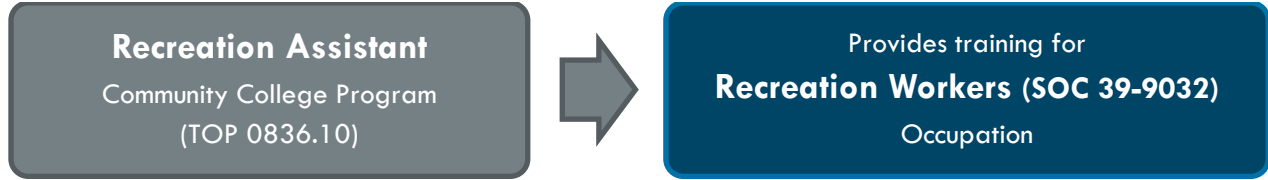


# Recreation Workers

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

## Summary



Over the next five years (2022-2027), employment for recreation workers is projected to:



**The Inland Empire/Desert Centers of Excellence**  
 **Cautionously Recommends**  
**Expanding Recreation Assistant Programs**  
**due to the low wages for these occupations**

## Introduction

California Community College recreation assistant programs (TOP 0836.10) prepare students for employment through instruction in the principles and techniques for preparing individuals to work in recreational occupations, including arts and crafts, sports, and hobbies (Taxonomy of Programs, 2023). The knowledge, skills, and abilities trained by recreation assistant programs lead to employment as recreation workers.

### Recreation Workers (39-9032)

Conduct recreation activities with groups in public, private, or volunteer agencies or recreation facilities. Organize and promote activities, such as arts and crafts, sports, games, music, dramatics, social recreation, camping, and hobbies, taking into account the needs and interests of individual members.

**Sample job titles:** Recreation Coordinator, Activities Assistant, Activities Director, Activity Aide, Activity Assistant, Activity Coordinator, Activity Director, Recreation Assistant, Recreation Supervisor

**Entry-Level Educational Requirement:** High school diploma or equivalent

**Training Requirement:** Less than one month on-the-job training

**Work Experience:** None

**Incumbent workers with a Community College Award or Some Postsecondary Coursework:** 35%

## Job Counts and Projections

There were an estimated 3,802 recreation worker jobs in the Inland Empire/Desert Region in 2022. This occupation is projected to increase employment by 11% through 2027, and have 890 annual job openings over the next five years. Exhibit 1 displays the job counts, five-year projected job growth, job openings, and the share of incumbent workers aged 55 years and greater in the region.

*Exhibit 1. Five-year projections for recreation workers, Inland Empire/Desert Region, 2022-2027*

Occupation	2022 Jobs	2027 Jobs	5-Yr % Change	5-Yr Openings (New + Replacement Jobs)	Annual Openings (New + Replacement Jobs)	% of workers age 55+
Recreation Workers	3,802	4,219	11%	4,450	890	22%

Source: Lightcast 2023.3

An online job ad search for recreation workers was conducted to reveal the employers seeking these workers, including the median posting duration, earnings information, and in-demand skills. Exhibit 2 displays the number of job ads posted for recreation workers over the last 12 months and the median posting duration. Regional employers posted 298 job ads for recreation workers over the previous 12 months.

On average, regional employers kept online job ads for recreation workers open for 29 days, one day less than the average number of days for all online job openings. This may indicate that employers face similar challenges filling recreation assistant positions as other jobs.

*Exhibit 2. Job ads and posting duration, Inland Empire/Desert Region, August 2022 through July 2023*

Occupation	Job Ads	Median Posting Duration (Days)
Recreation Workers	298	29

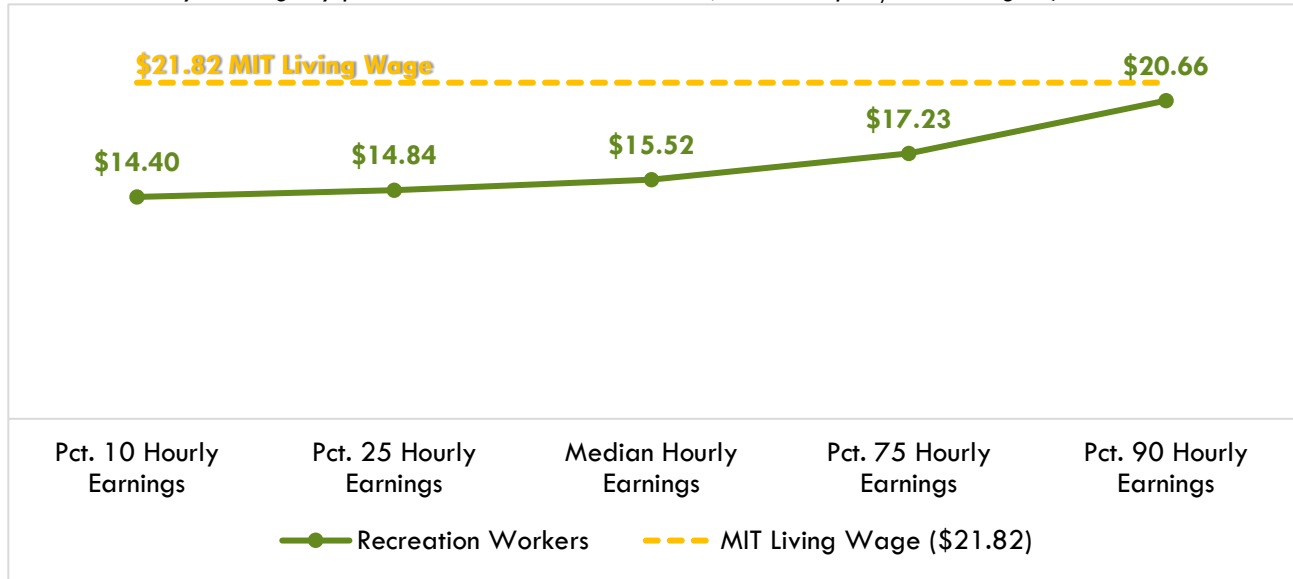
Source: Lightcast 2023.3

## Earnings and Benefits

Community colleges should ensure their training programs lead to employment opportunities that provide a living wage. The MIT living wage calculator estimates that an individual must earn \$21.82 per hour or \$45,386 annually to be self-sufficient in California (Glasmeier, 2023).

Exhibit 3 displays the hourly earnings for recreation workers. The median hourly wage for recreation workers is \$15.52 per hour (\$32,274 annually). The highest earners in this occupation (90<sup>th</sup> percentile) may expect \$20.66 per hour (\$42,964 annually), below the region’s living wage standard of \$21.82 per hour (\$45,386 annually). This indicates that workers may struggle to support themselves on the earnings provided by this occupation.

Exhibit 3. Hourly earnings by percentile for recreation workers, Inland Empire/Desert Region, 2022



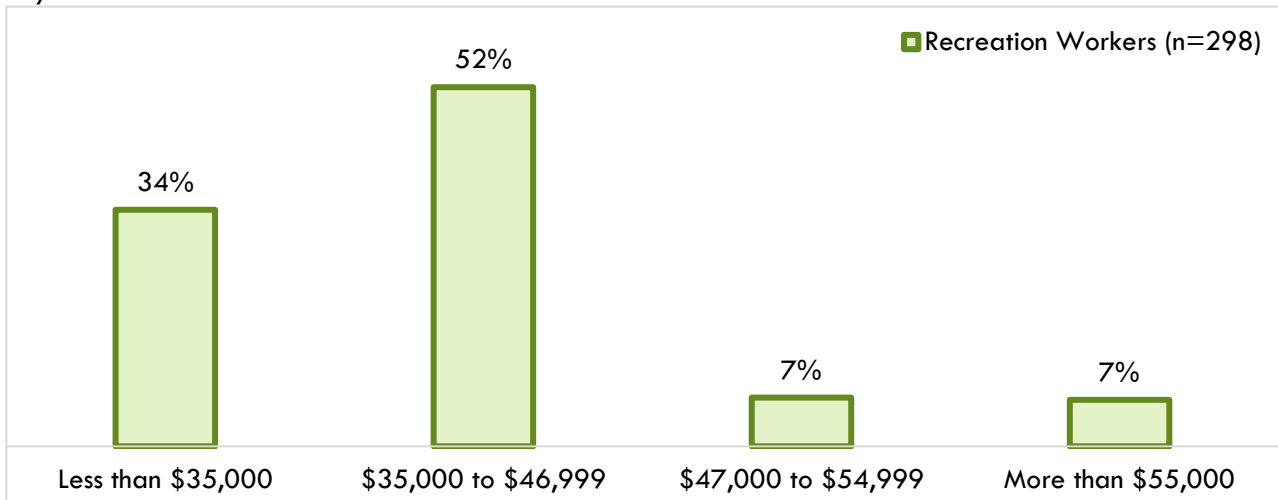
Source: Lightcast 2023.3

## Advertised Salary from Online Job Ads

Exhibit 4 displays the regional online advertised salaries for recreation workers over the last 12 months.

Online job ad salary information reveals employers are willing to pay recreation workers an annual salary of \$36,483 or \$17.54 per hour, below the region's \$21.82 hourly living wage standard (\$45,386 annually).

Exhibit 4. Online advertised salaries for recreation workers, Inland Empire/Desert Region, August 2022 through July 2023



Source: Lightcast 2023.3

### Job Titles, Employers, Skills, Education, and Work Experience

Exhibit 5 displays the job titles most frequently used in recreation worker job ads over the last 12 months. Displaying advertised job titles may provide insight into the types of positions sought by employers posting job ads. Activities assistant was the most frequently requested job title by employers in the region.

Exhibit 5. Job titles most frequently used in recreation workers job ads, Inland Empire/Desert Region, August 2022 through July 2023

Job Titles	Unique Job Ads
Activities Assistants	61
Recreation Leaders	37
Activities Directors	31
Recreation Coordinators	17
Teen Coordinators	16
All other job titles	136
<b>Total</b>	<b>298</b>

Source: Lightcast 2023.3

Exhibit 6 displays the employers posting the most job ads for recreation workers during the last 12 months. Showing employer names provides insight into where students may find employment after completing a program. The City of Temecula posted the most job ads for recreation workers over the last 12 months, primarily seeking recreation leaders to conduct city-wide community activities.

*Exhibit 6. Employers posting the most job ads for recreation workers, Inland Empire/Desert Region, August 2022 through July 2023*

Top Employer	Unique Job Ads
City of Temecula	12
San Bernardino County	10
YMCA	6
Town of Apple Valley	6
Pacifica Senior Living	6
<i>All other employers</i>	258
<b>Total</b>	<b>298</b>

Source: Lightcast 2023.3

Exhibit 7 lists a sample of specialized and employability skills employers seek when seeking workers to fill recreation worker positions. Specialized skills are occupation-specific skills that employers request for industry or job competency. Common skills are foundational skills that transcend industries and occupations; this category is often referred to as "soft skills." The skills requested in job ads may be utilized to guide curriculum development.

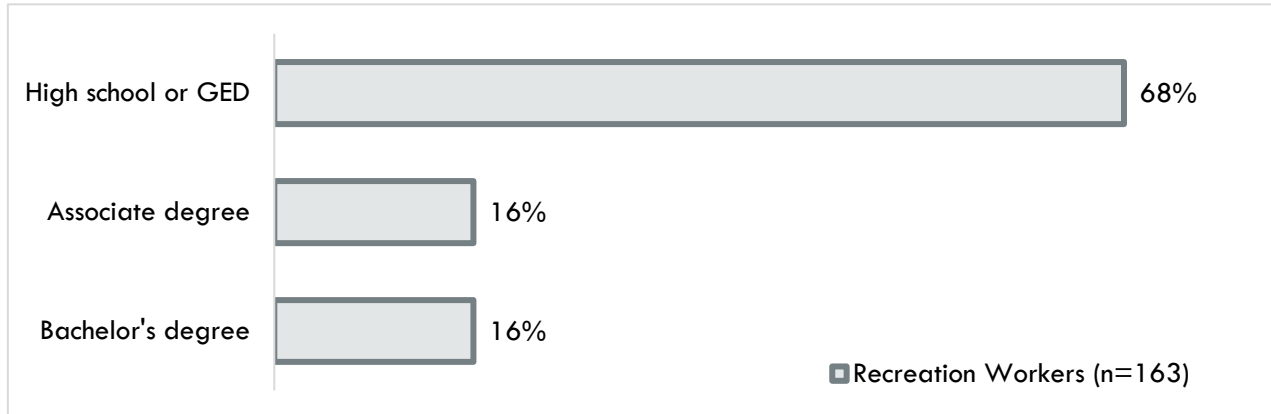
*Exhibit 7. Sample of in-demand skills from employer job ads, Inland Empire/Desert Region, August 2022 through July 2023*

Specialized skills (n=298)	Common skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Development</li> <li>• Marketing</li> <li>• Public Relations</li> <li>• Life Skills Development</li> <li>• Project Management</li> <li>• Group Dynamics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Customer Service</li> <li>• Management</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Operations</li> </ul>

Source: Lightcast 2023.3

Exhibit 8 displays the minimum advertised education requirements for recreation workers. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 35% of incumbent workers in this field hold a community college-level of educational attainment; "some college, no degree," and an "associate degree." More than two-thirds of employer job ads sought recreation workers with a high school diploma or equivalent.

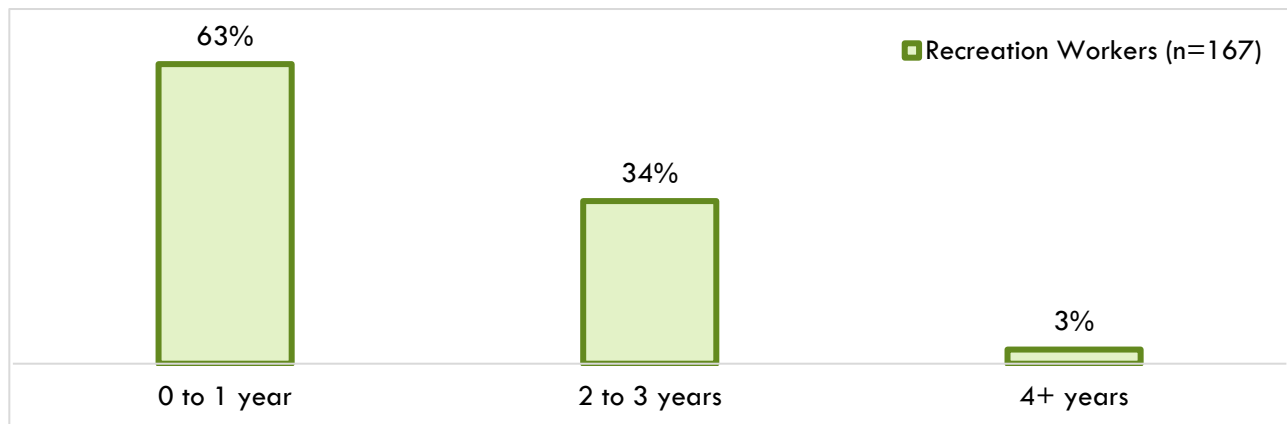
Exhibit 8. Minimum advertised education requirements, Inland Empire/Desert Region, August 2022 through July 2023



Source: Lightcast 2023.3

Exhibit 9 displays the work experience typically required from employer job ads for recreation workers. While most employers (63%) sought candidates with zero to one year of previous work experience, approximately 37% of employer job ads sought candidates with more than one year of work experience.

Exhibit 9. Real-time work experience requirements, Inland Empire/Desert Region, August 2022 through July 2023



Source: Lightcast 2023.3

## Certifications

Exhibit 10 displays the most frequently required certifications in employer job ads. Nearly one-third of online job ads for recreation workers included certification information. Nearly all job ads with certification requirements sought candidates with first aid and CPR certifications.

*Exhibit 10: Certifications most frequently required by employers, Inland Empire/Desert Region, August 2022 through July 2023*

Certification	Jobs Ads
First Aid Certification	85
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	84

Source: Lightcast 2023.3

## Student Completions and Programs Outcomes

College of the Desert is the only regional institution currently offering a program that uses the recreation assistant (TOP 0836.10) program code for its Advanced First Aid and Safety, CPR/AED. Over the last three academic years, College of the Desert has not issued awards using the recreation assistant program code. Other postsecondary education institutions in the region do not currently offer recreation assistant programs.

California program outcome data may provide 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 11.

*Exhibit 11. 0836.10 – Recreation assistant strong workforce program outcomes, Inland Empire/Desert Region, Academic Year 2020-2021 (Unless Noted)*

Strong Workforce Program Metrics: TOP 0836.10 – Recreation Assistant	Inland Empire/Desert Region	California
Unduplicated count of enrolled students (2021-22)	274	684
Completed 9+ career education units in one year (2021-22)	28%	31%
Median annual earnings (all exiters)	\$30,176	\$32,440
Median change in earnings (all exiters)	22%	38%
Attained a living wage (completers and skills-builders)	51%	49%

Sources: LaunchBoard Community College Pipeline and Strong Workforce Program Metrics

## Summary of Findings

Recreation workers are projected to have 890 annual job openings and increase employment by 11% in the Inland Empire/Desert Region over the next five years. The hourly earnings for recreation workers are low, failing to meet the living wage standard at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile, indicating that workers in this occupation may struggle to support themselves.

College of the Desert is the only regional institution currently offering a program that uses the recreation assistant (TOP 0836.10) program code for its Advanced First Aid and Safety, CPR/AED. Over the last three academic years, College of the Desert has not issued awards using the recreation assistant program code. Other postsecondary education institutions in the region do not currently offer recreation assistant programs.

While there appears to be a high demand for recreation assistant jobs, the Centers of Excellence cautiously recommends developing recreation assistant programs due to the low wages associated with this occupation. Colleges considering this program should partner with applicable employers to document their demand for recreation workers and the skills and certifications needed for students to earn a living wage after exiting the program.

### Contact

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August 2023

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[the-data](#)

## 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 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 for each metric, please see the web link for LaunchBoard's Strong Workforce Program Metrics Data Element Dictionary in the References section (LaunchBoard, 2023a). 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, 2023a).

Job ad 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 ads often do not reveal employers' hiring intentions; it is unknown if employers plan to hire one or multiple workers from a single online job ad or collect resumes for future hiring needs. A closed job ad may not be the result of a hired worker.

Table 1. 2022 to 2027 job growth, wages, entry-level education, training, and work experience required for recreation workers in the Inland Empire/Desert Region (Riverside and San Bernardino Counties combined)

Occupation (SOC)	2022 Jobs	5-Year Change	5-Year % Change	Annual Openings (New + Replacement Jobs)	Entry-Experienced Hourly Wage (10 <sup>th</sup> to 90 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	Median Hourly Wage (50 <sup>th</sup> percentile)	Average Annual Earnings	Entry-Level Education & On-The-Job-Training	Work Experience Required
Recreation Workers (39-9032)	3,802	417	11%	890	\$14.40 to \$20.66	\$15.52	\$35,400	High school diploma or equivalent & Less than one month	None

Source: Lightcast 2023.3