

Investigative Assistant

Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego counties

Introduction

An investigative assistant is an entry-level law enforcement position that provides support for criminal and civil justice cases (ZipRecruiter). This report aims to determine the demand for investigative assistant jobs in the Inland Empire/Desert Region (IEDR) and three other Southern California counties. Traditional labor market information does not recognize investigative assistants as a known or emerging job title used by employers on a national basis (O*Net). This report utilizes a job postings search to provide an approximation of demand in the Southern California labor market.

Additionally, this report provides student completion and outcome data for the California Community College administration of justice program (TOP 2105.00). This program provides students with the knowledge of theories, principles, and techniques of law enforcement agencies, juvenile justice, and corrections (Taxonomy of Programs, 2012). While not explicitly designed to train investigative assistants, the administration of justice program may provide community college students with the foundational knowledge and skills that transfer to the workplace.

Job Postings

A job posting search for investigative assistants in the IEDR yielded 16 results in the last five years, 2014 through 2018. Since job posting data is limited in the local region, the search was expanded to include all of Southern California over the past five years. Including Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego counties, the new search yielded 79 additional job postings over the last five years. Exhibit 1 displays the total number of job ads posted during the last five years for investigative assistants in each county in Southern California.

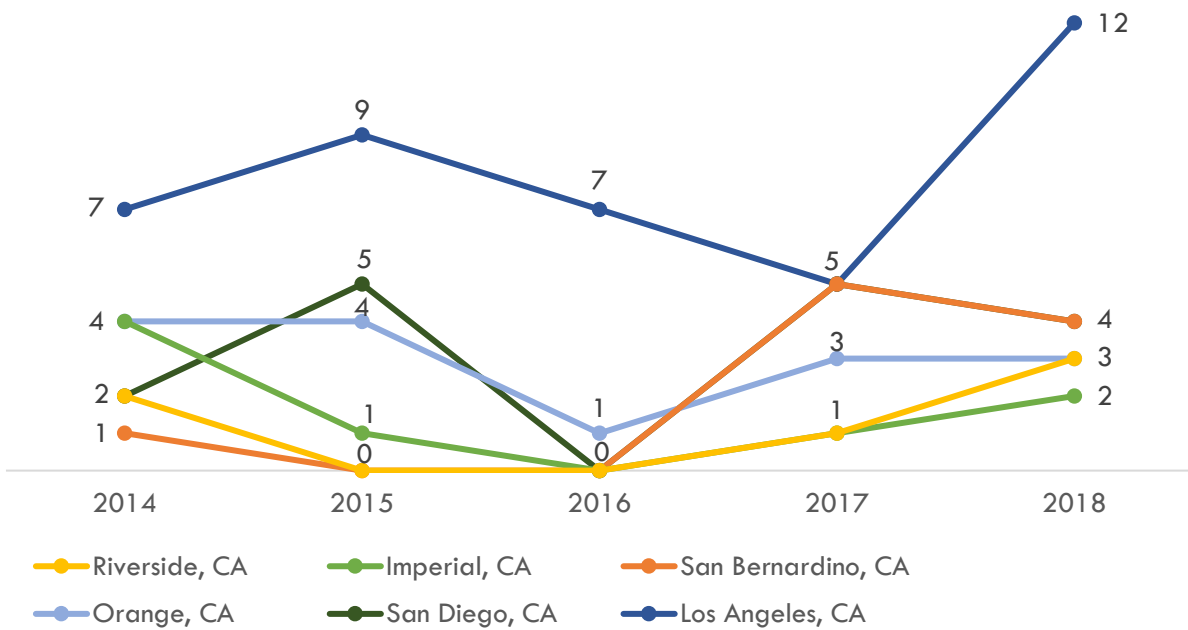
Exhibit 1: Job ads for investigative assistants in Southern California in the last five years, 2014 – 2018

Geographic Region	Job Ads
Los Angeles County	40
San Diego County	16
Orange County	15
San Bernardino County	10
Imperial County	8
Riverside County	6
Southern California Total	95

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

Exhibit 2 displays the number of job ads posted each year, by county, over the last five years. An average of 16 job ads posted for investigative assistants in Southern California annually. Los Angeles County had the most job ads for investigative assistants over the last five years, accounting for nearly half of all postings in Southern California. San Diego and Orange counties each post three job ads annually, which is less than the Los Angeles County average of eight per year.

Exhibit 2: Regional job ads for investigative assistants, 2014 – 2018



Employers, Locations, Skills, Education, Work Experience, and Salary

Exhibit 3 displays the employers posting the most job ads for investigative assistants over the last five years in Southern California. Federal government agencies post the majority of investigative assistant job advertisements in Southern California.

Exhibit 3: Employers posting the most job ads for investigative assistants, 2014 – 2018

Employers	Job Ads
United States Department of Justice	16
United States Office of Personnel Management	14
Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)	13
Orange County	8
United States Department of Homeland Security	4

Employers	Job Ads
United States Secret Service	4
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians	4
Forfeiture Support Associates (FSA)	3
United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement	2
<i>Total for all other employers</i>	<i>15</i>
Total	95

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

Exhibit 4 displays the top work locations from employer job advertisements in Southern California. The IEDR accounted for 17% of total job ads over the five-year timeframe.

Exhibit 4: Locations with the most job ads for investigative assistants, 2014 – 2018

City (County)	Job Ads
Los Angeles, CA (Los Angeles County)	25
San Diego, CA (San Diego)	16
Long Beach, CA (Los Angeles)	11
Santa Ana, CA (Orange)	9
Riverside, CA (Riverside)	6
Orange, CA (Orange)	6
Imperial, CA (Imperial)	5
Highland, CA (San Bernardino)	5
Palmdale, CA (Los Angeles)	3
Calexico, CA (Imperial)	3
Redlands, CA (San Bernardino)	2
<i>Total for all other employers</i>	<i>4</i>
Total	95

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

Exhibit 5 displays a sample of specialized and employability skills that employers are seeking when looking for workers to fill investigative assistant positions. Specialized skills are occupation-specific skills that employers are requesting for industry or job competency. Employability skills are foundational skills that transcend industries and occupations; this category is commonly referred to as “soft skills.” The skills requested in job postings may be utilized as a helpful guide for curriculum development. The skills information obtain from job postings indicates that employers often seek candidates capable of performing the administrative duties associated with criminal investigations. In addition to traditional

administrative assistant work, investigative assistants are frequently required to prepare reports based on research and information obtained from databases.

Exhibit 5: Sample of in-demand skills from employer job ads for investigative assistants, 2014 – 2018

Occupation	Specialized Skills	Employability Skills
Investigative Assistants (n=88)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreadsheets • Office Automation • Administrative Functions • Desktop Publishing • Data Entry • Administrative Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing Reports • Research • Communication Skills • Writing • Organizational Skills • Editing

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

Exhibit 6 displays the minimum advertised education requirements from employer job ads for investigative assistants. Job posting data indicates that the duties and responsibilities of investigative assistant positions often involve a mix of administrative duties and investigative work. The precise mix of these duties appears to be linked to job posting education requirements. Job postings that specified a desire for candidates with a high school diploma typically sought workers to perform administrative duties and some light investigative work. Postings mentioning a bachelor’s degree typically sought workers to perform low-level investigative work and some light administrative duties. Please note, employers may list a high school diploma as the minimum education requirement for a job, but would prefer candidates with a bachelor’s degree. When looking at preferred educational attainment, 85% of employers would prefer a candidate with a bachelor’s degree.

Exhibit 6: Minimum advertised education requirements for investigative assistants, 2014 – 2018

Occupation	Minimum Advertised Education Requirement from Job Ads			
	Number of Job Ads (n=)	High school diploma or vocational training	Associate degree	Bachelor’s degree or higher
Investigative Assistants	27	63%	-	37%

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

Exhibit 7 displays real-time years of work experience required from employer job ads for investigative assistants. Most employers are seeking a candidate with less than two years of related professional experience.

Exhibit 7: Real-time work experience requirements, 2014 – 2018

Occupation	Real-Time Work Experience			
	Number of job postings	0 – 2 years	3 – 5 years	6+ years
Investigative Assistants	72	93%	7%	-

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

Exhibit 8 displays advertised salary data from real-time job postings for investigative assistants over the last five years. The average advertised earnings for this job was \$47,000 annually. This annual wage is above the \$37,440 per year established as a “good job” wage by the Brookings Institute in their Advancing Opportunity in California’s Inland Empire report (Shearer, Shah & Gootman, p. 25). This information should be viewed with caution, as only 68% of job postings contain salary information. Please note that salary figures are prorated to reflect full-time, annual wage status.

Exhibit 8: Advertised salary information, 2014 – 2018

Occupation	Number of job postings	Real-Time Salary Information				Average Annual Earnings
		Less than \$35,000	\$35,000 to \$49,999	\$50,000 to \$74,999	More than \$75,000	
Investigative Assistants	65	3%	66%	31%	-	\$47,000

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

Student Completions and Program Outcomes

Exhibit 9 displays the average annual regional California Community College (CCC) credentials conferred during the three academic years between 2015 and 2018, from the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office Management Information Systems (MIS) Data Mart, along with the enrollments from the most recent year available on LaunchBoard. Credentials are the combined total of associate degrees and certificates issued during the timeframe, divided by three in this case to calculate an annual average. This is done to minimize the effect of atypical variation that might be present in a single year. Enrollments are the count of enrollments in courses assigned to the TOP code in the selected year. The relevant TOP code is from the Taxonomy of Programs manual. Please note, a credential is not always equal to a single person in search of a job opening since a student may earn more than one credential, such as an associate

degree, in addition to a certificate. Crafton Hills is the only regional college without an administration of justice program.

Exhibit 9: Annual average community college credentials and enrollments for the administration of justice program in the IEDR

2105.00 – Administration of Justice	Certificates			Associate Degrees			CCC Annual Average Credentials, Academic Years 2015-18	CCC Enrollments, Academic Year 2016-17
	6 to <18 Semester Units	18 to <30 Semester Units	30 to <60 Semester Units	Science (AS)	Arts (AA)	Transfer (ADT)		
Barstow	-	9	-	13	-	6	28	381
Chaffey	-	4	-	1	-	64	69	1,149
Copper Mountain	-	-	-	7	-	9	17	181
Desert	-	16	-	5	-	54	75	1,131
Moreno Valley	1*	-	-	13	-	-	13	348
Mt. San Jacinto	-	-	13	20	-	48	82	1,298
Norco	-	2	-	2	-	2	5	212
Palo Verde	-	3	-	3	-	1	7	182
Riverside	6	14	-	13	-	41	74	1,437
San Bernardino	1*	16	-	-	21	41	78	964
Victor Valley	-	1	-	35	-	26	62	1,296
Total	7	64	13	113	21	292	510	8,579

Source: LaunchBoard, MIS Data Mart

*Moreno Valley College and San Bernardino Valley College each issued one certificate (6 to < 18 units) in 2015-16.

Community college student outcome information is from LaunchBoard and based on the selected TOP code and region. These metrics are based on records submitted to the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office Management Information Systems (MIS) by community colleges, which come from self-reported student information from CCC Apply and the National Student Clearinghouse. Employment and earnings metrics are sourced from records provided by California’s Employment Development Department’s Unemployment Insurance database. When available, outcomes for completers are reported to demonstrate the impact that earning a degree or certificate can have on employment and earnings. For more information on the types of students included for each metric, please see the web link for LaunchBoard’s Strong Workforce Program Metrics Data Element Dictionary in the References section

(LaunchBoard, 2019a). Finally, employment in a job closely related to the field of study comes from self-reported student responses on the CTE Employment Outcomes Survey (CTEOS), administered by Santa Rosa Junior College (LaunchBoard, 2017). Data from the latest academic year for each metric is provided in Exhibit 10.

Exhibit 10: 2105.00 – Administration of justice strong workforce program outcomes

Strong Workforce Program Metrics: 2105.00 – Administration of Justice Academic Year 2015-16, unless noted otherwise	IEDR	California Median
Course enrollments (2016-17)	8,579	1,146
Completed 12+ units in one year (2016-17)	502	73
Economically disadvantaged students* (2016-17)	77%	58%
Transferred to a four-year institution* (transfers)	427	68
Employed in the fourth fiscal quarter after exit* (completers)	78%	75%
Median annual earnings* (completers)	\$21,944	\$26,640
Job closely related to the field of study (2014-15)	58%	57%
Median change in earnings* (completers)	75%	84%
Attained a living wage (completers and skills-builders)	40%	43%

Source: LaunchBoard

*Data for these metrics is available in Community College Pipeline. All others are available in Strong Program Workforce Metrics

Recommendation

An investigative assistant is an entry-level law enforcement position that provides support for criminal and civil justice cases. Traditional labor market information is not available for this emerging occupation; a search of job ads was used to quantify employer demand.

Over the last five years, there were 95 jobs posted for investigative assistants by Southern California employers. The majority of employers were located outside of the Inland Empire/Desert Region; 16 job postings were found in the two-county area over the last five years. The majority (63%) of employers listed high school or vocational education as a minimum level of education, although most employers preferred a bachelor's degree. The average advertised salary was \$47,000 annually.

IEDR community colleges considering an investigative assistant program will need to collaborate with employers to understand their hiring needs. Since 2016, demand for investigative assistants appears to be

on an upward trend, but it is unknown how long this trend may continue. It is also important to note that quantifying employer demand from job postings is complex. Employers may post one job ad to hire many workers or post a job ad to collect résumés, without an intent to hire. A limited number of investigative assistant job postings were found in the IEDR. Students completing this program must be willing to commute or relocate outside of the region to maximize their chance of obtaining a job in this field.

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