

☒ Endorsed: All Criteria Met			
Program LMI Endorsement Criteria			
	Met ☒	Partially Met ☐	Not Met ☐
Supply Gap:	There are projected to be 690 annual job openings throughout Los Angeles and Orange counties for <i>physical therapist assistants</i> , which is more than the 328 awards conferred by educational institutions .		
Self-Sufficiency Standard Living Wage ¹ :	Met ☒	Partially Met ☐	Not Met ☐
	The typical entry-level wage for <i>physical therapist assistants</i> is \$37.66 , which is above the OC living wage of \$27.13 .		
Education:	Met ☒	Partially Met ☐	Not Met ☐
	Typical education requirement for <i>physical therapist assistants</i> is an associate degree and 57% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree as their highest level of education .		

This LMA brief is valid for 12 months and expires September 2027.

Summary

The Orange County Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research (OC COE) prepared this report to determine whether there is a supply gap in the Los Angeles and Orange counties regional labor markets related to one occupation:

- Middle-Skill
 - *Physical Therapist Assistants (31-2021)*

Based on the available data, there appears to be a supply gap for *physical therapist assistants*, typical education requirements for this occupation align with a community college education, and entry-level wages are above the Self-Sufficiency Standard living wage. **Therefore, due to all regional labor market criteria being met, the COE endorses this proposed program.**

¹ The living wage endorsement criteria in this report uses the University of Washington's Center for Women's Welfare Self-Sufficiency Standard, which the COE refers to as a living wage; Orange County's living wage of \$27.13, was last updated in March 2024.

Exhibit 1 lists the occupational demand, supply, typical entry-level education, and educational attainment for the middle-skill occupation included in this report.

Exhibit 1: Labor Market Endorsement Summary

Occupation (SOC)	Demand (Annual Openings)	Supply (CC and Non-CC)	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25th Percentile)	Typical Entry-Level Education	Community College Educational Attainment
Physical Therapist Assistants (31-2021)	LA: 526 OC: 164	LA: 203 OC: 125	OC: \$37.66	Associate degree	57%
Total	690	328	N/A	N/A	N/A

Demand

- In Los Angeles and Orange counties, the number of jobs related to *physical therapist assistants* is projected to increase 14% through 2030, equating to 690 annual job openings.
- Hourly entry-level wages for *physical therapist assistants* are \$37.66 in Orange County, which is above the Self-Sufficiency Standard living wage.
- There were 2,392 online job postings for *physical therapist assistants* over the past 12 months. The highest number of postings were for physical therapist assistants, physical therapy assistants, and home health physical therapy assistants.
- The typical entry-level education for *physical therapist assistants* is an associate degree.
- Approximately 57% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree as their highest level of educational attainment.

Supply

- Between 2022 to 2024, an average of 34 awards were conferred by 3 community colleges for the middle-skill occupation in Los Angeles and Orange counties.
- From 2021 to 2024, non-community college institutions conferred an average of 294 awards for the middle-skill occupation.
- In the 2023-24 academic year, there is insufficient data to determine if Orange County community college students that exited physical therapist assistant programs attained the regional living wage.
- In 2022-23, there is insufficient data to determine the percentage of Orange County physical therapist assistant students that exited their programs and worked a job closely related to their field of study.

Demand

Occupational Projections

Exhibit 2 shows the annual percentage change in jobs for *physical therapist assistants* from 2020 through 2030. Beginning in 2025, Orange County job levels are projected to grow at a similar rate as all occupations through 2030.

Exhibit 2: Annual Percentage Change in Jobs for *Physical Therapist Assistants*, 2020-2030

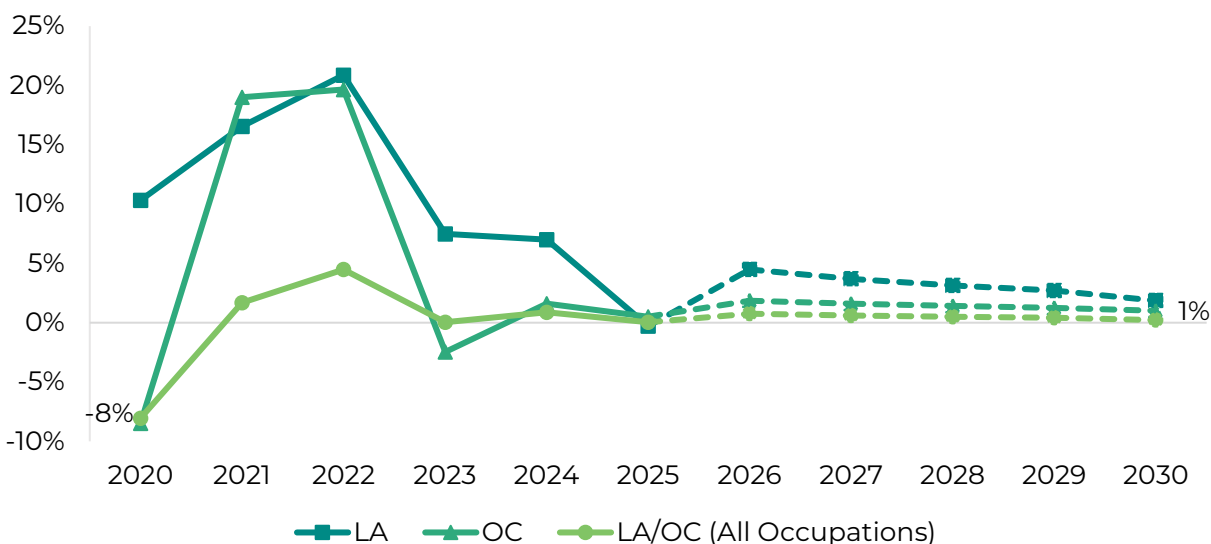


Exhibit 3 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for *physical therapist assistants*. In Los Angeles and Orange counties, the number of jobs related to this occupation is projected to increase 14% through 2030. There is projected to be 690 jobs available annually.

Exhibit 3: Middle-Skill Occupational Demand in Los Angeles and Orange Counties²

Geography	2025 Jobs	2030 Jobs	2025-2030 Change	2025-2030 % Change	Annual Openings
Los Angeles	2,847	3,329	481	17%	526
Orange	1,027	1,102	75	7%	164
Total	3,874	4,431	557	14%	690

Wages

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wage for *physical therapist assistants* in Orange County as it relates to the county's living wage. Los Angeles County wages are included below to provide a complete analysis of the LA/OC region.

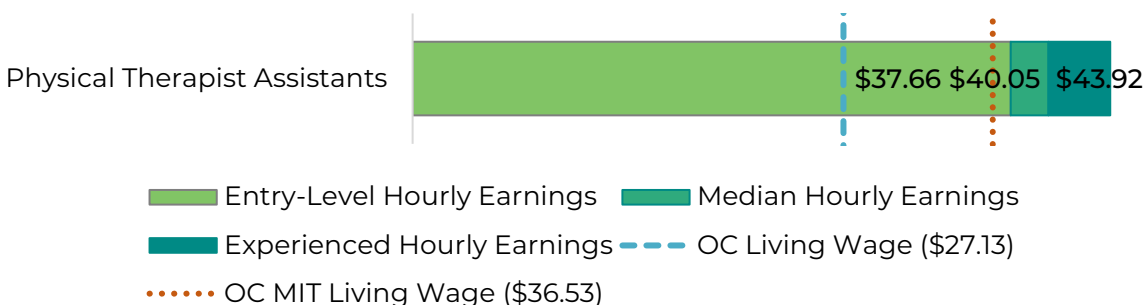
In addition to the Self Sufficiency Standard living wage, data for the MIT Living Wage (updated on February 15, 2026) is provided as a reference. Currently, the MIT Living Wage in Orange County is \$36.53. Both figures account for geographic-specific costs of necessities

² Five-year change represents new job additions to the workforce. Annual openings include new jobs and replacement jobs that result from retirements and separations.

such as housing, food, health care, and transportation to assess the cost of living, and are notated in the exhibits below.

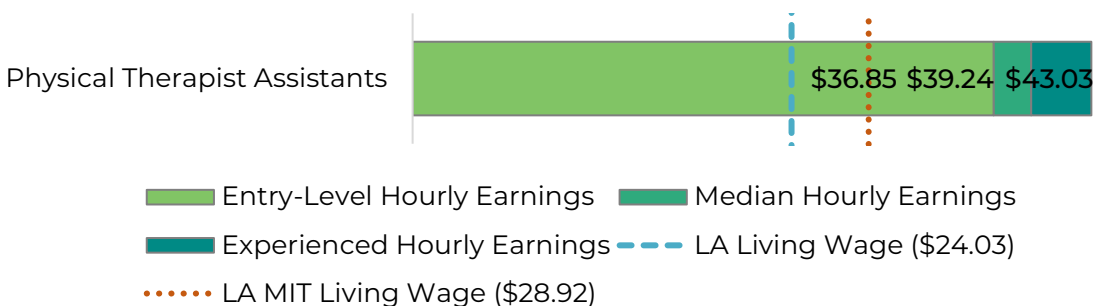
In Orange County, the typical entry-level wage for *physical therapist assistants* is \$37.66, which is above the Self-Sufficiency living wage of \$27.13 for a single adult. Exhibit 4 shows the wage range for *physical therapist assistants* in Orange County and how it compares to the regional living wage.

Exhibit 4: Wages by Occupation in Orange County



In Los Angeles County, the typical entry-level wage for *physical therapist assistants* is \$36.85, which is above the Self-Sufficiency living wage of \$24.03 for a single adult. Exhibit 5 shows the wage range for *physical therapist assistants* in Los Angeles County and how it compares to the regional living wage.

Exhibit 5: Wages by Occupation in Los Angeles County



Resilient Jobs and U.S. News & World Report Best Jobs

Exhibit 6 shows if the occupation is considered an Orange County Great Recession-Resilient, COVID-19 Pandemic Recession-Resilient Job, or a 2026 U.S. News & World Report (USN&WR) Best Job³. *Physical therapist assistants* meet the criteria for two of the three designations.

Exhibit 6: Resilient Jobs and USN&WR Best Jobs Designations

Occupation	Great Recession-Resilient Job	COVID-19 Pandemic Recession-Resilient Job	2026 USN&WR Best Job
Physical Therapist Assistants	☒	☐	☒

³ "100 Best Jobs," U.S. News & World Report, accessed January 12, 2026, <https://money.usnews.com/careers/best-jobs/rankings/the-100-best-jobs>.

Job Postings

Important Job Postings Data Note: There are limitations when analyzing job postings. A single job posting may not represent a single job opening for a variety of reasons.

There were 2,392 online job postings related to *physical therapist assistants* listed in the past 12 months. Exhibit 7 shows the number of job postings by occupation.

Exhibit 7: Number of Job Postings by Occupation (n=2,392)

Occupation	Job Postings	Percentage of Job Postings
<i>Physical Therapist Assistants</i>	2,392	100%
Total Postings	2,392	100%

The top job titles for *physical therapist assistants* in the region, by number of job postings, are shown in Exhibit 8.

Exhibit 8: Top Job Titles by Number of Job Postings for the Middle-Skill Occupation (n=2,392)

Job Titles	Job Postings	Percentage
Physical Therapist Assistants	963	40%
Physical Therapy Assistants	563	24%
Home Health Physical Therapy Assistants	113	5%
Home Health Physical Therapists	108	5%
Chiropractic Assistants	85	4%
Physical Therapy Technicians	57	2%
Chiropractic Assistants/Receptionists	46	2%
Outpatient Physical Therapists	42	2%
Licensed Physical Therapist Assistants	36	2%
Licensed Physical Therapy Assistants	34	1%

The top employers for *physical therapist assistants* in the region, by number of job postings, are shown in Exhibit 9.

Exhibit 9: Top Employers by Number of Job Postings for the Middle-Skill Occupation (n=2,392)

Employer	Job Postings	Percentage of Job Postings
AMN Healthcare	51	2%
CompHealth	40	2%
Empowerme Wellness	40	2%
Prospert Physical Therapy	37	2%
Omni Therapy	34	1%
Select Physical Therapy	34	1%
Genesis HealthCare	31	1%
Interface Rehab	28	1%
FeldCare Connects	27	1%
Select Medical	26	1%

The top specialized, soft, and computer skills for *physical therapist assistants* listed by those most frequently mentioned in job postings (denoted in parentheses) are shown in Exhibit 10.

Exhibit 10: Top Skills by Number of Job Postings for the Middle-Skill Occupation (n=2,392)

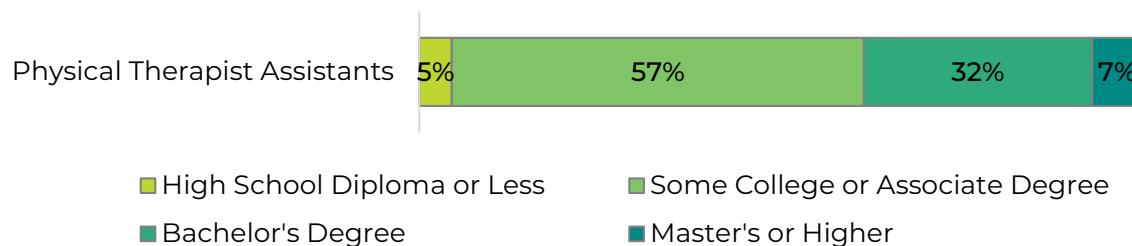
Top Specialized Skills	Top Soft Skills	Top Computer Skills
Physical Therapy (1,787)	Communication (847)	Microsoft Office (78)
Rehabilitation (842)	Scheduling (285)	Patient Management Software (26)
Treatment Planning (696)	Interpersonal Communications (222)	Productivity Software (22)
Home Health Care (474)	Customer Service (204)	Google Workspace (11)
Patient Treatment (452)	Management (197)	Learning Management Systems (11)
Patient Education And Counseling (423)	Computer Literacy (172)	Microsoft Excel (10)
Exercise Therapy (390)	Compassion (165)	Microsoft Outlook (9)
Nursing (270)	Organizational Skills (162)	Office Ally (9)
Patient Assistance (270)	Detail Oriented (152)	Epic EMR (7)
Orthopedics (247)	Mathematics (141)	Microsoft PowerPoint (7)

Educational Attainment

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists an associate degree as the typical entry-level education for *physical therapist assistants*.

The national-level educational attainment data indicates that 57% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree as their highest level of education. Exhibit 11 shows the educational attainment for this occupation.

Exhibit 11: National-level Educational Attainment for Occupations



Requested Minimum Education Requirement

In Los Angeles and Orange Counties, 31% (743) of job postings for *physical therapist assistants* included a stated minimum education requirement:

- 84% (627) requested a high school diploma or associate degree
- 13% (98) requested a bachelor's degree

Educational Supply

The following tables display the total educational supply for the TOP and CIP codes associated with the middle-skill occupation.

Community College Supply

Exhibit 12 shows the three-year average number of awards conferred by community colleges in the related TOP code: Physical Therapist Assistant (1222.00).

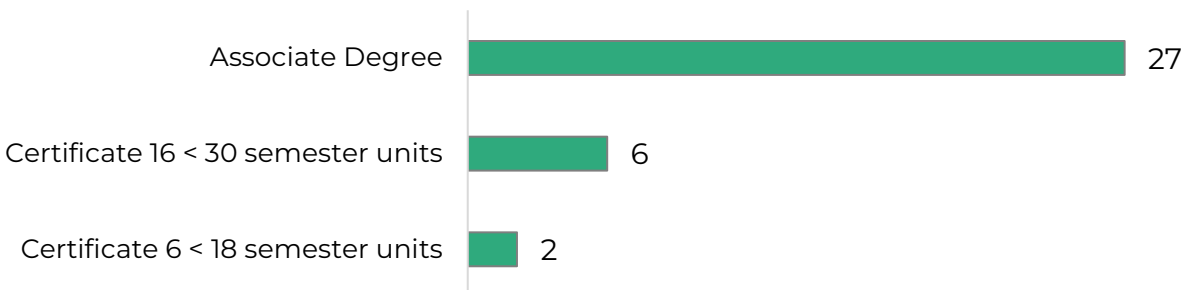
The colleges with the most completions in the region are Cerritos (27) and East LA (7). Over the past 12 months, there were no related program recommendation requests from regional community colleges.

Exhibit 12: Regional Community College Awards (Certificates and Degrees), 2022-2025

TOP Code	Program	College	2022-2023 Awards	2023-2024 Awards	2024-2025 Awards	3-Year Award Average
1222.00	Physical Therapist Assistant	Cerritos	31	24	25	27
		East LA	11	1	10	7
		LA City	0	1	0	0
Supply Total/Average			42	26	35	34

Exhibit 13 shows the annual average community college awards by type from 2022-23 to 2024-25. The plurality of the awards are for associate degree, followed by certificate 16 to 30 semester units then certificate 6 to 18 semester units.

Exhibit 13: Annual Average Community College Awards by Type, 2022-2025



Community College Student Outcomes

Exhibit 14 shows the Strong Workforce Program (SWP) metrics for physical therapist assistant programs in South Orange County Community College District (SOCCCD), the Orange County Region, and California. Per California Community Colleges Curriculum Inventory (COCI), Orange County does not offer any programs under the TOP code: physical therapist assistant (1222.00). Therefore, there is insufficient data to determine strong workforce program metrics.

Exhibit 14: Physical Therapist Assistant (1222.00) Strong Workforce Program Metrics, 2022-25⁴

SWP Metric	SOCCCD	OC Region	California
SWP Students	N/A	N/A	1,325
SWP Students Who Earned 9 or More Career Education Units in the District in a Single Year	N/A	N/A	33%
SWP Students Who Completed a Noncredit CTE or Workforce Preparation Course	N/A	N/A	49%
SWP Students Who Earned a Degree or Certificate or Attained Apprenticeship Journey Status	N/A	N/A	170
SWP Students Who Transferred to a Four-Year Postsecondary Institution (2023-24)	N/A	N/A	33
SWP Students with a Job Closely Related to Their Field of Study (2022-23)	N/A	N/A	88%
Median Annual Earnings for SWP Exiting Students (2023-24)	N/A	N/A	\$47,676 (\$22.92)
Median Change in Earnings for SWP Exiting Students (2023-24)	N/A	N/A	52%
SWP Exiting Students Who Attained the Living Wage (2023-24)	N/A	N/A	56%

Non-Community College Supply

To comprehensively analyze the regional supply, it is crucial to include data from other institutions offering physical therapist assistant programs. Exhibit 15 displays the annual and three-year average awards granted by these institutions under the related Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes: Physical Therapy Assistant (51.0806).

The available data covers 2021 to 2024. During this period, non-community college institutions in the region conferred an average of 294 awards annually in related programs.

Exhibit 15: Regional Non-Community College Awards, 2021-2024

CIP Code	Program	College	2021-2022 Awards	2022-2023 Awards	2023-2024 Awards	3-Year Award Average
51.0806	Physical Therapy Assistant	American Career College-Anaheim	42	47	40	43
		American College of Healthcare and Technology	17	20	14	17
		ATI College-Whittier	0	0	0	0
		Casa Loma College-Los Angeles	30	24	24	26

⁴ All SWP metrics are for 2024-25 unless otherwise noted.

CIP Code	Program	College	2021-2022 Awards	2022-2023 Awards	2023-2024 Awards	3-Year Award Average
		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
		University of La Verne	545	559	465	523
		University of Massachusetts Global	352	433	467	417
Supply Total/Average			271	331	280	294

Regional Demographics

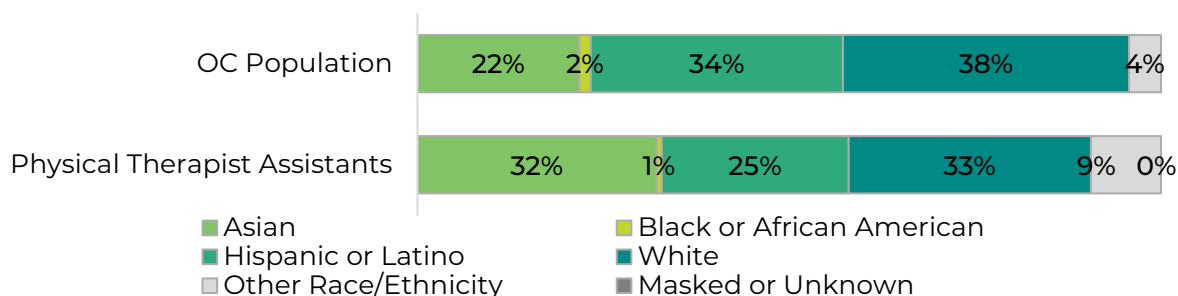
The following section presents occupational, community college program, and population demographic data for Orange County. This comparison can help identify possible equity gaps between the local workforce and the student pipeline who are preparing for these occupations. These insights can inform program development, outreach, and support strategies to better align community college programs with current labor market needs.

Ethnicity

Exhibit 16 compares the ethnicity of the Orange County community with the occupation-specific data for *physical therapist assistants*.

A third (32%) of *physical therapist assistants* are Asian, which is greater than their representation in the Orange County community, suggesting many of these workers are coming from out of the area. In contrast, there are greater numbers of Hispanic or Latino and White individuals in the community than are represented in the workforce, however, these differences are not large.

Exhibit 16: Program and County Demographics by Ethnicity

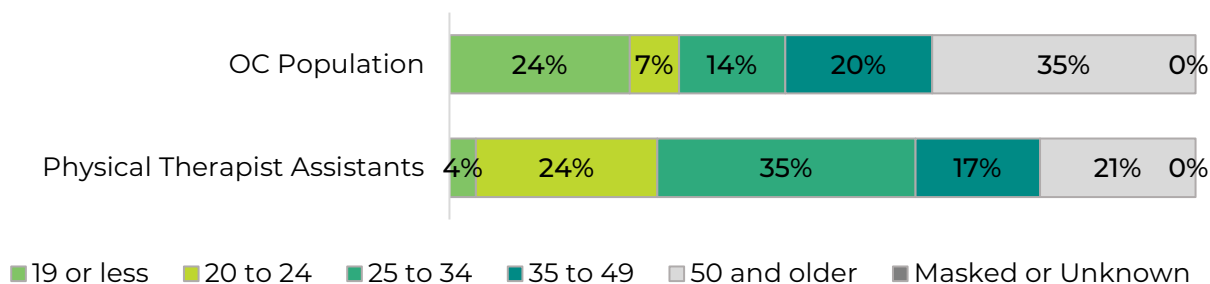


Age

Exhibit 17 compares the age of the overall Orange County population and occupation-specific data for *physical therapist assistants*.

Over half (59%) of *physical therapist assistants* are aged 20 to 34, which is far higher than the overall population with only 21% in this age group. This suggests that the majority of *physical therapist assistants* do not live in the area they service.

Exhibit 17: Program and County Demographics by Age

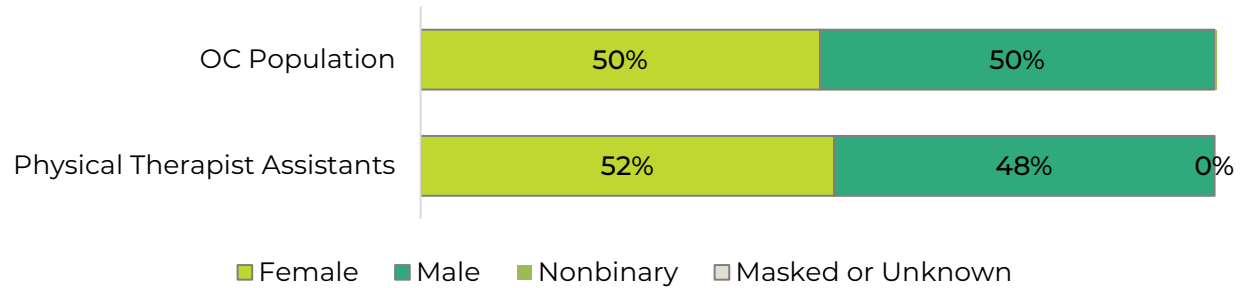


Sex

Exhibit 18 compares the sex of the overall Orange County population and occupation-specific data for *physical therapist assistants*.

The population is split evenly between women and men for both the Orange County population and *physical therapist assistants*.

Exhibit 18: Program and County Demographics by Sex



Appendix A: Methodology

OC COE prepared this report by analyzing occupational and educational program data. Occupational data comes from Lightcast, a labor market analytics firm which compiles information from the California Employment Development Department (EDD), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and other agencies. Analysis of emerging occupations is predicated on online job postings data combined with Occupational Information Network (O*NET) profile descriptions. Program supply data was sourced from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Data Mart (MIS Data Mart) (datamart.cccco.edu) and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data), also known as IPEDS, which was integrated into the COE's Supply Table. (IPEDS).

Using a TOP-SOC crosswalk, the OC COE identified middle-skill jobs for which programs within these TOP codes train. Middle-skill jobs include:

- All occupations that have 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.

The OC COE determined labor market supply for each occupation (SOC code) by analyzing the number of 3-year average program completers or awards in related TOP and CIP codes. TOP code data comes from MIS Data Mart and CIP code data comes from the IPEDS. The TOP is a system of numerical codes used at the state level to collect and report information on California community college programs and courses throughout the state that have similar outcomes. CIP codes are a taxonomy of academic disciplines at institutions of higher education throughout the United States and Canada. The California Community Colleges are the only system that use TOP codes.

The analysis reflects labor market demand for occupations closely related to the proposed program as expressed by the requesting college in consultation with the OC COE. Traditional labor market data was used to assess current and projected employment based on data trends for detailed occupations, as well as annual average awards granted by regional postsecondary educational institutions. Real-time labor market information (online job postings) assesses employer preferences but cannot be used to measure the quantity of open positions, number of jobs, or annual openings.

All findings are based on the most current available data and a combination of primary and secondary sources. While care was taken to ensure accuracy, the OC COE, its host district, and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office are not responsible for individual decisions made based on this report.

Appendix B: Data Sources

Data Type	Source
Occupational Projections, Wages, and Job Postings	Traditional and real-time labor market information are captured using data from Lightcast (v.2026.3), a labor market analytics firm.
Living Wage	Per the CCCC's this report's endorsement criteria uses the University of Washington's Center for Women's Welfare Self-Sufficiency Standard last updated in March 2024, which is \$27.13 per hour (\$57,294 annually) in Orange County. The MIT Living Wage, updated on February 15, 2026, is a nationally recognized living wage metric and is provided for reference. The current MIT Living Wage in Orange County is \$36.53.
Typical Education and Training Requirements, and Educational Attainment	The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) uses a system to assign categories for entry-level education, work experience in a related occupation, and typical on-the-job training to each occupation for which BLS publishes projections data.
Emerging Occupation Descriptions, Additional Education Requirements, and Employer Preferences	The O*NET database includes information on skills, abilities, knowledges, work activities, and interests associated with occupations.
Educational Supply	The CCCCO Data Mart provides information about students, courses, student services, outcomes and faculty and staff. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Integrated Data System (IPEDS) collects data on the number of postsecondary awards earned (completions).
Student Metrics and Demographics	Data Vista , a statewide data system supported by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office provides data on progress, success, employment, and earnings outcomes for California community college students.
Population and Occupation Demographics	The Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) is the premier source for detailed population and housing information. Data is sourced from IPUMS USA, a database providing access to ACS and other Census Bureau data products.

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September 2026

