

⚠ Endorsed: Caution Advised			
Program LMI Endorsement Criteria			
	Met ☒	Partially Met ☐	Not Met ☐
Supply Gap:	There are projected to be 2,851 annual job openings throughout Los Angeles and Orange counties for <i>paralegals and legal assistants</i> , which is more than the 723 awards conferred by educational institutions .		
Self-Sufficiency Standard Living Wage ¹ :	Met ☐	Partially Met ☐	Not Met ☒
	The typical entry-level wage for <i>paralegals and legal assistants</i> is \$25.53 , which is below the OC living wage of \$27.13 .		
Education:	Met ☒	Partially Met ☐	Not Met ☐
	Typical education requirement for <i>paralegals and legal assistants</i> is an associate degree and 39% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree as their highest level of education .		

This LMA brief for program recommendation is valid for 12 months and expires August 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
 - *Paralegals and Legal Assistants (23-2011)*

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

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

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: 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
Paralegals and Legal Assistants (23-2011)	LA: 2,196 OC: 655	LA: 447 OC: 277	OC: \$25.53	Associate degree	39%
Total	2,851	723	N/A	N/A	N/A

Demand

- In Los Angeles and Orange counties, the number of jobs related to *paralegals and legal assistants* is projected to increase 8% through 2030, equating to 2,851 annual job openings.
- Hourly entry-level wages for *paralegals and legal assistants* are \$25.53 in Orange County, which is below the Self-Sufficiency Standard living wage.
- There were 5,939 online job postings for *paralegals and legal assistants* over the past 12 months. The highest number of postings were for paralegals, litigation paralegals, and legal assistants.
- The typical entry-level education for *paralegals and legal assistants* is an associate degree.
- Approximately 39% 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 673 awards were conferred by 13 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 51 awards for the middle-skill occupation.
- In the 2023-24 academic year, Orange County community college students that exited paralegal programs had a median annual wage of \$53,992 (\$25.96 per hour) post-exit, and 48% attained the regional living wage.
- In 2022-23, 60% of Orange County paralegal students that exited their programs reported working a job closely related to their field of study.

Demand

Occupational Projections

Exhibit 2 shows the annual percentage change in jobs for *paralegals and legal assistants* from 2020 through 2030. Beginning in 2025, job levels are projected to grow at a higher rate than all occupations through 2030.

Exhibit 2: Annual Percentage Change in Jobs for Paralegals and Legal Assistants, 2020-2030

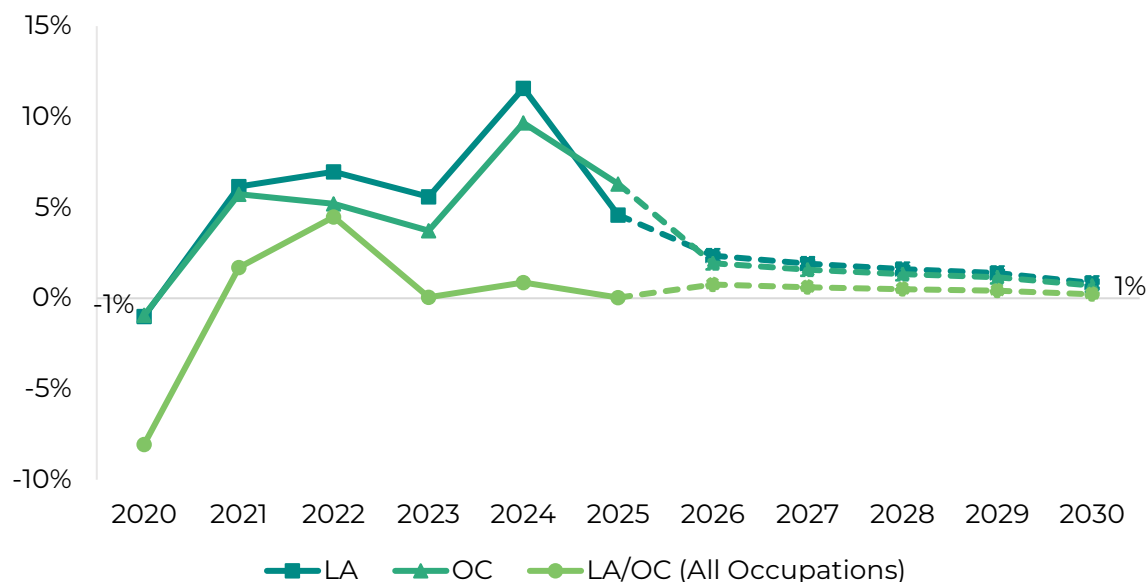


Exhibit 3 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for *paralegals and legal assistants*. In Los Angeles and Orange counties, the number of jobs related to this occupation is projected to increase by 8% through 2030. There is projected to be 2,851 jobs available annually.

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	17,560	19,027	1,467	8%	2,196
Orange	5,395	5,766	371	7%	655
Total	22,955	24,793	1,838	8%	2,851

Wages

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wage for *paralegals and legal 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.

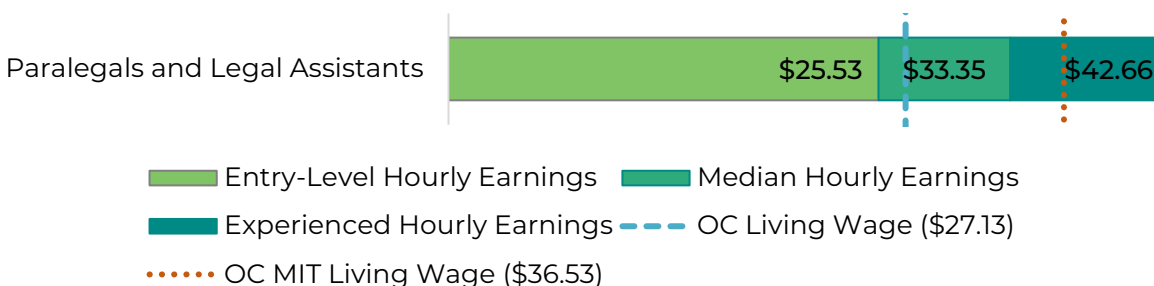
In addition to the Self Sufficiency Standard living wage, data for the MIT Living Wage (updated on February 15, 2026) is provided as a reference. Currently, the MIT Living Wage in Orange County is \$36.53. Both figures account for geographic-specific costs of necessities

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.

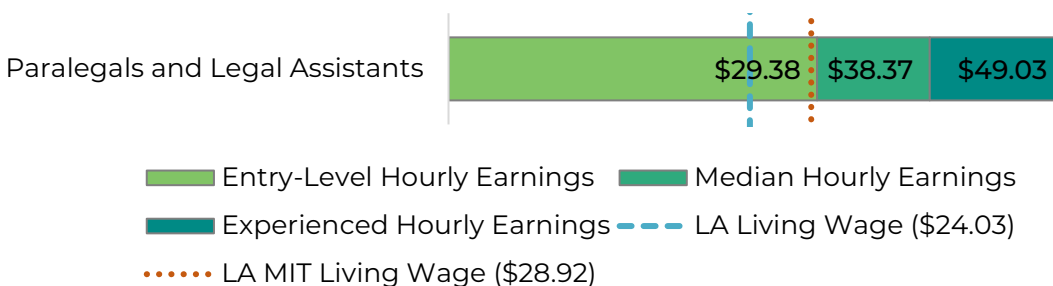
In Orange County, the typical entry-level wage for *paralegals and legal assistants* is \$25.53, which is below the Self-Sufficiency living wage of \$27.13 for a single adult. Exhibit 4 shows the wage range for *paralegals and legal assistants* in Orange County and how it compares to the regional living wage.

Exhibit 4: Wages by Occupation in Orange County



In Los Angeles County, the typical entry-level wage for *paralegals and legal assistants* is \$29.38, which is above the Self-Sufficiency living wage of \$24.03 for a single adult. Exhibit 5 shows the wage range for *paralegals and legal 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 2025 U.S. News & World Report (USN&WR) Best Job³. *Paralegals and legal assistants* do not meet the criteria for any 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	2025 USN&WR Best Job
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	☐	☐	☐

³ "100 Best Jobs," U.S. News & World Report, accessed January 28, 2025, <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 5,939 online job postings related to *paralegals and legal 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=5,939)

Occupation	Job Postings	Percentage of Job Postings
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	5,939	100%
Total Postings	5,939	100%

The top job titles for *paralegals and legal 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=5,939)

Job Titles	Job Postings	Percentage
Paralegals	911	15%
Litigation Paralegals	879	15%
Legal Assistants	809	14%
Paralegals/Legal Assistants	245	4%
Litigation Legal Assistants	214	4%
Legal Administrative Assistants	179	3%
Personal Injury Paralegals	132	2%
Corporate Paralegals	125	2%
Immigration Paralegals	121	2%
Civil Litigation Paralegals	90	2%

The top employers for *paralegals and legal 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=5,939)

Employer	Job Postings	Percentage of Job Postings
Adams & Martin Group	430	7%
Robert Half	402	7%
GPAC	228	4%
Lee Hecht Harrison	90	2%
Jobot	63	1%
AppleOne	56	<1%
Estrin Legal Staffing	43	<1%
CyberCoders	41	<1%
Beacon Hill Staffing Group	27	<1%
Wisner Baum	26	<1%

The top specialized, soft, and computer skills for *paralegals and legal 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=5,939)

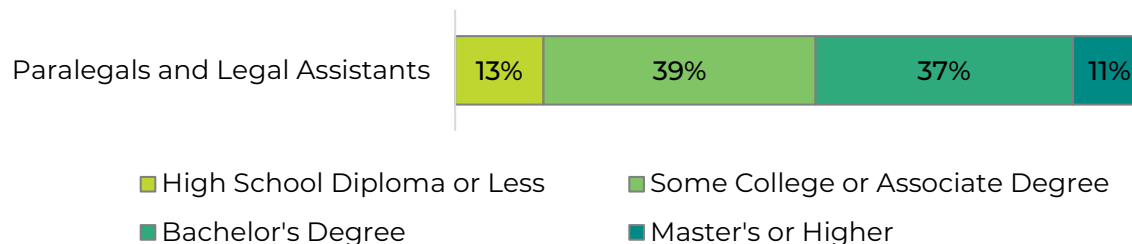
Top Specialized Skills	Top Soft Skills	Top Computer Skills
Lawsuits (3,284)	Detail Oriented (3,214)	Microsoft Office (1,534)
Legal Discovery (2,436)	Communication (2,976)	Microsoft Excel (1,210)
Legal Pleadings (2,009)	Filing (2,684)	Microsoft Outlook (1,134)
Legal Depositions (1,544)	Organizational Skills (1,978)	Microsoft Word (668)
Legal Research (1,427)	Microsoft Office (1,534)	Document Management Systems (641)
Trial Preparation (1,336)	Verbal Communication Skills (1,324)	Law Practice Management Software (528)
Case Management (1,216)	Microsoft Excel (1,210)	Microsoft PowerPoint (519)
Proofreading (1,094)	Research (1,151)	Westlaw (477)
Legal Hearings (1,032)	Microsoft Outlook (1,134)	LexisNexis (223)
Calendar Management (1,008)	Administrative Functions (1,107)	Spreadsheets (189)

Educational Attainment

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

The national-level educational attainment data indicates that 39% 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, 42% (2,483) of job postings for *paralegals and legal assistants* included a stated minimum education requirement:

- 37% (929) requested a high school diploma or associate degree
- 59% (1,475) 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: Paralegal (1402.00).

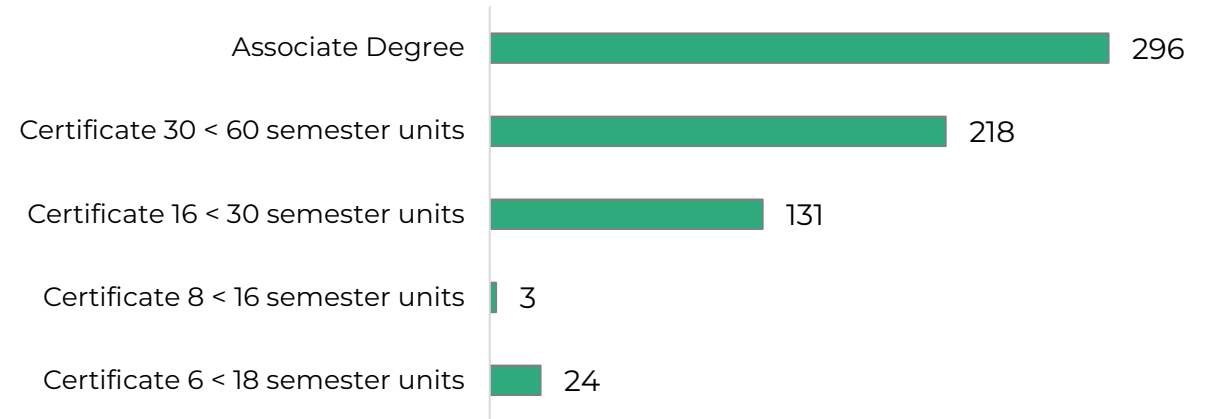
The colleges with the most completions in the region are Santa Ana (100), followed by Pasadena (79), and West LA (72). Over the past 12 months, there were no related program recommendation requests from regional community colleges.

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

2022-2023						
TOP Code	Program	College	2022- 2023 Awards	2023- 2024 Awards	2024- 2025 Awards	3-Year Award Average
1402.00	Paralegal	Cerritos	40	53	52	48
		East LA	40	46	105	64
		El Camino	36	25	36	32
		LA City	33	30	64	42
		LA Mission	22	29	29	27
		LA Trade	5	2	5	4
		Mt San Antonio	40	60	53	51
		Pasadena	70	92	74	79
		West LA	55	77	85	72
		LA Subtotal	341	414	503	419
		Coastline	69	53	59	60
		Fullerton	57	51	42	50
		Irvine	45	24	61	43
		Santa Ana	64	104	131	100
		OC Subtotal	235	232	293	253
		Supply Total/Average			576	646

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 30 to 60 semester units then certificate 16 to 30 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 paralegal programs in Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD), the Orange County Region, and California. Of the 1,499 Orange County paralegal students in the 2024-25 academic year, 50% (751) attended an RSCCD college.

RSCCD students that exited paralegal programs in the 2023-24 academic year had lower median annual earnings (\$49,452 or \$23.78 per hour) compared to all paralegal students in Orange County (\$53,992 or \$25.96 per hour). A lower percentage of RSCCD paralegal students attained the living wage (42%) when compared to all paralegal students in Orange County (48%).

Exhibit 14: Paralegal (1402.00) Strong Workforce Program Metrics, 2022-25⁴

SWP Metric	RSCCD	OC Region	California
SWP Students	751	1,499	11,036
SWP Students Who Earned 9 or More Career Education Units in the District in a Single Year	30%	36%	37%
SWP Students Who Completed a Noncredit CTE or Workforce Preparation Course	67%	65%	68%
SWP Students Who Earned a Degree or Certificate or Attained Apprenticeship Journey Status	72	165	1,052
SWP Students Who Transferred to a Four-Year Postsecondary Institution (2023-24)	20	51	628
SWP Students with a Job Closely Related to Their Field of Study (2022-23)	27%	60%	21%
Median Annual Earnings for SWP Exiting Students (2023-24)	\$49,452 (\$23.78)	\$53,992 (\$25.96)	\$52,364 (\$25.18)
Median Change in Earnings for SWP Exiting Students (2023-24)	32%	32%	29%
SWP Exiting Students Who Attained the Living Wage (2023-24)	42%	48%	52%

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

Non-Community College Supply

To comprehensively analyze the regional supply, it is crucial to include data from other institutions offering paralegal programs. Exhibit 15 displays the annual and three-year average awards granted by these institutions under the related Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes: Legal Assistant/Paralegal (22.0302).

The available data covers 2021 to 2024. During this period, non-community college institutions in the region conferred an average of 51 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
22.0302	Legal Assistant / Paralegal	Abraham Lincoln University	2	2	0	1
		Downey Adult School	14	6	9	10
		Fremont University	11	18	13	14
		South Coast College	11	9	8	9
		University of La Verne	6	0	1	2
		University of Massachusetts Global	24	10	8	14
Supply Total/Average			68	45	39	51

Regional Demographics

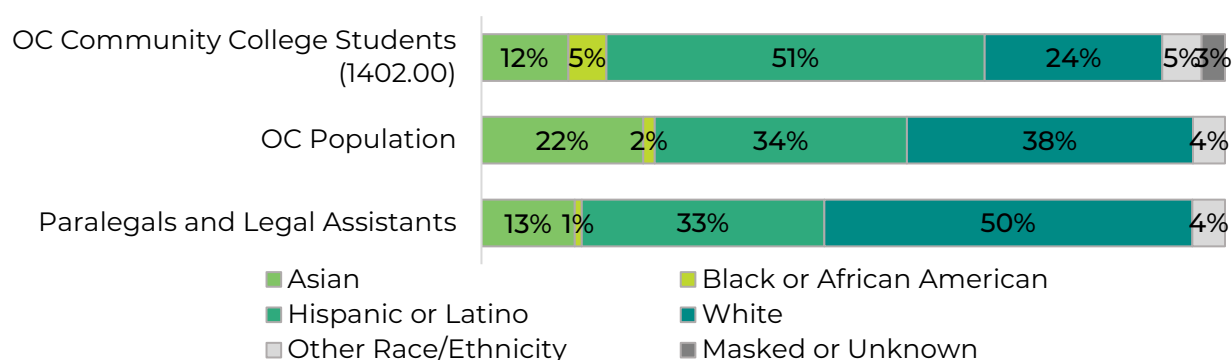
The following section presents occupational, community college program, and population demographic data for Orange County. This comparison can help identify possible equity gaps between the local workforce and the student pipeline who are preparing for these occupations. These insights can inform program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

Ethnicity

Exhibit 16 compares the ethnicity of Orange County community college students enrolled in paralegal programs, the overall Orange County population, and occupation-specific data for *paralegals and legal assistants*.

Half (50%) of *paralegal and legal assistants* are white, which is more than double their representation in paralegal programs (24%), suggesting that white workers may be entering these jobs through alternate training pathways. In contrast, Hispanic or Latino individuals make up 33% of the workforce but account for 51% of program enrollment, indicating a potential disconnect between education and employment outcomes.

Exhibit 16: Program and County Demographics by Ethnicity

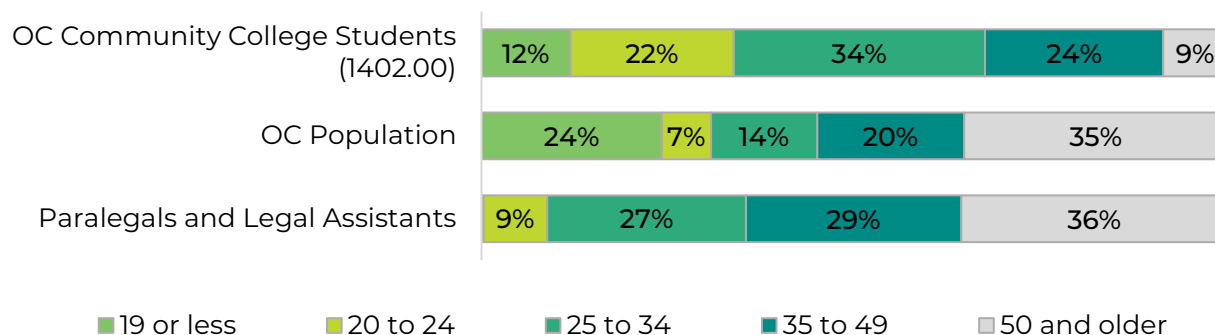


Age

Exhibit 17 compares the age of Orange County community college students enrolled in paralegal programs, the overall Orange County population, and occupation-specific data for *paralegal and legal assistants*.

Over half (56%) of *paralegals and legal assistants* are aged 25 to 49, which is similar to paralegal students (58%). This suggests the field may attract mid-career individuals or require some level of prior training and experience for entry.

Exhibit 17: Program and County Demographics by Age

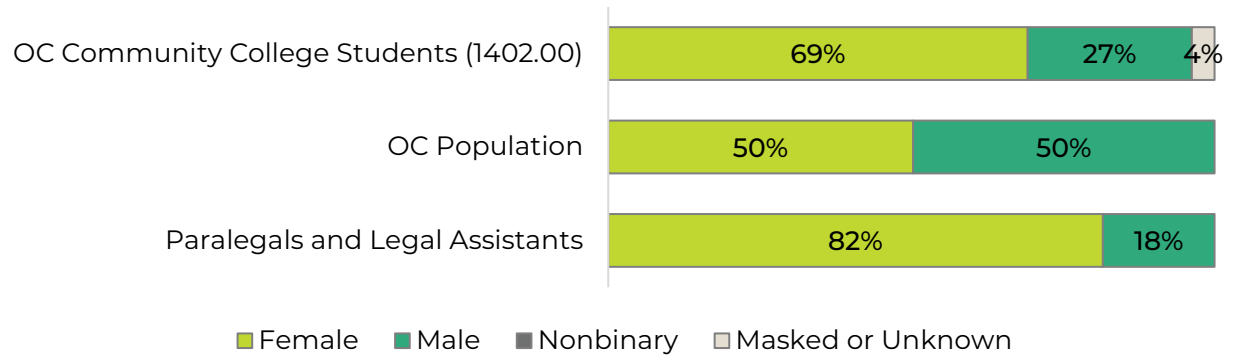


Sex

Exhibit 18 compares the sex of Orange County community college students enrolled in paralegal programs, the overall Orange County population, and occupation-specific data for *paralegal and legal assistants*.

Though the population is split evenly between women and men, only 18% of *paralegals and legal assistants* and 27% of community college students are men.

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.

For more information, please contact the Orange County Center of Excellence:

Jesse Crete, Ed. D., Regional Director
crete_jesse@rscdd.edu

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