



Labor Market Analysis: 0614.40 – Animation

50.0102 – Digital Arts

Animation Production – Associate of Arts (A.A.) 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 type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (See below)	
Living Wage: (Entry-Level, 25 th)	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"/>	

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 does not appear to be a supply gap for the occupation of interest. While this program does not meet the traditional supply/demand endorsement criteria, there may be demand for *special effects artists and animators* from local employers that is not reflected in traditional labor market data. For this reason, real-time labor market data is included in this report as well – to provide a more nuanced view of the regional job market for the target animation occupation in this report. Furthermore, the skills learned from the Digital Arts (50.0102) CIP programs included in this report can be applied to a variety of digital arts occupations beyond the scope of this report, thus overestimating the supply for *special effects artists and animators*. Furthermore, entry-level wages exceed the self-sufficiency standard wage in both Los Angeles and Orange counties, and more than one third of current animation workers in the field have completed an associate degree or less education as their highest level of educational attainment.

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.

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

- 580 annual job openings are projected in the region through 2029. This number is less than the three-year average of 765 awards conferred by educational institutions in the region.
 - However, the chosen CIP code in this report (Digital Arts – 50.0102) trains for many art and design occupations, including *special effects artists and animators*. Since skills taught in these digital arts programs can be applied to various art and design occupations, it is difficult to accurately gauge the supply data for solely animation occupations.
 - Over the past 12 months, there were **727 online job postings related to special effects artists and animators**. The highest number of job postings were for environment artists, motion designers, animators, designers, and visual designers.

Living Wage

- \$31.07 is the typical entry-level hourly wage for *special effects artists and animators*, which is higher than Los Angeles County's self-sufficiency standard hourly (\$24.03/hour).²

Educational Attainment

- A bachelor's degree is the typical entry-level education for *special effects artists and animators*, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).
- 27% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree, according to national educational attainment data.
 - 43% of workers in the field have completed an associate degree or less educational attainment.

Community college supply

- 16 community colleges issued awards related to animation in the greater LA/OC region.
- 243 awards (degrees and certificates) were conferred on average each year between 2023 and 2025.

Other postsecondary supply

- 17 educational institutions in the LA/OC region have conferred awards in programs related to animation over the past three years.
- 522 awards were conferred on average each year by other postsecondary institutions throughout the greater LA/OC region between 2022 and 2024.

TARGET OCCUPATION

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

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

- **Special Effects Artists and Animators (27-1014)** Create special effects or animations using film, video, computers, or other electronic tools and media for use in products, such as computer games, movies, music videos, and commercials.³

OCCUPATIONAL DEMAND

Exhibit 1 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for *special effects artists and animators*. 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 nearly 600 job openings per year through 2029 due to job growth and replacements. The majority of jobs in 2024 for this target occupation (89%) were located in Los Angeles County.

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	5,682	5,709	27	0%	514
Orange	726	743	17	2%	66
Total	6,407	6,451	44	1%	580

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.

Exhibit 2: Detailed employment and occupational demand, Los Angeles County⁵

Occupation	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	% Aged 55 and older
Special Effects Artists and Animators	5,682	5,709	0%	514	28%

WAGES

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wages for *special effects artists and animators* 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 *special effects artists and animators* are \$31.07, which is above the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$24.03 in Los Angeles County). Experienced workers can expect to earn wages of \$71.23 (Exhibit 3).

³ [Special Effects Artists and Animators \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov)

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 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*
Special Effects Artists and Animators	\$31.07	\$54.63	\$71.23	\$113,600

*Rounded to the nearest \$100

Orange County

The typical entry-level hourly wages for *special effects artists and animators* are \$25.50, which is below the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$27.13 in Orange County). Experienced workers can expect to earn wages of \$64.39, which is higher than the self-sufficiency standard (Exhibit 4).

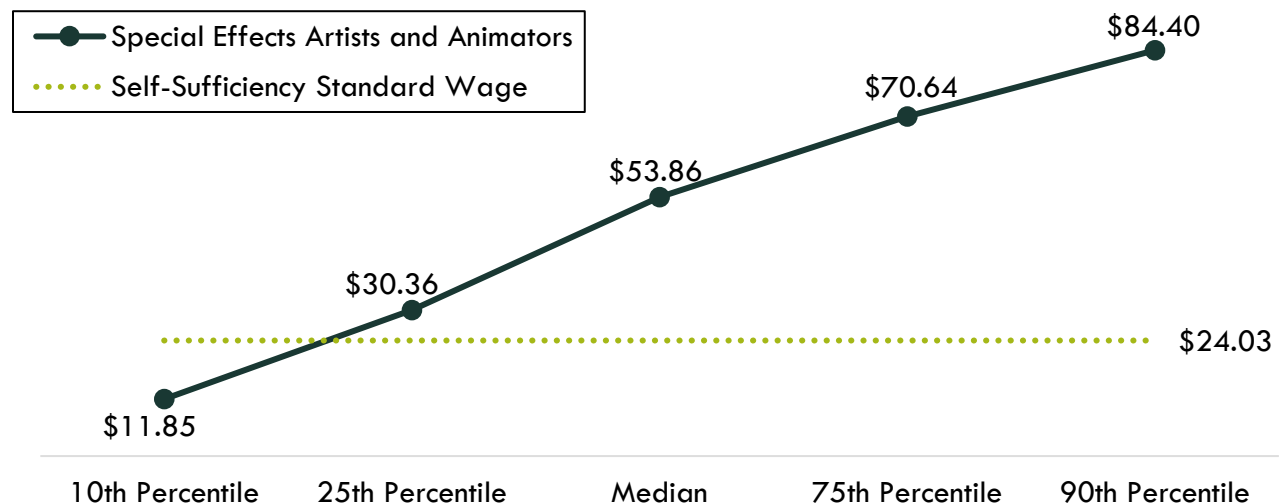
Exhibit 4: Earnings for occupation in Orange County

Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)	Median Annual Earnings*
Special Effects Artists and Animators	\$25.50	\$46.26	\$64.39	\$96,200

*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 \$30.36; 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 occupation in this report, for entry-level to experienced workers.

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



JOB POSTINGS

There were 727 online job postings related to *special effects artists and animators* 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"> • Environment artists • Motion designers • Animators • Designers • Visual designers • VFX artists • Gameplay engineers • Multimedia designers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animations • Adobe Photoshop • Workflow management • Autodesk Maya • Marketing • Adobe Illustrator • Graphic design • Adobe After Effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canteen Vending • NBC • Riot Game • Sony Interactive Entertainment • Disney • Electronic Arts • Activision Blizzard

In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, 33% of the target 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 target occupation, Los Angeles and Orange counties

Education Level	Job Postings	% of Job Postings
Bachelor's degree	234	97%
Associate degree	4	2%
High school diploma or vocational training	2	1%

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists a bachelor's degree as the typical entry-level education for *special effects artists and animators* (Exhibit 8). While the national-level data indicates 27% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree as their highest level of educational attainment, 43% have earned an associate degree or less education. 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
Special Effects Artists and Animators	Bachelor's degree

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: Animation (0614.40). The colleges with the most completions in the region are Santa Monica, Mt. San Antonio, and Pasadena.

Exhibit 9: Regional community college awards (certificates and degrees), 2023-2025

TOP Code	Program	College	2022-23 Awards	2023-24 Awards	2024-25 Awards	3-Year Average		
0614.40	Animation	Cerritos	13	11	9	11		
		East LA	6	4	16	9		
		El Camino	2	1	7	3		
		Glendale	5	3	7	5		
		LA City	2	7	9	6		
		LA Mission	12	4	12	9		
		Mt San Antonio	40	60	60	53		
		Pasadena	21	20	49	30		
		Rio Hondo	17	8	10	12		
		Santa Monica	37	107	123	89		
		LA Subtotal	155	225	302	227		
		Coastline	2	6	1	3		
		Cypress	-	-	1	0		
		Fullerton	-	-	1	0		
		Irvine	3	2	5	3		
		Orange Coast	8	5	11	8		
		Santa Ana	-	-	1	0		
		OC Subtotal	13	13	20	15		
		Supply Total/Average			168	238	322	243

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 (64%).

Exhibit 10: Community college awards by award type, 2023-2025

Award Type	# of Awards	% of Awards
A.A./A.S. degrees	87	36%
Certificates	156	64%
Total	243	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 animation. 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 2022 to 2024. Between 2022 and 2024, other postsecondary college institutions in the region conferred an average of 522 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 11: Other regional postsecondary awards, 2022-2024

CIP Code	Program	Postsecondary Institution	2021-22 Awards	2022-23 Awards	2023-24 Awards	3-Year Average
10.0304	Animation, Interactive Technology, Video Graphics, and Special Effects	ABC Adult School	1	-	-	0
		Art Center College of Design	62	79	95	79
		Azusa Pacific Univ.	14	12	9	12
		CA College of ASU	2	12	7	7
		CA Institute of the Arts	54	35	58	49
		Chapman University	23	45	30	33
		Laguna College of Art and Design	29	26	46	34
		Los Angeles Film School	67	85	105	86
		Loyola Marymount Univ.	13	14	22	16
		New York Film Academy	15	4	6	8
		USC	-	-	14	5
		Woodbury University	-	24	12	12
50.0102	Digital Arts	California College of ASU	15	-	-	5
		Gnomon	29	48	56	44
		LA Academy of Figurative Art	5	-	-	2
		Los Angeles Pacific College	-	1	1	1
		Otis College of Art and Design	90	101	105	99
		USC	33	36	25	31
		Whittier College	-	-	1	0
Supply Total/Average			452	522	592	522

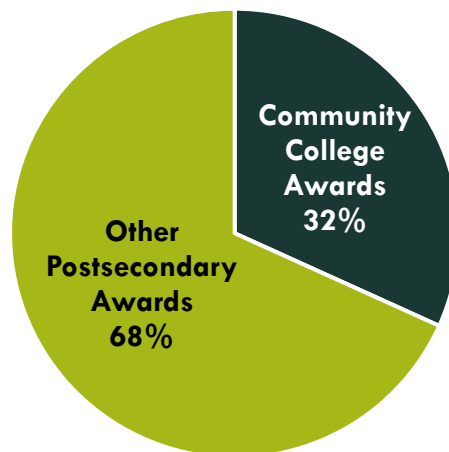
Exhibit 12 shows the breakdown of other postsecondary awards by award type. The majority of awards issued by other postsecondary schools are bachelor's degrees (99%).

Exhibit 12: Other postsecondary awards by award type, 2022-2024

Award Type	# of Awards	% of Awards
Bachelor's degrees	516	99%
Sub-baccalaureate awards	6	1%
Total	522	100%

Exhibit 13 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 13: 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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