



Childhood Education Employment: MAPPING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN THE BAY REGION AND CALIFORNIA



FOR LABOR MARKET RESEARCH

BAY AREA

POWERED BY



California
Community
Colleges

Prepared by
The Bay Region Center of Excellence

MAPPING
OPPORTUNITY
PATHWAYS

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ABOUT THE MAPPING OPPORTUNITIES PATHWAYS PROJECT

This report is part of the Center of Excellence (COE) Mapping Opportunity Pathways project, developed to support California's priority sectors and occupational clusters by demonstrating how skills acquired in all jobs, including those often categorized as low-wage or low-mobility, can be leveraged to access more rewarding employment opportunities. In addition to higher wages, these pathways may offer non-monetary benefits such as greater job stability, increased likelihood of full-time work, and more predictable or family-friendly work schedules—factors that significantly improve overall job quality and economic security for workers.

The project is anchored in a state-level analysis that maps occupational transitions based on transferable skills, ensuring a consistent and replicable framework across regions. By establishing these skill-based connections at the state level, regional reports could focus on supporting the pathways, assessing factors such as labor market demand, wage levels, and alignment with education and training infrastructure.

Underlying the mapping is a review of occupational similarities using multiple national and proprietary data tools, including the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia's Occupational Mobility Explorer, Lightcast's Compatibility Index, and the U.S. Department of Labor's O*NET and Career Trajectories and Occupational Transitions (CTOT) datasets. The COE used these tools to compare skill sets, identify patterns of historical worker movement, and prioritize occupations as source, lateral, or next-level.

Each report attempted to apply the mapping approach to different sectors or occupational clusters to assess the usability of each of these data tools. However, each tool's limitations required some variation in the method. The regional workforce needs assessment that follows the mapping examines whether the occupations are in demand locally, offer living wages, and are supported by community college or workforce training programs in the region.

The state-level mapping and regional needs assessments provide a framework for improving job mobility, targeting educational investments, and addressing equity by illuminating viable, skill-aligned pathways to upward mobility for workers across California.

Far North: Food Service Occupations

This report maps entry-level food service roles—such as dishwashers, fast food workers, and cafeteria attendants—to higher-paying, in-demand occupations that require minimal additional training. It highlights how workers can leverage existing skills to transition into roles like food service managers or institutional cooks that offer greater stability and upward mobility.

Bay Area: Childhood Education Occupations

This report focuses on low-wage early childhood education workers and identifies lateral and next-level opportunities aligning with existing skill sets. Pathways into occupations such as library technicians or kindergarten teachers are evaluated based on compatibility, wage improvement, and educational requirements.

Inland Empire/Desert: Climate-Ready Occupations

This report targets production-sector workers whose jobs may be at high risk due to automation. It identifies viable transitions into climate-ready jobs that offer long-term stability and growth and provides a roadmap for moving from potentially at-risk jobs to more resilient occupations such as wind turbine technicians and environmental technologists.

San Diego & Imperial: Military-to-Civilian Transitions

This report illuminates how veterans returning to civilian employment can navigate pathways into high-demand, high-wage jobs by analyzing how military experience maps to civilian careers. It highlights occupations where military training aligns directly with regional needs and identifies compatible civilian roles when a direct match is unavailable.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Many individuals in childhood education source occupations identified for this study find themselves in occupations that pay below a living wage, making it difficult to support themselves and their families. These low-wage jobs are often part-time and categorized as low skill, which limits not only the financial prospects and job stability of workers but also long-term career advancement. Since these roles typically present few promotional opportunities, many workers have no choice but to leave their initial career choice in order to seek better employment opportunities.

In light of the need for many of these workers to transition to occupations with more promising career trajectories and given the importance of the education sector in the overall economy, this study by the Bay Region Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research identifies source occupations that have limited pay and low educational requirements but that have skills and educational requirements aligned with similar occupations with more optimistic outlooks. Four source occupations in childhood education were identified as a starting point for the study:

- Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary
- Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education
- Self-Enrichment Teachers
- Childcare Workers

The study team then examined alternative career pathways into lateral and next-level occupations. Lateral occupations are defined as paying the same or a higher wage with minimal additional education needed to transition while next-level occupations pay a higher wage but are less closely aligned in terms of skills and may require more than six months of additional education. In the second half of the report, recommendations are presented concerning the lateral and next-level occupations identified that are most closely aligned with each of the source occupations.

Examples of lateral occupations:

- Library Technicians
- Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan
- Healthcare Support Workers, All Other
- Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other
- Psychiatric Technicians
- Eligibility Interviewers, Government Programs

Examples of next-level occupations:

- Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education
- Compliance Officers
- Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education
- Librarians and Media Collections Specialists
- Interpreters and Translators
- Occupational Therapists

INTRODUCTION

In an effort to address workforce development needs in statewide priority sectors and job clusters selected by the Governor's Office, the Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research embarked on an investigation driven by skills analysis to identify below-middle-skill and middle-skill occupations with less than favorable employment characteristics, such as low wages, projected employment contraction, or low educational requirements. The research team then mapped these occupations to similar middle-skill jobs with shared skills and educational requirements that have more favorable employment characteristics, such as better pay and greater hiring demand.¹ Ultimately, this project's findings seek to illuminate alternative career pathways for individuals employed in occupations that have limited advancement opportunities or that have forecasted stagnant or diminishing employment demand.

The study selected occupations in childhood education with low pay and minimal education requirements, referred to as **source occupations**. Pathways were then identified leading to promising occupations, referred to as **lateral or next-level occupations**, suitable for workers seeking to transition or advance into better-compensated, more in-demand jobs.

Source occupations examined in this report are:

- Teaching assistants, except postsecondary, an occupation which requires some college education but not a degree
- Preschool teachers, except special education, an occupation which requires an associate degree
- Self-enrichment teachers, considered below middle skill, an occupation which requires a high school diploma or equivalent
- Childcare workers, an occupation which requires a high school diploma or equivalent

Using statewide labor market data, recommendations are provided for transitioning from these occupations into comparable lateral occupations that pay a higher wage, without additional education, due to their high level of transferable skills. Next-level occupations are also identified that align less closely with current skills and experience requirements but pay a higher wage in most instances. These next-level occupations require further education and therefore more time before transitioning.

¹ Middle-skill jobs typically require more education and training than a high school diploma, but less than a bachelor's degree. By comparison, a below-middle-skill job typically requires a high school diploma or less, and little to moderate work experience.

METHODOLOGY

The research team used various criteria to select and describe source occupations, lateral occupations, and next-level occupations. Source occupations require a high school diploma, some college education, or an associate degree. Additionally, these occupations are typically entry-level jobs that provide less than a living wage. Exhibit 1 shows the criteria that was used to select lateral and next-level occupations compatible with the source occupations.

Exhibit 1. Criteria used to define lateral and next-level occupations

| | Compatibility Index | Training | Wages | Lateral Move |
|-------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Lateral Occupations | Very high | No more than six months of education or training is required | Same or exceeds wages of the source occupations | This can be a lateral move in terms of education and wages |
| Next-Level Occupations | May be lower than the lateral occupations compatibility index | Education or training required could take more than six months to complete | Same or exceeds wages of the source occupations (but in most cases it exceeds) | This position is not a lateral move because it requires more education and most of the time it exceeds the median wages of the source occupations |

Data analysis

The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and O*NET were used to research the characteristics of source, lateral, and next-level occupations and explore job descriptions and skills. SOC codes for source, lateral, and next-level occupations are included in Appendix A, as are details regarding entry-level education and alignment with sectors designated by the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO). Additionally, occupational characteristics of the source occupations were derived from the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS).

Labor market data available through the economic modeling firm and job postings aggregator Lightcast was used to provide a comprehensive overview of employment trends and projections for the study’s source, lateral, and next-level occupations. Employment data referenced represents the historical year 2023 projected through 2028.² This dataset includes information on projected job openings, wages, and skills requirements to help stakeholders understand current labor market dynamics and future workforce needs. Lightcast also provides a compatibility index for comparing occupations that range from 0 to 100. The higher the number, the more similar a lateral or next-level occupation is to the source workforce. The compatibility index is a synthetic number generated by a proprietary algorithm that uses O*NET’s data on the required “Levels” and “Importance” of competencies.

² Data source: Lightcast 2024.4; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

The Career Trajectories and Occupational Transitions (CTOT) is a dataset or research framework (provided by different organizations or researchers) specifically focused on the career paths and job changes of individuals over time. The CTOT was used to profile the career trajectories and transitions of early care and education workers within the labor market. The dashboard specifically focuses on “mid-level” occupations—also known as “middle-skill,” those typically requiring education or experience beyond a high school diploma or equivalent, but less than a four-year degree.

Living wage data was used to evaluate whether workers in specific occupations could earn enough to adequately support themselves. The state’s living wage is \$17 per hour. The Bay Region and its subregions have even higher living wages, ranging from \$25 to \$31 for one adult, no children (Exhibit 2). The hourly living wage is higher for adults with one or more children.

Exhibit 2. Living wages for one adult, no children in California, the Bay Region, and its subregions

| Geographic Area | Hourly Living Wage |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| California | \$17 |
| Bay Region | \$26 |
| East Bay | \$26 |
| Mid-Peninsula | \$31 |
| North Bay | \$25 |
| Santa Cruz-Monterey | \$27 |
| Silicon Valley | \$31 |

Data source: The Self-Sufficiency Standard for California 2023, Center for Women’s Welfare, University of Washington.

Mapping career pathways

Using Lightcast’s compatibility index, occupations were sorted from highest to lowest compatibility to identify lateral and next-level occupations. For the statewide analysis, occupations were excluded that paid less than the source occupation, had fewer than 1,000 jobs in 2023, or showed a growth decrease of -5% or greater between 2023 and 2028. If an occupation’s entry-level educational requirement was the same as that of the source occupation, it was categorized as a lateral occupation. If more than six additional months of education was required, it was classified as a next-level occupation. These lateral and next-level occupations were examined for the Bay Region, and occupations are recommended with more than 200 annual job openings and a median hourly wage of at least \$26, which is the region’s living wage.³

³ The Bay Region encompasses 12 counties: Sonoma, Marin, Napa, Solano, Contra Costa, Alameda, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Monterey.

SOURCE OCCUPATIONS: OCCUPATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Hourly wages

Exhibit 3 presents the median hourly earnings for each source occupation in California and the Bay Region. When median wages are considered for California, all four occupations pay more than the state’s living wage of \$17 per hour. However, in the Bay Region, the living wage is \$26 per hour, and the median wages for all four source occupations fall below this threshold. Notably, at \$17 per hour, the hourly wage for childcare workers is lower in the Bay Region, which has a higher cost of living than California, \$19 per hour.

Exhibit 3. Hourly median wages for source occupations in California and the Bay Region

| Source Occupation | California | Bay Region |
|--|------------|------------|
| Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education | \$24 | \$22 |
| Self-Enrichment Teachers | \$23 | \$25 |
| Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary | \$22 | \$22 |
| Childcare Workers | \$19 | \$17 |

Data source: Lightcast 2024.4; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.



Education

In terms of education requirements, an associate degree is only required for preschool teachers, while a high school diploma is required for self-enrichment teachers and childcare workers (Exhibit 4). The completion of some college is required for teaching assistants, except postsecondary.

Exhibit 4. Typical entry-level education, work experience and skill levels of source occupations

| Source Occupation | Entry-Level Education | Work Experience Required | Skill Level |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Childcare Workers | High School | None | Below Middle Skill |
| Self-Enrichment Teachers | High School | Less Than Five Years | Below Middle Skill |
| Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary | Some College | None | Middle Skill |
| Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education | Associate | None | Middle Skill |

Data source: Lightcast 2024.4; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

Data analysis reveals that although these occupations typically require a high school diploma or equivalent, or at most an associate degree, many individuals possess higher degrees than the basic requirements (Exhibit 5). For example, 31% of teaching assistants, except postsecondary, have a bachelor’s degree or more than a bachelor’s degree. For preschool teachers, that percentage is even greater, 53%. Similarly, 61% of self-enrichment teachers have a bachelor’s degree or more than a bachelor’s degree. In contrast, childcare workers have the greatest proportion of the workforce with a high school diploma or less, 46%.



Exhibit 5. Educational attainment by source occupation, California



Data source: [Occupational Characteristics](#) (2021 American Community Survey).

Occupational demand

There are a substantial number of annual job openings for each occupation, demonstrating employment demand (Exhibit 6). In California and the Bay Region, the greatest number of annual openings are projected for teaching assistants, except postsecondary, and childcare workers. Of the four source occupations, self-enrichment teachers have the smallest number of annual openings, 48,230 in California and 12,445 in the Bay Region.

Exhibit 6. Projected change in employment and annual openings for source occupations in California and the Bay Region, 2023-2028

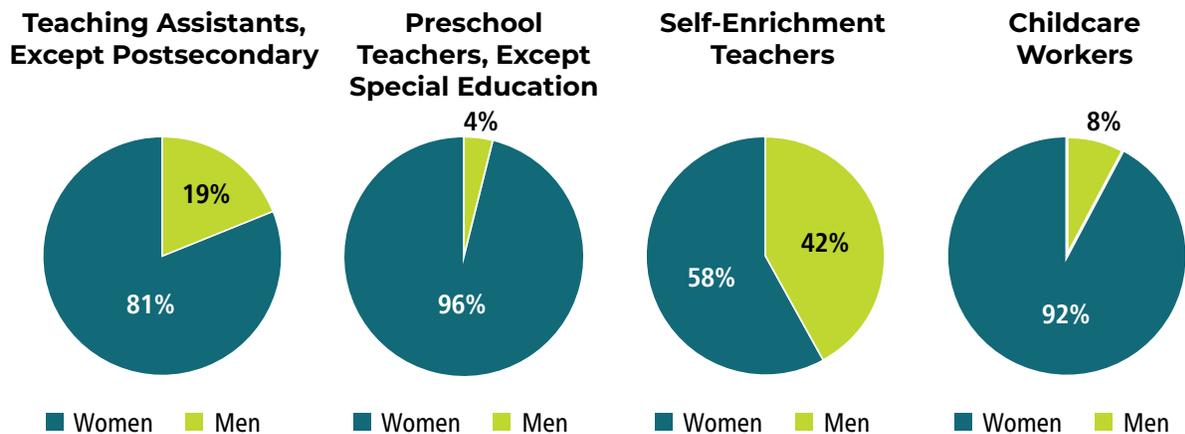
| Source Occupation | California % Change | Bay Region % Change | California Annual Openings | Bay Region Annual Openings |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary | 5% | 3% | 163,731 | 29,421 |
| Childcare Workers | 3% | 4% | 116,288 | 33,871 |
| Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education | 6% | 6% | 54,482 | 15,010 |
| Self-Enrichment Teachers | 10% | 6% | 48,230 | 12,445 |

Data source: Lightcast 2024.4; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

Gender composition

Comprising 58% to 96% of the workforce, women outnumber men in the source occupations in California (Exhibit 7). Gender disparities are starkest for two occupations—preschool teachers, except special education, in which women account for 96% of the workforce, and childcare workers, in which women account for 92% of the workforce.

Exhibit 7. Gender composition of source occupations, California

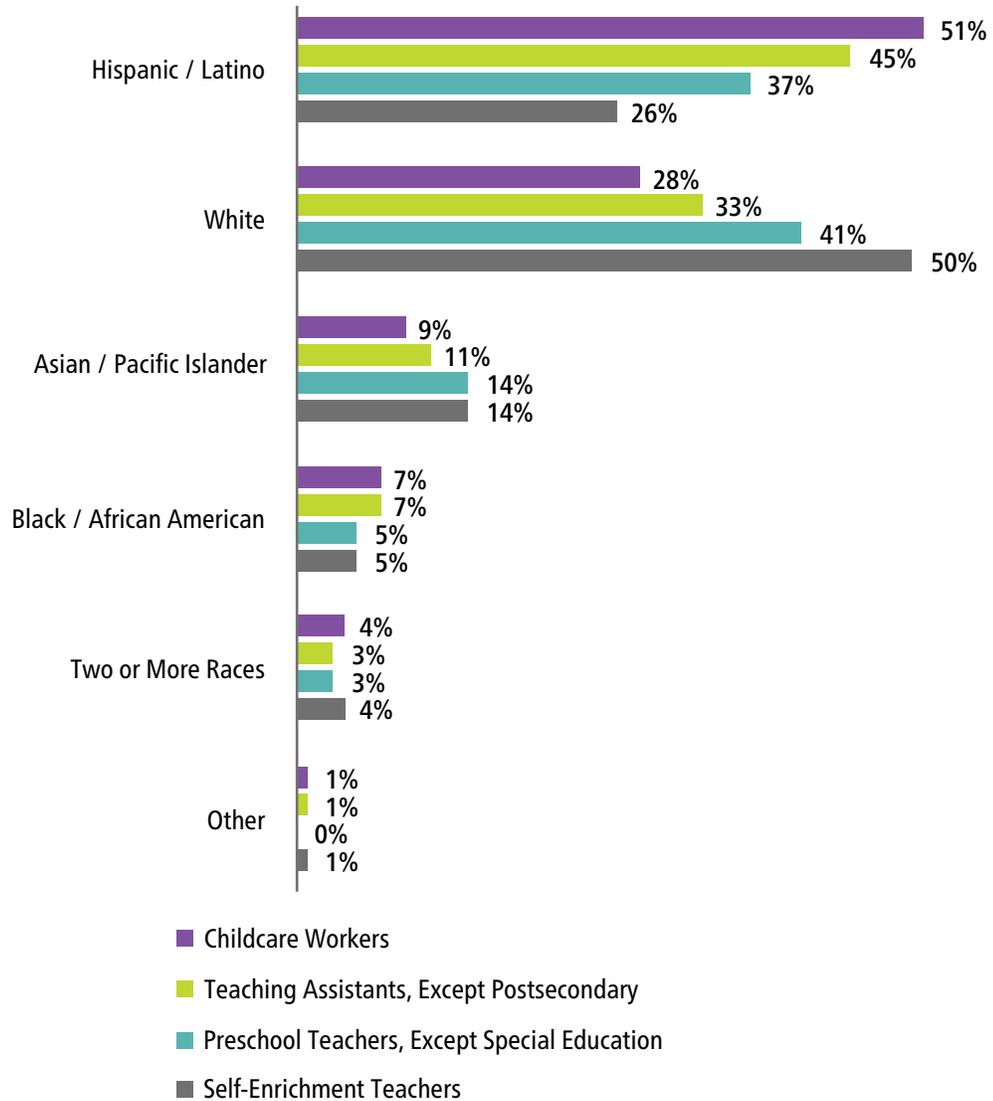


Data source: [Occupational Characteristics](#) (2021 American Community Survey).

Race and ethnicity

Workers who identify as Latino or Hispanic account for 51% of childcare workers and 45% of teaching assistants, except postsecondary (Exhibit 8). By comparison, white workers comprise 50% of self-enrichment teachers and 41% of preschool teachers, except special education. Workers who identify as Asian/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, and two or more races comprise a much smaller share of the workforce across all four source occupations.

Exhibit 8. Race and ethnicity by source occupation, California⁴



Data source: [Occupational Characteristics](#) (2021 American Community Survey).

⁴ Across all four source occupations, individuals who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native comprised less than 1% of the workforce.

Veteran and self-employed status

Exhibit 9 shows the percentage of workers in each source occupation who are veterans or self-employed. Self-enrichment teachers have the highest percentage of workers who are veterans, 4%. Childcare workers has the highest percentage of workers who are self-employed, 36%.

Exhibit 9. Veteran and self-employed status in source occupations, California

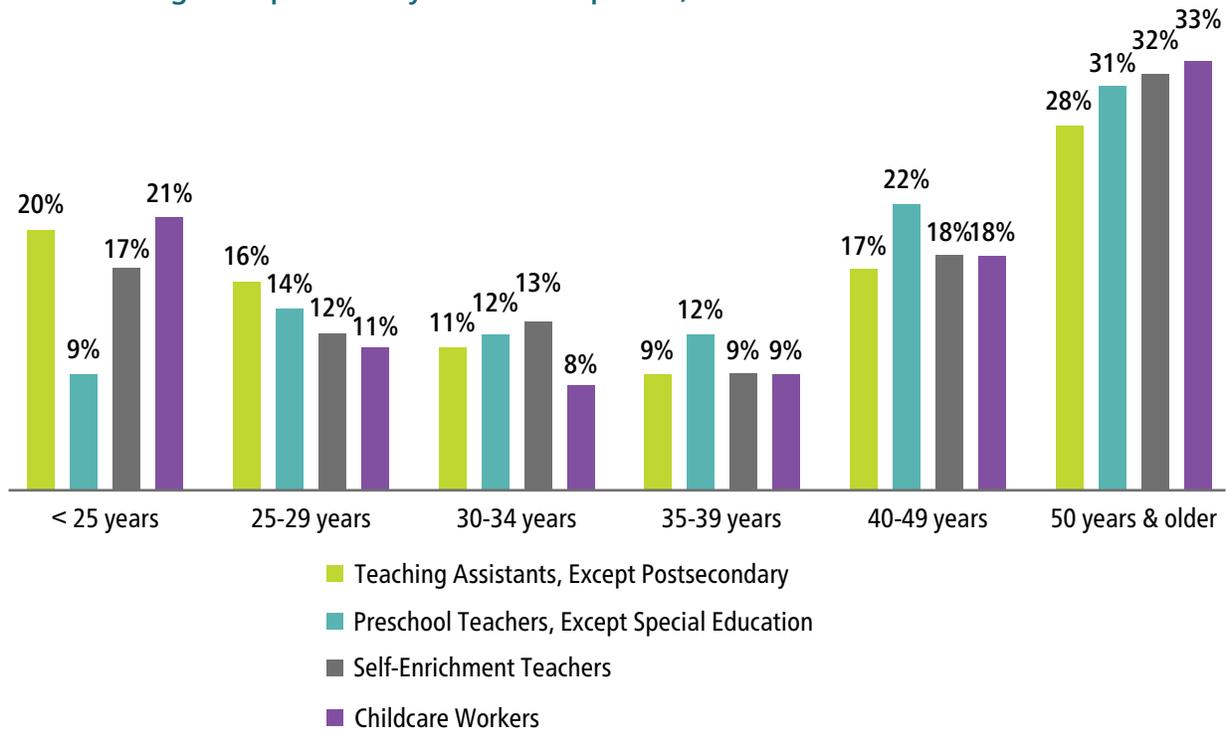
| Source Occupation | Veteran | Self-Employed |
|--|---------|---------------|
| Childcare Workers | 1% | 36% |
| Self-Enrichment Teachers | 4% | 24% |
| Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education | <1% | 4% |
| Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary | 1% | 1% |

Data source: [Occupational Characteristics](#) (2021 American Community Survey).

Age composition

In each occupation, about a third of the workforce is age 50 or older (Exhibit 10). For all occupations, about 23% to 36% of the workforce is age 29 or younger.

Exhibit 10. Age composition by source occupation, California



Data source: [Occupational Characteristics](#) (2021 American Community Survey).

Skills and knowledge areas

Exhibit 11 provides the skills and knowledge required for each of the source occupations. Active listening is a skill required for all four source occupations. Speaking and coordination are skills required for three of the four source occupations. With regard to knowledge areas, all four have several in common: customer and personal service; English language; and education and training. Psychology is an area of knowledge required for three of the four source occupations. The exception is self-enrichment teachers.

Exhibit 11. Common skills and knowledge areas for source occupations

| Source Occupation | Skills | Knowledge |
|--|---|---|
| Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary | Active Listening Coordination Reading Comprehension Social Perceptiveness Speaking | Customer and Personal Service English Language Psychology Mathematics Education and Training |
| Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education | Active Listening Coordination Instruction Learning Strategies Speaking | Education and Training English Language Public Safety and Security Customer and Personal Service Psychology |
| Self-Enrichment Teachers | Active Listening Active Learning Instructing Learning Strategies Speaking | Education and Training Customer and Personal Service English Language |
| Childcare Workers | Active Listening Coordination Monitoring Service Orientation Social Perceptiveness | Customer and Personal Service English Language Education and Training Public Safety and Security Psychology |

Data source: O*NET.

Career pathways outcomes

The National Career Trajectories and Occupational Transitions (CTOT) data category “Early Care and Education” includes teacher assistants, preschool and kindergarten teachers, childcare workers, and other teachers and instructors. While these are not exactly the same occupational titles as the source workforce occupations, they align closely and provide valuable insights into our source workforce occupations.

Exhibit 12 shows that most individuals who begin their careers in these roles leave after three years, with many leaving the early care and education field entirely. For instance, only 15% of former childcare workers remain in a similar role after three years, and only 22% continue in any position within early care and education. Furthermore, CTOT data reveals that only 19% of teacher assistants, 23% of preschool and kindergarten teachers, 11% of childcare workers, and 32% of other teachers and instructors earn more than \$25 per hour after five years of employment. Over a decade, these percentages increased to 36%, 39%, 18%, and 45%, respectively.

Exhibit 12. Occupational trajectories for source occupations with percent of workers still in the same career at three, five, and 10 years, United States

| Occupation | 3 Years | 5 Years | 10 Years |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| Teacher Assistants | 16% | 10% | 3% |
| In Any Early Care Education | 40% | 41% | 30% |
| Preschool and Kindergarten Teachers | 28% | 20% | 9% |
| In Any Early Care Education | 57% | 54% | 37% |
| Childcare Workers | 15% | 9% | 5% |
| In Any Early Care Education | 22% | 17% | 14% |
| Other Teachers and Instructors | 13% | 9% | 5% |
| In Any Early Care Education | 32% | 27% | 23% |

Data source: Career Trajectories and Occupational Transitions (CTOT).

The four source occupations exhibit minimal wage growth over time (Exhibit 13). For example, hourly wages for the occupational grouping “all occupations in early care and education” increase by an average of \$2.38 after three years and by \$8.73 after 10 years. While wage growth is slim, this occupational grouping is one of three with the highest wage increases. The other two are other teachers and instructors (\$10.22), and teacher assistants (\$10.08). Childcare workers have an average increase of \$8.72 after 10 years, and preschool and kindergarten teachers have an average increase of \$7.88 over the same period.

Exhibit 13. Hourly wage growth for source occupations after three, five, and 10 years, United States

| Occupation | 3 Years | 5 Years | 10 Years |
|---|---------|---------|----------|
| All Occupations in Early Care and Education | \$2.38 | \$4.55 | \$8.73 |
| Teaching Assistants | \$2.53 | \$4.99 | \$10.08 |
| Preschool and Kindergarten Teachers | \$1.84 | \$3.28 | \$7.88 |
| Childcare Workers | \$3.15 | \$5.23 | \$8.72 |
| Other Teachers and Instructors | \$1.74 | \$3.75 | \$10.22 |

Data source: Career Trajectories and Occupational Transitions (CTOT).

Over the course of three, five, and 10 years, the percentage of childcare workers earning more than \$25 per hour remains low, reaching 18% only after 10 years (Exhibit 14). Wage outcomes are stronger for teacher assistants and preschool and kindergarten teachers with 36% and 39% earning more than \$25 per hour after 10 years. The strongest wage growth is demonstrated for other teachers and instructors, with 45% earning more than \$25 per hour after 10 years.

Exhibit 14. Percent of workforce in source occupations earning more than \$25 per hour after three, five, and 10 years, United States

| Occupation | 3 Years | 5 Years | 10 Years |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| Teacher Assistants | 10% | 19% | 36% |
| Preschool and Kindergarten Teachers | 17% | 23% | 39% |
| Childcare Workers | 8% | 12% | 18% |
| Other Teachers and Instructors | 22% | 32% | 45% |

Data source: Career Trajectories and Occupational Transitions (CTOT).



OVERVIEW: LATERAL AND NEXT-LEVEL OCCUPATIONS

Exhibit 15 shows the 12 lateral occupations aligned with the four source occupations and the number of source occupations that “generated” it as a lateral occupation.⁵ These lateral occupations were both in demand and offered a living wage in the Bay Region. One occupation, library technicians, was “generated” as a lateral occupation aligned with all four source occupations. Interviewers, except eligibility and loan, was “generated” as a lateral occupation from the four source occupations.

Of the 12 lateral occupations, library technicians is the only occupation that enables the source workforce to remain in the education and human development sector. For each source occupation’s lateral and next-level occupation, Appendix A shows the assigned SOC code, typical entry-level education required, and associated sector designated by the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO).

Exhibit 15. Lateral occupations aligned with source occupations in the Bay Region

| Lateral Occupations | # of Source Occupations that “Generated” Lateral Occupations | Source Occupational Titles |
|---|--|--|
| Library Technicians | 4 | Childcare Workers, Preschool Teachers, Self-Enrichment Teachers, Teaching Assistants |
| Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan | 3 | Self-Enrichment Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Preschool Teachers |
| Healthcare Support Workers, All Other | 1 | Self-Enrichment Teachers |
| Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other | 1 | Teaching Assistants |
| Medical Assistants | 1 | Teaching Assistants |
| Phlebotomist | 1 | Preschool Teachers |
| Psychiatric Technicians | 1 | Preschool Teachers |
| Eligibility Interviewers, Government Programs | 1 | Self-Enrichment Teachers |
| Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants | 1 | Self-Enrichment Teachers |
| Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive | 1 | Self-Enrichment Teachers |
| Insurance Sales Agents | 1 | Self-Enrichment Teachers |
| Court, Municipal, and License Clerks | 1 | Self-Enrichment Teachers |

Data source: Lightcast 2024.4; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

⁵ Starting with a source occupation, lateral and secondary occupations that met specific criteria, as outlined in the methodology, were “generated” to create a list of promising jobs to which the source workforce could transition.

A similar approach was applied to analyzing next-level occupations. Using statewide findings as a foundation, occupational data specific to the Bay Region was examined. Two occupations—kindergarten teachers, except special education, and compliance officers—were “generated” as next-level occupations aligned with all four source occupations.

Three occupations were “generated” as next-level occupations from three of the four occupations that comprise the source workforce: elementary school teachers, except special education; librarians and media collections specialists; and interpreters and translators.

Five of the 11 recommended next-level occupations enable the source workforce to remain in the education and human development sector. Exhibit 16 shows the 11 next-level occupations and, for each, shows the number of source occupations that “generated” it as a next-level occupation.

Exhibit 16. Next-level occupations aligned with source occupations in the Bay Region

| Next-Level Occupations | # of Source Occupations that “Generated” Next-Level Occupations | Source Occupational Titles |
|--|---|--|
| Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education | 4 | Childcare Workers, Preschool Teachers, Self-Enrichment Teachers, Teaching Assistants |
| Compliance Officers | 4 | Childcare Workers, Preschool Teachers, Self-Enrichment Teachers, Teaching Assistants |
| Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education | 3 | Preschool Teachers, Self-Enrichment Teachers, Teaching Assistants |
| Librarians and Media Collections Specialists | 3 | Preschool Teachers, Self-Enrichment Teachers, Teaching Assistants |
| Interpreters and Translators | 3 | Preschool Teachers, Self-Enrichment Teachers, Teaching Assistants |
| Occupational Therapists | 2 | Preschool Teachers, Teaching Assistants |
| Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping | 2 | Childcare Workers, Self-Enrichment Teachers |
| Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education | 1 | Teaching Assistants |
| Producers and Directors | 1 | Self-Enrichment Teachers |
| Dental Hygienists | 1 | Childcare Workers |
| Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks | 1 | Childcare Workers |

Data source: Lightcast 2024.4; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

TEACHING ASSISTANTS: LATERAL AND NEXT-LEVEL OCCUPATIONS

In California, teaching assistants, except postsecondary, can earn an average of \$22 per hour, which exceeds the state’s living wage of \$17. Workers employed as teaching assistants, except postsecondary, can transition to any of the occupations in Exhibit 17 with no additional formal education or minimal further training. These occupations offer wages ranging from \$22 to \$38 per hour. (See Appendix A for SOC codes, educational requirements, and CCCCO Sectors for lateral and next-level occupations.)

One of the 10 occupations is in the education and human development sector: library technicians. Additionally, there are opportunities in health, business and entrepreneurship, advanced transportation and logistics, and retail, hospitality, and tourism. These lateral occupations have a compatibility index of 92 or higher, making them suitable options for career advancement.

Exhibit 17. Wages, current employment, and projected occupational demand for lateral occupations mapped to teaching assistants, except postsecondary, California

| Lateral Occupation | Median Hourly Earnings | 2023 Jobs | % Change | Annual Openings | Compatibility Index |
|--|------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Patient Representatives* | \$25.39 | 22,230 | 12% | 2,110 | 94 |
| Library Assistants, Clerical | \$22.43 | 9,745 | 2% | 1,781 | 94 |
| Library Technicians | \$24.01 | 9,308 | 2% | 1,618 | 94 |
| Occupational Therapy Assistants | \$38.93 | 2,973 | 23% | 589 | 93 |
| Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance | \$24.02 | 24,077 | 3% | 2,459 | 93 |
| Customer Service Representatives | \$22.21 | 190,835 | (1%) | 25,925 | 93 |
| Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan | \$24.08 | 20,749 | (2%) | 2,514 | 93 |
| First-Line Supervisors of Personal Service Workers | \$24.47 | 9,198 | 16% | 1,358 | 92 |
| Social and Human Service Assistants | \$23.26 | 57,260 | 12% | 7,495 | 92 |
| Medical Assistants | \$22.45 | 109,579 | 10% | 16,675 | 92 |

Data source: Lightcast 2024.4; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

* denotes an 8-digit SOC code which represents a more specific occupation that falls under the broader category defined by the corresponding 6-digit SOC code.

Exhibit 18 highlights next-level occupations that are compatible with the teaching assistant source occupation but require additional education. These occupations offer wages from \$41 to \$53 per hour. Eight of the 10 occupations are in the education and human development sector. While the compatibility index for these occupations ranges from 92 to 96, all of them require at least a bachelor's degree, and some may require a master's degree. (See Appendix A for details.)

Exhibit 18. Wages, current employment, and projected occupational demand for next-level occupations mapped to teaching assistants, except postsecondary, California

| Next-Level Occupation | Median Hourly Earnings | 2023 Jobs | % Change | Annual Openings | Compatibility Index |
|--|------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education | \$45.70 | 7,250 | 7% | 895 | 96 |
| Special Education Teachers, Preschool | \$36.62 | 2,239 | 9% | 197 | 94 |
| Librarians and Media Collections Specialists | \$41.10 | 9,530 | 8% | 1,084 | 94 |
| Compliance Officers | \$41.76 | 48,199 | 3% | 4,012 | 94 |
| Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, and English as a Second Language Instructors | \$42.55 | 3,272 | 0% | 413 | 94 |
| Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education | \$45.98 | 153,285 | 5% | 11,980 | 93 |
| Low Vision Therapists, Orientation and Mobility Specialists, and Vision Rehabilitation Therapists* | \$53.61 | 12,556 | 13% | 1,055 | 92 |
| Special Education Teachers, Middle School | \$45.52 | 7,113 | 6% | 570 | 92 |
| Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education | \$48.30 | 96,538 | 5% | 7,154 | 92 |
| Interpreters and Translators | \$30.81 | 7,203 | 4% | 782 | 92 |

Data source: Lightcast 2024.4; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

* denotes an 8-digit SOC code which represents a more specific occupation that falls under the broader category defined by the corresponding 6-digit SOC code.

Regional assessment

Using the criteria outlined in the methodology, specific lateral and next-level occupations were identified with more than 200 annual job openings between 2023 and 2028 in the Bay Region and at least a median hourly wage of \$26 per hour. Exhibit 19 shows that of the 10 lateral occupations identified statewide, only four met the same criteria in the region: health technologists and technicians, all other; library technicians; interviewers, except eligibility and loan; and medical assistants.

The other occupations not selected offer a slightly lower median wage, below \$26 or have fewer than 200 annual job openings. Regarding the next-level occupations shown in Exhibit 19, seven of 10 occupations demonstrate a high number of job openings and offer wages above the region’s living wage.

Exhibit 19. Lateral and next-level occupations aligned with teaching assistants, except postsecondary, in the Bay Region

| | Lateral Occupations | Annual Openings | Median Hourly Earnings |
|-------------------------------|--|-----------------|------------------------|
| Meets Criteria | Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other* | 510 | \$31 |
| | Library Technicians | 370 | \$27 |
| | Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan | 590 | \$26 |
| | Medical Assistants | 4,180 | \$28 |
| More Than 200 Annual Openings | Customer Service Representatives | 5,910 | \$23 |
| | Social and Human Service Assistants | 1,550 | \$24 |
| | Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance | 550 | \$25 |
| | Library Assistants, Clerical | 500 | \$25 |
| | First-Line Supervisors of Personal Service Workers | 330 | \$25 |
| Above Region’s Living Wage | Occupational Therapy Assistants | 100 | \$45 |
| Next-Level Occupations | | | |
| Meets Criteria | Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education | 2,240 | \$45 |
| | Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/ Technical Education | 1,410 | \$48 |
| | Compliance Officers | 1,040 | \$43 |
| | Librarians and Media Collections Specialists | 340 | \$44 |
| | Interpreters and Translators | 330 | \$35 |
| | Occupational Therapists | 250 | \$58 |
| | Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education | 240 | \$45 |
| Above Region’s Living Wage | Special Education Teachers, Middle School | 150 | \$48 |
| | Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, and English as a Second Language Instructors | 140 | \$41 |
| | Special Education Teachers, Preschool | 50 | \$38 |

Data source: Lightcast 2024.4; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

* denotes an 8-digit SOC code which represents a more specific occupation that falls under the broader category defined by the corresponding 6-digit SOC code.

PRESCHOOL TEACHERS: LATERAL AND NEXT-LEVEL OCCUPATIONS

In California, preschool teachers, except special education, earn an average of \$24 per hour, which exceeds the state’s minimum wage of \$17, and typically must have an associate degree to enter an entry-level position. Exhibit 20 highlights lateral occupations aligned with preschool teachers that require either a high school diploma or equivalent, or an associate degree. Preschool teachers could transition into any of these occupations with no additional formal education or minimal training. These occupations offer median wages from \$24 to \$38 per hour. (See Appendix A for SOC codes, educational requirements, and CCCC Sector for lateral and next-level occupations.)

One out of the 10 lateral occupations is within the field of education and human development, library technicians, while other opportunities exist in the business and entrepreneurship sector and health sector. These lateral occupations have a compatibility index of 90 or higher, making them suitable options for career advancement.

Exhibit 20. Wages, current employment, and projected occupational demand for lateral occupations mapped to preschool teachers, except special education, California

| Lateral Occupation | Median Hourly Earnings | 2023 Jobs | % Change | Annual Openings | Compatibility Index |
|--|------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Library Technicians | \$24.01 | 9,308 | 2% | 1,618 | 95 |
| Psychiatric Technicians | \$31.83 | 10,079 | 13% | 1,155 | 92 |
| Speech-Language Pathology Assistants | \$24.28 | 17,388 | 5% | 2,557 | 92 |
| Bailiffs | \$40.25 | 17,388 | 5% | 2,557 | 92 |
| First-Line Supervisors of Personal Service Workers | \$24.47 | 302,281 | (1%) | 36,506 | 92 |
| Phlebotomists | \$23.84 | 2,973 | 23% | 589 | 91 |
| Occupational Therapy Assistants | \$38.93 | 2,973 | 23% | 589 | 91 |
| Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan | \$24.08 | 20,749 | (2%) | 2,514 | 91 |
| Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance | \$24.02 | 24,077 | 3% | 2,459 | 91 |
| Makeup Artists, Theatrical and Performance | \$46.54 | 1,294 | 10% | 246 | 90 |

Data source: Lightcast 2024.4; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

* denotes an 8-digit SOC code which represents a more specific occupation that falls under the broader category defined by the corresponding 6-digit SOC code.

Exhibit 21 highlights next-level occupations that are compatible with preschool teachers, except special education, but require additional education. These occupations offer median wages from \$30 to \$53 per hour. Eight out of the 10 occupations are in the education and human development sector. While the compatibility index for these occupations ranges from 90 to 94, all of them require at least a bachelor's degree, and some may even require a master's degree. (See Appendix A for details.)

Exhibit 21. Wages, current employment, and projected occupational demand for next-level occupations mapped to preschool teachers, except special education, California

| Next-Level Occupation | Median Hourly Earnings | 2023 Jobs | % Change | Annual Openings | Compatibility Index |
|--|------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Special Education Teachers, Preschool | \$36.62 | 2,239 | 9% | 197 | 94 |
| Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education | \$45.70 | 7,250 | 7% | 895 | 94 |
| Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, and English as a Second Language Instructors | \$42.55 | 3,272 | 0% | 413 | 93 |
| Compliance Officers | \$41.76 | 48,199 | 3% | 4,012 | 92 |
| Adapted Physical Education Specialists* | \$41.81 | 7,468 | 6% | 599 | 91 |
| Low Vision Therapists, Orientation and Mobility Specialists, and Vision Rehabilitation Therapists* | \$53.61 | 12,556 | 13% | 1,055 | 91 |
| Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education | \$45.98 | 153,285 | 5% | 11,980 | 91 |
| Special Education Teachers, Middle School | \$45.52 | 7,113 | 6% | 570 | 90 |
| Interpreters and Translators | \$30.81 | 7,203 | 4% | 782 | 90 |
| Librarians and Media Collections Specialists | \$41.10 | 9,530 | 8% | 1,084 | 90 |

Data source: Lightcast 2024.4; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

* denotes an 8-digit SOC code which represents a more specific occupation that falls under the broader category defined by the corresponding 6-digit SOC code.

Regional assessment

Exhibit 22 shows recommended lateral and next-level occupations aligned with the source occupations in the Bay Region. There are four lateral occupations that met the methodology criteria in the Bay Region: library technicians, psychiatric technicians, phlebotomists, and interviewers, except eligibility and loan. The other occupations not marked as “recommended” offer a slightly lower median wage (below \$26 per hour) or had fewer than 200 annual job openings. Regarding next-level occupations shown in Exhibit 22, six out of 10 occupations meet both criteria; they demonstrate a high number of job openings and offer wages above the Bay Region’s living wage.

Exhibit 22. Lateral and next-level occupations aligned with preschool teachers, except special education, in the Bay Region⁶

| | Lateral Occupations | Annual Openings | Median Hourly Earnings |
|--------------------------------|--|-----------------|------------------------|
| Meets Criteria | Library Technicians | 370 | \$27 |
| | Psychiatric Technicians | 220 | \$35 |
| | Phlebotomists | 370 | \$26 |
| | Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan | 590 | \$26 |
| More Than 200 Annual Openings | First-Line Supervisors of Personal Service Workers | 330 | \$25 |
| | Speech-Language Pathologists Assistants | 660 | \$20 |
| | Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance | 550 | \$25 |
| Above the Region’s Living Wage | Occupational Therapy Assistants | 100 | \$45 |
| | Bailiffs | 20 | \$35 |
| | Makeup Artists, Theatrical and Performance | 50 | \$48 |
| Next-Level Occupations | | | |
| Meets Criteria | Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education | 2,240 | \$45 |
| | Compliance Officers | 1,040 | \$43 |
| | Librarians and Media Collections Specialists | 340 | \$44 |
| | Interpreters and Translators | 330 | \$35 |
| | Occupational Therapists* | 250 | \$58 |
| | Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education | 240 | \$45 |
| Above the Region’s Living Wage | Special Education Teachers, Middle School | 150 | \$48 |
| | Special Education Teachers, All Other* | 120 | \$40 |
| | Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, and English as a Second Language Instructors | 140 | \$41 |
| | Special Education Teachers, Preschool | 50 | \$38 |

Data source: Lightcast 2024.4: QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

* denotes an 8-digit SOC code which represents a more specific occupation that falls under the broader category defined by the corresponding 6-digit SOC code.

⁶ In conducting the analysis, the SOC code 25-9042 was not available for preschool teachers, except special education, in the Bay Region. The 8-digit SOC code was not available for this specific occupation in the Bay Region; therefore, we used the broader code. The SOC codes 31-3099 (health care support workers), 25-2059 (special education teachers, all other), and 29-1122 (occupational therapists) are the parent codes that includes the more specific SOC codes represented in the prior state-level tables.

SELF-ENRICHMENT TEACHERS: LATERAL AND NEXT-LEVEL OCCUPATIONS

In California, self-enrichment teachers earn an average median wage of \$23 per hour, which is above the state’s living wage of \$17 per hour. Typically, a high school diploma or equivalent is needed to enter an entry-level position. Exhibit 23 highlights lateral occupations that require a high school diploma or equivalent and have median wages from \$24 to \$38 per hour.

These occupations mostly represent lateral movements in terms of wages. Only two of the 10 occupations are within the field of education and human development: library technician and eligibility interviewers, government programs. Additionally, there are opportunities in the business and entrepreneurship, health, and advanced transportation and logistics sectors. These lateral occupations have a compatibility index of 90 or higher, making them viable lateral options, and some offer higher wages. (See Appendix A for SOC codes, educational requirements, and CCCCC Sectors for lateral and next-level occupations.)

Exhibit 23. Wages, current employment, and projected occupational demand for lateral occupations mapped to self-enrichment teachers, California

| Lateral Occupation | Median Hourly Earnings | 2023 Jobs | % Change | Annual Openings | Compatibility Index |
|---|------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Library Technicians | \$24.01 | 9,308 | 2% | 1,618 | 95 |
| Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan | \$24.08 | 20,749 | (2%) | 2,514 | 92 |
| Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers | \$38.36 | 4,133 | (1%) | 399 | 92 |
| Speech-Language Pathology Assistants* | \$24.28 | 17,388 | 5% | 2,557 | 92 |
| Eligibility Interviewers, Government Programs | \$29.10 | 29,727 | 4% | 2,850 | 91 |
| Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants | \$23.55 | 111,353 | 6% | 13,240 | 91 |
| Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive | \$24.30 | 187,346 | (3%) | 20,846 | 90 |
| Insurance Sales Agents | \$30.31 | 52,565 | 0% | 4,407 | 90 |
| Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance | \$24.02 | 24,077 | 3% | 2,459 | 90 |
| Court, Municipal, and License Clerks | \$28.51 | 13,657 | 8% | 1,607 | 90 |

Data source: Lightcast 2024.4; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

* denotes an 8-digit SOC code which represents a more specific occupation that falls under the broader category defined by the corresponding 6-digit SOC code.

Exhibit 24 highlights occupations that are compatible with the self-enrichment teachers source occupation but require additional education. These occupations offer wages ranging from \$25 to \$51 per hour. Six out of the 10 occupations are in the education and human development sector. The compatibility index for these occupations ranges from 90 to 93, and some require an associate degree, a bachelor's degree, or a master's degree. (See Appendix A for details.)

Exhibit 24. Wages, current employment, and projected occupational demand for next-level occupations mapped to self-enrichment teachers, California

| Next-Level Occupation | Median Hourly Earnings | 2023 Jobs | % Change | Annual Openings | Compatibility Index |
|--|------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, and English as a Second Language Instructors | \$42.55 | 3,272 | 0% | 413 | 93 |
| Compliance Officers | \$41.76 | 48,199 | 3% | 4,012 | 92 |
| Interpreters and Translators | \$30.81 | 7,203 | 4% | 782 | 92 |
| Special Education Teachers, Preschool | \$36.62 | 2,239 | 9% | 197 | 92 |
| Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education | \$45.70 | 7,250 | 7% | 895 | 91 |
| Librarians and Media Collections Specialists | \$41.10 | 9,530 | 8% | 1,084 | 91 |
| Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping | \$25.47 | 14,218 | (1%) | 1,589 | 90 |
| Talent Directors* | \$51.05 | 40,948 | 2% | 3,579 | 90 |
| Credit Counselors | \$29.72 | 2,830 | 3% | 215 | 90 |
| Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education | \$45.98 | 153,285 | 5% | 11,980 | 90 |

Data source: Lightcast 2024.4; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

* denotes an 8-digit SOC code which represents a more specific occupation that falls under the broader category defined by the corresponding 6-digit SOC code.



Regional assessment

Exhibit 25 shows recommended lateral and next-level occupations aligned with the source occupations in the Bay Region. Eight out of 10 lateral occupations met both criteria: a median wage above the region’s living wage and more than 200 annual job openings.

The occupations not marked as “recommended” offer a slightly lower median wage (below \$26 per hour) or had fewer than 200 annual job openings. Regarding the next-level occupations, seven out of 10 occupations meet both criteria; they demonstrate a high number of job openings and offer wages above the Bay Region’s living wage.

Exhibit 25. Lateral and next-level occupations aligned with self-enrichment teachers in the Bay Region

| | Lateral Occupations | Annual Openings | Median Hourly Earnings |
|--------------------------------|--|-----------------|------------------------|
| Meets Criteria | Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive | 4,980 | \$26 |
| | Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants | 3,010 | \$27 |
| | Insurance Sales Agents | 1,160 | \$34 |
| | Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan | 590 | \$26 |
| | Eligibility Interviewers, Government Programs | 470 | \$35 |
| | Court, Municipal, and License Clerks | 370 | \$30 |
| | Healthcare Support Workers, All Other* | 470 | \$26 |
| | Library Technicians | 370 | \$27 |
| More Than 200 Annual Openings | Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance | 550 | \$25 |
| Above the Region’s Living Wage | Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers | 110 | \$37 |
| Next-Level Occupations | | | |
| Meets Criteria | Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education | 2,240 | \$45 |
| | Compliance Officers | 1,040 | \$43 |
| | Producers and Directors | 750 | \$47 |
| | Librarians and Media Collections Specialists | 340 | \$44 |
| | Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping | 340 | \$27 |
| | Interpreters and Translators | 330 | \$35 |
| | Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education | 240 | \$45 |
| Above the Region’s Living Wage | Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, and English as a Second Language Instructors | 140 | \$41 |
| | Credit Counselors | 60 | \$31 |
| | Special Education Teachers, Preschool | 50 | \$38 |

Data source: Lightcast 2024.4; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

* denotes an 8-digit SOC code which represents a more specific occupation that falls under the broader category defined by the corresponding 6-digit SOC code.

CHILDCARE WORKERS: LATERAL AND NEXT-LEVEL OCCUPATIONS

In California, childcare workers earn an average of \$19 per hour, which is above the state’s living wage of \$17. This role typically requires a high school diploma or equivalent for entry-level employment. Exhibit 26 highlights lateral occupations that require the same level of education and offer wages ranging from \$19 to \$24 per hour. Only one of the 10 occupations is within the field of education and human development: library technicians. Other lateral occupations fall within sectors such as business and entrepreneurship, health, and retail, hospitality, and tourism. These lateral occupations have a compatibility index of 93 or higher, making them viable lateral options; however, the wage increase is minimal. (See Appendix A for SOC codes, educational requirements, and CCCCCO Sectors for lateral and next-level occupations.)

Exhibit 26. Wages, current employment, and projected occupational demand for lateral occupations mapped to childcare workers, California

| Lateral Occupation | Median Hourly Earnings | 2023 Jobs | % Change | Annual Openings | Compatibility Index |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Library Technicians | \$24.01 | 9,308 | 2% | 1,618 | 95 |
| Demonstrators and Product Promoters | \$19.88 | 9,494 | 1% | 1,783 | 95 |
| Library Assistants, Clerical | \$22.43 | 9,745 | 2% | 1,781 | 95 |
| Nursing Assistants | \$21.69 | 111,486 | 11% | 19,152 | 94 |
| Pharmacy Aides | \$19.95 | 9,347 | (2%) | 1,644 | 94 |
| Skincare Specialists | \$20.37 | 9,866 | 16% | 1,771 | 94 |
| Gambling Cage Workers | \$19.20 | 1,260 | 3% | 142 | 94 |
| Psychiatric Aides | \$22.73 | 2,304 | 13% | 424 | 93 |
| Customer Service Representatives | \$22.21 | 190,835 | (1%) | 25,925 | 93 |
| Office Clerks, General | \$22.13 | 302,281 | (1%) | 36,506 | 93 |

Data source: Lightcast 2024.4; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.



Exhibit 27 highlights next-level occupations that are compatible with the skillsets of childcare workers but require additional education (e.g., some college or an associate degree). These occupations offer wages ranging from \$20 to \$58 per hour. Four out of the 10 occupations are in the education and human development sector. While the compatibility index for these occupations ranges from 87 to 90, all of them require the completion of some college or a degree. (See Appendix A for details.)

Exhibit 27. Wages, current employment, and projected occupational demand for next-level occupations mapped to childcare workers, California

| Next-Level Occupation | Median Hourly Earnings | 2023 Jobs | % Change | Annual Openings | Compatibility Index |
|--|------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Compliance Officers | \$41.76 | 48,199 | 3% | 4,012 | 90 |
| Special Education Teachers, Preschool | \$36.62 | 2,239 | 9% | 197 | 90 |
| Dental Hygienists | \$58.09 | 24,563 | 7% | 2,020 | 89 |
| Occupational Therapy Assistants | \$38.93 | 2,973 | 23% | 589 | 89 |
| Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, and English as a Second Language Instructors | \$42.55 | 3,272 | 0% | 413 | 88 |
| Teaching Assistants, Postsecondary | \$19.94 | 26,929 | 3% | 3,404 | 88 |
| Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks | \$25.70 | 166,320 | (1%) | 19,430 | 88 |
| Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping | \$25.47 | 14,218 | (1%) | 1,589 | 88 |
| Credit Counselors | \$29.72 | 2,830 | 3% | 215 | 87 |
| Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education | \$45.70 | 7,250 | 7% | 895 | 87 |

Data source: Lightcast 2024.4; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

Regional assessment

Exhibit 28 shows recommended lateral and next-level occupations aligned with the source occupations in the Bay Region. One occupation, library technicians, met the methodology criteria for selection—a median wage above \$26 per hour and more than 200 annual job openings. The other occupations not marked as “recommended” offer a slightly lower median wage (below \$26 per hour) or have fewer than 200 annual job openings. Regarding the next-level occupations, five out of 10 occupations meet both criteria; they demonstrate a high number of job openings and offer wages above the Bay Region’s living wage.

Exhibit 28. Lateral and next-level occupations aligned with childcare workers in the Bay Region⁷

| | Lateral Occupations | Annual Openings | Median Hourly Earnings |
|--------------------------------|--|-----------------|------------------------|
| Meets Criteria | Library Technicians | 370 | \$27 |
| More Than 200 Annual Openings | Office Clerks, General | 7,730 | \$23 |
| | Customer Service Representatives | 5,910 | \$23 |
| | Nursing Assistants | 4,000 | \$23 |
| | Demonstrators and Product Promoters | 750 | \$19 |
| | Skincare Specialists | 570 | \$24 |
| | Library Assistants, Clerical | 500 | \$25 |
| | Pharmacy Aides | 340 | \$25 |
| Next-Level Occupations | | | |
| Meets Criteria | Compliance Officers | 1,040 | \$43 |
| | Dental Hygienists | 490 | \$61 |
| | Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping | 340 | \$27 |
| | Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education | 240 | \$45 |
| | Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks | 4,640 | \$28 |
| More Than 200 Annual Openings | Teaching Assistants, Postsecondary | 820 | \$20 |
| Above the Region’s Living Wage | Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, and English as a Second Language Instructors | 140 | \$41 |
| | Occupational Therapy Assistants | 100 | \$45 |
| | Credit Counselors | 60 | \$31 |
| | Special Education Teachers, Preschool | 50 | \$38 |

Data source: Lightcast 2024.4; QCEW, non-QCEW, and Self-Employed.

⁷ The SOC code 25-9042 is not available for the Bay Region. Note. The SOC code 31-3099, 25-2059, and 29-1122 are the parent code that includes the more specific SOC codes represented in the prior state-level tables. The 8-digit SOC code was not available for this specific occupation in the Bay Region; therefore, we used the broader code.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Some childhood education occupations offer a living wage at the state level in California but fall short of meeting the cost of living in the Bay Region, where expenses are significantly higher. Individuals in these roles may be interested in exploring alternative career pathways that provide higher earning potential. About 5% of individuals who began in one of the four source occupations remained in the same occupation after 10 years. Addressing concerns about occupations with low wages or limited career advancement opportunities can support individuals who may choose to switch to occupations with similar skills requirements but that offer greater stability, higher pay, or promising opportunities in other areas.

Individuals currently employed in the source occupations (teaching assistants, preschool teachers, self-enrichment teachers, and childcare workers) may consider transitioning to lateral occupations that align with their existing skills and require minimal additional education. Based on statewide data, 12 occupations meet the definition of a lateral occupation and are recommended for childhood education professionals transitioning from the source workforce. These lateral occupations have a high compatibility index, offer wages equal to or higher than the source workforce occupation, and require less than six months of additional education or training, if any. Examples include library technicians, healthcare support workers, and interviewers, except eligibility and loan. These roles offer higher wages and better job stability, making them viable options for career growth.

Based on Bay Region data analysis, library technicians stand out as a promising lateral occupation that is highly compatible with all four source occupations, meaning it is accessible to a large pool of workers. Secretaries and administrative assistants, with 4,980 annual openings, and medical secretaries and administrative assistants, with 3,010 annual openings, are promising lateral occupations because they represent occupations in high demand in the regional labor market. In terms of wages, eligibility workers (government programs) and psychiatric technicians pay \$35 per hour, the highest median wages among the 12 lateral occupations.

For those willing to pursue further education, a number of next-level career pathways provide significant earning potential and long-term benefits that align closely with the skills and work experience required for childhood education employment. Based on statewide data, 11 occupations met the definition of next-level occupation. Five of the 11 recommended next-level occupations allow the source workforce to remain in the education and human development sector. These occupations include kindergarten teachers, elementary school teachers, secondary school teachers, librarians and media collection specialists, and interpreters and translators.

Kindergarten teachers and compliance officers stand out as promising next-level occupations because they are highly compatible with all four source occupations, meaning they are accessible to a large pool of workers. Two next-level occupations with high-employment demand are elementary school teachers, 2,240 annual openings, and secondary school teachers, 1,410 annual openings. In terms of wages, dental hygienists at \$61 per hour and occupational therapists at \$58 per hour may be appealing because they pay the highest median wages among the 11 next-level occupations.

Policymakers and stakeholders in the Bay Region are encouraged to support individuals who may be transitioning to new careers by providing resources, such as career counseling, short-term training programs, financial aid for further education, and fostering partnerships with local employers and educational institutions. Initiatives that enhance the retention and professional development of individuals within the field of early childhood education, such as wage increases and career progression frameworks, can also play a crucial role in addressing workforce challenges.

Childhood education roles play a foundational part in the social and economic framework of communities, yet these jobs often do not provide the financial security needed for workers to thrive, especially in high-cost regions like the Bay Region. The pathways outlined in this report offer financial stability, align with existing skillsets, and allow individuals to build on their commitment to education and community service. By exploring alternative career pathways and providing targeted support for skill development, individuals in these roles can achieve higher wages, greater job stability, and career satisfaction. Addressing these systemic challenges requires coordinated efforts from educational institutions, policymakers, and community organizations to empower this vital workforce and ensure sustainable career opportunities.



APPENDIX A: SOC CODES, EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS, AND CCCCO SECTORS FOR LATERAL AND NEXT-LEVEL OCCUPATIONS

TEACHING ASSISTANTS, EXCEPT POSTSECONDARY

Exhibit A1. Lateral occupations requiring less than six months mapped to teaching assistants, except postsecondary (SOC code 25-9045)

| SOC Codes | Lateral Occupation | Entry-Level Education | Sector |
|------------|--|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 29-2099.08 | Patient Representatives* | Certificate | Health |
| 43-4121.00 | Library Assistants, Clerical | High School | Business & Entrepreneurship |
| 25-4031.00 | Library Technicians | Certificate | Education & Human Development |
| 31-2011.00 | Occupational Therapy Assistants | Associate Degree | Health |
| 43-5032.00 | Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance | High School | Advanced Transportation & Logistics |
| 43-4051.00 | Customer Service Representatives | High School | Business & Entrepreneurship |
| 43-4111.00 | Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan | High School | Business & Entrepreneurship |
| 39-1022.00 | First-Line Supervisors of Personal Service Workers | High School | Retail, Hospitality & Tourism |
| 21-1093.00 | Social and Human Service Assistants | High School | Health |
| 31-9092.00 | Medical Assistants | Certificate | Health |

* denotes an 8-digit SOC code which represents a more specific occupation that falls under the broader category defined by the corresponding 6-digit SOC code.

Exhibit A2. Next-level occupations requiring less than six months mapped to teaching assistants, except postsecondary (SOC code 25-9045)

| SOC Codes | Next-Level Occupation | Entry-Level Education | Sector |
|------------|--|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 25-2012.00 | Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 25-2051.00 | Special Education Teachers, Preschool | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 25-4022.00 | Librarians and Media Collections Specialists | Master's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 13-1041.00 | Compliance Officers | Bachelor's Degree | Unassigned CTE |
| 25-3011.00 | Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, and English as a Second Language Instructors | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 25-2021.00 | Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 29-1122.01 | Low Vision Therapists, Orientation and Mobility Specialists, and Vision Rehabilitation Therapists* | Master's Degree | Health |
| 25-2057.00 | Special Education Teachers, Middle School | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 25-2031.00 | Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 27-3091.00 | Interpreters and Translators | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |

* denotes an 8-digit SOC code which represents a more specific occupation that falls under the broader category defined by the corresponding 6-digit SOC code.

PRESCHOOL TEACHERS, EXCEPT SPECIAL EDUCATION

Exhibit A3. Lateral occupations requiring less than six months mapped to preschool teachers, except special education (SOC code 25-2011)

| SOC Codes | Lateral Occupation | Entry-Level Education | Sector |
|------------|--|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 25-4031.00 | Library Technicians | Certificate | Education & Human Development |
| 29-2053.00 | Psychiatric Technicians | High School | Health |
| 31-9099.01 | Speech-Language Pathology Assistants* | High School | Health |
| 31-2011.00 | Occupational Therapy Assistants | Associate Degree | Health |
| 31-9097.00 | Phlebotomists | Certificate | Life Sciences/Biotech |
| 33-3011.00 | Bailiffs | High School | Public Safety |
| 39-1022.00 | First-Line Supervisors of Personal Service Workers | High School | Retail, Hospitality & Tourism |
| 39-5091.00 | Makeup Artists, Theatrical and Performance | Certificate | Business & Entrepreneurship |
| 43-4111.00 | Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan | High School | Business & Entrepreneurship |
| 43-5032.00 | Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance | High School | Advanced Transportation & Logistics |

* denotes an 8-digit SOC code which represents a more specific occupation that falls under the broader category defined by the corresponding 6-digit SOC code.

Exhibit A4. Next-level occupations requiring less than six months mapped to preschool teachers, except special education (25-2011)

| SOC Codes | Next-Level Occupation | Entry-Level Education | Sector |
|------------|--|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 25-2051.00 | Special Education Teachers, Preschool | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 25-2012.00 | Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 25-3011.00 | Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, and English as a Second Language Instructors | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 13-1041.00 | Compliance Officers | Bachelor's Degree | Unassigned CTE |
| 25-2059.01 | Adapted Physical Education Specialists* | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 29-1122.01 | Low Vision Therapists, Orientation and Mobility Specialists, and Vision Rehabilitation Therapists* | Master's Degree | Health |
| 25-2021.00 | Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 25-2057.00 | Special Education Teachers, Middle School | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 27-3091.00 | Interpreters and Translators | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 25-4022.00 | Librarians and Media Collections Specialists | Master's Degree | Education & Human Development |

* denotes an 8-digit SOC code which represents a more specific occupation that falls under the broader category defined by the corresponding 6-digit SOC code.

SELF-ENRICHMENT TEACHERS

Exhibit A5. Lateral occupations requiring less than six months mapped to self-enrichment teachers (SOC code 25-3021)

| SOC Codes | Lateral Occupation | Entry-Level Education | Sector |
|------------|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 25-4031.00 | Library Technicians | Certificate | Education & Human Development |
| 43-4111.00 | Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan | High School | Business & Entrepreneurship |
| 23-2093.00 | Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers | High School | Business & Entrepreneurship |
| 31-9099.01 | Speech-Language Pathology Assistants* | High School | Health |
| 43-4061.00 | Eligibility Interviewers, Government Programs | High School | Education & Human Development |
| 43-6013.00 | Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants | High School | Health |
| 43-6014.00 | Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive | High School | Business & Entrepreneurship |
| 41-3021.00 | Insurance Sales Agents | High School | Business & Entrepreneurship |
| 43-5032.00 | Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance | High School | Advanced Transportation & Logistics |
| 43-4031.00 | Court, Municipal, and License Clerks | High School | Unassigned CTE |

* denotes an 8-digit SOC code which represents a more specific occupation that falls under the broader category defined by the corresponding 6-digit SOC code.

Exhibit A6. Next-level occupations requiring less than six months mapped to self-enrichment teachers (SOC code 25-3021)

| SOC Codes | Next-Level Occupation | Entry-Level Education | Sector |
|------------|--|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 25-3011.00 | Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, and English as a Second Language Instructors | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 13-1041.00 | Compliance Officers | Bachelor's Degree | Unassigned CTE |
| 27-3091.00 | Interpreters and Translators | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 25-2051.00 | Special Education Teachers, Preschool | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 25-2012.00 | Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 25-4022.00 | Librarians and Media Collections Specialists | Master's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 43-4161.00 | Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping | Associate Degree | Business & Entrepreneurship |
| 27-2012.04 | Talent Directors* | Bachelor's Degree | ICT/Digital Media |
| 13-2071.00 | Credit Counselors | Bachelor's Degree | Business & Entrepreneurship |
| 25-2021.00 | Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |

* denotes an 8-digit SOC code which represents a more specific occupation that falls under the broader category defined by the corresponding 6-digit SOC code.

CHILDCARE WORKERS

Exhibit A7. Lateral occupations requiring less than six months mapped to childcare workers (SOC code 39-9011)

| SOC Codes | Lateral Occupation | Entry-Level Education | Sector |
|------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 25-4031.00 | Library Technicians | Certificate | Education & Human Development |
| 41-9011.00 | Demonstrators and Product Promoters | No Formal Education | Retail, Hospitality & Tourism |
| 43-4121.00 | Library Assistants, Clerical | High School | Business & Entrepreneurship |
| 31-1131.00 | Nursing Assistants | Certificate | Health |
| 31-9095.00 | Pharmacy Aides | High School | Health |
| 39-5094.00 | Skincare Specialists | Certificate | Business & Entrepreneurship |
| 43-3041.00 | Gambling Cage Workers | High School | Retail, Hospitality & Tourism |
| 31-1133.00 | Psychiatric Aides | High School | Health |
| 43-4051.00 | Customer Service Representatives | High School | Business & Entrepreneurship |
| 43-9061.00 | Office Clerks, General | High School | Business & Entrepreneurship |

Exhibit A8. Next-level occupations requiring less than six months mapped to childcare workers (SOC code 39-9011)

| SOC Codes | Next-Level Occupation | Entry-Level Education | Sector |
|------------|--|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 13-1041.00 | Compliance Officers | Bachelor's Degree | Unassigned CTE |
| 25-2051.00 | Special Education Teachers, Preschool | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 29-1292.00 | Dental Hygienists | Associate Degree | Health |
| 31-2011.00 | Occupational Therapy Assistants | Associate Degree | Health |
| 25-3011.00 | Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, and English as a Second Language Instructors | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 25-9044.00 | Teaching Assistants, Postsecondary | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |
| 43-3031.00 | Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks | Some College | Business & Entrepreneurship |
| 43-4161.00 | Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping | Associate Degree | Business & Entrepreneurship |
| 13-2071.00 | Credit Counselors | Bachelor's Degree | Business & Entrepreneurship |
| 25-2012.00 | Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education | Bachelor's Degree | Education & Human Development |



APPENDIX B: MATRIX ILLUSTRATING CAREER PATHWAYS FROM SOURCE OCCUPATIONS

Exhibit B1: Lateral and next-level occupations aligned with source occupations in the Bay Region

| | Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary | Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education | Self-Enrichment Teachers | Childcare Workers |
|---|---|--|--------------------------|-------------------|
| LATERAL OCCUPATIONS | | | | |
| Library Technicians | X | X | X | X |
| Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan | X | X | X | |
| Healthcare Support Workers, All Other | | | X | |
| Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other | X | | | |
| Medical Assistants | X | | | |
| Phlebotomists | | X | | |
| Psychiatric Technicians | | X | | |
| Eligibility Interviewers, Government Programs | | | X | |
| Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants | | | X | |
| Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive | | | X | |
| Insurance Sales Agents | | | X | |
| Court, Municipal, and License Clerks | | | X | |
| NEXT-LEVEL OCCUPATIONS | | | | |
| Kindergarten Teachers, Except Special Education | X | X | X | X |
| Compliance Officers | X | X | X | X |
| Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education | X | X | X | |
| Librarians and Media Collections Specialists | X | X | X | |
| Interpreters and Translators | X | X | X | |
| Occupational Therapists | X | X | | |
| Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping | | | X | X |
| Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education | X | | | |
| Producers and Directors | | | X | |
| Dental Hygienists | | | | X |
| Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks | | | | X |

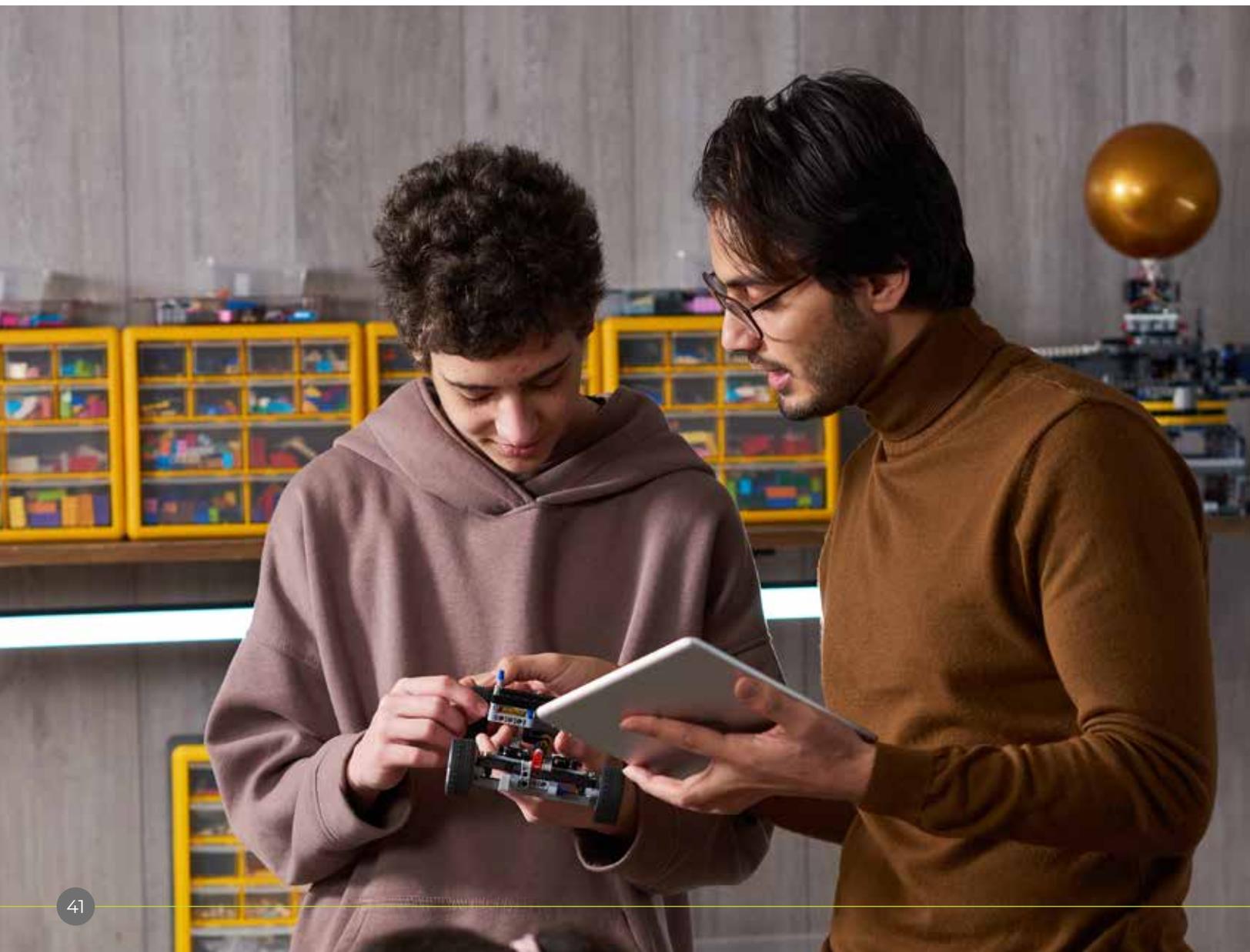
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IMPORTANT DISCLAIMERS

All representations included in this report have been produced from primary research and a 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 Bay Region Center of Excellence (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.



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