










Psychiatric Technicians

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
 Proceed with Caution	 	 	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Master's Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Degree <input checked="" 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	
 	LOW 	MEDIUM 	

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, *Psychiatric Technicians* in San Diego County have a labor market demand of 108 annual job openings (while average demand for a single occupation in San Diego County is 289 annual job openings), and no institutions supply awards for this occupation, suggesting that there is a supply gap in the labor market. Entry-level and median wages are below the living wage. This brief recommends that the colleges proceed with caution when developing a new program for this occupation and supports a program modification because although 1) there is a supply gap in San Diego County and 2) no institutions provide training for this occupation, 3) entry-level and median wages are below the living wage.

Introduction

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

Psychiatric Technicians (SOC 29-2053): Care for individuals with mental or emotional conditions or disabilities, following the instructions of physicians or other health practitioners. Monitor patients' physical and emotional well-being and report to medical staff. May participate in rehabilitation and treatment programs, help with personal hygiene, and administer oral or injectable medications.

Sample reported job titles include:

- Mental Health Technician
- Behavioral Health Technician
- Rehabilitation Technician
- Psychiatric Assistant
- Mental Health Worker
- Counselor
- Support Team Member
- Residential Aide
- Psychology Associate

Projected Occupational Demand

Between 2023 and 2028, *Psychiatric Technicians* are projected to increase by 291 net jobs or 64% (Exhibit 1). Employers in San Diego County will need to hire 108 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 *Psychiatric Technicians* (2023-2028)²

Occupational Title	2023 Jobs	2028 Jobs	2023 - 2028 Net Jobs Change	2023 - 2028 % Net Jobs Change	Annual Job Openings (Demand)
Psychiatric Technicians	458	749	291	64%	108

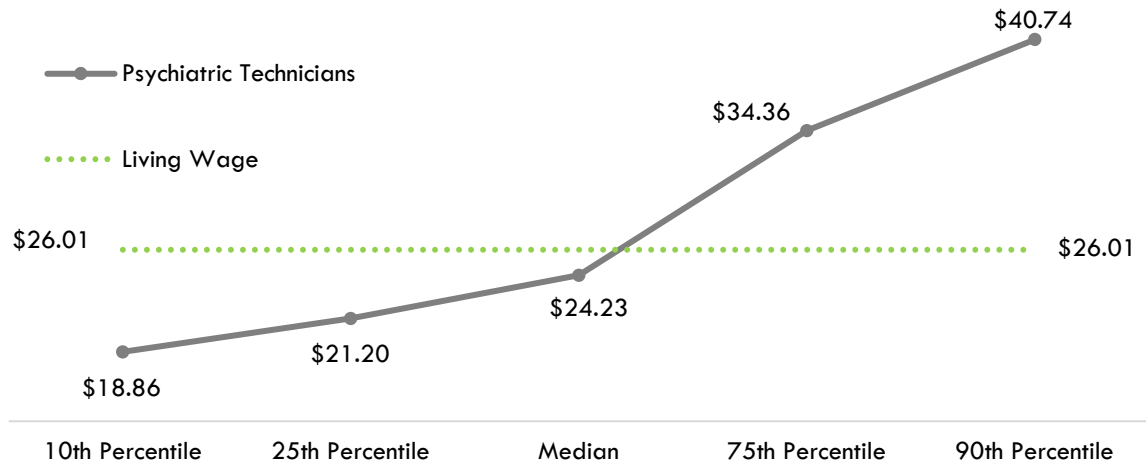
¹ The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system is used by federal statistical agencies to classify workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating or disseminating data. <https://www.bls.gov/soc/>.

² Lightcast 2025.02; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

Earnings

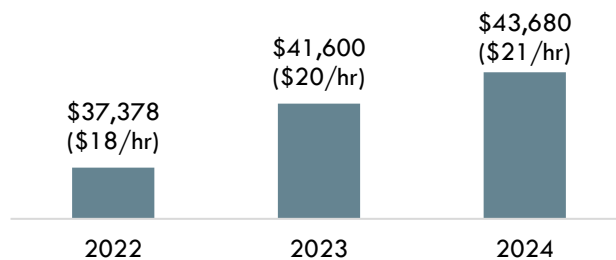
According to traditional³ labor market information (LMI), *Psychiatric Technicians* had until recently entry-level hourly earnings of \$21.20—or \$44,096 annual salary⁴; this is less than the living wage for a single adult in San Diego County, which is \$26.01 per hour (Exhibit 2).⁵

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



In online job postings, employers advertised between \$18 to \$21 per hour between January 1, 2022 and December 30, 2024 for *Psychiatric Technicians* in San Diego County (Exhibit 3).⁸ This suggests that, in recent years, employers have maintained wages consistent with traditional labor market information.

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



*Hourly wages are rounded to the nearest dollar amount.

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

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

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

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

⁷ Lightcast 2025.02; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

⁸ Lightcast 2025.02; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

Expected Level of Education

According to traditional LMI (data reported to EDD and BLS), *Psychiatric Technicians* have a national educational attainment of a **postsecondary non-degree award** (Exhibit 4).⁹

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

Occupational Title	Typical Entry-Level Education
Psychiatric Technicians	Postsecondary non-degree award

Similarly, online job postings between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2024 in San Diego County had a **high school or GED** as the most requested educational requirement for *Psychiatric Technicians*; however, employers also expected the following certifications (Exhibit 4).¹¹

Exhibit 4: Top Certifications for *Psychiatric Technicians* in San Diego County in Online Job Postings (2021-2023)¹²

1. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification
2. First Aid Certification
3. Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification
4. Certified Corporate Trust Specialist
5. Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Certification
6. Basic Cardiac Life Support
7. American Red Cross (ARC) Certification
8. Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)
9. Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) Certification
10. Board Certified/Board Eligible

Educational Supply

Educational supply for an occupation can be estimated by analyzing the number of awards in related Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) or Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes. There is **one** TOP code and **one** CIP code related to *Psychiatric Technicians* (

⁹ Lightcast 2025.02; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

¹⁰ Lightcast 2025.02; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

¹¹ Lightcast 2025.02; "Job Posting Analytics." 2021-2023.

¹² Lightcast 2025.02; "Job Posting Analytics." 2021-2023.

Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5: Related TOP and CIP Codes for Psychiatric Technicians¹³

TOP or CIP Code	TOP or CIP Program Title
TOP 1239.00	Psychiatric Technician
CIP 51.1502	Psychiatric/Mental Health Services Technician

According to TOP and CIP data, no community colleges or other educational institutions supply the region with awards for this occupation (Exhibit 6).

**Exhibit 6: 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)
1239.00	Psychiatric Technician	0	0	0
51.1502	Psychiatric/Mental Health Services Technician	0	0	0
			Total	0

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

Demand vs. Supply

Comparing labor demand (annual openings) with labor supply¹⁴ suggests that there is a **supply gap** for this occupation in San Diego County, with **108** annual openings and **zero** awards. Comparatively, there are **1,448** annual openings in California and **410** awards, suggesting that there is a supply gap across the state¹⁵ (Exhibit 7).

Exhibit 7: Labor Demand (Annual Openings) Compared with Labor Supply (Average Annual Awards)

	Demand (Annual Openings)	Supply (Total Annual Average Supply)	Supply Gap or Oversupply
San Diego	108	0	108
California	1,448	410	1,038

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

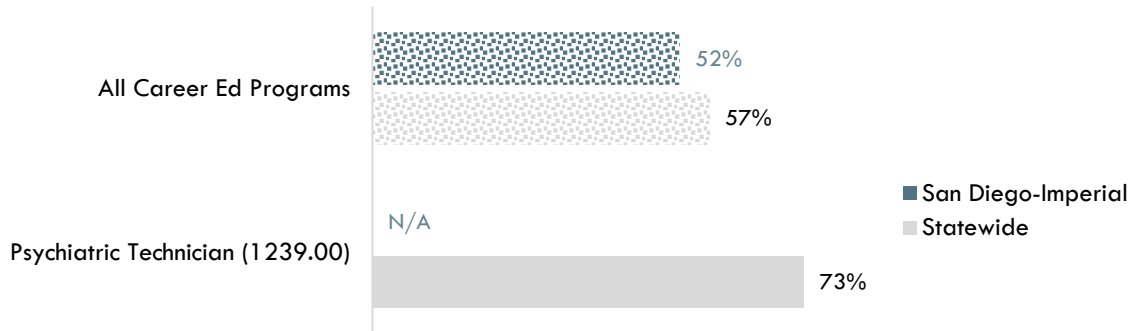
¹⁴ Labor supply can be found from two different sources: EMSI or the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart. EMSI uses CIP codes while MIS uses TOP codes. Different coding systems result in differences in the supply numbers.

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

Student Outcomes and Regional Comparisons

According to the California Community Colleges LaunchBoard, 73% of students statewide earned a living wage after completing a Psychiatric Technician (TOP 1239.00) program, compared to 57% of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 8).¹⁶

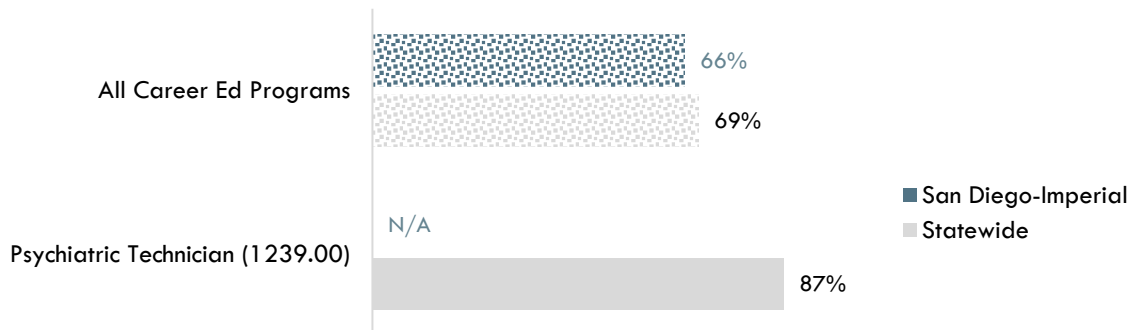
Exhibit 8: Percentage of Students Who Earned a Living Wage After Completing a Psychiatric Technician (TOP 1239.00) Program, PY2020-21¹⁷



"N/A" indicates insufficient data

According to the California Community Colleges LaunchBoard, 87% of students statewide obtained a job closely related to their field of study after completing a Psychiatric Technician (TOP 1239.00) program, compared to 69% of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 9).¹⁸

Exhibit 9: Percentage of Students in a Job Closely Related to Field of Study After Completing a Psychiatric Technician (TOP 1239.00) Program, PY2019-20¹⁹



"N/A" indicates insufficient data

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

¹⁷ Most recent year with available data is Program Year 2020-21. Among completers and skills builders who exited, the percentage of students who attained a living wage.

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

¹⁹ Most recent year with available data is Program Year 2019-20. 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 *Psychiatric Technicians* were *Matrix Providers*, *Lightfully Behavioral Health*, *Center For Discovery*, *Liberty Healthcare Corporation*, and *Akua Behavioral Health* based on online job postings (Exhibit 10).

Exhibit 10: Top Employers for *Psychiatric Technicians* in San Diego County²⁰

Top Employers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matrix Providers • Lightfully Behavioral Health • Center For Discovery • Liberty Healthcare Corporation • Akua Behavioral Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maxim Healthcare Services • NaphCare • Mental Health Center Of San Diego • La Jolla Recovery • Newport Healthcare Center

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 11: Top Skills for *Psychiatric Technicians* in San Diego County²¹

Specialized Skills	Soft Skills	Software Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health • Psychiatry • Behavioral Health • Psychology • Behavioral Science • Vital Signs • Treatment Planning • Crisis Intervention • Rehabilitation • Patient Assistance • Social Work • Patient Discharges • Medical Records • Community Mental Health Services • Housekeeping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Management • English Language • Operations • Cleanliness • Administrative Functions • Good Driving Record • Ethical Standards And Conduct • Confidentiality • Professionalism • Verbal Communication Skills • Time Management • Customer Service • First Aid • Innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsoft Office

²⁰ Lightcast 2025.02; "Job Posting Analytics." 2021-2023.

²¹ Lightcast 2025.02; "Job Posting Analytics." 2021-2023.

Prepared by:

Tina Ngo Bartel, Executive Director (tngobartel@miracosta.edu)

Christine Timbol Larson, Associate Director (ctimbollarson@miracosta.edu)

John Edwards, Research Analyst (jedwards@miracosta.edu)

San Diego & Imperial Center of Excellence



CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
SAN DIEGO & IMPERIAL

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.