

November 2020

# Labor Market Analysis

## Office Assistant



California  
Community  
Colleges



Prepared by the Central Valley/Mother Lode Center of Excellence

# Table of Contents

- Summary ..... 3
  - Key findings ..... 3
- Introduction ..... 4
- Occupational Demand ..... 5
- Wages ..... 6
- Job Postings ..... 7
  - Salaries ..... 7
  - Education ..... 8
  - Baseline and Specialized Skills ..... 8
  - Software Skills ..... 9
  - Certifications ..... 9
- Education, Work Experience & Training ..... 9
- Supply ..... 10
  - Gap Analysis ..... 11
- Student Outcomes ..... 11
- Conclusion ..... 11
- Recommendation ..... 11
- Appendix A: Methodology & Data Sources ..... 12

**COVID-19 Statement:** This report includes employment projection data by EMSI. 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 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

Please note the COVID-19 statement on page 2 when considering this report's findings.

This study conducted by the Central Valley/Mother Lode Center of Excellence examines labor market demand, wages, skills, and postsecondary supply for office assistant. Six occupations related to office assistants were identified for Bakersfield College:

- 43-9061, Office Clerks, General
- 43-6014, Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive
- 43-6011, Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants
- 43-4161, Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping
- 43-3061, Procurement Clerks
- 43-5011, Cargo and Freight Agents

## Key findings:

- **Occupational demand** — More than 37,200 workers were employed in jobs related to office assistants in 2019 in the South Central Valley/Southern Mother Lode (SCV/SML) subregion. The largest occupation is office clerks, general with 20,187 workers in 2019, a projected growth rate of 3% over the next five years, and 2,583 annual openings.
- **Wages** — Executive secretaries and executive administrative assistants earn the highest entry-level wages, \$22.99/hour in the subregion and \$22.35/hour in the region.
- **Employers** — Employers with the most job postings in the subregion are The Home Depot Incorporated, Anthem Blue Cross, and State of California.
- **Occupational titles** — The most common occupational title in job postings in the subregion is secretaries and administrative assistants, except legal, medical, and executive. The most common job title is administrative assistant.
- **Skills and certifications** — The top baseline skill is communication, the top specialized skill is administrative support, and the top software skill is Microsoft Excel. The most in-demand certification is a driver's license.
- **Education** — Five of the six occupations typically require a high school education. An associate degree is typically required for human resources assistants, except payroll and timekeeping.
- **Supply** — Analysis of postsecondary completions in the region shows that on average 761 awards were conferred in the Central Valley/Mother Lode region each year.

Based on a comparison of occupational demand and supply, there is an undersupply of 4,009 trained workers in the subregion and 6,542 workers in the region. The Center of Excellence recommends that Bakersfield College work with the Business and Entrepreneurship Regional Director, the college's advisory board, and local industry in the expansion of programs to address the shortage of office assistant workers in the region.

# Introduction

The Central Valley/Mother Lode Center of Excellence was asked by Bakersfield College to provide labor market information for office assistant. 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. The average living wage for a single adult in the South Central Valley/Southern Mother Lode (SCV/SML) subregion is \$10.30/hour.<sup>1</sup> Analysis of the program and occupational data related to office assistant resulted in the identification of applicable occupations. The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) System codes and titles used in this report are:

- 43-9061, Office Clerks, General
- 43-6014, Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive
- 43-6011, Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants
- 43-4161, Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping
- 43-3061, Procurement Clerks
- 43-5011, Cargo and Freight Agents

The occupational titles, job descriptions, sample job titles, and knowledge and skills from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and O\*NET OnLine are shown below.

## **Office Clerks, General**

**Job Description:** Perform duties too varied and diverse to be classified in any specific office clerical occupation, requiring knowledge of office systems and procedures. Clerical duties may be assigned in accordance with the office procedures of individual establishments and may include a combination of answering telephones, bookkeeping, typing or word processing, stenography, office machine operation, and filing.

**Knowledge:** Clerical, English Language, Customer and Personal Service, Administration and Management

**Skills:** Active Listening, Reading Comprehension, Speaking, Writing, Coordination

## **Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive**

**Job Description:** Perform routine clerical and administrative functions such as drafting correspondence, scheduling appointments, organizing, and maintaining paper and electronic files, or providing information to callers.

**Knowledge:** Clerical, English Language, Computers and Electronics, Customer and Personal Service, Administration and Management

**Skills:** Active Listening, Speaking, Reading Comprehension, Writing, Service Orientation

## **Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping**

**Job Description:** Compile and keep personnel records. Record data for each employee, such as address, weekly earnings, absences, amount of sales or production, supervisory reports, and date of and reason for termination. May prepare reports for employment records, file employment records, or search employee files and furnish information to authorized persons.

**Knowledge:** Personnel and Human Resources, Clerical, Customer and Personal Service, Administration and Management, English Language

**Skills:** Active Listening, Reading Comprehension, Speaking, Writing, Critical Thinking

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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/>.

### **Procurement Clerks**

**Job Description:** Compile information and records to draw up purchase orders for procurement of materials and services.

**Knowledge:** Clerical, Customer and Personal Service, Administration and Management, English Language, Education and Training

**Skills:** Reading Comprehension, Speaking, Active Listening, Writing, Complex Problem Solving

### **Cargo and Freight Agents**

**Job Description:** Expedite and route movement of incoming and outgoing cargo and freight shipments in airline, train, and trucking terminals, and shipping docks. Take orders from customers and arrange pickup of freight and cargo for delivery to loading platform. Prepare and examine bills of lading to determine shipping charges and tariffs.

**Knowledge:** Transportation, Customer and Personal Service, English Language, Geography, Public Safety and Security

**Skills:** Speaking, Active Listening, Critical Thinking, Monitoring, Service Orientation

## Occupational Demand

The South Central Valley/Southern Mother Lode subregion employed 37,216 workers in office assistant occupations in 2019 (Exhibit 1). The largest occupation is office clerks, general, with 20,187 workers in 2019. This occupation is projected to grow by 3% over the next five years and has the greatest number of projected annual openings, 2,583.

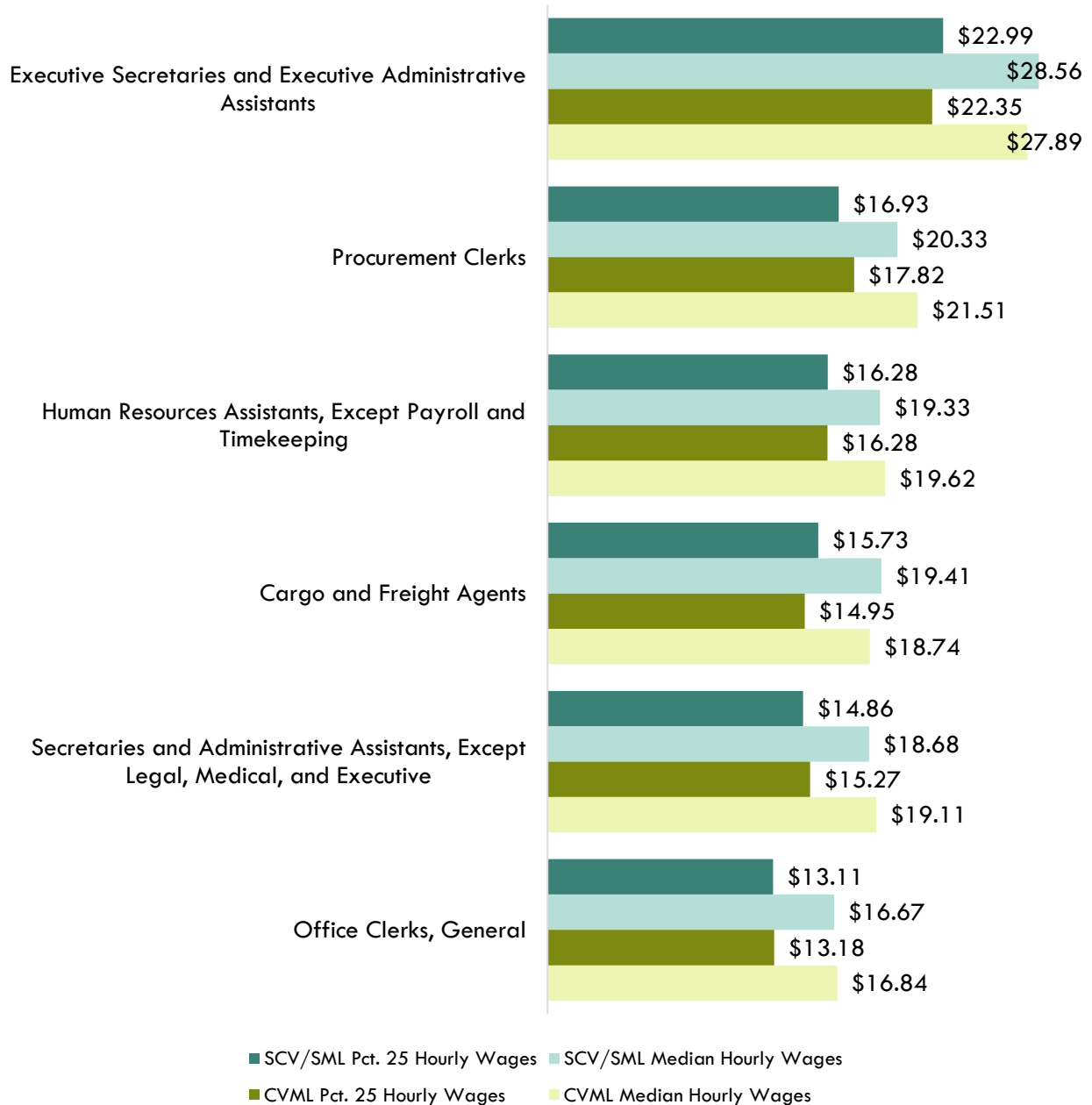
**Exhibit 1. Office assistant employment and occupational projections in the SCV/SML subregion**

Occupation	2019 Jobs	2024 Jobs	5-Year Change	5-Year % Change	Annual Openings
Office Clerks, General	20,187	20,716	529	3%	2,583
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	13,474	13,520	46	0%	1,556
Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	1,993	1,901	(92)	(5%)	223
Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping	910	923	13	1%	109
Procurement Clerks	366	368	2	1%	40
Cargo and Freight Agents	285	332	47	16%	39
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37,216</b>	<b>37,760</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>4,550</b>

# Wages

Exhibit 2 compares the entry-level and experienced wages of the office assistant occupations. Executive secretaries and executive administrative assistants earn the highest entry-level wages, \$22.99/hour in the subregion and \$22.35/hour in the region.

**Exhibit 2. Entry-level and experienced wage comparison in the SCV/SML subregion and region**



# Job Postings

There were 2,196 job postings for the six occupations in the SCV/SML subregion from May to October 2020.<sup>2</sup> The employers with the most job postings are listed in Exhibit 3.

**Exhibit 3. Top employers of office assistants by number of job postings**

Employer	Job Postings	% Job Postings
The Home Depot Incorporated	51	3%
Anthem Blue Cross	23	1%
State of California	19	1%
Community Medical Centers Incorporated	16	1%
Visalia Unified School District	16	1%
Proteus Incorporated	15	1%
Bakersfield City School District	14	1%
Les Schwab Tire Centers	14	1%
Fresno	13	1%
Fresno Unified School District	12	1%

Exhibit 4 shows how job postings for the targeted occupations in the SCV/SML subregion are distributed across seven O\*NET OnLine occupations. The occupational title secretaries and administrative assistants, except legal, medical, and executive is listed in 1,050 job postings. Note how a higher proportion of job postings are for this occupational title. Common job titles in postings include administrative assistant in 339 job postings, office assistant in 166 job postings, and human resources assistant in 83 job postings.

**Exhibit 4. Top occupational titles in job postings for office assistants**

Occupational Title	Job Postings	% of Job Postings
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	1,050	48%
Office Clerks, General	698	32%
Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping	198	9%
Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	113	5%
Cargo and Freight Agents	81	4%
Procurement Clerks	55	3%
Freight Forwarders	1	0%

## Salaries

Exhibit 5 shows the “Market Salaries” for office assistant occupations that are calculated by Burning Glass which uses a machine learning model built off of millions of job postings every year, and accounts for adjustments based on locations, industry, skills, experience, education requirements, among other variables.

<sup>2</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.

**Exhibit 5. Salaries for office assistants**

Market Salary Percentile	Salary Amount
10th Percentile	\$25,504
25th Percentile	\$27,511
50th Percentile	\$30,578
75th Percentile	\$35,209
90th Percentile	\$42,387

**Education**

Of the 2,196 job postings, 1,205 listed an education level preferred for the positions being filled. Among those, 79% requested high school or vocational training, 21% requested a bachelor’s degree, and 18% requested an associate degree (Exhibit 6). A job posting can indicate more than one education level. Hence, the percentages shown in the chart below total more than 100%.

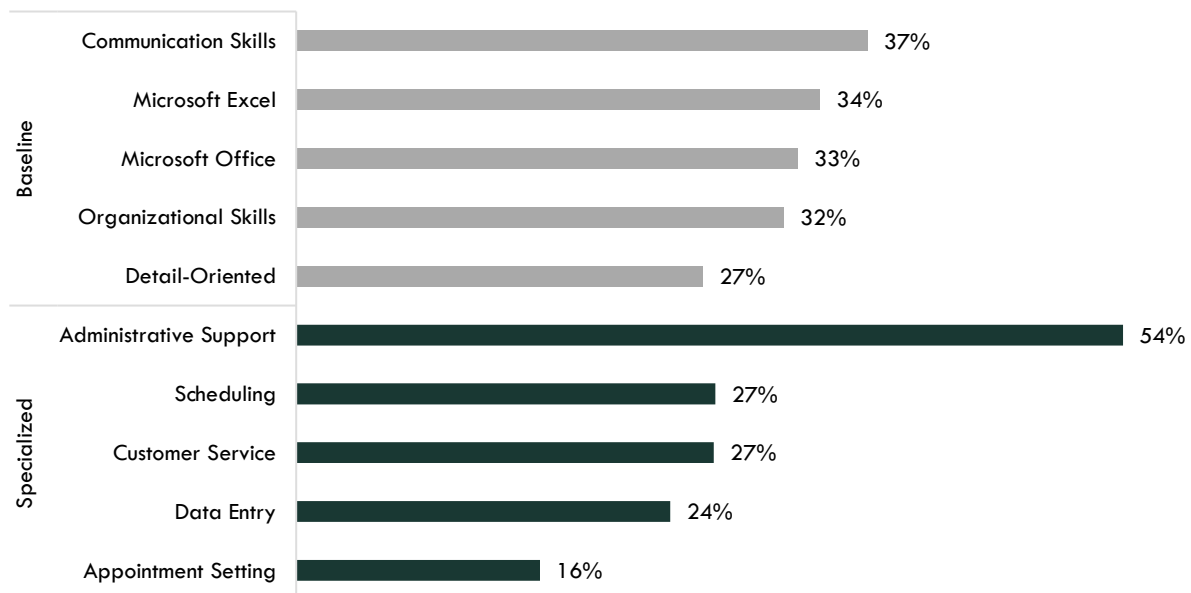
**Exhibit 6. Education levels requested in job postings for office assistants**

Education level	Job Postings	% of Job Postings
High school or vocational training	955	79%
Bachelor's degree	252	21%
Associate degree	217	18%

**Baseline and Specialized Skills**

Exhibit 7 depicts the top baseline and specialized skills for the targeted occupations. The three most important baseline skills are communication, 37% of job postings, Microsoft Excel, 34%, and Microsoft Office, 33%. The top three specialized skills are administrative support, 54% of job postings, scheduling, 27%, and customer service, 27%.

**Exhibit 7. In-demand office assistant baseline and specialized skills**

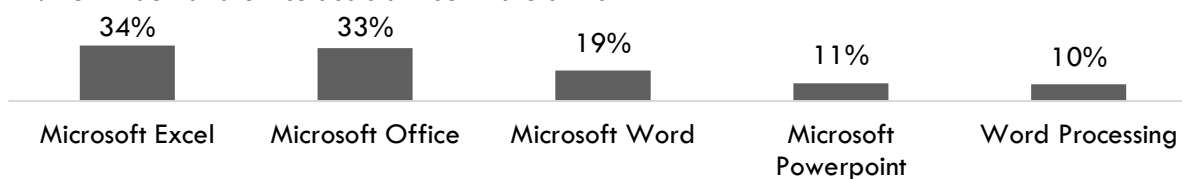




### Software Skills

Analysis also included the software skills most in demand by employers. Microsoft Excel and Office were the top two software skills identified in job postings (Exhibit 8).

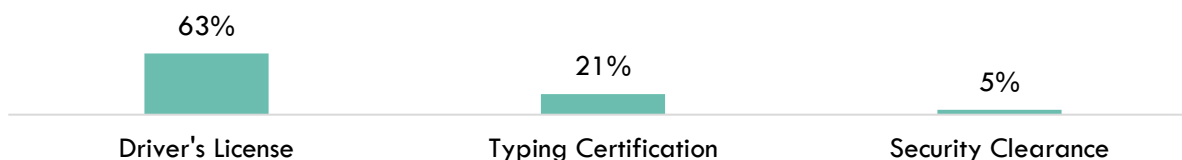
**Exhibit 8. In-demand office assistant software skills**



### Certifications

Of the 2,196 job postings, 462 contained certification data. Among those, 63% indicated a need for a driver's license. The next top certifications are typing certification and security clearance (Exhibit 9). (Due to the low number of job postings with certifications listed, the chart below may not be representative of the full sample.)

**Exhibit 9. Top office assistant certifications requested in job postings**



## Education, Work Experience & Training

Five of the six occupations typically require a high school education (Exhibit 10). An associate degree is typically required for human resources assistants, except payroll and timekeeping.

**Exhibit 10. Education, work experience, training, and Current Population Survey results for office assistant occupations<sup>3</sup>**

Occupation	Typical Entry-level Education	Work Experience Required	Typical On-The-Job Training
Office Clerks, General	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Short-term
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Short-term
Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	High school diploma or equivalent	Less than 5 years	None
Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping	Associate degree	None	None
Procurement Clerks	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term
Cargo and Freight Agents	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Short-term

<sup>3</sup> "Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey," Bureau of Labor Statistics, <https://www.bls.gov/cps/>.

# Supply

Analysis of program data from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Data Mart included the TOP and CIP codes: 051400 - Office Technology/Office Computer Applications, 051440 - Office Management, 52.0401 - Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, General, and 52.0408 - General Office Occupations and Clerical Services. Analysis of the last three years of TOP code data shows that, on average, 761 awards were conferred in the Central Valley/Mother Lode region each year (Exhibit 11).

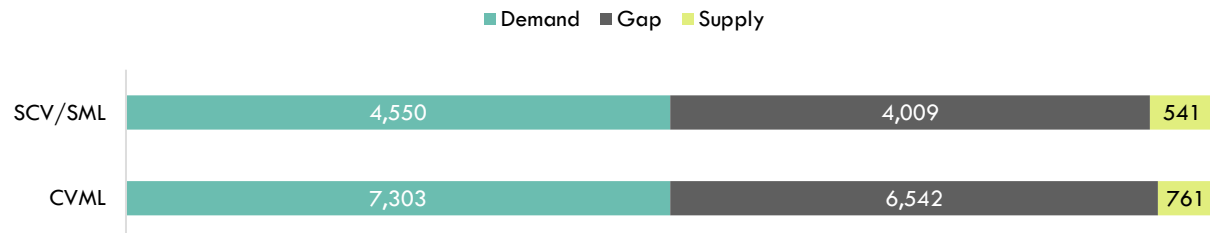
**Exhibit 11. Postsecondary supply for office assistant occupations in the region**

TOP Code - Title	Colleges	Associate Degree	Award < 1 academic year	Award 1 < 2 academic years	Certificate 12 < 18 semester units	Certificate 18 < 30 semester units	Certificate 30 < 60 semester units	Certificate 6 < 18 semester units	Noncredit award 48 < 96 hours	Subtotal
051400 - Office Technology/Office Computer Applications	Bakersfield	10					8	11		29
	Cerro Coso	4				14	11			30
	Columbia	0						1		1
	Fresno City	12				27	2		14	55
	Merced	18					24	8		50
	Modesto	7			3	2	2			13
	Reedley College	9			21	37				68
	San Joaquin Delta					10	5			15
	Sequoias	2				1				3
	Taft	5					0		0	5
	West Hills Coalinga	2					3			5
	West Hills Lemoore	0								0
051440 - Office Management	San Joaquin Delta	4					4			8
52.0401 - Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, General	Clovis Adult Education		20							20
	Computer Tutor Business and Technical Institute		37							37
	Institute of Technology			7						7
52.0408 - General Office Occupations and Clerical Services	Milan Institute-Visalia		18							18
	Computer Tutor Business and Technical Institute		11							11
	MTI Business College Inc			15						15
	San Joaquin Valley College-Visalia	152		67						220
	UEI College-Bakersfield			52						52
	UEI College-Fresno			58						58
United Education Institute-UEI College Stockton			40						40	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>225</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>761</b>

## Gap Analysis

There is an undersupply of 4,009 office assistant workers in the SCV/SML subregion and 6,542 workers in the region (Exhibit 12).

### Exhibit 12. Office assistant workforce annual demand and supply in the SCV/SML subregion and region



## Student Outcomes

Exhibit 13 summarizes employment and wage outcomes from the California Community College Chancellor's Cal-PASS Plus LaunchBoard for the TOP codes related to office assistants. There were 184 office technology/office computer and 27 office management students who received a degree, certificate, or attained apprenticeship journey status, and 105 office technology/office computer students transferred.

### Exhibit 13. Regional metrics for the TOP code related to office assistant

Metric	051400 - Office Technology/Office Computer Applications	051440 - Office Management
Students Who Got a Degree or Certificate or Attained Apprenticeship Journey Status	184	27
Number of Students Who Transferred	105	*
Job Closely Related to Field of Study	69%	*
Median Change in Earnings	22%	*
Attained a Living Wage	54%	*

\* denotes data not available.

## Conclusion

The entry-level wages of the six occupations exceed the SCV/SML subregion's average living wage. There were 2,196 job postings in the past six months for occupations related to office assistant in the subregion. Analysis of skills and certification requirements in job postings indicates:

- The top baseline skill is communication, and the top specialized skill is administrative support.
- The top software skill is Microsoft Excel.
- The top certification is a driver's license.

There is an undersupply of trained workers, a shortage of 4,009 in the SCV/SML subregion and 6,542 in the region.

## Recommendation

Based on these findings, it is recommended that Bakersfield College work with the Business and Entrepreneurship Regional Director, the college's advisory board, and local industry in the expansion of programs to address the shortage of office assistant workers in the region.

# Appendix A: 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. (EMSI). EMSI occupational employment data are based on final EMSI industry data and final EMSI 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 EMSI 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> .
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	Burning Glass: <a href="http://burning-glass.com/">burning-glass.com/</a> .
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. (EMSI) formula that includes historical employment and economic indicators along with national, state and local trends.

**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.