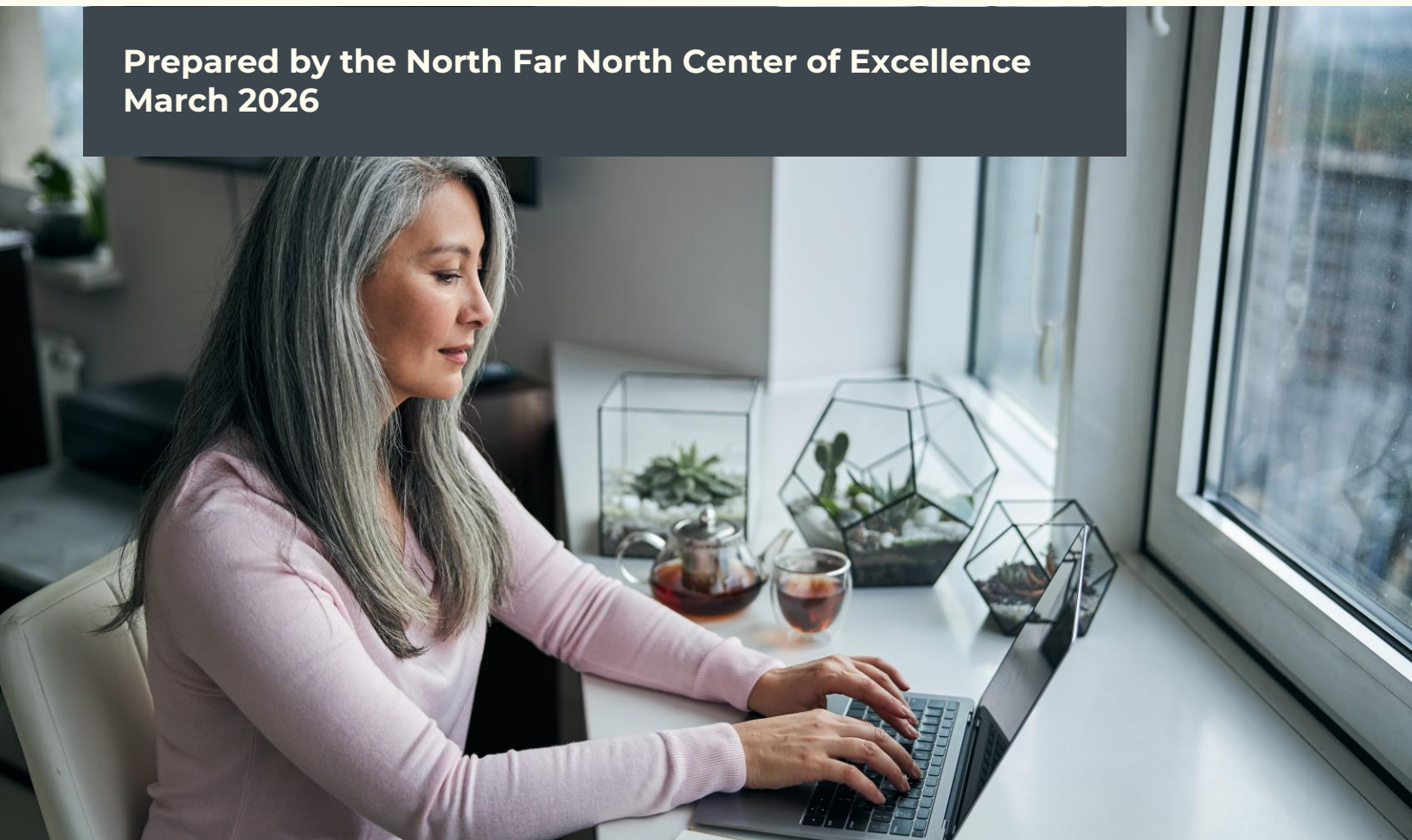


Labor Market Analysis for Program Review:

Screenwriters in Greater Sacramento

Prepared by the North Far North Center of Excellence
March 2026



POWERED BY



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CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
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Summary

The North Far North Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research (NFN COE) prepared this report to provide an analysis of occupational demand and educational supply for selected occupations employed across the 22-county North Far North region. This report aims to determine if demand in the local labor market is unmet by the supply from existing community college programs and other postsecondary training providers, with a primary focus on training that leads to living wage jobs in middle-skilled occupations.¹

Key Findings

- **Screenwriting jobs are growing slightly faster in the Greater Sacramento subregion than in the rest of California.** Screenwriting jobs are growing at a rate of 7% in the subregion compared to 5% in California as a whole.
- **Entry-level wages for screenwriter occupations are below the living wage for a single working adult in Cosumnes River's community college district.** Entry-level wages are between \$17.19 and \$20.67 per hour, while the living wage for a single working adult in Cosumnes River's community college district is \$21.17 per hour.
- **Job posting analysis reveals that jobs requiring screenwriting skillsets focus primarily on social media content creation.** Seventy-eight percent of job postings focused on social media content creation, with 42% specifically focusing on TikTok video creation.
- **Screenwriting occupations have a bachelor's degree as their minimum entry-level education.** Between 41% and 50% incumbent workers in screenwriting occupations have a bachelor's degree as their highest level of educational attainment.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, the North Far North COE recommends that community colleges **do not proceed** in creating new programs related to screenwriting and scriptwriting. Key considerations include:

- Entry-level wages for screenwriter occupations are below the living wage for a single working adult.
- Job postings analysis reveals that job postings requiring screenwriting skills are primarily focused on social media content creation. These jobs require additional skills related to video production and editing. Programs focusing on Digital Media, given their closer alignment to skillsets required in social media content production, are more appropriate to train for these opportunities.
- The Playwriting and Screenwriting CIP (50.0504) is not CTE. Per the [TOP-to-CIP crosswalk](#), there are no CIP codes focusing on playwriting and screenwriting skills that are CTE. Colleges that are considering offering a playwriting and screenwriting program should consider non-CTE pathways.

¹ Pursuant to California Education Code §78015, labor market information (LMI) is required for all new career education certificate and degree program proposals, and the North Far North Regional Consortium (NFNRC) requires LMI to come from the NFN COE. This report should serve to satisfy those requirements.

Introduction

The North Far North Center of Excellence (COE) was asked to provide labor market data to support a proposed new career education program or modifications to existing programs at a regional community college (see Appendix A for methodology and data sources).

This report focuses on the following Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) occupations and codes:

- Writers and Authors (27-3043)
- Proofreaders and Copy Markers (43-9081)

The Technical Writers (27-3042) occupation was considered, but job postings data revealed roles in the Greater Sacramento subregion were concentrated in industries related to computer systems design, engineering, and other scientific or technical disciplines, as opposed to television or film.

A review of related programs revealed the following Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) title(s) and code(s) are appropriate for inclusion in this report:

- Journalism (0602.00)
- Film Production (0612.20)
- Mass Communications (0614.00)

*Film production is included as it is the proposed TOP code for the new program, and the only existing playwriting and screenwriting program at the community colleges (at L.A. Valley) is housed under this TOP code.

The corresponding Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) title(s) and code(s) are:

- Playwriting and Screenwriting (50.0504)**

**Playwriting and Screenwriting is not a CTE CIP code. There are no aligned CTE CIP codes related to screenwriting, scriptwriting, theater writing, or creative writing.

Occupational Demand

Exhibit 1 summarizes the five-year projected job growth for the targeted occupational groups in the Greater Sacramento subregion, the 22-county North Far North region, and California.²

Exhibit 1. Current employment and projected occupational demand, 2024-2029

Occupational Group	2024 Jobs	2024-2029 Change	2024-2029 % Change	2024-2029 Annual Openings
Writers and Authors	1,103	92	8%	127
Proofreaders and Copy Markers	122	(6)	(5%)	19
Greater Sacramento	1,225	86	7%	146
Writers and Authors	1,373	109	8%	158
Proofreaders and Copy Markers	131	(5)	(4%)	21
North Far North	1,504	104	7%	179
Writers and Authors	24,323	1,151	5%	2,640
Proofreaders and Copy Markers	904	9	1%	151
California	25,227	1,160	5%	2,791

Exhibit 2 compares historical and projected annual change in employment for the period 2019 to 2029 with the base number of jobs in 2019 for Greater Sacramento, the 22-county North Far North region, and California.

² The 22-county North Far North is a dual region. It is represented by the North (Greater Sacramento) subregion that covers seven counties, including El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba, and the 15-county Far North subregion which includes Butte, Colusa, Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Trinity.

Exhibit 2. Changes in employment, 2019-2029

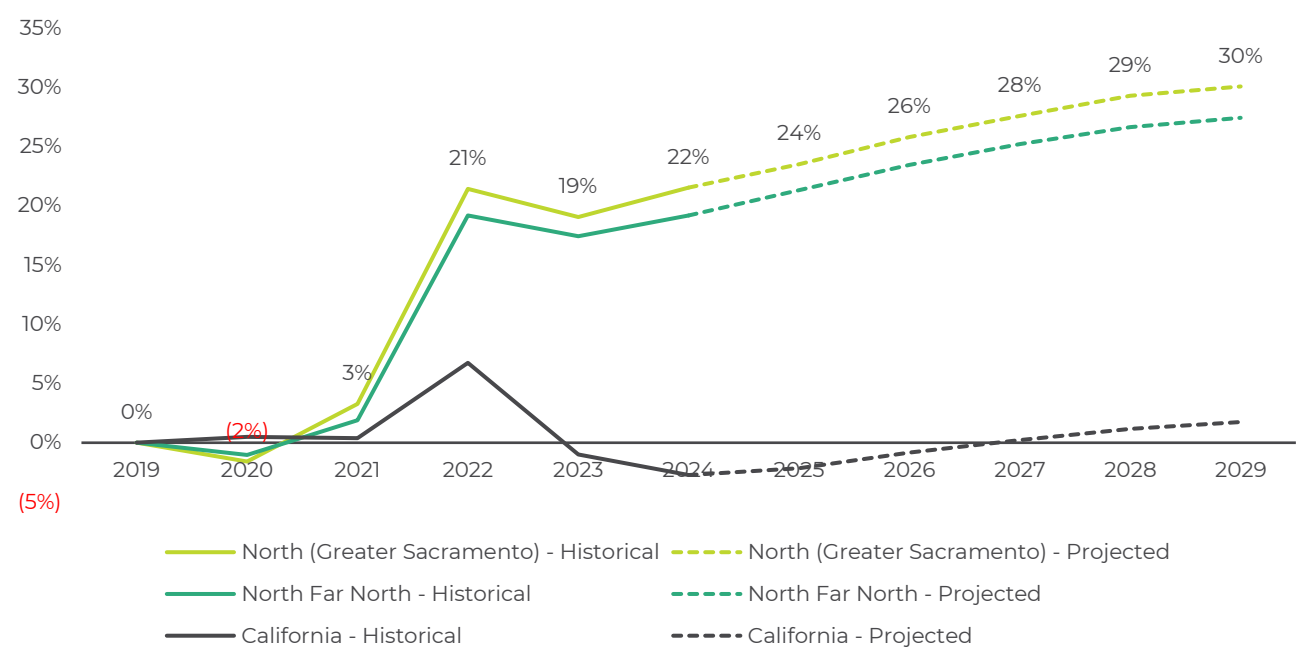
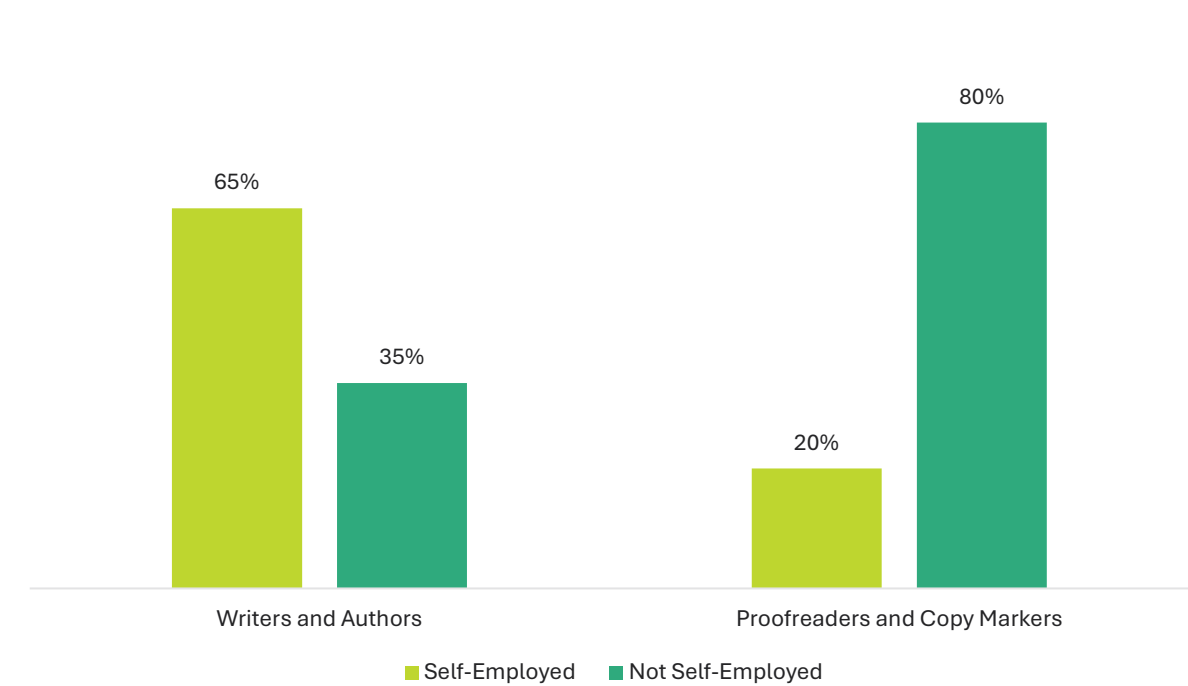


Exhibit 3 shows the percentage of workers in each occupation in the Greater Sacramento subregion in 2024 who were self-employed compared to those who were not.

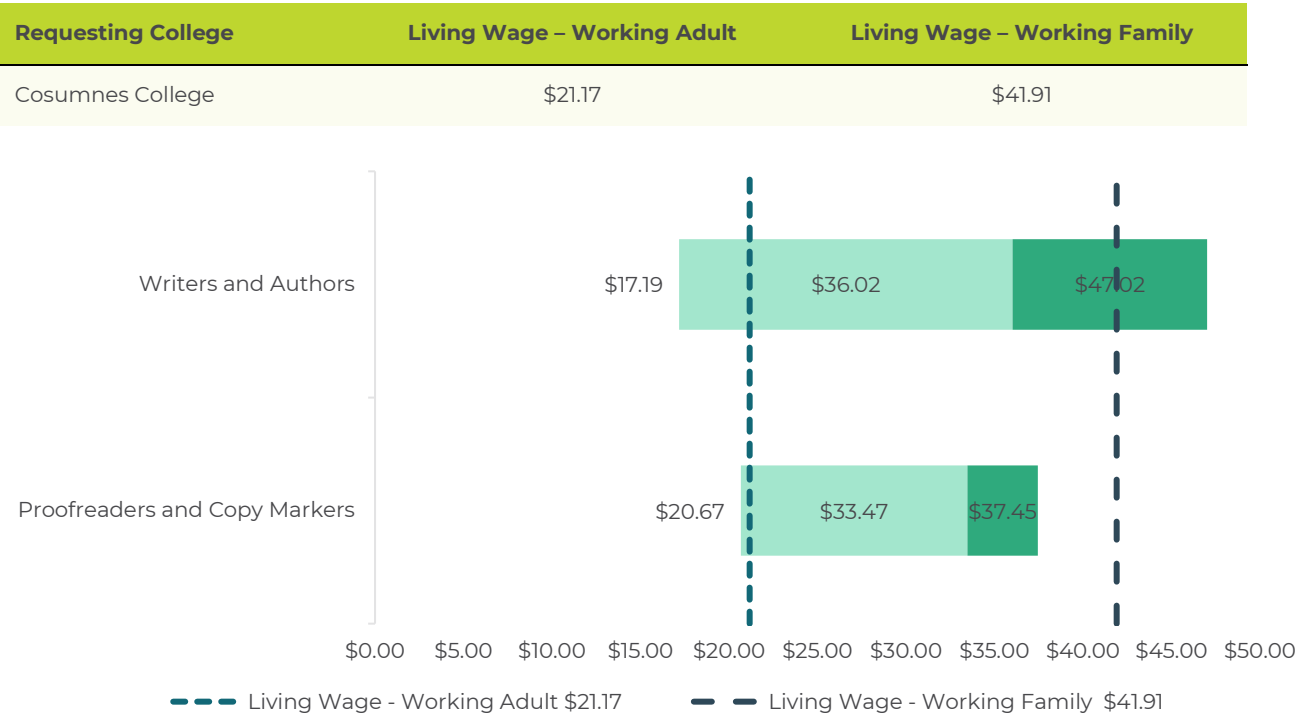
Exhibit 3. Percentage of workers who were self-employed by occupation



Earnings

Exhibit 4 compares the percentile hourly earnings for the selected occupations to the living wage for a single working adult and a working family residing in the county of the community college district that requested this report.^{3,4} Earnings data includes wages from employed and self-employed workers. Also, it’s important to note that living wage thresholds vary by county, and in the Greater Sacramento subregion, range from \$17 to \$24 per hour for a single working adult.

Exhibit 4. Hourly earnings compared to the community college district's living wage



³ A “living wage” is defined as the level of income one working adult with no children must earn to meet basic needs, including food, housing, transportation, healthcare, taxes, and other miscellaneous basic needs. Please note that the 25th-percentile and 75th-percentile hourly wages are used as proxies for entry-level and experienced-level wages.

⁴ A “working family” is defined as one working adult and one infant (between the ages of 0 and 2 years).

Job Postings

Analysis of online job postings can offer additional insights into recent labor market changes not reflected in historical trends. However, it is important to note that job postings do not equate to actual labor market demand, which is based on projected annual job openings.

There are several limitations to interpreting online job postings. Employers may repost the same position multiple times to attract more applicants, or job postings may remain active even if the position is no longer being filled. Additionally, a single job posting can be used to hire for multiple openings, and not all job opportunities are advertised online. Despite these limitations, job posting analyses can be valuable for guiding community college curriculum development and identifying potential employers for targeted experiential learning opportunities.

Job posting data comes from and represents unique advertisements posted online during the last 12 months, from March 2025 to February 2026. The North Far North COE identified 120 online job postings for the selected occupations across the Greater Sacramento subregion. The composition of these postings

Exhibit 5. Total job postings by occupation

Occupation	Number of Job Postings	Share of Postings	Median Advertised Salary
Writers and Authors	101	84%	\$34.83
Proofreaders and Copy Markers	19	16%	\$33.85
Total	120	100%	\$34.83

Of the job postings aligned with Writers and Authors and Proofreaders and Copy Markers, many job postings do not focus specifically on screenwriting or scriptwriting. Exhibit 6 shows the occupation and median advertised salary for the 77 job postings that include some screenwriting or scriptwriting components.

Exhibit 6. Job postings with screenwriting or scriptwriting

Occupation	Number of Job Postings	Share of Postings	Median Advertised Salary
Writers and Authors	72	94%	\$29.91
Proofreaders and Copy Markers	5	6%	\$20.50
Total	77	100%	\$29.91

Top employers

Exhibit 7 shows the employers with the most job postings for the selected occupations across Greater Sacramento.

Exhibit 7. Employers with the most job postings

Employer	Number of Job Postings
Nexstar Media Group	3
Sutter Health	2
Fresh Press Ink, LLC	2
Nathan and Sons	2

Top titles

Exhibit 8 shows the job titles with the most job postings for the selected occupations across Greater Sacramento.

Exhibit 8. Job titles with the most job postings

Job title	Number of Job Postings
Social Media and Content Creators	12
Content Creators	6
Digital Content Producers	4
Copywriter	3
Social Media Managers/Content Creators	3
Digital Content Producers	3
Content Producers	3

Skills and qualifications

Exhibit 9 shows the most requested skills in job postings by occupation in Greater Sacramento.⁵ Seventy-eight percent of job postings listed had social media production as a major component, with 42% specifically referencing TikTok.

Exhibit 9. Most requested in-demand skills in job postings

Specialized Skills	Common or Employability Skills	Software and Technology Skills
• Social Media • Marketing • Content Creation	• Editing • Communication • Detail-Oriented	• TikTok • Adobe Photoshop • Adobe Illustrator

⁵ Specialized skills are those primarily required to perform specific tasks in an occupation. Common skills are typically related to employability; these are skills that are prevalent across many occupations and usually include a mix of interpersonal attributes and soft skills. Software skills are specific to any software tool or programming component used to accomplish tasks in a job.

• Video Editing • Content Strategy • Adobe Photoshop • Graphic Design • Photography • Copywriting • Project Management	• Writing • Creativity • Research • Sales • Time Management • Ability to Meet Deadlines • Planning	• Adobe Premiere Pro • Canva • Adobe Creative Suite • Microsoft Office (PowerPoint, Excel, Word, Outlook) • InShot • Final Cut Pro • Content Management Systems
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Exhibit 10 shows the employer-preferred minimum level of education in job postings related to the selected occupations in Greater Sacramento.

Exhibit 10. Employer-preferred education levels for the studied occupations

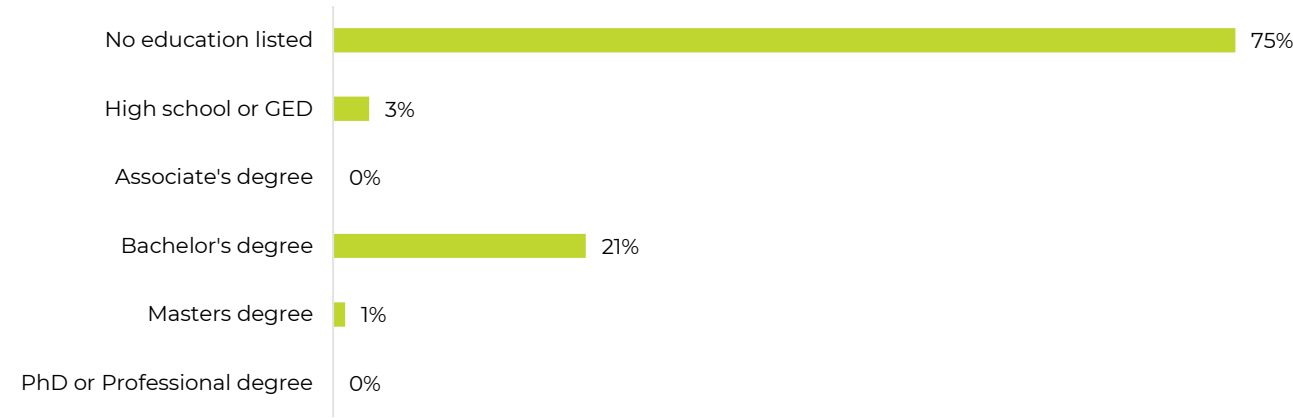
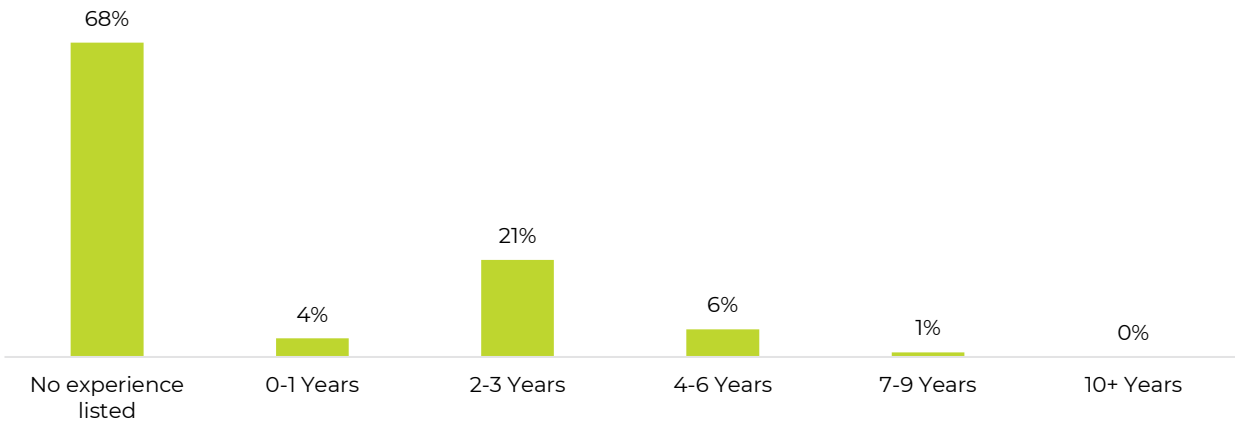


Exhibit 11 shows the employer-preferred minimum level of experience in job postings related to the selected occupations in Greater Sacramento.

Exhibit 11. Employer-preferred experience levels for the studied occupations



Education and Training Requirements

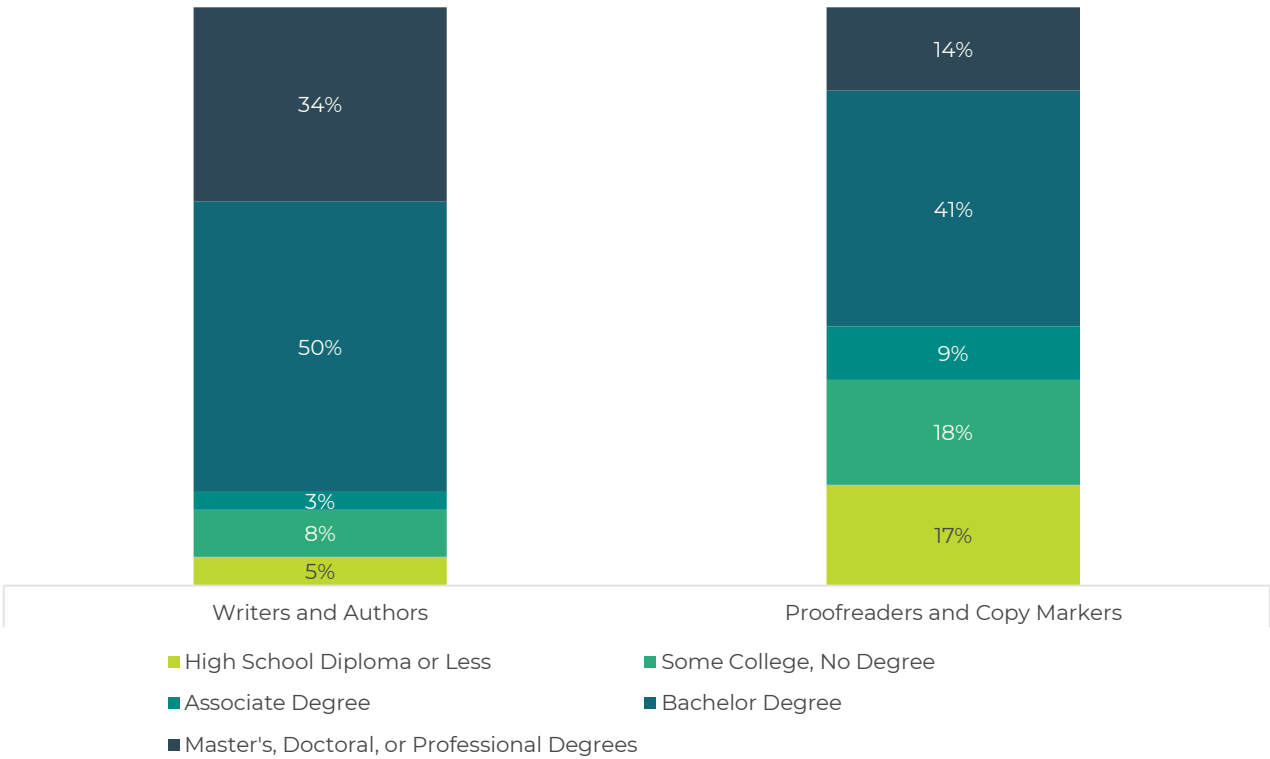
The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) assigns each occupation a typical entry-level education, related work experience, and on-the-job training category in its projection data. Exhibit 12 summarizes these requirements by occupation.

Exhibit 12. Typical entry-level job requirements for the studied occupations

Occupation	Entry-Level Education	Work Experience	On-The-Job Training
Writers and Authors	Bachelor's degree	None	Long-term on-the-job training
Proofreaders and Copy Markers	Bachelor's degree	None	None

The U.S. Census Bureau tracks the highest education level attained by workers in all occupations. Exhibit 13 presents this data for the current U.S. workforce in the studied occupations.

Exhibit 13. Educational attainment for workers 25 years and older by occupation, 2021-22



Educational Supply

Educational supply for an occupation can be estimated by analyzing the number of awards issued in related Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) or Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes.

Community college supply

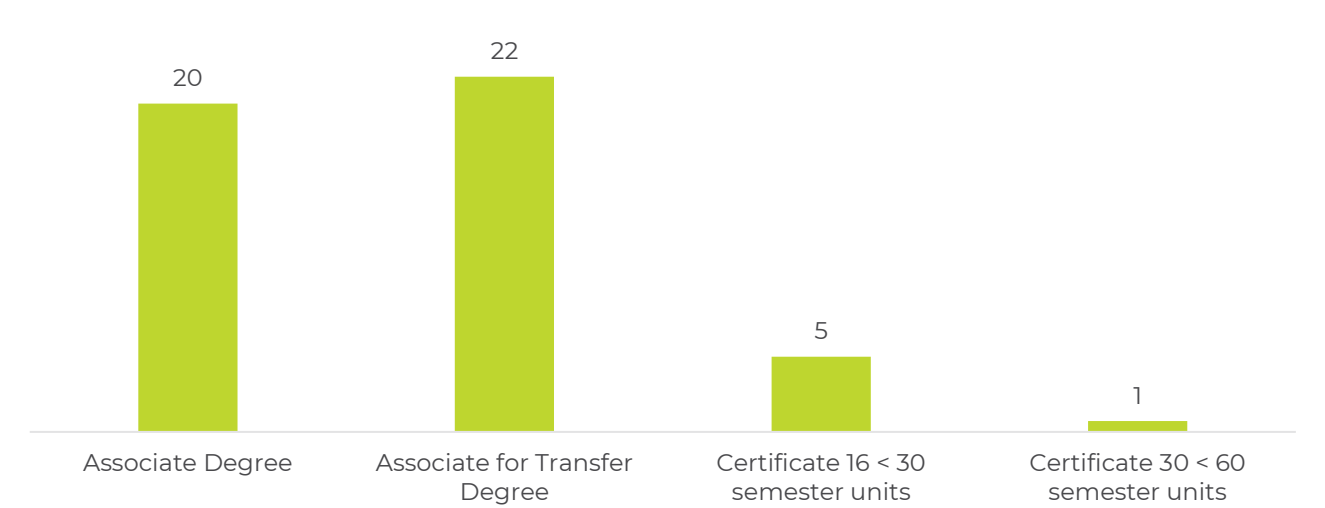
Exhibits 14 and 15 summarize the three-year average of awards (certificates and degrees) conferred by the Greater Sacramento community college programs relevant to the occupations studied.

Exhibit 14. Average annual community college awards by TOP program

TOP Program and Code	College	2022-23 Annual Awards	2023-24 Annual Awards	2024-25 Annual Awards	Three-Year Average Awards
Journalism (0602.00)	American River	8	1	8	6
	Cosumnes River	6	1	3	3
	Sacramento City	5	7	10	7
	Sierra	4	12	9	8
Subtotal		23	21	30	25
Film Production-061220	Cosumnes River	8	6	11	8
	Sacramento City	2	2	4	3
	Sierra	10	9	17	12
Subtotal		18	17	32	23
Totals		43	38	62	48

Note: Values in the table are rounded to the nearest whole number. However, subtotals and totals are calculated using unrounded values.

Exhibit 15. Average annual community college awards by award type and program area



Other postsecondary supply

There are no other Playwriting and Screenwriting programs offered in the Greater Sacramento subregion. Similar programs are offered in Creative Writing and English Language and Literature, but none of those programs are CTE-focused.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Data insights

- Demand**— **Screenwriting jobs are growing slightly faster in the Greater Sacramento subregion than in the rest of California.** Screenwriting jobs are growing at a rate of 7% in the subregion compared to 5% in California as a whole.
- Living Wage**— **Entry-level wages for screenwriter occupations are below the living wage for a single working adult in Cosumnes River’s community college district.** Entry-level wages are between \$17.19 and \$20.67 per hour, while the living wage for a single working adult in Cosumnes River’s community college district is \$21.17 per hour.
- Education**— **Screenwriting occupations have a bachelor’s degree as their minimum entry-level education.** Between 41% and 50% incumbent workers in screenwriting occupations have a bachelor's degree as their highest level of educational attainment.
- Supply Gap**— **There is a supply gap for screenwriting occupations, although most related openings in the Greater Sacramento subregion are for social media content creation.** There are 146 annual openings for writers and authors and proofreaders and copy markers, with only 48 annual awards conferred. Not all writers and authors or proofreader jobs require screenwriting, and job posting analysis reveals that of those that do, 78% focus on social media content creation.

Recommendation

Based on the current analysis, the North Far North COE recommends that community colleges **do not proceed** in creating new programs related to screenwriting or scriptwriting.

Entry-level wages for screenwriters are below the living wage for a single working adult. Job postings analysis reveals that job postings requiring screenwriting skills are primarily focused on social media content creation, which aligns better with programs focused on Digital Media. Programs focusing solely on screenwriting and playwriting should consider non-CTE pathways.

New Program Recommendation		
Proceed	Use Caution	Do Not Proceed
☐	☐	☒

Appendix A. Methodology and Data Sources

Labor market and educational supply data compiled in this report derive from a variety of sources. Occupations were identified by using the Center of Excellence TOP-to-CIP-to-SOC Crosswalk: <http://coeccc.net/>. This report's findings were primarily determined with labor market and educational supply data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the economic modeling firm and job postings aggregator Lightcast, and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

Data Sources

The following table summarizes the data sources used in this study.

Data Type	Source
Labor Market Information and Job Postings	Traditional labor market information data is sourced from Lightcast, a labor market analytics firm. Lightcast's occupational employment data are based on final Lightcast industry data and final Lightcast staffing patterns. Wage estimates are based on Occupational Employment Statistics (QCEW and non-QCEW employee classes of worker) and the American Community Survey (self-employed and extended proprietors). For more information, see https://lightcast.io/ .
Living Wage	The living wage is derived from the Insight Center's California Family Needs Calculator, which measures the income necessary for an individual or family to afford basic expenses. The data assesses the cost of housing, food, childcare, health care, transportation, and taxes. The Chancellor's Office uses wage data to calculate the percentage of students who attained a regional living wage. For more information, visit https://selfsufficiencystandard.org/California/ .
Typical Education Level, On-the-job Training, 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, visit https://www.bls.gov/emp/documentation/education/tech.htm .
Emerging Occupation Descriptions, Additional Education Requirements, and Employer Preferences	The O*NET database includes information on skills, abilities, knowledge areas, work activities, and interests associated with occupations. For more information, visit https://www.onetonline.org/help/online/ .
Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Estimates	The California Employment Development Department's Labor Market Information Division is a source of labor market and workforce data. For more information, visit labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov .
Educational Supply	The CCCCO Management Information Systems (MIS) Data Mart provides information about students, courses, student services, outcomes, and faculty and staff. For more information, visit https://datamart.cccco.edu. The Chancellor's Office Curriculum Inventory System (COCI) collects data on courses and programs offered by the California Community Colleges. For more information, visit https://coci2.ccctechcenter.org/. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) collects data from providers of postsecondary education, including the number of postsecondary awards earned (completions). For more information, visit https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data/survey-components/7/completions.
Student Metrics and Demographics	DataVista, a statewide data system supported by the Chancellor's Office and hosted by Cal-PASS Plus, provides data on progress, success, employment, and earnings outcomes for California community college students. For more information, visit https://datavista.cccco.edu/ .

Living Wage

Beginning in October 2024, to determine if an occupation meets the living wage threshold, the NFN COE compared the 25th percentile hourly wage of an occupation in the subregion to the living wage for a single adult (no dependents) living in the county where the requesting community college district was located.

This change aligned with the Chancellor’s Office methodology for calculating the share of students earning a living wage after leaving the California Community College system, as reported in the Data Vista living wage metric (802S). For details, see the *DataVista Metric Definition Dictionary*.

The NFN COE updated this practice as needed to remain consistent with the Chancellor’s Office. The table below summarizes hourly living wages by community college district and county.

2024 Single Adult Living Wage			
Community College District	County	Hourly	Annual
Butte-Glenn	Butte	\$16.77	\$35,416
Feather River	Plumas	\$15.11	\$31,909
Lake Tahoe	El Dorado	\$22.11	\$46,703
Lassen	Lassen	\$14.81	\$31,274
Los Rios	Sacramento	\$21.17	\$44,709
Mendocino-Lake	Mendocino	\$17.06	\$36,039
Redwoods	Humboldt	\$16.59	\$35,046
Shasta-Tehama-Trinity Joint	Shasta	\$16.99	\$35,874
Sierra Joint	Placer	\$23.92	\$50,519
Siskiyou Joint	Siskiyou	\$14.51	\$30,639
Yuba	Sutter	\$17.08	\$36,074
California Minimum Wages			
All industries, except fast food and healthcare (Effective January 2026)		\$16.90	\$35,152
Fast food (Effective April 2024)		\$20.00	\$41,600
Healthcare (Effective July 2025)		\$18.63-\$24.00, depending on facility type	\$38,750-\$49,920

Sources: University of Washington Self Sufficiency Standard and State of California Department of Industrial Relations, “Minimum Wage,” https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/minimum_wage.htm

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