








Specialized Woodworking Occupations

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(S) OF EDUCATION
<div> Do Not Proceed with New Program</div>	<div> </div>	<div> </div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Master's Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Some College or Certificate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HS Diploma or Equivalent <input type="checkbox"/> Less Than a HS Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship</div>
<div>SUPPORT FOR PROGRAM MODIFICATION?</div>	<div>NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS THAT PROVIDE TRAINING</div>	<div>NUMBER OF ANNUAL JOB OPENINGS</div>	
<div>The COE defers to the region</div>	<div>LOW </div>	<div>LOW </div>	

The San Diego & Imperial Center of Excellence (COE) developed this brief to assist the region’s community colleges with strategic planning and program development. *Specialized Woodworking Occupations* include “Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters,” “Furniture Finishers,” “Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Wood,” “Woodworking Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Except Sawing” and “Woodworkers, All Other.” According to available data, *Specialized Woodworking Occupations* in San Diego County have a labor market demand of 128 annual job openings (while average demand for a single occupation in San Diego County is 289 annual job openings), and one institution supply 25 awards for these occupations. Entry-level and median wages are below the living wage. This brief recommends that the colleges do not proceed with a new and defers to the region for a program modification because 1) **both** entry-level and median wages are below the living wage and 2) the expected level of education is a high school diploma or equivalent; however, there is a supply gap that exists for these positions.

Introduction

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

- **Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters (SOC 51-7011):** Cut, shape, and assemble wooden articles or set up and operate a variety of woodworking machines, such as power saws, jointers, and mortisers to surface, cut, or shape lumber or to fabricate parts for wood products.
- **Furniture Finishers (SOC 51-7021):** Shape, finish, and refinish damaged, worn, or used furniture or new high-grade furniture to specified color or finish.
- **Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Wood (SOC 51-7041):** Set up, operate, or tend wood sawing machines. May operate computer numerically controlled (CNC) equipment. Includes lead sawyers.
- **Woodworking Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Except Sawing (SOC 51-7042):** Set up, operate, or tend woodworking machines, such as drill presses, lathes, shapers, routers, sanders, planers, and wood nailing machines. May operate computer numerically controlled (CNC) equipment.
- **Woodworkers, All other (SOC 51-7099):** All woodworkers not listed separately.

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

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/>.

Projected Occupational Demand

Between 2024 and 2029, businesses in San Diego County will need to hire **128** 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 Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters, which are projected to have the most annual job openings with **88** openings each year between 2024 and 2029.

Exhibit 1: Number of Jobs for Specialized Woodworking Occupations (2024-2029)²

Occupational Title	2024 Jobs	2029 Jobs	2024 - 2029 Net Jobs Change	2024 - 2029 % Net Jobs Change	Annual Job Openings (Demand)
Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters	952	906	- 46	- 5%	88
Woodworking Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Except Sawing	148	144	- 4	- 3%	16
Woodworkers, All Other	102	92	-10	- 10%	11
Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Wood	65	66	1	1%	7
Furniture Finishers	60	56	- 5	- 8%	6
Total	1,327	1,264	- 63	- 5%	128

Earnings

According to traditional³ labor market information (LMI), entry-level hourly earnings for *Specialized Woodworking Occupations* range from **\$10.34** to **\$21.39** (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2: Hourly Earnings for Specialized Woodworking Occupations in San Diego County⁴

Occupational Title	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25 th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75 th Percentile)
Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters	\$21.39	\$24.74	\$31.53
Woodworking Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Except Sawing	\$18.65	\$22.26	\$23.85
Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Wood	\$18.37	\$21.72	\$25.91
Furniture Finishers	\$16.71	\$20.77	\$25.58
Woodworkers, All Other	\$10.34	\$17.90	\$26.36

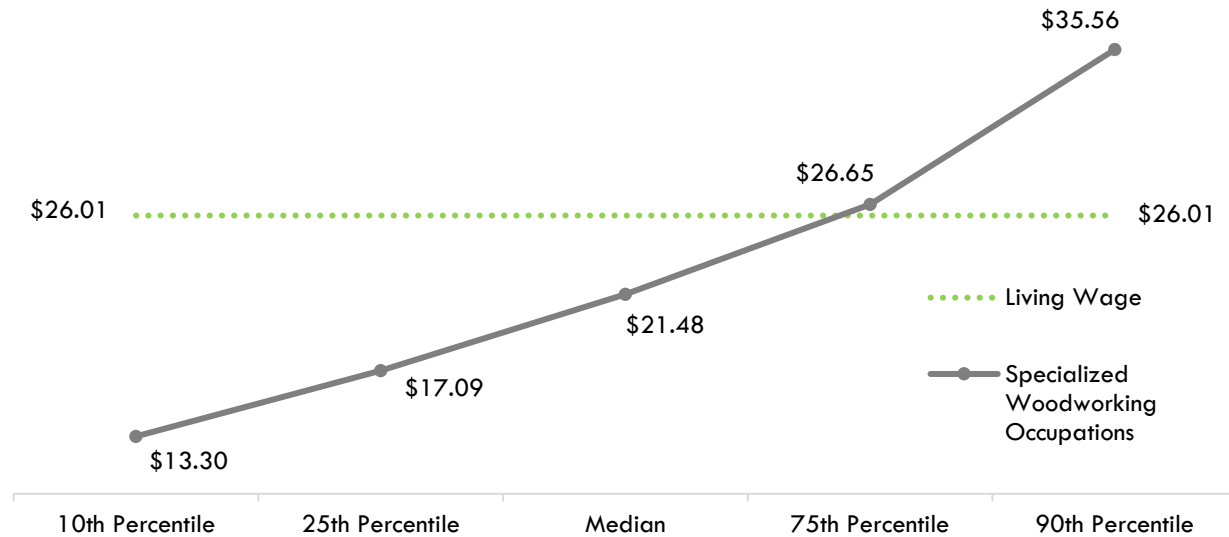
² Lightcast 2025.04; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

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

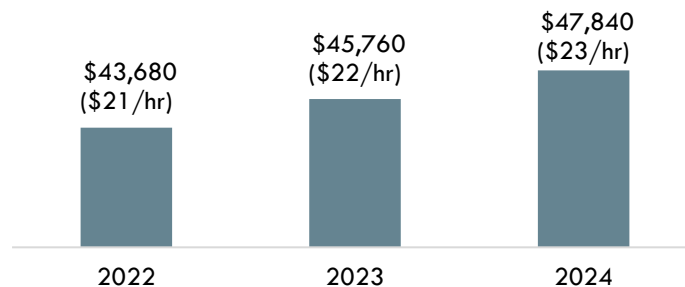
On average, the entry-level hourly earnings for employed *Specialized Woodworking Occupations* are \$17.09—or \$35,547.20 annual salary⁵; this is less than the living wage for a single adult in San Diego County, which is \$26.01 per hour (Exhibit 3).⁶

Exhibit 3: Hourly Earnings⁷ for Specialized Woodworking Occupations in San Diego County⁸



In online job postings, however, employers advertised between \$21 to \$23 per hour between January 1, 2022 and December 30, 2024 for *Specialized Woodworking Occupations* in San Diego County (Exhibit 4).⁹ This indicates that employer-advertised wages have remained relatively stable.

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



⁵ Annualized salaries assume a full-time position with 2,080 hours. Multiplying the hourly wage with 2,080 yields the annual salary.

⁶ Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington. (2024). The self-sufficiency standard for California 2024. selfsufficiencystandard.org/California.

⁷ 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.

⁸ Lightcast 2025.04; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

⁹ Lightcast 2025.04; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

Expected Level of Education

According to traditional LMI (data reported to EDD and BLS), *Specialized Woodworking Occupations* have a national educational attainment of a [high school diploma or equivalent](#) (Exhibit 5).¹⁰

Exhibit 5: National Educational Attainment for Specialized Woodworking Occupations¹¹

Occupational Title	Typical Entry-Level Education
Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters	High school diploma or equivalent
Furniture Finishers	High school diploma or equivalent
Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Wood	High school diploma or equivalent
Woodworkers, All Other	High school diploma or equivalent
Woodworking Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Except Sawing	High school diploma or equivalent

Similarly, online job postings between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2024 in San Diego County had a [high school diploma or equivalent](#) as the most requested educational requirement for *Specialized Woodworking Occupations*; however, employers also expected the following certifications (Exhibit 6).¹²

**Exhibit 6: Top Certifications for Specialized Woodworking Occupations
in San Diego County in Online Job Postings (2022-2024)¹³**

1. Valid Driver's License
2. Forklift Certification
3. 10-Hour OSHA General Industry Card

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

¹¹ Lightcast 2025.04; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

¹² Lightcast 2025.04; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

¹³ Lightcast 2025.04; "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 is **one** TOP code and **three** CIP codes related to *Specialized Woodworking Occupations* (Exhibit 7).

Exhibit 7: Related TOP and CIP Codes for Specialized Woodworking Occupations¹⁴

TOP or CIP Code	TOP or CIP Program Title
TOP 0952.50	Mill and Cabinet Work
CIP 48.0701	Woodworking, General
CIP 48.0702	Furniture Design and Manufacturing
CIP 48.0703	Cabinetmaking and Millwork

According to TOP data, **one** community college supplies the region with awards for these occupations, **Palomar College**. According to CIP data, **no** non-community-college institution supplies the region with awards (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)
0952.50	Mill and Cabinet Work	25	0	25
	Palomar	25	0	
	• Associate degree	6	0	
	• Certificate 16 < 30 units	10	0	
	• Certificate 8 < 16 units	9	0	
Total				25

¹⁴ This brief uses a conservative estimate of program supply and only calculates awards from the TOP code listed in Exhibit 7.

Demand vs. Supply

Comparing labor demand with labor supply¹⁵ suggests that there is a **supply gap** for these occupations in San Diego County, with **128** annual openings and **25** awards. Comparatively, there are **1,887** annual openings in California and **72** awards, suggesting that there is a **supply gap** across the state (Exhibit 9).¹⁶

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	128	25	103
California	1,887	72	1,815

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.

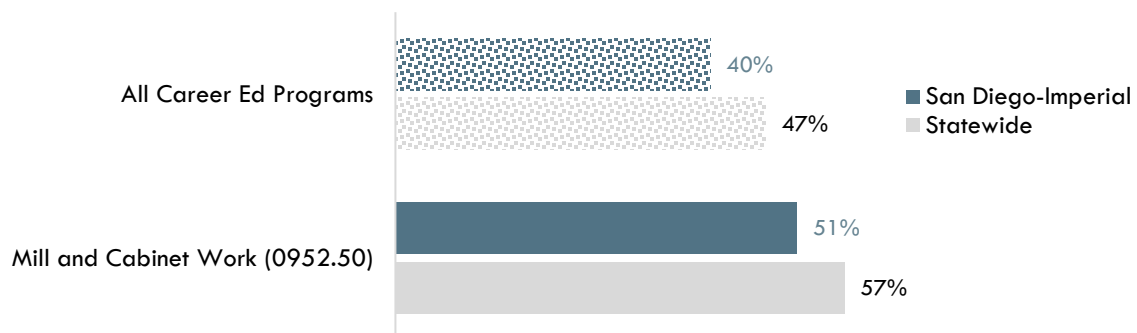
¹⁵ Labor supply can be found from two different sources: Lightcast or the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart. Lightcast uses CIP codes while MIS uses TOP codes. Different coding systems result in differences in the supply numbers.

¹⁶ "Supply and Demand," Centers of Excellence Student Outcomes, coecc.net/our-resources.

Student Outcomes and Regional Comparisons

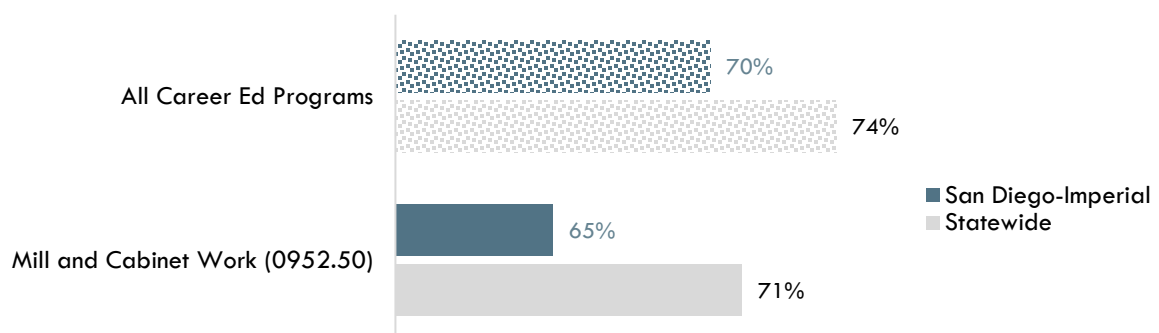
According to the California Community Colleges DataVista, **51%** of students in the San Diego-Imperial region earned a living wage after completing a Mill and Cabinet Work (TOP 0952.50) program, compared to **57%** statewide and 47% of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 10).¹⁷

Exhibit 10: Percentage of Students Who Earned a Living Wage a Mill and Cabinet Work (TOP 0952.50) Program, PY2022-23¹⁸



According to the California Community Colleges DataVista, **65%** of students in the San Diego-Imperial region obtained a job closely related to their field of study after completing a Mill and Cabinet Work (TOP 0952.50) program, compared to **71%** statewide and 47% of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 11).¹⁹

Exhibit 11: Percentage of Students in a Job Closely Related to Field of Study a Mill and Cabinet Work (TOP 0952.50) Program, PY2021-22²⁰



¹⁷ DataVista, California Community Colleges, datavista.cccco.edu/.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ DataVista, California Community Colleges, datavista.cccco.edu/.

²⁰ 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 *Specialized Woodworking Occupations* were Kohler, Trueline Woodworks, Living Spaces, Quality Woodworks, and Rock West Composites based on online job postings (Exhibit 12).

Exhibit 12: Top Employers for Specialized Woodworking Occupations in San Diego County²¹

Top Employers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kohler• Trueline Woodworks• Living Spaces• Quality Woodworks• Rock West Composites	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corovan• G/M Business Interiors• SBM Management Services• West World• Austin Mcadams Design & Fabrication

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 Specialized Woodworking Occupations in San Diego County²²

Specialized Skills	Soft Skills	Software Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cabinetry• Carpentry• Hand Tools• Construction• Woodworking• Warehousing• Sawing• Power Tool Operation• Furniture Cleaning• Project Management• Renovation• Shop Drawing• Forklift Truck• Furniture Assembly• Painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Detail Oriented• Lifting Ability• Communication• Customer Service• Problem Solving• Good Driving Record• Sales• English Language• Loading And Unloading• Management• Positivity• Self-Motivation• Planning• Strong Work Ethic• Tape Measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• N/A

²¹ Lightcast 2025.04; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

²² Lightcast 2025.04; "Job Posting Analytics." 2022-2024.

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