

# Program Endorsement Brief:

American River College: Interior Retail Merchandising

**North/Far North Center of Excellence, December 2018**

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## INTRODUCTION

American River College is exploring programs related to interior retail merchandising. This report examines two occupations: Interior Designers and Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers.

This report provides an overview of the labor market demand and supply for interior retail merchandising occupations, including the employment opportunities and existing community college programs that prepare students for the profession.

Key findings include:

- The number of retail merchandisers and interior designers has grown in the recovery over the last six years. The labor market is small overall, showing about 1,600 jobs overall in the two occupations most closely associated with the request. There are about 160 annual openings projected for the two occupations over the next five years.
- These occupations are below the living wage for Sacramento County. Merchandise displayers pays especially poorly, with wages just above minimum wage.
- American River College is the only regional college with program completions in the related TOP code, showing about 20 average annual awards.

Findings in this report were determined using labor market data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), U.S. Census Bureau data from Emsi and job posting data from Burning Glass.

The report contains the following sections:

- Occupational demand,
- Wages and job postings,
- Educational attainment and supply, and
- Findings and recommendations.

# OCCUPATIONAL DEMAND

Two Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes were analyzed in relation to the proposed program: Interior Designers (SOC 27-1025) and Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers (SOC 27-1026). Exhibit 1 summarizes job trends per the SOC codes in the 7-county North region and the 22-county North/Far North region. The data includes estimates for self-employed workers.

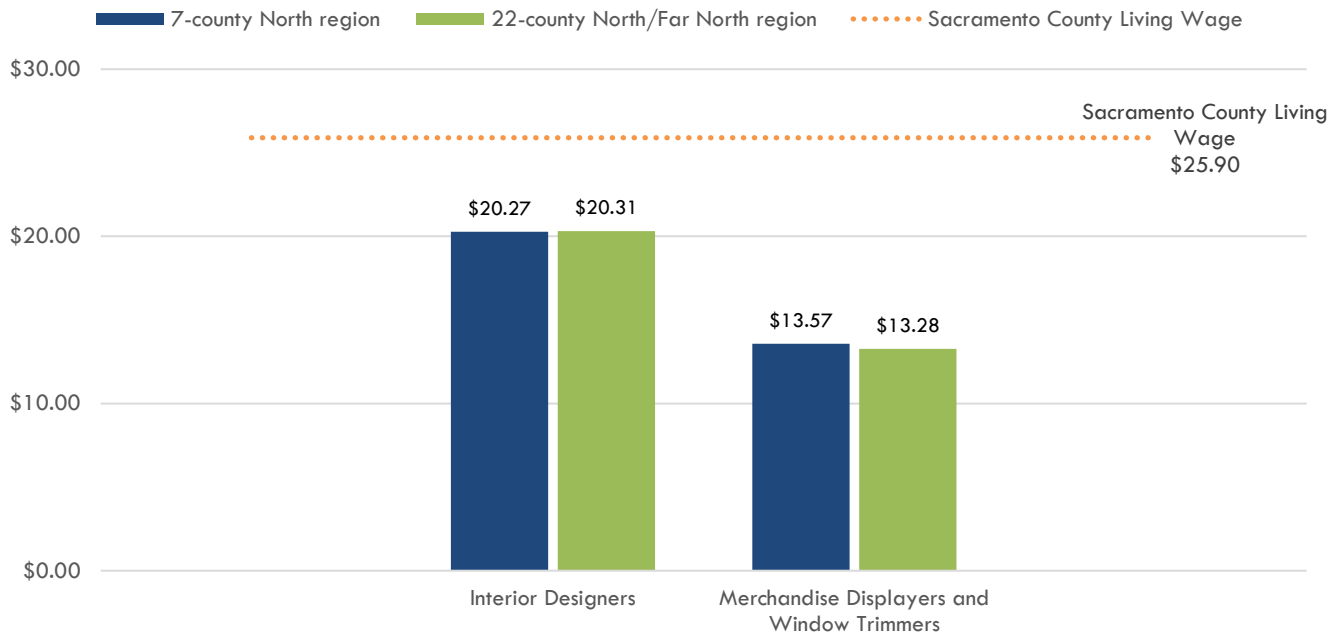
**Exhibit 1: Employment and projected occupational demand, 7-county and 22-county regions<sup>1</sup>**

Occupation	SOC	2007 Jobs	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2017-22 Jobs % Change	Annual Openings
Interior Designers	27-1025	940	858	877	2%	84
Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	27-1026	442	741	778	5%	77
<b>7-County North Region</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,382</b>	<b>1,599</b>	<b>1,655</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>162</b>
Interior Designers	27-1025	1,136	1,009	1,027	2%	99
Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	27-1026	538	884	933	6%	93
<b>22-County North/Far North Region</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,674</b>	<b>1,892</b>	<b>1,961</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>193</b>

# WAGES AND JOB POSTINGS

Exhibit 2 displays hourly wages for the two interior retail merchandiser occupations of focus in the study regions compared to the Sacramento County living wage for a one-adult, one-child household.<sup>2</sup> The chart highlights the difference between the median wages of the representative occupations.

**Exhibit 2: Wages for interior retail merchandising occupations<sup>3</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> Emsi 2018.4; QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees and Self-Employed. 7-County North region includes El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba Counties. The 22-County North/Far North region includes these 7 counties in addition to Butte, Colusa, Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Trinity Counties.

<sup>2</sup> Living Wage Calculator: Counties and Metropolitan Statistical Areas in California, <http://livingwage.mit.edu/states/06/locations>.

<sup>3</sup> Emsi 2018.4; QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees and Self-Employed.

Burning Glass data for job postings identified a pool of 1,409 listings in the 22-County region based on the two SOC codes. Data was pulled for the last year from December 1, 2017 through November 30, 2018.

Exhibit 3 presents the job postings trend for the two SOC code job postings over the past 8 years compared to the median from 2010 to 2017 for the 22-county North/Far North region.

**Exhibit 3: Job posting trend for interior retail merchandising occupations<sup>4</sup>**

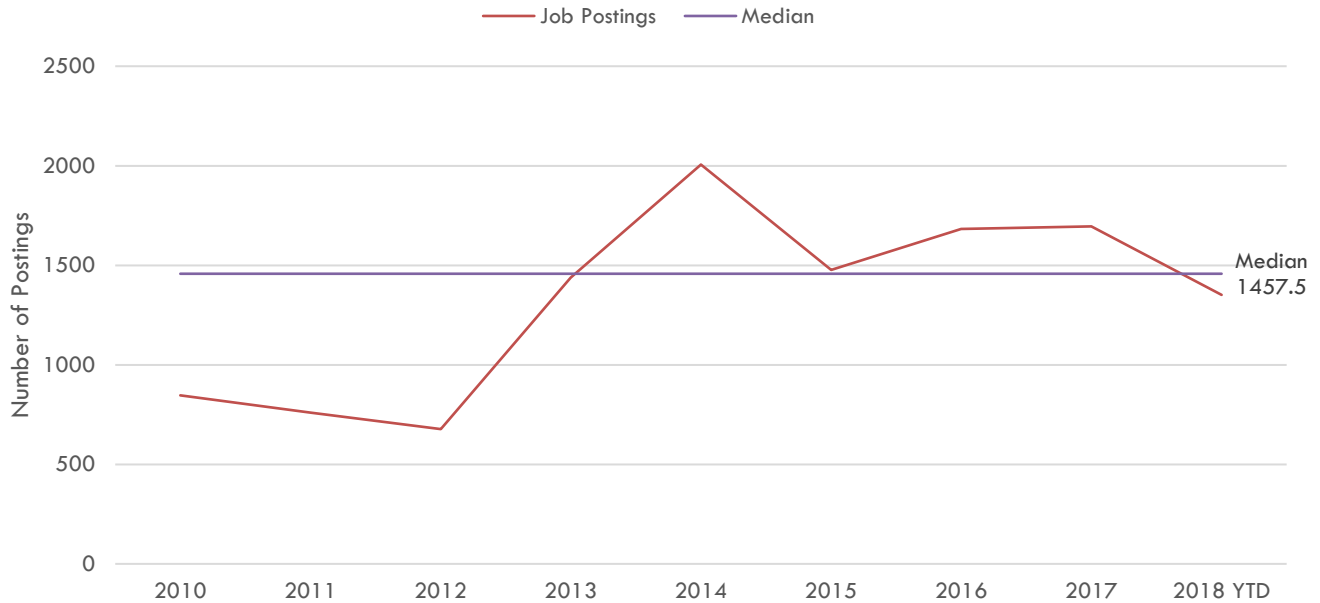


Exhibit 4 shows the top titles for interior retail merchandising occupations that were present in the job postings in the North/Far North region.

**Exhibit 4: Top titles for interior retail merchandising job postings<sup>5</sup>**

Top Titles	Number	Percent (n=1,409)
Merchandiser	939	66.6%
Merchandising Specialist	70	5.0%
Merchandise Associate	49	3.5%
Designer, Kitchen	37	2.6%
Retail Sales Merchandiser	25	1.8%
Merchandising Representative	25	1.8%

Exhibit 5 shows the top employers for interior retail merchandising jobs postings in the 22-county region.

In the region, of the 1,409 postings, there were 1,280 records that included an employer. As a result, the table below may not be representative of the full sample.

<sup>4</sup> Burning Glass Technologies, "Labor Insight Real-Time Labor Market Information Tool," 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

**Exhibit 5: Top Employers among interior retail merchandising job postings<sup>6</sup>**

Top Employers	Number	Percent (n=1,280)
Spar Business Services	46	3.6%
Driveline Retail Merchandising	44	3.4%
Mondelez International	38	3.0%
The Home Depot Incorporated	37	2.9%
JC Penney	36	2.8%
Advantage Sales & Marketing	36	2.8%
American Greetings Corporation, Inc.	33	2.6%
Crossmark	28	2.2%

Exhibit 6 shows the top skills desired for interior retail merchandising professionals in the 22-county region.

In the region, of the 1,409 postings, there were 1,191 records that included a skill. As a result, the table below may not be representative of the full sample.

**Exhibit 6: Top specialized skills desired in the interior retail merchandising job postings<sup>7</sup>**

Top Skills	Number	Percent (n=1,191)
Merchandising	1,191	100%
Retail industry knowledge	578	50.5%
Customer service	345	30.2%
Sales	327	28.6%
Scheduling	256	22.4%
Store management	200	17.5%
Lifting ability	169	14.8%
Visual merchandising	165	14.4%

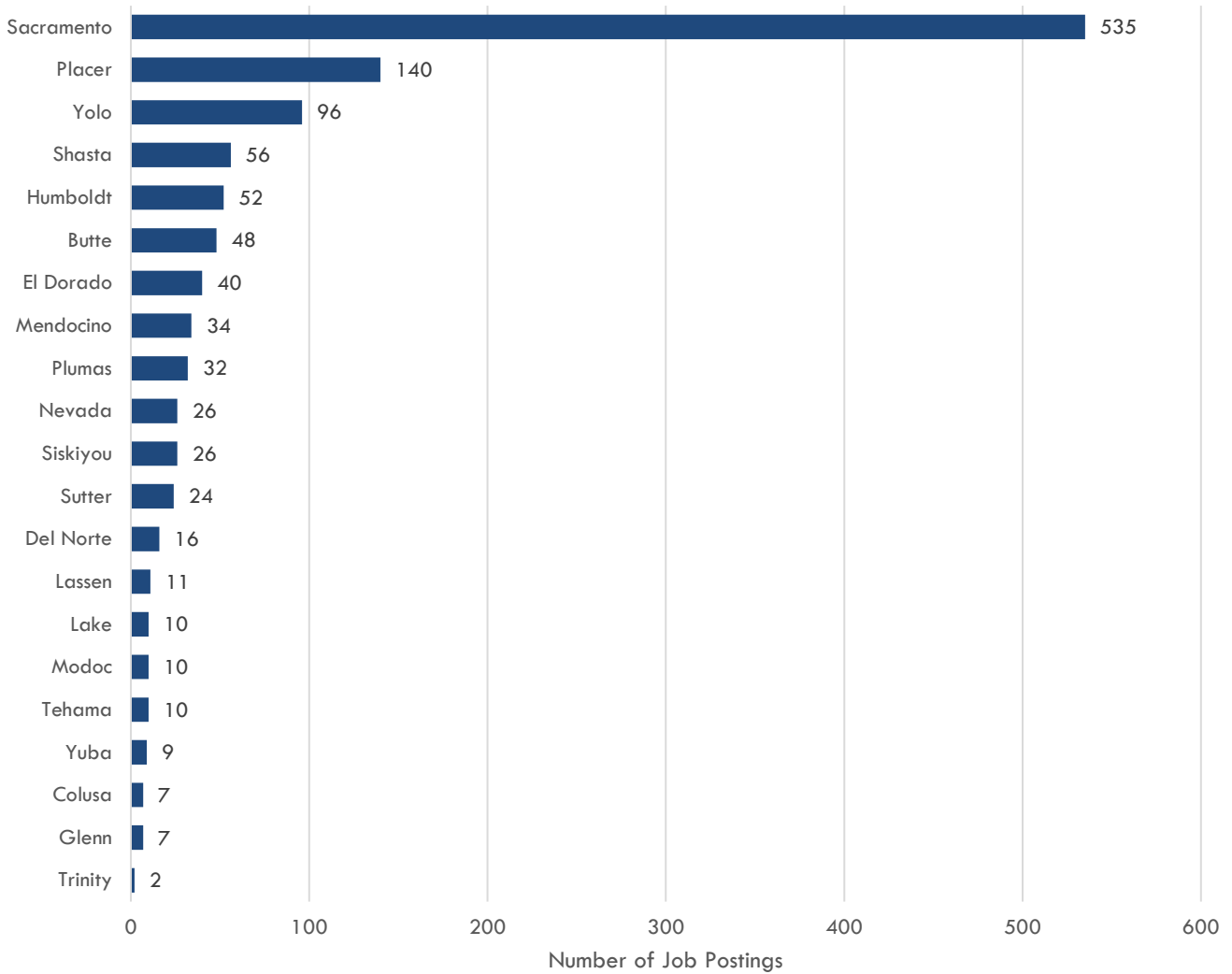
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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Exhibit 7 shows the counties where interior retail merchandising postings were located throughout the 22-county region.

**Exhibit 7: Top county locations listed in interior retail merchandising job postings<sup>8</sup>**

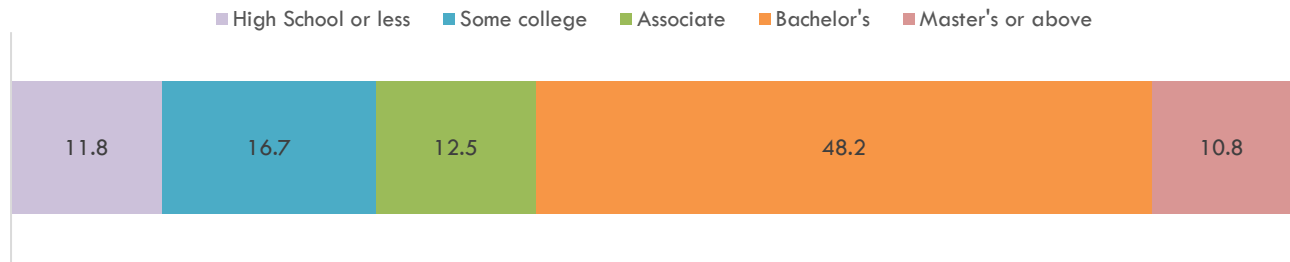


<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND SUPPLY

At the national level, the typical education required for interior retail merchandising jobs is high school diploma and bachelor's degree. Exhibit 8 breaks down the educational attainment percentages by degree type for both occupations. The BLS and Census combine the two occupations for their measures.

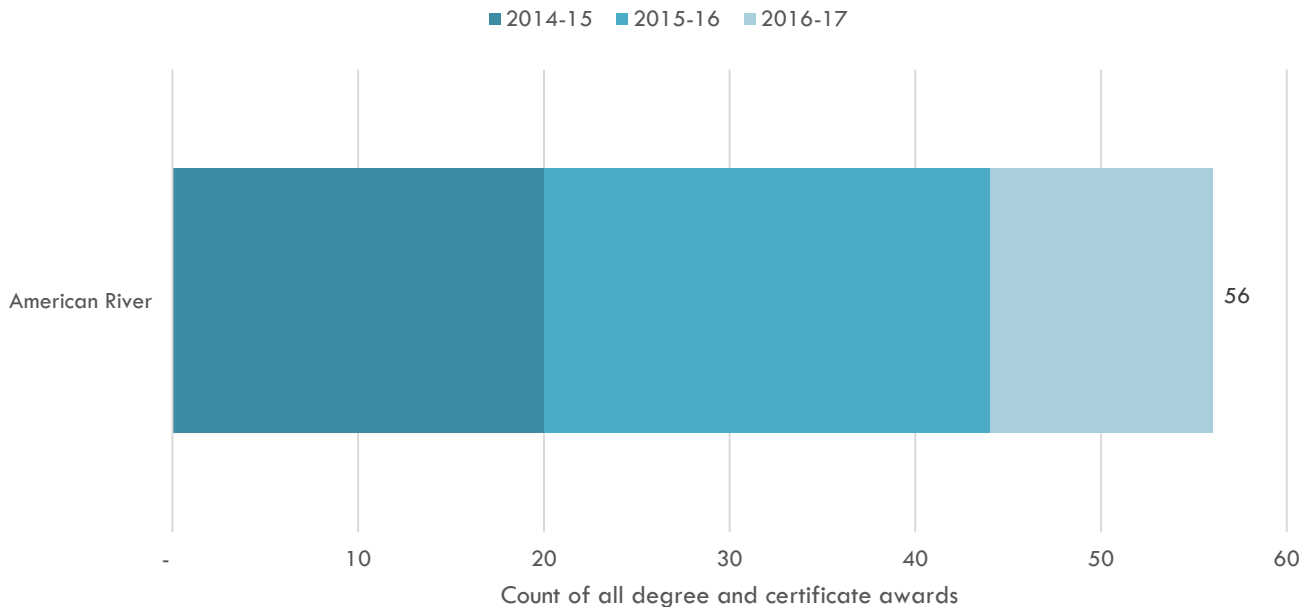
**Exhibit 8: Typical educational attainment for interior retail merchandising occupations nationally<sup>9</sup>**



There is one Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) code identified that relates to interior retail merchandising: Interior Design and Merchandising (TOP 1302.00). There is one community college in the 22-county North/Far North region that offers related training: American River College.

In the 22-county North/Far North region, there were on average 19 awards earned by students each year over the past three years, most of which were credit awards (12 on average), with an average of 7 associate degrees. Exhibit 6 shows the total number of awards during the past three academic years in the North/Far North region.

**Exhibit 9: Total Merchandising awards conferred by North/Far North community colleges, 2014-2017<sup>10</sup>**



<sup>9</sup> Current Population Survey, Educational Attainment for Workers 25 Years and Older by Detailed Occupation, 2014-2015, [https://www.bls.gov/emp/ep\\_table\\_111.htm](https://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_table_111.htm).

<sup>10</sup> COE Supply Tables, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office DataMart, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The research measured the two most related occupations, finding a generally small labor market, finding 1,600 jobs in the Sacramento region. Merchandising displayers have performed well, increasing employment by more than half over the last 10 years. Interior designers employment has declined significantly in the last 10 years. There are 160 annual openings projected between the two occupations.
- Wages are low for both occupations. Wages for merchandise displayers are just above minimum wage. Wages for interior designers is \$20 per hour, low considering the typical entry-level education and educational attainment figures in the data. The bachelor's degree is the typical education level for interior designers. Merchandising shows a mix of educational attainment, including middle skill, high school, and bachelor's degrees.
- American River College is the only institution in the North Far North region posting awards in the related TOP code. ARC produces about 20 awards on average annually.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The COE recommends that ARC move forward with the program, but emphasize technical skills transfer into occupations that pay higher wages. The request form mentions the construction industry, where technical design skills are in demand, and the wages are higher than fashion and retail. The program might consider emphasis on technical design software like BIM, CAD, or another similar design software.

COE Recommendation		
Move forward with program	Program is not recommended	Additional information needed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION (FOR RC APPLICATION)**

- The COE recommends that ARC move forward with the program. ARC should emphasize the construction industry, where technical design skills are in demand, and the wages are higher than fashion and retail.

COE Recommendation		
Move forward with program	Program is not recommended	Additional information needed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## APPENDIX A: SOURCES

Sources used for data analysis purposes in this report include:

- U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA) O\*NET Online
- Burning Glass, Labor Insight/Jobs
- Economic Modeling Specialists, International (EMSI)
- California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division (EDD, LMID)
- Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)
- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, Cal-PASS Plus LaunchBoard
- Living Insight Center for Community Economic Development, Self-Sufficiency Standard Tool for California
- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems (MIS Data Mart)
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

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