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Labor Market Analysis

Paralegal Studies



POWERED BY



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 1 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 Paralegal Studies. 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. Three occupations related to Paralegal Studies were identified for Porterville College:

- 23-2011, Paralegals and Legal Assistants
- 23-2099, Legal Support Workers, All Other
- 43-6012, Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants

Key findings:

- **Occupational demand** — There were 2,013 workers employed in jobs related to Paralegal Studies in 2021 in the South Central Valley/Southern Mother Lode (SCV/SML) subregion. The largest occupation is paralegals and legal assistants with 1,144 workers, a projected growth rate of 6% over the next five years, and 137 annual openings.
- **Wages** — Paralegals and legal assistants earn the highest entry-level wage, \$22.12/hour in the subregion.
- **Employers** — Employers with the most job postings in the subregion are Adventist Health, Gale Healthcare, and Wellpath.
- **Occupational titles** — The most common occupational title in job postings in the subregion is Paralegals and Legal Assistants. The most common job title is Legal Secretary.
- **Skills and certifications** — The top baseline skill is communication skills, the top specialized skill is legal support, and the top software skill is Microsoft Office. The most in-demand certification is a paralegal certification.
- **Education** — A high school diploma or equivalent is typically required for legal secretaries and administrative assistants. An associate degree is typically required for paralegals and legal assistants and legal support workers, all other.
- **Supply** — Analysis of postsecondary completions shows that on average 94 awards were conferred in the Central Valley/Mother Lode region each year.

Recommendation:

Based on a comparison of occupational demand and supply, there is an undersupply of 134 trained workers in the subregion and 265 workers in the region. The Center of Excellence recommends that Porterville College work with the regional directors, the college's advisory board, and local industry in the development of programs to address the shortage of Paralegal Studies workers in the region.

Introduction

The Central Valley/Mother Lode Center of Excellence was asked by Porterville College to provide labor market information for Paralegal Studies. The geographical focus for this report is the South Central Valley/Southern Mother Lode (SCV/SML) 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 SCV/SML subregion is \$11.91/hour.¹ Analysis of the program and occupational data related to Paralegal Studies resulted in the identification of applicable occupations. The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) System codes and titles used in this report are:

- 23-2011, Paralegals and Legal Assistants
- 23-2099, Legal Support Workers, All Other
- 43-6012, Legal Secretaries and Administrative 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. There was no O*Net data available for legal support workers, all other.

Paralegals and Legal Assistants

Job Description: 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.

Knowledge: Administrative, English Language, Law and Government, Customer and Personal Service, Computers and Electronics

Skills: Reading Comprehension, Active Listening, Speaking, Writing, Critical Thinking

Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants

Job Description: 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.

Knowledge: Administrative, Law and Government, English Language

Skills: Reading Comprehension, Writing, Active Listening, Speaking, Time Management

Occupational Demand

The SCV/SML subregion employed 2,013 workers in Paralegal Studies occupations in 2021 (Exhibit 1). The largest occupation is paralegals and legal assistants with 1,144 workers. This occupation is projected to grow by 6% over the next five years and has the greatest number of projected annual openings, 137.

Exhibit 1. Paralegal Studies employment and occupational projections in the SCV/SML subregion

Occupation	2021 Jobs	2026 Jobs	5-Year Change	5-Year % Change	Annual Openings
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	1,144	1,207	63	6%	137
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	511	469	(42)	(8%)	53
Legal Support Workers, All Other	358	361	3	1%	35
TOTAL	2,013	2,037	24	1%	225

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/>.

Wages

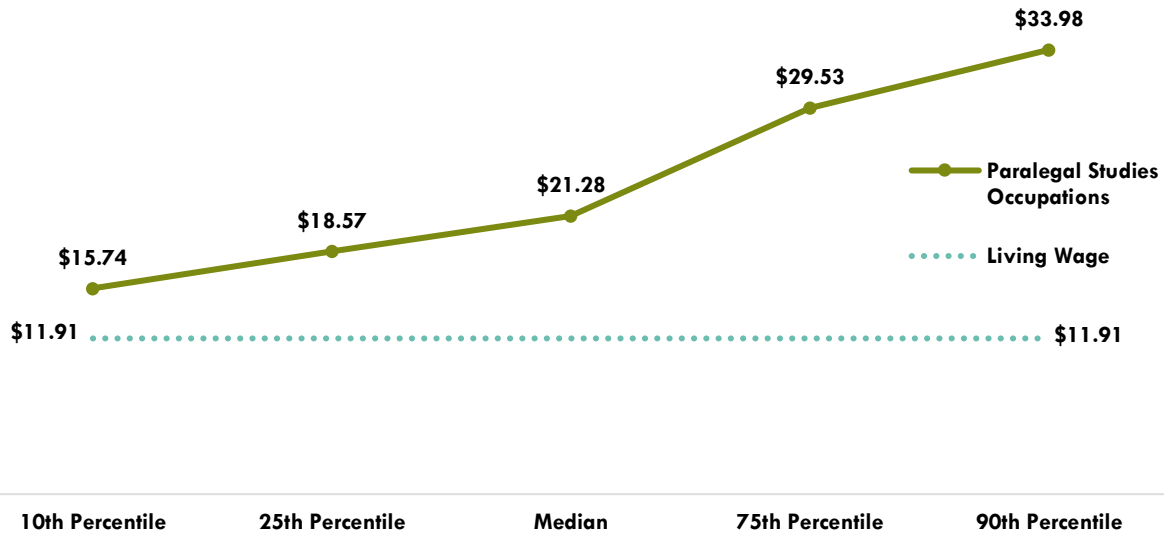
Exhibit 2a shows the hourly wages of the Paralegal Studies occupations. Paralegals and legal assistants earn the highest entry-level wage, \$22.12/hour in the subregion.² Please note 10th and 25th percentiles are considered entry-level wages while 75th and 90th are considered experienced wages, either by gained long-term employment, received extra training, etc.

Exhibit 2a. Paralegal Studies hourly wages in the SCV/SML subregion

Occupation	Pct. 25 Hourly Earnings	Median Hourly Earnings	Pct. 75 Hourly Earnings
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	\$22.12	\$24.26	\$34.11
Legal Support Workers, All Other	\$17.30	\$20.73	\$27.34
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	\$16.28	\$18.84	\$27.14

Exhibit 2b shows the average hourly wages for Paralegal Studies occupations; the average entry-level wage exceeds the average living wage for the South Central Valley/Southern Mother Lode (SCV/SML) subregion.

Exhibit 2b. Paralegal Studies average hourly wages in the SCV/SML subregion



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

Job Postings

There were 395 job postings for the three occupations in the SCV/SML subregion from May 2022 to October 2022.³ The employers with the most job postings are listed in Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 3. Top employers of Paralegal Studies by number of job postings

Employer	Job Postings	% Job Postings
Adventist Health	74	27%
Gale Healthcare	55	20%
Wellpath	38	14%
Community Regional Medical	34	13%
Interim Healthcare	32	12%
Regional West Medical Center	25	9%
Healthcare Employment Network, Llc	22	8%
Ro Health	21	8%
Saint Agnes Medical Center	21	8%
Kaiser Permanente	20	7%

Exhibit 4 shows how job postings for the targeted occupations in the SCV/SML subregion are distributed across three O*NET OnLine occupations. The occupational title Paralegals and Legal Assistants is listed in 245 job postings. Note how this occupational title dominates the job posting results. Common job titles in postings include Legal Secretary in 42 job postings, Paralegal in 38 job postings, and Legal Assistant in 29 job postings.

Exhibit 4. Top occupational titles in job postings for Paralegal Studies

Occupational Title	Job Postings	% of Job Postings
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	245	62%
Legal Secretaries	111	28%
Legal Support Workers, All Other	39	10%

Salaries

Exhibit 5 shows the “Market Salaries” for Paralegal Studies 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 Paralegal Studies occupations

Market Salary Percentile	Salary Amount
10th Percentile	\$29,130
25th Percentile	\$31,904
50th Percentile	\$36,352
75th Percentile	\$43,002
90th Percentile	\$50,554

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.

Education

Of the 395 job postings, 165 listed an education level preferred for the positions being filled. Among those, 52% requested high school or vocational training, 37% requested a bachelor's degree, and 23% 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%.

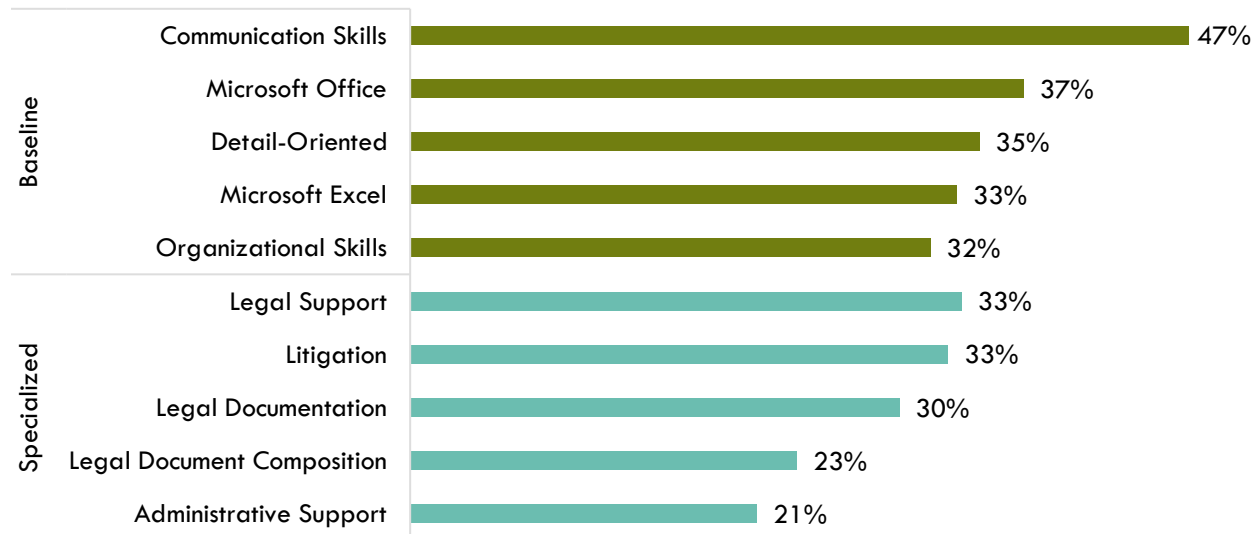
Exhibit 6. Education levels requested in job postings for Paralegal Studies

Education Level	Job Postings	% of Job Postings
High school or vocational training	86	52%
Bachelor's degree	61	37%
Associate's degree	38	23%
Doctoral degree	11	7%
Master's degree	8	5%

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, 47% of job postings, Microsoft Office, 37%, and Detail-Oriented, 35%. The top three specialized skills are legal support, 33% of job postings, litigation, 33%, and legal documentation, 30%.

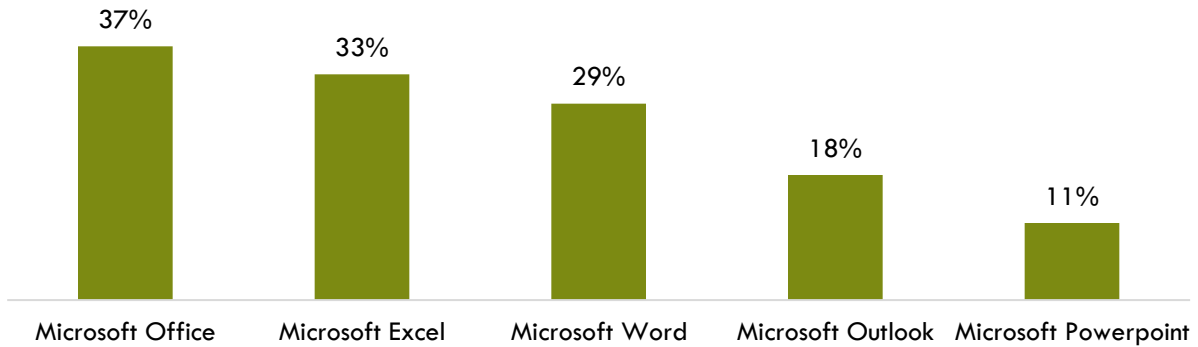
Exhibit 7. In-demand Paralegal Studies baseline and specialized skills



Software Skills

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

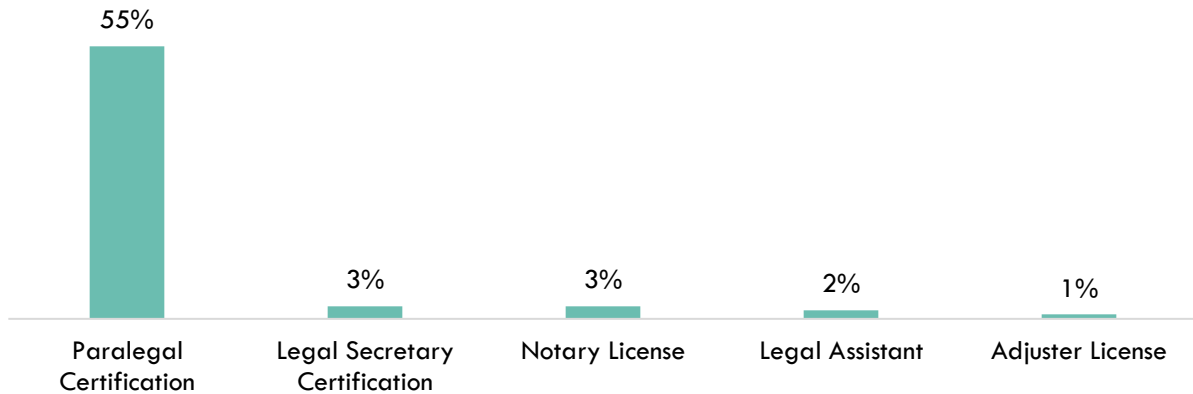
Exhibit 8. In-demand Paralegal Studies software skills



Certifications

Of the 395 job postings, 3116 contained certification data. Among those, 55% indicated a need for a paralegal certification. The next top certifications are legal secretary certification and notary license (Exhibit 9). Please note 32% indicated a need for a driver's license, but it is not a certification.

Exhibit 9. Top Paralegal Studies certifications requested in job postings



Education, Work Experience & Training

A high school diploma or equivalent is typically required for legal secretaries and administrative assistants. An associate degree is typically required for paralegals and legal assistants and legal support workers, all other (Exhibit 10).

Exhibit 10. Education, work experience, training, and Current Population Survey results for Paralegal Studies occupations⁴

Occupation	Typical Entry-level Education	Work Experience Required	Typical On-The-Job Training	CPS
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term	53.2%
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	Associate degree	None	None	43.2%
Legal Support Workers, All Other	Associate degree	None	None	24.9%

Supply

Analysis of program data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) included the TOP and CIP codes and titles: 140200 – Paralegal and 22.0302 - Legal Assistant/Paralegal. Analysis of the last three years of data shows that, on average, 94 awards were conferred in the Central Valley/Mother Lode region each year (Exhibit 11).

Exhibit 11. Postsecondary supply for Paralegal Studies occupations in the region

TOP/ CIP Code- Title	College	Associate Degree	Award 1 < 2 Academic Years	Award 2 < 4 Academic Years	Certificate 30 < 60 Semester Units	Subtotal
140200 - Paralegal	Cerro Coso	4			6	10
	Fresno City	23			31	54
	Sequoias	13			4	17
22.0302 - Legal Assistant/Paralegal	Humphreys University-Stockton and Modesto Campuses			3		3
	Santa Barbara Business College-Bakersfield	10	0			10
TOTAL		50	0	3	41	94

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

There is an undersupply of 134 Paralegal Studies workers in the SCV/SML subregion and 265 workers in the region (Exhibit 12).

Exhibit 12. Paralegal Studies workforce demand (annual job openings), postsecondary supply of students (awards), and additional students needed to fill gap in the SCV/SML subregion and region

Region	Demand (Annual Openings)	Supply (Total Annual Average Supply)	Supply Gap
SCV/SML	225	91	134
CVML	359	94	265

Student Outcomes

Exhibit 13 summarizes employment and wage outcomes from the California Community College Chancellor’s Cal-PASS Plus LaunchBoard for the TOP code related to Paralegal Studies. Of note, 54 paralegal students received a degree or certificate or attained apprenticeship journey status; 14 students transferred; 63% of students obtained a job closely related to their field of study; 26% had a median change in earnings; and 65% of students attained a living wage.

Exhibit 13. Regional metrics for the TOP code related to Paralegal Studies

Metric	Paralegal 140200
Students Who Got a Degree or Certificate or Attained Apprenticeship Journey Status	54
Number of Students Who Transferred	14
Job Closely Related to Field of Study	63%
Median Change in Earnings	26%
Attained a Living Wage	65%
* denotes data not available.	

Conclusion

The entry-level wages of the three occupations exceed the SCV/SML subregion’s average living wage. There were 395 job postings in the past six months for occupations related to Paralegal Studies 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 legal support.
- The top software skill is Microsoft Office.
- The top certification is a paralegal certification.

There is an undersupply of trained workers, a shortage of 134 in the SCV/SML subregion and 265 in the region.

Recommendation

Based on these findings, it is recommended that Porterville College work with the regional directors, the college’s advisory board, and local industry in the development of programs to address the shortage of Paralegal Studies 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.