



Labor Market Analysis for Program Recommendation

Dental Assistant Occupations

Silicon Valley Subregion

Prepared by the Bay Region Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research

Certificate Program

August 2026

Recommendation Based on Labor Market Data: ☒ Yes ☐ With Reservations ☐ No		
	Earning Wage Meets Living Wage	Meets Demand
Bay Region	Entry Level Hourly Wage- \$27 Mid-Career Hourly Wage- \$29 Mid-Career Hourly Wage at or above the Bay Living Wage (\$27)? ☒ Yes ☐ No	Demand: 1,741 Supply: 568 (33% of Demand is Met) Gap: 1173 In-Demand? ☒ Yes ☐ No
Silicon Valley Subregion	Entry Level Hourly Wage- \$27 Mid-Career Hourly Wage- \$31 Mid-Career Hourly Wage at or above the Subregion Living Wage (\$30)? ☒ Yes ☐ No	Demand: 415 Supply: 183 (44% of Demand is Met) Gap: 232 In-Demand? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Note: An occupation is considered to provide a living wage if the mid-career wage is at or above the amount required for a single adult to be economically self-sufficient within a specified region. As a rule of thumb, an occupation will be considered **in-demand** when the supply is less than 75% of the demand **and** the labor market gap exceeds 40 openings (a reasonable regional threshold for starting a new program), but this approach may not apply in all cases. For definitions of demand, supply, and living wage, please scroll to the bottom of the report under **Definitions**.

Recommendation

The labor market data supports this proposed program. The occupations meet both the Bay Region and Silicon Valley subregion living wage at the entry and mid-career levels. An additional 1,173 students are needed in the Bay Region and 232 students in the Silicon Valley subregion to complete their program. Lastly, only 33% of labor market demand is being met in the Bay Region, and 44% of demand is being met in the Silicon Valley subregion overall.

Introduction

This report provides student outcomes data on employment and earnings for TOP 1240.10 - Dental Assistant programs in the state and region. It is recommended that these data be reviewed to better understand how outcomes for students taking courses on this TOP code compare to potentially similar programs at subregion in the state and region.

This report profiles Dental Assistant Occupations in the 12 county Bay Region and in the Silicon Valley subregion. The occupations classified as middle-skill occupations require a certificate, or an associate degree, or it may require a bachelor's degree, but 33% or fewer of current workers in these roles hold one.

- **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 for oral healthcare procedures. May perform administrative duties such as scheduling appointments, maintaining medical records, billing, and coding information for insurance purposes.
 - Typical Entry-Level Educational: Postsecondary nondegree award
 - Skill Level: Middle-Skill
 - Work Experience Required: None
 - Percentage of individuals 25+ with an associate degree, certificate, or some postsecondary coursework as their highest level of education attainment: 56%

Occupational Demand

Table 1. Employment Outlook for Dental Assistant Occupations in the Bay Region

Occupation	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	5-yr Change	5-yr % Change	5-yr Total Openings	Annual Openings	Entry Level Hourly	Mid-Career Hourly Wage
Dental Assistants	12,577	13,061	484	4%	8,704	1,741	\$27	\$29
Total	12,577	13,061	484	4%	8,704	1,741	\$27	\$29

Source: Lightcast 2026.1

The Bay Region includes: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano and Sonoma Counties

Table 2. Employment Outlook for Dental Assistant Occupations in the Silicon Valley Subregion

Occupation	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	5-yr Change	5-yr % Change	5-yr Total Openings	Annual Openings	Entry Level Hourly	Mid-Career Hourly Wage
Dental Assistants	2,939	3,095	156	5%	2,075	415	\$27	\$31
Total	2,939	3,095	156	5%	2,075	415	\$27	\$31

Source: Lightcast 2026.1

Silicon Valley Subregion includes: Santa Clara Counties

Job Postings in the Bay Region and Silicon Valley Subregion

Table 3. Number of Job Postings by Occupation for the latest 12 months

Occupation	Bay Region	Silicon Valley
Dental Assistants	4,178	925
Source: Lightcast 2026.1; "Job Posting Analytics." Aug. 2025 - Jul. 2026		

Table 4a. Top Job Titles in Job Postings for Dental Assistant Occupations in the Bay Region

Title	Bay	Title	Bay
Dental Assistants	1,647	Training Assistants	54
Registered Dental Assistants	962	Dental Assistants/Front Desk	52
Dental Assistants/Registered Dental Assistants	236	Pediatric Dental Assistants	45
Orthodontic Dental Assistants	116	Oral Surgery Assistants	39
Dental Assistant Instructors	110	Endodontic Dental Assistants	35
Assistant Service Experience Managers	109	Sterilization Assistants	21
Orthodontic Assistants	101	Certification Experts	21
Expanded Duties Dental Assistants	65	Lead Dental Assistants	20
Dental Assistants/Receptionist	58	Training Program Managers	17
Source: Lightcast 2026.1; "Job Posting Analytics." Aug. 2025 - Jul. 2026			

Table 4b. Top Job Titles in Job Posting for Dental Assistant Occupations in the Silicon Valley Subregion

Title	Silicon Valley	Title	Silicon Valley
Dental Assistants	384	Endodontic Dental Assistants	11
Registered Dental Assistants	210	Administrative Assistants	9
Dental Assistants/Registered Dental Assistants	51	Oral Surgery Assistants	8
Orthodontic Assistants	25	Floater	8
Dental Assistants/Receptionist	21	Pediatric Dental Assistants	8
Orthodontic Dental Assistants	20	Sterilization Assistants	7
Expanded Duties Dental Assistants	18	Front Desk Receptionists	6
Dental Assistant Instructors	15	Floor Supervisors	6
Dental Assistants/Front Desk	11	Dental Receptionists/Dental Assistants	6
Source: Lightcast 2026.1; "Job Posting Analytics." Aug. 2025 - Jul. 2026			

Industry Concentration

Table 5. Industries Hiring for Dental Assistant Occupations in the Bay Region

Industry - 6 Digit NAICS (No. American Industry Classification) Codes	Jobs in Industry (2024)	Jobs in Industry (2029)	% Change (2024-29)	% Occupation Group in Industry (2024)
Offices of Dentists	11,567	11,962	3%	92%
HMO Medical Centers	341	395	16%	3%
Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists)	110	111	1%	1%
Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools	75	79	5%	1%
All Other Outpatient Care Centers	73	92	25%	1%
Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools (State Government)	48	46	-4%	0%
Freestanding Ambulatory Surgical and Emergency Centers	45	50	11%	0%
Federal Government, Civilian, Excluding Postal Service	37	36	-3%	0%
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	32	33	6%	0%
Hospitals (Local Government)	26	28	10%	0%

Source: Lightcast 2026.1

Table 6. Top Employers Posting Dental Assistant Occupations in the Bay Region and the Silicon Valley Subregion

Employer	Bay	Employer	Silicon Valley
Pds Health	100	Sonrava Health	20
Sonrava Health	74	Western Dental Orthodontics	13
Western Dental Orthodontics	68	Gentle Dental	11
La Clinica De La Raza	45	Amergis	11
Choice Healthcare Services	33	Premise Health	11
Nursing Home Dental Care	26	Pds Health	10

Source: Lightcast 2026.1; "Job Posting Analytics." Aug. 2025 - Jul. 2026

Educational Supply

There are ten community colleges in the Bay Region issuing 208 awards on average annually (last 3 years ending 2024-25) on TOP 1240.10 - Dental Assistant. In the Silicon Valley subregion, there are two community colleges that issued 62 awards on average annually (last 3 years) on this TOP code.

There are eight other CTE educational institutions in the Bay Region issuing 360 awards on average annually (last 3 years ending 2023-24) on CIP 51.0601 - Dental Assisting/Assistant. There is one other CTE educational institution in the Silicon Valley subregion issuing 121 awards on average annually (last 3 years) on this CIP code.

Table 7a. Community College Awards on TOP 1240.10 - Dental Assistant in the Bay Region

College	Subregion	Associate Degree	High unit Certificate	Low unit Certificate	Noncredit award	Total
Alameda	East Bay	10	15	0	0	25
Cabrillo	SC-Monterey	0	0	0	5	5
Diablo Valley	East Bay	11	18	0	0	29
Foothill	Silicon Valley	10	10	0	0	20
Marin	North Bay	3	17	0	0	20
Monterey	SC-Monterey	8	0	8	0	16
San Francisco	Mid-Peninsula	3	12	0	0	15
San Jose City	Silicon Valley	7	35	0	0	42
San Mateo	Mid-Peninsula	8	12	0	0	20
Santa Rosa	North Bay	0	0	16	0	16
Total	-	60	119	24	5	208

Source: Data Mart

Note: The annual average for awards is 2022-23 to 2024-25.

Table 7b. Other CTE Institutions Awards on CIP 51.0601- Dental Assisting/Assistant. in the Bay Region

College	Subregion	Associate degree	Certificates of at least 1 but less than 2 years	Certificates of less than 1 year	Total
Blake Austin College	North Bay	0	15	0	15
Carrington College-Pleasant Hill Campus	East Bay	0	38	0	38
Carrington College-San Jose	Silicon Valley	51	70	0	121
Carrington College-San Leandro Campus	East Bay	0	66	0	66
Contra Costa Medical Career College	East Bay	0	7	9	16
Gurnick Academy of Medical Arts	Mid-Peninsula	0	23	0	23
Mt. Diablo Adult Education-Mt. Diablo USD	East Bay	0	18	0	18
Unitek College	East Bay	0	0	63	63
Total	-	51	237	72	360

Source: IPEDS

Note: The annual average for awards is 2021-22 to 2023-24.

Gap Analysis

Based on the data included in this report, there is a labor market gap in the Bay Region with 1,741 annual openings for the Dental Assistant occupational cluster and 568 annual (3-year average) awards for an annual undersupply of 1,173 students. In the Silicon Valley subregion, there is also a gap with 415 annual openings and 183 annual (3-year average) awards for an annual undersupply of 232 students.

Student Outcomes

Table 8. Four Employment Outcomes Metrics for Students Who Took Courses on TOP 1240.10 - Dental Assistant

Metric Outcomes	Bay All CTE Program	State 1240.10	Bay 1240.10	Silicon Valley 1240.10
Students with a Job Closely Related to Their Field of Study	75%	80%	89%	NA

Metric Outcomes	Bay All CTE Program	State 1240.10	Bay 1240.10	Silicon Valley 1240.10
Median Annual Earnings for SWP Exiting Students	\$58,379	\$34,894	\$40,136	\$38,670
Median Change in Earnings for SWP Exiting Students	31%	65%	104%	80%
Exiting Students Who Attained the Living Wage	50%	15%	16%	NA

Source: DataVista Program Median of 2020 to 2022.

Skills, Certifications and Education

Table 9. Top Skills in Job Postings for Dental Assistant Occupations in the Bay Region

Skill	Posting	Skill	Posting
Sterilization	1,464	Dental Care	542
Infection Control	1,250	Coronal Polishing	527
Dentistry	1,200	Setting Appointments	516
Dental Assisting	944	Orthodontics	515
Oral Hygiene	906	Disinfecting	481
Patient Education And Counseling	853	Vital Signs	458
Dental Procedures	791	Patient Flow	455
Dental Radiography	774	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	448
Dentrix	706	Front Office	445
Medical Records	589	Oral Health	424

Source: Lightcast 2026.1; "Job Posting Analytics." Aug. 2025 - Jul. 2026

Table 10. Certifications in Job Postings for Dental Assistant Occupations in the Bay Region

Certification	Posting	Certification	Posting
Radiology Certification	564	American Red Cross (ARC) Certification	9
Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification	450	Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Certification	6
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	432	Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) Certification	4
First Aid Certification	27	ARRT Radiography (R) Certification	3
Nitrous Oxide Certification	19		

Source: Lightcast 2026.1; "Job Posting Analytics." Aug. 2025 - Jul. 2026

Table 11. Education Requirements for Dental Assistant Occupations in the Bay Region

Education Level	Job Postings	% of Total
High school or GED	1,011	86%
Associate degree	99	8%
Bachelor's degree & higher	67	6%

Source: Lightcast 2026.1; "Job Posting Analytics." Aug. 2025 - Jul. 2026

Note: 74% of records have been excluded because they do not include a degree level. As a result, the chart above may not be representative of the full sample.

Methodology

Occupations for this report were identified by use of job descriptions and skills listed in O*Net. Labor demand data is sourced from Lightcast occupation and job postings data. Educational supply and student outcomes data is retrieved from multiple sources, including CCCCO Data Mart and CTE Launchboard.

Definitions

Demand refers to average annual openings which includes a combination of both [new jobs and replacement jobs](#) between 2024 to 2029. New jobs represent the total number of additional workers required in an occupation, calculated as the difference between the current number of workers and the projected number of unfilled positions. Replacements are jobs that will need to be filled by [new hires](#) due to existing workers leaving the occupation. The average annual openings figure is derived by dividing total openings (2024 to 2029) by five years.

Supply refers to the average number of [graduates](#) between academic years 2021–2022 and 2023–2024. Graduates include students from community colleges, other two-year private and public institutions, as well as four-year institutions.

Living wage refers to the amount of income required for working families to meet basic needs at a minimally adequate level, considering family composition, ages of children, and geographic differences in costs based on the Self-Sufficiency Standard methodology.

Entry-level wages are the hourly earnings paid to workers who are newly entering an occupation.

Mid-career wages are the hourly earnings paid to workers who have accumulated several years of experience in an occupation, reflecting increased productivity, skill proficiency, and responsibility beyond entry-level roles but short of late-career or senior positions.

Sources

O*Net Online

Lightcast

CTE LaunchBoard www.calpassplus.org

Statewide CTE Outcomes Survey

Employment Development Department Unemployment Insurance Dataset

CCCO Data Mart

Contacts

For more information, please contact:

- Yumi Huang, Research Analyst, Bay Region Center of Excellence, yumi@baccc.net or (831) 275-0043
- Marcela Reyes, Director, Research and Center of Excellence, marcela@baccc.net or (831) 219-8875