

## Speech/Language Pathologist

### ■ Job Description

Speech/language pathologists study human communication, its normal development, and its disorders. They evaluate the speech and language of children and adults, determine whether communication problems exist, and determine the best ways to treat these problems. Speech/language pathologists treat individuals with articulation disorders, voice disorders, impaired hearing, stuttering, delayed language, aphasia, cleft palate, and other problems. They are also interested in the prevention of communication disorders through public education, early identification of problems, and research on the causes and treatment.

Speech/language pathologists usually work as part of a team with other health professionals and/or education specialists.

### ■ Job Settings

Public and private schools, community clinics, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, colleges and universities, government agencies, and private practice.

### ■ Projected Need

Nationally and in Illinois, employment of speech pathologists and audiologists is expected to grow much faster than average through 2010. Speech pathologist is one of the top 50 fastest growing occupations in the state. About 350 job openings are expected each year in Illinois.

Speech and hearing disorders are related to birth defects and aging. Several factors will increase the number of people with these disorders. First, medical advances are allowing more premature babies and seriously injured people to survive. Developmental problems or injuries may cause speech or hearing disorders. Second, the number of elderly people is growing. This group is likely to experience age-related hearing disorders. In addition, people who have strokes sometimes need help learning to speak again. As more people survive strokes, more speech pathologists will be needed to help them. Third, the general population is exposed to more noise than ever before. This may also increase the number of people with hearing loss.

The number of children enrolling in schools is expected to increase. In addition, federal law promises services to children with special needs. Thus, many jobs should be available in schools. The outlook for those in private practice is favorable because some employers prefer to use private contractors. Openings also occur from the need to replace people who leave the occupation.

In Illinois, there were about 5,100 people employed in this small occupation in 2000.

### ■ Salaries

Nationally, the median wage for speech-language pathologists is \$23.32 per hour. Half of all speech-language pathologists earn between \$18.85 and \$28.34 per hour.

In Illinois, the median wage for speech pathologists is \$23.08 per hour. Wages for speech pathologists in selected cities are given below:

City	Median Hourly Wage
Bloomington-Normal	\$22.97
Champaign-Urbana	\$24.42
Chicago	\$23.56
Kankakee	\$23.08
Peoria-Pekin	\$21.22
Springfield	\$21.37
St. Louis	\$21.29

### ■ Related Careers

Special education; linguistics; behavioral sciences, including psychology and child psychology; medicine; dentistry; audiology; rehabilitative therapies

### ■ Related Educational Programs

The programs of study listed below are the recommended areas of study to pursue for this occupation. Clicking on these will lead to files that show in-state and national schools that offer these programs.

*The following link(s) will take you to CIS for more information. CIS requires an ID and password that can*

*be obtained at <http://cis.ilworkinfo.com/loginhelp/> You must log into CIS prior to clicking on the links below.*

## [Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology](#)

### ■ **Credentials**

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) offers speech-language pathologists the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology (CCC-SLP) and audiologists the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Audiology (CCC-A). To earn these certifications, a person must have a graduate degree and 375 hours of supervised clinical experience, complete a 36-week postgraduate clinical fellowship, and pass a written exam.

Speech language-pathologists and audiologists must be licensed by the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation to practice in Illinois.

### ■ **Advanced Training**

Master's and/or doctoral degrees in audiology or speech and hearing science are available in Illinois at Governors State University, Rush University, St. Xavier University, Eastern Illinois University, Illinois State University, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and Edwardsville, Northern Illinois University, Northwestern University, University of Illinois at Urbana, and Western Illinois University.

### ■ **Resources**

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association  
10801 Rockville Pike  
Rockville, MD 20852  
Phone: 800.638.8255  
E-mail: [actioncenter@asha.org](mailto:actioncenter@asha.org)  
<http://www.asha.org>  
Click on "Students" then on "Learn About the Professions."

The association offers various research grants and scholarships of up to \$5,000 to study communication sciences and disorders.

Illinois Speech-Language-Hearing Association  
230 E. Ohio Street, Suite 400  
Chicago, IL 60611  
<http://www.ishail.org>