



Labor Market Analysis: 1012.00 – Applied Photography 50.0406 – Commercial Photography

Commercial Photography – Associate of Science (A.S.) degree

Los Angeles Center of Excellence, April 2026

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, 25th)	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, more than one-third of current workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree as their highest level of educational attainment.

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

- 1,020 annual job openings are projected in the region through 2029. This number is greater than the three-year average of 183 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

- \$17.88 is the typical entry-level hourly wage for *photographers*, which is lower than Los Angeles County's self-sufficiency standard hourly (\$24.03/hour).²

Educational Attainment

- A high school diploma or equivalent is the typical entry-level education for *photographers*, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).
- 34% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree, according to national educational attainment data.

Community college supply

- 13 community colleges issued awards related to applied photography in the greater LA/OC region.
- 182 awards (degrees and certificates) were conferred on average each year between 2022 and 2024.

Other postsecondary supply

- 2 educational institutions in the LA/OC region have conferred awards in programs related to commercial photography over the past three years.
- 1 award was conferred on average each year by other postsecondary institutions throughout the greater LA/OC region between 2021 and 2023.

TARGET OCCUPATION

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

- **Photographers (27-4021)** Photograph people, landscapes, merchandise, or other subjects. May use lighting equipment to enhance a subject's appearance. May use editing software to produce finished images and prints. Includes commercial and industrial photographers, scientific photographers, and photo journalists.³

OCCUPATIONAL DEMAND

Exhibit 1 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for *photographers*. In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, the number of jobs related to this occupation is projected to increase by 1% through 2029. There will be more than 1,000 job openings per year through 2029 due to job growth and replacements. The majority of jobs in 2024 for *photographers* (78%) were located in Los Angeles County.

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

³ [Photographers \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov/occupations/27-4021)

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

Geography	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2024-2029 Change	2024-2029 % Change	Annual Openings
Los Angeles	8,883	8,996	112	1%	794
Orange	2,486	2,544	58	2%	226
Total	11,370	11,540	170	1%	1,020

Detailed Occupation Data

Exhibit 2 displays the current employment and projected occupational demand for the target occupation in Los Angeles County. 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 County⁵

Occupation	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	% Aged 55 and older	% Full Time Workers
Photographers	8,883	8,996	1%	794	19%	74%

WAGES

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wages for *photographers* 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 *photographers* are \$17.88, which is below the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$24.03 in Los Angeles County). Experienced workers can expect to earn wages of \$53.09, which is higher than the self-sufficiency standard (Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 3: Earnings for occupation in Los Angeles County

Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)	Median Annual Earnings*
Photographers	\$17.88	\$29.08	\$53.09	\$60,500

*Rounded to the nearest \$100

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.

Orange County

The typical entry-level hourly wages for *photographers* are \$16.05, which is below the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$27.13 in Orange County). Experienced workers can expect to earn wages of \$50.14, which is higher than the self-sufficiency standard (Exhibit 4).

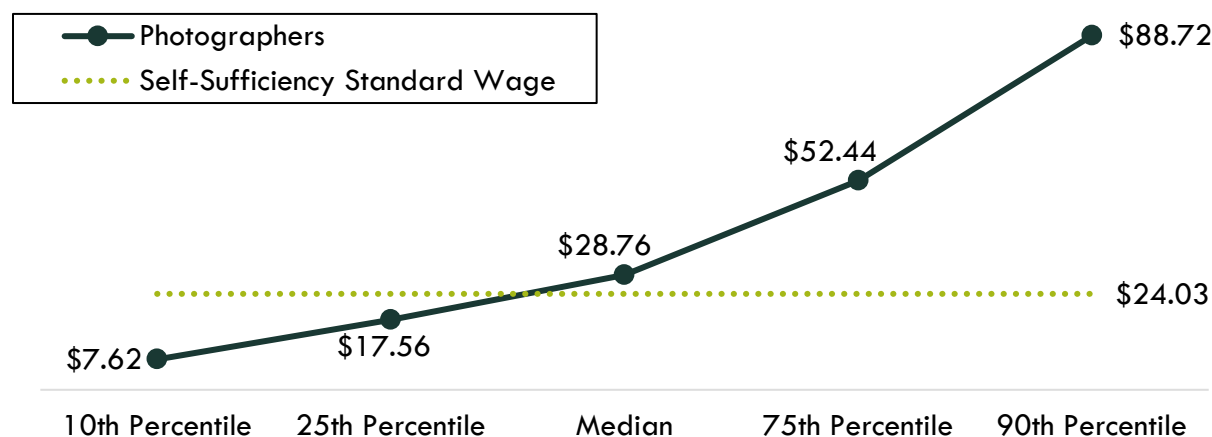
Exhibit 4: Earnings for occupation in Orange County

Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)	Median Annual Earnings*
Photographers	\$16.05	\$27.80	\$50.14	\$57,800

*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 \$17.56; this is below the living wage for one single adult in Los Angeles County (\$24.03). Exhibit 5 shows the average hourly wage for the occupation in this report, for entry-level to experienced workers.

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



JOB POSTINGS

There were 1,718 online job postings for *photographers* 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 occupation 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"> Photographers Videographers/photographers Automotive photographers Graduation photographers Ophthalmic photographers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photography Marketing Adobe Photoshop Videography Workflow management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pro Motion Pix GradImages Shutterfly Eyetex London Limited Wallbank

In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, 14% of the *photographer* job postings listed a minimum educational requirement. Exhibit 7 details the number and percentage of job postings by educational level.

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

Education Level	Job Postings	% of Job Postings
Bachelor's degree	86	35%
Associate degree	19	8%
High school diploma or vocational training	143	58%

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists a high school diploma or equivalent as the typical entry-level education for *photographers* (Exhibit 8). However, the national-level data indicates 34% 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 occupation in this report:

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

Occupation	Education Level
Photographers	High school diploma or equivalent

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 code: Applied Photography (1012.00). The colleges with the most completions in the region are Santa Monica, Mt. San Antonio, and Orange Coast.

Exhibit 9: Regional community college awards (certificates and degrees), 2022-2024

TOP Code	Program	College	2021-22 Awards	2022-23 Awards	2023-24 Awards	3-Year Average
1012.00	Applied Photography	East LA	-	6	6	4
		El Camino	10	7	7	8
		Glendale	6	16	15	12
		LA City	8	6	19	11
		LA Mission	-	-	9	3
		LA Pierce	2	7	5	5
		LA Valley	3	11	6	7
		Mt San Antonio	32	30	39	34
		Pasadena	10	4	13	9
		Santa Monica	31	21	129	60
		LA Subtotal	102	108	248	153
		Cypress	2	7	5	5
		Fullerton	5	16	11	11
		Orange Coast	10	16	16	14
		OC Subtotal	17	39	32	29
Supply Total/Average			119	147	280	182

Exhibit 10 displays the community college awards broken down by award type. In this case, the majority of awards issued by community colleges are certificates (66%).

Exhibit 10: Community college awards by award type, 2022-2024

Award Type	# of Awards	% of Awards
A.A./A.S. degrees	61	34%
Certificates	121	66%
Total	182	100%

Other Postsecondary Supply

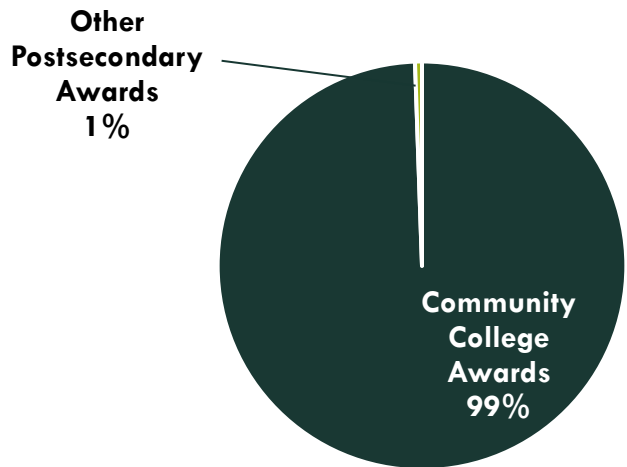
For a comprehensive regional supply analysis, it is important to consider the supply from other institutions in the region that provide training programs for *photographers*. Exhibit 11 shows the number of awards conferred by these institutions in relevant programs. Due to different data collection periods, the most recent data is from 2021 to 2023. Between 2021 and 2023, other postsecondary college institutions in the region conferred an average of 1 bachelor’s award annually.

Exhibit 11: Other regional postsecondary awards, 2021-2023

CIP Code	Program	Postsecondary Institution	2020-21 Awards	2021-22 Awards	2022-23 Awards	3-Year Average
10.0201	Photographic and Film/Video Technology/Technician	Chapman University	1	-	-	0
50.0406	Commercial Photography	Mount Saint Mary's Univ.	-	1	-	0
Supply Total/Average			1	1	-	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



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POWERED BY

**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)

Important Disclaimer: All representations included in this report have been produced from primary research and/or secondary review of publicly and/or privately available data and/or research reports. Efforts have been made to qualify and validate the accuracy of the data and the reported findings; however, neither the Centers of Excellence, COE host District, nor California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office are responsible for applications or decisions made by recipient community colleges or their representatives based upon components or recommendations contained in this study.

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