

Program Endorsement Brief: 0850.10/Sign Language Interpreting

Introduction to ASL-English Interpreting

(Program name revised August 2022)

Orange County Center of Excellence, November 2021

Summary Analysis

Program Endorsement:	Endorsed: All Criteria Met <input type="checkbox"/>	Endorsed: Some Criteria Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not Endorsed <input type="checkbox"/>
Program Endorsement Criteria			
Supply Gap:	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Living Wage: (Entry-Level, 25th)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Education:	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Emerging Occupation(s)			
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

The Orange County Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research (COE) prepared this report to provide Los Angeles/Orange County regional labor market supply and demand data related to one middle-skill occupation: *interpreters and translators (27-3091)*. Middle-skill occupations typically require some postsecondary education, but less than a bachelor’s degree.¹ Although this occupation typically requires a bachelor’s degree, it is considered middle-skill because approximately one-third of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree. This report is intended to help determine whether there is demand in the local labor market that is not being met by the supply from community college programs that align with the relevant occupations.

Based on the available data there appears to be a supply gap for interpreters and translators in the region. Furthermore, though this occupation typically requires a bachelor’s degree, nearly one-third of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree as their highest level of education. Finally, while entry-level wages are lower than the living wage in Orange County, they exceed the living wage in Los Angeles County. **Therefore, due to some of the criteria being met, the COE endorses this proposed program.** Detailed reasons include:

Demand:

- **Supply Gap Criteria** – Over the next five years, there is projected to be **541 jobs available annually** in the region due to new job growth and replacement, **which is more than the 116 awards conferred annually** by educational institutions in the region.
 - However, the SOC code *interpreters and translators (27-3091)* does not discern between interpreters and translators of different languages. Since the SOC

¹ The COE classifies middle-skill jobs as the following:

- 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.

code does not solely represent sign language interpreters, **the number of annual job openings specifically for sign language interpreters and translators is overstated.**

- Over the past 12 months, there were **117 online job postings for interpreters and translators that included the keywords “American Sign Language” and “ASL”**. The highest number of job postings were for sign language interpreters, community interpreters, and ASL interpreters.
- **Living Wage Criteria** –Within Orange County, **typical entry-level hourly wages for interpreters and translators are \$19.62, which is lower than the living wage** for one adult in the region (\$20.63 in Orange County).²
 - However, the **median hourly wages** for this occupation **are higher than the living wage**, suggesting that workers can attain the living wage with additional work experience.
- **Educational Criteria** – The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists a **bachelor’s degree as the typical entry-level education** for interpreters and translators.
 - However, the national-level educational attainment data indicates **32.8% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree** as their highest level of education.

Supply:

- There are **eight community colleges** in the LA/OC region that issue awards related to *interpreters and translators*, conferring an average of **114 awards annually** between 2017 and 2020.
- Between 2016 and 2019, there was an average of **two awards conferred annually** in related training programs by non-community college institutions, all of which were generated by **one individual four-year college throughout** the region.

Occupational Demand

Exhibit 1 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for *interpreters and translators*. In Los Angeles/Orange County, the number of jobs related to this occupation is projected to increase by 9% through 2025. There will be nearly 550 job openings per year through 2025 due to job growth and replacements. It is important to note that the SOC code *interpreters and translators* (27-3091) does not discern between interpreters and translators of different languages. Since the SOC code does not solely represent sign language interpreters, the number of annual job openings specifically for sign language interpreters and translators is overstated.

This report includes employment projection data by Emsi which uses EDD information. Emsi’s projections are modeled on recorded (historical) employment figures and incorporate several underlying assumptions, including the assumption that the economy, during the projection period, will be at approximately full employment. To the extent that a recession or labor shock, such as the economic effects of COVID-19, can cause long-term structural change, it may impact the projections. At this time, it is not possible to quantify the impact of COVID-19 on projections of industry and

² Living wage data was pulled from California Family Needs Calculator on 10/20/2021. For more information, visit the California Family Needs Calculator website: <https://insightcced.org/family-needs-calculator/>.

occupational employment. Therefore, the projections included in this report do not take the impacts of COVID-19 into account.

Exhibit 1: Occupational demand in Los Angeles and Orange Counties³

Geography	2020 Jobs	2025 Jobs	2020-2025 Change	2020-2025 % Change	Annual Openings
Los Angeles	3,644	3,964	320	9%	415
Orange	1,087	1,187	101	9%	126
Total	4,731	5,151	421	9%	541

Wages

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wages for *interpreters and translators* in Orange County as they relate to the county’s living wage. Los Angeles County wages are included below in order to provide a complete analysis of the LA/OC region. Detailed wage information, by county, is included in Appendix A.

Orange County: The typical entry-level hourly wages for *interpreters and translators* are \$19.62, which is below the living wage for one adult (\$20.63 in Orange County). Experienced workers can expect to earn wages of \$39.67, which is higher than the living wage estimate. Orange County’s average wages are below the average statewide wage of \$36.70 for this occupation.

Los Angeles County: The typical entry-level hourly wages for *interpreters and translators* are \$21.22, which is above the living wage for one adult (\$18.10 in Los Angeles County). Experienced workers can expect to earn wages of \$41.53, which is higher than the living wage estimate. Los Angeles County’s average wages are below the average statewide wage of \$36.70 for this occupation.

Job Postings

There were 1,011 online job postings related to *interpreters and translators* listed in the past 12 months. The highest number of job postings were for Spanish interpreters, localization specialists, and sign language interpreters. The top skills were teaching, scheduling, customer service, customer contact, manual dexterity, and language assessment. The top three employers, by number of job postings, in the region were Online Interpreters, Homeland Language Services, and United Language Group.

To better understand the demand for sign language interpreters and translators, an additional job posting analysis was performed using the keywords “American Sign Language” and “ASL”. There were 117 online job postings related to *interpreters and translators* that included these keywords listed in the past 12 months. The highest number of job postings were for sign language interpreters, community interpreters, and ASL interpreters. The top skills were scheduling, customer service, teaching, record keeping, and customer contact. The top three employers, by number of job postings, in the region were California State University, Purple Communications, Inc., and Therapeutic Outreach Incorporated.

³ Five-year change represents new job additions to the workforce. Annual openings include new jobs and replacement jobs that result from retirements and separations.

It is important to note that the job postings data included in this section reflects online job postings listed in the past 12 months and does not yet demonstrate the impact of COVID-19. While employers have generally posted fewer online job postings since the beginning of the pandemic, the long-term effects are currently unknown.

Educational Attainment

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists a bachelor’s degree as the typical entry-level education for interpreters and translators. However, the national-level educational attainment data indicates 32.8% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree as their highest level of education. Of the 53% of *interpreter and translator* job postings listing a minimum education requirement in Los Angeles/Orange County, 57% (307) requested high school or vocational training, 6.1% (33) requested an associate degree, and 35.4% (191) requested a bachelor’s degree.

Educational Supply

Community College Supply—Exhibit 2 shows the three-year average number of awards conferred by community colleges in the related TOP codes: Sign Language Interpreting (0850.10) and Legal and Community Interpretation (2140.00). The colleges with the most completions in the region are: Golden West, Mt. San Antonio, LA Pierce, and El Camino. Over the past 12 months, there was other related program recommendation requests from regional community colleges.

Exhibit 2: Regional community college awards (certificates and degrees), 2017-2020

TOP Code	Program	College	2017-2018 Awards	2018-2019 Awards	2019-2020 Awards	3-Year Award Average
0850.10	Sign Language Interpreting	Compton	2	-	-	1
		El Camino	20	26	18	21
		LA Pierce	10	34	23	22
		Mt San Antonio	14	16	49	26
		LA Subtotal	46	76	90	71
		Golden West	7	66	23	32
		Saddleback	28	-	-	9
		Santiago Canyon	1	1	-	1
		OC Subtotal	36	67	23	42
Supply Subtotal/Average			82	143	113	113
2140.00	Legal and Community Interpretation	Santa Ana	1	1	3	2
		OC Subtotal	1	1	3	2
Supply Subtotal/Average			1	1	3	2
Supply Total/Average			83	144	116	114

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 *interpreters and translators*. Exhibit 3 shows the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred by this institution in the related Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Codes: Language Interpreting and Translation (16.0103). Due to different data collection periods, the most recent three-year period of available data is from 2016 to 2019. Between 2016 and 2019, one four-year college in the region conferred an average of 2 awards annually in related training programs.

Exhibit 3: Regional non-community college awards, 2016-2019

CIP Code	Program	College	2016-2017 Awards	2017-2018 Awards	2018-2019 Awards	3-Year Award Average
16.0103	Language Interpretation and Translation	Biola University	1	3	1	2
Supply Total/Average			1	3	1	2

Appendix A: Occupational demand and wage data by county

Exhibit 4. Orange County

Occupation (SOC)	2020 Jobs	2025 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)
Interpreters and Translators (27-3091)	1,087	1,187	101	9%	126	\$19.62	\$26.53	\$39.67

Exhibit 5. Los Angeles County

Occupation (SOC)	2020 Jobs	2025 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)
Interpreters and Translators (27-3091)	3,644	3,964	320	9%	415	\$21.22	\$28.26	\$41.53

Exhibit 6. Los Angeles and Orange Counties

Occupation (SOC)	2020 Jobs	2025 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings
Interpreters and Translators	4,731	5,151	421	9%	541

Occupation (SOC)	2020 Jobs	2025 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings
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(27-3091)

Appendix B: Sources

- O*NET Online
- Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)
- Economic Modeling Specialists, International (Emsi)
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)
- Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division, OES
- California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office Management Information Systems (MIS)
- California Family Needs Calculator, Insight Center for Community Economic Development
- Chancellor’s Office Curriculum Inventory (COCI 2.0)

For more information, please contact:

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