

Labor Market Analysis for Program Recommendation: 1240.10/Dental Assistant (Certificate of Achievement)

CVML Center of Excellence, October 2025



FOR LABOR MARKET RESEARCH
CENTRAL VALLEY/MOTHER LODGE

Summary

Program LMI Endorsement	Endorsed: All LMI Criteria Met ☒	Endorsed: Some LMI Criteria Met ☐	Not LMI Endorsed ☐
Program LMI Endorsement Criteria			
	Yes ☒	No ☐	
Supply Gap:	Comments: There are projected to be 307 annual job openings throughout the NCV/NML subregion for <i>Dental Assistants</i> , which is more than the 157 awards conferred by educational institutions in the NCV/NML subregion (CC + Non-CC) .		
	Yes ☒	No ☐	
Living Wage: (Entry-Level, 25th):	Comments: <i>Dental Assistants</i> have an entry-level hourly wage above the NCV/NML living wage of \$16.81 .		
	Yes ☒	No ☐	
Education:	Comments: The typical entry-level education for <i>Dental Assistants</i> is a postsecondary nondegree award. Additionally, 57% have completed some college or an associate degree as their highest level of education .		
Emerging Occupations(s)			
Yes ☐		No ☒	
Comments: N/A			

The Central Valley/Mother Lode Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research (CVML COE) prepared this report to determine whether there is a supply gap in the North Central Valley/Northern Mother Lode regional labor market related to the following middle-skill occupation:

- Dental Assistants (31-9091)

Middle-skill occupations typically require a community college education while above middle-skill occupations typically require at least a bachelor's degree.

Based on the available data, there appears to be a supply gap for *Dental Assistants*. In addition to this occupation having an entry-level wage above the subregion's living wage, 57% of workers in this field have completed some college or an associate degree as their highest level of education. **Therefore, due to all the 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 *Dental Assistants*.

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
Dental Assistants (31-9091)	NCV/NML: 307 SCV/SML: 464	SCV/SML: 399 NCV/NML: 157	NCV/NML: \$19.79 SCV/SML: \$21.96	Postsecondary nondegree award	57%
Total	770	556	-	-	-

Demand:

- The number of jobs for *Dental Assistants* is projected to increase 7% through 2029. There will be 307 annual job openings in the NCV/NML subregion.
- *Dental Assistants* have an entry-level hourly wage above the living wage of \$16.81 in the NCV/NML subregion.
- There were 613 online job postings for *Dental Assistants* over the past 12 months.
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists a postsecondary nondegree award as the typical entry-level education for *Dental Assistants*.
- National-level educational attainment data indicates that 57% of *Dental Assistants* have completed some college or an associate degree as their highest level of education.

Supply:

- Between 2021 and 2024, there was an average of 0 awards conferred by community colleges in the NCV/NML subregion.
- Between 2020 and 2023, non-community college institutions in the NCV/NML subregion conferred an average of 157 awards in relevant programs.

Demand

Occupational Projections

Exhibit 2 shows the annual percent change in jobs for *Dental Assistants* from 2019 through 2029. The NCV/NML subregion experienced the highest growth in 2021 at 6%, compared to the 2% growth across all CA occupations. The percent change for the NCV/NML subregion only experienced negative growth in 2020 and 2023 and has been positive for all other years. From 2025 to 2029, growth is projected to remain steady (between 1% and 2%) for the NCV/NML subregion, similar to all occupations in California.

Exhibit 2: Annual Percent Change in Jobs for Dental Assistants, 2019-2029

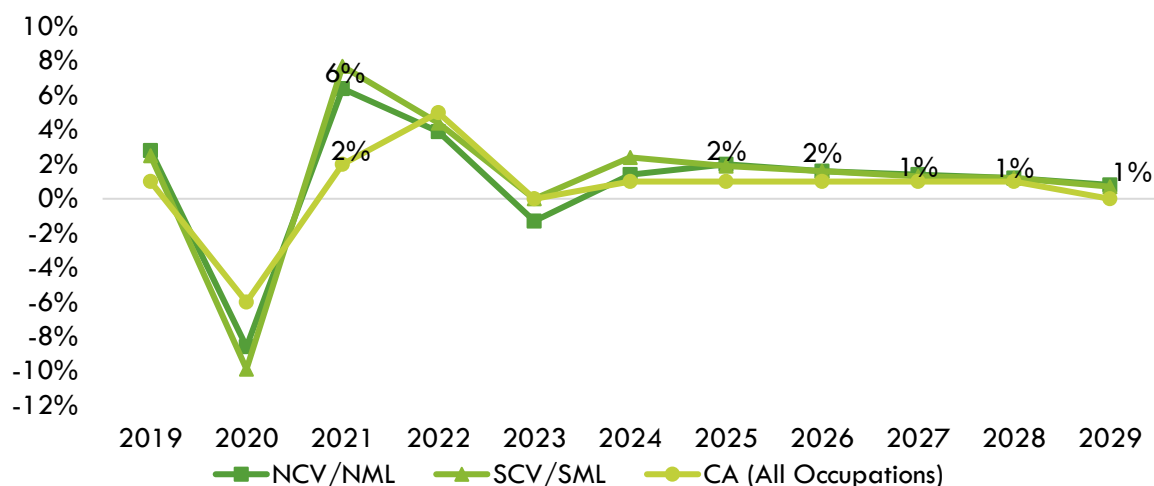


Exhibit 3 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for *Dental Assistants*. In the NCV/NML subregion, the number of jobs related to this occupation is projected to increase by 7% through 2029. There are projected to be 307 jobs available annually in the NCV/NML subregion.

Exhibit 3: Occupational Demand in NCV/NML, SCV/SML, and CVML¹

Geography	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2024-2029 Change	2024-2029 % Change	Annual Openings
NCV/NML	2,028	2,173	145	7%	307
SCV/SML	3,080	3,294	214	7%	464
CVML	5,108	5,467	359	7%	771

¹Five-year change represents new job additions to the workforce. Annual openings include new jobs and replacement jobs that result from retirements and separations.

Wages:

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wages for *Dental Assistants* as they relate to the subregions and region's living wage. NCV/NML, SCV/SML, and CVML wages are included below to provide a complete analysis of the region.

Dental Assistants have an entry-level hourly wage above the living wage for one adult in the NCV/NML subregion (\$16.81). The NCV/NML average wage for this occupation is \$24.83, which is below the average statewide wage of \$25.79. Exhibit 4a shows the wage range for *Dental Assistants* and how they compare to the NCV/NML subregion's living wage.

Exhibit 4a: Wages by Occupation in NCV/NML



Dental Assistants have an entry-level hourly wage above the living wage for one adult in the SCV/SML subregion (\$16.08). The SCV/SML average wage for this occupation is \$24.85, which is below the average statewide wage of \$25.79. Exhibit 4b shows the wage range for *Dental Assistants* and how they compare to the SCV/SML subregion's living wage.

Exhibit 4b: Wages by Occupation in SCV/SML



Dental Assistants have an entry-level hourly wage above the living wage for one adult in the CVML region (\$16.48). The CVML average wage for this occupation is \$24.84, which is below the average statewide wage of \$25.79. Exhibit 5 shows the wage range for *Dental Assistants* and how they compare to the CVML region's living wage.

Exhibit 5: Wages by Occupation in CVML



Job Postings:

Important Online Job Postings Data Note: Online job postings data is sourced from Lightcast, a labor market analytics firm that scrapes, collects, and organizes data from online job boards such as LinkedIn, Indeed, Glassdoor, Monster, GovernmentJobs.com, and thousands more. Lightcast uses natural language processing (NLP) to determine the related company, industry, occupation, and other information for each job posting. However, NLP has limitations that include understanding contextual words of phrases; determining differences in words that can be used as nouns, verbs, and/or adjectives; and misspellings or grammatical errors.² For these reasons, job postings could be assigned to the wrong employer, industry, or occupation within Lightcast's database.

Additionally, there are several limitations when analyzing job postings. A single job posting may not represent a single job opening, as employers may be creating a pool of candidates for future openings or hiring for multiple positions with a single posting. Additionally, not all jobs are posted online, and jobs may be filled through other methods such as internal promotion, word-of-mouth advertising, physical job boards, or a variety of other channels.

There were 613 online job postings for *Dental Assistants* listed in the past 12 months (Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 6: Number of Job Postings by Occupation (n=613)

Occupations	Job Postings	Percentage of Job Postings
Dental Assistants	613	100%

The top employers in the region for *Dental Assistants*, by number of job postings, are shown in Exhibit 7.

Exhibit 7: Top Employers by Number of Job Postings (n=613)

Employer	Job Postings	Percentage of Job Postings
PDS Health	23	4%
Sonrava Health	22	4%
Choice Healthcare Services	20	3%
Golden Valley Health CTRS	19	3%
Kids Care Dental & Orthodontics	18	3%
Golden Valley Health Centers	14	2%
Aspen Dental	13	2%
Western Dental Orthodontics	11	2%
Community Medical Centers	9	1%
Pacific Dental Services	9	1%

²K. R. Chowdhary, *Fundamentals of Artificial Intelligence* (Basingstoke: Springer Nature, 2020), <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-81-322-3972-7>

The top specialized, common, and software skills for *Dental Assistants* are listed by those most frequently mentioned in job postings (denoted in parentheses) are shown in Exhibit 8.

Exhibit 8: Top Skills by Number of Job Postings (n=613)

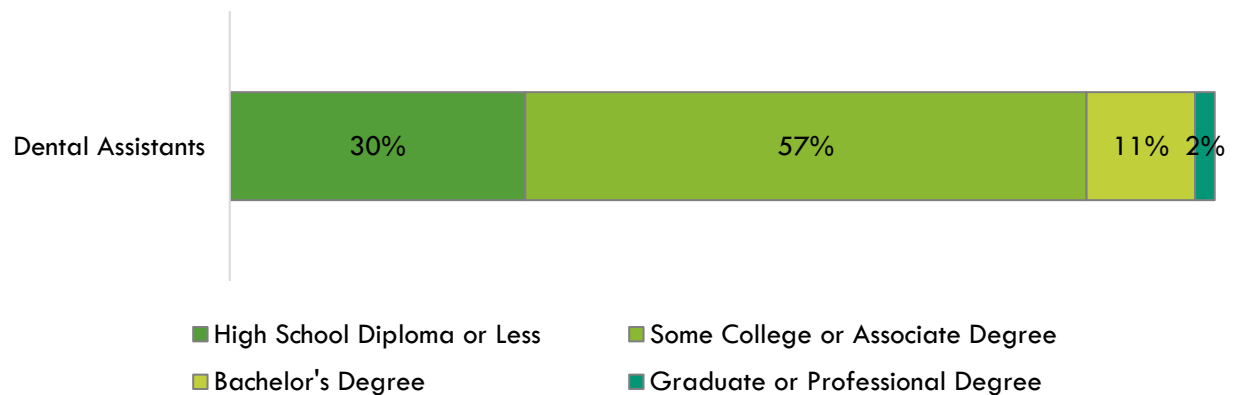
Top Specialized Skills	Top Soft Skills	Top Computer Skills
Dentistry (197)	Communication (197)	Dentrix (72)
Oral Hygiene (181)	Detail Oriented (125)	Epic EMR (10)
Infection Control (170)	Customer Service (91)	Patient Management Software (10)
Sterilization (127)	Computer Literacy (78)	Practice Management Software (10)
Dental Procedures (117)	Multitasking (62)	Open Dental (9)
Patient Education and Counseling (103)	Spanish Language (56)	Project Management Software (8)
Patient Preparation (96)	Multilingualism (54)	Learning Management Systems (7)
Dental Care (89)	Writing (48)	Safari (Web Browser) (4)
Oral Health (83)	Interpersonal Communications (47)	Zoom (Video Conferencing Tool) (3)
Coronal Polishing (83)	Problem Solving (40)	IBM MQ (3)

Educational Attainment:

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists a postsecondary nondegree award as the typical entry-level education for *Dental Assistants*. 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 9 shows the educational attainment for *Dental Assistants*.

Of the 613 online job postings, 32% (equivalent to 195 postings) of cumulative job postings for *Dental Assistants* listed a minimum education requirement in the NCV/NML subregion. Of the 195 postings, 94% (184) requested a high school or GED.

Exhibit 9: National-level Educational Attainment for Dental Assistants



Educational Supply

Community College Supply:

Exhibit 10 shows the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred by community colleges in the programs that have historically trained for the occupation included in this report. No awards were conferred by NCV/NML community colleges. The college with the most completions in the SCV/SML subregion is Reedley.

**Exhibit 10: SCV/SML Community College Awards (Certificates and Degrees)
2021-22 through 2023-24**

TOP Code	Program	College	2021-2022 Awards	2022-2023 Awards	2023-2024 Awards	3-Year Award Average
1240.10	Dental Assistant	Fresno City	-	15	13	9
		Reedley	40	42	29	37
Subtotal/Average			40	57	42	46
SCV/SML Supply Grand Total			40	57	42	46

Exhibit 11 shows the annual average community college awards by type from 2021-22 through 2023-24. Of the 0 awards conferred in the NCV/NML subregion, none of these awards were for an associate degree, so no exhibit is displayed.

Community College Student Outcomes:

Exhibit 12 shows the Strong Workforce Program (SWP) metrics for Dental Assistant programs in Merced Community College District (MCCD), the NCV/NML subregion, the CVML region, and California.

Of the 1,247 dental assistant program students statewide in the 2023-2024 academic year, 7% (85) attended a CVML institution. CVML region students that exited dental assistant programs in the 2022-2023 academic year had less median annual earnings (\$30,040) compared to all dental assistant students statewide (\$34,894).

Exhibit 12: Dental Assistant (1240.10) Strong Workforce Program Metrics

SWP Metric	MCCD	NCV/NML Subregion	CVML Region	California
SWP Students	N/A	N/A	85	1,247
SWP Students Who Earned 9 or More Career Education Units in the District in a Single Year	N/A	N/A	49%	54%
SWP Students Who Completed a Noncredit CTE or Workforce Preparation Course	N/A	N/A	N/A	70%
SWP Students Who Earned a Degree or Certificate or Attained Apprenticeship Journey Status	N/A	N/A	42%	46%
SWP Students Who Transferred to a Four-Year Postsecondary Institution	N/A	N/A	0%	1%
SWP Students with a Job Closely Related to Their Field of Study	N/A	N/A	N/A	88%
Median Annual Earnings for SWP Exiting Students	N/A	N/A	\$30,040 (\$14.44)	\$34,894 (\$16.78)
Median Change in Earnings for SWP Exiting Students	N/A	N/A	N/A	51%
SWP Exiting Students Who Attained the Living Wage	N/A	N/A	N/A	11%



Non-Community College Supply:

For a comprehensive regional supply analysis, it is also important to consider the supply from other institutions in the region that provide training programs for the occupation studied in this report. Exhibits 13a and 13b show the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred by non-community college institutions in programs that have historically trained for the occupation of interest.

Between 2020 and 2023, non-community college institutions in the NCV/NML subregion conferred an average of 157 awards annually in related programs.

Exhibit 13a: NCV/NML Subregional Non-Community College Awards, 2020-2023

CIP Code	Program	Institution	2020-21 Awards	2021-22 Awards	2022-23 Awards	3-Year Award Average
51.0601	Dental Assisting/Assistant	Carrington College-Stockton	43	60	60	54
		Milan Institute-Merced	26	20	13	20
		Stellar Career College	-	-	5	2
		UEI College-Stockton	88	63	94	82
Subtotal/Average			157	143	172	157
NCV/NML Supply Grand Total			157	143	172	157

Exhibit 13b: SCV/SML Subregional Non-Community College Awards, 2020-2023

CIP Code	Program	Institution	2020-21 Awards	2021-22 Awards	2022-23 Awards	3-Year Award Average
51.0601	Dental Assisting/Assistant	Milan Institute-Visalia	21	34	24	26
		San Joaquin Valley College-Bakersfield	38	28	29	32
		San Joaquin Valley College-Fresno	46	39	30	38

CIP Code	Program	Institution	2020-21 Awards	2021-22 Awards	2022-23 Awards	3-Year Award Average
		San Joaquin Valley College-Visalia	55	48	56	53
		UEI College-Bakersfield	77	93	99	90
		UEI College-Fresno	90	121	131	114
Subtotal/Average			327	363	369	353
SCV/SML Supply Grand Total			327	363	369	353

Appendix A: Methodology

The CVML COE prepared this report by analyzing data from occupations and education programs.

Occupational data is derived from Lightcast, a labor market analytics firm that consolidates data from the California Employment Development Department (EDD), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and other government agencies. Program supply data is drawn from two systems: Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) and Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP).

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

- 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.

The CVML COE determined labor market supply for an occupation or SOC code by analyzing the number of program completers or awards in a related TOP or CIP code. The COE developed a “supply table” with this information, which is the source of the program supply data for this report. TOP code data comes from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart (datamart.cccco.edu) and CIP code data comes from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data), also known as IPEDS. 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 in the United States and Canada. Institutions outside of the California Community College system do not use TOP codes in their reporting systems.

Data included in this analysis represent the labor market demand for relevant positions most closely related to the proposed program as expressed by the requesting college in consultation with the CVML COE. Traditional labor market information was used to show current and projected employment based on data trends, as well as annual average awards granted by regional community colleges. Real-time labor market information captures job post advertisements for occupations relevant to the field of study which can signal demand and show what employers are looking for in potential employees but is not a perfect measure of the quantity of open positions.

All representations have been produced from primary research and/or secondary review of publicly and/or privately available data and/or research reports. The most recent data available at the time of the analysis was examined; however, data sets are updated regularly and may not be consistent with previous reports. Efforts have been made to qualify and validate the accuracy of the data and findings; however, neither the Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research (COE), COE host district, nor California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office are responsible for the applications or decisions made by individuals and/or organizations based on this study or its recommendations.

Appendix B: Data Sources

Data Type	Source
Occupational Projections, Wages, and Job Postings	Traditional labor market information data is sourced from Lightcast, a labor market analytics firm. Lightcast occupational employment data are based on final Lightcast industry data and final Lightcast staffing patterns. Wage estimates are based on Occupational Employment Statistics and the American Community Survey. For more information, see https://lightcast.io/
Living Wage	The living wage is derived from the Insight Center's California Family Needs Calculator, which measures the income necessary for an individual of family to afford basic expenses. The data assesses the cost of housing, food, childcare, health care, transportation, and taxes. For more information, see: https://selfsufficiencystandard.org/California/ Wage figures are used by the CCCCCO to calculate the percentage of students that attained the regional living wage.
Typical Education and Training Requirements, and Educational Attainment	The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) provides information about education and training requirements for hundreds of occupations. 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. For more information, see https://www.bls.gov/emp/documentation/education/tech.htm
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. For more information, see https://www.onetonline.org/help/online/
Educational Supply	The CCCCCO Data Mart provides information about students, courses, student services, outcomes and faculty and staff. For more information, see: https://datamart.cccco.edu The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Integrated Data System (IPEDS) collects data on the number of postsecondary awards earned (completions). For more information, see https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data/survey-components/7/completions
Student Metrics and Demographics	DataVista, a statewide data system supported by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and hosted by Cal-PASS Plus, provides data on progress, success, employment, and earnings outcomes for California community college students. For more information, see: https://datavista.cccco.edu/
Population and Occupation Demographics	The Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) is the premier source for detailed population and housing information. For more information, see: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs Data is sourced from IPUMS USA, a database providing access to ACS and other Census Bureau data products. For more information, see: https://usa.ipums.org/usa/about.shtml

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