



FOR LABOR MARKET RESEARCH
SOUTH CENTRAL COAST

FALL 2025

High-Quality Occupations Profile:

Santa Barbara County



POWERED BY



California
Community
Colleges

• Executive Summary

This Santa Barbara County High-Quality Occupations Profile provides key findings from the SCC COE's analysis of the county's labor market, which emphasizes not only the number of jobs, projected growth, and demand, but also the quality of employment opportunities across occupational sectors. This report supports regional community colleges and workforce partners in aligning educational programs with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Vision 2030 goals and the economic realities of the South Central Coast (SCC) Region.

To address regional challenges related to the rising cost of living, an aging population, and the high concentration of lower-wage jobs, this analysis classifies 714 Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) occupations into High-, Medium-, and Low-Quality categories using nine criteria, blending traditional labor market indicators with measures of job quality such as wages, benefits, and automation risk. Of the 714 occupations: 129 (18%) are High Quality, 369 (52%) are Medium Quality, and 216 (30%) are Low Quality. The following points highlight key findings related to the 129 High-Quality occupations in Santa Barbara County.

- High-Quality occupations are concentrated in the **Health** (36 occupations), **Business and Entrepreneurship** (23), and **ICT/Digital Media** (15) sectors.
- High-Quality occupations accounted for 24% of total regional employment in 2024 (57,432 jobs).
 - These occupations are projected to grow 4% between 2024 and 2029, slightly outpacing overall employment growth in the region.
 - Notably, employment for **Health** occupations is expected to increase 8%, underscoring the demand for skilled workers in healthcare. In contrast, sectors such as **Energy, Construction and Utilities** (3%) and **Other/Unassigned** (3%) are projected to grow at a slower rate.
- Entry-level wages in nearly all High-Quality occupations exceed both the Self-Sufficiency Standard (\$29.80 per hour) and MIT Living Wage (\$30.98 per hour) thresholds, with **Health** (\$48.25), **ICT/Digital Media** (\$48.07), and **Other/Unassigned** (\$44.23) leading the way.
- Sectors with high rates of employer-sponsored health insurance coverage include **Life Sciences and Biotechnology** (96%), **Other/Unassigned** (86%), and **ICT/Digital Media** (85%).
- Automation risk is low across all sectors, with **Life Sciences and Biotechnology, ICT/Digital Media, and Education** and **Human Development** having the lowest levels of risk.
- Notably, there are no High-Quality occupations in **Retail, Hospitality and Tourism**.

The findings highlight the importance of targeted investments in education, training, and workforce development that expand access to High-Quality occupations, ensure equitable participation in the labor force, and strengthen the region's long-term economic resilience.

Access all other resources related to Job Quality in the SCC Region by scanning the QR Code. Other resources include a report on job quality across the entire SCC Region, County Profiles for each county in the SCC Region, Data Exploration Addendums for each area, and a SCC Region Job Quality Dashboard for those that would like to further explore the data.

Scan this code to access the digital report and other resources related to the SCC COE's Job Quality analysis, including County Profiles, Data Exploration Addendums, and a SCC Region Job Quality Dashboard.



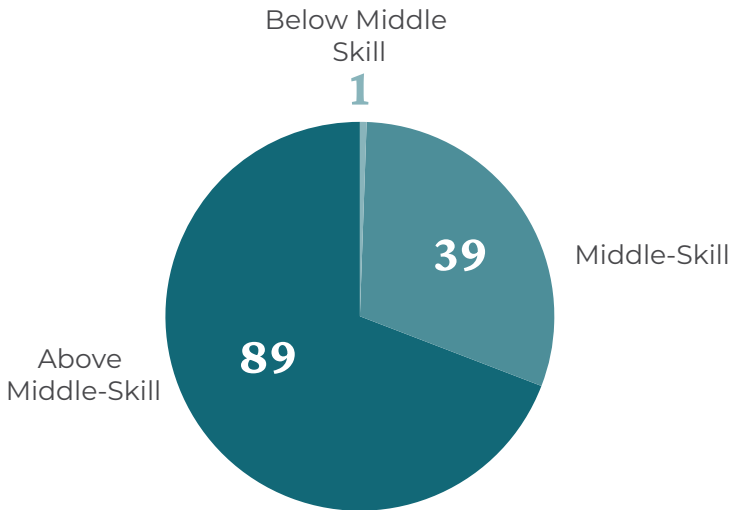
• High-Quality Occupations in Santa Barbara County



714 Total Occupations



129 High-Quality Occupations



126
Low-Risk of Automation



66
US News & World Report Best Job



36% – 100%
Employer Sponsored Health Insurance



28 – 71
Hours Worked



124
Met the SSS Living Wage (\$25.12)



120
Met the MIT Living Wage (\$28.94)

High-Quality Occupations Key Figures

57,432
Jobs in 2024

4,666
Annual Openings

4%
5-Year % Change

\$22.14 – \$126.96
Entry-Level Wages

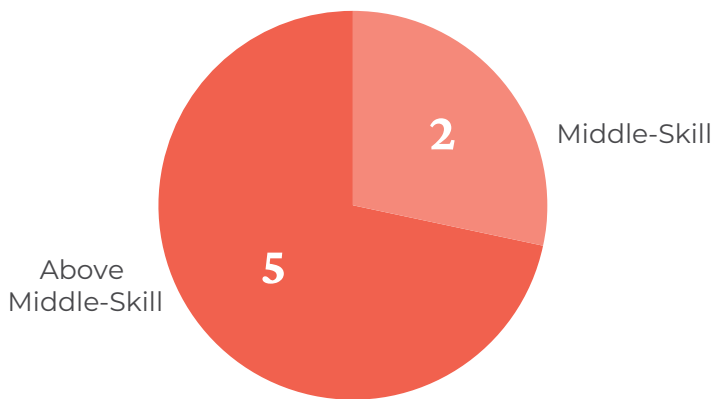
• Advanced Manufacturing



74 Total Occupations



7 High-Quality Occupations



7
Low-Risk of Automation



3
US News & World Report Best Job



64% – 100%
Employer Sponsored Health Insurance



36 – 43
Hours Worked



7
Met the SSS Living Wage (\$25.12)



7
Met the MIT Living Wage (\$28.94)

High-Quality Occupations Key Figures

1,497
Jobs in 2024

112
Annual Openings

4%
5-Year % Change

\$31.26 – \$62.66
Entry-Level Wages

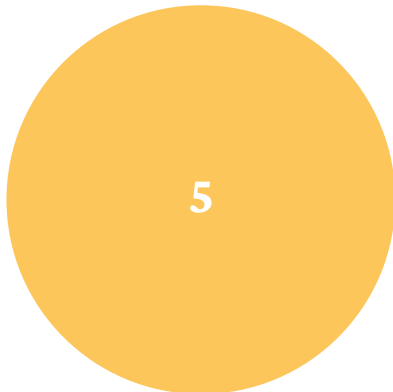
• Advanced Transportation and Logistics



58 Total Occupations



5 High-Quality Occupations



Middle-Skill



5
Low-Risk of
Automation



2
*US News & World
Report Best Job*



44% – 94%
Employer Sponsored
Health Insurance



38 – 45
Hours Worked



5
Met the
SSS Living Wage
(\$25.12)



5
Met the
MIT Living Wage
(\$28.94)

High-Quality Occupations Key Figures

1,445
Jobs in 2024

148
Annual Openings

5%
5-Year % Change

\$32.46 – \$35.86
Entry-Level Wages

• Agriculture, Water and Environmental Technologies



38 Total Occupations



3 High-Quality Occupations



3
Low-Risk of Automation



3
US News & World Report Best Job



56% – 100%
Employer Sponsored Health Insurance



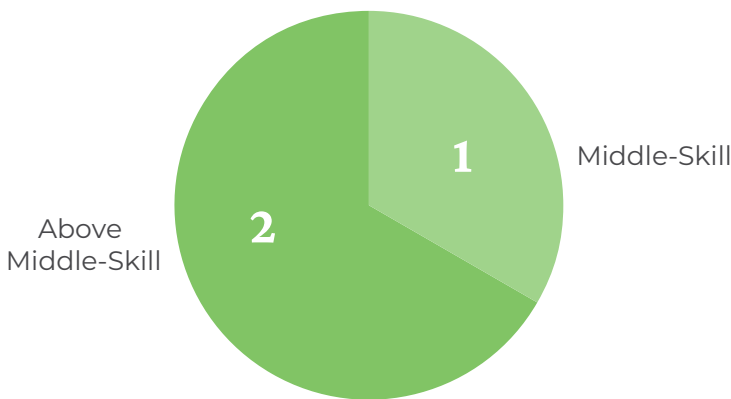
30 – 43
Hours Worked



2
Met the SSS Living Wage (\$25.12)



2
Met the MIT Living Wage (\$28.94)



High-Quality Occupations Key Figures

341
Jobs in 2024

27
Annual Openings

8%
5-Year % Change

\$22.42 – \$53.69
Entry-Level Wages

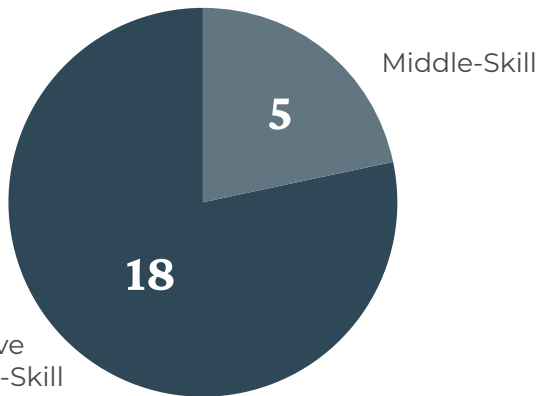
• Business and Entrepreneurship



95 Total Occupations



23 High-Quality Occupations



23
Low-Risk of Automation



14
US News & World Report Best Job



36% – 100%
Employer Sponsored Health Insurance



35 – 46
Hours Worked



22
Met the SSS Living Wage (\$25.12)



22
Met the MIT Living Wage (\$28.94)

High-Quality Occupations Key Figures

17,106
Jobs in 2024

1,464
Annual Openings

3%
5-Year % Change

\$27.27 – \$57.16
Entry-Level Wages

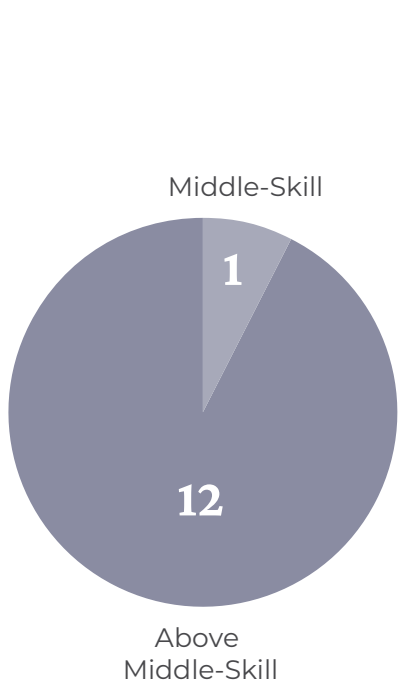
• Education and Human Development



35 Total Occupations



13 High-Quality Occupations



13
Low-Risk of Automation



1
US News & World Report Best Job



70% – 100%
Employer Sponsored Health Insurance



28 – 45
Hours Worked



13
Met the SSS Living Wage (\$25.12)



12
Met the MIT Living Wage (\$28.94)

High-Quality Occupations Key Figures

10,034

Jobs in 2024

835

Annual Openings

3%

5-Year % Change

\$30.81 – \$58.21

Entry-Level Wages

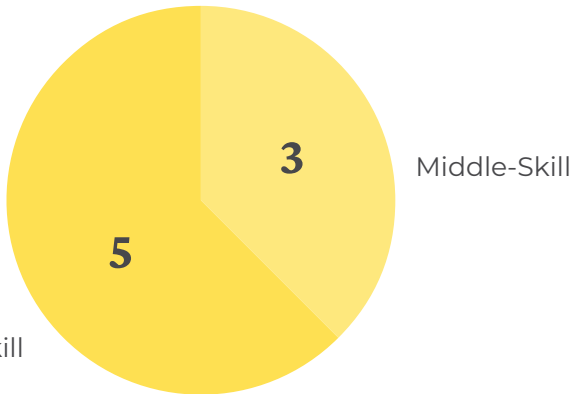
• Energy, Construction and Utilities



94 Total Occupations



8 High-Quality Occupations



7
Low-Risk of Automation



3
US News & World Report Best Job



60% – 100%
Employer Sponsored Health Insurance



37 – 44
Hours Worked



8
Met the SSS Living Wage (\$25.12)



8
Met the MIT Living Wage (\$28.94)

High-Quality Occupations Key Figures

2,682
Jobs in 2024

218
Annual Openings

3%
5-Year % Change

\$31.76 – \$77.27
Entry-Level Wages

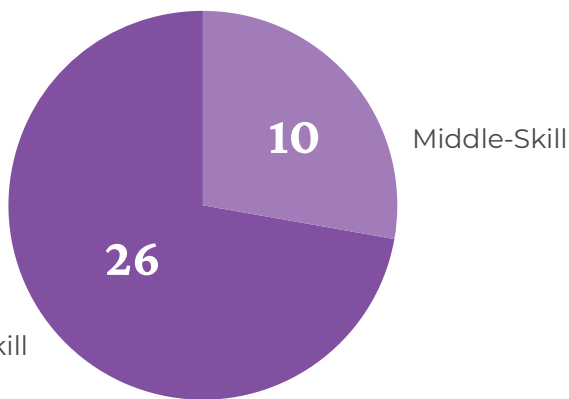
• Health



96 Total Occupations



36 High-Quality Occupations



36
Low-Risk of Automation



28
US News & World Report Best Job



41% – 100%
Employer Sponsored Health Insurance



31 – 56
Hours Worked



34
Met the SSS Living Wage (\$25.12)



34
Met the MIT Living Wage (\$28.94)

High-Quality Occupations Key Figures

11,719
Jobs in 2024

967
Annual Openings

8%
5-Year % Change

\$22.14 – \$126.96
Entry-Level Wages

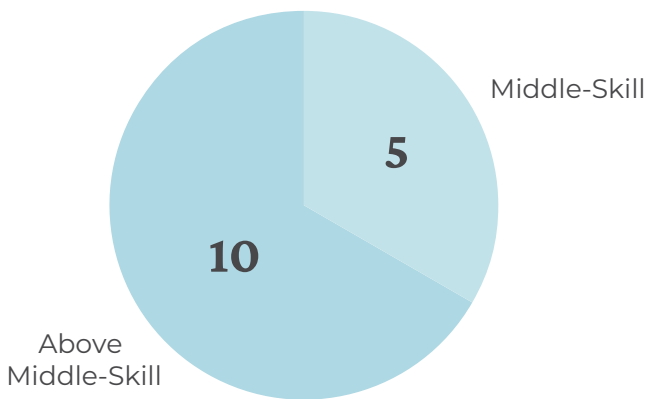
• ICT/Digital Media



48 Total Occupations



15 High-Quality Occupations



15
Low-Risk of Automation



7
US News & World Report Best Job



64% – 100%
Employer Sponsored Health Insurance



34 – 46
Hours Worked



14
Met the SSS Living Wage (\$25.12)



13
Met the MIT Living Wage (\$28.94)

High-Quality Occupations Key Figures

7,461
Jobs in 2024

492
Annual Openings

3%
5-Year % Change

\$23.89 – \$75.84
Entry-Level Wages

• Life Sciences and Biotechnology



7 Total Occupations



2 High-Quality Occupations



Above Middle-Skill



2
Low-Risk of Automation



1
US News & World Report Best Job



96% – 100%
Employer Sponsored Health Insurance



41 – 42
Hours Worked



2
Met the SSS Living Wage (\$25.12)



2
Met the MIT Living Wage (\$28.94)

High-Quality Occupations Key Figures

226
Jobs in 2024

19
Annual Openings

4%
5-Year % Change

\$38.85 – \$44.20
Entry-Level Wages

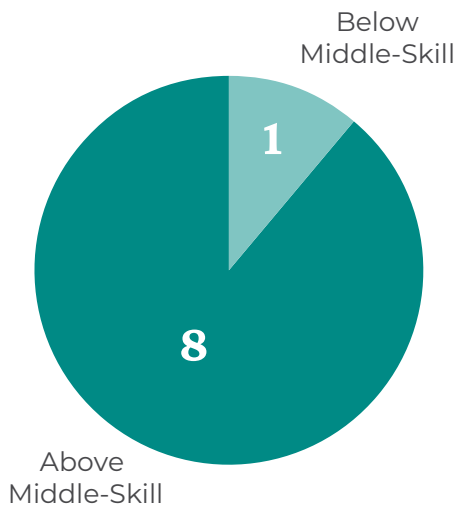
• Other/Unassigned



95 Total Occupations



9 High-Quality Occupations



8
Low-Risk of Automation



3
US News & World Report Best Job



79% – 100%
Employer Sponsored Health Insurance



38 – 46
Hours Worked



9
Met the SSS Living Wage (\$25.12)



8
Met the MIT Living Wage (\$28.94)

High-Quality Occupations Key Figures

2,628
Jobs in 2024

174
Annual Openings

3%
5-Year % Change

\$30.22 – \$58.36
Entry-Level Wages

Public Safety

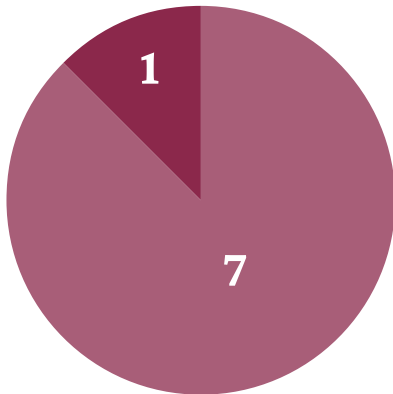


25 Total Occupations



8 High-Quality Occupations

Above Middle-Skill



Middle-Skill



7
Low-Risk of Automation



1
US News & World Report Best Job



61% – 100%
Employer Sponsored Health Insurance



34 – 71
Hours Worked



8
Met the SSS Living Wage (\$25.12)



7
Met the MIT Living Wage (\$28.94)

High-Quality Occupations Key Figures

2,929
Jobs in 2024

210
Annual Openings

4%
5-Year % Change

\$30.05 – \$69.19
Entry-Level Wages

• Retail, Hospitality and Tourism



49 Total Occupations



0 High-Quality Occupations

No occupations in this sector qualified as High Quality



—
Low-Risk of Automation



—
US News & World Report Best Job



—
Employer Sponsored Health Insurance



—
Hours Worked



—
Met the SSS Living Wage (\$25.12)



—
Met the MIT Living Wage (\$28.94)

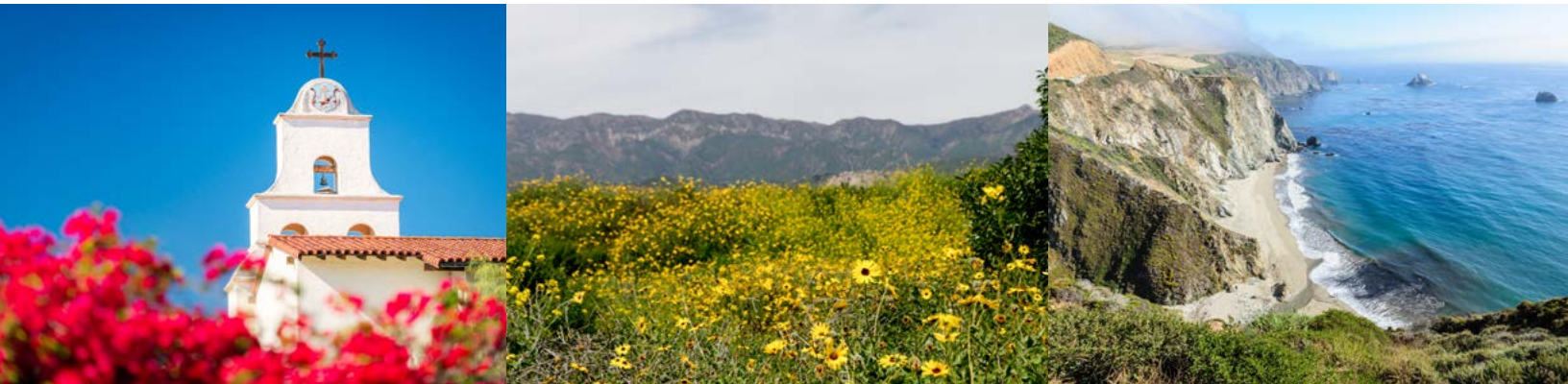
High-Quality Occupations Key Figures

—
Jobs in 2024

—
Annual Openings

—
5-Year % Change

—
Entry-Level Wages



Scan this code to access the digital report and other resources related to the SCC COE's Job Quality analysis, including County Profiles, Data Exploration Addendums, and a SCC Region Job Quality Dashboard.

The SCC COE would like to acknowledge and thank **Juan Madrigal** for his work and contributions to this report.

Prepared by the South Central Coast Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research:

Jacob Poore, Director

Ashley Kernan, Research Manager

Janneth Najera, Research Manager

Important Disclaimers

All representations included in this report have been produced from primary research and/or secondary review of publicly and/or privately available data and/or research reports. This study examines the most recent data available at the time of the analysis; however, data sets are updated regularly and may not be consistent with previous reports. Efforts have been made to qualify and validate the accuracy of the data and the report findings; however, neither the Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research (COE), COE host district, nor California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office are responsible for the applications or decisions made by individuals and/or organizations based on this study or its recommendations.



coecc.net

POWERED BY



cccco.edu