

**MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM**

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**Report of the Market Supplement Review  
Committee**

**Pathologist Assistant (Job #465)**

**FINAL**

**Report Due Date: February 25, 2026**

**New Request**

**Report Distribution Date: March 10, 2026**

## **OBJECTIVE**

The objective of the Saskatchewan 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 and/or retention pressures.

A market supplement will be an acceptable option only if:

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

## **OVERVIEW**

The Market Supplement Review Committee (MSRC) reviewed documentation provided in the new review request for the Pathologist Assistant (Job #465). This request was advanced by an Employer representative of the Saskatchewan Health Authority on December 4, 2025.

The Pathologist Assistants (#465) are members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU-West). The market supplement review process is outlined in each of the Letters of Understanding found within the respective collective bargaining agreements.

### **Role of a Pathologist Assistant – Job #465**

*Responsible for the initial examination and dissection of surgical specimens and dissection of bodies during post-mortem examination. Assists with research and instruction of Pathology interns/residents.*

### **Qualifications:**

- *Pathologists' Assistant Masters' Program*
- *Certification with Canadian Association of Pathologists and/or Certification with the American Society for Clinical Pathology.*

## 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 permanent positions and vacancies is provided in the following table:

**Table 1: Pathologist Assistant (Job #465) - Vacant Permanent Positions (December 2025)**

Number of Permanent Positions		Number of Vacant Permanent Positions		% Vacancy	
Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
8	0	2	0	25%	0%

Regina and Saskatoon are currently the only locations that employ this classification. Regina reports no vacancies at this time, while Saskatoon has indicated that its vacancy situation is critical, with positions either unlikely to be filled or expected to remain vacant for extended periods (i.e., more than 12 months). Overall, the provincial vacancy rate for this classification is significant, at 25%.

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

Service delivery impacts in Regina were noted as minor, meaning there may be some impact to the timing, quality, or quantity of service. Patients may experience minor inconveniences; however, any service disruptions are expected to be temporary.

Saskatoon reported moderate service delivery impacts. While the department continues to provide services, some routine duties are not being performed as they have been deprioritized. The overall quality of service is being maintained; however, service challenges may persist as timelines for recruiting or secure alternate staffing arrangements extend beyond expectations.

Initiatives undertaken to address service delivery challenges for the Pathologist Assistant classification include:

- Utilizing other classifications where possible.
- Utilizing overtime.
- Engaging contract workers.
- Contacting retirees to determine their availability to return in a casual capacity.

**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 in the given occupation.).*

Where it was known over the past 12 months, the following turnover was reported:

- Number of employees who retired from this classification – 0
- Number of employees who failed their probation period – 0

- Number of employees who left due to family/domestic reasons – 2
- Number of employees who left the organization for reasons not wage related – 0
- Number of employees who left the organization for increased salary – 0

Turnover trends noted were employees moving to another province.

**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).*

Both Regina and Saskatoon identified their recruitment efforts as significant, meaning that qualified professionals and new graduates are in high demand among employers, some of whom are offering substantial recruitment incentives or contracting services where necessary. Saskatchewan is currently offering a \$10,000 recruitment incentive and continues to experience challenges recruiting for this classification.

A significant rating also indicates educational institutions have been working to increase the number of available training seats; however, Saskatoon noted that current programs are still not graduating enough candidates to meet demand.

Initiatives undertaken to support recruitment include:

- Establishing a partnership with the University of Calgary, where students currently complete the final eight months of their practicum in Saskatchewan.
- Delivering presentations to University of Calgary students regarding employment opportunities in Saskatchewan.
- Attending professional conferences, such as the College of American Pathologists (CAP).
- Posting opportunities on Health Careers and in accordance with the requirements of the collective agreement.
- Increasing visibility through a recruitment booth at the Canadian Certification Council of Pathologists' Assistants (CCCPA) conference in Saskatoon.
- Offering recruitment incentives.
- Providing relocation assistance.
- Offering practicum placements.

**SALARY MARKET CONDITIONS:** *(Employers 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).*

The following market rates for Pathologist Assistants amongst the four western provinces are reported as:

**Table 2: Pathologist Assistant - Salary Market Conditions**

Province	Job Title	Effective Date	Maximum Rate of Pay (April 1, 2022)
British Columbia	Pathologists' Assistant	April 1, 2022	\$47.910
Alberta	Pathologists' Assistant 1	April 1, 2022	\$51.150
Saskatchewan	Pathologist Assistant	April 1, 2022	\$44.970
Manitoba	Pathology Assistant	April 1, 2022	\$44.610
<b>Western Canadian Average (2022)</b>			<b>\$47.160</b>

Saskatchewan Rate	\$44.970
Western Canadian Average	\$47.160
Sask compared to Average (\$)	\$(2.19)
Sask compared to Average (%)	95.36%

Note: 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.

**CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Considering the labour market criteria under the provincial framework, the MSRC makes the following recommendation:

- The vacancy rate for the Pathologist Assistant classification is 25%, with Saskatoon reporting a critical vacancy rating.
- Service delivery impacts have been reported in both Regina and Saskatoon.
- Trends indicate that some individuals are leaving the province for employment opportunities elsewhere.
- A number of initiatives are currently underway to support recruitment for the Pathologist Assistant classification, including a recruitment incentive and respondents are still experiencing challenges in recruitment and retention.
- There continues to be a significant shortage of graduates entering the profession, contributing to the limited pool of available candidates.
- Compensation for the Pathologist Assistant classification is below the Western Canadian average.

Having reviewed the information as provided by employers, and considering the labour market criteria, the Market Supplement Review Committee recommends to **implement** a market supplement for the Pathologist Assistant classification (Job #465).