



Paralegal Studies

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Prepared by the Los Angeles/Orange County Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research

Occupation Codes and Descriptions

Currently, there are four occupations in the standard occupational classification (SOC) system related to paralegal studies, and one emerging occupation in the O*NET¹ database of occupational information. The occupation titles, job descriptions, and reported job titles are included in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1 – Occupations, descriptions and sample job titles

SOC Code/ O*NET Code	Title	Description	Sample of Reported Job Titles
23-2011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	Assist lawyers by investigating facts, preparing legal documents, or researching legal precedent. Conduct research to support a legal proceeding, to formulate a defense, or to initiate legal action.	Certified Paralegal, Immigration Paralegal, Law Clerk, Legal Analyst, Legal Assistant, Legal Clerk, Paralegal, Paralegal Specialist, Real Estate Paralegal, Summer Law Associate
23-2091	Court Reporters	Use verbatim methods and equipment to capture, store, retrieve, and transcribe pretrial and trial proceedings or other information. Includes stenocaptioners who operate computerized stenographic captioning equipment to provide captions of live or prerecorded broadcasts for hearing-impaired viewers.	Certified Shorthand Reporter (CSR), Court Recording Monitor, Court Reporter, Court Stenographer, Deposition Reporter, Digital Court Reporter, Freelance Court Reporter, Official Court Reporter, Realtime Court Reporter, Stenographer
23-2093	Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers	Search real estate records, examine titles, or summarize pertinent legal or insurance documents or details for a variety of purposes. May compile lists of mortgages, contracts, and other instruments pertaining to titles by searching	Abstracter, Abstractor, Commercial Title Examiner, Searcher, Title Abstractor, Title Agent, Title Department Manager, Title Examiner, Title Officer, Title Searcher

¹ New and emerging occupations (N&E) are incorporated into the O*NET-SOC classification system based on the evolving nature of workforce requirements stemming from changes in technology, society, law, and business practices. Incorporating N&E occupations into the O*NET system makes O*NET information more beneficial and responsive. <https://www.onetcenter.org/reports/NewEmerging.html>

		public and private records for law firms, real estate agencies, or title insurance companies.	
43-4031.01	Court Clerks	Perform clerical duties in court of law; prepare docket of cases to be called; secure information for judges; and contact witnesses, attorneys, and litigants to obtain information for court.	Case Manager, Circuit Court Clerk, Clerk, Court Clerk, Court Specialist, Courtroom Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Deputy Clerk of Court, Deputy Court Clerk, Law Clerk
43-6012	Legal Secretaries	Perform secretarial duties using legal terminology, procedures, and documents. Prepare legal papers and correspondence, such as summonses, complaints, motions, and subpoenas. May also assist with legal research.	Confidential Secretary, Judicial Administrative Assistant, Legal Administrative Secretary, Legal Assistant, Legal Secretary, Litigation Assistant, Magistrate Assistant, Secretary

Source: O*NET Online

Current and Future Employment

In Los Angeles County, the number of paralegal-related occupations are expected to increase by 4% over the next five years. More than 500 job opportunities will be available annually for this group of occupations through 2021 due to new job growth and replacement need (e.g., retirements). Exhibit 2 contains detailed employment projections data for these occupations. Data collection is underway for the emerging occupation of court clerks (43-4031.01), and is therefore not available yet.

Exhibit 2 – Five-year projections for paralegal-related occupations in Los Angeles County

SOC	Occupation	2016 Jobs	2021 Jobs	2016 - 2021 Change	2016 - 2021 % Change	Annual Openings
43-6012	Legal Secretaries	11,079	11,218	139	1%	145
23-2011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	9,269	9,956	687	7%	347
23-2093	Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers	1,979	1,994	15	1%	48
23-2091	Court Reporters	887	927	40	5%	28
		23,213	24,095	882	4%	568

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)

Earnings

In Los Angeles County, the entry-level average wage for occupations related to paralegals is \$14.66 per hour, which is above the MIT Living Wage² estimate of \$13.08 per hour for a single adult. The average annual earnings for this occupation group in the region is \$55,735 per year, assuming full-time employment.

Exhibit 3 contains hourly wages and annual average earnings for these occupations. Entry-level hourly earnings is represented by the 10th percentile of wages, median hourly earnings is represented by the 50th percentile of wages, and experienced hourly earnings is represented by the 90th percentile of wages, demonstrating various levels of employment.

Exhibit 3 – Earnings for paralegal-related occupations in Los Angeles County, 2016-2021

SOC	Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings	Average Annual Earnings
23-2091	Court Reporters	\$24.33	\$30.33	\$37.87	\$64,865
23-2093	Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers	\$15.26	\$21.24	\$31.74	\$46,430
43-6012	Legal Secretaries	\$14.25	\$24.67	\$39.05	\$53,857
23-2011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	\$14.12	\$27.51	\$45.61	\$59,164
		\$14.66	\$25.71	\$40.98	\$55,735

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)

Employer Job Postings

In this research brief, real-time labor market information is used to provide a more nuanced view of the current job market, as it captures job advertisements for occupations relevant to the field of study. Employer job postings are consulted to understand who is employing paralegal-related occupations, and what they are looking for in potential candidates.

To identify job postings related to paralegals, the following keywords/search terms were used: paralegals and legal assistants (23-2011), legal secretaries (43-6012), title examiners, abstractors, and searchers (23-2093), court clerks (43-4031.01), court reporters (23-2091)

² MIT Living Wage Calculator. <http://livingwage.mit.edu/>

Top Occupations

In 2016, there were 4,821 employer postings for paralegal-related occupations. More than half of the postings (60%) were for paralegals and legal assistants (2,899 job postings). There were 4,847 job postings for the same cluster of occupations in 2015, and 3,324 job postings in 2014.

Exhibit 4 – Top occupations in job postings (n=4,821)

SOC Code/ O*NET Code	Occupation	Job Postings, Full Year 2016
23-2011.00	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	2,899
43-6012.00	Legal Secretaries	1,712
23-2093.00	Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers	164
43-4031.01	Court Clerks	38
23-2091.00	Court Reporters	8

Source: Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)

Top Titles

The top job titles for employers posting ads for paralegal-related occupations are listed in exhibit 5. Legal Secretary is mentioned as the job title in 20% of all relevant job postings (943 postings).

Exhibit 5 –Job titles (n=4,821)

Title	Job Postings, Full Year 2016
Legal Secretary	943
Legal Assistant	896
Paralegal	888
Litigation Paralegal	299
Litigation Secretary	281

Source: Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)

Top Employers

Exhibit 6 lists the major employers hiring professionals in the field of paralegals. Top employers postings job ads included Deloitte, D3 Legal Search, Fox, Disney, and AAA. The top worksite cities in the region for these occupations were Los Angeles, Glendale, Beverly Hills, Pasadena, and Santa Monica.

Exhibit 6 – Top employers (n=1,029)

Employer	Job Postings, Full Year 2016
Deloitte	69
D3 Legal Search, LLC	26
Fox	24
Disney	22
AAA	15

Source: Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)

Certifications and Skills

Paralegal Certification is overwhelmingly the most sought after certification by employers (86% of all certifications in demand).

Job-specific skills desired by employers include litigation, legal support, and skills in Microsoft programs.

Exhibit 7 –Job certifications (n=840) and job skills (n=3,840)

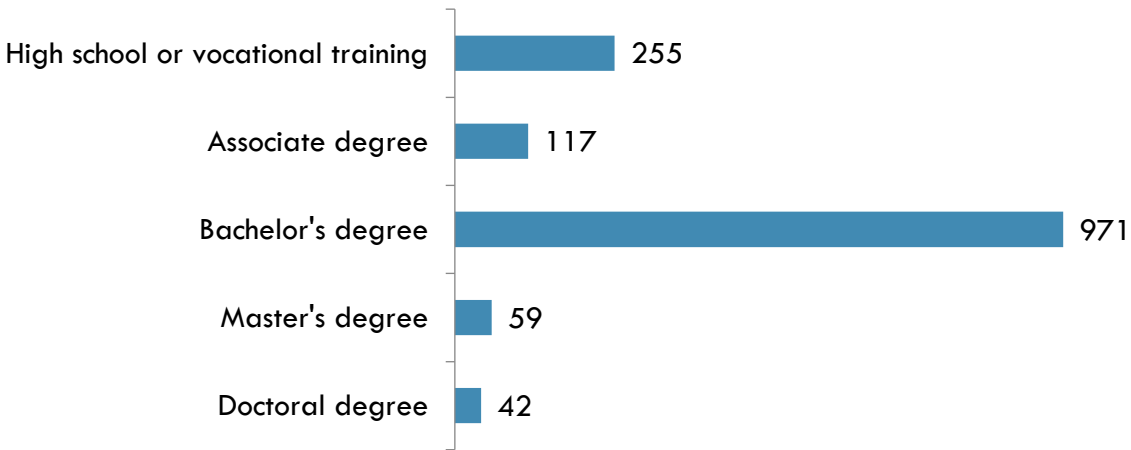
Certifications	Job Postings, Full Year 2016	Skills	Job Postings, Full Year 2016
Paralegal Certification	720	Litigation	1,798
Real Estate Certification	25	Legal Support	1,134
Legal Assistant	18	Microsoft Excel	1,059

Source: Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)

Advertised Education Levels

Exhibit 8 displays the education level requested by employers in online job ads. The majority of employers were looking for a candidate with a bachelor’s degree. Approximately 70% of job postings did not specify a level of education.

Exhibit 8 – 2016 Online job ads with minimum advertised education requirements for paralegal-related occupations (n=1,444)



Source: Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)

Industry Concentration

Paralegal-related jobs in Los Angeles County are most often found in the offices of lawyers industry (77% of total jobs in the industry). Exhibit 9 shows the industries that are the largest employers of paralegal-related occupations in Los Angeles County.

Exhibit 9 – Industries with the largest number of paralegal-related occupations, 2016

NAICS (6-Digit)	Industry	Occupation Group Jobs in Industry	% of Occupation Group in Industry
541110	Offices of Lawyers	17,974	77%
903999	Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	1,240	5%
541199	All Other Legal Services	685	3%

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International, Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Projections (Educational Attainment)

Education and Training

Exhibit 10 shows the typical entry-level education requirement for the occupations of interest, along with the typical on-the-job training, and percentage of workers in the field who hold a community college award or have completed some postsecondary courses.

At least 40% of workers in these occupations have completed some postsecondary coursework, which indicates that these occupations are relevant for community college students.

Exhibit 10 – Education and training requirements, 2015-2020

SOC	Occupation	Typical entry-level education	Typical on-the-job training	% of Community College Award Holders or Some Postsecondary Coursework
43-6012	Legal Secretaries	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate-term on-the-job training	48%
23-2011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	Associate degree	None	43%
23-2091	Court Reporters	Postsecondary award	Short-term on-the-job training	40%
23-2093	Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term on-the-job training	40%

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International, Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Projections (Educational Attainment)

Currently, there are 13 community colleges in Los Angeles County that train students in paralegal studies. Exhibit 11 displays the headcount and annual average community college awards for each of the colleges training in this field. Between 2012-2015, the total annual average community college awards conferred was 367 (151 associate degrees and 216 certificates) across the program.

Headcount is the actual number of students enrolled, regardless of credit hours. It is also important to note that an award is not equivalent to a single person in search of a job opening, since a student may earn more than one award (e.g. an associate degree and a certificate).

Exhibit 11 – CCC Student Awards (by TOP and College)

2012 – 2015 Annual Average						
TOP Code	Program	College	CCC Headcount	CCC Associate Degrees	CCC Certificates	Total Average CC Awards
1402.00	Paralegal	Cerritos	925	N/A	54	54
		Compton	N/A	N/A	1	1
		East LA	1,210	N/A	N/A	N/A
		El Camino	244	18	23	41
		LA City	895	29	N/A	29
		LA Mission	532	9	54	63
		LA Southwest	71	1	N/A	1
		LA Trade	199	4	4	8
		LA Valley	490	N/A	N/A	N/A
		Mt San Antonio	429	54	N/A	54
		Pasadena	533	13	56	69
		Rio Hondo	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
		West LA	919	23	24	47
		Total		6,447	151	216

Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office MIS Data Mart

Student Outcomes

The CTE LaunchBoard provides student outcome data on the effectiveness of CTE programs. The following student outcome information was collected from exiters of the Paralegal Taxonomy of Program (TOP) code (1402.00) in Los Angeles County for the 2013-14 academic year.

- The median annual wage after program completion is \$23,971
- 44% of students are earning a living wage
- 64% of students are employed within six months after completing a program

Source: CTE LaunchBoard

Program Recommendation

This report was compiled by the Los Angeles/Orange County Center of Excellence to provide regional labor market data for the program recommendation of Paralegal (1402.00). This report is to help determine whether there is demand in the local labor market that is not being met by the supply from programs of study (CCC and non-CCC) that align with this occupation group.

Based on the data, the COE has determined there is an unmet need for the paralegal program in the Los Angeles region. Reasons include:

- Paralegal-related occupations are forecasted to increase by 4% over the next 5 years, resulting in over 500 jobs annually
- On average, 367 community college awards were conferred annually between 2012-2015
- Between 40-48% of these paralegal-related workers have completed some postsecondary coursework, signaling that these occupations are relevant for community college students.

Sources

O*Net Online, Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass), Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI), MIT Living Wage Calculator, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Education Attainment, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems (MIS) Data Mart, CTE LaunchBoard, Statewide CTE Outcomes Survey, Employment Development Department Unemployment Insurance Dataset

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Notes

Data included in this analysis represents the labor market demand for positions most closely related to paralegal studies. Standard occupational classification (SOC) codes were chosen based on the national education level required for employment (associate degree and postsecondary certificate) as well as the proportion of current workers who hold a community college award or have had some community college training. This selection process narrows the labor market analysis to the most relevant employment opportunities for students with community college education and/or training.

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 and should not be used to establish current job openings, because the numbers may include duplicate job postings or postings intended to gather a pool of applicants. Real-time labor market information 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.