

## How many people in Pennsylvania are deaf or hard of hearing?

This is a simple question asked often. While the answer may seem obvious, unfortunately it is not. Despite the fact that there have been numerous demographic studies, there are no accurate statistics that define the deaf or hard of hearing population in the state. However, this document presents a demographic sketch of Pennsylvanians with hearing loss.

The National Center for Disease Control, Early Hearing Detection & Intervention estimates 8.6 percent of newborns screened are diagnosed with a permanent hearing loss. This national average can be applied to Pennsylvania's population to determine an estimate of Pennsylvanians who are deaf or hard of hearing.

	Population	% of population
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	12,787,209	100%
<b>Pennsylvanians with hearing loss</b>	1.1 million	8.6%

**Sources:** U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 estimate of Pennsylvania population  
2011 Center for Disease Control, Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Screening & Follow-up Survey (HSFS)

### Number of Pennsylvanians who are deaf or hard of hearing in each county:

There is no data to show the number of residents in each county with hearing loss. The Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (ODHH) suggests applying the 8.6 percent to the county's population. You can obtain county populations from the U. S. Census Bureau, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

### Possible factors that impact the population of people who are deaf of hard of hearing:

- Towns with smaller populations may have a lower number of residents who are deaf or hard of hearing than the numbers suggest. And the opposite holds true: larger towns may have more residents who are deaf or hard of hearing than what the numbers suggest.
- People who are deaf or hard of hearing will naturally live in locations where services, such as access to education and social events, are readily available.
- Cultural and sociological factors influence the size of the deaf population who use American Sign Language (ASL). Historically, prior to the advances in technology, persons who were deaf lived in close proximity to each other in order to socialize and be able to communicate, thus creating a deaf community. For example, deaf communities grew near schools for the deaf. To this day, in Pennsylvania, there is a larger population of people who are deaf residing near these schools.