

Careers with ASL

THE SHORT VERSION

Ten careers where knowing ASL is the job or makes you better at it. Interpreting is the obvious one, but the list runs from the emergency room to the lecture hall, and the pay runs with it.

AT A GLANCE

The ten careers by pay. Detail on each one follows.

	CAREER	MEDIAN	TYPICAL RANGE
01	Sign language interpreter	\$56,000	\$20–\$60 an hour
02	Special education teacher (D/HH)	\$56,000	\$44,000–\$72,000
03	ASL instructor	\$49,000	\$35,000–\$70,000
04	Healthcare provider with ASL	\$35k–\$250k	EMT to physician
05	Social worker	\$50,000	\$40,000–\$65,000
06	Deaf advocate or coordinator	\$52,000	\$40,000–\$68,000
07	Hearing screener	\$43,000	\$35,000–\$52,000
08	Sign language specialist	\$58,000	\$50,000–\$75,000
09	Legal interpreter	\$75,000	\$50,000–\$100,000+
10	Professor of Deaf studies or ASL	\$70,000	\$55,000–\$100,000

CAREER PATHS

ENTRY LEVEL
\$40,000 – \$50,000

Social worker
Hearing screener

MID LEVEL
\$50,000 – \$70,000

Special education teacher
EMT
ASL instructor

ADVANCED
\$60,000 – \$100,000+

Sign language interpreter
Legal interpreter
Deaf advocate or services coordinator

THE TEN CAREERS

What each one involves, what it pays, and what moves the figure.

CAREER	DETAIL
01 Sign language interpreter \$56,000 MEDIAN	ROLE Facilitates communication between Deaf and hearing people in healthcare, education, legal settings, and public services. DAY TO DAY Interprets spoken language into sign and back, often in real time, in hospitals, schools, and at conferences. PAY Median \$56,000 a year, or \$20 to \$60 an hour. Experience, certification, location, and setting all move the figure. OUTLOOK Strong — around 20 percent growth over the next ten years, as demand rises in education and healthcare. EXAMPLE Around \$50,000 in a medical setting; closer to \$75,000 in a legal one, where specialization pays.
02 Special education teacher, Deaf and hard of hearing \$56,000 MEDIAN	ROLE Teaches students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, often using sign language as the medium of instruction. DAY TO DAY Prepares lesson plans, teaches academic subjects, and works on communication skills and behavior management. PAY \$44,000 to \$72,000 by location, experience, and district. Special education credentials and Deaf education certification raise it. EXAMPLE Teachers in large cities such as New York or Los Angeles earn more than those in rural districts, where pay sits at the lower end.
03 ASL instructor \$49,000 MEDIAN	ROLE Teaches ASL to hearing people in schools, community programs, universities, and specialized workshops. DAY TO DAY Designs lesson plans, teaches from beginner to advanced, and provides cultural context for the language. PAY \$35,000 to \$70,000, depending on experience and institution. OUTLOOK Steady demand at universities and community colleges, as interest in learning ASL keeps growing. EXAMPLE A part-time community college instructor may earn \$35,000; full-time university faculty \$60,000 or more, with tenure.

CAREER	DETAIL
04 Healthcare provider with sign language skills \$35k–\$250k RANGE	ROLE Provides medical care while using sign language to communicate with Deaf patients and their families. DAY TO DAY Takes medical histories, performs procedures including emergency care, and communicates directly with Deaf patients. PAY Emergency medical technician \$35,000 to \$50,000. Registered nurse \$65,000 to \$80,000. Physician \$150,000 to \$250,000. Title, location, experience, and certification set the figure. EXAMPLE A nurse with sign language skills around \$75,000; a family medicine physician over \$200,000.
05 Social worker \$50,000 MEDIAN	ROLE Helps Deaf and hard of hearing individuals get access to services – healthcare, education, and housing. DAY TO DAY Assesses client needs, provides counseling, and helps people navigate government and community resources. PAY \$40,000 to \$65,000 by region, position, and experience. EXAMPLE Those specializing in Deaf clients in medical or mental health settings earn more; knowledge of Deaf culture is sought after.
06 Deaf advocate or services coordinator \$52,000 MEDIAN	ROLE Works inside government or nonprofit organizations to advocate for the rights of the Deaf community. DAY TO DAY Pushes for policy change, coordinates services and resources, and educates organizations about accessibility. PAY \$40,000 to \$68,000, depending on the organization and the region. EXAMPLE A coordinator at a state agency or large nonprofit earns \$45,000 to \$60,000; leadership roles pay more.
07 Hearing screener \$43,000 MEDIAN	ROLE Conducts hearing tests, often for newborns or school children, working alongside audiologists. DAY TO DAY Administers screenings, provides follow-up support, and communicates results to parents, using sign language with Deaf clients. PAY \$35,000 to \$52,000 by experience and location. EXAMPLE Screeners in hospitals or pediatric offices in urban areas earn at the higher end of the range.

CAREER	DETAIL
08 Sign language specialist, corporate or government \$58,000 MEDIAN	ROLE Supports Deaf employees by facilitating communication inside corporate, government, and large organizational settings. DAY TO DAY Provides interpreting, runs training, and makes sure the organization complies with accessibility regulations. PAY \$50,000 to \$75,000 based on experience, setting, and geography. EXAMPLE A specialist at a large corporation with real accessibility commitments earns at the higher end, often with better benefits.
09 Legal interpreter \$75,000 MEDIAN	ROLE Specializes in legal settings — courtrooms, legal meetings, and depositions. DAY TO DAY Interprets between Deaf and hearing people involved in legal matters, from consultations through to trial. PAY \$50,000 to \$100,000 or more, depending on the complexity of the cases taken. EXAMPLE Interpreters on high-profile cases, or in criminal defense and corporate law, can earn over \$100,000.
10 Professor of Deaf studies or ASL \$70,000 MEDIAN	ROLE Teaches Deaf culture, history, and ASL at college level. DAY TO DAY Develops curriculum, teaches ASL courses, and conducts research in Deaf studies. PAY \$55,000 to \$100,000 by rank — assistant, associate, or full professor — institution type, and location. EXAMPLE A full professor at a major university may earn \$90,000 or more; an adjunct or part-time instructor closer to \$50,000.