



Labor Market Analysis: 0809.00 – Special Education

Special Education – Certificate of Achievement

Los Angeles Center of Excellence, January 2026

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| 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"/> | |

SUMMARY

This report analyzes whether local labor market demand is being met by community college programs aligned with the identified middle-skill occupations¹ or whether a shortage of workers exists. Labor market demand is measured by annual job openings while education supply is measured by the number of awards (degrees and certificates) conferred on average each year.

Based on the available data, there appears to be a supply gap for the two identified target occupations in the region. While the majority of annual openings have entry-level wages that are lower than the self-sufficiency standard wage in both Los Angeles and Orange counties, these openings typically require some college, but no college degree.

Recommendation: Due to two of three program endorsement criteria being met, the Los Angeles Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research (LA COE) endorses this proposed program.

Key Findings

Supply Gap

- 6,548 annual job openings are projected in the region through 2029. This number is greater than the three-year average of 265 awards conferred by educational institutions in the region.

¹ Middle-skill occupations typically require some postsecondary education, but less than a bachelor’s degree. 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.

Living Wage

- 99.5% of annual job openings for these target special education occupations have entry-level wages **below** Los Angeles County’s self-sufficiency standard hourly wage (\$24.03/hour).²

Educational Attainment

- 99% of the annual job openings typically require some college but no degree for these target special education occupations in the LA/OC region.
- 37% of *teaching assistants, except postsecondary* in the field have completed some college or an associate degree, according to national educational attainment data.
 - Only 7% of *special education teachers, preschool* have completed an associate degree as their highest level of educational attainment; 90% have completed a bachelor’s degree or more education.

Community college supply

- 16 community colleges issued awards related to special education in the greater LA/OC region.
- 265 awards (degrees and certificates) were conferred on average each year between 2022 and 2024.

Other postsecondary supply

- No educational institutions in the LA/OC region have conferred sub-baccalaureate or bachelor’s awards in programs related to special education over the past three years.

TARGET OCCUPATIONS

LA COE prepared this report to provide regional labor market and postsecondary supply data related to two target special education occupations. Although *special education teachers, preschool* typically require a bachelor’s degree, they are included in this report since the Special Education TOP Code (0809.00) has historically trained for this occupation. [For full occupation descriptions, please see Appendix.](#)

- ***Special education teachers, preschool (25-2051)***³
- ***Teaching assistants, except postsecondary (25-9045)*** This occupation includes the 2018 SOC occupations:⁴
 - ***Teaching assistants, preschool, elementary, middle, and secondary school, except special education (25-9042)***⁵
 - ***Teaching assistants, special education (25-9043)***⁶
 - ***Teaching assistants, all other (25-9049)***⁷

² Center for Women’s Welfare, University of Washington. (2024). *The self-sufficiency standard for California 2024.* <http://selfsufficiencystandard.org/California>.

³ [Special Education Teachers \(bls.gov\)](#)

⁴ [Teaching Assistants \(bls.gov\)](#)

⁵ [Teaching Assistants, Preschool, Elementary, Middle, and Secondary School, Except Special Education \(ONETOnline.org\)](#)

⁶ [Teaching Assistants, Special Education \(ONETOnline.org\)](#)

⁷ [Teaching Assistants, All Other \(ONETOnline.org\)](#)

OCCUPATIONAL DEMAND

Exhibit 1 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for these target special education occupations. In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, the number of jobs related to these occupations is projected to increase by 2% through 2029. There will be more than 6,500 job openings per year through 2029 due to job growth and replacements. The majority of jobs in 2024 for these target special education occupations (77%) were located in Los Angeles County.

Exhibit 1: Current employment and occupational demand, Los Angeles and Orange counties⁸

| Geography | 2024 Jobs | 2029 Jobs | 2024-2029 Change | 2024-2029 % Change | Annual Openings |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Los Angeles | 41,392 | 42,062 | 671 | 2% | 5,021 |
| Orange | 12,233 | 12,551 | 317 | 3% | 1,527 |
| Total | 53,625 | 54,613 | 988 | 2% | 6,548 |

Detailed Occupation Data

Exhibit 2 displays the current employment and projected occupational demand for each of the target occupations in Los Angeles County. The average percentage of workers aged 55+ across all occupations in the Los Angeles/Orange County region is 26%; occupations with a larger share of workers aged 55 and older typically have greater replacement needs to offset the amount of impending retirements. On average, 81% of workers across all occupations in California are employed full-time. Occupations with a lower-than-average percentage of full-time workers may have less employment security but may see increased activity in the gig economy.

Exhibit 2: Detailed employment and occupational demand, Los Angeles County⁹

| Occupation | 2024 Jobs | 2029 Jobs | 5-Yr % Change | Annual Openings | % Aged 55 and older | % Full Time Workers |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Special Education Teachers, Preschool | 252 | 283 | 12% | 24 | 22% | 59% |
| Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary | 41,139 | 41,780 | 2% | 4,997 | 24% | 43% |
| Total | 41,392 | 42,062 | 2% | 5,021 | - | - |

WAGES

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the entry-level hourly wages for these target special education occupations in Los Angeles County as they relate to the county's self-sufficiency standard wage. Orange County wages are included below in order to provide a complete analysis of the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region.

⁸ Five-year change represents new job additions to the workforce. Annual openings include new jobs and replacement jobs that result from retirements and separations.

⁹ Ibid.

Los Angeles County

The majority, 99.5%, of annual openings for these target occupations have entry-level wages below the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$24.03 in Los Angeles County). Typical entry-level hourly wages are in a range between \$18.04 and \$33.55. (Exhibit 3).

One occupation has entry-level wages above the self-sufficiency standard wage:

- *Special education teachers, preschool*, \$33.55

Experienced *teaching assistants, except postsecondary* workers can expect to earn \$23.14, which is lower than the self-sufficiency standard. However, experienced *special education teachers, preschool* can expect to earn \$50.05, which is higher than the self-sufficiency standard.

Exhibit 3: Earnings for occupations in Los Angeles County

| Occupation | Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile) | Median Hourly Earnings | Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile) | Median Annual Earnings* |
|---|---|------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Special Education Teachers, Preschool | \$33.55 | \$47.90 | \$50.05 | \$99,600 |
| Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary | \$18.04 | \$21.88 | \$23.14 | \$45,500 |

*Rounded to the nearest \$100

Orange County

The majority, 99.6%, of annual openings for these target occupations have entry-level wages below the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$27.13 in Orange County). Typical entry-level hourly wages are in a range between \$17.88 and \$33.26 (Exhibit 4).

One occupation has entry-level wages above the self-sufficiency standard wage:

- *Special education teachers, preschool*, \$33.26

Experienced *teaching assistants, except postsecondary* workers can expect to earn \$22.94, which is lower than the self-sufficiency standard. However, experienced *special education teachers, preschool* can expect to earn \$48.66, which is higher than the self-sufficiency standard.

Exhibit 4: Earnings for occupations in Orange County

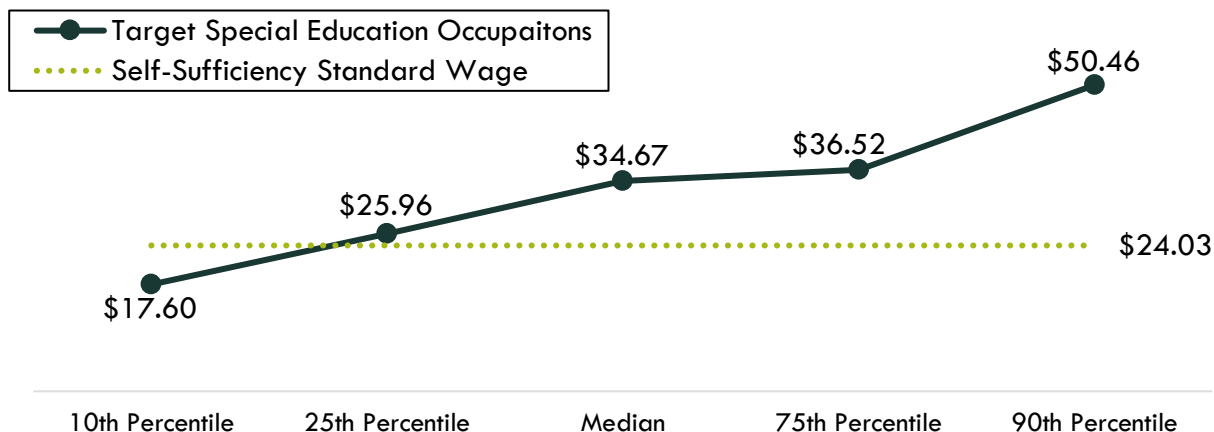
| Occupation | Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile) | Median Hourly Earnings | Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile) | Median Annual Earnings* |
|---|---|------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Special Education Teachers, Preschool | \$33.26 | \$46.64 | \$48.66 | \$97,000 |
| Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary | \$17.88 | \$21.70 | \$22.94 | \$45,100 |

*Rounded to the nearest \$100

Across the greater Los Angeles and Orange County region, the average entry-level hourly earnings for the occupations in this report are \$25.96; this is above the living wage for one single

adult in Los Angeles County (\$24.03). Exhibit 5 shows the average hourly wage for the occupations in this report, for entry-level to experienced workers.

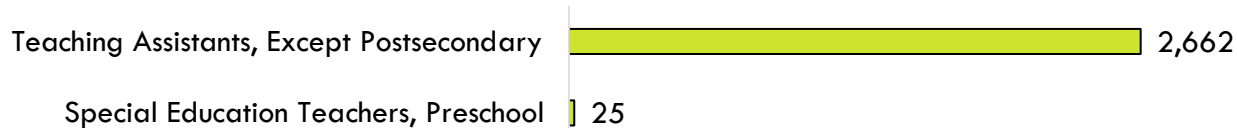
Exhibit 5: Average hourly earnings for target occupations, Los Angeles and Orange counties



JOB POSTINGS

There were **2,687** online job postings for the target occupations listed in the past 12 months in Los Angeles and Orange counties that also included the following specialized skills: “special education” and/or “special needs children”. Exhibit 6 displays the number of job postings by occupation. The majority of job postings (99%) were for *teaching assistants, except postsecondary*, followed by *special education teachers, preschool* (1%).

Exhibit 6: Job postings by occupation (last 12 months), Los Angeles and Orange counties



Job postings were analyzed for the most common job titles, skills, and employers associated with the target occupations in this report (Exhibit 7).

Exhibit 7: Most commonly requested job titles, skills and employers in job postings, Los Angeles and Orange counties

| Top Job Titles | Top Skills | Top Employers |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special education paraprofessionals Paraprofessionals Teaching assistants Special education aides Teacher aides | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special Education Toileting Personal care Individualized Education Programs (IEP) Working with children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zen Educate* Soliant Health* Stepping Stones* Therapy Lounge Center Amergis* |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional aides • Special education instructional assistants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavior management • Intervention plans • De-escalation techniques | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunbelt Staffing* • Spectrum Center Schools and Programs • Baldwin Park USD |
|---|---|---|

*Staffing company

In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, 81% of the target special education job postings listed a minimum educational requirement. Exhibit 8 details the number and percentage of job postings by educational level.

Exhibit 8: Education levels requested in job postings for target occupations, Los Angeles and Orange counties

| Education Level | Job Postings | % of Job Postings |
|--|--------------|-------------------|
| Bachelor's degree | 118 | 5% |
| Associate degree | 215 | 10% |
| High school diploma or vocational training | 1,865 | 85% |

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

In the greater Los Angeles/Orange County region, the majority of annual job openings (99%) typically require some college, but no degree (Exhibit 9). The national-level data indicates 37% of *teaching assistants, except postsecondary* working in the field have completed some college or an associate degree as their highest level of educational attainment. Only 7% of *special education teachers, preschool* have completed an associate degree as their highest level of educational attainment; 90% have completed a bachelor's degree or more education. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists the following typical entry-level education levels for the occupations in this report:

Exhibit 9: Entry-level education preferred by employers nationally, Bureau of Labor Statistics

| Occupation | Education Level |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Special education teachers, preschool | Bachelor's degree |
| Teaching assistants, except postsecondary | Some college, but no degree |

EDUCATIONAL SUPPLY

Community College Supply

Exhibit 10 shows the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred by community colleges in programs that have historically trained for the occupations of interest. The colleges with the most completions in the region are Santa Ana, LA Valley, and East LA.

Exhibit 10: Regional community college awards (certificates and degrees), 2022-2024

| TOP Code | Program | College | 2021-22 Awards | 2022-23 Awards | 2023-24 Awards | 3-Year Average |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 0802.00 | Educational Aide (Teacher Assistant) | LA Pierce | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| | | Long Beach | - | 4 | 15 | 6 |
| | | Mt San Antonio | 13 | 7 | 10 | 10 |
| | | West LA | - | 12 | 4 | 5 |
| | | LA Subtotal | 16 | 24 | 30 | 23 |
| | | Coastline | - | - | 1 | 0 |
| | | Santa Ana | 60 | 42 | 47 | 50 |
| | | Santiago Canyon | 13 | 21 | 16 | 17 |
| | | OC Subtotal | 73 | 63 | 64 | 67 |
| Supply Subtotal/Average | | | 89 | 87 | 94 | 90 |
| 0802.10 | Educational Aide (Teacher Assistant), Bilingual | LA Mission | 1 | - | - | 0 |
| | | LA Subtotal | 1 | - | - | 0 |
| | | Santa Ana | 7 | 1 | - | 3 |
| | | Santiago Canyon | 5 | - | - | 2 |
| | | OC Subtotal | 12 | 1 | - | 4 |
| Supply Subtotal/Average | | | 13 | 1 | - | 5 |
| 0809.00 | Special Education | Compton | 1 | - | - | 0 |
| | | Long Beach | 3 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| | | LA Subtotal | 4 | 2 | 5 | 4 |
| | | Santa Ana | 23 | 27 | 21 | 24 |
| | | Santiago Canyon | 7 | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| | | OC Subtotal | 30 | 28 | 25 | 28 |
| Supply Subtotal/Average | | | 34 | 30 | 30 | 31 |
| 1305.20 | Children with Special Needs | Citrus | - | 2 | - | 1 |
| | | Compton | 1 | - | - | 0 |
| | | East LA | 43 | 38 | 38 | 40 |
| | | LA City | 12 | 12 | 10 | 11 |
| | | LA Valley | 39 | 75 | 49 | 54 |
| | | Long Beach | 5 | 2 | 6 | 4 |
| | | Mt San Antonio | 3 | - | 3 | 2 |
| | | Pasadena | - | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| | | Rio Hondo | 11 | 11 | 10 | 11 |
| | | Santa Monica | 8 | 13 | 13 | 11 |
| | | LA Subtotal | 122 | 158 | 133 | 138 |

| TOP Code | Program | College | 2021-22 Awards | 2022-23 Awards | 2023-24 Awards | 3-Year Average |
|----------|---------|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | Santiago Canyon | - | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| | | OC Subtotal | - | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| | | Supply Subtotal/Average | 122 | 161 | 134 | 139 |
| | | Supply Total/Average | 258 | 279 | 258 | 265 |

Exhibit 11 displays the community college awards broken down by award type. In this case, the majority of awards issued by community colleges are certificates (66%).

Exhibit 11: Community college awards by award type, 2022-2024

| Award Type | # of Awards | % of Awards |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| A.A./A.S./A.A.-T/A.S.-T degrees | 84 | 32% |
| Certificates | 176 | 66% |
| Noncredit awards | 5 | 2% |
| Total | X | 100% |

Other Postsecondary Supply

Currently, there are no other postsecondary institutions in the greater LA/OC region that have conferred sub-baccalaureate or bachelor’s awards for special education teaching programs in the past three years. There are currently programs offered under the following CIP codes that train for special education occupations; however, these programs are master’s level or higher:

- 13.1001 – Special Education and Teaching, General
 - Degrees offered: Postbaccalaureate certificates; Master’s degrees; Post-master’s certificates; Doctoral degrees
 - Programs at 14 regional colleges
- 13.1013 – Education/Teaching of Individuals with Autism
 - Degrees offered: Postbaccalaureate certificates; Master’s degrees
 - Programs at 2 regional colleges
- 13-1015 – Education/Teaching of Individuals | Early Childhood Special Education Programs
 - Degrees offered: Master’s degrees
 - Program at 1 regional college

APPENDIX: OCCUPATION DESCRIPTIONS

LA COE prepared this report to provide regional labor market supply and demand data related to these target occupations:

- **Special education teachers, preschool (25-2051)** Teach academic, social, and life skills to preschool-aged students with learning, emotional, or physical disabilities. Includes teachers who specialize and work with students who are blind or have visual impairments; students who are deaf or have hearing impairments; and students with intellectual disabilities.¹⁰
- **Teaching assistants, except postsecondary (25-9045)** This occupation includes the 2018 SOC occupations:¹¹
 - **Teaching assistants, preschool, elementary, middle, and secondary school, except special education (25-9042)** Assist a preschool, elementary, middle, or secondary school teacher with instructional duties. Serve in a position for which a teacher has primary responsibility for the design and implementation of educational programs and services;¹²
 - **Teaching assistants, special education (25-9043)** Assist a preschool, elementary, middle, or secondary school teacher to provide academic, social, or life skills to students who have learning, emotional, or physical disabilities. Serve in a position for which a teacher has primary responsibility for the design and implementation of educational programs and services;¹³
 - **Teaching assistants, all other (25-9049)** All teaching assistants not listed separately.¹⁴

¹⁰ [Special Education Teachers \(bls.gov\)](#)

¹¹ [Teaching Assistants \(bls.gov\)](#)

¹² [Teaching Assistants, Preschool, Elementary, Middle, and Secondary School, Except Special Education \(ONETOnline.org\)](#)

¹³ [Teaching Assistants, Special Education \(ONETOnline.org\)](#)

¹⁴ [Teaching Assistants, All Other \(ONETOnline.org\)](#)

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POWERED BY

**DATA SOURCES**

- O*NET Online
- Lightcast (formerly Emsi)
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)
- California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division, OES
- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems (MIS)
- Self-Sufficiency Standard at the Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington
- Chancellor's Office Curriculum Inventory (COCI 2.0)

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