










# Social and Human Services Assistants

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>Proceed with Caution</b>	 	 	<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	
 	<b>MEDIUM</b> 	<b>HIGH</b> 	

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, *Social and Human Services Assistants* in San Diego County have a labor market demand of 897 annual job openings (while average demand for a single occupation in San Diego County is 289 annual job openings), and five institutions supply 152 awards for this occupation, suggesting that there is a supply gap in the labor market. Entry-level and median wages are below the living wage. This brief recommends that the colleges proceed with caution when developing a new program for this occupation and supports a program modification because 1) a high number of annual job openings exist for this occupation; 2) there is a supply gap in San Diego County; however, 3) entry-level and median wages are below the living wage. Additionally, colleges should note that the percentage of students who complete a related program and earn a living wage is generally lower than students who complete Career Education programs in general.

## 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:

**Social and Human Services Assistants (SOC 21-1093):** Assist other social and human service providers in providing client services in a wide variety of fields, such as psychology, rehabilitation, or social work, including support for families. May assist clients in identifying and obtaining available benefits and social and community services. May assist social workers with developing, organizing, and conducting programs to prevent and resolve problems relevant to substance abuse, human relationships, rehabilitation, or dependent care. Sample reported job titles include:

- Social Work Assistant
- Social Services Assistant
- Clinical Assistant
- Social Worker Assistant
- Social Services Aide
- Advocate
- Addictions Counselor Assistant
- Social Work Associate
- Residential Care Assistant

## Projected Occupational Demand

Between 2024 and 2029, *Social and Human Services Assistants* are projected to increase by 710 net jobs or 10% (Exhibit 1). Employers in San Diego County will need to hire 897 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 Social and Human Services Assistants (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)
Social and Human Services Assistants	7,054	7,764	710	10%	897

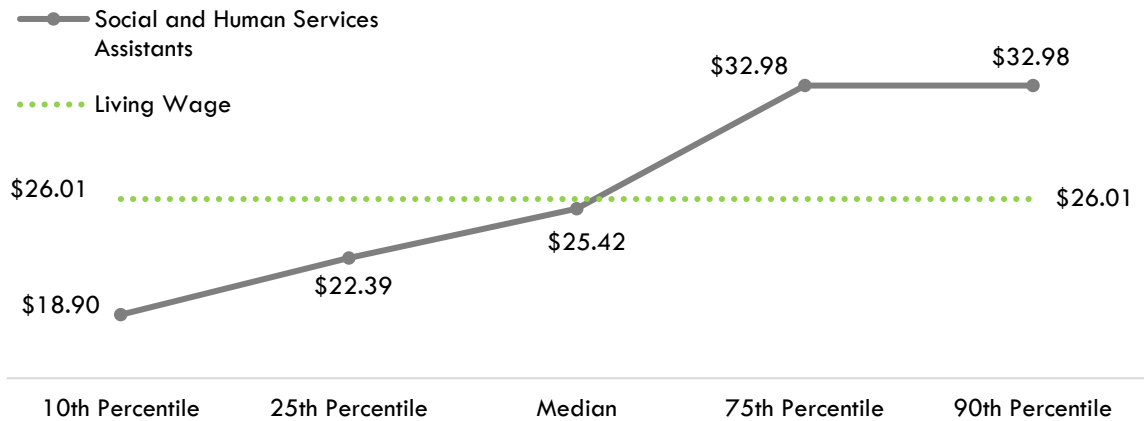
<sup>1</sup> The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system is used by federal statistical agencies to classify workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating or disseminating data. <https://www.bls.gov/soc/>.

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

## Earnings

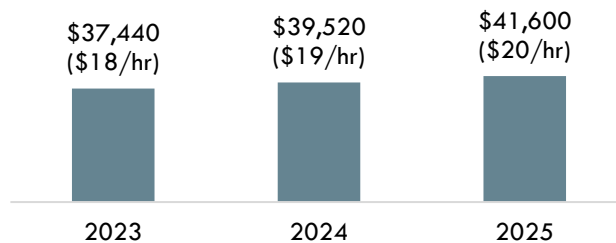
According to traditional<sup>3</sup> labor market information (LMI), *Social and Human Services Assistants* had entry-level hourly earnings of \$22.39—or \$46,571.20 annual salary<sup>4</sup>; this is less than the living wage for a single adult in San Diego County, which is \$26.01 per hour (Exhibit 2).<sup>5</sup>

**Exhibit 2: Hourly Earnings<sup>6</sup> for Social and Human Services Assistants in San Diego County<sup>7</sup>**



In online job postings, employers advertised between \$18 to \$20 per hour between January 1, 2023 and December 30, 2025 for *Social and Human Services Assistants* in San Diego County (Exhibit 3).<sup>8</sup> This suggests that employer-advertised wages in online job postings were lower than entry-level wages reported in traditional labor market information during the period analyzed.

**Exhibit 3: Entry-Level Advertised Salaries in Online Job Postings for Social and Human Services Assistants in San Diego County (2023-2025)\***



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

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

<sup>5</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>6</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>7</sup> Lightcast 2026.01; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

<sup>8</sup> Lightcast 2026.01; "Job Posting Analytics." 2023-2025.

## Expected Level of Education

According to traditional LMI (data reported to EDD and BLS), *Social and Human Services Assistants* have a national educational attainment of a [high school diploma or equivalent](#) (Exhibit 4).<sup>9</sup>

**Exhibit 4: National Educational Attainment for *Social and Human Services Assistants***<sup>10</sup>

Occupational Title	Typical Entry-Level Education
Social and Human Services Assistants	High school diploma or equivalent

Similarly, online job postings between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2025 in San Diego County had a [high school or GED](#) as the most requested educational requirement for *Social and Human Services Assistants*; however, employers also expected the following certifications (Exhibit 5).<sup>11</sup>

**Exhibit 5: Top Certifications for *Social and Human Services Assistants* in San Diego County in Online Job Postings (2023-2025)**<sup>12</sup>

1. Valid Driver's 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 [three](#) CIP codes related to *Social and Human Services Assistants* (Exhibit 6).

**Exhibit 6: Related TOP and CIP Codes for *Social and Human Services Assistants***<sup>13</sup>

TOP or CIP Code	TOP or CIP Program Title
TOP 2104.00	Human Services
CIP 19.0710	Developmental Services Worker
CIP 44.0000	Human Services, General
CIP 44.9999	Public Administration and Social Service Professions, Other

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

<sup>10</sup> Lightcast 2026.01; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

<sup>11</sup> Lightcast 2026.01; "Job Posting Analytics." 2023-2025.

<sup>12</sup> Lightcast 2026.01; "Job Posting Analytics." 2023-2025.

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

According to TOP data, five community colleges supply the region with awards for this occupation: Cuyamaca College, MiraCosta College, Palomar College, San Diego City College, and Southwestern College. According to CIP data, no non-community-college institution supplies the region with awards (Exhibit 7).

**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 PY22-24)
2104.00	Human Services	<b>152</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>152</b>
	Cuyamaca	<b>47</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate degree	47	0	
	MiraCosta	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate degree	3	0	
	Palomar	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate degree	4	0	
	• Certificate 16 < 30 units	6	0	
	San Diego City	<b>44</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate degree	44	0	
	Southwestern	<b>48</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate degree	48	0	
19.0710	Developmental Services Worker	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
44.0000	Human Services, General	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
44.9999	Public Administration and Social Service Professions, Other	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
			<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>

## Demand vs. Supply

Comparing labor demand (annual openings) with labor supply<sup>14</sup> suggests that there is a **supply gap** for this occupation in San Diego County, with **897** annual openings and **152** awards. Comparatively, there are **8,391** annual openings in California and **1,642** awards, suggesting that there is a **supply gap** across the state<sup>15</sup> (Exhibit 8).

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

	<b>Demand</b> (Annual Openings)	<b>Supply</b> (Total Annual Average Supply)	<b>Supply Gap or Oversupply</b>
San Diego	897	152	<b>745</b>
California	8,391	1,642	<b>6,749</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.

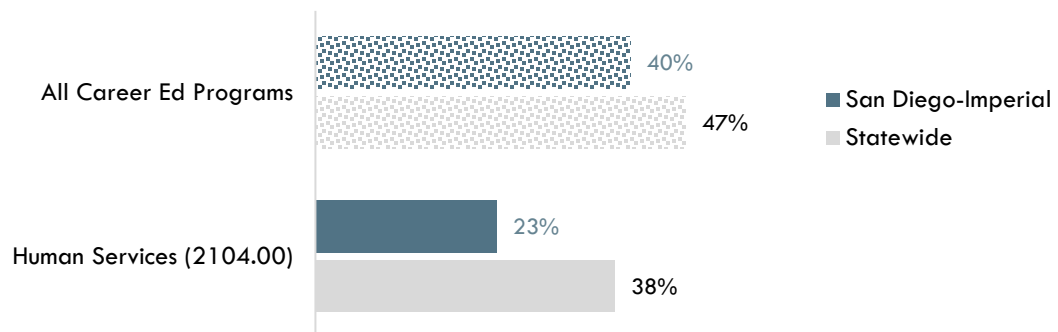
<sup>14</sup> Labor supply can be found from two different sources: EMSI or the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart. EMSI uses CIP codes while MIS uses TOP codes. Different coding systems result in differences in the supply numbers.

<sup>15</sup> "Supply and Demand," Centers of Excellence Student Outcomes, [coecc.net/our-resources](http://coecc.net/our-resources).

## Student Outcomes and Regional Comparisons

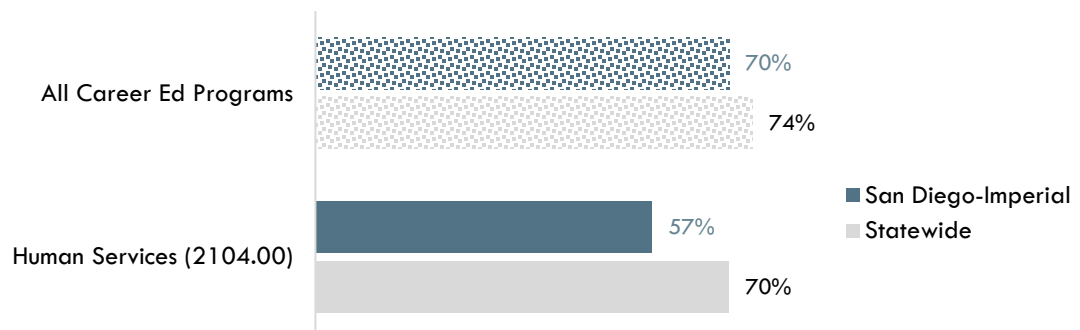
According to the California Community Colleges DataVista, 23% of students in the San Diego-Imperial region earned a living wage after completing a Human Services (TOP 2104.00) program, compared to 38% statewide and 47% of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 9).<sup>16</sup>

**Exhibit 9: Percentage of Students Who Earned a Living Wage After Completing a Human Services (TOP 2104.00) Program, PY2022-23<sup>17</sup>**



According to the California Community Colleges DataVista, 57% of students in the San Diego-Imperial region obtained a job closely related to their field of study after completing a Human Services (TOP 2104.00) program, compared to 70% statewide and 74% of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 10).<sup>18</sup>

**Exhibit 10: Percentage of Students in a Job Closely Related to Field of Study After Completing a Human Services (TOP 2104.00) Program, PY2021-22<sup>19</sup>**



<sup>16</sup> "California Community Colleges Strong Workforce Program," California Community Colleges, [calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx](https://calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx).

<sup>17</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.

<sup>18</sup> "California Community Colleges Strong Workforce Program," California Community Colleges, [calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx](https://calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx).

<sup>19</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 *Social and Human Services Assistants* were San Diego Post Acute, Sweetwater Union High School District, Seacrest Village Retirement Communities, Nami San Diego, and Balboa Nursing And Rehabilitation Center based on online job postings (Exhibit 11).

### Exhibit 4: Top Employers for *Social and Human Services Assistants* in San Diego County<sup>20</sup>

Top Employers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>San Diego Post Acute</li> <li>Sweetwater Union High School District</li> <li>Seacrest Village Retirement Communities</li> <li>Nami San Diego</li> <li>Balboa Nursing And Rehabilitation Center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>St. Vincent De Paul Village</li> <li>Sunrise Senior Living</li> <li>State of California</li> <li>County of San Diego</li> <li>Villa Las Palmas Healthcare Center</li> </ul>

## Skills

Exhibit 12 lists the top specialized, soft, and software skills that appeared in online job postings between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2025.

### Exhibit 5: Top Skills for *Social and Human Services Assistants* in San Diego County<sup>21</sup>

Specialized Skills	Soft Skills	Software Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Work</li> <li>Disabilities</li> <li>Community Planning</li> <li>Discharge Planning</li> <li>Nursing</li> <li>Treatment Planning</li> <li>Medicare</li> <li>Medicaid</li> <li>Psychiatry</li> <li>Optometry</li> <li>Dentistry</li> <li>Podiatry</li> <li>Community Health</li> <li>Technical Procedure Compliance</li> <li>Case Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning</li> <li>Confidentiality</li> <li>Communication</li> <li>Management</li> <li>Coordinating</li> <li>Mathematics</li> <li>Report Writing</li> <li>Advocacy</li> <li>English Language</li> <li>Calculators</li> <li>Multilingualism</li> <li>Writing</li> <li>Interpersonal Communications</li> <li>Customer Service</li> <li>Leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Microsoft Office</li> </ul>

<sup>20</sup> Lightcast 2026.01; "Job Posting Analytics." 2023-2025.

<sup>21</sup> Lightcast 2026.01; "Job Posting Analytics." 2023-2025.

Prepared by:

Tina Ngo Bartel, Executive Director ([tngobartel@miracosta.edu](mailto:tngobartel@miracosta.edu))

John Edwards, Research Analyst ([jedwards@miracosta.edu](mailto:jedwards@miracosta.edu))



### 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.