



SKILLS THAT SUPPORT THE CCCCCO PUBLIC SAFETY SECTOR

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INLAND EMPIRE/DESERT REGION



FOR LABOR MARKET RESEARCH
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) Public Safety sector is a critical component of the Inland Empire/Desert Region economy. Approximately 5.1% of regional middle-skill jobs are within the public safety sector, accounting for 42,205 jobs in 2024. These occupations are projected to grow by 8.7% by 2029. Middle-skill public safety occupations, those requiring more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree, represent nearly 83% of all public safety-sector jobs and generate over 5,300 annual openings, positioning community colleges and K-12 partners as essential engines of workforce preparation.

This report examines the skills that define middle-skill public safety occupations, relying on employer job postings for four minor occupational groups that together accounted for 42,205 regional jobs in 2024. Using a comparison of two date periods, 2019–2023 and 2024–2025, the analysis identifies which skills are increasing, declining, or persistently in demand across the sector.

Key Findings

Employer demand is shifting toward behavioral and decision-oriented competencies.

Across occupational groups, foundational skills remain the most frequently requested competencies by employers, with investigation, problem-solving, composure, customer service, leadership, and professionalism consistently appearing among the top skills statewide and regionally (e.g., Exhibits 2.1.6, 2.2.7, 2.3.6, 2.4.6). These competencies support safe operations, coordination of public safety activities, and effective response across law enforcement, fire, and emergency management environments.

However, the analysis also shows that more than one-third of all growing skills (35.4% in the IE/D region) are specialized, reflecting rising expectations for operational proficiency and field-response expertise.

These include:

- Fire Protection
- Patrolling
- Physical Security Operations
- Fire Protection Systems

These skills have grown significantly across multiple minor occupational groups (e.g., Exhibits 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 2.3.4, 2.3.5, 2.4.4, 2.4.5) and point to an evolving public safety environment where workers are increasingly expected to operate specialized equipment, manage complex incidents, and apply technical knowledge across diverse field conditions.

Routine foundational and administrative skills are declining across the sector.

The shrinking-skills analysis shows a decline in baseline foundational and administrative competencies, including:

- English Language
- Writing
- Interpersonal Communications
- Clerical Works
- Computer Literacy

Because foundational competencies represent a large share of overall employer demand, most changes in employer demand occur within foundational skill categories rather than specialized technical skills. More than two-thirds of shrinking skills fall within foundational categories (66.1% in IE/D; 75.6% in California), but they overwhelmingly represent competencies that employers increasingly treat as assumed baseline qualifications rather than as differentiating skills (Exhibits 2.1.7, 2.1.8, 2.2.7, 2.2.8, 2.3.7, 2.3.8, 2.4.7). Their reduced appearance in job postings does not indicate that these abilities are becoming less important; rather, employers appear to treat them as minimum expectations that applicants are assumed to possess.

A similar pattern appears within specialized skill categories, with declining skills including broad disciplinary competencies such as law enforcement, crime prevention, fire science, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), equipment maintenance, and public relations. Cross-sector skills account for a notably larger share of declining skills in the IE/D region (26.8%) than in statewide postings (15.6%), suggesting that local employers may place greater emphasis on sector-specific competencies in hiring.

Certifications and licensure requirements vary by occupation but remain important for workforce entry.

Unlike some sectors, there is no single certification required across all public safety occupations. However, many roles require occupation-specific credentials that support field operations and regulatory compliance. The most consistently requested qualifications across occupational groups reflect the technical and emergency response demands of modern public safety work.

Common credentials include:

- Basic Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Certification
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) License
- Paramedic License
- Firefighter I Certification
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification

These credentials serve as key signals of job readiness for specific occupations and often represent minimum requirements for entry into technical public safety roles (e.g., Exhibits 2.1.9, 2.2.9, 2.3.9, 2.4.9). Job advertisements indicate that CPR certification is required across all public safety occupational groups.

Middle-skill public safety work emphasizes decision-making capacity and de-emphasizes administrative skills.

Across the sector, employer job postings increasingly emphasize behavioral and decision-oriented competencies related to leadership, situational awareness, and professionalism, as well as technical competencies tied to field operations and emergency response. Meanwhile, foundational communication and administrative skills are less frequently listed, as these have become assumed baseline requirements.

This reflects a broader shift in public safety workplaces, where the complexity and unpredictability of incidents, alongside growing community expectations and evolving legal and regulatory frameworks, have elevated the demands placed on personnel. As a result, middle-skill public safety workers are expected to combine strong interpersonal judgment with specialized operational knowledge to manage complex incidents, coordinate responses, and interact effectively with the communities they serve.

Implications for Education and Training in the Inland Empire/Desert Region

The regional shift in skill demand points to several opportunities for K-12 and community college programs to strengthen workforce alignment:

1. Align curriculum with rising foundational and technical skills.

Programs should integrate critical thinking, situational decision-making, leadership, professionalism, and safety procedures, alongside field operations competencies such as incident response, investigation techniques, and communication protocols, which show the strongest growth across occupational groups. Coursework, simulations, and scenario-based training can help students develop both the interpersonal and technical capabilities employers increasingly prioritize.

2. Embed industry-recognized credentials within program structures.

Given employer demand for credentials such as CPR certification, POST certification, EMT licensure, and Firefighter certifications, colleges should align coursework and hands-on training with these qualifications. K-12 pathways can strengthen alignment by offering pre-certification exposure, dual enrollment, and career technical education programs focused on public safety careers.

3. Strengthen K-12 to community college pathway alignment.

K-12 public services pathways can use the qualification and skill findings to align coursework with postsecondary expectations. High schools offering pathways in public safety, emergency response, and legal practices can integrate early exposure to skills such as professionalism, leadership, situational decision-making, and teamwork, while providing early familiarity with public safety practices and technologies. Dual enrollment opportunities, introductory emergency response training, and scenario-based learning can help students build foundational readiness and transition more smoothly into community college programs and middle-skill public safety careers.

Conclusion

The CCCCO public safety sector is a cornerstone of the Inland Empire/Desert Region workforce, and employer demand within this sector is shifting toward both behavioral and decision-oriented foundational competencies and higher-level technical skills related to field operations and emergency response. At the same time, routine foundational and administrative skills are declining in postings as these competencies become assumed baseline requirements.

This report is part of a ten-sector series that provides a skills-based roadmap to strengthen workforce preparation across K-12, community colleges, and regional partners. Together with forthcoming analyses on automation, artificial intelligence, and economic transformation, this work will guide the development of programs that equip learners with the skills required for modern public safety careers.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to strengthen community college program development and review by aligning regional education pathways with the evolving skill needs of the Inland Empire/Desert economy. Using the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) priority sector framework as its foundation, this analysis focuses on the skills that define and sustain the region's middle-skill public safety workforce, providing research for K-12 schools and community colleges to examine how well programs prepare students for occupations within this priority sector.¹

Within this framework, the CCCCCO Public Safety sector is one of the smaller yet faster-growing areas of middle-skill employment. This sector accounted for over 42,200 jobs in 2024 and is projected to grow by nearly 9% through 2029. A region-wide skills assessment of the CCCCCO public safety sector may assist educators and workforce developers in understanding the skills needed to support employment in this sector.

This report examines the specialized and foundational skills appearing in employer job postings for middle-skill public safety occupations. Middle-skill occupations are those that typically require more than a high school diploma, but less than a four-year degree, and are largely associated with community college CTE programs, placing community colleges at the center of preparing the workforce that supports regional public safety.

This report is one of a ten-part series that leverages the CCCCCO priority sector association to the region's middle-skill occupations. These sector reports will be released ahead of a companion analysis examining how emerging technologies are reshaping skill demand for middle-skill occupations. That research will sit alongside the sector series to help colleges understand both current and future drivers of workforce change. Before the release of this broader analysis, the COE will complete the sector reports, providing a full view of skill needs across the regional economy.

The ten-part skills analysis reports will be released in the following order:

1. Health
2. Energy, Construction, and Utilities
3. Advanced Manufacturing
4. Information and Communication Technologies/Digital Media (ICT/DM)
5. Business and Entrepreneurship
6. Advanced Transportation and Logistics
7. Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism
8. Public Safety
9. Education and Human Development
10. Agriculture, Water, and Environmental Technologies

The report seeks to answer three major questions:

- Section 1: How does the middle-skill public safety workforce support the regional economy?
- Section 2: What skills are essential for middle-skill public safety workers?
- Section 3: How can skills information be used to guide career education program development in the Inland Empire/Desert region?

¹ <https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Workforce-and-Economic-Development/Strong-Workforce-Program/SWP-Archive/Events/K12-SWP-Industry-Sector-Crosswalk>

METHODOLOGY

This report analyzes the skills essential to the middle-skill workforce in occupations associated with the California Community College Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO) public safety sector. The Chancellor’s Office grouped career and technical education programs into twelve priority sectors, further referred to as CCCCCO priority sectors.² The grouping of community college programs by CCCCCO priority sector facilitates analysis of programs and occupations with similar knowledge bases and skill sets. The Center of Excellence, in collaboration with the CCCCCO, developed a crosswalk that identifies vocational occupations associated with each program code. This crosswalk serves as the foundation for program and workforce assessments by the CCCCCO priority sector. Please note that the CCCCCO priority sector should not be confused with the industry employment sectors identified by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Additionally, only ten CCCCCO reports will be developed as the Life Sciences/Biotech and Global Trade priority sectors are typically rolled up into the larger sectors, Health and Business and Entrepreneurship, respectively.

Skills considered essential to the CCCCCO public safety sector occupations were identified through an analysis of employer job advertisements. Job advertisement information, such as skills and qualifications, was obtained from Lightcast’s Job Posting Analytics, which aggregates job advertisements posted over 220,000 current and historical sources.³ To provide a more nuanced perspective and to ensure the utility of this report, skills and qualifications information are analyzed at the minor occupation group level.

The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system aggregates occupation information by four levels: major group, minor group, broad occupation, and detailed occupation.⁴ This report relies on the minor occupational groupings of detailed occupations for the skills analysis, as they provide greater detail than the broader occupational groups and ensure the feasibility and readability of this study, which would be lacking in a detailed occupation-based skills analysis.

The following is an example of the SOC coding structure for Police and Sheriff’s Patrol Officers (33-3051).

- Major Occupational Group: Protective Service Occupations (33-0000)
 - Minor Occupational Group: Law Enforcement Workers (33-3000)
 - Broad Occupation: Police Officers (33-3050)
 - Detailed Occupation: Police and Sheriff’s Patrol Officers (33-3051)

Minor occupational groups enable this report to focus on occupations connected by similar work activities and area of focus in the priority sector, in order to determine what skills are either currently most in-demand, the demand is growing rapidly, or the demand is shrinking rapidly. This data will allow program designers, owners, and administrators to have a window into what skills employers need in their workforce for each group of occupations and how to plan for growing future needs.

This analysis focuses on minor occupational groups comprising three or more detailed occupations related to the CCCCCO public safety sector. This ensures that the occupations are grouped by similar work activities and have sufficient job advertisements to analyze. As a result of this requirement, three occupations in the CCCCCO public safety sector are excluded from this skills analysis. A list of these occupations is in the Appendix.

² DataVista Sector Explanation. 2024. Retrieved from: <https://datavista.cccco.edu/resources/7>

³ Lightcast. Job Posting Analytics (JPA) Methodology. 2025. Retrieved from: <https://kb.lightcast.io/en/articles/6957446-job-posting-analytics-jpa-methodology>

⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics. Standard Occupational Classification and Coding Structure. 2018. Retrieved from: https://www.bls.gov/soc/2018/soc_2018_class_and_coding_structure.pdf

The skills analysis compares skills posted over a two-year period (January 2024 – December 2025) to a historical five-year period (January 2019 – December 2023) to identify skills that are growing and shrinking in terms of their prevalence in job ads. This report intentionally uses a two-year period for the current analysis to ensure a sufficient volume of recent job advertisements and avoid the instability that can come with relying on a single year of data. The five-year historical period provides a stable benchmark of longer-term industry skill patterns and reduces the influence of short-term fluctuations. This analysis also illuminates the skills with the highest share of job ads in the most recent period, addressing employer demand for skills that are persistently in demand across time.

One goal of this research was to include skills in this report that are most significant to the CCCC public safety sector workforce, based on their frequency in employer job postings. To ensure the analysis focuses on skills that employers consistently value, only skills appearing frequently in job ads within each minor occupational group during the most recent period (January 2024 – December 2025) were included.

The Lightcast taxonomy organizes skills into a tiered structure that groups related competencies according to the type of work or task they support. Within this framework, skills are categorized as common, specialized, or software skills. To determine which skills should be included in our analysis, we examined how frequently individual skills appear in job postings. We calculated the median share of job ads in which common skills appear across all occupations, providing a baseline measure of typical skill prevalence. Our analysis found that common skills typically appeared in roughly five percent of job postings across occupations. We used this median value as the threshold for determining which skills were included in our research.

The five percent threshold is sufficient to capture in-demand skills while eliminating skills included in job ads that are not essential for employment in the minor occupational group. Additionally, in-demand skills found in employer job ads posted throughout California are also included in this analysis to provide context for the regional skills data, highlighting nuances of the regional employment environment.

Foundational skills, or common skills, “are prevalent across many different occupations and industries, including both personal attributes and learned skills.”⁵ Since these skills are found across industries, they are considered foundational for the workplace. Specialized skills, also known as technical skills, equip an individual to perform specific tasks effectively.⁶ Our analysis of specialized skills will indicate whether they were specific to a minor occupation group, identified across multiple minor occupation groups, or across sectors.

Specialized skills are classified based on how broadly they appear across job advertisements. Skills appearing only within a single occupational group are considered occupation-specific, while those found across multiple occupational groups within the same industry are classified as industry-specific. Skills appearing across occupations in multiple industries are categorized as cross-sector, and those appearing across most occupational groups are reclassified as foundational skills.

⁵ Lightcast. Skills Glossary. 2023. Retrieved from: <https://kb.lightcast.io/en/articles/7934140-skills>

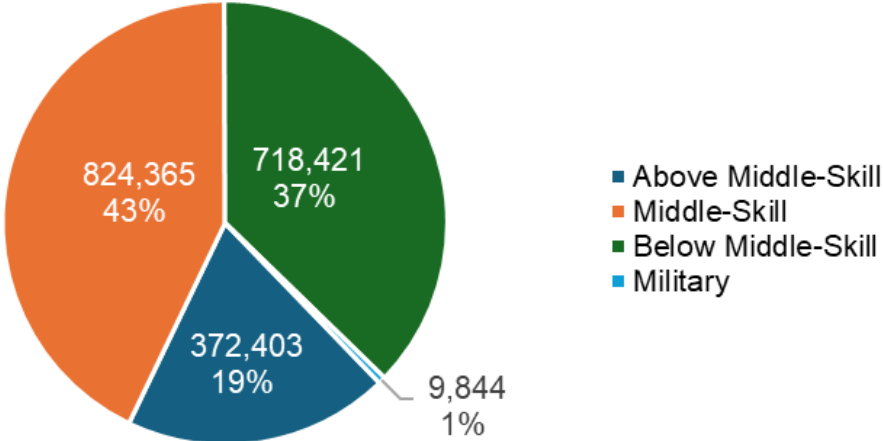
⁶ Ibid.

SECTION 1: HOW DOES THE MIDDLE-SKILL PUBLIC SAFETY WORKFORCE SUPPORT THE REGIONAL ECONOMY?

1.1 REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT

In 2024, there were nearly 1.93 million jobs in the Inland Empire/Desert Region. Exhibit 1.1.1 displays the distribution of regional jobs in 2024 by skill level. Approximately 824,400 or 43% of regional jobs are middle skill. The number of regional jobs is projected to increase by more than 139,000 through 2029, representing 7% growth. While there are over 257,500 annual job openings expected between 2024 and 2029 across all skill levels, these employment opportunities are not evenly distributed across skill levels. Approximately 41% of annual job openings in the Inland Empire/Desert Region are expected to be for middle-skill workers, totaling over 107,500.

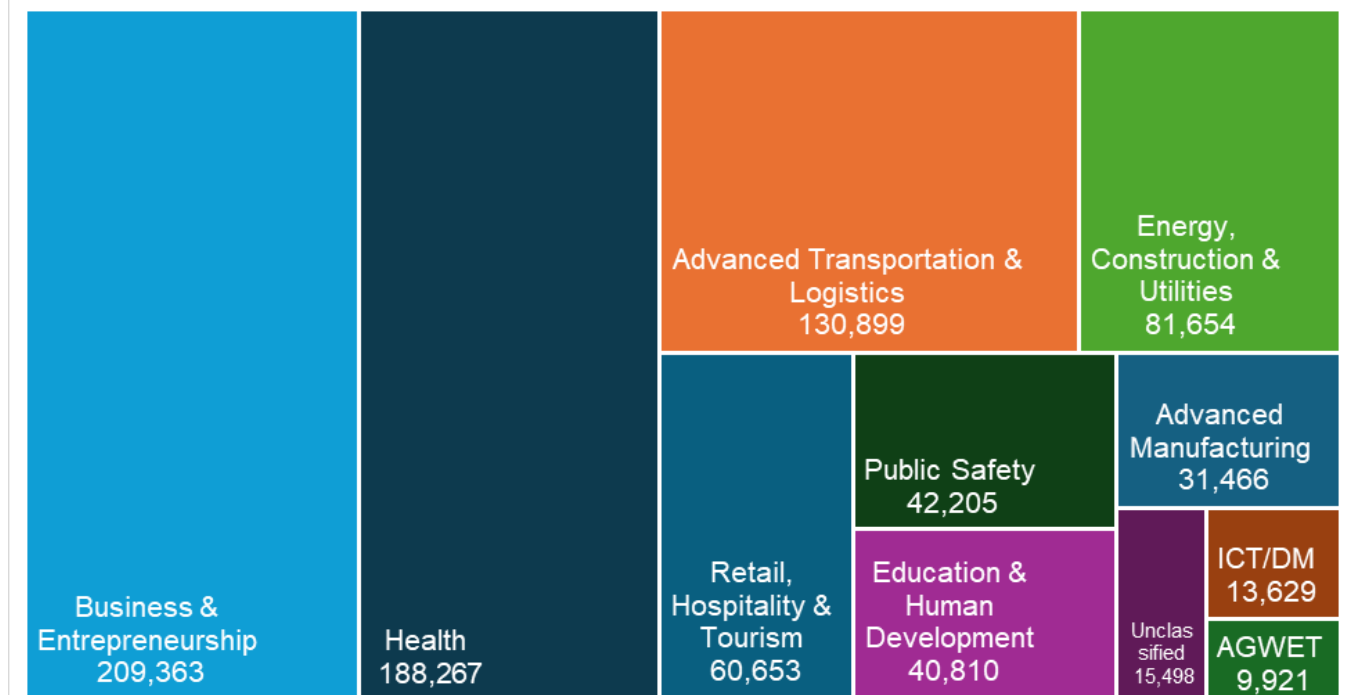
Exhibit 1.1.1: Distribution of Employment by Skill Level, Inland Empire/Desert Region, 2024



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Occupation Table, QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed

Exhibit 1.1.2 displays the distribution of middle-skill employment by CCCC priority sector in the Inland Empire/Desert Region in 2024. The CCCC public safety sector is the fifth-smallest in the Inland Empire in terms of middle-skill employment, with 42,205 jobs in 2024. Despite containing only 5.1% of regional middle-skill jobs, public safety employment is projected to grow by 8.7%. Additionally, this CCCC priority sector is projected to provide over 5,300 annual job openings between 2024 and 2029.

Exhibit 1.1.2: Distribution of Middle-Skill Employment by CCCC Priority Sector, Inland Empire/Desert Region, 2024



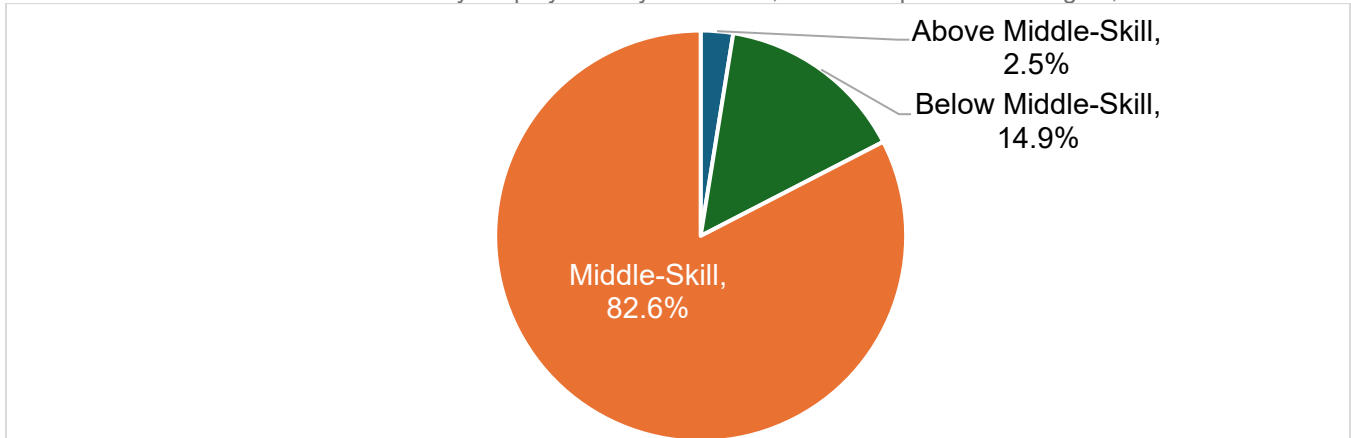
Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Occupation Table, QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed

1.2: PUBLIC SAFETY SECTOR OVERVIEW

There are 11 TOP codes in the CCCC public safety sector that prepare students for employment. Across all levels of educational attainment, experience, and training, there are 28 occupations related to the CCCC public safety sector. At over 51,100 jobs across all education levels, only 2.7% of regional jobs are related to the CCCC public safety sector. While the CCCC public safety sector is not a major source of regional employment, it plays a vital role in the regional economy. The share of regional public safety employment is higher than that of California as a whole (2.3%) and the national average (2.4%). Regional public safety employment is projected to grow by 8.6% through 2029, outpacing projections for California (6.2%) and the nation (3.4%).

Exhibit 1.2.1 displays the share of CCCC public safety sector jobs by skill level in the Inland Empire/Desert Region in 2024. In the CCCC public safety sector, 20 middle-skill occupations account for over 42,200 jobs, or 82.6% of the sector's jobs, in 2024. There are six public safety occupations below middle skill that accounted for 7,600 jobs in 2024, or 14.9% of regional public safety employment. There are only two above middle-skill occupations in the CCCC public safety sector, accounting for 2.5% of sector jobs.

Exhibit 1.2.1: Distribution of Public Safety Employment by Skill Level, Inland Empire/Desert Region, 2024



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Occupation Table, QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed

Exhibit 1.2.2 displays minor occupational group employment for middle-skill occupations in the CCCC public safety sector. This report provides an in-depth skills analysis of four minor occupational groups within the public safety sector, which together account for over 40,900 jobs in 2024. See Appendix for a list of the three middle-skill public safety sector occupations not included in the skills analysis. Middle-skill public safety occupations are projected to grow by 9% through 2029, primarily driven by job growth in the other protective service workers and law enforcement workers minor groups, which are projected to contribute nearly 75% of middle-skill public safety job growth.

Exhibit 1.2.2: Middle-skill Public Safety Employment by Minor Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region, 2024-2029

SOC Minor Group Title	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2024 - 2029 % Change	Average Annual Openings	Occupation Count
Other Protective Service Workers	22,075	23,695	7%	3,221	3
Law Enforcement Workers	11,916	12,914	8%	1,198	6
Supervisors of Protective Service Workers	3,834	4,273	11%	401	5
Firefighting and Prevention Workers	3,079	3,534	15%	333	3
Middle-Skill Total	40,904	44,415	9%	5,154	17

Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Occupation Table, QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed

The following section will analyze the specialized skills, foundational skills, qualifications, and programs for the above minor occupational groups.

SECTION 2: WHAT SKILLS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR MIDDLE-SKILL PUBLIC SAFETY WORKERS?

2.1: OTHER PROTECTIVE SERVICE WORKERS

Exhibit 2.1.1 displays current and projected employment data for the other protective service workers occupational group from 2024 to 2029. The other protective service workers occupational group contains three occupations that had nearly 22,100 jobs in 2024. This occupational group is projected to grow by 7%, adding over 1,600 jobs to the region by 2029. This occupational group is projected to have over 3,200 annual job openings over the next five years.

Exhibit 2.1.1: Current and Projected Employment for the Other Protective Service Workers Occupational Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region, 2024-2029

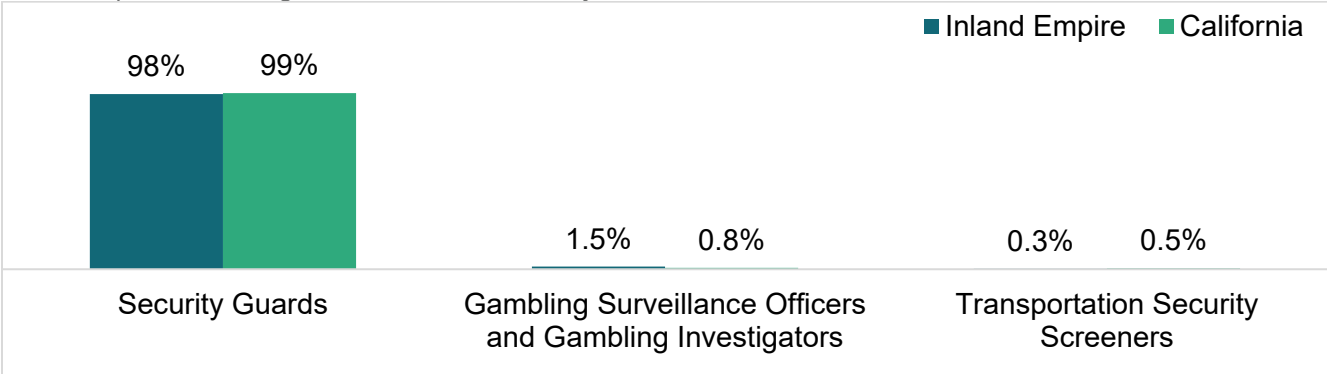
Occupation Title	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2024-2029 % Change	Average Annual Openings	Median Hourly Earnings
Security Guards	21,483	23,071	7%	3,151	\$18.71
Transportation Security Screeners	450	467	4%	48	\$32.84
Gambling Surveillance Officers and Gambling Investigators	142	157	11%	22	\$21.94
Total	22,075	23,695	7%	3,221	

Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Occupation Table, QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed

Over the last 24 months, from January 2024 to December 2025, referred to as the “most recent period” going forward, there were 8,088 job ads posted for the other protective service workers occupational group in the Inland Empire, compared to 71,738 across California. In the previous period, from January 2019 to December 2023, there were 28,688 job ads posted for this occupational group in the Inland Empire and 262,458 in California.

Exhibit 2.1.2 displays the share of job advertisements by occupation for the other protective service workers occupational group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region and California. Nearly all job advertisements for the other protective service workers occupational group were posted for security guards. The scale of these occupational job advertisements may influence the skills most frequently requested by employers for this occupational group.

Exhibit 2.1.2: Share of Advertisements by Occupation for the Other Protective Service Workers Occupational Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region and California, January 2024 – December 2025



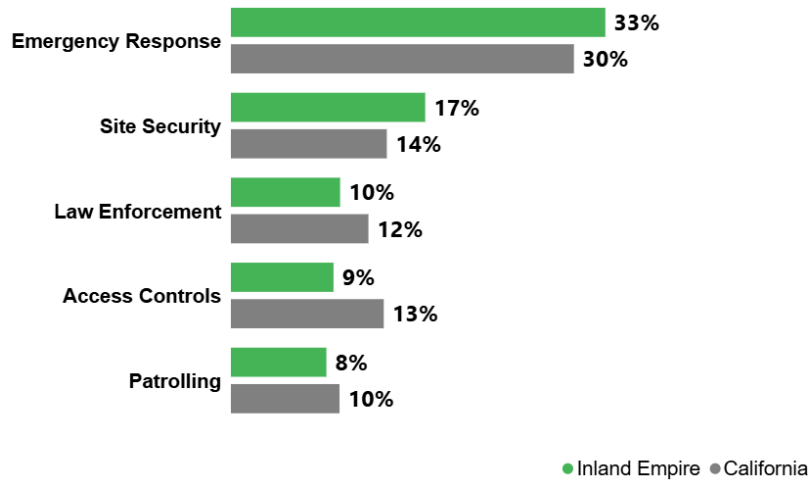
Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Specialized Skills

Exhibit 2.1.3 displays the top specialized skills included in employer job advertisements for the other protective service workers occupational group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region and their share of job

ads in California. The top skills may provide insight into the specialized skills employers find critical to employment.

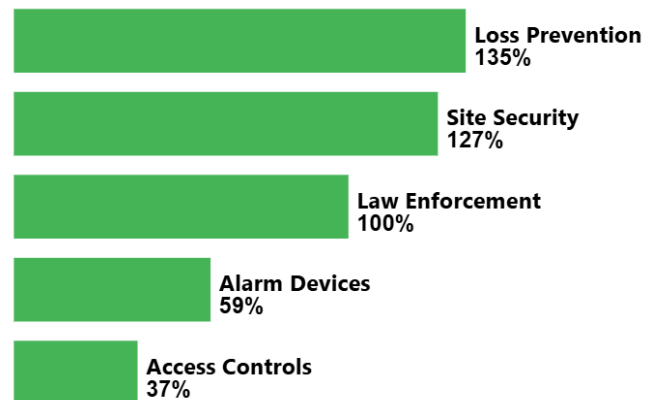
Exhibit 2.1.3: Top Specialized Skills from Employer Job Ads for the Other Protective Service Workers Occupational Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region and California, January 2024 – December 2025



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Exhibit 2.1.4 displays the specialized skills that have increased or decreased the most in their share of job advertisements for the other protective service workers occupational group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region, based on a comparison of the two time periods. Recent employer demand (2024-2025) for candidates with loss prevention, site security, and law enforcement skills has more than doubled compared to the previous period (2019-2023). Specialized skills, which are decreasing in prevalence among the other protective service workers occupational group, are not available.

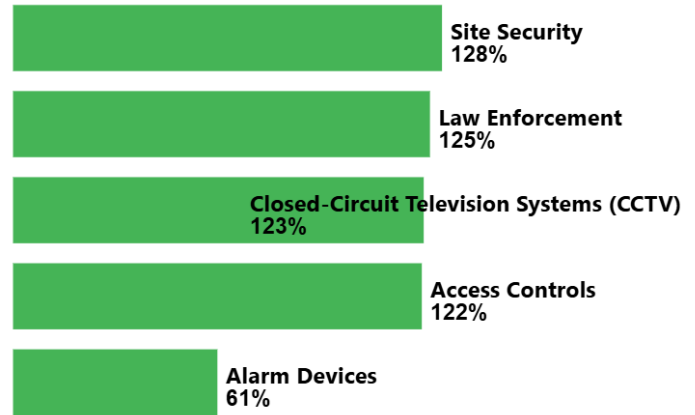
Exhibit 2.1.4: Specialized Skills that Have Increased or Decreased the Most in Their Share of Job Advertisements for the Other Protective Service Workers Occupational Group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Exhibit 2.1.5 displays the specialized skills that have increased or decreased the most in their share of job advertisements for the other protective service workers occupational group in California, based on a comparison of the two time periods. Recent employer demand (2024-2025) for candidates with site security, law enforcement, closed-circuit television systems (CCTV), and access controls skills has increased by over 120% compared to the previous period (2019-2023). Specialized skills, which are decreasing in prevalence among the other protective service workers occupational group, are not available.

Exhibit 2.1.5: Specialized Skills that Have Increased or Decreased the Most in Their Share of Job Advertisements for the Other Protective Service Workers Occupational Group in California

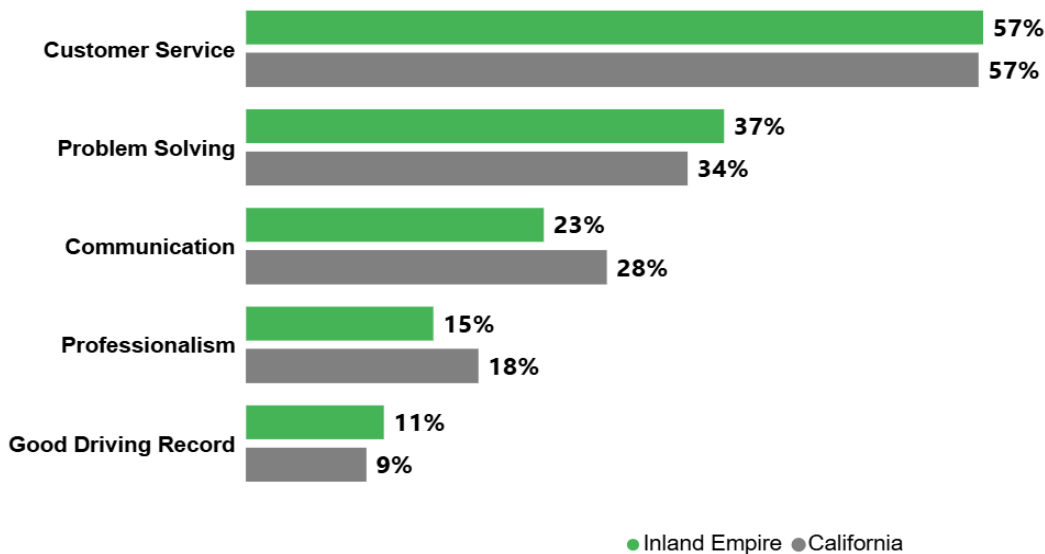


Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Foundational Skills

Exhibit 2.1.6 displays the top foundational skills included in employer job advertisements for the other protective service workers occupational group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region and their share of job ads in California. The top skills may provide insight into the foundational skills employers find critical to employment. Customer service was the top foundational skill for this occupational group across both regions.

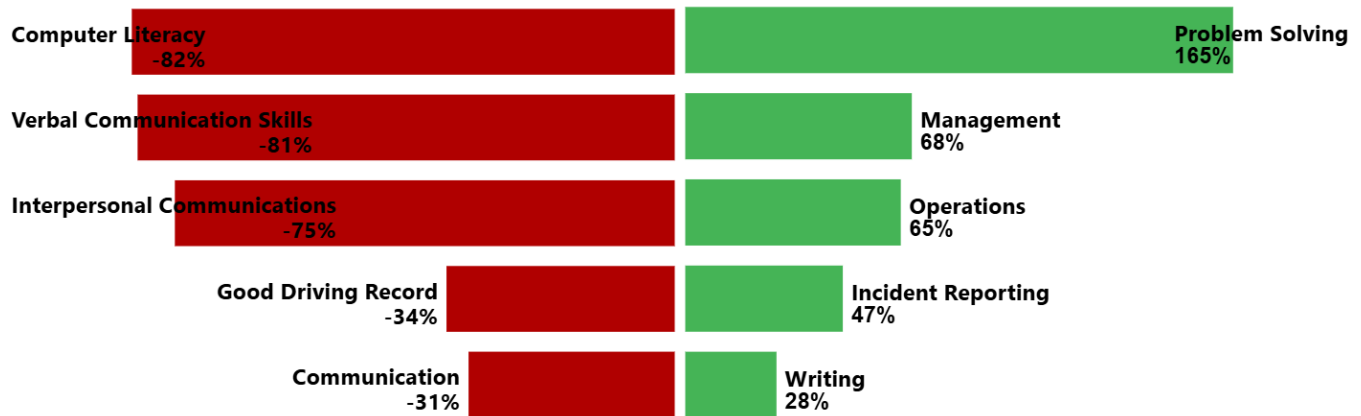
Exhibit 2.1.6: Top Foundational Skills from Employer Job Ads for the Other Protective Service Workers Occupational Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region and California, January 2024 – December 2025



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Exhibit 2.1.7 displays the foundational skills that have increased or decreased the most in their share of job advertisements for the other protective service workers occupational group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region, based on a comparison of the two time periods. Recent employer demand (2024-2025) for candidates with problem-solving skills has increased by 165% since the previous period (2019-2023). Employers' desire for candidates with computer literacy, verbal communication skills, and interpersonal communication skills has decreased by 75% or more between the two periods in the Inland Empire.

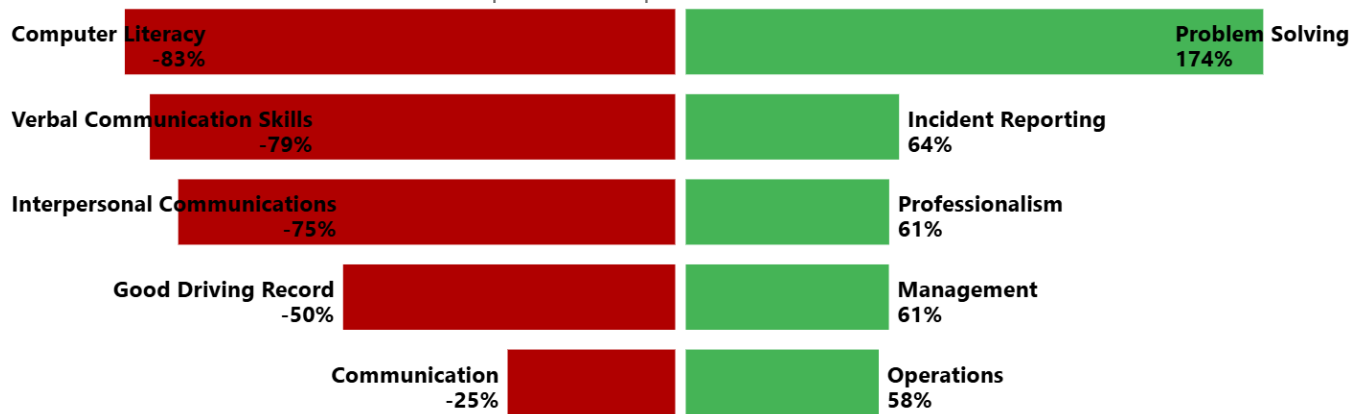
Exhibit 2.1.7: Foundational Skills that Have Increased or Decreased the Most in Their Share of Job Advertisements for the Other Protective Service Workers Occupational Group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Exhibit 2.1.8 displays the foundational skills that have increased or decreased the most in their share of job advertisements for the other protective service workers occupational group in California, based on a comparison of the two time periods. Recent employer demand (2024-2025) for candidates with problem-solving skills has increased by 174% compared to the previous period (2019-2023). In California, employers’ demand for candidates with computer literacy, verbal communication skills, and interpersonal communication skills has decreased by 75% or more between the two periods.

Exhibit 2.1.8: Foundational Skills that Have Increased or Decreased the Most in Their Share of Job Advertisements for the Other Protective Service Workers Occupational Group in California



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Qualifications and Programs

Exhibit 2.1.9 displays the qualifications most frequently included in employer job advertisements for the other protective service workers occupational group. A valid driver’s license was the most frequently requested qualification in employer job advertisements, appearing in 35% or more of job ads. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification was included in 11% of job advertisements, highlighting that employers expect other protective service workers to address medical emergencies in addition to providing protective services.

Exhibit 2.1.9: Top Qualifications Skills from Employer Job Ads for the Other Protective Service Workers Occupational Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region and California, January 2024 – December 2025

Inland Empire/Desert Region		California	
Qualification	Share	Qualification	Share
Valid Driver's License (CDL Class C)	37%	Valid Driver's License (CDL Class C)	35%

Inland Empire/Desert Region		California	
Qualification	Share	Qualification	Share
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	11%	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	11%
First Aid Certification	9%	First Aid Certification	9%
Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Certification	3%	Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Certification	3%
Security Guard License	2%	Security Guard License	2%

Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

The following community college programs prepare students for employment in the other protective service workers occupational group.

- Industrial and Transportation Security (2105.30)
- Other Public and Protective Services (2199.00)

2.2: LAW ENFORCEMENT WORKERS

Exhibit 2.2.1 displays current and projected employment data for the law enforcement workers occupational group from 2024 to 2029. The law enforcement workers occupational group comprises six occupations, with over 11,900 jobs in 2024. This occupational group is projected to grow by 8%, adding nearly 1,000 jobs to the region through 2029. The law enforcement workers occupational group is projected to have nearly 1,200 job openings available annually.

Exhibit 2.2.1: Current and Projected Employment of the Law Enforcement Workers Occupational Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region, 2024-2029

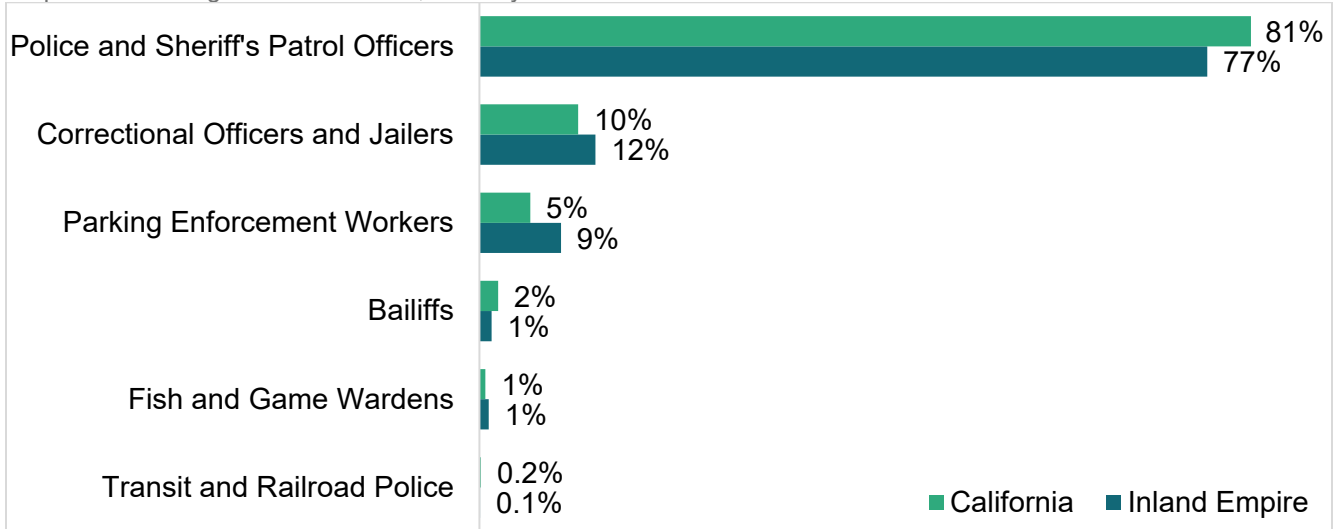
Occupation Title	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2024-2029 % Change	Average Annual Openings	Median Hourly Earnings
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	6,559	7,413	13%	689	\$50.63
Correctional Officers and Jailers	5,169	5,289	2%	486	\$44.67
Parking Enforcement Workers	75	85	12%	9	\$23.87
Transit and Railroad Police	48	51	7%	4	\$47.53
Fish and Game Wardens	41	41	0%	4	\$40.50
Bailiffs	25	36	44%	6	\$19.36
Total	11,916	12,914	8%	1,198	

Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Occupation Table, QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed

Over the last 24 months, from January 2024 to December 2025, referred to as the “most recent period” going forward, there were 1,267 job ads posted for the law enforcement workers occupational group in the Inland Empire, compared to 11,794 across California. In the previous period, from January 2019 to December 2023, there were 2,800 job ads posted for this occupational group in the Inland Empire and 29,123 in California.

Exhibit 2.2.2 displays the share of job advertisements by occupation for the law enforcement workers occupational group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region and California. Over 80% of regional job ads were posted for police and sheriff’s patrol officers. The scale of these occupational job advertisements may influence the skills most frequently requested by employers for this occupational group.

Exhibit 2.2.2: Share of Advertisements by Occupation for the Law Enforcement Workers Occupational Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region and California, January 2024 – December 2025

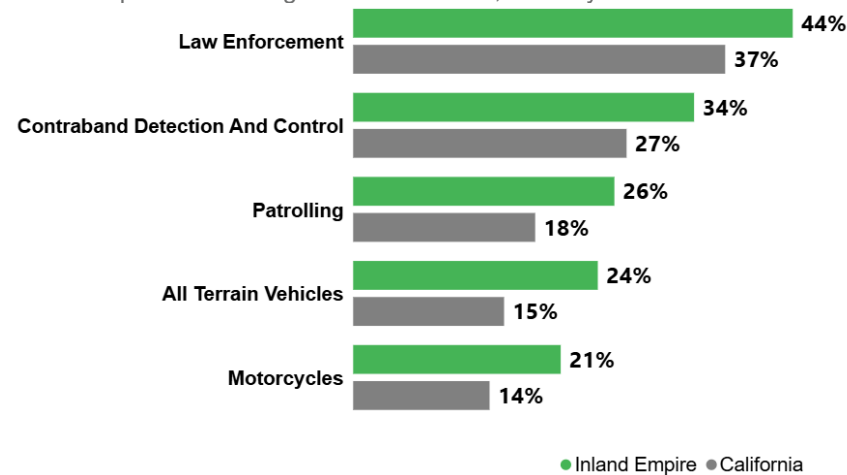


Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Specialized Skills

Exhibit 2.2.3 displays the top specialized skills included in employer job advertisements for the law enforcement workers occupational group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region and their share of job ads in California. The top skills may provide insight into the specialized skills employers find critical to employment.

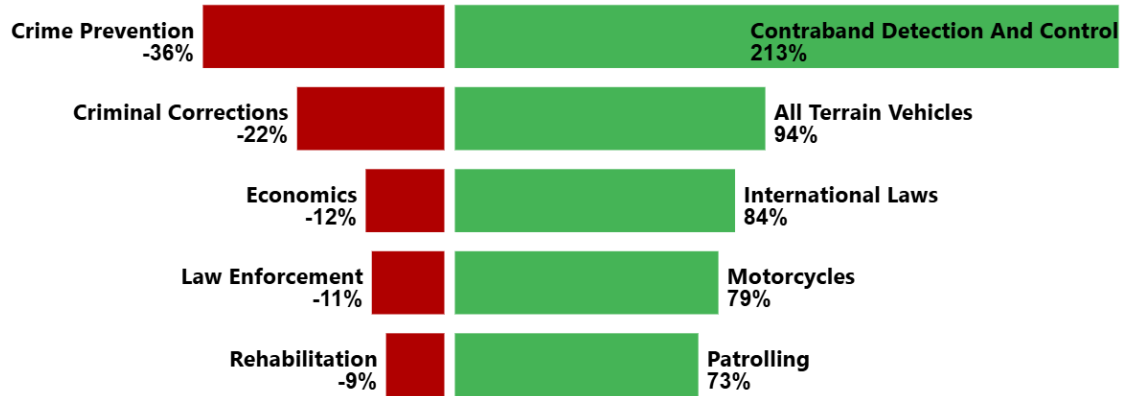
Exhibit 2.2.3: Top Specialized Skills from Employer Job Ads for the Law Enforcement Workers Occupational Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region and California, January 2024 – December 2025



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Exhibit 2.2.4 displays the specialized skills that have increased or decreased the most in their share of job advertisements for the law enforcement workers occupational group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region, based on a comparison of the two time periods. Recent employer demand (2024-2025) for candidates with contraband detection and control skills has increased by 213% compared to the previous period (2019-2023). Employers' desire for candidates with crime prevention skills has decreased by 36% between the two periods in the Inland Empire.

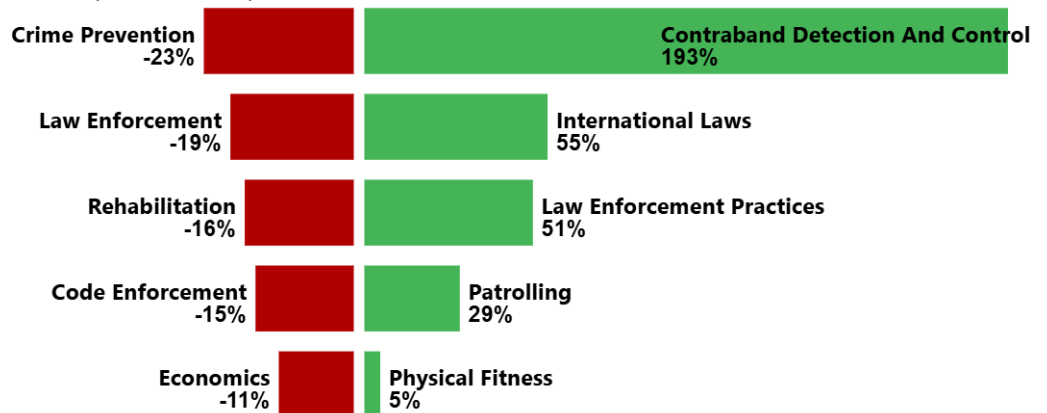
Exhibit 2.2.4: Specialized Skills that Have Increased or Decreased the Most in Their Share of Job Advertisements for the Law Enforcement Workers Occupational Group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Exhibit 2.2.5 displays the specialized skills that have increased or decreased the most in their share of job advertisements for the law enforcement workers occupational group in California, based on a comparison of the two time periods. Recent employer demand (2024-2025) for candidates with contraband detection and control skills has increased by 193% compared to the previous period (2019-2023). In California, employers’ desire for candidates with crime prevention skills has decreased by 23% between the two periods.

Exhibit 2.2.5: Specialized Skills that Have Increased or Decreased the Most in Their Share of Job Advertisements for the Law Enforcement Workers Occupational Group in California

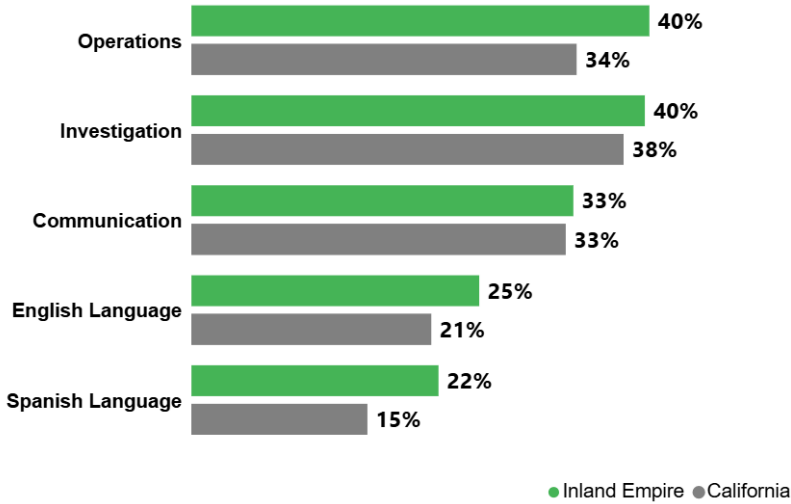


Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Foundational Skills

Exhibit 2.2.6 displays the top foundational skills included in employer job advertisements for law enforcement workers in the Inland Empire/Desert Region and their share of job ads in California. The top skills may provide insight into the foundational skills employers find critical to employment. Operations, investigation, and communication were the top foundational skills for this occupational group across both regions.

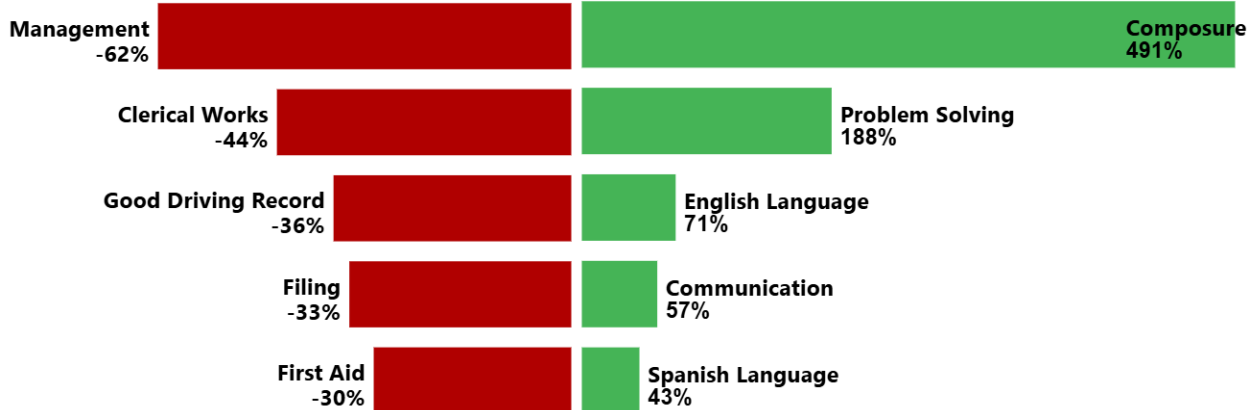
Exhibit 2.2.6: Top Foundational Skills from Employer Job Ads for the Law Enforcement Workers Occupational Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region and California, January 2024 – December 2025



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Exhibit 2.2.7 displays the foundational skills that have increased or decreased the most in their share of job advertisements for the law enforcement workers occupational group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region, based on a comparison of the two time periods. Recent employer demand (2024-2025) for candidates with composure skills has increased by 491% since the previous period (2019-2023). Employers’ desire for candidates with management skills has decreased by 62% in the Inland Empire between the two periods.

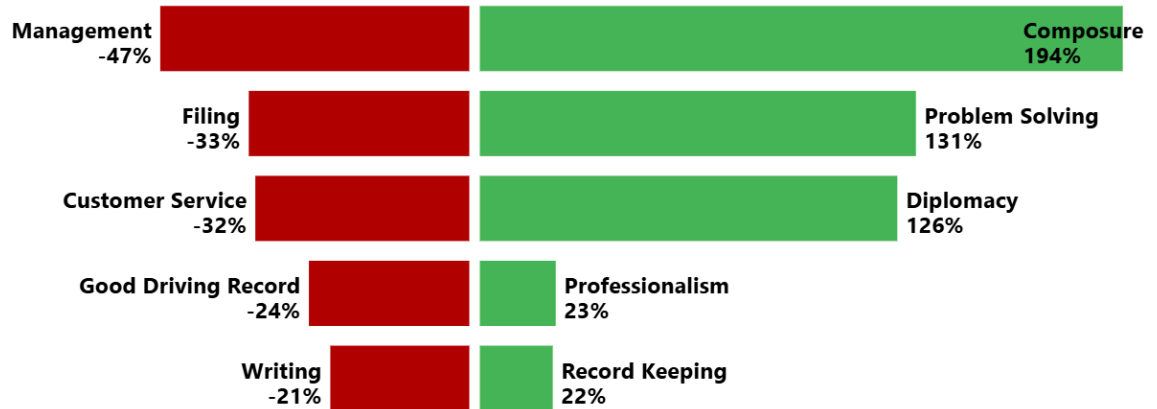
Exhibit 2.2.7: Foundational Skills that Have Increased or Decreased the Most in Their Share of Job Advertisements for the Law Enforcement Workers Occupational Group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Exhibit 2.2.8 displays the foundational skills that have increased or decreased the most in their share of job advertisements for the law enforcement workers occupational group in California, based on a comparison of the two time periods. Recent employer demand (2024-2025) for candidates with composure, problem-solving, and diplomacy skills has increased by over 100% compared to the previous period (2019-2023). In California, employers’ desire for candidates with management skills has decreased by 47% between the two periods.

Exhibit 2.2.8: Foundational Skills that Have Increased or Decreased the Most in Their Share of Job Advertisements for the Law Enforcement Workers Occupational Group in California



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Qualifications and Programs

Exhibit 2.2.9 displays the qualifications most frequently included in employer job advertisements for the law enforcement workers occupational group. A valid driver’s license was the most frequently requested qualification in employer job advertisements, appearing in 37% of regional job ads. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification was included in 10% of regional job advertisements, highlighting that employers expect law enforcement workers to address medical emergencies in addition to providing protective services.

Exhibit 2.2.9: Top Qualifications Skills from Employer Job Ads for the Law Enforcement Workers Occupational Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region and California, January 2024 – December 2025

Inland Empire/Desert Region		California	
Qualification	Share	Qualification	Share
Valid Driver's License (CDL Class C)	37%	Valid Driver's License (CDL Class C)	39%
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	10%	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	7%
First Aid Certification	8%	First Aid Certification	7%
Peace Officer Standards And Training (POST) Certificate	5%	Peace Officer Standards And Training (POST) Certificate	4%

Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

The following community college programs prepare students for employment in the law enforcement workers occupational group.

- Administration of Justice (2105.00)
- Corrections (2105.10)
- Forensics, Evidence, and Investigation (2105.40)
- Modern Policing (2105.60)
- Other Public and Protective Services (2199.00)
- Police Academy (2105.50)
- Probation and Parole (2105.20)

2.3: SUPERVISORS OF PROTECTIVE SERVICE WORKERS

Exhibit 2.3.1 displays current and projected employment data for the supervisors of protective service workers occupational group from 2024 to 2029. The supervisors of protective service workers occupational group contain five occupations that had over 3,800 jobs in 2024. This occupational group is projected to grow by 11% through 2029, adding over 400 jobs to the region over this period. This occupational group is projected to have more than 400 job openings annually.

Exhibit 2.3.1: Current and Projected Employment for the Supervisors of Protective Service Workers Occupational Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region, 2024-2029

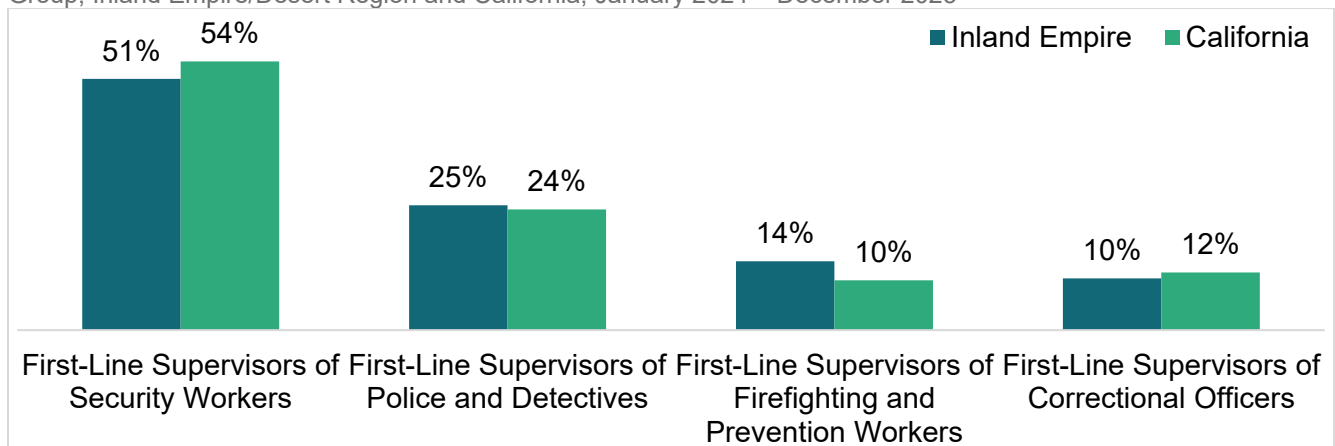
Occupation Title	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2024-2029 % Change	Average Annual Openings	Median Hourly Earnings
First-Line Supervisors of Police and Detectives	1,422	1,605	13%	134	\$75.31
First-Line Supervisors of Security Workers	951	1,046	10%	118	\$27.72
First-Line Supervisors of Correctional Officers	642	671	5%	60	\$61.81
First-Line Supervisors of Firefighting and Prevention Workers	591	703	19%	62	\$58.87
First-Line Supervisors of Protective Service Workers, All Other	228	248	9%	27	\$35.17
Total	3,834	4,273	11%	401	

Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Occupation Table, QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed

Over the last 24 months, from January 2024 to December 2025, referred to as the “most recent period” going forward, there were 1,018 job ads posted for the supervisors of protective service workers occupational group in the Inland Empire, compared to 9,863 across California. In the previous period, January 2019 to December 2023, there were 2,821 job ads posted for this occupational group in the Inland Empire and 29,032 in California.

Exhibit 2.3.2 displays the share of job advertisements by occupation for the supervisors of protective service workers occupational group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region and California. More than half of the regional and statewide job ads were posted for first-line supervisors of security workers. The scale of these occupational job advertisements may influence the skills most frequently requested by employers for this occupational group.

Exhibit 2.3.2: Share of Advertisements by Occupation for the Supervisors of Protective Service Workers Occupational Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region and California, January 2024 – December 2025

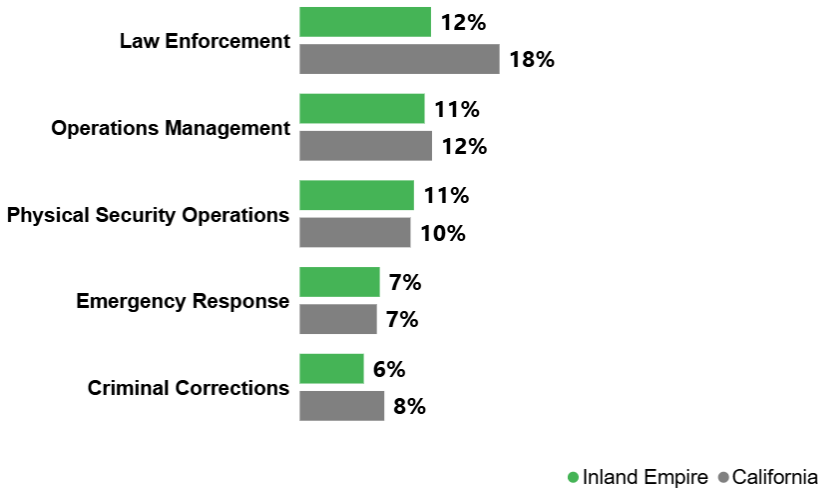


Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Specialized Skills

Exhibit 2.3.3 displays the top specialized skills included in employer job advertisements for the supervisors of protective service workers occupational group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region and their share of job ads in California. The top skills may provide insight into the specialized skills employers find critical to employment.

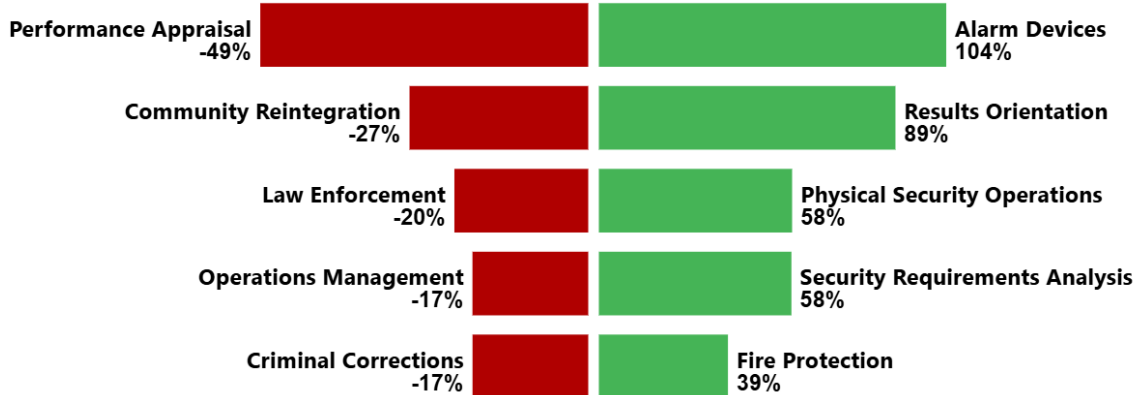
Exhibit 2.3.3: Top Specialized Skills from Employer Job Ads for the Supervisors of Protective Service Workers Occupational Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region and California, January 2024 – December 2025



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Exhibit 2.3.4 displays the specialized skills that have increased or decreased the most in their share of job advertisements for the supervisors of protective service workers occupational group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region, based on a comparison of the two time periods. Recent employer demand (2024-2025) for candidates with familiarity with alarm devices, results-oriented, physical security operations skills, and security requirements analysis has increased by more than 50% since the previous period (2019-2023). Employers’ desire for candidates with performance appraisal skills has decreased by 49% in the Inland Empire between the two periods.

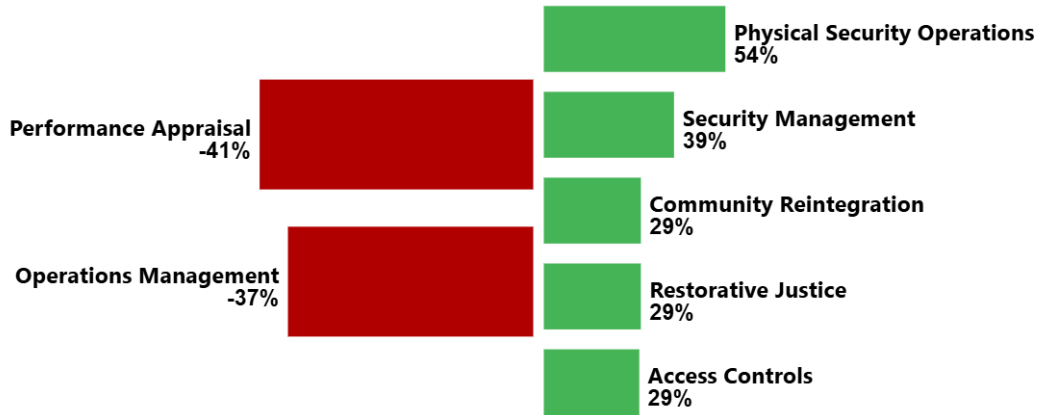
Exhibit 2.3.4: Specialized Skills that Have Increased or Decreased the Most in Their Share of Job Advertisements for the Supervisors of Protective Service Workers Occupational Group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Exhibit 2.3.5 displays specialized skills that have increased or decreased the most in their share of job advertisements for the supervisors of protective service workers occupational group in California, based on a comparison of the two time periods. Recent employer demand (2024-2025) for candidates with physical security operations skills has increased by 54% since the previous period (2019-2023). In California, employers’ desire for candidates with performance appraisal skills decreased by 41% between the two periods.

Exhibit 2.3.5: Specialized Skills that Have Increased or Decreased the Most in Their Share of Job Advertisements for the Supervisors of Protective Service Workers Occupational Group in California

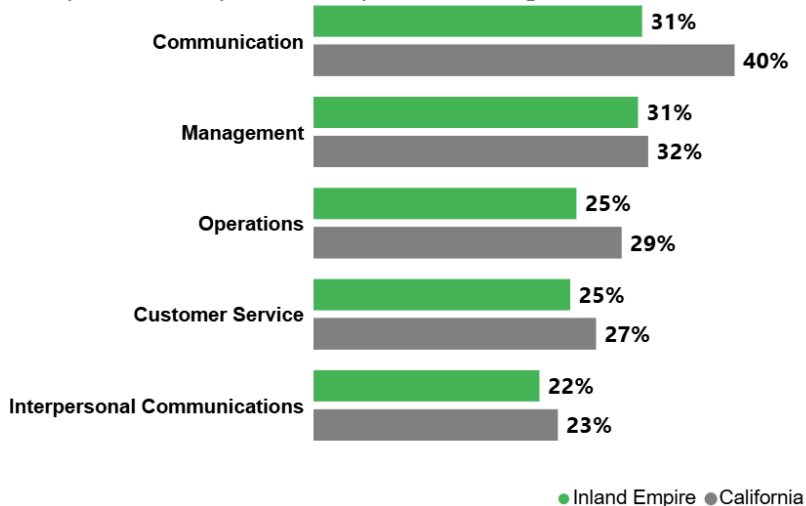


Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Foundational Skills

Exhibit 2.3.6 displays the top foundational skills included in employer job advertisements for the supervisors of protective service workers occupational group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region and their share of job ads in California. The top skills may provide insight into the foundational skills employers find critical to employment. Communication and management were the top foundational skills for this occupational group across both regions.

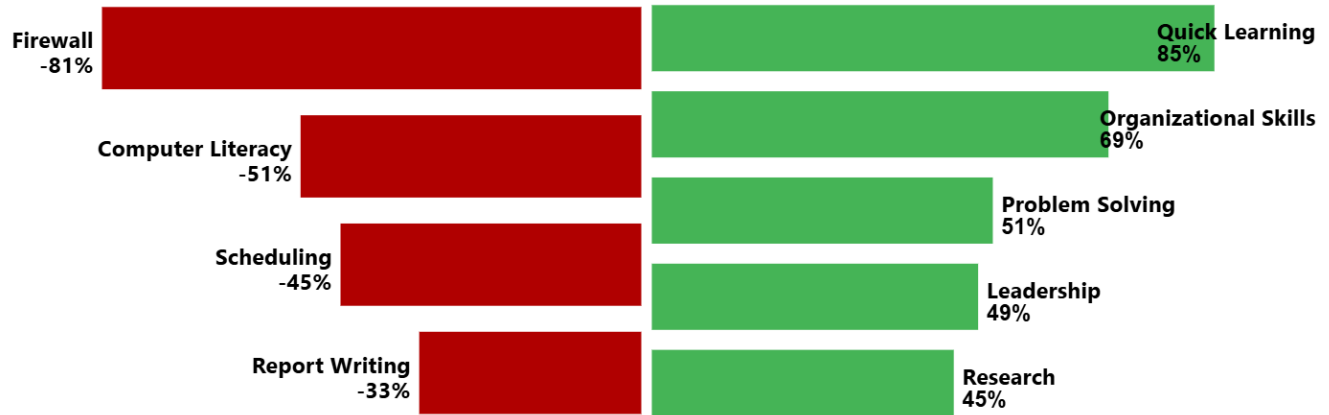
Exhibit 2.3.6: Top Foundational Skills from Employer Job Ads for the Supervisors of Protective Service Workers Occupational Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region and California, January 2024 – December 2025



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Exhibit 2.3.7 displays the foundational skills that have increased or decreased the most in their share of job advertisements for the supervisors of protective service workers occupational group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region, based on a comparison of the two time periods. Recent employer demand (2024-2025) for quick-learning, organization, and problem-solving skills has increased by more than 50% compared to the previous period (2019-2023). Employers' demand for candidates with firewall and computer literacy skills has decreased by more than 50% between the two periods in the Inland Empire.

Exhibit 2.3.7: Foundational Skills that Have Increased or Decreased the Most in Their Share of Job Advertisements for the Supervisors of Protective Service Workers Occupational Group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Exhibit 2.3.8 displays the foundational skills that have increased or decreased the most in their share of job advertisements for the supervisors of protective service workers occupational group in California, based on a comparison of the two time periods. Recent employer demand (2024-2025) for candidates with composure, training and development, organizational, and leadership skills has increased by 60% since the previous period (2019-2023). In California, employers’ desire for candidates with innovation and computer literacy skills has decreased by 59% between the two periods.

Exhibit 2.3.8: Foundational Skills that Have Increased or Decreased the Most in Their Share of Job Advertisements for the Supervisors of Protective Service Workers Occupational Group in California



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Qualifications and Programs

Exhibit 2.3.9 displays the qualifications most frequently included in employer job advertisements for the supervisors of the protective service workers occupational group. A valid driver’s license certification was the most frequently requested qualification in employer job advertisements, appearing in approximately 37% of regional job ads.

Exhibit 2.3.9: Top Qualifications Skills from Employer Job Ads for the Supervisors of Protective Service Workers Occupational Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region and California, January 2024 – December 2025

Inland Empire/Desert Region		California	
Qualification	Share	Qualification	Share
Valid Driver's License (CDL Class C)	37%	Valid Driver's License (CDL Class C)	38%

Inland Empire/Desert Region		California	
Qualification	Share	Qualification	Share
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	7%	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	9%
First Aid Certification	5%	First Aid Certification	8%
Peace Officer Standards And Training (POST) Certificate	3%	Peace Officer Standards And Training (POST) Certificate	2%

Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

The following community college programs prepare students for employment as supervisors of protective service workers.

- Administration of Justice (2105.00)
- Corrections (2105.10)
- Fire Academy (2133.50)
- Fire Technology (2133.00)
- Forensics, Evidence, and Investigation (2105.40)
- Industrial and Transportation Security (2105.30)
- Modern Policing (2105.60)
- Other Public and Protective Services (2199.00)
- Police Academy (2105.50)

2.4: FIREFIGHTING AND PREVENTION WORKERS

Exhibit 2.4.1 displays current and projected employment data for the firefighting and prevention workers occupational group from 2024 to 2029. The firefighting and prevention workers occupational group contains three occupations that provided nearly 3,100 jobs in 2024. This occupational group is projected to grow by 15%, adding 455 jobs to the region through 2029. This occupational group is projected to have over 300 annual job openings over the next five years.

Exhibit 2.4.1: Current and Projected Employment for the Firefighting and Prevention Workers Occupational Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region, 2024-2029

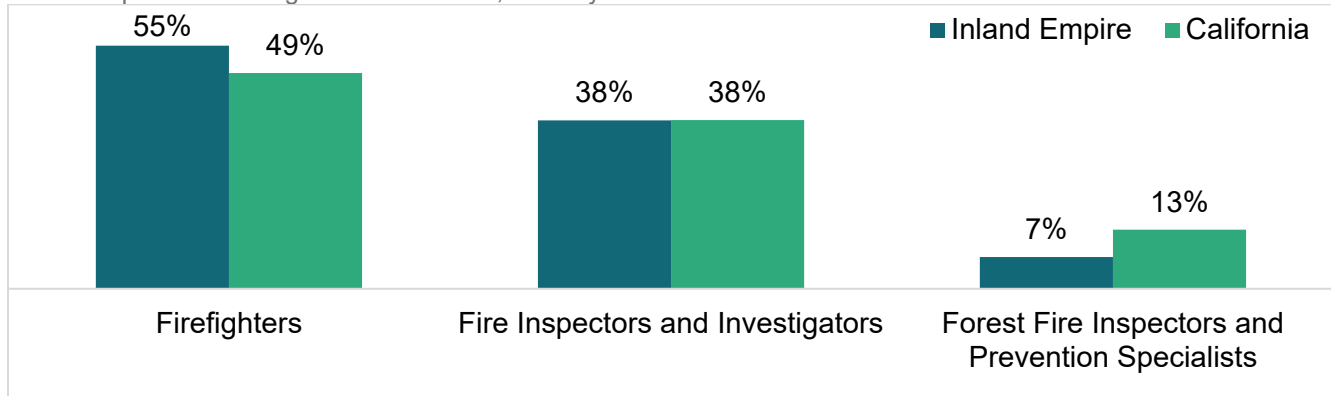
Occupation Title	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2024-2029 % Change	Average Annual Openings	Median Hourly Earnings
Firefighters	2,883	3,314	15%	312	\$35.97
Fire Inspectors and Investigators	166	186	12%	18	\$39.89
Forest Fire Inspectors and Prevention Specialists	30	33	12%	3	\$36.75
Total	3,079	3,534	15%	333	

Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Occupation Table, QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed

Over the last 24 months, from January 2024 to December 2025, referred to as the “most recent period” going forward, there were 279 job ads posted for the firefighting and prevention workers occupational group in the Inland Empire, compared to 2,027 across California. In the previous period, January 2019 to December 2023, there were 669 job ads were posted for this occupational group in the Inland Empire and 5,766 in California.

Exhibit 2.4.2 displays the share of firefighting and prevention workers' job advertisements by occupation in the Inland Empire/Desert Region and California. Approximately half of the job advertisements for the firefighting and prevention workers occupational group were for firefighters, and 38% were for fire inspectors and investigators. The scale of these occupational job advertisements may influence the skills most frequently requested by employers for this occupational group.

Exhibit 2.4.2: Share of Advertisements by Occupation for the Firefighting and Prevention Workers Occupational Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region and California, January 2024 – December 2025

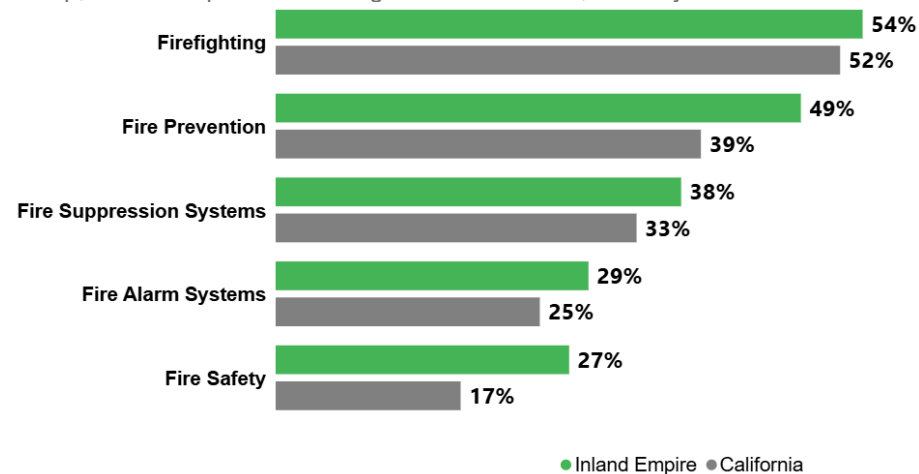


Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Specialized Skills

Exhibit 2.4.3 displays the top specialized skills included in employer job advertisements for the firefighting and prevention workers occupational group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region and their share of job ads in California. The top skills may provide insight into the specialized skills employers find critical to employment.

Exhibit 2.4.3: Top Specialized Skills from Employer Job Ads for the Firefighting and Prevention Workers Occupational Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region and California, January 2024 – December 2025



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Exhibit 2.4.4 displays the specialized skills that have increased or decreased the most in their share of job advertisements for the firefighting and prevention workers occupational group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region, based on a comparison of the two time periods. Recent employer demand (2024-2025) for candidates with fire protection and sprinkler systems skills has increased by 80% or more since the previous period (2019-2023). Employers' desire for candidates with equipment maintenance skills has decreased by 51% between the two periods in the Inland Empire.

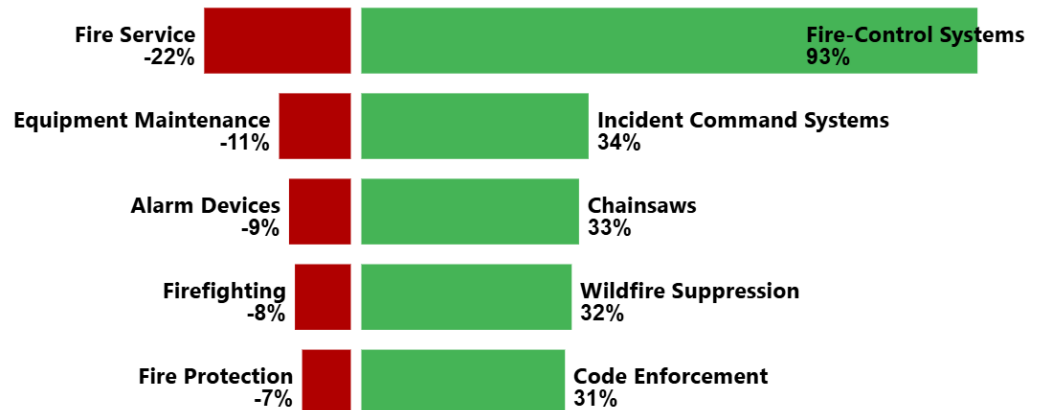
Exhibit 2.4.4: Specialized Skills that Have Increased or Decreased the Most in Their Share of Job Advertisements for the Firefighting and Prevention Workers Occupational Group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Exhibit 2.4.5 displays the specialized skills that have increased or decreased the most in their share of job advertisements for the firefighting and prevention workers occupational group in California, based on a comparison of the two time periods. Recent employer demand (2024-2025) for candidates with fire control systems skills has increased by 93% compared to the previous period (2019-2023). In California, employers’ desire for candidates with fire service skills has decreased by 22% between the two periods.

Exhibit 2.4.5: Specialized Skills that Have Increased or Decreased the Most in Their Share of Job Advertisements for the Firefighting and Prevention Workers Occupational Group in California

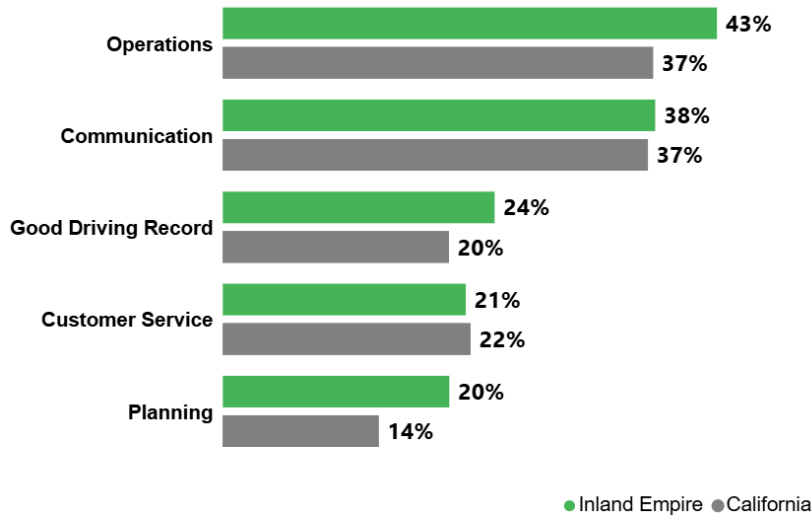


Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Foundational Skills

Exhibit 2.4.6 displays the top foundational skills included in employer job advertisements for the firefighting and prevention workers occupational group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region, along with their share of job ads in California. The top skills may provide insight into the foundational skills employers find critical to employment. Operations was the top foundational skill for this occupational group across both regions, followed by communication.

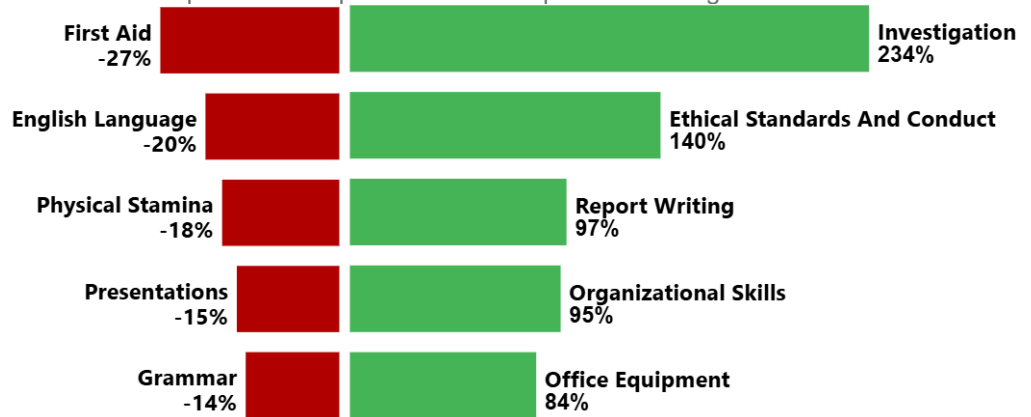
Exhibit 2.4.6: Top Foundational Skills from Employer Job Ads for the Firefighting and Prevention Workers Occupational Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region and California, January 2024 – December 2025



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Exhibit 2.4.7 displays the foundational skills that have increased or decreased the most in their share of job advertisements for the firefighting and prevention workers occupational group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region, based on a comparison of the two time periods. Recent employer demand (2024-2025) for candidates with investigation skills has increased by 234% compared to the previous period (2019-2023). Employers’ desire for candidates with first aid skills has decreased by 27% between the two periods in the Inland Empire.

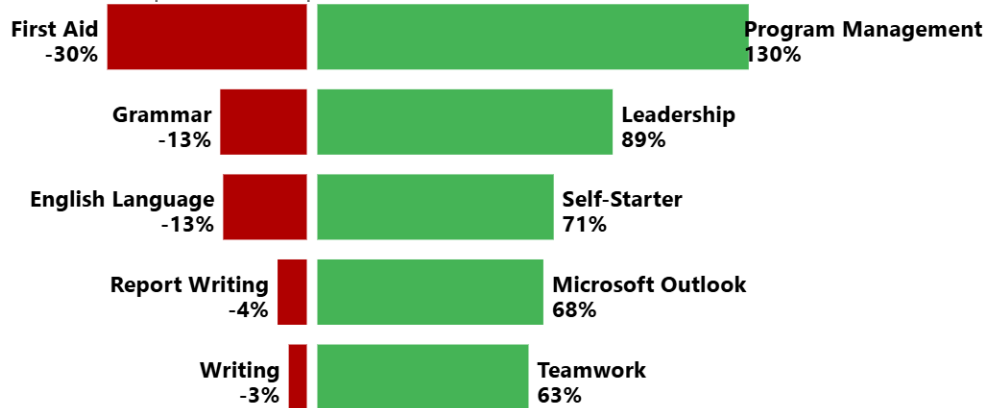
Exhibit 2.4.7: Foundational Skills that Have Increased or Decreased the Most in Their Share of Job Advertisements for the Firefighting and Prevention Workers Occupational Group in the Inland Empire/Desert Region



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Exhibit 2.4.8 displays the foundational skills that have increased or decreased the most in their share of job advertisements for the firefighting and prevention workers occupational group in California, based on a comparison of the two time periods. Recent employer demand (2024-2025) for candidates with program management skills has increased by 130% compared to the previous period (2019-2023). In California, employers’ demand for candidates with first-aid skills decreased by 30% between the two periods.

Exhibit 2.4.8: Foundational Skills that Have Increased or Decreased the Most in Their Share of Job Advertisements for the Firefighting and Prevention Workers Occupational Group in California



Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

Qualifications and Programs

Exhibit 2.4.9 displays the qualifications most frequently included in employer job advertisements for the firefighting and prevention workers occupational group. A valid driver’s license was the most frequently requested qualification in employer job advertisements, appearing in approximately 50% of job ads. Following a driver’s license, the Firefighter 1 certification appeared in 27% of regional job advertisements.

Exhibit 2.4.9: Top Qualifications Skills from Employer Job Ads for the Firefighting and Prevention Workers Occupational Group, Inland Empire/Desert Region and California, January 2024 – December 2025

Inland Empire/Desert Region		California	
Qualification	Share	Qualification	Share
Valid Driver's License (CDL Class C)	50%	Valid Driver's License (CDL Class C)	52%
Firefighter I Certification	27%	Firefighter I Certification	23%
Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)	20%	Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)	21%
Paramedic (EMT-P)	19%	Paramedic (EMT-P)	14%
Advanced Life Support	18%	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	11%

Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Job Posting Analytics

The following community college programs prepare students for employment in the firefighting and prevention workers occupational group.

- Fire Academy (2133.50)
- Fire Technology (2133.00)
- Wildland Fire Technology (2133.10)

SECTION 3: HOW CAN SKILLS INFORMATION BE USED TO GUIDE CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT IN THE INLAND EMPIRE/DESERT REGION?

To identify which skills are increasing most noticeably in employer demand, we compared their prevalence in job postings across the two time periods analyzed. We then examined how many middle-skill occupational minor groups each skill appeared in. Weighting skills by the number of occupational groups in which they increased allows the analysis to identify skill shifts that are occurring broadly across the sector rather than within isolated occupations. Below is the distribution within each skills tier for skills that are increasing by 10% or more:

- Foundational skills (51.2% IE/D; 55.7% California)
 - More than half of the skills increasing in demand in both regions are foundational. Many of these skills reflect behavioral and decision-making competencies rather than basic workplace readiness, indicating that employers are emphasizing judgment, situational awareness, and leadership capabilities in public safety roles. Furthermore, skills such as professionalism, composure, investigation, and problem-solving remain essential to public safety work.
- Specialized or technical skills
 - Industry-specific (12.8% IE/D; 10.2% California)
 - Skills such as fire prevention, patrolling, site security, and two-way radio operation are growing in demand across occupational groups in the Inland Empire. These skills are unique to the public safety sector and reflect a shared operational foundation required across roles. Their widespread growth suggests that employers are placing greater emphasis on standardized, field-based competencies.
 - Occupation-specific: (12.8% IE/D; 5.7% California)
 - These skills are unique to each occupational group and highlight the specialization within the middle-skill public safety workforce. These diverse competencies include operating all-terrain vehicles and motorcycles, using breathing equipment, using wireless distribution systems, forensic psychology, and incident management systems.
 - Cross-Sector: (23.3% IE/D; 28.4% California)
 - Cross-sector skills, including emergency response, fire prevention, ordinances, and patient treatment, account for the largest share of growing specialized skills. Although these skills are transferable across multiple industries, they still require advanced, public safety–specific training to be applied effectively in real-world contexts.

Using the same approach as described above, we present the distribution of skills that declined in prevalence between the two time periods. This approach highlights which skill declines are sector-wide rather than limited to a single occupational group. Below is the distribution within each skills tier for skills that are decreasing by 10% or more:

- Foundational skills (66.1% IE/D; 75.6% California)
 - Foundational skills decreasing in prevalence are foundational communication and administrative skills in nature, including English language, computer literacy, customer service, verbal communication skills, and writing. Their reduced appearances in postings do not indicate these skills are less important in practice; rather, employers increasingly treat them as baseline hiring expectations rather than differentiating qualifications.
- Specialized or technical skills
 - Industry-specific (7.1% IE/D; 6.7% California)

- These declining skills tend to be broad competencies that employers increasingly treat as assumed knowledge for employment rather than differentiating qualifications, including law enforcement, crime prevention, and fire science.
- Occupation-specific: (0.0% IE/D; 2.2% California)
 - While occupation-specific skills typically reflect the technical activities that define many public safety roles, none declined in prevalence among the occupations analyzed in the region under this report's methodology. The absence of declining occupation-specific skills in regional postings suggests that the core technical functions defining public safety occupations remain stable even as employers adjust how they communicate broader skill expectations. In California, the National Incident Management Systems is the only occupation-specific skill to decline over the periods analyzed.
- Cross Sector: (26.8% IE/D; 15.6% California)
 - These are more specialized than foundational skills but still found in multiple sectors. They require more advanced training but are not unique to public safety employment, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), equipment maintenance, operations management, and public relations. The higher share of declining cross-sector skills in the IE/D region may reflect a stronger emphasis on direct operational competencies in local public safety hiring compared with statewide postings, where managerial or administrative competencies appear more frequently.

The distribution of growing skills in public safety job postings indicates that employer demand is evolving in several important ways. Foundational skills account for the largest share of increasing skills across both the IE/D region (51.2%) and California (55.7%), underscoring the continued importance of broad competencies that support effective public safety work. However, the specific foundational skills gaining prominence are not basic workplace readiness skills, but rather behavioral and decision-oriented competencies such as investigation, problem-solving, composure, leadership, and professionalism. These skills reflect the need for personnel who can navigate complex, high-stakes environments, requiring sound judgment, situational awareness, and the ability to respond effectively under pressure.

Specialized skills represent a substantial share of those in increasing demand, with nearly half falling into industry-specific, occupation-specific, or cross-sector categories. Industry-specific skills, such as fire prevention, patrolling, law enforcement activities, and two-way radio operation, reflect a shared operational foundation across roles. In contrast, the range of occupation-specific skills highlights increasing differentiation within the public safety workforce. Cross-sector skills, which account for roughly one-quarter of growth, indicate greater interoperability with industries such as utilities, logistics, and communications. The concentration of field-based and equipment-intensive skills further suggests rising expectations for operational readiness and real-time response in increasingly complex environments.

Because foundational competencies represent a large share of overall employer demand, most changes in employer demand occur within foundational skill categories rather than specialized technical skills. Foundational skills account for more than two-thirds of shrinking skills in the IE/D region (66.1%) and more than three-quarters statewide (75.6%). These declining skills largely consist of basic communication and administrative competencies such as English language proficiency, computer literacy, customer service, verbal communication, and writing. Reduced posting frequency may paradoxically indicate growing importance: as a skill becomes universally expected, employers see little value in listing it as a distinguishing competency.

Declines within the technical tiers are comparatively limited and tend to involve competencies that public safety employers may now treat as assumed knowledge. Among industry-specific skills, areas such as law enforcement, crime prevention, and fire science appear less frequently in postings, likely

because they represent foundational knowledge expected of individuals entering the field. Similarly, several cross-sector skills, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), equipment maintenance, operations management, and public relations, show declining prevalence. These skills remain relevant to public safety employment but may increasingly be embedded within training requirements or certification pathways rather than explicitly listed in job advertisements.

These patterns reflect the ongoing professionalization of public safety occupations, in which workers are expected to combine formal training, operational expertise, and strong interpersonal capabilities to manage complex and unpredictable situations. As a result, basic workplace and administrative competencies are increasingly assumed, while job postings place greater emphasis on behavioral competencies related to decision-making, leadership, discretion, and problem-solving, alongside operational and technical skills in field response and emergency management. The contrast between declining administrative communication skills and rising emphasis on investigation, composure, and leadership suggests a rebalancing of foundational competencies toward more decision-intensive, situationally driven work. This shift underscores the evolving nature of public safety roles, where personnel must assess complex conditions, coordinate responses, and exercise discretion under pressure while engaging effectively with the communities they serve

Feedback

For K-12 systems and community colleges, these findings highlight several opportunities to strengthen program alignment with workforce demand:

Curriculum alignment with growing skills.

The growth of behavioral and decision-oriented skills indicates a need to emphasize competencies such as critical thinking, situational awareness, leadership, and professionalism across public safety programs. Coursework, simulations, and scenario-based training can help students develop these capabilities while reinforcing operational skills, including incident response procedures, investigation techniques, and communication protocols. Integrating these competencies into learning outcomes can ensure that students develop both the interpersonal and technical capabilities employers increasingly prioritize.

Alignment with certifications and operational training.

Many of the growing technical skills are tied to specific operational systems, equipment, and response frameworks that underpin public safety work. Programs should ensure that course content and hands-on training expose students to widely used systems and procedures, including incident management frameworks, communication equipment, and emergency response protocols. Job ads reveal strong demand for broad certifications, such as CPR, and occupation-specific certifications, such as POST, EMT, and Firefighter. Aligning coursework with certification standards and required competencies can help ensure graduates meet entry-level qualification requirements and are prepared to transition more directly into public safety roles.

K-12 pathway alignment.

Public services career pathways in high schools can play an important role in building early familiarity with both foundational and operational competencies. Courses can introduce students to key concepts such as professionalism, leadership, situational decision-making, and teamwork, while providing early exposure to public safety practices and technologies. Dual enrollment opportunities, introductory emergency response training, and scenario-based learning can help students build foundational readiness and transition more smoothly into community college public safety programs.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH DEFINITIONS AND METHODOLOGIES

Definitions

Labor market information was pulled from Lightcast, a labor market analytics firm that specializes in providing insights for workforce development, economic planning, and education. Lightcast compiles its regional and occupational datasets from a variety of federal and state sources. Among these are the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), which offers detailed industry employment and wage data, and other critical sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) and Quarterly Workforce Indicators, the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics and Current Population Survey, and data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis.⁷ These combined resources provide comprehensive insights into employment trends, wage patterns, and quality job workforce characteristics. The baseline year of 2024 was used to offer the maximum comparability with the student data available, and the projected data was through 2029.

Annual job openings include the projected growth (new jobs) and replacement needs of an occupation annually. This figure is often used to assess the expected employer demand for an occupation, providing a number of job openings that will require new workers to fill.

Educational attainment is the highest level of education attained by workers aged 25 years or older. This information may illuminate mismatches between resident skills and employment needs.

An **occupation** is a set of activities or tasks employees are paid to perform. Employees that perform essentially the same tasks are in the same occupation, whether or not they work in the same industry. Some occupations are concentrated in a few particular industries; other occupations are found in many industries. For example, jobs for registered nurses are concentrated in the healthcare industry sector, but educational industries may also employ these jobs.

SOC code: The Standard Occupational Classification system is a federally defined system used to classify workers into occupational categories that are grouped together according to job duties.⁸

TOP code: The Taxonomy of Programs is a system of codes used by the State of California to compare differently named academic programs with similar outcomes across community colleges.⁹ Each course offered by California Community Colleges is assigned to a TOP code.

Methodologies and Sources

The data sources used in this study include data from Lightcast, a labor market analytics firm that specializes in providing insights for workforce development, economic planning, and education. Lightcast compiles its regional and occupational datasets from a variety of federal and state sources. Among these are the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), which offers detailed industry employment and wage data, and other critical sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) and Quarterly Workforce Indicators, the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics and Current Population Survey, and data from the

⁷ Lightcast (2025). Version 2025.1. Retrieved from <https://lightcast.io/> in April 2025.

⁸ "Standard Occupational Classification," Bureau of Labor Statistics, bls.gov/soc/

⁹ "Taxonomy of Programs," California Community Colleges, <https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/About-Us/Divisions/Educational-Services-and-Support/Academic-Affairs/What-we-do/Curriculum-and-Instruction-Unit/Files/TOPmanual6200909corrected12513>

Bureau of Economic Analysis.¹⁰ These combined resources provide comprehensive insights into employment trends, wage patterns, and industry-specific workforce characteristics across the Inland Empire/Desert regions.

The Lightcast taxonomy organizes skills into a tiered structure that groups related competencies according to the type of work or task they support. Within this framework, skills are categorized as common, specialized, or software skills. To determine which skills should be included in our analysis, we examined how frequently individual skills appear in job postings. We calculated the median share of job ads in which common skills appear across all occupations, providing a baseline measure of typical skill prevalence. Our analysis found that common skills typically appeared in roughly five percent of job postings across occupations. We used this median value as the threshold for determining which skills were included in our research.

The skills analysis compares skills posted over a two-year period (January 2024 – December 2025) to a historical five-year period (January 2019 – December 2023) to identify skills that are growing and shrinking in terms of their prevalence in job ads. This report intentionally uses a two-year period for the current analysis to ensure a sufficient volume of recent job advertisements and avoid the instability that can come with relying on a single year of data. The five-year historical period provides a stable benchmark of longer-term industry skill patterns and reduces the influence of short-term fluctuations. This analysis also illuminates the skills with the highest share of job ads in the most recent period, addressing employer demand for skills that are persistently in demand across time.

The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system aggregates occupation information by four levels: major group, minor group, broad occupation, and detailed occupation.¹¹ This report relies on the minor occupational groupings of detailed occupations for the skills analysis, as they provide greater detail than the broader major occupational groups and ensure the feasibility and readability of this study, which would be lacking in a detailed occupation skills analysis.

¹⁰ Lightcast (2025). Version 2025.3. Retrieved from <https://lightcast.io/> in July 2025.

¹¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics. Standard Occupational Classification and Coding Structure. 2018. Retrieved from: https://www.bls.gov/soc/2018/soc_2018_class_and_coding_structure.pdf

APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL OCCUPATIONS RELATED TO THE CCCC PUBLIC SAFETY SECTOR

Exhibit B.1 displays current and projected employment data for the miscellaneous occupational group from 2024 to 2029. The miscellaneous occupational group includes three occupations with over 1,300 jobs in 2024. This occupational group is projected to grow by 12%, adding 157 jobs to the region through 2029.

Exhibit B.1: Additional Occupations Related to the CCCC Public Safety Sector, Inland Empire/Desert Region, 2024-2029

Occupation Title	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2024 - 2029 % Change	Average Annual Openings	Median Hourly Earnings
Public Safety Telecommunicators	889	1,006	13%	124	\$36.42
Forensic Science Technicians	311	353	13%	49	\$38.14
Ambulance Drivers and Attendants, Except Emergency Medical Technicians	101	99	-1%	13	\$17.23
Total	1,301	1,458	12%	186	-

Source: Lightcast 2025.4 – Occupation Table, QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed