










Mortuary Occupations

Labor Market Analysis: San Diego County

February 2026

Summary

| NEW PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION? | EVIDENCE OF A SUPPLY GAP? | AT OR ABOVE THE LIVING WAGE? | EXPECTED LEVEL(S) OF EDUCATION |
|---|--|--|--|
|  Proceed with Caution |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Master's Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Some College or Certificate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HS Diploma or Equivalent <input type="checkbox"/> Less Than a HS Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship |
| SUPPORT FOR PROGRAM MODIFICATION? | NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS THAT PROVIDE TRAINING | NUMBER OF ANNUAL JOB OPENINGS | |
|   | <p>LOW</p>  | <p>LOW</p>  | |

The San Diego & Imperial Center of Excellence (COE) developed this brief to assist the region’s community colleges with strategic planning and program development. *Mortuary Occupations* include “Funeral Home Managers and “Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers.” According to available data, *Mortuary Occupations* in San Diego County have a labor market demand of 50 annual job openings (while average demand for a single occupation in San Diego County is 289 annual job openings), and no institutions in San Diego County supply awards for these occupations. Entry-level wages are below the living wage. This brief recommends that the colleges proceed with caution when developing a new program for these occupations and supports a program modification because 1) there is a supply gap in San Diego County, 2) no institution in San Diego County trains for these occupations, however, 3) entry-level wages are below the living wage.

Introduction

This report provides labor market information in San Diego County for the following occupational codes in the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)¹ system:

- **Funeral Home Managers (SOC 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.
- **Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers (SOC 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.

For the purpose of this report, these occupations are referred to as *Mortuary Occupations*.

Projected Occupational Demand

Between 2024 and 2029, businesses in San Diego County will need to hire 50 employees annually to fill new jobs and backfill jobs due to attrition caused by turnover and retirement, for example (Exhibit 1). Most of this labor market demand comes from Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers, which are projected to have the most annual job openings with 42 openings each year between 2024 and 2029.

Exhibit 1: Number of Jobs for Mortuary Occupations (2024-2029)²

| Occupational Title | 2024 Jobs | 2029 Jobs | 2024 - 2029 Net Jobs Change | 2024 - 2029 % Net Jobs Change | Annual Job Openings (Demand) |
|--|------------|------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers | 278 | 321 | 43 | 16% | 42 |
| Funeral Home Managers | 58 | 73 | 15 | 26% | 8 |
| Total | 336 | 394 | 58 | 17% | 50 |

¹ The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system is used by federal statistical agencies to classify workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating or disseminating data. <https://www.bls.gov/soc/>.

² Lightcast 2025.04; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

Earnings

According to traditional³ labor market information (LMI), entry-level hourly earnings for *Mortuary Occupations* range from \$16.98 to \$34.09 (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2: Hourly Earnings for Mortuary Occupations in San Diego County⁴

| Occupational Title | Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile) | Median Hourly Earnings | Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile) |
|--|---|------------------------|---|
| Funeral Home Managers | \$34.09 | \$36.31 | \$45.09 |
| Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers | \$16.98 | \$22.15 | \$24.23 |

On average, the entry-level hourly earnings for employed *Mortuary Occupations* are \$25.54—or \$53,102.40 annual salary⁵; this is less than the living wage for a single adult in San Diego County, which is \$26.01 per hour (Exhibit 3).⁶

Exhibit 3: Hourly Earnings⁷ for Mortuary Occupations in San Diego County⁸



³ Traditional LMI is generally historical data captured by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) or the California Employment Development Department (EDD). It does not account for recent technological, economic, or legislative changes that may affect labor market demand and wages.

⁴ Lightcast 2025.04; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

⁵ Annualized salaries assume a full-time position with 2,080 hours. Multiplying the hourly wage with 2,080 yields the annual salary.

⁶ Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington. (2024). The self-sufficiency standard for California 2024.

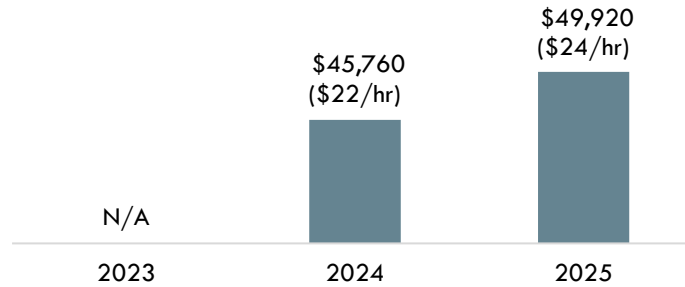
selfsufficiencystandard.org/California.

⁷ 10th and 25th percentiles could be considered entry-level wages, and 75th and 90th percentiles could be considered experienced wages for individuals who may have been in the occupation longer, received more training than others, etc.

⁸ Lightcast 2025.04; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

In online job postings, however, employers advertised between \$22 to \$24 per hour between January 1, 2023 and December 30, 2025 for *Mortuary Occupations* in San Diego County (Exhibit 4).⁹ This indicates that employer-advertised wages increased between 2024 and 2025.

Exhibit 4: Entry-Level Advertised Salaries in Online Job Postings for *Mortuary Occupations* in San Diego County (2023-2025)



Expected Level of Education

According to traditional LMI (data reported to EDD and BLS), *Mortuary Occupations* have a national educational attainment of an [associate degree](#) (Exhibit 5).¹⁰

Exhibit 5: National Educational Attainment for *Mortuary Occupations*¹¹

| Occupational Title | Typical Entry-Level Education |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Funeral Home Managers | Associate degree |
| Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Arrangers | Associate degree |

⁹ Lightcast 2025.04; "Job Posting Analytics." 2023-2025.

¹⁰ Lightcast 2025.04; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

¹¹ Lightcast 2025.04; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

Similarly, online job postings between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2025 in San Diego County had a high school diploma or equivalent as the most requested educational requirement for *Mortuary Occupations*; however, employers also expected the following certifications (Exhibit 6).¹²

**Exhibit 6: Top Certifications for *Mortuary Occupations*
in San Diego County in Online Job Postings (2023-2025)**¹³

1. Funeral Director License
2. Board Certified/Board Eligible
3. Embalming License

Educational Supply

Educational supply for an occupation can be estimated by analyzing the number of awards in related Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) or Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes. There is one TOP code and one CIP code related to *Mortuary Occupations* (Exhibit 7).

Exhibit 7: Related TOP and CIP Codes for *Mortuary Occupations*¹⁴

| TOP or CIP Code | TOP or CIP Program Title |
|-----------------|---|
| TOP 1255.00 | Mortuary Science |
| CIP 12.0301 | Funeral Service and Mortuary Science, General |

¹² Lightcast 2025.04; "Job Posting Analytics." 2023-2025.

¹³ Lightcast 2025.04; "Job Posting Analytics." 2023-2025.

¹⁴ This brief uses a conservative estimate of program supply and only calculates awards from the TOP code listed in Exhibit 7.

According to TOP and CIP data, no community college or non-community college supplies the region with awards for these occupations (Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8: Number of Awards (Certificates and Degrees) Conferred by Postsecondary Institutions (Program Year 2020-21 Through Program Year 2023-24 Average)

| TOP6 or CIP Code | TOP6 or CIP Program Title | 3-Yr Annual Average CC Awards (PY21-22 to PY23-24) | Other Educational Institutions 3-Yr Annual Average Awards (PY20-21 to PY22-23) | Total Average Supply (PY20-21 to PY22-24) |
|------------------|---|--|--|---|
| 1255.00 | Mortuary Science | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12.0301 | Funeral Service and Mortuary Science, General | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | Total | 0 |

Demand vs. Supply

Comparing labor demand with labor supply¹⁵ suggests that there is a **supply gap** for these occupations in San Diego County, with **50** annual openings and **zero** awards. Comparatively, there are **455** annual openings in California and **71** awards, suggesting that there is a **supply gap** across the state (Exhibit 9).¹⁶

Exhibit 9: Labor Demand (Annual Openings) Compared with Labor Supply (Average Annual Awards)

| | Demand (Annual Openings) | Supply (Annual Awards) | Supply Gap or Oversupply |
|------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| San Diego | 50 | 0 | 50 |
| California | 455 | 71 | 384 |

Please note: This is a basic analysis of supply and demand of labor. The data does not include workers currently in the labor force who could fill these positions or workers who are not captured by publicly available data. This data should be used to discuss the potential gaps or oversupply of workers; however, it should not be the only basis for determining whether or not a program should be developed.

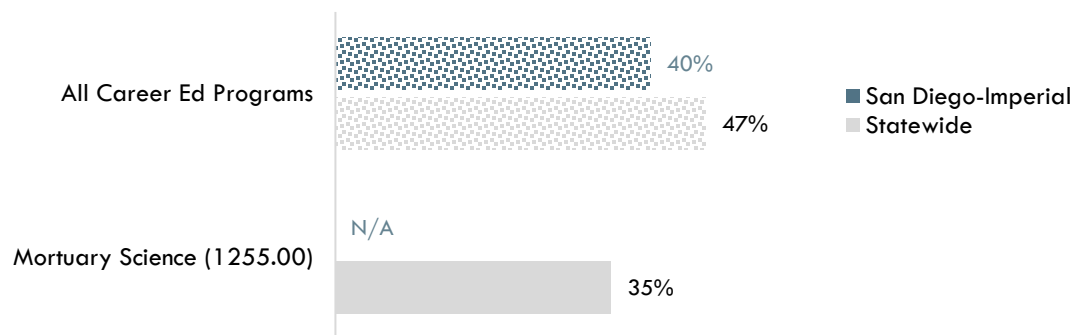
¹⁵ Labor supply can be found from two different sources: Lightcast or the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart. Lightcast uses CIP codes while MIS uses TOP codes. Different coding systems result in differences in the supply numbers.

¹⁶ "Supply and Demand," Centers of Excellence Student Outcomes, coecc.net/our-resources.

Student Outcomes and Regional Comparisons

According to the California Community Colleges DataVista, 35% of students statewide earned a living wage after completing an Mortuary Science (TOP 1255.00) program, compared to 57% of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 10).¹⁷

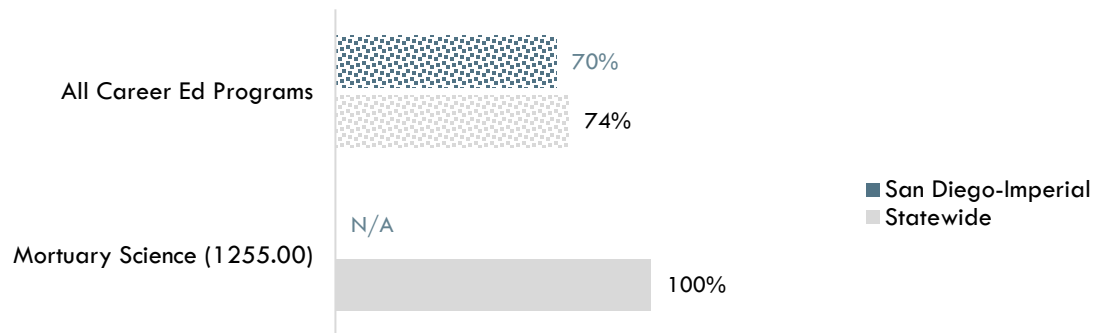
Exhibit 10: Percentage of Students Who Earned a Living Wage After Completing a Mortuary Science (TOP 1255.00) Program, PY2022-23¹⁸



"N/A" indicates insufficient data

According to the California Community Colleges DataVista, 100% of students statewide obtained a job closely related to their field of study after completing an Mortuary Science (TOP 1255.00) program, compared to 69% of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 11).¹⁹

Exhibit 11: Percentage of Students in a Job Closely Related to Field of Study After Completing a Mortuary Science (TOP 1255.00) Program, PY2021-22²⁰



"N/A" indicates insufficient data

¹⁷ DataVista, California Community Colleges, datavista.cccco.edu/.

¹⁸ Most recent year with available data is Program Year 2022-23. Among completers and skills builders who exited, the percentage of students who attained a living wage.

¹⁹ DataVista, California Community Colleges, datavista.cccco.edu/.

²⁰ Most recent year with available data is Program Year 2021-22. Percentage of Students in a Job Closely Related to Field of Study: Among students who responded to the CTEOS, the percentage reporting employment in the same or similar field as their program of study.

Employers

Between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2025, the top employers in San Diego County for *Mortuary Occupations* were Service Corporation International, Northstar Memorial Group, GPAC, Archdiocese Los Angeles Ed Off, and Gupton Jones College of Funeral Service based on online job postings (Exhibit 12).

Exhibit 12: Top Employers for Mortuary Occupations in San Diego County²¹

| Top Employers | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Corporation International • Northstar Memorial Group • GPAC • Archdiocese Los Angeles Ed Off • Gupton Jones College of Funeral Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation Partners • Northstar • California Funeral Alternatives • Mid-America College of Funeral Service • Funerals Your Way |

Skills

Exhibit 13 lists the top specialized, soft, and software skills that appeared in online job postings between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2025.

Exhibit 13: Top Skills for Mortuary Occupations in San Diego County²²

| Specialized Skills | Soft Skills | Software Skills |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funeral Services • Good Driving Record • Funeral Arrangements • Office Procedures • Cremation • Embalming • Merchandising • Death Certificates • Fine Motor Skills • Market Share • Lifting Ability • Data Entry • Customer Relationship Management • Memorial Services • Selling Techniques | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Customer Service • Detail Oriented • Multitasking • Report Writing • Compassion • Coordinating • Problem Solving • Professionalism • Operations • Planning • Sales • Management • Organizational Skills • Empathy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsoft Office |

²¹ Lightcast 2025.04; "Job Posting Analytics." 2023-2025.

²² Lightcast 2025.04; "Job Posting Analytics." 2023-2025.

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