

# Environmental Technician Occupations

Labor Market Analysis: San Diego County

September 2026

## Summary

| NEW PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION?                                                                                                                                             | EVIDENCE OF A SUPPLY GAP?                                                                                                                                              | AT OR ABOVE THE LIVING WAGE?                                                                                                                                           | EXPECTED LEVEL(S) OF EDUCATION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <br><b>Proceed with Caution</b>                                                        | <br> | <br> | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate Degree<br><input type="checkbox"/> Master's Degree<br><input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Associate degree<br><input type="checkbox"/> Some College or Certificate<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HS Diploma or Equivalent<br><input type="checkbox"/> Less Than a HS Diploma<br><input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship |
| SUPPORT FOR PROGRAM MODIFICATION?                                                                                                                                       | NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS THAT PROVIDE TRAINING                                                                                                                           | NUMBER OF ANNUAL JOB OPENINGS                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <br> | <b>MEDIUM</b><br>                                                                    | <b>MEDIUM</b><br>                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

The San Diego & Imperial Center of Excellence (COE) developed this brief to assist the region's community colleges with strategic planning and program development. Environmental Technician Occupations include "Construction and Building Inspectors," "Environmental Science and Protection Technicians, Including Health," "Forest and Conservation Workers," "Hazardous Materials Removal Workers," and "Hydrologic Technicians." According to available data, Environmental Technician Occupations in San Diego County have a labor market demand of 364 annual job openings (while average demand for a single occupation in San Diego County is 289 annual job openings), and seven institutions supply an estimated 121 awards for these occupations. On average, entry-level wages are below the living wage. This brief recommends proceeding with caution when developing a new program and supports a program modification because 1) there is a supply gap; and 2) typical entry-level education for these occupations can be an associate degree. However, average entry-level wages are below the living wage.

## Introduction

This report provides labor market information in San Diego County for the following occupational codes in the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)<sup>1</sup> system:

- **Construction and Building Inspectors** (SOC 47-4011): Inspect structures using engineering skills to determine structural soundness and compliance with specifications, building codes, and other regulations.
- **Environmental Science and Protection Technicians, Including Health** (SOC 19-4042): Perform laboratory and field tests to monitor the environment and investigate sources of pollution, including those that affect public health, under the direction of an environmental scientist, engineer, or other specialist.
- **Forest and Conservation Workers** (SOC 45-4011): Perform manual labor necessary to develop, maintain, or protect areas such as forests, forested areas, woodlands, wetlands, and rangelands.
- **Hazardous Materials Removal Workers** (SOC 47-4041): Identify, remove, pack, transport, or dispose of hazardous materials, including asbestos, lead-based paint, waste oil, radioactive materials, and contaminated soil.
- **Hydrologic Technicians** (SOC 19-4044): Collect and organize data concerning the distribution and circulation of ground and surface water and data on its physical, chemical, and biological properties.

For the purpose of this report, these occupations are referred to as *Environmental Technician Occupations*.

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<sup>1</sup> The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system is used by federal statistical agencies to classify workers into occupational categories for collecting, calculating, and disseminating data. [bls.gov/soc](https://www.bls.gov/soc)

## Projected Occupational Demand

Between 2025 and 2030, businesses in San Diego County will need to hire **364** employees annually to fill new jobs and backfill positions made vacant through turnover and retirement (Exhibit 1). Construction and Building Inspectors account for the largest share of demand, with **164** annual openings. Overall employment is projected to increase by **53** jobs, or **two percent**, during the five-year period.

**Exhibit 1: Employment Change and Occupational Demand for Environmental Technician Occupations in San Diego County (2025-2030)<sup>2</sup>**

| Occupational Title                                                 | 2025 Jobs    | 2030 Jobs    | 2025-2030 Net Jobs Change | 2025-2030 % Jobs Change | Annual Job Openings (Demand) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Construction and Building Inspectors                               | 1,507        | 1,543        | 36                        | 2%                      | 164                          |
| Environmental Science and Protection Technicians, Including Health | 601          | 596          | -4                        | -1%                     | 80                           |
| Hazardous Materials Removal Workers                                | 713          | 741          | 27                        | 4%                      | 75                           |
| Forest and Conservation Workers                                    | 184          | 177          | -7                        | -4%                     | 36                           |
| Hydrologic Technicians                                             | 64           | 65           | 1                         | 2%                      | 9                            |
| <b>Total</b>                                                       | <b>3,069</b> | <b>3,122</b> | <b>53</b>                 | <b>2%</b>               | <b>364</b>                   |

<sup>2</sup> Lightcast Q3 2026; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

## Earnings

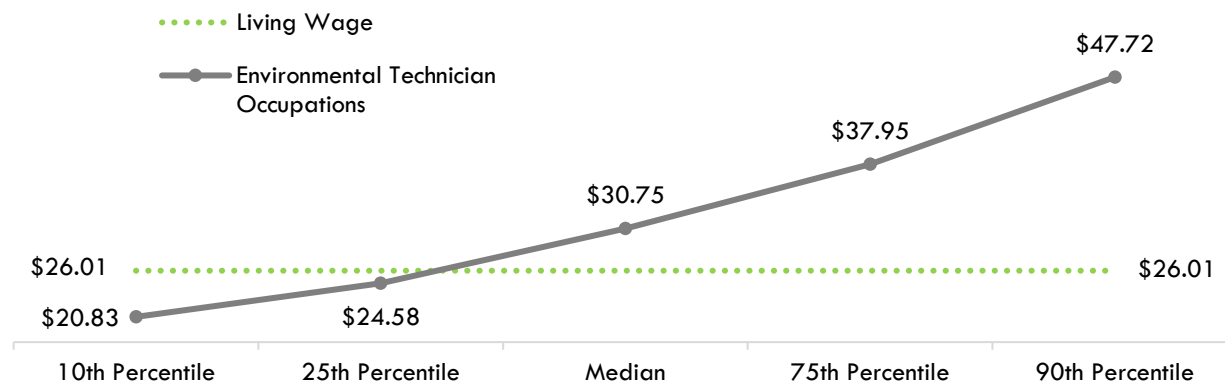
According to traditional<sup>3</sup> labor market information (LMI), entry-level hourly earnings for *Environmental Technician Occupations* range from \$18.29 to \$34.57 (Exhibit 2).

**Exhibit 2: Hourly Earnings for Environmental Technician Occupations in San Diego County<sup>4</sup>**

| Occupational Title                                                 | Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25th Percentile) | Median Hourly Earnings | Experienced Hourly Earnings (75th Percentile) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Construction and Building Inspectors                               | \$34.57                                       | \$46.37                | \$58.13                                       |
| Hydrologic Technicians                                             | \$26.99                                       | \$34.29                | \$43.34                                       |
| Hazardous Materials Removal Workers                                | \$22.35                                       | \$24.90                | \$28.72                                       |
| Environmental Science and Protection Technicians, Including Health | \$20.73                                       | \$27.93                | \$38.21                                       |
| Forest and Conservation Workers                                    | \$18.29                                       | \$20.27                | \$21.33                                       |

On average, entry-level hourly earnings for *Environmental Technician Occupations* are \$24.58—or approximately \$51,136 annually<sup>5</sup>. This is below the living wage of \$26.01 per hour for a single adult in San Diego County (Exhibit 3).<sup>6</sup>

**Exhibit 3: Average Hourly Earnings<sup>7</sup> for Environmental Technician Occupations in San Diego County<sup>8</sup>**



<sup>3</sup> Traditional LMI is generally historical data captured by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) or the California Employment Development Department (EDD). It does not account for recent technological, economic, or legislative changes that may affect labor market demand and wages.

<sup>4</sup> Lightcast Q3 2026; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

<sup>5</sup> Annualized salaries assume a full-time position with 2,080 work hours. Multiplying the hourly wage by 2,080 yields the annual salary.

<sup>6</sup> Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington. The Self-Sufficiency Standard for California 2024.

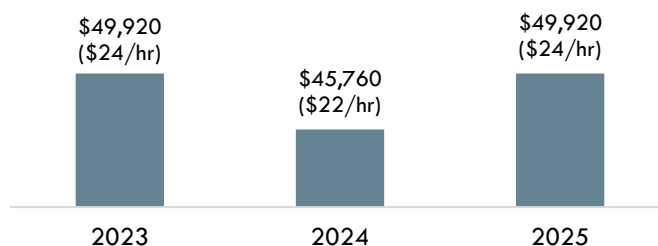
[selfsufficiencystandard.org/california](https://selfsufficiencystandard.org/california)

<sup>7</sup> The 10th and 25th percentiles may be considered entry-level wages; the 75th and 90th percentiles may be considered experienced wages.

<sup>8</sup> Lightcast Q3 2026; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

In online job postings, employers also advertised between \$22 and \$24 per hour between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2025 for *Environmental Technician Occupations* in San Diego County (Exhibit 4).<sup>9</sup> This suggests that employer-advertised wages in online job postings were within the range of entry-level wages reported in traditional labor market information and fluctuated over the period analyzed.

**Exhibit 4: Entry-Level Advertised Salaries in Online Job Postings for Environmental Technician Occupations in San Diego County (2023-2025)**



\*Hourly wages are rounded to the nearest dollar amount.

## Expected Level of Education

According to traditional LMI reported to the California Employment Development Department and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Environmental Technician Occupations typically require either a [high school diploma or equivalent](#) or an [associate degree](#) for entry-level employment (Exhibit 5).<sup>10</sup>

**Exhibit 5: National Educational Attainment for Environmental Technician Occupations<sup>11</sup>**

| Occupational Title                                                 | Typical Entry-Level Education     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Environmental Science and Protection Technicians, Including Health | Associate degree                  |
| Hydrologic Technicians                                             | Associate degree                  |
| Construction and Building Inspectors                               | High school diploma or equivalent |
| Forest and Conservation Workers                                    | High school diploma or equivalent |
| Hazardous Materials Removal Workers                                | High school diploma or equivalent |

<sup>9</sup> Lightcast Q3 2026; Job Posting Analytics, January 2023 through December 2025.

<sup>10</sup> Lightcast Q3 2026; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

<sup>11</sup> Lightcast Q3 2026; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

Similarly, a [high school diploma or General Educational Development \(GED\) credential](#) was the most requested minimum educational requirement in online job postings for *Environmental Technician Occupations* in San Diego County between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2025. Employers also expected the following certifications (Exhibit 6).<sup>12</sup>

**Exhibit 6: Top Certifications for Environmental Technician Occupations in San Diego County in Online Job Postings (2023-2025)<sup>13</sup>**

- |                                   |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. CDL Class C License            | 6. Contractor License                 |
| 2. Certified Welding Inspector    | 7. 30-Hour OSHA General Industry Card |
| 3. Asbestos License/Certification | 8. Certified Energy Manager           |
| 4. Security Clearance             | 9. 10-Hour OSHA General Industry Card |
| 5. Engineer in Training           | 10. Tanker Endorsement                |

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<sup>12</sup> Lightcast Q3 2026; Job Posting Analytics, January 2023 through December 2025.

<sup>13</sup> Lightcast Q3 2026; Job Posting Analytics, January 2023 through December 2025. Valid Driver's License was excluded from this exhibit.

## Educational Supply

Educational supply for an occupation can be estimated by analyzing the number of awards in related Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) or Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes. There are **five** TOP codes and **10** CIP codes related to Environmental Technician Occupations (Exhibit 7).

**Exhibit 7: Related TOP and CIP Codes for Environmental Technician Occupations<sup>14</sup>**

| TOP or CIP Code | TOP or CIP Program Title                                           |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| TOP 0114.00     | Forestry                                                           |
| TOP 0301.00     | Environmental Science                                              |
| TOP 0303.00     | Environmental Technology                                           |
| TOP 0954.30     | Petroleum Technology                                               |
| TOP 0957.20     | Construction Inspection                                            |
| CIP 03.0104     | Environmental Science                                              |
| CIP 03.0501     | Forestry, General                                                  |
| CIP 03.0511     | Forest Technology/Technician                                       |
| CIP 03.0599     | Forestry, Other                                                    |
| CIP 15.0507     | Environmental/Environmental Engineering Technology/Technician      |
| CIP 15.0508     | Hazardous Materials Management and Waste Technology/Technician     |
| CIP 15.0903     | Petroleum Technology/Technician                                    |
| CIP 41.9999     | Science Technologies/Technicians, Other                            |
| CIP 46.0403     | Building/Home/Construction Inspection/Inspector                    |
| CIP 46.0499     | Building/Construction Finishing, Management, and Inspection, Other |

<sup>14</sup> California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office TOP-CIP crosswalk and confirmed program-code selection for this analysis.

According to TOP data, **four** community colleges supply the region with awards for these occupations: Cuyamaca College, San Diego City College, San Diego Mesa College, and Southwestern College.

According to CIP data, **three** non-community-college institutions supply the region with awards: Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego State University, and University of San Diego. Combined, the seven institutions confer an average of **121** awards annually (Exhibit 8).

**Exhibit 8: Number of Awards (Certificates and Degrees) Conferred by Postsecondary Institutions  
(Program Year 2022-23 Through Program Year 2024-25 Average)<sup>1516</sup>**

| TOP or CIP Code | TOP or CIP Program Title       | 3-Yr Annual Average CC Awards | Other Institutions 3-Yr Annual Average Awards | Total Average Supply |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 0114.00         | Forestry                       | 0                             | 0                                             | 0                    |
| 0301.00         | Environmental Science          | 0                             | 0                                             | 0                    |
| 0303.00         | Environmental Technology       | 23                            | 0                                             | 23                   |
|                 | Cuyamaca                       | 18                            | 0                                             |                      |
|                 | • Associate degree             | 12                            | 0                                             |                      |
|                 | • Certificate 30 < 60 units    | 4                             | 0                                             |                      |
|                 | • Certificate 16 < 30 units    | 2                             | 0                                             |                      |
|                 | San Diego City                 | 1                             | 0                                             |                      |
|                 | • Certificate 16 < 30 units    | 1                             | 0                                             |                      |
|                 | Southwestern                   | 4                             | 0                                             |                      |
|                 | • Certificate 16 < 30 units    | 1                             | 0                                             |                      |
|                 | • Certificate 6 < 18 units     | 3                             | 0                                             |                      |
| 0954.30         | Petroleum Technology           | 0                             | 0                                             | 0                    |
| 0957.20         | Construction Inspection        | 18                            | 0                                             | 18                   |
|                 | San Diego Mesa                 | 12                            | 0                                             |                      |
|                 | • Associate degree             | 8                             | 0                                             |                      |
|                 | • Certificate 16 < 30 units    | 4                             | 0                                             |                      |
|                 | Southwestern                   | 6                             | 0                                             |                      |
|                 | • Associate degree             | 4                             | 0                                             |                      |
|                 | • Certificate 16 < 30 units    | 2                             | 0                                             |                      |
| 03.0104         | Environmental Science          | 0                             | 80                                            | 80                   |
|                 | Point Loma Nazarene University | 0                             | 4                                             |                      |
|                 | • Bachelor's degree            | 0                             | 4                                             |                      |
|                 | San Diego State University     | 0                             | 36                                            |                      |

<sup>15</sup>California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Data Mart, program years 2022-23 through 2024-25.

<sup>16</sup>National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System completions, academic years 2022-23 through 2024-25. Awards above a bachelor's degree were excluded.

| TOP or CIP Code | TOP or CIP Program Title                                           | 3-Yr Annual Average CC Awards | Other Institutions 3-Yr Annual Average Awards | Total Average Supply |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------|
|                 | • Bachelor's degree                                                | 0                             | 36                                            |                      |
|                 | University of San Diego                                            | 0                             | 40                                            |                      |
|                 | • Bachelor's degree                                                | 0                             | 40                                            |                      |
| 03.0501         | Forestry, General                                                  | 0                             | 0                                             | 0                    |
| 03.0511         | Forest Technology/Technician                                       | 0                             | 0                                             | 0                    |
| 03.0599         | Forestry, Other                                                    | 0                             | 0                                             | 0                    |
| 15.0507         | Environmental/Environmental Engineering Technology/Technician      | 0                             | 0                                             | 0                    |
| 15.0508         | Hazardous Materials Management and Waste Technology/Technician     | 0                             | 0                                             | 0                    |
| 15.0903         | Petroleum Technology/Technician                                    | 0                             | 0                                             | 0                    |
| 41.9999         | Science Technologies/Technicians, Other                            | 0                             | 0                                             | 0                    |
| 46.0403         | Building/Home/Construction Inspection/Inspector                    | 0                             | 0                                             | 0                    |
| 46.0499         | Building/Construction Finishing, Management, and Inspection, Other | 0                             | 0                                             | 0                    |
| <b>Total</b>    |                                                                    | <b>41</b>                     | <b>80</b>                                     | <b>121</b>           |

## Demand vs. Supply

Comparing labor demand with labor supply<sup>17</sup> suggests that there is a **supply gap** for these occupations in San Diego County, with **364** annual openings and **121** average annual awards. Comparatively, there are **4,181** annual openings in California and **1,807** annual awards, suggesting a statewide **supply gap** (Exhibit 9).<sup>18</sup>

**Exhibit 9: Labor Demand (Annual Openings) Compared with Labor Supply (Average Annual Awards)**

|            | <b>Demand</b><br>(Annual Openings) | <b>Supply</b><br>(Average Annual Awards) | <b>Supply Gap or<br/>Oversupply</b> |
|------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| San Diego  | 364                                | 121                                      | <b>243</b>                          |
| California | 4,181                              | 1,807                                    | <b>2,374</b>                        |

**Please note:** This is a basic analysis of supply and demand of labor. The data does not include workers currently in the labor force who could fill these positions or workers who are not captured by publicly available data. This data should be used to discuss the potential gaps or oversupply of workers; however, it should not be the only basis for determining whether or not a program should be developed.

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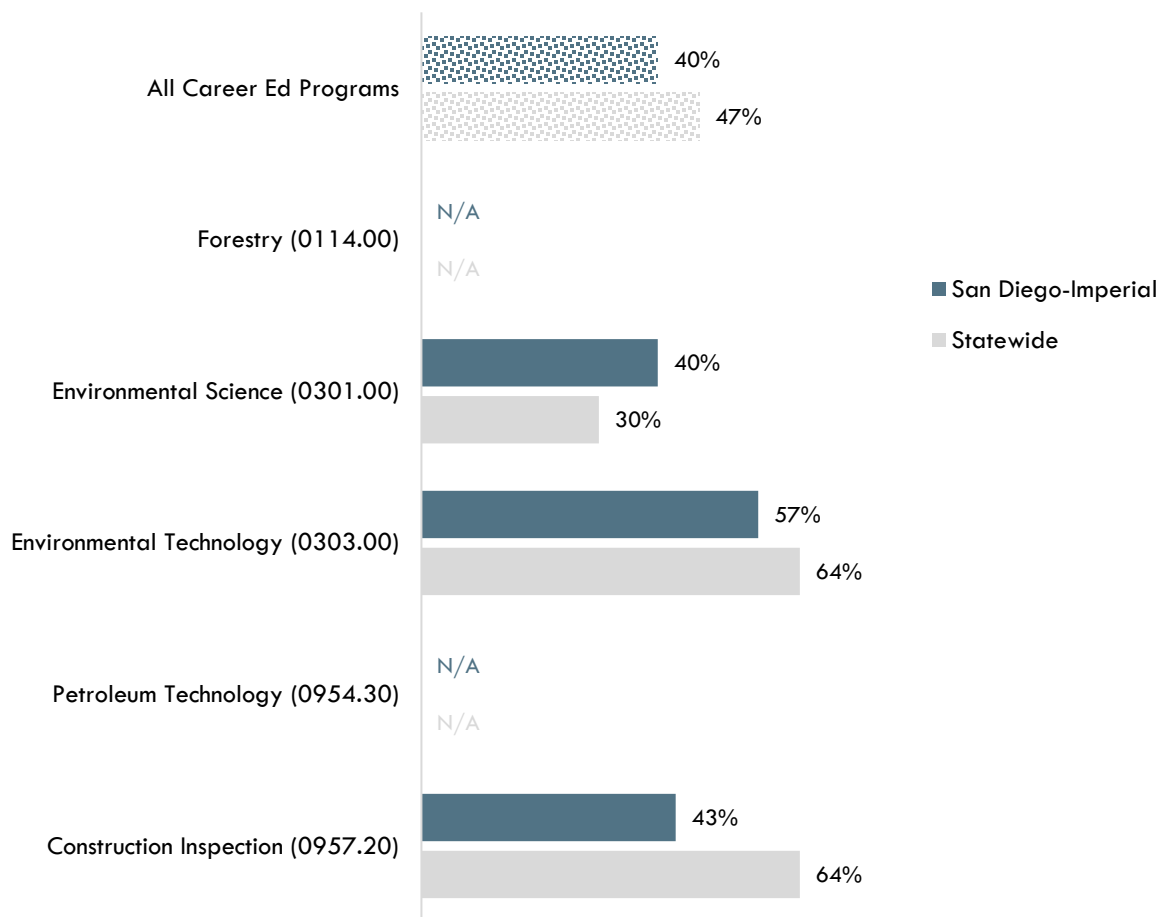
<sup>17</sup> Labor supply can be found from two different sources: Lightcast or the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart. Lightcast uses CIP codes while MIS uses TOP codes. Different coding systems result in differences in the supply numbers.

<sup>18</sup> "Supply and Demand," Centers of Excellence Student Outcomes, [coecc.net/our-resources](http://coecc.net/our-resources).

## Student Outcomes and Regional Comparisons

According to the California Community Colleges DataVista, 40 to 57 percent of students in the San Diego-Imperial region earned a living wage after completing a program related to *Environmental Technician Occupations*, compared to 30 to 64 percent statewide and 47 percent of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 10).<sup>19</sup>

**Exhibit 10: Percentage of Students Who Earned a Living Wage by Program, PY2023-24<sup>20</sup>**



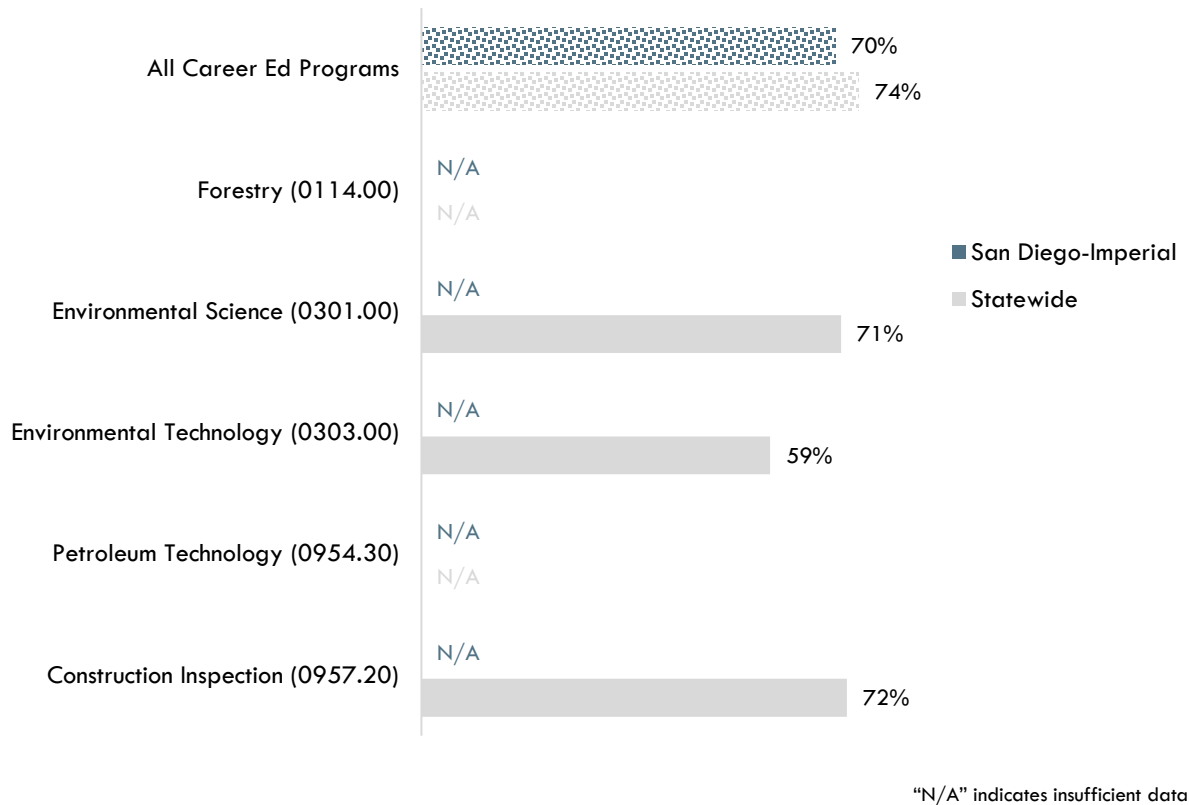
"N/A" indicates insufficient data

<sup>19</sup> California Community Colleges DataVista. [datavista.cccco.edu](https://datavista.cccco.edu)

<sup>20</sup> Most recent year with available data is Program Year 2023–24. The measure reports the percentage of completers and skills builders who exited and attained a living wage.

According to the California Community Colleges DataVista, the percentage of students in the San Diego-Imperial region who obtained a job closely related to their field of study after completing a program related to *Environmental Technician Occupations* was not available, compared to 59 to 72 percent statewide and 74 percent of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 11).<sup>21</sup>

**Exhibit 11: Percentage of Students in a Job Closely Related to Field of Study by Program, PY2022-23<sup>22</sup>**



<sup>21</sup> California Community Colleges DataVista. [datavista.cccco.edu](http://datavista.cccco.edu)

<sup>22</sup> Most recent year with available data is Program Year 2022–23. The measure reports the percentage of CTE Outcomes Survey respondents employed in the same or a similar field as their program of study.

## Employers

Between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2025, the top employers in San Diego County for Environmental Technician Occupations included [City of San Diego](#), [Clean Harbors](#), [Interwest Consulting Group](#), [NV5](#), and [Atlas](#), based on online job postings (Exhibit 12).

**Exhibit 12: Top Employers for Environmental Technician Occupations in San Diego County<sup>23</sup>**

| Top Employers                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• City of San Diego</li><li>• Clean Harbors</li><li>• Interwest Consulting Group</li><li>• NV5</li><li>• Atlas</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eurofins</li><li>• AECOM</li><li>• Kleinfelder</li><li>• Sedgwick</li><li>• WSP Global</li></ul> |

## Skills

Exhibit 13 lists the top specialized, soft, and software skills that appeared in online job postings between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2025.

**Exhibit 13: Top Skills for Environmental Technician Occupations in San Diego County<sup>24</sup>**

| Specialized Skills                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Soft Skills                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Software Skills                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Construction</li><li>• Project Management</li><li>• Building Codes</li><li>• Construction Inspection</li><li>• Construction Management</li><li>• Plumbing</li><li>• Field Inspection</li><li>• Civil Engineering</li><li>• Change Orders</li><li>• Biology</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communication</li><li>• Management</li><li>• Operations</li><li>• Detail Oriented</li><li>• Customer Service</li><li>• Quality Control</li><li>• Problem Solving</li><li>• Report Writing</li><li>• Quality Assurance</li><li>• Planning</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Microsoft Office</li><li>• Microsoft Excel</li><li>• Microsoft Outlook</li><li>• Microsoft Word</li><li>• Microsoft PowerPoint</li><li>• Spreadsheets</li><li>• Geographic Information Systems</li><li>• Permitting Software</li><li>• Microsoft Access</li><li>• Python</li></ul> |

<sup>23</sup> Lightcast Q3 2026; Job Posting Analytics, January 2023 through December 2025.

<sup>24</sup> Lightcast Q3 2026; Job Posting Analytics, January 2023 through December 2025. Skills must populate in at least 10% of job postings to be listed.

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### Important Disclaimers

All representations included in this report have been produced from primary research and/or secondary review of publicly and/or privately available data and/or research reports. This study examines the most recent data available at the time of the analysis; however, data sets are updated regularly and may not be consistent with previous reports. Efforts have been made to qualify and validate the accuracy of the data and the report findings; however, neither the California Community Colleges Centers of Excellence (COE), COE host district, nor California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office are responsible for the applications or decisions made by individuals and/or organizations based on this study or its recommendations.