

Labor Market Analysis: 1402.00/Paralegal

Legal Support Assistant - Certificate requiring 6 to <18 semester units

Los Angeles Center of Excellence, February 2024

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 three 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
- **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.³

Middle-skill occupations typically require some postsecondary education, but less than a bachelor's degree.⁴ This report is intended to help determine whether there is demand in the local

¹ [Paralegals and Legal Assistants \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov/occupations/23-2011)

² [Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov/occupations/23-2093)

³ [Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov/occupations/43-6012)

⁴ 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.

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 for these middle-skill legal occupations in the region. Furthermore, entry-level wages exceed the self-sufficiency standard wage in both Los Angeles and Orange counties, and the majority of annual openings for the occupations in this report typically require an associate degree. **Therefore, due to all the criteria being met, the LA COE endorses this proposed program.** Detailed reasons include:

Demand:

- **Supply Gap Criteria** – Over the next five years, **4,074 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 **658 awards** conferred by educational institutions in the region.
- **Living Wage Criteria** – Within Los Angeles County, all three occupations have entry-level wages **above** the self-sufficiency standard hourly wage (\$18.10/hour).⁵
- **Educational Criteria** – Within the greater LA/OC region, **53% of the annual job openings** for these middle-skill legal occupations **typically require an associate degree.**
 - Furthermore, the national-level educational attainment data indicates that **between 39% and 52% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree.**

Supply:

- There are **16 community colleges** in the greater LA/OC region that issue awards related to paralegal and/or legal occupations, conferring an average of **609 awards annually** between 2019 and 2022.
- Between 2019 and 2021, there was an average of **49 awards conferred annually** in related training programs by non-community college institutions throughout the greater LA/OC region.

Occupational Demand

Exhibit 1 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for these middle-skill legal occupations. In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, the number of jobs related to these occupations is projected to increase by 3% through 2027. There will be more than 4,000 job openings per year through 2027 due to job growth and replacements. The majority of jobs in 2022 for these middle-skill legal occupations (76%) were located in Los Angeles County.

⁵ Self-Sufficiency Standard wage data was pulled from The Self-Sufficiency Standard Tool for California. For more information, visit: <http://selfsufficiencystandard.org/california>.

Exhibit 1: Occupational demand in Los Angeles and Orange Counties⁶

Geography	2022 Jobs	2027 Jobs	2022-2027 Change	2022-2027 % Change	Annual Openings
Los Angeles	26,514	27,519	1,005	4%	3,133
Orange	8,358	8,417	59	1%	941
Total	34,872	35,936	1,064	3%	4,074

Wages

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wages for these middle-skill legal occupations 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 three occupations in this report 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 \$23.85 and \$29.14. Experienced workers can expect to earn wages between \$36.37 and \$46.15.

Exhibit 2: 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)	\$29.14	\$35.05	\$46.15	\$72,900
Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers (23-2093)	\$26.50	\$31.38	\$38.75	\$65,300
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants (43-6012)	\$23.85	\$23.85	\$36.37	\$49,600

*Rounded to the nearest \$100

Orange County

All three occupations have entry-level wages nearly equal to or above the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$20.63 in Orange County). Typical entry-level hourly wages are in a range between \$20.62 and \$25.27. Experienced workers can expect to earn wages between \$31.46 and \$40.09, which are higher than the self-sufficiency standard.

⁶ Five-year change represents new job additions to the workforce. Annual openings include new jobs and replacement jobs that result from retirements and separations.

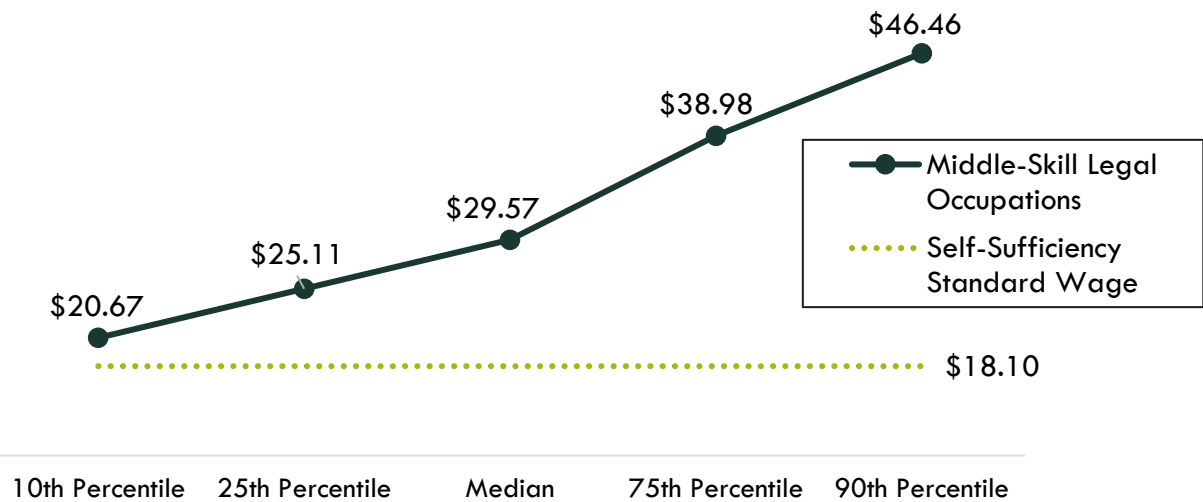
Exhibit 3: Earnings for Occupations in Orange County

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)	\$25.27	\$30.41	\$40.09	\$63,200
Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers (23-2093)	\$24.52	\$28.86	\$35.72	\$60,000
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants (43-6012)	\$20.62	\$20.62	\$31.46	\$42,900

*Rounded to the nearest \$100

On average, the entry-level earnings for the occupations in this report are \$25.11; this is above the living wage for one single adult in Los Angeles County (\$18.10). Exhibit 4 shows the average wage for the occupations in this report, from entry-level to experienced workers.

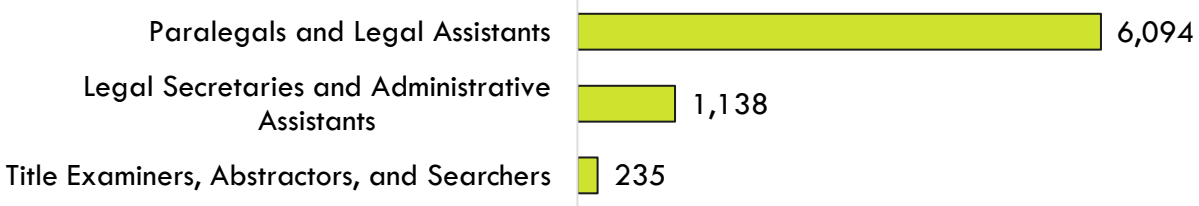
Exhibit 4: Average Hourly Earnings for Middle-Skill Legal Occupations in LA/OC



Job Postings

There were 7,467 online job postings related to middle-skill legal occupations listed in the past 12 months. Exhibit 5 displays the number of job postings by occupation. The majority of job postings (82%) were for *paralegals and legal assistants*, followed by *legal secretaries and administrative assistants* (15%) and *title examiners, abstractors, and searchers* (3%). Most job postings were for paralegals, legal assistants, litigation paralegals, legal secretaries, and paralegals/legal assistants. The top skills were lawsuits, legal discovery, legal pleadings, legal depositions, and legal research. The region's top three employers, by number of job postings, were all staffing companies Robert Half, GPAC, and AppleOne. The top law firms and legal service employers were Wilshire Law Firm, Wisner Baum, Disney, and Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles.

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*
- **High school diploma or equivalent:** *Title examiners, abstractors, and searchers; Legal secretaries and administrative assistants*

In the greater LA/OC region, the majority of annual job openings (53%) typically require an associate degree. Furthermore, the national-level educational attainment data indicates between 39% and 52% 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, 27% (853) requested high school or vocational training, 17% (546) requested an associate degree, and 56% (1,769) 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 the related TOP codes: Legal Office Technology (0514.10) and Paralegal (1402.00). The colleges with the most completions in the region are Santa Ana, Pasadena, and Cerritos.

Exhibit 6: Regional community college awards (certificates and degrees), 2019-2022

TOP	Program	College	2019-20 Awards	2020-21 Awards	2021-22 Awards	3-Year Average
0514.10	Legal Office Technology	Cerritos	-	2	-	1
		East LA	-	1	-	0
		LA City	-	1	-	0
		LA Pierce	-	-	3	1
		Santa Monica	12	3	7	7
		West LA	5	7	4	5
		LA Subtotal	17	14	14	15
		Cypress	-	-	1	0
		Santa Ana	1	3	1	2
		OC Subtotal	1	3	2	2

TOP	Program	College	2019-20 Awards	2020-21 Awards	2021-22 Awards	3-Year Average
Supply Subtotal/Average			18	17	16	17
1402.00	Paralegal	Cerritos	60	56	66	61
		East LA	41	31	41	38
		El Camino	31	42	39	37
		LA City	34	43	38	38
		LA Mission	24	36	36	32
		LA Trade-Tech	7	5	6	6
		Mt San Antonio	42	63	41	49
		Pasadena	49	68	94	70
		West LA	24	38	47	36
		LA Subtotal	312	382	408	367
		Coastline	60	48	51	53
		Fullerton	49	76	41	55
		Irvine	32	26	60	39
		Santa Ana	72	86	73	77
		OC Subtotal	213	236	225	225
Supply Subtotal/Average			525	618	633	592
Supply Total/Average			543	635	649	609

Non-Community College Supply

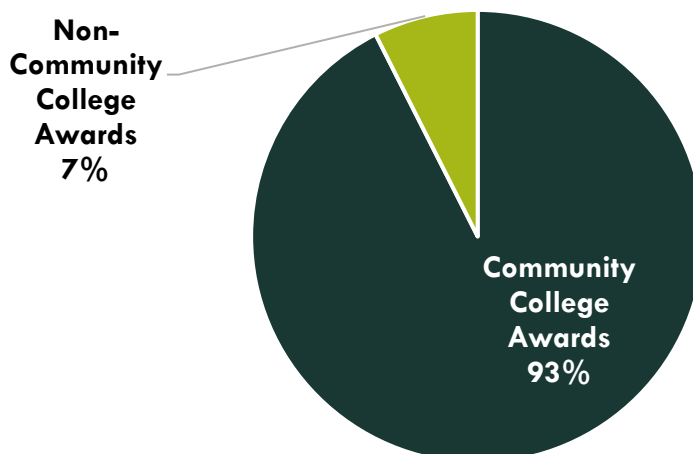
For a comprehensive regional supply analysis, it is important to consider the supply from other institutions in the region that provide training programs for middle-skill legal occupations. Exhibit 7 shows the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred by these institutions in relevant programs. Due to different data collection periods, the most recent three-year period of available data is from 2019 to 2021. Between 2019 and 2021, non-community college institutions in the region conferred an average of 49 sub-baccalaureate awards. Sub-baccalaureate awards include associate degrees, postsecondary awards, and other academic awards.

Exhibit 7: Regional non-community college awards, 2019-2021

CIP	Program	Institution	2019-20 Awards	2020-21 Awards	2-Year Average
22.0302	Legal Assistant/Paralegal	Abraham Lincoln Univ.	6	5	6
		Downey Adult School	12	19	16
		Fremont College	20	18	19
		South Coast College	10	2	6
		University of Massachusetts Global	3	3	3
Supply Total/Average			51	47	49

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 vast 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)	2022 Jobs	2027 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)	13,232	14,591	1,358	10%	1,666	\$29.14	\$35.05	\$46.15
Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers (23-2093)	1,562	1,606	44	3%	161	\$26.50	\$31.38	\$38.75
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants (43-6012)	11,720	11,322	(398)	(3%)	1,305	\$23.85	\$23.85	\$36.37
Total	26,514	27,519	1,005	4%	3,133	-	-	-

Exhibit 10. Orange County

Occupation (SOC)	2022 Jobs	2027 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)	4,145	4,444	298	7%	490	\$25.27	\$30.41	\$40.09
Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers (23-2093)	625	602	(24)	(4%)	58	\$24.52	\$28.86	\$35.72
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants (43-6012)	3,587	3,371	(216)	(6%)	394	\$20.62	\$20.62	\$31.46
Total	8,358	8,417	59	1%	941	-	-	-

Exhibit 11. Los Angeles and Orange Counties

Occupation (SOC)	2022 Jobs	2027 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	% Age 55 and older*	Typical Entry-Level Education
Paralegals and Legal Assistants (23-2011)	17,378	19,034	1,657	10%	2,156	21%	Associate degree
Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers (23-2093)	2,187	2,208	21	1%	219	26%	HS diploma or equivalent
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants (43-6012)	15,307	14,694	(614)	(4%)	1,699	37%	HS diploma or equivalent
Total	34,872	35,936	1,064	3%	4,074	-	-

*The average percentage of workers age 55 and older across all occupations in the greater LA/OC region is 27%. *Legal secretaries and administrative assistants* have a larger share of older workers, which typically indicates greater replacements needed 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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