

Community Health Workers

Professional Activities

Community health workers help promote wellness by helping people adopt healthy behaviors. These workers become advocates for the people that may have limited access to health resources and social services. Typical things a community health worker does are work with individuals in their community and the health systems, conduct home visits, provide resources, provide coaching and social support, and increase & improve the health and wellbeing of individuals of the community.

Community health workers act as intermediaries between their clients and providers of healthcare and social services. They identify health-related issues, collect data, and discuss clients' health concerns within the community. Ideally, these workers have close ties to the communities they serve so that they understand their clients' unique needs. They share that information with providers of healthcare and social services for determining appropriate programs and care. They also advocate for community wellness needs and conduct outreach to engage clients, assist with navigating healthcare, and improve coordination of care.

Community health workers may spend part of their day in an office for activities such as recordkeeping and writing reports. However, they spend much of their time in the field to interact with community members, hold events, and collect data. They may travel to a variety of settings, including homes or medical facilities, to meet with clients.

Educational Requirements

To become a community health worker, you need to have a high school diploma. Some employers may prefer that you have a postsecondary education. Often there is a brief period of on-the-job training, and some states require certification.

Community health workers usually benefit from understanding the specific community, culture, medical condition, or disability with which they work. They may have personal experience in these areas, or they may gain experience by working in activities such as community development, public health, or social outreach. The ability to speak another language is helpful for working in some communities.

Employment/Job Outlook

Community health workers will continue to be needed to help organizations and government agencies provide people with health-related information, such as how to access medical services. Demand for these workers will also stem from their role in implementing public health initiatives, including preventive measures to reduce the spread of disease.

State and National Wages

Location	Pay Period	2022		
		Low	Median	High
United States	Hourly	\$15.47	\$22.21	\$35.45
	Annual	\$32,180	\$46,190	\$73,730
Illinois	Hourly	\$15.07	\$20.44	\$29.65
	Annual	\$31,350	\$42,520	\$61,670

Note: There is no hourly wage data available for this occupation.

State and National Trends

United States	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings ¹
	2021	2031		
Community Health Workers	67,000	77,700	16%	8,800
Illinois	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings ¹
	2020	2030		
Community Health Workers	2,150	2,440	+14%	270

¹Job Openings refers to the average annual job openings due to growth and net replacement.

More Information about community health workers

American Public Health Association ([APHA.org](https://www.apha.org))

National Association of Community Health Workers ([NACHW](https://www.nachw.org))

References

Occupational Outlook Handbook, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics
(<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/community-health-workers.htm>)

O*NET OnLine (<https://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/21-1094.00>)

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