



ASHA
Audiology
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the Profession of Audiology

 **2021**
AUDIOLOGY SURVEY

Private Practice

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Executive Summary

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) conducted a survey of audiologists in the fall of 2021. The survey was designed to provide information about salaries, working conditions, and service delivery, as well as to update and expand information gathered during previous *Audiology Surveys*.

The results are presented in a series of reports. This report is limited to responses from audiologists in private practice.

Highlights

- ◆ 69% of private practice audiologists received primarily an annual salary.
- ◆ 79% worked in nonresidential health care facilities.
- ◆ 69% held an AuD as their only doctoral degree.
- ◆ 48% worked in the suburbs.
- ◆ The median annual salary for owners was \$90,120.
- ◆ The median hourly wage was \$43.20 for part-time employees and \$44.26 for contractors and consultants.
- ◆ The median commission reported was \$20,000.
- ◆ The median percentage of commission was 20% for owners and 8% for full-time employees.
- ◆ The median bonus was \$25,000 for owners and \$3,000 for full-time salaried employees.
- ◆ 49% of owners and 57% of employees had never heard of the Alternative Payment Model.
- ◆ TruHearing (38%) and United Healthcare Hearing/EPIC (37%) were the most frequently used third-party administrators.
- ◆ 33% are considering providing follow-up care for patients who purchase hearing aids online or over the counter, and 31% have plans to provide this service.

Who They Are

The data in this report were gathered from 540 ASHA-certified audiologists who indicated their involvement in private practice on the *2021 Audiology Survey* as:

Involvement in Private Practice*

- ◆ Owner (e.g., office-based or contract-based private practice; *n* = 217)
- ◆ Full-time salaried audiologist (*n* = 200)
- ◆ Part-time salaried audiologist (*n* = 51)
- ◆ Contractor/consultant (e.g., per diem, hourly, or temporary; *n* = 72)

Salary Basis*

- ◆ 69% received primarily an annual salary.
- ◆ 26% received primarily an hourly wage.
- ◆ 5% received primarily a commission.

Primary Facility*

- ◆ 79% worked in nonresidential health care facilities.
- ◆ 8% worked in hospitals.
- ◆ 7% worked in audiology franchises/retail chains.
- ◆ 4% worked in industry.
- ◆ 1% worked in colleges/universities.
- ◆ 2% worked in *other* facilities.

Highest Degree**

- ◆ 28% held a master's as the highest degree.
- ◆ 69% held an AuD as their only doctorate.
- ◆ 3% held a PhD as their only doctorate.

Primary Function*

- ◆ 91% were clinical service providers.
- ◆ 4% were administrators, supervisors, or directors.
- ◆ 2% were consultants.
- ◆ 1% were in sales, training, or technical support.
- ◆ 1% were college or university faculty or clinical educators.
- ◆ <1% were researchers.
- ◆ 1% filled *other* functions.

Region of the Country*

- ◆ 21% worked in the Northeast.
- ◆ 24% worked in the Midwest.
- ◆ 38% worked in the South.
- ◆ 17% worked in the West.

Population Density*

- ◆ 38% worked in a city/urban area.
- ◆ 48% worked in a suburban area.
- ◆ 14% worked in a rural area.

* Respondents could select only one response. ** Respondents could select more than one response.

What They Earn: Annual Salaries

The salaries in this report are *median salaries* (the one in the middle when salaries are ordered from lowest to highest). The salaries in this section (i.e., annual salaries) are only for respondents who reported that they received *primarily* an annual salary and worked full time. In most cases, salaries are presented separately for owners and employees. The term *employee* will be used throughout this report to refer to the list of five types of nonowners (i.e., salaried employees, contractors, consultants, per diems, and temps). All respondents were ASHA-certified in audiology (Certificate of Clinical Competence [CCC-A]). Salaries are presented only when there are sufficient cases—that is, a minimum of 25 respondents.

Wording of the salary questions has changed over time. Prior to 2010, bonuses and commissions were to be included in the basic salary. Beginning with the 2010 survey, however, they were to be excluded, and their amounts were established in separate questions. Additionally, prior to 2014, respondents were asked if they were paid on an hourly or annual basis; in 2014, the response options were changed to *primarily per hour*, *primarily annual salary*, or *primarily commission*. These changes may account for some of the differences in salaries across years.

The median salary for owners who were employed full time in private practice was \$90,120 ($n = 111$). The median salary for full-time salaried audiologists was \$75,000 ($n = 131$).



Highest Degree

The median full-time annual salary was \$15,000 higher for owners who had earned an AuD than for employees with the same degree (see Table 1).

Highest Degree	Owner		Employee	
	\$	<i>n</i>	\$	<i>n</i>
Master's	—	18	70,000	27
AuD as only doctorate	90,000	84	75,000	103
PhD as only doctorate	—	5	—	0

Years of Experience

The median number of years of experience for all of the audiologists who work in private practice was 21 for employees and 28 for owners. The median salary for owners who were employed full time was highest for those with 31–40 years of experience (\$97,500) and for employees with 11–20 years (\$81,000; see Table 2).

Table 2: Median Annual Salary, by Years of Experience				
Years of Experience	Owner		Employee	
	\$	<i>n</i>	\$	<i>n</i>
1–10 years	—	13	72,000	54
11–20 years	—	23	81,000	28
21–30 years	85,000	33	70,000	25
31–40 years	97,500	29	—	16
41 or more years	—	13	—	7

Region of the Country

The highest median full-time annual salary for private practice owners was in the South (\$95,000) and for employees in the Midwest (\$73,000; see Table 3)

Table 3: Median Annual Salary, by Region of the Country				
Region	Owner		Employee	
	\$	<i>n</i>	\$	<i>n</i>
Northeast	90,000	26	—	20
Midwest	—	24	73,000	31
South	95,000	43	70,000	62
West	—	19	—	17

Northeast: CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT

Midwest: IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI

South: AL, AR, DC, DE, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV

West: AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, NM, OR, UT, WA, WY

Population Setting

Median full-time annual salaries for private practice employees were the same in city/urban areas and in suburban areas (see Table 4).

Table 4: Median Annual Salary, by Population Setting				
Population Setting	Owner		Employee	
	\$	<i>n</i>	\$	<i>n</i>
City/urban	100,000	43	75,000	63
Suburban	90,000	48	75,000	58
Rural	—	15	—	10

What They Earn: Hourly Wages

The salaries in this section (i.e., hourly wages) are for respondents who reported that they worked in private practice and worked either full time or part time.

Of those who reported their hourly wage, the median number of hours worked was 30 for owners ($n = 20$), 40 for full-time employees ($n = 23$), 24 for part-time employees ($n = 33$), and 20 for contractors and consultants ($n = 53$).

Owner or Employee

Median hourly wages were \$43.20 for part-time employees ($n = 31$) and \$44.26 for contractors and consultants ($n = 48$). Too few owners and full-time employees provided this information for it to be included in the report.

Predictors

Several predictor variables (i.e., region of the country, years of experience, population setting, and highest degree) can be presented only for employees (i.e., full-time employees, part-time employees, and contractors/consultants) because fewer than 25 owners provided this information (see Table 5).

Table 5: Median Hourly Wages for Employees		
Predictor	\$	<i>n</i>
Region		
Northeast	50.00	26
Midwest	38.00	30
South	42.00	30
West	—	17
Years of Experience		
1–10	—	8
11–20	42.00	25
21–30	43.00	34
31–40	40.00	28
41 or more years	—	8
Population Setting		
Metropolitan/urban area	40.00	31
Suburban area	43.50	59
Rural area	—	11
Highest Degree		
Master's	40.00	48
AuD as only doctorate	43.00	46
PhD as only doctorate	—	5

What They Earn: Commissions and Bonuses

Of the private practice audiologists who responded to the survey, 127 indicated that they had received a commission during the previous 12 months. Their median commission was \$20,000.

- ◆ The median commission for audiologists who were full-time salaried employees in a private practice was \$20,000 ($n = 82$). Too few responses were received from owners ($n = 21$), part-time salaried employees ($n = 8$), and contractors/consultants ($n = 15$) to report their commissions.
- ◆ Of private practice audiologists who received a commission in addition to receiving primarily an *annual salary*, the median combined amount of their earnings was \$90,987 ($n = 73$).

Commission Percentage

The median percentage of commission on product sales was 20% for owners ($n = 29$) and 8% for full-time employees ($n = 77$).

Bonus

A total of 164 private practice audiologists reported receiving a median bonus of \$4,616 during the previous 12 months. The median bonus was \$25,000 for 48 owners and \$3,000 for 85 full-time salaried employees.



Alternative Payment Models

We asked audiologists how familiar they were with the concept of *alternative payment models* in health care delivery and payment (see Table 6). Owners' responses differed from employees' responses ($p = .027$).

Table 6: Alternative Payment Models (%)			
Response	Total	Owner	Employee
Have never heard of it.	54	49	57
Have only <i>heard</i> of it.	20	17	21
Know a little about it.	24	30	20
Know a lot about it.	3	4	2
<i>n</i>	537	213	322

Third-Party Administrators

We asked audiologists which third-party administrators they currently work with for hearing aid dispensing and related services. Employees were more likely than owners to say that the question was *not applicable* (see Table 7).

Table 7: Third-Party Administrators (%)			
Response	Total	Owner	Employee
Not applicable ^{***}	38	29	44
TruHearing ^{**}	38	45	33
United Healthcare Hearing/EPIC ^{***}	37	48	30
Amplifon	29	31	27
Hearing Care Solutions (HCS) [*]	22	26	18
NationsHearing ^{**}	15	21	11
HearUSA	13	16	11
American Hearing Benefits/Start Hearing ^{**}	11	16	8
Hear.com	7	10	6
Other	10	10	10
<i>n</i>	540	≥216	≥323

^{*}*p* < .05, ^{**}*p* < .01, ^{***}*p* < .001.

COVID-19's Effect on Telepractice

We asked whether the COVID-19 pandemic had affected their practice setting's telepractice offerings.

- ◆ 10% said that there had been no effect; their practice was already providing telepractice services.
- ◆ 37% said that their practice has now begun to provide telepractice services.
- ◆ 14% said that their practice is considering providing telepractice services.
- ◆ 39% said that their practice has not provided, and is not currently planning to provide, telepractice services.

Follow-Up Care

We asked if their practice setting would be providing follow-up care for patients who purchased hearing aids either online or over the counter. Responses from owners differed significantly from those of employees ($p = .000$, see Table 8).

Table 8: Follow-Up Care (%)			
Response	Total	Owner	Employee
No, we are not planning to provide this service.	36	28	41
We are considering it but have not made a decision.	33	28	35
Yes, we have plans to provide this service.	31	43	23
<i>n</i>	524	212	314



Supervision

We also asked how many individuals they were currently supervising.

- ◆ Among those who supervise any audiology assistants, the median number currently being supervised by both owners ($n = 43$) and employees ($n = 49$) was 1.
- ◆ Among those who supervise any graduate students, the median number currently being supervised by both owners ($n = 43$) and employees ($n = 85$) was 1.
- ◆ There were too few owners ($n = 21$) and employees ($n = 14$) to report on how many hearing aid dealers they were supervising.

What They Say About ASHA

For years, the first question on the *Audiology Survey* and other major ASHA surveys has inquired about the kind of job the Association is doing in serving its members. In 2021, the ratings by owners and employees did not differ significantly ($p = .082$).

- ◆ 6% of the respondents gave ratings of *excellent*.
- ◆ 48% of the respondents gave ratings of *good*.
- ◆ 40% of the respondents gave ratings of *fair*.
- ◆ 7% of the respondents gave ratings of *poor*.



To probe specific areas of approval with ASHA, we used a follow-up question to ask respondents to *agree*, *strongly agree*, *disagree*, or *strongly disagree* with four statements. More than half of the audiologists agreed or strongly agreed with each statement.

- ◆ At ASHA, I feel I belong.
 - 61% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Owners' responses were not significantly different from employees' responses ($p = .234$).
- ◆ ASHA is an organization I trust.
 - 85% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.
 - 80% of owners and 88% of employees agreed or strongly agreed ($p = .025$).
- ◆ ASHA values me.
 - 61% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.
 - Owners' responses were not significantly different from employees' responses ($p = .181$).
- ◆ I recommend ASHA as a resource to colleagues.
 - 58% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.
 - Owners' responses were not significantly different from employees' responses ($p = .055$).

**Survey
Notes and
Methodology**

The *ASHA Audiology Survey* has been fielded in even-numbered years between 2004 and 2018 to gather information of interest to the profession. The 2020 version was postponed by 1 year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Members, volunteer leaders, and staff rely on data from the survey to better understand the priorities and needs of audiologists.

The survey was fielded via postal mail in October, November, and December of 2021 to a random sample of 5,000 ASHA-certified audiologists who were employed in the United States. Half of each group was assigned to a random sample to receive an additional response option on the primary employment function question, i.e., *owner* was added to the option of *administrator/supervisor/director* for half of the sample.

The sample was a random sample, stratified by both type of facility and private practice. Small groups, such as industry, were oversampled. Weighting was used when presenting data to reflect the actual distribution of audiologists in each type of facility.

Response Rate

Of the original 5,000 audiologists in the sample, 27 were retired, 90 were not currently employed in the profession, and 43 had undeliverable mail addresses. The actual number of respondents was 1,487, resulting in a 30.7% response rate. The results presented in this report are based on responses from those 1,487 individuals.

**Survey
Reports**

Results from the *2021 Audiology Survey* are presented in a series of reports:

- Survey Summary
- Annual Salaries
- Hourly Wages
- Private Practice
- Clinical Focus Patterns
- Survey Methodology, Respondent Demographics, and Glossary

**Suggested
Citation**

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2022). *ASHA 2021 Audiology Survey: Private Practice*. www.asha.org

Resources

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.-a). ASHA's coding, reimbursement, and advocacy modules. Retrieved from www.asha.org/practice/reimbursement/modules

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American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.-e). Quality improvement for audiologists. Retrieved from www.asha.org/aud/Quality-Improvement-for-Audiologists/

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Consulta- tion

For a free consultation with an ASHA staff audiologist, please contact audiology@asha.org.

Additional Information

For additional information regarding the *2021 Audiology Survey*, please contact ASHA's audiology practices unit at audiology@asha.org. To learn more about how the Association is working on behalf of ASHA-certified audiologists, visit ASHA's website at www.asha.org/aud/.

Thank You!

ASHA would like to thank the audiologists who completed the *ASHA 2021 Audiology Survey*. Reports like this one are possible only because people like *you* participate.

Is this information valuable to you? If so, please accept invitations to participate in other ASHA-sponsored surveys and focus groups. You are the experts, and we rely on you to provide data to share with your fellow members. ASHA surveys benefit *you*.