



Prep Cook (TOP 1306.30)

March 2023

Prepared by the South Central Coast Center of Excellence for
Labor Market Research

Program Recommendation

This report was compiled by the South Central Coast¹ Center of Excellence to provide regional labor market data for the program recommendation – Prep Cook. This report can help determine whether there is demand in the local labor market that is not being met by the supply from programs of study (CCC and non-CCC) that align with this occupation group.

Key Findings

- In the South Central Coast region, **the number of jobs related to Prep Cook are expected to increase** for both Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria and Cooks, All Other and **remain steady** for Food Preparation Workers, Cooks, Short Order, and Cooks, Fast Food.
- Prep Cook is anticipated to experience a **high risk of automation** for all five related occupations.
- In 2021 there were 50 regional completions in programs related to the occupations identified as aligned with Prep Cook and 2,379 openings, indicating an **undersupply**.
- Typical entry-level education is **no formal educational credential** for all five related occupations.
- Completers of Prep Cook programs from the 2019-2020 academic year in the South Central Coast region had a **median annual wage upon completion of \$26,704**.
- 51% of students are **employed within a year** after completing a program.
- 29% of students **attained a living wage** within a year of completion.
- Completers experienced an average of +29% **change in earnings after exiting**.
- 80% of students were **part-time**, 18% **skill builders**, 36% **first-generation**, and 77% **economically disadvantaged**.

¹ The South Central Coast Region consists of San Luis Obispo County, Santa Barbara County, Ventura County, and the following cities from North Los Angeles County: Canyon Country, Castaic, Lake Hughes, Lancaster, Littlerock, Llano, Newhall, Palmdale, Pearblossom, Santa Clarita, Stevenson Ranch, and Valencia.

Occupation Codes and Descriptions

There are five occupations in the standard occupational classification (SOC) system that were identified as related to Prep Cook for this analysis. The occupation titles and descriptions, as well as reported job titles, are included in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1 – Occupation, Description, and Sample Job Titles

SOC Code	Title	Description	Sample of Reported Job Titles
35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food	Prepare and cook food in a fast food restaurant with a limited menu. Duties of these cooks are limited to preparation of a few basic items and normally involve operating large-volume single-purpose cooking equipment.	Cook, Deep Fat Fryer Operator, Fast Food Cook, Fry Cook, Fryer, Grill Cook, Line Cook, Pizza Cook, Pizza Maker, Prep Cook (Preparatory Cook)
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	Perform a variety of food preparation duties other than cooking, such as preparing cold foods and shellfish, slicing meat, and brewing coffee or tea.	Deli Clerk (Delicatessen Clerk), Diet Aide, Dietary Aide, Dietary Assistant, Food Prep (Food Preparer), Food Service Aide, Food Service Worker, Nutrition Aide, Pantry Cook, Slicer
35-2012	Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	Prepare and cook large quantities of food for institutions, such as schools, hospitals, or cafeterias.	Cafeteria Cook, Chef, Cook, Dietary Cook, Dinner Cook, Food Service Specialist, Food Service Worker, Prep Cook (Preparatory Cook), School Cook, Sous Chef
35-2015	Cooks, Short Order	Prepare and cook to order a variety of foods that require only a short preparation time. May take orders from customers and serve patrons at counters or tables.	Caterer, Cook, Deli Cook (Delicatessen Cook), Food and Beverage Attendant, Grill Cook, Line Cook, Pizza Maker, Prep Cook (Preparation Cook), Short Order Cook, Snack Bar Cook
35-2019	Cooks, All Other	--	--

Source: O*NET Online

Current and Future Employment

In the South Central Coast region, the number of jobs related to Prep Cook are expected to increase for both Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria and Cooks, All Other and remain steady for Food Preparation Workers, Cooks, Short Order, and Cooks, Fast Food.

Exhibit 2 – Five-Year Projections for Prep Cook in the South Central Coast Region

SOC	Occupation	2022 Jobs	2027 Jobs	2022-2027 Change	2022-2027 % Change
35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food	7,569	7,550	-19	0%
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	5,116	5,257	141	3%
35-2012	Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	1,358	1,449	90	7%
35-2015	Cooks, Short Order	897	904	7	1%
35-2019	Cooks, All Other	187	196	9	5%

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)

Earnings

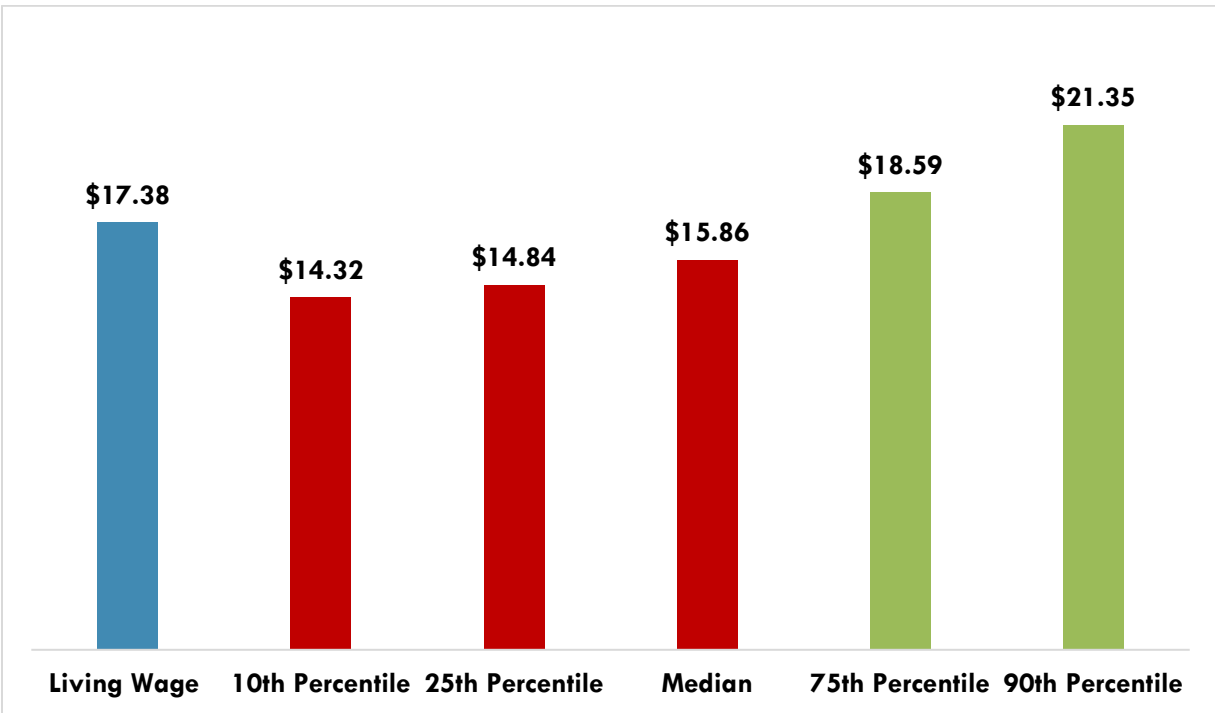
Exhibit 3 contains hourly wages and annual average earnings for these occupations. Entry-level hourly earnings are represented by the 25th percentile of wages, median hourly earnings are represented by the 50th percentile of wages, and experienced hourly earnings are represented by the 75th percentile of wages, demonstrating various levels of employment.

Exhibit 3 – Earnings for Prep Cook in the South Central Coast Region

SOC	Occupation	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings
35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food	\$14.44	\$14.70	\$15.29
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	\$14.45	\$14.97	\$17.62
35-2012	Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	\$16.21	\$18.22	\$21.85
35-2015	Cooks, Short Order	\$14.66	\$15.27	\$17.27
35-2019	Cooks, All Other	\$14.42	\$16.17	\$20.91

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)

Exhibit 3b – Earnings for Prep Cook in the South Central Coast Region



Source: Family Needs Calculator (Living wage is based on Single Adult households with no children); Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)

Employer Job Postings

In this research brief, real-time labor market information is used to provide a more nuanced view of the current job market, as it captures job advertisements for occupations relevant to the field of study. Employer job postings are consulted to understand who is looking for prep cooks, and what they are looking for in potential candidates. To identify job postings related to Prep Cook the following standard occupational classifications were used:

35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers
35-2012	Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria
35-2015	Cooks, Short Order
35-2019	Cooks, All Other

Top Occupations

In 2022, there were 942 employer postings for the occupations related to Prep Cook.

Exhibit 4 – Top Occupations by Job Postings

SOC Code	Occupation	Job Postings, Full Year 2022
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	702
35-2015	Cooks, Short Order	166
35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food	46
35-2012	Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	27
35-2019	Cooks, All Other	1

Source: Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)

Exhibit 4b – Top Occupations and Risk of Automation

SOC Code	Occupation	Risk of Automation
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	High
35-2015	Cooks, Short Order	High
35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food	High
35-2012	Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	High
35-2019	Cooks, All Other	High

Source: Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)

Top Titles

The top job titles for employers posting ads for jobs related to Prep Cook are listed in Exhibit 5. Kitchen Crews is mentioned as the job title in 18% of all relevant job postings (143 postings).

Exhibit 5 – Job Titles

Title	Job Postings, Full Year 2022
Kitchen Crews	143
Kitchen Staff	73
Grill Cooks	45
Kitchen Utilities Worker	33
Kitchen Helpers	30

Source: Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)

Top Employers

Exhibit 6 lists the major employers hiring professionals in the Prep Cook field. The top employer posting job ads was The Habit Burger Grill. The top worksite cities for these occupations were Ventura, Santa Barbara, Thousand Oaks, Santa Clarita, and Oxnard.

Exhibit 6 – Top Employers (n=547)

Employer	Job Postings, Full Year 2022
The Habit Burger Grill	92
Atria Senior Living	35
Buffalo Wild Wings	32
Superior Grocers	25
Whole Foods	23

Source: Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)

Skills

The tables in Exhibit 7 list employers' most commonly requested skills in job postings related to Prep Cook. Restaurant Operation is the most sought-after specialized skill for employers, followed by Food Preparation and Grilling. Customer Service, Sanitation and Communications were the most requested baseline skills. Expo (Application Development Framework), Inquiry, and Protege were the most commonly requested software and programming skills.

Exhibit 7 – Specialized Skills (n= 2,103)

Skills	Job Postings, Full Year 2022
Restaurant Operation	297
Food Preparation	269
Grilling	228
Cooking	188
Food Safety and Sanitation	141
Food Services	125
Merchandising	45
Safety Standards	43
Accounting	41
Frying	40
Dicing	34
Mopping	31
Standard Operating Procedure	27
Pallet Jacks	27
Selling Techniques	27

Source: Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)

Exhibit 7b – Baseline Skills (n= 1,992)

Skills	Job Postings, Full Year 2022
Customer Service	212
Sanitation	190
Communications	164
Lifting Ability	132
Management	79
Sales	79
Cleanliness	78
Positivity	60
Time Management	55
Detail Oriented	54

Source: Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)

Exhibit 7c – Software and Programming Skills (n= 33)

Skills	Job Postings, Full Year 2022
Expo (Application Development Framework)	7
Inquiry	4
Protege	4
Software Systems	3
JavaScript (Programming Language)	2
Google Classroom	2
Disassembler	1
Embarcadero Software	1
Chef (Configuration Management Tool)	1
eClinicalWorks (ECW)	1

Source: Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)

Industry Concentration

Exhibit 8 shows the industries with the most Prep Cook postings in the South Central Coast region. Note: 36% of records have been excluded because they do not include an industry. As a result, the chart below may not be representative of the full sample.

Exhibit 8 – Industries Employing the Most in the Prep Cook Field, 2022

Industry	Occupation Group Jobs in Industry	% of Occupation Group in Industry
Accommodation and Food Services	370	62%
Retail Trade	92	15%
Health Care and Social Assistance	81	13%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	21	3%
Information	3	<1%

Source: Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)

Certifications

Exhibit 9 lists the most in-demand certifications in the Prep Cook field. The top requested certification in job postings was Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification.

Exhibit 9 – Certifications (n= 139)

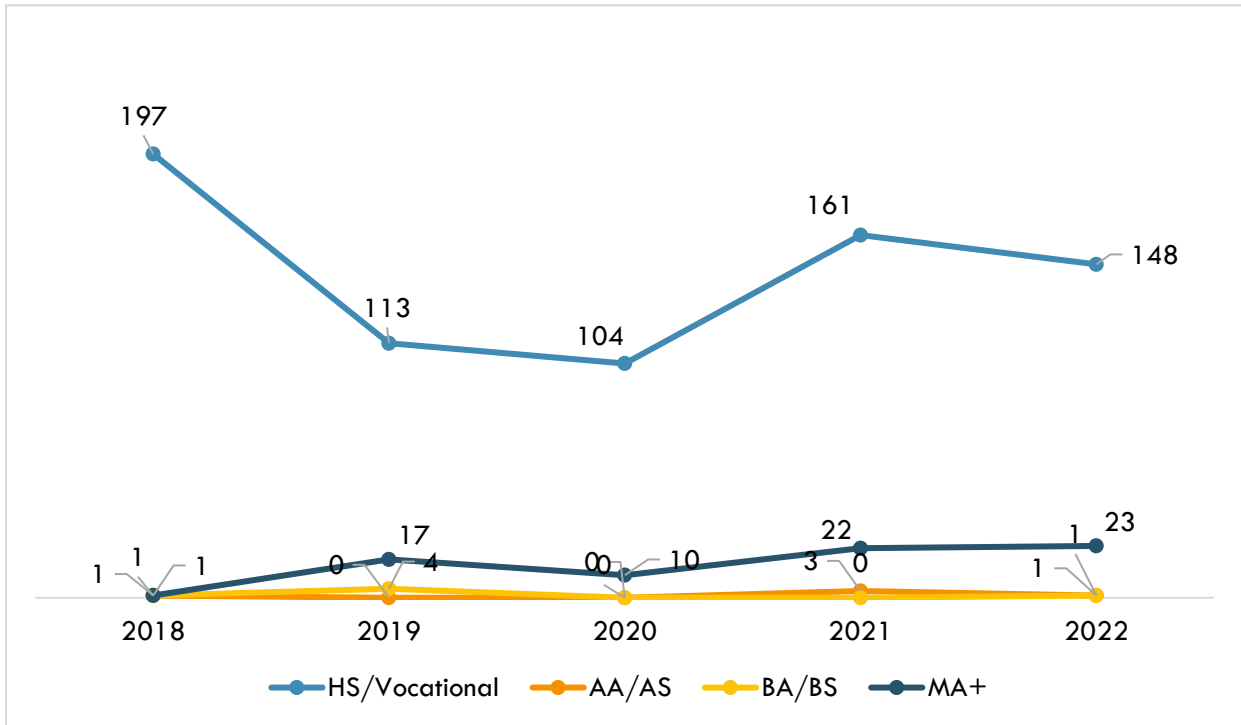
Certifications	Job Postings, Full Year 2022
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	15
First Aid Certification	15
Food Handler's Card	50
Food Safety Certification	11
ServSafe Certification	28

Source: Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)

Job Postings - Minimum Educational Attainment Over Time

Exhibit 10 displays the change in job advertisements over the last five years for Prep Cook, according to the minimum advertised education. In 2022, there were 173 total job ads posted with a minimum advertised education, with 148 of them requiring a high school diploma or vocational training.

Exhibit 10 – Educational Demand, Minimum Advertised



Source: Labor Insight / Jobs (Burning Glass)

Job Postings – Proportion of Job Postings by Minimum Educational Attainment Required

To gauge employer preference for candidates with particular education levels, the proportion of job postings by minimum advertised education appears in Exhibit 11. Employers posting job ads for Prep Cook have frequently sought candidates with a high school diploma or vocational training.

Exhibit 11 – Occupational Demand by Education, Minimum Advertised

Minimum Education Requirement	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
HS Diploma / Vocational Training	98%	84%	91%	87%	86%
Associate Degree	<1%	0%	0%	1%	<1%
Bachelor’s Degree	<1%	3%	0%	0%	<1%
Graduate Degree	<1%	13%	9%	12%	13%

Source: Labor Insight/ Jobs (Burning Glass)

Education and Training

Exhibit 12 shows the typical entry-level education requirement for the occupations of interest, along with the typical on-the-job training needed to attain competency in the occupation.

Exhibit 12 – Education and Training Requirements

SOC	Occupation	Typical entry-level education	Typical on-the-job training
35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food	No formal educational credential	Short-term on-the-job training
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	No formal educational credential	Short-term on-the-job training
35-2012	Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	No formal educational credential	Short-term on-the-job training
35-2015	Cooks, Short Order	No formal educational credential	Short-term on-the-job training
35-2019	Cooks, All Other	No formal educational credential	Moderate-term on-the-job training

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Projections (Educational Attainment)

Regional Completions and Openings

There were 50 regional completions (2021) and 2,379 regional openings (2021) in the South Central Coast region aligned with programs related to the occupations in this report.

Exhibit 13 – Completions and Openings

6 Regional Institutions had Related Programs (2021)	50 Regional Completions (2021)	2,379 Annual Openings (2021)
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Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)

Related Programs

CIP Code	Program	Completions (2021)
12.0500	Cooking and Related Culinary Arts, General	50
12.0503	Culinary Arts/Chef Training	0
19.0505	Foodservice Systems Administration/Management	0

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)

CCC and Non-CCC Awards

Exhibit 14 lists the number of completers from programs related to Prep Cook in the South Central Coast region.

Exhibit 14 – CCC and Non-CCC Awards the South Central Coast, 2021

CCC Programs	Completers
Oxnard College	15
College of the Canyons	14
Santa Barbara City College	11
Allan Hancock College	6
Cuesta College	4
Non-CCC Programs	Completers
University of Antelope Valley	0

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)

Student Outcomes

The CTE LaunchBoard provides student outcome data on the effectiveness of CTE programs. The following student outcome information was collected from exiters of the regional Culinary Arts Programs (TOP: 1306.30) for the 2019-2020 academic year.

- Completers of Culinary Arts programs from the 2019-2020 academic year in the South Central Coast region had a **median annual wage upon completion of \$26,704**.
- 51% of students are **employed within a year** after completing a program.
- 29% of students **attained a living wage** within a year of completion.
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Sources

O*Net Online, Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass), Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI), MIT Living Wage Calculator, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Education Attainment, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems (MIS) Data Mart, CTE LaunchBoard, Statewide CTE Outcomes Survey, Employment Development Department Unemployment Insurance Dataset

Notes

Data included in this analysis represent the labor market demand for relevant positions most closely related to Prep Cook. Traditional labor market information was used to show current and projected employment based on data trends, as well as annual average awards granted by regional community colleges. Real-time labor market information captures job post advertisements for occupations relevant to the field of study and can signal demand and show what employers are looking for in potential employees, but is not a perfect measure of the quantity of open positions. All representations have been produced from primary research and/or secondary review of publicly and/or privately available data and/or research reports. The most recent data available at the time of the analysis was examined; 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 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.