

Labor Market Assessment: 1222.00 – Physical Therapist Assistant

Physical Therapy Aide (Certificate)

Los Angeles Center of Excellence, June 2022

Summary

Program Endorsement:	Endorsed: All Criteria Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Endorsed: Some Criteria Met <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input 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 Los Angeles Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research (LA COE) prepared this report to provide regional labor market supply and demand data related to two occupations:

Middle-skill occupation:

- *Physical therapist assistants (31-2021)*

Below middle-skill occupation:

- *Physical therapist aides (31-2022)*

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

NOTE: *Physical therapist assistants (31-2021)* should be the target occupation for community college students, as this occupation requires an associate degree and licensure and offers higher wages than *physical therapist aides (31-2022)*, which only requires a HS diploma or equivalent and no license. **Since both occupations are closely related and students may use this program as a career path towards licensure and employment as a physical therapy assistant, both occupations are included in this labor market analysis.**

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.

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.

Based on the available data, there appears to be a supply gap in the region for the occupations of interest. In addition to the entry-level wage for *physical therapist assistants* exceeding the self-sufficiency standard wage in both Los Angeles and Orange counties, more than half of current workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree. **Due to all of the criteria being met, the LA COE endorses this proposed program.** Detailed reasons include:

Demand:

- **Supply Gap Criteria** – Over the next five years, there is projected to be **723 jobs available annually** in the region due to new job growth and replacements, **which is more than the 329 awards conferred annually** by educational institutions in the region.
- **Living Wage Criteria** – In Los Angeles County, **50% of annual job openings** for the occupations of interest have entry-level wages **above** the self-sufficiency standard wage (\$18.10/hour).²
- **Educational Criteria** – Within the LA/OC region, **50% of annual job openings** for the occupations of interest **typically require an associate degree.**
 - National-level educational attainment data indicates that **61% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree.**

Supply:

- Between 2017 and 2020, **1 community college and the adult school in the region** issued awards in physical therapist assistant programs, conferring an **average of 68 awards.**
- Between 2016 and 2019, non-community college institutions in the LA/OC region conferred an **average of 261 awards in relevant program(s).**

² Self-Sufficiency Standard wage data was pulled from The Self-Sufficiency Standard Tool for California. For more information, visit: <http://selfsufficiencystandard.org/california>.

Occupational Demand

Exhibit 1 shows the five-year occupational demand projections for the two occupations of interest. In the Los Angeles/Orange County region, the number of jobs related to these occupations is projected to increase by 21% through 2025. There will be more than 700 job openings per year through 2025 due to job growth and replacements.

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 full impact of COVID-19 on projections of industry and occupational employment. Therefore, the projections included in this report do not take the full 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	2,963	3,689	726	25%	526
Orange	1,327	1,487	160	12%	197
Total	4,290	5,177	887	21%	723

Wages

The labor market endorsement in this report considers the hourly wages for the two 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 LA/OC region. Detailed wage information, by county, is included in Appendix A.

Los Angeles County – Half of the annual openings for the occupations of interest have entry-level wages **above** the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$18.10 in Los Angeles County). Typical entry-level hourly wages for *physical therapist assistants* are above the self-sufficiency standard wage (\$32.63), while entry-level hourly wages for *physical therapist aides* are below the county's self-sufficiency standard wage (\$12.84). Experienced *physical therapist assistants* can expect to earn \$39.90, which is above the self-sufficiency standard wage, while experienced *physical therapist aides* earn below the self-sufficiency standard wage estimate (\$15.65).

Orange County – The majority of annual openings (51%) for the occupations of interest have entry-level wages **below** the self-sufficiency standard wage for one adult (\$20.63 in Orange County). Typical entry-level hourly wages for *physical therapist assistants* are above the self-sufficiency standard wage (\$34.19), while entry-level hourly wages for *physical therapist aides* are below the county's self-sufficiency standard wage (\$13.40). Experienced *physical therapist assistants* can expect to earn \$41.73, which is above the self-sufficiency standard wage, while experienced *physical therapist aides* earn below the self-sufficiency standard wage estimate (\$16.32).

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.

Job Postings

Over the past 12 months, there have been 1,995 online job postings for the two occupations of interest. Exhibit 2 displays the number of job postings by occupation. The majority of job postings (61%) were for *physical therapist assistants*. The top skills were physical therapy, rehabilitation, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), patient care, and treatment planning. The top employers, by number of job postings, in the region were California Rehabilitation & Sports Therapy, HealthPRO Heritage, FeldCare Connects, and Reliant Rehabilitation.

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 full 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.

Exhibit 2: Job postings by occupation (last 12 months)



Educational Attainment

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists the following entry-level education levels for the occupations in this report:

- **Associate degree:** *physical therapist assistants (31-2021)*
- **High school diploma or equivalent:** *physical therapist aides (31-2022)*

In the LA/OC region, half of the annual job openings (50%) typically require an associate degree (*physical therapist assistants*); the other half require a high school diploma or equivalent (*physical therapist aides*). National-level educational attainment data indicates that 61% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree.

Educational Supply

Community College Supply – Exhibit 3 shows the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred by community colleges in Physical Therapist Assistant programs (TOP 1222.00). Between 2017 and 2020, only two institutions in the region (Cerritos and North Orange Adult) conferred awards.

Exhibit 3: Regional community college awards (certificates and degrees), 2017-2020

TOP	Program	College	2017-18 Awards	2018-19 Awards	2019-20 Awards	3-Year Average
1222.00	Physical Therapist Assistant	Cerritos	28	26	35	30
		LA Subtotal	28	26	35	30
		North Orange Adult	65	37	14	39
		OC Subtotal	65	37	14	39
Supply Total/Average			93	63	49	68

Non-Community College Supply – For a comprehensive regional supply analysis, it is important to consider the supply from other institutions in the region that may provide training programs for the occupations of interest. Exhibit 4 shows the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred in relevant programs. Due to different data collection periods, the most recent three-year period of available data is from 2016 to 2019. Between 2016 and 2019, non-community college institutions in the region conferred an average of 261 awards.

Exhibit 4: Regional non-community college awards, 2016-2019

CIP	Program	Institution	2016-17 Awards	2017-18 Awards	2018-19 Awards	3-Year Average
51.0806	Physical Therapy Technician/Assistant	Advanced College	-	1	-	0
		American Career College-Anaheim	37	31	39	36
		Casa Loma College – Van Nuys	17	19	18	18
		CBD College	40	39	45	41
		Concorde Career College-Garden Grove	24	29	27	27
		Concorde Career College – North Hollywood	24	23	46	31
		Southern California Health Institute	62	55	51	56
		Stanbridge University	48	44	65	52
Supply Total/Average			252	241	291	261

Appendix A: Occupational demand and wage data by county

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)
Physical Therapist Assistants (31-2021)	1,344	1,779	435	32%	264	\$32.63	\$36.28	\$39.90
Physical Therapist Aides (31-2022)	1,618	1,910	292	18%	262	\$12.84	\$13.99	\$15.65
Total	2,963	3,689	726	25%	526	-	-	-

Exhibit 6. 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)
Physical Therapist Assistants (31-2021)	555	680	125	23%	97	\$34.19	\$37.97	\$41.73
Physical Therapist Aides (31-2022)	772	807	35	5%	100	\$13.40	\$14.59	\$16.32
Total	1,327	1,487	160	12%	197	-	-	-

Exhibit 7. Los Angeles and Orange Counties

Occupation (SOC)	2020 Jobs	2025 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Typical Entry-Level Education
Physical Therapist Assistants (31-2021)	1,899	2,460	561	30%	361	Associate degree
Physical Therapist Aides (31-2022)	2,390	2,717	327	14%	362	HS diploma or equivalent
Total	4,290	5,177	887	21%	723	-

Appendix B: Sources

- O*NET Online
- Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)
- Economic Modeling Specialists, International (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)

For more information, please contact:

Luke Meyer, Director
Los Angeles Center of Excellence
Lmeyer7@mtsac.edu

