










Fashion Merchandising Occupations

Labor Market Analysis: San Diego County

February 2025

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 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	
 	HIGH 	HIGH 	

The San Diego & Imperial Center of Excellence (COE) developed this brief to assist the region’s community colleges with strategic planning and program development. *Fashion Merchandising Occupations* include “First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers;” “General and Operations Managers;” “Marketing Managers;” “Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners;” and “Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers.” According to available data, *Fashion Merchandising Occupations* in San Diego County have a labor market demand of 4,428 annual job openings (while average demand for a single occupation in San Diego County is 289 annual job openings), and 24 institutions supply 8,308 awards for these occupations, suggesting that there is an oversupply in the labor market. Employers historically reported to the California Employment Development Department (EDD) and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) that on average *Fashion Merchandising Occupations* earned entry-level earnings of \$35.38 per hour, which is above the living wage of \$26.01 per hour in San Diego County. Recent online job postings (2022-2024) suggest moderate wages, with entry-level earnings posted between \$24 to \$26 per hour. This brief recommends that the colleges do not proceed with developing a new program for these occupations but supports a program modification because 1) there is an estimated oversupply in the region and 2) a significantly high number of institutions train for these occupations.

Introduction

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

- **First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers (SOC 41-1011):** Directly supervise and coordinate activities of retail sales workers in an establishment or department. Duties may include management functions, such as purchasing, budgeting, accounting, and personnel work, in addition to supervisory duties.
- **General and Operations Managers (SOC 11-1021):** Plan, direct, or coordinate the operations of public or private sector organizations, overseeing multiple departments or locations. Duties and responsibilities include formulating policies, managing daily operations, and planning the use of materials and human resources, but are too diverse and general in nature to be classified in any one functional area of management or administration, such as personnel, purchasing, or administrative services. Usually manage through subordinate supervisors.
- **Marketing Managers (SOC 11-2021):** Plan, direct, or coordinate marketing policies and programs, such as determining the demand for products and services offered by a firm and its competitors, and identify potential customers. Develop pricing strategies with the goal of maximizing the firm's profits or share of the market while ensuring the firm's customers are satisfied. Oversee product development or monitor trends that indicate the need for new products and services.
- **Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers (SOC 27-1026):** Plan and erect commercial displays, such as those in windows and interiors of retail stores and at trade exhibitions.
- **Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners (SOC 13-1121):** Coordinate activities of staff, convention personnel, or clients to make arrangements for group meetings, events, or conventions.

For the purpose of this report, these occupations are referred to as *Fashion Merchandising Occupations*.

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/>.

Projected Occupational Demand

Between 2023 and 2028, employers in San Diego County will need to hire 4,428 workers annually to fill new jobs and backfill jobs in *Fashion Merchandising Occupations* due to attrition caused by turnover and retirement, for example (Exhibit 1). “General and Operations Managers” are projected to have the most labor market demand between 2023 and 2028, with 2,361 annual job openings.

Exhibit 1: Number of Jobs for *Fashion Merchandising Occupations* (2023-2028)²

Occupational Title	2023 Jobs	2028 Jobs	2023 – 2028 Net Jobs Change	2023 - 2028 % Net Jobs Change	Annual Job Openings (Demand)
General and Operations Managers	25,409	26,878	1,469	6%	2,361
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	12,511	12,304	- 207	- 2%	1,219
Marketing Managers	4,898	5,029	131	3%	414
Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners	2,035	2,180	145	7%	248
Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	1,569	1,582	13	1%	186
Total	46,422	47,973	1,551	3%	4,428

Earnings

According to traditional³ labor market information (LMI), entry-level hourly earnings for *Fashion Merchandising Occupations* range from \$16.86 to \$63.29 (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2: Hourly Earnings for *Fashion Merchandising Occupations* in San Diego County⁴

Occupational Title	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)
General and Operations Managers	\$63.29	\$76.70	\$108.03
Marketing Managers	\$55.44	\$78.59	\$104.19
Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners	\$23.19	\$29.71	\$38.52
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	\$18.12	\$22.28	\$28.57
Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	\$16.86	\$18.34	\$21.77

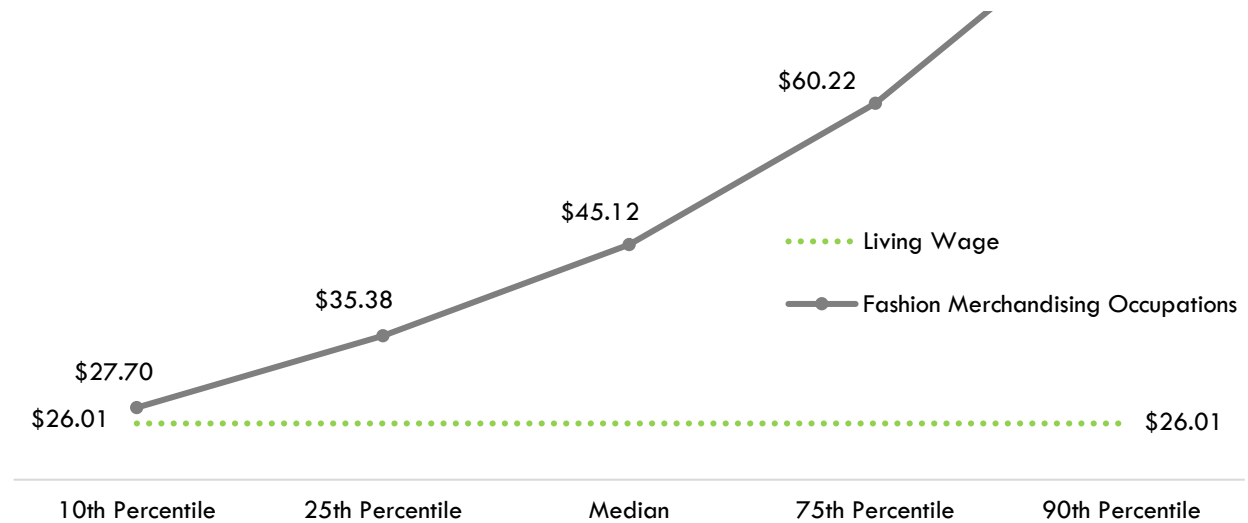
² Lightcast 2024.04; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

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 Lightcast 2024.04; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

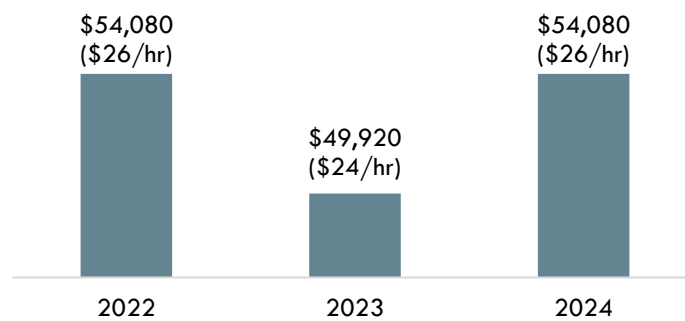
On average, the entry-level hourly earnings are \$35.38—or \$73,590.40 annual salary⁵; this is more than the living wage for a single adult in San Diego County, which is \$26.01 per hour (Exhibit 3).⁶

Exhibit 3: Hourly Earnings⁷ for Fashion Merchandising Occupations in San Diego County⁸



Between January 1, 2022 and December 30, 2024, employers advertised between \$24 to \$26 per hour in online job postings for Fashion Merchandising Occupations in San Diego County (Exhibit 4).⁹ This suggests that employers in recent years have maintained wages due to labor market forces that may not be captured by traditional LMI.

Exhibit 4: Entry-Level Advertised Salaries in Online Job Postings for Fashion Merchandising Occupations in San Diego County (2021-2023)*



*Hourly wages are rounded to the nearest dollar amount.

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

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

⁷ 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.

⁸ Lightcast 2024.04; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

⁹ Lightcast 2024.04; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

Expected Level of Education

According to traditional LMI, *Fashion Merchandising Occupations* have a national educational attainment ranging from a [bachelor's degree](#) to a [high school diploma or equivalent](#).¹⁰ (Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5: National Educational Attainment for *Fashion Merchandising Occupations*¹¹

Occupational Title	Typical Entry-Level Education
General and Operations Managers	Bachelor's degree
Marketing Managers	Bachelor's degree
Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners	Bachelor's degree
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	High school diploma or equivalent
Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	High school diploma or equivalent

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 *Fashion Merchandising Occupations*; however, employers also expected the following certifications (Exhibit 6).¹²

Exhibit 6: Top Certifications for *Fashion Merchandising Occupations* in San Diego County in Online Job Postings (2022-2024)¹³

1. Master Of Business Administration (MBA)
2. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification
3. Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification
4. ServSafe Certification
5. Project Management Professional Certification
6. First Aid Certification
7. Security Clearance
8. Food Handler's Card
9. Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Certification
10. Cosmetology License

¹⁰ Lightcast 2024.04; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

¹¹ Lightcast 2024.04; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

¹² Lightcast 2024.04; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

¹³ Lightcast 2024.04; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

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 14 TOP codes and 21 CIP codes related to *Fashion Merchandising Occupations* (Exhibit 7).

Exhibit 7: Related TOP and CIP Codes for *Fashion Merchandising Occupations*¹⁴

TOP or CIP Code	TOP or CIP Program Title
TOP 0501.00	Business and Commerce, General
TOP 0505.00	Business Administration
TOP 0506.00	Business Management
TOP 0506.30	Management Development and Supervision
TOP 0506.40	Small Business and Entrepreneurship
TOP 0506.50	Retail Store Operations and Management
TOP 0508.00	International Business and Trade
TOP 0509.00	Marketing and Distribution
TOP 0509.40	Sales and Salesmanship
TOP 0509.60	Display
TOP 0509.70	E-Commerce (Business emphasis)
TOP 0514.40	Office Management
TOP 1303.20	Fashion Merchandising
TOP 1307.00	Hospitality
CIP 19.0905	Apparel and Textile Marketing Management
CIP 52.0101	Business/Commerce, General
CIP 52.0201	Business Administration and Management, General
CIP 52.0204	Office Management and Supervision
CIP 52.0205	Operations Management and Supervision
CIP 52.0208	E-Commerce/Electronic Commerce
CIP 52.0211	Project Management
CIP 52.0212	Retail Management

¹⁴ This brief uses a conservative estimate of program supply and only calculates awards from the TOP code listed in Exhibit 7.

TOP or CIP Code	TOP or CIP Program Title
CIP 52.0701	Entrepreneurship/Entrepreneurial Studies
CIP 52.0704	Social Entrepreneurship
CIP 52.0907	Meeting and Event Planning
CIP 52.1001	Human Resources Management/Personnel Administration, General
CIP 52.1101	International Business/Trade/Commerce
CIP 52.1401	Marketing/Marketing Management, General
CIP 52.1404	Digital Marketing
CIP 52.1801	Sales, Distribution, and Marketing Operations
CIP 52.1803	Retailing and Retail Operations
CIP 52.1804	Selling Skills and Sales Operations
CIP 52.1899	General Merchandising, Sales, and Related Marketing Operations, Other
CIP 52.1902	Fashion Merchandising
CIP 52.1904	Apparel and Accessories Marketing Operations

According to TOP data, nine community colleges supply the region with awards for these occupations: Cuyamaca College, Grossmont College, MiraCosta College, Palomar College, San Diego City College, San Diego College of Continuing Education, San Diego Mesa College, San Diego Miramar College, and Southwestern College.. According to CIP data, 15 non-community-college institutions supply the region with awards: Alliant International University-San Diego, Ashford University, California Miramar University, California State University-San Marcos, John Paul the Great Catholic University, National University, Northcentral University, Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego Christian College, San Diego State University, Southern States University, United States University, University of Saint Katherine, University of San Diego, and Vista Adult School (Exhibit 8).

**Exhibit 8: Number of Awards (Certificates and Degrees) Conferred by Postsecondary Institutions
(Program Year 2019-20 Through Program Year 2022-23 Average)**

TOP6 or CIP Code	TOP6 or CIP Program Title	3-Yr Annual Average CC Awards (PY20-21 to PY22-23)	Other Educational Institutions 3-Yr Annual Average Awards (PY19-20 to PY21-22)	Total Average Supply (PY19-20 to PY22-23)
0501.00	Business and Commerce, General	289	0	289
	• Cuyamaca	5	0	
	• Grossmont	17	0	
	• MiraCosta	13	0	
	• Palomar	43	0	
	• San Diego Cont Ed	189	0	
	• San Diego Mesa	22	0	
	• Southwestern	0	0	
0505.00	Business Administration	1,673	0	1,673
	• Cuyamaca	115	0	
	• Grossmont	405	0	
	• MiraCosta	187	0	
	• Palomar	183	0	
	• San Diego City	84	0	
	• San Diego Mesa	291	0	
	• San Diego Miramar	191	0	
	• Southwestern	217	0	
0506.00	Business Management	930	0	930
	• Cuyamaca	5	0	
	• Grossmont	10	0	
	• MiraCosta	42	0	
	• Palomar	150	0	
	• San Diego Cont Ed	664	0	
	• San Diego Mesa	9	0	
	• San Diego Miramar	13	0	
	• Southwestern	37	0	

TOP6 or CIP Code	TOP6 or CIP Program Title	3-Yr Annual Average CC Awards (PY20-21 to PY22-23)	Other Educational Institutions 3-Yr Annual Average Awards (PY19-20 to PY21-22)	Total Average Supply (PY19-20 to PY22-23)
0506.30	Management Development and Supervision	3	0	3
	• Southwestern	3	0	
0506.40	Small Business and Entrepreneurship	769	0	769
	• Cuyamaca	4	0	
	• MiraCosta	27	0	
	• San Diego Cont Ed	724	0	
	• San Diego City	5	0	
	• San Diego Mesa	3	0	
	• San Diego Miramar	1	0	
	• Southwestern	5	0	
0506.50	Retail Store Operations and Management	9	0	9
	• Grossmont	1	0	
	• MiraCosta	3	0	
	• San Diego Mesa	5	0	
0508.00	International Business and Trade	5	0	5
	• Southwestern	5	0	
0509.00	Marketing and Distribution	87	0	87
	• Grossmont	7	0	
	• MiraCosta	21	0	
	• San Diego Cont Ed	48	0	
	• San Diego Mesa	6	0	
	• Southwestern	5	0	
0509.70	E-Commerce (business emphasis)	2	0	2
	• Southwestern	2	0	
0514.40	Office Management	3	0	3
	• MiraCosta	1	0	
	• San Diego Mesa	2	0	

TOP6 or CIP Code	TOP6 or CIP Program Title	3-Yr Annual Average CC Awards (PY20-21 to PY22-23)	Other Educational Institutions 3-Yr Annual Average Awards (PY19-20 to PY21-22)	Total Average Supply (PY19-20 to PY22-23)
1303.20	Fashion Merchandising	31	0	31
	• Palomar	14	0	
	• San Diego Cont Ed	12	0	
	• San Diego Mesa	5	0	
1307.00	Hospitality	39	0	39
	• Grossmont	9	0	
	• MiraCosta	11	0	
	• San Diego Mesa	7	0	
	• Southwestern	12	0	
52.0201	Business Administration and Management, General	0	3,537	3,537
	• Alliant International University-San Diego	0	15	
	• Ashford University	0	676	
	• California Miramar University	0	25	
	• California State University-San Marcos	0	584	
	• John Paul the Great Catholic University	0	5	
	• National University	0	226	
	• Northcentral University	0	35	
	• Point Loma Nazarene University	0	69	
	• San Diego Christian College	0	25	
	• San Diego State University	0	1,722	
	• Southern States University	0	9	
	• United States University	0	2	
	• University of Saint Katherine	0	21	
	• University of San Diego	0	123	
52.0205	Operations Management and Supervision	0	66	66
	• Ashford University	0	66	

TOP6 or CIP Code	TOP6 or CIP Program Title	3-Yr Annual Average CC Awards (PY20-21 to PY22-23)	Other Educational Institutions 3-Yr Annual Average Awards (PY19-20 to PY21-22)	Total Average Supply (PY19-20 to PY22-23)
52.0208	E-Commerce/Electronic Commerce	0	25	25
	• Ashford University	0	25	
52.0211	Project Management	0	136	136
	• Ashford University	0	136	
52.0701	Entrepreneurship/Entrepreneurial Studies	0	62	62
	• Ashford University	0	58	
	• John Paul the Great Catholic University	0	4	
52.1001	Human Resources Management/Personnel Administration, General	0	301	301
	• Ashford University	0	293	
	• National University	0	0	
	• Vista Adult School	0	8	
52.1101	International Business/Trade/Commerce	0	179	179
	• Ashford University	0	18	
	• San Diego State University	0	124	
	• University of San Diego	0	37	
52.1401	Marketing/Marketing Management, General	0	162	162
	• Point Loma Nazarene University	0	30	
	• Southern States University	0	31	
	• University of San Diego	0	101	
52.1404	Digital Marketing	0	0	0
	• University of Saint Katherine	0	0	
			Total	8,308

Demand vs. Supply

Comparing labor demand (annual openings) with labor supply¹⁵ suggests that there is an oversupply for these occupations in San Diego County, with 4,428 annual openings and 8,308 awards. Comparatively, there are 51,468 annual openings in California and 58,297 awards, suggesting that there is an oversupply across the state¹⁶ (Exhibit 9).

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

	Demand (Annual Openings)	Supply (Annual Awards)	Supply Gap or Oversupply
San Diego	4,428	8,308	-3,880
California	51,468	58,297	-6,829

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.

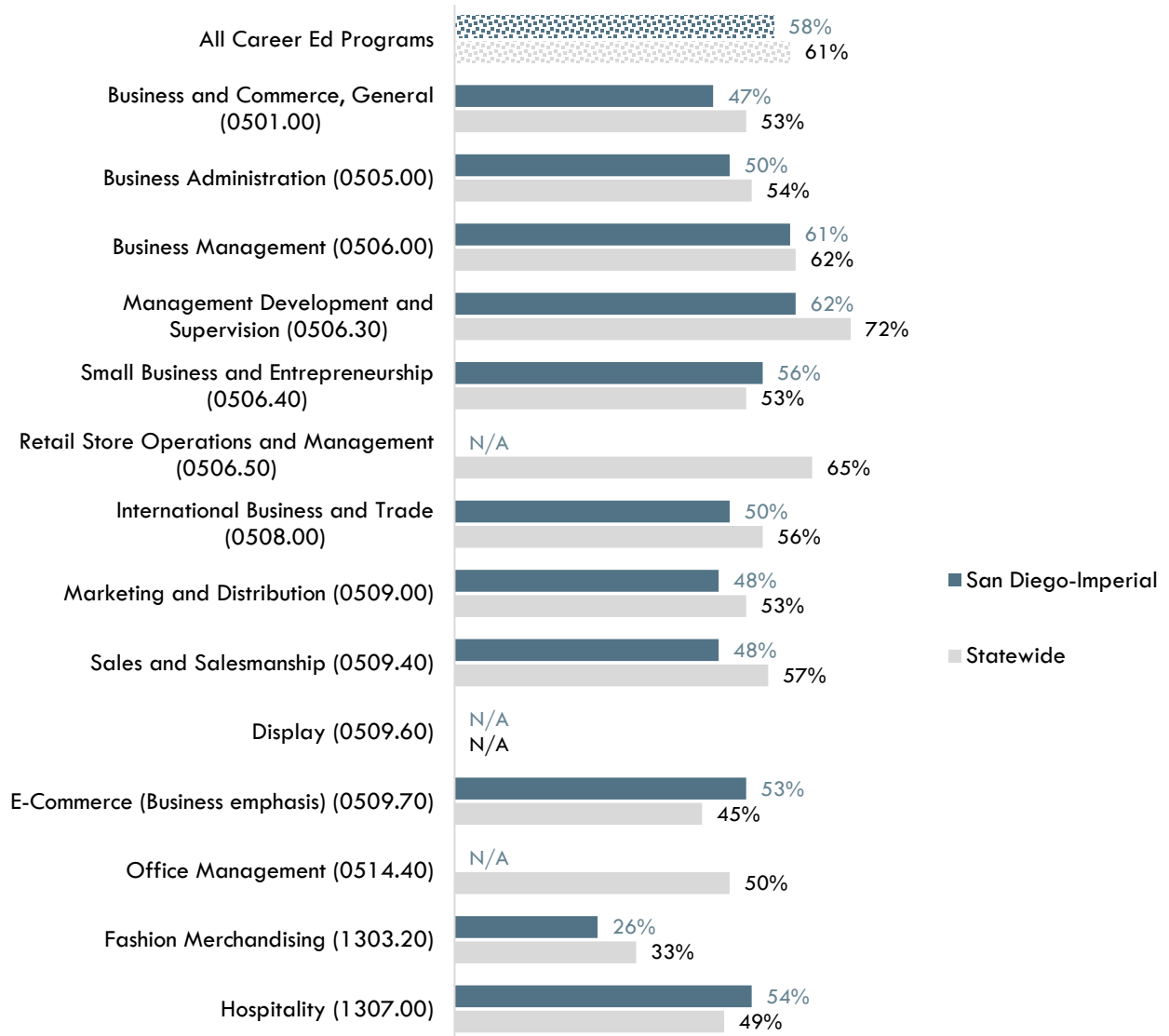
¹⁵ Labor supply can be found from two different sources: Lightcast or the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart. Lightcast uses CIP codes while MIS uses TOP codes. Different coding systems result in differences in the supply numbers.

¹⁶ "Supply and Demand," Centers of Excellence Student Outcomes, coecc.net/our-resources.

Student Outcomes and Regional Comparisons

According to the California Community Colleges DataVista, 26 to 62 percent of students in the San Diego-Imperial region earned a living wage after completing a program related to *Fashion Merchandising Occupations*, compared to 33 to 72 percent statewide and 61 percent of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 10).¹⁷

Exhibit 10: Percentage of Students Who Earned a Living Wage by Program, PY2021-22¹⁸



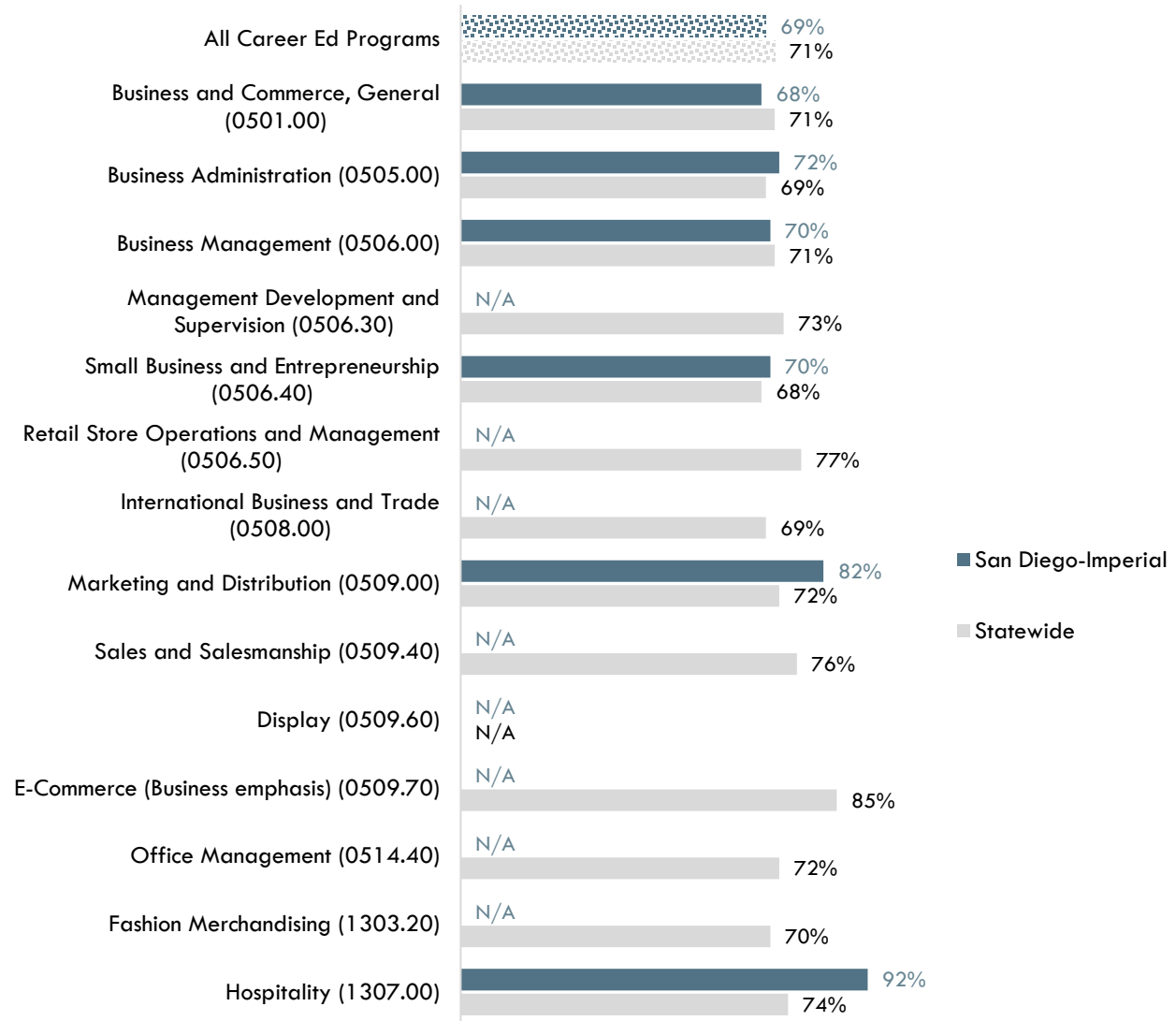
"N/A" indicates insufficient data

¹⁷ DataVista, California Community Colleges, datavista.cccco.edu/.

¹⁸ Most recent year with available data is Program Year 2021-22. Among completers and skills builders who exited, the percentage of students who attained a living wage.

According to the California Community Colleges DataVista, 68 to 92 percent of students in the San Diego-Imperial region obtained a job closely related to their field of study after completing a program related to *Fashion Merchandising Occupations*, compared to 68 to 85 percent statewide and 71 percent 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, PY2020-21²⁰



"N/A" indicates insufficient data

¹⁹ DataVista, California Community Colleges, datavista.cccco.edu/.

²⁰ Most recent year with available data is Program Year 2020-21. 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, 2022 and December 31, 2024, the top five employers in San Diego County for *Fashion Merchandising Occupations* were *CVS Health, Intuit, Crossmark, Thermo Fisher Scientific, and SAS Retail Services* based on online job postings (Exhibit 12).

Exhibit 12: Top Employers for *Fashion Merchandising Occupations* in San Diego County²¹

Top Employers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVS Health • Intuit • Crossmark • Thermo Fisher Scientific • SAS Retail Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walmart • Qualcomm • Goodwill • PetCo • The Coca-Cola Company

Skills

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

Exhibit 13: Top Skills for *Fashion Merchandising Occupations* in San Diego County²²

Specialized Skills	Soft Skills	Software Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merchandising • Marketing • Selling Techniques • Retail Operations • Project Management • Product Management • Key Performance Indicators • New Product Development • Product Knowledge • Inventory Management • Auditing • Visual Merchandising • Finance • Loss Prevention • Operations Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales • Communication • Customer Service • Management • Leadership • Operations • Planning • Coaching • Problem Solving • Detail Oriented • Writing • Lifting Ability • Interpersonal Communications • Scheduling • Self-Motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsoft Excel • Microsoft Office

²¹ Lightcast 2024.04; “Job Posting Analytics.” 2022-2024.

²² Lightcast 2024.04; “Job Posting Analytics.” 2022-2024.

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