

Labor Market Analysis: 0850.10/Sign Language Interpreting

Sign Interpreting - Certificate requiring 30 to <60 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 one middle-skill occupation:

- **Interpreters and Translators (27-3091)** Interpret oral or sign language, or translate written text from one language into another.¹

Middle-skill occupations typically require some postsecondary education, but less than a bachelor's degree.² Although *interpreters and translators* typically require a bachelor's degree, they are considered middle-skill because approximately one-third of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree. 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 *interpreters and translators* in the region. Furthermore, entry-level wages exceed the self-sufficiency standard wage in Los Angeles County, and one-third of current workers in the field have completed some college or 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, **350 jobs** are projected to be available annually in the region due to retirements and workers leaving the field, which is **more**

¹ [Interpreters and Translators : Occupational Outlook Handbook : U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics \(bls.gov\)](#)

² 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.

than the three-year average of 256 awards conferred by educational institutions in the region.

- However, the *interpreters and translators* (27-3091) SOC code includes all interpreting and translating occupations. Since the SOC code does not solely represent sign language interpreting, **the number of annual job openings is likely overstated.**
- Over the past 12 months, there were **158 online job postings for sign language interpreting jobs.** The highest number of job postings were for sign language interpreters, American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, school sign language interpreters, certified interpreters, and educational sign language interpreters.
- **Living Wage Criteria** – Within Los Angeles County, typical entry-level hourly wages for *interpreters and translators* are **\$22.52**, which is **higher** than the self-sufficiency standard hourly wage (living wage) for one adult in the region (\$18.10 in Los Angeles County).³
- **Educational Criteria** – The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists a **bachelor's degree** as the typical entry-level education for *interpreters and translators*.
 - However, the national-level educational attainment data indicates **33% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree.**

Supply:

- There are **7 community colleges** in the greater LA/OC region that issue awards related to sign language interpreting, conferring an average of **88 awards annually** between 2019 and 2022.
- Between 2019 and 2021, there was an average of **168 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 *interpreters and translators*. In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, the number of jobs related to this occupation is projected to decrease by 1% through 2027. However, there will be approximately 350 job openings per year through 2027 due to retirements and workers leaving the field. It is important to note that the *interpreters and translators* (27-3091) SOC code includes all interpreting and translating jobs and not solely sign language interpreting. Therefore, the data in Exhibit 1 is likely overstated for sign language interpreters. The majority of jobs in 2022 for *interpreters and translators* (76%) were located in Los Angeles County.

³ 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 Counties⁴

Geography	2022 Jobs	2027 Jobs	2022-2027 Change	2022-2027 % Change	Annual Openings
Los Angeles	2,557	2,517	(40)	(2%)	261
Orange	824	827	3	0%	88
Total	3,381	3,344	(37)	(1%)	350

Wages

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wages for *interpreters and translators* 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

The typical entry-level hourly wages for *interpreters and translators* are \$22.52, which is above the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$18.10 in Los Angeles County). Experienced workers can expect to earn wages of \$46.25.

Exhibit 2: Earnings for Occupation in LA County

Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)	Median Annual Earnings*
Interpreters and Translators (27-3091)	\$22.52	\$31.77	\$46.25	\$66,100

*Rounded to the nearest \$100

Orange County

The typical entry-level hourly wages for *interpreters and translators* are \$20.46, which is below the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$20.63 in Orange County). Experienced workers can expect to earn wages of \$42.41, which is higher than the self-sufficiency standard.

Exhibit 3: Earnings for Occupation in Orange County

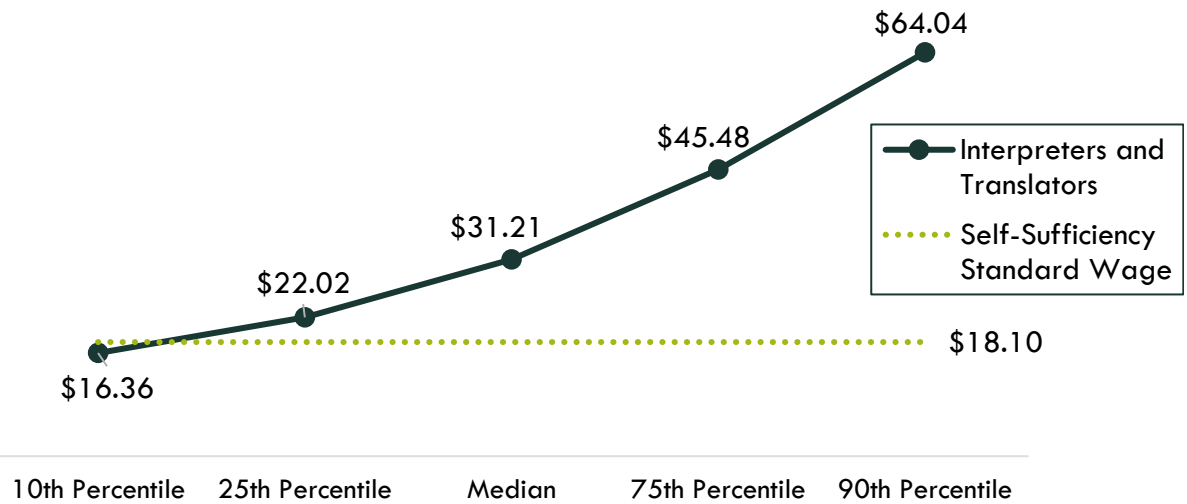
Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)	Median Annual Earnings*
Interpreters and Translators (27-3091)	\$20.46	\$29.39	\$42.41	\$61,100

*Rounded to the nearest \$100

On average, the entry-level earnings for the occupation in this report is \$22.02; 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.

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.

Exhibit 4: Average Hourly Earnings for Interpreters and Translators in LA/OC



Job Postings

There were 158 online job postings related to sign language interpreting listed in the past 12 months. The highest number of job postings were for sign language interpreters, American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, school sign language interpreters, certified interpreters, and educational sign language interpreters. The top skills were American Sign Language (ASL), language interpretation, sign language interpretation, hearing disorders, and vocabulary. The top three employers, by number of job postings, in the region were California State University, Long Beach Community College District, and Sunbelt Staffing.

Educational Attainment

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists a bachelor’s degree as the typical entry-level education for *interpreters and translators*. However, the national-level educational attainment data indicates 33% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree. Of the 59% of sign language interpreter job postings listing a minimum education requirement in the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, 43% (40) requested high school or vocational training, 15% (14) requested an associate degree, and 43% (40) requested a bachelor’s degree.

Educational Supply

Community College Supply

Exhibit 5 shows the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred by community colleges in the related TOP code: Sign Language Interpreting (0850.10). The colleges with the most completions in the region are Mt. San Antonio, Golden West, and LA Pierce.

Exhibit 5: Regional community college awards (certificates and degrees), 2019-2022

TOP	Program	College	2019-20 Awards	2020-21 Awards	2021-22 Awards	3-Year Average
0850.10	Sign Language Interpreting	East LA	-	1	5	2
		El Camino	18	15	10	14
		LA Pierce	23	12	18	18
		Mt San Antonio	49	23	25	32
		Rio Hondo	-	1	1	1
		LA Subtotal	90	52	59	67
		Golden West	23	20	18	20
		Santiago Canyon	-	2	-	1
		OC Subtotal	23	22	18	21
Supply Total/Average			113	74	77	88

Non-Community College Supply

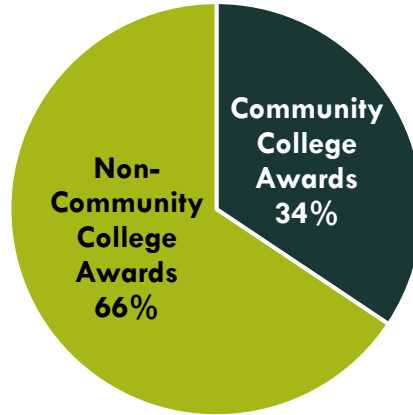
For a comprehensive regional supply analysis, it is important to consider the supply from other institutions in the region that provide training programs for sign language interpreters. Exhibit 6 shows the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred by these institutions in relevant programs. 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 168 bachelor’s degrees. Bachelor’s awards are included in this report since *interpreters and translators* typically require a bachelor’s degree. There were no completions in Sign Language Interpretation and Translation (CIP 16.1603) programs.

Exhibit 6: Regional non-community college awards, 2019-2021

CIP	Program	Institution	2019-20 Awards	2020-21 Awards	2-Year Average
05.0211	Deaf Studies	CSU-Long Beach	27	38	33
		CSU-Northridge	156	115	136
Supply Total/Average			183	153	168

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. Two out of three awards conferred in these programs are awarded by non-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)
Interpreters and Translators (27-3091)	2,557	2,517	(40)	(2%)	261	\$22.52	\$31.77	\$46.25

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)
Interpreters and Translators (27-3091)	824	827	3	0%	88	\$20.46	\$29.39	\$42.41

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
Interpreters and Translators (27-3091)	3,381	3,344	(37)	(1%)	350	28%	Bachelor's degree

*The average percentage of workers aged 55 and older across all occupations in the greater LA/OC region is 27%. This occupations has a slightly 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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