



# REHABILITATION COUNSELOR

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

*Rehabilitation counselors* help people deal with the personal, social, and vocational effects of disabilities. They counsel people with disabilities resulting from birth defects, illness or disease, accidents, or the stress of daily life. They evaluate the strengths and limitations of individuals, provide personal and vocational counseling, and arrange for medical care, vocational training, and job placement. Rehabilitation counselors interview both individuals with disabilities and their families, evaluate school and medical reports, and confer and plan with physicians, psychologists, occupational therapists, and employers to determine the capabilities and skills of the individual. Conferring with the client, they develop a rehabilitation program that often includes training to help the person develop job skills. Rehabilitation counselors also work toward increasing the client's capacity to live independently.

## **EXPERIENCE & SKILLS**

Persons interested in counseling should have a strong desire to help others and should possess the ability to inspire respect, trust, and confidence. Essential skills are:

- Advising
- Ability to communicate well
- Lead small groups
- Provide support
- Assess student needs
- Objectivity

## **EDUCATION & TRAINING**

A master's degree is typically required to be licensed as a counselor. The Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification offers voluntary national certification for rehabilitation counselors. Some employers may require rehabilitation counselors to be nationally certified. To become certified, rehabilitation counselors usually must graduate from an accredited educational program, complete an internship, and pass a written examination. (Certification requirements vary according to an applicant's educational history. Employment experience, for example, is required for those with a counseling degree in a specialty other than rehabilitation.) After meeting these requirements, candidates are designated "Certified Rehabilitation Counselors." To maintain their certification, counselors must successfully retake the certification exam or complete 100 credit hours of acceptable continuing education every 5 years.

## **SALARIES**

Salaries vary depending on work setting, years of experience, specialty and region or state.

Entry level: \$22,110

Average: \$27,870

Experienced: \$36,120

## **EMPLOYMENT & ADVANCEMENT PROSPECTS**

The number of people who will need rehabilitation counseling is expected to grow as advances in medical technology allow more people to survive injury or illness and live independently again. In addition, legislation requiring equal employment rights for people with disabilities will spur demand for counselors, who not only help these people make a transition into the workforce but also help companies to comply with the law.

## **RELATED OCCUPATIONS**

- Human service assistants
- Social workers
- Psychologists
- Occupational Therapist

## **REFERENCES**

The Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) at <http://www.crc certification.com/>

American Counseling Association at <http://www.counseling.org>

Occupational Outlook Handbook, U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov) 2005-06