

Labor Market Assessment: Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations (TOP 1306.30 Culinary Arts) (CIP 12.0505 Food Preparation/Professional Cooking/ Kitchen Assistant)



FOR LABOR MARKET RESEARCH
INLAND EMPIRE/DESERT

Inland Empire/Desert Center of Excellence, June 2026

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Summary

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

Program LMI Endorsement Criteria			
Supply Gap	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;">No <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> <p><i>Comments:</i> There is <i>projected</i> to be 7,012 annual job openings throughout the Inland Empire/Desert region, which is more than the 160 annual average awards conferred by educational institutions over the last 3 years. Supply data includes both community college awards (160) and non-community college awards (0).</p>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Living Wage	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;">No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> <p><i>Comments:</i> One of the five occupations has entry-level hourly wages above the IE/D living wage of 20.42¹, which accounts for a minority (5%) of annual job openings.</p>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Education	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Yes <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;">No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> <p><i>Comments:</i> None of the nine occupations have some college or postsecondary degree or associate degree as their typical entry-level education level. Additionally, less than 33% of all workers in the field (31%) have completed some college or an associate degree as their highest level of education. See Exhibit 9 for more details.</p>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

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

- Below Middle-Skill (typically require training/education at or below a HS diploma)
 - Chefs and Head Cooks (35-1011)
 - First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers (35-1012)
 - Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria (35-2012)
 - Cooks, Restaurant (35-2014)
 - Bakers (51-3011)

Summary of findings

Demand

- The number of jobs related to the assessed occupations is projected to increase 10% through 2029, with 7,012 annual job openings (new and replacement jobs).
- Hourly entry-level wages for only one of the five occupations are above living wage at the 25th percentile hourly wage, with all occupations ranging from \$17.43 to \$22.20 in IE/D.
- There were 5,803 online job postings from 834 employers over the past 12 months with the highest postings for shift leaders and shift supervisors.
- Most job postings for target occupations require a high school diploma or equivalent (87%), followed by a bachelor's degree (8%), and associate degree (4%).

Supply

- On average, there were 160 annual awards conferred by educational institutions over the last 3 years in related fields: 160 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 2023-24 academic year earned a median annual wage of \$32,712 (\$15.73 hour).
- 27% of students that exited their program in 2023-24 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 Culinary Arts (TOP 1306.30) programs prepare students for employment Selection, storage, preparation, and service of food in quantity, including the culinary techniques used by chefs, institutional cooks, bakers, and catering services (Taxonomy of Programs, 2023). The knowledge, skills, and abilities trained by Culinary Arts programs lead to employment in occupations related to culinary arts.

Job Demand

In 2024, there were 41,850 jobs in occupations related to culinary arts in the IE/D region. Regional employment for this occupation group is projected to increase by 10% through 2029 with 7,012 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 occupations related to culinary arts, 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)
Chefs and Head Cooks	35-1011	2,771	3,039	10%	1,885	377
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	35-1012	16,292	17,489	7%	13,030	2,606
Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	35-2012	2,650	3,038	15%	2,456	491
Cooks, Restaurant	35-2014	16,857	18,852	12%	14,869	2,974
Bakers	51-3011	3,280	3,558	8%	2,820	564
Total		41,850	45,976	10%	35,060	7,012

SOURCE: LIGHTCAST 2026.2

Job Postings

The following analysis for occupations related to culinary arts 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 occupations related to culinary arts over the last 12 months and the median posting duration. Over the previous 12 months, there were 5,803 unique job postings for occupations related to culinary arts in the region from 834 employers.

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

Job Title	Job Ads	Median Posting Duration
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	2,858	26 days
Cooks, Restaurant	1,614	31 days
Bakers	664	23 days
Chefs and Head Cooks	584	32 days
Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	83	25 days
Total	5,803	

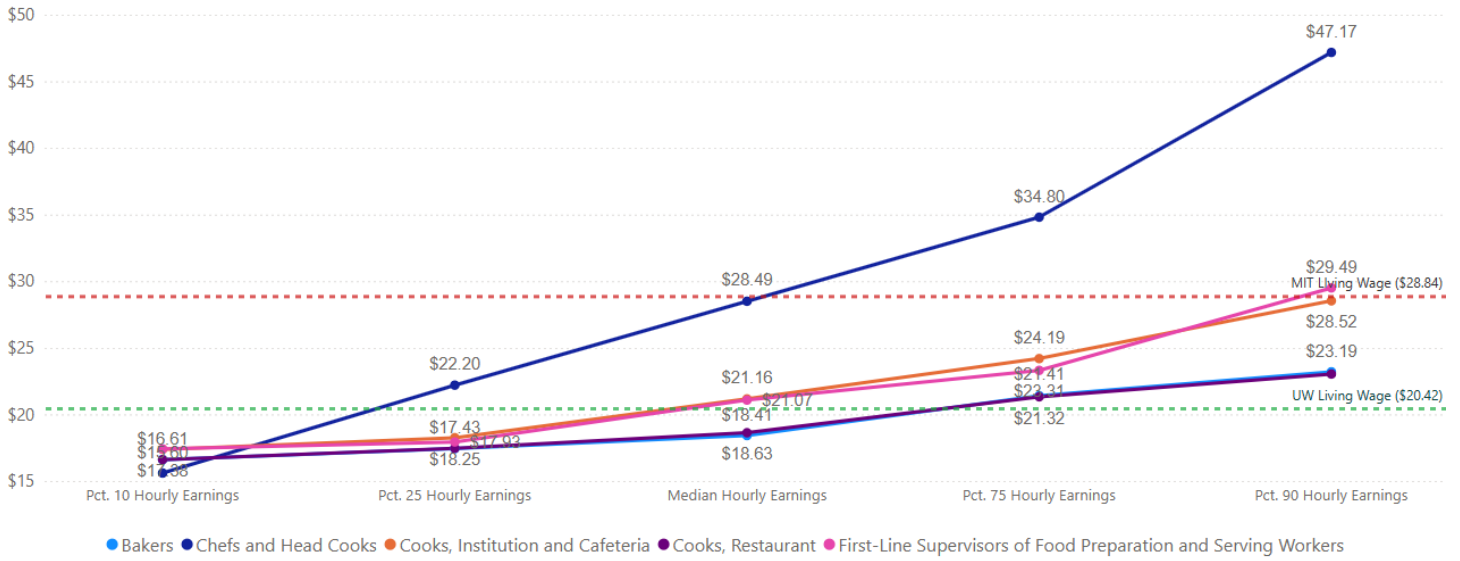
SOURCE: LIGHTCAST 2026.2

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 occupations related to culinary arts 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



Description	Pct. 10 Hourly Earnings	Pct. 25 Hourly Earnings	Median Hourly Earnings	Pct. 75 Hourly Earnings	Pct. 90 Hourly Earnings
Cooks, Restaurant	\$16.61	\$17.46	\$18.63	\$21.32	\$23.03
Bakers	\$16.61	\$17.43	\$18.41	\$21.41	\$23.19
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	\$17.41	\$17.93	\$21.07	\$23.31	\$29.49
Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	\$17.38	\$18.25	\$21.16	\$24.19	\$28.52
Chefs and Head Cooks	\$15.60	\$22.20	\$28.49	\$34.80	\$47.17

SOURCE: 2026.2

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

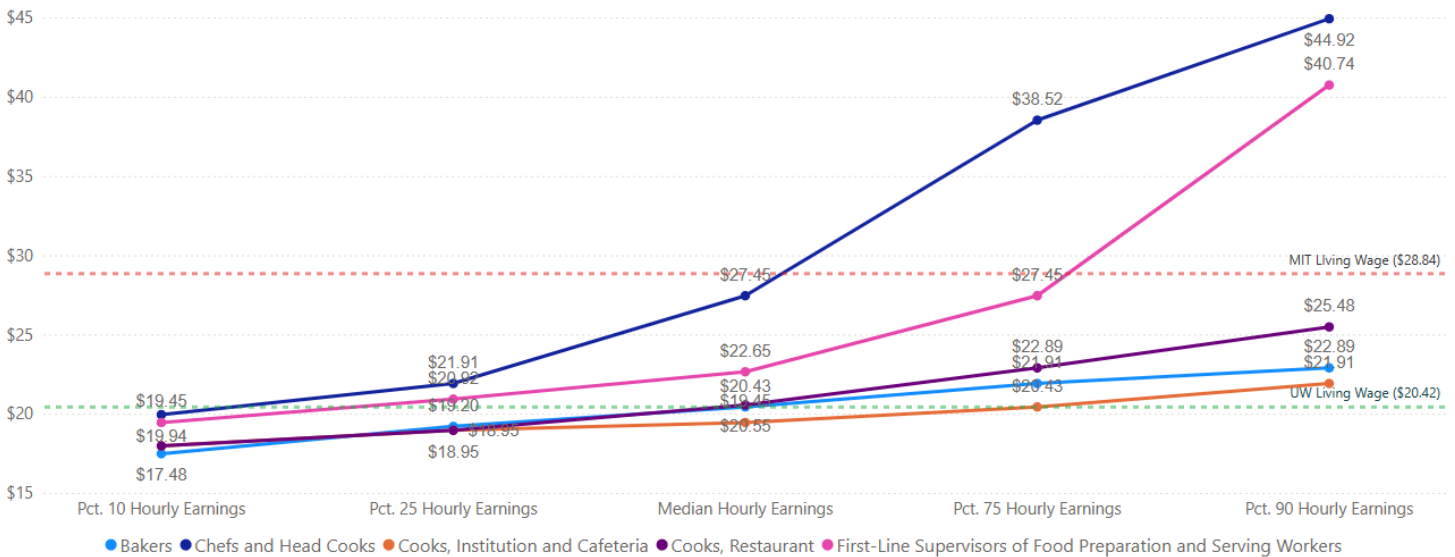
³ The UW self-sufficiency standard is currently used by the CO and other COEs, the self-sufficiency standard was last updated by UW in 2024. To provide an alternative perspective, the COE will provide an alternative living wage calculation from MIT in the analysis below as an additional reference point. 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 occupations related to culinary arts over the last 12 months. The salary information of online job ad data suggests employers advertise entry level hourly wages between \$18.95 and \$21.91 (estimated to be equal to an annual salary between \$39,416 and \$45,573).

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



Description	Pct. 10 Hourly Earnings	Pct. 25 Hourly Earnings	Median Hourly Earnings	Pct. 75 Hourly Earnings	Pct. 90 Hourly Earnings
Bakers	\$17.48	\$19.20	\$20.43	\$21.91	\$22.89
Chefs and Head Cooks	\$19.94	\$21.91	\$27.45	\$38.52	\$44.92
Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	\$17.97	\$18.95	\$19.45	\$20.43	\$21.91
Cooks, Restaurant	\$17.97	\$18.95	\$20.55	\$22.89	\$25.48
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	\$19.45	\$20.92	\$22.65	\$27.45	\$40.74

SOURCE: LIGHTCAST 2026.2

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

Exhibit 5 displays the job titles most frequently used in job postings for the occupations related to culinary arts 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, June 2025 – May 2026

Job Title	Unique Postings
Shift Leaders	840
Shift Supervisors	813
Cooks	710
Prep Cooks	234
Bakery Clerks	135
Sushi Chefs	129
Bakers	125
Team Leads	124
Cake Decorators	109

SOURCE: LIGHTCAST 2026.2

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. Starbucks and Panda Express 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 de-duplicated. 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, June 2025 – May 2026

Company	Total/Unique (Jun 2025 - May 2026)	Posting Intensity	Median Posting Duration
Starbucks	1,534 / 692	2 : 1	18 days
Panda Express	516 / 229	2 : 1	17 days
Walgreens Boots Alliance	558 / 131	4 : 1	31 days
El Pollo Loco	339 / 124	3 : 1	36 days
Taco Bell	525 / 120	4 : 1	42 days
Compass Group	150 / 84	2 : 1	27 days
Jack in the Box	192 / 72	3 : 1	34 days
Walmart	124 / 71	2 : 1	22 days
Cardenas Markets	156 / 67	2 : 1	28 days
Marriott International	233 / 65	4 : 1	31 days

SOURCE: LIGHTCAST 2026.2

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, June 2025 – May 2026

Common skills	Total Postings	Skill Growth Relative to Market
Communication	2,393	Stable
Customer Service	2,312	Stable
Operations	1,774	Stable
Leadership	1,693	Growing
Management	1,620	Stable
Cleanliness	1,342	Growing
Sales	913	Stable
Verbal Communication Skills	859	Stable
Honesty	396	Growing
Time Management	396	Growing

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

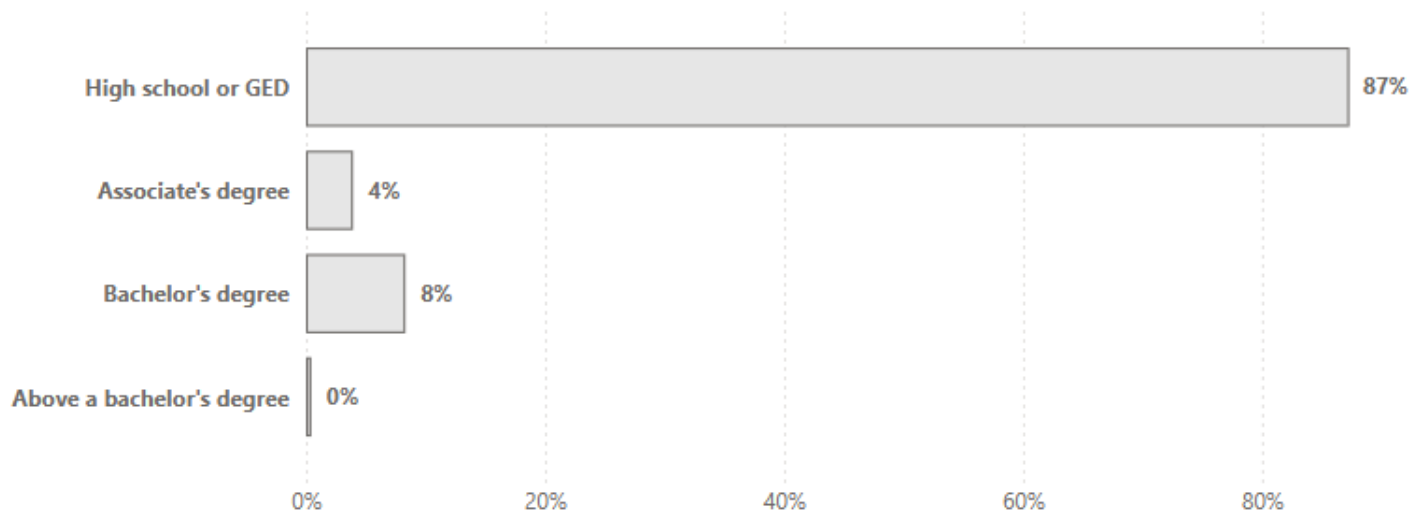
Specialized skills	Total Postings	Skill Growth Relative to Market
Food Safety And Sanitation	1,966	Growing
Restaurant Operation	1,849	Rapidly Growing
Sanitation	1,325	Growing
Cooking	1,241	Growing
Cash Handling	1,117	Growing
Food Preparation	1,100	Growing
Food Services	970	Growing
Lifting Ability	947	Growing
Collective Bargaining	643	Rapidly Growing
Customer Complaint Resolution	279	Rapidly Growing
Warehousing	279	Growing

Computer Skills	Total Postings	Skill Growth Relative to Market
Microsoft Outlook	184	Rapidly Growing
Microsoft Excel	154	Growing
Microsoft Office	127	Growing
Microsoft Word	114	Stable
Inventory Management System	97	Growing
Warehouse Management Systems	45	Growing
Microsoft PowerPoint	43	Rapidly Growing
Spreadsheets	37	Growing
SAP Applications	29	Rapidly Growing

SOURCE: LIGHTCAST 2026.2

Exhibit 8 includes the minimum educational requirements from job postings for this occupational group with high school diploma or equivalent (87%) significantly greater than bachelor's degree (8%) or associate degree (4%).

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



SOURCE: LIGHTCAST 2026.2

For the assessed occupations, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) education attainment data in Exhibit 9 for current professionals in the occupations of interest indicates that between 24% and 38% 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

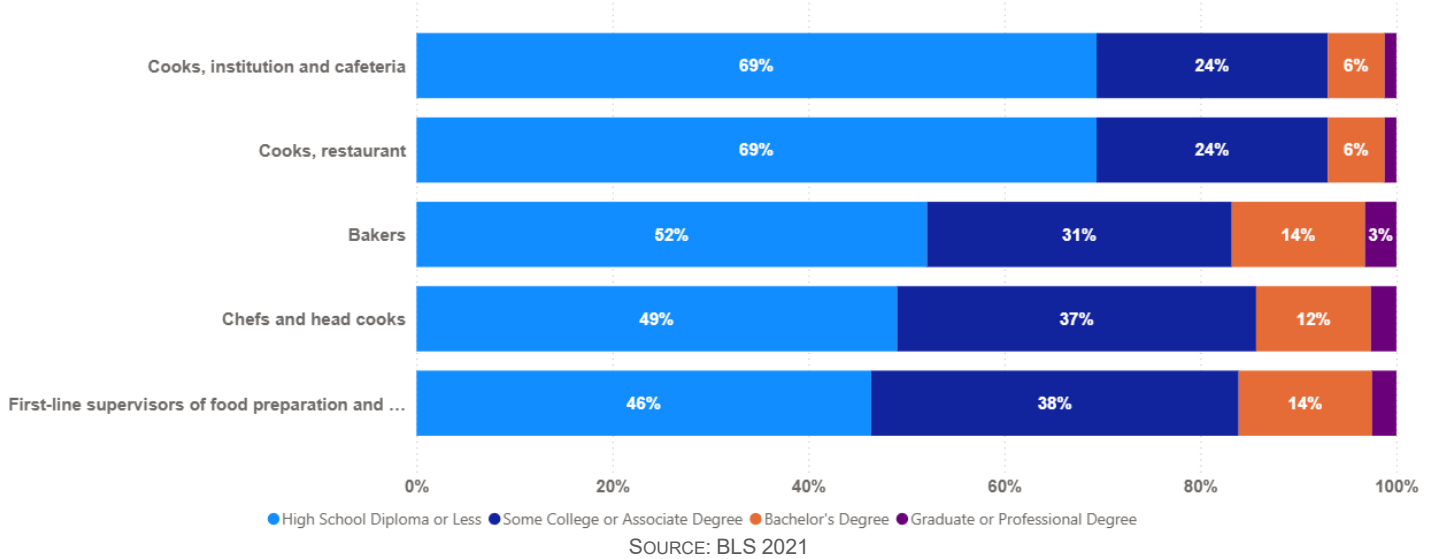
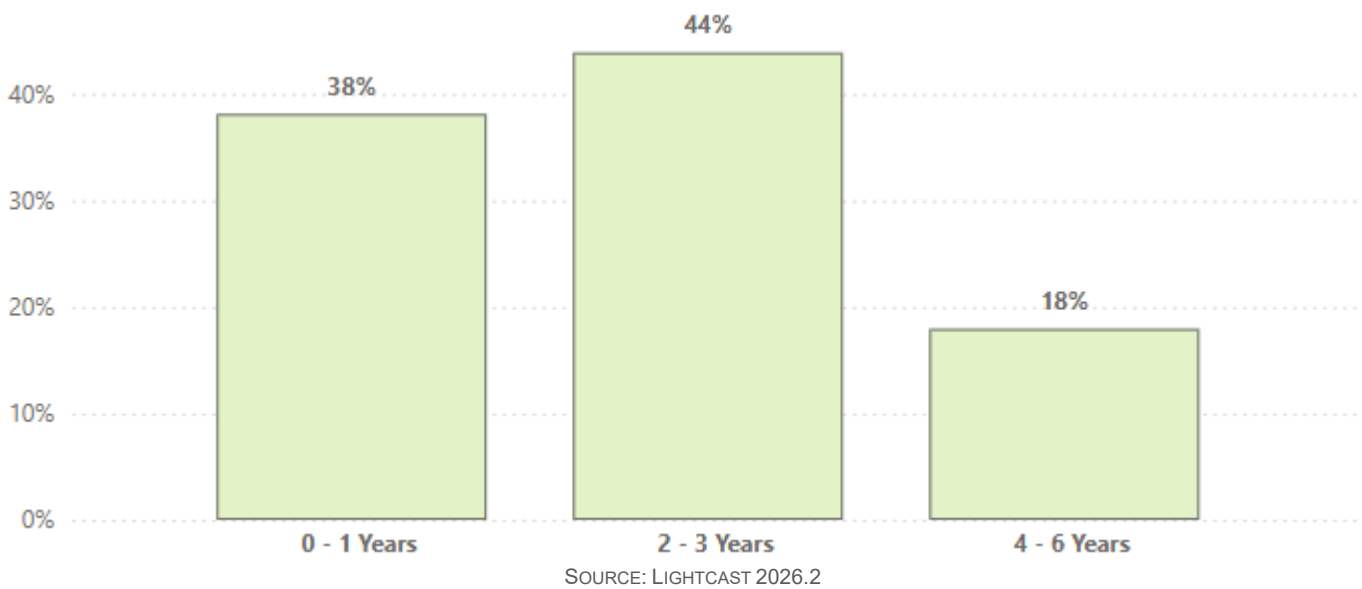


Exhibit 10 displays the work experience typically required from employer job ads for this occupational group. The plurality (44%) of employers listing minimum experience requirements sought candidates with 2-3 years of previous work experience.

Exhibit 10 Work experience requirements, IE/D Region, June 2025 – May 2026



Student Completions and Program Outcomes

Exhibit 11 displays student completions for the Culinary Arts (TOP 1306.30) programs over the last three academic years (2022-2025). In the previous three academic years, six regional community colleges issued an average of 160 awards in relevant programs.

Exhibit 11 Annual average community college awards for Culinary Arts (TOP 1306.30), IE/D, 2022-2025

Top Code	Program	College	2022-2023 Awards	2023-2024 Awards	2024-2025 Awards	3-Year Award Average
1306.30	Culinary Arts	Chaffey	24	22	23	23
1306.30	Culinary Arts	College of the Desert	10	34	24	23
1306.30	Culinary Arts	Copper Mountain College	0	0	2	1
1306.30	Culinary Arts	Mt. San Jacinto	0	9	11	7
1306.30	Culinary Arts	Riverside	89	87	118	98
1306.30	Culinary Arts	San Bernardino	2	16	8	9
Total			125	168	186	160

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: Cooking and Related Culinary Arts, General (CIP 12.0500); Baking and Pastry Arts/Baker/Pastry Chef (CIP 12.0501); Culinary Arts/Chef Training (CIP 12.0503); Food Preparation/Professional Cooking/Kitchen Assistant (CIP 12.0505).

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 12.

Exhibit 12 Culinary Arts strong workforce program outcomes, IE/D & California, AY 2023-24

Program Metric Title	Inland Empire	Statewide
Students	1,220	11,608
Earned 9+ Career Education Units	30%	33%
Completed Noncredit Workforce Preparation Milestone	56%	73%
Earned an Award: Degree or Cert or Attained Appren. Journey Level Status	10%	8%
Transferred to a Four-Year Institution: Four-Year Postsecondary Institution	2%	2%
Median Annual Earnings	\$32,712	\$35,148
Median Change in Earnings	25%	23%
Attained Living Wage	63%	26%

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	<p>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.</p> <p>https://lightcast.io/</p>
Living Wage (UW)	<p>Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington. (2024). The self-sufficiency standard for California 2024.</p> <p>http://www.selfsufficiencystandard.org/California.</p> <p>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 (\$57,408 annually). The living wage for one adult in Riverside County is \$20.76 per hour (\$43,854 annually).</p> <p>The average of the two, \$20.42 per hour (\$42,474 annually), is used to represent the Inland Empire/Desert living wage.</p>
Living Wage (MIT)	<p><i>Living wage data sourced from the Living Wage Institute via https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/06065; https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/06071, Accessed on June 6, 2026.</i></p> <p>The living wage is derived from MIT's 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.</p> <p>The living wage for one adult in San Bernardino County is \$27.60 per hour (\$52,353.60 annually). The living wage for one adult in Riverside County is \$28.84 per hour (\$59,987 annually). The higher of the two, \$28.84 per hour (\$59,987 annually), is used to represent the Inland Empire/Desert living wage.</p>
Typical Education and Training Requirements, and Educational Attainment	<p>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</p>

Educational Supply	<p>The CCCCO Data Mart provides information about students, courses, student services, outcomes and faculty and staff. For more information, see: https://datamart.cccco.edu</p> <p>The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Integrated Data System (IPEDS) collects data on the number of postsecondary awards earned (completions). For more information, see https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data/survey-components/7/completions</p>
Student Metrics and Demographics	<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>