



# Occupational Therapy TOP 1218.00/Occupational Therapy Technology

December 2024

Prepared by the South Central Coast Center of Excellence for  
Labor Market Research

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## Program Recommendation

This report was compiled by the South Central Coast<sup>1</sup> Center of Excellence to provide regional labor market data for the program recommendation – Occupational Therapy. This report can help determine whether there is demand in the local labor market that is not being met by the supply from programs of study that align with the following occupations:

- Occupational Therapy Assistants (SOC 31-2011)
- Occupational Therapy Aides (SOC 31-2012)

## Key Findings

- In 2023, there were 291 jobs for the two occupations of interest in the South Central Coast Region.
- The number of new jobs is expected to decrease by 14% through 2028.
- Projections show approximately 51 annual openings in the region. There were 0 awards conferred in relevant programs.
- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Therapy Assistants* typically require an associate degree while *Occupational Therapy Aides* typically require a high school diploma or equivalent.

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<sup>1</sup> The South Central Coast Region consists of San Luis Obispo County, Santa Barbara County, Ventura County, and the following cities from North Los Angeles County: Canyon Country, Castaic, Lake Hughes, Lancaster, Littlerock, Llano, Newhall, Palmdale, Pearblossom, Santa Clarita, Stevenson Ranch, and Valencia.

## Occupation Codes and Descriptions

There are two occupations in the standard occupational classification (SOC) system that were identified for this analysis. The occupation titles and descriptions, as well as reported job titles, are included in Exhibit 1.

**Exhibit 1 – Occupations, Descriptions, and Sample Job Titles**

SOC Code	Title	Description	Sample of Reported Job Titles
31-2011	<b>Occupational Therapy Assistants</b>	Assist occupational therapists in providing occupational therapy treatments and procedures. May, in accordance with state laws, assist in development of treatment plans, carry out routine functions, direct activity programs, and document the progress of treatments. Generally requires formal training.	Acute Care Occupational Therapy Assistant (Acute Care OT Assistant), Certified Occupational Assistant, Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant (COTA), Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA), Licensed Occupational Therapist Assistant (LOTA), Licensed Occupational Therapy Assistant (LOTA), Occupational Therapist Assistant (OTA), Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA), Registered Therapist Assistant, School Based Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (School Based COTA)
31-2012	<b>Occupational Therapy Aides</b>	Under close supervision of an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant, perform only delegated, selected, or routine tasks in specific situations. These duties include preparing patient and treatment room.	Certified Occupational Rehabilitation Aide (CORA), Direct Service Professional (DSP), Direct Support Professional (DSP), Occupational Rehabilitation Aide, Occupational Therapist Aide (OT Aide), Occupational Therapy Aide (OT Aide), Rehabilitation Aide (Rehab Aide), Rehabilitation Services Aide, Restorative Aide

Source: O\*NET Online

## Current and Future Employment

In the South Central Coast region, the number of *new* jobs for Occupational Therapy-related occupations is expected to increase by 14% through 2028. Approximately 51 annual openings are expected through 2028.

**Exhibit 2 – Five-Year Projections for Occupational Therapy-related workers in the South Central Coast Region**

<b>SOC</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>2023 Jobs</b>	<b>2028 Jobs</b>	<b>2023-2028 Change</b>	<b>2023-2028 % Change</b>	<b>Annual Openings</b>
31-2011	Occupational Therapy Assistants	192	231	39	20%	36
31-2012	Occupational Therapy Aides	99	102	3	3%	15
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>51</b>

Source: Lightcast™ Analyst

**Earnings**

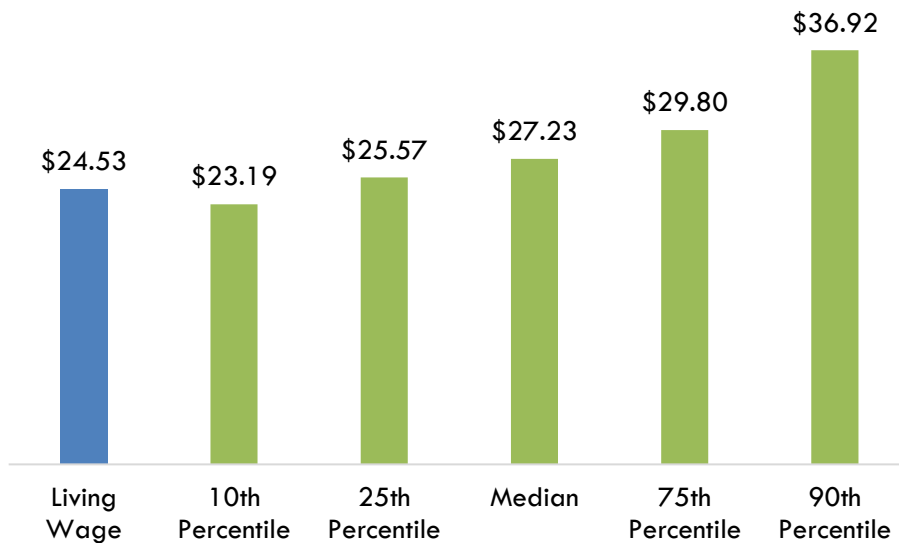
Exhibit 3 contains hourly wages for the occupations of interest. Entry-level hourly earnings are represented by the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile of wages, median hourly earnings are represented by the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile of wages, and experienced hourly earnings are represented by the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of wages, demonstrating various levels of employment.

**Exhibit 3 – Earnings in the South Central Coast Region**

SOC	Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings
31-2011	Occupational Therapy Assistants	\$34.73	\$38.03	\$42.76
31-2012	Occupational Therapy Aides	\$16.42	\$16.42	\$16.85

Source: Lightcast™ Analyst

**Exhibit 3b – Earnings in the South Central Coast Region**



Source: Family Needs Calculator (Living wage is based on Single Adult households with no children); Lightcast™ Analyst

## 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 the occupations relevant to the field of study. Employer job postings are consulted to understand who is looking for professionals in a given field, and what they are looking for in potential candidates. To identify relevant job postings, the following occupations were used:

31-2011	Occupational Therapy Assistants
31-2012	Occupational Therapy Aides

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## Top Occupations

Over the past 12 months (December 2023 to November 2024), there have been 187 employer job postings for the two occupations of interest.

**Exhibit 4 – Job Postings by Occupation**

SOC Code	Occupation	Job Postings, Last 12 months
31-2011	Occupational Therapy Assistants	139
31-2012	Occupational Therapy Aides	48
	<b>Total</b>	<b>187</b>

Source: Lightcast™ Analyst

## Top Titles

The top job titles for employers posting ads for Occupational Therapy-related occupations are listed in Exhibit 5.

**Exhibit 5 – Job Titles**

Title	Job Postings, Last 12 months
Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants	96
Occupational Therapy Assistants	36
Occupational Therapy Aides	12
Travel Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants	4
School Occupational Therapists	4
Travel Occupational Therapists	3
Aides	3
Rehabilitation Aides	2

Source: Lightcast™ Analyst

## Top Employers

Exhibit 6 lists the major employers hiring professionals in the field of interest. The top employers posting job ads were Empowerme Wellness, Ensign Group, and Powerback Rehabilitation.

**Exhibit 6 – Top Employers**

Employer	Job Postings, Last 12 months
Empowerme Wellness	30
Ensign Group	17
Powerback Rehabilitation	10
Omni Therapy	8
Soliant Health	7
Amergis	7
FeldCare Connects	6
Consonus Healthcare	5
Ojai Health & Rehabilitation	4
Ventura Orthopedics	4

Source: Lightcast™ Analyst

## Skills

The tables in Exhibit 7 list employers' most commonly requested skills in job postings related to the two occupations of interest. Occupational therapy is the most sought-after specialized skill for employers. Problem Solving was the most requested baseline skill. Microsoft Office was the most requested software.

**Exhibit 7 – Specialized Skills**

Skills	Job Postings, Last 12 months
Occupational Therapy	169
Rehabilitation	66
Treatment Planning	45
Program Development	37
Quality Improvement	31
Home Health Care	26
Medicare Part B	22
Pediatrics	21
Therapeutic Interventions	20
Medical Terminology	20

Source: Lightcast™ Analyst

### Exhibit 7b – Baseline Skills

Skills	Job Postings, Last 12 months
Problem Solving	37
Ethical Standards and Conduct	33
Critical Thinking	29
Interpersonal Communications	29
Communication	27
Writing	25
Coordinating	15
Organizational Skills	14
Multilingualism	14
Computer Literacy	11

Source: Lightcast™ Analyst

### Exhibit 7c – Software and Programming Skills

Skills	Job Postings, Last 12 months
Microsoft Office	3
Epic EMR	1
Microsoft Excel	1
Microsoft Outlook	1
Microsoft Word	1

Source: Lightcast™ Analyst

**Education and Training**

Exhibit 8 shows the typical entry-level education requirement for the two occupations included in this report. *Occupational Therapy Assistants* typically require an associate degree while *Occupational Therapy Aides* typically require a high school diploma or equivalent.

**Exhibit 8 – Education and Training Requirements**

SOC	Occupation	Typical entry-level education	Typical on-the-job training
31-2011	Occupational Therapy Assistants	Associate degree	None
31-2012	Occupational Therapy Aides	High school diploma or equivalent	Short-term

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Projections (Educational Attainment)

**Regional Completions and Openings**

Between 2020 and 2023, there were no awards conferred in the South Central Coast region aligned with the programs that have historically trained for the occupations of interest.

**Exhibit 9 – Three-Year Average of Awards Conferred in the Region**

TOP/CIP Code	Program	3-Year Average (2020-2023)
1218.00	Occupational Therapy Technology	-
51.0803	Occupational Therapist Assistant	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Datamart and IPEDS

**Sources**

O\*Net Online, Lightcast™ Analyst, 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

**Notes**

Data included in this analysis represent the labor market demand for relevant positions most closely related to Occupational Therapy. 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 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. All representations have been produced from primary research and/or secondary review of publicly and/or privately available data and/or research reports. The most recent data available at the time of the analysis was examined; however, data sets are updated regularly and may not be consistent with previous reports. Efforts have been made to qualify and validate the accuracy of the data and findings; however, neither the Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research (COE), COE host district, nor California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office are responsible for the applications or decisions made by individuals and/or organizations based on this study or its recommendations.