

WORKING LANDS & WATER

South Central Coast Priority Sector Snapshot



AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION



FOOD PROCESSING



AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGY
AND FARM EQUIPMENT



LAND MANAGEMENT



BIOECONOMY



R&D IN WORKING LANDS
& WATER



BLUE ECONOMY AND BLUE
TECHNOLOGY



WATER ECONOMY

Regional Impact

\$19.0B

Contribution to Gross
Regional Product, 2025

85,441

South Central Coast
Jobs, 2025

\$52,624

Average Annual Regional
Wages, 2025

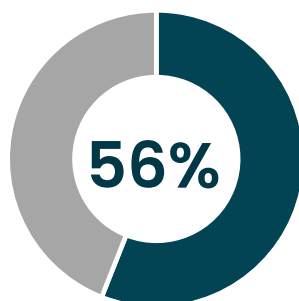
90%

Regional Employers
interested in Work-Based
Learning Partnerships

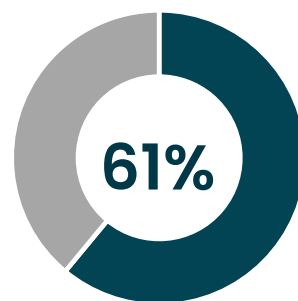
Working Lands & Water Sector Definition

The Working Lands & Water sector includes traditional agriculture & farming, bioeconomy & biomaterials, agriculture technology and farm equipment, and blue economy and marine industries and R&D.

The Working Lands & Water sector has been designated a "Bet" and "Accelerate" sector under California Jobs First due to its projected growth and its strategic importance to the South Central Coast's innovation ecosystem.



EMPLOYERS PREDICTING
12-MONTH JOB GROWTH



EMPLOYERS PREDICTING
3-YEAR JOB GROWTH

Assets and Demand Drivers



UC Santa Barbara Bren School
of Environmental Science



Expansion of Agriculture
Technology



Cal Poly Strawberry Center



Increased Focus on
Regional Food Systems



Cal Poly Agricultural
Research Institute



Growing Water
Infrastructure Needs

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Emerging Regional Skills Needs



CLOUD DATA SYSTEMS



MARKETING



COMMUNICATIONS AND
RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT



STEM FOUNDATIONS



HANDS-ON TECHNICAL
SKILLS



DATA ANALYTICS

Community College Investment Priorities

Community colleges can accelerate growth in key middle-skill occupations that require less than a four-year degree at entry.

Occupation	Jobs, 2025.Q3	Advancement Potential*	Automation Potential**
HIGH PRIORITY			
Agricultural Equipment Operators	2,143	Moderate	High
MEDIUM PRIORITY			
Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels	121	*	High
Food Science Technicians	254	Moderate	Moderate
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	365	Moderate	High
Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant Operators	230	High	Moderate
Welders	174	Moderate	High

* BW Research's Job Advancement Index measures workers' potential to advance to higher-paying job opportunities. Advancement potential is not applicable for occupations already paying high wages.

** BW Research's Job Automation Index measures the proportion of skills and tasks that can be automated within a particular occupation.

353

Regional Working Lands &
Water Training Programs,
2026

58%

Regional Training Programs
Offered by Community
Colleges, 2026

48%

Regional Employers
Partnering with
Community Colleges to
Recruit, Hire, or Train

Data Sources

- U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey (2000-2025),
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2025)
- O*NET Online 30.0 Database (2025)
- JobsEQ (2026)
- Regional employer survey (n=123, 2026)
- Regional stakeholder interviews (2026)
- Training provider websites (2026)