PA Certification Standard 1
Pathways Agency Entity

The Pathways Agency Entity has a structure in place to operate an accountable community-based care coordination agency to implement Pathways Community HUB Institute® care coordination to fidelity.

Description: The Pathways Agency (PA) is a legal entity that has the capacity to enter into agreements or contracts, assume obligations, incur and pay debts, sue and be sued, and to be held responsible for its actions. The organization must have adequate infrastructure to employ a supervisor and community health worker(s) to deliver PCHI care coordination services to those at risk and must have the ability to document engagement and Pathways and manage the implementation of community-based care coordination. The PA staff must have diverse competencies to ensure the success and sustainability of the PA.

The Pathways Agency must attest that it supports the development of a Certified Pathways Community HUB (PCH) in its service area. The Pathways Agency commits to working with community partners on the future development of a Certified PCH. If certified as a Pathways Agency, Organization must follow the requirement to affiliate with a Pathways Community HUB in Organization's service area. Once a PCH has operated in the Organization's service area for 3 months and has applied for its certification review, Pathways Agency certification, including licensing agreement, will end, as PA must affiliate with the PCH. If there is more than one Pathways Agency in the service area, a working relationship will be established to ensure communication and coordination to avoid duplication and meet the needs of the participants served.

PCHI requires Pathways Agencies to submit documentation of eligibility to serve as a PA as part of the certification process. This information is submitted by the PA to PCHI and is maintained in each PA's certification file. This file should be kept up to date. Prior to the certification documentation upload deadline, the PA should review all documents on file and provide any additional updates as needed.

Aligns with CLAS Standards 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Review Items

The PA Certification File includes the following previously submitted documents. Please ensure that the information is up to date:

- PA Certification Applications (Initial Certification Application and Certification Review Application, if applicable)
- PA Certification Agreement
- Confidentiality Agreements, as applicable
- PA Annual Certification Attestation(s)
- PA Attendance Records for PCHI Network meetings
- Current PA Certification Quality Improvement Plan Agreement

Job descriptions and resumes for PA Director, supervisor (if different), and CHWs implementing the PCHI Model.
Organizational Chart for PA and if applicable, sponsoring organization which shows where the PA fits into the organization and reporting structure.
PCHI Eligibility and Compliance Acknowledgement indicating that the PA continues to meet the PA eligibility requirements, including affiliating with a Pathways Community HUB if one is implemented, and understands that it is responsible for complying with the various privacy, security, antitrust, and other regulations that pertain to its operations.
PA Certification Workbook is used to collect information on the demographics of the service area (Tab 1.1, PA Service Area), the number of participants enrolled in each defined location in your service area in the past 12 months, as well as demographics of your PA staff (Tab 1.2, Staff Demographic Tool). Please complete all fields for each individual and defined service area.
PA Case Statement demonstrating the value provided to the community by funding the PA and the PA's role in addressing health equity (this can be from a funding request) and advocating for the development of a Pathways Community HUB. Also include, if available, annual report, studies on effectiveness, return on investment, and program evaluation reports.

PA Certification Standard 2
Pathways Community HUB Institute® Model Care Coordination

The Pathways Agency uses the Pathways Community HUB Institute Model with fidelity.

Description: The Pathways Community HUB Institute Model (PCHI Model) includes the PCHI Data Model, Standard Pathways, Demographic Form, Visit Form, and Quality Benchmark Report. Each element of the Model must be used by the PA with fidelity. Implementation of the Model is fundamental to improving the evidence-based effectiveness of the PA and its ongoing development and improvement. The PA must clearly identify additional data fields captured and share with PCHI as part of the Certification review process.

A PCHI Standard Pathway is opened for each risk identified for a participant. This includes risks that the participant may not be ready or interested in addressing. Each Pathway, when successfully completed, represents a specific individually modifiable risk factor that has been identified and eliminated. Even when Pathways are not successfully closed (finished incomplete), they can provide valuable, data-supported insight into unmet community needs.

Some modifiable risks can only be addressed through learning and behavior change. PCHI has developed Learning Modules used in combination with the Learning Pathway to encourage and support behavior change. All Learning Modules must be available to CHWs providing community-based care coordination through the PCHI Model. CHWs must have sufficient training and support to be able to use any of the Learning Modules with participants.

If the PA uses additional curriculum, then it must describe the process used to approve evidence-based learning materials used by CHWs. Each Learning Module should be tied to a specific medical, social, or behavioral health risk factor that can be mitigated and addressed with learning and motivational interventions*. Learning materials used outside of the PCHI standard curriculum for Learning Modules must represent a similar level of effort, time, commitment, and expertise in delivery towards a measurable outcome:
- Represents a volume of learning and educational material that will take 10–15 minutes for the CHW to provide to the participant, using motivational interviewing techniques, and not simply providing a handout.
- The learning process includes educational, and behavior change information shared in an Ask-Tell-Ask interaction using open-ended questions.
- Content is evidence-based and focused on addressing a specific, well-defined, modifiable medical, social, behavioral, or safety risk.
- The participant is engaged, and the CHW can document the participant's response to the learning information provided.

*(https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0091743520301420?via%3Dihub)

Aligns with CLAS Standards 1, 2, 11, and 12.
Review Items
The PCHI Model requires that a Standard Pathway is opened when a risk factor is identified. The PA must provide confirmation that it can support all current Standard Pathways and Learning Modules. The PA must confirm that CHWs and supervisors have been trained on all Pathways and Learning Modules, and to open a Pathway whenever a risk is identified. Paper documentation, screenshots, and the Quality Benchmark Report (table 4) will be required to verify this.
If the PA is using additional educational materials, then the PA will provide a document detailing this information, the process of approving the material, and the rationale for its use.
Confirmation that CHWs are using PCHI Model data collection forms through paper process or screenshots: • Demographic Form • Visit Form • Progress Form
If the PA needs to collect participant information beyond what is collected in the PCHI Model, then the PA must provide a list of such fields.
PA is using a PCHI Certified Technology Vendor or the PCHI Participant Tracking Toolkit on the current PCHI Model. A new PA cannot be certified on the 1.0 version of the Model.

PA Certification Standard 3
Training

The Pathways Agency staff have comprehensive training, education and support.

Description: The Pathways Community HUB Institute® Model of community-based care coordination focuses on improving health, advancing health equity, and improving quality. Education, training and support for community health workers (CHW) and CHW supervisors is vital to the provision of effective, equitable, understandable, and respectful quality services that lead to improved outcomes.

PCHI has developed a Training Log (Tab 3.1) in the PA Certification Workbook which is the monitoring and oversight tool that records the specific training classes/courses that are needed, when and by whom, and provides a way to identify training gaps.

Aligns with CLAS Standards 1, 2, 4, and 15.

Review Items

PA has clearly defined and written training expectations for the PA staff as outlined in the Operations Manual.

Completed Tab 3.1, Training Log of the PA Certification Workbook for staff, including:
1. All PA staff must complete PCHI Model training. Community health workers are required to complete PCHI Model training prior to engaging with participants. PCHI Model training can only be given by an approved PCHI Model Care Coordination Trainer. Refresher training should be provided as updates to the Model are released.
2. HIPAA, privacy and security training upon hire and annually. Community health workers are required to complete HIPAA training prior to engaging with participants.
3. Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) training:
   - PCHI Organizational CLAS Training is required for PA Directors.
   - CHWs and supervisors must complete initial CHW/Supervisor CLAS training ensuring that each CHW and supervisor have completed all required components using the PCHI Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Core Training Competencies for CHWs/Supervisors as a guide. Local CLAS training may be substituted in place of PCHI's CHW/Supervisor CLAS training, if your PCH/PA can show that the PCHI CLAS Core Training Competencies for CHWs/Supervisors are fully met.
   - Annual CLAS training should be outlined in your PA Operations Manual.
4. Community Health Worker training ensuring that each CHW has completed all required components of comprehensive training using the PCHI Model CHW Core Training Competencies as a guide. Recommended as soon as possible, at least within 12 months from date of hire.
5. CHWs are required to complete mandatory reporting training prior to engaging with participants.
6. CHWs are required to complete home visit safety training prior to engaging with participants.

PA Certification Standard 4
Pathways Agency Operations

The Pathways Agency is responsible for monitoring and improving the quality of community-based care coordination services provided to those who are at risk.

Description: To ensure that Pathways Agency (PA) operations align in a transparent and accountable manner, the PA must establish and maintain a written Operations Manual outlining policies and procedures related to the PCHI Model. The PA Operations Manual must be reviewed at least annually, and updates provided to staff.

Aligns with CLAS Standards 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, and 15.
Review Items
Written PA Operations Manual contains, at a minimum, the following policies and procedures:

1. The PA's organizational policies and practices reflect the adoption of the National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards. Applicable CLAS Standards should be referenced in each policy and practice.

2. Referral Policy that clearly defines the referral process:
   - Initial referral from a referral partner to the PA, or from a CHW to the PA
   - Referral from supervisor to CHW
   - PA's update on referral and engagement status to the referral partner.

   The policy should define the number and types of attempts required to contact the community member, as well as the expected timeframes for each step of the referral process.

3. Enrollment Policy that includes the engagement and enrollment process for new participants. The policy should include the offer of language assistance to individuals who have limited English proficiency and/or other communication needs. Services may be offered internally or through community partners.

4. Supervision Policy that addresses the supervisor to CHW ratio, minimum of monthly caseload reviews, supervisor review and sign off process within five business days from the home visit date, and action steps for urgent issues.

5. CHW Caseload Policy that includes minimum and maximum caseload expectations for full and part-time CHWs. The policy should address caseload correction processes. The PCHI Model requires that CHWs be at least 0.5 FTE.

6. The Home Visit Policy should state that home visits are expected 75% of the time and should occur at least monthly. The policy should address how attempted visits and contact between visits are captured by the CHW. PCHI Model requires that CHWs complete home visit documentation within two business days of the visit date. Background checks are required for all CHWs and any additional PA staff that provide home or community visits.

7. Emergency Situation Response Policy provides guidance on how the PA will respond in emergency situations (natural disasters, pandemics, etc.). The policy should clearly define the actions and expectations of the PA, including training for CHWs.

8. Training Policy that provides training expectations, including:
   - All PA staff must complete PCHI Model Care Coordination training.
   - PA Director must complete PCHI's Organizational Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) training.
   - PA staff must receive HIPAA, privacy and security training, and CLAS training annually.
   - CHWs and supervisors must receive PCHI Model Care Coordination training, Mandatory Reporting training, and Home Visit Safety training before engaging participants.
   - CHWs must complete all required components of comprehensive training using the PCHI Model CHW Core Training Competencies as a guide.

9. Quality Improvement Policy and procedures including:
   - Overview of the quality improvement (QI) tools or methods adopted by your PA (examples include, but are not limited to, PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act), Six Sigma, Lean, etc.)
   - A named owner and a description of their role in the management of the quality improvement process.
   - Description of how QI reviews are initiated by the PA.
   - Description of how the PA uses QI findings to improve the quality of community-based care coordination services.

PA Certification Standard 5
Quality Improvement

The Pathways Community HUB Institute® Model is based on continuous quality improvement. The Pathways Agency is committed to quality improvement and has a written quality improvement policy and procedures.

Description: The Pathways Agency (PA) is a data-driven organization with a defined quality improvement (QI) approach. Quality improvement is integrated into ongoing operations and is used to ensure fidelity to the PCHI Model, advance work towards health equity, and to improve participant outcomes. As part of the PA Certification process, a Quality Improvement Plan Agreement is developed for all Pathways Agencies to focus on operational areas that could be improved upon. Quality Improvement and the PCHI Model: • Evidence-based and QI focused: The Model requires validation of impact and course correction to improve quality. • Model fidelity: Research has shown that the Model provides a meaningful and measurable return on investment when followed to fidelity. This Standard validates that the PA is following the PCHI Model. • Equity: The Model is designed to empower communities to advance health equity. This Standard validates that the PA is supporting populations identified as at-risk and under-resourced.
Aligns with CLAS Standards 1, 10, 11, and 14.
Review Items
Pathways Agencies that have previously gone through a PCHI Certification Review need to upload their most recent PCHI Certification Quality Improvement Plan Agreement (QIP), with updates describing progress made on each item. The QIP is developed by the PA and PCHI after each certification review to identify areas to improve the PA's compliance with PCHI Model Certification Standards.
Copy of the Pathways Agency's written Quality Improvement policy and procedures that describes how the PA addresses continuous quality improvement, including: • Overview of the quality improvement (QI) tools or methods adopted by your PA (examples include, but are not limited to, PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act), Six Sigma, Lean, etc.) • A named owner and a description of their role in the management of the quality improvement process. • Description of how the PA initiates QI reviews. • Description of how the PA uses QI findings to improve the quality of community-based care coordination services.

• Description of how operational changes based on QI findings are communicated to PA staff.

Quality improvement reviews for the past 12 months, including: • Referral and engagement of participants • Pathways closure rates and strategies to improve • Reviews of the Quality Benchmark Report

PCHI will confirm that Quality Benchmark Reports have been submitted quarterly to PCHI over the past 12 months. PA should upload the most recent QBR to their Certification Folder.

PA must track engagement and Pathways completed each month for each community health worker. PCHI recognizes that the development of outcome-based contracts may be beyond the scope of a single agency. In preparation for becoming a contracted care coordination agency within a Pathways Community HUB Network, at a minimum PAs are required to track and report on the engagement fee and Pathways completion metrics for each staff member providing care coordination services. Provide documentation that engagement and Pathways progress is shared with CHWs at least monthly.

CLAS/PCHI Standard CROSSWALK

CLAS Standard		PCHI Standard	
1.	Provide effective, equitable, understandable, and respectful quality care and services that are responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication needs.	Overarching alignment with all PCHI Standards but more prominent in PCHI Standards 1,2, and 4.	
		1	Pathways Agency
		2	PCHI Model Care Coordination
		4	PA Operations
2.	Advance and sustain organizational governance* and leadership that promotes CLAS and health equity through policy, practices, and allocated resources.	1	Pathways Agency
		2	PCHI Model Care Coordination
		3	Training
3.	Recruit, promote, and support a culturally and linguistically diverse governance*, leadership, and workforce that are responsive to the population in the service area.	1	Pathways Agency
4.	Educate and train governance*, leadership, and workforce in culturally and linguistically appropriate policies and practices on an ongoing basis.	1	Pathways Agency
		3	Training
5.	Offer language assistance to individuals who have limited English proficiency and/or other communication needs, at no cost to them, to facilitate timely access to all health care and services.	4	PA Operations

*Pathways Agency should encourage their organization to align with CLAS Standards in the governance of their organization.

6.	Inform all individuals of the availability of language assistance services clearly and in their preferred language, verbally and in writing.	4	PA Operations
7.	Ensure the competence of individuals providing language assistance, recognizing that the use of untrained individuals and/or minors as interpreters should be avoided.	4	PA Operations
8.	Provide easy-to-understand print and multimedia materials and signage in the languages commonly used by the populations in the service area.	4	PA Operations
9.	Establish culturally and linguistically appropriate goals, policies, and management accountability, and infuse them throughout the organization's planning and operations.	4	PA Operations
10.	Conduct ongoing assessments of the organization's CLAS-related activities and integrate CLAS-related measures into measurement and continuous quality improvement activities.	5	Quality Improvement
11.	Collect and maintain accurate and reliable demographic data to monitor and evaluate the impact of CLAS on health equity and outcomes and to inform service delivery.	2	PCHI Model Care Coordination
		4	PA Operations
		5	Quality Improvement
12.	Conduct regular assessments of community health assets and needs and use the results to plan and implement services that respond to the cultural and linguistic diversity of populations in the service area.	2	PCHI Model Care Coordination

13.	Partner with the community to design, implement, and evaluate policies, practices, and services to ensure cultural and linguistic appropriateness.	4	PA Operations
14.	Create conflict and grievance resolution processes that are culturally and linguistically appropriate to identify, prevent, and resolve conflicts or complaints.	5	Quality Improvement
15.	Communicate the organization's progress in implementing and sustaining CLAS to all stakeholders, constituents, and the general public.	3	Training
		4	PA Operations