

Alcohol and Drug Counselor

■ Job Description

Alcohol and drug counselors' tasks may vary greatly depending on the organization in which they work. Job responsibilities will also be influenced by choice of involvement in one of the following areas of care giving: prevention, assessment, intervention, primary care, and aftercare. For example, in primary care, a counselor generally conducts individual and group counseling sessions. This person may also teach classes (according to his or her areas of specialty) on such topics as communication, intimacy, family systems and alcoholism, codependency, incest, physical and emotional abuse, grief, and the Twelve Step Program of Alcoholics Anonymous. Counselors may also be required to educate the community on these and other issues relating to chemical health problems.

■ Job Settings

Residential treatment centers, hospitals, halfway houses, referral centers, and schools. Other places of employment may be connected with business (employee assistance) or prevention organizations.

■ Projected Need

Employment of alcohol and drug abuse counselors is expected to grow faster than average through 2010. One reason for the expected growth is an increase in the number of employers who are offering employee assistance programs that provide counseling services for alcohol and drug abuse. Overall population growth will also lead to a need for health care professionals who have the knowledge and clinical skills to counsel individuals and families experiencing problems with alcohol and drugs.

■ Salaries

Nationally the median wage for alcohol and drug abuse counselors is \$13.70 per hour.

In Illinois, beginning salary is \$9.73 per hour. Median wage is \$13.47 per hour. Experienced counselors earn \$16.31 per hour.

■ Related Careers

A career in psychology or guidance and counseling would be most similar to alcohol and drug counseling. Other related and often integrated careers include social work, marriage and family therapy, pastoral counseling, and human service careers such as parenting education, youth and child care counseling, and financial counseling.

■ Differences in Training

In Illinois, the following community colleges offer certificate and associate degree programs in addiction counseling:

Carl Sandburg College - Galesburg
College of DuPage - Glen Ellyn
College of Lake County - Grayslake
Danville Area Community College - Danville
Elgin Community College - Elgin
Harold Washington College - Chicago
Illinois Central College - Peoria
Kennedy-King College - Chicago
Moraine Valley Community College - Palos Hills
Oakton Community College - Des Plaines
Rock Valley College - Rockford
Shawnee Community College - Ullin
South Suburban College - South Holland
Triton College - River Grove
Waubonsee Community College - Sugar Grove

Master's degree programs in counseling and social work are available at many colleges and universities in the state.

■ Related Educational Programs

The programs of study listed below are the recommended areas of study to pursue for this occupation. Clicking on these will lead to files that show in-state and national schools that offer these programs.

The following link(s) will take you to CIS for more information. CIS requires an ID and password that can be obtained at <http://cis.ilworkinfo.com/loginhelp/>. You must log into CIS prior to clicking on the links below.

[Addiction Counseling](#)

[Human Services](#)

[Social Work](#)

■ **Credentials**

National certification is available from the National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors.

Certification is also available from the Illinois Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Professional Certification Association. Applicants for certification must meet education and experience requirements and pass written and oral exams.

■ **Advanced Training**

There are advanced degrees available throughout the United States in alcohol and drug studies.

■ **Resources**

National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors
901 N. Washington Street, Suite 600
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 800.548.0497
E-mail: naadac@naadac.org
<http://www.naadac.org>

Illinois Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Professional Certification Association, Inc.
1305 Wabash Avenue, Suite L
Springfield, IL 62704
Phone: 800.272.2632
E-mail: iaodapca@aol.com
<http://www.iaodapca.org>

American Counseling Association
5999 Stevenson Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22304-3300
Phone: 800.347.6647
<http://www.counseling.org>

National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc.
3 Terrace Way, Suite D
Greensboro, NC 27403-3660
Phone: 336.547.0607
E-mail: nbcc@nbcc.org
<http://www.nbcc.org>

Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification
1835 Rohlwing Road, Suite E
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008
Phone: 847.394.2104
<http://www.crcrcertification.com>