








# Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators

Labor Market Analysis: San Diego County

March 2026

## Summary

NEW PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION?	EVIDENCE OF A SUPPLY GAP?	AT OR ABOVE THE LIVING WAGE?	EXPECTED LEVEL OF EDUCATION
 <b>Do Not Proceed with New Program</b>	 	 	<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	
<b>The COE defers to the region</b>	<div style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">HIGH</div> 	<div style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">LOW</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, *Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators* in San Diego County have a labor market demand of 88 annual job openings (while average demand for a single occupation in San Diego County is 289 annual job openings), and nine institutions supply 216 awards for this occupation, suggesting that there is an oversupply in the labor market. On average, entry-level wages fall below the living wage when considering both employed and self-employed workers. This brief recommends that the colleges do not proceed with developing a new program for this occupation and defers to the region for a program modification because 1) there is an estimated oversupply in San Diego; 2) this occupation's entry-level wages are below the living wage; and 3) the expected level of education is a bachelor's degree.

## Introduction

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

**Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators (SOC 27-1013):** Create original artwork using any of a wide variety of media and techniques. Sample reported job titles include:

- Portrait Artist
- Painter
- Illustrator
- Watercolor Artist
- Water Colorist
- Stained Glass Artist
- Non-Representational Metal Sculptor
- Muralist
- Caricature Artist

## Projected Occupational Demand

Because *Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators* often have self-employed workers, the following exhibits separate the labor market data by employee (E) and self-employed (SE). Between 2024 and 2029, businesses in San Diego County will need to hire 88 employees annually to fill new jobs and backfill jobs due to attrition caused by turnover and retirement, for example (Exhibit 1). Prior trends suggest that there will be 13 employed and 76 self-employed *Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators* each year between 2024 and 2029.

**Exhibit 1: Number of Jobs for *Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators* (2024-2029)<sup>2</sup>**

Occupational Title	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2024 – 2029 Net Jobs Change	2024 - 2029 % Net Jobs Change	Annual Job Openings (Demand)
(SE) Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators	720	780	60	8%	76
(E) Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators	145	142	-3	-2%	13
Total	865	922	57	7%	88

<sup>1</sup> 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/>.

<sup>2</sup> Lightcast 2026.01; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

## Earnings

According to traditional<sup>3</sup> labor market information (LMI), entry-level hourly earnings for *Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators* range from \$5.04 to \$30.98 (Exhibit 2).

**Exhibit 2: Hourly Earnings for Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators in San Diego County<sup>4</sup>**

Occupational Title	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile)
(E) Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators	\$30.98	\$34.87	\$39.20
(SE) Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators	\$5.04	\$12.01	\$24.81
Average	\$18.01	\$23.44	\$32.00

The entry-level hourly earnings for employed *Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators* are \$30.98—or \$64,438.40 annual salary<sup>5</sup>—and \$5.04 per hour or \$10,483.20 annual salary for self-employed *Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators*; on average *Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators* earn less than the living wage, which is \$26.01 per hour (Exhibit 3).<sup>6</sup> These wages are lower than the minimum wage because labor market statistical agencies such as the California Employment Development Department (EDD) and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) examine wages on a yearly basis and divide the total salary reported by a full-time workload (e.g., 2,080 hours a year) to determine the hourly wage for an occupation.<sup>7</sup> In other words, the data suggests that employed individuals report an annual salary of \$64,438.40 and self-employed individuals report an annual salary of \$10,483.20; dividing them by 2,080 yields the \$30.98 and \$5.04 hourly earnings, respectively.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> Lightcast 2026.01; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

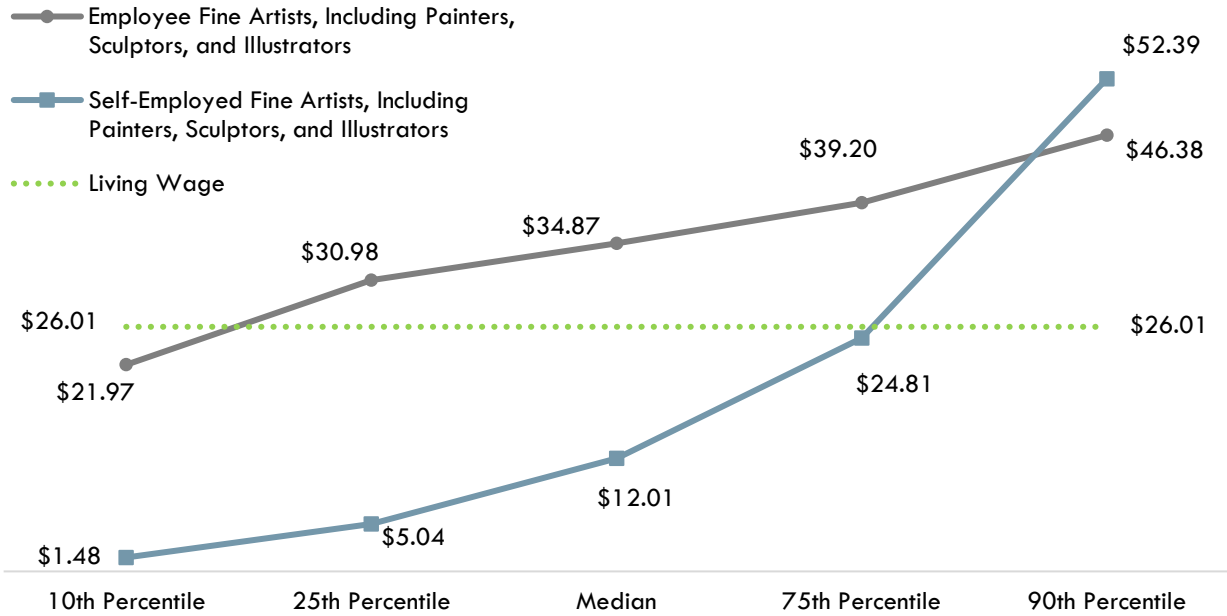
<sup>5</sup> Annualized salaries assume a full-time position with 2,080 hours. Multiplying the hourly wage with 2,080 yields the annual salary.

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

[selfsufficiencystandard.org/California](https://selfsufficiencystandard.org/California).

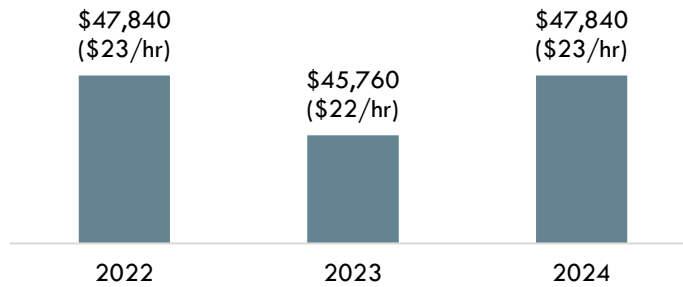
<sup>7</sup> Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages methodology. [bls.gov/cew/overview.htm](https://bls.gov/cew/overview.htm).

**Exhibit 3: Hourly Earnings<sup>8</sup> for Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators in San Diego County<sup>9</sup>**



In online job postings, however, employers advertised between \$22 to \$23 per hour between January 1, 2023 and December 30, 2025 for *Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators* in San Diego County (Exhibit 4).<sup>10</sup> This suggests a potential difference between reported earnings across the workforce and the initial compensation offered in the job market, as demonstrated in the previous exhibit.

**Exhibit 4: Entry-Level Advertised Salaries in Online Job Postings for Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators in San Diego County (2023-2025)\***



\*Hourly wages are rounded to the nearest dollar amount.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> Lightcast 2026.01; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

<sup>10</sup> Lightcast 2026.01; "Job Posting Analytics." 2023-2025.

## Expected Level of Education

According to traditional LMI (data reported to EDD and BLS), *Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators* have a national educational attainment of a [bachelor's degree](#) (Exhibit 5).<sup>11</sup>

### **Exhibit 5: National Educational Attainment for *Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators***<sup>12</sup>

Occupational Title	Typical Entry-Level Education
Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators	Bachelor's degree

Similarly, online job postings between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2025 in San Diego County had a [bachelor's degree](#) as the most requested educational requirement for *Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators*; however, employers also expected the following certifications (Exhibit 6).<sup>13</sup>

### **Exhibit 6: Top Certifications for *Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators* in San Diego County in Online Job Postings (2023-2025)**<sup>14</sup>

1. N/A

<sup>11</sup> Lightcast 2026.01; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

<sup>12</sup> Lightcast 2026.01; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

<sup>13</sup> Lightcast 2026.01; "Job Posting Analytics." 2023-2025.

<sup>14</sup> Lightcast 2026.01; "Job Posting Analytics." 2023-2025.

## 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 **five** TOP codes and **four** CIP codes related to *Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators* (Exhibit 7).

### **Exhibit 7: Related TOP and CIP Codes for *Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators***<sup>15</sup>

TOP or CIP Code	TOP or CIP Program Title
TOP 1002.00	Art (Painting, Drawing, and Sculpture)
TOP 1002.10	Painting and Drawing
TOP 1002.20	Sculpture
TOP 1002.30	Ceramics
TOP 1099.00	Other Fine and Applied Arts
CIP 50.0702	Fine/Studio Arts, General
CIP 50.0705	Drawing
CIP 50.0709	Sculpture
CIP 50.0711	Ceramic Arts and Ceramics

According to TOP data, **eight** community colleges supply the region with awards for this occupation: *Cuyamaca College, Grossmont College, MiraCosta College, Palomar College, San Diego City College, San Diego Mesa College, San Diego Miramar College, and Southwestern College*. According to CIP data, **one** non-community-college institution supplies the region with awards, *University of California-San Diego* (Exhibit 8).

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<sup>15</sup> This brief uses a conservative estimate of program supply and only calculates awards from the TOP code listed in Exhibit 7.

**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)
1002.00	Art (Painting, Drawing, and Sculpture)	<b>174</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>174</b>
	Cuyamaca	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate Degree	4	0	
	Grossmont	<b>34</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate Degree	34	0	
	MiraCosta	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate Degree	19	0	
	Palomar	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate Degree	7	0	
	San Diego City	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate Degree	10	0	
	San Diego Mesa	<b>37</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate Degree	37	0	
	San Diego Miramar	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate Degree	27	0	
	Southwestern	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate Degree	36	0	
1002.10	Painting and Drawing	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>
	Cuyamaca	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate Degree	3	0	
	Grossmont	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate Degree	2	0	

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)
	Palomar	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate Degree	1	0	
	San Diego Mesa	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate Degree	0	0	
	San Diego Miramar	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate Degree	0	0	
1002.20	Sculpture	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	San Diego Mesa	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate Degree	0	0	
1002.30	Ceramics	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
	Grossmont	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate Degree	1	0	
	Palomar	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate Degree	0	0	
	San Diego Mesa	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate Degree	1	0	
50.0702	Fine/Studio Arts, General	<b>0</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>34</b>
	University of California-San Diego	<b>0</b>	<b>34</b>	
	• Bachelor's Degree	0	34	
			<b>Total</b>	<b>216</b>

## Demand vs. Supply

Comparing labor demand with labor supply<sup>16</sup> suggests that there is an **oversupply** for this occupation in San Diego County, with 88 annual openings and 216 awards. Comparatively, there are 1,268 annual openings in California and 3,980 awards, suggesting that there is an **oversupply** across the state (Exhibit 9).<sup>17</sup>

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

	<b>Demand</b> (Annual Openings)	<b>Supply</b> (Annual Awards)	<b>Supply Gap or Oversupply</b>
San Diego	88	216	<b>-128</b>
California	1,268	3,980	<b>-2,712</b>

**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.

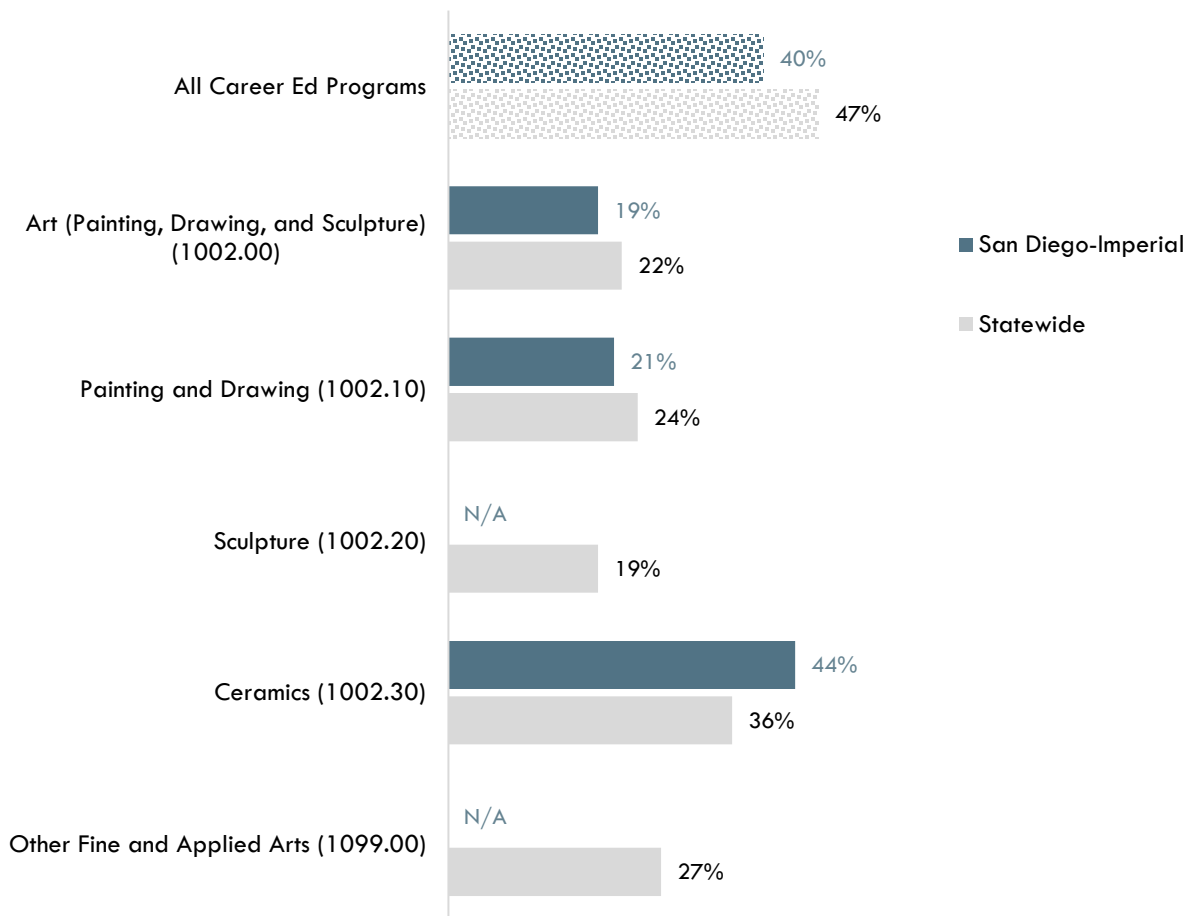
<sup>16</sup> Labor supply can be found from two different sources: Lightcast or the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart. Lightcast uses CIP codes while MIS uses TOP codes. Different coding systems result in differences in the supply numbers.

<sup>17</sup> "Supply and Demand," Centers of Excellence Student Outcomes, [coecc.net/our-resources](http://coecc.net/our-resources).

## Student Outcomes and Regional Comparisons

According to the California Community Colleges DataVista, 19 to 44% of students in the San Diego-Imperial region earned a living wage after completing a program related to *Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators*, compared to 19 to 36% statewide and 47% of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 10).<sup>18</sup>

**Exhibit 10: Percentage of Students Who Earned a Living Wage by Program, PY2022-23<sup>19</sup>**



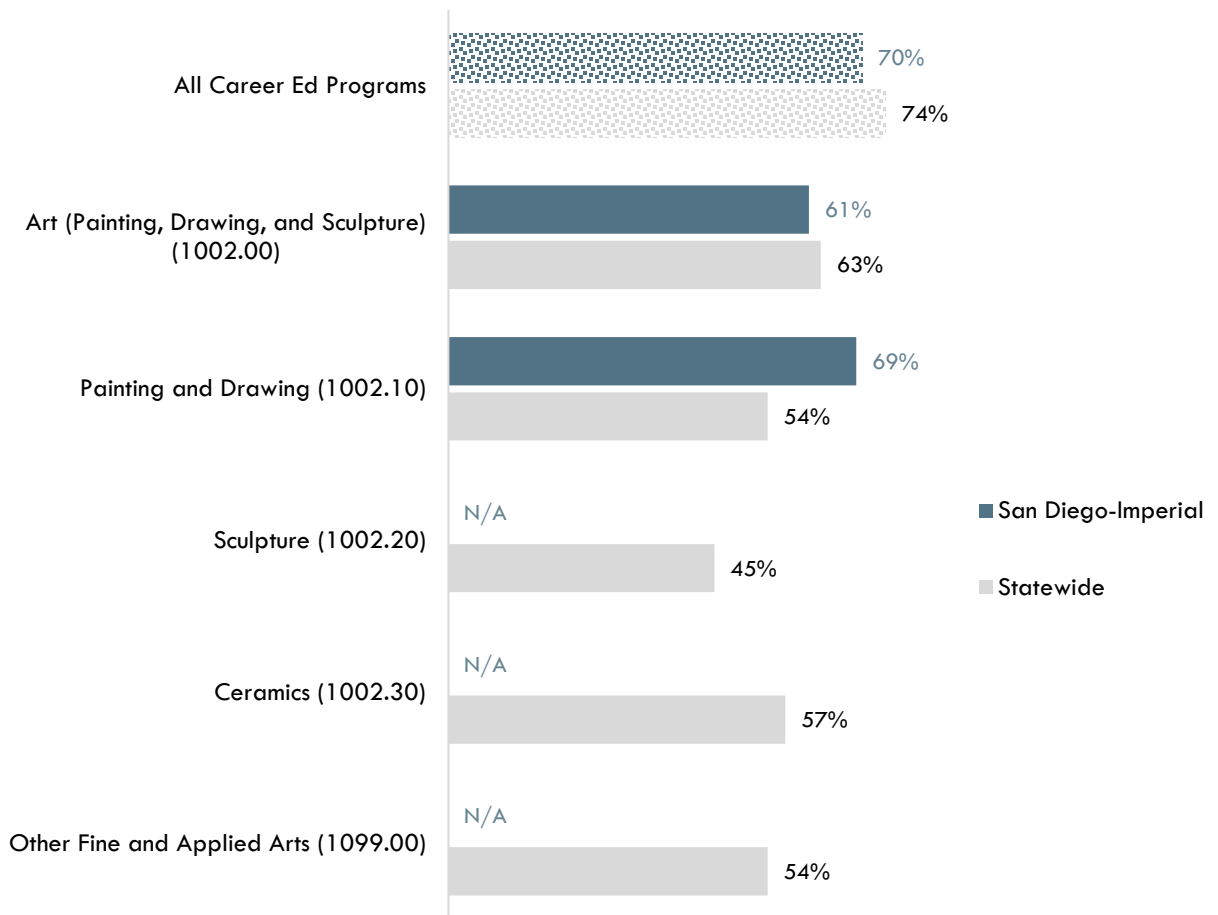
"N/A" indicates insufficient data

<sup>18</sup> DataVista, California Community Colleges, [datavista.cccco.edu/](http://datavista.cccco.edu/).

<sup>19</sup> 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.

According to the California Community Colleges DataVista, 61 to 69% of students in the San Diego-Imperial region obtained a job closely related to their field of study after completing a program related to *Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators*, compared to 45 to 63% statewide and 74% of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 11).<sup>20</sup>

**Exhibit 11: Percentage of Students in a Job Closely Related to Field of Study by Program, PY2021-22<sup>21</sup>**



"N/A" indicates insufficient data

<sup>20</sup> DataVista, California Community Colleges, [datavista.cccco.edu/](http://datavista.cccco.edu/).

<sup>21</sup> 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 five employers in San Diego County for *Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators* were The Estée Lauder Companies, Blushtan, Kaman's Art Shoppes, Sony Interactive Entertainment, and Heartbeat Music And Performing Arts Academy based on online job postings (Exhibit 12).

**Exhibit 12: Top Employers for Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators in San Diego County<sup>22</sup>**

Top Employers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Estée Lauder Companies</li> <li>• Blushtan</li> <li>• Kaman's Art Shoppes</li> <li>• Sony Interactive Entertainment</li> <li>• Heartbeat Music And Performing Arts Academy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrepid Studios</li> <li>• City Of Encinitas</li> <li>• Funko</li> <li>• Mac Foodservice</li> <li>• San Diego State University-Research Foundation</li> </ul>

## 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 Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators in San Diego County<sup>23</sup>**

Specialized Skills	Soft Skills	Software Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animations</li> <li>• Point Of Sale</li> <li>• Visual Merchandising</li> <li>• Lesson Planning</li> <li>• Workflow Management</li> <li>• Painting</li> <li>• Visual Effects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Customer Service</li> <li>• Teaching</li> <li>• Detail Oriented</li> <li>• Writing</li> <li>• Organizational Skills</li> <li>• Creativity</li> <li>• Problem Solving</li> <li>• Mentorship</li> <li>• Troubleshooting (Problem Solving)</li> <li>• Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adobe Photoshop</li> <li>• Autodesk Maya</li> <li>• Adobe Illustrator</li> </ul>

<sup>22</sup> Lightcast 2026.01; "Job Posting Analytics." 2023-2025.

<sup>23</sup> Lightcast 2026.01; "Job Posting Analytics." 2023-2025.

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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.