



get on the path to public health

Is this the job for me?

Take this quick quiz to find out if health educator is a good direction for you:

- 1 Are you a good writer and speaker?
 YES NO
- 2 Do you enjoy working with people?
 YES NO
- 3 Do you like to teach, lead and motivate others?
 YES NO
- 4 Do you like to reason and solve problems?
 YES NO
- 5 Do you like staying busy and doing a variety of tasks?
 YES NO
- 6 Do you like to plan programs or events?
 YES NO
- 7 Do you want to invest about four years in your education?
 YES NO

If you answered yes to several of these questions, you may be on the right track!

What's it all about?

Health educators work to prevent disease and improve people's health by planning, directing, carrying out and evaluating health education programs on a community-wide level. By increasing people's knowledge about disease causes and prevention, health educators strive to change people's behavior and promote good health.

Health educators can specialize in a particular area, such as international public health, maternal/child health, or public health, or focus on a specific disease, such as HIV/AIDS. They can also find work in a variety of settings, including local health departments, community agencies, schools, colleges, large companies and medical facilities.

What do health educators do?

Health educators are responsible for a variety of duties, including:

- Assess individual, community or organization needs for health education.
- Plan effective health education programs.
- Develop and write grant applications to obtain funding for programs.
- Implement programs by making presentations or planning workshops or conferences.
- Communicate with the public about health needs, concerns and resources.

- Prepare and distribute educational materials, such as pamphlets or videos.
- Coordinate health education services.
- Develop cooperation between public, civic and professional agencies.
- Act as a resource for health education and information.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of health education programs.
- Document all activities, keep records and write reports.
- Stay up-to-date on health threats, laws and treatments by attending seminars and classes.
- May supervise other health education staff.

How much money can I make?

In Alaska, health educators earn an average hourly wage of \$18.43, and have an average annual salary of \$38,330.

How do I become a health educator? How long does it take?

To become a health educator, you must:

- Have a high school diploma or GED.
- Earn at least a bachelor's degree, usually in community health education, health education, public health education, or school health education.

- Many health educators also go on to earn a master's degree, and some complete a doctoral degree program.

Getting a bachelor's degree takes about four years of full-time study after high school. A master's degree usually takes five to six years, and a doctoral degree typically takes about 10 years.

Learn more about health educator programs in Alaska by reviewing the "training providers" section later in this publication.

Attention high school students!

If you think you might want to become a health educator, the time to start planning is now. In general, you should take four years of English, three years of math, three years of social studies, two years of science and possibly two years of a second language. You should also consider taking college preparatory or advanced placement (AP) courses. Other recommended classes and electives include:

- Computer applications
- Food and nutrition
- Foreign language
- Introduction to health care
- Safety and first aid
- Child development and parenting
- Public speaking
- Health education
- Biology
- Environmental science
- Fitness education
- World geography
- Economics
- Social science
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Organization studies

You should also discuss your plans with a teacher, counselor or parent, and check to see what work-based learning opportunities, such as field trips, job shadowing and internships, are available in your community.

Are there jobs available?

According to a recent vacancy study, there are currently about 14 job openings for different types of health educators in Alaska. This occupation is also expected to continue to grow (19.7 percent growth compared to 14.8 percent for all occupations).

Where are the jobs?

Health educators in Alaska work for public health departments, schools, Native health corporations, hospitals, outpatient care centers, and community, government or social service agencies.

What else is on this pathway?

Although health educator is the only public health "hot job" featured in this publication, there are several other high-demand jobs on this pathway, such as maternal/child health program manager and epidemiologist! See the "how to find out more information" section of this publication to learn more.





abby moon

HEALTH EDUCATOR

Abbie Moon knew she wanted to go into a career where she could help people, so her job as an educator at STAR (Standing Together Against Rape), a nonprofit agency in Anchorage, was a natural fit.

“Sexual assault is both prevalent in our state and personal for me, so working at STAR seemed to be a perfect transition after college,” said Abbie, who earned an associate’s degree in human services from the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), completed a two-semester internship at STAR and participated in trainings on sexual assault and crisis intervention, suicide prevention and domestic violence.

“My education provided me with the tools I need for dealing with crisis, and practice in the field provided me hands-on experience, so I was more than ready when I actually took on the job,” Abbie said.

In her job, Abbie provides education to anyone in the community who wants more information on personal safety and sexual assault. She leads presentations for audiences ranging from pre-schoolers to university students, and even travels to rural communities to provide education and advocacy services. She also answers STAR’s 24-hour

crisis line and takes call-outs when someone has been sexually assaulted.

“The most enjoyable part of my job is knowing that I help make a difference every single day,” said Abbie, who is a 2003 graduate of Fauquier High School in Virginia. “I am providing education that not only reaches out to survivors of sexual assault – letting them know it’s OK to come forward and talk about their abuse – but also to our community, urging them to take a stand against sexual violence.”

Next year, Abbie will be moving to Seattle, Washington, where she plans to continue her career in the field. In the future, she would like to continue her education, as well.

“When I tell people what I do, more often than not, they ask, ‘How can you do that type of work?’ My answer is always the same – ‘How can I not?’” she said.



Dating 101