

September 2022

Labor Market Analysis

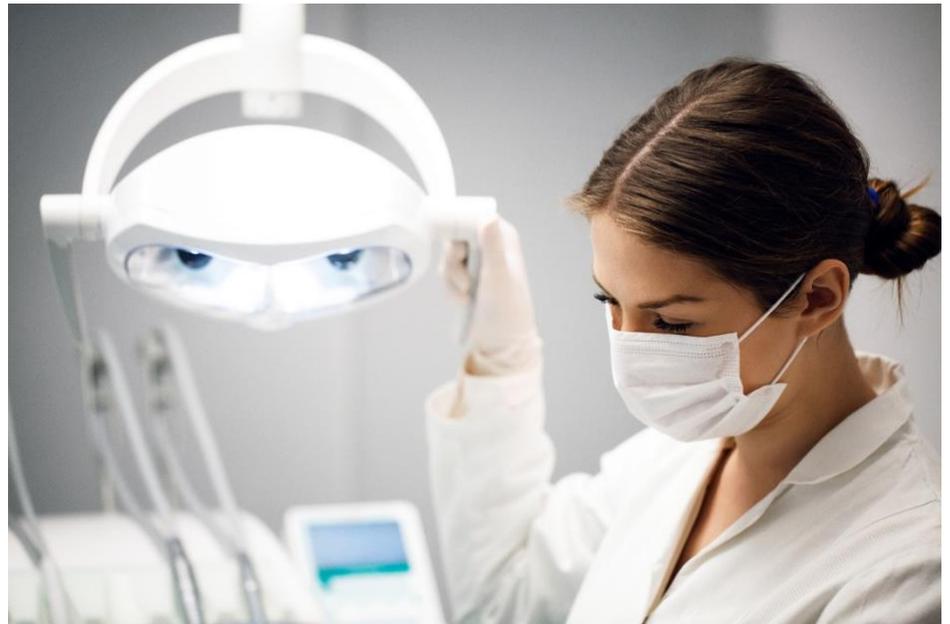
Dental Assistants



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Prepared by the Central Valley/Mother Lode Center of Excellence

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COVID-19 Statement: This report includes employment projection data by Lightcast. Lightcast’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.

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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 Dental Assistant. One occupation related to Dental Assistant was identified for Modesto Junior College:

- 31-9091, Dental Assistants

Key findings:

- **Occupational demand** — Nearly 2,100 workers were employed in jobs related to Dental Assistant in 2021 in the North Central Valley/Northern Mother Lode (NCV/NML) subregion. Dental assistants have 2,080 workers, a projected growth rate of 9% over the next five years, and 292 annual openings.
- **Wages** — Dental Assistants earn an entry-level wage of \$17.81/hour in the subregion.
- **Employers** — Employers with the most job postings in the subregion are Western Dental Services, Pacific Dental Services Incorporated, and Kids Care Dental.
- **Occupational titles** — The most common occupational title in job postings in the subregion is Dental Assistants. The most common job title is Dental Assistant.
- **Skills and certifications** — The top baseline skill is communication skills, the top specialized skill is x-rays, and the top software skill is Dentrrix. The most in-demand certification is a First Aid Cpr Aed.
- **Education** — A postsecondary nondegree award is typically required for dental assistants.
- **Supply** — Analysis of postsecondary completions shows that on average 468 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 182 trained workers in the subregion and 206 workers in the region. The Center of Excellence recommends that Modesto Junior College work with the regional directors, the college's advisory board, and local industry in the development of programs to address the shortage of Dental Assistant 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 Dental Assistant. 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 \$12.63/hour.¹ Analysis of the program and occupational data related to Dental Assistant resulted in the identification of applicable occupations. The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) System codes and titles used in this report are:

- 31-9091, Dental Assistants

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.

Dental Assistants

Job Description: Perform limited clinical duties under the direction of a dentist. Clinical duties may include equipment preparation and sterilization, preparing patients for treatment, assisting the dentist during treatment, and providing patients with instructions for oral healthcare procedures. May perform administrative duties such as scheduling appointments, maintaining medical records, billing, and coding information for insurance purposes.

Knowledge: Customer and Personal Service, Medicine and Dentistry, English Language, Administration and Management, Administration

Skills: Active Listening, Speaking, Reading Comprehension, Active Listening, Instructing

Occupational Demand

The NCV/NML subregion employed 2,080 workers in Dental Assistant occupations in 2021 (Exhibit 1). Dental assistants have 2,080 workers, a projected growth rate of 9% over the next five years, and 292 annual openings.

Exhibit 1. Dental Assistant employment and occupational projections in the NCV/NML subregion

Occupation	2021 Jobs	2026 Jobs	5-Year Change	5-Year % Change	Annual Openings
Dental Assistants	2,080	2,274	194	9%	292
TOTAL	2,080	2,274	194	9%	292

Wages

Exhibit 2 shows the entry-level hourly wages of the Dental Assistant occupations. Dental assistants earn the highest entry-level wage, \$17.81/hour in the subregion².

¹ 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/>.

² Entry-level wages are derived from the 25th percentile.

Exhibit 2. Dental Assistant entry-level wages in the NCV/NML subregion



Job Postings

There were 457 job postings for the occupation in the NCV/NML subregion from March 2022 to August 2022.³ The employers with the most job postings are listed in Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 3. Top employers of Dental Assistant by number of job postings

Employer	Job Postings	% Job Postings
Western Dental Services	23	6%
Pacific Dental Services Incorporated	22	6%
Kids Care Dental	12	3%
Golden Valley Health Centers	11	3%
New Smile Orthodontics	8	2%
Aspen Dental	7	2%
Kids Care Dental & Orthodontics	7	2%
Community Medical Centers Incorporated	6	2%
Suave Dental	6	2%
Camarena Health	5	1%

Exhibit 4 shows how job postings for the targeted occupations in the NCV/NML subregion are distributed across one O*NET OnLine occupation. The occupational title Dental Assistants is listed in 457 job postings. Note how this occupational title dominates the job posting results. Common job titles in postings include Dental Assistant in 116 job postings, Registered Dental Assistant Rda in 67 job postings, and Registered Dental Assistant in 65 job postings.

Exhibit 4. Top occupational titles in job postings for Dental Assistant

Occupational Title	Job Postings	% of Job Postings
Dental Assistants	457	100%

³ 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.

Salaries

Exhibit 5 shows the “Market Salaries” for Dental Assistant occupations. These are calculated by Burning Glass using a machine learning model built off of millions of job postings every year. This accounts for adjustments based on locations, industry, skills, experience, education requirements, among other variables.

Exhibit 5. Salaries for Dental Assistant occupations

Market Salary Percentile	Salary Amount
10th Percentile	\$26,676
25th Percentile	\$29,759
50th Percentile	\$32,855
75th Percentile	\$38,303
90th Percentile	\$42,468

Education

Of the 457 job postings, 154 listed an education level preferred for the positions being filled. Among those, 98% requested high school or vocational training, and 20% requested an associate 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%.

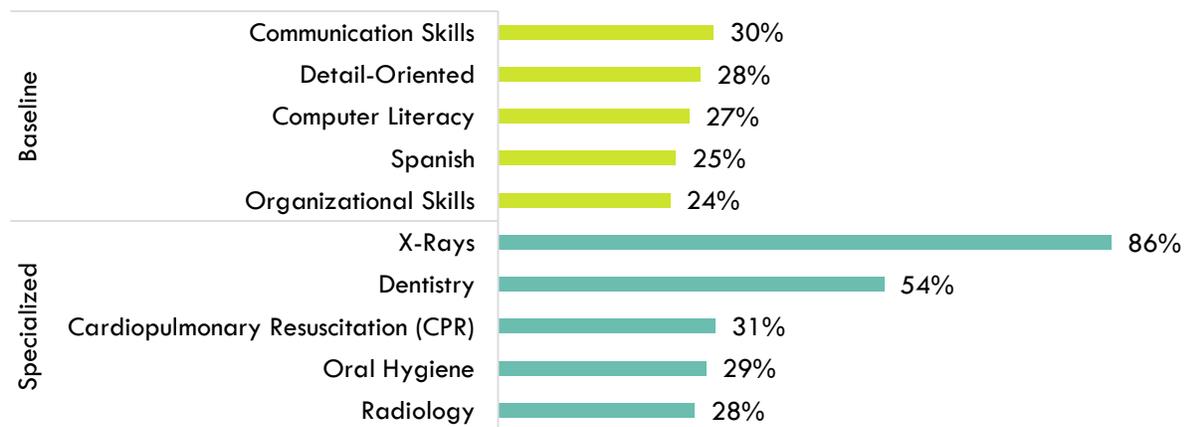
Exhibit 6. Education levels requested in job postings for Dental Assistant

Education Level	Job Postings	% of Job Postings
High school or vocational training	151	98%
Associate degree	31	20%

Baseline and Specialized Skills

Exhibit 7 depicts the top baseline and specialized skills for the targeted occupations. The three most important baseline skills are communication skills, 30% of job postings, detail-oriented, 28%, and computer literacy, 27%. The top three specialized skills are x-rays, 86% of job postings, dentistry, 54%, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), 31%.

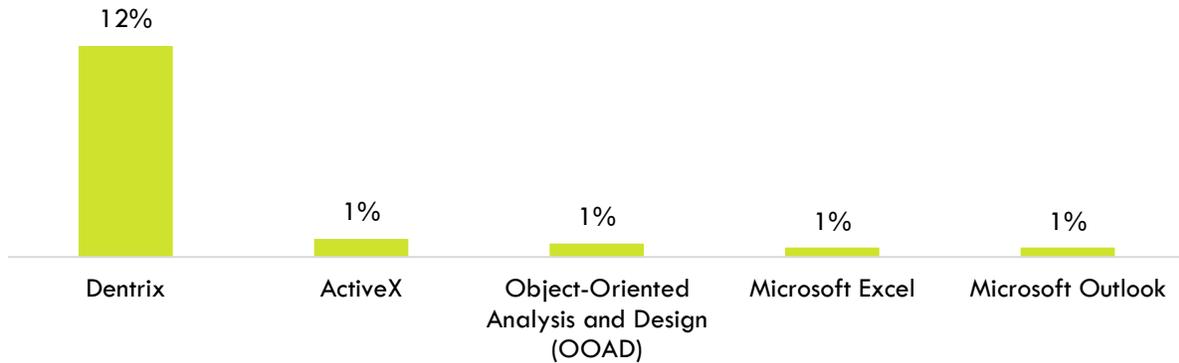
Exhibit 7. In-demand Dental Assistant baseline and specialized skills



Software Skills

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

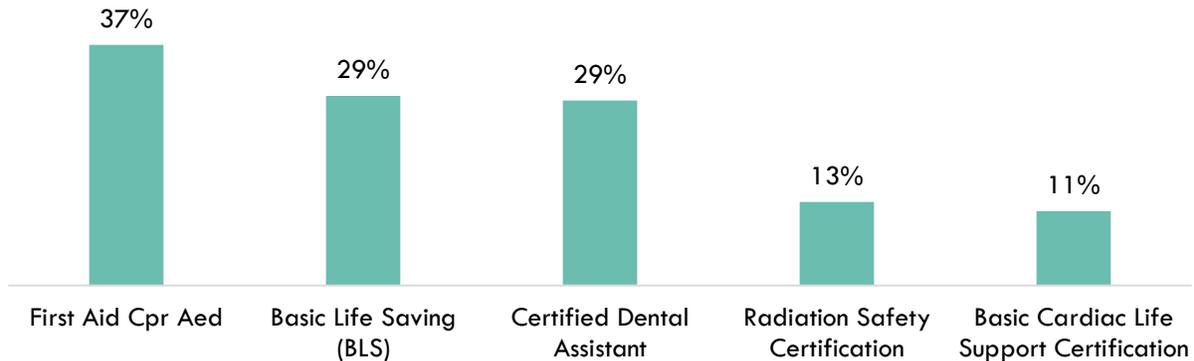
Exhibit 8. In-demand Dental Assistant software skills



Certifications

Of the 457 job postings, 140 contained certification data. Among those, 37% indicated a need for a First Aid Cpr Aed. The next top certifications are basic life saving (BLS) and certified dental assistant (Exhibit 9).

Exhibit 9. Top Dental Assistant certifications requested in job postings



Education, Work Experience & Training

A postsecondary nondegree award is typically required for dental assistants (Exhibit 10).

Exhibit 10. Education, work experience, training, and Current Population Survey results for Dental Assistant occupations⁴

Occupation	Typical Entry-level Education	Work Experience Required	Typical On-The-Job Training	CPS
Dental Assistants	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None	55.9%

⁴ "Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey," Bureau of Labor Statistics, <https://www.bls.gov/cps/>.

Supply

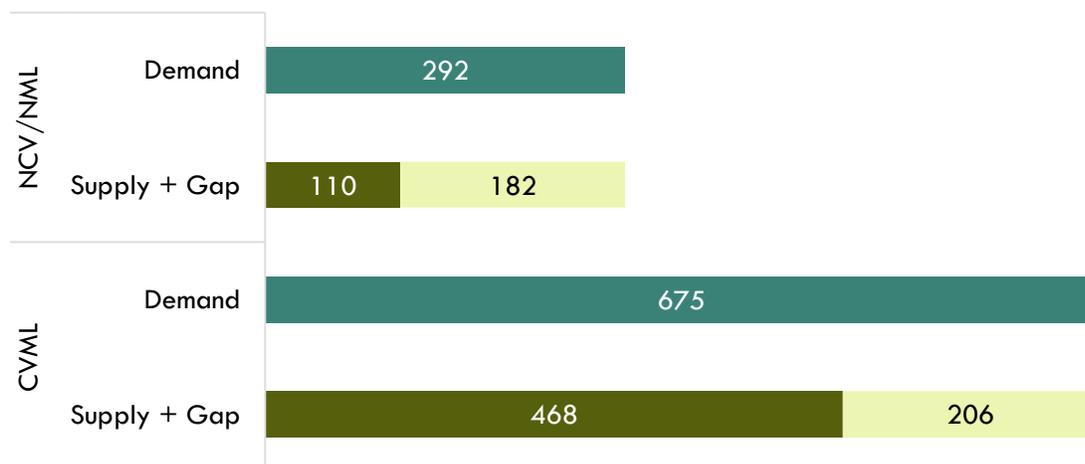
Analysis of program data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) included the TOP and CIP codes and titles: 124010 - Dental Assistant and 51.0601 - Dental Assisting/Assistant. Analysis of the last three years of data shows that, on average, 468 awards were conferred in the Central Valley/Mother Lode region each year (Exhibit 11).

Exhibit 11. Postsecondary supply for Dental Assistant occupations in the region

TOP/ CIP Code- Title	College	Associate Degree	Award < 1 Academic Year	Award 1 < 2 Academic Years	Certificate 30 < 60 Semester Units	Subtotal
124010 - Dental Assistant	Reedley College	5			16	21
	Carrington College-Stockton	0		33		33
	Milan Institute-Merced		22			22
	Milan Institute-Visalia		38			38
51.0601 - Dental Assisting/Assistant	San Joaquin Valley College-Visalia			155		155
	UEI College-Bakersfield			80		80
	UEI College-Fresno			64		64
	United Education Institute-UEI College Stockton			55		55
TOTAL		5	60	388	16	468

There is an undersupply of 182 Dental Assistant workers in the NCV/NML subregion and 206 workers in the region (Exhibit 12).

Exhibit 12. Dental Assistant workforce demand (annual job openings), postsecondary supply of students (awards), and additional students needed to fill gap in the NCV/NML subregion and region



Student Outcomes

There was no employment and wage outcomes data available from the California Community College Chancellor's Cal-PASS Plus LaunchBoard for the TOP code related to Dental Assistant.

Conclusion

The entry-level wages of the occupation exceed the NCV/NML subregion's average living wage. There were 457 job postings in the past six months for occupations related to Dental Assistant in the subregion. Analysis of skills and certification requirements in job postings indicates:

- The top baseline skill is communication skills, and the top specialized skill is x-rays.
- The top software skill is Dentrax.
- The top certification is a First Aid Cpr Aed.

There is an undersupply of trained workers, a shortage of 182 in the NCV/NML subregion and 206 in the region.

Recommendation

Based on these findings, it is recommended that Modesto Junior College work with the regional directors, the college's advisory board, and local industry in the development of programs to address the shortage of Dental Assistant workers 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. (Lightcast). Lightcast occupational employment data are based on final Lightcast industry data and final Lightcast 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 Lightcast earnings by industry: economicmodeling.com.
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: https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/educational-attainment.htm .
Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Estimates	California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division: labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov .
Job Posting and Skills Data	Burning Glass: burning-glass.com/ .
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: ononline.org .

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 age 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. (Lightcast) 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.