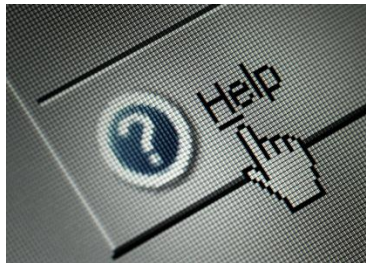


# Pursuing a Career in Substance Abuse Counseling

## The Facts

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, “an estimated **19.5 million Americans** aged 12 or older were current users of an illicit drug in 2003. This estimate represents 8.2 percent of the population.” In Oklahoma, over 160,000 people—nearly 6% of the population—need substance abuse treatment according to the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services. Obviously we have a high demand for drug & alcohol counselors. In addition, projections from the National Employment Matrix show substance abuse counselors to be the fastest growing area of counseling from 2008-2018.



## Is addiction counseling the field for you?

Providing addiction or substance abuse counseling can be a challenging job. Many consumers in this field have co-occurring disorders, meaning they suffer from both addiction and other behavioral or mental health issues. Relapse is common and burnout easily occurs without proper self-care. However, substance abuse counseling is also one of the most rewarding jobs one can have in the counseling field. An addiction counselor can facilitate change and aid in establishing positive lifestyle behaviors. In addition, it is an exciting time to be in the field of addiction with new research changing the way we view and treat substance disorders!

## Where can I work as a substance abuse counselor?

- Inpatient and/or outpatient therapy or counseling centers
- Drug and alcohol treatment centers
- Private, public, state and/or community agencies
- Hospitals
- Research institutes
- Educational settings like high schools & colleges
- Half-way houses
- Jails/Prisons
- Social welfare agencies
- Shelter

## What is the average salary for a substance abuse counselor?

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics May 2010 data:

- The national average hourly wage for substance abuse counselors is \$19.62.
- The national average annual wage for substance abuse counselors is \$40,810.
- In Oklahoma, the average hourly wage for substance abuse counselors is \$19.53.
- In Oklahoma, the average annual wage for substance abuse counselors is \$40,610.

# Pursuing a Career in Substance Abuse Counseling

National Wage Statistics for Substance Abuse Counselors by setting (according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics):

Setting	Average Hourly Wage	Average Annual Wage
Outpatient Care Centers	\$18.28	\$38,020
Individual & Family Services	\$18.86	\$39,220
Inpatient Mental Retardation, Mental Health & Substance Abuse Facilities	\$16.98	\$35,320
Other Residential Care Facilities	\$15.95	\$33,180
Psychiatric & Substance Abuse Hospitals	\$20.50	\$42,640
General Medical & Surgical Hospitals	\$23.14	\$48,120
Elementary & Secondary Schools	\$28.66	\$59,610
Colleges, Universities & Professional Schools	\$24.51	\$50,990
Civic & Social Organizations	\$23.33	\$48,520
Scientific Research & Development Services	\$23.32	\$48,500

## What are the educational requirements for a substance abuse counselor?

These requirements can vary from state to state. In Oklahoma, the regulations for certified or licensed alcohol and drug counselors are set forth by the Oklahoma Board of Licensed Alcohol & Drug Counselors (OBLADC). To be eligible to become a **Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor (CADC)**, a person must have a **Bachelor's degree from an accredited college in behavioral science or counseling**.

To be eligible to become a **Licensed Alcohol & Drug Counselor (LADC)**, a person must have a **45-hour Master's degree from an accredited college in Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counseling or a content-equivalent degree**. More details can be found at [www.okdrugcounselors.org](http://www.okdrugcounselors.org).

## What else is required for certification as a substance abuse counselor?

In Oklahoma, a person seeking CADC status must submit their application to the LADC Board. According to the OBLADC, as of October 2011, the initial application must include:

- Official transcript of **Bachelor's degree** discussed above
- Supervision contract with a Board approved supervisor
- Notarized application form
- Application fee
- Signed code of ethics
- 3 personal recommendations
- Personal Philosophy

Once the application is approved, additional criteria must be met. These criteria would be met while the person is working in a clinic, counseling center, etc. with clients. According to the LADC Board, as of October 2011, a CADC under supervision must:

- Complete a 300 hour Practicum with at least 10 hours in each of the 12 Core Functions

## Pursuing a Career in Substance Abuse Counseling

- Complete **45 hours of education on co-occurring disorders** (i.e. Abnormal Psychology class taken in his/her degree would fulfill this)
- **Work for 24 months (4,000 hours total)** in substance abuse counseling with at least ½ of the hours in direct client contact.
- Meet with his/her Board approved Supervisor face to face 1 hour per week
- Maintain and submit a supervision log for the 2 year period (This can be turned in at the completion of the two years/4,000 hours, but it is preferable that logs are submitted every 6 months to the LADC Board)
- Have the Supervisor complete the General Supervision Evaluation form (Again this can be done at the completion of the hours requirement, but it is preferable that logs and evaluations are submitted every 6 months to the LADC Board)
- Complete **270 hours of continuing education of which 135 hours must be Drug & Alcohol specific** (OBLADC website provides an ongoing list of continuing education events that are approved by the LADC Board)
- Submit a notarized Citizenship Affidavit form

### **What else is required for licensure as a substance abuse counselor?**

In Oklahoma, a person seeking LADC status must submit their application to the LADC Board. According to the OBLADC, as of October 2011, the initial application must include:

- Official transcript of **Master's degree** discussed above
- Supervision contract with a Board approved supervisor
- Notarized application form
- Application fee
- Signed code of ethics
- 3 personal recommendations
- Personal Philosophy

Once the application is approved, additional criteria must be met. These criteria would be met while the person is working in a clinic, counseling center, etc. with clients. According to the LADC Board, as of October 2011, a LADC under supervision must:

- Complete a 300 hour Practicum with at least 10 hours in each of the 12 Core Functions
- **Work for 12 months (2,000 hours total)** in substance abuse counseling with at least ½ of the hours in direct client contact.
- Meet with his/her Board approved Supervisor face to face 1 hour per week
- Maintain and submit a supervision log for the 1 year period (This can be turned in at the completion of the year/2,000 hours, but it is preferable that logs are submitted every 6 months to the LADC Board)
- Have the Supervisor complete the General Supervision Evaluation form (Again this can be done at the completion of your hours requirement, but it is preferable that logs and evaluations are submitted every 6 months to the LADC Board)
- **Complete 180 hours of continuing education of which 90 hours must be Drug & Alcohol specific** (OBLADC website provides an ongoing list of continuing education events that are approved)
- Submit a notarized Citizenship Affidavit form