

**Labor Market Assessment:
Forensic Science Technicians
(TOP 2105.40 Forensics, Evidence, and Investigation)
(CIP 43.0106 Forensic Science and Technology)**

Inland Empire/Desert Center of Excellence, April 2026

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FOR LABOR MARKET RESEARCH
INLAND EMPIRE/DESERT

Summary

Program LMI Endorsement	All LMI Criteria Met	Some LMI Criteria Met (Proceed with Caution)	LMI Criteria NOT Met
	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Program LMI Endorsement Criteria		
Supply Gap	Yes ✓	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Comments:</i> There are projected to be 48 annual job openings throughout the Inland Empire/Desert region, which is more than the 40 annual average awards conferred by educational institutions over the last 3 years . Supply data includes both community college awards (40) and non-community college awards (0).	
Living Wage	Yes ✓	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Comments:</i> This occupation has entry-level hourly wages \$11 above the IE/D living wage of 20.42. ¹	
Education	Yes ✓	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Comments:</i> This occupation does not have some college or postsecondary degree or associate degree as its typical entry-level education level , however more than 33% of all workers in the field (33.2%) have completed some college or an associate degree as their highest level of education . See Exhibit 9 for more details.	

The Inland Empire/ Desert (IE/D) Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research (IE/D COE) reviewed the following occupations to prepare this report:

- Above Middle-Skill (typically require a bachelor’s degree)
 - Forensic Science Technicians (19-4092)

Summary of findings

Demand

- The number of jobs related to the assessed occupation is projected to increase 13% through 2029, with 48 annual job openings (new and replacement jobs).
- Hourly entry-level wages for this occupation are above living wage at the 25th percentile, with hourly wage estimated to be \$31.86 in IE/D.
- There were 60 online job postings from 25 employers over the past 12 months with the highest postings for crime analysts.
- Most job postings for target occupations require bachelor’s degree (45%), followed by high school diploma or equivalent (40%), and associate degree (14%).

Supply

- On average, there were 40 annual awards conferred by educational institutions over the last 3 years in related fields: 40 from community colleges and 0 from other institutions (e.g., 4-year universities, private schools).
- IE/D community college students that exited these programs in the 2022-23 academic year earned a median annual wage of \$38,350 (\$18.44 per hour).
- 40% of students that exited their program in 2022-23 reported that they are now earning a living wage.

¹ The [UW self-sufficiency standard](#) is currently used by the CO and other COEs, the self-sufficiency standard was last updated by UW in 2024. To provide an alternative perspective, the COE will provide an alternative living wage calculation from MIT in the analysis below as an additional reference point. MIT estimates, the living wage for an adult with no kids living in 2024 is \$26.30 in Riverside County and \$25.17 in San Bernadino County.

Introduction

California Community College Forensics, Evidence, and Investigation (TOP 2105.40) programs prepare students for employment using the theories, principles, and techniques of forensic science and investigation in the justice system (Taxonomy of Programs, 2023). The knowledge, skills, and abilities trained by Forensics, Evidence, and Investigation programs lead to employment in forensic science technicians.

Job Demand

In 2024, there were 314 forensic science technicians in the IE/D region. Regional employment for this occupation group is projected to increase by 13% through 2029 with 48 job openings projected annually. Exhibit 1 displays the job count, five-year projected job growth, and job openings in the region.

Exhibit 1. Five-year projections for forensic science technicians, IE/D Region, 2024-2029

Occupation	SOC	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2024 - 2029 % Change	5-Yr Openings (New + Replacement Jobs)	Annual Openings (New + Replacement Jobs)
Forensic Science Technicians	19-4092	314	354	13%	242	48

SOURCE: LIGHTCAST 2026.1

Job Postings

The following analysis for forensic science technicians using online job posting data.

Important note: The data produced in this section were generated by leveraging online job posting data sourced from Lightcast, which is the labor market analytics software tool COEs use to produce these briefs. The job posting data is collected from scraping online job boards such as LinkedIn, Indeed, Glassdoor and many others. The process Lightcast uses to assemble this data does have some limitations due to methods that recruitment professionals sometimes use (e.g., posting one job to fill multiple positions). For example, the number of jobs posted is not necessarily the same as the number of job vacancies.² While not perfect, Lightcast leverages machine learning and other AI technologies to enrich, de-duplicate and aggregate this information to make it a meaningful dataset.

Exhibit 2 displays the number of job ads posted for forensic science technicians over the last 12 months and the median posting duration. Over the previous 12 months, there were 60 unique job postings for forensic science technicians in the region from 25 employers.

Exhibit 2. Job ads and posting duration, IE/D Region, Apr 2025 – Mar 2026

Job Title	Job Ads	Median Posting Duration
Forensic Science Technicians	60	26 days

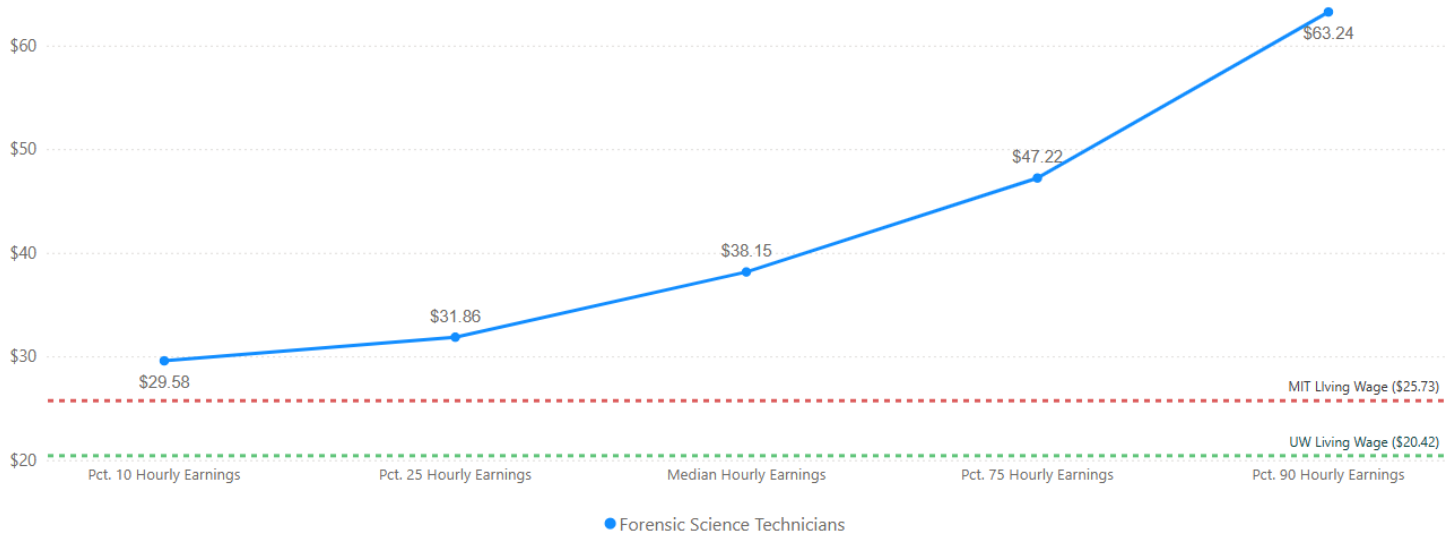
SOURCE: LIGHTCAST 2026.1

² "Job Posting Analytics (JPA) Methodology." Lightcast Knowledge Base, <https://kb.lightcast.io/en/articles/6957446-job-posting-analytics-jpa-methodology>

Earnings

Exhibit 3 displays the hourly earnings for forensic science technicians compared to both the UW Self-Sufficiency Standard for the IE/D of \$20.42³ and the MIT IE/D living wage of \$25.73.⁴

Exhibit 3. Projected hourly earnings by percentile, IE/D Region, 2024



SOURCE: 2026.1

All projected entry-level earnings (that is, the earnings of the lowest paid 25% of employees in the IE/D) were above the UW Self-Sufficiency Standard for the IE/D (see Exhibit 3). The occupation listed was also above the MIT living wage for an adult with no children (\$25.73) in projected entry-level earnings (see Exhibit 3).

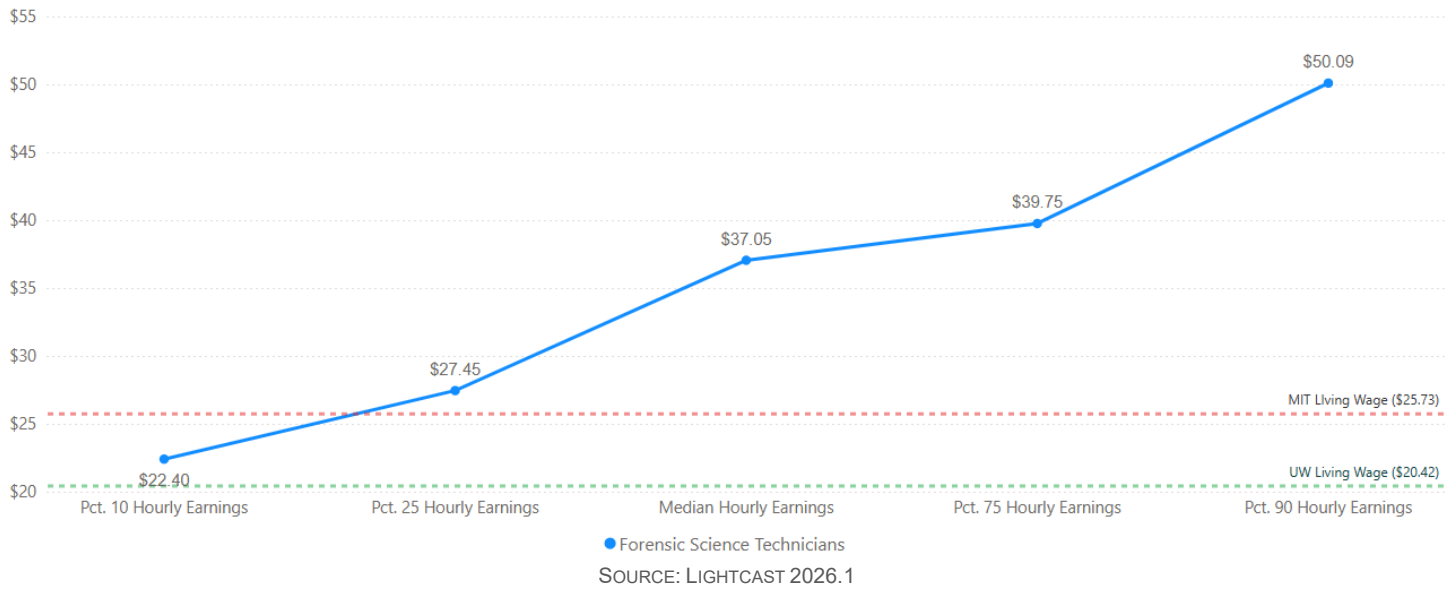
³ The UW self-sufficiency standard is currently used by the CO and other COEs, the self-sufficiency standard was last updated by UW in 2024. To provide an alternative perspective, the COE will provide an alternative living wage calculation from MIT in the analysis below as an additional reference point. MIT estimates, the living wage for an adult with no kids living in 2024 is \$26.30 in Riverside County and \$25.17 in San Bernadino County.

⁴ *ibid.*

Advertised Salary from Online Job Ads

Exhibit 4 displays the regional online advertised salaries for the forensic science technicians over the last 12 months. The salary information of online job ad data suggests employers advertise entry level hourly wages of \$27.45 (estimated to be equal to an annual salary of \$57,096).

Exhibit 4. Hourly earnings of job postings by percentile, IE/D Region, Apr 2025 – Mar 2026



Online Job Advertisements: top job titles, skills, education & work experience.

Exhibit 5 displays the job titles most frequently used in job postings for the forensic science technicians over the last 12 months. Assessing the top advertised job titles may provide insight into the types of positions sought by employers.

Exhibit 5. Job titles most frequently used in job ads, IE/D Region, Apr 2025 – Mar 2026

Job Title	Unique Postings
Crime Analysts	12
Criminalists	9
Crime Intelligence Analysts	7
Evidence Technicians	6
Investigative Technicians	4
Police Cadets	4
Crime Scene Technicians	3
Forensic Investigators	2
Forensic Technicians	2
Victim Services Specialists	2

SOURCE: LIGHTCAST 2026.1

Exhibit 6 displays the employers posting the most job ads for this occupational group during the last 12 months. Showing employer names can provide insight into where students may find employment after completing a program and may inform job development and other employer engagement targets for faculty and staff involved in related programs. The County of Riverside and City of Riverside, CA had the highest unique job posts for this occupational group in the last 12 months. Posting intensity is the ratio of total job posts to unique job posts which are deduplicated. A higher posting intensity can represent the level of effort and activity the organization is putting into hiring for that position. The following report comes directly from Lightcast’s Job Posting Analytics dashboard.

Exhibit 6. Employers posting the most job ads, IE/D Region, Apr 2025 – Mar 2026

Company	Total/Unique (Apr 2025 - Mar 2026)	Posting Intensity	Median Posting Duration
County Of Riverside	47 / 13	4 : 1	46 days
City Of Riverside Ca	11 / 5	2 : 1	16 days
San Bernardino County	14 / 5	3 : 1	21 days
State of California	6 / 4	2 : 1	13 days
The San Bernardino County, Ca, Chapter Of Concerned Black Men	4 / 4	1 : 1	19 days
City Of San Bernardino	6 / 3	2 : 1	43 days
City Of Riverside	7 / 2	4 : 1	n/a
Strategic Contracting Services	3 / 2	2 : 1	23 days
City Of Cathedral	1 / 1	1 : 1	n/a
City Murrieta	3 / 1	3 : 1	28 days

SOURCE: LIGHTCAST 2026.1

Exhibit 7 displays the top common, specialized and computer skills that were included in the job postings over the last 12 months. Today’s demand is an important indicator of which skills employers are looking for in the current market. Analyzing skills from a historical perspective as well as projecting the future needs of employers may provide insight into how the job posting skills demand compares to the market as a whole. Rapidly growing skills are those that are increasing in demand at a faster rate than the market as a whole.⁵

Exhibit 7. Top 10 in-demand skills from employer job ads, IE/D Region, Apr 2025 – Mar 2026

Common skills	Total Postings	Skill Growth Relative to Market
Investigation	28	Growing
Communication	22	Lagging
Research	22	Growing
Presentations	16	Rapidly Growing
Operations	14	Stable
Writing	13	Growing
Detail Oriented	10	Stable
Ethical Standards And Conduct	10	Growing
Customer Service	9	Stable
Clerical Works	8	Growing
Problem Solving	8	Growing

⁵ “What are Lightcast Skill Projects”, Lightcast Knowledge base, <https://kb.lightcast.io/en/articles/8496296-what-are-lightcast-skill-projections>

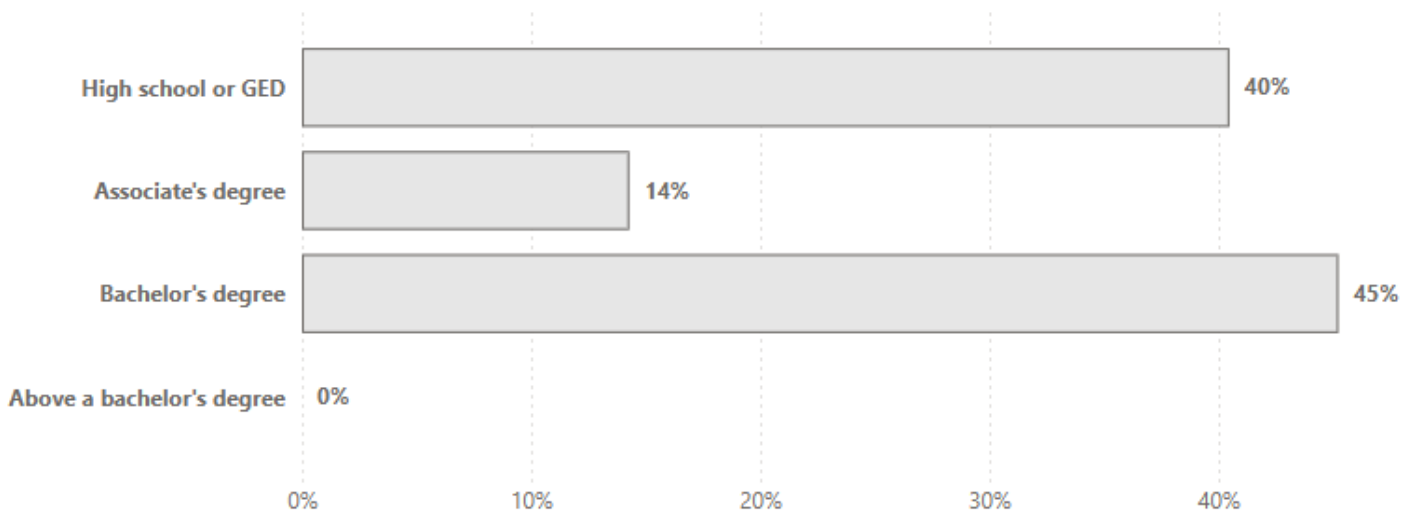
Specialized skills	Total Postings	Skill Growth Relative to Market
Law Enforcement	24	Growing
Crime Analysis	19	Growing
Statistics	18	Rapidly Growing
Chain Of Custody	14	Stable
Intelligence Analysis	13	Lagging
Public Administration	12	Rapidly Growing
Biology	11	Rapidly Growing
Data Analysis	11	Rapidly Growing
Evidence Collection	10	Growing
Evidence Preservation	10	Stable

Computer Skills	Total Postings	Skill Growth Relative to Market
Firewall	8	Rapidly Growing
Geographic Information Systems	8	Growing
Spreadsheets	3	Rapidly Growing
Inventory Control Systems	2	Growing
Database Systems	1	Growing
Microsoft Excel	1	Growing
Microsoft Outlook	1	Rapidly Growing
Microsoft Word	1	Stable
Statistical Software	1	Growing

SOURCE: LIGHTCAST 2026.1

Exhibit 8 includes the minimum educational requirements from job postings for this occupational group with bachelor's degree (45%) greater than associate degree (14%) or high school diploma or equivalent (40%).

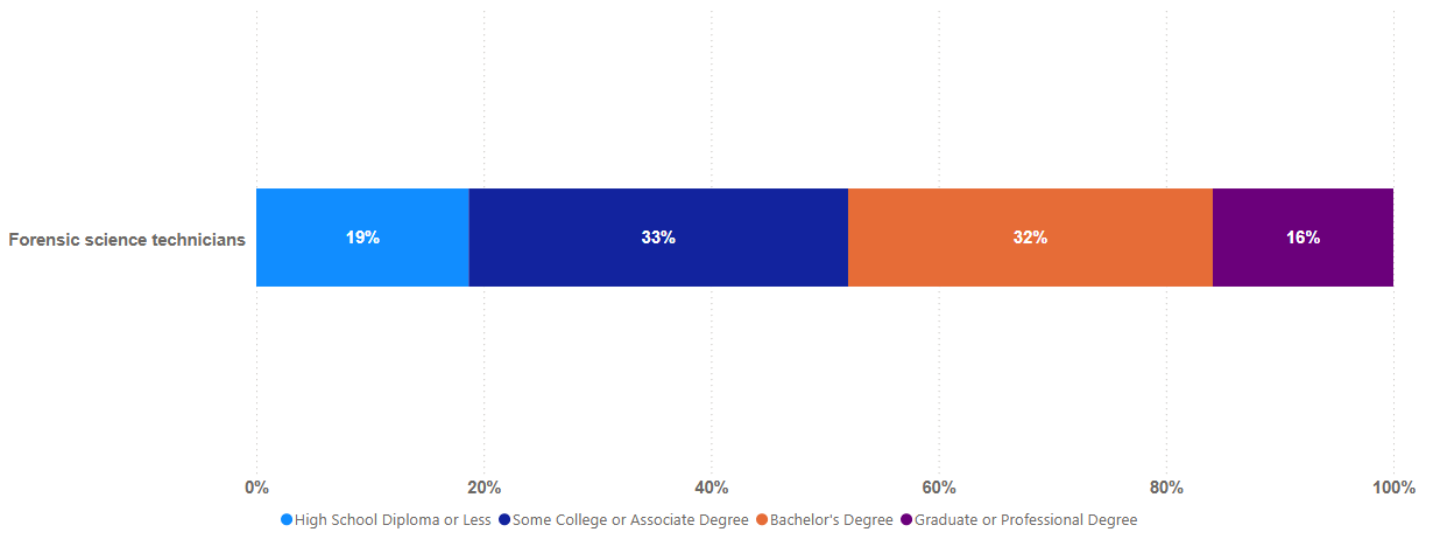
Exhibit 8 Minimum educational requirements in job postings for this occupational group, IE/D Region, Apr 2025 – Mar 2026



SOURCE: LIGHTCAST 2026.1

For forensic science technicians, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) education attainment data in Exhibit 9 for current professionals in the occupation indicates that 33% of workers have completed some college or an associate degree as their highest level of education.

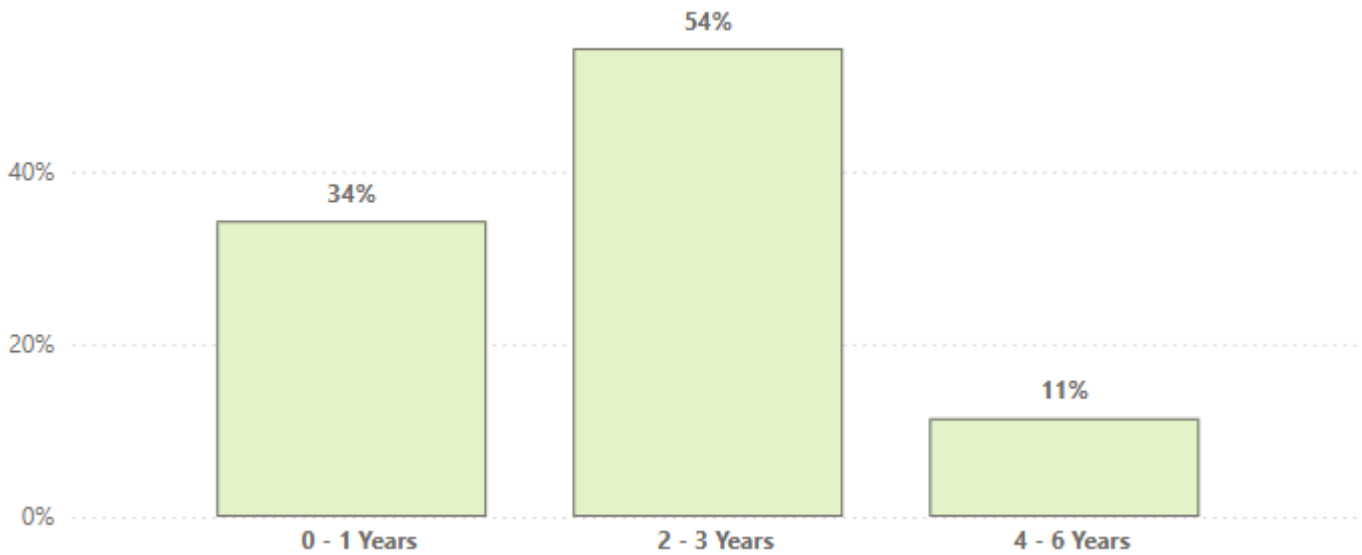
Exhibit 9 National-level Education Attainment for the Occupational Group



SOURCE: BLS 2021

Exhibit 10 displays the work experience typically required from employer job ads for this occupational group. The majority (54%) of employers listing minimum experience requirements sought candidates with 2-3 years of previous work experience.

Exhibit 10 Work experience requirements, IE/D Region, Apr 2025 – Mar 2026



SOURCE: LIGHTCAST 2026.1

Student Completions and Program Outcomes

Exhibit 11 displays student completions for the Forensics, Evidence, and Investigation (TOP 2105.40) programs over the last three academic years (2021-2024). In the previous three academic years, four regional community colleges issued an average of 40 awards in relevant programs.

Exhibit 11 Annual average community college awards for Forensics, Evidence, and Investigation (TOP 2105.40), IE/D, 2022-2025

Top Code	Program	College	2022-2023 Awards	2023-2024 Awards	2024-2025 Awards	3-Year Award Average
2105.40	Forensics, Evidence, and Investigation	Moreno Valley	0	22	26	16
2105.40	Forensics, Evidence, and Investigation	Mt. San Jacinto	1	2	7	3
2105.40	Forensics, Evidence, and Investigation	Norco	4	11	12	9
2105.40	Forensics, Evidence, and Investigation	Riverside	7	11	16	11
Total			12	46	61	40

SOURCE: MIS DATA MART

Non-Community College Supply

Student award completion data was not found in the IE/D for other related non-community college programs: Law Enforcement Record-Keeping and Evidence Management (CIP 43.0115), Financial Forensics and Fraud Investigation (CIP 43.0117), Forensic Science and Technology (CIP 43.0106), Criminalistics and Criminal Science (CIP 43.0111), Law Enforcement Investigation and Interviewing (CIP 43.0114).

In the previous three academic years, 0 regional non-community college institutions issued an average of 0 awards in relevant programs.

Strong Workforce Program Outcomes

California SWP program outcome data may provide useful insight into the likelihood of success for the proposed program. Community college student outcome information based on the selected TOP code and region is provided in Exhibit 13.

Exhibit 13 Forensics, Evidence, and Investigation strong workforce program outcomes, IE/D & California, AY 2022-23

Program Metric Title	Inland Empire	Statewide
Students	298	1,936
Earned 9+ Career Education Units	43%	44%
Completed Noncredit Workforce Preparation Milestone	-	-
Earned an Award: Degree or Cert or Attained Appren. Journey Level Status	-	7%
Transferred to a Four-Year Institution: Four-Year Postsecondary Institution	9%	10%
Median Annual Earnings	\$38,350	\$38,956
Median Change in Earnings	97%	39%
Attained Living Wage	40%	35%

SOURCE: DATAVISTA

Appendix: Methodology

Exhibit 11 displays the average annual California Community College (CCC) awards conferred during the three academic years between 2022 and 2025 from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems (MIS) Data Mart. Awards are the combined total during the timeframe, divided by three in this case to calculate an annual average. This is done to minimize the effect of atypical variations that might be present in a single year.

Community college student outcome information is from DataVista and based on the selected TOP code and region. These metrics are based on records submitted to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems (MIS) by community colleges, which come from self-reported student information from CCC Apply and the National Student Clearinghouse. Employment and earnings metrics are sourced from California's Employment Development Department's Unemployment Insurance database. When available, outcomes for completers are reported to demonstrate the impact that earning a degree or certificate can have on employment and earnings. For more information on the types of students included for each metric, please see the web link for DataVista's Strong Workforce Program Metrics Data Element Dictionary in the Resources section (DataVista, 2025).

Appendix: References

Type of Data	Source
Occupational Projections, Wages, and Job Postings	Traditional labor market information data is sourced from Lightcast, a labor market analytics firm. Lightcast occupational employment data are based on final Lightcast industry data and final Lightcast staffing patterns. Wage estimates are based on Occupational Employment. https://lightcast.io/
Living Wage (UW)	Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington. (2024). The self-sufficiency standard for California 2024. http://www.selfsufficiencystandard.org/California . The COE refers to the Self-Sufficiency Wage as a "living wage." This calculation measures the income necessary for an individual of family to afford basic expenses. The data assesses the cost of housing, food, childcare, health care, transportation, and taxes. The living wage for one adult in San Bernardino County is \$20.07 per hour (\$42,392 annually). The living wage for one adult in Riverside County is \$20.76 per hour (\$43,854 annually). The average living wage to represent Inland Empire/Desert is \$20.42 per hour (\$43,123 annually).
Living Wage (MIT)	Glasmeier, A. K. (2024). <i>Living wage calculator</i> . Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Accessed on April 14, 2025, https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/06/locations The living wage is derived from MITs Living Wage Calculator, which measures the income necessary for an individual of family to afford basic expenses. The data assesses the cost of housing, food, childcare, health care, transportation, and taxes. For more information, see: https://livingwage.mit.edu/pages/methodology The living wage for one adult in San Bernardino County is \$25.17 per hour (\$52,353.60 annually). The living wage for one adult in Riverside County is \$26.30 per hour (\$54,704 annually). The average living wage to represent Inland Empire/Desert is \$25.74 per hour (53,539.20 annually)
Typical Education and Training Requirements, and Educational Attainment	The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) provides information about education and training requirements for hundreds of occupations. BLS uses a system to assign categories for entry-level education, work experience in a related occupation, and typical on-the-job training to each occupation for which BLS publishes projections data. For more information, see https://www.bls.gov/emp/documentation/education/tech.htm
Educational Supply	The CCCCO Data Mart provides information about students, courses, student services, outcomes and faculty and staff. For more information, see: https://datamart.cccco.edu The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Integrated Data System (IPEDS) collects data on the

	<p>number of postsecondary awards earned (completions). For more information, see https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data/survey-components/7/completions</p>
<p>Student Metrics and Demographics</p>	<p>DataVista aims to provide up-to-date and useful information on students within the California Community Colleges and its Adult Education partners. DataVista is a modernization of the supporting architecture and visualization of metrics previously available on the LaunchBoard.</p> <p>DataVista is a collaboration between the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and WestEd, see: https://datavista.cccco.edu/data_views/swp_report</p>