

Program Endorsement Brief: 0850.10/Sign Language Interpreting
American Sign Language Interpreting
Orange County Center of Excellence, April 2021

Summary Analysis

Program Endorsement:	Endorsed: All Criteria Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Endorsed: Some Criteria Met <input type="checkbox"/>	Not Endorsed <input type="checkbox"/>
Program Endorsement Criteria			
Supply Gap:	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Living Wage: (Entry-Level, 25th)	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Education:	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Emerging Occupation(s)			
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

The Orange County Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research (COE) prepared this report to provide Los Angeles/Orange County regional labor market supply and demand data related to one middle-skill occupation: *interpreters and translators (27-3091)*. Middle-skill occupations typically require some postsecondary education, but less than a bachelor’s degree.¹ Although the occupation in this report typically require a bachelor’s degree, it is considered middle-skill because approximately one-third of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree. This report is intended to help determine whether there is demand in the local labor market that is not being met by the supply from community college programs that align with the relevant occupations.

Based on the available data, there appears to be a supply gap for *interpreters and translators* in the region; however, it is not possible to quantify the exact regional need due to the fact that the demand data is aggregated with all oral interpreting occupations. Furthermore, entry-level wages exceed the living wage in both Los Angeles and Orange counties, and nearly one-third of current workers in the field have completed an associate degree or some college as their highest level of education. **Therefore, due to all the criteria being met, the COE endorses this proposed program.** Detailed reasons include:

Demand:

- **Supply Gap Criteria** – Over the next five years, there is projected to be **496 jobs available annually** in the region due to new job growth and replacements, **which is more than the 106 awards conferred annually** by educational institutions in the region.

¹ The COE classifies middle-skill jobs as the following:

- All occupations that require an educational requirement of some college, associate degree or apprenticeship;
- All occupations that require a bachelor’s degree, but also have more than one-third of their existing labor force with an educational attainment of some college or associate degree; or
- All occupations that require a high school diploma or equivalent or no formal education, but also require short- to long-term on-the-job training where multiple community colleges have existing programs.

- However, **the interpreters and translators (27-3091) SOC code includes all oral interpreting occupations and not solely American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting.** Since the SOC code does not solely represent American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, **the number of annual job openings is overstated.**
- Over the past 12 months, there were **90 online job postings related to American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters.** The highest number of job postings were for sign language interpreters, American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, and community interpreters
 - Online job postings is the closest available way to demonstrate regional need, however they are not a direct replacement for annual openings.
- **Living Wage Criteria** –Within Orange County, **typical entry-level hourly wages** for interpreters and translators are **\$19.30, which is higher than the California Family Needs Calculator** hourly wage (living wage) for one adult in the region (\$17.36 in Orange County).²
- **Educational Criteria** –The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists a **bachelor's degree** as the **typical entry-level education for interpreters and translators.**
 - However, the national-level educational attainment data indicates **30.3% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree.**

Supply:

- There are **7 community colleges** in the LA/OC region that issue awards related to sign language interpreting, conferring an average of **105 awards annually** between 2016 and 2019.
- Between 2014 and 2017, there was an average of **1 award conferred annually** in a related training program by a non-community college institution in the region.

Occupational Demand

Exhibit 1 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for *interpreters and translators*. In Los Angeles/Orange County, the number of jobs related to this occupation is projected to increase by 8% through 2024. There will be nearly 500 job openings per year through 2024 due to job growth and replacements. It is important to note that the *interpreters and translators* (27-3091) SOC code includes all oral interpreting occupations, as well as written translators, and not solely American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting. Therefore, the data in Exhibit 1 is overstated for ASL interpreters.

This report includes employment projection data by Emsi which uses EDD information. Emsi's projections are modeled on recorded (historical) employment figures and incorporate several underlying assumptions, including the assumption that the economy, during the projection period, will be at approximately full employment. To the extent that a recession or labor shock, such as the economic effects of COVID-19, can cause long-term structural change, it may impact the projections. At this time, it is not possible to quantify the impact of COVID-19 on projections of industry and

² Living wage data was pulled from California Family Needs Calculator on 4/14/21. For more information, visit the California Family Needs Calculator website: <https://insightcced.org/2018-family-needs-calculator/>.

occupational employment. Therefore, the projections included in this report do not take the impacts of COVID-19 into account.

Exhibit 1: Occupational demand in Los Angeles and Orange Counties³

Geography	2019 Jobs	2024 Jobs	2019-2024 Change	2019-2024 % Change	Annual Openings
Los Angeles	3,633	3,906	273	8%	380
Orange	1,088	1,182	94	9%	116
Total	4,720	5,088	367	8%	496

Wages

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wages for *interpreters and translators* in Orange County as they relate to the county’s living wage. Los Angeles County wages are included below in order to provide a complete analysis of the LA/OC region. Detailed wage information, by county, is included in Appendix A.

Orange County— The typical entry-level hourly wages for *interpreters and translators* are \$19.30, which is above the living wage for one adult (\$17.36 in Orange County). Experienced workers can expect to earn wages of \$36.86, which is higher than the living wage estimate. Orange County’s average wages are slightly below the average statewide wage of \$34.50 for this occupation.

Los Angeles County— The typical entry-level hourly wages for *interpreters and translators* are \$20.18, which is above the living wage for one adult (\$15.04 in Los Angeles County). Experienced workers can expect to earn wages of \$37.75, which is higher than the living wage estimate. Los Angeles County’s average wages are slightly below the average statewide wage of \$34.50 for this occupation.

Job Postings

There were 90 online job postings for American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters listed in the past 12 months. The highest number of job postings were for sign language interpreters, American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, and community interpreters. The top skills were: experience with network interface cards, scheduling, teaching, customer service, and telecommunications. The top employers, by number of job postings, in the region were: Sorenson Communication and Los Angeles Community College District. While it is not possible to quantify the exact regional need due to the fact that the demand data is aggregated with all oral interpreting occupations, online job postings is the closest available way to demonstrate regional need even though they are not a direct replacement for annual openings.

It is important to note that the job postings data included in this section reflects online job postings listed in the past 12 months and does not yet demonstrate the impact of COVID-19. While employers have generally posted fewer online job postings since the beginning of the pandemic, the long-term effects are currently unknown.

³ Five-year change represents new job additions to the workforce. Annual openings include new jobs and replacement jobs that result from retirements and separations.

Educational Attainment

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists a bachelor’s degree as the typical entry-level education for *interpreters and translators*. However, the national-level educational attainment data indicates 30.3% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree. Of the 56% of American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter job postings listing a minimum education requirement in Los Angeles/Orange County, 52% (26) requested a high school, 32% (16) requested a bachelor’s degree and 16% (8) requested an associate degree.

Educational Supply

Community College Supply—Exhibit 2 shows the three-year average number of awards conferred by community colleges in the related TOP code: Sign Language Interpreting (0850.10). The colleges with the most completions in the region are: Golden West, El Camino, and LA Pierce. Over the past 12 months, there were no other related program recommendation requests from regional community colleges.

Exhibit 2: Regional community college awards (certificates and degrees), 2016-2019

TOP Code	Program	College	2016-2017 Awards	2017-2018 Awards	2018-2019 Awards	3-Year Award Average
0850.10	Sign Language Interpreting	Compton	3	2		2
		El Camino	30	20	26	25
		LA Pierce	4	10	34	16
		Mt San Antonio	12	14	16	14
		LA Subtotal	49	46	76	57
		Golden West	25	7	66	33
		Saddleback	13	28		14
		Santiago Canyon	2	1	1	1
		OC Subtotal	40	36	67	48
		Supply Total/Average			89	82

Non-Community College Supply—For a comprehensive regional supply analysis, it is also important to consider the supply from other institutions in the region that provide training programs for language interpretation. Exhibit 3 shows the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred by this institution in the related Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code: Language Interpretation and Translation (16.0103). Due to different data collection periods, the most recent three-year period of available data is from 2014 to 2017. Between 2014 and 2017, four-year colleges in the region conferred an average of 1 award annually in related training programs.

Exhibit 3: Regional non-community college awards, 2014-2017

CIP Code	Program	College	2014-2015 Awards	2015-2016 Awards	2016-2017 Awards	3-Year Award Average
16.0103	Language Interpretation and Translation	Biola University	-	1	1	1
Supply Total/Average			0	1	1	1

Appendix A: Occupational demand and wage data by county

Exhibit 4. Orange County

Occupation (SOC)	2019 Jobs	2024 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)
Interpreters and Translators (27-3091)	1,088	1,182	94	9%	116	\$19.30	\$26.18	\$36.86

Exhibit 5. Los Angeles County

Occupation (SOC)	2019 Jobs	2024 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)
Interpreters and Translators (27-3091)	3,633	3,906	273	8%	380	\$20.18	\$27.22	\$37.75

Exhibit 6. Los Angeles and Orange Counties

Occupation (SOC)	2019 Jobs	2024 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings
Interpreters and Translators (27-3091)	4,720	5,088	367	8%	496

Appendix B: Sources

- O*NET Online
- Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)
- Economic Modeling Specialists, International (Emsi)
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)
- Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division, OES
- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems (MIS)
- California Family Needs Calculator, Insight Center for Community Economic Development
- Chancellor's Office Curriculum Inventory (COCI 2.0)

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