

Homemaker (Home Health Aide)

■ Job Description

Homemakers care for elderly, convalescent, or handicapped people in the patients' homes. The homemaker performs duties for the patient, including changing bed linen, preparing meals (sometimes following prescribed diets), cleaning, doing laundry, and running errands. The aide helps the patient with dressing, bathing, grooming, and moving around the house, and may entertain the patient by reading aloud or playing games or cards. The homemaker also administers medication under the direction of a physician or nurse, and may provide massage or other treatments.

■ Job Settings

Homemakers work in the patient's home and may visit several households to provide daily care. They are employed by social service agencies, hospital home care programs, and home health care companies.

■ Projected Need

Home health aide is one of the top 20 fastest growing occupations in the state. Employment of home health aides is expected to increase much faster than average nationally as well. This is due primarily to the rapid growth in our elderly population who will require home care services. There is also a trend to view home care as more helpful and less costly than other care environments. As a result, more insurance companies are willing to pay for home care. This trend will increase the need for caregivers who work with people from all age groups.

Many job openings will occur in this field because of the high turnover rate. This occupation has high physical and emotional demands. In addition, the pay is low. For people who enjoy this type of work, there will be many job openings.

In Illinois, there were 12,430 people employed in this medium-sized occupation in 2000.

■ Salaries

Nationally, home health aides earn a median wage of \$8.46 per hour. Half of all home health aides earn between \$7.32 and \$10.09 per hour.

In Illinois, salaries for home health aides range from a beginning wage of \$6.32 to \$9.70 per hour for experienced aides. Median hourly wage was \$8.39.

■ Related Careers

Licensed practical nurse, nurse assistant, and social service workers

■ 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.

[Health Aide](#)
[Nursing Assisting](#)

■ Credentials

The federal government has enacted guidelines for home health aides whose employers receive reimbursement from Medicare. Federal law requires home health aides to pass a competency test covering 12 areas. A home health aide may take training before taking the competency test. Federal law suggests at least 75 hours of classroom and practical training supervised by a registered nurse. In Illinois, home health aides who work in Medicare-certified agencies must first be certified nursing assistants.

The National Association for Home Care offers a National Homemaker-Home Health Aide certificate. This certification is a voluntary demonstration that the individual has met industry standards.

■ Resources

National Association for Home Care
228 Seventh Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003
Phone: 202.547.7424
<http://www.nahc.org>

The Association for Gerontology in
Higher Education
1030 15th Street NW, Suite 240
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202.289.9806
E-mail: info@aghe.org
<http://www.aghe.org>
Click on “Resources” then “Careers in Aging.”