



Labor Market Assessment

Alcohol and Controlled Substances Occupations

San Jose City College

May 2026

Key Findings

In California, employment in Alcohol and Controlled Substances occupations (Rehabilitation Counselors, Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors, and Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers) is projected to generate an average of 12,510 annual job openings from 2024 to 2034. However, most of these occupations require a master's degree or higher. Within the Bay Region, there are approximately 2,346 such openings annually, accounting for about 19% of the state's total demand. In the Bay Region, community colleges do not offer a bachelor's degree program in this field. However, there are other institutions awarding 1,279 annual awards for a total annual undersupply of 1,067. This indicates a significant undersupply of graduates relative to available job openings. Therefore, San Jose City College would fill a critical regional need by introducing a bachelor's degree program in Alcohol and Drug Studies, helping to close the workforce gap and providing students with an affordable pathway to a four-year degree. However, note that most of these occupations require a master's degree or higher, and San Jose City College may want to offer a post-baccalaureate internship or residency to support students in continuing their education. Alternatively, they may provide students with specific job opportunities in the field that require only a bachelor's degree.

In the Bay Region, entry-level counselors typically earn approximately \$25 per hour, while social workers earn approximately \$30 per hour; only some occupations approach or exceed the living wage for a single adult. Wages rise significantly with higher education attainment, with job postings showing that candidates holding bachelor's and master's degrees command higher pay. Based on statewide data, for Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers, and Rehabilitation Counselors, the average advertised wage increases from approximately \$24–\$28 per hour for those with a bachelor's degree to \$22–\$24 per hour for those with an associate's degree. However, the larger wage increase comes from earning a master's degree, with wages of \$36, \$34, and \$37, respectively. This wage differential highlights the economic benefits of pursuing both a bachelor's and a master's degree, reinforcing the case for expanding access to bachelor's degree opportunities. Doing so would help students access higher-paying roles and place them on a pathway to earning a master's degree.

Introduction

This report provides student outcomes data on employment and earnings for Alcohol and Controlled Substances (TOP 2104.40) in the Bay Region. Reviewing this data helps to understand how student outcomes compare to similar programs at other colleges in the region.

This report evaluates labor market needs and workforce alignment for the proposed bachelor's degree program called "Alcohol and Drug Studies." In the sections below, we leverage state and regional data to provide insights into

educational and occupational requirements, employment trends, wages, and degree alignment for three occupations: Rehabilitation Counselors (21-1015), Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors (21-1018), and Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers (21-1023).

Because these occupations are closely related and often work in overlapping service areas, they are combined for demand and gap analysis to provide a comprehensive view of regional workforce needs. In addition to TOP 2104.40, this report also examines related Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes, including CIP 42.0000 (Human Services, General), CIP 42.0701 (Social Work), CIP 34.0104 (Addiction Prevention and Treatment), and CIP 51.2310 (Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling/Counselor), to assess alignment between educational supply and labor market demand. Notably, no awards are currently conferred in the Bay Region under CIP 34.0104 or CIP 51.2310, indicating gaps in specialized program availability.

Occupation under Review

- Rehabilitation Counselors (21-1015):** Counsel individuals to maximize the independence and employability of persons coping with personal, social, and vocational difficulties that result from birth defects, illness, disease, accidents, aging, or the stress of daily life. Coordinate activities for residents of care and treatment facilities. Assess client needs and design and implement rehabilitation programs that may include personal and vocational counseling, training, and job placement.

Occupational Characteristics	
Typical Entry Level Education	Master's degree
Work Experience Required	None
Typical On-The-Job Training	None
Existing Workforce(% of individuals age 25+ with an associate degree, certificate, or some postsecondary coursework as their highest level of education attainment)	18%

- Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors (21-1018):** Counsel and advise individuals with alcohol, tobacco, drug, or other problems, such as gambling and eating disorders. May counsel individuals, families, or groups or engage in prevention programs.

Occupational Characteristics	
Typical Entry Level Education	Bachelor's degree
Work Experience Required	None
Typical On-The-Job Training	None
Existing Workforce(% of individuals age 25+ with an associate degree, certificate, or some postsecondary coursework as their highest level of education attainment)	10%

- Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers (21-1023):** Assess and treat individuals with mental, emotional, or substance abuse problems, including abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and/or other drugs. Activities may include individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, case management, client advocacy, prevention, and education.

Occupational Characteristics

Typical Entry Level Education	Master's degree
Work Experience Required	None
Typical On-The-Job Training	Internship/residency
Existing Workforce(% of individuals age 25+ with an associate degree, certificate, or some postsecondary coursework as their highest level of education attainment)	9%

State Level Analysis

Table 1 shows the number of job postings that employers frequently list certifications and licenses such as Licensed Clinical Psychology License (6%).

Table 1. Educational Licenses or Certifications for Alcohol and Controlled Substances Occupations in California

Licenses or Certifications	# of Job Postings	% of Total
Clinical Psychology License	1,074	6%
Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) Certification	159	1%
School Psychology License	31	<1%
Alcohol Certification	26	<1%

"Job Posting Analytics." Apr. 2025 - Mar. 2026, Source: Lightcast 2026.1

Note: This table combines Rehabilitation Counselors, Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors and Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers.

Tables 2a–2c show the educational levels listed on job postings for each occupation. For Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors, 52% of job postings list a master’s degree as preferred, while for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers, the figure is 43%. For Rehabilitation Counselors, 63% of job postings require a master’s degree. Only 16%, 27%, and 29% of these job postings require a bachelor’s degree, respectively. Over a twelve-month period, approximately 70% to 85% of employers included an educational requirement or preference in their job postings, while the remainder did not.

Of those postings that did contain educational requirement information, Tables 2a–2c show that wage levels increase with more education, which highlights the value of pursuing bachelor’s degrees. This correlation underscores the economic benefits to students for continuing their education, supporting the case for expanding bachelor’s degree programs in Alcohol and Controlled Substances occupations to align with employer demand and enhance workforce readiness.

Table 2a. Educational Level and Entry Level Wages for Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors in California

Education Level	# of Job Postings	% of Total	25% Hourly Advertised Wage
High school or GED	1,675	12%	\$23
Associate's degree	920	7%	\$22
Bachelor's degree	2,300	16%	\$24

Education Level	# of Job Postings	% of Total	25% Hourly Advertised Wage
Master's degree	7,203	52%	\$36
Ph.D. or professional degree	1,847	13%	\$39

"Job Posting Analytics." Apr. 2025 - Mar. 2026, Source: Lightcast 2026.1

Note: 30% of records have been excluded because they do not include a degree level. As a result, the chart above may not be representative of the full sample.

Table 2b. Educational Level and Entry Level Wages for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers in California

Education Level	# of Job Postings	% of Total	25% Hourly Advertised Wage
High school or GED	475	11%	\$23
Associate's degree	395	9%	\$24
Bachelor's degree	1,138	27%	\$24
Master's degree	1,855	43%	\$34
Ph.D. or professional degree	409	10%	\$39

"Job Posting Analytics." Apr. 2025 - Mar. 2026, Source: Lightcast 2026.1

Note: 15% of records have been excluded because they do not include a degree level. As a result, the chart above may not be representative of the full sample.

Table 2c. Educational Level and Entry Level Wages for Rehabilitation Counselors in California

Education Level	# of Job Postings	% of Total	25% Hourly Advertised Wage
High school or GED	1	1%	\$28
Associate's degree	2	1%	\$27
Bachelor's degree	43	29%	\$28
Master's degree	92	63%	\$37
Ph.D. or professional degree	8	5%	\$23

"Job Posting Analytics." Apr. 2025 - Mar. 2026, Source: Lightcast 2026.1

Note: 36% of records have been excluded because they do not include a degree level. As a result, the chart above may not be representative of the full sample.

Tables 3a–3c indicate that most job postings for Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors (89%) require 0 to 3 years of work experience, while 86% of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Worker postings and 92% of Rehabilitation Counselor postings require the same level of experience. These findings demonstrate that most positions in this field are accessible to individuals early in their careers, reflecting strong entry-level opportunities and a clear pathway for recent graduates to enter the workforce.

Table 3a. Work Experience Requirement for Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors in California

Working Experience Required	Job Postings	% of Total
0 - 1 Years	1,905	32%
2 - 3 Years	3,382	57%
4 - 6 Years	608	10%

Working Experience Required	Job Postings	% of Total
7 - 9 Years	21	0%
10+ Years	43	1%

"Job Posting Analytics." Apr. 2025 - Mar. 2026, Source: Lightcast 2026.1

Note: 58% of records have been excluded because they do not include a degree level. As a result, the chart above may not be representative of the full sample.

Table 3b. Work Experience Requirement for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers in California

Working Experience Required	Job Postings	% of Total
0 - 1 Years	647	29%
2 - 3 Years	1,259	57%
4 - 6 Years	293	13%
7 - 9 Years	7	0%
10+ Years	17	1%

"Job Posting Analytics." Apr. 2025 - Mar. 2026, Source: Lightcast 2026.1

Note: 32% of records have been excluded because they do not include a degree level. As a result, the chart above may not be representative of the full sample.

Table 3c. Work Experience Requirement for Rehabilitation Counselors in California

Working Experience Required	Job Postings	% of Total
0 - 1 Years	30	53%
2 - 3 Years	22	39%
4 - 6 Years	3	5%
7 - 9 Years	0	0%
10+ Years	2	4%

"Job Posting Analytics." Apr. 2025 - Mar. 2026, Source: Lightcast 2026.1

Note: 66% of records have been excluded because they do not include a degree level. As a result, the chart above may not be representative of the full sample.

Table 4 shows that employment in Alcohol and Drug Studies occupations in California is substantial. In 2024, there were 103,129 positions statewide, and the field is projected to grow by 27% over the next 10 years, a rate that significantly outpaces average occupational growth. This expansion is driven by a 31% projected increase for Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors, a 23% increase for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers, and an 11% increase for Rehabilitation Counselors. Additionally, entry-level to experienced wages range from \$22 to \$29 per hour when combining all occupations, with counselors earning between \$22 and \$29 per hour, social workers earning between \$26 and \$36 per hour, and rehabilitation counselors earning between \$19 and \$21 per hour. This data underscores both the strong demand and the competitive wages available to individuals pursuing careers in this field.

Table 4. Employment Outlook for Alcohol and Controlled Substances Occupations in California

Occupation	2024 Jobs	2034 Jobs	10-yr Change	10-yr % Change	Annual Openings	Annual Replacement Rate	25% Hourly Earning	50% Hourly Wage
Rehabilitation Counselors	13,965	15,535	1,570	11%	1,740	11%	\$19	\$21
Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	69,680	91,417	21,737	31%	8,448	8%	\$22	\$29
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers	19,484	24,001	4,517	23%	2,322	8%	\$26	\$36
Total	103,129	130,953	27,824	27%	12,510	9%	\$22	\$29

Source: Lightcast 2026.1

Regional Level Analysis

Employment Historical Trend for BS Alcohol and Drug Studies

Table 5 and the accompanying figures show that employment trends for Alcohol and Drug Studies-related occupations vary across roles in the Bay Region. Employment for Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors grew significantly by 156% over the past decade versus statewide growth of 204%. In contrast, employment for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers grew more modestly by 3% in the region, compared to 39% statewide, while Rehabilitation Counselor employment declined slightly by 3% regionally.

Table 5. Historical 10-Year Employment Trend for Alcohol and Controlled Substances in the Bay Region vs. California

SOC	Area	2014 Jobs	2024 Jobs	10-yr Change	10-yr% Change
21-1015	CA	13,651	13,965	314	2
21-1015	Bay	3,083	2,990	-94	-3
21-1018	CA	22,897	69,680	46,783	204
21-1018	Bay	5,625	14,395	8,770	156
21-1023	CA	14,061	19,484	5,423	39
21-1023	Bay	3,372	3,476	105	3

Source: Lightcast 2026.1

Figure 1 illustrates the historical employment trend for Rehabilitation Counselors at both the state and regional levels. The data show that employment in the Bay Region declined slightly over the past decade, decreasing by 3% between 2014 and 2024, while statewide employment remained relatively stable with a modest 2% increase.

Figure 1. Historical 10 Year to Year Present Change in Employment for Rehabilitation Counselors in the Bay Region vs. California

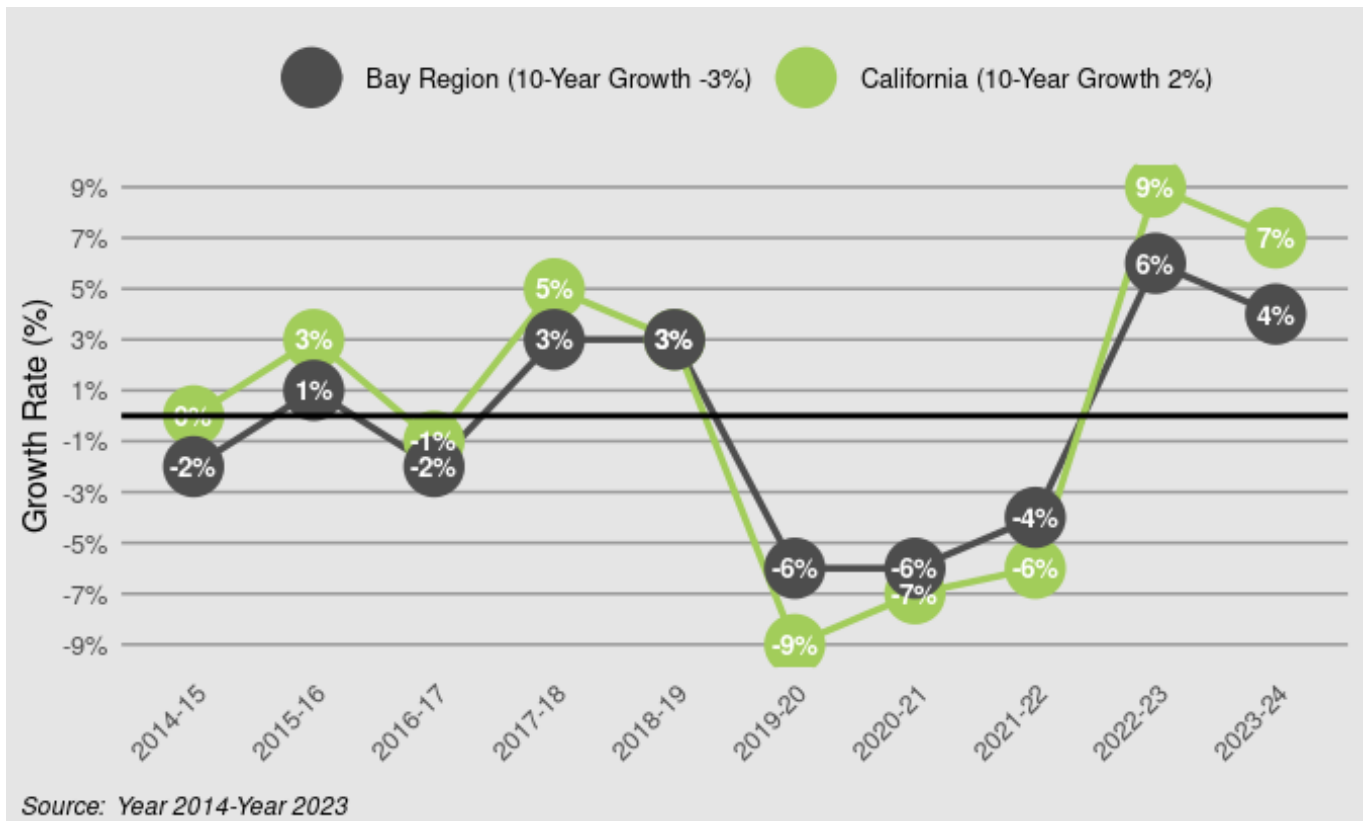


Figure 2 illustrates the historical employment trend for Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors at both the state and regional levels. The data show strong growth over the past decade, with employment in the Bay Region increasing by 156% and statewide employment increasing by 204% between 2014 and 2024. This trend highlights the rapidly growing demand for counseling services related to substance abuse and behavioral health, reflecting broader increases in need for mental health and addiction treatment services.

Figure 2. Historical 10 Year to Year Present Change in Employment for Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors in the Bay Region vs. California

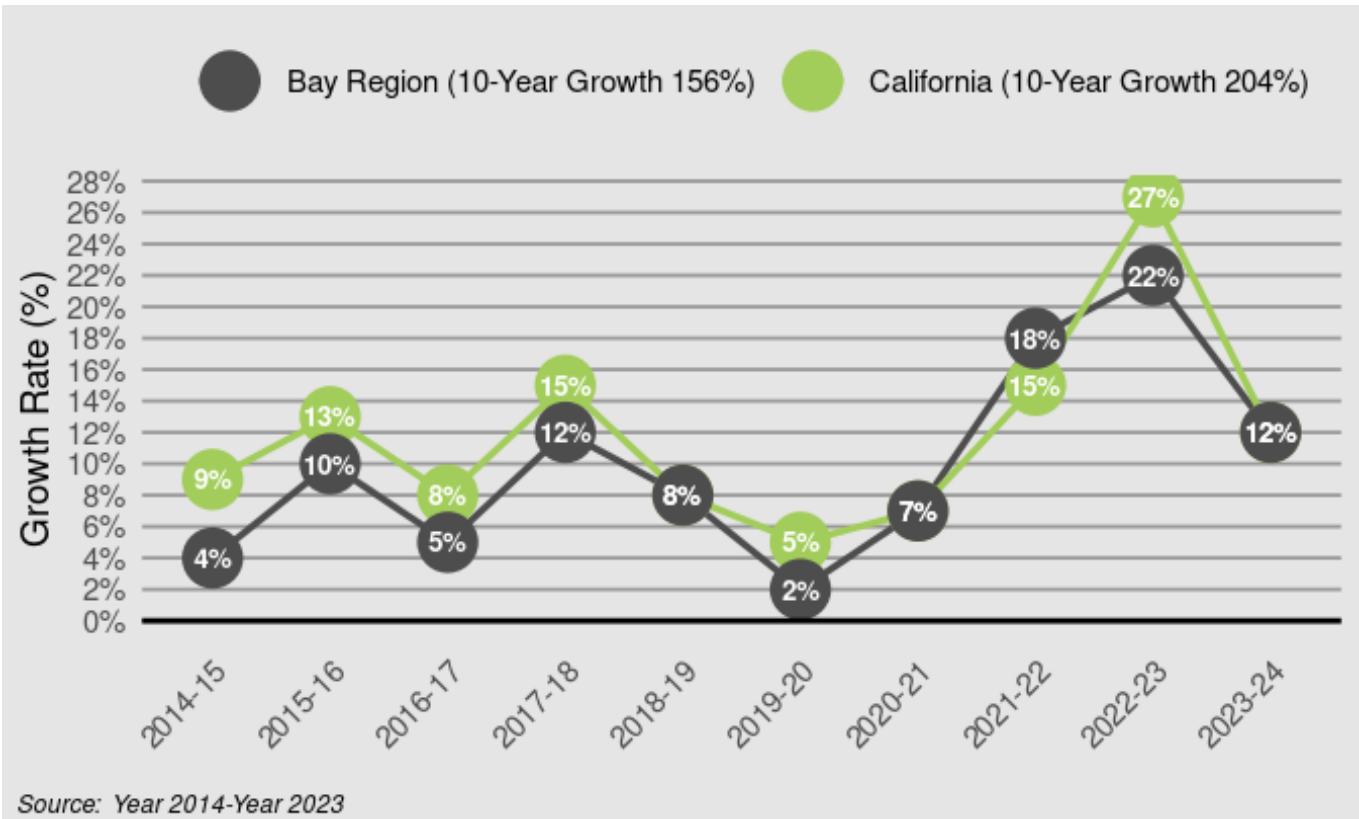
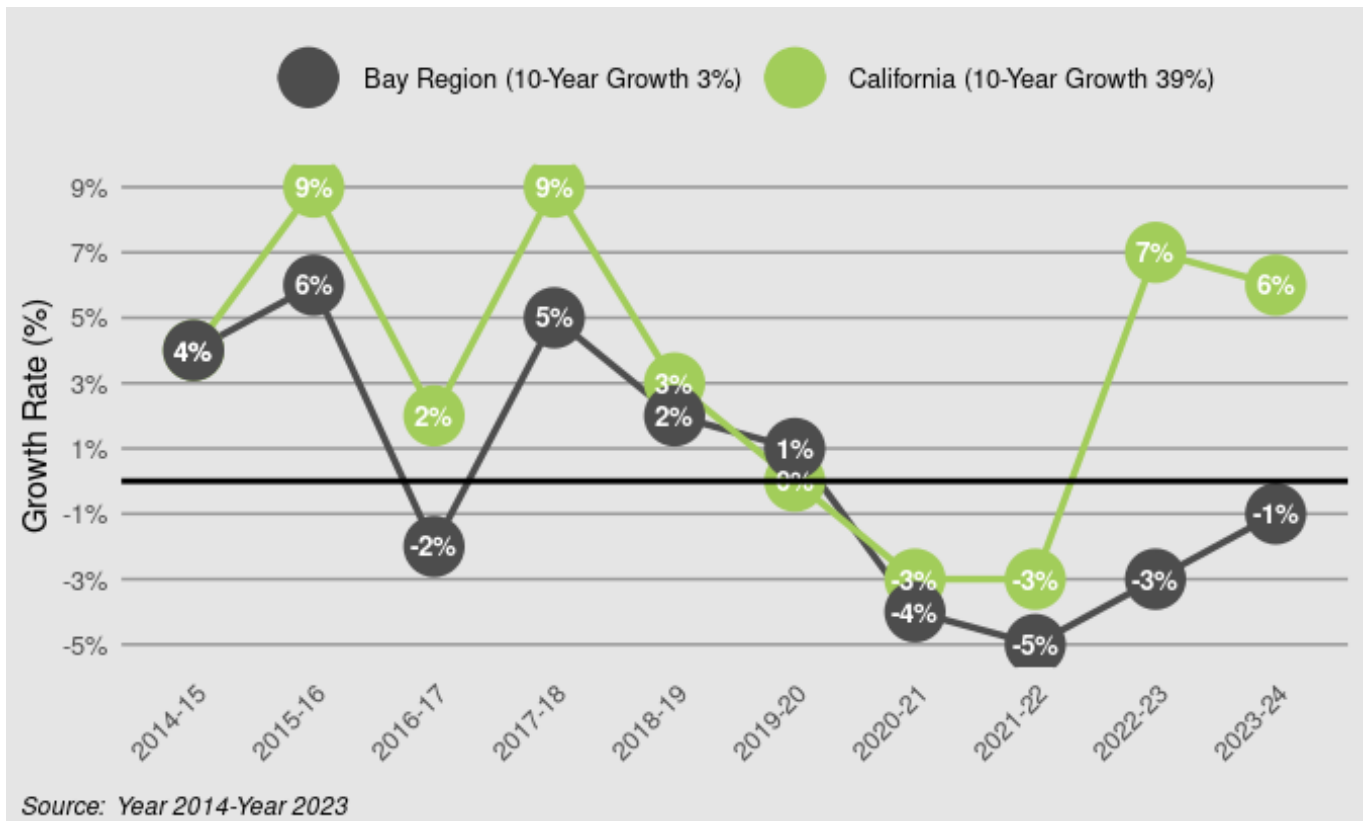


Figure 3 illustrates the historical employment trend for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers at both the state and regional levels. The data show that employment in the Bay Region grew modestly by 3% over the past decade, compared to a 39% increase statewide between 2014 and 2024.

Figure 3. Historical 10 Year to Year Present Change in Employment for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers in the Bay Region vs. California



Occupational Demand

Table 6 shows that the Bay Region employed 20,861 workers in 2024 across Alcohol and Controlled Substances occupations. Employment in this cluster is projected to grow to 25,247 jobs by 2034, generating approximately 2,346 annual job openings; this number includes replacement needs. Replacements are jobs that will need to be filled by new hires due to existing workers leaving the occupation.

Most positions are in Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors, which accounted for 14,395 jobs in 2024 and are projected to increase by 24% over the next decade. The entry-level wage is \$25 per hour, while the median wage is \$34. In contrast, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers make up a smaller share of the workforce, with 3,476 jobs in 2024, but are projected to grow by 20%, resulting in 396 annual openings and median wages of \$40 per hour. Rehabilitation Counselors represent 2,990 jobs in the region and are projected to grow by 9%, with 361 annual openings and median wages of \$23 per hour.

Together, these data confirm that Alcohol and Controlled Substances occupations provide stable employment opportunities and moderate wages, with stronger earning potential for workers who pursue advanced education and specialized roles.

Table 6. Employment Outlook for Alcohol and Controlled Substances Occupations in the Bay Region

Occupation	2024 Jobs	2034 Jobs	10-yr Change	10-yr % Change	Annual Openings	Annual Replacement Rate	25% Hourly Earning	50% Hourly Wage
Rehabilitation Counselors	2,990	3,256	266	9%	361	11%	\$21	\$23

Occupation	2024 Jobs	2034 Jobs	10-yr Change	10-yr % Change	Annual Openings	Annual Replacement Rate	25% Hourly Earning	50% Hourly Wage
Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	14,395	17,829	3,434	24%	1,589	8%	\$25	\$34
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers	3,476	4,162	686	20%	396	8%	\$30	\$40
Total	20,861	25,247	4,386	21%	2,346	9%	\$25	\$33

Source: Lightcast 2026.1

The Bay Region includes: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano and Sonoma Counties

Educational Supply

Table 7a shows seven community colleges in the Bay Region issuing 36 associate degree awards on average annually (last 3 years ending 2022-24) on TOP 2104.40 – Alcohol and Controlled Substances. However, students in this field require a bachelor’s degree or higher, and Bay Region community colleges do not offer a bachelor’s degree under this TOP code.

There is no other CTE educational institution in the Bay Region issuing degree awards on average annually (last 3 years ending 2021-23) on CIP 51.1501 – Substance Abuse/Addiction Counseling, and there are no four-year institutions in the Bay Region issuing bachelor’s degree awards on this CIP code, creating a clear gap for students who wish to pursue a four-year educational pathway and advance their careers in substance abuse and mental health services.

Table 7b shows eight other institutions in the Bay Region issuing 568 master’s degree awards on average annually (last 3 years ending 2021-23) on CIP 42.2803 - Counseling Psychology in the Bay Region.

Table 7c shows that eight other institutions in the Bay Region award an average of 127 bachelor’s and master’s degrees annually (based on the last three years, 2021–23) in CIP 42.0000 – Human Services, General.

Table 7d shows that eight other institutions in the Bay Region award an average of 584 bachelor’s and master’s degrees annually (based on the last three years, 2021–23) in CIP 42.0701 Social Work. There are no awards conferred in the Bay Region under CIP 34.0104 (Addiction Prevention and Treatment) or CIP 51.2310 (Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling/Counselor

Table 7a. Community College Awards on TOP 2104.40 - Alcohol and Controlled Substances in the Bay Region

College	Subregion	Associate Degree	Total
Diablo Valley	East Bay	16	16
Hartnell	SC-Monterey	6	6
Merritt	East Bay	4	4
San Francisco	Mid-Peninsula	2	2
San Jose City	Silicon Valley	5	5
San Mateo	Mid-Peninsula	1	1
Santa Rosa	North Bay	2	2
Total	-	36	36

Table 7b. Master's Degree Awards on CIP 42.2803 - Counseling Psychology in the Bay Region

College	Subregion	Master's degree	Total
Holy Names University	East Bay	16	16
The Wright Institute	East Bay	68	68
Saint Mary's College of California	East Bay	6	6
California Institute of Integral Studies	Mid-Peninsula	161	161
Golden Gate University	Mid-Peninsula	18	18
University of San Francisco	Mid-Peninsula	170	170
Dominican University of California	North Bay	23	23
Santa Clara University	Silicon Valley	106	106
Total	-	568	568

Source: IPEDS

Note: The annual average for awards is 2020-21 to 2022-23.

Table 7c. Bachelor's Degree or Higher on CIP 42.0000- Human Services, General

College	Subregion	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Total
Notre Dame de Namu University	Mid-Peninsula	16	0	16
California State University- Monterey	Santa Cruz and Monterey	100	0	100
University of San Francisco	Mid-Peninsula	0	11	11
Total	-	116	11	127

Source: IPEDS

Note: The annual average for awards is 2020-21 to 2022-23.

Table 7d. Bachelor's Degree or Higher on CIP 42.0701 Social Work

College	Subregion	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Total
California State University	East Bay	0	67	67
University of California – Berkeley	East Bay	77	93	170
San Francisco State University	Mid-Peninsula	25	37	62
California State University	Santa Cruz and Monterey	0	45	45
San Jose State University	Silicon Valley	61	172	233
Pacific Union College	North Bay	7	0	7
Total		170	414	584

Source: IPEDS

Note: The annual average for awards is 2020-21 to 2022-23.

Gap Analysis

The following calculations do not include the associate degrees because most occupations in this field require a bachelor's degree or higher. The labor market gap in the Bay Region includes 2,346 annual openings for Alcohol and

Controlled Substances occupations and 1,279 annual (3-year average) awards for an annual undersupply of 1,067 students. A bachelor’s degree program would help close this gap by preparing more qualified candidates to meet growing employer demand.

Living Wage

The Self-Sufficiency Standard Calculator estimates the income needed for working families to meet basic living standards, considering family composition, children’s ages, and regional costs. It calculates a living wage as the hourly income required for full-time workers to cover basic needs, factoring in family budgets, taxes, and local cost variations across counties, Metropolitan Statistical Areas, and states.

Table 8 shows that for Alcohol and Controlled Substances occupations, the entry-level hourly wage is \$25, and the median wage is \$33. These median wages are sufficient to support an adult with no dependents. However, this wage does not fully meet the hourly living wage requirements for an adult with one infant, preschooler, school-age child, or teenager.

Table 8. Hourly Living Wage compared to Entry- and Mid-Level Wages for BS Alcohol and Drug Studies in the Bay Region

Earning Wage		Hourly Living Wage				
25% Hourly Wage	50% Hourly Wage	Adult Only	Adult + Infant	Adult + Preschool	Adult + School-age	Adult + teenage
\$25	\$33	\$26	\$56	\$53	\$45	\$36

Source: Lightcast 2026.1

Note. The Self-Sufficiency (SS) Standard for California (2024) Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington. The data combines Rehabilitation Counselors, Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors and Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers.

Methodology

The occupation for this report was identified by San Jose City College. Labor demand data is sourced from Lightcast occupation and job postings data. Educational supply and student outcomes data is retrieved from multiple sources, including CCCC Data Mart.

Sources

Data and information referenced in this report were compiled from the following public and proprietary sources:

- [Lightcast](#).
- California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO) [DataMart](#).
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System [([IPEDS](#))].
- U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Occupational Information Network ([O*NET](#))
- Self-Sufficiency Standard at the Center for Women’s Welfare, University of Washington. [2024 California Dataset](#).

Contacts

For more information, please contact:

- Yumi Huang, Research Analyst, Bay Region Center of Excellence, yumi@baccc.net or (831) 275-0043
- Marcela Reyes, Director, Research and Center of Excellence, marcela@baccc.net or (831) 219-8875