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# Labor Market Analysis

## Dental Assistants



Prepared by Central Valley/Mother Lode Center of Excellence



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# Summary

The Central Valley/Mother Lode Center of Excellence developed this report for College of the Sequoias to determine whether there is demand in the local labor market that is not being met by the supply from postsecondary programs. This report summarizes labor market demand, wages, skills, and postsecondary supply for:

- Dental Assistants (SOC 31-9091)

## Key Findings

- **Occupational Demand** — *Dental Assistants* have a labor market demand of 527 annual job openings in the South Central Valley/Southern Mother Lode (SCV/SML) subregion.
- **Wages** — *Dental Assistants* have an average entry-level hourly wage of \$17.57/hour, which is above the living wage in the SCV/SML subregion.<sup>1</sup>
- **Employers** — Employers in the SCV/SML subregion include Family Healthcare Network, United Health Centers of the San Joaquin Valley, and Western Dental Orthodontics.
- **Skills** — The most common baseline skill is communication; the most common specialized skill is sterilization; and the most common software skill is Dentrrix.
- **Education** — A postsecondary nondegree award or equivalent is typically required for *Dental Assistants*.
- **Supply and Demand Analysis** — Based on 527 annual openings (i.e., demand) and an average of 294 postsecondary degrees awarded (i.e., supply), an analysis of supply and demand suggests there is an undersupply of 233 workers in the SCV/SML subregion. In the CVML region, 460 awards were conferred suggesting an undersupply of 429 workers (based on 889 annual openings in the CVML region).

## Recommendation

Based on a comparison of supply and demand, there is an undersupply of trained workers in the SCV/SML subregion and the CVML region. The Center of Excellence recommends that College of the Sequoias work with the regional directors, the college's advisory board, and local industry in the development of programs to address the shortage of *Dental Assistants*.

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<sup>1</sup> 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/>.

# Introduction

The Central Valley/Mother Lode Center of Excellence developed this report to provide College of the Sequoias with labor market information for *Dental Assistants*. The geographical focus for this report is the South Central Valley/Southern Mother Lode (SCV/SML) subregion, but regional supply and demand data has been included for broader applicability and use. Analysis of the program and occupational data related to *Dental Assistants* is included in the report. The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) System code and occupational title used in this report are from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and O\*NET OnLine.

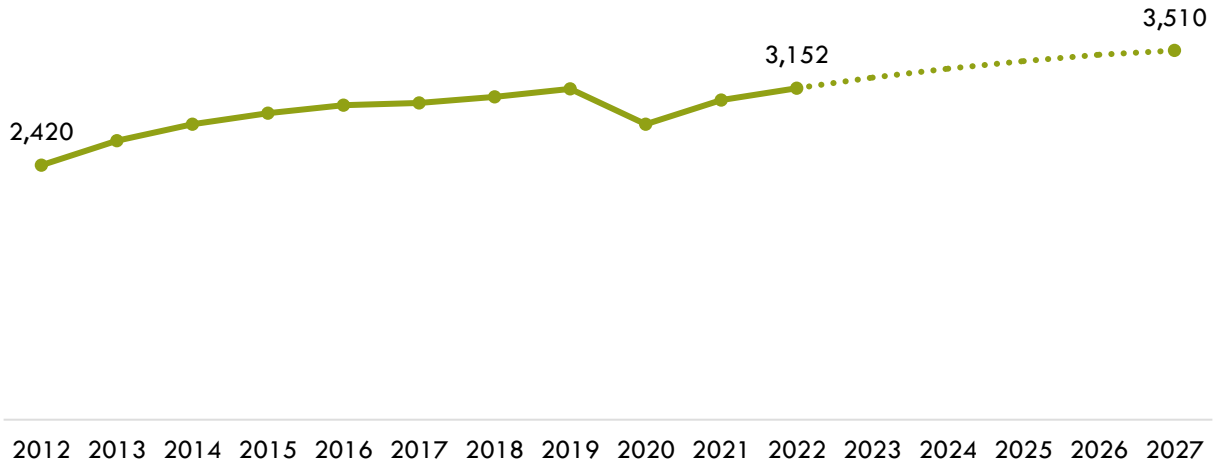
## Dental Assistants (SOC 31-9091)

- **Job Description:** 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.
- **Knowledge:** Customer and Personal Service, Medicine and Dentistry, English Language, Administration and Management, Administrative
- **Skills:** Active Listening, Speaking, Reading Comprehension, Active Learning, Instructing

# Employment

Exhibit 1a shows employment trends for *Dental Assistants* in the SCV/SML subregion. Between 2022 to 2027, the number of jobs for *Dental Assistant* is projected to increase by 358 (growth of 11%).

**Exhibit 1a. Historical employment and projected occupational demand for *Dental Assistants* in the SCV/SML subregion, 2012-2027**



In 2022, there were 3,152 *Dental Assistants* employed in the SCV/SML subregion (Exhibit 1b).

**Exhibit 1b. Current employment and projected occupational demand for *Dental Assistants* in the SCV/SML subregion, 2022-2027**

Occupation	2022 Jobs	2027 Jobs	5-Year Change	5-Year % Change	Annual Openings
Dental Assistants	3,152	3,510	358	11%	527
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,152</b>	<b>3,510</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>527</b>

# Wages

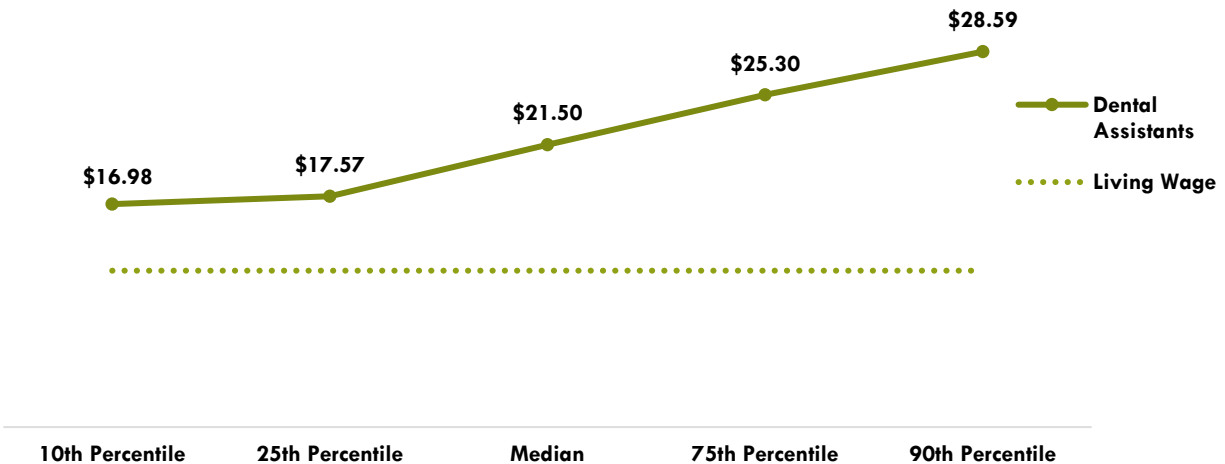
Dental Assistants have an average entry-level hourly wage of \$17.57/hour, which is above the living wage in the SCV/SML subregion.<sup>2</sup> Exhibit 2a shows the hourly wages for Dental Assistants.<sup>3</sup>

**Exhibit 2a. Hourly wages for Dental Assistants in the SCV/SML subregion**

Occupation	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile Hourly Earnings	Median Hourly Earnings	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile Hourly Earnings
Dental Assistants	\$17.57	\$21.50	\$25.30

Exhibit 2b shows the average hourly wages for Dental Assistants; all five average hourly wages are above the living wage for these workers in the SCV/SML subregion.

**Exhibit 2b. Average hourly wages for Dental Assistants in the SCV/SML subregion**



<sup>2</sup> 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/>.

<sup>3</sup> Note: 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> percentiles are considered entry-level wages while 75<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> are considered experienced wages, which may be obtained through long-term employment or extra training, etc.

# Job Postings

There were 868 unique job postings for *Dental Assistants* in the SCV/SML subregion from January to December 2023.<sup>4</sup>

## Top Employers

The employers with the most job postings are listed in Exhibit 3. The top employers in online job postings were Family Healthcare Network, United Health Centers of the San Joaquin Valley, and Western Dental Orthodontics.

### Exhibit 3. Top employers of *Dental Assistants*

Employer
Family Healthcare Network
United Health Centers of the San Joaquin Valley
Western Dental Orthodontics
Smileworld Dental
Pacific Dental Services
Choice Healthcare Services
Sonrava Health
Gentle Dental
Clinic Sierra Vista
Family Health Network

## Top Job Titles

Exhibit 4 shows the top job titles for *Dental Assistants* in the SCV/SML subregion.

### Exhibit 4. Top job titles for *Dental Assistants*

Job Title
Registered Dental Assistants
Dental Assistants
Orthodontic Assistants
Dental Assistants/Receptionist
Dental Assistants/Registered Dental Assistants
Oral Surgery Assistants
Orthodontic Dental Assistants
Dental Assistant Instructors
Expanded Function Dental Assistants
Dental Assistants/Front Desk

<sup>4</sup> Other than occupational 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 868 unique job postings, 427 listed a preferred or minimum educational requirement for the position being filled. Among those, 83% requested a high school diploma or GED and 12% requested an associate degree (Exhibit 5).

**Exhibit 5. Education levels requested in job postings for *Dental Assistants***

Education Level	Job Postings
High school diploma or GED	353
Associate degree	51
Bachelor's degree	1
Master's degree or higher	22

## Baseline, Specialized, and Software Skills

Exhibit 6 shows the top baseline, specialized, and software skills in job postings. The most common baseline skill is communication. The most common specialized skill is sterilization. The most common software skill is Dentrrix.

**Exhibit 6. In-demand baseline, specialized, and software skills for *Dental Assistants***

Baseline Skills	Specialized Skills	Software Skills
Communication	Sterilization	Dentrrix
Detail Oriented	Oral Health	Microsoft Office
Customer Service	Dental Procedures	Lookup Tables
Computer Literacy	Dentistry	Clinic Management Systems
Multilingualism	Patient Flow	IBM WebSphere MQ

# Education, Work Experience, & Training

A postsecondary nondegree award is typically required for *Dental Assistants* (Exhibit 7).

**Exhibit 7. Education, work experience, training, and Current Population Survey results for *Dental Assistants*.<sup>5</sup>**

Occupation	Typical Entry-level Education	Work Experience Required	Typical On-The-Job Training	CPS
Dental Assistants	Postsecondary nondegree award	None	None	57%

<sup>5</sup> "Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey," Bureau of Labor Statistics, <https://www.bls.gov/cps/>.



# Supply

An analysis of program data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) for the last three program years shows that, on average, 294 awards were conferred in the SCV/SML subregion (Exhibits 8 and 9).

## Exhibit 8. TOP and CIP codes relevant to *Dental Assistant* programs

TOP Titles	CIP Titles
1240.10 - Dental Assistant	51.0601 – Dental Assisting/Assistant

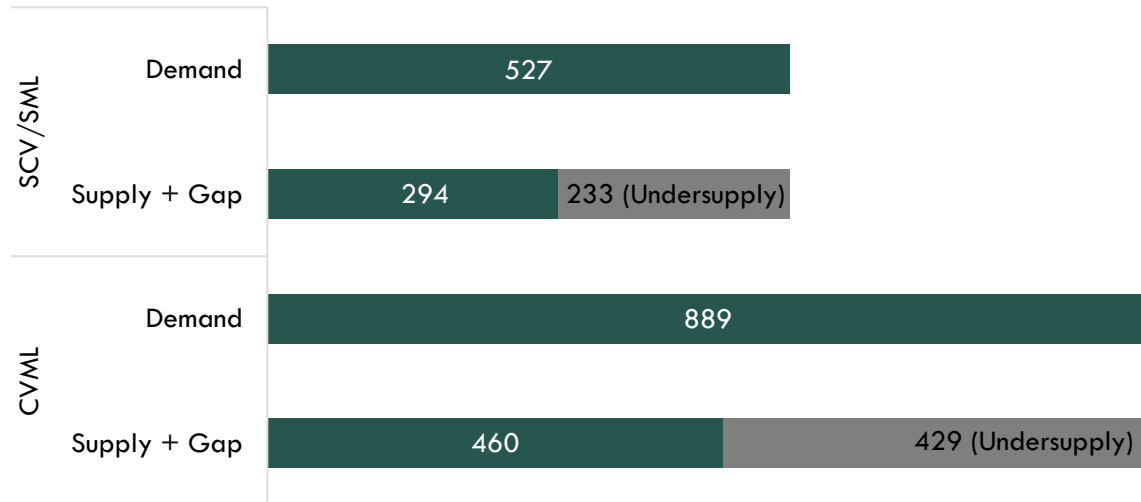
## Exhibit 9. Postsecondary supply data related to *Dental Assistants*

TOP / CIP Code- Title	Institution	Certificate 30<60 semester units	Associate degree	Certificate (1<2 years)	Certificate less than 1 year	Total
1240.10 – Dental Assistants	Reedley College	18	9			27*
	Carrington College - Stockton			42		42
	Milan Institute-Merced				25	25
	Milan Institute-Visalia				22	22*
51.0601 - Dental Assisting/Assistant	San Joaquin Valley College-Bakersfield			30		30*
	San Joaquin Valley College-Fresno			39		39*
	San Joaquin Valley College-Visalia			48		48*
	UEI College-Bakersfield			77		77*
	UEI College-Fresno			73		73*
	United Education Institute-UEI College Stockton			77		77
<b>SCV/SML TOTAL</b>		<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>294</b>
<b>CVML TOTAL</b>		<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>460</b>

\*SCV/SML awards

There is an undersupply of 233 workers in the SCV/SML subregion and an undersupply of 429 workers in the CVML region (Exhibit 10).

**Exhibit 10. Workforce demand (annual job openings), postsecondary awards (supply), and additional students needed to fill gap in the SCV/SML subregion and CVML region**



## Recommendation

This report suggests there is a shortage of 233 workers in the SCV/SML subregion and a shortage of 429 workers in the CVML region for *Dental Assistants*. Based on these findings, it is recommended that College of the Sequoias work with the regional directors, the college’s advisory board, and local industry in the development of programs to address the shortage of *Dental Assistants* in the region.

# Appendix: 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: <a href="http://economicmodeling.com">economicmodeling.com</a> .
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: <a href="https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/educational-attainment.htm">https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/educational-attainment.htm</a> .
LaunchBoard	Chancellor’s LaunchBoard. <a href="https://www.calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx">https://www.calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx</a>
Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Estimates	California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division: <a href="http://labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov">labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov</a> .
Job Posting and Skills Data	Burning Glass: <a href="http://burning-glass.com/">burning-glass.com/</a> .
Additional Education Requirements/ Employer Preferences	The O*NET Job Zone database includes over 900 as well as information on skills, abilities, knowledge, work activities and interests associated with specific occupations: <a href="http://onetonline.org">onetonline.org</a> .

## 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.

**LaunchBoard (Attained the Living Wage):** Among SWP students who exited college and did not transfer to any postsecondary institution, the proportion who attained the district county living wage for a single adult measured immediately following academic year of exit.

**LaunchBoard (Median Annual Earnings):** Among SWP students who exited the community college system and who did not transfer to any postsecondary institution, median earnings following the academic year of exit.

**LaunchBoard (Median Change in Earnings):** Among SWP students who exited and who did not transfer to any postsecondary institution, median change in earnings between the second quarter prior to the beginning of the academic year of entry and the second quarter after the end of the academic year of exit from the last college attended.

**LaunchBoard (Job Closely Related to Field of Study):** Among SWP students who responded to the CTE Outcomes Survey and did not transfer to any postsecondary institution, the proportion who reported that they are working in a job very closely or closely related to their field of study.

**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.