

Program Endorsement Brief: 1402.00/Paralegal Legal Support Professional

Los Angeles/Orange County Center of Excellence, April 2019

Summary

The Los Angeles/Orange County Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research (COE) prepared this report to provide regional labor market supply and demand data related to legal support occupations. 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 relevant occupations.

The following summarizes key findings from this data brief:

- The number of jobs for legal support-related occupations is projected to increase by 3% over the next five years; nearly 3,600 job openings will be available annually due to new job growth and replacement need.
- Over the past 12 months, there have been 6,530 online job postings related to middle-skill legal support occupations in Los Angeles and Orange Counties.
- No other related program recommendation requests were received in 2018 from regional community colleges.
- Nineteen colleges in the region have existing legal office technology and paralegal programs.
- Between 2015 and 2018, community colleges in the region conferred an average of 482 awards annually (associate degrees and certificates) in related training programs.

Occupational Demand — In Los Angeles/Orange County, the number of jobs for legal support-related occupations is projected to increase by 3%. There will be nearly 3,600 job openings per year through 2023 (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1: Occupational demand in Los Angeles and Orange Counties¹

Geography	2018 Jobs	2023 Jobs	2018-2023 Change	2018-2023 % Change	Annual Openings
Los Angeles	24,517	25,232	715	3%	2,735
Orange	7,536	7,735	199	3%	848
Total	32,053	32,968	915	3%	3,584

¹ Five-year change represents new job additions to the workforce. Annual openings include new jobs and replacement jobs that result from retirements and separations.

Wages — Entry-level wages for legal support occupations in the region are between \$10.90 and \$15.12. Entry-level wages for legal secretaries are higher than the MIT Living hourly wage for one adult in the region (\$14.36 in Los Angeles County and \$15.85 in Orange County); however, entry-level wages for paralegals, legal assistants and all other legal support workers are lower than the living wage. Experienced workers earn between \$35.36 and \$41.13, which is higher than the living wage.

Job Postings — There have been 6,530 online job postings for middle-skill legal support professionals listed in the past 12 months. The majority of job postings were for legal assistants, paralegals, legal secretaries, litigation secretaries, and litigation paralegals. Top specialized skills are: litigation, legal support, administrative support, legal documentation, and legal document composition. The top three employers, by number of job postings, in the region are: Kent Daniels and Associates, Ricoh Electronics, and JBA International.

Educational Attainment — The BLS lists an associate degree as the typical entry-level education for paralegals and legal assistants, and a high school diploma for legal secretaries and all other legal support workers. The national-level educational attainment data indicates between 40% and 48% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree. In Los Angeles/Orange County, 76% of job postings request high school or vocational training.

Community College Supply — Appendix A shows the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred by community colleges in Legal Office Technology (0514.10) and Paralegal (1402.00). The paralegal programs with the most completions in the region are: Coastline, Pasadena and Cerritos. Last year, there were no other related program recommendation requests from regional community colleges.

Appendix A: Regional community college awards (certificates and degrees), 2015-2018

TOP Code	Program	College	2015-16 Awards	2016-17 Awards	2017-18 Awards	3-Year Award Average
0514.10	Legal Office Technology	Cerritos	1	1	0	1
		East LA	6	1	3	3
		Glendale	0	1	1	1
		LA Pierce	0	0	4	1
		Long Beach	0	0	1	0
		Santa Monica	1	2	1	1
		West LA	10	3	8	7
Subtotal/Average			18	8	18	15
1402.00	Paralegal	Cerritos	36	48	58	47
		Coastline	62	75	75	71
		Compton	1	4	2	2
		El Camino	21	15	34	23
		Fullerton	43	56	0	33
		Irvine	41	31	16	29

LA City	29	27	30	29
LA Mission	54	28	35	39
LA Southwest	0	2	0	1
LA Trade-Tech	10	16	13	13
Mt San Antonio	52	35	25	37
Pasadena	66	72	61	66
Santa Ana	46	48	39	44
West LA	39	29	28	32
Subtotal/Average	500	486	416	467
Total/Average	518	494	434	482

Appendix B: Occupational demand and wage data by county

Exhibit 2. Los Angeles County

Occupation (SOC)	2018 Jobs	2023 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings
Paralegals and Legal Assistants (23-2011)	11,188	12,321	1,133	10%	1,397	\$13.09	\$23.57	\$41.81
Legal Secretaries (43-6012)	10,348	9,851	(497)	(5%)	1,078	\$15.43	\$23.87	\$39.88
Legal Support Workers, All Other (23-2099)	2,981	3,061	80	3%	261	\$10.82	\$22.13	\$35.00
Total	24,517	25,232	715	3%	2,735			

Exhibit 3. Orange County

Occupation (SOC)	2018 Jobs	2023 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings
Paralegals and Legal Assistants (23-2011)	3,753	4,114	361	10%	463	\$15.38	\$22.51	\$38.58
Legal Secretaries (43-6012)	3,249	3,067	(182)	(6%)	337	\$13.73	\$24.33	\$37.37
Legal Support Workers, All Other (23-2099)	534	554	20	4%	48	\$16.89	\$25.99	\$42.26
Total	7,536	7,735	199	3%	848			

Exhibit 4. Los Angeles and Orange Counties

Occupation (SOC)	2018 Jobs	2023 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings
Paralegals and Legal Assistants (23-2011)	14,941	16,434	1,493	10%	1,861	\$13.71	\$23.22	\$41.13
Legal Secretaries (43-6012)	13,597	12,918	(679)	(5%)	1,415	\$15.12	\$23.97	\$39.30
Legal Support Workers, All Other (23-2099)	3,515	3,615	100	3%	309	\$10.90	\$23.05	\$35.36
Total	32,053	32,968	915	3%	3,584			

Appendix C: Sources

- O*NET Online
- Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)
- Economic Modeling Specialists, International (EMSI)
- Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division, OES
- Employment Development Department, Unemployment Insurance Dataset
- Living Insight Center for Community Economic Development
- California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office Management Information Systems (MIS)
- MIT Living Wage
- Chancellor’s Office Curriculum Inventory (COCI 2.0)

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