

MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

**Report of the Market Supplement Review
Committee**

Audiology Assistant (#516)

Final Report

Report Due Date: July 11, 2025

New Request

**Report Distribution Date: September 15,
2025**

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Market Supplement Program is to ensure that Saskatchewan health care employers can attract and retain the employees required to provide appropriate health care services to the people of Saskatchewan.

This Program is designed to address specific skill shortages, by use of a temporary market supplement to attract and/or retain qualified employees. The Program is also designed to ensure that temporary market supplements respond to valid labour market criteria to address recruitment/retention pressures.

A market supplement will be an acceptable option only if:

- a) workplace initiatives have not addressed the skill shortage;
- b) labour market data supports a supplement; and,
- c) recruitment/retention is a problem, is affecting service delivery, and is well documented.

OVERVIEW

The Market Supplement Review Committee (MSRC) reviewed documentation provided by employers for the Audiologist Assistant Classification – job #516. This request is a new request advanced by the Provider Unions on April 22, 2025.

The market supplement process is outlined in each of the Letters of Understanding pertaining to the Market Supplement Program for the Canadian Union of Public Employees Union (CUPE), Saskatchewan Government Employees Union (SGEU) and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU-West).

Responses were received from Saskatoon and Regina where this classification is employed within the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA).

Role of an Audiology Assistant:

Under the supervision of an Audiologist, the Assistant supports all aspects of audiology, including hearing screenings.

Qualifications:

- *Speech Language Pathologist Assistant diploma plus the Audiology Assistant Program.*

ANALYSIS

The MSRC discussed the Labour Market Criteria as guided by the Market Supplement Program.

VACANCY RATE ANALYSIS: *(Respondents were requested to provide information about the frequency and timing of vacancy occurrences (i.e., seasonal vacancies; do the vacancies always follow an event; etc.); and to identify trends that may affect recruitment/retention efforts.)*

Information regarding positions and vacancies is provided in the following table:

Audiology Assistant (#516) – Position Information:

| Saskatchewan Health Authority | Number of Positions (As of June 2025) | | Number of Vacant Positions (As of June 2025) | | % Vacancy | |
|-------------------------------|--|-----------|---|-----------|------------|-----------|
| | Full-Time | Part-Time | Full-Time | Part-Time | Full-Time | Part-Time |
| Regina | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0% |
| Saskatoon | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 100% | 0% |
| Total | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 50% | 0% |

Regina and Saskatoon are the only geographic locations within the Saskatchewan Health Authority that employ Audiology Assistants. Regina has not identified any vacancies or trends related to vacancies as the one position is currently filled. Saskatoon, however, has indicated that their vacancy impact is critical meaning that vacancies are either unlikely to be filled or may be vacant for extended periods of time i.e. greater than 12 months. In this case, the Saskatoon vacancy has been vacant for quite some time.

SERVICE DELIVERY IMPACTS: *(Employers were asked to provide information that addresses current service delivery impacts resulting from staff shortages; potential staff short term service delivery impacts; potential long term service delivery impacts; and options for alternative service delivery models.)*

Regina reported minor service delivery impacts, such as temporary delays or slight changes in the quality or quantity of services. While these may cause some inconvenience to patients, the impacts are short-term. In contrast, Saskatoon identified significant service delivery impacts, noting that the department is operating at only a basic level. This has led to substantial service challenges, including extensive wait lists that are directly affecting patient care.

Strategies utilized to address service delivery impacts include the use of other classifications where appropriate.

TURNOVER RATES: *(Respondents were asked to provide local analysis of reasons for leaving and trends that may be emerging. They were also asked to provide annual turnover {loss of employees to other competitor employers} ratio to the existing staff complement {budgeted positions} in the given occupation.)*

There has been no turnover within this classification over the past year. As such, no turnover trends can be analyzed.

RECRUITMENT ISSUE ANALYSIS: *(Respondents were asked to provide information such as length of recruitment times, training investments, licensing issues, supply and demand issues, etc., as well as information that would identify trends that may affect recruitment and/or retention efforts).*

Regina characterized their recruitment efforts as being moderate meaning that new graduates and qualified professionals are difficult to recruit. Educational institutions are not graduating sufficient new grads to meet the demand. Saskatoon characterized their recruitment efforts as being significant in that qualified professionals and new graduates are in great demand by employers who are willing to pay significant recruiting bonuses or, to contract the service if required.

Initiatives undertaken to address recruitment issues include the following:

- Posting internally and on the Health Careers website when positions become vacant.
- Relocation incentives.
- Tuition and educational incentives.
- Access to Provincial Employment Strategy Funds (PESC) for Employees within the CUPE Bargaining Unit to support educational assistance.
- Access to practical placements if available.

SALARY MARKET CONDITIONS: *(Respondents were asked to identify situations where their salary levels are lower than other employers that they would expect to recruit employees from, or other employers that recruit their employees. This may be local, provincial, regional, national or international, depending on the occupation group and traditional recruitment relationships. Cost of living considerations may or may not be appropriate to factor into market salary comparisons.)*

| Province | Job Title | Effective Date | Maximum Rate of Pay (2022) |
|--|--------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| British Columbia | Audiometric Technician 1 | April 1, 2022 | \$ 27.33 |
| Alberta | Therapy Assistant | April 1, 2022 | \$ 30.86 |
| Saskatchewan | Audiology Assistant | April 1, 2022 | \$ 24.84 |
| Manitoba | Audiology Assistant | April 1, 2022 | \$ - |
| Western Canadian Average (2022) | | | \$ 27.68 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Saskatchewan Rate (2022) | \$ 24.84 |
| Western Canadian Average (2022) | \$ 27.68 |
| Sask compared to Average (\$) | \$ (2.84) |
| Sask compared to Average (%) | 89.74% |

Notes:

- Saskatchewan rates are below the Western Canadian Average.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- SAHO and the Provider Unions are currently negotiating a new collective agreement as their previous agreements expired on March 31, 2023.
- In the letter from Colin Byas, CUPE National Representative, dated April 22, 2025, he indicated that the vacancy rate for the classification was 50% which the Committee found to be consistent with the information obtained by the Committee. There was no information, however, indicating that the services were being contracted out.
- In addition, Mr. Byas indicated the salary fell behind the Western Canadian average by \$1.75 which the Committee did not find consistent with the costing information provided by the SAHO Compensation and Data Analytics Department. Mr. Byas also did not provide the comparator positions that the Union used for their analysis.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Considering all the labour market criteria defined by the Market Supplement Program, the Market Supplement Review Committee makes the following conclusions:

- Service delivery issues across the province have been impacted.
- The vacancy rate within the province is 50%.
- Turnover was not a consideration in the evaluation.
- Saskatchewan rates are below the Western Canadian average.
- Respondents expressed concerns with the salary of this classification.

Having reviewed the employer information and considering all of the labour market criteria defined by the market supplement framework, the Market Supplement Review Committee recommends to **implement a market supplement** for the Audiology Assistant classification, job # 516.