

Labor Market Analysis: 1218.00/Occupational Therapy Technology

Occupational Therapist Technician - Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree

Los Angeles Center of Excellence, November 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 two middle-skill occupations:

- **Occupational Therapy Assistants (31-2011)** Assist occupational therapists in providing occupational therapy treatments and procedures. May, in accordance with state laws, assist in development of treatment plans, carry out routine functions, direct activity programs, and document the progress of treatments. Generally requires formal training.¹
- **Occupational Therapy Aides (31-2012)** Under close supervision of an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant, perform only delegated, selected, or routine tasks in specific situations. These duties include preparing patient and treatment room.²

Middle-skill occupations typically require some postsecondary education, but less than a bachelor's degree.³ 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 for middle-skill occupational therapy 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

¹ [Occupational Therapy Assistants and Aides \(bls.gov\)](#)

² [Occupational Therapy Assistants and Aides \(bls.gov\)](#)

³ 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.

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, **338 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 **263 awards** conferred by educational institutions in the region.
- **Living Wage Criteria** – Within Los Angeles County, both occupations have entry-level wages **above** the self-sufficiency standard hourly wage (\$18.10/hour).⁴
- **Educational Criteria** – Within the greater LA/OC region, **94% of the annual job openings** for middle-skill occupations related to occupational therapy typically require an **associate degree**.
 - Furthermore, the national-level educational attainment data indicates **65% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree**.

Supply:

- There are **2 community colleges** in the greater LA/OC region that issue awards related to occupational therapy, conferring an average of **73 awards annually** between 2019 and 2022.
- Between 2019 and 2021, there was an average of **190 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 occupational therapy occupations. In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, the number of jobs related to these occupations is projected to increase by 23% through 2027. There will be more than 300 job openings per year through 2027 due to job growth and replacements.

Exhibit 1: Occupational demand in Los Angeles and Orange Counties⁵

Geography	2022 Jobs	2027 Jobs	2022-2027 Change	2022-2027 % Change	Annual Openings
Los Angeles	1,232	1,519	287	23%	244
Orange	490	596	106	22%	95
Total	1,721	2,115	393	23%	338

Wages

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wages for these middle-skill occupational therapy 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

⁴ Self-Sufficiency Standard wage data was pulled from The Self-Sufficiency Standard Tool for California. For more information, visit: <http://selfsufficiencystandard.org/california>.

⁵ Five-year change represents new job additions to the workforce. Annual openings include new jobs and replacement jobs that result from retirements and separations.

complete analysis of the greater LA/OC region. Detailed wage information, by county, is included in Appendix A.

Los Angeles County

Both occupations have entry-level wages above the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$18.10 in Los Angeles County). Typical entry-level hourly wages range between \$25.36 and \$32.87. Experienced workers can expect to earn wages between \$35.52 and \$39.43.

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*
Occupational Therapy Assistants (31-2011)	\$32.87	\$37.76	\$39.43	\$78,500
Occupational Therapy Aides (31-2012)	\$25.36	\$30.51	\$35.52	\$63,500

*Rounded to the nearest \$100

Orange County

Both occupations have entry-level wages above the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$20.63 in Orange County). Typical entry-level hourly wages range between \$25.47 and \$32.94. Experienced workers can expect to earn wages between \$35.59 and \$39.51.

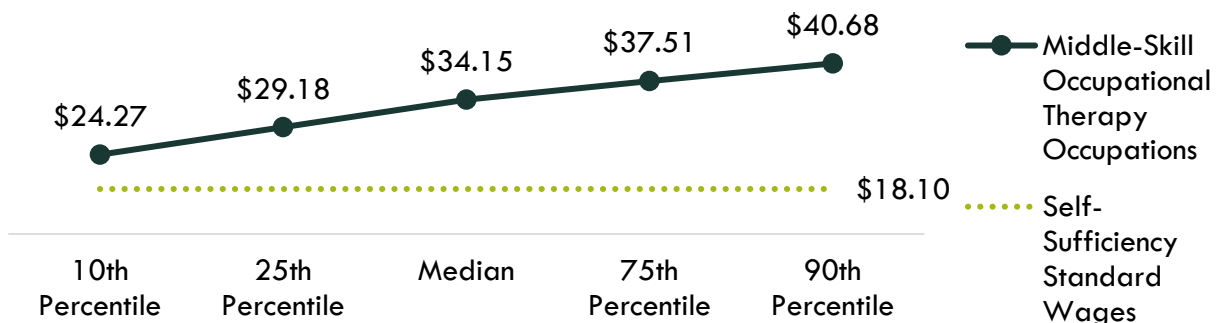
Exhibit 3: Earnings for Occupations in Orange County

Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)	Median Annual Earnings*
Occupational Therapy Assistants (31-2011)	\$32.94	\$37.84	\$39.51	\$78,700
Occupational Therapy Aides (31-2012)	\$25.47	\$30.60	\$35.59	\$63,600

*Rounded to the nearest \$100

On average, the entry-level earnings for the occupations in this report are \$29.18; 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 Occupational Therapy Occupations in LA/OC



Job Postings

There were 1,014 online job postings related to middle-skill occupational therapy occupations listed in the past 12 months. Exhibit 5 displays the number of job postings by occupation. The majority of job postings (68%) were for *occupational therapy assistants*, followed by *occupational therapy aides* (32%). The highest number of job postings were for certified occupational therapy assistants, occupational therapy assistants, rehabilitation aides, rehabilitation technicians, and program therapists. The top skills were occupational therapy, rehabilitation, treatment planning, occupational safety and health, and ancillary medical services. The top three employers, by number of job postings, in the region were Healthcare Employment Network, Select Physical Therapy, and Discover Behavioral Health.

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:** *Occupational therapy assistants*
- **High school diploma or equivalent:** *Occupational therapy aides*

In the greater LA/OC region, the majority of annual job openings (94%) typically require an associate degree. Furthermore, the national-level educational attainment data indicates 65% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree. Of the 50% of middle-skill occupational therapy job postings listing a minimum education requirement in the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, 48% (247) requested high school or vocational training, 26% (131) requested an associate degree, and 26% (132) 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 code: Occupational Therapy Technology (1218.00). The only two colleges with the program completions in the region are Santa Ana and Santa Monica.

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
1218.00	Occupational Therapy Technology	Santa Monica	13	14	14	14
		LA Subtotal	13	14	14	14
		Santa Ana	47	56	76	60
		OC Subtotal	47	56	76	60
Supply Total/Average			60	70	90	73

Non-Community College Supply

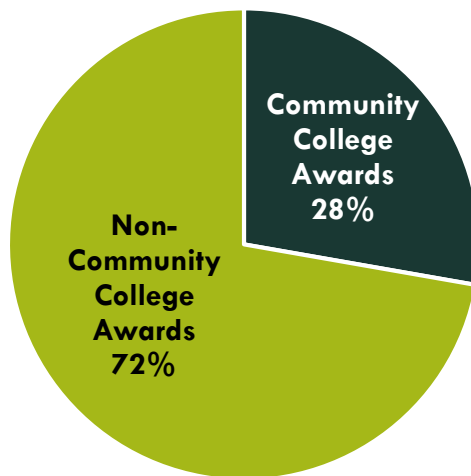
For a comprehensive regional supply analysis, it is important to consider the supply from other institutions in the region that provide training programs for middle-skill occupational therapy occupations. Exhibit 6 shows the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred by these institutions 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 190 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
51.0803	Occupational Therapist Assistant	American Career College-Anaheim	40	28	34
		CBD College	54	42	48
		Stanbridge University	117	98	108
Supply Total/Average			211	168	190

Exhibit 7 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. One out of four awards conferred in these programs are awarded by community colleges in the LA/OC region.

Exhibit 7: 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 8. 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)
Occupational Therapy Assistants (31-2011)	1,155	1,428	273	24%	229	\$32.87	\$37.76	\$39.43
Occupational Therapy Aides (31-2012)	77	91	13	17%	14	\$25.36	\$30.51	\$35.52
Total	1,232	1,519	287	23%	244	-	-	-

Exhibit 9. 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)
Occupational Therapy Assistants (31-2011)	460	561	101	22%	90	\$32.94	\$37.84	\$39.51
Occupational Therapy Aides (31-2012)	30	35	5	17%	5	\$25.47	\$30.60	\$35.59
Total	490	596	106	22%	95	-	-	-

Exhibit 10. 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
Occupational Therapy Assistants (31-2011)	1,614	1,989	375	23%	319	15%	Associate degree
Occupational Therapy Aides (31-2012)	107	125	18	17%	19	12%	HS diploma or equivalent
Total	1,721	2,115	393	23%	338	-	-

*The average percentage of workers age 55 and older across all occupations in the greater LA/OC region is 27%. These occupations have a smaller share of older workers, which typically indicates fewer 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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