

Program Endorsement Brief: 1217.00/Surgical Technician

Surgical Technician

Orange County Center of Excellence, May 2022

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, 25th)	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 two middle-skill occupations: *surgical technicians (29-2055)*, and *health information technologists, medical registrars, surgical assistants, and healthcare practitioners and technical workers, all other (29-9098)*. 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 occupations.

Based on the available data there appears to be a supply gap for these Surgical Technician occupations in the region. Furthermore, all annual openings for the occupations in this report typically require a postsecondary nondegree award and more than one-third of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree as their highest level of education. However, while all job openings in Los Angeles County have entry-level wages that exceed the living wage for one adult in Los Angeles County, the majority (83%) of annual job openings in Orange County have entry-level wages that are lower than the Orange County living wage estimate. **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 **533 jobs available annually** in the region due to new job growth and replacements, **which is more than the 347 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 *health information technologists, medical registrars, surgical assistants, and healthcare practitioners and technical workers, all other (29-9098)* SOC code includes a variety of healthcare support job titles that are not currently classified under other SOC codes. Since the SOC code does not solely represent surgical assistants, **the number of annual job openings for surgical assistants is overstated.**
- Over the past 12 months, there were **1,753 online job postings related to these Surgical Technician occupations.** The highest number of job postings were for surgical technicians, surgical technologists, certified surgical technicians and operating room (OR) technicians.
- **Living Wage Criteria** – Within Orange County, **the majority (51%) of annual job openings** for these Surgical Technician occupations have **entry-level wages below the county's living wage (\$20.63/hour).**²
 - However, **median wages for these occupations exceed the living wage,** suggesting that workers can attain the living wage with some work experience.
- **Educational Criteria** – Within the LA/OC region, **all annual job openings** for occupations related to *surgical technicians* **typically require a postsecondary nondegree award.**
 - Furthermore, the national-level educational attainment data indicates **between 20.4% and 73.2% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree** as their highest level of education.

Supply:

- There are **no community colleges** in the LA/OC region that issue awards related to surgical technicians or surgical assistants.
 - Between 2017 and 2020 two colleges in San Diego County and one college in San Mateo County issued an average of 39 awards annually
- Between 2016 and 2019, there was an average of **347 awards conferred annually** in related training programs by non-community college institutions, all of which were generated by **14 individual non-community college institutions throughout the region.**

Occupational Demand

Exhibit 1 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for these Surgical Technician occupations. In Los Angeles/Orange County, the number of jobs related to these occupations is projected to increase by 9% through 2025. There will be more than 500 job openings per year through 2025 due to job growth and replacements. It is important to note that the *health information technologists, medical registrars, surgical assistants, and healthcare practitioners and technical workers, all other (29-9098)* SOC code includes a variety of healthcare support job titles that are not currently classified under other SOC codes. Since the SOC code does not solely

² Living wage data was pulled from California Family Needs Calculator on 5/10/2022. For more information, visit the California Family Needs Calculator website: <https://insightcced.org/family-needs-calculator/>.

represent surgical assistants, the number of annual job openings for surgical assistants is overstated.

Exhibit 1: Occupational demand in Los Angeles and Orange Counties³

Geography	2020 Jobs	2025 Jobs	2020-2025 Change	2020-2025 % Change	Annual Openings
Los Angeles	4,525	4,899	374	8%	403
Orange	1,359	1,508	149	11%	130
Total	5,884	6,407	523	9%	533

Wages

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wages for these Surgical Technology occupations 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 majority (83%) of annual openings for these Surgical Technician occupations have entry-level wages below the living wage for one adult (\$20.63 in Orange County). Typical entry-level hourly wages are in a range between \$18.57 and \$22.28. Experienced workers can expect to earn wages between \$33.00 and \$42.14, which are higher than the living wage estimate. Orange County’s average wages are below the average statewide wage of \$30.61 for these occupations.

Los Angeles County: All annual openings for these Surgical Technician occupations have entry-level wages above the living wage for one adult (\$18.10 in Los Angeles County). Typical entry-level hourly wages are in a range between \$19.25 and \$23.89. Experienced workers can expect to earn wages between \$35.38 and \$43.26, which are higher than the living wage estimate. Los Angeles County’s average wages are below the average statewide wage of \$30.61 for these occupations.

Job Postings

To capture job postings directly related to surgery, a job postings analysis was performed using the selected Surgical Technician occupations and the following keywords “surgery”, “surgical assistant”, and “surgical technologist”. There were 1,753 online job postings related to Surgical Technicians listed in the past 12 months. The highest number of job postings were for surgical technicians, surgical technologists, certified surgical technicians and operating room (OR) technicians. The top skills were surgery, surgical technician, patient care, aseptic technique and surgical technology. The top three employers, by number of job postings, in the region were Advent Health, Healthcare Traveler-Allied Health, and Providence Health and Services.

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 postsecondary nondegree award as the typical entry-level education for *surgical technicians* and *health information technologists, medical registrars, surgical assistants, and healthcare practitioners and technical workers, all other*. In the LA/OC region, all annual job openings typically require a postsecondary nondegree award. Furthermore, the national-level educational attainment data indicates that between 20.4% and 73.2% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree as their highest level of education. Of the 36% of Surgical Technician job postings listing a minimum education requirement in Los Angeles/Orange County, 89% (563) requested high school or vocational training and 11% (71) requested an associate degree.

Educational Supply

Community College Supply— There were no colleges in the LA/OC region that conferred awards in the related TOP code: Surgical Technician (1217.00). Between 2017 and 2020 an average of 39 awards were conferred annually throughout the state by two colleges in San Diego County and one college in Mateo County.

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 related to Surgical Technician. Exhibit 3 shows the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred by these in the related Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code: Surgical Technology/Technologist (51.0909). Due to different data collection periods, the most recent three-year period of available data is from 2016 to 2019. Between 2016 and 2019, four-year colleges in the region conferred an average of 347 awards annually in related training programs.

Exhibit 3: Regional non-community college awards, 2016-2019

CIP Code	Program	College	2016-2017 Awards	2017-2018 Awards	2018-2019 Awards	3-Year Award Average
51.0909	Surgical Technology/Technologist	Advanced College	-	-	2	1
		American Career College-Anaheim	49	30	32	37
		American Career College-Los Angeles	70	51	56	59
		American College of Healthcare and Technology	11	4	-	5
		California Healing Arts College	19	8	4	10
		Career Networks Institute	38	20	19	26
		CBD College	46	41	47	45

CIP Code	Program	College	2016-2017 Awards	2017-2018 Awards	2018-2019 Awards	3-Year Award Average
		Concorde Career College-North Hollywood	13	32	23	23
		Glendale Career College	61	66	66	64
		North-West College-Anaheim	8	6	12	9
		North-West College-Long Beach	15	17	10	14
		North-West College-West Covina	12	19	15	15
		Premiere Career College	35	34	23	31
		Valley College of Medical Careers	12	7	7	9
Supply Total/Average			389	335	316	347

Appendix A: Occupational demand and wage data by county

Exhibit 4. Orange County

Occupation (SOC)	2020 Jobs	2025 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75th Percentile)
Surgical Technologists (29-2055)	675	745	71	10%	64	\$22.28	\$27.60	\$33.00
Health Information Technologists, Medical Registrars, Surgical Assistants, and Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers, All Other (20-9098)	684	763	79	12%	66	\$18.57	\$25.82	\$42.14
Total	1,359	1,508	149	11%	130			

Exhibit 5. Los Angeles County

Occupation (SOC)	2020 Jobs	2025 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75th Percentile)
Surgical Technologists (29-2055)	2,476	2,678	202	8%	220	\$23.89	\$29.59	\$35.38
Health Information Technologists, Medical Registrars, Surgical Assistants, and Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers, All Other (20-9098)	2,049	2,221	172	8%	183	\$19.25	\$26.64	\$43.26
Total	4,525	4,899	374	8%	403			

Exhibit 6. Los Angeles and Orange Counties

Occupation (SOC)	2020 Jobs	2025 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings
Surgical Technologists (29-2055)	3,151	3,423	272	9%	283
Health Information Technologists, Medical Registrars, Surgical Assistants, and Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers, All Other (20-9098)	2,733	2,984	251	9%	250
Total	5,884	6,407	523	9%	533

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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May 2022

