

Athletic Trainers

Labor Market Analysis: San Diego County

November 2025

Summary

NEW PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION?	EVIDENCE OF A SUPPLY GAP?	AT OR ABOVE THE LIVING WAGE?	EXPECTED LEVEL OF EDUCATION
 Do Not Proceed with New Program	 	 	☐ Doctorate Degree ☐ Master's Degree ☒ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Associate Degree ☐ Some College or Certificate ☐ HS Diploma or Equivalent ☐ Less Than a HS Diploma ☐ Apprenticeship
SUPPORT FOR PROGRAM MODIFICATION? The COE defers to the region	NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS THAT PROVIDE TRAINING LOW 	NUMBER OF ANNUAL JOB OPENINGS LOW 	

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, *Athletic Trainers* in San Diego County have a labor market demand of 23 annual job openings (while average demand for a single occupation in San Diego County is 289 annual job openings), and two institutions supply 36 awards for this occupation, suggesting that there is an oversupply in the labor market. Entry-level wages are below the living wage. This brief recommends that the colleges do not proceed with developing a new program for this occupation and defers to the region for a program modification because 1) there is an estimated oversupply in San Diego; 2) this occupations’ entry-level wages are below the living wage. However, no community college currently offers a program aligned with this occupation in San Diego County.

Introduction

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

Athletic Trainers (SOC 29-9091): Evaluate and treat musculoskeletal injuries or illnesses. Provide preventive, therapeutic, emergency, and rehabilitative care. Sample reported job titles include:

- Resident Athletic Trainer
- Certified Athletic Trainer
- Women's Athletic Trainer
- Personal Trainer
- Athletic Lecturer
- Athletic Instructor
- Sports Trainer
- Sports Medicine Trainer
- Sports Athletic Trainer

Projected Occupational Demand

Between 2024 and 2029, *Athletic Trainers* are projected to increase by 34 net jobs or 14% (Exhibit 1). Employers in San Diego County will need to hire 23 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 Athletic Trainers (2024-2029)²

Occupational Title	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2024 - 2029 Net Jobs Change	2024 - 2029 % Net Jobs Change	Annual Job Openings (Demand)
Athletic Trainers	245	279	34	14%	23

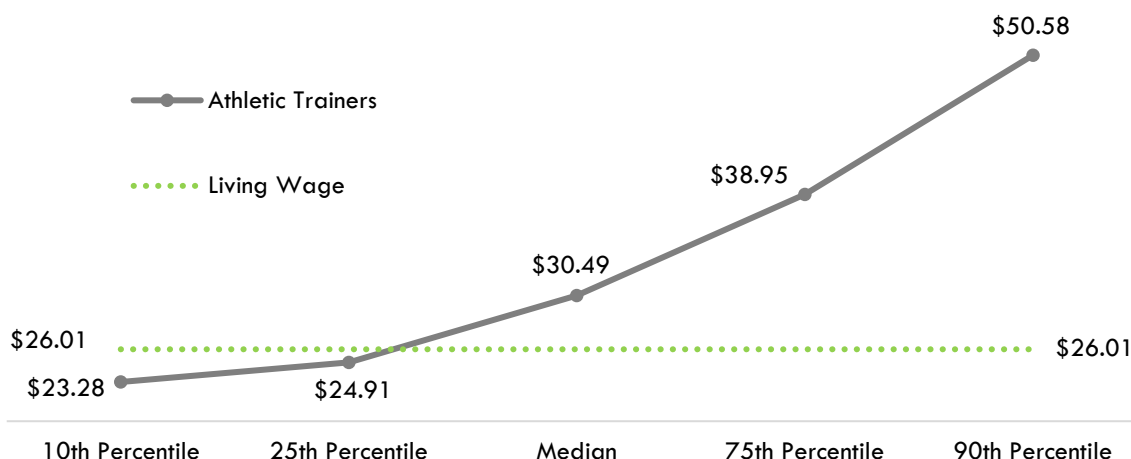
¹ The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system is used by federal statistical agencies to classify workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating or disseminating data. <https://www.bls.gov/soc/>.

² Lightcast 2025.04; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

Earnings

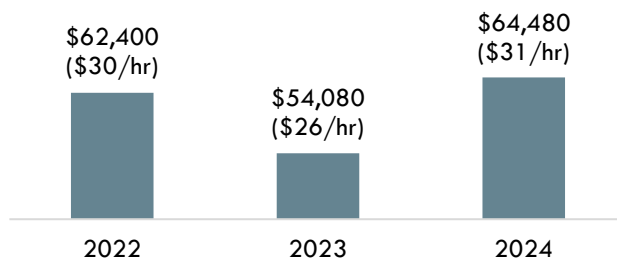
According to traditional³ labor market information (LMI), *Athletic Trainers* had until recently entry-level hourly earnings of \$24.91—or \$51,812.80 annual salary⁴; this is less than the living wage for a single adult in San Diego County, which is \$26.01 per hour (Exhibit 2).⁵

Exhibit 2: Hourly Earnings⁶ for Athletic Trainers in San Diego County⁷



In online job postings, employers advertised between \$26 to \$31 per hour between January 1, 2022 and December 30, 2024 for *Athletic Trainers* in San Diego County (Exhibit 3).⁸ This suggests that employer-advertised wages in recent years are slightly higher than traditional BLS estimates, indicating that employers may be raising pay to remain competitive in the current labor market.

**Exhibit 3: Entry-Level Advertised Salaries in Online Job Postings
for Athletic Trainers 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 2025.04; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

⁸ Lightcast 2025.04; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

Expected Level of Education

According to traditional LMI (data reported to EDD and BLS), *Athletic Trainers* have a national educational attainment of a [bachelor's degree](#) (Exhibit 4).⁹

Exhibit 4: National Educational Attainment for *Athletic Trainers*¹⁰

Occupational Title	Typical Entry-Level Education
Athletic Trainers	Bachelor's degree

Similarly, online job postings between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2024 in San Diego County had a [bachelor's degree](#) as the most requested educational requirement for *Athletic Trainers*; however, employers also expected the following certifications (Exhibit 5).¹¹

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

1. Certified Athletic Trainer
2. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification
3. First Aid Certification
4. CPR/AED For The Professional Rescuer
5. Valid Driver's License
6. Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification
7. Automated External Defibrillator (AED)
8. American Red Cross (ARC) Certification
9. Certified Strength And Conditioning Specialist
10. Personal Trainer Certification

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 *Athletic Trainers* (Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 6: Related TOP and CIP Codes for *Athletic Trainers*¹³

TOP or CIP Code	TOP or CIP Program Title
TOP 1228.00	Athletic Training and Sports Medicine
CIP 31.0507	Physical Fitness Technician

⁹ Lightcast 2025.04; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

¹⁰ Lightcast 2025.04; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

¹¹ Lightcast 2025.04; "Job Posting Analytics." 2021-2023.

¹² Lightcast 2025.04; "Job Posting Analytics." 2021-2023.

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

According to TOP data, **no** community college supplies San Diego County with awards for this occupation. According to CIP data, **two** non-community-college institutions supply the region with awards, **Point Loma Nazarene University** and **San Diego State University** (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 PY23- 24)
1 228.00	Athletic Training and Sports Medicine	0	0	0
51.0913	Athletic Training/Trainer	0	36	36
	Point Loma Nazarene University	0	15	
	• Master's degree	0	15	
	San Diego State University	0	21	
	• Bachelor's degree	0	21	
Total				36

Demand vs. Supply

Comparing labor demand (annual openings) with labor supply¹⁴ suggests that there is an **oversupply** for this occupation in San Diego County, with **23** annual openings and **36** awards. Comparatively, there are **244** annual openings in California and **184** awards, suggesting that there is a supply gap across the state¹⁵ (Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8: 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	23	36	-13
California	244	184	60

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.

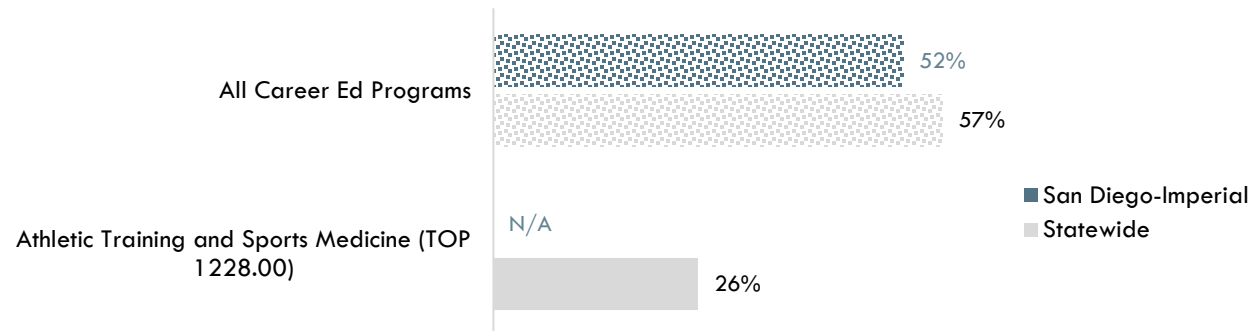
¹⁴ Labor supply can be found from two different sources: EMSI or the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart. EMSI uses CIP codes while MIS uses TOP codes. Different coding systems result in differences in the supply numbers.

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

Student Outcomes and Regional Comparisons

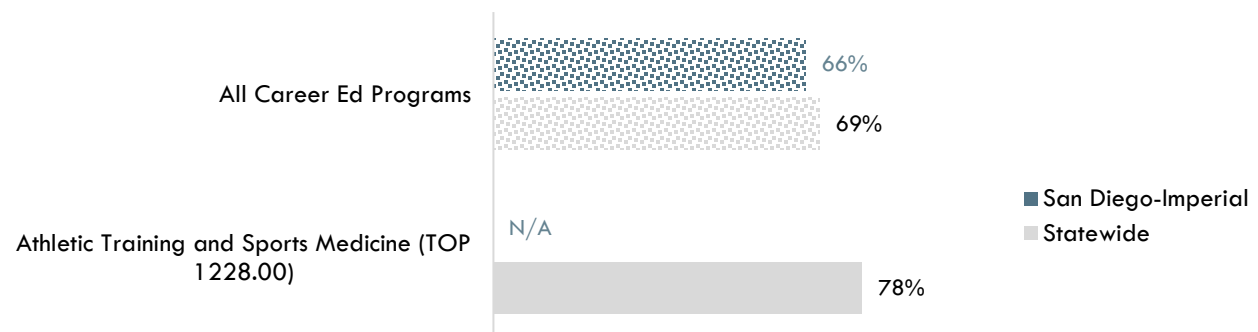
According to the California Community Colleges DataVista, **26%** of students statewide earned a living wage after completing an Athletic Training and Sports Medicine (TOP 1228.00) program, compared to **57%** of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 9).¹⁶

Exhibit 9: Percentage of Students Who Earned a Living Wage After Completing an Athletic Training and Sports Medicine (TOP 1228.00) Program, PY2020-21¹⁷



According to the California Community Colleges DataVista, **78%** of students statewide obtained a job closely related to their field of study after completing an Athletic Training and Sports Medicine (TOP 1228.00) program, compared to **69%** of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 10).¹⁸

Exhibit 10: Percentage of Students in a Job Closely Related to Field of Study After Completing an Athletic Training and Sports Medicine (TOP 1228.00) Program, PY2019-20¹⁹



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 *Athletic Trainers* were [California State University-Chancellors Office](#), [Decypher](#), [San Diego State University](#), [Corewell Health](#), and [Rady Children's Hospital](#) based on online job postings (Exhibit 11).

Exhibit 4: Top Employers for Athletic Trainers in San Diego County²⁰

Top Employers	
• California State University-Chancellors Office • Decypher • San Diego State University • Corewell Health • Rady Children's Hospital	• Poway Unified School District • Enovis • ATvantage Athletic Training • University of California San Diego • University of San Diego

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 5: Top Skills for Athletic Trainers in San Diego County²¹

Specialized Skills	Soft Skills	Software Skills
• Athletic Training • Rehabilitation • Sports Medicine • Sports Injuries • Injury Prevention • Kinesiology • Orthopedics • Physical Education • Physical Therapy • Strength Training And Conditioning • Intercollegiate Athletics • Emergency Medicine • Therapeutic Modalities • Automated External Defibrillator • Soft Tissue Mobilization	• Communication • First Aid • Coaching • Physical Fitness • Management • Interpersonal Communications • Planning • Operations • Coordinating • Writing • Sales • Leadership • Record Keeping • Research • Scheduling	• N/A

²⁰ Lightcast 2025.04; "Job Posting Analytics." 2021-2023.

²¹ Lightcast 2025.04; "Job Posting Analytics." 2021-2023.

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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.