



Labor Market Analysis: 1222.00 – Physical Therapist Assistant 51.2605 – Physical Therapy Technician/Aide

Physical Therapy Aide – Certificate of Achievement

Los Angeles Center of Excellence, May 2026

Program Endorsement:	Endorsed: All Criteria Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Endorsed: Some Criteria Met <input 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 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 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 middle-skill occupations in the region. Furthermore, the majority of annual openings have entry-level wages that exceed the self-sufficiency standard wage in both Los Angeles and Orange counties, and more than half of current workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree as their highest level of educational attainment.

Recommendation: Due to all 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

- 1,045 annual job openings are projected in the region through 2029. This number is greater than the three-year average of 360 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

- 69% of annual job openings for these middle-skill physical therapy occupations have entry-level wages **above** Los Angeles County’s self-sufficiency standard hourly wage (\$24.03/hour).²

Educational Attainment

- 68% of the annual job openings typically require an associate degree for middle-skill occupations related to physical therapy in the LA/OC region.
- 59% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree, according to national educational attainment data.

Community college supply

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

Other postsecondary supply

- 10 educational institutions in the LA/OC region have conferred sub-baccalaureate awards in programs that train for middle-skill physical therapy occupations over the past three years.
- 319 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 two middle-skill occupations. [For full occupation descriptions, please see Appendix.](#)

- **Physical Therapist Assistants (31-2021)** Assist physical therapists in providing physical therapy treatments and procedures. May, in accordance with state laws, assist in the development of treatment plans, carry out routine functions, document the progress of treatment, and modify specific treatments in accordance with patient status and within the scope of treatment plans established by a physical therapist. Generally, requires formal training.³
- **Physical Therapist Aides (31-2022)** Under close supervision of a physical therapist or physical therapy assistant, perform only delegated, selected, or routine tasks in specific situations. These duties include preparing the patient and the treatment area.⁴

OCCUPATIONAL DEMAND

Exhibit 1 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for these middle-skill physical therapy occupations. In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, the number of jobs related to these occupations is projected to increase by 11% through 2029. There will be more

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

³ [Physical Therapist Assistants and Aides \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov/occupations/physical-therapist-assistants-and-aides)

⁴ [Ibid.](#)

than 1,000 job openings per year through 2029 due to job growth and replacements. The majority of jobs in 2024 for these middle-skill physical therapy occupations (73%) were located in Los Angeles County.

Exhibit 1: Current employment and occupational demand, Los Angeles and Orange counties⁵

Geography	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2024-2029 Change	2024-2029 % Change	Annual Openings
Los Angeles	4,509	5,119	610	14%	787
Orange	1,695	1,740	45	3%	258
Total	6,204	6,859	655	11%	1,045

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 County⁶

Occupation	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	% Aged 55 and older	% Full Time Workers
Physical Therapist Assistants	2,942	3,457	17%	544	13%	55%
Physical Therapist Aides	1,566	1,662	6%	243	11%	55%
Total	4,509	5,119	14%	787	-	-

WAGES

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wages for these middle-skill 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, 69%, of annual openings for these target occupations have entry-level wages above the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$24.03 in Los Angeles County). Typical entry-level hourly wages are in a range between \$16.59 and \$35.88. (Exhibit 3).

⁵ Five-year change represents new job additions to the workforce. Annual openings include new jobs and replacement jobs that result from retirements and separations.

⁶ Ibid.

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

- *Physical therapist assistants*, \$35.88

Experienced *physical therapist aides* can expect to earn \$18.47, which is lower than the self-sufficiency standard. However, experienced *physical therapist assistants* can expect to earn \$35.88, which is higher than 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*
Physical Therapist Assistants	\$35.88	\$36.48	\$43.13	\$75,900
Physical Therapist Aides	\$16.59	\$17.20	\$18.47	\$35,800

*Rounded to the nearest \$100

Orange County

The majority, 66%, of annual openings for these target occupations have entry-level wages above the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$27.13 in Orange County). Typical entry-level hourly wages are in a range between \$16.23 and \$36.19 (Exhibit 4).

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

- *Physical therapist assistants*, \$36.19

Experienced *physical therapist aides* can expect to earn \$18.06, which is lower than the self-sufficiency standard. However, experienced *physical therapist assistants* can expect to earn \$43.63, which is higher than the self-sufficiency standard wage.

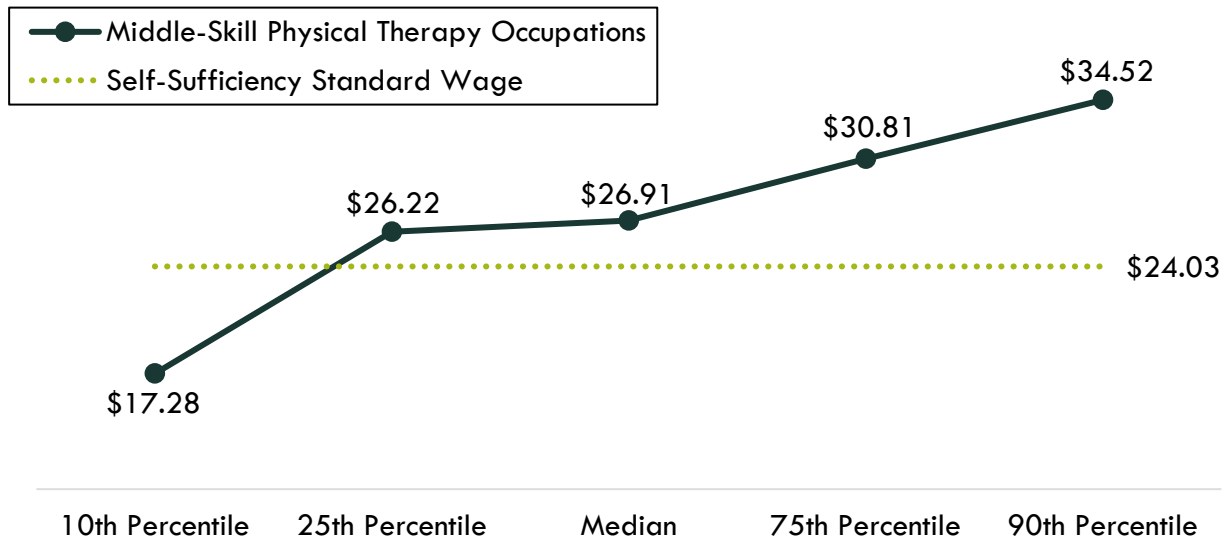
Exhibit 4: Earnings for occupations in Orange County

Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)	Median Annual Earnings*
Physical Therapist Assistants	\$36.19	\$36.91	\$43.63	\$76,800
Physical Therapist Aides	\$16.23	\$16.82	\$18.06	\$35,000

*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 \$26.22; 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.

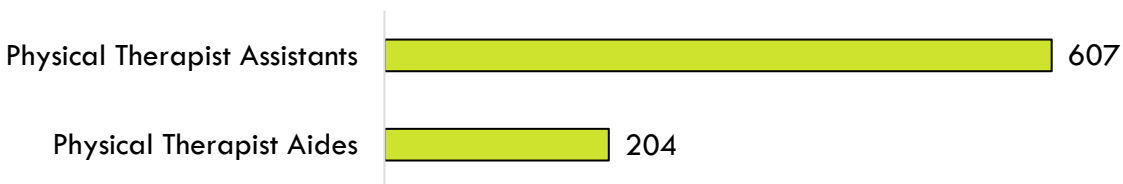
Exhibit 5: Average hourly earnings for target occupations, Los Angeles and Orange counties



JOB POSTINGS

There were 811 online job postings related to these middle-skill physical therapy 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 (75%) were for *physical therapist assistants*, followed by *physical therapist aides* (25%).

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"> Physical therapist assistants Physical therapy aides Physical therapy assistants Chiropractic assistants Physical therapy technicians Home health physical therapy assistants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical therapy Rehabilitation Patient assistance Treatment planning Patient education and counseling Exercise therapy Home health care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Rehabilitation and Sports Therapy ProSport Physical Therapy EmpowerMe Wellness CompHealth* AccentCare Kaiser Permanente In Motion O.C.

*Staffing company

In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, 37% 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	24	8%
Associate degree	132	43%
High school diploma or vocational training	148	49%

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, the majority of annual job openings (68%) typically require an associate degree (Exhibit 9). Furthermore, the national-level data indicates 64% 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
Physical Therapist Assistants	Associate degree
Physical Therapist Aides	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 the related TOP codes: Orthopedic Assistant (1214.00) and Physical Therapist Assistant (1222.00). The college with the most completions in the region is Cerritos.

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
1214.00	Orthopedic Assistant	Rio Hondo	-	10	10	7
		LA Subtotal	-	10	10	7
		Supply Subtotal/Average	-	10	10	7
1222.00	Physical Therapist Assistant	Cerritos	31	24	25	27
		East LA	11	1	10	7
		LA City	-	1	-	0
		LA Subtotal	42	26	35	34
		Supply Subtotal/Average	42	26	35	34
Supply Total/Average			42	36	45	41

Exhibit 11 displays the community college awards broken down by award type. In this case, the majority of awards issued by community colleges are associate degrees (66%).

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

Award Type	# of Awards	% of Awards
A.A./A.S. degrees	27	66%
Certificates	14	34%
Total	41	100%

Other Postsecondary Supply

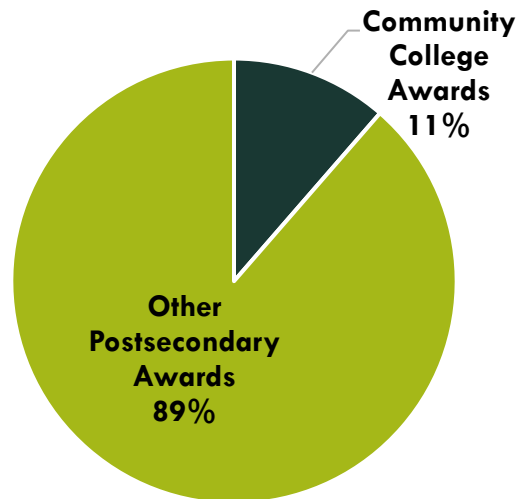
For a comprehensive regional supply analysis, it is important to consider the supply from other institutions in the region that provide training programs for these middle-skill physical therapy occupations. Exhibit 12 shows the number of awards conferred by these institutions in relevant programs. Due 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 319 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, 2022-2024

CIP Code	Program	Postsecondary Institution	2021-22 Awards	2022-23 Awards	2023-24 Awards	3-Year Average
51.0806	Physical Therapy Assistant	American Career College-Anaheim	42	47	40	43
		American College of Healthcare and Technology	17	20	14	17
		Casa Loma College-Los Angeles	30	24	24	26
		CBD College	62	65	39	55
		Concorde Career College-Garden Grove	23	38	23	28
		Concorde Career College-North Hollywood	35	16	30	27
		Stanbridge University	31	82	50	54
		Universal Healthcare Careers College	31	39	60	43
51.2605	Physical Therapy Technician/Aide	Healthcare Career College	-	2	-	1
		Southern California Health Institute	26	27	20	24
Supply Total/Average			297	360	300	319

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



APPENDIX: OCCUPATION DESCRIPTIONS

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

- **Physical Therapist Assistants (31-2021)** Assist physical therapists in providing physical therapy treatments and procedures. May, in accordance with state laws, assist in the development of treatment plans, carry out routine functions, document the progress of treatment, and modify specific treatments in accordance with patient status and within the scope of treatment plans established by a physical therapist. Generally, requires formal training.⁷
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⁷ [Physical Therapist Assistants and Aides \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov)

⁸ [Ibid.](#)

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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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