



Labor Market Analysis: 1240.00 – Dental Occupations 51.0699 – Dental Services and Allied Professions, Other Pre-Dental/Medical Professional – Associate Degree for Transfer (AD-T)

Los Angeles Center of Excellence, March 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 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 three identified middle-skill 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, the majority of annual openings for the occupations in this report typically require an associate degree or postsecondary award.

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

- 4,028 annual job openings are projected in the region through 2029. This number is substantially greater than the three-year average of 1,515 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

- 82% of annual job openings for these middle-skill dental occupations have entry-level wages **below** Los Angeles County's self-sufficiency standard hourly wage (\$24.03/hour).²

Educational Attainment

- 93% of the annual job openings typically require an associate degree or postsecondary award for middle-skill dental occupations in the LA/OC region.
- 50%-58% 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 middle-skill dental occupations in the greater LA/OC region.
- 511 awards (degrees and certificates) were conferred on average each year between 2022 and 2024.

Other postsecondary supply

- 24 educational institutions in the LA/OC region have conferred awards in programs related to middle-skill dental occupations over the past three years.
- 1,004 awards were conferred on average each year by other postsecondary institutions throughout the greater LA/OC region between 2021 and 2023.

TARGET OCCUPATIONS

LA COE prepared this report to provide regional labor market and postsecondary supply data related to three middle-skill occupations. [For full occupation descriptions, please see Appendix.](#)

- **Dental Hygienists (29-1292)** ³
- **Dental Assistants (31-9091)** ⁴
- **Dental Laboratory Technicians (51-9081)** ⁵

OCCUPATIONAL DEMAND

Exhibit 1 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for these middle-skill dental occupations. In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, the number of jobs related to these occupations is projected to increase by 7% through 2029. There will be more than 4,000 job openings per year through 2029 due to job growth and replacements. The majority of jobs in 2024 for these middle-skill dental occupations (66%) 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 [Dental Hygienists \(bls.gov\)](#)

⁴ [Dental Assistants \(bls.gov\)](#)

⁵ [Dental and Ophthalmic Laboratory Technicians and Medical Appliance Technicians \(bls.gov\)](#)

Exhibit 1: Current employment and occupational demand, Los Angeles and Orange counties⁶

Geography	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2024-2029 Change	2024-2029 % Change	Annual Openings
Los Angeles	20,349	21,734	1,385	7%	2,627
Orange	10,556	11,443	888	8%	1,401
Total	30,904	33,177	2,273	7%	4,028

Detailed Occupation Data

Exhibit 2 displays the current employment and projected occupational demand for each of the target occupations 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 County⁷

Occupation	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	% Aged 55 and older	% Full Time Workers
Dental Hygienists	5,857	6,335	8%	485	23%	82%
Dental Assistants	13,741	14,669	7%	2,059	14%	65%
Dental Laboratory Technicians	751	730	(3%)	82	37%	100%
Total	20,349	21,734	7%	2,627	-	-

WAGES

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wages for these middle-skill dental 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, 82%, of annual openings for these middle-skill dental 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 \$19.24 and \$26.44. (Exhibit 3).

⁶ Five-year change represents new job additions to the workforce. Annual openings include new jobs and replacement jobs that result from retirements and separations.

⁷ Ibid.

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

- *Dental hygienists*, \$26.44

Experienced *dental assistants* can expect to earn \$23.27, which is below the self-sufficiency wage. However, experienced *dental hygienists* and *dental laboratory technicians* can expect to earn wages between \$29.46 and \$56.91, which are higher than the self-sufficiency standard.

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 Hygienists	\$26.44	\$49.41	\$56.91	\$102,800
Dental Assistants	\$21.32	\$21.80	\$23.27	\$45,300
Dental Laboratory Technicians	\$19.24	\$21.34	\$29.46	\$44,400

*Rounded to the nearest \$100

Orange County

The majority, 83%, of annual openings for these middle-skill dental 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 \$22.12 and \$28.22 (Exhibit 4).

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

- *Dental hygienists*, \$28.22

Experienced *dental assistants* can expect to earn \$24.91, which is below the self-sufficiency wage. However, experienced *dental hygienists* and *dental laboratory technicians* can expect to earn wages between \$32.48 and \$60.97, which are higher than the self-sufficiency standard.

Exhibit 4: Earnings for occupations in Orange County

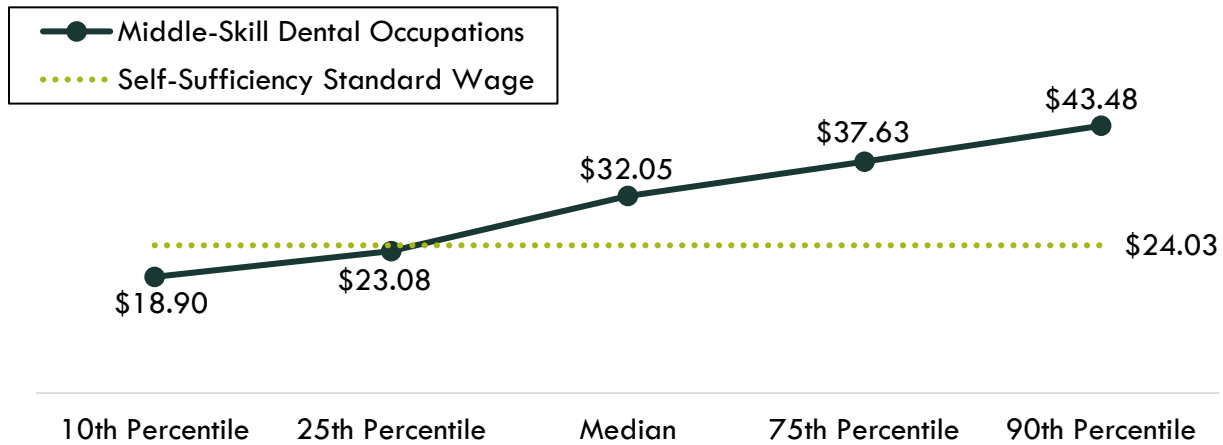
Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)	Median Annual Earnings*
Dental Hygienists	\$28.22	\$53.04	\$60.97	\$110,300
Dental Assistants	\$22.83	\$23.34	\$24.91	\$48,500
Dental Laboratory Technicians	\$22.12	\$24.01	\$32.48	\$49,900

*Rounded to the nearest \$100

Across the greater Los Angeles and Orange County region, the average entry-level hourly earnings for the occupations in this report are \$23.08; 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 occupations in this report, for entry-level to experienced workers.

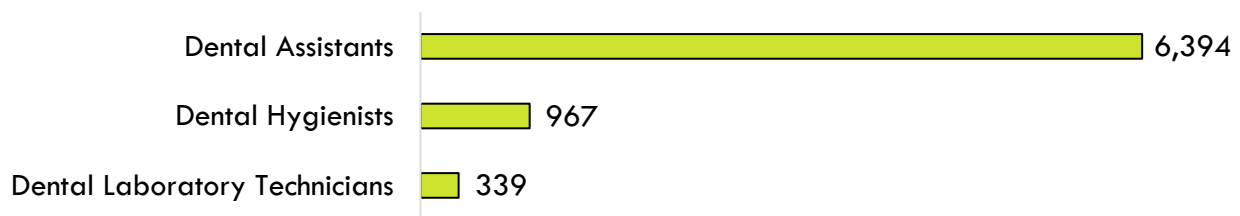
Exhibit 5: Average hourly earnings for target occupations, Los Angeles and Orange counties



JOB POSTINGS

There were 7,700 online job postings related to middle-skill dental 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 (83%) were for *dental assistants*, followed by *dental hygienists* (13%) and *dental laboratory technicians* (4%).

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"> • Dental assistants • Registered dental assistants • Dental hygienists • Registered dental hygienists • Orthodontic assistants • Expanded duties dental assistants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sterilization • Dentistry • Infection control • Dental assisting • Patient education and counseling • Oral hygiene 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDS Health* • West Coast Dental Services • Western Dental Orthodontics • Children’s Dental FunZone • Pacific Dental Servies • AltaMed Health Services

*Staffing company

In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, 19% of the middle-skill dental 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 dental occupations, Los Angeles and Orange counties

Education Level	Job Postings	% of Job Postings
Bachelor's degree	31	2%
Associate degree	249	17%
High school diploma or vocational training	1,162	81%

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, the majority of annual job openings (93%) typically require an associate degree or postsecondary award (Exhibit 9). Furthermore, the national-level data indicates between 50% and 58% 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 9: Entry-level education preferred by employers nationally, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Occupation	Education Level
Dental Hygienists	Associate degree
Dental Assistants	Postsecondary non-degree award
Dental Laboratory Technicians	High school diploma or equivalent

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 West LA, Cypress, and Cerritos.

Exhibit 10: 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
1240.00	Dental Occupations	West LA	-	165	69	78
		LA Subtotal	-	165	69	78
Supply Subtotal/Average			-	165	69	78
1240.10	Dental Assistant	Cerritos	26	30	35	30
		Citrus	34	35	12	27
		Pasadena	10	19	22	17
		West LA	62	149	126	112
		LA Subtotal	132	233	195	187
		Cypress	22	18	20	20
		Orange Coast	25	29	21	25
		OC Subtotal	47	47	41	45
Supply Subtotal/Average			179	280	236	232
1240.20	Dental Hygienist	Cerritos	33	17	21	24
		Pasadena	11	26	15	17
		West LA	74	68	85	76
		LA Subtotal	118	111	121	117
		Cypress	31	151	73	85
		OC Subtotal	31	151	73	85
Supply Subtotal/Average			149	262	194	202
Supply Total/Average			328	707	499	511

Exhibit 11 displays the community college awards broken down by award type. In this case, the majority of awards issued by community colleges are certificates (50%).

Exhibit 11: Community college awards by award type, 2022-2024

Award Type	# of Awards	% of Awards
B.A./B.S. degrees	62	12%
A.A./A.S. degrees	101	20%
Certificates	257	50%
Noncredit awards	91	18%
Total	511	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 middle-skill dental occupations. Exhibit 12 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 1,004 bachelor’s and sub-baccalaureate awards. Sub-baccalaureate awards include associate degrees, postsecondary awards, and other academic awards that typically take fewer than four years to complete.

Exhibit 12: Other regional postsecondary awards, 2021-2023

CIP Code	Program	Postsecondary Institution	2020-21 Awards	2021-22 Awards	2022-23 Awards	3-Year Average
51.0601	Dental Assisting/ Assistant	ABC Adult School	6	7	8	7
		American Career College-Anaheim	38	49	54	47
		American Career College-LA	84	93	105	94
		California Career Institute	-	-	2	1
		CBD College	13	8	-	7
		Concorde Career College-Garden Grove	75	79	93	82
		Concorde Career College-North Hollywood	53	46	45	48
		Downey Adult School	45	25	20	30
		Hacienda La Puente Adult Education	9	11	12	11
		Healthcare Career College	10	8	6	8
		National Career College	26	18	24	23
		North-West College-Anaheim	18	17	19	18
		North-West College-Glendale	14	16	8	13
		North-West College-Pomona	18	14	20	17
		North-West College-Van Nuys	21	20	7	16
		North-West College-West Covina	30	26	37	31
		PCI College	3	3	1	2
		UEI College-Garden Grove	43	103	101	82
		UEI College-Gardena	57	86	97	80
		UEI College-Huntington Park	132	148	121	134
UEI College-Reseda	53	68	86	69		
UEI College-West Covina	57	86	75	73		
51.0602	Dental Hygiene/ Hygienist	Concorde Career College-Garden Grove	23	47	23	31
		USC	30	1	-	10
		West Coast University-OC	79	62	70	70
Supply Total/Average			937	1,041	1,034	1,004

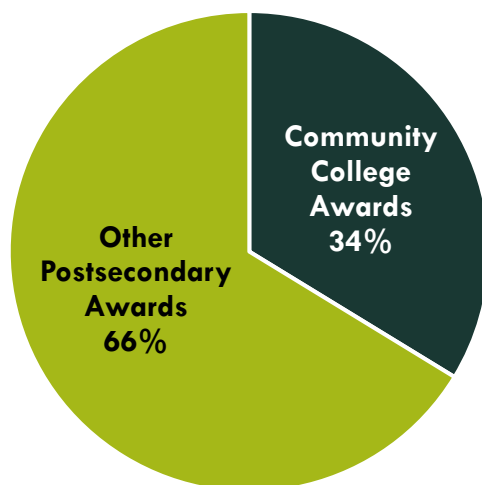
Exhibit 13 shows the breakdown of other postsecondary awards by award type. The majority of awards issued by other postsecondary schools are sub-baccalaureate awards (92%).

Exhibit 13: Other postsecondary awards by award type, 2021-2023

Award Type	# of Awards	% of Awards
Bachelor’s degrees	81	8%
Sub-baccalaureate awards	923	92%
Total	1,004	100%

Exhibit 14 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 institutions in the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region.

Exhibit 14: 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:

- **Dental Hygienists (29-1292)** Administer oral hygiene care to patients. Assess patient oral hygiene problems or needs and maintain health records. Advise patients on oral health maintenance and disease prevention. May provide advanced care such as providing fluoride treatment or administering topical anesthesia. ⁸
- **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

⁸ [Dental Hygienists \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov)

for oral healthcare procedures. May perform administrative duties such as scheduling appointments, maintaining medical records, billing, and coding information for insurance purposes. ⁹

- **Dental Laboratory Technicians (51-9081)** Construct and repair full or partial dentures or dental appliances. ¹⁰

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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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⁹ [Dental Assistants \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov)

¹⁰ [Dental and Ophthalmic Laboratory Technicians and Medical Appliance Technicians \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov)