



## Labor Market Analysis: 2105.40 – Forensics, Evidence, and Investigation 43.0406 – Forensic Science and Technology

### *Forensic Photography – Certificate requiring 16 to <30 semester units*

Los Angeles Center of Excellence, August 2026

|                                                         |                                      |                                     |                                       |                                     |                     |                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Program Endorsement:</b>                             | <b>Endorsed:</b><br>All Criteria Met | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>Endorsed:</b><br>Some Criteria Met | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <b>Not Endorsed</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Program Endorsement Criteria</b>                     |                                      |                                     |                                       |                                     |                     |                          |
| <b>Supply Gap:</b>                                      | Yes                                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No                                    | <input type="checkbox"/>            |                     |                          |
| <b>Living Wage:</b><br>(Entry-Level, 25 <sup>th</sup> ) | Yes                                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No                                    | <input type="checkbox"/>            |                     |                          |
| <b>Education:</b>                                       | Yes                                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No                                    | <input type="checkbox"/>            |                     |                          |
| <b>Emerging Occupation(s)</b>                           |                                      |                                     |                                       |                                     |                     |                          |
| 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 occupation<sup>1</sup> 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 one identified middle-skill occupation in the region. Furthermore, entry-level wages exceed the self-sufficiency standard wage in both Los Angeles and Orange counties, and one-third of current workers in the field have completed an associate degree or some college 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

- 175 annual job openings are projected in the region through 2030. This number is greater than the three-year average of 135 awards conferred by educational institutions in the region.

<sup>1</sup> 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**

- \$39.19 is the typical entry-level hourly wage for *forensic science technicians*, which is higher than Los Angeles County's self-sufficiency standard hourly wage (\$24.03/hour).<sup>2</sup>

### **Educational Attainment**

- A bachelor's degree is the typical entry-level education for *forensic science technicians*, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).
- 34% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree, according to national educational attainment data.

### **Community college supply**

- 5 community colleges issued awards related to forensics, evidence, and investigation in the greater LA/OC region.
- 135 awards (degrees and certificates) were conferred on average each year between 2023 and 2025.

### **Other postsecondary supply**

- No educational institutions in the LA/OC region have conferred sub-baccalaureate awards in programs related to forensic science technology over the past three years.

## **TARGET OCCUPATION**

LA COE prepared this report to provide regional labor market and postsecondary supply data related to one middle-skill occupation. Although the occupation in this report typically requires a bachelor's degree, it is considered middle-skill because approximately one-third of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree. [For full occupation descriptions, please see Appendix.](#)

- **Forensic Science Technicians (19-4092)** Collect, identify, classify, and analyze physical evidence related to criminal investigations. Perform tests on weapons or substances, such as fiber, hair, and tissue to determine significance to investigation. Take photographs and make sketches of the crime scene. May testify as expert witnesses on evidence or crime laboratory techniques. May serve as specialists in area of expertise, such as ballistics, fingerprinting, handwriting, or biochemistry.<sup>3</sup>

## **OCCUPATIONAL DEMAND**

Exhibit 1 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for *forensic science technicians*. In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, the number of jobs related to this occupation is projected to increase by 9% by 2030. There will be nearly 200 job openings per year through 2030 due to job growth and replacements. The majority of jobs in 2025 for *forensic science technicians* (81%) were located in Los Angeles County.

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

<sup>3</sup> [Forensic Science Technicians \(bls.gov\)](#)

**Exhibit 1: Current employment and occupational demand, Los Angeles and Orange counties<sup>4</sup>**

| 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              |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1,213</b> | <b>1,319</b> | <b>106</b>       | <b>9%</b>          | <b>175</b>      |

**Detailed Occupation Data**

Exhibit 2 displays the current employment and projected occupational demand for the target occupation 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.

**Exhibit 2: Detailed employment and occupational demand, Los Angeles County<sup>5</sup>**

| Occupation                   | 2025 Jobs | 2030 Jobs | 5-Yr % Change | Annual Openings | % Aged 55 and older |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Forensic Science Technicians | 979       | 1,067     | 9%            | 142             | 19%                 |

**WAGES**

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wages for *forensic science technicians* 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 typical entry-level hourly wages for *forensic science technicians* are \$39.19, which is above the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$24.03 in Los Angeles County). Experienced workers can expect to earn wages of \$65.57 (Exhibit 3).

**Exhibit 3: Earnings for occupation in Los Angeles County**

| Occupation                   | Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile) | Median Hourly Earnings | Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile) | Median Annual Earnings* |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Forensic Science Technicians | \$39.19                                                   | \$50.81                | \$65.57                                                   | \$105,700               |

\*Rounded to the nearest \$100

<sup>4</sup> Five-year change represents new job additions to the workforce. Annual openings include new jobs and replacement jobs that result from retirements and separations.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

## Orange County

The typical entry-level hourly wages for *forensic science technicians* are \$36.19, which is above the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$27.13 in Orange County). Experienced workers can expect to earn wages of \$60.66 (Exhibit 4).

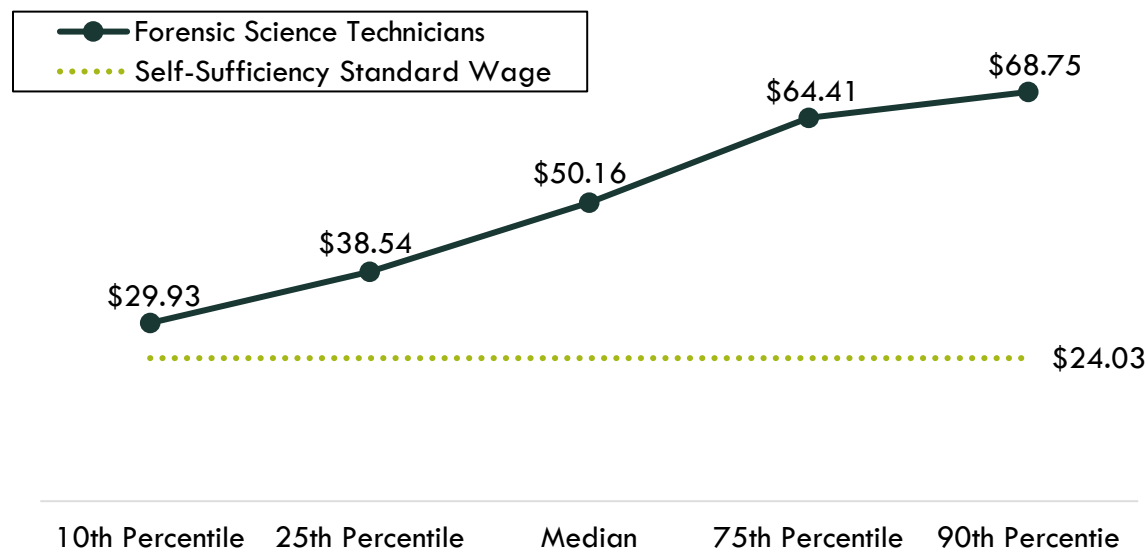
### Exhibit 4: Earnings for occupation in Orange County

| Occupation                   | Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile) | Median Hourly Earnings | Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile) | Median Annual Earnings* |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Forensic Science Technicians | \$36.19                                                   | \$46.98                | \$60.66                                                   | \$97,700                |

\*Rounded to the nearest \$100

Across the greater Los Angeles and Orange County region, the average entry-level hourly earnings for the occupation in this report are \$38.54; 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 occupation in this report, for entry-level to experienced workers.

### Exhibit 5: Average hourly earnings for occupation, Los Angeles and Orange counties



## JOB POSTINGS

There were 150 online job postings related to *forensic science technicians* listed in the past 12 months in Los Angeles and Orange counties. Job postings were analyzed for the most common job titles, skills, and employers associated with the target occupation in this report (Exhibit 6).

**Exhibit 6: 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"> <li>• Crime analysts</li> <li>• Digital forensics analysts</li> <li>• Forensic specialists</li> <li>• Investigators</li> <li>• Crime prevention specialists</li> <li>• Evidence technicians</li> <li>• Forensic technicians</li> <li>• eDiscovery analysts</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law enforcement</li> <li>• Evidence collection</li> <li>• Chain of custody</li> <li>• Crime analysis</li> <li>• Data analysis</li> <li>• Digital forensics</li> <li>• Crime scene investigation</li> <li>• Evidence preservation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State of California</li> <li>• County of Los Angeles</li> <li>• City of Santa Monica</li> <li>• County of Orange-Health Care Agency</li> <li>• Los Angeles County Department of Human Resources</li> <li>• City of Anaheim</li> </ul> |

In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, 59% of the target job postings listed a minimum educational requirement. Exhibit 7 details the number and percentage of job postings by educational level.

**Exhibit 7: Education levels requested in job postings for target occupation, Los Angeles and Orange counties**

| Education Level                            | Job Postings | % of Job Postings |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Bachelor's degree                          | 50           | 57%               |
| Associate degree                           | 14           | 16%               |
| High school diploma or vocational training | 24           | 27%               |

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists a bachelor's degree as the typical entry-level education for *forensic science technicians* (Exhibit 8). However, the national-level data indicates 34% 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 occupation in this report:

**Exhibit 8: Entry-level education preferred by employers nationally, Bureau of Labor Statistics**

| Occupation                   | Education Level   |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Forensic science technicians | Bachelor's degree |

## EDUCATIONAL SUPPLY

### Community College Supply

Exhibit 9 shows the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred by community colleges in the related TOP code: Forensics, Evidence, and Investigation (2105.40). The colleges with the most completions in the region are East LA, Rio Hondo, and Long Beach. In the past three years, there were no other post-secondary institutions in the greater LA/OC region that have conferred sub-baccalaureate awards in programs that train for *forensic science technicians*. There have been no sub-baccalaureate awards conferred recently in the related CIP codes:

- Forensic Science and Technology (43.0106)
- Criminalistics and Criminal Science (43.0111)
- Law Enforcement Investigation and Interviewing (43.0114)
- Law Enforcement Record-Keeping and Evidence Management (43.0115)
- Financial Forensics and Fraud Investigation (43.0117)

**Exhibit 9: 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 |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 2105.40              | Forensics, Evidence, and Investigation | 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              | -              | 10             | 6              |
|                      |                                        | OC Subtotal | 9              | -              | 10             | 6              |
| Supply Total/Average |                                        |             | 117            | 117            | 171            | 135            |

Exhibit 10 displays the community college awards broken down by award type. In this case, the majority of awards issued by community colleges are certificates (70%).

**Exhibit 10: Community college awards by award type, 2023-2025**

| Award Type        | # of Awards | % of Awards |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| A.A./A.S. degrees | 40          | 30%         |
| Certificates      | 95          | 70%         |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>135</b>  | <b>100%</b> |

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**DATA SOURCES**

POWERED BY



- 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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