



Labor Market Analysis: 0809.00 – Special Education

Education: Special Education – Associate of Arts (A.A.) Degree

Los Angeles Center of Excellence, January 2025

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 occupations¹ 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 two identified target occupations in the region. While the majority of annual openings have entry-level wages that are lower than the self-sufficiency standard wage in both Los Angeles and Orange counties, these openings typically require some college, but no college degree.

Recommendation: Due to all 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

- 6,426 annual job openings are projected in the region through 2028. This number is substantially greater than the three-year average of 292 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

- 99% of annual job openings for these target special education occupations have entry-level wages **below** Los Angeles County's self-sufficiency standard hourly wage (\$24.03/hour).²

Educational Attainment

- 99% of the annual job openings typically require some college, but no degree for the target occupations related to special education in the LA/OC region.
- 37% of *teaching assistants, except postsecondary* in the field have completed some college or an associate degree, according to national educational attainment data.
 - Only 7% of *special education teachers, preschool* have completed an associate degree as their highest level of educational attainment; 90% have completed a bachelor's degree or more education.

Community college supply

- 18 community colleges issued awards related to special education in the greater LA/OC region.
- 291 awards (degrees and certificates) were conferred on average each year between 2021 and 2023.

Other postsecondary supply

- 1 educational institution in the LA/OC region has conferred awards in programs related to special education over the past three years.
- 1 award was conferred on average each year by other postsecondary institutions throughout the greater LA/OC region between 2020 and 2022.

TARGET OCCUPATIONS

LA COE prepared this report to provide regional labor market and postsecondary supply data related to two target special education occupations. Although *special education teachers, preschool* typically require a bachelor's degree, they are included in this report since the Special Education TOP Code (0809.00) has historically trained for this occupation. [For full occupation descriptions, please see Appendix.](#)

- ***Special education teachers, preschool (25-2051)***³
- ***Teaching assistants, except postsecondary (25-9045)*** This occupation includes the 2018 SOC occupations:⁴
 - ***Teaching assistants, preschool, elementary, middle, and secondary school, except special education (25-9042)***⁵
 - ***Teaching assistants, special education (25-9043)***⁶

² Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington. (2024). *The self-sufficiency standard for California 2024*. <http://selfsufficiencystandard.org/California>.

³ [Special Education Teachers \(bls.gov\)](#)

⁴ [Teaching Assistants \(bls.gov\)](#)

⁵ [2018 Standard Occupational Classification System \(bls.gov\)](#)

⁶ Ibid.

- *Teaching assistants, all other (25-9049)*⁷

OCCUPATIONAL DEMAND

Exhibit 1 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for these target special education occupations. In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, the number of jobs related to these occupations is projected to increase by 2% through 2028. There will be more than 6,400 job openings per year through 2028 due to job growth and replacements. The majority of jobs in 2023 for these target special education occupations (77%) were located in Los Angeles County.

Exhibit 1: Current employment and occupational demand, Los Angeles and Orange counties⁸

Geography	2023 Jobs	2028 Jobs	2023-2028 Change	2023-2028 % Change	Annual Openings
Los Angeles	40,897	41,662	765	2%	4,931
Orange	12,089	12,393	304	3%	1,495
Total	52,985	54,055	1,070	2%	6,426

Detailed Occupation Data

Exhibit 2 displays the current employment and projected occupational demand for each of the target occupations in Los Angeles County. Positive scores for automation resilience⁹ reflect a lower-than-average threat of the occupation(s) being replaced by automation, while negative scores reflect a greater-than-average risk of automation. The average percentage of workers aged 55+ across all occupations in the Los Angeles/Orange County region is 26%; occupations with a larger share of workers aged 55 and older typically have greater replacement needs to offset the amount of impending retirements. On average, 81% of workers across all occupations in California are employed full-time. Occupations with a lower-than-average percentage of full-time workers may have less employment security but may see increased activity in the gig economy.

Exhibit 2: Detailed employment and occupational demand, Los Angeles County¹⁰

Occupation	2023 Jobs	2028 Jobs	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Automation Resilience	% Aged 55 and older	% Full Time Workers
Special Education Teachers, Preschool	295	325	10%	27	15.6	21%	59%
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	40,601	41,337	2%	4,904	10.3	24%	43%
Total	40,897	41,662	2%	4,931	-	-	-

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Five-year change represents new job additions to the workforce. Annual openings include new jobs and replacement jobs that result from retirements and separations.

⁹ Automation risk is calculated based on the percentage of time spent on high-risk compared to low-risk work, the number of high-risk jobs in compatible occupations, and the overall industry automation risk.

¹⁰ Five-year change represents new job additions to the workforce. Annual openings include new jobs and replacement jobs that result from retirements and separations.

WAGES

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wages for these target special education 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 Los Angeles/Orange County region.

Los Angeles County

The majority, 99%, of annual openings for the target occupations have entry-level wages below the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$24.03 in Los Angeles County). Typical entry-level hourly wages are in a range between \$18.20 and \$37.93. (Exhibit 3).

One occupation has entry-level wages above the self-sufficiency standard wage:

- *Special education teachers, preschool*, \$37.93

While experienced *special education teachers, preschool* can expect to earn wages that are higher than the self-sufficiency standard (\$59.09), experienced *teaching assistants, except postsecondary* can expect to earn \$23.44, which is below the self-sufficiency standard wage.

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*
Special Education Teachers, Preschool	\$37.93	\$54.16	\$59.09	\$112,660
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	\$18.20	\$21.69	\$23.44	\$45,100

*Rounded to the nearest \$100

Orange County

The majority, 99%, of annual openings for the target occupations have entry-level wages below the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$27.13 in Orange County). Typical entry-level hourly wages are in a range between \$18.41 and \$37.58 (Exhibit 4).

One occupation has entry-level wages above the self-sufficiency standard wage:

- *Special education teachers, preschool*, \$37.58

While experienced *special education teachers, preschool* can expect to earn wages that are higher than the self-sufficiency standard (\$58.52), experienced *teaching assistants, except postsecondary* can expect to earn \$23.71, which is below the self-sufficiency standard wage.

Exhibit 4: Earnings for occupations in Orange County

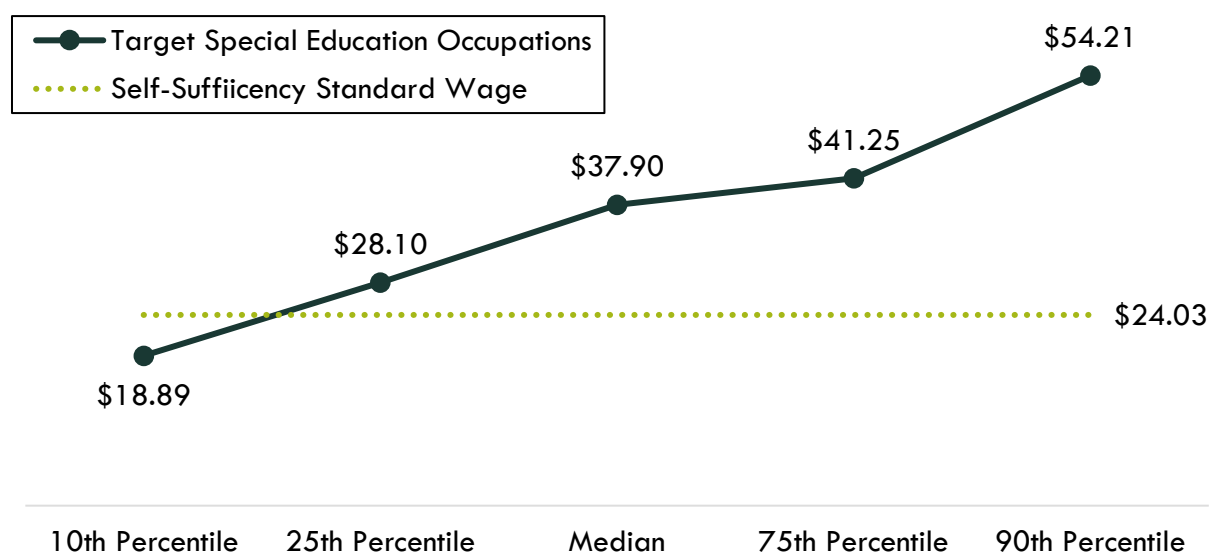
Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)	Median Annual Earnings*
Special Education Teachers, Preschool	\$37.58	\$53.69	\$58.52	\$111,700

Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)	Median Annual Earnings*
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	\$18.41	\$21.87	\$23.71	\$45,500

*Rounded to the nearest \$100

Across the greater Los Angeles and Orange County region, the average entry-level hourly earnings for the target occupations in this report are \$28.10; this is above the living wage for one single adult in Los Angeles County (\$24.03). Exhibit 5 shows the average hourly wage for the occupations in this report, for entry-level to experienced workers.

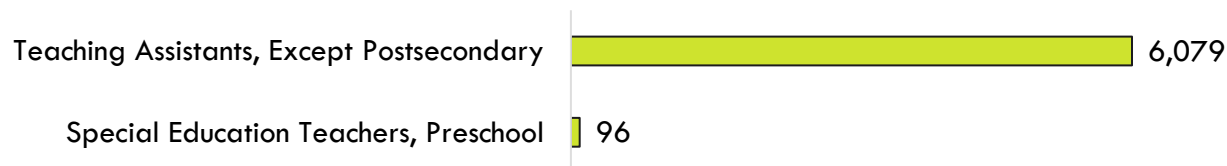
Exhibit 5: Average hourly earnings for the target special education occupations, Los Angeles and Orange counties



JOB POSTINGS

There were 6,175 online job postings related to the target special education occupations listed in the past 12 months in Los Angeles and Orange counties. Exhibit 6 displays the number of job postings by occupation. The majority of job postings (98%) were for *teaching assistants, except postsecondary*, followed by *special education teachers, preschool* (2%).

Exhibit 6: Job postings by occupation (last 12 months), 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 7).

Exhibit 7: 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"> • Preschool teacher assistants • Teacher assistants • Paraprofessionals • Instructional assistants • Instructional aides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special education • Child development • Preschool education • Working with children • Lesson planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amergis* • Zen Educate • Stepping Stones • Volunteers of America • Guidepost Montessori

*Staffing company

In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, 58% of the target special education job postings listed a minimum educational requirement. Exhibit 8 details the number and percentage of job postings by educational level.

Exhibit 8: Education levels requested in job postings for target occupations related to special education, Los Angeles and Orange counties

Education Level	Job Postings	% of Job Postings
Bachelor's degree	493	13%
Associate degree	737	19%
High school diploma or vocational training	2,641	68%

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, the majority of annual job openings (99%) typically require some college, but no degree (Exhibit 9). The national-level data indicates 37% of *teaching assistants, except postsecondary* working in the field have completed some college or an associate degree as their highest level of educational attainment. Only 7% of *special education teachers, preschool* have completed an associate degree as their highest level of educational attainment; 90% have completed a bachelor's degree or more education. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists the following typical entry-level education levels for the occupations in this report:

Exhibit 9: Entry-level education preferred by employers nationally, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Occupation	Education Level
<i>Special education teachers, preschool</i>	Bachelor's degree
<i>Teaching assistants, except postsecondary</i>	Some college, but no degree

EDUCATIONAL SUPPLY

Community College Supply

Exhibit 10 shows the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred by community colleges in programs that have historically trained for the occupations of interest. The colleges with the most completions in the region are Santa Ana, LA Valley, and East LA.

Exhibit 10: Regional community college awards (certificates and degrees), 2021-2023

TOP Code	Program	College	2020-21 Awards	2021-22 Awards	2022-23 Awards	3-Year Average
0802.00	Educational Aide (Teacher Assistant)	LA Pierce	-	3	1	1
		Long Beach	-	-	4	1
		Mt San Antonio	21	13	7	14
		West LA	-	-	12	4
		LA Subtotal	21	16	24	20
		Coastline	6	-	-	2
		Santa Ana	80	60	42	61
		Santiago Canyon	20	13	21	18
		OC Subtotal	106	73	63	81
Supply Subtotal/Average			127	89	87	101
0802.10	Educational Aide (Teacher Assistant), Bilingual	LA Mission	-	1	-	0
		LA Subtotal	-	1	-	0
		Santa Ana	3	7	1	4
		Santiago Canyon	4	5	-	3
		OC Subtotal	7	12	1	7
Supply Subtotal/Average			7	13	1	7
0809.00	Special Education	Compton	2	1	-	1
		Long Beach	1	3	2	2
		LA Subtotal	3	4	2	3
		Santa Ana	31	23	27	27
		Santiago Canyon	6	7	1	5
		OC Subtotal	37	30	28	32
Supply Subtotal/Average			40	34	30	35
1305.20	Children with Special Needs	Cerritos	1	-	-	0
		Citrus	-	-	2	1
		Compton	1	1	-	1
		East LA	38	43	38	40
		LA City	16	12	12	13
		LA Valley	52	39	75	55

TOP Code	Program	College	2020-21 Awards	2021-22 Awards	2022-23 Awards	3-Year Average
		Long Beach	3	5	2	3
		Mt San Antonio	3	3	-	2
		Pasadena	2	-	5	2
		Rio Hondo	15	11	11	12
		Santa Monica	15	8	13	12
		LA Subtotal	146	122	158	142
		Orange Coast	13	-	-	4
		Santiago Canyon	2	-	3	2
		OC Subtotal	15	-	3	6
Supply Subtotal/Average			161	122	161	148
Supply Total/Average			335	258	279	291

Other Postsecondary Supply

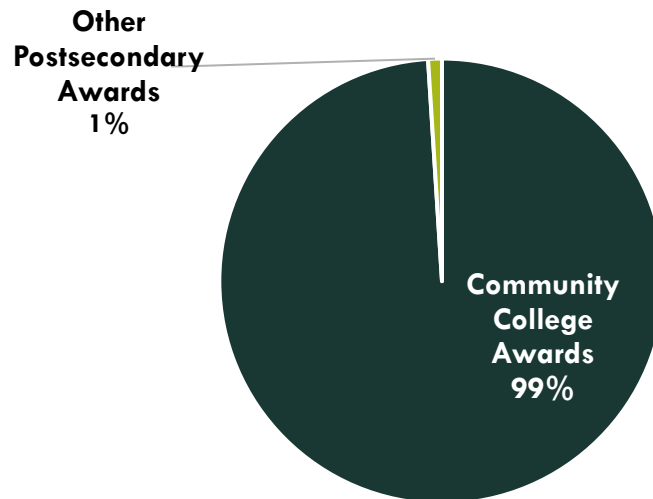
For a comprehensive regional supply analysis, it is important to consider the supply from other institutions in the region that provide training programs for the target special education occupations. Exhibit 11 shows the number of awards conferred by this institution in relevant programs. Due to different data collection periods, the most recent data is from 2020 to 2022. Between 2020 and 2022, other postsecondary college institutions in the region conferred an average of 1 sub-baccalaureate award. Sub-baccalaureate awards include associate degrees, postsecondary awards, and other academic awards that typically take fewer than four years to complete.

Exhibit 11: Other regional postsecondary awards, 2020-2022

CIP Code	Program	Postsecondary Institution	2019- 20 Awards	2020- 21 Awards	2021- 22 Awards	3-Year Average
13.1001	Special Education and Teaching, General	Mount Saint Mary's University	2	-	-	1
Supply Total/Average			2	-	-	1

Exhibit 12 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 community colleges in the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region.

Exhibit 12: Percentage of community college awards compared to other postsecondary institution awards in the Los Angeles/Orange County region



APPENDIX: OCCUPATION DESCRIPTIONS

LA COE prepared this report to provide regional labor market supply and demand data related to these target occupations:

- **Special education teachers, preschool (25-2051)** Teach academic, social, and life skills to preschool-aged students with learning, emotional, or physical disabilities. Includes teachers who specialize and work with students who are blind or have visual impairments; students who are deaf or have hearing impairments; and students with intellectual disabilities.¹¹
- **Teaching assistants, except postsecondary (25-9045)** This occupation includes the 2018 SOC occupations:¹²
 - **Teaching assistants, preschool, elementary, middle, and secondary school, except special education (25-9042)** Assist a preschool, elementary, middle, or secondary school teacher with instructional duties. Serve in a position for which a teacher has primary responsibility for the design and implementation of educational programs and services;¹³
 - **Teaching assistants, special education (25-9043)** Assist a preschool, elementary, middle, or secondary school teacher to provide academic, social, or life skills to students who have learning, emotional, or physical disabilities. Serve in a position for which a teacher has primary responsibility for the design and implementation of educational programs and services;¹⁴

¹¹ [Special Education Teachers \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov/occupations/special-education-teachers)

¹² [Teaching Assistants \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov/occupations/teaching-assistants)

¹³ [2018 Standard Occupational Classification System \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov/occupations/2018-standard-occupational-classification-system)

¹⁴ Ibid.

- **Teaching assistants, all other (25-9049)** All teaching assistants not listed separately.¹⁵

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DATA SOURCES



POWERED BY



- 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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¹⁵ Ibid.