

Respiratory Therapists

Summary | What They Do | Work Environment | How to Become One | Pay | **Job Outlook** | State & Area Data | Similar Occupations | More Info

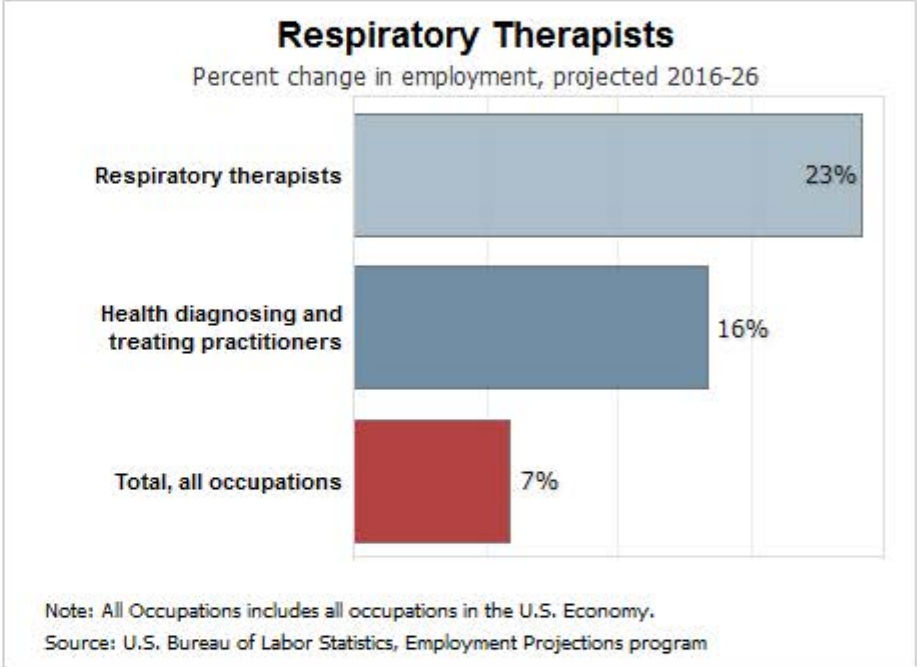
Job Outlook

About this section

Employment of respiratory therapists is projected to grow 23 percent from 2016 to 2026, much faster than average for all occupations. Growth in the middle-aged and older population will lead to an increased incidence of respiratory conditions such as pneumonia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and other disorders that can permanently damage the lungs or restrict lung function. The aging population will in turn lead to an increased demand for respiratory therapy services and treatments, mostly in hospitals.

In addition, a growing emphasis on reducing readmissions in hospitals may result in more demand for respiratory therapists in nursing homes and in doctors' offices.

Advances in preventing and detecting disease, improved medications, and more sophisticated treatments will also increase the demand for respiratory therapists. Other conditions affecting the general population, such as respiratory problems due to smoking and air pollution, along with respiratory emergencies, will continue to create demand for respiratory therapists.



Job Prospects

Job prospects will be best for therapists willing to travel to look for job opportunities. Some areas will be saturated with workers, and other areas (more often, rural areas) will be in need of respiratory therapists' services. Certification is generally recommended, as it may increase an applicant's competitiveness in the job market.

Employment projections data for respiratory therapists, 2016-26

Occupational Title	SOC Code	Employment, 2016	Projected Employment, 2026	Change, 2016-26		Employment by Industry
				Percent	Numeric	
Respiratory therapists	29-1126	130,200	160,600	23	30,400	xlsx

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

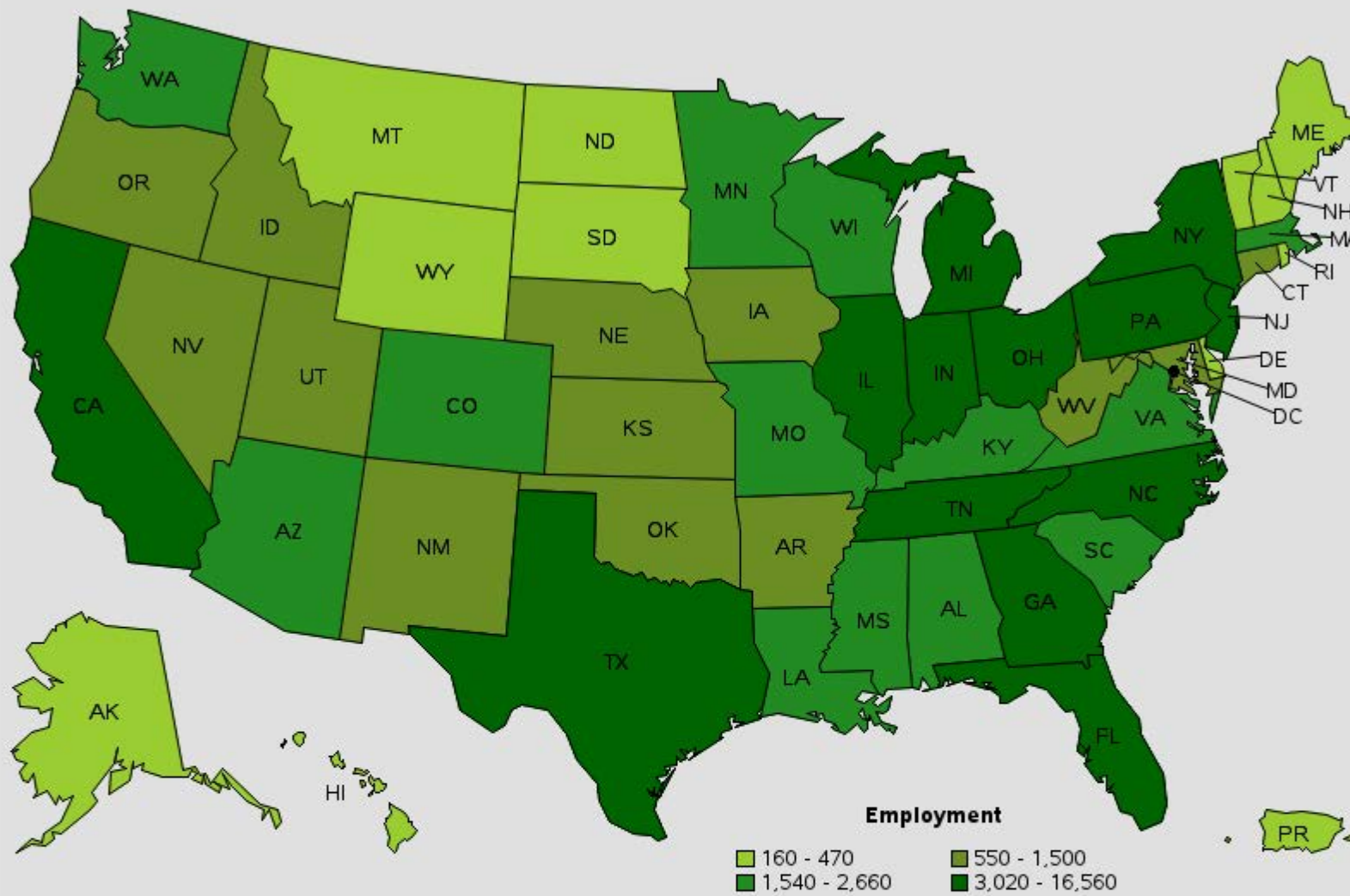
[<- Pay](#)

[State & Area Data ->](#)

SUGGESTED CITATION:

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Respiratory Therapists, on the Internet at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/respiratory-therapists.htm> (visited December 17, 2017).

Employment of respiratory therapists, by state, May 2016



Blank areas indicate data not available.

States with the highest employment level in this occupation:

State	Employment (1)	Employment per thousand jobs	Location quotient (9)	Hourly mean wage	Annual mean wage (2)
California	16,560	1.04	1.15	\$37.90	\$78,820
Texas	11,700	1.00	1.10	\$27.92	\$58,070
Florida	8,590	1.04	1.16	\$27.02	\$56,200
Ohio	6,490	1.22	1.35	\$26.04	\$54,150
New York	5,840	0.64	0.71	\$34.18	\$71,100

What is the Job Outlook?

Job opportunities should be good, especially for RTs with cardiopulmonary care skills or experience working with infants. Much of the increased demand will come from substantial growth in the middle-aged and elderly population—a development that will heighten the incidence of cardiopulmonary disease. Job growth will also result from the expanding role of RTs in case management, disease prevention, emergency care, and the early detection of pulmonary disorders.

Advances in inhaled medications and in the treatment of transplant patients, heart attack and accident victims, and premature infants (many of whom are dependent on a ventilator during part of their treatment) will also increase the demand for the services of respiratory care practitioners.

Projections of Employment

In California, the number of Respiratory Therapists is expected to grow faster than average growth rate for all occupations. Jobs for Respiratory Therapists are expected to increase by 17.0 percent, or 2,500 jobs between 2014 and 2024.

Estimated Employment and Projected Growth Respiratory Therapists					
Geographic Area (Estimated Year-Projected Year)	Estimated Employment	Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change	Additional Openings Due to Net Replacements
California (2014-2024)	14,700	17,200	2,500	17.0	3,500

Source: EDD/LMID Projections of Employment by Occupation

[View Projected Growth for All Areas](#)

Annual Job Openings

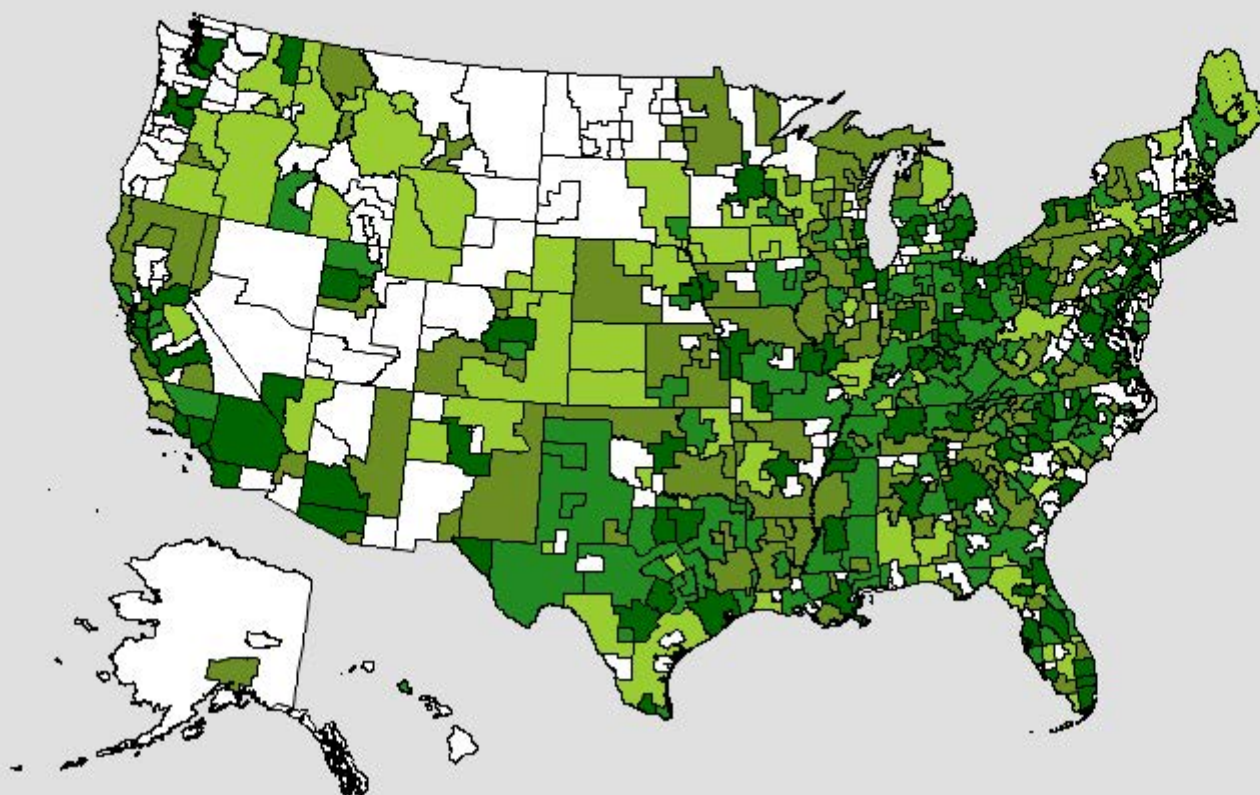
In California, an average of 250 new job openings per year is expected for Respiratory Therapists, plus an additional 350 job openings due to net replacement needs, resulting in a total of 600 job openings.

Estimated Average Annual Job Openings Respiratory Therapists			
Geographic Area (Estimated Year- Projected Year)	Jobs From Growth	Jobs Due to Net Replacements	Total Annual Job Openings
California (2014-2024)	250	350	600

Source: EDD/LMID Projections of Employment by Occupation

[View Data for All Areas](#)

Employment of respiratory therapists, by area, May 2016



Employment



Blank areas indicate data not available.

Metropolitan areas with the highest employment level in this occupation:

Metropolitan area	Employment (1)	Employment per thousand jobs	Location quotient (9)	Hourly mean wage	Annual mean wage (2)
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Glendale, CA Metropolitan Division	5,250	1.24	1.38	\$35.38	\$73,590
New York-Jersey City-White Plains, NY-NJ Metropolitan Division	4,100	0.62	0.69	\$36.32	\$75,540
Chicago-Naperville-Arlington Heights, IL Metropolitan Division	3,370	0.93	1.03	\$27.08	\$56,330
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX	2,600	0.89	0.98	\$28.86	\$60,030
Dallas-Plano-Irving, TX Metropolitan Division	2,160	0.89	0.99	\$28.96	\$60,230
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	1,850	0.72	0.80	\$27.51	\$57,220

Respiratory Therapists Estimated Employment and Projected Growth					
Geographic Area (Estimated Year-Projected Year)	Estimated Employment	Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change	Additional Openings Due to Net Replacements
California (2014-2024)	14,700	17,200	2,500	17.0	3,500
Butte County (2014-2024)	130	150	20	15.4	30
East Bay Area (2014-2024)	1,210	1,480	270	22.3	280
Eastern Sierra Region (2014-2024)	10	20	10	100.0	
Fresno County (2014-2024)	310	370	60	19.4	70
Imperial County (2014-2024)	30	40	10	33.3	10
Inland Empire Area (2014-2024)	1,320	1,590	270	20.5	310
Kern County (2014-2024)	240	270	30	12.5	60
Los Angeles County (2014-2024)	4,350	5,120	770	17.7	1,020
Monterey County (2014-2024)	120	140	20	16.7	30
North Coast Region (2014-2024)	110	130	20	18.2	30
Northern Counties Region (2014-2024)	80	100	20	25.0	20
Sacramento Metro Area (2014-2024)	760	890	130	17.1	180
San Benito and Santa Clara Counties	880	1,110	230	26.1	210

Respiratory Therapists
 (SOC Code : 29-1126)
 in Los Angeles County

<http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/cgi/databrowsing/occExplorerQSDetails.asp?menuChoice=occxplorer&printerFriendly=TRUE&soccode=291126&geogArea=0604000037&socTitle=Respiratory+Therapists&zipCode=&zipRadius=25>

Assess, treat, and care for patients with breathing disorders. Assume primary responsibility for all respiratory care modalities, including the supervision of respiratory therapy technicians. Initiate and conduct therapeutic procedures; maintain patient records; and select, assemble, check, and operate equipment.

Employers are usually looking for candidates with a Associate degree .

Los Angeles County is the same as Los Angeles-Long Beach-Glendale Metro Div.

Occupational Wages

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Area	Year	Period	Hourly Mean	Hourly by Percentile		
				25th	Median	75th
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Glendale Metro Div	2017	1st Qtr	\$35.83	\$30.57	\$35.97	\$42.27

[View Wages for All Areas](#) [About Wages](#)

Occupational Projections of Employment (also called "Outlook" or "Demand")

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Area	Estimated Year-Projected Year	Employment		Employment Change		Annual Avg Openings
		Estimated	Projected	Number	Percent	
Los Angeles County	2014 - 2024	4,350	5,120	770	17.7	179

[View Projections for All Areas](#) [About Projections](#)

Job Openings from JobCentral National Labor Exchange

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Possible Licenses Required and Issuing Authority

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License Title	License Authority
Respiratory Care Practitioner	Department of Consumer Affairs Respiratory Care Board of California http://www.rcb.ca.gov

About Licenses

Industries Employing This Occupation (click on Industry Title to View Employers List)

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Industry Title	Number of Employers in Los Angeles County	Percent of Total Employment for Occupation in State of California
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	336	66.7%
Outpatient Care Centers	2,656	6.5%
Nursing Care Facilities	821	6.1%
Employment Services	1,694	5.9%
Other Hospitals	52	4.3%
Home Health Care Services	1,567	3.2%
Offices of Physicians	12,542	3.0%
Residential Mental Health Facilities	4	1.0%

About Staffing Patterns

Santa Monica College LOI

C. Employer Survey/Other Evidence of Need

Employer Survey/Other Evidence of Need Questions Richard Hernandez	Method- Via Telephone	
1. How many employers were surveyed and how many responded	Surveyed	Responded
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LACUSC 	LACUSC
2. The specific title(s) of the positions covered by the survey	Respiratory Care Practitioner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry level • NICU 	
3. How many openings the employer anticipates, due to separations and new jobs (growth), in the next full year and over the next full five years?	1-year	5-year
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 positions LAC USC next year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turnover, retirees
4. Whether the employer believes the applicant program as described would qualify students for the specific positions?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, but currently coming through registry until they have one year of clinical experience 	
5. Whether the employer would preferentially hire students who have completed the program?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YES 	

Employer Survey/Other Evidence of Need Questions Donna Matalon	Method- Via Telephone	
1. How many employers were surveyed and how many responded	Surveyed	Responded
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providence Tarzana Medical Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YES
2. The specific title(s) of the positions covered by the survey	Respiratory Care Practitioner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry level • NICU 	
3. How many openings the employer anticipates, due to separations and new jobs (growth), in the next full year and over the next full five years?	1-year	5-year
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turnover, retirees
4. Whether the employer believes the applicant program as described would qualify students for the specific positions?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, minimum qualifications ASRT and RRT credential 	
5. Whether the employer would preferentially hire students who have completed the program?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YES 	

Employer Survey/Other Evidence of Need Questions Rowena Gandionco	Method- Via Telephone	
1. How many employers were surveyed and how many responded	Surveyed	Responded
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providence St. Joseph Burbank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YES
2. The specific title(s) of the positions covered by the survey	Respiratory Care Practitioner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry level • NICU 	
3. How many openings the employer anticipates, due to separations and new jobs (growth), in the next full year and over the next full five years?	1-year	5-year
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, few openings in NICU and ICU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to continue trend • Turnover, retirees
4. Whether the employer believes the applicant program as described would qualify students for the specific positions?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASRT minimum qualification • BSRT preferred 	
5. Whether the employer would preferentially hire students who have completed the program?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As long the applicant has met the requirements • Goes through recruiter 	

Employer Survey/Other Evidence of Need Questions Janice Garcia	Method- Via Telephone	
6. How many employers were surveyed and how many responded	Surveyed	Responded
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beverly Hospital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes
7. The specific title(s) of the positions covered by the survey	Respiratory Care Practitioner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry level 	
8. How many openings the employer anticipates, due to separations and new jobs (growth), in the next full year and over the next full five years?	1-year	5-year
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding scope of practice for RTs to start doing PICC lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turnover, retirees
9. Whether the employer believes the applicant program as described would qualify students for the specific positions?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASRT minimum qualification • BSRT preferred 	
10. Whether the employer would preferentially hire students who have completed the program?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YES 	

Employer Survey/Other Evidence of Need Questions Sherryn Tico	Method- Via Telephone	
1. How many employers were surveyed and how many responded	Surveyed	Responded
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KP Downey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes
2. The specific title(s) of the positions covered by the survey	Respiratory Care Practitioner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry level • NICU 	
3. How many openings the employer anticipates, due to separations and new jobs (growth), in the next full year and over the next full five years?	1-year	5-year
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to expand hospital wing, will add ICU beds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turnover, retirees
4. Whether the employer believes the applicant program as described would qualify students for the specific positions?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASRT minimum qualification • BSRT preferred 	
5. Whether the employer would preferentially hire students who have completed the program?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As long the applicant has met the requirements • Internal employees get preferential employment 	

Employer Survey/Other Evidence of Need Questions Anthony Hidalgo	Method- Via Telephone	
1. How many employers were surveyed and how many responded	Surveyed	Responded
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garfield Medical Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes
2. The specific title(s) of the positions covered by the survey	Respiratory Care Practitioner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry level • NICU 	
3. How many openings the employer anticipates, due to separations and new jobs (growth), in the next full year and over the next full five years?	1-year	5-year
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipates openings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipates openings due to staff retiring and turnover
4. Whether the employer believes the applicant program as described would qualify students for the specific positions?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASRT minimum qualification 	
5. Whether the employer would preferentially hire students who have completed the program?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As long the applicant has met the requirements 	

Employer Survey/Other Evidence of Need Questions Michael O'connor	Method- Via Telephone	
1. How many employers were surveyed and how many responded	Surveyed	Responded
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glendale Adventist Medical Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes
2. The specific title(s) of the positions covered by the survey	Respiratory Care Practitioner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry level • NICU 	
3. How many openings the employer anticipates, due to separations and new jobs (growth), in the next full year and over the next full five years?	1-year	5-year
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not this year, using registry until able to justify to administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, currently short staffed, anticipates hiring within five years. • Also, some retirees
4. Whether the employer believes the applicant program as described would qualify students for the specific positions?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASRT minimum qualification • 	
5. Whether the employer would preferentially hire students who have completed the program?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YES, as long the applicant has met the requirements 	

Employer Survey/Other Evidence of Need Questions Anthony Innabi	Method- In person	
1. How many employers were surveyed and how many responded	Surveyed	Responded
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • California Hospital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes
2. The specific title(s) of the positions covered by the survey	Respiratory Care Practitioner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry level • NICU 	
3. How many openings the employer anticipates, due to separations and new jobs (growth), in the next full year and over the next full five years?	1-year	5-year
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, in fact, just hired four staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turnover, retirees
4. Whether the employer believes the applicant program as described would qualify students for the specific positions?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASRT minimum qualification • • BSRT preferred 	
5. Whether the employer would preferentially hire students who have completed the program?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As long the applicant has met the requirements • 	

Employer Survey/Other Evidence of Need Questions Jeff Davis	Method- In person	
1. How many employers were surveyed and how many responded	Surveyed	Responded
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCLA Ronald Reagan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes
2. The specific title(s) of the positions covered by the survey	Respiratory Care Practitioner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry level -Per diem • 	
3. How many openings the employer anticipates, due to separations and new jobs (growth), in the next full year and over the next full five years?	1-year	5-year
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has openings now 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turnover, retirees
4. Whether the employer believes the applicant program as described would qualify students for the specific positions?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASRT minimum qualification • • BSRT preferred 	
5. Whether the employer would preferentially hire students who have completed the program?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As long the applicant has met the requirements • 	

Employer Survey/Other Evidence of Need Questions Drew Martenson	Method- In person	
1. How many employers were surveyed and how many responded	Surveyed	Responded
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White Memorial Medical Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes
2. The specific title(s) of the positions covered by the survey	Respiratory Care Practitioner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry level -Per diem • 	
3. How many openings the employer anticipates, due to separations and new jobs (growth), in the next full year and over the next full five years?	1-year	5-year
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No openings now 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turnover, retirees
4. Whether the employer believes the applicant program as described would qualify students for the specific positions?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASRT minimum qualification 	
5. Whether the employer would preferentially hire students who have completed the program?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As long the applicant has met the requirements 	

Employer Survey/Other Evidence of Need Questions Stephanie Summerville	Method- In person	
1. How many employers were surveyed and how many responded	Surveyed	Responded
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LAC+USC Adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes
2. The specific title(s) of the positions covered by the survey	Respiratory Care Practitioner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entry level 	
3. How many openings the employer anticipates, due to separations and new jobs (growth), in the next full year and over the next full five years?	1-year	5-year
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has openings now, requires 2 years of experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turnover, retirees
4. Whether the employer believes the applicant program as described would qualify students for the specific positions?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASRT minimum qualification 	
5. Whether the employer would preferentially hire students who have completed the program?	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As long the applicant has met the requirements 	

The workforce demands for respiratory care remain strong and the job outlook is promising. According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS), employment growth for Respiratory Therapists for the years 2016-2026, is projected 23%. Seven percent higher compared to health diagnostic and treating practitioners, and 16% higher than for all other occupations. U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics-U.S. Department of Labor- December 19, 2017. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/respiratory-therapists.htm#tab-6>

At the state level, California projects employment growth for Respiratory Therapists for years 2014-2024, at 17%. State of California Employment Development Department, Occupation profile- December 19, 2017. <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/cgi/databrowsing/occExplorerQSDetails.asp?searchCriteria=Respiratory+Therapy&careerID=&menuChoice=occxplorer&geogArea=0601000000&soccode=291126&search=Explore+Occupation>

At the Local level, the County of Los Angeles is expected to have employment growth of 17.7%. State of California Employment Development Department, Occupation profile- December 19, 2017. <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/aspdotnet/SupportPage/AllOccPrj.aspx?soccode=291126>

Doing a search of local jobs in the Los Angeles area, U.S. jobs shows 27 positions and Indeed.com shows 179 jobs within 50 miles of Santa Monica College. The latter indicates a healthy demand for respiratory therapist and supports the Santa Monica College, Respiratory Therapy Program. <https://us.jobs/results.asp?jobcategory=29112600&rd1=50&zc1=90405> . Accessed 19 December 2017. <https://www.indeed.com/jobs?q=respiratory+therapist&l=Los+Angeles%2C+CA&radius=50>. Accessed 19 December 2017.