



# AHEA

Alberta Human Ecology & Home Economics Association

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## An Overview of Human Ecology/Home Economics in the Health and Social Services Sectors

"Human ecologists and home economists<sup>1</sup> advise, counsel, promote and teach in a variety of settings.

In **business**, human ecologists may work as consultants, advisors, designers, managers, administrators and quality control testers in companies and organizations that provide product and services that meet individual and family needs. We also work in human resources and consumer or public relations. You may find human ecologists working as food consultants, consumer service managers, fashion or textiles designers, product managers, store buyers, journalists, recipe developers, product promoters, product salespersons, financial planners, investment advisors, media commentators, food stylists or entrepreneurs.

Working with a **community agency**, human ecologists may co-ordinate volunteers, work as financial counselors, family outreach workers, life skills facilitators, rehabilitation workers or consumer advocates.

In **health care**, human ecologists with appropriate educational preparation in foods and nutrition areas, including a minor in Community Nutrition, could provide dietary or health promotion education.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The terms Human Ecologist and Human Ecology will be used subsequently. Where Human Ecology/Ecologist is used, Home Economics/Economist can be substituted.

<sup>2</sup> To work or use the titles of Registered Dietitian, Registered Nutritionist, Nutritionist or Dietitian requires that the professional be registered according to the

In **education**, human ecologists could be public school teachers, college or university instructors, education consultants, curriculum and program developers or adult educators.

In **government**, you may find human ecologists working as researchers, museum curators, health educators, food and nutrition advisers or consultants, information specialists, product developers, policy developers, advocacy specialists or marketing specialists.

As well, human ecologists volunteer in their communities – supporting individuals and families."<sup>3</sup>

Human Ecology is a fast changing profession. One of our problems, in terms of identity, is that we do work in such diverse fields. What binds Human Ecologists together is the desire to provide a better quality of life for individuals, families, communities, and societies. The profession is grounded in the theory of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model.<sup>4</sup> This model (shown in Figure 1) is very useful for looking at the field of human ecology and how we fit in.

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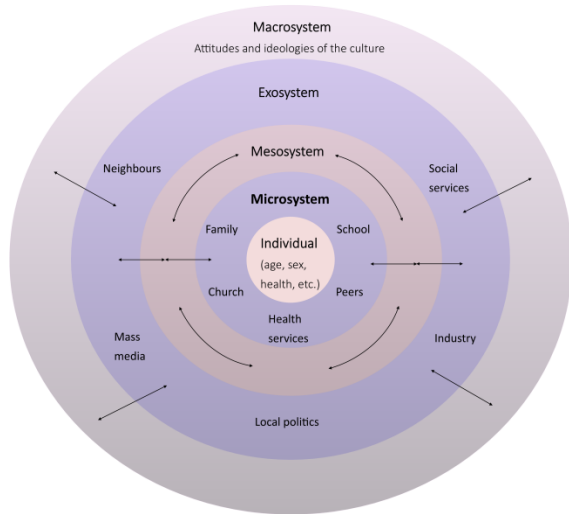
requirements set out in the Health Professions Act (HPA) section 17 of the Registered Dietitians and Registered Nutritionists Profession Regulation, and Schedule 23 of the HPA.

<sup>3</sup> AHEA. What is a PHEC?

<http://www.ahea.ab.ca/Default.aspx?pageId=144714>  
2 Accessed 17Jul2017.

<sup>4</sup> Bronfenbrenner, U. *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. 1979. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Figure 1 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Development<sup>5</sup>



Within the health and human services sector, Human Ecologists can work with all age groups. They can be direct care providers, or work in administration. Some examples of health and human service provider organizations Human Ecologists work for include: The Family Centre, iHuman Youth Society, Terra Centre for Teen Parents, Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth, charitable foundations, YMCA, and YWCA. Several current members work for government, such as Alberta Health, Alberta Health Services, and the Social Services departments in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

### Professional Registration

In January, 1989, the Alberta Home Economics Association (AHEA) was registered under the Professional and Occupational Associations Registration Act (POARA), and granted the authority to

register qualified members as Professional Home Economists. In 2002, a new name for the Association was registered. The revised Human Ecologist and Home Economist Regulation recognized the new association name as well as an additional protected title.

The current legislation provides the right to the titles Professional Human Ecologist and Professional Home Economist, and the abbreviations P.H.Ec. or PHEc. AHEA members who are registered Professional Human Ecologists or Professional Home Economists have exclusive use of these designated titles and abbreviations. In working towards becoming a self-regulated profession, AHEA established the following objectives:

1. To protect the public through defining standards of education, experience, performance, and conduct for registered members.
2. To define to the public the field of practice of human ecology and in this way ensure services are known and accessible.
3. To make known to the public a means of redress and discipline of registered members of the profession for unskilled practice and professional misconduct.

Exclusive-use-of-title legislation does not prohibit unregistered persons from practising human ecology, nor does it require unregistered human ecologists to abide by the provisions of the act and regulation.

### For more information:

Registrar  
 Alberta Human Ecology and Home Economics Association  
[www.ahea.ab.ca](http://www.ahea.ab.ca)  
 (780)914-6638

<sup>5</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bronfenbrenner%27s\\_Ecological\\_Theory\\_of\\_Development.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bronfenbrenner%27s_Ecological_Theory_of_Development.jpg) accessed 12Jan14.