

# *Mental and Social Health*

*Genetic Counselor, Human Service Worker,  
Psychiatric Mental Health Technician/Aide, Psychologist, Social Worker*



## Genetic Counselor, Human Service Worker

### Genetic Counselor

#### JOB DESCRIPTION

Genetic counselors provide information and support to individuals and families who have members with birth defects or genetic disorders, or who may be at risk for a variety of inherited conditions. They investigate the family pedigree, interpret information, analyze inheritance patterns and risks of recurrence, and review available options with the family. Counselors may focus on one aspect of genetics, such as preconception, prenatal or pediatric genetics, cancer genetics, neurogenetics, or numerous other aspects of genetic patterns in families. Genetic counselors use their counseling skills, combined with a background in medical genetics, to assist families through emotional times.

#### WORK ENVIRONMENT

Genetic counselors work in private practice, commercial research laboratories, public health clinics, health maintenance organizations (HMOs), and federal agencies. Most, however, are employed by hospitals or university medical centers, where they are concentrated in pediatrics, obstetrics and/or oncology. Full-time, 40-hour workweeks are standard for genetic counselors, although some hospitals may request that they be on call for emergency situations.

#### ANNUAL WAGES

Starting Salary .....\$40,900  
Overall Average .....\$53,800

*Salary ranges for 2000. American Medical Association.*

#### ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

A bachelor's degree in a biological science, psychology, public health, nursing, genetics, or other related

fields is necessary. Those interested can obtain their master's degree in genetic counseling. Graduate course work includes medical genetics, counseling topics, and hands-on-experience in the field. The American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) conducts the certification examination for those who have their graduate degree in genetic counseling from an ABGC-accredited program and who meet the requirements.

#### PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Board of Genetic Counseling  
National Society of Genetic Counselors

*For professional organization address and phone information see Appendix B.*

#### EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

*For a listing of educational programs in New York State for Mental and Social Health see page 43.*

### Human Service Worker

#### JOB DESCRIPTION

The title human service worker encompasses a broad range of careers in social work, mental health, and rehabilitation. Some job titles that fall under this heading are social service assistant, alcohol or drug abuse counselor, childcare worker, gerontology aide, community support worker, life skills counselor, case management aide, and social work assistant. Depending upon the job title and setting, workers' responsibilities will vary. Generally, human service workers provide support; give clients information about services such as food stamps and Medicaid; provide transportation; counsel clients on lifestyles and coping habits; keep an accurate record of client progress; and coordinate group, community, and outreach activities. Some human service workers deal directly with psychological issues or coordinate the activities of a rehabilitation program, counseling center, youth program, or nursing home.

#### WORK ENVIRONMENT

Just as the job description of a human service worker varies, so does the work environment. Group homes, hospitals, clinics, and shelters all require the skills of these individuals. Government agencies, public welfare agencies, and private human service agencies employ human service workers as planners, coordinators, project managers, and field workers. Usually, human service workers will work a 40-hour week; some work during business hours, while in-home or hospital workers may have evening, late or weekend shifts. Some work may be carried out in an office environment, while the rest of the time is spent out in the field.

#### ANNUAL WAGES

National .....\$23,858  
New York State .....\$27,082

*National and New York State median annual earnings for 2003. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.*

#### ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

High school graduates will be trained on the job, but their duties may be limited to direct care services. Although a college degree is not necessary for human service work, it will make a job applicant more attractive to employers. A certificate or an associate's, bachelor's, or higher degree qualifies the holder for positions in management or worker supervision, as well as for direct contact with clients.

#### PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Council for Standards in Human Service Education  
National Organization for Human Service Education

*For professional organization address and phone information see Appendix B.*

#### EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

*For a listing of educational programs in New York State for Mental and Social Health see page 43.*

## Psychiatric Mental Health Technician/Aide, Psychologist

### Psychiatric Mental Health Technician/Aide

#### JOB DESCRIPTION

Psychiatric mental health technicians, also known as psychiatric aides, work with people with emotional or mental illness, and mental retardation, under the supervision of doctors, nurses, and other medical personnel. They observe, interview, and counsel patients; and participate in their daily recreation, work, and treatment programs. They also perform simple nursing tasks, such as taking temperatures and giving out medications. Additionally, psychiatric mental health technicians assist patients in dealing with problems occurring within the family, work, and community environments. Most important, they

provide companionship and assistance to individuals who are isolated from the outside world.

#### WORK ENVIRONMENT

Psychiatric mental health technicians are usually employed in hospital psychiatric wards, community mental health centers, state and county mental institutions, and private facilities. Some facilities may have aides on duty around the clock, or may need them during normal business hours. Full-time and part-time work schedules are possible within this field.

#### ANNUAL WAGES

National .....	\$25,771
New York State .....	\$30,680

*National and New York State median annual earnings for 2003. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.*

#### ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Some psychiatric facilities may hire mental health technicians with no experience or training. Through on-the-job training, these aides learn their designated duties under close supervision. Training programs may be offered in vocational-technical schools, community colleges, or through mental health facilities. Good interpersonal skills and a willingness to help others are important for a successful mental health technician.

#### PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Psychiatric Association

*For professional organization address and phone information see Appendix B.*

#### EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

*For a listing of educational programs in New York State for Mental and Social Health see page 43.*

### Psychologist

#### JOB DESCRIPTION

Psychologists study the behaviors, emotions, and thinking processes. These licensed mental health professionals are trained to assess, diagnose, and treat mental disorders by using individual, child, family, and group therapies. Psychologists may teach, conduct research, or serve as consultants or therapists.

#### AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

*Clinical Psychologists* – comprise the largest group of psychologists and work with physicians in counseling emotionally disturbed individuals, medical and surgical patients, and chronically ill patients.

*Health Psychologists* – work with patients trying to adopt a healthy lifestyle and achieve personal health goals.

*Geropsychologists* – specialize in problems of the elderly, such as adapting to lifestyle limitations, keeping a healthy attitude about the future, and remaining active.

*Counseling Psychologists* – advise clients on how to cope with everyday issues and help to resolve personal problems.

There are many other areas in which to specialize as a psychologist, including developmental, experimental, industrial-organizational, school, social, abnormal, neuroforensic, engineering, rehabilitation, educational, and sports psychology.

#### WORK ENVIRONMENT

Psychologists practice in varied settings, depending upon their specialty. Private practice psychologists have their own offices with hours tailored to meet patients' needs. Psychologists employed by hospitals, nursing homes, and other medical facilities may need to cover late night and weekend shifts. Others who work as faculty at colleges and universities, in government positions, or engage in research are likely to keep regular business hours. Psychologists may often work in more than one setting and divide their time accordingly.

#### ANNUAL WAGES

National .....	\$52,208
New York State .....	\$63,981

*National and New York State median annual earnings for 2003. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.*

#### ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

School psychologists and some community mental health psychologists hold at least a master's degree in

psychology. However, to become a licensed psychologist, you must have a doctorate degree in psychology. Most doctoral programs in psychology and clinical psychology involve four to five years of study after receiving a bachelor's degree. There are two types of doctoral degrees - a PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) and a Psy.D (Doctor of Psychology). Psychologists with a PhD generally qualify for a number of teaching, research, clinical or counseling positions, while those with a Psy.D primarily work in clinical positions. Upon earning an advanced degree from an accredited school, students must meet proper certification requirements. To become a certified psychologist in New York State, individuals must meet New York State licensing requirements. Detailed information for New York State licensing requirements can be found online at: [www.labor.state.ny.us/business\\_ny/employer\\_responsibilities/olcny/menu.htm](http://www.labor.state.ny.us/business_ny/employer_responsibilities/olcny/menu.htm).

#### PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Board of Professional Psychology, Inc.  
American Psychological Association  
New York State Psychological Association

*For professional organization address and phone information see Appendix B.*

#### EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

*For a listing of educational programs in New York State for Mental and Social Health see page 43.*

## Social Worker

### Social Worker

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

Social workers work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. In a medical setting, they help patients and their families deal with problems related to physical, mental, or emotional illness and disability. Working in the community, social workers assist residents in finding employment or housing and help initiate community projects. A social worker may provide personal counseling to help individuals and families improve their problem solving and coping skills and developmental capacities.

**AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION**

There are many fields in which to specialize as a social worker, including child welfare, family services, child or adult protective services, clinical, mental health, health care, school social work, criminal justice, occupational social work, gerontology, and policy/planning.

**WORK ENVIRONMENT**

A social worker typically works a 40-hour week, with some of those hours on the weekend or during evening hours when clients are available. Because the title of social worker encompasses so many

duties, work settings will vary from person to person. In health care, social workers are predominantly employed in hospitals, clinics, mental health facilities, nursing homes, community and public health centers, federal agencies, and patient homes. They will often work alongside other health care providers such as physicians, nurses, and mental health professionals.

**ANNUAL WAGES**

	National	New York State
Child, Family and School Social Workers .....	\$33,800	\$39,229
Medical and Public Health Social Workers .....	\$38,438	\$44,138
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers .....	\$33,030	\$36,400

*National and New York State median annual earnings for 2003. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.*

**ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS**

A bachelor's degree in social work is the entry degree for the field; a master's degree is necessary for more advanced positions. The master's degree is appropriate for those interested in health and mental health social work, or for any supervisory or administrative position. The Doctor of Social Work degree is required for college and university teaching positions and any

formal research in social work. Licensing and certification laws regarding social workers vary from state to state. To practice as a certified social worker in New York State, individuals must meet New York State licensing requirements. Detailed information for New York State licensing requirements can be found online at: [www.labor.state.ny.us/business\\_ny/employer\\_responsibilities/olcn/menu.htm](http://www.labor.state.ny.us/business_ny/employer_responsibilities/olcn/menu.htm).

The National Association of Social Workers awards several certifications: C-SWCM (Certified Social Work Case Manager), C-CATODSW (Certified Clinical Alcohol, Tobacco, and other Drugs Social Worker), and C-SSWS (Certified School Social Work Specialist).

**PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

American Board of Examiners in Clinical Social Work  
 Association of Social Work Boards  
 National Association of Social Workers  
 National Association of Puerto Rican/Hispanic Social Workers

*For professional organization address and phone information see Appendix B.*

**EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

*For a listing of educational programs in New York State for Mental and Social Health see page 43.*

*New York State Educational Institutions***NEW YORK STATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS WITH PROGRAMS IN MENTAL AND SOCIAL HEALTH***(For New York State educational institution address and phone informations, see Appendix A.)*

Adelphi University	Hofstra University	St John's University-New York
Barnard College	Houghton College	St Lawrence University
Canisius College	Iona College	State University of New York at Albany
Clarkson University	Ithaca College	State University of New York at Binghamton
Colgate University	Keuka College	State University of New York at Buffalo
College of Mount Saint Vincent	Le Moyne College	State University of New York at Stony Brook
Columbia University in the City of New York	Long Island University-Brooklyn Campus	State University of New York College at Brockport
Concordia College	Long Island University-C W Post Campus	State University of New York College at Buffalo
Cornell University-Endowed Colleges	Long Island University-Southampton College	State University of New York College at Cortland
Cornell University-New York State Statutory Colleges	Long Island University-Westchester	State University of New York College at Fredonia
City University of New York Bernard M Baruch College	Manhattan College	State University of New York College at Geneseo
City University of New York Brooklyn College	Manhattanville College	State University of New York College at New Paltz
City University of New York City College	Marist College	State University of New York College at Old Westbury
City University of New York College of Staten Island	Marymount College	State University of New York College at Oneonta
City University of New York Graduate School and University Center	Marymount Manhattan College	State University of New York College at Oswego
City University of New York Hunter College	Mercy College-Bronx Branch Campus	State University of New York College at Plattsburgh
City University of New York John Jay College	Mercy College-Main Campus	State University of New York College at Potsdam
Criminal Justice	Mercy College-White Plains Branch Campus	State University of New York College at Purchase
City University of New York Kingsborough	Mercy College-Yorktown Heights Branch Campus	State University of New York College of Agriculture and Technology at Cobleskill
Community College	Mohawk Valley Community College-Utica Branch	State University of New York Empire State College
City University of New York La Guardia	Molloy College	State University of New York Institute of Technology at Utica-Rome
Community College	Mount Saint Mary College	State University of New York Westchester Community College
City University of New York Lehman College	Nazareth College of Rochester	Syracuse University
City University of New York Medgar Evers College	New School University	Teachers College at Columbia University
City University of New York Queens College	New York Institute of Technology-Central Islip	The College of New Rochelle
City University of New York York College	New York Institute of Technology-Manhattan Campus	The College of Saint Rose
Daemen College	New York Institute of Technology-Old Westbury	The Sage Colleges-Albany Campus
Dominican College of Blauvelt	New York Medical College	The Sage Colleges-Troy Campus
Dowling College	Niagara University	Touro College
D'Youville College	Nyack College	Union College
Elmira College	Pace University-New York	University of Rochester
Federation Employment Guide Service Trades and Business School	Pace University-Pleasantville Briarcliff	Utica College of Syracuse University
Fordham University	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	Vassar College
Hamilton College	Roberts Wesleyan College	Wagner College
Hartwick College	Rochester Institute of Technology	Wells College
Hilbert College	Saint Bonaventure University	Yeshiva University
Hobart William Smith Colleges	Saint John Fisher College	
	Saint Josephs College-Main Campus	
	Saint Josephs College-Suffolk Campus	
	Saint Thomas Aquinas College	
	Siena College	
	Skidmore College	
	St Francis College	

*Source: U.S. Department of Education – Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System ([www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/](http://www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/)) and the New York State Area Health Education Center System Data Resource Center, September 2003.*