

2017

Labor Market Analysis

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

Prepared by the
Central Valley/
Mother Lode
Center of Excellence



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Introduction

The Central Valley/Mother Lode Center of Excellence was asked by West Hills College Coalinga to provide labor market information for an American Sign Language program. After review of the data and confirmation from the region's deputy sector navigator, it was determined that American Sign Language jobs fall under the occupation of interpreters and translators, which includes sign language along with all foreign languages.

No regional specifications were provided; therefore, labor market information for the Central Valley/Mother Lode (CVML) region and South Central Valley/Southern Mother Lode (SCV/SML) subregion are provided in this analysis. (See Appendix A for methodology and data sources.)

According to the American Translators Association (ATA) website, an ATA certification greatly enhances employment prospects for translators. The deputy sector navigator of health care also provided valuable feedback stating:

“Most employers in the valley tend to NOT require certifications, unless they are teaching at a community college.

However, the deputy sector navigator also highlighted job requirements and proof of certification from a Sacramento job posting on Indeed.com:

“Sign Language Interpreter(s) shall hold a minimum of one (or more) valid and current certifications of the following:

- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID) with a level no less than Comprehensive Skills Certificate (CSC),
- National Interpreting Certification (NIC), and/or
- Certificate of Interpretation (CI), Certificate of Translation (CT) both are required.

OR

- Certification by the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) with a level no less than Level III (Generalist), IV (Advanced) or Level V (Master)

OR

- RID – Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI)

Sign Language Interpreter(s) must be proficient in interpreting the spoken English language to American Sign Language and American Sign.”

The National Association for the Deaf (NAD) references the Registry of Interpreters RID as the training program source.¹

¹ “Interpreting American Sign Language.” National Association of the Deaf. Accessed December 6, 2017. <https://www.nad.org/resources/american-sign-language/interpreting-american-sign-language/>

According to RID, eligibility requirements for the Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDI) exam entail:

“Submitting 40 Hours/4.0 CEUs of Interpreter Training

1. **8 hours/0.8 CEUs required on the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct** – Recommended topics include: Ethical Decision Making and Ethics in Interpreting
2. **8 hours/0.8 CEUs required on the Introduction to Interpreting** – Recommended topics include: Interpreting 101
3. **8 hours/0.8 CEUs required on the Process of Interpretation** – Recommended topics include: The Deaf Interpreter at Work, Deaf/Hearing Team Interpreting, Deaf/Deaf Team Interpreting, Interpreting for Deaf Blind consumers, Deaf Interpreting Processes, Deaf Interpreting Theory and Practice, Consecutive Interpreting, Simultaneous Interpreting, Sight/Test Translation, Visual Gestural Communication, and Platform Interpreting
4. **16 hours/1.6 CEUs required on the elective(s) of your choice** – Recommended topics include: ASL Linguistics, Mentorship Programs, and Interpreting Practicum, Additional training in any of the required content areas above

Please note: For a semester class, the number of CEUs equals 1.5 semester credits (i.e. a 3 credit course = 4.5 CEUs). For a quarter class, the number of CEUs equals 1 quarter credit (i.e. a 3 credit course = 3 CEUs).

Documentation Required: Documentation must indicate date(s), location(s), and duration of training. (Applicant must send a copy of training documentation to RID Headquarters in the form of official academic transcripts, RID CEU Transcript, letter(s) of verification signed by the person teaching the training session(s), certificate(s)/letter(s) of completion.”²

² “Certified Deaf Interpreter.” Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. Accessed December 6, 2017. <https://www.rid.org/rid-certification-overview/cdi-certification/>

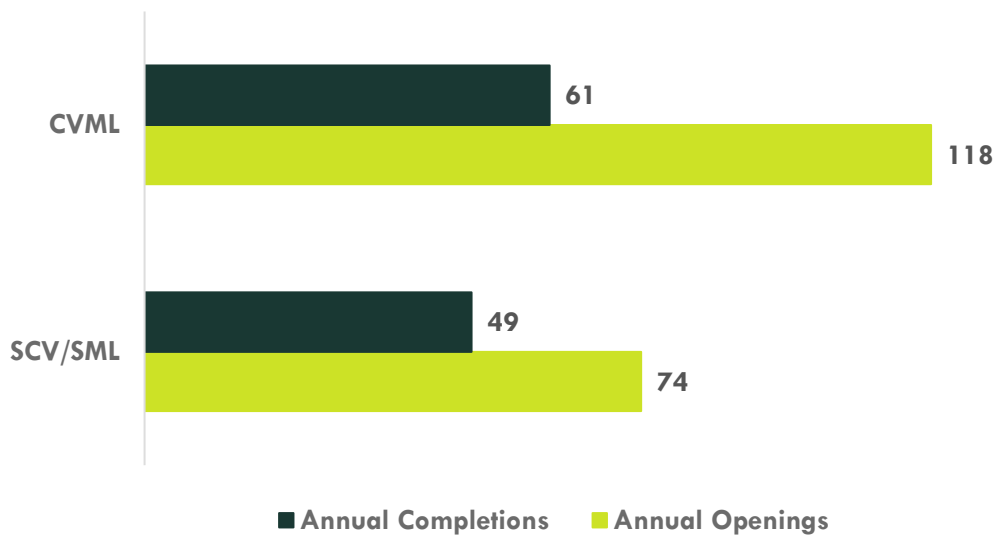
Occupational Demand and Supply

Exhibit 1 shows the annual job openings (demand) and community college completions (supply) at the regional and subregional levels.

In both scenarios, average annual demand is greater than three-year supply when focusing on the occupation of interpreters and translators.

However, it is important to note that only completions from the following two programs are included: Sign Language (TOP code 085000) and Sign Language-Interpreting (TOP code 085010).

Exhibit 1: Annual sign language interpreters demand and supply, 2014-2017



Wages

The 2014 self-sufficiency wage for a single adult in the Central Valley/Mother Lode region is \$10.28/hour, and the living wage for a single adult is \$11.16/hour (Exhibit 2).

The average self-sufficiency wage is \$10.29/hour, and the average living wage is \$11.32/hour in the subregion.

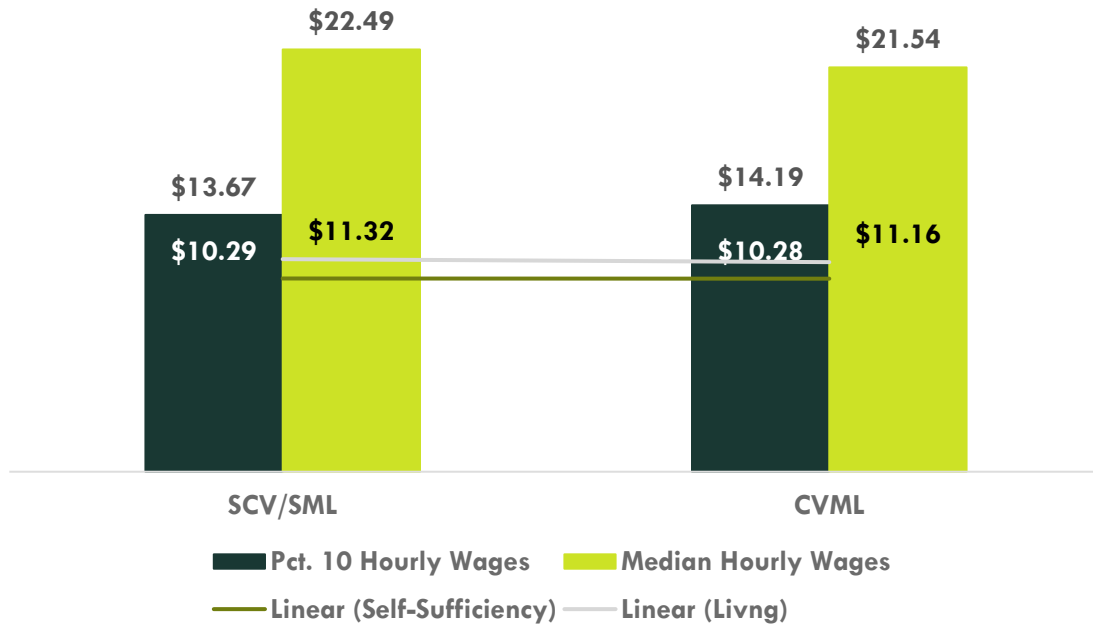
Exhibit 2: Regional and subregional self-sufficiency and living wages

County	Wages for a Single Adult		County	Wages for a Single Adult	
	Self-Sufficiency	Living		Self-Sufficiency	Living
Alpine	\$10.36	\$10.90	Fresno	\$9.80	\$11.21
Amador	\$11.21	\$11.12	Inyo	\$11.30	\$11.68
Calaveras	\$10.87	\$11.10	Kern	\$9.36	\$10.81
Fresno	\$9.80	\$11.21	Kings	\$9.57	\$10.85
Inyo	\$11.30	\$11.68	Madera	\$9.45	\$11.45
Kern	\$9.36	\$10.81	Mono	\$13.55	\$12.59
Kings	\$9.57	\$10.85	Tulare	\$8.97	\$10.67
Madera	\$9.45	\$11.45	Seven-County Average	\$10.29	\$11.32
Mariposa	\$9.32	\$11.18			
Merced	\$9.25	\$10.26			
Mono	\$13.55	\$12.59			
San Joaquin	\$10.29	\$10.91			
Stanislaus	\$10.34	\$11.03			
Tulare	\$8.97	\$10.67			
Tuolumne	\$10.55	\$11.68			
15-County Average	\$10.28	\$11.16			

The entry-level wage of \$14.19/hour for interpreters and translators in the Central Valley/Mother Lode region exceeds the region’s self-sufficiency wage of \$10.28/hour and the living wage of \$11.16/hour (Exhibit 3).

The average entry-level wage for interpreters and translators is \$13.67/hour in the subregion. This wage exceeds the subregion’s average self-sufficiency wage of \$10.29/hour and average living wage of \$11.32/hour.

Exhibit 3: Hourly wages for interpreters and translators



Job Postings

The following job posting data was obtained using the following O*NET Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code: 27-3091—interpreters and translators.

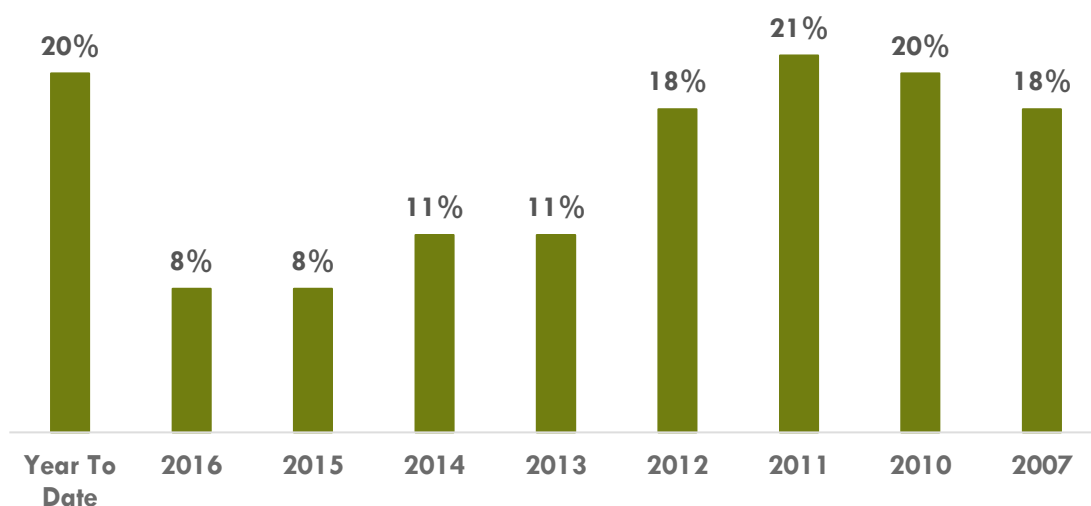
The percentages shown in Exhibit 4 represent the total number of job postings for the seven-county South Central Valley/Southern Mother Lode subregion.

On the x-axis, “Year to Date” represents job postings from December 1, 2016 through November 30, 2017. The remaining are the annual totals for the prior seven years as well as 2007.

For the year to date, there were 189 job postings related to the interpreters-and-translators SOC code.

This represents one-fifth of the total job postings in the subregion thus far. This percentage is already more than double the amount in 2016, but is consistent with four earlier years: 2012, 2011, 2010 and 2007.

Exhibit 4: Number of job postings in the subregion



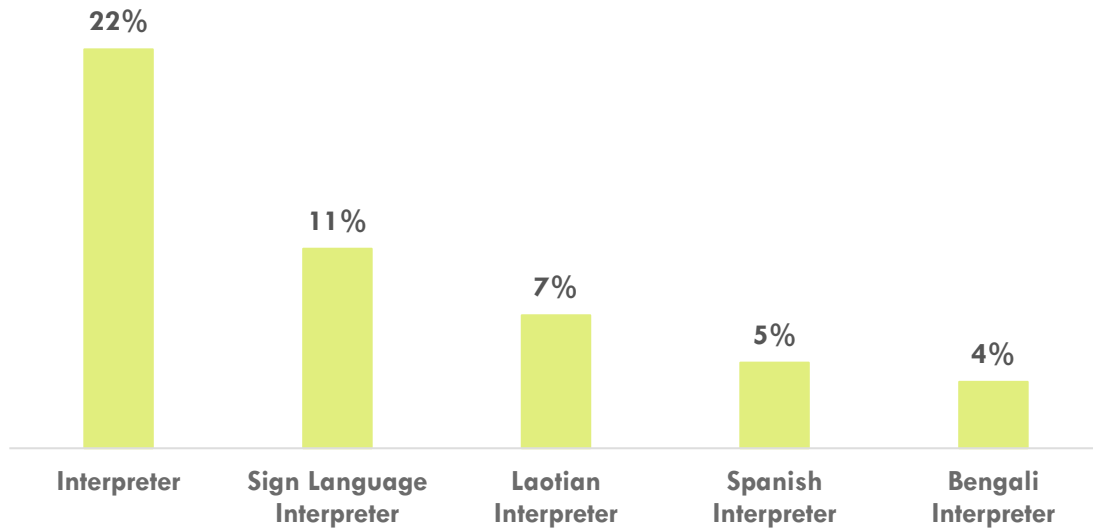
The 10 top cities with job postings for interpreters and translators are shown in Exhibit 5. Most of the postings are in Fresno, 28%, followed by Visalia, 18%, and Porterville, 10%. Bakersfield and Hanford have an equal number of postings, as do Delano and Tulare.

Exhibit 5: Top 10 cities with the most job postings

City	Job Postings	
	Number	Percent
Fresno	53	28%
Visalia	34	18%
Porterville	19	10%
Bakersfield	18	10%
Hanford	18	10%
Delano	13	7%
Tulare	13	7%
Madera	6	3%
Clovis	3	2%
Edwards	3	2%

Exhibit 6 details the top five job titles for job postings related to interpreters and translators. The No. 1 job title under this occupation is interpreter, 22%, followed by sign language interpreter, 11%, and Laotian interpreter, 7%.

Exhibit 6: Top job titles from job postings



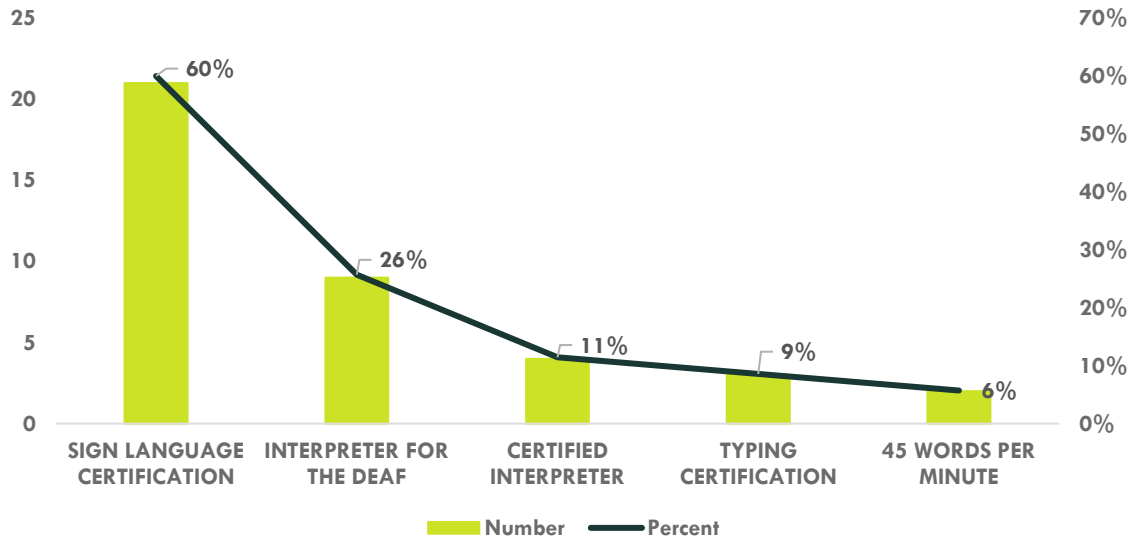
Just under three-quarters of the job postings specify required skills. American Sign Language ranks fifth among the top five baseline skills sought by employers (Exhibit 7). The top three baseline skills are English, communication skills and writing. The top three specialized skills are training materials, phone systems and scheduling.

Exhibit 7: Top job titles from job postings

Baseline Skills	Job Postings		Specialized Skills	Job Postings	
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
English	112	59%	Training Materials	77	41%
Communication Skills	102	54%	Phone Systems	56	30%
Writing	80	42%	Scheduling	26	14%
Listening	78	41%	Teaching	21	11%
American Sign Language	26	14%	Special Education	14	7%

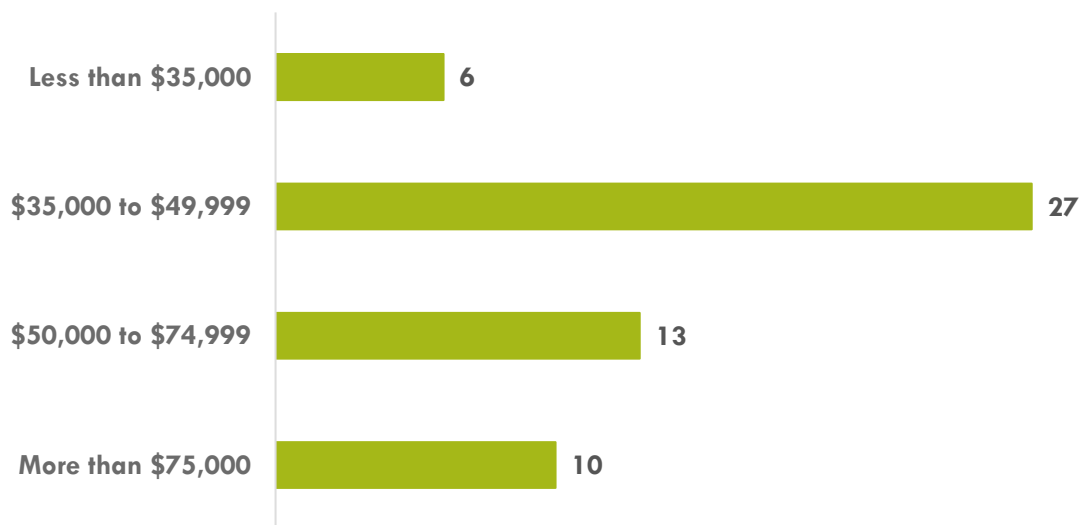
Only 19% of the 189 postings specify required certifications (Exhibit 8). Of these, 35 postings, 60%, require a sign language certification, and 26% require an interpreter for the deaf certification. Another 11% require an interpreter certification.

Exhibit 8: Most common required certifications



Seventy percent of the job postings did not have salary information. The salary distribution for the remaining 56 postings is illustrated in Exhibit 9. The mean annual salary is \$54,000, and the median annual salary is \$45,000.

Exhibit 9: Salaries listed in job postings



Educational Attainment and Work Experience

The typical entry-level education level for the occupation of interpreters and translators is a bachelor's degree; however, this occupation does qualify as community college relevant with 36% of workers having completed at least some college or an associate degree as their highest level of education, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (Exhibit 10).

Exhibit 10: Education, training and work experience levels

Occupation	Typical Entry-level Education	Work Experience Required	Typical On-The-Job Training	CPS
Interpreters and Translators	Bachelor's degree	None	Short-term	36%

Community College Supply

At the regional level, four colleges confer, on average, 61 American Sign Language awards annually (Exhibit 11). Those colleges and their three-year average annual awards are:

- Bakersfield College, 28 degrees;
- Fresno City College, eight degrees and two certificates;
- San Joaquin Delta College, 11 certificates; and
- College of the Sequoias, 11 degrees.

At the subregional level, Bakersfield College, Fresno City College and College of the Sequoias confer 49 awards annually on average.

Exhibit 11: Annual average awards in the region, 2014-2017

College	3-Year Average	
	Certificates	Degrees
Bakersfield		28
Fresno City	2	8
San Joaquin Delta	11	
Sequoias	0	11
TOTAL	14	47

Conclusion and Recommendations

Occupational demand exceeds community college supply in the region and subregion. However, the occupation of interpreters and translators includes not only American Sign Language, but all foreign languages. If completions in foreign languages are included in the supply, then the results reverse and there is an oversupply of workers.

Recommendation:

West Hills College Coalinga should work with its advisory board and the region's health care deputy sector navigator to identify agencies and potential employers to insure the COE's analysis of demand for American Sign Language interpreters is accurate.

Appendix A: Methodology & Data Sources

Data Sources

Labor market and educational supply data compiled in this report derive from a variety of sources. Data were drawn from external sources, including the Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc., the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Data Mart and the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Below is the summary of the data sources found in this study.

Data Type	Source
Labor Market Information/Population Estimates and Projections/Educational Attainment	Economic Modeling Specialists, Intl. (EMSI). EMSI occupational employment data are based on final EMSI industry data and final EMSI staffing patterns. Wage estimates are based on Occupational Employment Statistics (QCEW and Non-QCEW Employees classes of worker) and the American Community Survey (Self-Employed and Extended Proprietors). Occupational wage estimates also affected by county-level EMSI earnings by industry: economicmodeling.com .
Living Wage	A living wage calculator that estimates the cost of living in a specific community or region: livingwage.mit.edu .
Typical Education Level and On-the-job Training	Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) uses a system to assign categories for entry-level education and typical on-the-job training to each occupation for which BLS publishes projections data: www.bls.gov/emp/ep_education_tech.htm .
Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Estimates	California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division, labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov
Job Posting and Skills Data	Burning Glass, http://www.burning-glass.com/
Additional Education Requirements/Employer Preferences	The O*NET Job Zone database includes over 900 occupations as well as information on skills, abilities, knowledge, work activities and interests associated with specific occupations: www.onetonline.org

Key Terms and Concepts

Annual Job Openings: Annual openings are calculated by dividing the number of years in the projection period by total job openings.

Education Attainment Level: The highest education attainment level of workers age 25 years or older.

Employment Estimate: The total number of workers currently employed.

Employment Projections: Projections of employment are calculated by a proprietary Economic Modeling Specialists, Intl. (EMSI) formula that includes historical employment and economic indicators along with national, state and local trends.

Living Wage: The cost of living in a specific community or region for one adult and no children. The cost increases with the addition of children.

Occupation: An occupation is a grouping of job titles that have a similar set of activities or tasks that employees perform.

Percent Change: Rate of growth or decline in the occupation for the projected period; this does not factor in replacement openings.

Replacements: Estimate of job openings resulting from workers retiring or otherwise permanently leaving an occupation. Workers entering an occupation often need training. These replacement needs, added to job openings due to growth, may be used to assess the minimum number of workers who will need to be trained for an occupation.

Total Job Openings (New + Replacements): Sum of projected growth (new jobs) and replacement needs. When an occupation is expected to lose jobs, or retain the current employment level, number of openings will equal replacements.

Typical Education Requirement: represents the typical education level most workers need to enter an occupation.

Typical On-The-Job Training: indicates the typical on-the-job training needed to attain competency in the skills needed in the occupation.

Wages Family Compositions: The living wage calculator estimates the living wage needed to support families. For single adult families, the adult is assumed to be employed full time. For two adult families where both adults are in the labor force, both adults are assumed to be employed full time. For two adult families where one adult is not in the labor force, one of the adults is assumed to be employed full time while the other non-wage-earning adult provides full-time child care for the family's children. Full-time work is assumed to be year-round, 40 hours per week for 52 weeks, per adult. Families with one child are assumed to have a 'young child' (4 years old). Families with two children are assumed to have a 'young child' and a 'child' (9 years old). Families with three children are assumed to have a 'young child,' a 'child,' and a 'teenager' (15 years old).