

# Speech-Language Pathology Assistants

*Inland Empire/Desert Region (IEDR, Riverside and San Bernardino counties combined)*

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## Introduction

This report analyzes speech-language pathology and audiology programs and the demand for speech-language pathology assistants in the Inland Empire/Desert region (IEDR). Speech-language pathology assistants (SLPA) assist speech-language pathologists in the assessment and treatment of speech, language, voice, and fluency disorders, implement speech and language programs or activities as planned and directed by speech-language pathologists, and monitor the use of alternative communication devices and systems (O\*NET Online, 2020).

The Federal Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) system classifies speech-language pathology assistants (SOC 31-9099.01) as an emerging occupation within the broader occupational code, healthcare support workers, all other (SOC 31-9099). Traditional labor market data does not provide employment counts and wages for the speech-language pathology assistant because it is an emerging occupation. This report approximates the demand for speech-language pathology assistants through an online job ad search for this emerging occupation.

The California Community College speech-language pathology and audiology (Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) 1220.00) programs prepare students for employment as SLPAs through instruction related to the principles and procedures used to assist in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of hearing and speech disorders under the supervision of a licensed speech-language pathologist or audiologist (Taxonomy of Programs, 2012). This report focuses on speech-language pathology employment. Relevant program information is displayed in the [student completion](#) section.

## Online Job Advertisement Data (Real-Time Labor Market Information)

A search of job advertisements (ads) was conducted to assess the demand for speech-language pathology assistants (SOC 31-9099.01) in the IEDR. There were 14 advertisements for SLPA positions over the last 12 months (November 2019 to October 2020) and 71 advertisements in the previous five years (November 2015 to October 2020). This report utilizes the five-year timeframe because there were more advertisements from which to obtain job ad information.

## Employers

Exhibit 1, on the next page, displays the employers posting job advertisements for SLPA positions in the IEDR. Approximately 54% (38 ads) of job advertisements did not include employer name information;

these job ads are labeled "unspecified employers" in the table below. Job ads indicate that the demand for SLPA positions is concentrated in school employers.

*Exhibit 1: Employers posting online job advertisements*

Employers	Job Ads
Fontana Unified School District	17
San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools	7
Chaffey Joint Union High School District	5
Jurupa Unified School District	2
Snowline Joint Unified School District	1
Sage Oak Charter School	1
<i>Unspecified employers</i>	38
<b>Total Job Ads</b>	<b>71</b>

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

### Locations

Exhibit 2 displays the cities that listed more than two SLPA job advertisements in the IEDR.

*Exhibit 2: Cities with the most SLPA job advertisements*

Cities	Job Ads
San Bernardino	19
Fontana	13
Riverside	6
Ontario	5
Redlands	3
Menifee	3
Chino	3
Perris	2
Jurupa Valley	2
Beaumont	2
<i>All other cities</i>	13
<b>Total Job Ads</b>	<b>71</b>

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

### Salary

Community colleges should ensure their training programs lead to employment opportunities that provide a self-sustainable level of income. The Family Needs Calculator estimates that a self-sustainable wage for a single adult with one school-age child is \$19.94 per hour or \$41,475 annually in Riverside County and \$19.49 per hour or \$40,539 annually in San Bernardino County (Pearce & Manzer, 2018). For this study, Speech-Language Pathology in the Inland Empire/Desert Region, November 2020

the higher hourly wage requirement in Riverside County is adopted as the self-sufficiently standard for the two-county region.

Exhibit 3 displays advertised salary data from SLPA online job ads. Online advertised salary information reveals that employers are willing to these positions an average of \$58,000 annually. This wage exceeds the \$42,475 (\$19.94 hourly) required annually for one adult family with a school-age child to meet the region's regional self-sufficiency standard. Consider the salary information with caution since only 41% (29 out of 71) online job ads for these occupations provided salary information. The salary figures are prorated to reflect full-time, annual wage status.

*Exhibit 3: Online job ads and salary information for SLPA jobs*

Number of job ads	Real-Time Salary Information				Average Annual Salary
	Less than \$35,000	\$35,000 to \$49,999	\$50,000 to \$74,999	More than \$75,000	
29	-	7%	90%	3%	\$58,000

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

### Skills

Exhibit 4 lists employers' in-demand skills when looking for workers to fill speech-language pathology assistant positions. The skills reported in job ads may be utilized as a helpful guide for curriculum development. Specialized skills are occupation-specific skills employers are requesting for industry or job competency. Employability skills are foundational skills that transcend industries and occupations; this category is commonly referred to as "soft skills."

*Exhibit 4: In-demand skills for SLPA positions*

Occupation	Specialized skills	Employability skills
Speech-Language Pathology Assistants (n=30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treatment Planning</li> <li>• Special Education</li> <li>• Special Needs Children</li> <li>• Program Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bilingual (English/Spanish)</li> <li>• Building Effective Relationships</li> <li>• Teamwork/Collaboration</li> <li>• Verbal/Oral Communication</li> </ul>

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

### Educational qualifications and certifications

According to ONet, medium preparation is needed to enter the speech-language pathology assistant occupation. This occupation typically requires vocational training, related on-the-job experience, or an associate degree.

Exhibit 5 displays information on both the preferred and minimum/required education levels listed in the job ad. For this reason, a job ads may be counted in more than one of the educational categories. For

example, an employer may require a high school diploma as a minimum qualification in addition to a certification but desire an associate or bachelor's degree. Note: 44% of records have been excluded because they do not include a degree level. As a result, the chart below may not be representative of the full sample. Job ads data indicates that employers value SLPA registration more than educational requirements, given that approximately 99% of job ads required SLPA registration requirements and only 56% (40 ads) included a minimum advertised educational requirement.

*Exhibit 5: Count of online job ads, all advertised educational qualifications for SLPA positions*

Number of unique job ads (n=)	High school diploma or vocational training	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree or higher
40	36	20	18

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

### Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Registration

To become a registered speech-language pathology assistant in California, individuals must first obtain their associate degree from an accredited program and complete a minimum of 70 hours of field work experience or clinical experience or obtain a bachelor's degree from an accredited speech-language pathology program (Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology and Hearing Aid Dispensers Board, 2020). There are seven approved community college speech-language pathology assistant programs in California (Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology and Hearing Aid Dispensers Board, 2020a).

Many online job postings mention obtaining a Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Certificate within a year of gaining or having a California SLPA license. It appears that most qualified candidates for employment should have the California SLPA license before seeking employment.

### Student Completions

The IEDR community colleges do not currently offer speech-language pathology and audiology (TOP 1220.00) programs. However, private educational institutions in the region provide training related to speech-language pathology and audiology. Awards granted from private educational institutions are displayed in Exhibits 6 and 7 and the relevant CIP code. Please note that the following training programs were designed to prepare students for graduate-level study related to speech-language pathology and do not train students to become an SLPA. However, individuals with their bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology/audiology may apply for SLPA registration. These programs have issued a combined total of 70 awards annually over the last three academic years.

*Exhibit 6: Annual average private educational institution awards from speech-language pathology/pathologist programs in the Inland Empire/Desert region*

<b>51.0203 – Speech-Language Pathology/Pathologist</b>	<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	<b>Private Educational Institutions Annual Average Certificates or Other Credit Awards (2014-17)</b>
<b>Loma Linda University</b>	19	19
<b>Total annual average other awards</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>

Source: IPEDS

*Exhibit 7: Annual average private educational institution awards from audiology/audiologist and speech-language pathology/pathologist programs in the Inland Empire/Desert region*

<b>51.0204 – Audiology/Audiologist and Speech-Language Pathology/Pathologist</b>	<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	<b>Private Educational Institutions Annual Average Certificates or Other Credit Awards (2014-17)</b>
<b>University of Redlands</b>	51	51
<b>Total annual average other awards</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>51</b>

Source: IPEDS

## Recommendation

Speech-language pathology assistants (SLPA) assist speech-language pathologists in assessing and treating speech, language, voice, and fluency disorders. A search of online job ads was conducted to gauge demand for this emerging occupation. Over the last 12 months, 14 job ads were identified for this occupation in the Inland Empire/Desert area. The search was expanded to the previous five years to provide generalizable results; 71 results were identified.

Most employers seeking SLPA were school employers. Only 41% of online job ads listed a salary. About 90% of job ads recorded a salary range of \$50,000 to \$74,999 annually; the annual average was \$58,000. Employer job ads indicate job seekers should currently hold, or obtain shortly after employment, a California SLPA license. To become a registered speech-language pathology assistant in California, individuals must first obtain their associate degree from an accredited program and complete a minimum of 70 hours of fieldwork or clinical experience or obtain a bachelor's degree from an accredited speech-language pathology program.

Inland Empire/Desert community colleges do not currently offer the speech-language pathology and audiology (TOP 1220.00) programs. However, two private colleges offer related programs. These training programs are designed to prepare students for graduate-level study related to speech-language pathology.

There appears to be a limited opportunity to develop a speech-language pathology program at a local community college. This recommendation is based on a lack of relevant training programs in the region and self-sustainable wages offered for the occupation from online job ads. The recommendation is limited due to the relatively low number of online job postings over the last 12 months. An interested college should

partner with local employers to understand their need for more workers and desired educational and certification requirements to secure employment.

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November 2020

## Appendix

### Occupation

#### Speech-Language Pathology Assistants (SOC 31-9099.01)

Assist speech-language pathologists in the assessment and treatment of speech, language, voice, and fluency disorders. Implement speech and language programs or activities as planned and directed by speech-language pathologists. Monitor the use of alternative communication devices and systems.

**Sample of reported job titles:** Assistant Speech-Language Pathologist, Communication Assistant, Speech-Language Pathology Assistant (SLPA), Speech and Language Assistant, Speech and Language Tutor, Speech Language Pathologist Assistant, Speech Language Pathology Assistant, Speech Pathologist Assistant, Speech-Language Assistant

### References

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## Methodology

Online job advertisement (ads) data is limited to the information provided by employers and the ability of artificial intelligence search engines to identify this information. Additionally, preliminary calculations by Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce found that "just 30 to 40 percent of openings for candidates with some college or an associate degree, and only 40 to 60 percent of openings for high school diploma holders appear online" (Carnevale et al., 2014). Online job ads often do not reveal the hiring intentions of employers; it is unknown if employers plan to hire one or multiple workers from a single online job ad, or if they are collecting resumes for future hiring needs. A closed job ad may not be the result of a hired worker.