



AMERICAN  
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-  
HEARING  
ASSOCIATION

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# AUDIOLOGY SURVEY 2010

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## **Private Practice**

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## Executive Summary

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) conducted a survey of audiologists in the fall of 2010. This survey was designed to provide information about salaries, working conditions, and service delivery, as well as to update and expand information gathered from previous Audiology and Omnibus Surveys.

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

### *Highlights:*

- ◆ 44% were owners of a private practice.
- ◆ 72% received an annual salary.
- ◆ 53% held an AuD degree.
- ◆ 41% worked in a suburban area.
- ◆ Median annual salary for self-employed owners was \$80,000.
- ◆ Median annual salaries were highest in the Northeast for owners (\$93,000) and in the West for employees (\$70,000).
- ◆ Median hourly wages were \$50.00 for self-employed owners and \$35.00 for employees.
- ◆ Median commissions were \$24,492 for owners and \$18,000 for employees.
- ◆ 90% of owners and 86% of employees provided fitting and dispensing of hearing aids.
- ◆ 27% of private practice audiologists used social networks to connect with audiology colleagues.
- ◆ 45% of owners maintained their CCC-A to remain current in the field, 50% of employees for portability in obtaining state licenses.
- ◆ 68% reported that their practice bundled all charges for hearing aid dispensing.

## **Who They Are**

The data in this report were gathered from 693 audiologists who indicated on the 2010 Audiology Survey that they worked in a private practice setting. Of that group:

### ***Involvement in Private Practice\****

- ◆ 44% were owners.
- ◆ 32% were full-time salaried employees.
- ◆ 16% were part-time salaried employees.
- ◆ 9% were contractors/consultants (e.g., per diem, temporary).

### ***Type of Practice\*\****

- ◆ 47% were self-employed in a private practice.
- ◆ 33% were employed in a private practice owned by nonaudiologists.
- ◆ 19% were employed in a private practice owned by other audiologists.

### ***Annual or Hourly\****

- ◆ 72% received an annual salary.
- ◆ 28% received an hourly wage.

### ***Primary Facility\****

- ◆ 87% worked in a nonresidential health care facility.
- ◆ 7% worked in hospitals.
- ◆ 4% worked in schools.
- ◆ 2% worked in colleges/universities.
- ◆ 1% worked in industry.
- ◆ 1% worked in an "other" facility.

### ***Highest Degree\****

- ◆ 39% held a master's as highest degree.
- ◆ 53% held an AuD degree.
- ◆ 8% held a PhD degree.
- ◆ 1% held an "other" doctorate.

### ***Primary Function\****

- ◆ 93% were clinical service providers.
- ◆ 4% were administrators, supervisors, or directors.
- ◆ 2% were consultants.
- ◆ 1% were college/university faculty.
- ◆ 1% had an "other" function.

*Region of the Country\**

- ◆ 38% worked in the South.
- ◆ 21% worked in the Midwest.
- ◆ 21% worked in the West.
- ◆ 19% worked in the Northeast.

*Population Setting\**

- ◆ 41% worked in a suburban area.
- ◆ 39% worked in a metropolitan/urban area.
- ◆ 20% worked in a rural area.

\* Respondents could select only one response. \*\* 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 worked in private practice full-time for 11 to 12 months a year. In most cases, salaries are presented separately for owners and full-time employees (i.e., salaried employees, contractors, consultants, per diems, and temps). Salaries are presented only when there are sufficient cases, that is, a minimum of 25 respondents.

*Change in Reporting*

In the past, survey respondents were instructed to include bonuses and commissions as part of their annual salary. Beginning in 2010, they were requested to report basic annual salaries, bonuses, and commissions as three separate figures. The salaries reported in 2010 may appear to be smaller than in previous years, but keep in mind that bonuses and commissions were excluded.



*Owner or Employee*

The median salary for *owners* was \$80,000 ( $n = 193$ ). The median for *employees* was \$60,000 ( $n = 176$ ).

**Private Practice Type**

Owners received higher average salaries than did employees (see Table 1).

Table 1. Median Annual Salary by Private Practice Type				
Private Practice Type	Owner		Employee	
	\$	<i>n</i>	\$	<i>n</i>
Self-employed	80,000	189	<i>n</i> < 25	7
Other audiologists	<i>n</i> < 25	2	60,000	66
Nonaudiologists		3	58,000	99

**Highest Degree**

The median salary was \$3,000 higher for *employees* with an AuD than for those with a master's. For *owners*, the difference was more than \$4,000 and was in the opposite direction (see Table 2).

Table 2. Median Annual Salary by Highest Degree				
Highest Degree	Owner		Employee	
	\$	<i>n</i>	\$	<i>n</i>
Master's	80,000	61	57,000	43
AuD	75,706	112	60,000	122
PhD	<i>n</i> < 25	19	<i>n</i> < 25	8



**Years of Experience**

The median number of years of experience was 12 for full-time employees and 26 for owners. The median salary for *owners* was highest with 21-25 years of experience (\$100,000) and for *employees* with 6-10 years (\$61,000; see Table 3).

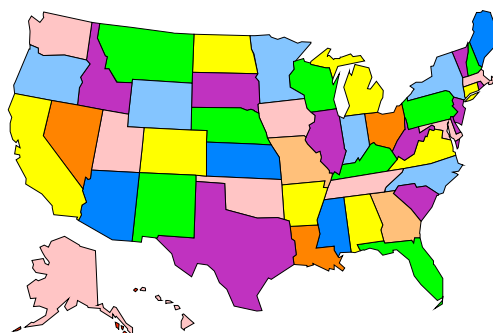
Table 3. Median Annual Salary by Years of Experience				
Years of Experience	Owner		Employee	
	\$	<i>n</i>	\$	<i>n</i>
1-5 years	<i>n</i> < 25	4	55,465	49
6-10 years		14	61,000	45
11-15 years	75,717	27	55,926	31
16-20 years	<i>n</i> < 25	24	<i>n</i> < 25	17
21-25 years	100,000	28		10
26-30 years	80,000	45		12
31 or more years	95,000	49		11

**Region of the Country**

The highest median salary for *owners* was in the Northeast (\$93,000). For *employees*, it was in the West (\$70,000). The lowest medians were in the South for both employees and owners (see Table 4).

Region*	Owner		Employee	
	\$	<i>n</i>	\$	<i>n</i>
Northeast	93,000	34	61,730	32
Midwest	80,000	31	59,652	41
South	75,000	86	55,000	71
West	80,000	40	70,000	30

\*Northeast: NJ, NY, PA, CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT  
 Midwest: IL, IN, MI, OH, WI, IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD  
 South: AL, KY, MS, TN, DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV, AR, LA, OK, TX  
 West: AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY, AK, CA, HI, OR, WA



**Population Setting**

The highest salaries for both owners and employees were in metropolitan/urban settings (see Table 5).

Population Setting	Owner		Employee	
	\$	<i>n</i>	\$	<i>n</i>
Metropolitan/urban	96,295	64	60,000	83
Suburban	80,000	64	58,643	76
Rural	80,000	61	<i>n</i> < 25	17

## What They Earn: Hourly Wages

### Owner or Employee

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 receiving an hourly wage, the median number of hours that *owners* worked per week was 24 ( $n = 29$ ). The median number of hours worked was 37 ( $n = 31$ ) for *full-time employees*, 20 for *part-time* ( $n = 81$ ), and 16 for *contractors* ( $n = 31$ ).

*Owners* reported a median hourly wage of \$50.00 ( $n = 27$ ), while *employees* reported a median wage of \$35.00 ( $n = 64$ ).

### Private Practice Type

The median wage for private practice *owners* who were self-employed was \$50.00. Audiologists employed in private practices owned by nonaudiologists earned a median wage of \$31.47 (see Table 6).

Private Practice Type	Owner		Employee	
	\$	<i>n</i>	\$	<i>n</i>
Self-employed	50.00	26		8
Owned by other audiologists	$n < 25$	0	$n < 25$	17
Owned by nonaudiologists	$n < 25$	1	31.47	37

### Other Predictors

Several predictor variables had so many cells with fewer than 25 participants that it is not possible to present data on hourly wages for them:

- ◆ By highest degree
- ◆ By years of experience
- ◆ By region of the country
- ◆ By population setting

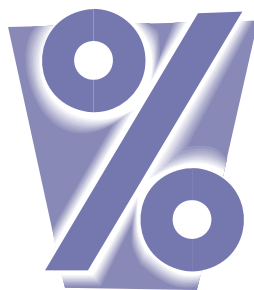
## What They Earn: Commissions and Bonuses

Of the private practice audiologists who responded to the survey, 184 indicated that they had received a commission during the previous 12 months. Their median commission was \$15,000.

The median commission for *owners* was \$24,492 ( $n = 33$ ). The median for *employees* was \$18,000 ( $n = 115$ ).

Commissions were determined in three ways:

- 51% as a percentage of profit
- 29% as a percentage of sale
- 19% as a flat rate



The median percentage of commission *on hearing aid sales* was 15% ( $n = 132$ ).

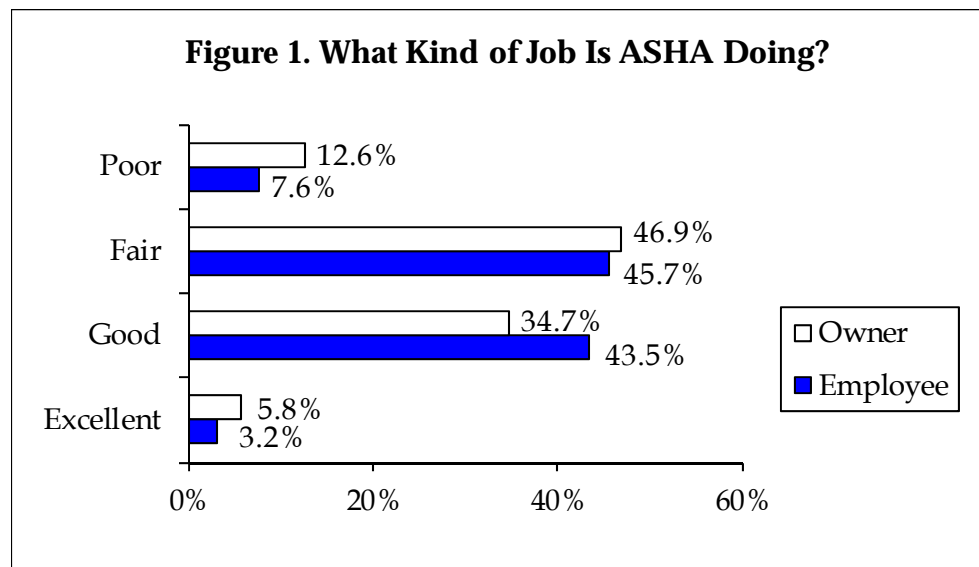


A total of 177 private practice audiologists reported receiving bonuses during the previous 12 months. The median amount was \$1,800. The average (mean) bonus earned by 46 owners was \$40,682, compared with \$4,123 earned by 91 employees ( $p = .000$ ).

## 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 2010, overall, 5% gave ratings of *excellent*, and 39% selected *good*. More *owners* than employees selected responses of excellent, but more *employees* selected responses of good (see Figure 1).



$n = 572, \chi^2(3) = 8.5, p = .037$

### About Service Provision

Two services (i.e., counseling on communication strategies/realistic expectations and fitting and dispensing hearing aids) were provided by more than 80% of owners and employees. Additionally, demonstration/fitting/orientation of hearing assistive technology was provided by 88% of owners.

The rate at which owners and employees provided services was significantly different for five of the eight services. *Owners* were more likely than employees to provide those five services (e.g., 26% of owners provided auditory training compared with 16% of employees who provided this service; see Table 7).



Table 7. Services Provided			
Service	Owner	Employee	<i>p</i>
Auditory training	26.4	15.6	.001
Counseling on communication strategies/realistic expectations	86.1	83.7	.238
Demonstration/fitting/orientation of hearing assistive technology	87.5	78.4	.002
Fitting and dispensing hearing aids	89.8	86.1	.110
Programming and fitting cochlear implants (CIs)	4.6	7.1	.136
Speechreading	7.6	3.2	.015
Validation of treatment outcomes by self-questionnaires	49.8	34.2	.000
Verification of performance of hearing aids using real ear measures	59.7	48.6	.004
I do not provide any of the above services.	3.3	7.1	.029

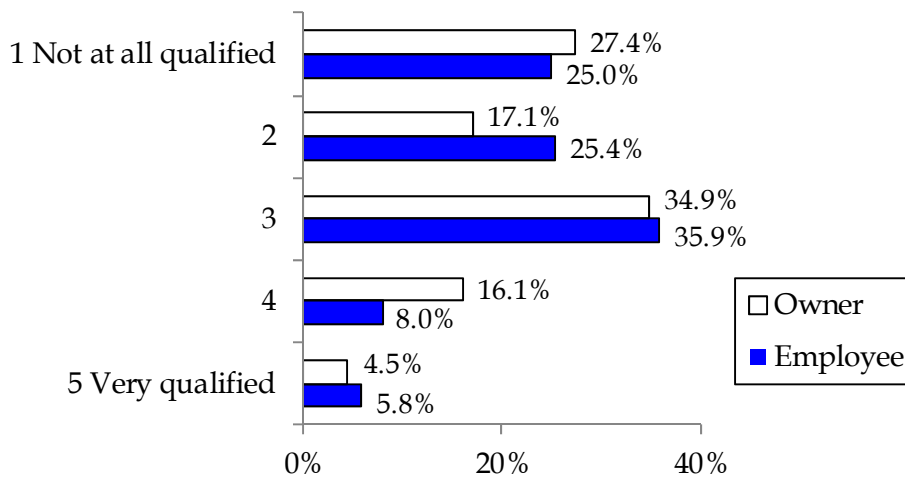
*n* ≥ 584. Shading indicates nonsignificant findings.



**About Serving Multicultural Populations**

The audiologists who received this survey used a 5-point scale (from *not at all* to *very*) to rate how qualified they were to address cultural and linguistic influences on service delivery and outcomes. Owners varied significantly from employees, with most of the differences coming from ratings of 2 or 4. Both owners and employees were equally likely to select either the extreme values (1 and 5) or the midpoint (3; see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Cultural Qualifications



$n = 568, \chi^2(4) = 13.1, p = .011$

**About Social Networking Uses**

Most of the private practice audiologists (59%) reported that they did not use social networks for any of four suggested activities. A few used them to find job opportunities (7%), promote their professional practices (16%), or find information relevant to their professional practice (16%), while most (27%) used them to connect with audiology colleagues. Ownership of a private practice had an effect on their responses.

- 21% of owners and 34% of employees used social networks to *connect with audiology colleagues* ( $p = .000$ ).
- 11% of employees and 21% of owners used social networks to *find information relevant to their professional practices* ( $p = .002$ ).
- 4% of owners and 10% of employees used social networks to *find job opportunities* ( $p = .003$ ).
- 12% of employees and 20% of owners used social networks to *promote their professional practice* ( $p = .004$ ).

**About Maintaining Their CCC-A**

More private practice *owners* maintained their Certificate of Clinical Competence in Audiology (CCC-A) because of *commitment to remaining current in the field* (45%) than for any other reason. On the other hand, the most frequently selected reason why private practice *employees* maintained their CCC-A was for *portability for obtaining state licensure* (50%; see Table 8).

Table 8. Reasons to Maintain CCC-A			
Service	Owner	Employee	<i>p</i>
Commitment to remaining current in the field	44.9	40.4	.157
Consumer recognition	33.7	25.5	.020
Increased opportunities for student supervision	27.1	33.3	.059
Overall value of the credential	37.0	28.0	.013
Portability for obtaining state licensure	37.0	49.6	.001
Required by my employer	6.9	33.3	.000
Required by third-party payers	40.6	34.0	.060
Value being highly qualified/credentialed	42.9	37.6	.110

*n* = 585. Shading indicates nonsignificant findings.

**About Licenses**

The median number of state licenses held by the private practice audiologists was one, but some audiologists did hold multiple licenses. There was no difference between owners and employees in the average number of licenses they held (*p* = .972).

Audiologists who held licenses in multiple states (*n* = 124) were asked their reasons. Most indicated that they worked in multiple states (53%) or were previously employed in another state and retained that license (43%). Answers of providing telepractice services (1%) or other (10%) were rare. None of the reasons was affected by whether the respondent was an owner or an employee of a private practice (*p* values between .093 and .709).

**About Bundling of Charges**

More private practice audiologists reported that their practice bundled all charges for hearing aid dispensing (68%) than that they charged separately for professional services and devices (25%). There was no difference between owners and employees with regard to bundling charges (*p* = .484), but owners (27%) were more likely than employees (21%) to charge separately (*p* = .033).

## Survey Notes and Method- ology

### *Response Rate*

The Audiology Survey has been fielded in even-numbered years since 2004 to gather information of interest to the profession. Members, volunteer leaders, and staff rely on data from the survey to better understand the priorities and needs of audiologists.

A stratified random sample was used to select 4,000 ASHA-certified audiologists for this survey from a population of 7,986 audiologists. They were stratified on the basis of type of facility and private practice.

The survey was mailed in September 2010. Second and third mailings followed, at approximately 4-week intervals, to individuals who had not responded to earlier mailings.

Of the original 4,000 audiologists in the sample, 13 had undeliverable addresses, 1 was deceased, 1 was retired, 2 were no longer employed in the field, and 1 was ineligible for other reasons, leaving 3,982 possible respondents. The actual number of respondents was 2,072, resulting in a *52.0%* response rate.

Because facilities with fewer audiologists (such as schools) were oversampled and those with many (e.g., hospitals) were undersampled, *weighting* was used when presenting data to reflect the actual distribution of audiologists in each type of facility within ASHA.

### *Other Reports*

Results from the 2010 Audiology Survey are reported in a series of reports:

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

## Electronic Copy

An electronic copy of this report will be available on the ASHA website at [www.asha.org/research/memberdata/AudiologySurvey.htm](http://www.asha.org/research/memberdata/AudiologySurvey.htm)

## Suggested Citation

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2010). *2010 Audiology Survey report: Private practice*. Available from [www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org).

## Supplemental Sources

ASHA's Health Care/Business Institute  
[www.asha.org/events/hcare-conf/](http://www.asha.org/events/hcare-conf/)

Frequently Asked Questions About Business Practices (ASHA)  
[www.asha.org/practice/faq\\_business\\_practices\\_both.htm](http://www.asha.org/practice/faq_business_practices_both.htm)

Practice Management (ASHA)  
[www.asha.org/practice/](http://www.asha.org/practice/)

U.S. Small Business Administration  
[www.sba.gov/](http://www.sba.gov/)

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics – Wages by Area and Occupation  
[www.bls.gov/bls/blswage.htm](http://www.bls.gov/bls/blswage.htm)

## Additional Information

For additional information regarding the 2010 Audiology Survey, please contact Pam Mason, Director of ASHA's Audiology Professional Practices, at 301-296-5790; e-mail: [pmason@asha.org](mailto:pmason@asha.org). To learn more about how the Association is working on behalf of ASHA-certified audiologists, members may visit ASHA's website at [www.asha.org/aud/](http://www.asha.org/aud/).

## Thank You

ASHA would like to thank the audiologists who received the 2010 Audiology Survey and completed it. Reports like this one are only possible because people like *you* participated. If you find this information valuable, please accept the invitation 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.