

Emergency Medical Occupations

Labor Market Analysis: San Diego County

October 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	 	 	<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. *Emergency Medical Occupations* include “Emergency Medical Technicians” and “Paramedics.” According to available data, *Emergency Medical Occupations* in San Diego County have a labor market demand of 209 annual job openings (while average demand for a single occupation in San Diego County is 289 annual job openings), and three institutions supply 539 awards for these occupations. Entry-level wages are below the living wage. This brief recommends that the colleges do not proceed with developing a new program for these occupations and supports a program modification because 1) there is an estimated oversupply in the region and 2) this occupations’ entry-level wages are below the living wage. However, despite the projected oversupply, there have been persistent reports of unfilled paramedic shifts and operational gaps—particularly during nighttime hours—suggesting that staffing shortages may still exist at the service delivery level.¹ Two of the three institutions that train for these occupations are from the community college.

¹ San Diego Union-Tribune. (2025, June 30). San Diego sees response times improve under new model, but medics report burnout. Accessed 09/26/25. [ems1.com/response-times/san-diego-sees-response-times-improve-under-new-model-but-medics-report-burnout](https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/response-times/san-diego-sees-response-times-improve-under-new-model-but-medics-report-burnout).

Introduction

This report provides labor market information in San Diego County for the following occupational codes in the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC)² system:

- **Emergency Medical Technicians** (SOC 29-2042): Assess injuries and illnesses and administer basic emergency medical care. May transport injured or sick persons to medical facilities.
- **Paramedics** (SOC 29-2043): Administer basic or advanced emergency medical care and assess injuries and illnesses. May administer medication intravenously, use equipment such as EKGs, or administer advanced life support to sick or injured individuals.

For the purpose of this report, these occupations are referred to as *Emergency Medical Occupations*.

Projected Occupational Demand

Between 2024 and 2029, businesses in San Diego County will need to hire 209 employees annually to fill new jobs and backfill jobs due to attrition caused by turnover and retirement, for example (Exhibit 1). Most of this labor market demand comes from Emergency Medical Technicians, which are projected to have the most annual job openings with 141 openings each year between 2024 and 2029.

Exhibit 1: Number of Jobs for *Emergency Medical Occupations* (2024-2029)³

Occupational Title	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2024 - 2029 Net Jobs Change	2024 - 2029 % Net Jobs Change	Annual Job Openings (Demand)
Emergency Medical Technicians	1,601	1,693	92	6%	141
Paramedics	1,313	1,340	27	2%	68
Total	2,914	3,033	119	4%	209

² 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/>.

³ Lightcast 2025.03; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

Earnings

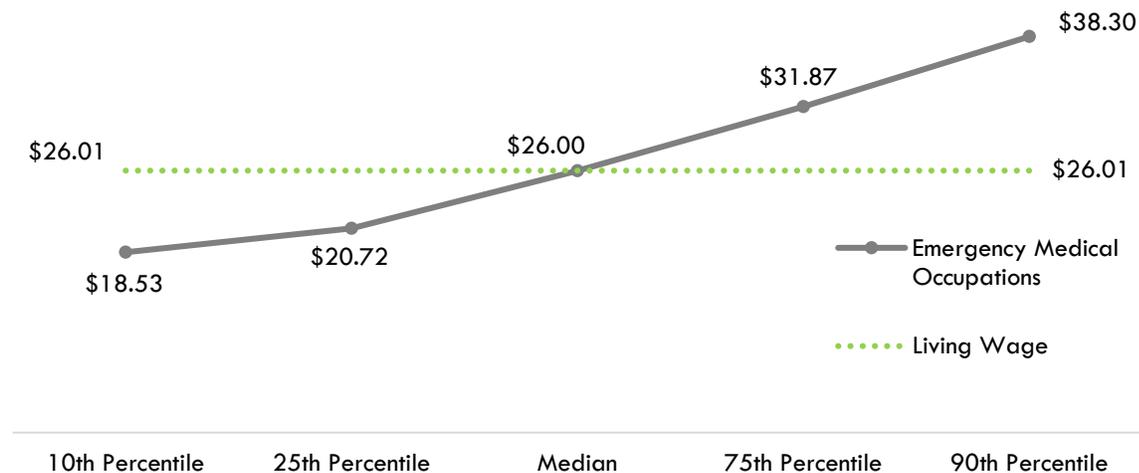
According to traditional⁴ labor market information (LMI), entry-level hourly earnings for *Emergency Medical Occupations* range from \$18.44 to \$23.01 (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2: Hourly Earnings for *Emergency Medical Occupations* in San Diego County⁵

Occupational Title	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)
Paramedics	\$23.01	\$32.29	\$40.59
Emergency Medical Technicians	\$18.44	\$19.71	\$23.15

On average, the entry-level hourly earnings for employed *Emergency Medical Occupations* are \$20.72—or \$43,097.60 annual salary⁶; this is less than the living wage for a single adult in San Diego County, which is \$26.01 per hour (Exhibit 3).⁷

Exhibit 3: Hourly Earnings⁸ for *Emergency Medical Occupations* in San Diego County⁹



⁴ 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.

⁵ Lightcast 2025.03; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

⁶ Annualized salaries assume a full-time position with 2,080 hours. Multiplying the hourly wage with 2,080 yields the annual salary.

⁷ Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington. (2024). The self-sufficiency standard for California 2024.

selfsufficiencystandard.org/California.

⁸ 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.

⁹ Lightcast 2025.03; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

In online job postings, however, employers advertised between \$18 to \$21 per hour between January 1, 2022 and December 30, 2024 for *Emergency Medical Occupations* in San Diego County (Exhibit 4).¹⁰ This suggests that employers have maintained wages due to labor market forces that may not be captured by traditional LMI.

Exhibit 4: Entry-Level Advertised Salaries in Online Job Postings for *Emergency Medical Occupations* in San Diego County (2022-2024)



Expected Level of Education

According to traditional LMI (data reported to EDD and BLS), *Emergency Medical Occupations* have a national educational attainment of a [postsecondary non-degree award](#) (Exhibit 5).¹¹

Exhibit 5: National Educational Attainment for *Emergency Medical Occupations*¹²

Occupational Title	Typical Entry-Level Education
Emergency Medical Technicians	Postsecondary non-degree award
Paramedics	Postsecondary non-degree award

¹⁰ Lightcast 2025.03; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

¹¹ Lightcast 2025.03; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

¹² Lightcast 2025.03; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

Similarly, online job postings between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2024 in San Diego County had a high school diploma or GED as the most requested educational requirement for *Emergency Medical Occupations*; however, employers also expected the following certifications (Exhibit 6).¹³

Exhibit 6: Top Certifications for *Emergency Medical Occupations* in San Diego County in Online Job Postings (2022-2024)¹⁴

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) | 6. Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) Certification |
| 2. Valid Driver's License | 7. Emergency Medical Technician - Basic (EMT-B) |
| 3. Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification | 8. Certified First Responder (CFR) |
| 4. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification | 9. Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Certification |
| 5. Paramedic (EMT-P) | 10. First Aid 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 are two TOP codes and one CIP code related to *Emergency Medical Occupations* (Exhibit 7).

Exhibit 7: Related TOP and CIP Codes for *Emergency Medical Occupations*¹⁵

TOP or CIP Code	TOP or CIP Program Title
TOP 1250.00	Emergency Medical Services
TOP 1251.00	Paramedic
CIP 51.0904	Emergency Medical Technology/Technician (EMT Paramedic)

¹³ Lightcast 2025.03; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

¹⁴ Lightcast 2025.03; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

¹⁵ This brief uses a conservative estimate of program supply and only calculates awards from the TOP code listed in Exhibit 7.

According to TOP data, two community colleges supply the region with awards for these occupations: San Diego Mesa College, and Southwestern College. According to CIP data, one non-community-college institution supplies the region with awards, National University (Exhibit 8).

**Exhibit 8: 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 PY22-24)
1250.00	Emergency Medical Services	95	0	95
	Southwestern	95	0	
	• Certificate 8 < 16 units	95	0	
1251.00	Paramedic	280	0	280
	San Diego Mesa	258	0	
	• Associate degree	12	0	
	• Certificate 30 < 60 units	39	0	
	• Certificate 6 < 18 units	207	0	
	Southwestern	22	0	
	• Associate degree	7	0	
	• Certificate 30 < 60 units	15	0	
51.0904	Emergency Medical Technology/Technician (EMT Paramedic)	0	164	164
	National University	0	164	
	• Certificate >1 year	0	164	
			Total	539

Demand vs. Supply

Comparing labor demand with labor supply¹⁶ suggests that there is an **oversupply** for these occupations in San Diego County, with 209 annual openings and 539 awards. Comparatively, there are 2,473 annual openings in California and 3,616 awards, suggesting that there is an **oversupply** across the state (Exhibit 9).¹⁷

Exhibit 9: Labor Demand (Annual Openings) Compared with Labor Supply (Average Annual Awards)

	Demand (Annual Openings)	Supply (Annual Awards)	Supply Gap or Oversupply
San Diego	209	539	- 330
California	2,473	3,616	-1,143

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.

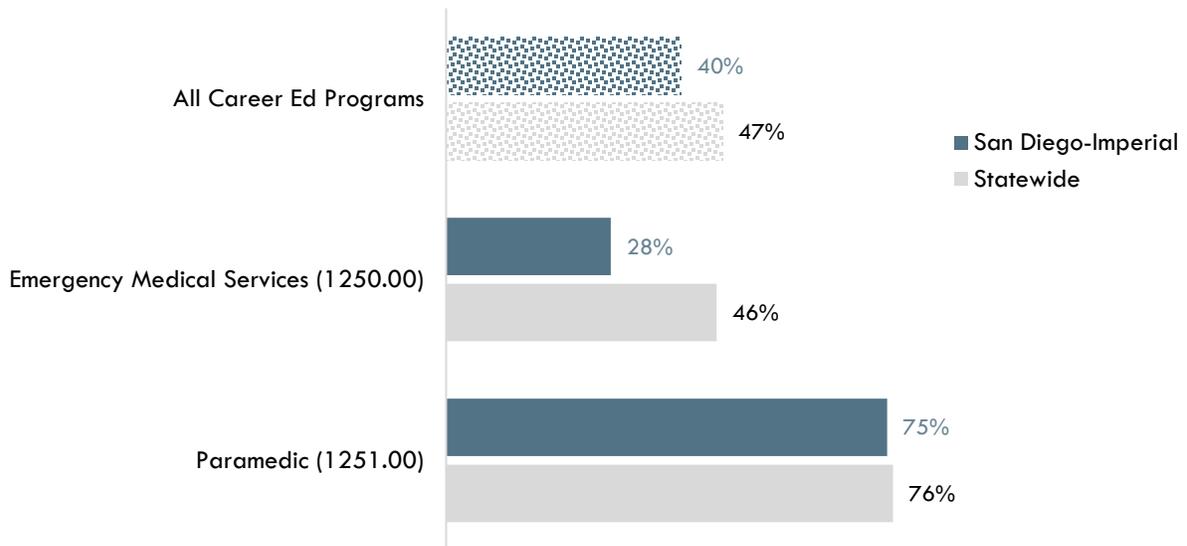
¹⁶ Labor supply can be found from two different sources: Lightcast or the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart. Lightcast uses CIP codes while MIS uses TOP codes. Different coding systems result in differences in the supply numbers.

¹⁷ "Supply and Demand," Centers of Excellence Student Outcomes, coecc.net/our-resources.

Student Outcomes and Regional Comparisons

According to the California Community Colleges DataVista, 28 to 75% of students in the San Diego-Imperial region earned a living wage after completing a program related to *Emergency Medical Occupations*, compared to 46 to 76% statewide and 47% of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 10).¹⁸

Exhibit 10: Percentage of Students Who Earned a Living Wage by Program, PY2022-23¹⁹

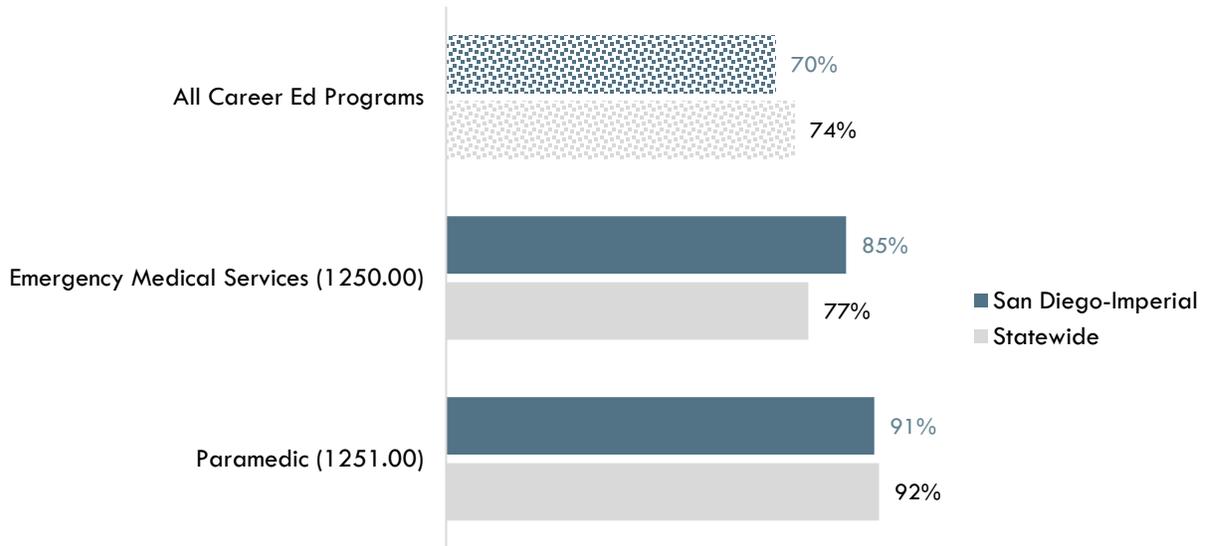


¹⁸ DataVista, California Community Colleges, datavista.cccco.edu/.

¹⁹ 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, 85 to 91% of students in the San Diego-Imperial region obtained a job closely related to their field of study after completing a program related to *Emergency Medical Occupations*, compared to 77 to 92% statewide and 74% of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 11).²⁰

Exhibit 11: Percentage of Students in a Job Closely Related to Field of Study by Program, PY2021-22²¹



²⁰ DataVista, California Community Colleges, datavista.cccco.edu/.

²¹ 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 *Emergency Medical Occupations* were [AMR](#), [Global Medical Response](#), [Advantage Ambulance](#), [Lifestart Ambulance Services](#), and [The Glen At Scripps Ranch CCRC](#) based on online job postings (Exhibit 12).

Exhibit 12: Top Employers for *Emergency Medical Occupations* in San Diego County²²

Top Employers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AMR • Global Medical Response • Advantage Ambulance • Lifestart Ambulance Services • The Glen At Scripps Ranch CCRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MedSpeed • Prime Healthcare Services • San Diego Ambulance Services • DispatchHealth • Sharp Healthcare

Skills

Exhibit 13 lists the top specialized, soft, and software skills that appeared in online job postings between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2024.

Exhibit 13: Top Skills for *Emergency Medical Occupations* in San Diego County²³

Specialized Skills	Soft Skills	Software Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Medical Services • Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation • Ambulances • Electrocardiography • Emergency Medicine • Mechanical Reliability • Number Systems • Standard Operating Procedure • Defibrillation • Occupational Safety and Health Administration • Medical Equipment • Emergency Preparedness • Critical Care • Vital Signs • Emergency Response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Service • Management • Communication • Professionalism • Operations • Good Driving Record • Cleanliness • Lifting Ability • First Aid • Quality Assurance • English Language • Leadership • Prioritization • Writing • Verbal Communication Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

²² Lightcast 2025.03; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

²³ Lightcast 2025.03; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

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