










Physical Therapist Assistants

Labor Market Analysis: San Diego County

February 2023

Summary

NEW PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION?	EVIDENCE OF A SUPPLY GAP?	AT OR ABOVE THE LIVING WAGE?	EXPECTED LEVEL OF EDUCATION
 Proceed with New Program	 	 	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Master's Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree <input checked="" 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	
 	<p>LOW</p> 	<p>HIGH</p> 	

The Center of Excellence (COE) for the San Diego and Imperial Counties Community Colleges developed this brief to assist the region's community colleges with strategic planning and program development. According to available labor market information, *Physical Therapist Assistants* in San Diego County have a labor market demand of 216 annual job openings (while average demand for a single occupation in San Diego County is 242 annual job openings), and three educational institutions in San Diego County supply 54 awards for this occupation, suggesting that there is a supply gap in the labor market. Entry-level and median wages for this occupation are above the living wage. This brief recommends proceeding with a new program and supports a program modification because 1) this occupations' entry-level and median earnings are above the living wage and 2) a supply gap exists for this occupation.

Introduction

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

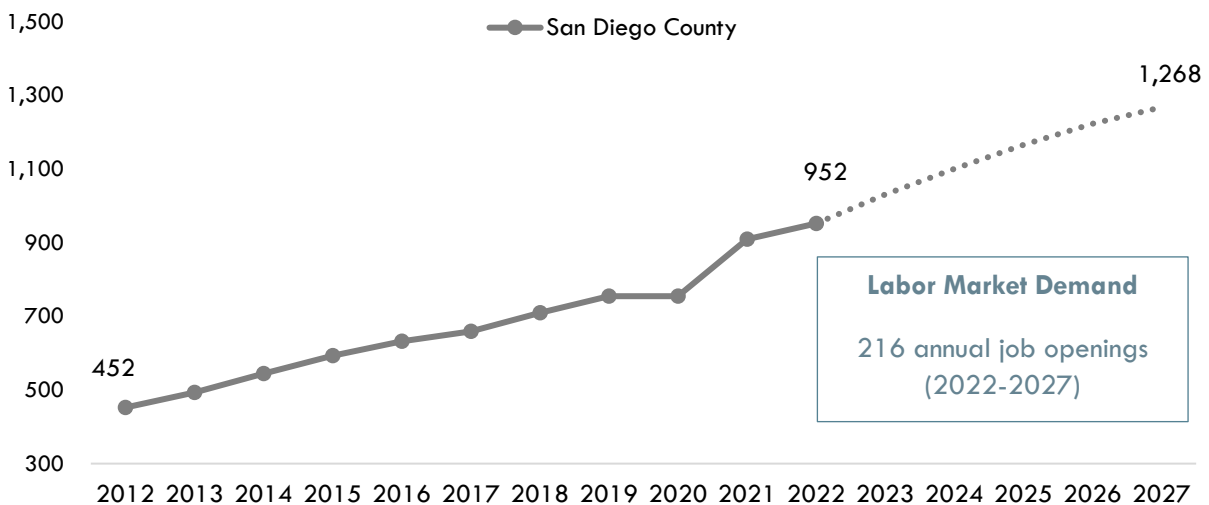
Physical Therapist Assistants (SOC 31-2021): Assist physical therapists in providing physical therapy treatments and procedures. May, in accordance with state laws, assist in the development of treatment plans, carry out routine functions, document the progress of treatment, and modify specific treatments in accordance with patient status and within the scope of treatment plans established by a physical therapist. Generally requires formal training. Sample reported job titles include:

- Licensed Physical Therapist Assistant
- Per Diem Physical Therapist Assistant
- Outpatient Physical Therapist Assistant
- Licensed Physical Therapy Assistant
- Home Health Physical Therapist Assistant
- Home Care Physical Therapy Assistant
- Certified Physical Therapist Assistant
- Rehabilitation Assistant

Projected Occupational Demand

Between 2022 and 2027, *Physical Therapist Assistants* are projected to increase by 316 net jobs or 33 percent (Exhibit 1). Employers in San Diego County will need to hire 216 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 Physical Therapist Assistants (2012-2027)²



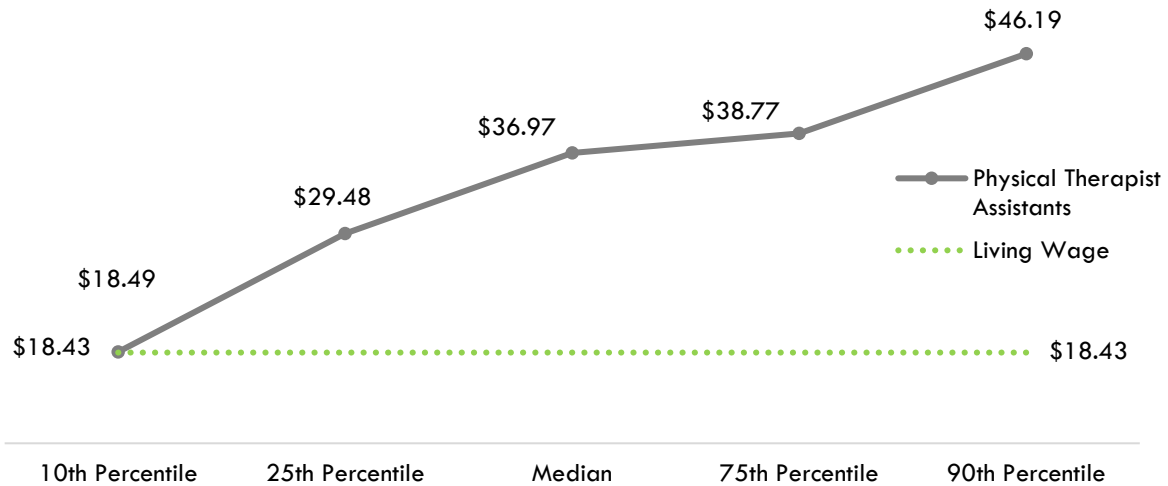
¹ The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system is used by federal statistical agencies to classify workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating or disseminating data. [bls.gov/soc](https://www.bls.gov/soc/).

² Lightcast 2023.01; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

Earnings

Physical Therapist Assistants receive entry-level hourly earnings of \$29.48; this is more than the living wage for a single adult in San Diego County, which is \$18.43 per hour (Exhibit 2).³

Exhibit 2: Hourly Earnings⁴ for Physical Therapist Assistants in San Diego County⁵



³ "Family Needs Calculator (formerly the California Family Needs Calculator)," Insight: Center for Community Economic Development, last updated 2022. insightccd.org/family-needs-calculator.

⁴ 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.

⁵ Lightcast 2023.01; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

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.⁶ There is **one** TOP code and **one** CIP code related to *Physical Therapist Assistants* (Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 3: Related TOP and CIP Codes for *Physical Therapist Assistants*⁷

TOP or CIP Code	TOP or CIP Program Title
TOP 1222.00	Physical Therapist Assistant
CIP 51.0806	Physical Therapy Technician/Assistant

According to TOP data, **one** community college supplies the region with awards for this occupation, **San Diego Mesa College**. According to CIP data, **two** non-community-college institutions supply the region with awards: **Concorde Career College-San Diego** and **Pima Medical Institute-San Marcos** (Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4: Number of Awards (Certificates and Degrees) Conferred by Postsecondary Institutions (Program Year 2017-18 through Program Year 2020-21 Average)

TOP6 or CIP Code	TOP6 or CIP Program Title	3-Yr Annual Average CC Awards (PY18-19 to PY20-21)	Other Educational Institutions 3-Yr Annual Average Awards (PY17-18 to PY19-20)	3-Yr Total Average Supply (PY17-18 to PY20-21)
1222.00	Physical Therapist Assistant	22	0	22
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> San Diego Mesa 	22	0	
51.0806	Physical Therapy Technician/Assistant	0	32	32
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concorde Career College-San Diego 	0	32	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pima Medical Institute-San Marcos 	0	0	
		Total		54

⁶ TOP data comes from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart (datamart.cccco.edu) and CIP data comes from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data).

⁷ This brief uses a conservative estimate of program supply and only calculates awards from the TOP code listed in Exhibit 3.

Demand vs. Supply

Comparing labor demand (annual openings) with labor supply⁸ suggests that there is an **supply gap** for this occupation in San Diego County, with **216** annual openings and **54** awards. Comparatively, there are **1,555** annual openings in California and **547** awards, suggesting that there is also a supply gap across the state⁹ (Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5: Labor Demand (Annual Openings) Compared with Labor Supply (Average Annual Awards)

	Demand (Annual Openings)	Supply (Total Annual Average Supply)	Supply Gap or Oversupply
San Diego	216	54	162
California	1,555	547	1,008

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.

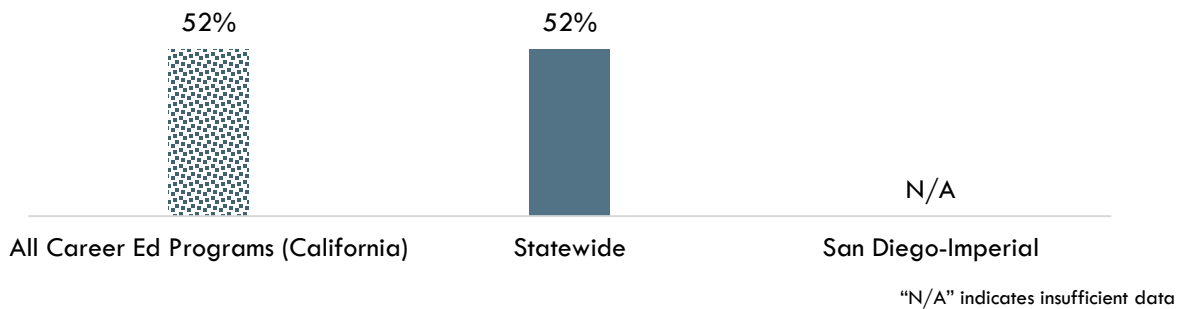
⁸ Labor supply can be found from two different sources: EMSI or the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart. EMSI uses CIP codes while MIS uses TOP codes. Different coding systems result in differences in the supply numbers.

⁹ "Supply and Demand," Centers of Excellence Student Outcomes, coecc.net/our-resources.

Student Outcomes and Regional Comparisons

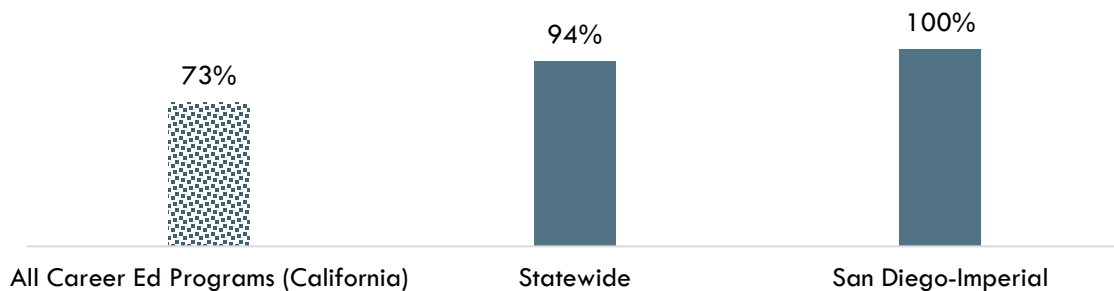
According to the California Community Colleges LaunchBoard, 52 percent of students statewide earned a living wage after completing a Physical Therapist Assistant (TOP 1222.00) program, compared to 52 percent of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 6a).¹⁰

**Exhibit 6a: Percentage of Students Who Earned a Living Wage by Program
(Physical Therapist Assistant, PY2019-20)¹¹**



According to the California Community Colleges LaunchBoard, 100 percent of students in the San Diego-Imperial region obtained a job closely related to their field of study after completing a Physical Therapist Assistant (TOP 1222.00) program, compared to 94 percent statewide and 73 percent of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 6b).¹²

**Exhibit 6b: Percentage of Students in a Job Closely Related to Field of Study by Program
(Physical Therapist Assistant, PY2018-19)¹³**



¹⁰ "California Community Colleges Strong Workforce Program," California Community Colleges, calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx.

¹¹ Most recent year with available data is Program Year 2019-20. Among completers and skills builders who exited, the percentage of students who attained a living wage.

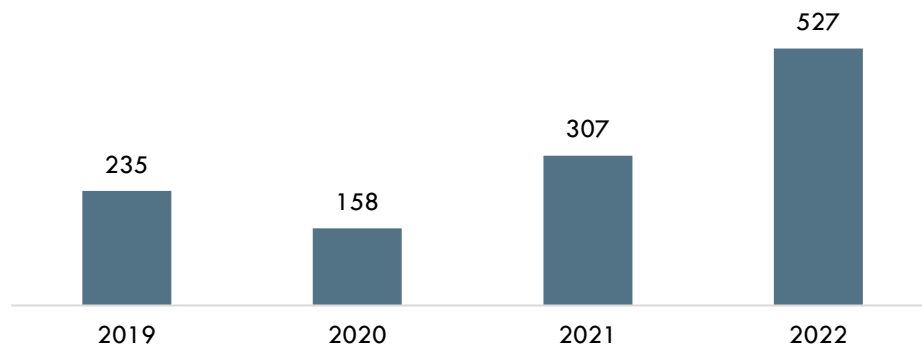
¹² "California Community Colleges Strong Workforce Program," California Community Colleges, calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx.

¹³ Most recent year with available data is Program Year 2018-19. 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.

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 2019 and 2022, there was an average of 307 online job postings per year for *Physical Therapist Assistants* in San Diego County (Exhibit 7). 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 7: Number of Online Job Postings for *Physical Therapist Assistants* in San Diego County (2019-2022)¹⁴



¹⁴ Lightcast; "Job Posting Analytics." 2019-2022.

Top Employers

Between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2022, the top five employers in San Diego County for *Physical Therapist Assistants* were HealthPRO Heritage, Sharp Healthcare, Therapy Specialists, Rehab United, and Family Health Centers Of San Diego based on online job postings (Exhibit 8).

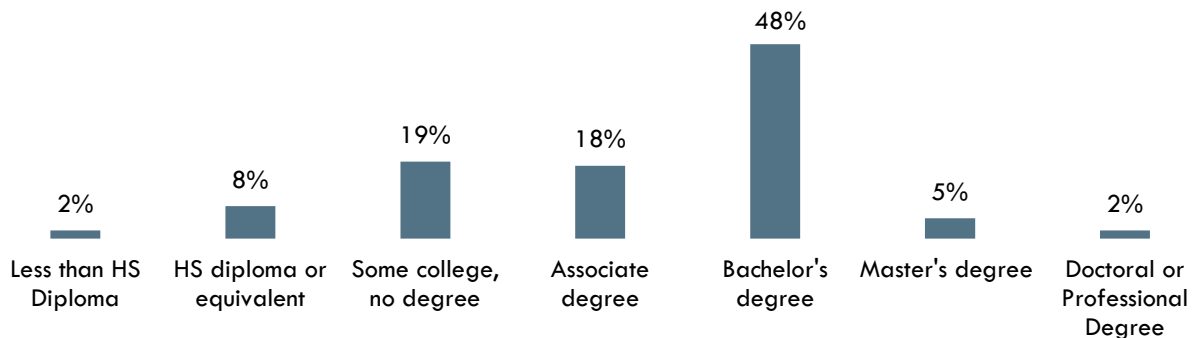
Exhibit 8: Top Employers for *Physical Therapist Assistants* in San Diego County¹⁵

Top Employers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HealthPRO Heritage • Sharp Healthcare • Therapy Specialists • Rehab United • Family Health Centers Of San Diego 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orthopaedic & Neurological Rehabilitation • Spine And Sport Physical Therapy • SpineZone • Kindred Healthcare • Preferred Healthcare Staffing

Education, Skills, and Certifications

Exhibit 9a indicates that the typical educational attainment for the occupation found currently in the California labor force is a *Bachelor's degree*. The typical entry-level education is an *Associate degree*.¹⁶

Exhibit 9a: California Educational Attainment of *Physical Therapist Assistants*¹⁷



¹⁵ Lightcast; "Job Posting Analytics." 2020-2022.

¹⁶ Lightcast 2023.01; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

¹⁷ "Educational Attainment for Workers 25 Years and Older by Detailed Occupation," Bureau of Labor Statistics, last modified September 8, 2022. bls.gov/emp/tables/educational-attainment.htm.

Based on online job postings between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2022 in San Diego County, employers posted an **associate degree** as the educational requirement for *Physical Therapist Assistants* (Exhibit 9b).¹⁸

Exhibit 9b: Educational Requirements for *Physical Therapist Assistants* in San Diego County¹⁹

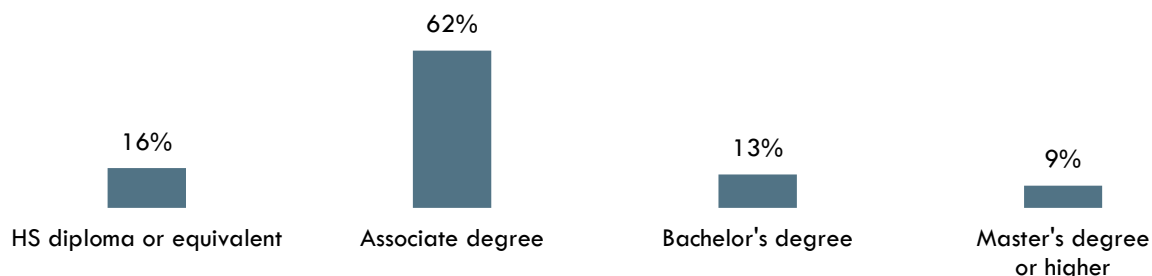


Exhibit 10 lists the top specialized, soft, and software skills that appeared in online job postings between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2022.

Exhibit 10: Top Skills for *Physical Therapist Assistants* in San Diego County²⁰

Specialized Skills	Soft Skills	Software Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical Therapy Rehabilitation Treatment Planning Patient Treatment Home Health Care Orthopedics Medical Records Exercise Therapy Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Infection Control Billing Quality Improvement Clinical Supervision Nursing Human Musculoskeletal System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Interpersonal Communications Writing Customer Service Scheduling Management Operations Professionalism Consulting Detail Oriented Time Management Problem Solving Ethical Standards And Conduct Cleanliness Self-Motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Microsoft Excel Operating Systems Microsoft PowerPoint Microsoft Outlook Microsoft Word QuickBooks eClinicalWorks Cisco Meraki Microsoft Access Zoom Mac OS Net Health Optima Google Sheets Gmail Google Docs

¹⁸ Lightcast; "Job Posting Analytics." 2020-2022.

¹⁹ "Educational Attainment for Workers 25 Years and Older by Detailed Occupation," Bureau of Labor Statistics, last modified April 9, 2021. bls.gov/emp/tables/educational-attainment.htm.

²⁰ Lightcast; "Job Posting Analytics." 2020-2022.

Exhibit 11 lists the top certifications that appeared in online job postings between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2022.

Exhibit 11: Top Certifications for *Physical Therapist Assistants* in San Diego County²¹

Top Certifications in Online Job Postings

1. Physical Therapy Assistant License
 2. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification
 3. Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification
 4. Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) Certification
 5. Advanced Trauma Life Support
 6. Basic Cardiac Life Support
 7. Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)
 8. Top Secret-Sensitive Compartmented Information (TS/SCI Clearance)
 9. First Aid Certification
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²¹ Lightcast; "Job Posting Analytics." 2020-2022.

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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.