

May 19, 2026

To: Pima County Board of Supervisors
Re: Pima County Health Department Supplemental Request

Dear Members of the Board,

We would like to express our strong support for the requested supplemental funding to address the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCD) in our county. As public health researchers, we have worked alongside the CHW workforce for 30 years to establish their effectiveness in connecting to community members, conducting screening, providing health promotion education and social support, and linking people to health care and other services. Today, CHWs are broadly recognized as an essential workforce in the primary and secondary prevention of cancer, heart disease, diabetes and other non-communicable diseases. Return on investment studies have demonstrated that \$6.10 are saved for every \$1 invested in CHW diabetes self-management support.

We collaborated with Pima County Health Department Staff over the past two years to study the benefits of the CHW staff to the health department and the residents of Pima County. In our published findings, we document the importance of CHWs in achieving the department's core mission to improve the health and well-being of residents. Pima County CHWs are highly valued for their ability not only to deliver chronic disease services, but also to address social needs that often create the greatest challenge to NCD prevention. Further, with their close community ties, Pima County CHWs play an important role in identifying community concerns and priorities and sharing these with departmental leadership.

Soft funding is the greatest barrier to CHW effectiveness. While grant funding helps counties to develop quality programming, grant requirements often limit their expertise and flexibility to respond to emerging issues on a community level. The proposed funding ensured that the county has a unified cadre of CHWs working across departments to serve and advocate for county residents.

Today, the Pima County Health Department has a highly skilled and committed CHW workforce prepared to meet the intense challenges of the current environment, in which public health is being undermined and Pima County residents are losing access to health care. We urge you to approve this funding opportunity to ensure the capacity of the health department to meet this critical need in our county.



Maia Ingram, MPH
Co-Director, Center for Participatory Evaluation &
Action Research, University of Arizona
Member of the Pima County Board of Health



Ada Wilkinson-Lee, PhD
Associate Professor, Department of
Mexican American Studies,
University of Arizona

CLERK'S NOTE:
COPY TO SUPERVISORS
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

DATE 5-18-26 

CC: HD, Theresa Cullen, Director 

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