

TAKE AWAYS FROM APHA CONFERENCE 2023

By Randa Cooper-Real, RN/CHW (Rural Health Projects, Inc.; Enid, OK)

From November 12-14, I was able to attend the *2023 American Public Health Association's (APHA) Annual Meeting & Expo* in Atlanta, Georgia, thanks in part to a supplemental scholarship that I received through the *2023-2025 OPHTC Conference and Continued Education Fund for CHWs in Oklahoma*. On Sunday the 12th, I began my conference experience by attending the "Opening General Session" and "Special Session:



Missing the Boat on CHW Expansion in the Public Health Sector?" On Monday the 13th, I attended two CHW Section sessions, called "National Efforts to Sustain and Develop the CHW Workforce", and "Innovative CHW Core Competency Curriculum Development and Training Evaluation." The following day, Tuesday the 14th, I joined a roundtable on "CHWs Addressing Health Disparities," and attended a session called "Local, State, and Regional CHW Policy & Workforce Development" and the "CHW Section Open Business Meeting." During the afternoon session focused on policy and workforce development, I presented the material developed by Dr. Kerstin M. Reinschmidt (OUHSC), Dr. Marshan Marick (Health Integrated Solutions, & OSU), Cathy Billings (OSDH) and myself. Titled "Engaging a Statewide Coalition in Policy and Workforce Development to Build a Sustainable CHW Infrastructure", the presentation covering the progress made and obstacles faced in the State of Oklahoma with a focus on voluntary CHW certification and training. I had a great attendance of roughly 50-75 people during my session presentation and great feedback concerning our presentation. During the APHA Conference, I was able to meet a lot of people and I have either spoken to them in email or read about their published progress in their states. I also received many new contacts and invitations to reach out for questions or help for our Oklahoma pursuit of obtaining CHW certification. This was the first time I have attended the APHA conference, and I hope to be able to make this conference attendance a yearly event.

