

Paralegal

Inland Empire/Desert Region (Riverside and San Bernardino counties)

This workforce demand report uses state and federal job projection data developed before the economic impact of COVID-19. The COE is monitoring the situation and will provide more information as it becomes available. Please consult with local employers to understand their current employment needs.

Summary

- The community college paralegal program provides the knowledge, skills, and abilities that lead to three paralegal and related community college-level occupations.
- This group is projected to have 404 combined annual job openings through 2024, increasing employment by 2%.
- The 50th percentile hourly wages for this group are between \$21.96 and \$27.50 per hour, above the regional \$21.78 per hour self-sustainable wage standard for a single adult with one child.
- Four community colleges conferred an annual average of 45 awards in paralegal programs over the last three academic years in the region. Other postsecondary institutions in the region issued 22 awards annually over the previous three academic years in related training programs.
- The Centers of Excellence recommends expanding paralegal programs to meet the demand for workers in the region.

Introduction

California Community College paralegal (TOP 1402.00) programs prepare students for employment through the instruction of legal terminology, forms and procedures; general legal concepts; principles and techniques of legal research, including analysis of legal issues, documentation of appropriate legal precedents, and presentation of research findings useable by attorneys, judges, and others (Taxonomy of Programs, 2012). The knowledge, skills, and abilities trained by paralegal programs lead to the following occupations:

- Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants (SOC 43-6012)
- Paralegals and Legal Assistants (23-2011)
- Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers (23-2093)

Job Counts and Projections

In 2019, there were 3,787 combined paralegal and related jobs group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region. Employment in this group is expected to increase by 2% over the next five years. The paralegal and legal assistants occupations will increase new job employment by 9%, while legal secretaries and administrative

assistants (-6%) and title examiners, abstractors, and searchers (-4%) are expected to see employment decline.

Employers are expected to have 404 combined annual job openings for paralegal and related occupations over the next five years to fill new jobs and backfill jobs that workers are permanently vacating (includes retirements). Paralegals and legal assistants will have most annual job openings (232 annual job openings, or 57% of annual job openings in this group), followed by legal secretaries and administrative assistants (141, or 35% of job openings in this group) and title examiners, abstractors, and searchers (32, or 8% of job openings in this group). Exhibit 1 displays job counts, five-year projected job growth, job openings, and the share of incumbent workers age 55 years and greater working in this group.

Exhibit 1: Paralegal five-year projections, 2019-2024

Occupation	2019 Jobs	2024 Jobs	5-Yr % Change (New Jobs)	5-Yr Openings (New + Replacement Jobs)	Annual Openings (New + Replacement Jobs)	% of workers age 55+
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	1,953	2,132	9%	1,393	232	22%
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	1,429	1,346	(6%)	843	141	36%
Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers	405	387	(4%)	191	32	31%
Total	3,787	3,865	2%	2,426	404	28%

Source: Emsi 2021.1

Exhibit 2 shows the number of job ads posted during the last 12 months and the average time to fill each occupation in the local region and statewide. The job advertisement searches for legal secretaries and administrative assistants and title examiners, abstractors, and searchers were expanded to the state-level to provide generalizable results. On average, regional employers fill online job postings for the paralegal and related jobs group within 53 days, four days longer than the statewide average of 49 days, indicating that

local employers may face more hiring challenges than other California employers.

Exhibit 2: Job ads and time to fill

Occupation	Job Ads	Regional Average Time to Fill (Days)	Statewide Average Time to Fill (Days)
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	355	46	49
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants*	1,194	-	53
Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers*	1,043	-	47
TOTAL	2,592	-	49

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

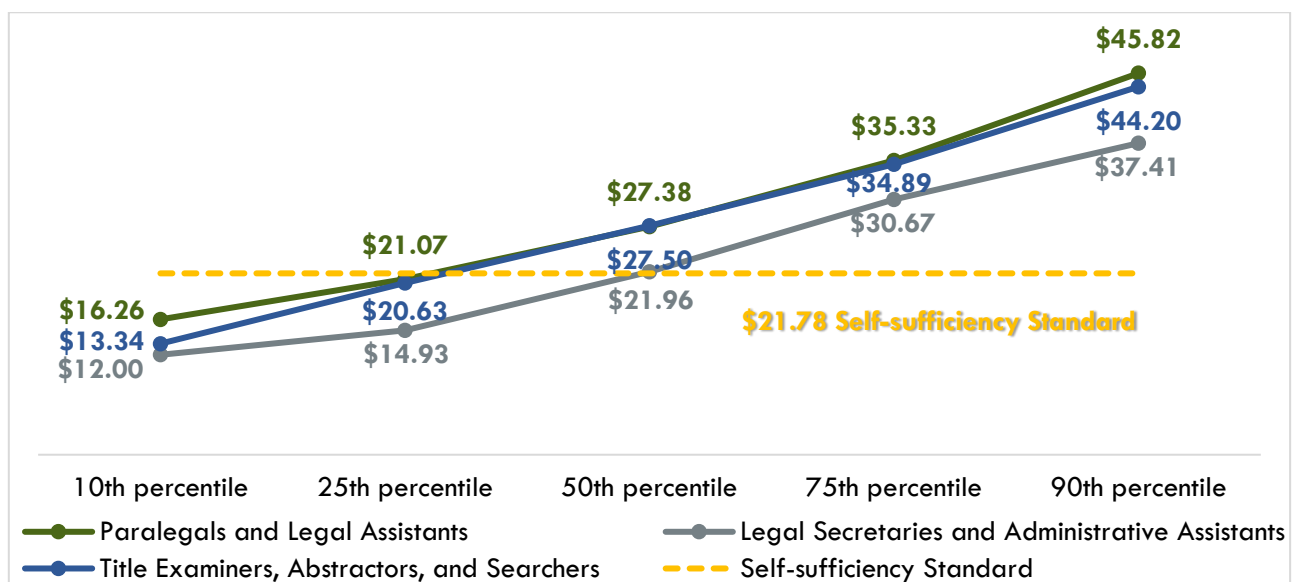
*Statewide job advertisement information displayed

Earnings and Benefits

Community colleges should ensure their training programs lead to employment opportunities that provide self-sustainable income. The University of Washington estimates that a self-sufficient hourly rate for a single adult with one school-age child is \$21.78 per hour or \$45,992 annually in Riverside County; \$21.24 per hour or \$44,867 annually in San Bernardino County (Pearce, 2020). For this study, the higher hourly earnings requirement in Riverside County is adopted as the self-sufficiency standard for the two-county region.

The 50th percentile hourly earnings for the paralegal and related jobs group is above the self-sufficiency rate, indicating that the top 50% of workers in this group earn a self-sustainable wage. Exhibit 3 displays the hourly earnings.

Exhibit 3: Hourly earnings by percentile



Source: Emsi 2021.1

The California Labor Market Information Division's occupational guides indicate that most employers offer workers in the paralegal and related jobs group benefits packages that include medical, dental, and life insurance as well as sick leave and retirement plans. Benefits information is not available for title examiners, abstractors, and searches (Detailed Occupational Guides, 2020).

Advertised Salary from Online Job Ads

Exhibit 4 displays online job ad salary data for the paralegal and related jobs group over the last 12 months. Online job ad salary information reveals that employers are willing to pay the paralegal and related jobs group between \$43,000 and \$54,000 annually. Advertised wages for *legal secretaries and administrative assistants* are above the \$45,992 annual (\$21.78 hourly) self-sufficiency standard for the region. Consider online job ad salary with caution since only 57% (1,485 out of 2,592) of results for these occupations provided information. The salary figures are prorated to reflect full-time, annual salary status.

Exhibit 4: Advertised salary information

Occupations	Number of job postings	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	
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	255	1%	22%	56%	21%	\$43,000
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants*	714	12%	34%	42%	12%	\$54,000
Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers*	516	22%	54%	18%	6%	\$45,000

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

*Statewide job advertisement information displayed

Employers, Skills, Education, and Work Experience

Exhibit 5 displays the employers posting the most job ads during the last 12 months. Displaying employer names provides some insight into where students may find employment after completing a program.

Exhibit 5: Employers posting the most job ads for the paralegal and related jobs group

Occupation	Top Employers	
Paralegals and Legal Assistants (n=355)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime Healthcare Management, Inc. • Holstrom, Block, and Parke • District Attorney of Riverside County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law Office of Beverly W. Quinn • Singleton Smith Law Offices • Law Offices Of Alejo Lugo • Law Offices Of Ademola M Okusanya
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants* (n=1,194)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zurich Insurance • State of California Attorney's Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wood, Smith, Henning & Berman • Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani, LLP
Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers* (n=1,043)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First American Corporation • Realogy Franchise Group • Schnitzer Steel Industries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fidelity Brokerage Services • Century 21 • CBRE Group

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

*Statewide job advertisement information displayed

Exhibit 6 lists a sample of specialized and employability skills employers seek when looking for workers to fill paralegal positions. Specialized skills are occupation-specific skills that employers request for industry or job competency. Employability skills are foundational skills that transcend industries and occupations; this category is often referred to as "soft skills." The skills requested in job postings may be utilized to guide curriculum development.

Exhibit 6: Sample of in-demand skills from employer job ads

Occupation	Specialized skills	Employability skills
Paralegals and Legal Assistants (n=324)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Documentation • Customer Service • Family Law • Legal Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail-Oriented • Spanish • Organizational Skills • Communication Skills
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants* (n=1,164)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Support • Administrative Support • Legal Documentation • Secretarial Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Skills • Communication Skills • Detail-Oriented • Typing
Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers* (n=912)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Service • Real Estate Experience • Insurance Underwriting • Data Entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Skills • Detail-Oriented • Organizational Skills • Problem Solving

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights *Statewide job advertisement information displayed

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than a third (39%-53%) of incumbent workers in this field hold a community college-level of educational attainment; "some college, no degree" and an "associate degree." Online job ads indicate that the minimum advertised education requirement requested by employers the majority is a high school diploma or vocational training; *paralegals and legal assistants* (59%), *legal secretaries and administrative assistants* (66%), and *title examiners, abstractors, and searchers* (81%).

Exhibit 7: Typical entry-level education, educational attainment, and minimum advertised education requirements

Occupation	Typical Entry-Level Education Requirement	CC-Level Educational Attainment*	Real-Time Minimum Advertised Education Requirement			
			Number of Job Ads	High school or vocational training	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree or higher
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	Associate degree	43%	170	59%	13%	28%
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants**	High school diploma or equivalent	53%	509	66%	11%	23%
Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers**	High school diploma or equivalent	39%	618	81%	3%	16%

Source: Emsi 2021.1, Burning Glass – Labor Insights

*Percentage of incumbent workers with a Community College Award or Some Postsecondary Coursework

**Statewide job advertisement information displayed

Exhibit 8 displays the work experience typically required to enter each occupation and the real-time work experience requirements from employer job ads. Job ads indicate that most employers seek paralegal workers with zero and five years of work experience.

Exhibit 8: Work experience required and real-time work experience requirements

Occupation	Work Experience Typically Required	Real-Time Work Experience			
		Number of job postings	0 – 2 years	3 – 5 years	6+ years
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	None	212	44%	55%	1%
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants*	None	758	34%	60%	6%
Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers*	None	596	56%	37%	7%

Source: Emsi 2021.1, Burning Glass – Labor Insights *Statewide job advertisement information displayed

Student Completions for Paralegal Programs

Exhibit 9 displays completion data for California Community College paralegal (TOP 1402.00) programs between 2017 and 2020. These programs have collectively awarded an annual average of 45 associate degrees and certificates over the last three academic years. The student completion and outcome methodology are available on page 11.

Exhibit 9: 2016-19, Annual average community college awards for the paralegal programs in the Inland Empire/Desert Region

TOP 1402.00 – Paralegal (Local Program Title)	Associate degree	Certificate requiring 30 to <60 semester units	Certificate requiring 18 to <30 semester units	Certificate requiring 16 to <30 semester units	Total CC Annual Average Awards, Academic Years 2017-20
Chaffey (Paralegal Studies)	3	4	13	-	19
Mt. San Jacinto (Legal Studies)	3	3	-	1	8
Riverside (Paralegal Studies)	11	-	-	-	11
Victor Valley (Paralegal Studies)	-	7	-	-	7
Total	18	14	13	1	45

Source: MIS Data Mart

California program outcome data may provide a useful insight into the likelihood of success for the proposed program. Community college student outcome information based on the selected TOP code and region is provided in Exhibit 10. The outcome methodology is available in the appendix section of this report.

Exhibit 10: 1402.00 – Paralegal strong workforce program outcomes

Strong Workforce Program Metrics: 1402.00 – Paralegal Academic Year 2017-18, unless noted otherwise	Inland Empire/Desert Region	California
Unduplicated count of enrolled students (2018-19)	502	9,064
Completed 9+ career education units in one year (2018-19)	37%	38%
Perkins Economically disadvantaged students (2018-19)	88%	83%
Students who attained a noncredit workforce milestone in a year (2018-19)	-	2%
Students who earned a degree, certificate, or attained apprenticeship (2018-19)	34	749
Transferred to a four-year institution (transfers)	21	514
Job closely related to the field of study (2016-17)	-	71%
Median annual earnings (all exiters)	\$29,392	\$36,156

Strong Workforce Program Metrics: 1402.00 – Paralegal Academic Year 2017-18, unless noted otherwise	Inland Empire/Desert Region	California
Median change in earnings (all exiters)	22%	33%
Attained a living wage (completers and skills-builders)	59%	56%

Sources: LaunchBoard Community College Pipeline and Strong Workforce Program Metrics

Exhibit 11 displays awards conferred outside the community college system. Completion data is compiled from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) for the most recent three years available. Due to IPEDS reporting limitations, it is assumed that each award represents a qualified worker since it is unknown if students are earning multiple awards from this program.

Exhibit 11: Annual average other educational program student completions for legal assistant/paralegal programs in the Inland Empire/Desert Region

22.0302 Legal Assistant/Paralegal (CIP Program)	Associate Degree	Other Educational Institutions Annual Average Certificates or Other Credit Awards (2014-17)
Platt College – Ontario	9	9
Platt College – Riverside	13	13
Total annual average other awards	22	22

Source: IPEDS

Recommendation for Paralegal Programs

Paralegal occupations are expected to have 404 combined annual job openings over the next five years. Approximately 57% of these annual job openings are for paralegals and legal assistants and 35% of annual job openings are for legal secretaries and administrative assistants. Title examiners, abstractors, and searchers are projected to have only 32 annual job openings over the next five years. The median hourly earnings for each of these occupations exceeds the self-sustainability standard.

Community college paralegal (TOP 1402.00) programs are offered at four colleges. These programs have collectively awarded an annual average of 45 associate degrees and certificates over the last three academic years. Private institutions awarded an annual average of 22 awards.

The Centers of Excellence recommends expanding paralegal programs to meet the demand for workers in the region. Colleges should partner with relevant employers and concentrate on the skills that lead to the paralegal and related jobs group and ensure students earn a self-sustainable level of income shortly after exiting these programs.

Contact

Michael Goss & Paul Vaccher
Centers of Excellence, Inland Empire/Desert Region
michael.goss@chaffey.edu
March 2021

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Appendix: Occupation definitions, sample job titles, five-year projections, and earnings for paralegal occupations

Occupation Definitions (SOC code), Education and Training Requirement, Community College Education Attainment

Paralegals and Legal Assistants (23-2011)

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.

Sample job titles: Certified Paralegal, Corporate Law Assistant, Law Associate, Legal Analyst, Legal Assistant, Litigation Paralegal, Paralegal, Paralegal Assistant, Paralegal Specialist, Real Estate Paralegal

Entry-Level Educational Requirement: Associate degree

Training Requirement: None

Percentage of incumbent workers with a Community College Award or Some Postsecondary Coursework: 43%

Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers (23-2093)

Search real estate records, examine titles, or summarize pertinent legal or insurance documents or details for a variety of purposes. May compile lists of mortgages, contracts, and other instruments pertaining to titles by searching public and private records for law firms, real estate agencies, or title insurance companies.

Sample job titles: Abstracter, Abstractor, Commercial Title Examiner, Searcher, Title Abstractor, Title Agent, Title Examiner, Title Officer, Title Searcher

Entry-Level Educational Requirement: High school diploma or equivalent

Training Requirement: Between one and twelve months on-the-job training

Percentage of incumbent workers with a Community College Award or Some Postsecondary Coursework: 39%

Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants (43-6012)

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.

Sample job titles: Confidential Secretary, Coordinating Legal Practice Assistant, Judicial Administrative Assistant, Legal Administrative Assistant, Legal Administrative Secretary, Legal Coordinator, Legal Office Support Assistant, Legal Secretary, Magistrate Assistant, Secretary

Entry-Level Educational Requirement: High school diploma or equivalent

Training Requirement: Between one and twelve months on-the-job training

Percentage of incumbent workers with a Community College Award or Some Postsecondary Coursework: 53%

Appendix: Student Completions and Program Outcome Methodology

Exhibit 9 displays the average annual California Community College (CCC) awards conferred during the three academic years between 2017 and 2020, from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems (MIS) Data Mart. Awards are the combined total of associate degrees and certificates issued during the timeframe, divided by three in this case to calculate an annual average. This is done to minimize the effect of atypical variation that might be present in a single year.

Community college student outcome information is from LaunchBoard and based on the selected TOP code and region. These metrics are based on records submitted to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems (MIS) by community colleges, which come from self-reported student information from CCC Apply and the National Student Clearinghouse. Employment and earnings metrics are sourced from records provided by California's Employment Development Department's Unemployment Insurance database. When available, outcomes for completers are reported to demonstrate the impact that earning a degree or certificate can have on employment and earnings. For more information on the types of students included for each metric, please see the web link for LaunchBoard's Strong Workforce Program Metrics Data Element Dictionary in the References section (LaunchBoard, 2021 a). Finally, employment in a job closely related to the field of study comes from self-reported student responses on the CTE Employment Outcomes Survey (CTEOS), administered by Santa Rosa Junior College (LaunchBoard, 2021 a).

Job advertisement 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 advertisements often do not reveal employers' hiring intentions; it is unknown if employers plan to hire one or multiple workers from a single online job ad or collect resumes for future hiring needs. A closed job ad may not be the result of a hired worker.

Table 1. 2019 to 2024 job growth, wages, entry-level education, training, and work experience required for the paralegal and related jobs group

Occupation (SOC)	2019 Jobs	5-Year Change (New Jobs)	5-Year % Change (New Jobs)	Annual Openings (New + Replacement Jobs)	Entry-Experienced Hourly Wage (10 th to 90 th percentile)	Median Hourly Wage (50 th percentile)	Average Annual Earnings	Entry-Level Education & On-The-Job-Training	Work Experience Required
Paralegals and Legal Assistants (23-2011)	1,953	179	9%	232	\$16.26 to \$45.82	\$27.38	\$62,000	Associate's degree & None	None
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants (43-6012)	1,429	(83)	(6%)	141	\$12.00 to \$37.41	\$21.96	\$48,500	High school diploma or equivalent & 1-12 months	None
Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers (23-2093)	405	(18)	(4%)	32	\$13.34 to \$44.20	\$27.50	\$65,200	High school diploma or equivalent & 1-12 months	None
Total	3,787	78	2%	404	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Emsi 2021.1