

Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

Review of Existing Instructional Programs

Institution: Central Community College **Program:** Dental Assisting

I certify the following:

- the information provided regarding this program is accurate
- the above-named institution has in place a procedure for reviewing instructional programs
- such review took place and was presented to the institution's governing board on **May 15, 2025 PENDING**
- the governing board's action was: **Approved PENDING**

Signed: _____
 (Chief Academic Officer or designated representative) (Date)

Evidence of Demand and Efficiency

		19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	5 yr avg*
Student Credit Hours (SCH)		526	478	391	523	437	471
Faculty Full-time Equivalency (FTE)		2.03	1.68	1.69	2.14	2.20	1.95
SCH/Faculty FTE		259.11	284.52	231.36	244.39	198.64	241.54
Number of Degrees and Awards <i>(list degrees/awards separately)</i>	AAS	4	16	8	1**	13	8.4
	Diploma	8	21	12	-	15	11.2
	Certificate						
	Total Awards	12	37	20	1	28	19.6

*By term analysis combined to conduct an annual review. Numbers reported reflect 3 negotiated contract periods (FA17-SU20, FA20-SU22, FA22-SU25). Numbers for 22-23 and 23-24 FTE reflect updated tracking method for part-time instructors.

**Due to program changes in 2022-2023 requiring DENT students to earn degrees in late summer vs spring, there is a gap year where only one completed during that academic year, even though several more students were still enrolled and advancing. The rest of 22-23 cohort earned AAS awards in early 2023-2024. These program changes occur going forward from that time so will impact five year averages and reporting even though students have been enrolled and advancing in their program throughout those years.

Evidence of Need (provide a detailed explanation below or attach documentation)

See Attached

Justification if the program is below either of the CCPE thresholds—complete page 2

 For CCPE use: reviewer/date

Justification if the program is below CCPE thresholds—check one or more boxes and provide a detailed explanation or attach a document

☒ Program is critical to the role and mission of the institution (detailed explanation).

The Dental Assisting Program at Central Community College remains a strong and vital component of the Health Sciences Division and is a key contributor to the college's mission of supporting regional workforce development. As one of only three CODA (Commission on Dental Accreditation) accredited programs in Nebraska, it is a highly valued resource for employers within CCC's service area and beyond, including neighboring states. Dental practices continue to expand their services, resulting in growing demand for qualified dental assistants and administrative personnel. Graduates of the program are well-positioned to meet this need, with many securing employment prior to graduation, some even working part-time in dental offices while still enrolled. Program alumni find opportunities in a wide range of settings, including general and specialty dental practices, dental insurance companies, and educational institutions.

The program operates on a hybrid cohort model, enrolling 16 students each fall who complete coursework and clinical practicum experiences over the fall, spring, and summer semesters. These practicum placements are essential, offering students real-world experience in dental offices throughout the region. The program is designed with a strong emphasis on quality, maintaining low student-to-faculty ratios, personalized academic advising, and individualized job placement support. Faculty and the program director are deeply engaged in professional development, curriculum assessment, and collaboration with advisory board members and clinical partners to ensure training aligns with evolving industry standards.

While student credit hours per faculty FTE are below the 275 threshold, and the five-year average remains slightly under that mark, this is due to CODA-mandated instructional requirements. The accreditation standards strictly limit faculty-to-student ratios to 1:6 for clinical and radiography instruction and 1:12 for laboratory and preclinical courses. These ratios, along with the physical capacity of CCC's dental assisting clinic and labs, cap annual enrollment at 16 students. Additionally, the number of available practicum sites further limits the ability to expand the program. Despite these intentional constraints, they are critical to maintaining the high educational and safety standards expected by both accreditation bodies and the industry.

☐ Program contains courses supporting general education or other programs (detailed explanation).

☐ Interdisciplinary program (providing the program meets the requirements set in the existing policy for interdisciplinary programs) (explain).

☐ Student or employer demand, or demand for intellectual property is high and external funding would be jeopardized by discontinuing the program (explain).

☒ Program provides unique access to an underserved population or geographical area (explain).

Graduates experience high job placement rates, with increasing wages and steady demand across Nebraska. Retirement risk in the region is average, with about 35 expected retirements annually, ensuring a consistent need for new professionals. While most program participants are female, male enrollment is growing, and the student population includes a variety of ethnic backgrounds. However, diversity in the profession across the region remains low, representing a key opportunity for CCC to lead in building a more inclusive dental workforce. This is particularly critical in rural Nebraska, where culturally competent care and access to trained dental professionals are essential to improving public health outcomes. With strong enrollment, high placement rates, and a reputation for excellence, CCC's Dental Assisting Program continues to meet both workforce and community needs across the state.

☐ Program meets a unique need in the region, state, or nation (explain).

☐ Program is newly approved within the last five years (no additional justification needed).

☐ Other (detailed explanation).



Dental Assisting

Coordinating Commission Seven-Year Review 2025

Information in this report reviewed and recommended to cabinet:

Central Community College Educational Services, 04/24/2025

Recommended continuation of programs without monitoring:

Central Community College College Cabinet, 05/01/2025

Central Community College Board of Governors, 05/15/2025 **PENDING**

Shelly Steinkruger - Program Director

Savannah Blanke - Instructor

Dr. Sarah Kort - Dean of Instruction, Health Sciences

Dr. Marcie Kemnitz - Division Vice President, Health Sciences

Dental Assisting

Program Review Summary – Dr. Sarah Kort

Dental Assistants perform a variety of duties under the direction of a dentist, including clinical tasks such as equipment preparation, sterilization, patient preparation for treatment, assisting the dentist during procedures, and providing patients with instructions for oral healthcare procedures. In addition, they may also take on administrative duties, such as scheduling appointments, maintaining medical records, and handling billing and coding for insurance purposes. Job titles commonly reported by program graduates include Certified Registered Dental Assistant, Oral Surgery Assistant, Expanded Duty Dental Assistant, Surgical Dental Assistant, Orthodontic Assistant, Expanded Dental Assistant, Certified Dental Assistant, Registered Dental Assistant, Expanded Functions Dental Assistant, and Dental Assistant.

The Dental Assisting program at Central Community College continues to be a critical and successful part of the health science division, providing students with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in the dental industry. Over the years, the program has consistently demonstrated strong performance in key areas such as employment outcomes, retention rates, and academic success.

Graduates of the Dental Assisting program consistently find employment, with many securing jobs before completing their studies, and some working part-time in dental offices while still enrolled in the program. Despite regional employment rates being below the national average, the demand for dental assistants remains robust, and students report high levels of satisfaction with their wages and compensation. Graduates are employed in various settings, including dental offices, educational institutions, and dental insurance companies, working in both general and specialty practices.

The median wage for dental assistants in our area is \$19.45 per hour, which is lower than the national median wage of \$22.35 per hour. However, many students report satisfaction with their compensation, and the growing demand for dental assistants suggests strong opportunities for wage growth as the profession continues to expand.

The program boasts an impressive 100% retention rate over the last four years, which is a testament to the strong support systems in place. Faculty and program directors maintain regular, one-on-one communication with students, ensuring that they feel valued and supported throughout their studies. The course completion rate is equally impressive, with a 100% completion rate for 2023-24 and a 5-year average of 99.2%. These high success rates are largely attributed to the program's rigorous admission requirements, the hybrid instructional delivery model, and the unwavering dedication of the faculty to provide personalized academic guidance.

Each year, the program enrolls 16 students, achieving full enrollment each fall. The program follows a cohort model, where students complete their studies together in a collaborative environment. This model fosters strong bonds among students, encouraging peer support and contributing to overall success. Additionally, the hybrid format provides students with the flexibility to balance their school, work, and life responsibilities, further promoting retention and completion rates.

As one of only three CODA-accredited dental assisting programs in Nebraska, the program is a highly valuable resource for employers throughout the state and surrounding regions. The dental assisting job market is expanding, with salaries on the rise and a growing demand for skilled professionals. This ensures that graduates

of the program have a wide range of employment opportunities upon completion, making it a desirable career path for students.

The program benefits from a low student-to-faculty ratio, allowing for more individualized instruction and greater student success. Faculty and the program director are committed to staying current with industry standards by engaging in ongoing professional development. This ensures that the curriculum is continually refined to meet the needs of the dental industry, while maintaining strong relationships with the program's advisory board and practicum sites.

The strong demand for dental assistants in the region, coupled with the program's reputation for producing highly skilled professionals, ensures that it will remain relevant and in high demand for years to come. Employment opportunities in dental offices across the region continue to increase, providing ample job prospects for graduates and reinforcing the program's success.

The Dental Assisting program at Central Community College is a vital and thriving component of the health science division. With consistently high retention and completion rates, strong employment outcomes, and a rigorous, well-rounded curriculum, the program effectively meets the growing demands of the dental industry. With this, we recommend continuation of the program.

I. Program: **Dental Assisting**

II. College Mission: Central Community College maximizes student and community success.

III. College Vision: The Best Choice –

for students to achieve their educational goals.

- quality education
- personal service and individualized attention
- exceptional and passionate faculty and staff
- extraordinary value

for developing a skilled workforce.

- employability and/or successful credit transfers
- graduates who advocate for CCC
- business and industry partnerships
- state-of-the-art facilities and technologies

for advancing communities.

- educational partnerships
- strong alumni support
- foster economic development
- sustainability leaders

IV. Program Mission Statement:

The Dental Assisting Program provides the educational environment and experiences to prepare for employment as a dental assistant. Students will develop knowledge and skills needed to assist during dental care delivery and perform supportive laboratory and business office procedures effectively and professionally. Program graduates can take the Dental Assisting National Board Examination (DANB) and will meet all requirements to be employed in Nebraska as a *Dental Assistant* (DA). Graduation from CCC's Dental Assisting Program will meet the education requirement for Nebraska's optional credential of *Licensed Dental Assistant* (LDA).

V. Program Vision Statement:

The Dental Assisting Program provides an education that positions graduates to assume an expanded role in the delivery of dental care in Nebraska. We value:

- student success
- on-going relationships with graduates as lifelong learners and supporters of the program
- mandatory education for dental assistants
- wage and benefits for dental assistants commensurate with responsibility
- open communication between all dental entities
- continuing education for dental assistants
- promotion of dental assisting as a progressive career
- accreditation by the American Dental Association's Commission on Accreditation

VI. Program/Discipline Environmental Scan (Program Need):

Program placement statistics indicate a strong market in central Nebraska for people with a dental assisting education. Population growth, greater retention of natural teeth, and an increased focus on preventive and cosmetic dental care will continue to drive demand for dental services. As dentists' workloads increase, it is expected that they will delegate more patient care tasks to dental assistants so they may devote their own time to more complex procedures. Some job openings will arise out of the need to replace assistants who retire, transfer to other occupations, or leave for other reasons. Since January 2018, dental assistants in Nebraska can become licensed members of the dental care team. Licensed dental assistants are eligible to take additional instruction in four functions (take impressions for fixed prostheses, take impressions for, and make minor adjustments to removable prostheses; cement prefabricated fixed prostheses on primary teeth, and monitor and administer nitrous oxide). After working 1500 hours (approximately 1 year) as a *Licensed Dental Assistant*, an assistant will be eligible to add restorative tasks to his/her skills.

A. Industry or college need

Programs - A summary of industry need include EMSI or State data, information from advisory committees

Disciplines – data of college usage and a summary statement

Lightcast (EMSI) Q4 2024 Data Set

Lightcast data is a hybrid dataset derived from official government sources such as the US Census Bureau, Bureau of Economic Analysis, and Bureau of Labor Statistics. Leveraging the unique strengths of each source, our data modeling team creates an authoritative dataset that captures more than 99% of all workers in the United States. This core offering is then enriched with data from online social profiles, resumés, and job postings to give you a complete view of the workforce.

REPORT PARAMETERS

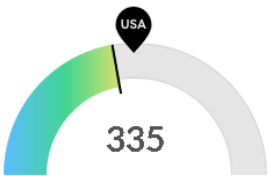
1 Occupation

Occupation Summary for Dental Assistants

Dental Assistants (SOC 31-9091): Perform limited clinical duties under the direction of a dentist. Clinical duties may include equipment preparation and sterilization, preparing patients for treatment, assisting the dentist during treatment, and providing patients with instructions for oral healthcare procedures. May perform administrative duties such as scheduling appointments, maintaining medical records, billing, and coding information for insurance purposes. Sample of Reported Job Titles: Certified Registered Dental Assistant, Oral Surgery Assistant, Expanded Duty Dental Assistant (EDDA), Surgical Dental Assistant, Orthodontic Assistant (Ortho Assistant), Expanded Dental Assistant, Certified Dental Assistant (CDA), Registered Dental Assistant (RDA), Expanded Functions Dental Assistant (EFDA), Dental Assistant (DA)

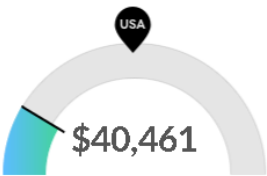
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Light Job Posting Demand Over a Thin Supply of Regional Jobs



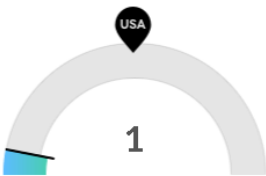
Jobs (2024)

Your area is not a hotspot for this kind of job. The national average for an area this size is 395* employees, while there are 335 here.



Compensation

Earnings are low in your area. The national median salary for Dental Assistants is \$46,487, compared to \$40,461 here.



Job Posting Demand

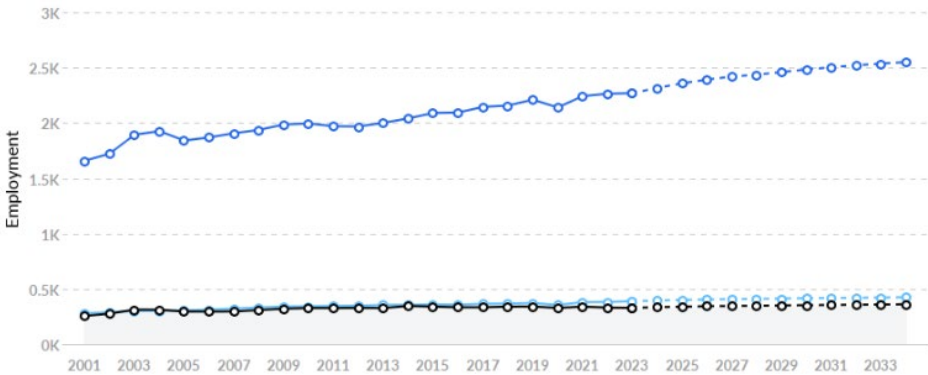
Job posting activity is low in your area. The national average for an area this size is 11* job postings/mo, while there is 1 here.

*National average values are derived by taking the national value for Dental Assistants and scaling it down to account for the difference in overall workforce size between the nation and your area. In other words, the values represent the national average adjusted for region size.

JOBS

Regional Employment Is Lower Than the National Average

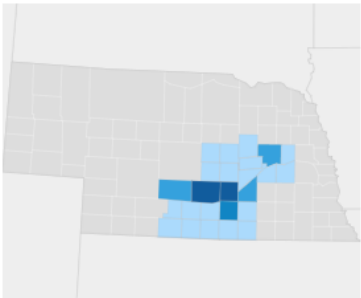
An average area of this size typically has 395* jobs, while there are 335 here. This lower than average supply of jobs may make it more difficult for workers in this field to find employment in your area.



Region	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	Change	% Change
● CCC Service Area	335	351	16	4.8%
● National Average	395	413	18	4.6%
● State of Nebraska	2,317	2,460	143	6.2%

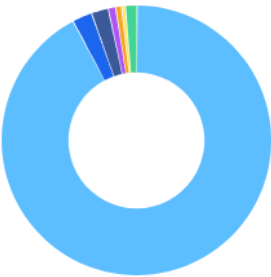
*National average values are derived by taking the national value for Dental Assistants and scaling it down to account for the difference in overall workforce size between the nation and your area. In other words, the values represent the national average adjusted for region size.

Regional Breakdown



County	2024 Jobs
Hall County, NE	86
Buffalo County, NE	86
Adams County, NE	47
Platte County, NE	26
Dawson County, NE	19

Most Jobs are Found in the Offices of Dentists Industry Sector

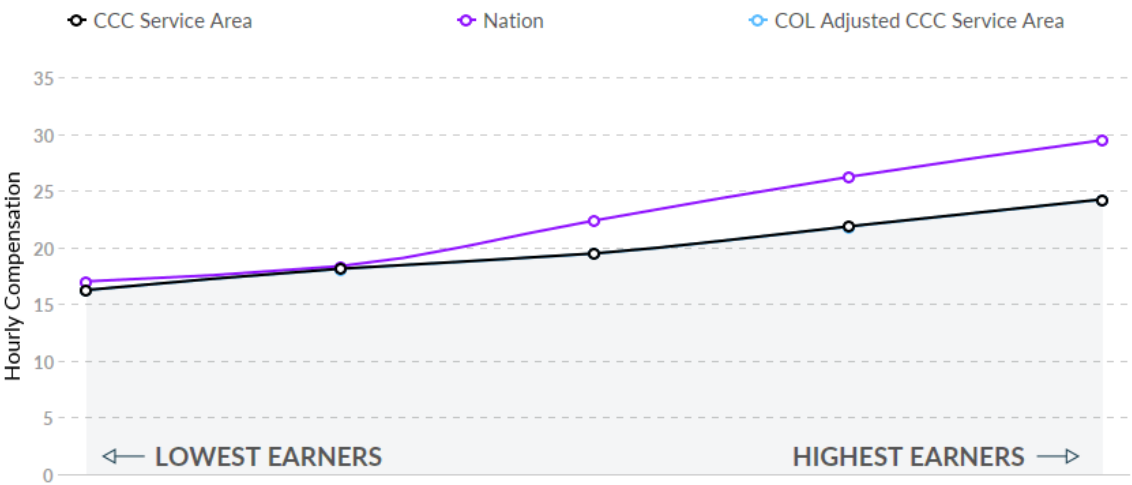


Industry	% of Occupation in Industry (2024)
Offices of Dentists	92.2%
Offices of Physicians	2.4%
Outpatient Care Centers	2.0%
Federal Government, Civilian	0.9%
Education and Hospitals (State Government)	0.7%
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	0.5%
Other	1.4%

COMPENSATION

Regional Compensation Is 13% Lower Than National Compensation

For Dental Assistants, the 2023 median wage in your area is \$19.45/hr, while the national median wage is \$22.35/hr.



JOB POSTING ACTIVITY



11 Unique Job Postings

The number of unique postings for this job from Jan 2024 to Nov 2024.



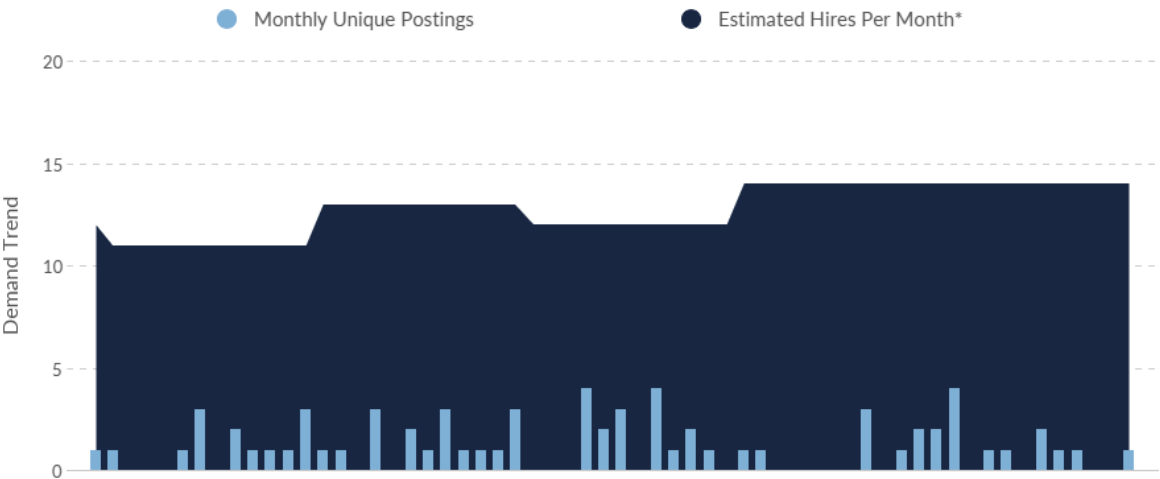
5 Employers Competing

All employers in the region who posted for this job from Jan 2024 to Nov 2024.



9 Day Median Duration

Posting duration is 13 days shorter than what's typical in the region.



Occupation	Avg Monthly Postings (Jan 2024 - Nov 2024)	Avg Monthly Hires (Jan 2024 - Nov 2024)
Dental Assistants	1	14

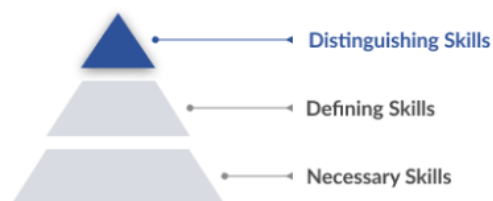
*A hire is reported by the Quarterly Workforce Indicators when an individual's Social Security Number appears on a company's payroll and was not there the quarter before. Lightcast hires are calculated using a combination of Lightcast jobs data, information on separation rates from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and industry-based hires data from the Census Bureau.

Top Companies	Unique Postings	Top Job Titles	Unique Postings
Aspen Dental	7	Dental Assistants	7
Cottonwood Dental	1	Oral Surgery Assistants	2
Nebraska Oral & Facial Surger	1	Hiring Managers	1
Platte Valley Endodontics	1		

SKILLS

Top Distinguishing Skills by Demand

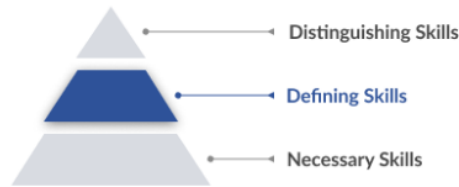
An occupation's Distinguishing Skills are the advanced skills that are called for occasionally. An employee with these skills is likely more specialized and able to differentiate themselves from others in the same role.



Skill	Salary Boosting	Job Postings Requesting	Projected Growth	Growth Relative to Market
Oral And Maxillofacial Surgery	✓	3	+10.0%	Growing
Patient Comfort	✓	0	+8.1%	Stable
Postoperative Care	✓	0	+7.8%	Stable
Expanded Functions Dental Assistant	✗	0	-5.2%	Lagging
Endodontics	✓	0	+16.0%	Growing
Coronal Polishing	✓	0	+4.1%	Lagging
Dental Experience	✗	0	+9.3%	Growing
Construct Study Casts	✓	0	+8.4%	Stable
Dental Health	✗	0	+15.7%	Growing
Dentures	✗	0	+20.6%	Rapidly Growing

Top Defining Skills by Demand

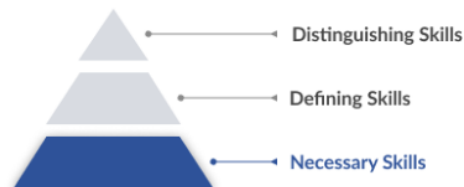
An occupation's Defining Skills represent the day-to-day tasks and responsibilities of the job. An employee needs these skills to qualify for and perform successfully in this occupation.



Skill	Salary Boosting	Job Postings Requesting	Projected Growth	Growth Relative to Market
Infection Control	✗	9	+17.1%	Growing
Radiology Certification	✗	5	+6.6%	Stable
Dental Radiography	✗	5	+11.3%	Growing
Oral Health	✗	4	+6.6%	Stable
Oral Hygiene	✗	4	+11.7%	Growing
Sterilization	✗	2	+9.2%	Growing
Dental Procedures	✓	1	+5.7%	Stable
Dentistry	✗	1	+8.0%	Stable
Dental Informatics	✗	1	+8.1%	Stable
Dental Hygiene	✗	0	+13.6%	Growing

Top Necessary Skills by Demand

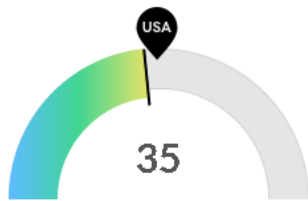
An occupation's Necessary Skills are the specialized skills required for that job and relevant across other similar jobs. An employee needs these skills as building blocks to perform the more complex Defining Skills.



Skill	Salary Boosting	Job Postings Requesting	Projected Growth	Growth Relative to Market
Patient Education And Counseling	✗	5	+11.6%	Growing
Medical Records	✗	4	+12.5%	Growing
Treatment Planning	✗	1	+6.7%	Stable
Patient Preparation	✗	0	+15.8%	Growing
Disinfecting	✗	0	+16.8%	Growing
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	✗	0	+14.8%	Growing
Radiography	✗	0	+8.3%	Stable

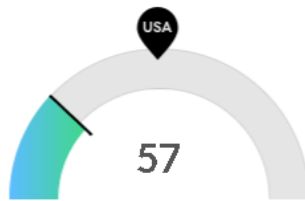
DEMOGRAPHICS

Retirement Risk Is About Average, While Overall Diversity Is Low



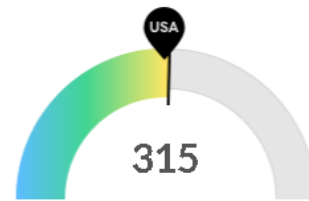
Retiring Soon

Retirement risk is about average in your area. The national average for an area this size is 39* employees 55 or older, while there are 35 here.



Racial Diversity

Racial diversity is low in your area. The national average for an area this size is 144* racially diverse employees, while there are 57 here.

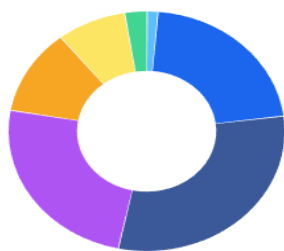


Gender Diversity

Gender diversity is about average in your area. The national average for an area this size is 308* female employees, while there are 315 here.

*National average values are derived by taking the national value for Dental Assistants and scaling it down to account for the difference in overall workforce size between the nation and your area. In other words, the values represent the national average adjusted for region size.

Occupation Age Breakdown



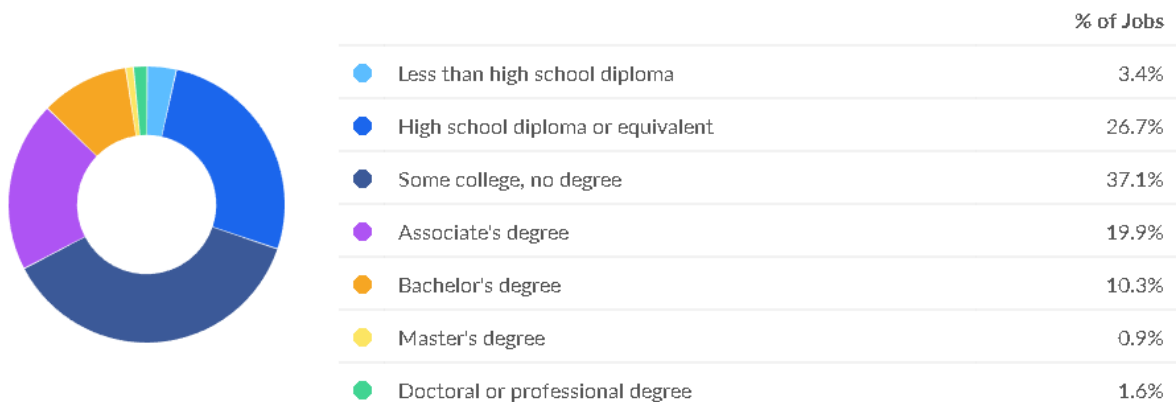
	% of Jobs	Jobs
14-18	1.3%	4
19-24	21.6%	71
25-34	30.3%	100
35-44	24.5%	81
45-54	11.5%	38
55-64	8.1%	27
65+	2.6%	9

Occupation Gender Breakdown



	% of Jobs	Jobs
Males	4.5%	15
Females	95.5%	315

National Educational Attainment



GRADUATE PIPELINE



1 Program

Of the programs that can train for this job, 1 has produced completions in the last 5 years.

CIP Code

Top Programs

51.0601

Dental Assisting/Assistant

Top Schools

Central Community College



1 Completion (2023)

The completions from all regional institutions for all degree types.



52 Openings (2023)

The average number of openings for an occupation in the region is 28.

Completions (2023)

1

Completions (2023)

1

2025 Summary of Lightcast Q4 2024 Data Set:

Although the Lightcast Data shows regional employment is less than the national average, we are not finding that to be to be true among our graduates. We have an abundance of dental assisting positions, and our graduates are not having difficulty finding jobs. Many have secured employment prior to completion of the program, and some are working part-time in dental offices while in the program. Students are reporting satisfaction with the wages and compensation that they are receiving. Most of the dental assistants enrolled in the program are female students, although we do have male students. We find a mix of ethnicities within the program.

B. Supporting Data

Data suggests that the job market will increase over the next few years across the region and the state of Nebraska. The salary continues to climb which poses a positive demand for students entering the field.

a. Awards

Degree/ Credential Awarded	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	5-yr avg
AAS	4	16	8	1	13	8.4
Diploma	8	21	12	-	15	11.2
Certificate						
Total Awards	12	37	20	1	28	19.6
# of Graduates	10	26	12	1	16	13.0

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	5-yr avg
Degrees	4	16	8	1	13	8.40
Total awards	12	37	20	1	28	19.60
FT program faculty	2.03	1.68	1.69	2.14	2.20	1.95
Degrees/ FT faculty	1.97	9.52	4.73	0.47	5.91	4.31
Awards/ FT faculty	5.91	22.02	11.83	0.47	12.73	10.05

LOA	Award name	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	5-Year Total	5-Year Avg
AAS_DENT	Dental Assisting Degree	4	16	8	1	13	42	8.4
DIP_DENT	Dental Assisting Diploma	8	21	12	0	15	56	11.2
	Total Awards	12	37	20	1	28	98	19.6

2025 Summary of Awards (2023-24 data):

The Dental Assisting program exceeds the CCPE threshold of an average of 10 awards. The 5-year average appears to be lower due to a gap in 2022-2023 data. The program accepts 16 students each year, who begin the fall semester as a cohort, we are typically at full enrollment. Faculty/student ratios allow for more individualized instruction which increases student retention and allows for high graduation rates. In addition to the cohort group that earn diplomas upon completion of the program, approximately 50% or more of the students will also earn the Associate of Applied Science Degree. We anticipate that enrollment will remain strong in the future.

b. Student Credit Hours Produced per Faculty FTE

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	5 yr avg*
Student Credit Hours (SCH)	526	478	391	523	437	471
Faculty Full-time Equivalency (FTE)	2.03	1.68	1.69	2.14	2.20	1.95
SCH/Faculty FTE	259.11	284.52	231.36	244.39	198.64	241.54

Source: Program Stats by Alpha and Instructor-Student FTE reports.

*By term analysis combined to conduct an annual review. Numbers reported reflect 3 negotiated contract periods (FA17-SU20, FA20-SU22, FA22-SU25). Numbers for 22-23 and 23-24 FTE reflect updated tracking method for part-time instructors.

2025 Summary of the Student Credit Hours per Faculty FTE (2023-24 data):

The 2023-24 Student Credit Hours per Faculty FTE are lower than the threshold of 275 and the 5-year average is slightly lower than the threshold. This may be because as a Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) accredited program the program has specific student/faculty ratios that they must maintain. These guidelines restrict the faculty/student ratios to 1 to 6 for clinical and radiography courses, and 1 to 12 for laboratory and preclinical courses. These ratios restrict the number of students that may enroll yearly, in addition to the CODA requirements the lab and clinic size of the dental assisting facility does not allow for additional students. The number of practicum sites available also plays a roll in our maximum enrollment.

2025 Summary Statement:

The dental assisting program remains a strong and viable part of the health science division and of Central Community College. As one of 3 CODA (Commission on Dental Accreditation) accredited programs in Nebraska, it is an asset to employers within our service area and throughout the whole state and surrounding states. Dental offices continue to grow their services, resulting in offices needing more qualified assistants and office personnel. All students looking for employment can find employment opportunities with many of them securing employment prior to the completion of the program, with some working part-time while completing the program. Many opportunities are available for program graduates, who can find employment in general and specialty offices, working as chairside assistants and office assistants. In addition, some graduates are employed in educational setting or dental insurance companies.

The program is a hybrid cohort model allowing for the enrollment of 16 students each fall, these students complete a fall, spring, and summer session together. Spring and summer sessions include practicum experiences in dental offices. The program director and faculty provide a high-quality experience for each student. This includes low student to faculty ratios, strong program advisement, and aid in the search for employment. In addition, the faculty and director partake in professional development to keep up with industry standards, evaluate and revise the curriculum as needed, and maintain a strong relationship with advisory board members and practicum offices.

We anticipate continuing to see strong enrollments over the coming years, employment opportunities within dental offices support the need for high enrollment.