

Program Endorsement Brief: 1240.10/ Dental Assistant
Dental Assisting - Registered – Certificate of Achievement
Dental Assisting - Registered – A.S. Degree
 Orange County Center of Excellence, August 2021

Summary Analysis

Program Endorsement:	Endorsed: All Criteria Met	<input type="checkbox"/>	Endorsed: Some Criteria Met	<input checked="" 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, 25 th)	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" 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: *dental assistants* (31-9091). Middle-skill occupations typically require some postsecondary education, but less than a bachelor's degree.¹ 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 occupation.

Based on the available data, there appears to be a supply gap for dental assistants in the region. Furthermore, the typical entry-level education for this occupation is a postsecondary nondegree award. However, entry-level wages are lower than the living wage in Orange County. **Therefore, due to some of 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 **1,965 jobs available annually** in the region due to retirements and workers leaving the field, **which is more than the 1,186 awards conferred annually** by educational institutions in the region.
- **Living Wage Criteria:** Typical entry-level hourly wages for dental assistants are **\$15.79, which is lower than the living wage** for one adult in Orange County (\$17.36).²

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.

² Living wage data was pulled from California Family Needs Calculator on 7/31/21. For more information, visit the California Family Needs Calculator website: <https://insightcced.org/2018-family-needs-calculator/>.

- **Educational Criteria:** The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists a **postsecondary nondegree award** as the typical entry-level education for dental assistants.
 - Furthermore, the national-level educational attainment data indicates **56% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree** as their highest level of education.

Supply:

- There are **seven community colleges** in the LA/OC region that issue awards related to dental assistants, conferring an average of **133 awards annually** between 2016 and 2019.
- Between 2014 and 2017, there was an average of **1,053 awards conferred annually** in related training programs by **17 non-community college institutions** throughout the region.

Occupational Demand

Exhibit 1 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for dental assistants. In Los Angeles/Orange County, the number of jobs related to this occupation is projected to decrease by 6% through 2024. However, there will be nearly 2,000 job openings per year through 2024 due to retirements and workers leaving the field.

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 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	13,631	12,835	(796)	(6%)	1,357
Orange	6,147	5,764	(383)	(6%)	608
Total	19,778	18,599	(1,179)	(6%)	1,965

Wages

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

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.

Orange County—Typical entry-level hourly wages for dental assistants are \$15.79, which is below the living wage for one adult (\$17.36 in Orange County).⁴ Experienced workers can expect to earn wages of \$23.88, which is higher than the living wage estimate.

Los Angeles County—Typical entry-level hourly wages for dental assistants are \$14.93, which is below the living wage for one adult (\$15.04 in Los Angeles County).⁵ Experienced workers can expect to earn wages of \$22.58, which is higher than the living wage estimate.

Job Postings

There were 2,798 online job postings related to dental assistants listed in the past 12 months. The top skills were x-rays, dentistry, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The top employers, by number of job postings, in the region were Smile Brands, Pacific Dental Services Incorporated, Western Dental Services.

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.

Educational Attainment

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists a postsecondary nondegree award as the typical entry-level education for dental assistants. Furthermore, the national-level educational attainment data indicates 56% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree. Of the 36% of dental assistant job postings listing a minimum education requirement in Los Angeles/Orange County, 99.4% (1,004) requested high school or vocational training and 0.6% (6) requested an associate degree.

Educational Supply

Community College Supply—Exhibit 2 shows the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred by community colleges in the related TOP code: Dental Assistant (1240.10). The college with the most completions in the region is Orange Coast. Over the past 12 months, there was one other related program recommendation request 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
1240.10	Dental Assistant	Cerritos	15	21	34	23
		Citrus	26	36	24	29
		Glendale	1	-	-	0
		Pasadena	14	3	22	13
		West LA	9	19	16	15

⁵ Living wage data was pulled from California Family Needs Calculator on 07/31/2021. For more information, visit the California Family Needs Calculator website: <https://insightcced.org/2018-family-needs-calculator/>.

⁵ Ibid.

TOP Code	Program	College	2016-2017 Awards	2017-2018 Awards	2018-2019 Awards	3-Year Award Average
		LA Subtotal	65	79	96	80
		Cypress	18	20	25	21
		Orange Coast	29	32	35	32
		OC Subtotal	47	52	60	53
Supply Subtotal/Average			112	131	156	133

Non-Community College Supply— For a comprehensive regional supply analysis, it is important to consider the supply from technical institutions in the region that provide training programs for dental assistants. Exhibit 3 shows the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred by these institutions in the related Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code: 51.0601 – Dental Assisting/Assistant. Due to different data collection periods, the most recent three-year period of available data is from 2014 to 2017. Between 2014 and 2017, technical institutions in the region conferred an average of 1,053 awards 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
51.0601	Dental Assisting/Assistant	American Career College-Anaheim	63	55	41	53
		American Career College-Long Beach	53	72	53	59
		American Career College-Los Angeles	104	116	104	108
		Carrington College-Pomona	19	12	10	14
		Concorde Career College- Garden Grove	135	111	90	112
		Concorde Career College- North Hollywood	63	75	61	66
		Downey Adult School	181	92	24	99
		Galaxy Medical School	2	3	2	2
		Hacienda La Puente Adult Education	19	21	22	21
		North- West College Glendale	15	34	25	25

CIP Code	Program	College	2014-2015 Awards	2015-2016 Awards	2016-2017 Awards	3-Year Award Average
		North-West College Pasadena	-	2	2	1
		North-West College-Pomona	17	19	22	19
		North-West College-Covina	58	51	42	50
		PCI College	5	1	1	2
		UEI College-Gardena	79	64	72	72
		United Education Institute-Anaheim	81	76	44	67
		United Education Institute- Encino	98	89	81	89
		United Education Institute- Huntington Park Campus	158	120	114	131
		United Education Institute- West Covina	64	62	60	62
Supply Total/Average			1,214	1,075	870	1,053

Appendix A: Occupational demand and wage data by county

Exhibit 5. 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)
Dental Assistants (31-9001)	6,147	5,764	(383)	(6%)	608	\$15.79	\$19.39	\$23.88
Total	6,147	5,764	(383)	(6%)	608			

Exhibit 4. 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)
Dental Assistants (31-9001)	13,631	12,835	(796)	(6%)	1,357	\$14.93	\$18.33	\$22.58
Total	13,631	12,835	(796)	(6%)	1,357			

Exhibit 6. Los Angeles and Orange Counties

Occupation (SOC)	2019 Jobs	2024 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Typical Entry-level Education Requirement
Dental Assistants (31-9001)	19,778	18,599	(1,179)	(6%)	1,965	Postsecondary nondegree award
Total	19,778	18,599	(1,179)	(6%)	1,965	

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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