

Title 17. Professions, Occupations, and Businesses

Chapter XI. Department of Health, State Board of Health, Generally

Subchapter A. Generally

Part 55. Rules Pertaining to Community Health Workers

Codification Notes. This part was initially promulgated by Ark. R. 2026-96 (eff. August 15, 2026).

Subpart 1. Generally

17 CAR § 55-101. Purpose.

This part is adopted for the purpose of establishing the criteria for certification of a community health worker, pursuant to Acts 2025, No. 435.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 17-46-304.

History. Ark. R. 2026-96 (eff. August 15, 2026)

17 CAR § 55-102. Definitions.

As used in this part:

- (1) "Community health worker" means an individual that is:
 - (A) A trusted member of or has an unusually close understanding of the community;
 - (B) Serving as a liaison, link, or intermediary between health services or social services and the community; and
 - (C) Serving to:
 - (i) Facilitate access to health services or social services; and
 - (ii) Improve the quality and cultural competence of the services delivered; and
- (2) "Healthcare provider" means

- (A) A hospital;
- (B) An ambulatory surgical center;
- (C) A primary care center;
- (D) An outpatient psychiatric center;
- (E) A home healthcare agency;
- (F) A skilled nursing facility; or
- (G) An individual licensed to render covered healthcare services.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 17-46-304.

History. Ark. R. 2026-96 (eff. August 15, 2026)

17 CAR § 55-103. Scope of practice.

A community health worker shall perform only the following types of services:

- (1) Providing:
 - (A) Cultural mediation among individuals, communities, and health service systems or social service systems, or both;
 - (B) Culturally appropriate health education and information;
 - (C) Care coordination, including without limitation medication compliance under a patient care plan as directed by a healthcare provider or healthcare professional;
 - (D) Case management;
 - (E) Health service system navigation or social services system navigation, or both;
 - (F) Coaching and social support; and
 - (G) Direct services that:
 - (i) Do not require either of the following in order to be performed:
 - (a) A professional license under Title 17, Subtitle 3 of the Arkansas Code regarding medical professions; or

(b) Specialized training under Arkansas Code § 20-77-2301 et seq., such as first aid and diabetic foot checks; or

(ii) Are not met by a personal care attendant;

(2) Advocating for individuals and communities;

(3) Building individual and community capacity;

(4) Implementing individual and community assessments, including without limitation:

(A) Basic home environmental assessments; and

(B) Basic health screening and tests;

(5) Conducting outreach, such as health literacy services; and

(6) Participating in evaluation and research, including without limitation:

(A) Health education; and

(B) Community research activities.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 17-46-304.

History. Ark. R. 2026-96 (eff. August 15, 2026)

17 CAR § 55-104. Unlawful practice.

(a) A person may not practice or offer to act as a certified community health worker in Arkansas unless certified by the State Board of Health.

(b) It is unlawful for any person not certified as a community health worker by the board to receive insurance or Medicaid reimbursement for services rendered.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 17-46-304.

History. Ark. R. 2026-96 (eff. August 15, 2026)

17 CAR § 55-105. Certification.

(a) A community health worker certification is valid for two (2) years after date of issuance.

(b) Certification requirements must meet one (1) of the requirements as outlined in 17 CAR § 55-106.

(c) It is the responsibility of the community health worker to ensure their certification is current at all times.

(d) If the name used on the application is not the same as that on any of the supporting documentation, the applicant must submit proof of name change with application.

(e) If an application for certification or renewal is denied, the applicant may appeal that denial to the State Board of Health within thirty (30) days of receipt of the denial.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 17-46-304.

History. Ark. R. 2026-96 (eff. August 15, 2026)

17 CAR § 55-106. Eligibility requirements for initial certification.

Applicants for initial certification must submit:

(1) A completed application for initial certification on the form provided by the Department of Health;

(2) Documentation demonstrating the applicant is at least eighteen (18) years of age or older, including but not limited to the applicant's:

(A) Government-issued birth certificate;

(B) United States-issued passport;

(C) Driver's license issued by the State of Arkansas or another state or jurisdiction;

(D) Other state-issued identification document; or

(E) Any document issued by a federal, state, or provincial registrar of vital statistics;

(3) Documentation demonstrating the applicant has not pleaded guilty or nolo contendere to or been found guilty of any of the offenses detailed in Arkansas Code § 17-3-102 by any court in the State of Arkansas, of any similar offense by a court in another state, or of any similar offense by a federal court, unless the conviction was:

(A) Lawfully sealed under the Comprehensive Criminal Record Sealing Act of 2013, Arkansas Code § 16-90-1401 et seq.; or

(B) Otherwise sealed, pardoned, or expunged under prior law;

(4) Documentation that the applicant meets one (1) or more of the following requirements:

(A) The applicant is certified as a community health worker by the Arkansas Community Health Worker Association;

(B) The applicant has:

(i) Worked as a community health worker for at least two (2) years, and at least one (1) year in this state; and

(ii) Successfully completed a community health worker training program consisting of one hundred twenty (120) hours of core competency, including:

(a) Eighty (80) hours of didactic training; and

(b) Forty (40) hours of guided field practice from a school or training program approved by the association;

(C) The applicant has:

(i) Worked as a community health worker for at least one (1) year in this state; and

(ii) Prior to the date of application, either:

(a) Successfully completed eighty (80) hours of supplemental training that supports core competency and professional development;

(b) Been assigned a mentor who is a certified community health worker in this state or is eligible for certification and regularly accessed and communicated with a mentor at least two (2) times per month during the first three (3) months of the mentorship and monthly thereafter; and

(c) Been assigned a supervisor who has completed community health worker supervisor training and regularly accessed and communicated with the supervisor at least two (2) times per week during the first three (3) months of supervision and weekly for the remainder of the year;

(D) The applicant has four (4) years of experience that provides evidence of proficiency in the core competencies, with two (2) years of experience being in this state; and

(5) The initial application fee of fifty dollars (\$50.00).

Authority. Arkansas Code § 17-46-304.

History. Ark. R. 2026-96 (eff. August 15, 2026)

17 CAR § 55-107. Eligibility requirements for renewal certification.

(a) The community health worker certification expires two (2) years after date of certification.

(b) Renewal applications and documentation must be submitted sixty (60) days prior to the certification expiration date to be timely.

(c) Renewal will only occur upon receipt of completed application and favorable review of required documentation.

(d) To be eligible for renewal certification, the community health worker must have completed twenty (20) hours of professional development requirements and training every two (2) years.

(e) An applicant for renewal certification must submit:

(1) A completed application for renewal certification on the form provided by the Department of Health;

(2) Documentation of continuing education requirements or training as provided in subsection (d) of this section; and

(3) The renewal application fee of fifty dollars (\$50.00).

Authority. Arkansas Code § 17-46-304.

History. Ark. R. 2026-96 (eff. August 15, 2026)

17 CAR § 55-108. Uniformed service members, veterans, and their spouses.

(a) **Applicability.** This section applies to a:

- (1) Uniformed service member stationed in the State of Arkansas;
- (2) Uniformed service veteran who resides in or establishes residency in the State of Arkansas; and
- (3) The spouse of subdivision (a)(1) of this section or subdivision (a)(2) of this section including a uniformed service member who is:
 - (A) Assigned a tour of duty that excludes the spouse from accompanying the uniformed service member and the spouse relocates to Arkansas; and
 - (B) Killed or succumbs to his or her injuries or illness in the line of duty if the spouse establishes residency in Arkansas.

(b) **Automatic certification.** Automatic certification shall be granted to persons listed in subsection (a) of this section if the person:

- (1) Is a holder in good standing of occupational licensure or certification with similar scope of practice issued by another state, territory, or district of the United States; and
- (2) Pays the initial or renewal certification fee in 17 CAR §§ 55-106 and 55-107.

(c) **Credit toward initial certification.** Relevant and applicable uniformed service education, training, national certification, or service-issued credential shall be accepted toward initial certification.

(d) **Expiration dates and continuing education.**

- (1) A certification expiration date shall be extended for a deployed uniformed service member or spouse for one hundred eighty (180) days following the date of the uniformed service member's return from deployment.

(2) A uniformed service member or spouse exercising the extension shall provide evidence of completion of continuing education before renewal or grant of a subsequent certification.

(e) Application for automatic certification.

(1) An applicant will be eligible for automatic certification under this section upon completed submission of documentation evidencing the following:

(A) The applicant holds a substantially equivalent certification or license in another state;

(B) The applicant is a qualified applicant under either subdivision (a)(1), (2), or (3) of this section;

(C) The applicant has not had any certification or license revoked for:

(i) An act of bad faith; or

(ii) A violation of law, rule, or ethics; and

(D) A completed initial application for certification on the form provided by the Department of Health.

(f) If applicable, certification requirements shall be substantially similar to those outlined in 17 CAR § 55-106(4).

(g) All applicants who are certified pursuant to this section shall adhere to all provisions of this part.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 17-46-304.

History. Ark. R. 2026-96 (eff. August 15, 2026)

17 CAR § 55-109. Eligibility requirements for reciprocal certification.

(a) Reciprocal certification will be granted based on substantially equivalent certification or licensure issued by another state, territory, or district of the United States.

(b) An applicant is eligible for reciprocal certification if:

(1) The applicant holds a substantially similar certification or license issued by another state, territory, or district of the United States;

(2) The certification or licensure is relevant and applicable education, training, national certification, or service-issued credential that is substantially similar to those outlined in 17 CAR § 55-106(4);

(3) The occupational certification or licensure is currently in good standing;

(4) The applicant has not had a certification or license revoked for:

(A) An act of bad faith; or

(B) A violation of law, rule, or ethics;

(5) The applicant does not hold a suspended or probationary certification or license issued by another state, territory, or district of the United States; and

(6) The applicant is sufficiently competent to be a community health worker.

(c) An applicant for reciprocal certification shall submit to the Department of Health the following:

(1) A completed reciprocal application on the form provided by the department;

(2) Documentation demonstrating the applicant has not pleaded guilty or nolo contendere to or been found guilty of any of the offenses detailed in Arkansas Code § 17-3-102 by any court in the State of Arkansas, of any similar offense by a court in another state, or of any similar offense by a federal court, unless the conviction was:

(A) Lawfully sealed under the Comprehensive Criminal Record Sealing Act of 2013, Arkansas Code § 16-90-1401 et seq.; or

(B) Otherwise sealed, pardoned, or expunged under prior law;

(3)(A) A list of all current professional health-related certification or licensure, including those issued by another state, territory, or district of the United States.

(B) The applicant may be required to submit to the department verification of the certification or licensure issued by another state, territory, or district of the United States;

(4) As evidence that the applicant's certification or license issued by another state, territory, or district of the United States is substantially similar to Arkansas's, the applicant shall submit the following information:

(A) Evidence of current and active certification or licensure in that state, territory, or district; and

(B) Evidence that the other state's, territory's, or district's certification or licensure requirements match those listed in 17 CAR § 55-106.

(d)(1) The department may either:

(A) Require the applicant provide documentation; or

(B) Inquire directly with the other state's, territory's, or district's licensing or certification board to verify the information provided by the applicant pursuant to subsection (c) of this section.

(2) To demonstrate that the applicant meets the requirements in subsection (b) of this section, the applicant shall provide the department with:

(A) The names of all states, territories, or districts in which the applicant is currently certified or licensed or has been previously certified or licensed; and

(B) Letters of good standing or other information from each state, territory, or district in which the applicant is currently or has ever been certified or licensed showing that the applicant:

(i) Has not had a certification or license revoked; and

(ii) Does not hold a certification or license on suspended or probationary status.

(e) Applicants from another state, territory, or district of the United States where substantially equivalent certification or licensure is not available shall refer to 17 CAR § 55-106 for initial certification requirements.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 17-46-304.

History. Ark. R. 2026-96 (eff. August 15, 2026)

17 CAR § 55-110. Denial, discipline, suspension, or revocation of certification.

(a) The Department of Health may refuse to issue, suspend, or revoke a certification for any one or more of the following reasons:

(1) Violation of the Community Health Worker Act, Arkansas Code § 17-46-101 et seq.;

(2) Conviction of any offense listed in Arkansas Code § 17-3-102;

(3) Securing certification through fraud or deceit;

(4) Unethical conduct, gross ignorance, or inefficiency in the conduct of his or her practice;

(5) Using a false name or alias in his or her practice;

(6) Violation of any provision of this part; or

(7) Failure to comply with any of the requirements for issuance of certification as set forth in this part and the Community Health Worker Act, Arkansas Code § 17-46-101 et seq.

(b) Violations under this section or appeals of denied applications shall be addressed as provided in 17 CAR § 55-111.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 17-46-304.

History. Ark. R. 2026-96 (eff. August 15, 2026)

17 CAR § 55-111. Prohibiting offenses and disciplinary actions.

(a) Any applicant who is not eligible to receive or hold a community health worker certification because the individual has pleaded guilty or nolo contendere to or been found guilty of any of the offenses detailed in Arkansas Code § 17-3-102 may apply to the State Board of Health for a waiver in certain circumstances, as provided in Arkansas Code § 17-3-102.

(b) Suspected cases involving violation of the Community Health Worker Act, Arkansas Code § 17-46-101 et seq., or this part may be referred to the board for an

administrative hearing, in accordance with the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act, Arkansas Code § 25-15-201 et seq.

(c) If the board finds that a person holding a certification has violated the Community Health Worker Act, Arkansas Code § 17-46-101 et seq., or this part, the board may impose any one or more of the following disciplinary actions:

- (1) Revocation of certification;
- (2) Suspension of certification for a determinate period of time;
- (3) Probation of certification;
- (4) Written or verbal reprimand of a certification holder;
- (5) Limitation or conditions on the practice of a person holding a certification;
- (6) Continuing education requirements to address known deficiencies; or
- (7) Fines as imposed by the board, in accordance with Arkansas Code § 20-7-101.

(d) The Department of Health shall notify the certification holder of any proceedings for disciplinary actions in accordance the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act.

(e) Decisions may be appealed pursuant to the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act.

(f) Any applicable certification or licensing agencies or associations shall be notified of final action on certifications.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 17-46-304.

History. Ark. R. 2026-96 (eff. August 15, 2026)

17 CAR § 55-112. Inactive status.

(a) Inactive status is automatic on the day immediately after the certification expiration date.

(b) Community health workers who do not maintain a current certification will be considered inactive.

(c) Inactive status may be maintained for up to four (4) years.

(d) A community health worker with inactive status may not practice until the certification is reactivated.

(e) To reactivate a certification with inactive status, the applicant must submit:

(1) Documentation of continuing education credits totaling twenty (20) hours for each two-year period of inactive status;

(2) A renewal application as provided in 17 CAR § 55-107; and

(3) A renewal application fee of fifty dollars (\$50.00).

(f)(1) After four (4) years of inactive status from the last active expiration date, the certification will automatically expire.

(2) After four (4) years of inactive status from the last active expiration date, the applicant may be recertified by completing the requirements pursuant to 17 CAR § 55-106.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 17-46-304.

History. Ark. R. 2026-96 (eff. August 15, 2026)

17 CAR § 55-113. Department of Health responsibilities.

(a) **Granting certification.** The Department of Health shall:

(1) Review applications for certification; and

(2) Issue proof of certification for approved applications.

(b) **Certification Listing.** The department shall:

(1) Maintain a list of all certified community health workers in the State of Arkansas; and

(2) Make this list available to the public.

(c) **Investigations.**

(1) The department shall conduct investigations regarding complaints or deviations from this part.

(2) The department will consider all available information that is relevant and material to the investigations.

(3) Where, in the department's determination, the public's health, safety, or welfare requires emergency action, the department may temporarily suspend the certification of a community health worker pending proceedings for revocation or other action, in accordance with the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act, Arkansas Code § 25-15-201 et seq.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 17-46-304.

History. Ark. R. 2026-96 (eff. August 15, 2026)