

# What is a Health Educator?

The official Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) definition of a health educator is one who: *“promotes, maintains, and improves individual and community health by assisting individuals and communities to adopt healthy behaviors. They collect and analyze data to identify community needs prior to planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating programs designed to encourage healthy lifestyles, policies, and environments. May also serve as a resource to assist individuals, other professionals, or the community, and may administer fiscal resources for health education programs.”*

## Did you know?

- According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS) **Health educators held about 62,000 jobs in 2006, that number is expected to grow to 78,000 by 2016.**
- **More than 250 colleges and universities provide baccalaureate, masters and/or doctoral degrees in health education.** Entry-level positions for Health Educators generally require a bachelor's degree in health education, but many employers prefer to hire workers with a master's degree.
- **Many health educators have achieved the designation of certified health education specialists (CHES)** by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc. A list of the areas of responsibility, competencies and sub-competencies that guide the professional preparation and employment of health educators is available at [www.nchec.org](http://www.nchec.org).

## Where do Health Educators Work?

- A small percent of health educators work in grant-making services and social advocacy organizations.
- 5 out of 10 health educators work in health care and social assistance and an additional 2 out of 10 work in State and local government.

## Job Outlook for Health Educators:

Employment of health educators is expected to grow by 26%, which is **much faster than the average** for all occupations. Growth will result from the rising cost of health care and the increased recognition of the need for qualified health educators.

## What do Health Educators Do?

Among the many skills health educators have are:

- Assessing individual and community needs
- Planning health education programs
- Developing health education programs
- Coordinating health education programs
- Implementing health education programs
- Managing health education programs & personnel
- Coalition building
- Identifying resources & making referrals
- Developing social marketing & media campaigns

You can expect a trained health educator to be able to:

- Organize / mobilize communities
- Handle controversial health issues / content
- Advocate for health-related issues
- Encourage healthy behavior
- Use a variety of educational / training methods
- Develop audio, visual, print and electronic resource materials
- Conduct research
- Write scholarly articles