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Labor Market Analysis

Occupational Therapy Assistants



Prepared by Central Valley/Mother Lode Center of Excellence



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Summary

The Central Valley/Mother Lode Center of Excellence developed this report for Clovis College to determine whether there is demand in the local labor market that is not being met by the supply from postsecondary programs. This report summarizes labor market demand, wages, skills, and postsecondary supply for:

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

Key Findings

- **Occupational Demand** — The two *therapy* occupations have a labor market demand of 33 annual job openings in the South Central Valley/Southern Mother Lode (SCV/SML) subregion. Between 2021 and 2026, occupational therapy assistants are projected to have 31 annual job openings.
- **Wages** — Average entry-level earnings of \$23.74/hour for *Occupational Therapy* occupations are higher than the living wage in the SCV/SML subregion, which is \$11.91/hour for a single adult.¹ Occupational therapy assistants earn the highest entry-level wage, \$33.36/hour.
- **Employers** — Employers in the SCV/SML subregion include Healthcare Employment Network, Reliant Rehabilitation, and Prime HealthCare Staffing.
- **Skills and Certifications** — The top baseline skill is interpersonal communications; the top specialized skill is occupational therapy; and the top software skill is Microsoft Excel. The most in-demand certification is a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant.
- **Education** — A high school diploma or equivalent is typically required for occupational therapy aides. An associate degree is typically required for occupational therapy assistants.
- **Supply and Demand Analysis** — Based on 33 annual openings (i.e., demand) and zero postsecondary degrees awarded (i.e., supply), an analysis of supply and demand suggests there is an undersupply of 33 workers in the SCV/SML subregion. In the CVML region, zero awards were conferred suggesting an undersupply of 66 workers (based on 66 annual openings in the CVML region).

Recommendation

Based on a comparison of demand and supply, there is an undersupply of trained workers in the SCV/SML subregion and the CVML region. The Center of Excellence recommends that Clovis College work with the regional directors, the college's advisory board, and local industry when discussing the expansion or modification of relevant programs.

¹ The term "living wage" in Center of Excellence reports is calculated by averaging the self-sufficiency wages from the Insight Center's California Family Needs Calculator for each county in the subregion: <https://insightccd.org/tools-metrics/self-sufficiency-standard-tool-for-california/>.

Introduction

The Central Valley/Mother Lode Center of Excellence developed this report to provide Clovis College with labor market information for *Occupational Therapy Assistants*. The geographical focus for this report is the South Central Valley/Southern Mother Lode (SCV/SML) subregion, but regional demand and supply data has been included for broader applicability and use. Analysis of the program and occupational data related to *Occupational Therapy Assistants* is included in the report. The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) System codes and occupational titles used in this report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and O*NET OnLine are shown below.

Occupational Therapy Assistants (SOC 31-2011)

- **Job Description:** 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.
- **Knowledge:** Customer and Personal Service, Psychology, Education and Training, English Language, Therapy and Counseling
- **Skills:** Active Listening, Service Orientation, Social Perceptiveness, Speaking, Reading Comprehension

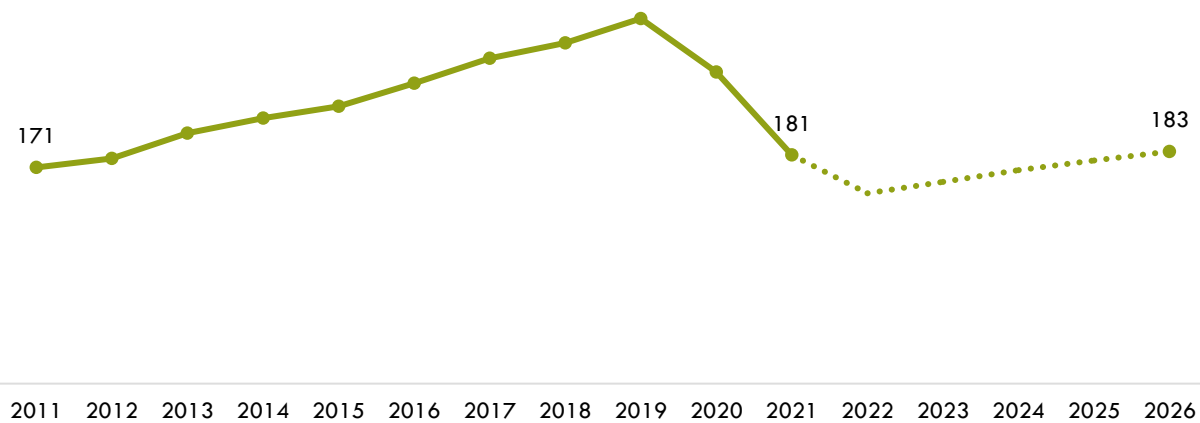
Occupational Therapy Aides (SOC 31-2012)

- **Job Description:** 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.
- **Knowledge:** Therapy and Counseling, English Language, Customer and Personal Service, Psychology, Computers and Electronics
- **Skills:** Service Orientation, Social Perceptiveness, Speaking, Active Listening, Coordination

Employment

Exhibit 1a shows trends for the two therapy occupations in the SCV/SML subregion. Between 2011 to 2026, the number of jobs for these two occupations is projected to increase by two, growing by 1%.

Exhibit 1a. Historical employment and projected occupational demand for *Occupational Therapy* in the SCV/SML subregion, 2011-2026



Occupations related to *Occupational Therapy* in the SCV/SML subregion employed 181 workers in 2021 (Exhibit 1b). Occupational therapy assistants are projected to remain the same over the next five years and have projected annual openings of 31.

Exhibit 1b. Current employment and projected occupational demand for *Occupational Therapy* in the SCV/SML subregion, 2021-2026

Occupation	2021 Jobs	2026 Jobs	5-Year Change	5-Year % Change	Annual Openings
Occupational Therapy Assistants	171	171	0	0%	31
Occupational Therapy Aides	10	12	2	20%	2
TOTAL	181	183	2	1%	33

Wages

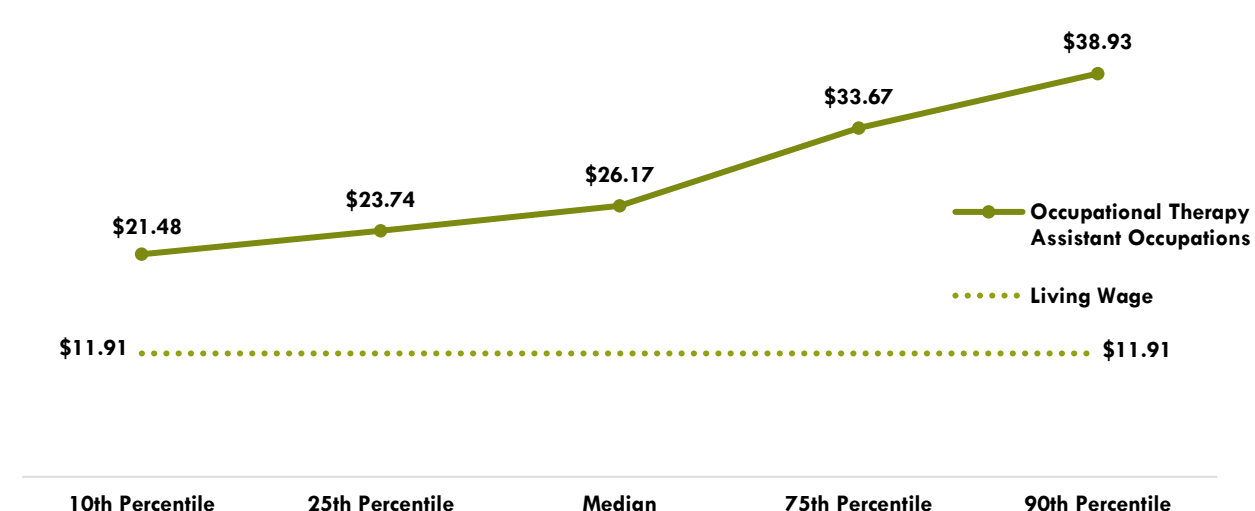
The average living wage for a single adult in the SCV/SML subregion is \$11.91/hour.² Exhibit 2a shows that the highest entry-level hourly wages are for occupational therapy assistants, which has an entry-level wage of \$33.36/hour.³

Exhibit 2a. Hourly wages for Occupational Therapy in the SCV/SML subregion

Occupation	25 th Percentile Hourly Earnings	Median Hourly Earnings	75 th Percentile Hourly Earnings
Occupational Therapy Assistants	\$33.36	\$36.47	\$39.57
Occupational Therapy Aides	\$14.13	\$15.87	\$27.77

Exhibit 2b shows the average hourly wages for Occupational Therapy; the average entry-level wage is higher than the living wage for the SCV/SML subregion.

Exhibit 2b. Average hourly wages for Occupational Therapy in the SCV/SML subregion



² The term "living wage" in Center of Excellence reports is calculated by averaging the self-sufficiency wages from the Insight Center's California Family Needs Calculator for each county in the subregion: <https://insightccd.org/tools-metrics/self-sufficiency-standard-tool-for-california/>.

³ Note: 10th and 25th percentiles are considered entry-level wages while 75th and 90th are considered experienced wages, which may be obtained through long-term employment or extra training, etc.

Job Postings

There were 484 unique job postings for the two *Occupational Therapy* occupations in the SCV/SML subregion from January 2023 to June 2023.⁴

Top Employers

The top employers with the most job postings are listed in Exhibit 3. The top employers in online job postings were Healthcare Employment Network, Reliant Rehabilitation, and Prime HealthCare Staffing.

Exhibit 3. Top employers of *Occupational Therapy* in job postings

Employer
Healthcare Employment Network
Reliant Rehabilitation
Prime HealthCare Staffing
Rolling Hills Care Center
CoreMedical Group
Jackson Therapy Partners
PT Solutions Physical Therapy
HealthPRO Heritage
Evergreen Care Center
Bravante Vineyards Fowler LP

Salaries

Exhibit 4 shows the “Market Salaries” for the two *Occupational Therapy* occupations. These are calculated by Lightcast using a machine learning model built from millions of job postings every year. This accounts for adjustments based on location, industry, skills, experience, education, among other variables.

Exhibit 4. Market salaries for *Occupational Therapy* occupations

Market Salary	Job Postings
\$67,000-\$74,999	39
\$83,000-\$90,999	34
\$75,000-\$82,999	33
\$35,000-\$42,999	18
\$115,000-\$166,000	16

⁴ Other than occupational titles and job titles, the categories below can be counted one or multiple times per job posting, and across several areas in a single posting. For example, a skill can be counted in two different skill types, and an employer can indicate more than one education level.

Education

Of the 484 unique job postings, 172 listed a preferred or minimum educational requirement for the position being filled. Among those, 43% requested an associate degree, 32% requested a high school diploma or GED, and 14% requested a bachelor's degree (Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5. Education levels requested in job postings for Occupational Therapy occupations

Education Level	Job Postings	% of Job Postings
Associate degree	74	43%
High school diploma or GED	55	32%
Bachelor's degree	24	14%
Master's degree	12	7%
Ph.D. or professional degree	7	4%

Baseline, Specialized, and Software Skills

Exhibit 6 depicts the top baseline, specialized, and software skills in job postings. The most important baseline skill is interpersonal communications. The most important specialized skill is occupational therapy. The most important software skill is Microsoft Excel.

Exhibit 6. In-demand baseline, specialized, and software skills for Occupational Therapy occupations in job postings

Baseline Skills	Specialized Skills	Software Skills
Interpersonal Communications	Occupational Therapy	Microsoft Excel
Communications	Rehabilitation	Net Health Optima
Positivity	Patient Treatment	Microsoft PowerPoint
Management	Nursing	Microsoft Office
Operations	Medical Records	PHP (Scripting Language)

Certifications

Of the 484 job postings, there were 594 certifications listed. Among those, 52% indicated a need for a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant. The next top certification is a Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification (Exhibit 7).

Exhibit 7. Top Occupational Therapy certifications requested in job postings

Certifications	% of Job Postings
Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant	52%
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	10%
Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification	6%
National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) Certified	5%
Registered Nurse (RN)	3%

Education, Work Experience, & Training

A high school diploma or equivalent is typically required for occupational therapy aides. An associate degree is typically required for occupational therapy assistants (Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8. Education, work experience, training, and Current Population Survey results for two Occupational Therapy occupations⁵

Occupation	Typical Entry-level Education	Work Experience Required	Typical On-The-Job Training	CPS
Occupational Therapy Assistants	Associate degree	None	None	62.6%
Occupational Therapy Aides	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Short-term	62.6%

⁵ "Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey," Bureau of Labor Statistics, <https://www.bls.gov/cps/>.

Supply

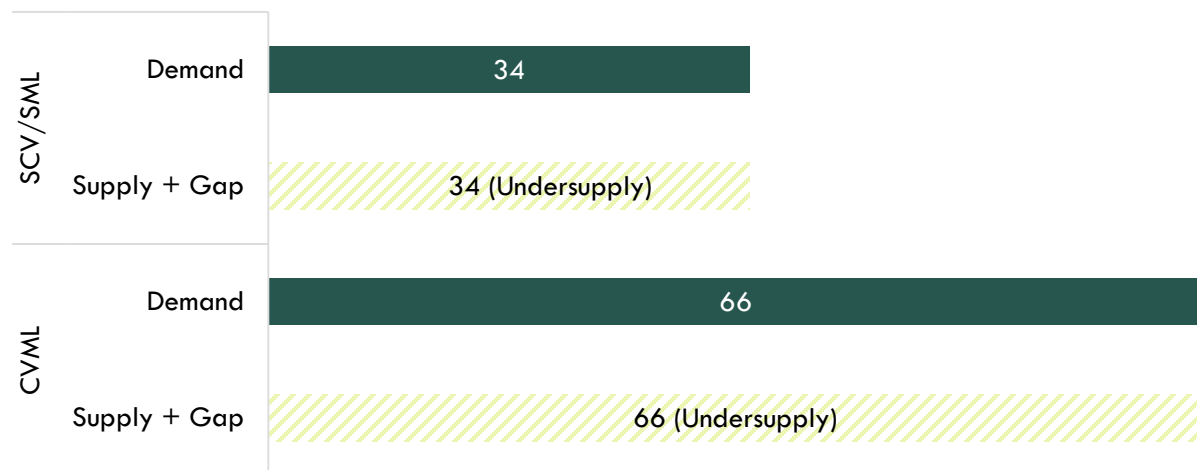
An analysis of program data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) for the last three program years shows that, on average, zero awards were conferred in the SCV/SML subregion (Exhibit 9).

Exhibit 9. TOP and CIP codes for Occupational Therapy occupations

TOP Titles	CIP Titles
121800 - Occupational Therapy Technology	51.0803 - Occupational Therapist Assistant

There is an undersupply of 33 *Occupational Therapy Assistant* workers in the SCV/SML subregion and an undersupply of 66 workers in the region (Exhibit 10).

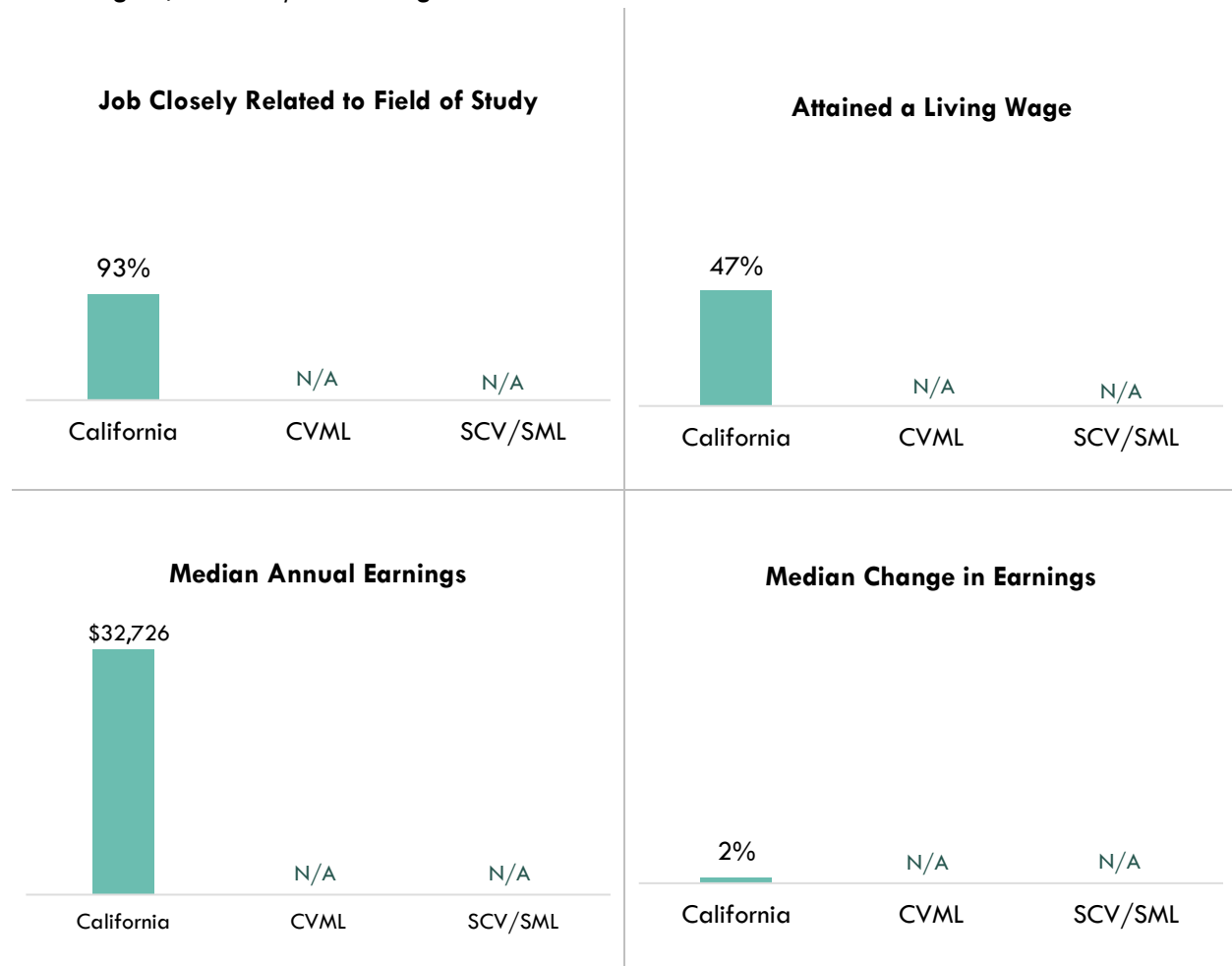
Exhibit 10. Occupational Therapy workforce demand (annual job openings), postsecondary awards (supply), and additional students needed to fill gap in the SCV/SML subregion and region



Student Outcomes

Exhibit 11 summarizes outcomes from California Community College Chancellor's LaunchBoard for TOP codes related to *Occupational Therapy*.

Exhibit 11. LaunchBoard Metrics for TOP 121800 Occupational Therapy Technology in California, CVML region, and SCV/SML subregion



Recommendation

This report suggests there is a shortage of 33 workers in the SCV/SML subregion and a shortage of 66 workers in the CVML region for *Occupational Therapy* occupations. Based on these findings, it is recommended that Clovis College work with the regional directors, the college's advisory board, and local industry when discussing the expansion or modification of relevant programs.

Appendix: 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. (LIGHTCAST). LIGHTCAST occupational employment data are based on final LIGHTCAST industry data and final LIGHTCAST 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 LIGHTCAST earnings by industry: economicmodeling.com .
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: https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/educational-attainment.htm .
LaunchBoard	Chancellor's LaunchBoard. https://www.calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx
Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Estimates	California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division: labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov .
Job Posting and Skills Data	Lightcast. https://lightcast.io/ .
Additional Education Requirements/Employer Preferences	The O*NET Job Zone database includes over 900 as well as information on skills, abilities, knowledge, work activities and interests associated with specific occupations: 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. (LIGHTCAST) formula that includes historical employment and economic indicators along with national, state and local trends.

LaunchBoard (Attained the Living Wage): Among SWP students who exited college and did not transfer to any postsecondary institution, the proportion who attained the district county living wage for a single adult measured immediately following academic year of exit.

LaunchBoard (Median Annual Earnings): Among SWP students who exited the community college system and who did not transfer to any postsecondary institution, median earnings following the academic year of exit.

LaunchBoard (Median Change in Earnings): Among SWP students who exited and who did not transfer to any postsecondary institution, median change in earnings between the second quarter prior to the beginning of the academic year of entry and the second quarter after the end of the academic year of exit from the last college attended.

LaunchBoard (Job Closely Related to Field of Study): Among SWP students who responded to the CTE Outcomes Survey and did not transfer to any postsecondary institution, the proportion who reported that they are working in a job very closely or closely related to their field of study.

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.