










# Interpreters and Translators

Labor Market Analysis: San Diego County

August 2025

## Summary

NEW PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION?	EVIDENCE OF A SUPPLY GAP?	AT OR ABOVE THE LIVING WAGE?	EXPECTED LEVEL OF EDUCATION
 <b>Proceed with Caution</b>	 	 	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Master's Degree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Some College or Certificate <input 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	
 	<b>LOW</b> 	<b>LOW</b> 	

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, *Interpreters and Translators* in San Diego County have a labor market demand of 106 annual job openings (while average demand for a single occupation in San Diego County is 289 annual job openings), and three institutions supply 40 awards for this occupation. Entry-level wages are below the living wage. This brief recommends that the colleges proceed with caution when developing a new program for this occupation and supports a program modification because although 1) there is a supply gap in San Diego County and 2) a low number of institutions provide training for this occupation, 3) entry-level 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)<sup>1</sup> system:

**Interpreters and Translators (SOC 27-3091):** Interpret oral or sign language, or translate written text from one language into another. Sample reported job titles include:

- Deaf Interpreter
- Court Interpreter
- Spanish Interpreter
- Medical Interpreter
- American Sign Language Interpreter
- Technical Translator
- Spanish Translator
- Sign Language Interpreter
- Linguist

## Projected Occupational Demand

Between 2023 and 2028, *Interpreters and Translators* are projected to decrease by 32 net jobs or three percent (Exhibit 1). Employers in San Diego County will need to hire 106 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 Interpreters and Translators (2023-2028)<sup>2</sup>**

Occupational Title	2023 Jobs	2028 Jobs	2023 - 2028 Net Jobs Change	2023 - 2028 % Net Jobs Change	Annual Job Openings (Demand)
Interpreters and Translators	1,078	1,046	-32	-3%	106

## Earnings

According to traditional<sup>3</sup> labor market information (LMI), entry-level hourly earnings for *Interpreters and Translators* were \$23.08—or \$48,006.40 annual salary<sup>4</sup>; this is less than the living wage for a single adult in San Diego County, which is \$26.01 per hour (Exhibit 2).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 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/>.

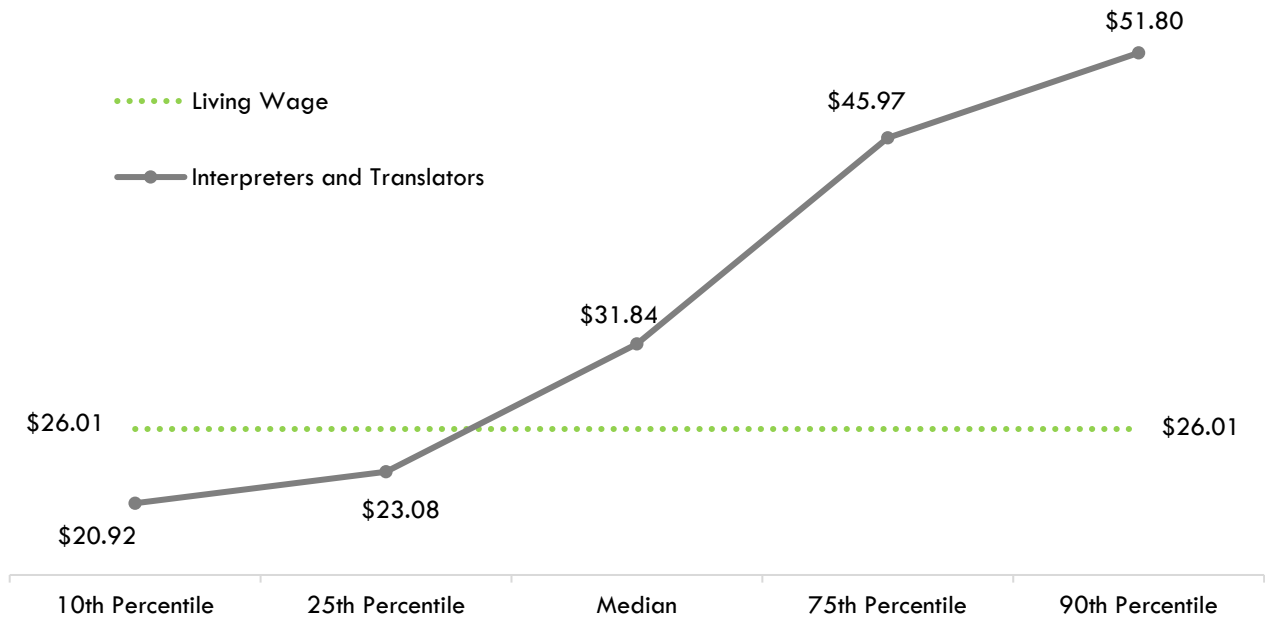
<sup>2</sup> Lightcast 2025.02; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

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

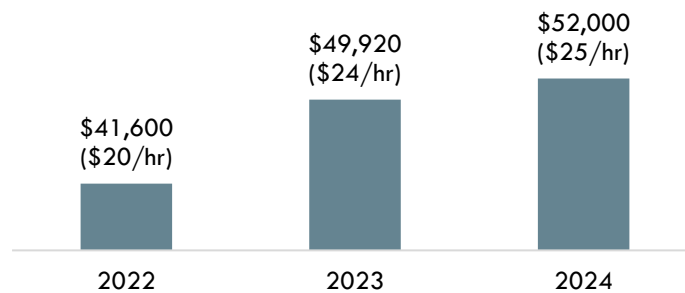
<sup>5</sup> Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington. (2024). The self-sufficiency standard for California 2024. [selfsufficiencystandard.org/California](https://selfsufficiencystandard.org/California).

**Exhibit 2: Hourly Earnings<sup>6</sup> for *Interpreters and Translators* in San Diego County<sup>7</sup>**



In online job postings, employers advertised between \$20 to \$25 per hour between January 1, 2022 and December 30, 2024 for *Interpreters and Translators* in San Diego County (Exhibit 3).<sup>8</sup> This suggests that employers in recent years are increasing wages due to labor market forces that may not be captured by traditional LMI.

**Exhibit 3: Entry-Level Advertised Salaries in Online Job Postings for *Interpreters and Translators* in San Diego County (2022-2024)\***



<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> Lightcast 2025.02; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

<sup>8</sup> Lightcast 2025.02; "Job Posting Analytics." 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), *Interpreters and Translators* have a national educational attainment of a bachelor’s degree (Exhibit 4).<sup>9</sup>

Exhibit 4: National Educational Attainment for *Interpreters and Translators*<sup>10</sup>

Occupational Title	Typical Entry-Level Education
Interpreters and Translators	Bachelor’s degree

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 *Interpreters and Translators*; however, employers also expected the following certifications (Exhibit 5).<sup>11</sup>

Exhibit 5: Top Certifications for *Interpreters and Translators*  
in San Diego County in Online Job Postings (2022-2024)<sup>12</sup>

1. Top Secret-Sensitive Compartmented Information (TS/SCI Clearance)

2. Top Secret Clearance

3. Court Interpreter Certification

4. Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification
5. Security Clearance

6. Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT)

7. Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)

<sup>9</sup> Lightcast 2025.02; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.  
<sup>10</sup> Lightcast 2025.02; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.  
<sup>11</sup> Lightcast 2025.02; “Job Posting Analytics.” 2022-2024.  
<sup>12</sup> Lightcast 2025.02; “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 are **two** TOP codes and **three** CIP codes related to *Interpreters and Translators* (Exhibit 6).

**Exhibit 6: Related TOP and CIP Codes for *Interpreters and Translators***<sup>13</sup>

TOP or CIP Code	TOP or CIP Program Title
TOP 0850.10	Sign Language Interpreting
TOP 2140.00	Legal and Community Interpretation
CIP 16.0103	Language Interpretation and Translation
CIP 16.1603	Sign Language Interpretation and Translation
CIP 22.0304	Court Interpreter

According to TOP data, **three** community colleges supply the region with awards for these occupations: **Palomar College**, **San Diego Mesa College**, and **Southwestern College**. According to CIP data, **no** non-community-college institution supplies the region with awards (Exhibit 7).

**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)
0850.10	Sign Language Interpreting	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>
	Palomar	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate degree	7	0	
	• Certificate 30 < 60 units	11	0	
	San Diego Mesa	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	
	• Associate degree	4	0	
	• Certificate 30 < 60 units	3	0	

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

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)
2140.00	Legal and Community Interpretation	15	0	15
	Southwestern	15	0	
	• Certificate 30 < 60 units	9	0	
	• Certificate 16 < 30 units	6	0	
			<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>

## Demand vs. Supply

Comparing labor demand with labor supply<sup>14</sup> suggests that there is a **supply gap** for this occupation in San Diego County, with **106** annual openings and **40** awards. Comparatively, there are **1,149** annual openings in California and **335** awards, suggesting that there is a **supply gap** across the state (Exhibit 8).<sup>15</sup>

### 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	106	40	<b>66</b>
California	1,149	335	<b>814</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.

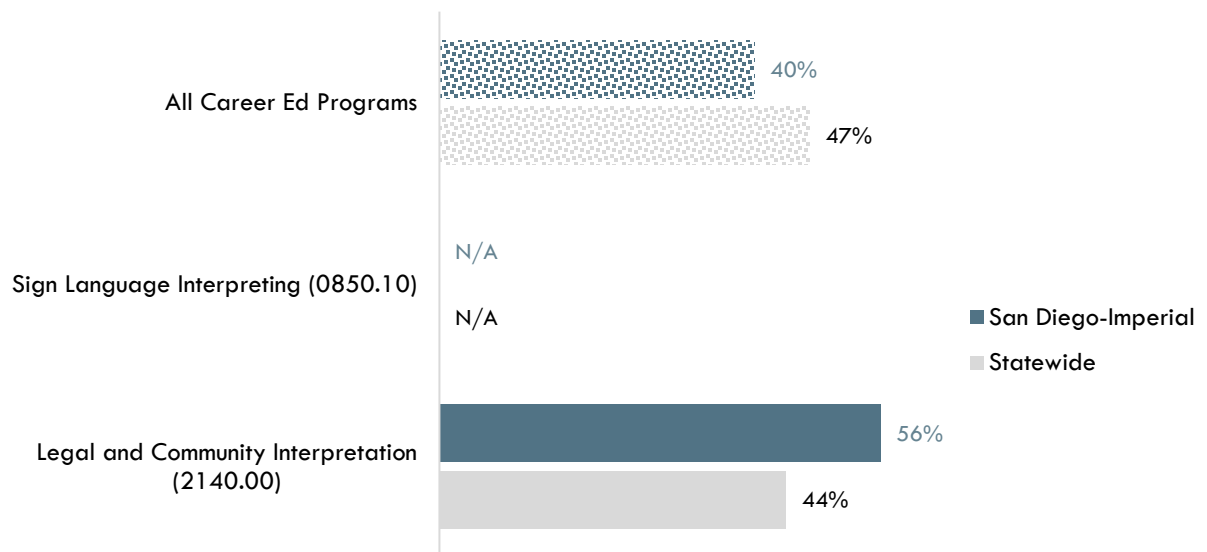
<sup>14</sup> Labor supply can be found from two different sources: Lightcast or the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart. Lightcast uses CIP codes while MIS uses TOP codes. Different coding systems result in differences in the supply numbers.

<sup>15</sup> "Supply and Demand," Centers of Excellence Student Outcomes, coeccc.net/our-resources.

## Student Outcomes and Regional Comparisons

According to the California Community Colleges DataVista, **56%** of students in the San Diego-Imperial region earned a living wage after completing a program related to *Interpreters and Translators*, compared to **44%** statewide and 47% of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 9).<sup>16</sup>

**Exhibit 9: Percentage of Students Who Earned a Living Wage by Program, PY2022-23<sup>17</sup>**



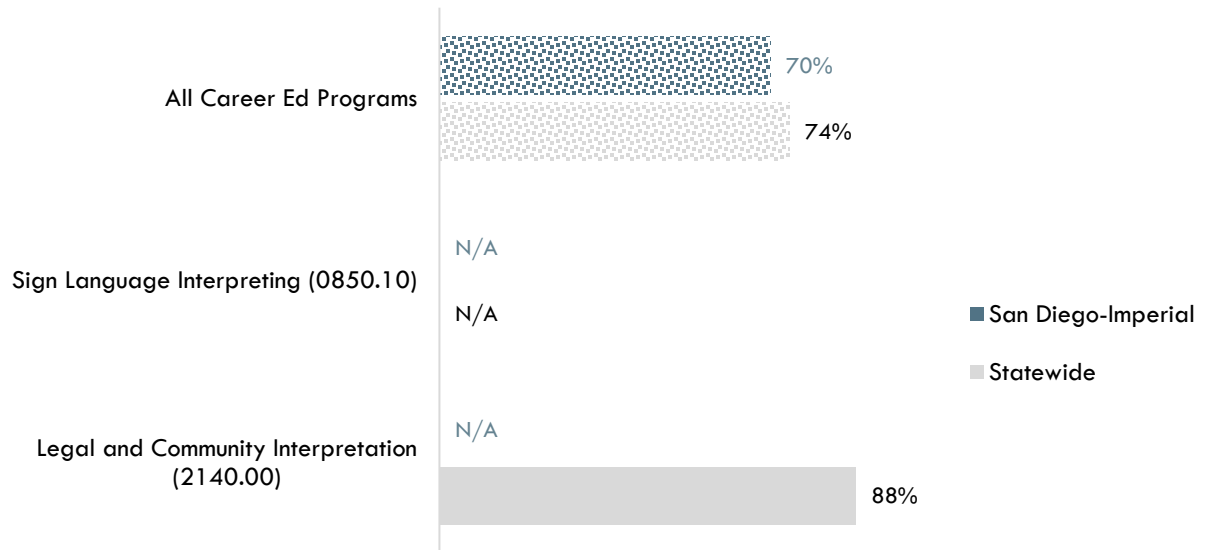
"N/A" indicates insufficient data

<sup>16</sup> "California Community Colleges Strong Workforce Program," California Community Colleges, [calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx](https://calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx).

<sup>17</sup> 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.

According to the California Community Colleges DataVista, **88%** of students statewide obtained a job closely related to their field of study after completing a program related to *Interpreters and Translators*, compared to 74% of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 10).<sup>18</sup>

**Exhibit 10: Percentage of Students in a Job Closely Related to Field of Study by Program, PY2021-22<sup>19</sup>**



"N/A" indicates insufficient data

<sup>18</sup> "California Community Colleges Strong Workforce Program," California Community Colleges, [calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx](http://calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx).

<sup>19</sup> 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 *Interpreters and Translators* were [Hanna Interpreting Services](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [International Rescue Committee](#), [Leidos](#), and [Rady Children's Hospital](#) based on online job postings (Exhibit 11).

**Exhibit 11: Top Employers for *Interpreters and Translators* in San Diego County<sup>20</sup>**

Top Employers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hanna Interpreting Services</li><li>• Federal Bureau of Investigation</li><li>• International Rescue Committee</li><li>• Leidos</li><li>• Rady Children's Hospital</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• San Diego Unified School District</li><li>• Vernacular Language Services</li><li>• Metlang</li><li>• Appen</li><li>• San Diego County Office of Education</li></ul>

## 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 *Interpreters and Translators* in San Diego County<sup>21</sup>**

Specialized Skills	Soft Skills	Software Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Language Interpretation</li><li>• Language Translation</li><li>• Bilingual (Spanish/English)</li><li>• American Sign Language</li><li>• Vocabulary</li><li>• Medical Terminology</li><li>• Farsi Language</li><li>• Somali Language</li><li>• Sign Language Interpretation</li><li>• Data Entry</li><li>• Source Language</li><li>• Office Equipment</li><li>• Effective Communication</li><li>• Punctuation and Capitalization</li><li>• Linguistics</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• English Language</li><li>• Communication</li><li>• Spanish Language</li><li>• Writing</li><li>• Multilingualism</li><li>• Confidentiality</li><li>• Professionalism</li><li>• Customer Service</li><li>• Foreign Language</li><li>• Transcribing</li><li>• Detail Oriented</li><li>• Interpersonal Communications</li><li>• Computer Literacy</li><li>• Grammar</li><li>• Arabic Language</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Microsoft Excel</li><li>• Microsoft PowerPoint</li><li>• Microsoft Word</li><li>• Microsoft Outlook</li></ul>

<sup>20</sup> Lightcast 2025.02; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

<sup>21</sup> Lightcast 2025.02; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

Prepared by:

Tina Ngo Bartel, Executive Director ([tngobartel@miracosta.edu](mailto:tngobartel@miracosta.edu))

Christine Timbol Larson, Associate Director ([ctimbollarson@miracosta.edu](mailto:ctimbollarson@miracosta.edu))

John Edwards, Research Analyst ([jedwards@miracosta.edu](mailto:jedwards@miracosta.edu))

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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 Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research (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.