

Workforce Needs Assessment

The Homeless Services Sector in Los Angeles County



2025

PREPARED BY: THE LOS ANGELES CENTER
OF EXCELLENCE FOR LABOR MARKET RESEARCH



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Executive Summary

A number of initiatives to address the homelessness crisis in Los Angeles County, including targeted efforts such as Measure H, Measure A, and Inside Safe, are helping to reduce unsheltered populations and transition individuals into housing, while spurring workforce demand for professionals skilled in the delivery of these targeted forms of services. As the county continues to implement strategies to solve the housing crisis, a growing need for a sustainable and skilled workforce to support these systems is anticipated.

This report presents a comprehensive assessment of workforce needs in the homeless services sector in Los Angeles County. Using detailed labor market data, industry and occupational analyses, and comparison of postsecondary award trends, this study's findings reveal a significant gap between workforce demand and educational supply of trained workers. On average, there are 7,561 annual job openings for key occupations that provide frontline support in the homeless services sector, including social workers, counselors, and service or program managers. However, postsecondary institutions in the county are collectively granting only 2,175 awards (degrees and certificates) on average each year, accounting for less than one-third of total projected demand.

The issue is not solely a matter of quantity. The supply of postsecondary awards (i.e., degrees) is heavily concentrated among a small number of institutions. One-third of all awards are conferred by the University of Southern California, while two other postsecondary institutions, California State University-Los Angeles and California State University-Long Beach, account for another 30%. Furthermore, 74% of awards are master's degrees, even though five of the top eight in-demand occupations require only a bachelor's degree. This imbalance leaves occupations requiring a bachelor's degree critically underfilled, limiting access to entry-level positions that could strengthen the sector from the ground up.

Workforce shortages are already affecting service delivery. Providers throughout the homelessness response system report chronic staffing gaps, high caseloads, and burnout among personnel. Frontline professionals face high turnover rates, driven by low wages, emotional exhaustion, and limited career advancement. These challenges contribute to delays in

service provision, reduce continuity of care, and place additional strain on workers and clients alike. The inability to supervise and license associate therapists due to a lack of clinical supervisors further compounds the shortage of licensed professionals in the field.

To meet employment demand resulting from 13% projected growth in occupations in the homeless services sector over the next five years, Los Angeles County will need to expand its capacity to train, recruit, and retain qualified professionals. This includes expanding degree and certificate programs at strategically located postsecondary institutions, increasing the availability of internships and supervised placements, and establishing clear and supported career pathways into the sector.

Special attention should be given to geographic alignment. Educational institutions in areas most impacted by homelessness, such as Metro Los Angeles, South Los Angeles, San Fernando Valley, and South Bay, are well positioned to contribute to regional talent pipelines. Strengthening partnerships between higher education and homeless services providers in these localities can help ensure students are prepared with the practical experience and licensure support needed to succeed.

The people who serve individuals experiencing homelessness are the foundation of the county's response system. Supporting an adequate number of well-trained workers in this sector is not only a practical necessity, it is a matter of public trust and social equity. Ultimately, the county's investments in services for the homeless must be matched by investments in the workforce. With data-driven strategies and targeted investment, Los Angeles County can build the workforce it needs to match the scale of its commitment to ending homelessness.

Key Findings



8

Occupations

The study identified 8 occupations primarily related to the homeless services sector that require either a bachelor's or master's degree for entry-level education.



13%

Growth Rate

The eight homeless services occupations have a combined growth rate of 13%.



68,608

Jobs in 2023

In 2023, the eight occupations accounted for more than 68,600 jobs in Los Angeles County.



\$21.33-\$44.14

Lowest And Highest Median Hourly Wages

Of the eight occupations, rehabilitation counselors earn the lowest median hourly wage and healthcare social workers earn the highest median hourly wage.



7,561

Annual Job Openings

The eight homeless services occupations are projected to offer more than 7,500 annual job openings in Los Angeles County.



2,175

Three-Year Average Awards

On average each year 2,175 awards are conferred in the county by postsecondary institutions in the targeted program areas.

Introduction

While the scale and complexity of homelessness in Los Angeles County have prompted major investments in housing and supportive services, far less attention has been paid to the people who power these systems: the workforce. Social workers and service providers are on the front lines of these efforts, yet their roles are often marked by low pay, high stress, limited support, and chronic turnover¹. Despite ongoing research on homelessness and interventions to address it, questions remain about whether there are enough qualified professionals to meet the growing demand, and whether those entering the field possess the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) needed to work effectively with this vulnerable population.

Research Question

This study was developed to identify workforce needs in the homeless services sector and examine whether postsecondary institutions are preparing an adequate number of students to enter employment in related occupations. The following report provides a comprehensive assessment of current and projected demand for key occupations in the sector, evaluates the educational pathways feeding into these roles, and investigates whether workers are entering the field with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to succeed.

Methodology

Phase 1: Exploring related industries

Phase 1 of the study involved exploring and identifying industries directly engaged in the homeless services sector. This was done by examining industries within the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) sub-sector 624-Social Assistance, within the two-digit NAICS sector 62-Health Care and Social Assistance. These industries include Other Individual and Family Services, Community Food Services, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services, among others. By identifying related and relevant industries, the study aimed to capture a comprehensive view of the workforce dynamics relevant of the homeless services sector.

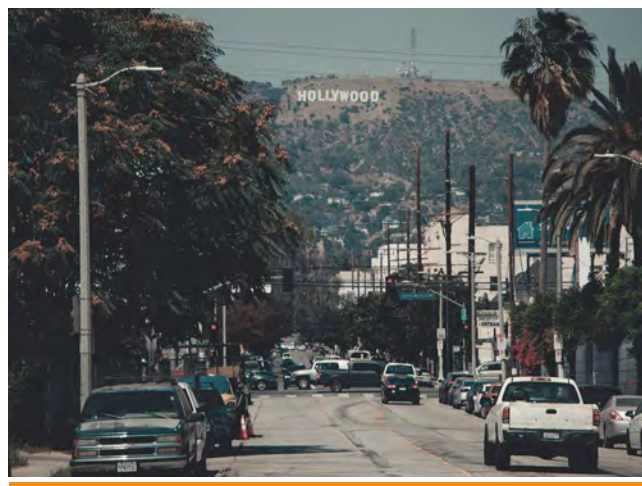
Phase 2: Analyzing staffing patterns

Once the industry clusters were identified, staffing patterns were analyzed to pinpoint the top occupations from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system employed within these sectors. This involved:

- Collecting data on occupational employment trends, percentage of total jobs in industries, median hourly

earnings, and typical entry-level education across the related industry group.

- Selecting the most pertinent and critical occupations that support the services and operations within the homeless services sector. All labor market demand data was sourced from Lightcast's 2025.1 datarun.



¹ Abraham, Lisa, and Sarah B. Hunter. Workers at homeless services agencies in L.A. often earn salaries below living wage levels. Rand Corporation. May 10, 2023. Retrieved https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA2266-1.html

Phase 3: Connecting occupations to educational supply

With the key occupations identified, an assessment was conducted of educational pathways and institutions that supply the workforce for these roles. This involved:

- Mapping the identified occupations to relevant Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) for occupations that typically require a bachelor's or master's degree for entry, and Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) codes for the more entry-level work roles. See Appendix A for occupational profiles at the bachelor's and master's degree level, and Appendix B for data on the entry-level occupations that are more aligned with community college programs.
- Analyzing the output of these educational programs, including the number and type of awards conferred by postsecondary institutions. All bachelor's and master's degree educational supply data was sourced from the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), while the community college data was sourced from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Data Mart.

- Identifying any gaps between the supply of qualified individuals by postsecondary institutions and the employer demand for these workers in the homeless services sector.

Phase 4: Identifying supply gaps

The final step involved integrating the data from staffing patterns and the educational supply analysis to determine where supply gaps exist. By comparing the number of qualified individuals entering the workforce with the employer demand for top occupations, the analysis identified specific areas where workforce shortages are most severe. The data analysis findings presented in this report offer a foundation for strategic planning and interventions to address these gaps, to ensure the homeless services sector has the necessary talent to effectively serve the community.

This comprehensive methodology applies a holistic data-driven approach to understanding and addressing workforce needs in the homeless services sector, paving the way for informed decision-making and building equity in the Los Angeles County.

Industry Analysis

The analysis focused on eight industries within NAICS sector 62-Health Care and Social Assistance, which are relevant to the homeless services sector. These industries are all categorized under subsector 624-Social Assistance. Historical data from 2002 to 2023 is presented, including the number of jobs, change in number of jobs, average earnings per job, employment concentration in 2023, and the number of business establishments in 2023. For the purpose of the study, employment concentration is measured using location quotients. A location quotient (LQ) compares how concentrated an industry is compared to the nation. A high LQ, above 1.0, indicates a region's industry is unique or specialized in comparison to the national average.

Over the last 20 years, a significant increase in employment occurred with the addition of 268,589 jobs, representing 726% growth in industries related to the homeless services sector in the county. This substantial increase is largely influenced by the dramatic 3,698% growth in the Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities industry, which also has the highest location quotient, 3.61, indicating that employment in this industry is more than three and a half times more concentrated in Los Angeles County than the national average. Table 1 summarizes detailed findings between and across industries in the homeless services sector.

Table 1: Analysis of historical employment, business establishments, and location quotients for industries related to the homeless services sector, Los Angeles County, 2002-2023

NAICS	Industry Description	2002 Jobs	2023 Jobs	2002 2023 Change	2002 2023 % Change	2023 Average Earnings Per Job	2023 Ests.*	2023 LQ**
624110	Child and Youth Services	4,995	10,892	5,897	118%	\$60,993	412	1.45
624120	Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities	6,740	256,00	249,261	3,698%	\$29,104	218,823	3.61
624190	Other Individual and Family Services	11,050	20,550	9,500	86%	\$64,149	1,432	1.20
624210	Community Food Services	583	1,213	630	108%	\$67,443	79	0.82
624221	Temporary Shelters	1,556	4,996	3,440	221%	\$68,531	136	1.80
624229	Other Community Housing Services	509	1,564	1,055	207%	\$88,679	119	1.07
624230	Emergency and Other Relief Services	2,125	1,193	(932)	(44%)	\$97,944	63	1.05
624310	Vocational Rehabilitation Services	9,454	9,192	(262)	(3%)	\$51,560	250	1.04
TOTAL / AVERAGE		37,013	305,60	268,589	726%	\$34,643	221,312	1.50

*Ests. = Business Establishments

**LQ = Employment Concentration. Quantifies the concentration of employment relative to the national average. Values greater than 1 indicate higher employment concentration.

Data source: Lightcast 2025.1; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

Historical Industry Employment Trends

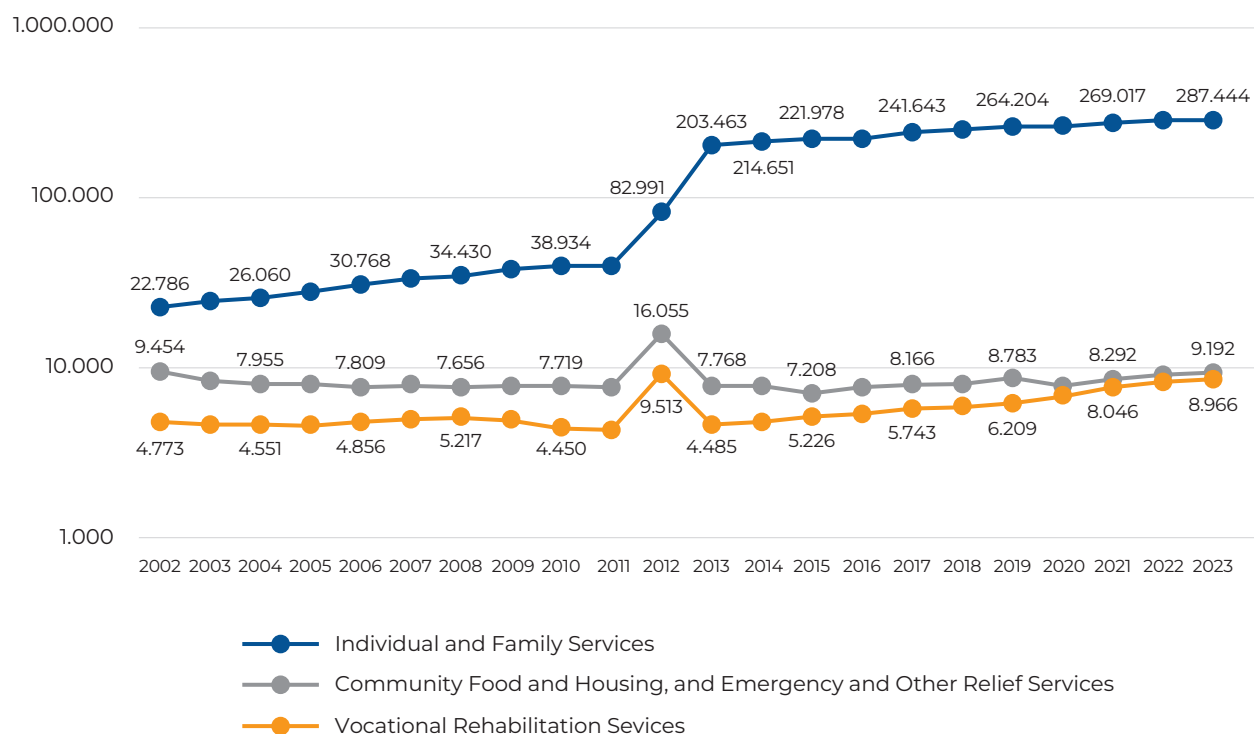
Through further investigation into employment trends, three 4-digit NAICS industries were identified that encompass the homeless services sector:

- (6241) Individual and Family Services
- (6242) Community Food and Housing, and Emergency and Other Relief Services
- (6243) Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The study's analysis revealed a significant increase in the number of jobs for all three industry groups starting in 2011. The number of jobs in two industries

peaked in 2012: Community Food and Housing, and Emergency and Other Relief Services; and Vocational Rehabilitation Services industries peaked. However, the number of jobs in the Individual and Family Services industry continued to rise through 2012 and stabilized in 2013. Figure 1 illustrates the number of jobs for the three homeless services sector industries from 2002 to 2023.

Figure 1. Historical employment for the industry groups related to the homeless services sector, Los Angeles County, 2002-2023



Data source: Lightcast 2025.1; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

Occupational Assessment

To distill the related industries into individual occupations, a staffing pattern analysis was conducted. This analysis grouped the three 4-digit NAICS industries referred to in the previous section.

Identifying Essential Occupations

The staffing pattern analysis revealed 85 occupations that each comprise at least 0.10% of the total jobs in the industry group. To identify occupations that are essential and highly relevant to the homeless services sector, this list was narrowed down to eight essential occupations using the following criteria:

- 1. Direct Interaction:** The occupation involves direct interaction with people experiencing homelessness. For instance, while Human Resources Specialists are crucial for daily operations, they typically do not interact directly with the homeless population.
- 2. Sector Relevance:** The occupation primarily operates within the homeless services sector. Although Home Health and Personal Care Aides constitute 73.10% of jobs in the industry group, most of these roles are outside the homeless services sector.
- 3. Educational Requirements:** Entry-level positions in these occupations typically require a bachelor's or master's degree, which aligns with the focus of this report. Occupations typically requiring doctoral or other advanced degrees, such as Clinical and Counseling Psychologists, were excluded from the analysis.

While this report adheres to federally recognized Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes, many frontline roles in homeless services operate under diverse program-specific or organizational job titles that do not always map neatly to SOC categories. To maintain alignment with labor market data while acknowledging real-world variation, it is important to provide contextual clarification of how these roles typically function in practice.

For instance, housing navigators, who assist clients in locating and securing stable housing, completing and submitting rental applications, and preparing for tenancy, are commonly categorized under "Social Workers, All Other" or "Community and Social Service



Specialists, All Other," depending on the particular occupation's structure and educational requirements. Street outreach workers, who engage with individuals in encampments, conduct needs assessments, and connect clients to shelters and services, may also be classified under "Community and Social Service Specialists, All Other", particularly when the role is paraprofessional in nature.

The case manager title, widely used across organizations providing homeless services, encompasses a broad range of responsibilities including assessment, care planning, benefit navigation, service coordination, and documentation. These roles can be found across multiple SOC codes, with placement depending on licensure requirements, education level, and the specific setting.

Each of these SOC categories encompasses real-world job functions central to homelessness response systems. "Social Workers, All Other" includes professionals who help individuals address life challenges, often serving in roles such as social worker, housing specialist, or case manager. "Community and Social Service Specialists, All Other" covers positions focused on promoting wellness and overcoming barriers, including titles like outreach specialist, case supervisor, or street health case manager.

These examples demonstrate the functional overlap between formal SOC codes and the job titles used by employers.

Education

One of this study's key findings is the extent of the education required for occupations employed by the homeless services sector. For three of the eight occupations identified for this study, employers typically require at least a master's degree for entry.

Meanwhile, a bachelor's degree is typically required for the remaining five occupations. Table 2 lists the preferred education levels for the specified occupations.

Table 2. Entry-level education preferred by employers, United States

Occupation (SOC)	Education Level
Rehabilitation Counselors (21-1015)	Master's Degree
Healthcare Social Workers (21-1022)	
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers (21-1023)	
Social and Community Service Managers (11-9151)	Bachelor's Degree
Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors (21-1018)	
Child, Family, and School Social Workers (21-1021)	
Social Workers, All Other (21-1029)	
Community and Social Service Specialists, All Other (21-1099)	

Data source: Lightcast 2025.1; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.



Historical Employment by Occupation

An analysis was then conducted of historical data pertaining to the number of jobs between 2002 and 2023, changes in jobs during this period, average

annual openings, median annual earnings, and median hourly earnings for the eight specified occupations (Table 3).

Table 3. Historical employment and median earnings for homeless services sector occupations, Los Angeles County, 2002-2023

Occupation	2002 Jobs	2003 Jobs	2002 - 2023 % Change	Median Annual Earnings	Median Hourly Earnings
Rehabilitation Counselors	2,186	3,478	13,478	3,478	3,478
Healthcare Social Workers	2,369	6,822	6,822	6,822	6,822
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers	3,780	6,139	6,139	6,139	6,139
Social and Community Service Managers	4,125	9,580	9,580	9,580	9,580
Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	3,706	18,324	18,324	18,324	18,324
Child, Family, and School Social Workers	6,316	16,537	16,537	16,537	16,537
Social Workers, All Other	3,038	3,155	3,155	3,155	3,155
Community and Social Service Specialists, All Other	2,216	4,573	4,573	4,573	4,573
TOTAL/AVERAGE	27,735	68,608	68,608	68,608	68,608

Data source: Lightcast 2025.1; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.



Demographics

Demographic data for each occupation is presented in the following section. Overall, female workers and people of color are overrepresented in the eight occupations. Depending on the occupation, women make up 60% to 80% of the workforce in each occupation. In terms of workforce diversity, workers of color comprise 74% of Community and Social Service Specialists, All Other, and 70% of Rehabilitation Counselors. In terms of age, most workers in the eight

occupations are between 35 and 54 years old. Most of the occupations, except for Social and Community Service Managers and Social Workers, All Other, have a relatively small proportion of workers aged 55+ compared to the Los Angeles County average (27%), which typically indicates fewer replacements are needed to offset impending retirements. Table 4 presents a summary of the demographic data for each occupation.

Table 4. Percent of demographic groups within each occupation, Los Angeles County, 2023²

Occupation	Male	Female	Age 14-21	Age 22-34	Age 35-54	Age 55+	Hispanic or Latino	White	Black or African American	Asian	Two or more races	Total Diversity*
Rehabilitation Counselors	40%	60%	2%	26%	45%	26%	40%	30%	17%	8%	3%	70%
Healthcare Social Workers	28%	72%	0%	25%	50%	25%	40%	31%	15%	12%	3%	69%
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers	23%	77%	0%	26%	45%	29%	38%	34%	12%	11%	4%	66%
Social and Community Service Managers	36%	64%	0%	19%	48%	33%	30%	41%	13%	12%	3%	59%
Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	33%	67%	1%	33%	43%	22%	38%	32%	13%	12%	3%	68%
Child, Family, and School Social Workers	20%	80%	0%	29%	49%	22%	42%	30%	15%	9%	4%	70%
Social Workers, All Other	22%	78%	0%	24%	45%	31%	32%	42%	13%	9%	4%	58%
Community and Social Service Specialists, All Other	33%	67%	2%	29%	44%	24%	46%	26%	14%	10%	3%	74%
Average	29%	71%	1%	28%	46%	25%	38%	33%	14%	11%	3%	67%

*Total Diversity is the sum of all non-white workers

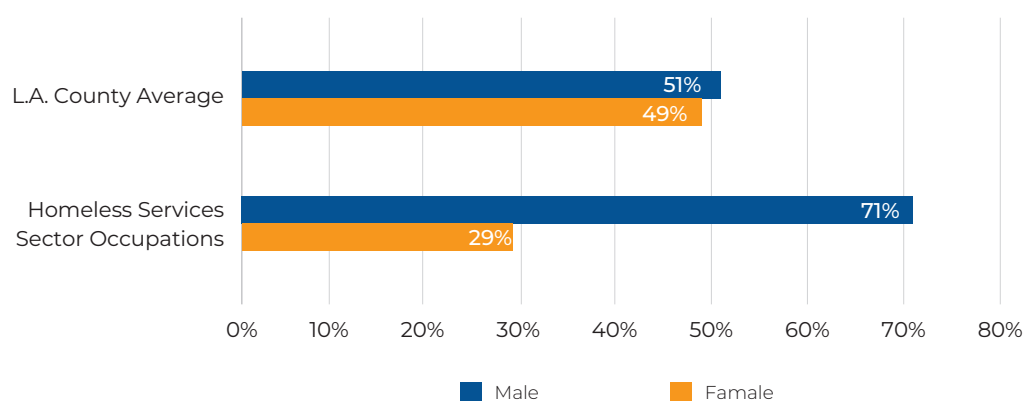
Data source: Lightcast 2025.1; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

² Across all eight occupations, individuals who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native comprise less than 1% of the workforce and due to low percentages are not represented in the above table.

The study's analysis also compared the demographics of occupations in the homeless services sector with the averages of all occupations in Los Angeles County. To highlight differences between occupational groups, the average demographics for each group, categorized by their entry-level educational requirements, were used. There is a higher prevalence of female workers

and Black or African American workers in the homeless services sector compared to their respective baseline county averages. Additionally, Asian workers are underrepresented in this sector. Figures 2-4 present the demographic averages for each occupational group alongside the corresponding Los Angeles County demographics.

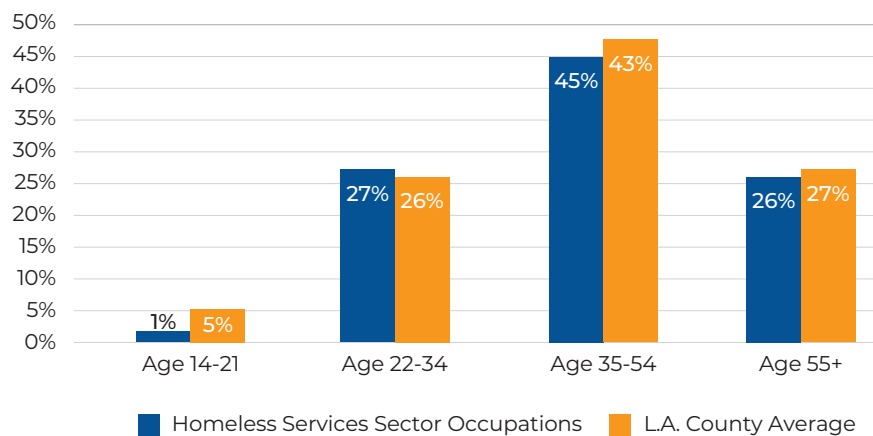
Figure 2. Average gender of workers in homeless services sector occupations compared to all occupations, Los Angeles County, 2023



Data source: Lightcast 2025.1; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

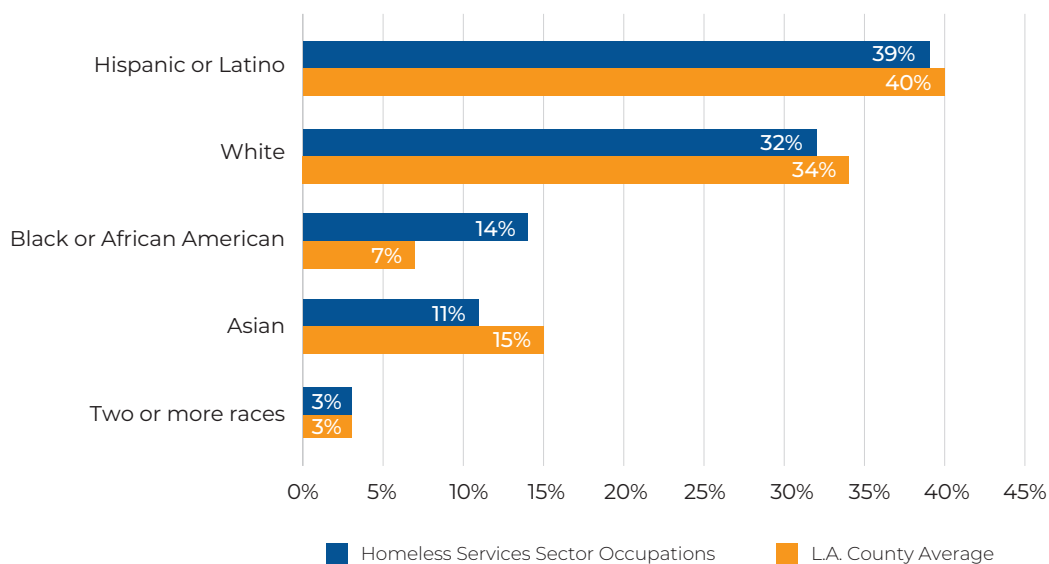


Figure 4. Average age of workers in homeless services sector occupations compared to all occupations, Los Angeles County, 2023



Data source: Lightcast 2025.1; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

Figure 5. Average ethnicity of workers in homeless services sector occupations compared to all occupations, Los Angeles County, 2023



Data source: Lightcast 2025.1; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

Projected Occupational Demand

Projected demand was analyzed for each occupation by forecasting the change in jobs in the next five years based on employment trends (Table 5). Overall, a 13% increase in demand is projected for jobs related to the

eight specified occupations, with the largest projected job growth (20%) for Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors.

Table 5. Projected occupational demand for homeless services sector occupations, Los Angeles County, 2023-2028

Occupation	2023 Jobs	2028 Jobs	2002 - 2023 % Change	% of Jobs in Related Industries	Average Annual Openings	2023 Turnover Rate	2023 LQ*
Rehabilitation Counselors	3,478	3,677	6%	57%	322	60%	1.25
Healthcare Social Workers	6,822	7,711	13%	27%	784	38%	1.19
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers	6,139	6,988	14%	20%	621	37%	1.62
Social and Community Service Managers	9,580	10,759	12%	51%	1,013	29%	1.61
Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	18,324	21,936	20%	21%	2,360	46%	1.38
Child, Family, and School Social Workers	16,537	17,935	8%	31%	1,587	34%	1.52
Social Workers, All Other	3,155	3,482	10%	43%	326	27%	1.28
Community and Social Service Specialists, All Other	4,573	4,976	9%	27%	547	41%	1.43
Average	68,608	77,464	13%	35%	7,561	39%	1.41

*LQ = Employment Concentration. Quantifies the concentration of employment relative to the national average. Values greater than 1 indicate higher employment concentration.

Data source: Lightcast 2025.1; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

Workforce Turnover in Homeless Services

Turnover in the homeless services sector has long been recognized as a persistent and complex issue. Over a decade ago, Mullen and Leginski (2010) emphasized the importance of building workforce capacity to sustain efforts to end homelessness, arguing that a lack of investment in staff development was likely to hinder progress. They observed that the workforce faced an array of challenges including low wages, emotional burnout, and limited professional development opportunities. Around the same time, Olivet et al. (2010) highlighted the significant staffing issues within the Collaborative Initiative to Help End Chronic Homelessness (CICH), identifying chronic burnout, high turnover, and insufficient training and supervision as major barriers to successful service delivery. These early works underscore that turnover in the homeless services field is not a new problem, but one that has endured despite increased public awareness and funding.

In recent years, new research has added further nuance to our understanding of this issue. Drawing on a range of recent studies, this section explores the primary causes of turnover among workers in the homeless services sector, differences between frontline and administrative roles, and potential solutions to address this pressing workforce challenge.

Primary Causes of Turnover

1. Low Pay and Financial Stress

One of the most frequently cited causes of turnover is low pay. The National Alliance to End Homelessness (2023) found, on average, that permanent housing staff only make \$42,912 a year and emergency shelter staff only make \$27,830 a year, making it difficult for them to afford their own housing and leading many workers to have housing issues themselves. Similarly a report by RAND found that frontline workers, which included case managers, social workers, outreach workers, resident advisors, navigators, and mental health workers, averaged between \$42,000 and \$57,000 per year. When looking at management workers, which



included supervisors, managers, directors, and officers, they averaged between \$64,000 and \$121,000 per year. The 2023 Nonprofit Workforce Survey similarly identified salary competition as the most commonly cited barrier to recruitment and retention, reported by nearly 73% of respondents.

2. Emotional Burnout and Secondary Traumatic Stress

Numerous studies confirm that emotional strain and burnout are central to staff attrition in this field. A 2021 systematic review by Peters et al. examined qualitative research highlighting the emotional burden carried by workers, including vicarious trauma, burnout, and the constant need to balance care for clients with personal well-being. Lenzi et al. (2021) demonstrated that lack of supervision and inadequate training correlate with higher burnout rates, while working in services that promote client empowerment reduces emotional exhaustion. Rogers et al. (2020) found similar dynamics, noting that frontline workers reported high stress levels but valued workplace supports and autonomy in decision-making as buffers to this stress.¹¹

¹¹ Rogers, Jim, Thomas George, and Amanda Roberts. "Working with individuals who have experienced homelessness: Stresses and successes." *Housing, Care and Support* 23, no. 2 (2020): 65-76.

3. Organizational and Systemic Challenges

Staff working in homeless services often face organizational instability and limited pathways for advancement. Voronov et al. (2024) outlined five primary causes of turnover, which included limited growth opportunities, incongruence between employee values, and their roles, reduced mental health, organizational support issues, and staff dismissal.¹² These challenges were exacerbated by sector-wide characteristics such as low wages and a transitory work culture. An assessment by KPMG (2022) similarly reported inconsistent training, undefined career paths, and a lack of employee support structures as key contributors to workforce instability.¹³

4. Stress from Complex Client Needs and High Workloads

Working with individuals experiencing homelessness often involves supporting people with co-occurring mental health, substance use, and trauma-related challenges. Staff are expected to navigate these complexities with limited resources, which contributes to high stress and turnover. The 2010 report by Olivet et al. described the high demands placed on staff working with clients facing chronic homelessness and comorbid conditions.¹⁴ More recently, Moses (2023) noted that 74% of workers described their organizations as understaffed, with 69% reporting stress due to not being able to help enough clients.¹⁵



Frontline Workers are Especially Susceptible to Turnover

Several studies make distinctions between turnover among frontline workers and administrative or managerial staff. Frontline staff (e.g., case managers, outreach workers, and housing navigators) are typically more exposed to direct client trauma, unstable field environments, and insufficient supervision. Peters et al. (2021) found that frontline staff reported higher rates of burnout and emotional fatigue compared to their administrative counterparts.¹⁶

Rogers et al. (2020) reported that frontline workers particularly valued “decision latitude,” or the ability to make autonomous decisions in the field, as a factor in job satisfaction¹⁷. The KPMG (2022) analysis further noted that frontline staff experienced greater concerns regarding physical safety and emotional health compared to those in back-office roles, who were more likely to cite career stagnation or unclear pathways for advancement as their primary challenges.¹⁸

¹² Voronov, Joseph, Sean A. Kidd, Emmy Tiderington, John Ecker, Vicky Stergiopoulos, and Nick Kerman. "Causes and decision paths of employee turnover in the homeless service sector." *Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness* 33, no. 2 (2024): 392-402.

¹³ KPMG and United Way. "Current state assessment report." *Homeless Sector Workforce Analysis*. August 26, 2022.

¹⁴ Olivet, Jeffrey, Sarah McGraw, Megan Grandin, and Ellen Bassuk. "Staffing challenges and strategies for organizations serving individuals who have experienced chronic homelessness." *The journal of behavioral health services & research* 37 (2010): 226-238.

¹⁵ Moses, Joy. "Working in homeless services: A survey of the field." *Homelessness Research Institute*, December 6 (2023).

¹⁶ Peters, L., Hobson, C. W., & Samuel, V. (2022). A systematic review and meta-synthesis of qualitative studies that investigate the emotional experiences of staff working in homeless settings. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 30(1), 58-72.

¹⁷ Rogers, Jim, Thomas George, and Amanda Roberts. "Working with individuals who have experienced homelessness: Stresses and successes." *Housing, Care and Support* 23, no. 2 (2020): 65-76.

¹⁸ KPMG and United Way. "Current state assessment report." *Homeless Sector Workforce Analysis*. August 26, 2022.

Potential Solutions

Addressing turnover in homeless services requires a multifaceted approach. Based on the reviewed literature, there are a number of strategies that can be helpful, including:

- 1. Improve Compensation:** As the current pay scale leaves many workers unable to meet basic needs, raising wages to competitive levels is essential for retaining workers in the sector.
- 2. Strengthen Supervision and Training:** Supervision and role-specific training has shown benefits toward reducing burnout and improving retention.
- 3. Create Clear Career Pathways:** Implementing career development and advancement opportunities may help to reduce attrition, and there is a need to define competencies and training for key roles.
- 4. Support Emotional Well-being:** Programs such as trauma-informed supervision, and wellness initiatives may help staff process the emotional toll of their work.
- 5. Address Organizational Culture:** Cultivating supportive, communicative, and mission-driven workplace cultures may enhance staff retention. The field may also benefit from more inclusive leadership and greater representation, especially regarding gender and ethnicity, at all levels.
- 6. Policy-Level Reforms:** Systemic reforms—such as changes to government grant structures to allow for full cost recovery—could provide the necessary resources for nonprofit employers to invest in their staff.

7. Institutionalize Social Work training programs with an emphasis on working effectively with the homeless population: Previous research has documented the effectiveness of social work training programs that provide ample homeless sector-specific curricula, with specific impacts to the recruitment and retention of workers in this sector, as well as improvements in worker's attitudes towards the homeless population.^{19 20}

Workforce turnover in the homeless services sector is not a new issue, but its persistence remains a serious threat to the effectiveness of programs that serve vulnerable populations. While emotional burnout, low wages, and organizational instability are key drivers of attrition, there are clear and actionable strategies that can improve retention and staff well-being. Reforms at the programmatic, organizational, and policy levels are necessary to build and maintain a workforce capable of rising to the challenge of ending homelessness.



¹⁹ Donna Gallup, Joseph Briglio, Elizabeth Devaney, Dominique Samario, Danielle Veldman, Alessandra Cianni & Dara Papel (2020): Addressing a Homeless Services Workforce Deficit Through Collaborative Social Work Field Placements, *Journal of Social Work Education*, DOI: 10.1080/10437797.2020.1723760.

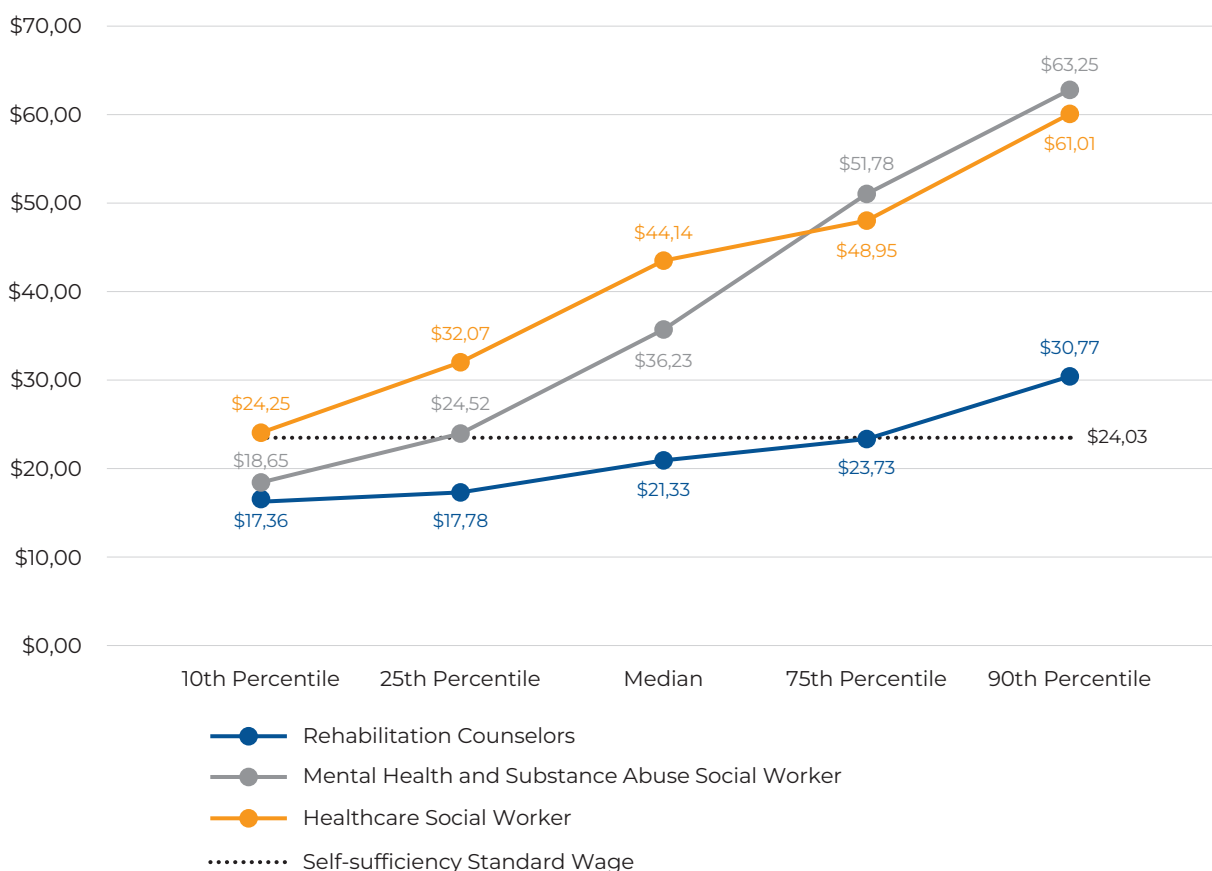
²⁰ Donna Gallup, Benjamin F. Henwood, Elizabeth Devaney, Dominique Samario & Jason Giang (2022): Shifting social worker attitudes toward homelessness: an MSW training program evaluation, *Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness*, DOI: 10.1080/10530789.2022.2061238

Earnings

Hourly earnings for each of the homeless services sector occupations were compared with other identified occupations with similar entry-level education levels to investigate wage parity. Figures 5

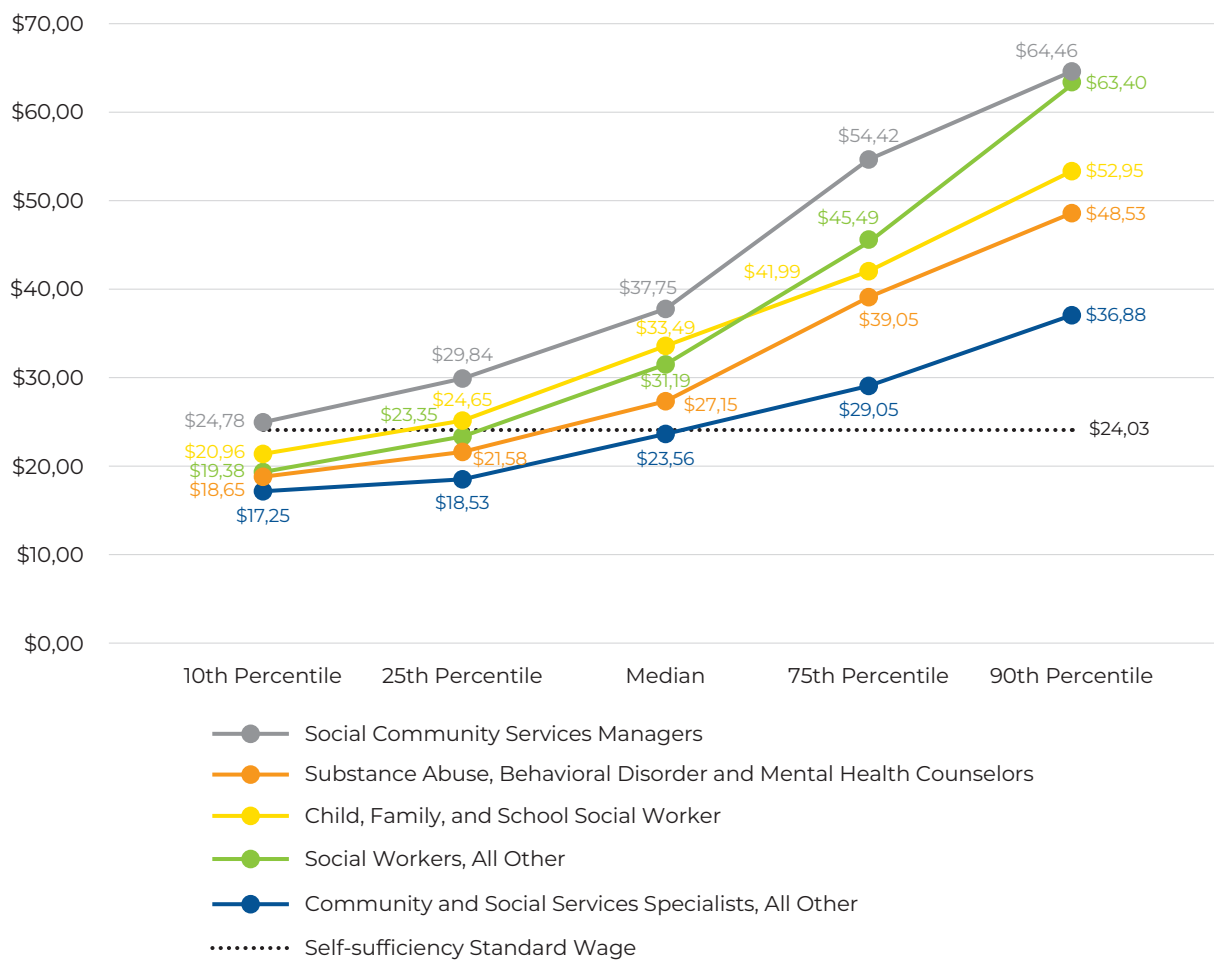
and 6 compare the occupations in each group with the self-sustainability standard wage for Los Angeles County.

Figure 6. Hourly wage range homeless services occupations requiring a master's degree, Los Angeles County, 2023



Data source: Lightcast 2025.1; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

Figure 7. Hourly wage range for homeless services occupations requiring a bachelor's degree, Los Angeles County, 2023



Data source: Lightcast 2025.1; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

Educational Pathway Analysis: Bachelor's and Master's Degrees

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the educational pathways associated with the eight occupations in the homeless services sector, Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes for each occupation were cross-referenced with Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes using the National Center for Education Statistics' CIP-SOC crosswalk. Identified CIP and SOC codes were also cross-checked with each other to ensure that all related educational programs were identified.

Identifying Educational Pathways

To ensure specificity and avoid inflating supply numbers, programs considered too general for occupations within the homeless services sector, such as behavioral science or business administration, were excluded from the analysis. As a result, 13 CIP-coded programs were identified that serve as potential educational pathways for occupations within the homeless services sector (Table 6).

Table 6. Postsecondary programs related to the homeless services sector by CIP code

CIP Code	Program Name
19.0710	Developmental Services Worker.
44.0000	Human Services, General.
44.0201	Community Organization and Advocacy.
44.0701	Social Work.
44.0702	Youth Services/Administration.
44.0703	Forensic Social Work.
44.0799	Social Work, Other.
51.1501	Substance Abuse/Addiction Counseling.
51.1503	Clinical/Medical Social Work.*
51.1504	Community Health Services/Liaison/Counseling.
51.1508	Mental Health Counseling/Counselor.
51.2310	Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling/Counselor.
51.2314	Rehabilitation Science.

*Loma Linda University in the Inland Empire has an online program coded here, with graduates from Los Angeles County.

Awards By Postsecondary Institutions

To further explore educational pathways that prepare students to enter occupations in the homeless services sector, awards data was compiled for the identified programs. Among the 13 CIP-coded programs, postsecondary institutions in the Los Angeles County granted an average of 2,175 awards (Table 7) over the past three years (for the academic years 2020-21 to 2022-23) in the following areas:

- Human Services, General
- Community Organization and Advocacy
- Social Work
- Substance Abuse/Addiction Counseling
- Mental Health Counseling/Counselor
- Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling/Counselor
- Rehabilitation Science

Of the awards granted over the past three years, 73.8% were master's degrees, 25.1% were bachelor's degrees, and 1.1% were associate degrees.

Table 7. Awards by program CIP-code and postsecondary institution, Los Angeles County, 2020-21 to 2022-23 academic years

CIP Code – Title and Postsecondary Institution	2020- 21	2021- 22	2022-23	3-year Average
44.0000 - Human Services, General				
California State University-Dominguez Hills	123	128	100	117
Mount Saint Mary's University	1	-	-	0
44.0201 - Community Organization and Advocacy				
Claremont Lincoln University	4	1	-	2
44.0701 - Social Work				
Azusa Pacific University	118	120	135	124
California State University-Dominguez Hills	86	98	98	94
California State University-Long Beach	301	345	291	312
California State University-Los Angeles	308	367	403	359
California State University-Northridge	148	136	170	151
Mount Saint Mary's University	18	11	20	16
Pacific Oaks College	-	1	15	5
University of California-Los Angeles	87	109	93	96
University of Southern California	888	664	649	734
Whittier College	8	14	13	12
World Mission University	-	2	10	4
51.1501 - Substance Abuse/Addiction Counseling*				
Galaxy Medical College	3	6	-	3
InterCoast Colleges-West Covina	19	12	34	22
51.1508 - Mental Health Counseling/Counselor				
The Chicago School at Los Angeles	-	67	69	45
51.2310 - Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling/Counselor				
California State University-Los Angeles	82	46	51	60
51.2314 - Rehabilitation Science				
California State University-Northridge	18	17	19	18
TOTAL	2,212	2,144	2,170	2,175

Data source: National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

*Completions for 51.1501 – Substance Abuse/Addiction Counseling are sub-baccalaureate awards (associate degrees and certificates).

The three-year average of awards granted by postsecondary institutions in Los Angeles County totals 2,175. (Detailed information on awards by community college educational programs is listed in Appendix B.) This indicates a significant undersupply of qualified candidates for the homeless services sector, as these awards account for less than a third of the projected demand for the identified occupations, which average 7,561 annual openings. Indeed, these awards do not even cover the top two occupation's expected average annual openings: Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors, and Child, Family, and School Social Workers.

The degrees granted are highly centralized with USC making up nearly one-third of completions, followed by California State University-Los Angeles and California State University-Long Beach accounting for the next 30% of completions. The remainder of which is spread

amongst the other locations. About two-thirds of students are enrolled in USC's online program, but 60–70% of them live in the region and significantly contribute to the county's workforce.

Furthermore, degrees awarded by master's programs account for nearly three-quarters of all completions; yet they fulfill the requirements of three of the top eight occupations, which account for about 23% of expected job openings, indicating a substantial gap in supply for the occupations that only require a bachelor's degree. This imbalance suggests that educational output at the bachelor's degree level is far too low relative to occupational need, especially for roles that could serve as entry points into the homeless services sector. Without increased investment in bachelor's-level program capacity, particularly for social work, human services, and community advocacy, the county will struggle to fill critical frontline positions.



Conclusion and Recommendations

Occupations in the homeless services sector are projected to grow by 13% over the next five years, leading to over 7,500 annual job openings. However, the current educational supply in Los Angeles County is producing less than one-third of the potential workers needed to fill these openings. A primary factor contributing to this shortfall is the limited availability of educational pathways that funnel qualified candidates into the sector. Only 56% of the identified educational programs are offered by higher education institutions in the county.

Additionally, a significant portion of student completions (one-third) come from the University of Southern California's M.S.W. program. This indicates an overreliance on a single institution for the preparation of the county's homeless services workforce, highlighting the need for a broader range of educational pathways from various institutions to ensure a steady and diversified supply of qualified candidates.

Several postsecondary institutions are located in areas affected by the homelessness crisis. Program development and expansion efforts could focus on increasing the number of graduates from existing programs to create a more reliable pipeline of trained students who live and plan to work in Los Angeles County. While countywide efforts are needed to address this workforce shortage, four areas in the county could be prioritized to maximize initial efforts: These areas include:

- Metro Los Angeles
- South Los Angeles
- San Fernando Valley
- South Bay

These locations are strategically positioned to expand academic programs, enhance community engagement, and support workforce development. Efforts to address the homeless services workforce shortage could also focus on student preparation, such as increasing the availability of internships, practicum opportunities, and other work-based learning experiences for students. To

ensure a prepared and licensed workforce, higher education institutions should partner with local homeless service providers to increase the number of supervised internship and practicum placements.

Universities such as California State University-Los Angeles, California State University-Long Beach, and the University of Southern California (USC) already account for a large number of completions, 64.5% on average over the last three years. Examining how these schools promote and support these programs may assist other locations in increasing program capacity and completions. Additionally, specialized programs such as substance abuse/addiction counseling, mental health counseling, vocational rehabilitation counseling, and rehabilitation science are only offered by one or two colleges, substantially limiting the pipelines needed to prepare students to enter these roles. To meaningfully address the supply-demand mismatch, it is essential to expand offerings and better align existing curricula with the specific workforce needs of homeless services agencies. This is especially important for bachelor's degree programs due to the high demand for workers who have completed this level of education, and the low number of degrees conferred in the county.

County Implications

Based on this study's findings, there is a high risk that current talent gap in the homeless services sector will worsen, exacerbating the workforce shortage in Los Angeles County. These shortages could impede the delivery of services and hinder Mayor Bass' and other initiatives to assist individuals experiencing homelessness in the county.

The underproduction of graduates in degree programs aligned with key occupations in the homeless services sector is contributing to persistent and growing workforce shortages across California. Labor market analyses indicate that the behavioral health services sector in Los Angeles County is already experiencing, and is projected to continue experiencing, workforce deficits that negatively impact health outcomes.²¹ Although employment demand is high for many

21 Workforce Education and Resource Center. "High Road Labor Market Analysis: Behavioral Health Services Sector in Los Angeles County." Los Angeles, CA: Workforce Education and Resource Center, February 2022. <https://www.lareentry.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/WERC-Labor-Market-Analysis-BHS-2022.pdf>.

critical roles, local education and training pipelines are not producing enough qualified candidates to meet those needs. As a result, providers throughout the homelessness response system report chronic staffing gaps, excessive caseloads, and burnout among existing personnel.²² For example, the shortage of licensed clinical social workers has impeded the supervision of associate therapists—delaying their licensure and further limiting the pool of professionals available to serve the community.²³ This shortage exacerbates service delays, undermines the quality and continuity of care, and reduces the overall capacity of the system to address the complex needs of individuals experiencing homelessness. Without a targeted effort to expand relevant degree programs and support students through to completion and licensure, these workforce gaps will continue to strain an already overburdened system.

22 Moses, Joy. "Working in homeless services: A survey of the field." Homelessness Research Institute, December 6 (2023).

23 Stringer, Heather. "Counties Embrace New Approach to Getting Therapist Trainees Licensed." The CHCF Blog, April 11, 2025. Accessed April 29, 2025. <https://www.chcf.org/blog/counties-embrace-new-approach-getting-therapist-trainees-licensed/>

Addressing the Supply Gap

To address these challenges and ensure the effective functioning of the homeless services sector's workforce, the following workforce development strategies are recommended:

- 1. Expand and Diversify Educational Pathways:** Seek state, county, and local funding opportunities to expand existing training programs and create new educational pathways connected to higher education institutions dedicated to preparing students for successful employment in the homeless services sector.
- 2. Reskilling and Transition Programs:** Implement initiatives to reskill and transition underemployed workers from related industries and occupations into the homeless services sector.
- 3. Financial Incentives:** Offer financial incentives such as higher pay and enhanced benefits to attract and retain competitive talent in the sector.

By adopting these strategies, Los Angeles County can build a robust and sustainable workforce capable of addressing the needs of the homeless services sector and supporting broader social equity goals.



Appendix A:

Assessment of Occupations Requiring a Bachelor's or Master's Degree

Appendix A presents occupational profiles for the following jobs which require at least a bachelor's or master's degree for entry-level employment:

- Child, Family, and School Social Workers (SOC 21-1021)
- Community and Social Service Specialists, All Other (21-1099)
- Healthcare Social Workers (21-1022)
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers (21-1023)
- Rehabilitation Counselors (21-1015)
- Social and Community Service Managers (11-9151)
- Social Workers, All Other (21-1029)
- Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors (21-1018)



Child, Family, and School Social Workers (SOC 21-1021)

Job Titles

Adoption Social Worker, Case Manager, Case Worker, Child Protective Services Social Worker, Family Protection Specialist, Family Resource Coordinator, Family Service Worker, Foster Care Social Worker, School Social Worker.

Occupational Description

Provide social services and assistance to improve the social and psychological functioning of children and their families and to maximize the well-being and functioning of children.

Typical Educational Requirement: Bachelor's degree.

Projected 5-year Demand (2023-2028).



16,537 Jobs (2023)



8% Job Growth



31% Employment in Sector



1,587 Annual Openings

Educational Pathways (19% B.A. and 81% M.A.)

CIP (1,907 Awards in L.A. County, 3-yr Avg.)

- Social Work (44.0701)
- Youth Services/Administration (44.0702)
- Forensic Social Work (44.0703)
- Social Work, Other (44.0799)

Institutions Currently Providing Educational Pathways

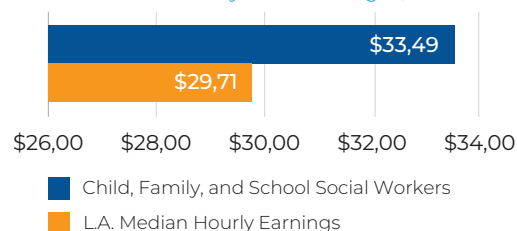
- Azusa Pacific University (124 Awards)
- California State University-Dominguez Hills (94 Awards)
- California State University-Long Beach (312 Awards)
- California State University-Los Angeles (359 Awards)
- California State University-Northridge (151 Awards)
- Mount Saint Mary's University (16 Awards)
- Pacific Oaks College (5 Awards)
- University of California-Los Angeles (96 Awards)
- University of Southern California (734 Awards)
- Whittier College (12 Awards)
- World Mission University (4 awards)

Supply/Demand Analysis

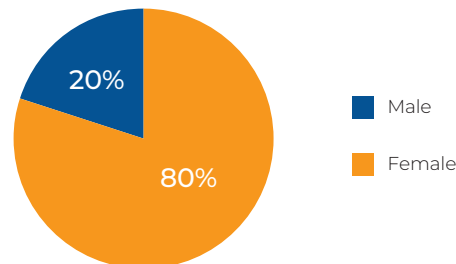
There were 1,907 awards granted for relevant educational pathways compared to the projected demand of 1,587 annual openings. While there are more awards than job openings, these programs prepare students for employment across several occupations, not solely this occupation.

Median Hourly Wages

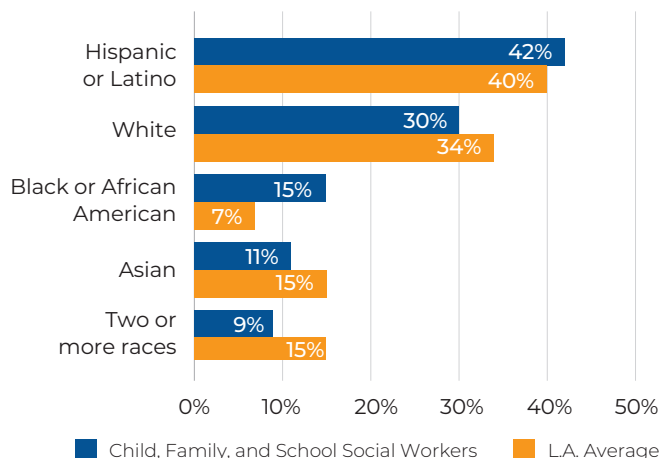
L.A. Self-sufficiency Standard Wage: \$24.03



Gender



Ethnicity



Community and Social Service Specialists, All Other (21-1099)

Job Titles

Case Investigator, Case Manager, Case Reviewer, Case Supervisor, Case Worker, Community Center Worker, Community Chest Officer, Community Educator, Community Organization Worker, Community Organizer, Field Reporter, Field Supervisor, Field Worker, Housing Specialist Social Worker, Health Information Provider, Health Promoter.

Occupational Description

Workers in these occupations promote wellness to help people cope with or overcome challenges.

Typical Educational Requirement: Bachelor's degree.

Projected 5-year Demand (2023-2028).



4,573 Jobs (2023)



9% Job Growth



27% Employment in Sector



547 Annual Openings

Educational Pathways (98% B.A. and 2% M.A.)

CIP (119 Awards in L.A. County, 3-yr Avg.)

- Developmental Services Worker (19.0710)
- Human Services, General (44.0000)
- Community Organization and Advocacy (44.0201)

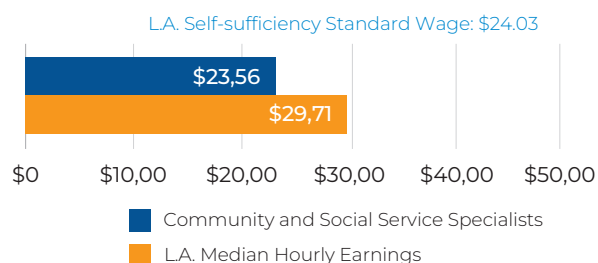
Institutions Currently Providing Educational Pathways

- California State University-Dominguez Hills (117 Awards)
- Claremont Lincoln University (2 Awards)

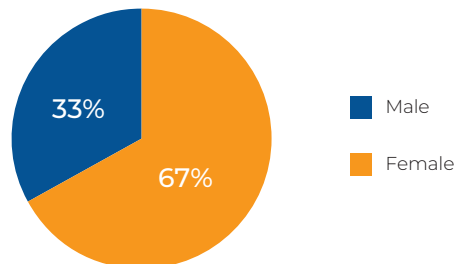
Supply/Demand Analysis

A supply gap exists for community and social service specialists. Only 119 awards were granted for relevant educational pathways compared to the projected demand of 547 annual openings.

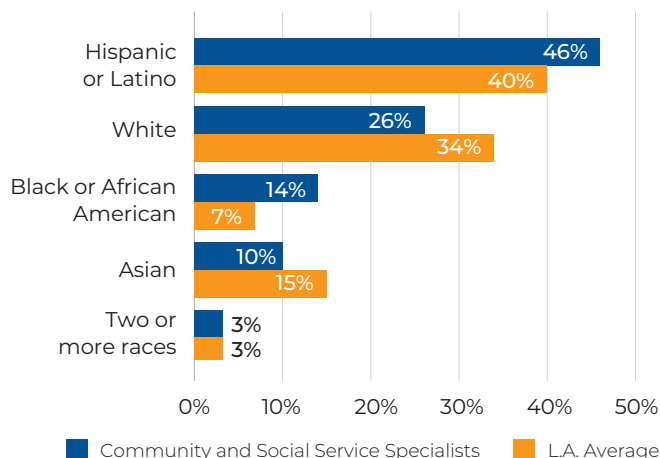
Median Hourly Wages



Gender



Ethnicity



Healthcare Social Workers (21-1022)

Job Titles

Clinical Social Worker, Hospice Social Worker, Licensed Master Social Worker, Medical Social Worker, Nephrology Social Worker, Oncology Social Worker, Psychosocial Coordinator, Renal Social Worker, Social Work Case Manager, Social Worker.

Occupational Description

Provide individuals, families, and groups with the psychosocial support needed to cope with chronic, acute, or terminal illnesses. Services include advising family caregivers. Provide patients with information and counseling, and make referrals for other services.

Typical Educational Requirement: Master's degree.

Projected 5-year Demand (2023-2028).



6,822 Jobs (2023)



13% Job Growth



27% Employment in Sector



784 Annual Openings

Educational Pathways (19% B.A. and 81% M.A.)

CIP (1,907 Awards in L.A. County, 3-yr Avg.)

- Social Work (44.0701)
- Forensic Social Work (44.0703)
- Social Work, Other (44.0799)
- Clinical/Medical Social Work (51.1503)

Institutions Currently Providing Educational Pathways

- Azusa Pacific University (124 Awards)
- California State University-Dominguez Hills (94 Awards)
- California State University-Long Beach (312 Awards)
- California State University-Los Angeles (359 Awards)
- California State University-Northridge (151 Awards)
- Mount Saint Mary's University (16 Awards)
- Pacific Oaks College (5 Awards)
- University of California-Los Angeles (96 Awards)
- University of Southern California (734 Awards)
- Whittier College (12 Awards)
- World Mission University (4 Awards)

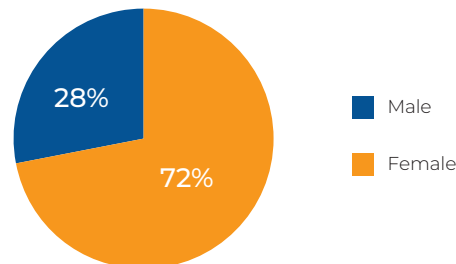
Supply/Demand Analysis

A supply gap exists for healthcare social workers. There were 1,907 awards granted for relevant educational pathways compared to the projected demand of 784 annual openings.

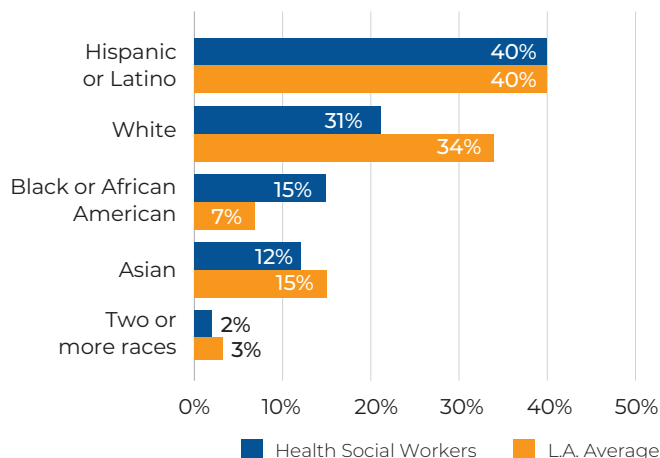
Median Hourly Wages



Gender



Ethnicity



Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers (21-1023)

Job Titles

Case Manager, Clinical Social Worker, Clinical Therapist, Clinician, Counselor, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Mental Health Therapist, Social Worker, Therapist.

Occupational Description

Assess and treat individuals with mental, emotional, or substance abuse problems, including abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and/or other drugs. Activities may include individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, case management, client advocacy, prevention, and education.

Typical Educational Requirement: Master's degree.

Projected 5-year Demand (2023-2028).



6,139 Jobs (2023)



14% Job Growth



20% Employment in Sector



621 Annual Openings

Educational Pathways (19% B.A. and 81% M.A.)

CIP (1,907 Awards in L.A. County, 3-yr Avg.)

- Social Work (44.0701)
- Social Work, Other (44.0799)
- Clinical/Medical Social Work (51.1503)

Institutions Currently Providing Educational Pathways

- Azusa Pacific University (124 Awards)
- California State University-Dominguez Hills (94 Awards)
- California State University-Long Beach (312 Awards)
- California State University-Los Angeles (359 Awards)
- California State University-Northridge (151 Awards)
- Mount Saint Mary's University (16 Awards)
- Pacific Oaks College (5 Awards)
- University of California-Los Angeles (96 Awards)
- University of Southern California (734 Awards)
- Whittier College (12 Awards)
- World Mission University (4 Awards)

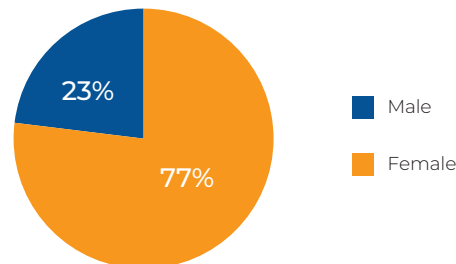
Supply/Demand Analysis

There were 1,907 awards granted for relevant educational pathways compared to the projected demand of 621 average openings. While there are more awards than job openings, these programs prepare students for employment across several occupations, not solely this occupation.

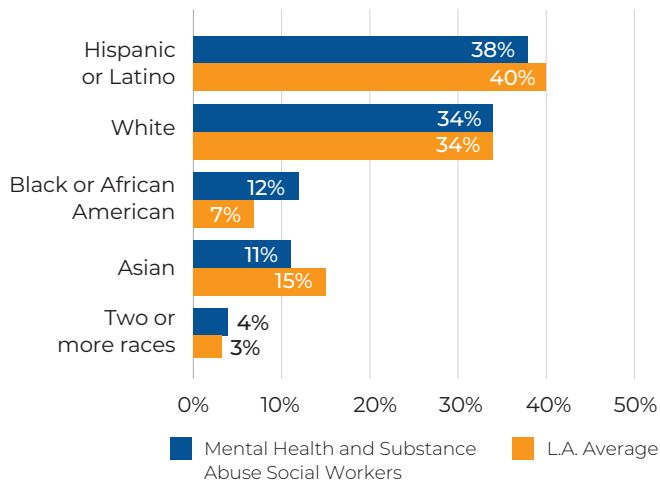
Median Hourly Wages



Gender



Ethnicity



Rehabilitation Counselors (21-1015)

Job Titles

Employment Advisor, Employment Services Case Manager, Employment Specialist, Human Services Care Specialist, Job Coach, Rehabilitation Counselor, Rehabilitation Specialist, Vocational Case Manager, Vocational Placement Specialist, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.

Occupational Description

Counsel individuals to maximize the independence and employability of persons coping with personal, social, and vocational difficulties that result from birth defects, illness, disease, accidents, aging, or the stress of daily life. Coordinate activities for residents of care and treatment facilities. Assess client needs and design and implement rehabilitation programs that may include personal and vocational counseling, training, and job placement.

Typical Educational Requirement: Master's degree.

Projected 5-year Demand (2023-2028).



6,139 Jobs (2023)



14% Job Growth



20% Employment in Sector



621 Annual Openings

Educational Pathways (77% B.A. and 23% M.A.)

CIP (78 Awards in L.A. County, 3-yr Avg.)

- Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling/Counselor (51.2310)
- Rehabilitation Science (51.2314)

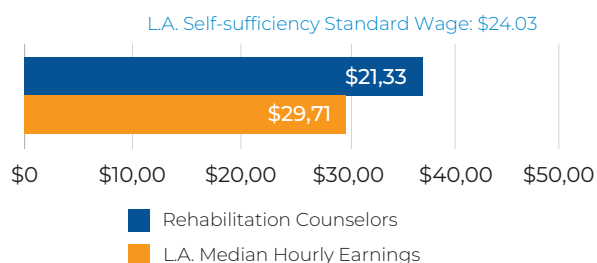
Institutions Currently Providing Educational Pathways

- California State University-Los Angeles (60 Awards)
- California State University-Northridge (18 Awards)

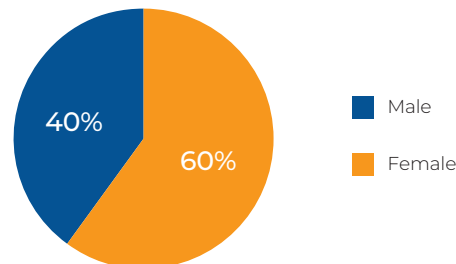
Supply/Demand Analysis

A supply gap exists for rehabilitation counselors. Only 78 awards were granted for relevant educational pathways compared to the projected demand of 322 annual openings.

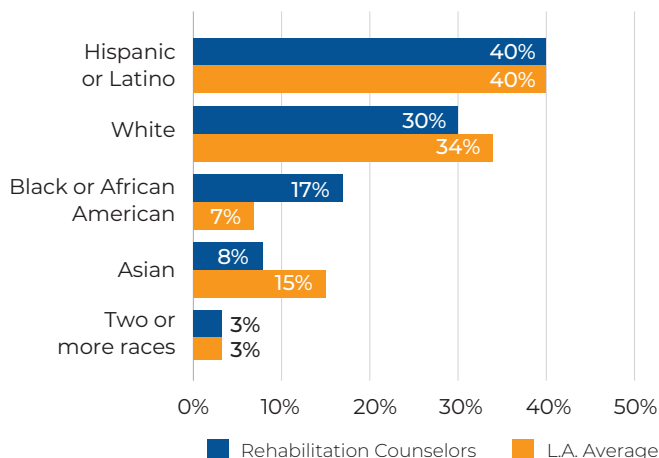
Median Hourly Wages



Gender



Ethnicity



Social and Community Service Managers (11-9151)

Job Titles

Adoption Services Manager, Child Welfare Services Director, Children's Service Supervisor, Clinical Services Director, Community Services Director, Psychiatric Social Worker Supervisor, Social Services Director, Transitional Care Director.

Occupational Description

Plan, direct, or coordinate the activities of a social service program or community outreach organization. Oversee the program or organization's budget and policies regarding involvement, program requirements, and benefits.

Typical Educational Requirement: Bachelor's degree.

Projected 5-year Demand (2023-2028).



9,580 Jobs (2023)



12% Job Growth



51% Employment in Sector



1,013 Annual Openings

Educational Pathways (24% B.A. and 76% M.A.)

CIP (2,027 Awards in L.A. County, 3-yr Avg.)

- Human Services, General (44.0000)
- Community Organization and Advocacy (44.0201)
- Social Work (44.0701)
- Forensic Social Work (44.0703)
- Social Work, Other (44.0799)

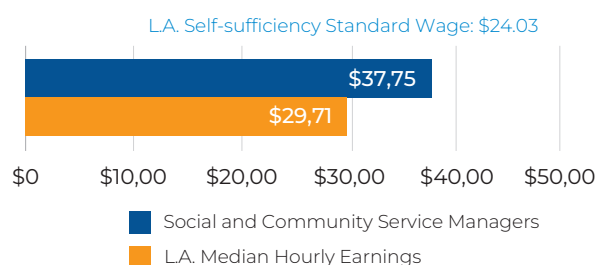
Institutions Currently Providing Educational Pathways

- Azusa Pacific University (124 Awards)
- California State University-Dominguez Hills (211 Awards)
- California State University-Long Beach (312 Awards)
- California State University-Los Angeles (359 Awards)
- California State University-Northridge (151 Awards)
- Claremont Lincoln University (2 Awards)
- Mount Saint Mary's University (16 Awards)
- Pacific Oaks College (5 Awards)
- University of California-Los Angeles (96 Awards)
- University of Southern California (734 Awards)
- Whittier College (12 Awards)
- World Mission University (4 Awards)

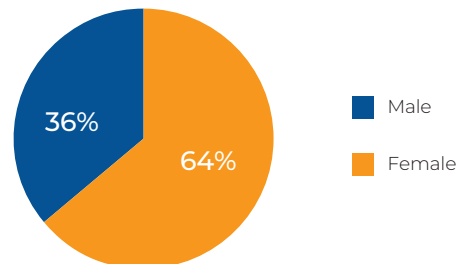
Supply/Demand Analysis

There were 2,026 awards granted compared to the projected demand of 1,013 annual openings. While there are more awards than job openings, these programs prepare students for employment across several occupations, not solely this occupation.

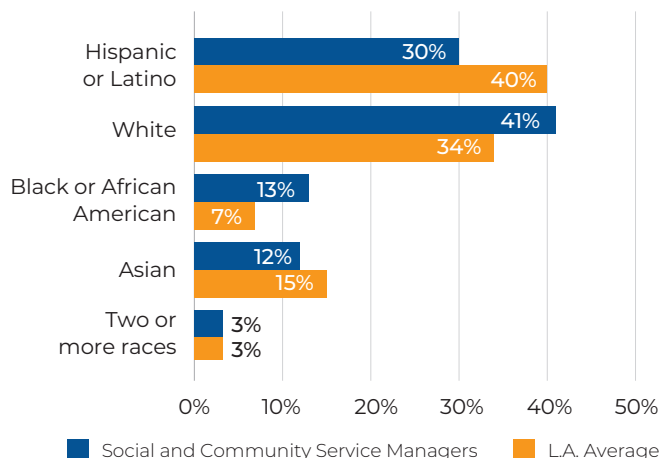
Median Hourly Wages



Gender



Ethnicity



Social Workers, All Other (21-1029)

Job Titles

Adult Protective Services Social Worker, Case Consultant, Case Reviewer, Case Supervisor, Case Worker, Case Investigator, Sexual Assault Social Worker, Shelter Advocate, Youth Teacher, Shelter Advocate, Field Reporter, Field Supervisor, Field Worker, Community Organization Worker.

Occupational Description

Social workers help people prevent and cope with problems in their everyday lives. These represent occupations with a wide range of characteristics which do not fit into one of the other detailed occupations.

Typical Educational Requirement: Bachelor's degree.

Projected 5-year Demand (2023-2028).



3,155 Jobs (2023)



10% Job Growth



43% Employment in Sector



326 Annual Openings

Educational Pathways (19% B.A. and 81% M.A.)

CIP (1,907 Awards in L.A. County, 3-yr Avg.)

- Social Work (44.0701)
- Forensic Social Work (44.0703)
- Social Work, Other (44.0799)

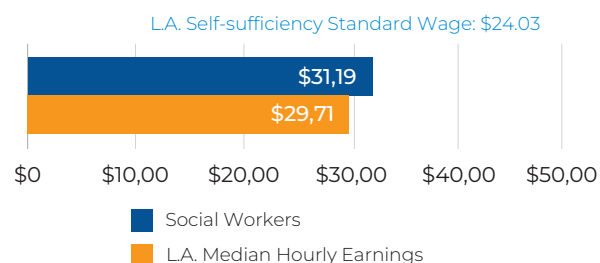
Institutions Currently Providing Educational Pathways

- Azusa Pacific University (124 Awards)
- California State University-Dominguez Hills (94 Awards)
- California State University-Long Beach (312 Awards)
- California State University-Los Angeles (359 Awards)
- California State University-Northridge (151 Awards)
- Mount Saint Mary's University (16 Awards)
- Pacific Oaks College (5 Awards)
- University of California-Los Angeles (96 Awards)
- University of Southern California (734 Awards)
- Whittier College (12 Awards)
- World Mission University (4 awards)

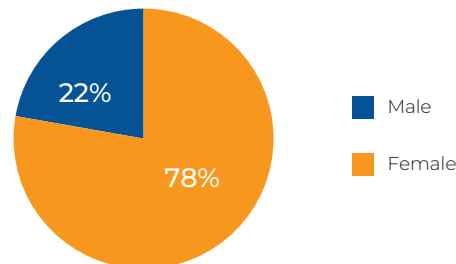
Supply/Demand Analysis

There were 1,907 awards granted for relevant educational pathways compared to the projected demand of 326 annual openings. While there are more awards than job openings, these programs prepare students for employment across several occupations, not solely this occupation.

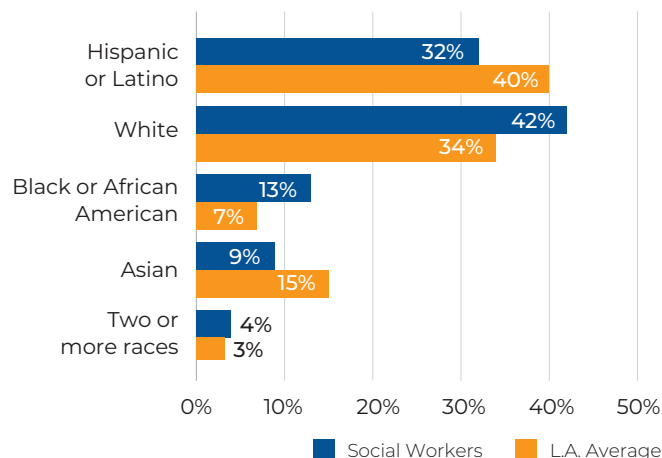
Median Hourly Wages



Gender



Ethnicity



Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors (21-1018)

Job Titles

Addictions Counselor, Chemical Dependency Counselor, Clinical Counselor, Counselor, Drug and Alcohol Treatment Specialist, Prevention Specialist, Substance Abuse Counselor, Behavior Analyst, Behavior Support Specialist, Case Manager, Clinician, Licensed Professional Counselor, Mental Health Counselor, Mental Health Program Specialist, Mental Health Specialist, Mental Health Therapist.

Occupational Description

Counsel and advise individuals with alcohol, tobacco, drug, or other problems, such as gambling and eating disorders. Counsel and advise individuals and groups to promote optimum mental and emotional health, with an emphasis on prevention.

Typical Educational Requirement: Bachelor's degree.

Projected 5-year Demand (2023-2028).



18,324 Jobs (2023)



20% Job Growth



21% Employment in Sector



2,360 Annual Openings

Educational Pathways (100% sub-B.A.)

CIP (89 Awards in L.A. County, 3-yr Avg.)

- Substance Abuse/Addiction Counseling (51.1501)
- Clinical/Medical Social Work (51.1503)

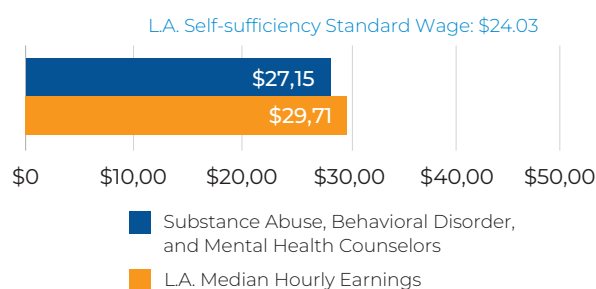
Institutions Currently Providing Educational Pathways

- Galaxy Medical College (3 Awards)
- InterCoast Colleges-West Covina (86 Awards)

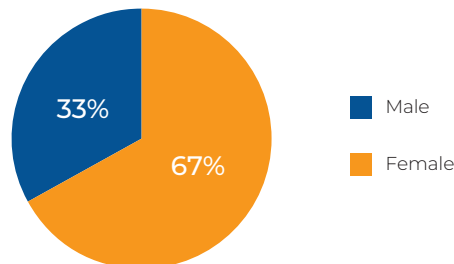
Supply/Demand Analysis

A supply gap exists for substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors. Only 89 awards (associate degrees and certificates) were granted for relevant educational pathways compared to the projected demand of 2,360 annual openings.

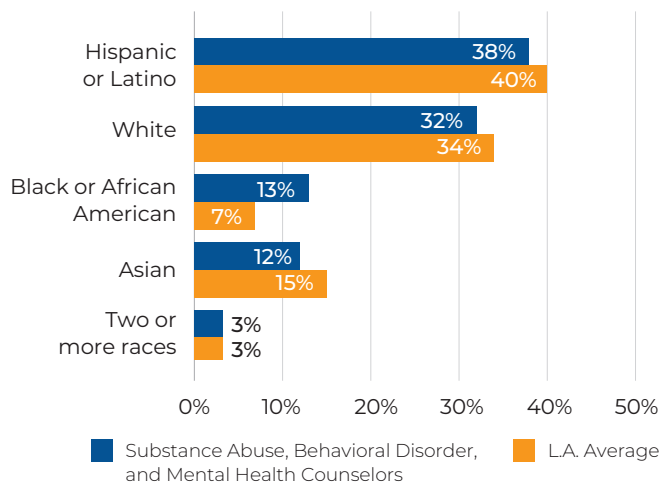
Median Hourly Wages



Gender



Ethnicity



Appendix B:

Assessment of Occupations Requiring Less Than a Bachelor's Degree, Including Community College Supply

Appendix B presents an analysis of community college supply as well as occupational profiles for the following jobs which require some form of community college education for entry-level employment:

- Community Health Workers (SOC 21-1094)
- Social and Human Service Assistants (21-1093)

Supplemental Occupational Assessments

From an initial list of 85 occupations, 10 essential occupations were selected based on the following criteria: (1) direct contact with individuals experiencing homelessness, (2) primary operation within the homeless services sector, and (3) educational requirements aligned with entry-level roles, excluding those requiring doctoral or other advanced degrees.

As the main report focuses on the eight occupations typically requiring at least a bachelor's or master's degree, two relevant occupations, "Social and Human Service Assistants" and "Community Health Workers," were included in this appendix due to their lower

entry-level educational requirements (high school diploma or equivalent). A brief occupational analysis is provided. For further details, refer to the "Occupational Assessments" section of this appendix.

Job Characteristics and Historical Employment

Compared to the eight occupations highlighted in the main report (Tables 2-5 from the main report), the two occupations requiring less than a bachelor's degree offer salaries at the lower end of the spectrum, with median annual earnings around \$49,500 whereas wages for the other eight occupations range from \$44,374 to \$91,822 (Table B1). Despite this, the two occupations represent a significant share of the workforce, nearly 22% of jobs in the field. Notably, the number of average annual job openings differs greatly between the two occupations: Social and Human Service Assistants report the highest number of openings among the 10 roles, 2,098 on average each year, while Community Health Workers have the fewest, 270.

Table B1. Historical employment data for homeless services sector occupations requiring less than a bachelor's degree, Los Angeles County, 2002-2023

Occupation	2002 Jobs	2023 Jobs	2002 - 2023 % Change	Average Annual Openings	Median Annual Earnings	Median Hourly Earnings
Social and Human Service Assistants (21-1093)	7,328	16,658	127%	2,098	\$48,855	\$23.49
Community Health Workers (21-1094)	939	2,457	161%	270	\$50,164	\$24.12
TOTAL / AVERAGE	8,268	19,114	131%	2,368	\$49,510	\$23.80

Data source: Lightcast 2025.1; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

Demographic Overview

Table B2 provides demographic information for both occupations. Compared to the other eight occupations, these roles have a higher representation of Hispanic or

Latino workers and less representation of white workers. Gender and age distributions are largely consistent with industry averages.

Table B2. Percent of demographic groups within each occupation, Los Angeles County, 2023

Occupation	Male	Female	Age 14-21	Age 22-34	Age 35-54	Age 55+	Hispanic or Latino	White	Black or African American	Asian	Two or more races	Total Diversity*
Social and Human Service Assistants	30%	70%	2%	28%	45%	25%	45%	25%	17%	9%	3%	75%
Community Health Workers	33%	67%	2%	29%	45%	24%	46%	25%	13%	12%	3%	75%
Average	32%	69%	1%	28%	46%	25%	46%	25%	15%	11%	3%	75%

Data source: Lightcast 2025.1; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

Projected Demand

Both positions are projected to experience more than 10% job growth by 2028, suggesting rising demand within the sector.

However, these trends are tempered by high turnover rates, which continue to be a challenge (Table B3).

Table B3. Projected demand for community college-level homeless services sector occupations, Los Angeles County, 2023-2028

Occupation	2023 Jobs	2028 Jobs	2023 - 2028 % Change	Average Annual Openings	2023 Turnover Rate	2023 Employment Concentration
Social and Human Service Assistants	16,658	18,945	14%	2,243	44%	1.27
Community Health Workers	2,457	2,731	11%	307	39%	1.29
TOTAL / AVERAGE	19,115	21,676	12.5%	2,550	41.5%	-

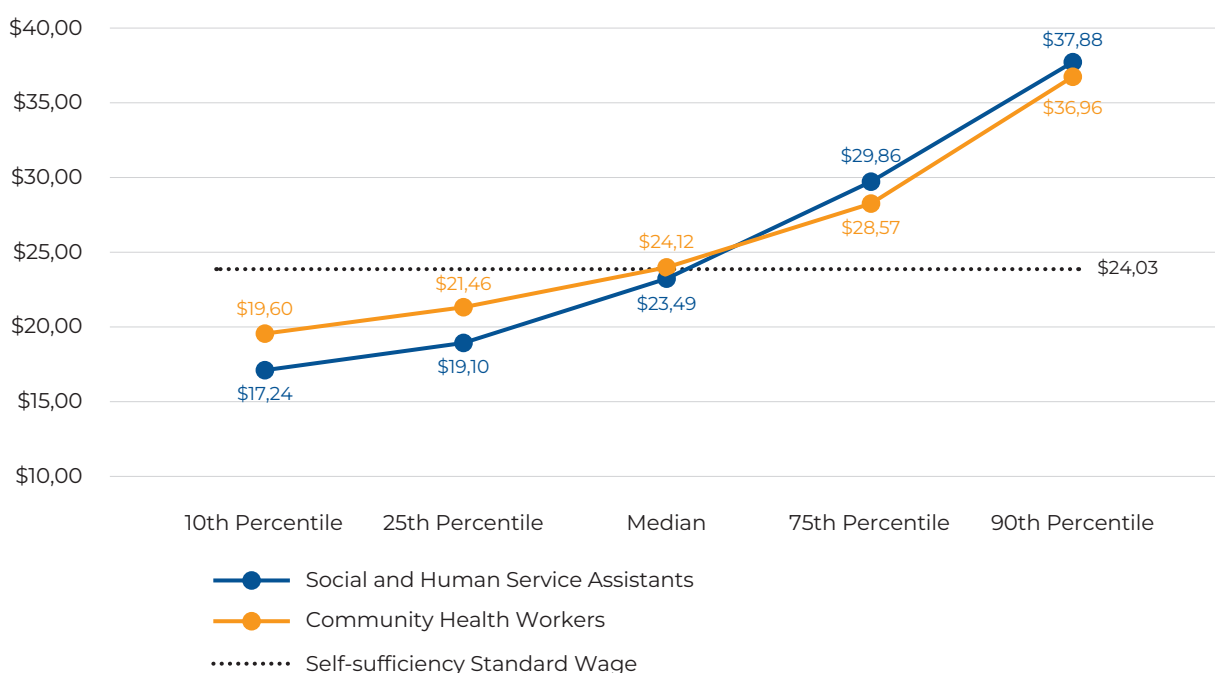
Data source: Lightcast 2025.1; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

Earnings

Earnings across the two roles span a wide range, from \$38,314 (10th percentile) to \$77,833 (90th percentile) (Figure B1). (Entry-level wages are typically derived from the 25th percentile while experience wages are

typically derived from the 75th percentile.) Despite this variability, the average median wage for both occupations is \$49,510 per year, with no substantial difference in pay between them.

Figure B1. Hourly wages for community-college-level homeless services sector occupations, Los Angeles County, 2023



Data source: Lightcast 2025.1; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

Community colleges in Los Angeles County conferred 569 awards on average over the past three academic years (2021-22 to 2023-24) across three of five identified programs, which are shown here with their TOP codes:

- Community Health Care Worker (1261.00)
- Human Services (2104.00)
- Alcohol and Controlled Substances (2104.40)

Two of the identified programs did not confer awards:

- Community Services, General (2101.00)
- Disability Services (2104.50)

Of the awards granted by community colleges over the past three years, 25.3% were associate degrees, 46.0% were certificates, and 19.3% were noncredit (Table B4).²⁴

²⁴ The number of certificate awards also includes credit < 6 semester unit awards.

Table B4. Awards by program TOP-code and community college, Los Angeles County, 2020-21 to 2022-23 academic years

TOP6 - Program Title - Community College	2021- 22	2022- 23	2023-24	3-year Average
1261.00 - Community Health Care Worker				
Cerritos	-	1	1	1
Los Angeles Pierce	6	83	14	34
Los Angeles Valley	-	77	84	54
Mt San Antonio	13	-	-	4
Rio Hondo	1	-	-	0
2104.00 - Human Services*				
Cerritos	32	47	48	42
Glendale	7	9	6	7
Los Angeles City	10	5	5	7
Los Angeles Valley	-	5	19	8
Long Beach	25	63	29	39
Rio Hondo	16	50	45	37
2104.40 - Alcohol and Controlled Substances				
East Los Angeles	68	85	138	97
Glendale	16	20	11	16
Los Angeles City	15	4	18	12
Los Angeles Pierce	30	42	35	36
Los Angeles Southwest	9	16	6	10
Long Beach	42	35	35	37
Mt San Antonio	127	68	120	105
Rio Hondo	14	13	10	12
West Los Angeles	7	12	11	10
TOTAL	438	635	635	569

Data source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Data Mart.

*Santa Monica College's first cohort in their Homeless Service Work program started in Fall 2024, which is coded under Human Services (TOP 2140.00).

Community Health Workers (SOC 21-1094)

Job Titles

Apprise Counselor, Community Health Outreach Worker, Community Health Program Coordinator, Community Health Program Representative, Community Health Promoter, Community Health Worker.

Occupational Description

Community health workers promote wellness by helping people adopt healthy behaviors. They implement programs and advocate for people who may have limited access to health resources and social services.

Typical Educational Requirement: HS diploma or equivalent.

Projected 5-year Demand (2023-2028).



2,457 Jobs (2023)



11% Job Growth



22% Employment in Sector



307 Annual Openings

Educational Pathways (100% sub-B.A.)

CIP (0 Awards in L.A. County, 3-yr Avg.)

- Community Health Services/Liaison/Counseling (51.1504)

TOP (93 Awards in L.A. Region, 3-yr Avg.)

- Community Health Care Worker (1261.00)

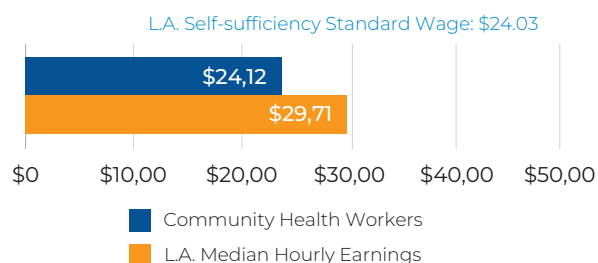
Institutions Currently Providing Educational Pathways

- Cerritos (1 Award)
- L.A. Pierce College (34 Awards)
- L.A. Valley College (54 Awards)
- Mt. San Antonio College (4 Awards)

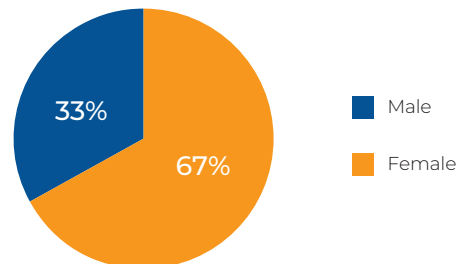
Supply/Demand Analysis

A supply gap exists for community health workers. Only 93 awards were granted for relevant educational pathways compared to the projected demand of 307 annual openings.

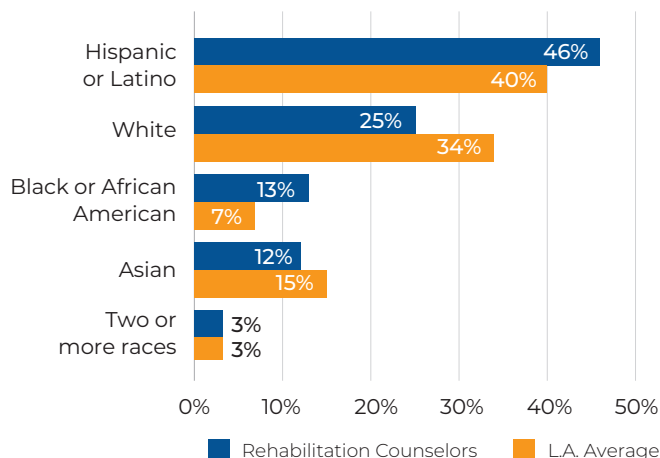
Median Hourly Wages



Gender



Ethnicity



Social and Human Service Assistants (21-1093)

Job Titles

Addictions Counselor Assistant, Advocate, Clinical Assistant, Residential Care Assistant, Social Services Aide, Social Services Assistant, Social Work Assistant, Social Work Associate, Social Worker Assistant.

Occupational Description

Assist other social and human service providers in providing client services in a wide variety of fields, such as psychology, rehabilitation, or social work. May assist clients in identifying and obtaining available benefits and social and community services. May assist social workers with developing, organizing, and conducting programs to prevent and resolve problems.

Typical Educational Requirement: HS diploma or equivalent.

Projected 5-year Demand (2023-2028).



16,658 Jobs (2023)



14% Job Growth



48% Employment in Sector



2,243 Annual Openings

Educational Pathways (24% B.A. and 76% M.A.)

CIP (117 Awards in L.A. County, 3-yr Avg.)

- Developmental Services Worker (19.0710)
- Human Services, General (44.0000)

TOP (140 Awards in L.A. Region, 3-yr Avg.)

- Human Services (2104.00)

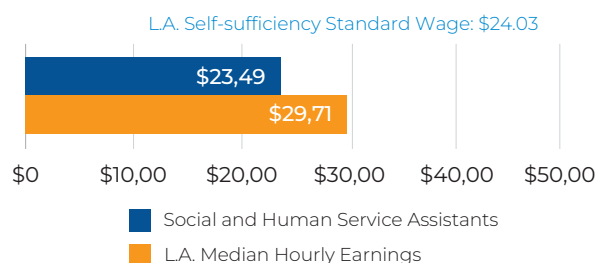
Institutions Currently Providing Educational Pathways

- California State University-Dominguez Hills (117 Awards)
- Cerritos (42 Awards)
- Glendale (7 Awards)
- L.A. City (7 Awards)
- L.A. Valley (8 Awards)
- Long Beach (39 Awards)
- Rio Hondo (37 Awards)

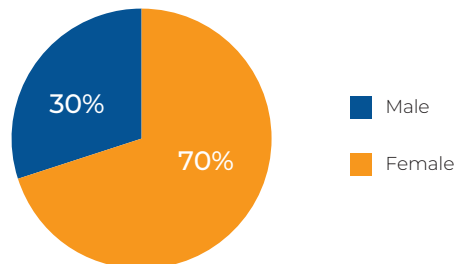
Supply/Demand Analysis

A supply gap exists for social and human service assistants. Only 257 awards were granted for relevant educational pathways compared to the projected demand of 2,243 annual openings.

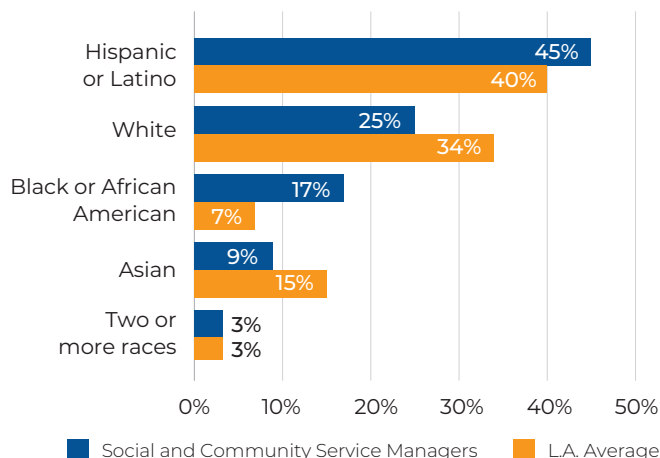
Median Hourly Wages



Gender



Ethnicity



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Workforce Needs Assessment

The Homeless Services Sector in Los Angeles County



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