

## Art Therapist

### ■ Job Description

Art therapists treat individuals, couples, families, and groups using therapeutic art tasks. Art therapy uses art and the creative process to facilitate communication, expression of emotions, physical and cognitive skills, self-awareness, and personal growth. The art therapist develops art activities to erode barriers to self-expression and explores the image with the client. The art therapist may be the primary therapist or may act as an adjunctive within the treatment team, depending on the treatment objectives and needs of the institution. The art therapist works with children and adults, including people who are emotionally disturbed, physically disabled, elderly, developmentally delayed, drug dependent, or prisoners.

### ■ Job Settings

Hospitals, rehabilitation centers, mental health facilities, private clinics, prisons, chemical dependency units, abuse victim centers, schools, and group homes

### ■ Projected Need

Nationally and in Illinois, overall employment of recreational therapists is expected to increase more slowly than average through 2010.

Employment will decline slightly in hospitals and nursing homes, which are expected to shift recreational therapy services to outpatient settings. Fast employment growth is expected in assisted living, outpatient physical and psychiatric rehabilitation, and services for people with disabilities.

This occupation is small so the total number of job openings will be low. Job candidates with a bachelor's degree in therapeutic recreation or in recreation with an option in therapeutic recreation should have the best opportunities.

In Illinois, there were 2,040 people employed in this small occupation in 2000.

### ■ Salaries

Earning for art therapists vary geographically depending on the type of practice and job

responsibilities. Entry-level income is approximately \$25,000, median income between \$28,000 and \$38,000, and top earning potential for salaried administrators ranges between \$40,000 and \$60,000. Art therapists with doctoral degrees, state licensure, or who qualify in their state to conduct private practice, have an earning potential of \$75.00 to \$90.00 per hour in private practice.

### ■ Related Careers

Psychology, social work, and other rehabilitative therapies

### ■ Differences in Training

Bachelor's degrees are offered at Barat College, Lake Forest, DePaul University, Chicago and Millikin University, Decatur. Master's programs in art therapy are offered by the Adler School of Professional Psychology, Chicago; University of Illinois at Chicago; School of the Art Institute of Chicago; and Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.

### ■ 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.*

### [Art Therapy](#)

### ■ Credentials

Various combinations of education and experience can lead to employment and credentialing. A bachelor's degree in art therapy, studio arts, psychology, art education, or human services can prepare individuals to pursue training in art therapy. The American Art Therapy Association (AATA) defines entry level into the profession at the master's degree level.

Educational, professional and ethical standards for art therapists are regulated by the AATA. The Art

Therapy Credentials Board, an independent organization, grants the title Art Therapist, Registered (ATR) after reviewing documentation of completion of graduate education and postgraduate supervised experience. The registered art therapist who successfully completes the written exam administered by the ATCB is qualified as Board Certified (ATR-BC), a credential requiring maintenance through continuing education credits. This credential is not a prerequisite for employment, but demonstrates that the art therapist has completed professional requirements within the field. For more information, contact the Art Therapy Credentials Board.

## ■ Resources

American Art Therapy Association  
1202 Allanson Road  
Mundelein, IL 60060-3808  
Phone: 888.290.0878 or 847.949.6064  
E-mail: [info@arttherapy.org](mailto:info@arttherapy.org)  
<http://www.arttherapy.org>  
Click on "About Art Therapy."

The association makes available various awards to graduate students in art therapy to encourage professionalism, scholarship, and research.

Art Therapy Credentials Board  
3 Terrace Way, Suite B  
Greensboro, NC 27403  
Phone: 877.213.2822  
E-mail: [atcb@nbcc.org](mailto:atcb@nbcc.org)  
<http://www.atcb.org>