










# Dental Assistants

## Labor Market Analysis: Imperial County

March 2023

### Summary

NEW PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION?	EVIDENCE OF A SUPPLY GAP?	AT OR ABOVE THE LIVING WAGE?	EXPECTED LEVEL OF EDUCATION
 <b>Proceed with New Program</b>	 	 	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree+ <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Degree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Some College or Certificate
SUPPORT FOR PROGRAM MODIFICATION?	NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS THAT PROVIDE TRAINING	NUMBER OF ANNUAL JOB OPENINGS	<input type="checkbox"/> HS Diploma or Equivalent <input type="checkbox"/> Less than a HS Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship
 	<div style="background-color: #4a7c9c; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">LOW</div> 	<div style="background-color: #4a7c9c; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">HIGH</div> 	

The Center of Excellence (COE) for the San Diego and Imperial Counties Community Colleges developed this brief to assist the region's community colleges with strategic planning and program development. According to available labor market information, *Dental Assistants* in Imperial County have a labor market demand of 18 annual job openings (average demand for a single occupation in Imperial County is 12 annual job openings), and no educational institution in Imperial County supplies any awards for this occupation, suggesting that a supply gap exists in the labor market. Entry-level and median wages for this occupation are above the living wage. This brief recommends to proceed with developing a new program and supports a program modification because 1) there is a supply gap in the region; and 2) this occupations' entry-level and median earnings are above the living wage.

## Introduction

This report provides labor market information in Imperial County for the following occupational code in the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)<sup>1</sup> system:

**Dental Assistants (SOC 31-9091):** Perform limited clinical duties under the direction of a dentist.

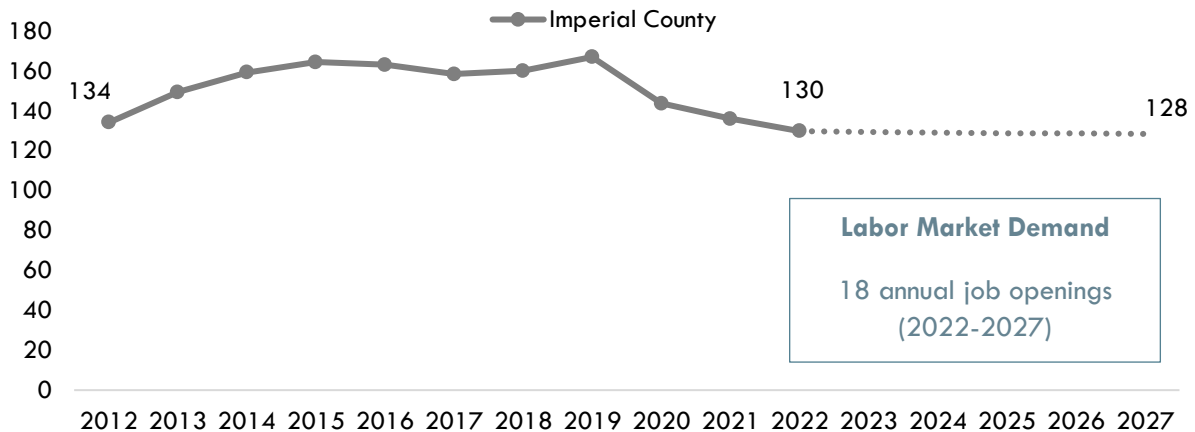
Clinical duties may include equipment preparation and sterilization, preparing patients for treatment, assisting the dentist during treatment, and providing patients with instructions for oral healthcare procedures. May perform administrative duties such as scheduling appointments, maintaining medical records, billing, and coding information for insurance purposes. Sample reported job titles include:

- Orthodontic Assistant
- Surgical Dental Assistant
- Registered Dental Assistant
- Expanded Functions Dental Assistant
- Certified Dental Assistant
- Oral Surgery Assistant
- Expanded Duty Dental Assistant
- Expanded Dental Assistant
- Certified Registered Dental Assistant

## Projected Occupational Demand

Between 2022 and 2027, *Dental Assistants* are projected to decrease by 2 net jobs or two percent (Exhibit 1). Employers in Imperial County will need to hire 18 workers annually to fill new jobs and backfill jobs due to attrition caused by turnover and retirement, for example.

**Exhibit 1: Number of Jobs for *Dental Assistants* (2012-2027)<sup>2</sup>**



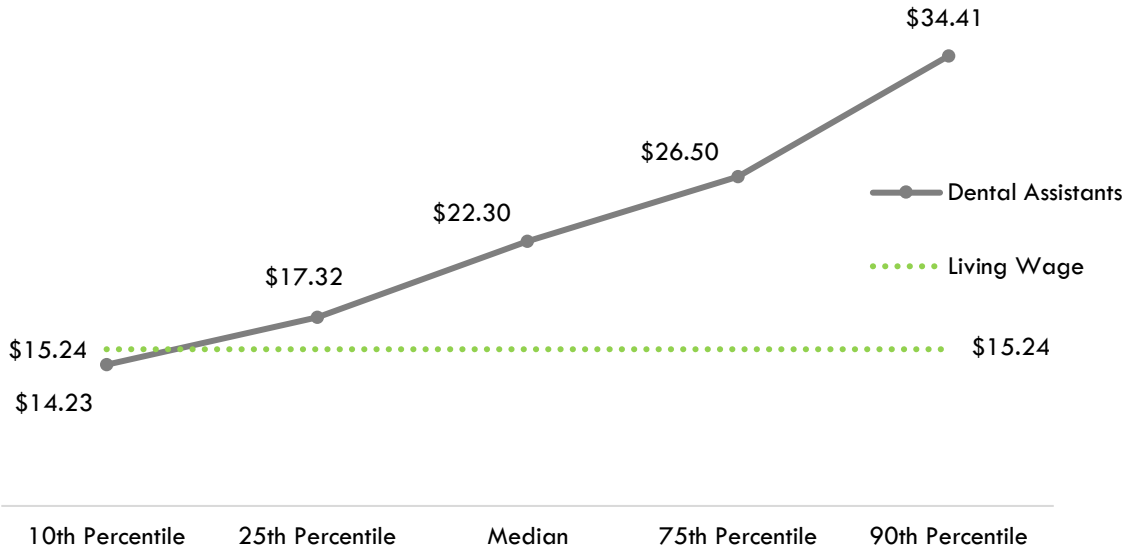
<sup>1</sup> The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system is used by federal statistical agencies to classify workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating or disseminating data. [bls.gov/soc](https://www.bls.gov/soc).

<sup>2</sup> Lightcast 2023.01; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

## Earnings

*Dental Assistants* receive entry-level hourly earnings of **\$17.32**; this is more than the living wage for a household of two adults and two school-age children in Imperial County, which is **\$15.24** per hour (Exhibit 2).<sup>3</sup>

**Exhibit 2: Hourly Earnings<sup>4</sup> for *Dental Assistants* in Imperial County<sup>5</sup>**



<sup>3</sup> "Family Needs Calculator (formerly the California Family Needs Calculator)," Insight: Center for Community Economic Development, last updated 2021. [insightccd.org/family-needs-calculator/](https://insightccd.org/family-needs-calculator/).

<sup>4</sup> 10th and 25th percentiles could be considered entry-level wages, and 75th and 90th percentiles could be considered experienced wages for individuals who may have been in the occupation longer, received more training than others, etc.

<sup>5</sup> Lightcast 2023.01; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

## Educational Supply

Educational supply for an occupation can be estimated by analyzing the number of awards in related Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) or Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes.<sup>6</sup> There is **one** TOP code and **one** CIP code related to *Dental Assistants* (Exhibit 3).

**Exhibit 3: Related TOP and CIP Codes for Dental Assistants**

TOP or CIP Code	TOP or CIP Program Title
TOP 1240.10	Dental Assistant
CIP 51.0601	Dental Assisting/Assistant

According to TOP and CIP data, **no** community college or other educational institution supplies the region with awards for this occupation (Exhibit 4).

**Exhibit 4: Number of Awards (Certificates and Degrees) Conferred by Postsecondary Institutions  
(Program Year 2017-18 through Program Year 2020-21 Average)**

TOP6 or CIP Code	TOP6 or CIP Program Title	3-Yr Annual Average CC Awards (PY18-19 to PY20-21)	Other Educational Institutions 3-Yr Annual Average Awards (PY17-18 to PY19-20)	3-Yr Total Average Supply (PY17-18 to PY20-21)
1240.10	Dental Assistant	0	0	0
51.0601	Dental Assisting/Assistant	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>				<b>0</b>

<sup>6</sup> TOP data comes from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart (datamart.cccco.edu) and CIP data comes from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data).

## Demand vs. Supply

Comparing labor demand (annual openings) with labor supply<sup>7</sup> suggests that a **supply gap** exists for this occupation in Imperial County, with **18** annual openings and **zero** awards. Comparatively, there are **8,760** annual openings in California and **2,822** awards, suggesting that there is also a supply gap across the state<sup>8</sup> (Exhibit 5).

**Exhibit 5: Labor Demand (Annual Openings) Compared with Labor Supply (Average Annual Awards)**

	<b>Demand</b> (Annual Openings)	<b>Supply</b> (Total Annual Average Supply)	<b>Supply Gap or Oversupply</b>
Imperial	18	0	<b>18</b>
California	8,760	2,822	<b>5,938</b>

**Please note:** This is a basic analysis of supply and demand of labor. The data does not include workers currently in the labor force who could fill these positions or workers who are not captured by publicly available data. This data should be used to discuss the potential gaps or oversupply of workers; however, it should not be the only basis for determining whether or not a program should be developed.

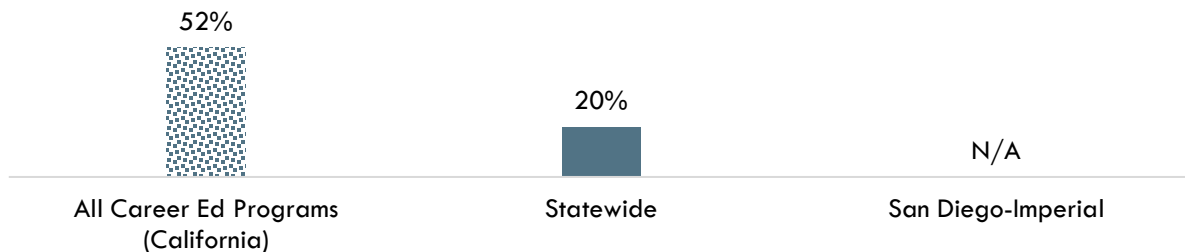
<sup>7</sup> Labor supply can be found from two different sources: Lightcast or the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart. Lightcast uses CIP codes while MIS uses TOP codes. Different coding systems result in differences in the supply numbers.

<sup>8</sup> "Supply and Demand," Centers of Excellence Student Outcomes, [coecc.net/our-resources](http://coecc.net/our-resources).

## Student Outcomes and Regional Comparisons

According to the California Community Colleges LaunchBoard, 20 percent of students statewide earned a living wage after completing a Dental Assistant (TOP 1240.10) program, compared to 52 percent of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 6a).<sup>9</sup>

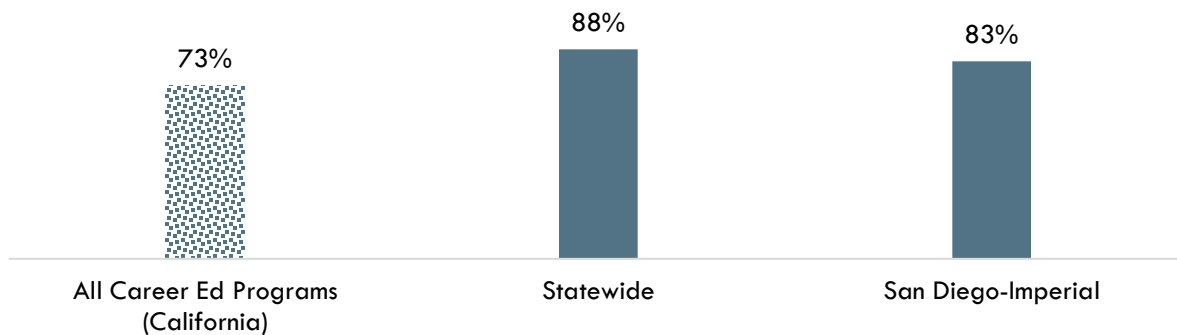
**Exhibit 6a: Percentage of Students Who Earned a Living Wage by Program, (Dental Assistant, PY2019-20)<sup>10</sup>**



"N/A" indicates insufficient data

According to the California Community Colleges LaunchBoard, 83 percent of students in the San Diego-Imperial region obtained a job closely related to their field of study after completing a Dental Assistant (TOP 1240.10) program, compared to 88 percent statewide and 73 percent of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 6b).<sup>11</sup>

**Exhibit 6b: Percentage of Students in a Job Closely Related to Field of Study by Program (Dental Assistant, PY 2018-19)<sup>12</sup>**



<sup>9</sup> "California Community Colleges Strong Workforce Program," California Community Colleges, [calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx](http://calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx).

<sup>10</sup> Most recent year with available data is Program Year 2019-20. Among completers and skills builders who exited, the percentage of students who attained a living wage.

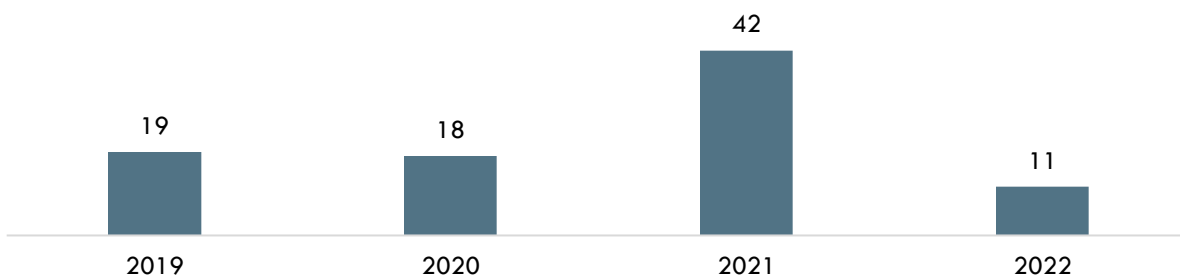
<sup>11</sup> "California Community Colleges Strong Workforce Program," California Community Colleges, [calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx](http://calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx).

<sup>12</sup> Most recent year with available data is Program Year 2018-19. Percentage of Students in a Job Closely Related to Field of Study: Among students who responded to the CTEOS, the percentage reporting employment in the same or similar field as their program of study.

## Online Job Postings

This report analyzes not only historical and projected (traditional LMI) data, but also recent data from online job postings (real-time LMI). Online job postings may provide additional insight about recent changes in the labor market that are not captured by historical data. Between 2019 and 2022, there was an average of 23 online job posting per year for *Dental Assistants* in Imperial County (Exhibit 7). Please note that online job postings do **not** equal labor market demand; demand is represented by annual job openings (see Exhibit 1). While this brief includes online jobs postings data to help with curriculum development, the community colleges should note that this type of data is impacted by several variables: employers may post a position multiple times to increase the pool of applicants; a job posting can remain posted after a business decides not to fill a position; or an employer may use one posting to fill multiple positions, for example.

**Exhibit 7: Number of Online Job Postings for *Dental Assistants* in Imperial County (2019-2022)<sup>13</sup>**



## Top Employers

Between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2022, the top five employers in Imperial County for *Dental Assistants* were [Western Dental Services](#), [Indian Health Service](#), [Management & Training Corporation](#), [GEO Group](#), and [State of California](#) based on online job postings (Exhibit 8).

**Exhibit 8: Top Employers for *Dental Assistants* in Imperial County<sup>14</sup>**

Top Employers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Western Dental Services</li><li>• Indian Health Service</li><li>• Management &amp; Training Corporation</li><li>• GEO Group</li><li>• State of California</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Correctional Healthcare Companies</li><li>• Comfort Dental Group</li><li>• Pacific Dental Services</li></ul>

<sup>13</sup> Lightcast; "Job Posting Analytics," 2019-2022.

<sup>14</sup> Lightcast; "Job Posting Analytics," 2020-2022.

## Education, Skills, and Certifications

Exhibit 9 indicates that the typical educational attainment for this occupation found currently in the national labor force is a *some college, no degree*. The typical entry-level education is a *postsecondary non-degree*.<sup>15</sup>

**Exhibit 9: National Educational Attainment of Dental Assistants<sup>16</sup>**

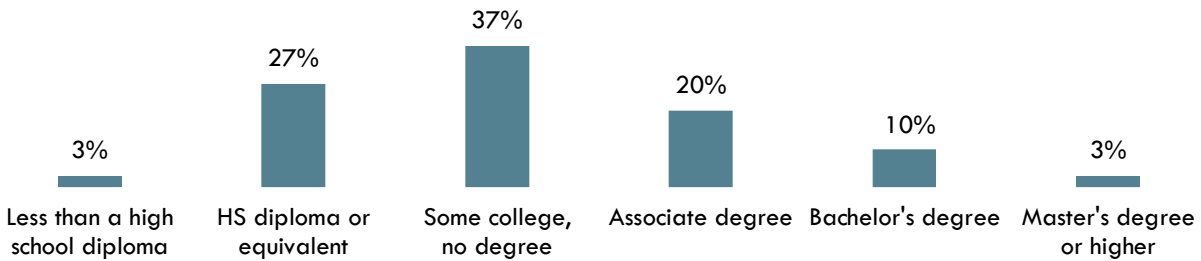


Exhibit 10 lists the top specialized, soft, and software skills that appeared in online job postings between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2022.

**Exhibit 10: Top Skills for Dental Assistants in Imperial County<sup>17</sup>**

Specialized Skills	Soft Skills	Software Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dentistry</li> <li>• Patient Preparation</li> <li>• Dental Hygiene</li> <li>• Podiatry</li> <li>• Chiropractics</li> <li>• Radiology</li> <li>• Registration</li> <li>• Influenza</li> <li>• Darkroom</li> <li>• Dental Experience</li> <li>• Medical Records</li> <li>• Radiography</li> <li>• Radiologic Physics</li> <li>• Setting Appointments</li> <li>• Amalgam</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record Keeping</li> <li>• Self-Motivation</li> <li>• Management</li> <li>• Ethical Standards And Conduct</li> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Good Driving Record</li> <li>• Accountability</li> <li>• Training And Development</li> <li>• Operations</li> <li>• Social Skills</li> <li>• Interpersonal Communications</li> <li>• Patience</li> <li>• Energetic</li> <li>• Professionalism</li> <li>• Positivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IBM WebSphere MQ</li> </ul>

<sup>15</sup> Lightcast 2023.01; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

<sup>16</sup> "Educational Attainment for Workers 25 Years and Older by Detailed Occupation," Bureau of Labor Statistics, last modified September 8, 2021. [bls.gov/emp/tables/educational-attainment.htm](https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/educational-attainment.htm).

<sup>17</sup> Lightcast; "Job Posting Analytics." 2020-2022.



Exhibit 11 lists the top certification that appeared in online job postings between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2022.

**Exhibit 11: Top Certification for *Dental Assistants* in Imperial County<sup>18</sup>**

Top Certification in Online Job Postings

1. Registered Dental Assistant
  2. Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification
  3. Radiology Certification
  4. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification
  5. Security Clearance
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<sup>18</sup> Lightcast; "Job Posting Analytics." 2020-2022.

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### Important Disclaimers

All representations included in this report have been produced from primary research and/or secondary review of publicly and/or privately available data and/or research reports. This study examines the most recent data available at the time of the analysis; however, data sets are updated regularly and may not be consistent with previous reports. Efforts have been made to qualify and validate the accuracy of the data and the report findings; however, neither the Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research (COE), COE host district, nor California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office are responsible for the applications or decisions made by individuals and/or organizations based on this study or its recommendations.