

MARKET SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

**Report of the Market Supplement Review
Committee**

Occupational Therapist

FINAL

**Report Due Date: January 29, 2024
(Annual Review)**

Report Distribution Date: April 2024

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Market Supplement Program is to ensure that the Saskatchewan healthcare 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.

OVERVIEW

The Market Supplement Review Committee (MSRC) reviewed updated documentation submitted in the annual review process regarding the market supplement for the Occupational Therapist classification. Occupational Therapists are members of the Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan (HSAS). The initial market supplement report was released by the Market Supplement Review Committee on August 6, 2002 and implemented on October 16, 2002. The market supplement for the Occupational Therapist classification was increased through negotiations in January of 2023 which resulted in a changed annual review date to January 29th of subsequent years.

HSAS and SAHO are parties to a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with a term of April 1, 2018 – March 31, 2024. The Provincial Market Supplement Program language can be found in Letter of Understanding #12 – Provincial Market Supplement Program and Letter of Understanding #13 – Determination of Market Supplement Rates, on pages 168 and 170 of the SAHO/HSAS CBA.

Role of an Occupational Therapist:

Occupational Therapists work collaboratively to enhance clients'/patients' abilities within the environments and communities in which they live and work. Using a holistic and client centered approach, they facilitate improved functional outcomes in areas of self care, productivity and leisure for persons with physical, mental, social or developmental impairments. They may also participate in research, education, evaluation and consultation.

Qualifications:

Occupational Therapists require a Masters or degree in Science in Occupational Therapy.

There are 14 universities in Canada that offer Occupational Therapy programs. In western Canada, there are Occupational Therapy programs at the University of British Columbia, the University of Alberta and the University of Manitoba. There is no program in Saskatchewan however a new program at the University of Saskatchewan will accept students beginning in 2026-27.

ANALYSIS

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

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.)*

There were ten geographical areas that reported to the market supplement survey. Information regarding budgeted positions and vacancies is provided in the following table:

Table 1 - Occupational Therapists (Degree) – Budgeted and Vacant Positions as of January 2024

Number of Budgeted Positions (May 2021)		Number of Vacant Positions (May 2021)		% Vacancy	
Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
140	40	28	8	20%	20%

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; potential long term service delivery impacts; and options for alternative service delivery models.)*

Of the ten geographic areas reporting for this review, one northern area reported critical service delivery impact in that the area which means the department may not be able to provide service, which in turn may significantly impact other services. Five areas indicated significant impact to service delivery meaning that they are only able to provide a basic level of service and there may be significant gaps with continued service problems. The last four areas indicated there is a moderate service delivery impact in that the department provides a level of service, but some routine duties are not being performed.

There continue to be significant waitlists both for inpatient and outpatient services in various areas of the province. There are efforts to try and load level where appropriate across some of the geographic areas, but lack of resources continues to make that difficult. There has also been work done to ensure the OTs are focusing 100% on their scope of practice and not doing other duties that can be done by other classifications to maximize their impact on service. In addition, referral to private practice has also occurred.

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.)*

The following data is reported:

Overall turnover is identified as moderate meaning that in that it is between 10-20%. Where the reasons are known for turnover, they are indicated below.

- Last 12 months – 3 other employment not wage related; 4 other employment wage related; 2 other; 3 retirement; 1.5 family/domestic
- Previous 12 months – 1 other employment not wage related; 1 other employment wage related; 1 retirement; 1 other

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.)*

All areas of the province indicated that their recruitment efforts were significant meaning that qualified professionals and new graduates are in great demand. Increased difficulty particularly exists with recruiting for temporary positions where maternity leaves and other longer leaves exist.

The major competitors identified continue to be private practice.

The announcement of a new program through the University of Saskatchewan is hoped to significantly assist with the recruitment of candidates but it will take time to see the results of graduates from any programs.

Other recruitment initiatives are as follows:

- Significant signing bonus' with return for service agreements.
- Relocation assistance.
- Educational allowances.
- Practicum students are supported.
- Significant advertising is done through linked in, professional associations, through trade journals and other publications in addition to attending career fairs and educational institutions.

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.)*

The MSRC reports the following market conditions for Occupational Therapists (Degree):

Table 2 – Occupational Therapist Salary Market Conditions

Province	Job Title	Effective Date	Maximum Rate of Pay (April 1, 2023)
British Columbia	Occupational Therapist (Grade I to II Phase-In)	April 1, 2023	\$50.67
Alberta	Occupational Therapist I	April 1, 2023	\$51.80
Saskatchewan	Occupational Therapist - Degree	April 1, 2023	\$46.770
Manitoba	Occupational Therapist	April 1, 2023	\$43.380
Western Canadian Average (2023)			\$48.155

Saskatchewan Rate	\$ 46.770
Western Canadian Average	\$ 48.155
Sask from Average (\$)	\$ (1.39)
Sask from Average (%)	97.12%

Notes: Saskatchewan rates are below the Western Canadian Average

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the labour market criteria under the provincial framework, the Market Supplement Review Committee makes the following conclusions:

- There continues to be challenges recruiting to this profession and respondents consistently identify the need for a program in Saskatchewan to be the priority. Consistently respondents indicate that recruiting from other provinces is difficult as individuals are already established in other locations. The recent announcement by the province is welcome news although graduates will not be available for some time yet.
- Our salary is below the western Canadian average.
- Turnover has improved over the past year.
- The majority of respondents identified increased difficulty recruiting to the rural and northern areas of the province. Urban centres are more attractive.

Having reviewed the information as provided by respondents, and considering the labour market criteria, the Market Supplement Review Committee has determined that the current market supplement for the Occupational Therapist classification should be **maintained**.