

Labor Market Analysis: 1402.00 – Paralegal

Paralegal - Certificate requiring 30 to <60 semester units

Los Angeles Center of Excellence, June 2023

Summary

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

- **Paralegals and Legal Assistants (23-2011)** 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.¹
- **Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers (23-2093)** Search real estate records, examine titles, or summarize pertinent legal or insurance documents or details for a variety of purposes. May compile lists of mortgages, contracts, and other instruments pertaining to titles by searching public and private records for law firms, real estate agencies, or title insurance companies.²
- **Court Reporters and Simultaneous Captioners (27-3092)** Use verbatim methods and equipment to capture, store, retrieve, and transcribe pretrial and trial proceedings or other information. Includes stenocaptioners who operate computerized stenographic captioning equipment to provide captions of live or prerecorded broadcasts for hearing-impaired viewers.³
- **Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants (43-6012)** 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.⁴

¹ [Paralegals and Legal Assistants \(bls.gov\)](#)

² [Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers \(bls.gov\)](#)

³ [Court Reporters and Simultaneous Captioners \(bls.gov\)](#)

⁴ [Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants \(bls.gov\)](#)

Middle-skill occupations typically require some postsecondary education, but less than a bachelor's degree.⁵ 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.

Based on the available data, there appears to be a supply gap in the region for the middle-skill legal occupations of interest. In addition to entry-level wages exceeding the self-sufficiency standard wage in Los Angeles County, the majority of annual openings for the occupations in this report typically require an associate degree or postsecondary non-degree award. **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, **4,094 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 667 awards conferred** by educational institutions in the region.
- **Living Wage Criteria** – In Los Angeles County, all four occupations have **entry-level wages above the self-sufficiency standard wage** (\$18.10/hour).⁶
- **Educational Criteria** – Within the greater LA/OC region, **64% of the annual job openings** for these middle-skill legal occupations **typically require an associate degree or postsecondary non-degree award**.
 - National-level educational attainment data indicates that **between 39% and 70% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree**.

Supply:

- There are **17 community colleges** in the greater LA/OC region that issue awards for paralegals and related legal occupations, conferring an average of **560 awards annually** between 2018 and 2021.
- Between 2017 and 2020, there was an average of **107 awards conferred annually** in related training programs by non-community college institutions throughout the greater LA/OC region.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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 the four legal occupations of interest. In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, the number of jobs related to these occupations is projected to increase by 7% through 2026. There will be nearly 4,100 job openings per year through 2026 due to job growth and replacements.

Exhibit 1: Occupational demand in Los Angeles and Orange Counties⁷

Geography	2021 Jobs	2026 Jobs	2021-2026 Change	2021-2026 % Change	Annual Openings
Los Angeles	23,378	24,951	1,573	7%	3,118
Orange	7,290	7,866	577	8%	977
Total	30,668	32,817	2,149	7%	4,094

Wages

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wages for the occupations of interest in Los Angeles County, as they relate 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

All four legal occupations of interest have entry-level wages above the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$18.10 in Los Angeles County). Typical entry-level hourly wages are in a range between \$21.45 and \$23.61. Experienced workers can expect to earn wages between \$38.39 and \$50.55.

Exhibit 2: Hourly Earnings for Occupations in LA County

Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)	Median Annual Earnings*
Paralegals and Legal Assistants (23-2011)	\$23.20	\$30.64	\$39.41	\$63,700
Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers (23-2093)	\$21.45	\$29.83	\$38.39	\$62,100
Court Reporters and Simultaneous Captioners (27-3092)	\$21.78	\$33.64	\$50.55	\$70,000
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants (43-6012)	\$23.61	\$30.78	\$38.85	\$64,000

*rounded to the nearest \$100

⁷ Five-year change represents new job additions to the workforce. Annual openings include new jobs and replacement jobs that result from retirements and separations.

Orange County

All four legal occupations of interest have entry-level wages that nearly meet or surpass the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$20.63 in Orange County). Typical entry-level hourly wages are in a range between \$20.32 and \$22.07. Experienced workers can expect to earn wages between \$33.79 and \$48.27, which are higher than the self-sufficiency standard wage estimate.

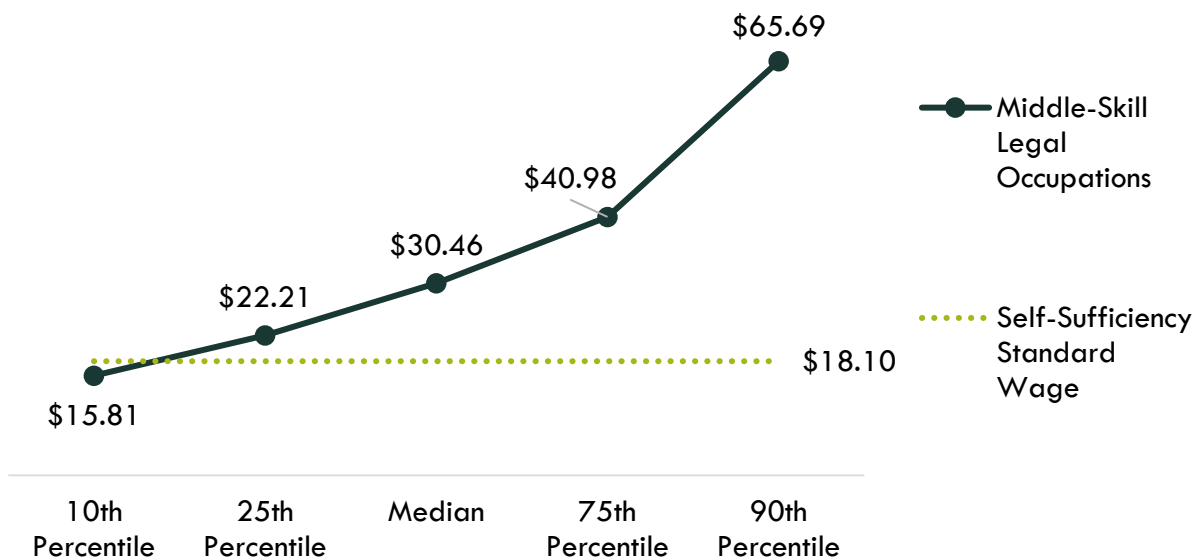
Exhibit 3: Hourly Earnings for Occupations in Orange County

Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)	Median Annual Earnings*
Paralegals and Legal Assistants (23-2011)	\$20.32	\$26.79	\$34.50	\$55,700
Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers (23-2093)	\$20.80	\$27.84	\$35.48	\$57,900
Court Reporters and Simultaneous Captioners (27-3092)	\$23.07	\$32.26	\$48.27	\$67,100
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants (43-6012)	\$20.53	\$26.76	\$33.79	\$55,700

*rounded to the nearest \$100

On average, the entry-level earnings for the occupations in this report are \$22.21. This is above the living wage for one single adult in Los Angeles County (\$18.10). Exhibit 4 shows the hourly wages for the occupations in this report, from entry-level to experienced workers.

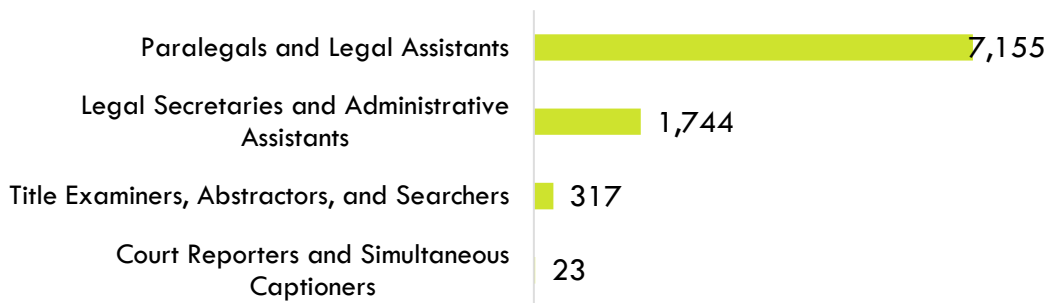
Exhibit 4: Hourly Earnings for Middle-Skill Legal Occupations in LA/OC



Job Postings

Over the past 12 months, there have been 9,239 online job postings for the legal occupations of interest. Exhibit 5 displays the number of job postings by occupation. The majority of job postings (77%) were for *paralegals and legal assistants*, followed by *legal secretaries and administrative assistants* (19%), and *title examiners, abstractors, and searchers* (3%). The highest number of job postings were for paralegals, legal assistants, legal secretaries, litigation paralegals, and litigation secretaries. The top skills were lawsuits, legal discovery, legal pleadings, legal depositions, and trial preparation. The top employers, by number of job postings, in the region were Robert Half (staffing company), GPAC (staffing company), and Adams & Martin Group (staffing company).

Exhibit 5: Job postings by occupation (last 12 months)



Educational Attainment

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists the following typical entry-level education levels for the occupations in this report:

- **Associate degree:** *Paralegals and legal assistants* (23-2011)
- **Postsecondary non-degree award:** *Court reporters and simultaneous captioners* (27-3092)
- **High school diploma or equivalent:** *Title examiners, abstractors, and searchers* (23-2093) and *legal secretaries and administrative assistants* (43-6012)

In the greater LA/OC region, the majority of annual job openings (64%) typically require an associate degree or postsecondary non-degree award. National-level educational attainment data indicates that between 39% and 70% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree. Of the 42% of middle-skill legal job postings listing a minimum education requirement in the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, 28% (1,083) requested high school or vocational training, 16% (606) requested an associate degree, and 57% (2,194) requested a bachelor's degree.

Educational Supply

Community College Supply

Exhibit 6 shows the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred by community colleges in programs that have historically trained for the occupations of interest. The colleges with the most completions in the region are Santa Ana, Pasadena, and Cerritos. Of the 560 community college awards averaged over the last three years, nearly half of these conferred awards were associate degrees (265 awards).

Exhibit 6: Regional community college awards (certificates and degrees), 2018-2021

TOP	Program	College	2018-19 Awards	2019-20 Awards	2020-21 Awards	3-Year Average
0514.10	Legal Office Technology	Cerritos	2	-	2	1
		East LA	-	-	1	0
		LA City	-	-	1	0
		Santa Monica	2	12	3	6
		West LA	2	5	7	5
		LA Subtotal	6	17	14	12
		Santa Ana	-	1	3	1
		OC Subtotal	-	1	3	1
Supply Subtotal/Average			6	18	17	14
0514.30	Court Reporting	Cypress	8	8	-	5
		OC Subtotal	8	8	-	5
Supply Subtotal/Average			8	8	-	5
1402.00	Paralegal	Cerritos	58	60	56	58
		Compton	2	-	-	1
		East LA	-	41	31	24
		El Camino	39	31	42	37
		LA City	25	34	43	34
		LA Mission	35	24	36	32
		LA Southwest	1	-	-	0
		LA Trade-Tech	2	7	5	5
		Mt San Antonio	43	42	63	49
		Pasadena	69	49	68	62
		West LA	30	24	38	31
		LA Subtotal	304	312	382	333
		Coastline	58	60	48	55
		Fullerton	39	49	76	55
		Irvine Valley	16	32	26	25
		Santa Ana	62	72	86	73
OC Subtotal	175	213	236	208		
Supply Subtotal/Average			479	525	618	541
Supply Total/Average			493	551	635	560

Non-Community College Supply

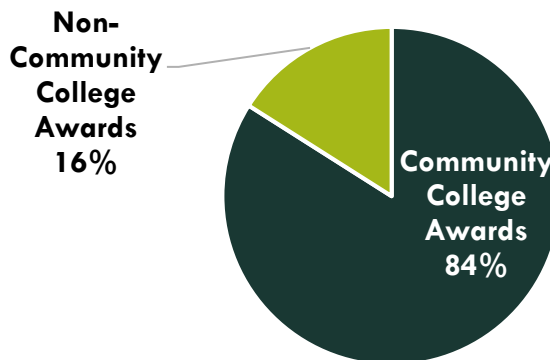
For a comprehensive regional supply analysis, it is important to consider the supply from other institutions in the region that provide training programs for the legal occupations of interest. Exhibit 7 shows the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred by these institutions in relevant programs. Due to different data collection periods, the most recent three-year period of available data is from 2017 to 2020. Between 2017 and 2020, non-community college institutions in the region conferred an average of 100 sub-baccalaureate awards and 7 bachelor's degrees (combined). Sub-baccalaureate awards include associate degrees, postsecondary awards, and other academic awards that typically take fewer than four years to complete.

Exhibit 7: Regional non-community college awards, 2017-2020

CIP	Program	Institution	2017-18 Awards	2018-19 Awards	2019-20 Awards	3-Year Average
22.0302	Legal Assistant/ Paralegal	Abraham Lincoln University	2	5	6	4
		Brandman University	1	8	14	8
		Downey Adult School	-	6	12	6
		Fremont College	26	21	20	22
		Platt College-LA	8	-	-	3
		South Coast College	14	4	10	9
		University of La Verne	-	-	1	0
22.0303	Court Reporting and Captioning/ Court Reporter	Downey Adult School	4	6	5	5
		South Coast College	18	11	21	17
		Tri-Community Adult Education	26	31	40	32
		Supply Total/Average	99	92	129	107

Exhibit 8 shows the proportion of community college awards conferred in LA/OC compared to the number of non-community college awards for the programs in this report. The majority of awards conferred in these programs are awarded by community colleges in the LA/OC region.

Exhibit 8: Community College Awards Compared to Non-Community College Awards in LA/OC Region, 3-Year Average



Appendix A: Occupational demand and wage data by county

Exhibit 9. Los Angeles County

Occupation (SOC)	2021 Jobs	2026 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)
Paralegals and Legal Assistants (23-2011)	12,750	14,675	1,925	15%	1,859	\$23.20	\$30.64	\$39.41
Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers (23-2093)	1,597	1,576	(21)	(1%)	167	\$21.45	\$29.83	\$38.39
Court Reporters and Simultaneous Captioners (27-3092)	1,222	1,015	(207)	(17%)	124	\$21.78	\$33.64	\$50.55
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants (43-6012)	7,810	7,685	(124)	(2%)	968	\$23.61	\$30.78	\$38.85
Total	23,378	24,951	1,573	7%	3,118	-	-	-

Exhibit 10. Orange County

Occupation (SOC)	2021 Jobs	2026 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)
Paralegals and Legal Assistants (23-2011)	4,030	4,606	576	14%	577	\$20.32	\$26.79	\$34.50
Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers (23-2093)	602	623	21	3%	63	\$20.80	\$27.84	\$35.48
Court Reporters and Simultaneous Captioners (27-3092)	250	310	60	24%	42	\$23.07	\$32.26	\$48.27
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants (43-6012)	2,408	2,327	(81)	(3%)	295	\$20.53	\$26.76	\$33.79
Total	7,290	7,866	577	8%	977	-	-	-

Exhibit 11. Los Angeles and Orange Counties

Occupation (SOC)	2021 Jobs	2026 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	% Age 55 and older*	Typical Entry-Level Education
Paralegals and Legal Assistants (23-2011)	16,780	19,281	2,501	15%	2,436	23%	Associate degree
Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers (23-2093)	2,199	2,199	(0)	(0%)	230	30%	High school diploma or equivalent
Court Reporters and Simultaneous Captioners (27-3092)	1,472	1,325	(147)	(10%)	166	49%	Postsecondary non-degree award
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants (43-6012)	10,217	10,012	(205)	(2%)	1,263	39%	High school diploma or equivalent
Total	30,668	32,817	2,149	7%	4,094	-	-

*The average percentage of workers age 55 and older across all occupations in the greater LA/OC region is 27%. Title examiners, abstractors, and searchers; court reporters and simultaneous captioners; and legal secretaries and administrative assistants have a larger share of older workers, which typically indicates greater replacements needs to offset the amount of impending retirements.

Appendix B: Sources

- O*NET Online
- 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)

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