

⚠ Endorsed: Caution Advised			
Program LMI Endorsement Criteria			
	Met ☐	Partially Met ☒	Not Met ☐
Supply Gap:	There are projected to be 175 annual job openings throughout Los Angeles and Orange counties for <i>forensic science technicians</i> , which is less than the 2,115 awards conferred by educational institutions . However, these educational programs also prepare students for two other related occupations, which account for 2,546 additional annual job openings . <i>Because this program trains for a variety of occupations with high demand, there is most likely an undersupply of labor for forensic science technicians.</i>		
Self-Sufficiency Standard Living Wage ¹ :	Met ☒	Partially Met ☐	Not Met ☐
	The typical entry-level wage for <i>forensic science technicians</i> is \$36.19 , which is above the OC living wage of \$27.13 .		
Education:	Met ☐	Partially Met ☒	Not Met ☐
	Typical education requirement for <i>forensic science technicians</i> is a bachelor's degree and 31% 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
 - *Forensic Science Technicians (19-4092)*

Based on the available data, there appears to be a supply gap for *forensic science technicians*. Although the number of awards exceeds demand for this occupation, supply is likely overstated because related educational programs train for two additional occupations. When considering the strong demand across these occupations, it is likely the region is experiencing a supply gap. Additionally, annual job openings have entry-level wages above the Self-Sufficiency Standard living wage and typical education requirements for this occupation generally align with a community college education. **Therefore, due to some 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
Forensic Science Technicians (19-4092)	LA: 142 OC: 33	LA: 1,650 OC: 465	OC: \$36.19	Bachelor's degree	31%
Total	175	2,115	N/A	N/A	N/A

Demand

- In Los Angeles and Orange counties, the number of jobs related to *forensic science technicians* is projected to increase 9% through 2030, equating to 175 annual job openings.
- Hourly entry-level wages for *forensic science technicians* are \$36.19 in Orange County, which is above the Self-Sufficiency Standard living wage.
- There were 161 online job postings for *forensic science technicians* over the past 12 months. The highest number of postings were for crime analysts, forensic specialists, and digital forensics analysts.
- The typical entry-level education for *forensic science technicians* is a bachelor's degree.
- Approximately 31% 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 2,115 awards were conferred by 25 community colleges for the middle-skill occupation in Los Angeles and Orange counties.
- From 2021 to 2024, no awards were conferred by non-community college institutions.
- In the 2023-24 academic year, Orange County community college students that exited administration of justice programs had a median annual wage of \$99,152 (\$47.67 per hour) post-exit, and 71% attained the regional living wage.
- In 2022-23, 29% of Orange County administration of justice 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 *forensic science technicians* from 2020 through 2030. Beginning in 2025, Orange County job levels are projected to grow at a higher rate than all occupations through 2030.

Exhibit 2: Annual Percentage Change in Jobs for *Forensic Science Technicians*, 2020-2030

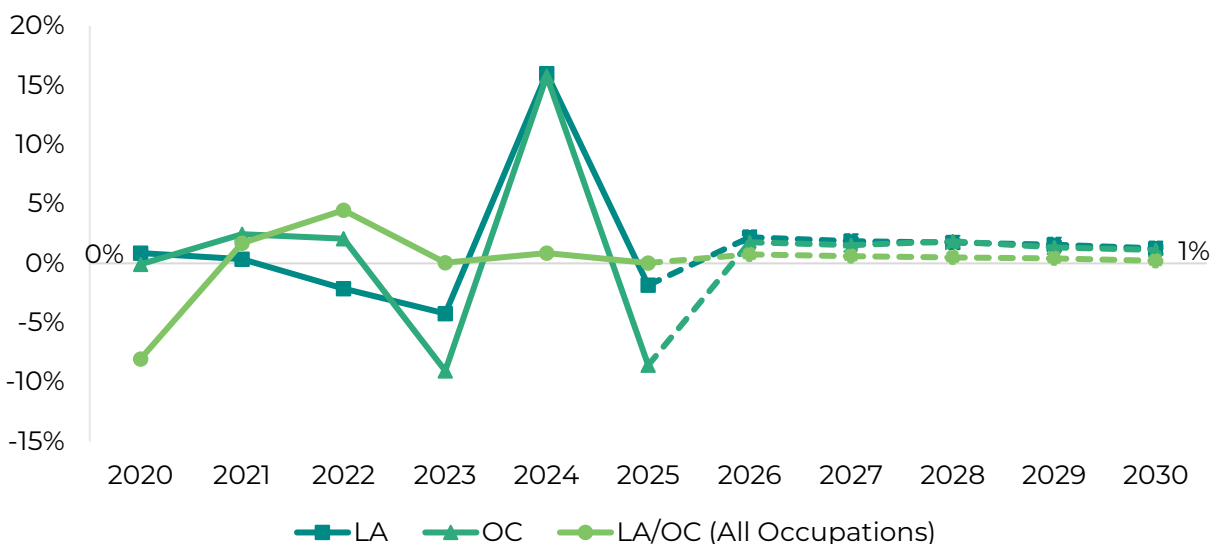


Exhibit 3 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for *forensic science technicians*. In Los Angeles and Orange counties, the number of jobs related to this occupation is projected to increase 9% through 2030. There is projected to be 175 jobs available annually.

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	979	1,067	88	9%	142
Orange	234	252	18	8%	33
Total	1,213	1,319	106	9%	175

Wages

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wage for *forensic science technicians* 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.

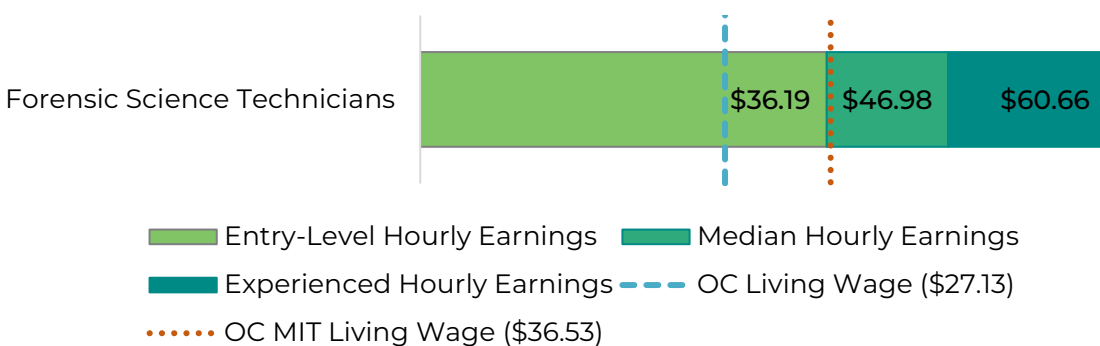
In addition to the Self Sufficiency Standard living wage, data for the MIT Living Wage (updated on February 15, 2026) is provided as a reference. Currently, the MIT Living Wage in Orange County is \$36.53. Both figures account for geographic-specific costs of necessities

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.

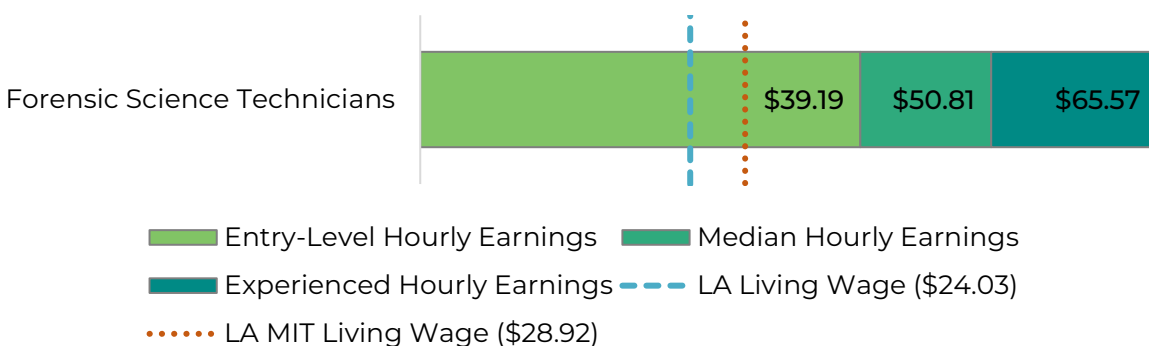
In Orange County, the typical entry-level wage for *forensic science technicians* is \$36.19, which is above the Self-Sufficiency living wage of \$27.13 for a single adult. Exhibit 4 shows the wage range for *forensic science technicians* in Orange County and how it compares to the regional living wage.

Exhibit 4: Wages by Occupation in Orange County



In Los Angeles County, the typical entry-level wage for *forensic science technicians* is \$39.19, which is above the Self-Sufficiency living wage of \$24.03 for a single adult. Exhibit 5 shows the wage range for *forensic science technicians* 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. *Forensic science technicians* met the criteria for 2026 USN&WR Best Job.

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
Forensic Science Technicians	☐	☐	☒

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 161 online job postings related to *forensic science technicians* 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=161)

Occupation	Job Postings	Percentage of Job Postings
Forensic Science Technicians	161	100%
Total Postings	161	100%

The top job titles for *forensic science technicians* 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=161)

Job Titles	Job Postings	Percentage
Crime Analysts	23	14%
Forensic Specialists	14	9%
Digital Forensics Analysts	12	7%
Investigators	11	7%
Crime Prevention Specialists	9	6%
Evidence Technicians	8	5%
Forensic Technicians	5	3%
Operational Excellence Specialists	5	3%
Crime Intelligence Analysts	4	2%
Criminalists	3	2%

The top employers for *forensic science technicians* 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=161)

Employer	Job Postings	Percentage of Job Postings
County Of Los Angeles	10	6%
State of California	10	6%
Los Angeles County Department Of Human Resources	7	4%
City Of Santa Monica	6	4%
County Orange-Health Care Agency	6	4%
University of California	6	4%
Beverly Hills International Ltd	4	2%
City Of Anaheim	4	2%
California State University-Los Angeles	3	2%
Aperture Agency	3	2%

The top specialized, soft, and computer skills for *forensic science technicians* 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=161)

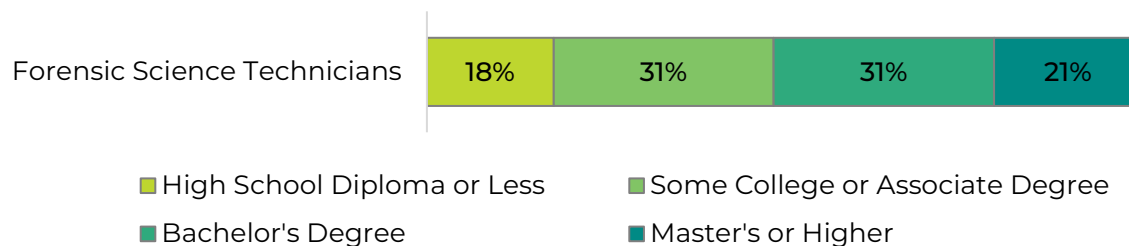
Top Specialized Skills	Top Soft Skills	Top Computer Skills
Law Enforcement (55)	Communication (73)	Microsoft Excel (24)
Evidence Collection (32)	Investigation (64)	Microsoft PowerPoint (15)
Data Analysis (29)	Research (49)	Microsoft Outlook (13)
Crime Analysis (28)	Management (42)	Microsoft Access (12)
Chain Of Custody (26)	Writing (37)	EnCase (Digital Intelligence Software) (10)
Digital Forensics (24)	Detail Oriented (34)	Forensics Tools (Digital Forensics Software) (10)
Office Equipment (21)	Report Writing (34)	Microsoft Office (10)
Statistics (21)	English Language (33)	Spreadsheets (10)
Biology (20)	Operations (32)	Cellebrite (Digital Intelligence Software) (9)
Crime Scene Investigation (19)	Presentations (32)	SQL (Programming Language) (9)

Educational Attainment

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists a bachelor's degree as the typical entry-level education for *forensic science technicians*.

The national-level educational attainment data indicates that 31% 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, 60% (97) of job postings for *forensic science technicians* included a stated minimum education requirement:

- 37% (36) requested a high school diploma or associate degree
- 57% (55) 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:

- Administration of Justice (2105.00)
- Forensics, Evidence, and Investigation (2105.40)

The colleges with the most completions in the region are East LA (430), followed by Rio Hondo (173), and Long Beach (166). Over the past 12 months, there were seven related program recommendation requests from regional community colleges.

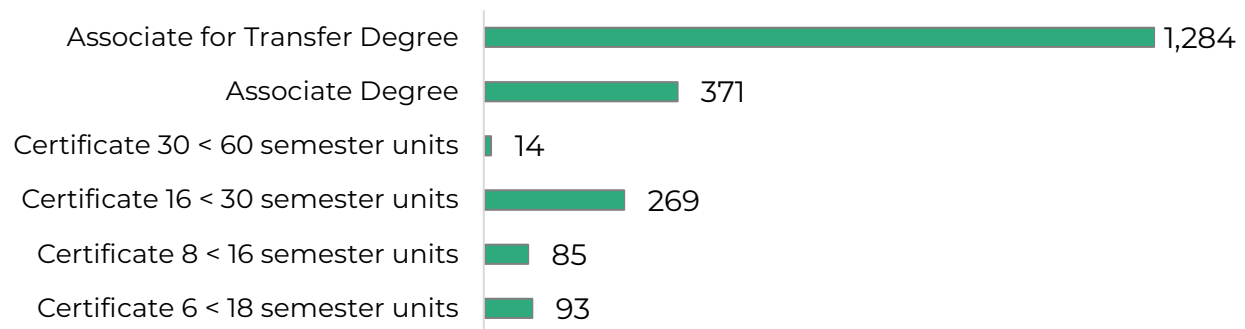
Exhibit 12: Regional Community College Awards (Certificates and Degrees), 2022-2025

TOP Code	Program	College	2022-2023 Awards	2023-2024 Awards	2024-2025 Awards	3-Year Award Average
2105.00	Administration of Justice	Cerritos	94	95	78	89
		Citrus	143	143	156	147
		Compton	32	42	28	34
		East LA	330	305	404	346
		El Camino	78	86	68	77
		Glendale	28	25	18	24
		LA City	39	36	36	37
		LA Harbor	30	41	30	34
		LA Mission	44	42	36	41
		LA Pierce	74	83	59	72
		LA Southwest	30	28	18	25
		LA Trade	11	19	13	14
		LA Valley	36	39	40	38
		Long Beach	152	132	156	147
		Mt San Antonio	75	78	92	82
		Pasadena	62	68	79	70
		Rio Hondo	155	152	147	151
		Santa Monica	44	60	53	52
		West LA	51	34	37	41
		LA Subtotal	1,508	1,508	1,548	1,521
		Coastline	13	2	0	5
		Cypress	61	56	50	56
		Fullerton	109	105	120	111
		Golden West	154	171	135	153

TOP Code	Program	College	2022-2023 Awards	2023-2024 Awards	2024-2025 Awards	3-Year Award Average
2105.40	Forensics, Evidence, and Investigation	Irvine	49	36	59	48
		Santa Ana	83	86	88	86
		OC Subtotal	469	456	452	459
		Supply Subtotal/Average	1,977	1,964	2,000	1,980
		East LA	75	70	105	83
		El Camino	4	8	3	5
		Long Beach	15	22	20	19
		Rio Hondo	14	17	33	21
		LA Subtotal	108	117	161	129
		Fullerton	9	0	10	6
		OC Subtotal	9	0	10	6
		Supply Subtotal/Average	117	117	171	135
		Supply Total/Average	2,094	2,081	2,171	2,115

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 for transfer degree, followed by associate degree 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 administration of justice programs in Coast Community College District (CCCD), the Orange County Region, and California. Of the 10,488 Orange County administration of justice students in the 2024-25 academic year, 13% (1,344) attended a CCCD college.

CCCD students that exited administration of justice programs in the 2023-24 academic year had lower median annual earnings (\$70,578 or \$33.93 per hour) compared to all administration of justice students in Orange County (\$99,152 or \$47.67 per hour). A lower percentage of CCCD administration of justice students attained the living wage (64%) when compared to all administration of justice students in Orange County (71%).

Exhibit 14: Administration of Justice (2105.00) Strong Workforce Program Metrics, 2022-25⁴

SWP Metric	CCCD	OC Region	California
SWP Students	1,344	10,488	86,732
SWP Students Who Earned 9 or More Career Education Units in the District in a Single Year	8%	9%	18%
SWP Students Who Completed a Noncredit CTE or Workforce Preparation Course	Insufficient Data	68%	49%
SWP Students Who Earned a Degree or Certificate or Attained Apprenticeship Journey Status	77	351	5,447
SWP Students Who Transferred to a Four-Year Postsecondary Institution (2023-24)	101	473	4,790
SWP Students with a Job Closely Related to Their Field of Study (2022-23)	31%	29%	45%
Median Annual Earnings for SWP Exiting Students (2023-24)	\$70,578 (\$33.93)	\$99,152 (\$47.67)	\$73,848 (\$35.50)
Median Change in Earnings for SWP Exiting Students (2023-24)	27%	20%	22%
SWP Exiting Students Who Attained the Living Wage (2023-24)	64%	71%	64%

Non-Community College Supply

To comprehensively analyze the regional supply, it is crucial to include data from other institutions offering administration of justice programs. Exhibit 15 displays the annual and three-year average awards granted by these institutions under the related Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes: Criminal Justice and Corrections, General (43.0100).

There were no awards for the following:

- Forensic Science and Technology (43.0106)
- Criminalistics and Criminal Science (43.0111)

The available data covers 2021 to 2024. During this period, non-community college institutions in the region conferred an average of 0 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
43.0100	Criminal Justice and Corrections, General	Vanguard University of Southern California	0	0	0	0
Supply Total/Average			0	0	0	0

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

Regional Demographics

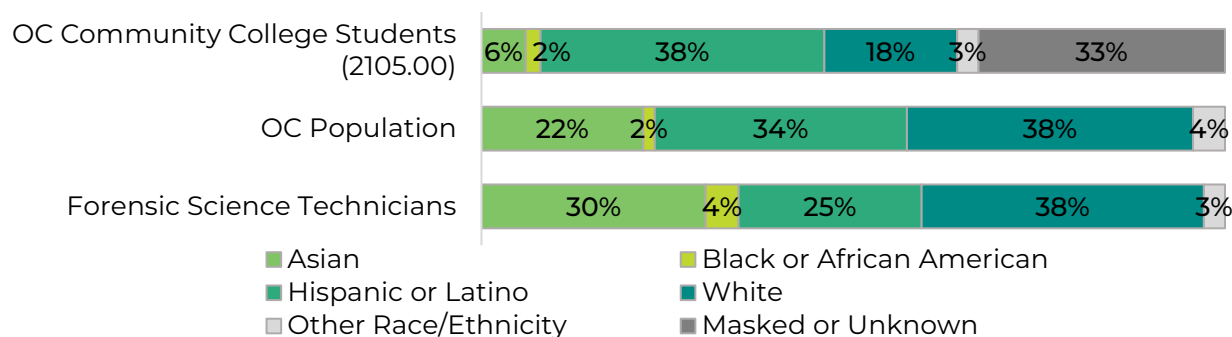
The following section presents occupational, community college program, and population demographic data for Orange County. This comparison can help identify possible equity gaps between the local workforce and the student pipeline who are preparing for these occupations. These insights can inform program 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 administration of justice programs, the overall Orange County population, and occupation-specific data for *forensic science technicians*.

White and Asian workers represent 38% and 30% of *forensic science technicians*, respectively, compared to just 18% and 6% of administration of justice students. These differences suggest that workers may enter the field through alternate training pathways. Conversely, Hispanic or Latino individuals account for 38% of program enrollments but only 25% of workers, indicating a potential education-to-employment gap. However, 33% of student demographics are masked or unknown, limiting a full assessment of representation across these programs.

Exhibit 16: Program and County Demographics by Ethnicity

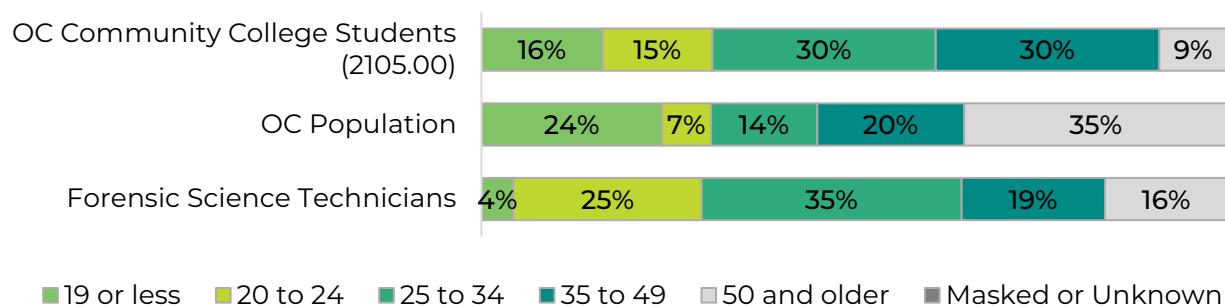


Age

Exhibit 17 compares the age of Orange County community college students enrolled in administration of justice programs, the overall Orange County population, and occupation-specific data for *forensic science technicians*.

Individuals aged 20 to 34 represent nearly 60% of *forensic science technicians*, whereas administration of justice program enrollment leans older, spanning ages 25 to 49. These figures suggest that *forensic science technicians* may enter the workforce earlier, whereas students may pursue these academic programs later in their careers.

Exhibit 17: Program and County Demographics by Age

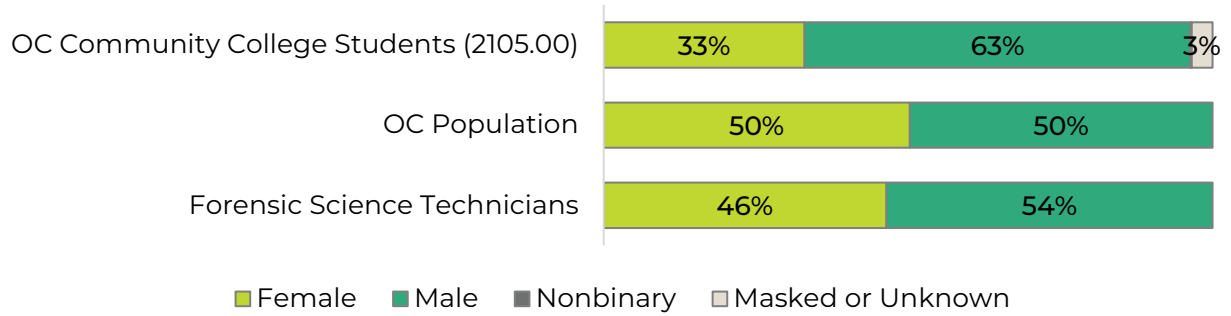


Sex

Exhibit 18 compares the sex of Orange County community college students enrolled in administration of justice programs, the overall Orange County population, and occupation-specific data for *forensic science technicians*.

Though the population is split evenly between women and men, 33% of *forensic science technicians* and 46% of community college students are women.

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 CCCCCO'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 CCCCCO 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

