



FOR LABOR MARKET RESEARCH

ORANGE COUNTY

Part of the
2026 OC Labor Market Overview

Orange County High-Quality Occupations

2026

A Strategic Resource for
Career Education and
Workforce Planning



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Introduction

Building on the Orange County Center of Excellence's (OC COE) [2026 Orange County Labor Market Overview](#) (2026 LMO), this brief highlights Orange County's High-Quality Occupations by looking at metrics beyond wages and adding two new Quality Signal criteria to the eight used in the LMO.

The 2026 LMO showed that meeting Orange County's high living wage was a challenge. Orange County is expensive, and only about one in five of the occupations meet the MIT Living Wage of \$36.53 an hour. But pay is only part of what qualifies a job as good. A job also needs enough hours to draw a decent salary and, for many workers, health insurance. The two new criteria are:

- **Hours Worked:** An occupation earns a point when its usual workweek is at least 30 hours. The MIT Living Wage assumes 2,080 hours of work a year, so an hourly wage supports a household only if the occupation provides the hours to match. The criterion is a floor, not a ceiling; longer workweeks are not penalized.
- **Employer-Sponsored Health Insurance:** An occupation earns a point when at least 62.1% of its workers receive health insurance through an employer or union. Benefits are a core indicator of job quality in the research, and health coverage is the benefit that available data can measure by occupation.

Both metrics come from the American Community Survey via IPUMS^{1,2}. They join the LMO's Quality Signal group, which until now included only Resilience and National Recognition.

High-Quality Occupations

Each occupation can now earn up to 10 points, one for each criterion it meets. Occupations that earn 6 or more points are called High-Quality, meaning they score well compared with other Orange County occupations. The average occupation earned 4 of 10 points. Occupations scoring at least half a standard deviation above that average (5.15 points, which means 6 or more) are classified as High-Quality.

A total of 177 occupations, 23% of the 775 evaluated, earned six or more points. They account for about 694,000 jobs, or 37% of the county's 1.86 million, and include all 31 of the LMO's Best-of-the-Best occupations. Most are above middle-skill (114) or middle-skill (61); two are below middle-skill. The two new criteria are earned far more often among them than countywide: 95% earned the Hours Worked point and 88% the Health Insurance point, compared with 80% and 56% of all 775 occupations.

The OC COE hopes that this additional analysis will be utilized by Orange County's community colleges, K12s, LEAs, and workforce development partners to create/update CTE pathways in order to help people get into high-quality jobs.



Exhibit 1 shows the 10 high-quality jobs criteria and point benchmarks.

Exhibit 1: The Ten Criteria and How Points Are Earned

Group	Criterion	A point is earned for...
Scale & Momentum	2024 Jobs	553 or more jobs (median for all occupations)
	2024–2029 % Change	Projected growth of 2.92% or more (all-occupation rate)
	Average Annual Openings	55.5 or more openings a year (median for all occupations)
Wage Adequacy	Self-Sufficiency Standard	Entry-level wage of \$27.13 an hour or more
	MIT Living Wage	Entry-level wage of \$36.53 an hour or more
Quality Signal	Resilience	Held up during the Great Recession, COVID-19, or both
	National Recognition	Listed in U.S. News & World Report's 2026 100 Best Jobs
	NEW: Hours Worked	A usual workweek of 30 hours or more
	NEW: Employer-Sponsored Health Insurance	62.1% or more of workers with employer or union health insurance
Local Relevance	Location Quotient	Greater concentration here than in the nation (1.0 or higher)

Note: Entry-level wage is the 25th percentile hourly wage.



Job Quality Literature Review

There is no single definition of a “good” or “high-quality” job, but the Center for Economic and Policy Research, the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, and the Urban Institute, among others, have each examined the characteristics of good jobs.^{3,4,5} Four indicators recur across this work: earnings and pay, benefits, job stability, and working conditions. Three correspond to criteria in this profile; the fourth, working conditions, cannot currently be measured at the occupation level.

Wage Adequacy

Pay is the feature most often used to define a good job. What counts is not only the amount but how dependable it is, because steady earnings are part of well-being.^{6,7} A good wage sits well above the minimum wage and can support a worker and a family. Fairness matters too: pay should not differ by race, ethnicity, or sex, and closing the gender pay gap is part of the picture.

Quality Signal

Hours Worked

Hours matter as much as the hourly rate. A consistent, predictable schedule helps workers balance work and home life and keeps them with their employer longer. Predictable schedules are also linked to less stress and anxiety, less burnout, and higher satisfaction, and workers who know their schedules can plan ahead, line up the support they need, and work better with colleagues.

Benefits

Benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans, and paid time off are the other pillar of job quality. Health and retirement benefits improve workers’ well-being and make them less likely to change jobs, and both paid and unpaid leave help employers keep the people they have.

Stability

Stability means more than keeping a job; it also means knowing the work and the hours will be there next month. Workers value it enough to accept lower pay in exchange.⁵ New technology, especially generative artificial intelligence, has added a fresh worry: workers who do not feel secure fear being replaced.

Working Conditions

Good jobs are safe, both physically and psychologically, because unsafe conditions lead to injuries and even deaths.^{5,8} Workplace culture matters as well. Where workers can build skills, are heard in decisions, and feel they belong, they tend to have more autonomy, better relationships with coworkers, and more resilience when things go wrong, and employers should have supports ready when they do.⁸

High-Quality Jobs by Sector

Health and Business & Entrepreneurship account for nearly half of the high-quality jobs. Exhibit 2 shows the number and share of each sector’s high-quality occupations.

Exhibit 2: High-Quality Occupations by CCCCCO Sector

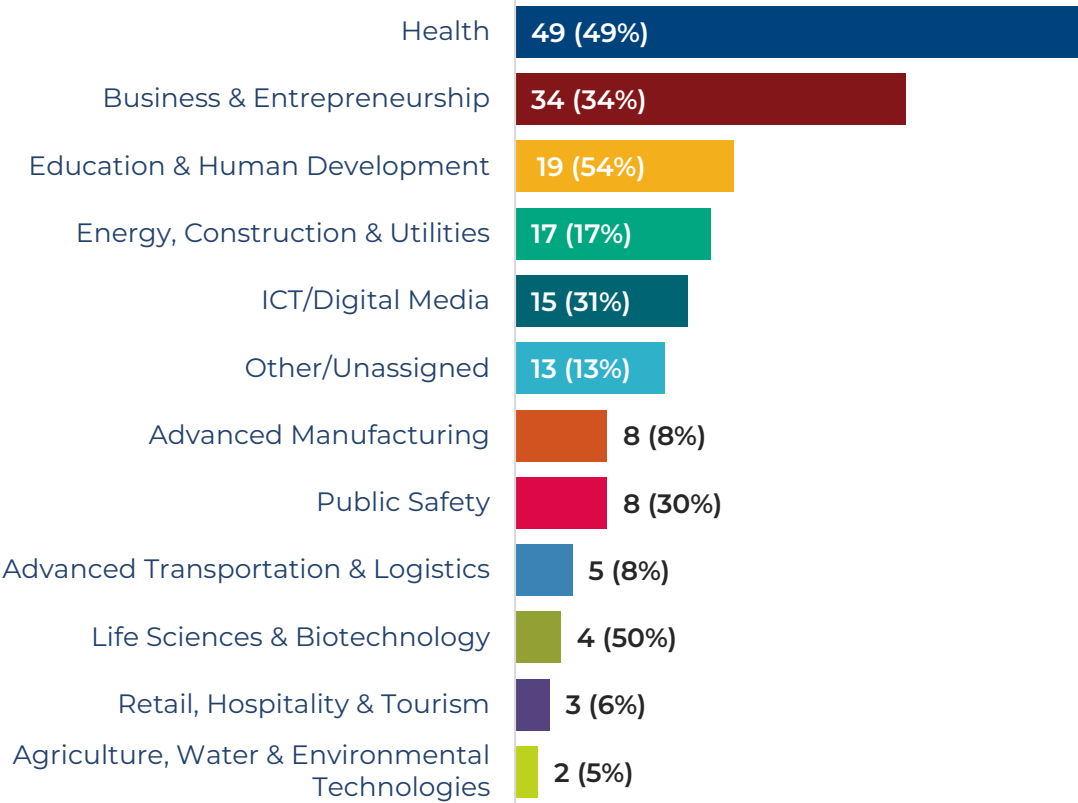


Exhibit 3 lists the 177 high-quality occupations by sector and total points earned. All applied criteria are included. Within the table, patterned cells indicate a criterion was not met, as shown in the legend and definitions below:

Legend	Definition
(Blue-Gray Pattern)	The occupation did not meet the corresponding criterion (non-wage criteria).
(Yellow Pattern)	Entry-level hourly wage meets the Self-Sufficiency Standard (\$27.13) but falls below the MIT Living Wage (\$36.53).
(Orange Pattern)	Entry-level hourly wage falls below the Self-Sufficiency Standard (\$27.13) and the MIT Living Wage (\$36.53).

Additional Definitions and Notes:

Skill Level: AMS = Above Middle-Skill; MS = Middle-Skill; Below MS = Below Middle-Skill.

Rounding: Totals may differ slightly due to rounding.

Exhibit 3: High-Quality Occupations by Sector, Total Points then Annual Demand

			Scale & Momentum			Wage Adequacy	Quality Signal				Local Relevance	
SOC	Occupation	Skill Level	2024 Jobs	2024 - 2029 % Change	Annual Demand	Entry-Level Hourly Wage	Hours Worked	Employer Sponsored Health Ins. %	Recession Resilient	USN&WR 2026 Best Job	LQ	Total Points
Advanced Manufacturing												
17-2112	Industrial Engineers	AMS	3,246	6%	234	\$45.68	38	87%	Yes	Yes	0.87	9
17-2071	Electrical Engineers	AMS	2,867	1%	159	\$49.41	35	81%	Yes	Yes	1.39	9
17-2141	Mechanical Engineers	AMS	2,992	3%	175	\$43.02	39	88%	No	Yes	0.96	8
17-2061	Computer Hardware Engineers	AMS	896	5%	57	\$50.94	33	74%	No	No	1.05	8
19-5011	Occupational Health & Safety Specialists	AMS	1,608	6%	173	\$36.11	31	86%	No	No	1.16	7
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production & Operating Workers	MS	6,169	-1%	586	\$27.14	38	71%	Yes	No	0.83	6
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	MS	2,543	9%	260	\$28.60	34	59%	Yes	No	0.55	6
17-3023	Electrical & Electronic Engineering Technologists & Technicians	MS	1,094	0%	97	\$31.44	37	70%	No	No	1.02	6
Advanced Transportation & Logistics												
13-1081	Logisticians	MS	2,611	7%	264	\$31.62	39	72%	Yes	Yes	0.91	8
11-3071	Transportation, Storage, & Distribution Managers	MS	2,873	1%	231	\$37.36	39	68%	Yes	No	1.18	8
49-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, & Repairers	MS	5,201	3%	464	\$35.18	42	78%	Yes	No	0.77	7
53-3052	Bus Drivers, Transit & Intercity	MS	2,223	12%	340	\$24.67	35	63%	No	Yes	1.27	7
49-3042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	MS	2,125	6%	201	\$35.20	42	81%	No	No	1.03	7

SOC	Occupation	Skill Level	Scale & Momentum			Wage Adequacy	Quality Signal				Local Relevance	Total Points
			2024 Jobs	2024 - 2029 % Change	Annual Demand	Entry-Level Hourly Wage	Hours Worked	Employer Sponsored Health Ins. %	Recession Resilient	USN&WR 2026 Best Job	LQ	

Agriculture, Water & Environmental Technologies

29-1131	Veterinarians	AMS	926	7%	36	\$46.28	41	69%	No	Yes	0.95	7
29-2056	Veterinary Technologists & Technicians	MS	1,280	8%	144	\$21.50	38	71%	No	Yes	0.88	6

Business & Entrepreneurship

11-3031	Financial Managers	AMS	11,083	3%	818	\$60.33	39	83%	Yes	Yes	1.19	10
11-1021	General & Operations Managers	MS	30,843	3%	2,612	\$40.33	42	74%	Yes	Yes	0.77	9
13-1082	Project Management Specialists	AMS	13,051	1%	921	\$38.17	38	80%	Yes	Yes	1.17	9
11-2022	Sales Managers	AMS	11,527	-2%	833	\$40.62	40	79%	Yes	Yes	1.73	9
11-1011	Chief Executives	AMS	4,664	1%	320	\$52.22	42	68%	Yes	Yes	1.44	9
11-9151	Social & Community Service Managers	AMS	3,030	10%	298	\$30.33	38	83%	Yes	Yes	1.29	9
11-3121	Human Resources Managers	AMS	2,667	1%	207	\$58.04	39	79%	Yes	Yes	1.09	9
11-3013	Facilities Managers	MS	1,650	4%	150	\$38.23	40	76%	Yes	No	1.05	9
13-1161	Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specialists	AMS	11,442	1%	992	\$28.46	37	68%	Yes	Yes	1.16	8
13-1071	Human Resources Specialists	AMS	10,722	1%	870	\$29.15	37	78%	Yes	Yes	1.01	8
11-2021	Marketing Managers	AMS	6,020	0%	459	\$53.62	39	79%	No	Yes	1.35	8
13-2052	Personal Financial Advisors	AMS	4,973	1%	315	\$33.17	39	72%	Yes	Yes	1.37	8

SOC	Occupation	Skill Level	Scale & Momentum			Wage Adequacy	Quality Signal				Local Relevance	Total Points
			2024 Jobs	2024 - 2029 % Change	Annual Demand	Entry-Level Hourly Wage	Hours Worked	Employer Sponsored Health Ins. %	Recession Resilient	USN&WR 2026 Best Job	LQ	
11-3012	Administrative Services Managers	MS	3,660	2%	306	\$43.93	43	84%	Yes	No	1.28	8
13-2051	Financial & Investment Analysts	AMS	4,628	0%	287	\$37.71	41	82%	No	Yes	1.19	8
11-3051	Industrial Production Managers	AMS	2,872	-1%	194	\$45.51	41	77%	Yes	No	1.12	8
15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	AMS	1,062	7%	78	\$34.32	37	82%	Yes	Yes	0.87	8
13-2011	Accountants & Auditors	AMS	20,402	1%	1,543	\$34.89	37	76%	No	Yes	1.19	7
13-1199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	AMS	15,286	1%	1,351	\$28.05	37	75%	Yes	No	1.17	7
13-1111	Management Analysts	AMS	15,132	2%	1,268	\$34.98	33	57%	Yes	Yes	1.29	7
11-9199	Managers, All Other	AMS	14,351	1%	1,085	\$35.14	38	70%	Yes	No	1.18	7
13-1028	Buyers & Purchasing Agents	MS	5,497	2%	542	\$28.68	35	77%	Yes	No	1.01	7
13-1051	Cost Estimators	MS	2,666	-2%	216	\$32.43	37	70%	Yes	No	1.10	7
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office & Administrative Support Workers	MS	18,111	0%	1,688	\$28.92	36	70%	No	No	1.08	6
43-6011	Executive Secretaries & Executive Administrative Assistants	MS	6,213	0%	635	\$33.17	35	81%	No	No	1.16	6
43-3051	Payroll & Timekeeping Clerks	MS	2,397	-7%	248	\$19.71	35	76%	Yes	No	1.41	6
41-4011	Sales Representatives, Wholesale & Manufacturing, Technical & Scientific Products	AMS	2,639	-4%	224	\$38.14	37	70%	No	No	0.81	6
13-2099	Financial Specialists, All Other	AMS	1,469	-1%	107	\$30.01	40	77%	Yes	No	0.99	6
13-1131	Fundraisers	AMS	918	6%	77	\$27.30	32	77%	No	No	0.64	6

SOC	Occupation	Skill Level	Scale & Momentum			Wage Adequacy	Quality Signal				Local Relevance	Total Points
			2024 Jobs	2024 - 2029 % Change	Annual Demand	Entry-Level Hourly Wage	Hours Worked	Employer Sponsored Health Ins. %	Recession Resilient	USN&WR 2026 Best Job	LQ	
13-2053	Insurance Underwriters	AMS	1,095	-12%	73	\$36.85	40	87%	No	No	0.78	6
13-2028	Property Appraisers & Assessors	MS	924	-8%	70	\$29.43	37	53%	Yes	No	1.11	6
11-3061	Purchasing Managers	AMS	869	2%	67	\$50.51	37	76%	No	No	0.95	6
11-2032	Public Relations Managers	AMS	827	2%	63	\$49.23	41	93%	No	No	0.94	6
13-2041	Credit Analysts	AMS	977	-10%	58	\$31.80	39	89%	No	No	1.33	6
11-3131	Training & Development Managers	AMS	572	2.6%	46	\$49.51	40	81%	No	No	1.09	6

Education & Human Development

25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	AMS	10,334	7%	862	\$37.52	34	81%	Yes	No	0.69	8
11-9032	Education Administrators, Kindergarten through Secondary	AMS	2,565	6%	207	\$58.70	35	78%	Yes	No	0.74	8
11-9033	Education Administrators, Postsecondary	AMS	1,786	4%	135	\$38.14	35	78%	Yes	No	0.72	8
11-9039	Education Administrators, All Other	AMS	1,101	6%	86	\$30.94	35	78%	Yes	No	1.50	8
25-2059	Special Education Teachers, All Other	AMS	667	6%	55	\$36.76	36	85%	No	No	1.38	8
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special & Career/Technical Education	AMS	6,801	7%	541	\$36.56	35	83%	No	No	0.59	7
21-1021	Child, Family, & School Social Workers	AMS	4,738	7%	469	\$25.47	38	67%	Yes	No	1.12	7
21-1012	Educational, Guidance, & Career Counselors & Advisors	AMS	3,961	6%	363	\$29.43	34	78%	Yes	No	0.97	7
25-2022	Middle School Teachers, Except Special & Career/Technical Education	AMS	4,122	7%	345	\$36.17	34	81%	Yes	No	0.62	7

			Scale & Momentum			Wage Adequacy	Quality Signal				Local Relevance	Total Points
SOC	Occupation	Skill Level	2024 Jobs	2024 - 2029 % Change	Annual Demand	Entry-Level Hourly Wage	Hours Worked	Employer Sponsored Health Ins. %	Recession Resilient	USN&WR 2026 Best Job	LQ	
25-9031	Instructional Coordinators	AMS	1,554	6%	168	\$29.93	31	67%	Yes	No	0.64	7
25-2052	Special Education Teachers, Kindergarten & Elementary School	AMS	1,466	7%	127	\$33.61	36	85%	Yes	No	0.61	7
25-2058	Special Education Teachers, Secondary School	AMS	959	7%	83	\$36.87	36	85%	No	No	0.56	7
25-1099	Postsecondary Teachers	AMS	16,161	6%	1,415	\$32.75	32	74%	No	No	0.83	6
13-1151	Training & Development Specialists	AMS	4,042	6%	390	\$23.26	40	77%	Yes	No	0.84	6
25-3099	Teachers & Instructors, All Other	AMS	2,667	5%	344	\$27.84	25	58%	Yes	No	1.43	6
21-1013	Marriage & Family Therapists	AMS	3,143	10%	330	\$21.69	29	71%	No	Yes	3.53	6
25-9099	Educational Instruction & Library Workers, All Other	AMS	2,700	4%	276	\$18.43	31	67%	No	No	1.81	6
29-1129	Therapists, All Other	AMS	660	16%	62	\$24.79	32	76%	No	No	1.04	6
25-2057	Special Education Teachers, Middle School	AMS	591	7%	51	\$37.26	36	85%	No	No	0.60	6
Energy, Construction & Utilities												
17-2051	Civil Engineers	AMS	6,507	0%	388	\$39.72	38	81%	Yes	Yes	1.57	9
11-9021	Construction Managers	AMS	6,120	3%	494	\$37.86	40	62%	Yes	Yes	0.97	8
11-9041	Architectural & Engineering Managers	AMS	3,048	1%	199	\$76.93	40	83%	No	Yes	1.34	8
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, & Steamfitters	MS	5,778	5%	534	\$28.47	38	53%	No	Yes	1.02	7
17-1011	Architects, Except Landscape & Naval	AMS	2,567	2%	167	\$36.00	36	74%	No	Yes	1.72	7

SOC	Occupation	Skill Level	Scale & Momentum			Wage Adequacy	Quality Signal				Local Relevance	Total Points
			2024 Jobs	2024 - 2029 % Change	Annual Demand	Entry-Level Hourly Wage	Hours Worked	Employer Sponsored Health Ins. %	Recession Resilient	USN&WR 2026 Best Job	LQ	
49-2098	Security & Fire Alarm Systems Installers	MS	1,172	11%	142	\$27.31	35	37%	Yes	No	1.27	7
49-9052	Telecommunications Line Installers & Repairers	MS	1,156	5%	136	\$34.67	35	75%	No	No	1.04	7
47-2231	Solar Photovoltaic Installers	MS	726	17%	89	\$23.96	41	75%	No	Yes	2.15	7
49-9051	Electrical Power-Line Installers & Repairers	MS	740	13%	79	\$41.25	55	91%	No	No	0.54	7
47-4021	Elevator & Escalator Installers & Repairers	MS	597	6%	54	\$39.52	32	75%	No	No	2.28	7
49-9071	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General	Below MS	13,604	5%	1,398	\$21.65	33	65%	No	Yes	0.76	6
47-2111	Electricians	MS	9,068	2.9%	845	\$26.91	38	60%	Yes	Yes	1.01	6
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, & Refrigeration Mechanics & Installers	MS	4,133	8%	419	\$29.67	39	55%	Yes	No	0.85	6
47-2073	Operating Engineers & Other Construction Equipment Operators	MS	2,849	1%	242	\$31.63	40	76%	Yes	No	0.54	6
17-3011	Architectural & Civil Drafters	MS	1,555	1%	137	\$30.57	28	67%	Yes	No	1.32	6
51-8021	Stationary Engineers & Boiler Operators	MS	634	1%	72	\$24.29	30	74%	Yes	No	1.64	6
51-8011	Nuclear Power Reactor Operators	MS	302	15%	40	\$49.37	37	93%	No	No	4.44	6
Health												
29-1141	Registered Nurses	MS	25,346	6%	1,573	\$51.69	33	81%	Yes	Yes	0.70	9
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	AMS	1,848	29%	196	\$67.25	37	82%	Yes	Yes	0.54	9
29-1051	Pharmacists	AMS	3,153	3%	138	\$62.17	35	83%	Yes	Yes	0.89	9

SOC	Occupation	Skill Level	Scale & Momentum			Wage Adequacy	Quality Signal				Local Relevance	Total Points
			2024 Jobs	2024 - 2029 % Change	Annual Demand	Entry-Level Hourly Wage	Hours Worked	Employer Sponsored Health Ins. %	Recession Resilient	USN&WR 2026 Best Job	LQ	
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists & Technicians	MS	1,730	6%	110	\$38.00	37	84%	Yes	Yes	0.71	9
29-1123	Physical Therapists	AMS	2,380	4%	109	\$45.94	35	74%	Yes	Yes	0.83	9
29-1071	Physician Assistants	AMS	1,331	14%	106	\$61.13	42	86%	Yes	Yes	0.76	9
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists	MS	1,673	5%	101	\$45.05	36	78%	No	Yes	1.13	9
29-1122	Occupational Therapists	AMS	1,249	8%	81	\$46.87	34	72%	Yes	Yes	0.73	9
29-1021	Dentists, General	AMS	1,879	4%	70	\$61.37	32	44%	Yes	Yes	1.26	9
29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	MS	962	7%	62	\$34.91	35	81%	Yes	Yes	1.00	9
29-2061	Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses	MS	7,564	6%	721	\$33.90	35	72%	No	Yes	1.07	8
11-9111	Medical & Health Services Managers	AMS	6,253	16%	667	\$35.05	38	76%	Yes	Yes	0.98	8
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	MS	1,049	7%	165	\$36.19	31	69%	Yes	Yes	0.88	8
19-1042	Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists	AMS	1,802	12%	135	\$48.84	41	90%	No	No	1.00	8
29-1127	Speech-Language Pathologists	AMS	1,337	10%	101	\$39.85	29	79%	Yes	Yes	0.65	8
19-3039	Psychologists, All Other	AMS	1,103	11%	99	\$32.74	32	52%	Yes	Yes	1.27	8
29-1031	Dietitians & Nutritionists	AMS	945	11%	81	\$37.05	29	72%	No	Yes	1.03	8
21-1018	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, & Mental Health Counselors	AMS	6,181	21%	780	\$21.90	32	66%	No	Yes	1.18	7
21-1023	Mental Health & Substance Abuse Social Workers	AMS	2,124	15%	253	\$23.06	36	77%	Yes	No	1.45	7

SOC	Occupation	Skill Level	Scale & Momentum			Wage Adequacy	Quality Signal				Local Relevance	Total Points
			2024 Jobs	2024 - 2029 % Change	Annual Demand	Entry-Level Hourly Wage	Hours Worked	Employer Sponsored Health Ins. %	Recession Resilient	USN&WR 2026 Best Job	LQ	
29-1292	Dental Hygienists	MS	2,727	8%	210	\$28.22	29	59%	Yes	Yes	1.13	7
29-2072	Medical Records Specialists	MS	2,118	6%	163	\$22.04	35	77%	No	Yes	1.03	7
19-3033	Clinical & Counseling Psychologists	AMS	1,099	21%	104	\$37.23	25	48%	Yes	No	1.21	7
21-1094	Community Health Workers	MS	754	11%	98	\$22.34	32	78%	No	Yes	1.09	7
29-2055	Surgical Technologists	MS	809	7%	57	\$31.42	38	73%	No	Yes	0.65	7
19-3034	School Psychologists	AMS	733	5%	51	\$49.35	37	90%	No	No	1.09	7
29-1215	Family Medicine Physicians	AMS	1,419	4%	49	\$78.16	42	67%	No	No	1.11	7
29-1223	Psychiatrists	AMS	510	9%	23	\$96.26	42	67%	No	Yes	1.64	7
31-1128	Home Health & Personal Care Aides	MS	64,276	21%	13,060	\$16.00	30	39%	No	Yes	1.31	6
31-9092	Medical Assistants	MS	9,799	10%	1,413	\$19.31	33	62%	No	Yes	1.11	6
29-2042	Emergency Medical Technicians	MS	2,092	20%	246	\$19.10	42	77%	No	No	1.09	6
31-9099	Healthcare Support Workers, All Other	MS	1,392	5%	195	\$22.24	34	65%	No	No	1.17	6
21-1022	Healthcare Social Workers	AMS	1,716	12%	194	\$31.83	38	86%	No	No	0.84	6
21-1091	Health Education Specialists	AMS	1,302	4%	147	\$22.76	32	78%	No	No	1.71	6
31-9093	Medical Equipment Preparers	MS	701	6%	99	\$23.13	34	65%	Yes	No	0.87	6
29-2043	Paramedics	MS	575	26%	56	\$29.42	40	64%	No	No	0.44	6

SOC	Occupation	Skill Level	Scale & Momentum			Wage Adequacy	Quality Signal				Local Relevance	Total Points
			2024 Jobs	2024 - 2029 % Change	Annual Demand	Entry-Level Hourly Wage	Hours Worked	Employer Sponsored Health Ins. %	Recession Resilient	USN&WR 2026 Best Job	LQ	
29-1041	Optometrists	AMS	1,070	1%	52	\$47.35	28	57%	Yes	Yes	2.03	6
29-1151	Nurse Anesthetists	AMS	329	12%	22	\$116.85	44	100%	No	Yes	0.56	6
29-1216	General Internal Medicine Physicians	AMS	620	3%	21	\$57.86	42	67%	No	No	0.77	6
29-2035	Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists	MS	328	6%	20	\$42.60	30	69%	No	Yes	0.70	6
29-1211	Anesthesiologists	AMS	541	2%	17	\$116.36	42	67%	No	Yes	1.07	6
29-1221	Pediatricians, General	AMS	521	2%	16	\$71.14	42	67%	No	Yes	1.02	6
29-1214	Emergency Medicine Physicians	AMS	388	4%	14	\$85.30	42	67%	No	Yes	0.95	6
29-1181	Audiologists	AMS	174	6%	8	\$36.56	35	76%	No	No	1.00	6
29-1222	Physicians, Pathologists	AMS	248	3%	8	\$69.47	42	67%	No	No	1.49	6
19-1041	Epidemiologists	AMS	110	7%	7	\$41.73	41	90%	No	Yes	0.74	6
29-1218	Obstetricians & Gynecologists	AMS	197	2%	6	\$90.98	42	67%	Yes	Yes	0.80	6
29-1023	Orthodontists	AMS	127	3%	5	\$138.44	32	44%	No	Yes	1.72	6
29-1161	Nurse Midwives	AMS	61	19%	5	\$79.96	37	82%	No	Yes	0.61	6
29-1022	Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons	AMS	118	4%	4	\$129.14	32	44%	No	Yes	1.56	6

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Information Communication Technologies (ICT)/Digital Media

11-3021	Computer & Information Systems Managers	AMS	7,516	4%	539	\$73.01	41	84%	Yes	Yes	1.05	10
15-2051	Data Scientists	AMS	2,982	11%	233	\$38.67	37	86%	Yes	Yes	1.16	10
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	AMS	1,479	10%	110	\$45.72	39	94%	Yes	Yes	0.70	9
15-1241	Computer Network Architects	MS	1,569	3%	88	\$53.65	34	75%	Yes	Yes	0.81	9
15-1252	Software Developers	AMS	18,309	2%	968	\$57.96	39	87%	No	Yes	1.00	8
17-2072	Electronics Engineers, Except Computer	AMS	1,760	3%	105	\$53.69	35	81%	No	No	1.65	8
15-1299	Computer Occupations, All Other	AMS	7,285	0%	408	\$31.93	39	80%	Yes	No	1.36	7
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts	AMS	5,079	1%	294	\$46.18	38	83%	No	Yes	0.92	7
27-1011	Art Directors	AMS	1,760	-1%	155	\$28.72	30	59%	Yes	Yes	1.72	7
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	MS	6,748	-4%	404	\$28.03	37	79%	Yes	No	0.85	6
27-1024	Graphic Designers	AMS	4,523	-2%	322	\$23.06	32	69%	Yes	No	1.52	6
15-1253	Software Quality Assurance Analysts & Testers	AMS	2,389	-1%	137	\$36.50	37	82%	No	No	1.12	6
27-2012	Producers & Directors	AMS	1,782	2%	135	\$30.06	33	66%	Yes	No	0.92	6
15-1244	Network & Computer Systems Administrators	MS	2,790	-2%	133	\$40.42	39	85%	No	No	0.78	6
15-1251	Computer Programmers	AMS	1,666	-7%	85	\$32.69	35	68%	No	No	1.24	6

SOC	Occupation	Skill Level	Scale & Momentum			Wage Adequacy	Quality Signal				Local Relevance	Total Points
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Life Sciences & Biotechnology

19-4099	Life, Physical, & Social Science Technicians, All Other	MS	904	3%	118	\$28.74	32	69%	Yes	No	1.04	8
49-9062	Medical Equipment Repairers	MS	810	4%	81	\$26.62	32	40%	Yes	Yes	1.19	7
19-1029	Biological Scientists, All Other	AMS	583	7%	53	\$36.56	36	77%	No	No	0.82	6
17-2031	Bioengineers & Biomedical Engineers	AMS	415	3%	25	\$47.38	41	94%	No	No	1.70	6

Other/Unassigned

23-1011	Lawyers	AMS	12,714	4%	567	\$51.75	41	74%	Yes	Yes	1.29	10
13-1041	Compliance Officers	AMS	4,411	1%	347	\$31.46	37	82%	Yes	No	1.00	7
43-4061	Eligibility Interviewers, Government Programs	Below MS	2,941	2.6%	262	\$27.36	38	84%	Yes	No	1.69	7
17-2199	Engineers, All Other	AMS	2,644	-1%	147	\$44.29	38	85%	No	No	1.43	7
27-3042	Technical Writers	AMS	1,915	-3%	146	\$44.17	33	76%	No	No	3.20	7
17-2011	Aerospace Engineers	AMS	1,569	0%	87	\$61.36	38	86%	No	No	1.98	7
23-2011	Paralegals & Legal Assistants	MS	5,131	7%	623	\$21.94	35	68%	No	No	1.26	6
43-6012	Legal Secretaries & Administrative Assistants	MS	2,667	4%	387	\$18.62	31	74%	No	No	1.59	6
21-2011	Clergy	AMS	2,279	4%	218	\$30.26	33	61%	Yes	No	0.80	6
11-9121	Natural Sciences Managers	AMS	733	12%	77	\$62.32	41	56%	No	No	0.65	6

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19-2031	Chemists	AMS	843	3%	62	\$34.31	38	78%	No	No	0.92	6
19-1021	Biochemists & Biophysicists	AMS	151	14%	16	\$41.05	36	77%	No	Yes	0.38	6
19-1099	Life Scientists, All Other	AMS	146	5%	8	\$51.48	41	90%	No	No	1.58	6
Public Safety												
33-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Police & Detectives	MS	935	6%	73	\$69.47	41	91%	Yes	No	0.52	8
33-3051	Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers	MS	4,760	6%	415	\$43.09	38	87%	No	No	0.61	7
33-3012	Correctional Officers & Jailers	MS	1,187	4%	116	\$35.42	39	84%	Yes	No	0.30	7
21-1092	Probation Officers & Correctional Treatment Specialists	AMS	847	4%	77	\$43.86	41	99%	No	No	0.89	7
33-2011	Firefighters	MS	1,423	8%	131	\$35.10	48	90%	No	No	0.39	6
33-1091	First-Line Supervisors of Security Workers	MS	786	10%	93	\$22.23	39	74%	No	No	1.04	6
33-3021	Detectives & Criminal Investigators	MS	583	5%	45	\$44.61	39	95%	No	No	0.45	6
19-4092	Forensic Science Technicians	MS	251	7%	35	\$34.30	32	69%	No	Yes	1.03	6
Retail, Hospitality & Tourism												
11-9072	Entertainment & Recreation Managers, Except Gambling	AMS	1,112	8%	150	\$29.18	38	81%	No	No	2.29	7
13-1121	Meeting, Convention, & Event Planners	AMS	1,949	7%	213	\$22.91	30	67%	No	No	1.14	6
27-1022	Fashion Designers	AMS	946	-3%	81	\$36.84	29	81%	No	No	2.87	6

End Notes

- ¹ Ruggles, Steven, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Grace Cooper, Julia A. Rivera Drew, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rodgers, Jonathan Schroeder, and Kari C. W. Williams. *IPUMS USA: Version 16.0* [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V16.0>.
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- ³ Schmitt, John, and Janelle Jones. *Where Have All the Good Jobs Gone?* Washington, DC: Center for Economic and Policy Research, 2012. <https://cepr.net/publications/where-have-all-the-good-jobs-gone/>.
- ⁴ Strohl, Jeff, Artem Gulish, and Catherine Morris. *The Future of Good Jobs: Projections through 2031*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2024. <https://cew.georgetown.edu/goodjobsprojections2031>.
- ⁵ Congdon, William J., Molly M. Scott, Batia Katz, Pamela J. Loprest, Demetra Smith Nightingale, and Jessica Shakesprere. *Understanding Good Jobs: A Review of Definitions and Evidence*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2020. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/understanding-good-jobs-review-definitions-and-evidence>.
- ⁶ Medaris, Anna. "What Do People Really Want in Their Work? Meaning and Stability." *Monitor on Psychology* 55, no. 1 (January 2024): 64. <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2024/01/trends-meaning-stability-workplaces>.
- ⁷ Dunavete, Anca. "The Power of Predictability in the Workplace." YAROOMS (blog). <https://www.yarooms.com/blog/predictability-in-the-workplace>.
- ⁸ Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. *Job Quality Toolkit*. National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2022. <https://cdn-jobquality.results4america.org/content/uploads/Job-Quality-Toolkit.pdf>.





FOR LABOR MARKET RESEARCH

ORANGE COUNTY

The OC COE would like to thank our colleagues at the South Central Coast COE who shared their high-quality jobs approach and methodology with us and allowed us to replicate their research.

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