

# CAP Explained

## What is the Community Ambassador Project (CAP)?

CAP is a project of the Greenbrier County Health Alliance (GCHA), which is a nonprofit partner of the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine (WVSOM) Center for Rural and Community Health (CRCH).

The CAP project supports people (“Community Ambassadors”) doing good work in rural communities to improve community health.

## What are the goals of CAP?

The goals of CAP are to positively impact community health in rural communities by supporting grassroots community leaders and community health projects. CAP also works to develop long-term collaborations and identify community-led areas for research (and then develop these ideas into community research projects).

To reach these goals, CAP identifies community leaders who are passionate about their community’s health (in other words, Community Ambassadors) and then supports their work in a variety of ways. First, CAP develops and holds relevant workshops (such as in grant writing and development, project evaluation, and project management) and provides financial stipends to Ambassadors who attend these events. Workshops also act as networking opportunities for Ambassadors and other community leaders.

CAP offers mini-grants—usually \$1,000 for up to a year long project— to help support community health improvement projects. Only Community Ambassadors are eligible to apply for these mini-grants. CAP also works to connect Ambassadors with local, regional, and national funders.

GCHA—with the support of WVSOM CRCH—offers Ambassadors technical assistance in

- project and grant development, management, and evaluation,
- developing community surveys,
- measuring the impact of community health projects,
- facilitating community focus groups,
- identifying what is likely to work to address a community challenge,
- help with data collection,
- assistance in identifying funding opportunities,
- support with training and development opportunities.

Finally, CAP surveys Ambassadors regularly to figure out community needs and priorities and develop relevant workshops and other support.

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### **How does CAP define “community?”**

We define community broadly both as groups of people with a shared sense of place and groups of people with a shared interest, need, or passion. For example, the community of Williamsburg, or the community of people in recovery from substance use disorder, or small farmers. Usually, each CAP "community" will have two Ambassadors.

### **How is CAP paid for?**

Greenbrier County Health Alliance (GCHA) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with a mission to work collaboratively to assess local needs, remove barriers to health equity, and inform action through environmental, systems, and policy change. As part of this mission, GCHA seeks grant funding to support the financial aspects of the CAP project.

Original funding and support to develop CAP was thanks in large part to the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, and the West Virginia Clinical and Translational Science Institute (WVCTSI).

### **How do I sign up to be a GCHA Community Ambassador?**

First, contact GCHA's executive director at [jlevine@osteo.wvsom.edu](mailto:jlevine@osteo.wvsom.edu) or 304-793-6554 to set up a meeting to chat about what community you're a part of and your vision for community health.

Then we ask all Community Ambassadors to fill out an annual memorandum of agreement (MOA) which GCHA's executive director will also sign. (accessible on our website at: [greenbriercountyhealthalliance.org/community-ambassador-project](https://greenbriercountyhealthalliance.org/community-ambassador-project)).

That's it! Once the annual MOA is signed by you and the GCHA executive director, you're eligible to apply for mini-grants and join in on all the other components of CAP.

### **What's the relationship between GCHA and WVSOM CRCH?**

GCHA is an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with a board of directors made up of leaders from the Greenbrier Valley Community. GCHA serves as a nonprofit partner of the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine Center for Rural and Community Health (CRCH).

As part of this collaboration between the two organizations, the CRCH's Director of Community

Engagement & Outreach serves as the Executive Director of Greenbrier County Health Alliance, directing and implementing GCHA projects. GCHA funding is separate from WVSOM, and final directions on GCHA's mission and activities rests with GCHA's board of directors.

This relationship furthers the missions of both organizations, and is a part of WVSOM's commitment to community engagement and mission to serve the State of West Virginia and its citizens.

