

FALL 2025

Public Safety

Los Angeles County Sector Profiles Project



Prepared by the Los Angeles Center of Excellence

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FOR LABOR MARKET RESEARCH

LOS ANGELES

A project supported by funding from the California Community Colleges
Chancellor's Office Workforce and Economic Development Division





Introduction

To support the collaborative planning and development of career education (CE) programs and to inform regional investments in Los Angeles County, the Los Angeles Center of Excellence developed a series of sector profiles examining labor market and community college program data that identify opportunity areas for workforce development in the region.

These sector profiles highlight middle-skill occupations—jobs that typically require some form of education or training beyond a high school diploma, but less than a bachelor’s degree. These occupations are a critical component of the overall workforce and support the economic vitality of the county and state.

The profiles bring attention to community college programs aligned with key middle-skill occupations and by analyzing the number of awards being conferred by postsecondary institutions, identify whether a shortage or oversupply of workers exist for these priority occupations in the sector.

Public Safety IN L.A. COUNTY

211,320

Jobs in 2024

222,522

Projected Jobs
in 2029

11,202

New Jobs by
2029

5%

Projected
Job Growth,
2024-2029

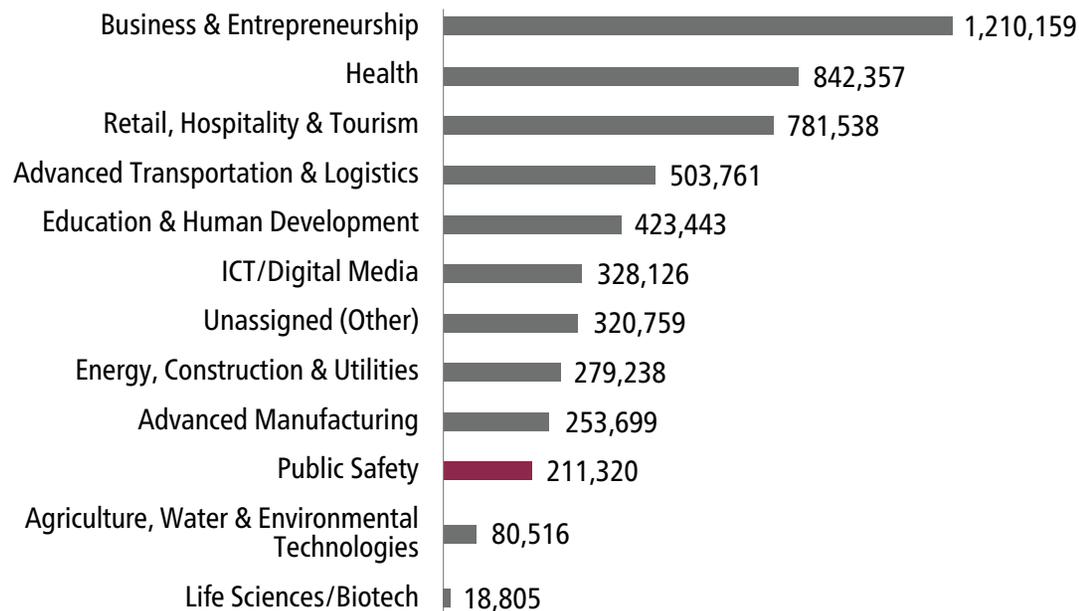
\$91,220

Median Annual
Earnings, 2024

4%

Of Los Angeles
County Employment,
2024

2024 Sector Employment



Regional Importance

The public safety sector includes police officers, firefighters, forensic scientists, correctional officers, and EMTs and paramedics. The majority of current public safety priorities named by Governor Gavin Newsom involve collaborating with police forces to combat property crime, gun violence, and drug trafficking. The Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) covers the second-largest metropolitan area in the nation, but is facing severe understaffing, with less than one firefighter for every 1,000 residents. (Of the largest U.S. cities, only San Diego has fewer firefighters per capita.) As a result of a reduced workforce, longstanding budget cuts, and federal funding cuts to wildland firefighting programs, the state is less prepared to battle not only wildfires but structural fires, traffic accidents, and medical emergencies. Similarly, the state currently faces a paramedic shortage, attributed to the greater aging population in need of assistance and the pandemic-caused shutdown of training facilities. The California Firefighter Joint Apprenticeship Committee (Cal-JAC) is working to combat this shortage with EMT/paramedic training and apprenticeships.

Sources:

- “Public Safety,” Governor of California, 2025, <https://www.gov.ca.gov/priorities-and-progress/priorities/public-safety/>.
- “About,” Los Angeles Fire Department Foundation, 2025, [https://supportlafd.org/about/about.html#:~:text=The%20Los%20Angeles%20Fire%20Department%20\(LAFD\)%20is%20a%20full%2D,106%20stations%20throughout%20the%20city.](https://supportlafd.org/about/about.html#:~:text=The%20Los%20Angeles%20Fire%20Department%20(LAFD)%20is%20a%20full%2D,106%20stations%20throughout%20the%20city.)
- Blake Ellis, et al, “Beyond the brink: Data shows LA Fire Department among the most understaffed in America,” CNN, January 14, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/01/14/us/la-fire-department-resourses-understaffed-invs.>
- “Wildland firefighting crews left short-staffed by DOGE ahead of wildfire season,” CBS News, May 9, 2025, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-washington-oregon-parks-workers-funding-cuts-challenge-wildfires/>.
- Peter Daut, “I-Team Investigation: ‘Rush to Respond,’” KESQ News Channel 3, February 6, 2025, <https://kesq.com/news/i-team/2025/02/04/i-team-investigation-rush-to-respond/#:~:text=Riverside%20County%2FCAL%20Fire%20Division,ilities%20shut%20down%2C%20diminishing%20supply>

L.A. Jobs First:

“The Los Angeles County Regional Report,” which is part of the Governor’s “California Jobs First” initiative, identifies economic priorities for the region. Although the report does not name public safety as a target sector, the report does address the importance of public safety. For example, the report notes that of the community stakeholders surveyed by the Los Angeles County Jobs First Collaborative, 31% said they considered public safety to be poor or very poor, while 32% reported they found public safety infrastructure, policy, and enforcement to be ineffective. The report also explores how inadequate public safety is impacting the business and entrepreneurship sector, with 17% of those surveyed responding that they considered public safety an obstacle to entrepreneurship. As safe communities are more likely to attract and retain prospective businesses and residents, the report notes that investing in public safety could make the county more attractive to entrepreneurs.

Sources:

- “Los Angeles County California Jobs First Regional Report: Part 1,” California Community Foundation, pp. 163, May 2024, accessed July 21, 2025, [https://24053461.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na2.net/hubfs/24053461/LA%20County%20CJF%20Regional%20Plan%E2%80%93Part%201_04-24%20\(1\).pdf](https://24053461.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na2.net/hubfs/24053461/LA%20County%20CJF%20Regional%20Plan%E2%80%93Part%201_04-24%20(1).pdf).



Top Middle-Skill Occupations

By applying specific criteria to an analysis of employment in the sector, the L.A. COE identified the top 10 occupations in the sector in the county.

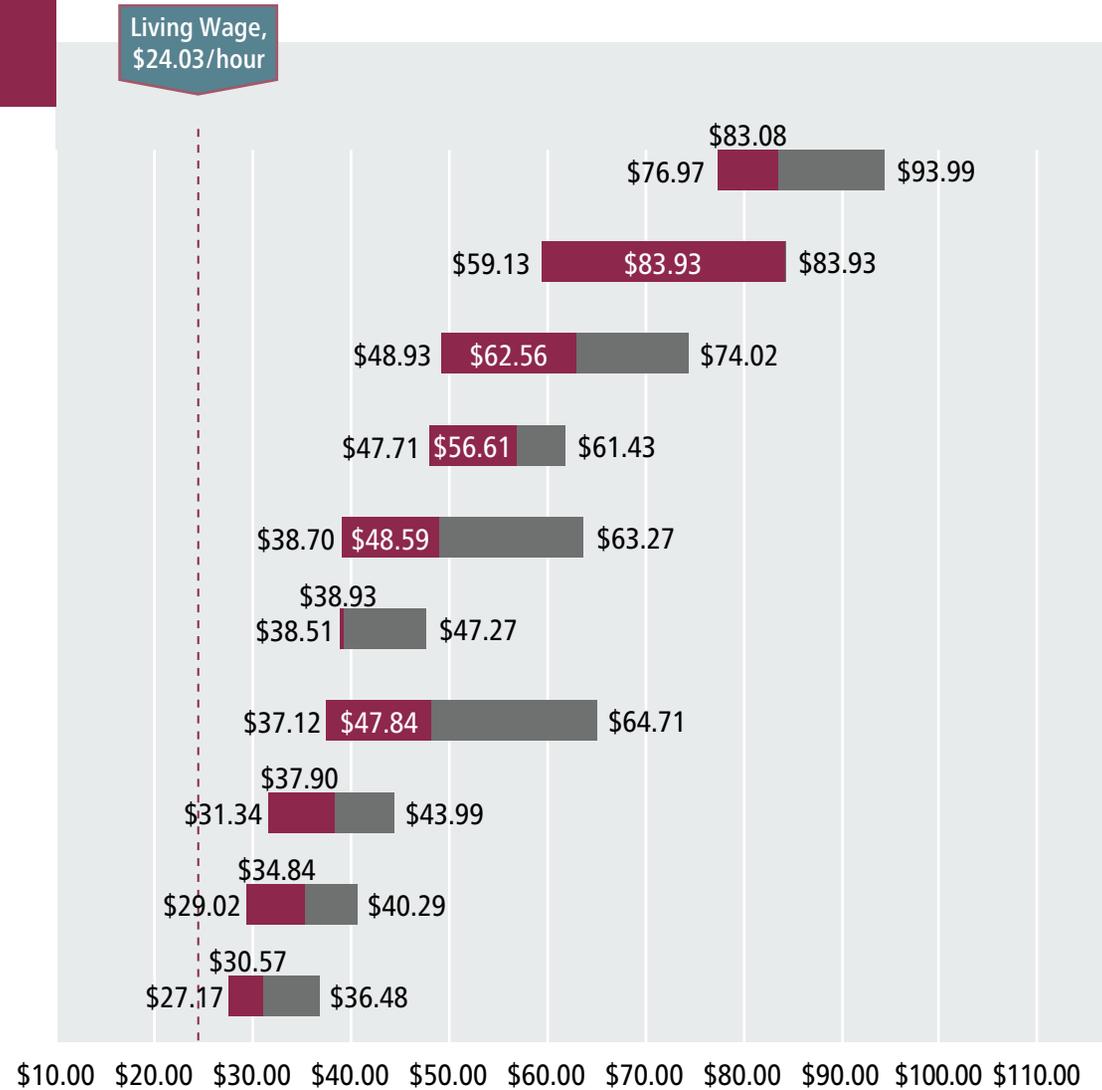
- Only middle-skill occupations were included to highlight jobs aligned with community college training.
- To bring attention to jobs that are in demand by employers, only occupations with more than 50 annual openings in the county were selected.
- Finally, to underscore the importance of connecting students with job opportunities that offer sustainable wages, occupations that pay above the region's living wage of \$24.03 were chosen for inclusion.

Occupation (SOC Code)	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	5-Year % Change	Annual Openings	Entry-Level Education
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers (33-3051)	21,173	22,148	5%	1,801	HS diploma or equivalent
Firefighters (33-2011)	6,107	6,501	6%	539	Postsecondary nondegree award
Correctional Officers and Jailers (33-3012)	5,065	5,174	2%	474	HS diploma or equivalent
First-Line Supervisors of Police and Detectives (33-1012)	4,185	4,389	5%	316	HS diploma or equivalent
Court, Municipal, and License Clerks (43-4031)	2,365	2,525	7%	272	HS diploma or equivalent
Detectives and Criminal Investigators (33-3021)	2,685	2,792	4%	218	HS diploma or equivalent
Public Safety Telecommunicators (43-5031)	1,806	1,909	6%	218	HS diploma or equivalent
Forensic Science Technicians (19-4092)	997	1,073	8%	143	Bachelor's degree
First-Line Supervisors of Firefighting and Prevention Workers (33-1021)	1,868	1,984	6%	141	Postsecondary nondegree award
Paramedics (29-2043)	1,134	1,185	4%	64	Postsecondary nondegree award

Note: Occupations are grouped by sector according to the occupational titles and codes assigned by the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system.

Hourly Wages

- First-Line Supervisors of Police and Detectives
- First-Line Supervisors of Firefighting and Prevention Workers
- Detectives and Criminal Investigators
- Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers
- Firefighters
- Correctional Officers and Jailers
- Forensic Science Technicians
- Public Safety Telecommunicators
- Paramedics
- Court, Municipal, and License Clerks



Note: The hourly wage ranges include the 25th percentile (entry-level), median, and 75th percentile (experienced) hourly earnings for workers employed in these occupations Los Angeles County.

Job Postings

Job postings can provide insights into workforce trends and employer hiring preferences. Analysis can reveal which competencies and skills employers most value for new hires, areas in which employers are hiring more aggressively than others, and changes in demand for certain types of workers or specific skillsets.



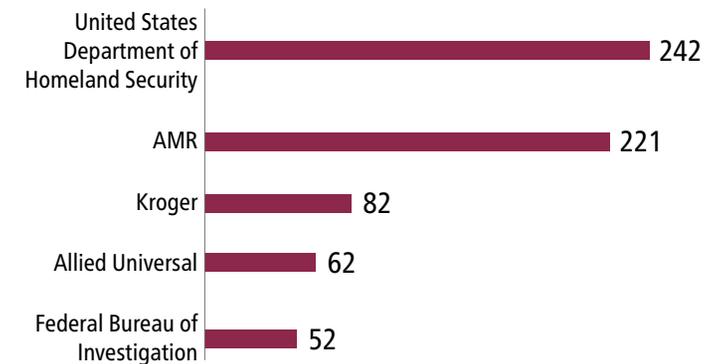
Earnings

Occupational Title	Number of Job Postings	Median Annual Earnings
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	815	\$92,928
Court, Municipal, and License Clerks	298	\$51,200
Paramedics	270	\$49,152
Detectives and Criminal Investigators	242	\$111,360
Public Safety Telecommunicators	134	\$48,128
Correctional Officers and Jailers	121	\$51,968
First-Line Supervisors of Police and Detectives	84	\$101,632
Forensic Science Technicians	70	\$102,656
Firefighters	48	\$82,688
First-Line Supervisors of Firefighting and Prevention Workers	44	\$100,096

In-Demand Skills

Specialized Skills	Soft Skills	Software and Technical Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law Enforcement • Contraband Detection and Control • Ambulances • Electrocardiography • Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Investigation • Management • Operations • Customer Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsoft Office (Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, Word) • Okta • Spreadsheets • SAP Applications • R (Programming Language)

Top Employers



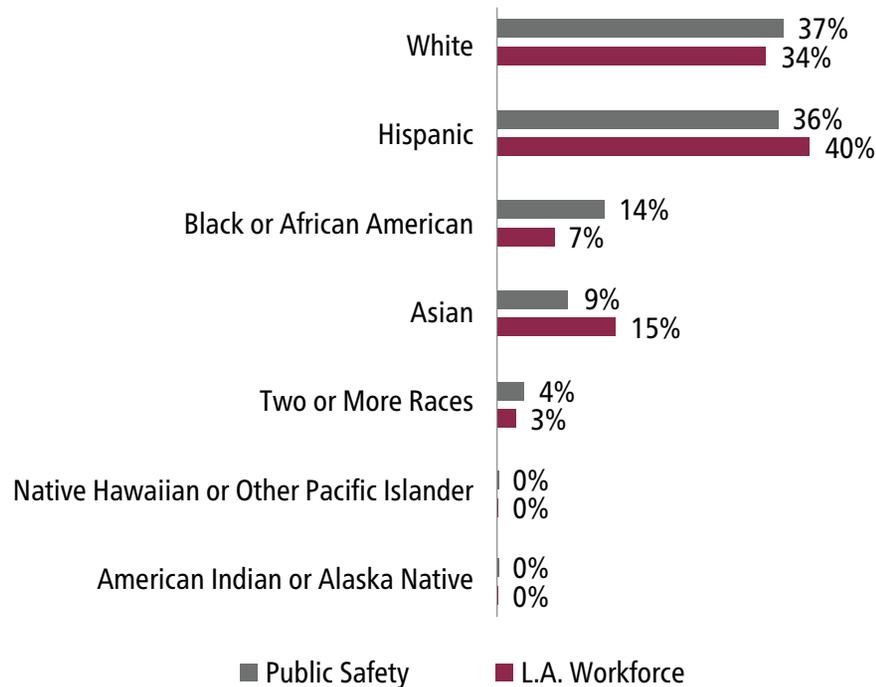
Note: Job posting data was analyzed for the top 10 middle-skill occupations in Los Angeles County from August 1, 2024 to July 31, 2025. Postings are limited to in-state employers and exclude staffing companies.

Workforce & Student Demographics

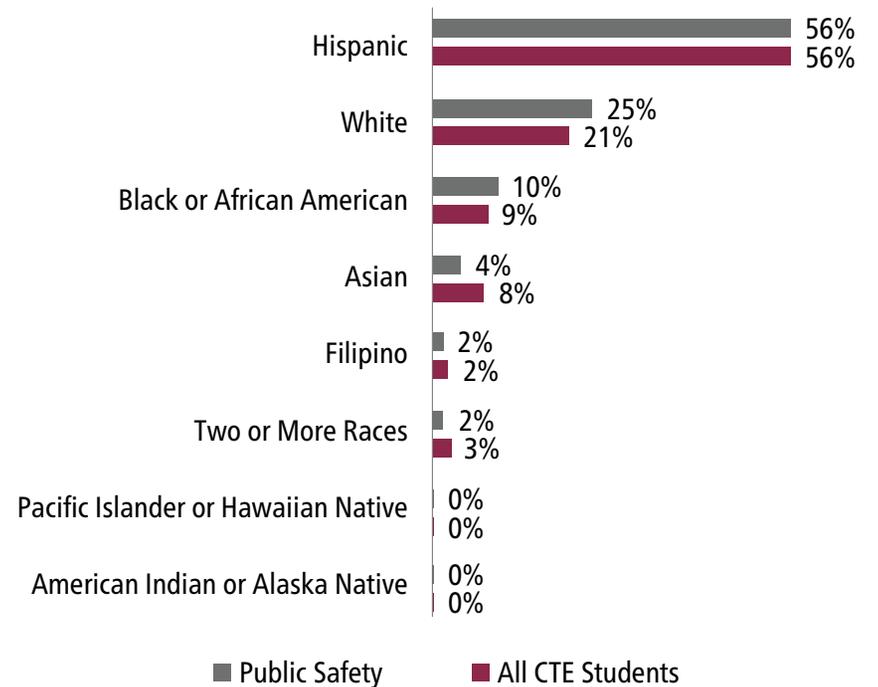
Due to the diversity of their student populations, community colleges play an important role in actively addressing equity gaps and disparities in the labor market while encouraging access to in-demand, well-paid career opportunities for students. Examining workforce race and ethnicity alongside student race and ethnicity can be useful for assessing

whether students from diverse backgrounds are equitably transitioning into the workforce and securing opportunities that align with their education. This type of data analysis can assist with identifying barriers to employment or advancement for certain groups and can highlight employment areas that might benefit from promoting inclusive hiring practices.

Workforce Race & Ethnicity



Student Race & Ethnicity



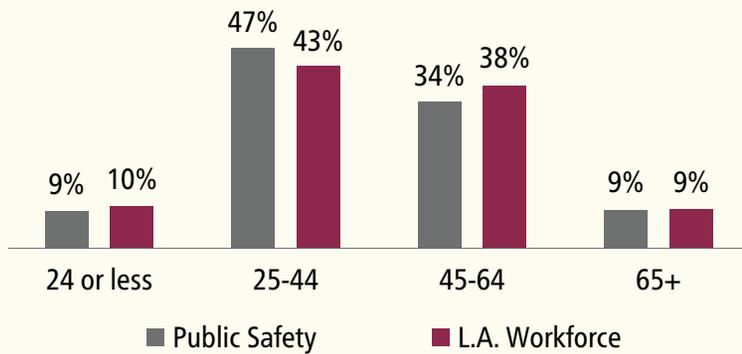
Note: For student data, "All Masked Values," "Unknown," and "Multiple Values Reported" are not included in the above charts. Data shown is from the 2023-24 academic year.

Examining demographics can lend insights into barriers to employment and assist with addressing impending workforce shortages or calibrating institutional allocation of resources.

The L.A. COE recommends three strategies to address equity gaps for community colleges:

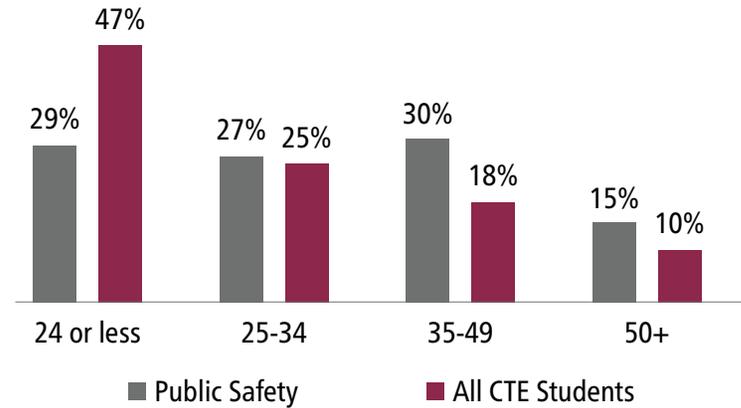
- Collaborate with employers to promote diversity in priority jobs and boost interest among underrepresented groups for these roles.
- Develop targeted recruitment and retention strategies for priority programs with significantly underrepresented groups.
- Focus on closing equity gaps in programs that also have existing disparities in high-demand, well-paid jobs.

Workforce Age

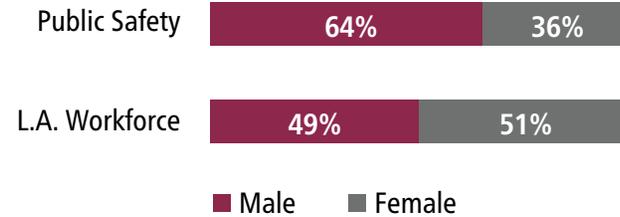


Note: For student data, "All Masked Values," "Unknown," and "Multiple Values Reported" are not included in the above charts. Data shown is from the 2023-24 academic year.

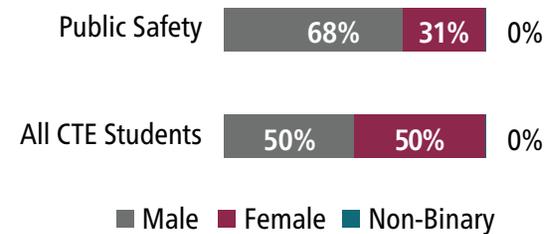
Student Age



Workforce Gender



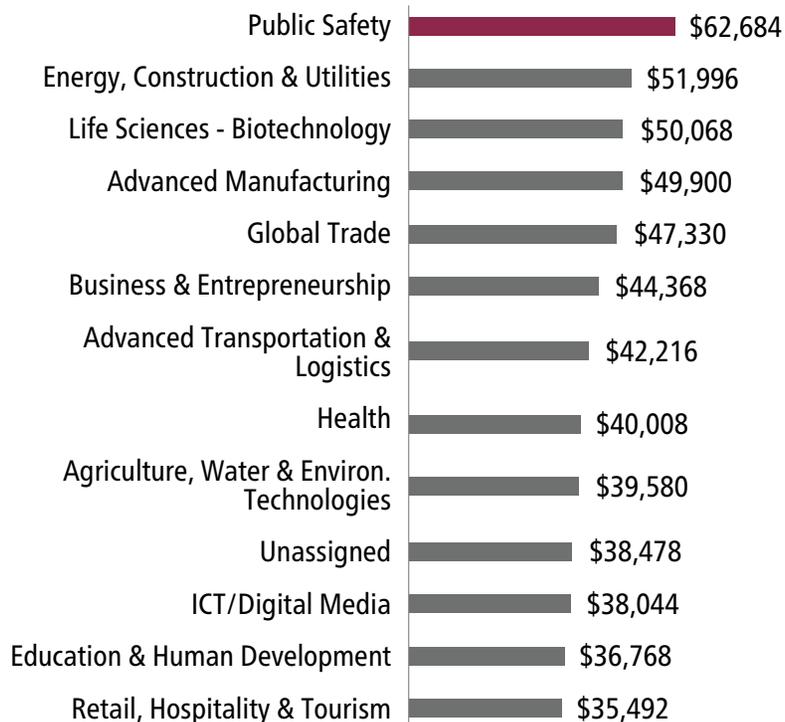
Student Gender



Student Outcomes

Tracking Strong Workforce Program outcomes is critical for evaluating whether regional community colleges are effectively preparing students for in-demand, well-paid jobs. This type of data-driven analysis can assist colleges in assessing whether students are successfully completing programs, securing employment related to their field of study, and increasing their earnings as they transition into the workforce.

Median annual earnings for exiting students, 2022-23



Strong Workforce Program Metrics

	2023-24	2022-23	2022-23	2021-22
Sector	Number of SWP Students	Median Change in Earnings	Percent Earning a Living Wage	Percent with a Job Related to Field of Study
ICT/Digital Media	60,820	29%	34%	68%
Business & Entrepreneurship	59,779	23%	42%	73%
Public Safety	38,218	26%	59%	54%
Health	36,256	38%	35%	83%
Education & Human Development	30,660	32%	27%	76%
Unassigned	14,883	30%	31%	74%
Energy, Construction & Utilities	14,621	35%	51%	77%
Retail, Hospitality & Tourism	11,234	32%	30%	66%
Advanced Manufacturing	9,945	40%	49%	81%
Advanced Transportation & Logistics	7,075	50%	37%	80%
Agriculture, Water & Environmental Technologies	3,641	39%	34%	67%
Global Trade	1,439	25%	48%	59%
Life Sciences - Biotechnology	376	93%	47%	N/A

Note: SWP metrics were the most recent year available.



Program Inventory

Analysis of academic offerings and the average number of awards conferred by community colleges in the county can be used by administrators for strategic planning to address program gaps to meet regional workforce needs, to make informed decisions about resource allocations, and to ensure students have access to programs that lead to promising career outcomes.



Program Awards by Community College

Community College	3-Year Average
Cerritos	96
Citrus	181
Compton	33
East LA	988
El Camino	157
Glendale	51
LA City	36
LA Harbor	35
LA Mission	54
LA Pierce	82
LA Southwest	30
LA Trade-Tech	22
LA Valley	50
Long Beach	225
Mt San Antonio	194
Pasadena	73
Rio Hondo	587
Santa Monica	51
West LA	61
TOTAL	3,006

Program Awards by Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) Code

TOP	Program	3-Year Average
2105.00	Administration of Justice	1,634
2105.10	Corrections	110
2105.20	Probation and Parole	71
2105.30	Industrial and Transportation Security	4
2105.40	Forensics, Evidence, and Investigation	110
2105.50	Police Academy	346
2133.00	Fire Technology	445
2133.10	Wildland Fire Technology	12
2133.50	Fire Academy	266
2199.00	Other Public and Protective Services	7
TOTAL		3,006

The above program inventory provides awards data by TOP code and features a three-year average for the academic years 2021-22 to 2023-24.



Demand & Supply Analysis

Occupations with similar knowledge areas, skills, and abilities (KSAs) have been grouped together to evaluate workforce demand and student supply in Los Angeles County. The table compares workforce demand as measured by annual job openings in the county with the supply of unduplicated students as measured by the number of awards conferred by community colleges and other postsecondary institutions.



Occupation	Demand (Annual Openings)	Community College Supply	Other Postsecondary Supply	Undersupply (-) / Oversupply (+)
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers (33-3051)	2,809	2,162	14	-633
Correctional Officers and Jailers (33-3012)				
First-Line Supervisors of Police and Detectives (33-1012)				
Detectives and Criminal Investigators (33-3021)				
Court, Municipal, and License Clerks (43-4031)	272	14	0	-258
Public Safety Telecommunicators (43-5031)	218	7	0	-211
Forensic Science Technicians (19-4092)	143	110	0	-33
Paramedics (29-2043)	64	40	22	-2
Firefighters (33-2011)	679	724	2	+47
First-Line Supervisors of Firefighting and Prevention Workers (33-1021)				

Note: Due to variations in employer demand and awards conferred each year, it is important to take into consideration that the over- or under-supply of students may be an underestimation or overestimation.



Appendix: Sector Comparison

Sector	Number of Middle-Skill Occupations	Number of Degrees and Certificates Offered	Number of Los Angeles Community Colleges Issuing Awards
Advanced Manufacturing	46	254	16
Advanced Transportation & Logistics	41	176	14
Agriculture, Water & Environmental Technologies	19	83	9
Business & Entrepreneurship (and Global Trade)	45	510	19
Education & Human Development	6	215	19
Energy, Construction & Utilities	49	235	17
Health	40	318	19
ICT/Digital Media	25	808	19
Life Sciences/Biotech	4	49	11
Public Safety	21	122	19
Retail, Hospitality & Tourism	19	178	17
Unassigned (Other)	12	138	19

Data Dashboard

To further assist with regional planning and strategic investments, the L.A. COE has prepared an interactive online dashboard featuring labor market and community college program data.

Access the dashboard:
<https://bit.ly/2025LAdata>



Data Sources:

- Lightcast 2025.3, QCEW, non-QCEW, Self-Employed
- Centers of Excellence Skill/Occupation Crosswalk
- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office DataVista
- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Data Mart
- Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)
- Chancellor's Office Curriculum Inventory System (COCI)

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Funding Acknowledgement:

This publication was supported through a grant from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Workforce and Economic Development Division.

Grant #G0914

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