

April 2023

# Labor Market Analysis

## Paralegal Studies



Prepared by Central Valley/Mother Lode Center of Excellence



POWERED BY



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**COVID-19 Statement:** This report includes employment projection data by Lightcast. Lightcast’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 or potential output. To the extent that a recession or labor shock, such as the economic effects of COVID-19, can cause long-term structural change, they may impact the projections. At this time, it is not possible to quantify the impact of COVID-19 on projections of industry and occupational employment. Other measures such as unemployment rates and monthly industry employment estimates will reflect the most recent information on employment and jobs in the state and, in combination with input from local employers, may help validate current and future employment needs as depicted here.

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# Summary

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

- Paralegals and Legal Assistants (SOC 23-2011)
- Legal Support Workers, All Other (23-2099)

## Key Findings

- **Occupational Demand** — *Paralegal Studies Occupations* have a labor market demand of 251 annual job openings in the South Central Valley/Southern Mother Lode (SCV/SML) subregion. Between 2021 and 2026, paralegals and legal assistants are projected to have the most demand with 148 annual job openings and a projected growth rate of three percent.
- **Wages** — Average entry-level earnings of \$18.57/hour for *Paralegal Studies Occupations* are higher than the living wage in the SCV/SML subregion, which is \$11.91/hour for a single adult.<sup>1</sup> Paralegals and legal assistants earn the highest entry-level wage, \$22.12/hour.
- **Employers and Occupational Titles** — Employers in the SCV/SML subregion include Robert Half, Internal Revenue Service, and the State of California. The most common occupational title in job postings in the subregion is Paralegals and Legal Assistants. The most common job title is Legal Secretaries.
- **Skills and Certifications** — The top baseline skill is filing, the top specialized skill is lawsuits, and the top software skill is Microsoft Outlook. The most in-demand certification is a typing certificate.
- **Education** — A high school diploma or equivalent is typically required for legal secretaries and administrative assistants. An associate degree is typically required for legal support workers, all other and paralegals and legal assistants.
- **Supply and Demand Analysis** — Based on 251 annual openings (i.e., demand), and 91 postsecondary degrees awarded (i.e., supply), an analysis of supply and demand suggests there is an undersupply of 160 workers in the SCV/SML subregion. In the CVML region, 94 awards were conferred suggesting an undersupply of 308 workers.

## 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 Taft College work with the regional directors, the college's advisory board, and local industry in the expansion of programs to address the shortage of Paralegal Studies workers.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 Taft College with labor market information for Paralegal Studies. 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 Paralegal Studies resulted in the identification of applicable occupations, known as *Paralegal Studies Occupations*. The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) System code and occupational titles used in this report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and O\*NET OnLine are shown below). There is no data available for Legal Support Workers, All Other (SOC 23-2099).

## **Paralegals and Legal Assistants (SOC 23-2011)**

- **Job Description:** Assist lawyers by investigating facts, preparing legal documents, or researching legal precedent. Conduct research to support a legal proceeding, to formulate a defense, or to initiate legal action.
- **Knowledge:** Administrative, English Language, Law and Government, Customer and Personal Service, Computers and Electronics
- **Skills:** Reading Comprehension, Active Listening, Speaking, Writing, Critical Thinking

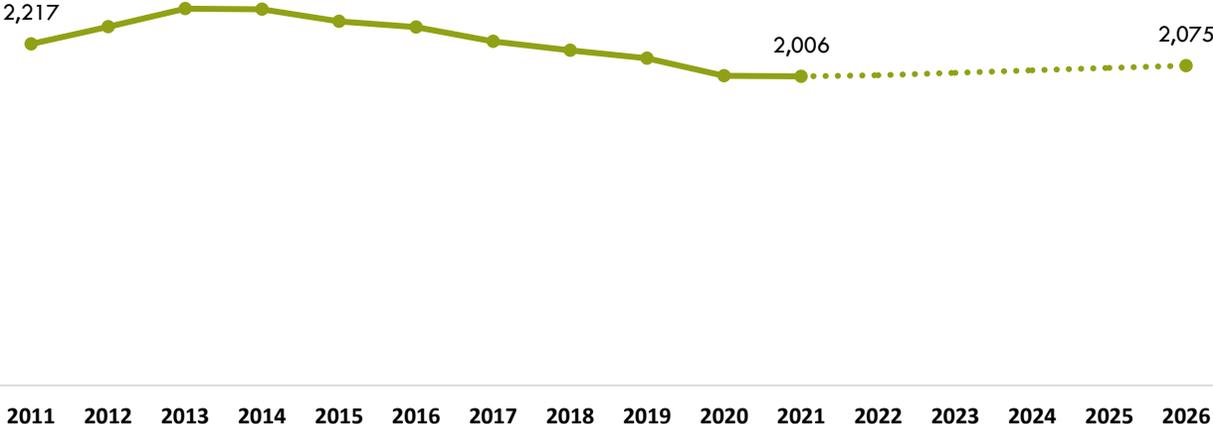
## **Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants (SOC 43-6012)**

- **Job Description:** Perform secretarial duties using legal terminology, procedures, and documents. Prepare legal papers and correspondence, such as summonses, complaints, motions, and subpoenas. May also assist with legal research.
- **Knowledge:** Administrative, Law and Government, English Language
- **Skills:** Reading Comprehension, Writing, Active Listening, Speaking, Time Management

# Occupational Demand

Exhibit 1a shows trends for *Paralegal Studies Occupations* in the SCV/SML subregion. Between 2021 to 2026, the number of jobs for *Paralegal Studies Occupations* is projected to increase by 69 jobs, or three percent.

**Exhibit 1a. Occupational projections for *Paralegal Studies Occupations* in the SCV/SML subregion**



Between 2021 to 2026, demand for *Paralegal Studies Occupations* in the SCV/SML subregion is 251 annual openings (Exhibit 1b). Paralegals and legal assistants are projected to have the most demand with 148 annual job openings and a projected growth rate of nine percent.

**Exhibit 1b. Occupational projections for *Paralegal Studies Occupations* in the SCV/SML subregion**

Occupation	2021 Jobs	2026 Jobs	5-Year Change	5-Year % Change	Annual Openings
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	1,142	1,242	100	9%	148
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	507	480	(27)	(5%)	62
Legal Support Workers, All Other	357	353	(4)	(1%)	41
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,006</b>	<b>2,075</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>251</b>

# Wages

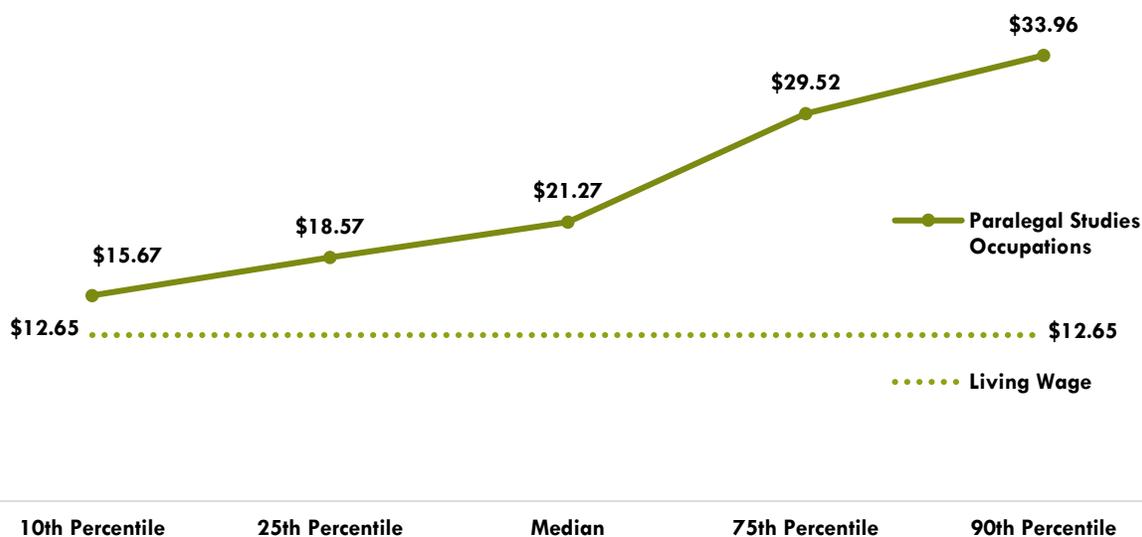
The average living wage for a single adult in the SCV/SML subregion is \$11.91/hour.<sup>2</sup> Exhibit 2a shows the hourly wages of *Paralegal Studies Occupations*. Paralegals and legal assistants earn the highest entry-level wage, \$22.12/hour in the subregion.<sup>3</sup> Please note 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> percentiles are considered entry-level wages while 75<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> are considered experienced wages, either by gained by long-term employment, extra training, etc.

**Exhibit 2a. Paralegal Studies Occupations hourly wages in the SCV/SML subregion**

Occupation	Pct. 25 Hourly Earnings	Median Hourly Earnings	Pct. 75 Hourly Earnings
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	\$22.12	\$24.25	\$34.11
Legal Support Workers, All Other	\$17.31	\$20.74	\$27.33
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	\$16.28	\$18.83	\$27.13

Exhibit 2b shows the average hourly wages for *Paralegal Studies Occupations*; the average entry-level wage is more than the average entry-level living wage for the SCV/SML subregion.

**Exhibit 2b. Paralegal Studies Occupations average hourly wages in the SCV/SML subregion**



<sup>2</sup> 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/>.

<sup>3</sup> Entry-level wages are derived from the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile.

# Job Postings

There were 450 job postings for *Paralegal Studies Occupations* in the SCV/SML subregion from September 2022 to February 2023.<sup>4</sup>

## Top Employers

The top employers with the most job postings are listed in Exhibit 3. The top employers in online job postings were Robert Half, Internal Revenue Service, and the State of California.

### Exhibit 3. Top employers of *Paralegal Studies Occupations* by number of job postings

Employer
Robert Half
Internal Revenue Service
State of California
GPAC
Brunn & Flynn
California Rural Legal Assistance
Merced County
Common Spirit Health
O'Brien Immigration
US Government

## Top Occupational Titles

Exhibit 4 shows the O\*NET OnLine occupational titles for *Paralegal Studies Occupations* in the SCV/SML subregion. Common job titles in postings include: Legal Secretaries, Paralegals, and Legal Assistants.

### Exhibit 4. Top occupational titles in job postings for *Paralegal Studies Occupations*

Occupational Title
Paralegals and Legal Assistants
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants
Legal Support Workers, All Other

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<sup>4</sup> Other than occupation 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.

## Salaries

Exhibit 5 shows the “Market Salaries” for *Paralegal Studies 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 5. Market salaries for *Paralegal Studies Occupations***

Market Salary	Job Postings
\$40,000-\$44,999	51
\$50,000-\$54,999	48
\$45,000-\$49,999	45
\$55,000-\$59,999	33
\$35,000-\$39,999	32

## Education

Of the 450 job postings, 237 listed a preferred or minimum educational requirement for the position being filled. Among those, 19% requested a high school or GED, 18% requested a bachelor’s degree, and 11% requested an associate degree (Exhibit 6).

**Exhibit 6. Education levels requested in job postings for *Paralegal Studies Occupations***

Education Level	Job Postings	% of Job Postings
High school or GED	84	19%
Bachelor's degree	83	18%
Associate degree	49	11%
Ph.D. or professional degree	13	3%
Master's degree	8	2%

## Baseline, Specialized, and Software Skills

Exhibit 7 depicts the top baseline, specialized, and software skills in job postings. The three most important baseline skills are filing, communications, and detail-oriented. The top three specialized skills are lawsuits, legal pleading, and legal discovery. The top software is Microsoft Outlook.

**Exhibit 7. In-demand *Paralegal Studies Occupations* baseline and specialized skills**

Baseline Skills	Specialized Skills	Software Skills
Filing	Lawsuits	Microsoft Outlook
Communications	Legal Pleadings	Microsoft Word
Detail-Oriented	Legal Discovery	Law Practice Management Software
Writing	Proofreading	Database Management Systems
Management	Legal Depositions	Document Management Systems

## Certifications

Of the 450 job postings, 56 contained certification data. Among those, 18% indicated a need for a typing certification. The next top certification is State Bar Membership and security clearance (Exhibit 8).

**Exhibit 8. Top Paralegal Studies Occupations certifications requested in job postings**

Certifications	% of Job Postings
Typing Certification	18%
State Bar Membership	14%
Security Clearance	4%
Certified Patient Care Technician (CPCT)	2%

## Education, Work Experience, & Training

A high school diploma or equivalent is typically required for legal secretaries and administrative assistants. An associate degree is typically required for legal support workers, all other and paralegals and legal assistants (Exhibit 9).

**Exhibit 9. Education, work experience, training, and Current Population Survey results Paralegal Studies Occupations<sup>5</sup>**

Occupation	Typical Entry-level Education	Work Experience Required	Typical On-The-Job Training	CPS
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	Associate degree	None	None	43.2%
Legal Support Workers, All Other	Associate degree	None	None	24.9%
Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term	53.2%

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<sup>5</sup> "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, 91 awards were conferred in the SCV/SML subregion (Exhibit 11).

## Exhibit 10. TOP and CIP codes for Paralegal Studies Occupations

TOP Titles	CIP Titles
140200 - Paralegal	220302 - Legal Assistant/Paralegal

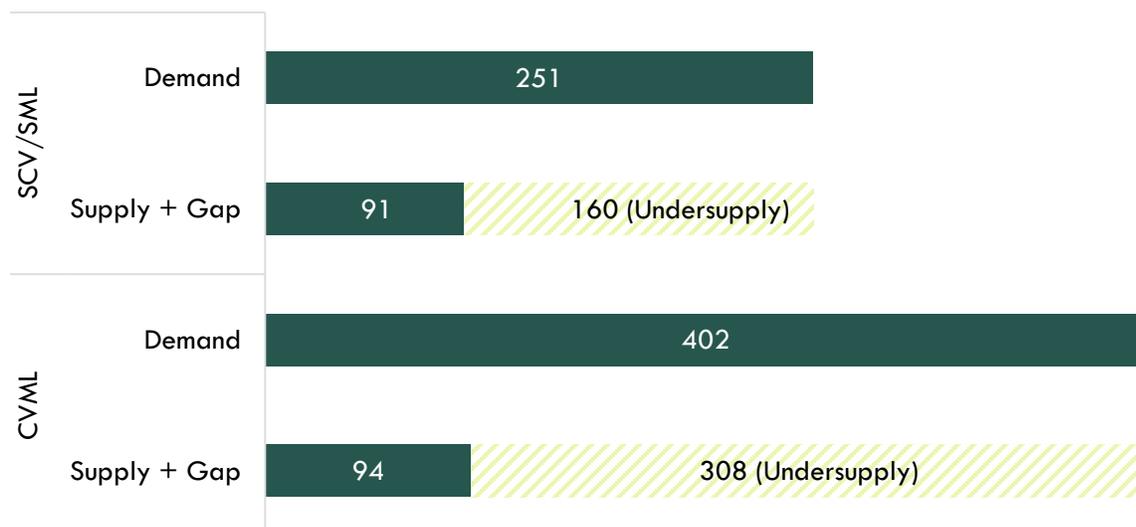
## Exhibit 11. Postsecondary supply for Paralegal Studies Occupations

TOP/CIP Code- Title	College	Associate Degree	Award 1 < 2 Academic Years	Award 2 < 4 Academic Years	Certificate 30 < 60 Semester Units	Total
140200 - Paralegal	Taft	4			6	10*
	Fresno City	23			31	54*
	Sequoias	13			4	17*
22.0302 - Legal Assistant/Paralegal	Humphreys University-Stockton and Modesto Campuses			3		3
	Santa Barbara Business College-Bakersfield	10	0			10*
<b>SCV/SML TOTAL</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>CVML TOTAL</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>94</b>

\*SCV/SML awards

There is an undersupply of 160 Paralegal Studies workers in the SCV/SML subregion and an undersupply of 308 workers in the region (Exhibit 12).

## Exhibit 12. Paralegal Studies Occupations workforce demand (annual job openings), postsecondary awards (supply), and additional students needed to fill gap in the SCV/SML subregion and region



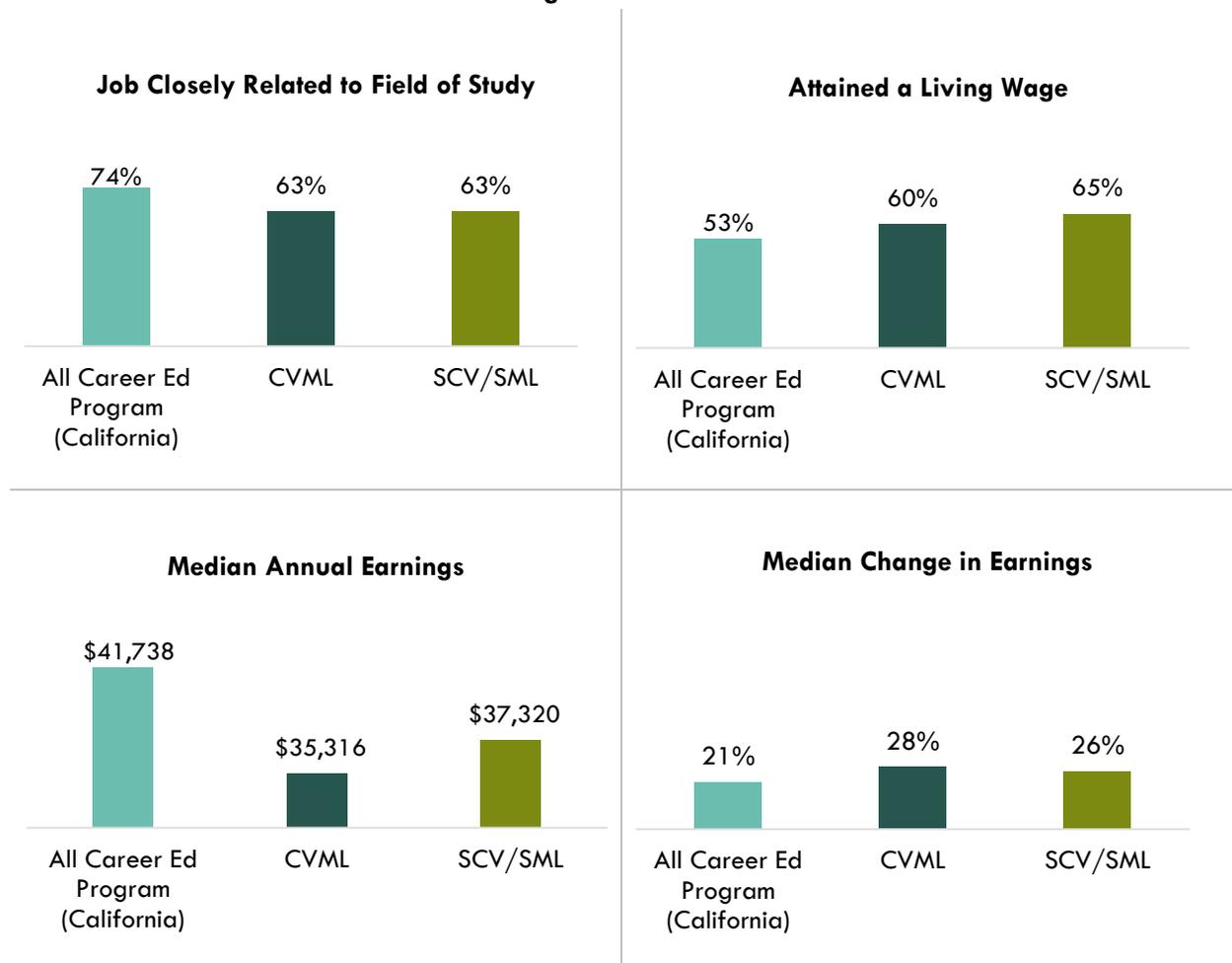
# Student Outcomes

Exhibits 13a and 13b summarize outcomes from California Community College Chancellor’s Cal-PASS Plus LaunchBoard for TOP codes related to *Paralegal Studies Occupations*. Notably, 63% of students obtained a job closely related to their field of study in the subregion, and 65% attained a living wage.

**Exhibit 13a. Regional metrics for TOP 140200 - Paralegal**

Metric	
Students Who Got a Degree or Certificate or Attained Apprenticeship Journey Status	54
Number of Students Who Transferred	14

**Exhibit 13b. Metrics for TOP 140200 - Paralegal**



# Recommendation

This report suggests there is a shortage of 160 workers in the SCV/SML subregion and a shortage of 308 workers in the CVML region for *Paralegal Studies Occupations*. Based on these findings, it is recommended that Taft College work with the regional directors, the college's advisory board, and local industry in the expansion of programs to address the shortage of Paralegal Studies workers in the region.

# 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: <a href="http://economicmodeling.com">economicmodeling.com</a> .
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: <a href="https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/educational-attainment.htm">https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/educational-attainment.htm</a> .
LaunchBoard	Chancellor’s Cal-PASS Plus LaunchBoard. <a href="https://www.calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx">https://www.calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx</a>
Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Estimates	California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division: <a href="http://labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov">labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov</a> .
Job Posting and Skills Data	Lightcast.
Additional Education Requirements/ Employer Preferences	The O*NET Job Zone database includes over 900 occupations as well as information on skills, abilities, knowledge, work activities and interests associated with specific occupations: <a href="http://onetonline.org">onetonline.org</a> .

## 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.