

## Labor Market Analysis: 0850.10 – Sign Language Interpreting

### American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreting (Associate Degree and Certificate)

Los Angeles Center of Excellence, October 2022

#### Summary

<b>Program Endorsement:</b>	<b>Endorsed:</b> All Criteria Met	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Endorsed:</b> Some Criteria Met	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Not Endorsed</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Program Endorsement Criteria</b>						
<b>Supply Gap:</b>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Living Wage:</b> (Entry-Level, 25 <sup>th</sup> )	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Education:</b>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Emerging Occupation(s)</b>						
Yes			<input type="checkbox"/>			
			No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

The Los Angeles Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research (LA COE) prepared this report to provide regional labor market supply and demand data related to one middle-skill occupation:

- **Interpreters and Translators (27-3091):** Interpret oral or sign language, or translate written text from one language into another.<sup>1</sup>

Middle-skill occupations typically require some postsecondary education, but less than a bachelor's degree.<sup>2</sup> Although *interpreters and translators* typically require a bachelor's degree, it is considered middle-skill because 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 relevant occupation.

Based on the available data, there appears to be a supply gap in the region for *interpreters and translators*. In addition to *interpreters and translators* having entry-level wages that exceed the self-sufficiency standard wage in both Los Angeles and Orange counties, at least one-third of workers in the field have completed some college, no degree or an associate degree. **Therefore, due to all of the criteria being met, the LA COE endorses this proposed program.** Detailed reasons include:

#### Demand:

- **Supply Gap Criteria** – Over the next five years, **585 jobs are projected to be available annually** in the region due to new job growth and replacements, **which is more than the three-year average of 110 awards conferred** by educational institutions in the region.

<sup>1</sup> [Interpreters and Translators \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov/occupations/27-3091)

<sup>2</sup> 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.

- *Interpreters and translators* (SOC 27-3091) includes occupations working in all languages, and not solely American Sign Language (ASL). **Therefore, the demand data in this report is overstated.**
- Over the past 12 months, there have been 110 online job postings for *interpreters and translators* that listed American Sign Language (ASL) as a skill.
- **Living Wage Criteria** – In Los Angeles County, the **typical entry-level hourly wage** for *interpreters and translators* is **\$21.94, which is above the self-sufficiency standard wage** for one adult in the region (\$18.10 in Los Angeles County).<sup>3</sup>
- **Educational Criteria** – 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 that **33% of workers in the field have completed some college, no degree or an associate degree.**

#### Supply:

- Between 2018 and 2021, **seven (7) community colleges** in the greater LA/OC region issued awards in sign language interpreting, conferring an average of **110 awards**.
- Between 2017 and 2020, there were no non-community college institutions in the greater LA/OC region that conferred awards in ASL interpreting.

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<sup>3</sup> Self-Sufficiency Standard wage data was pulled from The Self-Sufficiency Standard Tool for California. For more information, visit: <http://selfsufficiencystandard.org/california>.

## Occupational Demand

Exhibit 1 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for *interpreters and translators*. In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, the number of jobs related to this occupation is projected to increase by 15% through 2026. There will be nearly 600 job openings per year through 2026 due to job growth and replacements.

NOTE: *Interpreters and translators* (SOC 27-3091) includes occupations working in all languages, and not solely American Sign Language (ASL). Therefore, the data in Exhibit 1 is overstated for American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters.

**Exhibit 1: Occupational demand in Los Angeles and Orange Counties<sup>4</sup>**

Geography	2021 Jobs	2026 Jobs	2021-2026 Change	2021-2026 % Change	Annual Openings
Los Angeles	3,423	3,892	469	14%	432
Orange	1,139	1,336	197	17%	154
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,562</b>	<b>5,228</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>585</b>

## Wages

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wage for *interpreters and translators* in Los Angeles County, as it relates to the county's self-sufficiency standard wage. Orange County wages are included below in order to provide a complete analysis of the greater 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 \$21.94, which is **above** the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$18.10 in Los Angeles County). Experienced workers can expect to earn approximately \$47.09/hour.

**Exhibit 2: Hourly Earnings for Occupations in LA County**

Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile)
Interpreters and Translators (27-3091)	\$21.94	\$35.52	\$47.09

**Orange County** – The typical entry-level hourly wage for *interpreters and translators* is \$20.69, which is **above** the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$20.63 in Orange County). Experienced workers can expect to earn approximately \$44.23/hour.

**Exhibit 3: Hourly Earnings for Occupations in Orange County**

Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile)
Interpreters and Translators (27-3091)	\$20.69	\$33.48	\$44.23

<sup>4</sup> Five-year change represents new job additions to the workforce. Annual openings include new jobs and replacement jobs that result from retirements and separations.

On average, the entry-level hourly wage for *interpreters and translators* is \$21.65; this is above the self-sufficiency standard wage for one single adult in Los Angeles County (\$18.10). Exhibit 4 shows the average wages for *interpreters and translators*, from entry-level to experienced workers.

**Exhibit 4: Average Hourly Earnings for *Interpreters and Translators* in LA/OC**



### Job Postings

Over the past 12 months, there have been 110 online job postings for *interpreters and translators* that listed American Sign Language (ASL) as a skill. The top skills were customer service, teaching, record keeping, video-remote interpreting (VRI), and troubleshooting technical issues. The top employers, by number of job postings, in the region were Purple Communications, Sorenson Communications, and California State University.

### 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 that 33% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree.

## Educational Supply

**Community College Supply** – Exhibit 5 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, and LA Pierce.

**Exhibit 5: Regional community college awards (certificates and degrees), 2018-2021**

TOP	Program	College	2018-19 Awards	2019-20 Awards	2020-21 Awards	3-Year Average
0850.10	Sign Language Interpreting	East LA	-	-	1	0
		El Camino	26	18	15	20
		LA Pierce	34	23	12	23
		Mt San Antonio	16	49	23	29
		Rio Hondo	-	-	1	0
		LA Subtotal	76	90	52	73
		Golden West	66	23	20	36
		Santiago Canyon	1	-	2	1
		OC Subtotal	67	23	22	37
Supply Total/Average			143	113	74	110

**Non-Community College Supply** – Between 2017 and 2020, there were no non-community college institutions in the greater LA/OC region that conferred awards in ASL interpreting.

## Appendix A: Occupational demand and wage data by county

### Exhibit 6. Los Angeles County

Occupation (SOC)	2021 Jobs	2026 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile)
Interpreters and Translators (27-3091)	3,423	3,892	469	14%	432	\$21.94	\$35.52	\$47.09

### Exhibit 7. Orange County

Occupation (SOC)	2021 Jobs	2026 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile)
Interpreters and Translators (27-3091)	1,139	1,336	197	17%	154	\$20.69	\$33.48	\$44.23

### Exhibit 8. Los Angeles and Orange Counties

Occupation (SOC)	2021 Jobs	2026 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Typical Entry-Level Education
Interpreters and Translators (27-3091)	4,562	5,228	666	15%	585	Bachelor's degree

## Appendix B: Sources

- O\*NET Online
- Labor Insight (Burning Glass Technologies)
- Lightcast (formerly Emsi)
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)
- California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division, OES
- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems (MIS)
- Self-Sufficiency Standard at the Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington
- Chancellor's Office Curriculum Inventory (COCI 2.0)

For more information, please contact:

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