










Pharmacy Technicians

Labor Market Analysis: San Diego County

April 2025

Summary

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

The San Diego & Imperial Center of Excellence (COE) developed this brief to assist the region’s community colleges with strategic planning and program development. According to available data, *Pharmacy Technicians* in San Diego County have a labor market demand of 335 annual job openings (while average demand for a single occupation in San Diego County is 289 annual job openings), and no institutions supply awards for this occupation. Although three adult education schools offer certification programs, suggesting that there is a potential supply gap in the labor market. Entry-level and median wages are below the living wage. This brief recommends that the colleges proceed with caution when developing a new program for this occupation and defers to the region for a program modification because although 1) a high number of annual openings exist and 2) a supply gap exists for these positions, 3) entry-level and median wages are below the living wage.

Introduction

This report provides labor market information in San Diego County for the following occupational code in the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)¹ system:

Pharmacy Technicians (SOC 29-2052): Prepare medications under the direction of a pharmacist. May measure, mix, count out, label, and record amounts and dosages of medications according to prescription orders. Sample reported job titles include:

- Certified Pharmacy Technician
- Registered Pharmacy Technician
- Operating Room Pharmacy Tech
- Compounding Technician
- Accredited Pharmacy Technician
- Pharmacy Laboratory Technician
- Chemotherapy Pharmacy Technician
- Retail Pharmacy Tech

Projected Occupational Demand

Between 2024 and 2029, *Pharmacy Technicians* are projected to increase by 56 net jobs or two percent (Exhibit 1). Employers in San Diego County will need to hire 335 workers annually to fill new jobs and backfill jobs due to attrition caused by turnover and retirement, for example.

Exhibit 1: Number of Jobs for *Pharmacy Technicians* (2024-2029)²

Occupational Title	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2024 – 2029 Net Jobs Change	2024 - 2029 % Net Jobs Change	Annual Job Openings (Demand)
Pharmacy Technicians	3,611	3,667	56	2%	335

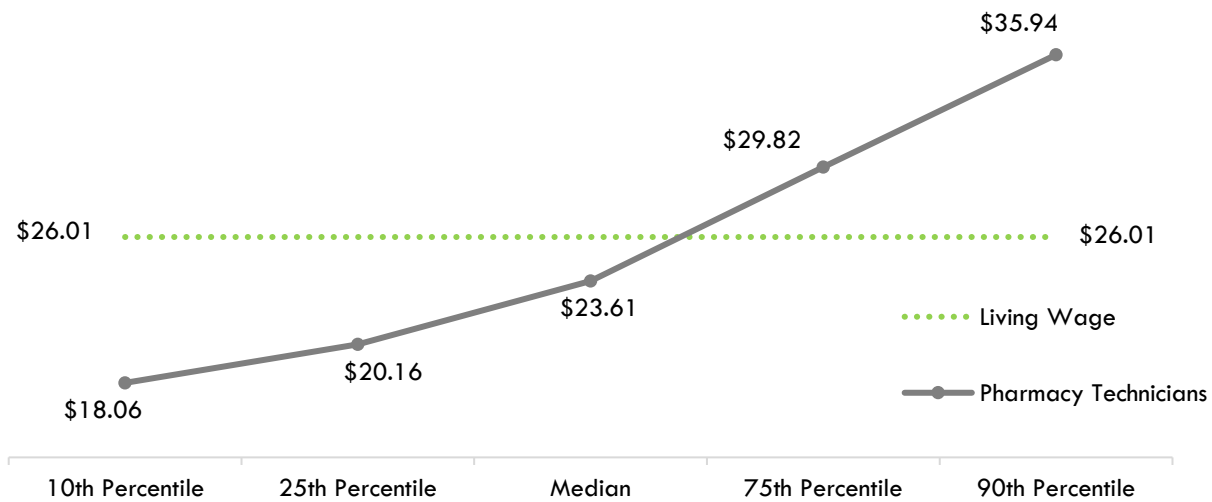
¹ The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system is used by federal statistical agencies to classify workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating or disseminating data. <https://www.bls.gov/soc/>.

² Lightcast 2025.01; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

Earnings

According to traditional³ labor market information (LMI), entry-level hourly earnings for *Pharmacy Technicians* were \$20.16—or \$41,932.80 annual salary⁴; this is less than the living wage for a single adult in San Diego County, which is \$26.01 per hour (Exhibit 2).⁵

Exhibit 2: Hourly Earnings⁶ for *Pharmacy Technicians* in San Diego County⁷



In online job postings, employers advertised between \$19 to \$20 per hour between January 1, 2022 and December 30, 2024 for *Pharmacy Technicians* in San Diego County (Exhibit 3).⁸ This suggests that employers in recent years have maintained wages in line with labor market information.

³ 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.

⁴ Annualized salaries assume a full-time position with 2,080 hours. Multiplying the hourly wage with 2,080 yields the annual salary.

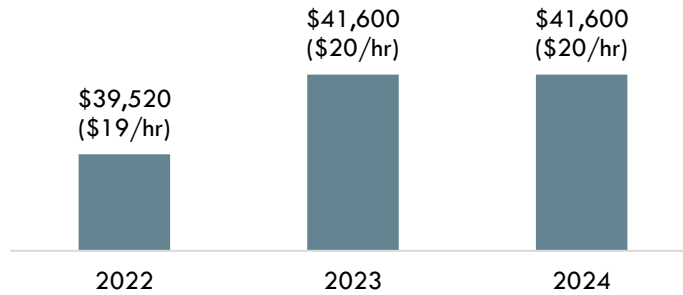
⁵ Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington. (2024). The self-sufficiency standard for California 2024. selfsufficiencystandard.org/California.

⁶ 10th and 25th percentiles could be considered entry-level wages, and 75th and 90th percentiles could be considered experienced wages for individuals who may have been in the occupation longer, received more training than others, etc.

⁷ Lightcast 2025.01; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

⁸ Lightcast 2025.01; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

Exhibit 3: Entry-Level Advertised Salaries in Online Job Postings for *Pharmacy Technicians* in San Diego County (2022-2024)*



*Hourly wages are rounded to the nearest dollar amount.

Expected Level of Education

According to traditional LMI (data reported to EDD and BLS), *Pharmacy Technicians* have a national educational attainment of a [high school diploma or equivalent](#) (Exhibit 4).⁹

Exhibit 4: National Educational Attainment for *Pharmacy Technicians*¹⁰

Occupational Title	Typical Entry-Level Education
Pharmacy Technicians	High school diploma or equivalent

Similarly, online job postings between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2024 in San Diego County had a [high school or GED](#) as the most requested educational requirement for *Pharmacy Technicians*; however, employers also expected the following certifications (Exhibit 5).¹¹

Exhibit 5: Top Certifications for *Pharmacy Technicians* in San Diego County in Online Job Postings (2022-2024)¹²

1. Certified Pharmacy Technician
2. Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification

⁹ Lightcast 2025.01; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.
¹⁰ Lightcast 2025.01; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.
¹¹ Lightcast 2025.01; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.
¹² Lightcast 2025.01; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

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 is **one** TOP code and **one** CIP code related to *Pharmacy Technicians* (Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 6: Related TOP and CIP Codes for *Pharmacy Technicians*¹³

TOP or CIP Code	TOP or CIP Program Title
TOP 1221.00	Pharmacy Technology
CIP 51.0805	Pharmacy Technician/Assistant

According to TOP and CIP data, no community colleges or other educational institutions supply the region with awards for this occupation (Exhibit 7); however, Grossmont Adult Education, Escondido Adult School, and Vista Adult School offer certification programs for *Pharmacy Technicians*.

Exhibit 7: Number of Awards (Certificates and Degrees) Conferred by Postsecondary Institutions (Program Year 2020-21 Through Program Year 2023-24 Average)

TOP6 or CIP Code	TOP6 or CIP Program Title	3-Yr Annual Average CC Awards (PY21-22 to PY23-24)	Other Educational Institutions 3-Yr Annual Average Awards (PY20-21 to PY22-23)	Total Average Supply (PY20-21 to PY22-23)
1221.00	Pharmacy Technology	0	0	0
51.0805	Pharmacy Technician/Assistant	0	0	0
Total				0

¹³ This brief uses a conservative estimate of program supply and only calculates awards from the TOP code listed in Exhibit 6.

Demand vs. Supply

Comparing labor demand with labor supply¹⁴ suggests that there is an **supply gap** for this occupation in San Diego County, with **335** annual openings and **zero** awards. Comparatively, there are **4,117** annual openings in California and **312** awards, suggesting that there is an **supply gap** across the state (Exhibit 8).¹⁵

Exhibit 8: Labor Demand (Annual Openings) Compared with Labor Supply (Average Annual Awards)

	Demand (Annual Openings)	Supply (Annual Awards)	Supply Gap or Oversupply
San Diego	335	0	335
California	4,117	312	3,805

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.

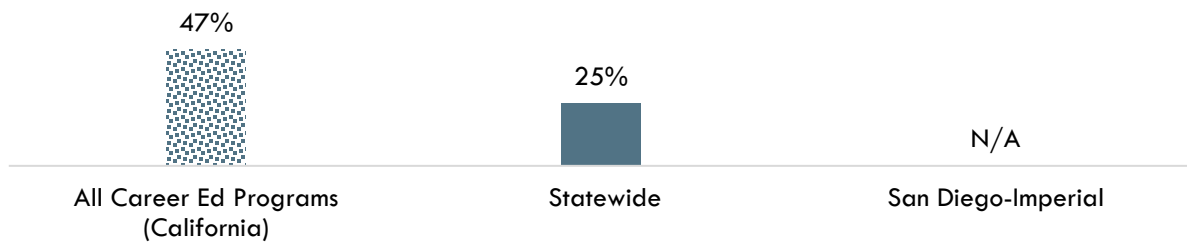
¹⁴ Labor supply can be found from two different sources: Lightcast or the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart. Lightcast uses CIP codes while MIS uses TOP codes. Different coding systems result in differences in the supply numbers.

¹⁵ "Supply and Demand," Centers of Excellence Student Outcomes, coecc.net/our-resources.

Student Outcomes and Regional Comparisons

According to the California Community Colleges LaunchBoard, 25 percent of students statewide earned a living wage after completing a Pharmacy Technology (TOP 1221.00) program, compared to 47 percent of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 9).¹⁶

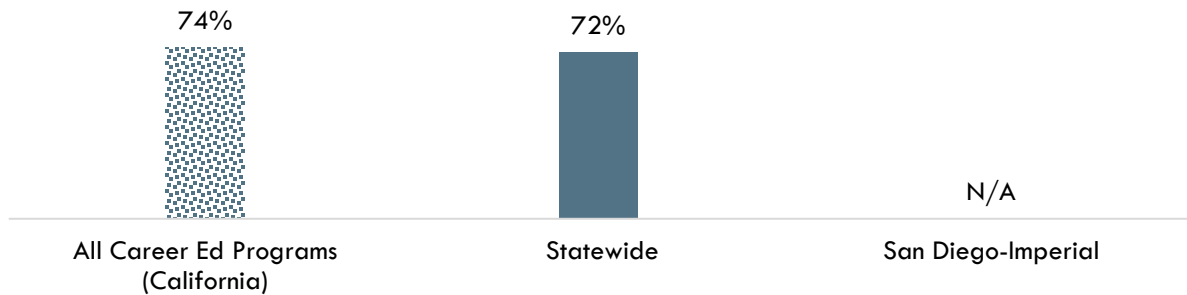
Exhibit 9: Percentage of Students Who Earned a Living Wage by Program, PY2022-23¹⁷



"N/A" indicates insufficient data

According to the California Community Colleges LaunchBoard, 72 percent of students statewide obtained a job closely related to their field of study after completing a Pharmacy Technology (TOP 1221.00) program, compared 74 percent of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 10).¹⁸

Exhibit 10: Percentage of Students in a Job Closely Related to Field of Study by Program, PY2021-22¹⁹



"N/A" indicates insufficient data

¹⁶ "California Community Colleges Strong Workforce Program," California Community Colleges, calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx.

¹⁷ Most recent year with available data is Program Year 2022-23. Among completers and skills builders who exited, the percentage of students who attained a living wage.

¹⁸ "California Community Colleges Strong Workforce Program," California Community Colleges, calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx.

¹⁹ Most recent year with available data is Program Year 2021-22. Percentage of Students in a Job Closely Related to Field of Study: Among students who responded to the CTEOS, the percentage reporting employment in the same or similar field as their program of study.

Employers

Between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2024, the top five employers in San Diego County for *Pharmacy Technicians* were [Walgreens](#), [CVS Health](#), [RPh on the Go](#), [Walmart](#), and [Scripps Health](#) based on online job postings (Exhibit 11).

Exhibit 11: Top Employers for *Pharmacy Technicians* in San Diego County²⁰

Top Employers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walgreens• CVS Health• RPh on the Go• Walmart• Scripps Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharp Healthcare• Rite Aid• University of California San Diego• Albertsons• Kaiser Permanente

Skills

Exhibit 12 lists the top specialized, soft, and software skills that appeared in online job postings between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2024.

Exhibit 12: Top Skills for *Pharmacy Technicians* in San Diego County²¹

Specialized Skills	Soft Skills	Software Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical Prescription• Pharmacist Assistance• Pharmaceuticals• Inventory Management• Pharmacy Experience• Medication Dispensation• Workflow Management• Billing• Inventory Control• Cash Register	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer Service• Communication• Packaging And Labeling• Operations• Mathematics• English Language• Writing• Management• Clerical Works• Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pyxis MedStation• Microsoft Office• Microsoft Excel

²⁰ Lightcast 2025.01; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

²¹ Lightcast 2025.01; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

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