



## PAH Fact Sheet

August 2008



PAH! is an American Sign Language (ASL) expression loosely translated to mean "Finally, we made it!"



The Deaf community and Deaf culture are important to the sense of identity of individual Deaf people. Although England and Canada share English as a spoken language, ASL is a language in its own right and differs from British Sign Language. ASL has its own distinct syntax and grammar.



Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals face unique challenges in the job market. With communication barriers and the sometimes costly accommodation of a qualified sign language interpreter, employers need to be convinced of the benefits of hiring a Deaf or Hard of Hearing individual.



One of the big issues for Employment PAH! is the employment among Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.



**Employment PAH!** began in 2004 and it is a project of the Coalition for Persons with Disabilities. It was funded through Employment Ontario and Service Canada.



**Employment PAH!** offers a 22-day workshop over seven weeks to learn fundamental employability skills that are specific to persons who are to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the Regions of Peel, Halton and Dufferin who are fluent in ASL and are unemployed or underemployed.



Workshops take a holistic approach and focus on information gathering, majority/corporate culture versus deaf culture, preparing self-marketing materials and setting individual employment goals. Personal belief systems are also examined. The workshops are offered year round and access is gained through referral from Mississauga Community Connections (MCC) and Vocational Pathways Incorporated (VPI).





Individual post-workshop support is offered in ASL for Employment Counselling, Job Development and Post-hiring Support.





Six in every thousand babies born in Canada have a hearing loss - including profound deafness.

 Every year in Ontario, up to about 400 children are born with impaired hearing.

 One in ten Canadians experiences some form of hearing loss that require special attention and expertise.

 Approximately 40 per cent of the Canadian population over the age of 75 has a significant hearing problem.

 Speech is not an indication of hearing ability or intelligence level.

 The Canadian Association of the Deaf conducted a survey and data collection project in 1998 on the employment and employability of Deaf Canadians. They found that only 20.6% of Deaf Canadians are fully employed; 41.9% are under-employed; and 37.5% are unemployed. By comparison, 60.9% of all Canadians are employed, and only 8.1% are unemployed.



**Deaf culture** is a term that designates deaf people who use ASL as their primary form of communication — it denotes that they are a language-based group, different from the mainstream in many of the same ways that characterize ethnic groups.

**Oral deaf:** This term is generally used to describe individuals with a severe to profound hearing loss, with little or no residual hearing. Some deaf people use sign language such as American Sign Language or Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) to communicate. Others use speech to communicate, using their residual hearing and hearing aids, communication devices or cochlear implants, and lip reading or speech reading.

**Culturally Deaf:** This term refers to individuals who identify with and participate in the language, culture, and community of Deaf people, based on sign language. Deaf culture, indicated by a capital “D,” does not perceive hearing loss and deafness as a disability, but as the basis of a distinct cultural group. Culturally Deaf people may also use speech reading, gesturing, spoken language, and written English to communicate with people who do not sign.

**Deafened:** This term describes individuals who grow up hearing or hard of hearing and, either suddenly or gradually, experience a profound hearing loss. Deafened adults usually use speech with visual cues such as captioning or computerized note-taking, speech reading or sign language.

**Hard of Hearing:** This term is generally used to describe individuals whose hearing loss ranges from mild to severe, and occasionally profound. Hard of hearing people use speech and residual hearing to communicate, supplemented by communication strategies that may include speech reading, hearing aids, sign language and communication devices. The term “person with hearing loss” is increasingly used and preferred by this constituency.

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Employment Ontario Programs  
are funded in part by the  
Government of Canada

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