

Mortuary Science

Inland Empire/Desert Region (Riverside and San Bernardino counties)

This workforce demand report uses state and federal job projection data developed before the economic impact of COVID-19. The COE is monitoring the situation and will provide more information as it becomes available. Please consult with local employers to understand their current employment needs.

Summary

- Community college mortuary science programs provide the knowledge, skills, and abilities that prepare students for employment in three community college-level occupations.
- These occupations are projected to have 48 annual job openings through 2025, increasing employment by 9%.
- The median hourly earnings for these occupations are between \$22.65 and \$38.26 per hour. The median hourly earnings for morticians, undertakers, and funeral arrangers and funeral home managers are above the regional \$24.36 per hour self-sustainable wage standard for a single adult with one child.
- Regional community colleges do not currently offer mortuary science programs.
- The COE recommends developing mortuary science programs. See the [recommendation section](#) for further detail.

Introduction

California Community College mortuary science (TOP 1255.00) programs prepare students for employment through the instruction of the preparation for burial, embalming, cremating, and other methods of disposition in conformity with legal requirements, and conduct funerals (Taxonomy of Programs, 2012). The knowledge, skills, and abilities trained by mortuary science programs lead to three distinct occupations, collectively referred to as the mortuary science occupational group in this report.

- Embalmers (SOC 39-4011)
- Funeral Home Managers (11-9171)
- Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers (39-4031)

Job Counts and Projections

In 2020, there were 434 mortuary science jobs in the Inland Empire/Desert Region. Employment for the mortuary science occupational group is projected to increase by 9% through 2025, with 48 job openings available annually. Exhibit 1 displays the job counts, five-year projected job growth, job openings, and the share of incumbent workers age 55 years and greater in the region.

Exhibit 1: Five-year projections for the mortuary science occupational group, 2020-2025

Occupation	2020 Jobs	2025 Jobs	5-Yr % Change (New Jobs)	5-Yr Openings (New + Replacement Jobs)	Annual Openings (New + Replacement Jobs)	% of workers age 55+
Funeral Home Managers	288	311	8%	129	26	28%
Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers	95	110	16%	75	15	35%
Embalmers	51	54	7%	38	8	42%
Total	434	475	9%	242	48	31%

Source: Emsi 2021.4

Exhibit 2 shows the number of job ads posted during the last 12 months and the statewide average time filling each occupation. There were 62 total advertisements posted for the mortuary science occupational group in the region. The search area for these occupations was expanded to the entire state of California to ensure actionable job-related data is provided. On average, employers in California fill online job advertisements for mortuary science workers in 36 days.

Exhibit 2: Job ads and time to fill

Occupation	Job Ads	Statewide Average Time to Fill (Days)
Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers	230	35
Funeral Home Managers	196	37
Embalmers	96	39
Total	522	36

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

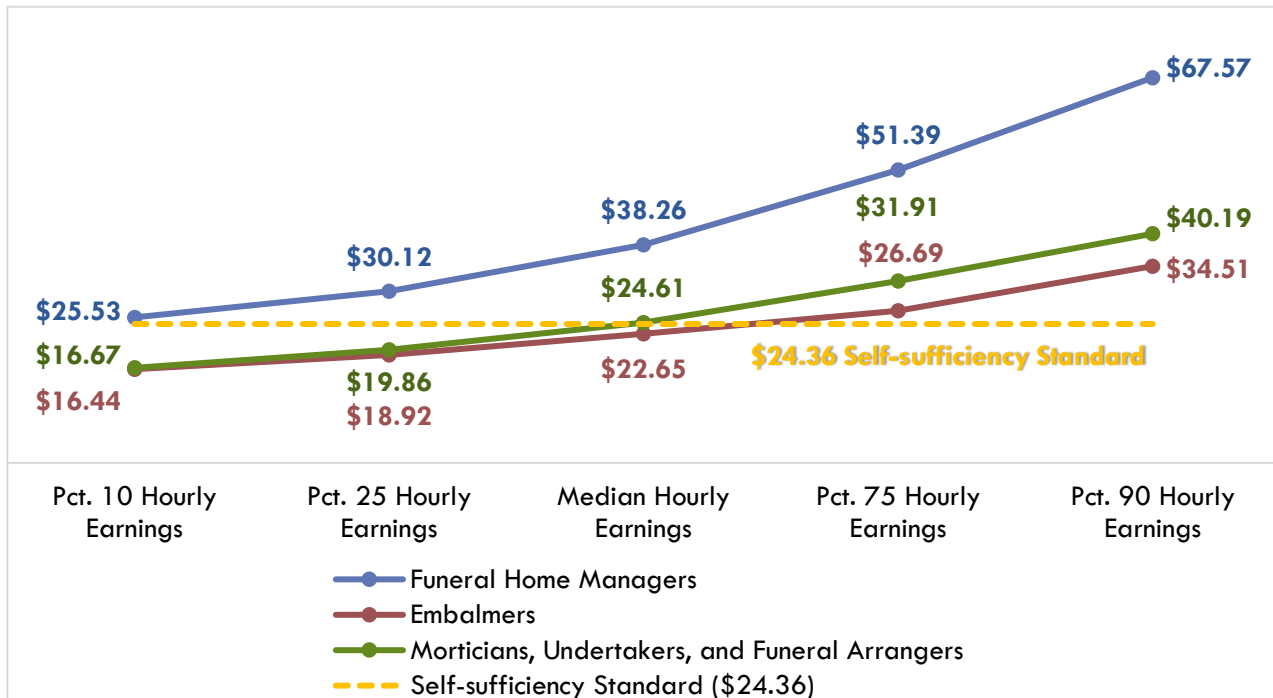
Earnings and Benefits

Community colleges should ensure their training programs lead to employment opportunities that provide self-sustainable income. The University of Washington estimates that a self-sufficient hourly rate for a single adult with one school-age child is \$24.36 per hour or \$51,452 annually in Riverside County; \$23.73 per hour or \$50,119 annually in San Bernardino County (Pearce, 2021). For this study, the higher hourly earnings requirement in Riverside County is adopted as the self-sufficiency standard for the two-county region.

Exhibit 3 displays the hourly earnings for the mortuary science occupational group. The median hourly earnings for these occupations are between \$22.65 and \$38.26 per hour. The median hourly earnings for morticians, undertakers, and funeral arrangers and funeral home managers are above the regional \$24.36

per hour self-sustainable wage standard for a single adult with one child. The hourly earnings for embalmers do not surpass the regional self-sufficiency standard until the 75th percentile, indicating that approximately 25% of workers in the field earn a self-sustainable wage.

Exhibit 3: Hourly earnings by percentile for the mortuary science occupational group



Source: Emsi 2021.4

Benefits information, provided by the California Labor Market Information Division's occupational guides, reveals that morticians, undertakers, and funeral arrangers typically receive medical and dental insurance, as well as vacation, sick leave, and retirement plans. The occupational guides do not have benefits information for embalmers and funeral home managers (Detailed Occupational Guides, 2021).

Advertised Salary from Online Job Ads

Exhibit 4 displays online job ad salary data for the mortuary science occupational group over the last 12 months. Online job ad salary information reveals that employers are willing to pay the mortuary science occupational group between \$41,000 and \$56,000 annually. The advertised wages for funeral home managers are above the region's \$51,452 annual (\$24.36 hourly) self-sufficiency standard. Consider the salary information with caution since only 22% (223 out of 1,023) of online job ads for these occupations provided salary information. The salary figures are prorated to reflect full-time, annual wage status.

Exhibit 4: Advertised salary information

Occupations	Real-Time Salary Information					
	Number of job postings	Less than \$35,000	\$35,000 to \$49,999	\$50,000 to \$74,999	More than \$75,000	Average Annual Salary
Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers	83	20%	68%	8%	4%	\$41,000
Funeral Home Managers	115	7%	38%	42%	13%	\$56,000
Embalmers	25	32%	40%	24%	4%	\$44,000

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

Employers, Skills, Education, and Work Experience

Exhibit 5 displays the employers that posted the most job ads during the last 12 months. Displaying employer names provides some insight into where students may find employment after completing a program. Service Corporation International (SCI), a funeral service provider, posted the most job advertisements for the mortuary science occupational group in the region and the state.

Exhibit 5: Employers posting the most job ads for the mortuary science occupational group

Occupation	Top Employers	
Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers (n=230)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Corporation International (SCI) NorthStar Memorial Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Archdiocese Los Angeles Grupo Deco America
Funeral Home Managers (n=196)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Corporation International (SCI) NorthStar Memorial Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grupo Deco America Neptune Society
Embalmers (n=96)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Corporation International (SCI) NorthStar Memorial Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catholic Funeral & Cemetery Services

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

Exhibit 6 lists a sample of specialized and employability skills employers seek when looking for workers to fill positions in the mortuary science occupational group. Specialized skills are occupation-specific skills that employers request for industry or job competency. Employability skills are foundational skills that transcend industries and occupations; this category is often referred to as "soft skills." The skills requested in job postings may be utilized to guide curriculum development. Approximately 57% of job advertisements for the mortuary science occupational group sought candidates with Microsoft Office Skills.

Exhibit 6: Sample of in-demand skills from employer job ads

Occupation	Specialized skills	Employability skills
Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers (n=214)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Service • Data Entry • Scheduling • Funeral Industry Knowledge • Presentation Preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone Skills • Communication Skills • Preparing Reports • Organizational Skills • Detail-Oriented
Funeral Home Managers (n=170)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Service • Scheduling • Legal Documentation • Community Relations • Administrative Functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Skills • Organizational Skills • Multi-Tasking • Detail-Oriented • Telephone Skills
Embalmers (n=91)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifting Ability • Hazardous Material Handling • Hair Styling • Customer Service • Occupational Health and Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Skills • Problem Solving • Teamwork/Collaboration • Bilingual (English/Spanish) • Building Effective Relationships

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

Exhibit 7 displays the typical entry-level education, educational attainment, and minimum advertised education requirements for the mortuary science occupational group. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, between 26% and 54% of incumbent workers in this field hold a community college-level of educational attainment; "some college, no degree" and an "associate degree." The majority of job advertisements for the mortuary science occupational group sought candidates with a high school diploma or vocational training.

Exhibit 7: Typical entry-level education, educational attainment, and minimum advertised education requirements

Occupation	Typical Entry-Level Education Requirement	CC-Level Educational Attainment*	Real-Time Minimum Advertised Education Requirement			
			Number of Job Ads	High school or vocational training	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree or higher
Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers	Associate degree	54%	168	88%	4%	8%
Funeral Home Managers	Associate degree	26%	127	55%	14%	31%
Embalmers	Associate degree	44%	59	61%	9%	30%

Source: Emsi 2021.4, Burning Glass – Labor Insights

*Percentage of incumbent workers with a Community College Award or Some Postsecondary Coursework

Exhibit 8 displays the work experience typically required to enter each occupation and the real-time work experience requirements from employer job ads.

Exhibit 8: Work experience required and real-time work experience requirements

Occupation	Work Experience Typically Required	Real-Time Work Experience			
		Number of job postings	0 – 2 years	3 – 5 years	6+ years
Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers	None	195	34%	66%	-
Funeral Home Managers	Less than five years	74	68%	32%	-
Embalmers	None	69	88%	12%	-

Source: Emsi 2021.4, Burning Glass – Labor Insights

Exhibit 9 displays the certifications most frequently requested or required by employers in job ads for mortuary science workers over the last 12 months. The Cemetery and Funeral Bureau (CFB) within the California Department of Consumer Affairs is the agency responsible for funeral service worker licensure. According to the Cemetery and Funeral Bureau, individuals must first complete a state-approved mortuary science program, be over 18 years of age, not committed crimes that would lead to a denial of licensure, and have completed at least two years of embalmer apprenticeship (CFB, 2021). To become a licensed funeral director, individuals must be 18 years of age, possess an associate degree, and have committed no crimes that would lead to a denial of licensures (CFB, 2021a). For more information regarding licensure, please visit the CFB website (CFB, 2021b).

Exhibit 9: Certifications most frequently required by employers

Occupation	Certification
Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers (n=184)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver's License • Licensed Funeral Director
Funeral Home Managers (n=175)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensed Funeral Director • Embalming License
Embalmers (n=84)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver's License • Embalming License

Source: Burning Glass – Labor Insights

Programs Completions and Student Outcomes

Community colleges in the Inland Empire/Desert Region do not currently offer mortuary science (TOP 1255.00) programs. According to the Chancellor's Office Curriculum Inventory (COCI), four colleges in the state offer mortuary science programs. Combined, colleges throughout California have issued 69 awards annually over the last three academic years in mortuary science programs. Cypress College, located in

Orange County, has a mortuary science program. The program objectives for Cypress's mortuary science program, which may be helpful in program development, are displayed below (Cypress College, 2021):

1. *To enlarge the background and knowledge of students about the funeral service profession;*
2. *To educate students in every phase of funeral service, and to help enable them to develop the proficiency and skills necessary in the profession, as defined in the Preamble at the beginning of Chapter 9 of the Manual on Accreditation;*
3. *To educate students concerning the responsibilities of the funeral service profession to the community at large;*
4. *To emphasize high standards of ethical conduct;*
5. *To provide a curriculum at the post-secondary level of instruction;*
6. *To encourage student and faculty research in the field of funeral service; and*
7. *To qualify students for professional licensure examinations.*

California program outcome data may provide a useful insight into the likelihood of success for the proposed program. Community college student outcome information based on the selected TOP code and region is provided in Exhibit 10. Among the students exiting mortuary science programs in the state, 95% of students reported working in a job closely related to their field of study. The median annual earnings were \$37,158, and 53% attained a living wage. The outcome methodology is available in the appendix section of this report.

Exhibit 10: 1255.00 – Mortuary science strong workforce program outcomes

Strong Workforce Program Metrics: 1255.00 – Mortuary Science Academic Year 2018-19, unless noted otherwise		California
Unduplicated count of enrolled students (2019-20)		359
Completed 9+ career education units in one year (2019-20)		48%
Perkins Economically disadvantaged students (2019-20)		89%
Students who attained a noncredit workforce milestone in a year (2019-20)		83%
Students who earned a degree, certificate, or attained apprenticeship (2019-20)		38
Job closely related to the field of study (2017-18)		95%
Median annual earnings (all exiters)		\$37,158
Median change in earnings (all exiters)		25%
Attained a living wage (completers and skills-builders)		53%

Sources: LaunchBoard Community College Pipeline and Strong Workforce Program Metrics

Recommendation

Community college mortuary science programs provide the knowledge, skills, and abilities that prepare students for employment in three community college-level occupations. The mortuary science occupational group is expected to have 48 annual job openings through 2025, increasing employment by 9% over this period.

The median hourly earnings for these occupations are between \$22.65 and \$38.26 per hour. The median hourly earnings for morticians, undertakers, and funeral arrangers and funeral home managers are above the regional \$24.36 per hour self-sustainable wage standard for a single adult with one child. The hourly earnings for embalmers do not surpass the regional self-sufficiency standard until the 75th percentile, indicating that approximately 25% of workers in the field earn a self-sustainable wage.

Regional community colleges do not currently offer mortuary science (TOP 1255.00) programs. Among the students exiting mortuary science programs in the state, 95% of students reported working in a job closely related to their field of study. The median annual earnings were \$37,158, and 53% attained a living wage.

The COE recommends developing mortuary science programs to meet the demand for mortuary science workers in the region. Colleges considering this program should partner with relevant employers to verify demand for these workers and to ensure that students have the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to earn a wage that meets or exceeds the self-sustainable hourly wage of \$24.36 per hour after completing the program.

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Appendix: Occupation definitions, sample job titles, five-year projections, and earnings for mortuary science occupations

Occupation Definitions (SOC code), Education and Training Requirement, Community College Education Attainment

Funeral Home Managers (11-9171)

Plan, direct, or coordinate the services or resources of funeral homes. Includes activities such as determining prices for services or merchandise and managing the facilities of funeral homes.

Sample job titles: Arranging Funeral Director, Funeral Home Location Manager, Funeral Home Manager, Funeral Service Manager, Mortuary Operations Manager, Prearranged Funerals Sales Manager

Entry-Level Educational Requirement: Associate degree

Training Requirement: None

Work Experience: Less than five years

Percentage of incumbent workers with a Community College Award or Some Postsecondary Coursework: 26%

Embalmers (39-4011)

Prepare bodies for interment in conformity with legal requirements.

Sample job titles: Embalmer, Licensed Embalmer, Trade Embalmer

Entry-Level Educational Requirement: Associate degree

Training Requirement: More than twelve months on-the-job training

Work Experience: None

Percentage of incumbent workers with a Community College Award or Some Postsecondary Coursework: 44%

Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers (39-4031)

Perform various tasks to arrange and direct individual funeral services, such as coordinating transportation of body to mortuary, interviewing family or other authorized person to arrange details, selecting pallbearers, aiding with the selection of officials for religious rites, and providing transportation for mourners.

Sample job titles: Funeral Arrangement Director, Funeral Arranger, Funeral Counselor, Funeral Director, Funeral Location Manager, Funeral Pre-Need Consultant, Funeral Prearrangement Counselor, Licensed Funeral Director, Licensed Mortician, Mortician

Entry-Level Educational Requirement: Associate degree

Training Requirement: More than twelve months on-the-job training

Work Experience: None

Percentage of incumbent workers with a Community College Award or Some Postsecondary Coursework: 54%

Appendix: Methodology

Community college student outcome information is from LaunchBoard and based on the selected TOP code and region. These metrics are based on records submitted to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems (MIS) by community colleges, which come from self-reported student information from CCC Apply and the National Student Clearinghouse. Employment and earnings metrics are sourced from records provided by California's Employment Development Department's Unemployment Insurance database. When available, outcomes for completers are reported to demonstrate the impact that earning a degree or certificate can have on employment and earnings. For more information on the types of students included in each metric, please see the web link for LaunchBoard's Strong Workforce Program Metrics Data Element Dictionary in the References section (LaunchBoard, 2021 a). Finally, employment in a job closely related to the field of study comes from self-reported student responses on the CTE Employment Outcomes Survey (CTEOS), administered by Santa Rosa Junior College (LaunchBoard, 2021 a).

Job postings data is limited to the information provided by employers and the ability of artificial intelligence search engines to identify this information. Additionally, preliminary calculations by Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce found that "just 30 to 40 percent of openings for candidates with some college or an associate degree, and only 40 to 60 percent of openings for high school diploma holders appear online" (Carnevale et al., 2014). Online job postings often do not reveal the hiring intentions of employers; it is unknown if employers plan to hire one or multiple workers from a single online job posting or if they are collecting resumes for future hiring needs. A closed job posting may not be the result of a hired worker.

Table 1. 2020 to 2025 job growth, wages, entry-level education, training, and work experience required for the mortuary science occupational group

Occupation (SOC)	2020 Jobs	5-Year Change (New Jobs)	5-Year % Change (New Jobs)	Annual Openings (New + Replacement Jobs)	Entry-Experienced Hourly Wage (10 th to 90 th percentile)	Median Hourly Wage (50 th percentile)	Average Annual Earnings	Entry-Level Education & On-The-Job-Training	Work Experience Required
Funeral Home Managers (11-9171)	288	22	8%	26	\$25.53 to \$67.57	\$38.26	\$92,900	Associate degree & None	Less than five years
Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers (39-4031)	95	15	16%	15	\$16.67 to \$40.19	\$24.61	\$58,700	Associate degree & More than 12 months	None
Embalmers (39-4011)	51	4	7%	8	\$16.44 to \$34.51	\$22.65	\$49,900	Associate degree & More than 12 months	None
Total	434	41	9%	48	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Emsi 2021.4