

Program Endorsement Brief: 0850.10 – Sign Language Interpreting Sign Language/Interpreting (AS and Certificate)

Los Angeles/Orange County Center of Excellence, September 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 Los Angeles/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 requires a bachelor's degree, it is considered middle-skill because more than 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 occupation of interest.

Based on the available data, there appears to be a supply gap for *interpreters and translators* in the region. In addition to more than one-third of current workers in the field having some college or an associate degree, entry-level wages exceed the self-sufficiency standard wage in Los Angeles County. **Therefore, due to all 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 **489 jobs available annually** in the region due to new job growth and replacements, **which is more than the 113 awards conferred annually** by educational institutions in the region.
 - *Interpreters and translators* (27-3091) includes all types of interpreters and translators, including sign language interpreters. Since the SOC does not solely

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.

represent sign language interpreters, **the number of annual job openings is overstated.**

- Over the past 12 months, there have been **201 online job postings for sign language interpreters.**
- **Living Wage Criteria** – In Los Angeles County, the **typical entry-level hourly wage** for *interpreters and translators* is **\$21.23, which is higher than the self-sufficiency standard** hourly wage (living wage) for one adult in the region (\$18.10 in Los Angeles 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*.
 - National-level educational attainment data indicates **33% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree.**

Supply:

- Between 2017 and 2020, **seven community colleges** in the LA/OC region issued awards in sign language interpreting, **conferring an average of 113 awards.**
- There are currently **no other educational institutions in the region** that provide training in sign language interpreting.

² Self-Sufficiency Standard wage data was pulled from The Self-Sufficiency Standard Tool for California on 8/25/2021. For more information, visit: <http://selfsufficiencystandard.org/california>.

Occupational Demand

Exhibit 1 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for *interpreters and translators*. In Los Angeles/Orange County, the number of jobs for *interpreters and translators* is projected to increase by 8% through 2025. There will be nearly 500 job openings per year through 2025 due to job growth and replacements. It is important to note that *interpreters and translators* (27-3091) includes all types of interpreters and translators and not solely sign language interpreters. Therefore, the data in Exhibit 1 is likely overstated for sign language 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 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

County	2020 Jobs	2025 Jobs	2020-2025 Change	2020-2025 % Change	Annual Openings
Los Angeles	3,642	3,911	269	7%	373
Orange	1,088	1,188	100	9%	116
Total	4,729	5,099	370	8%	489

Wages

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the hourly wages for *interpreters and translators* in Los Angeles County, as they relate to the county's self-sufficiency standard wage. Orange 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.

Los Angeles County – The typical entry-level hourly wage for *interpreters and translators* is \$21.23, which is above the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$18.10 in Los Angeles County). Experienced workers can expect to earn \$41.55/hour, which is higher than the self-sufficiency standard wage.

Orange County – The typical entry-level hourly wage for *interpreters and translators* is \$19.60, which is below the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$20.63 in Orange County). Experienced workers can expect to earn \$39.63/hour, which is higher than the self-sufficiency standard wage.

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.

Job Postings

Over the past 12 months, there have been 201 online job postings related to sign language interpreters. The top skills were teaching, scheduling, and tutoring. The top three employers, by number of job postings, in the region were VocoVision, Fusion Academy, Glendale Community College, and Sorenson. Of the 63% of sign language interpreter-related job postings listing a minimum education requirement in Los Angeles/Orange County, 11% (14) requested a high school or vocational training, 23% (29) requested an associate degree, and 66% (83) requested a bachelor's degree.

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 bachelor's degree as the typical entry-level education for *interpreters and translators*. However, national-level educational attainment data indicates 33% of workers in the field have completed some college or 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 Sign Language Interpreting (TOP 0850.10). The colleges with the most completions in the region are Golden West, Mt. San Antonio, LA Pierce, and El Camino. Over the past 12 months, there was one other related program recommendation request from a regional community college.

Exhibit 2: Regional community college awards (certificates and degrees), 2017-2020

TOP	Program	College	2017-18 Awards	2018-19 Awards	2019-20 Awards	3-Year Average
0850.10	Sign Language Interpreting	Compton	2	-	-	1
		El Camino	20	26	18	21
		LA Pierce	10	34	23	22
		Mt San Antonio	14	16	49	26
		LA Subtotal	46	76	90	71
		Golden West	7	66	23	32
		Saddleback	28	-	-	9
		Santiago Canyon	1	1	-	1
		OC Subtotal	36	67	23	42
Supply Total/Average			82	143	113	113

Non-Community College Supply – Currently, there are no non-community college institutions in the region that provide training in sign language interpreting.

Appendix A: Occupational demand and wage data by county

Exhibit 3. Los Angeles County

Occupation (SOC)	2020 Jobs	2025 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)	3,642	3,911	269	7%	373	\$21.23	\$28.27	\$41.55

Exhibit 4. Orange County

Occupation (SOC)	2020 Jobs	2025 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	1,188	100	9%	116	\$19.60	\$26.50	\$39.63

Exhibit 5. Los Angeles and Orange Counties

Occupation (SOC)	2020 Jobs	2025 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Typical Entry-Level Education
Interpreters and Translators (27-3091)	4,729	5,099	370	8%	489	Bachelor's degree

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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September 2021



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