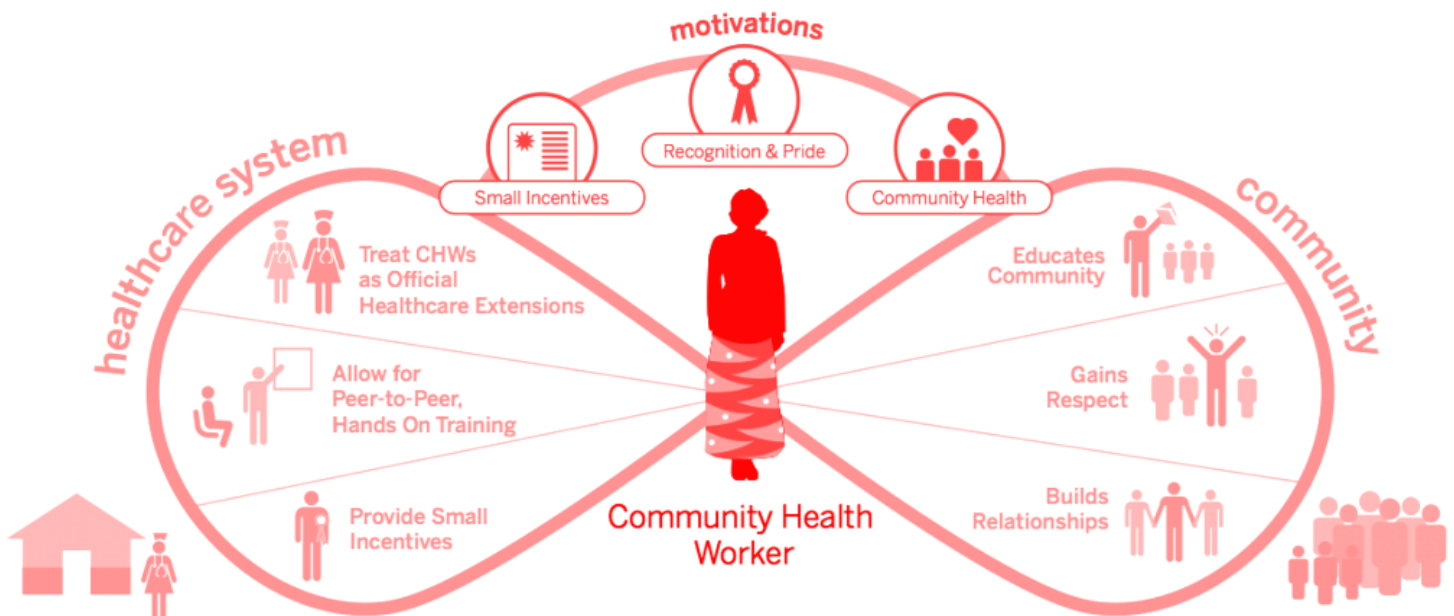


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### Ability Tools

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