

## Health Educator

### ■ Job Description

Health educators work with health personnel and community representatives to identify health needs and resources, make and act upon intelligent decisions leading to positive health behavior, and design ways to improve the utilization of health resources. As part of this work, the health educator may use a variety of educational processes such as one-to-one communication, group teaching, and community organization. Communication tools include mass media and audiovisual materials. The health educator's primary goal is optimal health maintenance for everyone. Translating research related to healthful living, the educator strives to provide a basis of scientific knowledge on which the public can make decisions about their health behavior.

### ■ Job Settings

*School health educators* are generally employed in public or private schools at the elementary or secondary level. *Community health educators* may work in a variety of settings, including governmental health agencies at the local, state, or national level; voluntary health agencies at all levels; hospital and ambulatory health care facilities; private industry; and labor unions.

### ■ Projected Need

Nationally, the number of jobs for public health educators is expected to increase faster than average through 2010. In Illinois, average employment growth is expected for this occupation. More attention and money are being given to the preventative health care approach. This will increase the need for health educators who will work with the public. Areas where job opportunities should be good for health educators include state and local governmental agencies, private industry associations, and companies involved in health information management or biostatistics.

### ■ Salaries

Wages vary by employer and area of the country. Wages also vary by the educator's level of experience, education and responsibility.

In Illinois, the median wage for public health educators is \$16.06 per hour. Nationally, the median wage is \$16.94

per hour. Half of all public health educators earn between \$12.88 and \$22.43 per hour.

According to a national survey conducted by the Association of Schools of Public Health, individuals with a master's degree in health education/behavioral science earn salaries ranging from \$33,000 to \$86,625 per year.

### ■ Related Careers

Someone interested in health education that has the necessary talents may find biomedical illustration or health science writing interesting. Consumer advocates/health care expeditors, health sciences librarians, and other public health professionals do related work. Individuals interested in combining psychology and education may wish to investigate teaching and childhood education occupations.

### ■ Differences in Training

A BS degree in school or community health education is necessary to teach health in public schools and is also designed to prepare individuals to work in community health agencies.

The Master of Education (MEd) degree with a major in school health education is designed for teachers in-service. The primary focus is on the improvement of teaching and/or the effective coordination of the school health education program.

Programs that offer a Master of Arts (MA) or doctoral degree in education with an emphasis in school health education or community education are available. These programs provide opportunities for in-depth study in areas of need and interest to students and prepare them to conduct research in the various aspects of health education.

The Master of Public Health (MPH) with a major in community health education prepares the student to assume a leadership role in the design, execution, and evaluation of the education components of health services and programs. The course of study includes educational theory, principles, and techniques for identifying and solving individual and community health problems. Particular attention is given to learning theory, communication theory and process, and the social/cultural/psychological factors that affect health behavior. Individuals interested in this type of program

must have an academic background in health and biological sciences, educational theory and method, and the social and behavioral sciences.

In addition, the PhD prepares students to provide consultation and to assume positions of leadership in teacher education, administration, and supervision at all educational levels.

### ■ 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/login.asp>*

[Public Health Education  
Public and Community Health](#)

### ■ Credentials

Professional certification is available from the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing (NCHEC). To be recognized as a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES), health educators must meet academic qualifications and successfully complete a certification exam.

### ■ Resources

American Association for Health Education  
1900 Association Drive  
Reston, VA 20191-1599  
Phone: 800.213.7193  
E-mail: [aahe@aahperd.org](mailto:aahe@aahperd.org)  
<http://www.aahperd.org/aahe.html>  
Click on "AAHE" then "Professional Development."  
Select "Careers."

The association offers three scholarships to undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students majoring in health education. Awards range from \$1,000 to \$1,500.

American School Health Association  
P.O. Box 708  
Kent, OH 44240  
Phone: 330.678.1601  
E-mail: [asha@ashaweb.org](mailto:asha@ashaweb.org)  
<http://www.ashaweb.org>

The association offers three \$500 scholarships to juniors, seniors, and graduate students in the areas of school health education, school nursing, school social work, school mental health services, and pediatric or adolescent medicine/dentistry.

American Public Health Association  
800 I Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
Phone: 202.777.2742  
E-mail: [comments@apha.org](mailto:comments@apha.org)  
<http://www.apha.org>

National Commission for Health Education  
Credentialing  
944 Marcon Boulevard, Suite 310  
Allentown, PA 18109  
Phone: 888.624.3248  
E-mail: [nchec@fast.net](mailto:nchec@fast.net)  
<http://www.nchec.org>

Association of Schools of Public Health  
1101 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 910  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: 202.296.1099  
E-mail: [info@asph.org](mailto:info@asph.org)  
<http://www.asph.org>

Click on "Employment & Training" in the left side bar.  
Select "Careers in Public Health."