

**April 2021**

# Labor Market Analysis

## Legal Studies

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Colleges



Prepared by the Central Valley/Mother Lode Center of Excellence

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**COVID-19 Statement:** This report includes employment projection data by Emsi. 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 or potential output. To the extent that a recession or labor shock, such as the economic effects of COVID-19, can cause long-term structural change, they may impact the projections. At this time, it is not possible to quantify the impact of COVID-19 on projections of industry and occupational employment. Other measures such as unemployment rates and monthly industry employment estimates will reflect the most recent information on employment and jobs in the state and, in combination with input from local employers, may help validate current and future employment needs as depicted here.

*If for any reason this document is not accessible or if you have specific needs for readability, please contact us and we will do our utmost to accommodate you with a modified version. To make a request, contact Nora Seronello by phone at (209) 575-6894 or by email [seronellon@mjc.edu](mailto:seronellon@mjc.edu).*

# Summary

Please note the COVID-19 statement on page 2 when considering this report's findings.

This study conducted by the Central Valley/Mother Lode Center of Excellence examines labor market demand, wages, skills, and postsecondary supply for legal studies. Four occupations related to legal studies were identified for Modesto Junior College:

- 23-2011, Paralegals and Legal Assistants
- 43-4031, Court, Municipal, and License Clerks
- 43-6012, Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants
- 23-2099, Legal Support Workers, All Other

## Key findings:

- **Occupational demand** — Nearly 1,800 workers were employed in jobs related to legal studies in 2019 in the North Central Valley/Northern Mother Lode (NCV/NML) subregion. The largest occupation is court, municipal, and license clerks with 640 workers in 2019, a projected employment decline of 9% over the next five years, and 61 annual openings. With a 2% projected growth rate, paralegals and legal assistants will have slightly more annual openings, a total of 63.
- **Wages** — Paralegals and legal assistants earn the highest entry-level wage, \$18.96/hour in the subregion and \$19.11/hour in the region.
- **Employers** — Employers with the most job postings in the subregion are City Lodi, E.J. Gallo, and E.J. Gallo Winery.
- **Occupational titles** — The most common occupational title in job postings in the subregion is paralegals and legal assistants. The most common job title is legal assistant.
- **Skills and certifications** — The top baseline skill is writing, the top specialized skill is litigation, and the top software skill is Microsoft Office. The most in-demand certification is a paralegal.
- **Education** — An associate degree is typically required for paralegals and legal assistants, and legal support workers, all other.
- **Supply** — Analysis of postsecondary completions in the region shows that on average four (4) awards were conferred in the Central Valley/Mother Lode region each year.

Based on a comparison of occupational demand and supply, there is an undersupply of 187 trained workers in the subregion and 503 workers in the region. The Center of Excellence recommends that Modesto Junior College work with the Business and Entrepreneurship Regional Director, the college's advisory board, and local industry in the development of programs to address the shortage of legal studies workers in the region.

# Introduction

The Central Valley/Mother Lode Center of Excellence was asked by Modesto Junior College to provide labor market information for legal studies. The geographical focus for this report is the North Central Valley/Northern Mother Lode (NCV/NML) subregion, but regional demand and supply data has been included for broader applicability and use. The average living wage for a single adult in the NCV/NML subregion is \$10.30/hour.<sup>1</sup> Analysis of the program and occupational data related to legal studies resulted in the identification of applicable occupations. The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) System codes and titles used in this report are:

- 23-2011, Paralegals and Legal Assistants
- 43-4031, Court, Municipal, and License Clerks
- 43-6012, Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants
- 23-2099, Legal Support Workers, All Other

The occupational titles, job descriptions, sample job titles, and knowledge and skills from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and O\*NET OnLine are shown below. O\*NET data was not available for Legal Support Workers, All Other.

## **Paralegals and Legal Assistants**

**Job Description:** Assist lawyers by investigating facts, preparing legal documents, or researching legal precedent. Conduct research to support a legal proceeding, to formulate a defense, or to initiate legal action.

**Knowledge:** Clerical, English Language, Law and Government, Customer and Personal Service, Computers and Electronics

**Skills:** Reading Comprehension, Active Listening, Speaking, Writing, Critical Thinking

## **Court, Municipal, and License Clerks**

**Job Description:** Perform clerical duties for courts of law, municipalities, or governmental licensing agencies and bureaus. May prepare docket of cases to be called; secure information for judges and court; prepare draft agendas or bylaws for town or city council; answer official correspondence; keep fiscal records and accounts; issue licenses or permits; and record data, administer tests, or collect fees.

**Knowledge:** Clerical, Customer and Personal Service, English Language, Law and Government, Administration and Management

**Skills:** Active Listening, Speaking, Reading Comprehension, Writing, Coordination

## **Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants**

**Job Description:** Perform secretarial duties using legal terminology, procedures, and documents. Prepare legal papers and correspondence, such as summonses, complaints, motions, and subpoenas. May also assist with legal research.

**Knowledge:** Clerical, Law and Government, English Language

**Skills:** Reading Comprehension, Writing, Active Listening, Speaking, Time Management

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<sup>1</sup> The term "living wage" in Center of Excellence reports is calculated by averaging the self-sufficiency wages from the Insight Center's California Family Needs Calculator for each county in the subregion: <https://insightccd.org/tools-metrics/self-sufficiency-standard-tool-for-california/>.

# Occupational Demand

The North Central Valley/Northern Mother Lode subregion employed 1,768 workers in legal studies occupations in 2019 (Exhibit 1). The largest occupation is court, municipal, and license clerks with 640 workers in 2019. This occupation is projected to decline by 9% over the next five years but is projected to have 61 annual openings. With a 2% project growth rate, paralegals and legal assistants will have slightly more annual openings, a total of 63.

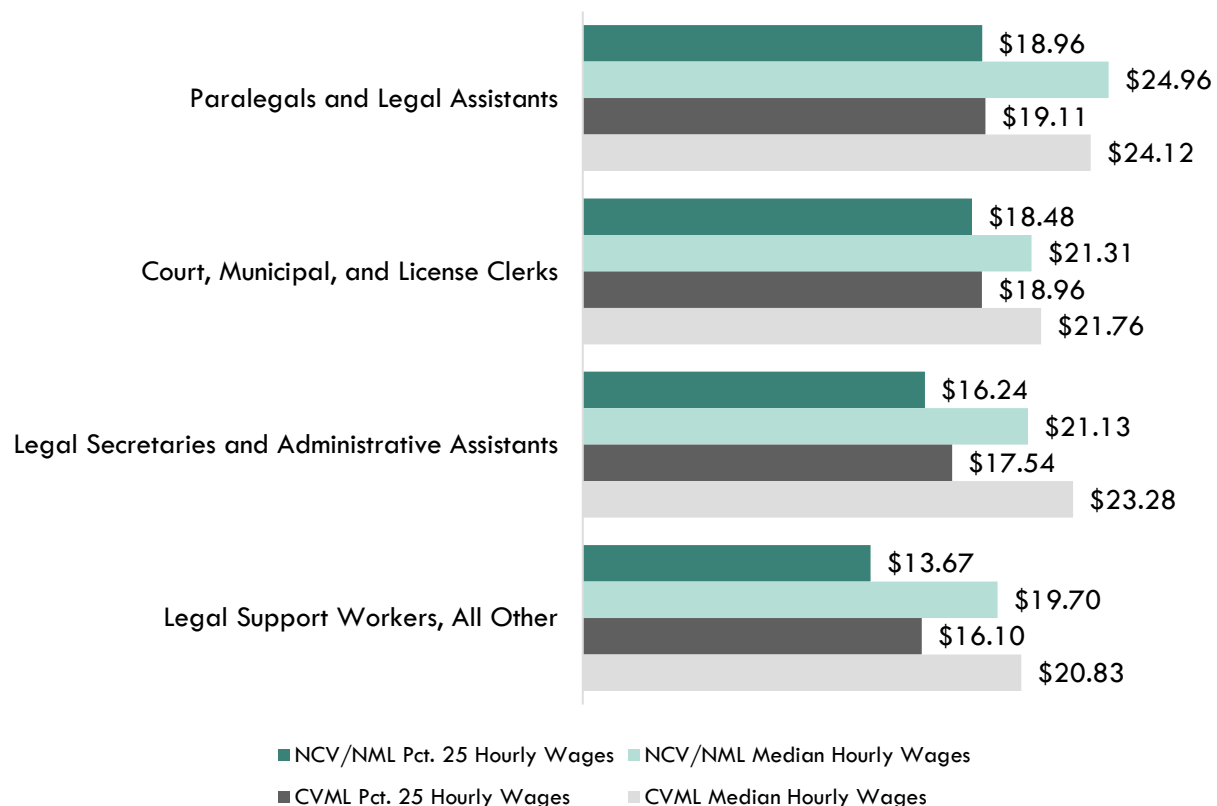
**Exhibit 1. Legal studies employment and occupational projections in the NCV/NML subregion**

Occupation	2019 Jobs	2024 Jobs	5-Year Change	5-Year % Change	Annual Openings
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	574	588	14	2%	63
Court, Municipal, and License Clerks	640	583	(56)	(9%)	61
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	375	319	(55)	(15%)	36
Legal Support Workers, All Other	179	233	54	30%	27
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,768</b>	<b>1,723</b>	<b>(44)</b>	<b>(2%)</b>	<b>187</b>

## Wages

Exhibit 2 compares the entry-level and experienced wages of the legal studies occupations. Paralegals and legal assistants earn the highest entry-level wage, \$18.96/hour in the subregion and \$19.11/hour in the region.

**Exhibit 2. Entry-level and experienced wage comparison in the NCV/NML subregion and region**



Median salary data from Emsi shows that paralegals and legal assistants earn the highest median salary, more than \$51,926 annually, followed by court, municipal, and license clerks, more than \$44,323 annually.

**Exhibit 3. Median salaries for legal studies occupations**

Occupation	Median Salary
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	\$51,926.36
Court, Municipal, and License Clerks	\$44,323.75
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	\$43,959.60
Legal Support Workers, All Other	\$40,969.58

## Job Postings

There were 108 job postings for the four occupations in the NCV/NML subregion from October 2020 to March 2021.<sup>2</sup> The employers with the most job postings are listed in Exhibit 4.

**Exhibit 4. Top employers of legal studies occupations by number of job postings**

Employer	Job Postings	% Job Postings
City Lodi	4	5%
Ej Gallo	4	5%
Ej Gallo Winery	4	5%
Chenault Law	3	4%
Corren	3	4%
Saputo	3	4%
8111	2	2%
Aplc Incorporated	2	2%
Calaveras Superior Court	2	2%
Calone & Harrel Law Group, LLP	2	2%

Exhibit 4 shows how job postings for the targeted occupations in the NCV/NML subregion are distributed across five O\*NET OnLine occupations. The occupational title paralegals and legal assistants is listed in 71 job postings. Note how this occupational title dominates the job posting results. Common job titles in postings include legal assistant in 11 job postings, paralegal/legal assistant in 11 job postings, and paralegal in nine job postings.

**Exhibit 5. Top occupational titles in job postings for legal studies**

Occupational Title	Job Postings	% of Job Postings
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	71	66%
Legal Support Workers, All Other	14	13%
Legal Secretaries	10	9%
Municipal Clerks	8	7%
Court Clerks	5	5%

<sup>2</sup> Other than occupation titles and job titles, the categories below can be counted one or multiple times per job posting, and across several areas in a single posting. For example, a skill can be counted in two different skill types, and an employer can indicate more than one education level.

## Education

Of the 108 job postings, 56 listed an education level preferred for the positions being filled. Of those, 82% requested high school or vocational training, 32% requested a bachelor's degree, and 14% requested a doctoral degree (Exhibit 6). A job posting can indicate more than one education level. Hence, the percentages shown in the chart below may total more than 100%.

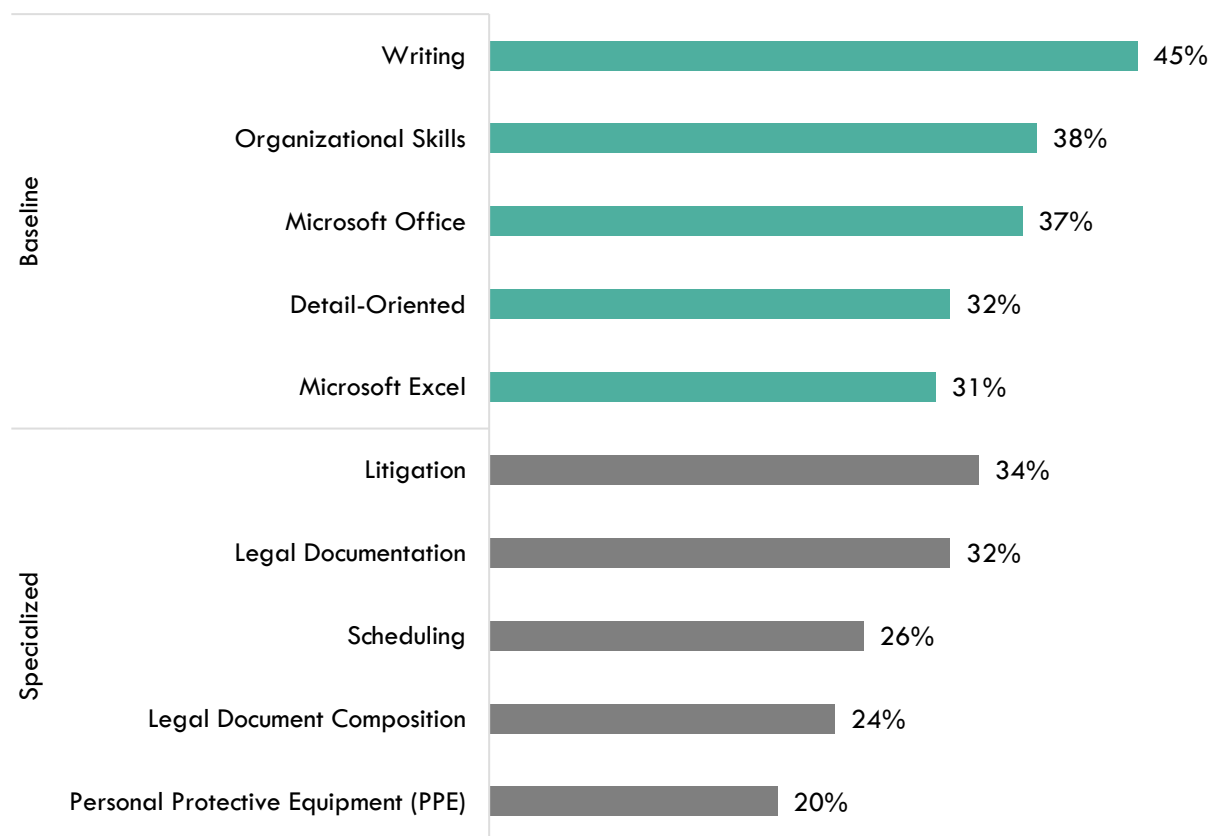
**Exhibit 6. Education levels requested in job postings for legal studies**

Education Level	Job Postings	% of Job Postings
High school or vocational training	46	82%
Bachelor's degree	18	32%
Doctoral degree	8	14%
Associate degree	4	7%
Master's degree	1	2%

## Baseline and Specialized Skills

Exhibit 7 depicts the top baseline and specialized skills for the targeted occupations. The three most important baseline skills are writing, 45% of job postings, organizational skills, 38%, and Microsoft Office, 37%. The top three specialized skills are litigation, 34% of job postings, legal documentation, 32%, and scheduling, 26%.

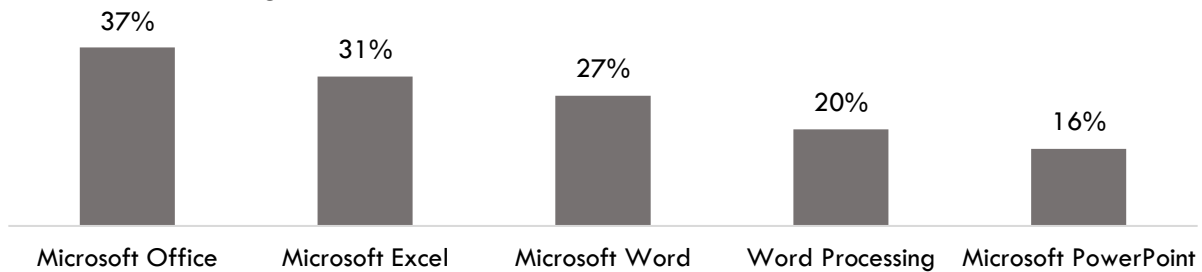
**Exhibit 7. In-demand legal studies baseline and specialized skills**



### Software Skills

Analysis also included the software skills most in demand by employers. Microsoft Office and Excel were the top two software skills identified in job postings (Exhibit 8).

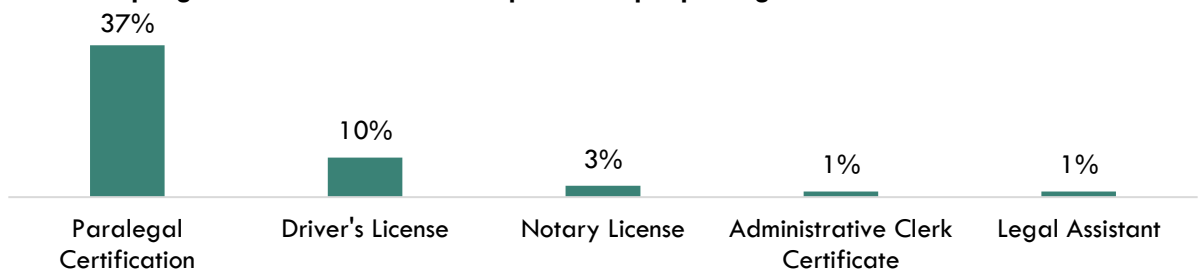
**Exhibit 8. In-demand legal studies software skills**



### Certifications

Of the 108 job postings, 73 contained certification data. Among those, 37% indicated a need for a paralegal certification. The next top certifications are driver's license and notary license (Exhibit 9). (Due to the low number of job postings with certifications listed, the chart below may not be representative of the full sample.)

**Exhibit 9. Top legal studies certifications requested in job postings**



## Education, Work Experience & Training

An associate degree is typically required for paralegals and legal assistants, and legal support workers, all other (Exhibit 10).

**Exhibit 10. Education, work experience, training, and Current Population Survey results for legal studies occupations<sup>3</sup>**

Occupation	Typical Entry-level Education	Work Experience Required	Typical On-The-Job Training	CPS
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	Associate degree	None	None	43.3%
Court, Municipal, and License Clerks	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Long-term	44.9%
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term	46.7%
Legal Support Workers, All Other	Associate degree	None	None	40.7%

<sup>3</sup> "Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey," Bureau of Labor Statistics, <https://www.bls.gov/cps/>.



# Supply

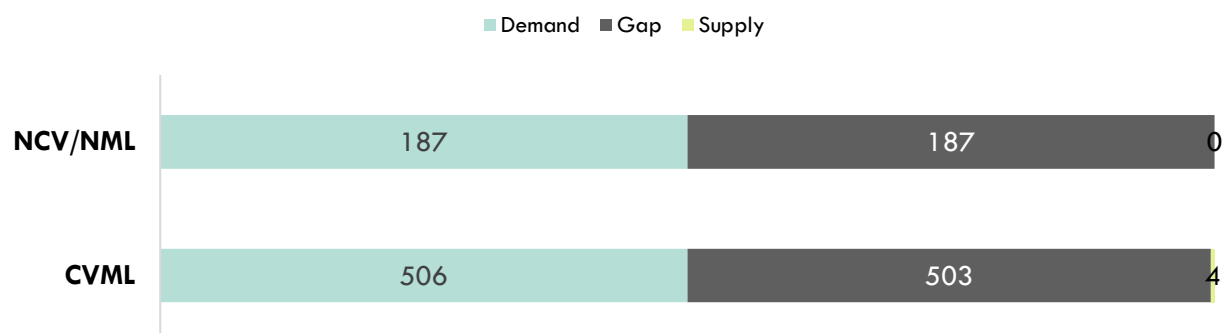
Analysis of program data from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Data Mart included the TOP code and title: 051410 - Legal Office Technology. Analysis of the last three years of data shows that, on average, four awards were conferred in the Central Valley/Mother Lode region each year (Exhibit 11).

**Exhibit 11. Postsecondary supply for legal studies occupations in the region**

TOP Code - Title	Colleges	Associate Degree	Certificate 30 < 60 Semester Units	Certificate 6 < 18 Semester Units	Subtotal
051410 - Legal Office Technology	Fresno City	1	1		2
	Sequoias			2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>

There is an undersupply of 187 legal studies workers in the NCV/NML subregion and 503 workers in the region (Exhibit 12).

**Exhibit 12. Legal studies workforce annual demand and supply in the NCV/NML subregion and region**



## Student Outcomes

There was no data available for legal studies through the California Community College Chancellor's Cal-PASS Plus LaunchBoard.

## Conclusion

The entry-level wages of the four occupations exceed the NCV/NML subregion's average living wage. There were 108 job postings in the past six months for occupations related to legal studies in the subregion. Analysis of skills and certification requirements in job postings indicates:

- The top baseline skill is writing, and the top specialized skill is litigation.
- The top software skill is Microsoft Office.
- The top certification is a paralegal certification.

There is an undersupply of trained workers, a shortage of 187 in the NCV/NML subregion and 503 in the region.

## Recommendation

Based on these findings, it is recommended that Modesto Junior College work with the Business and Entrepreneurship Regional Director, the college's advisory board, and local industry in the development of programs to address the shortage of legal studies in the region.

# Appendix A: Methodology & Data Sources

## Data Sources

Labor market and educational supply data compiled in this report derive from a variety of sources. Data were drawn from external sources, including the Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc., the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Data Mart and the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Below is the summary of the data sources found in this study.

Data Type	Source
Labor Market Information/Population Estimates and Projections/Educational Attainment	Economic Modeling Specialists, Intl. (EMSI). EMSI occupational employment data are based on final EMSI industry data and final EMSI staffing patterns. Wage estimates are based on Occupational Employment Statistics (QCEW and Non-QCEW Employees classes of worker) and the American Community Survey (Self-Employed and Extended Proprietors). Occupational wage estimates also affected by county-level EMSI earnings by industry: <a href="http://economicmodeling.com">economicmodeling.com</a> .
Typical Education Level and On-the-job Training	Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) uses a system to assign categories for entry-level education and typical on-the-job training to each occupation for which BLS publishes projections data: <a href="https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/educational-attainment.htm">https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/educational-attainment.htm</a> .
Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Estimates	California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division: <a href="http://labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov">labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov</a> .
Job Posting and Skills Data	Burning Glass: <a href="http://burning-glass.com/">burning-glass.com/</a> .
Additional Education Requirements/Employer Preferences	The O*NET Job Zone database includes over 900 occupations as well as information on skills, abilities, knowledge, work activities and interests associated with specific occupations: <a href="http://onetonline.org">onetonline.org</a> .

## Key Terms and Concepts

**Annual Job Openings:** Annual openings are calculated by dividing the number of years in the projection period by total job openings.

**Education Attainment Level:** The highest education attainment level of workers aged 25 years or older.

**Employment Estimate:** The total number of workers currently employed.

**Employment Projections:** Projections of employment are calculated by a proprietary Economic Modeling Specialists, Intl. (EMSI) formula that includes historical employment and economic indicators along with national, state and local trends.

**Living Wage:** The cost of living in a specific community or region for one adult and no children. The cost increases with the addition of children.

**Occupation:** An occupation is a grouping of job titles that have a similar set of activities or tasks that employees perform.

**Percent Change:** Rate of growth or decline in the occupation for the projected period; this does not factor in replacement openings.

**Replacements:** Estimate of job openings resulting from workers retiring or otherwise permanently leaving an occupation. Workers entering an occupation often need training. These replacement needs, added to job openings due to growth, may be used to assess the minimum number of workers who will need to be trained for an occupation.

**Total Job Openings (New + Replacements):** Sum of projected growth (new jobs) and replacement needs. When an occupation is expected to lose jobs, or retain the current employment level, number of openings will equal replacements.

**Typical Education Requirement:** represents the typical education level most workers need to enter an occupation.

**Typical On-The-Job Training:** indicates the typical on-the-job training needed to attain competency in the skills needed in the occupation.