CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR LABOR MARKET RESEARCH LOS ANGELES

Labor Market Analysis: 1006.00 – Technical Theater
50.0502 – Technical Theatre/Theatre Design and Technology
Theater Technology – Associate of Science (A.S.) degree

Los Angeles Center of Excellence, April 2026

Program Endorsement:	Endorsed: All Criteria Met ☐	Endorsed: Some Criteria Met ☒	Not Endorsed ☐

Program Endorsement Criteria		
Supply Gap:	Yes ☑	No ☐
Living Wage: (Entry-Level, 25th)	Yes ☐	No ☑
Education:	Yes ☑	No ☐
Emerging Occupation(s)		
	Yes ☐	No ☑

SUMMARY

This report analyzes whether local labor market demand is being met by community college programs aligned with the identified middle-skill occupations[1] 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 five 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 a postsecondary non-degree 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

- 1,660 annual job openings are projected in the region through 2029. This number is greater than the three-year average of 124 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

- 61% of annual job openings for these middle-skill technical theater occupations have entry-level wages **below** Los Angeles County's self-sufficiency standard hourly wage ($24.03/hour). [2]

Educational Attainment

- 60% of the annual job openings typically require a postsecondary non-degree award for middle-skill occupations related to technical theater in the LA/OC region.
- 38%-88% of workers in the field have completed an associate degree or less education, according to national educational attainment data.

Community college supply

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

Other postsecondary supply

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

TARGET OCCUPATIONS

LA COE prepared this report to provide regional labor market and postsecondary supply data related to five middle-skill occupations. Although one occupation in this report typically requires a bachelor's degree, it is considered middle-skill because approximately one-third of workers in the field have completed some college/associate degree or less education as their highest level of education. For full occupation descriptions, please see Appendix.

- ***Set and Exhibit Designers* (27-1027)** [3]
- ***Audio and Video Technicians* (27-4011)** [4]
- ***Sound Engineering Technicians* (27-4014)** [5]
- ***Lighting Technicians* (27-4015)** [6]
- ***Riggers* (49-9096)** [7]

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[2] Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington. (2024). *The self-sufficiency standard for California 2024.* http://selfsufficiencystandard.org/California.
[3] Set and Exhibit Designers (bls.gov)
[4] Broadcast, Sound, and Video Technicians (bls.gov)
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Riggers (bls.gov)

OCCUPATIONAL DEMAND

Exhibit 1 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for these middle-skill technical theater occupations. In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, the number of jobs related to these occupations is projected to increase by 1% through 2029. There will be nearly 1,700 job openings per year through 2029 due to job growth and replacements. The majority of jobs in 2024 for these middle-skill technical theater occupations (88%) were located in Los Angeles County.

Exhibit 1: Current employment and occupational demand, Los Angeles and Orange counties[8]

Geography	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2024-2029 Change	2024-2029 % Change	Annual Openings
Los Angeles	16,351	16,373	22	0%	1,449
Orange	2,204	2,288	84	4%	211
Total	**18,555**	**18,662**	**106**	**1%**	**1,660**

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

Exhibit 2: Detailed employment and occupational demand, Los Angeles County[9]

Occupation	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	% Aged 55 and older
Set and Exhibit Designers	2,825	2,749	(3%)	209	32%
Audio and Video Technicians	5,947	6,050	2%	530	24%
Sound Engineering Technicians	3,697	3,791	3%	352	26%
Lighting Technicians	2,349	2,267	(3%)	202	26%
Riggers	1,534	1,517	(1%)	156	28%
Total	**16,351**	**16,373**	**0%**	**1,449**	**-**

[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] Ibid.

WAGES

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wages for these middle-skill technical theater 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, 61%, of annual openings for these middle-skill technical theater 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 $21.76 and $39.71. (Exhibit 3).

Three occupations have entry-level wages above the self-sufficiency standard wage:

- *Riggers*, $39.71
- *Set and exhibit designers*, $28.36
- *Lighting technicians,* $25.09

Experienced workers can expect to earn wages between $48.63 and $60.32, which are higher than the self-sufficiency standard.

Exhibit 3: Earnings for occupations in Los Angeles County

Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75th Percentile)	Median Annual Earnings*
Set and Exhibit Designers	$28.36	$44.23	$60.32	$92,000
Audio and Video Technicians	$21.76	$29.89	$48.63	$62,200
Sound Engineering Technicians	$22.72	$36.19	$57.41	$75,300
Lighting Technicians	$25.09	$40.10	$50.94	$83,400
Riggers	$39.71	$45.63	$49.90	$94,900

*Rounded to the nearest $100

Orange County

The majority, 83%, of annual openings for these middle-skill technical theater 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 $19.79 and $38.85 (Exhibit 4).

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

- *Riggers*, $38.85

Experienced workers can expect to earn wages between $44.29 and $53.21, which are higher than the self-sufficiency standard.

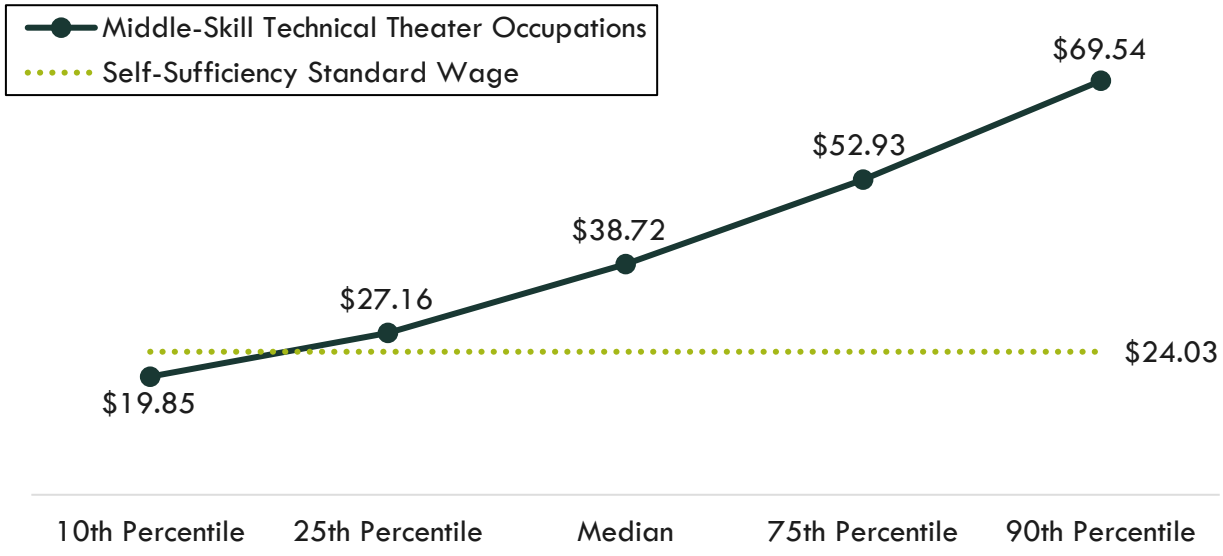
Exhibit 4: Earnings for occupations in Orange County

Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75th Percentile)	Median Annual Earnings*
Set and Exhibit Designers	$20.96	$36.59	$53.21	$76,100
Audio and Video Technicians	$19.79	$27.38	$44.29	$57,000
Sound Engineering Technicians	$20.52	$33.44	$52.06	$69,500
Lighting Technicians	$22.32	$35.56	$45.22	$74,000
Riggers	$38.85	$44.63	$48.82	$92,800

*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 $27.16; 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.

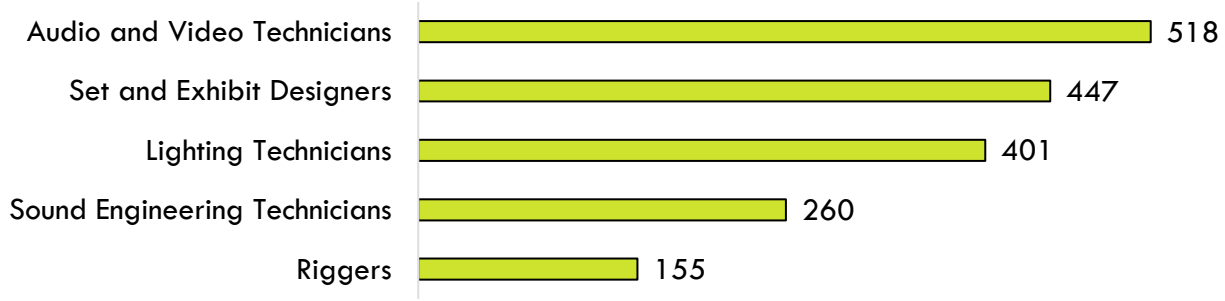
Exhibit 5: Average hourly earnings for target occupations, Los Angeles and Orange counties



JOB POSTINGS

There were 1,781 online middle-skill job postings related to technical theater 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 (29%) were for *audio and video technicians*, followed by *set and exhibit designers* (25%) and *lighting technicians* (23%).

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
• Audiovisual technicians • Home theater specialists • Wire harness engineers • Lighting technicians • Sound mixers • Technical designers	• Lifting ability • Project management • Electrical wiring • Workflow management • Creston (A/V systems) • Technical issues	• Aerotek* • Best Buy • Encore Global • Disney • NBC • AVI-SPL*

*Staffing company

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

Education Level	Job Postings	% of Job Postings
Bachelor's degree	275	46%
Associate degree	42	7%
High school diploma or vocational training	276	47%

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, the majority of annual job openings (60%) typically require a postsecondary non-degree award (Exhibit 9). Furthermore, the national-level data indicates between 38% and 88% of workers in the field have completed an associate

degree or less education 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
Set and Exhibit Designers	Bachelor's degree
Audio and Video Technicians	Postsecondary non-degree award
Sound Engineering Technicians	Postsecondary non-degree award
Lighting Technicians	High school diploma or equivalent
Riggers	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 East LA, Fullerton, and Santa Monica.

Exhibit 10: 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
1006.00	Technical Theater	Citrus	2	2	9	4
		East LA	13	38	24	25
		Glendale	-	1	3	1
		LA City	7	7	10	8
		LA Mission	-	-	4	1
		LA Pierce	-	4	11	5
		LA Valley	1	-	1	1
		Mt San Antonio	2	1	-	1
		Pasadena	-	-	3	1
		Santa Monica	8	11	15	11
		LA Subtotal	**33**	**64**	**80**	**59**
		Cypress	2	6	4	4
		Fullerton	4	26	43	24
		Golden West	-	1	3	1
		Irvine	1	4	4	3

TOP Code	Program	College	2022-23 Awards	2023-24 Awards	2024-25 Awards	3-Year Average
		Saddleback	2	1	5	3
		Santa Ana	-	-	3	1
		OC Subtotal	**9**	**38**	**62**	**36**
		Supply Total/Average	**42**	**102**	**142**	**95**

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 (82%).

Exhibit 11: Community college awards by award type, 2023-2025

Award Type	# of Awards	% of Awards
A.A./A.S. degrees	10	11%
Certificates	78	82%
Noncredit awards	7	7%
Total	**95**	**100%**

Other Postsecondary Supply

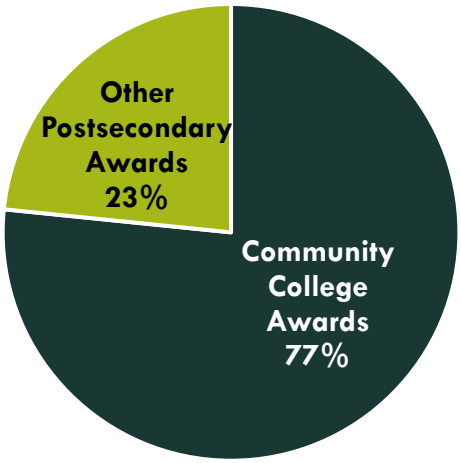
For a comprehensive regional supply analysis, it is important to consider the supply from other institutions in the region that provide training programs for middle-skill technical theater occupations. Exhibit 12 shows the number of awards conferred by these institutions in relevant programs. Due to different data collection periods, the most recent data is from 2022 to 2024. Between 2022 and 2024, other postsecondary college institutions in the region conferred an average of 29 bachelor's awards.

Exhibit 12: Other regional postsecondary awards, 2022-2024

CIP Code	Program	Postsecondary Institution	2021-22 Awards	2022-23 Awards	2023-24 Awards	3-Year Average
50.0502	Technical Theatre/ Theatre Design and Technology	CA Institute of the Arts	15	13	18	15
		Pepperdine University	1	3	3	2
		USC	8	9	14	10
		Vanguard University of Southern California	1	1	2	1
		Supply Total/Average	**25**	**26**	**37**	**29**

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 community colleges 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



APPENDIX: OCCUPATION DESCRIPTIONS

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

- ***Set and Exhibit Designers* (27-1027)** Design special exhibits and sets for film, video, television, and theater productions. May study scripts, confer with directors, and conduct research to determine appropriate architectural styles. [10]
- ***Audio and Video Technicians* (27-4011)** Set up, maintain, and dismantle audio and video equipment, such as microphones, sound speakers, connecting wires and cables, sound and mixing boards, video cameras, video monitors and servers, and related electronic equipment for live or recorded events, such as concerts, meetings, conventions, presentations, podcasts, news conferences, and sporting events.[11]
- ***Sound Engineering Technicians* (27-4014)** Assemble and operate equipment to record, synchronize, mix, edit, or reproduce sound, including music, voices, or sound effects, for theater, video, film, television, podcasts, sporting events, and other productions.[12]
- ***Lighting Technicians* (27-4015)** Set up, maintain, and dismantle light fixtures, lighting control devices, and the associated lighting electrical and rigging equipment used for photography, television, film, video, and live productions. May focus or operate light fixtures or attach color filters or other lighting accessories.[13]
- ***Riggers* (49-9096)** Set up or repair rigging for construction projects, manufacturing plants, logging yards, ships and shipyards, or for the entertainment industry. [14]

[10] Set and Exhibit Designers (bls.gov)
[11] Broadcast, Sound, and Video Technicians (bls.gov)
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Riggers (bls.gov)

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CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
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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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