

Labor Market Analysis: 1240.10 – Dental Assistant

Dental Assisting – Certificate requiring 30 to <60 semester units

Los Angeles Center of Excellence, May 2024

Program Endorsement:	Endorsed: All Criteria Met <input type="checkbox"/>	Endorsed: Some Criteria Met <input checked="" 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, 25 th)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Education:	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Emerging Occupation(s)			
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

SUMMARY

This report analyzes whether local labor market demand is being met by community college programs aligned with the identified middle-skill occupation¹ or whether a shortage of workers exists. Labor market demand is measured by annual job openings while education supply is measured by the number of awards (degrees and certificates) conferred on average each year.

Based on the available data, there appears to be a supply gap for the one identified middle-skill occupation in the region. While entry-level wages are lower than the self-sufficiency standard wage in both Los Angeles and Orange counties, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists a postsecondary non-degree award as the typical entry-level education.

Recommendation: Due to two of three program endorsement criteria being met, the Los Angeles Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research (LA COE) endorses this proposed program.

Key Findings

Supply Gap

- 3,289 annual job openings are projected in the region through 2027. This number is substantially greater than the three-year average of 1,056 awards conferred by educational institutions in the region.

¹ Middle-skill occupations typically require some postsecondary education, but less than a bachelor's degree. 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.

Living Wage

\$17.45 is the typical entry-level hourly wages for dental assistants, which is lower than Los Angeles County's self-sufficiency standard hourly (\$18.10/hour).²

Educational Attainment

- A postsecondary non-degree award is the typical entry-level education for dental assistants, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).
- 57% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree, according to national educational attainment data.

Community college supply

- 6 community colleges issued awards related to dental assisting in the greater LA/OC region.
- 266 awards (degrees and certificates) were conferred on average each year between 2020 and 2023.

Other postsecondary supply

- 22 educational institutions in the LA/OC region offer programs related to dental assisting.
- 790 awards were conferred on average each year by other postsecondary institutions throughout the greater LA/OC region.

TARGET OCCUPATIONS

LA COE prepared this report to provide regional labor market and postsecondary supply data related to one middle-skill occupation.

- **Dental Assistants (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.³

OCCUPATIONAL DEMAND

Exhibit 1 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for dental assistants. In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, the number of jobs related to this occupation is projected to increase by 8% through 2027. There will be nearly 3,300 job openings per year through 2027 due to job growth and replacements. The majority of jobs in 2022 for dental assistants (69%) were located in Los Angeles County.

² Self-Sufficiency Standard wage data was pulled from The Self-Sufficiency Standard Tool for California. For more information, visit: <http://selfsufficiencystandard.org/california>.

³ [Dental Assistants \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov/occupations/dental-assistants)

Exhibit 1: Current employment and occupational demand, Los Angeles and Orange counties⁴

Geography	2022 Jobs	2027 Jobs	2022-2027 Change	2022-2027 % Change	Annual Openings
Los Angeles	14,406	15,445	1,040	7%	2,234
Orange	6,545	7,169	624	10%	1,055
Total	20,950	22,614	1,664	8%	3,289

Detailed Occupation Data

Exhibit 2 displays the current employment and projected occupational demand for the target occupation in Los Angeles County. The percentage of workers aged 55+ and automation index is included in order to visualize upcoming replacement demand for this occupation. Dental assistants have a lower-than-average risk of automation, and a smaller share of older workers in the field. There is a smaller percentage of dental assistants working full-time compared to the average across all jobs, signaling that this occupation may lend itself to part-time or gig-based employment.

Exhibit 2: Current employment, projected occupational demand, percentage of workers aged 55+, Los Angeles County⁵

Occupation	2022 Jobs	2027 Jobs	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	% Aged 55 and older*	Automation Index**	% Full Time Workers***
Dental Assistants	14,406	15,445	7%	2,234	13%	97.5	65%

*The average percentage of workers aged 55 and older across all occupations in the greater LA/OC region is 27%. This occupation has a smaller share of older workers, which typically indicates fewer replacements needs to offset the amount of impending retirements.

**The automation index captures an occupation's risk of being affected by automation with a base of 100. An automation index greater than 100 indicates a higher-than average risk of automation; less than 100 indicates a lower-than-average risk.

***In California, 81% of workers are employed full-time.

WAGES

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wages for dental assistants 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 Los Angeles/Orange County region.

Los Angeles County

The typical entry-level hourly wages for dental assistants are \$17.45, which is below the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$18.10 in Los Angeles County). Experienced workers can expect to earn wages of \$21.84, which is higher than the self-sufficiency standard (Exhibit 3).

⁴ Five-year change represents new job additions to the workforce. Annual openings include new jobs and replacement jobs that result from retirements and separations.

⁵ Ibid.

Exhibit 3: Earnings for occupations in Los Angeles County

Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)	Median Annual Earnings*
Dental Assistants	\$17.45	\$21.04	\$21.84	\$43,800

*Rounded to the nearest \$100

Orange County

The typical entry-level hourly wages for dental assistants are \$18.28, which is below the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$20.63 in Orange County). Experienced workers can expect to earn wages of \$22.87, which is higher than the self-sufficiency standard (Exhibit 4).

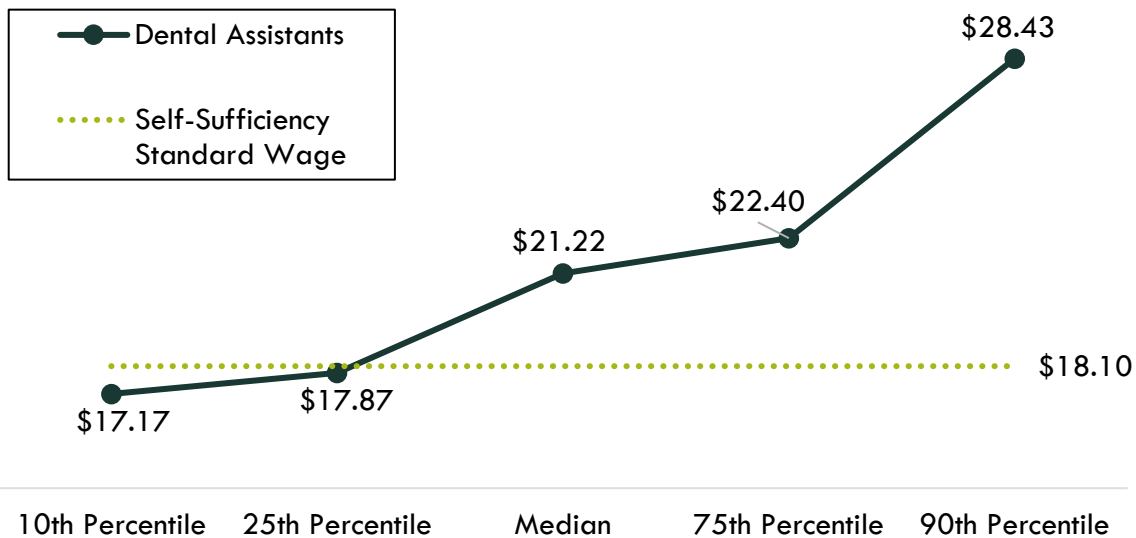
Exhibit 4: Earnings for occupations in Orange County

Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)	Median Annual Earnings*
Dental Assistants	\$18.28	\$22.05	\$22.87	\$45,900

*Rounded to the nearest \$100

Across the greater Los Angeles and Orange County region, the average entry-level hourly earnings for the occupation in this report are \$17.87; this is below the living wage for one single adult in Los Angeles County (\$18.10). Exhibit 5 shows the average hourly wage for the occupations in this report, for entry-level to experienced workers.

Exhibit 5: Average hourly earnings for dental assistants, Los Angeles and Orange counties



JOB POSTINGS

There were 7,551 online job postings for dental assistants listed in the past 12 months in Los Angeles and Orange counties. Job postings were analyzed for the most common job titles, skills, and employers associated with the target occupations in this report (Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 6: Most commonly requested job titles, skills and employers in job postings, Los Angeles and Orange counties

Top Job Titles	Top Skills	Top Employers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dental assistants • Registered dental assistants • Dental treatment coordinators • Orthodontic assistants • Dental assistants/receptionists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sterilization • Dental procedures • Infection control • Oral hygiene • Dental radiography • Dental instruments • Dental surgery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pacific Dental Services • West Coast Dental Services • Sonrava Health • Western Dental Orthodontics • Gentle Dental

In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, 26% of the dental assistant job postings listed a minimum educational requirement. The number and percentage of job postings by educational level appear in exhibit 7.

Exhibit 7: Education levels requested in job postings for dental assistants, Los Angeles and Orange counties

Education Level	Job Postings	% of Job Postings
Bachelor's degree	64	3%
Associate degree	100	5%
High school diploma or vocational training	1,833	92%

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists a postsecondary non-degree award as the typical entry-level education for dental assistants (Exhibit 8). Furthermore, the national-level data indicates 57% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree as their highest level of educational attainment. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists the following typical entry-level education levels for the occupations in this report:

Exhibit 8: Entry-level education preferred by employers nationally, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Occupation	Education Level
Dental assistants	Postsecondary non-degree award

EDUCATIONAL SUPPLY

Community College Supply

Exhibit 9 shows the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred by community colleges in the related TOP codes: Dental Occupations (1240.00) and Dental Assistant (1240.10). The colleges with the most completions in the region are: West LA, Citrus, and Cerritos.

Exhibit 9: Regional community college awards (certificates and degrees), 2020-2023

TOP Code	Program	College	2020-21 Awards	2021-22 Awards	2022-23 Awards	3-Year Average
1240.00	Dental Occupations	West LA	-	-	165	55
		LA Subtotal	-	-	165	55
		Supply Subtotal/Average	-	-	165	55
1240.10	Dental Assistant	Cerritos	38	26	30	31
		Citrus	50	34	35	40
		Pasadena	21	10	19	17
		West LA	24	62	149	78
		LA Subtotal	133	132	233	166
		Cypress	17	22	18	19
		Orange Coast	24	25	29	26
		OC Subtotal	41	47	47	45
Supply Subtotal/Average			174	179	280	211
Supply Total/Average			174	179	445	266

Other Postsecondary 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 dental assisting. Exhibit 10 shows the number of awards conferred by these institutions in relevant programs. Due to different data collection periods, the most recent data is from 2019 to 2022. Between 2019 and 2022, other postsecondary college institutions in the region conferred an average of 790 sub-baccalaureate awards. All the awards in Exhibit 10 are certificates that typically take fewer than four years to complete.

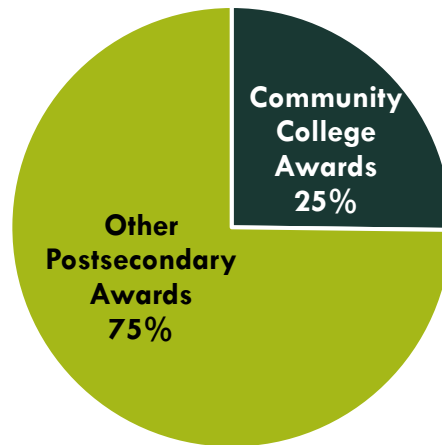
Exhibit 10: Other regional postsecondary awards, 2019-2022

CIP Code	Program	Postsecondary Institution	2019-20 Awards	2020-21 Awards	2021-22 Awards	3-Year Average
51.0601	Dental Assisting/ Assistant	ABC Adult School	-	6	7	4
		American Career College-Anaheim	42	38	49	43
		American Career College-LA	70	84	93	82

CIP Code	Program	Postsecondary Institution	2019-20 Awards	2020-21 Awards	2021-22 Awards	3-Year Average
		CBD College	12	13	8	11
		Concorde Career College-Garden Grove	49	75	79	68
		Concorde Career College-N. Hollywood	33	53	46	44
		Downey Adult School	36	45	25	35
		Hacienda La Puente Adult Education	10	9	11	10
		Healthcare Career College	4	10	8	7
		National Career College	15	26	18	20
		North-West College-Anaheim	7	18	17	14
		North-West College-Glendale	19	14	16	16
		North-West College-Pomona	13	18	14	15
		North-West College-Van Nuys	22	21	20	21
		North-West College-West Covina	31	30	26	29
		Palladium Technical Academy Inc	1	-	-	0
		PCI College	1	3	3	2
		UEI College-Garden Grove	31	43	103	59
		UEI College-Gardena	58	57	86	67
		UEI College-Huntington Park	91	132	148	124
		UEI College-Reseda	63	53	68	61
		UEI College-West Covina	25	57	86	56
Supply Total/Average			633	805	931	790

Exhibit 11 shows the proportion of community college awards conferred in the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region compared to the number of other postsecondary awards for the programs in this report. The majority of awards conferred in these programs are awarded by other postsecondary institutions in the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region.

Exhibit 11: Percentage of community college awards compared to other postsecondary institution awards in the Los Angeles/Orange County region



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DATA 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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