

# Health Career Observer



The Official Newsletter of the WNY R-AHEC

June, 2024

## Community Health Worker

Community health workers (CHW's) promote wellness by helping people adopt healthy behaviors. They implement programs and advocate for people who may have limited access to health resources and social services. 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. For example, community health workers might identify barriers preventing clients from access to transportation and provide referrals to resources that provide it.

**Average Annual Pay: \$48,200 per year**



*"The most rewarding part of being a community health worker is watching people become the best versions of themselves"*

-Ashley Sweatman, CHW

## How Do I Become a Community Health Worker

**PROJECTED JOB  
MARKET GROWTH:  
14% BY 2032**

Community health workers typically need at least a high school diploma, although some jobs require postsecondary education. Postsecondary community health worker programs may lead to a 1-year certificate or a 2-year associate's degree. These programs cover topics such as wellness, ethics, and cultural awareness. To attain competency, they typically complete a brief period of on-the-job training, and some states require certification. They learn about topics useful in their work, including communication styles, outreach and advocacy methods, and legal and ethical issues. Some workers participate in apprenticeships or other programs that provide opportunities for hands-on experience.

## What Does a Community Health Worker Do?

- ✓ Coordinate care among individuals, communities, and health and social service systems.
- ✓ Conduct outreach, such as home visits.
- ✓ Provide culturally appropriate health and informational resources.
- ✓ Oversee case management and resource access.
- ✓ Advocate for individuals and communities regarding housing, food security, and other needs.

- ✓ Provide coaching and social support, such as nutrition training, recovery services for mental health and substance use disorders, and chronic disease management and prevention.
- ✓ Provide services, such as basic health screenings and first aid.
- ✓ Increase individual and community participation in assessments and education to improve health and well-being.



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## A Professional Account

*Ashley Sweatman, CHW at Healthy Community Alliance, Inc. gives insight on the career of a Community Health Worker.*

### What is the most rewarding part of your job?

*"The most rewarding part of being a community health worker is watching people become the best versions of themselves. Every person deserves to be the best version of themselves and sometimes it takes a little cheerleader on the sidelines to help us realize the potential we all have and encourage us to keep going and believing in ourselves. When we feel supported, heard and understood we tend to extend that positivity to others around us."*

### What is the most challenging?

*"The most challenging part of being a community health worker is molding ourselves to each of our families specific needs. Each client and family is different from one another and switching "masks" is sometimes difficult. Keeping your own mental health in mind and taking time to rest, reset and recharge is important."*

### What do you wish you knew back in school that you know now?

*"There is no rush! Some people expect fresh high school graduates to know exactly what they want to do as soon as they graduate and it's almost impossible to know what you want to do long term. There is no rush, take your time, make the bigger decisions on a full nights sleep with a full stomach and clear head. Don't compare yourself to "other people your age", everyone progresses at their own pace. When I graduated high school I worked as a part time cashier at my local small town grocery store, I absolutely did not have the rest of my life figured out and almost 13 years later I still don't have everything figured out."*

### Anything else you want to share?

*"Never stop learning! Always be open to learning and taking the useful tips offered from people you trust. There is no shame in reaching out for support or help when you feel stuck or have questions."*



Click on the image for Community Health Worker career info

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UQAUmw\\_8rU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UQAUmw_8rU)



Scan Me



Click on the image for a professional account from Community Health Workers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3ms74AJrQ8>



Scan Me



For more information visit the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics  
<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/community-health-workers.htm>

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## NYS AHEC SCHOLARS PROGRAM

An **INTERNSHIP** Opportunity for **Health Profession Students**  
Receive up to **\$2000** for Program Completion!

Gain hands on experience in rural and underserved communities while networking with an interdisciplinary team

Receive \$50 and a T-shirt with Program Acceptance

Interprofessional teamwork



Identify healthcare needs

Create solutions to avoidable inpatient care

Improve patient centric clinical skills

AHEC SCHOLARS

### Requirements-

- Enrollment in an accredited health professions program
- Commitment to 2 years of learning with 40 hours of didactic and experiential learning each year

WESTERN NEW YORK  
**WNY R-AHEC**  
RURAL AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER

Enroll at <http://nysahec.org/our-programs/new-nys-ahec-scholars-program/>

For more info contact: Erin Brauen | [ebrauen@r-ahec.org](mailto:ebrauen@r-ahec.org) | 585-786-6275

## SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The "Healthcare Workers for Our Future" Scholarship

Two year scholarship for individuals seeking to pursue a degree in **Registered Nurse, Respiratory Therapist, Clinical Laboratory Technologist, Radiologic Technology and Surgical Technology.**

**APPLY TODAY!**

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/programs/healthcare-workers-our-future-scholarship>

Health Careers Resource Guide QR Code



2024

BEA SUMMER CAREER EXPLORATION CAMPS

REGISTRATION OPENS MARCH 26 AT 9 AM!

Register at [www.BEAGene.com](http://www.BEAGene.com)



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