








Health Education Specialists

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 OF EDUCATION
 Do Not Proceed with New Program	 	 	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Master's Degree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Some College or Certificate <input 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	
The COE defers to the region	<div style="background-color: #4a7c9c; color: white; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">MEDIUM</div> 	<div style="background-color: #4a7c9c; color: white; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">MEDIUM</div> 	

The San Diego & Imperial Center of Excellence (COE) developed this brief to assist the region’s community colleges with strategic planning and program development. According to available data, *Health Education Specialists* in San Diego County have a labor market demand of 141 annual job openings (while average demand for a single occupation in San Diego County is 289 annual job openings), and seven institutions supply 238 awards for this occupation. Entry-level wages are below the living wage. This brief recommends that colleges do not develop a new program for this occupation because the labor market shows an oversupply of workers and entry-level wages fall below the living wage. If colleges already offer related programs, the COE recommends considering a program modification instead, since the region still shows a moderate number of annual openings.

Because “Lactation Consultants” are not reported as a standalone occupation in available labor market data, this brief uses *Health Education Specialists* as the closest proxy. To add lactation-specific context to this brief, the COE also reviewed three years of online job postings for “Lactation Consultants.” Those postings indicated wages of approximately \$56 to \$57 per hour and frequently cited “Registered Nursing” qualifications (roughly 60% of postings), which suggests that employers may be seeking candidates with nursing-level credentials for these roles.

Introduction

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

Health Education Specialists (SOC 21-1091): Provide and manage health education programs that help individuals, families, and their communities maximize and maintain healthy lifestyles. Use data to identify community needs prior to planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating programs designed to encourage healthy lifestyles, policies, and environments. May link health systems, health providers, insurers, and patients to address individual and population health needs. May serve as resource to assist individuals, other health professionals, or the community, and may administer fiscal resources for health education programs. Sample reported job titles include:

- Public Health Educator
- Lactation Consultant
- Community Health Worker (CHW)
- Public Health Instructor
- Community Health Education Coordinator
- Health Educator
- Health Promotion Specialist
- Community Health Educator
- Community Educator
- Certified Diabetes Educator

Projected Occupational Demand

Between 2024 and 2029, *Health Education Specialists* are projected to increase by **75** net jobs or **six** percent (Exhibit 1). Employers in San Diego County will need to hire **141** workers annually to fill new jobs and backfill jobs due to attrition caused by turnover and retirement, for example.

Exhibit 1: Number of Jobs for Health Education Specialists (2024-2029)²

Occupational Title	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2024 - 2029 Net Jobs Change	2024 - 2029 % Net Jobs Change	Annual Job Openings (Demand)
Health Education Specialists	1,252	1,327	75	6%	141

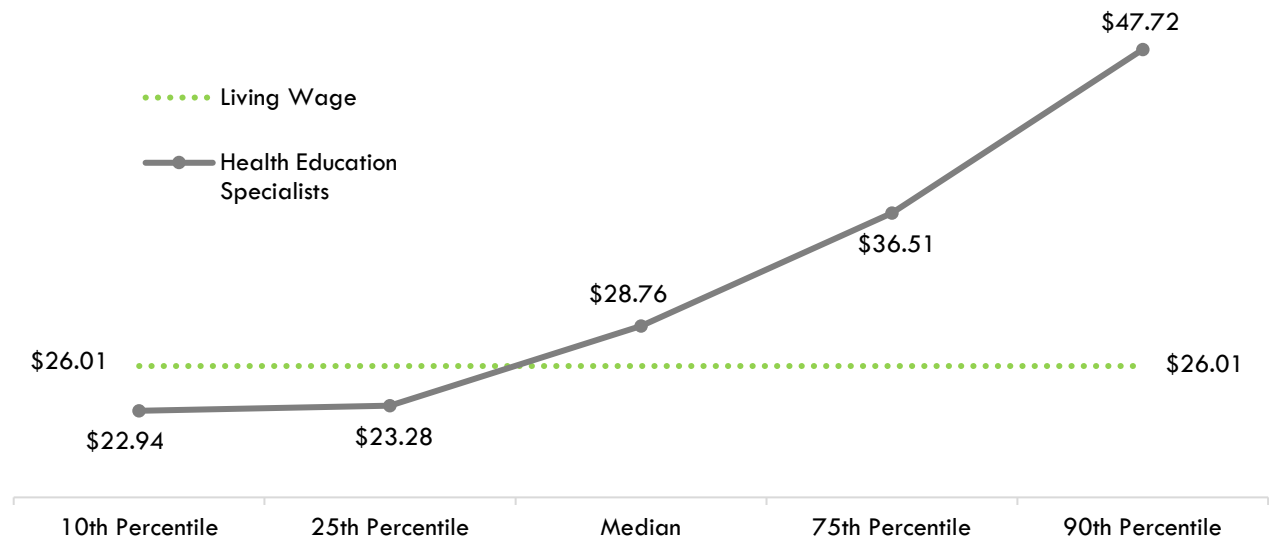
¹ The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system is used by federal statistical agencies to classify workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating or disseminating data. <https://www.bls.gov/soc/>.

² Lightcast 2025.03; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

Earnings

According to traditional³ labor market information (LMI), entry-level hourly earnings for *Health Education Specialists* were \$23.28—or \$48,422.40 annual salary⁴; this is less than the living wage for a single adult in San Diego County, which is \$26.01 per hour (Exhibit 2).⁵

Exhibit 2: Hourly Earnings⁶ for Health Education Specialists in San Diego County⁷



In online job postings, employers advertised between \$20 to \$23 per hour between January 1, 2022 and December 30, 2024 for *Health Education Specialists* in San Diego County (Exhibit 3).⁸ This suggests that employer-advertised wages generally align with traditional LMI estimates.

It is important to note that *Health Education Specialists* represent the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC 21-1091) category, which includes multiple related job titles. One of these job titles, “Lactation Consultants,” when separated in online postings, advertised wages between \$56 to \$57 per hour over the same period. This suggests that some specialized job titles within the broader SOC may command higher wages due to specific skill requirements or labor market demand not captured in the aggregate LMI data.

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

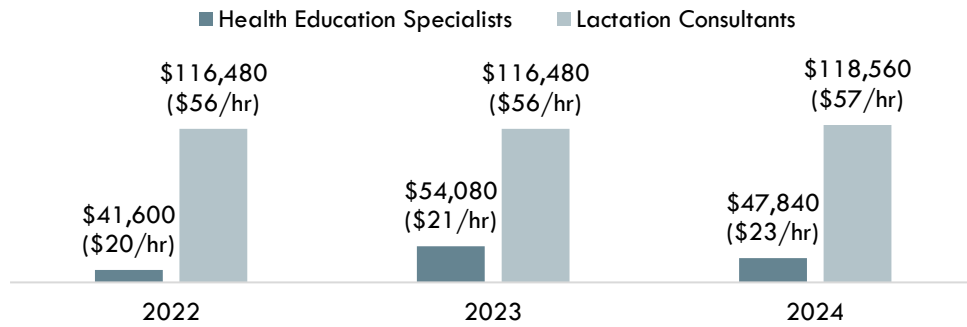
⁵ Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington. (2024). The self-sufficiency standard for California 2024. selfsufficiencystandard.org/California.

⁶ 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.

⁷ Lightcast 2025.03; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

⁸ Lightcast 2025.03; “Job Posting Analytics.” 2022-2024.

Exhibit 3: Entry-Level Advertised Salaries in Online Job Postings for *Health Education Specialists* and *Lactation Consultants* (Job Title) in San Diego County (2022-2024)*



*Hourly wages are rounded to the nearest dollar amount.

Expected Level of Education

According to traditional LMI (data reported to EDD and BLS), *Health Education Specialists* have a national educational attainment of a **bachelor's degree** (Exhibit 4).⁹

Exhibit 4: National Educational Attainment for *Health Education Specialists*¹⁰

Occupational Title	Typical Entry-Level Education
Health Education Specialists	Bachelor's degree

Similarly, online job postings between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2024 in San Diego County had a **bachelor's degree** as the most requested educational requirement for *Health Education Specialists*; however, employers also expected the following certifications (Exhibit 5).¹¹

⁹ Lightcast 2025.03; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.
¹⁰ Lightcast 2025.03; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.
¹¹ Lightcast 2025.03; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

Exhibit 5: Top Certifications for Health Education Specialists in San Diego County in Online Job Postings (2022-2024)¹²

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification | 6. American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) Certification |
| 2. First Aid Certification | 7. Personal Trainer Certification |
| 3. Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Certification | 8. Board Certified/Board Eligible |
| 4. American Red Cross (ARC) Certification | 9. International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) |
| 5. No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) Standards | 10. Registered Dietitian (RD/RDN) |

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 are **two** TOP codes and **one** CIP code related to *Health Education Specialists* (Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 6: Related TOP and CIP Codes for Health Education Specialists¹³

TOP or CIP Code	TOP or CIP Program Title
TOP 0837.00	Health Education
TOP 1201.00	Health Occupations, General
CIP 51.0001	Health and Wellness, General

According to TOP data, **three** community colleges supply San Diego County with awards for this occupation: *Cuyamaca College, MiraCosta College, and San Diego College of Continuing Education*. According to CIP data, **four** non-community-college institutions supply the region with awards: *Ashford University, California State University-San Marcos, Pacific College of Health and Science, and University of Saint Katherine* (Exhibit 7).

¹² Lightcast 2025.03; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

¹³ This brief uses a conservative estimate of program supply and only calculates awards from the TOP code listed in Exhibit 6.

**Exhibit 7: 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 PY23-24)
1201.00	Health Occupations, General	120	0	120
	Cuyamaca	8	0	
	• Associate for transfer degree	8	0	
	MiraCosta	26	0	
	• Associate for transfer degree	3	0	
	• Certificate 6 < 18 units	23	0	
	SD College of Cont. Ed.	86	0	
	• Noncredit 96 < 144 hrs	86	0	
51.0001	Health and Wellness, General	0	118	118
	Ashford University	0	11	
	• Bachelor's degree	0	11	
	California State University-San Marcos	0	0	
	• Postbaccalaureate certificate	0	0	
	Pacific College of Health and Science	0	101	
	• Master's degree	0	9	
	• Certificate 1 < 2 yr	0	92	
	University of Saint Katherine	0	6	
	• Bachelor's degree	0	6	
			Total	238

Demand vs. Supply

Comparing labor demand with labor supply¹⁴ suggests that there is an **oversupply** for this occupation in San Diego County, with 141 annual openings and 238 awards. Comparatively, there are 1,690 annual openings in California and 2,955 awards, suggesting that there is also an **oversupply** across the state (Exhibit 8).¹⁵

Exhibit 8: Labor Demand (Annual Openings) Compared with Labor Supply (Average Annual Awards)

	Demand (Annual Openings)	Supply (Annual Awards)	Supply Gap or Oversupply
San Diego	141	238	-97
California	1,690	2,955	-1,265

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.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ "Supply and Demand," Centers of Excellence Student Outcomes, coecc.net/our-resources.

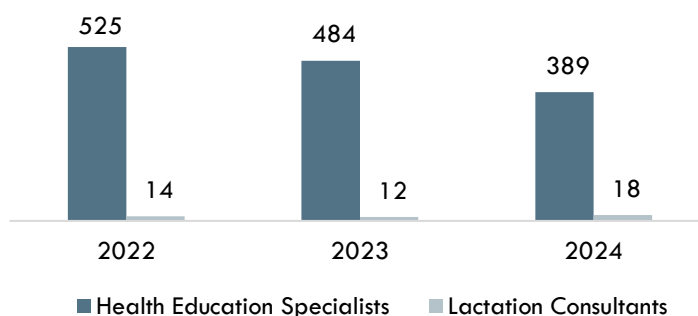
Other LMI to Consider for Program Development

Online Job Postings

This report analyzes not only historical and projected (traditional LMI) data, but also recent data from online job postings (real-time LMI). Online job postings may provide additional insight about recent changes in the labor market that are not captured by historical data. Between 2022 and 2024, there was an average of 466 online job postings per year for *Health Education Specialists* in San Diego County. During the same period, employers posted 15 online job postings per year for the job title, “Lactation Consultants” (Exhibit 9). Additionally, approximately 60% of these postings for Lactation Consultants cited Registered Nursing (RN) qualifications.

Please note that online job postings do **not** equal labor market demand; demand is represented by annual job openings (see Exhibit 1). While this brief includes online jobs postings data to help with curriculum development, the community colleges should note that this type of data is impacted by several variables: employers may post a position multiple times to increase the pool of applicants; a job posting can remain posted after a business decides not to fill a position; or an employer may use one posting to fill multiple positions, for example.

Exhibit 9: Number of Online Job Postings for *Health Education Specialists* (SOC 21-1091) and *Lactation Consultants* (Job Title) in San Diego County (2022-2024)¹⁶



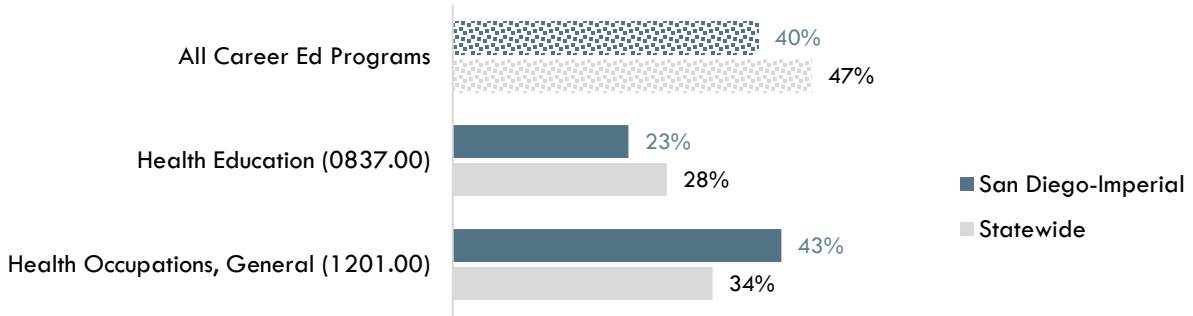
Student Outcomes and Regional Comparisons

According to the California Community Colleges DataVista, 23% to 43% of students in the San Diego-Imperial region earned a living wage after completing a program related to *Health Education Specialists*, compared to 28% to 34% statewide and 47% of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 10).¹⁷

¹⁶ Lightcast; “Job Posting Analytics.” 2022-2024.

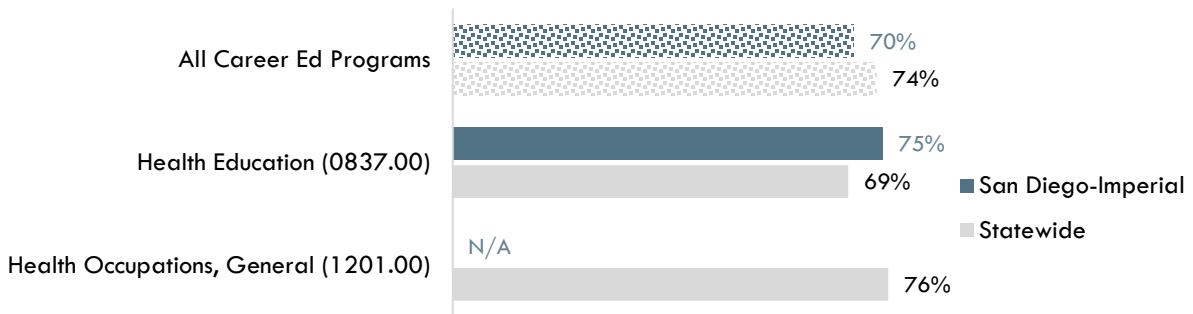
¹⁷ “California Community Colleges Strong Workforce Program,” California Community Colleges, calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx.

Exhibit 10: Percentage of Students Who Earned a Living Wage by Program, PY2022-23¹⁸



According to the California Community Colleges DataVista, 75% of students in the San Diego-Imperial region obtained a job closely related to their field of study after completing a program related to *Health Education Specialists*, compared to 69% to 76% statewide and 74% 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 by Program, PY2021-22²⁰



"N/A" indicates insufficient data

Employers

Between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2024, the top five employers in San Diego County for *Health Education Specialists* were Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District, Scripps Health, Vista Community Clinic, Kaiser Permanente and Family Health Centers of San Diego based on online job postings (Exhibit 12).

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 "California Community Colleges Strong Workforce Program," California Community Colleges, calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx.

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.

Exhibit 12: Top Employers for Health Education Specialists in San Diego County²¹

Top Employers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District • Scripps Health • Vista Community Clinic • Kaiser Permanente • Family Health Centers of San Diego 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crestwood Behavioral Health • University of California-San Diego • Santee School District • Telecare

Skills

Exhibit 13 lists the top specialized and soft skills that appeared in online job postings between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2024.

Exhibit 13: Top Skills for Health Education Specialists in San Diego County²²

Specialized Skills	Soft Skills	Software Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Education • Bilingual (Spanish/English) • Public Health • Mental Health • Community Health • Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Teaching • Customer Service • Management • Planning • Interpersonal Communications • Presentations • Writing • Research • Multilingualism • Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsoft Office • Microsoft Excel

²¹ Lightcast 2025.03; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

²² Lightcast 2025.03; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

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Important Disclaimers

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