CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
SAN DIEGO & IMPERIAL

Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics

Labor Market Analysis: San Diego County **September 2026**

Summary

NEW PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION?	EVIDENCE OF A SUPPLY GAP?	AT OR ABOVE THE LIVING WAGE?	EXPECTED LEVEL OF EDUCATION
Proceed with Caution	☑	☒	☐ Doctorate Degree ☐ Master's Degree ☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Associate Degree ☑ Some College or Certificate ☐ HS Diploma or Equivalent ☐ Less Than a HS Diploma ☐ Apprenticeship
SUPPORT FOR PROGRAM MODIFICATION?	**NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS THAT PROVIDE TRAINING**	**NUMBER OF ANNUAL JOB OPENINGS**	
☑	MEDIUM	HIGH	

The San Diego & Imperial Center of Excellence (COE) developed this brief to assist the region's community colleges with strategic planning and program development. According to available data, *Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics* in San Diego County have a labor market demand of 546 annual job openings (while average demand for a single occupation in San Diego County is 289 annual job openings), and seven institutions supply 471 for-credit awards, suggesting a supply gap. Entry-level wages are below the living wage. This brief recommends proceeding with caution when developing a new program for this occupation, and supports a program modification because there is a supply gap for this occupation. However, entry-level wages are below the living wage, although more recent employer-advertised wages suggest wages are above the living wage. Colleges should note that the expected level of education is a postsecondary non-degree award.

Introduction

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

Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics (SOC 49-3023): Diagnose, adjust, repair, or overhaul automotive vehicles. Sample reported job titles include:

- Auto Drivability Tech
- Auto Mechanic
- Automotive Mechanic
- Auto Service Tech
- Auto Tech
- Automotive Technician
- Automatic Transmission Technician
- Heavy Line Technician
- Lube Technician
- Service Technician

Projected Occupational Demand

Between 2025 and 2030, *Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics* are projected to increase by 18 net jobs or less than one percent (Exhibit 1). Employers in San Diego County will need to hire 546 workers annually to fill new jobs and backfill jobs due to attrition caused by turnover and retirement, for example.[2]

Exhibit 1: Number of Jobs for Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics (2025-2030)

Occupational Title	2025 Jobs	2030 Jobs	2025-2030 Net Jobs Change	2025-2030 % Jobs Change	Annual Job Openings (Demand)
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	6,490	6,508	18	0%	546

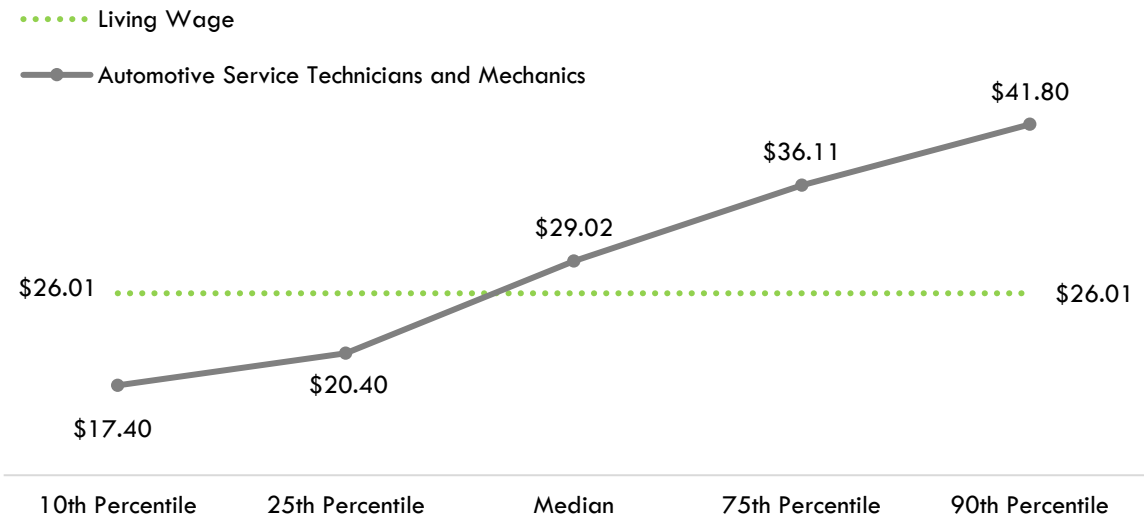
[1] The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system is used by federal statistical agencies to classify workers into occupational categories for the purpose of collecting, calculating or disseminating data. bls.gov/soc

[2] Lightcast 2026.3; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

Earnings

According to traditional[3] labor market information (LMI), *Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics* had entry-level hourly earnings of $20.40—or an annual salary of $42,432[4]; this is below the living wage for a single adult in San Diego County, which is $26.01[5] per hour (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2: Hourly Earnings[6] for Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics in San Diego County[7]



[3] Lightcast 2026.3; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

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

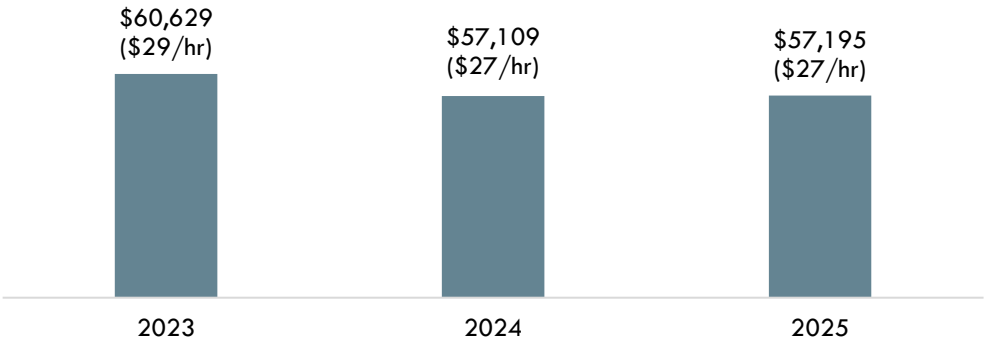
[5] Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington. (2024). The self-sufficiency standard for California 2024. selfsufficiencystandard.org/california

[6] 10th and 25th percentiles could be considered entry-level wages, and 75th and 90th percentiles could be considered experienced wages for individuals who may have been in the occupation longer, received more training than others, etc.

[7] Lightcast 2026.3; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

In online job postings, employers advertised between $27 and $29 per hour between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2025 for *Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics* in San Diego County (Exhibit 3). This suggests that employer-advertised wages in recent years are generally higher than traditional BLS estimates.[8]

Exhibit 3: Entry-Level Advertised Salaries in Online Job Postings for Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics in San Diego County (2023-2025)*



*Hourly wages are rounded to the nearest dollar amount.

Expected Level of Education

According to traditional LMI (data reported to EDD and BLS), *Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics* have a national educational attainment of a postsecondary non-degree award (Exhibit 4).[9]

Exhibit 4: National Educational Attainment for Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics[10]

Occupational Title	Typical Entry-Level Education
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	Postsecondary non-degree award

[8] Lightcast Q3 2026; "Job Posting Analytics." 2023-2025.
[9] Lightcast 2026.3; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.
[10] Lightcast 2026.3; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

Similarly, online job postings between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2025 in San Diego County had a high school diploma or GED as the most requested educational requirement for *Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics*; however, employers also expected the following certifications (Exhibit 5).[11]

Exhibit 5: Top Certifications for Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics in San Diego County in Online Job Postings (2023-2025)[12]

1. Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Certification
2. Commercial Driver's License (CDL)
3. CDL Class A License
4. CDL Class B License
5. CDL Class C License

Educational Supply

Educational supply for an occupation can be estimated by analyzing the number of awards in related Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) or Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes. There are two TOP codes and four CIP codes related to *Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics* (Exhibit 6).[13]

Exhibit 6: Related TOP and CIP Codes for Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics

TOP or CIP Code	TOP or CIP Program Title
TOP 0948.00	Automotive Technology
TOP 0948.40	Alternative Fuels and Advanced Transportation Technology
CIP 15.0803	Automotive Engineering Technology/Technician
CIP 47.0604	Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician
CIP 47.0612	Vehicle Emissions Inspection and Maintenance Technology/Technician
CIP 47.0614	Alternative Fuel Vehicle Technology/Technician

[11] Lightcast Q3 2026; "Job Posting Analytics." 2023-2025.
[12] Lightcast Q3 2026; "Job Posting Analytics." 2023-2025.
[13] This brief includes for-credit awards from all TOP and CIP codes listed in Exhibit 6.

According to TOP data, six community colleges supply the region with awards for this occupation: Cuyamaca College, MiraCosta College, Palomar College, San Diego College of Continuing Education, San Diego Miramar College, and Southwestern College. According to CIP data, two non-community-college institutions supply the region with awards: United Education Institute-Chula Vista and United Education Institute-UEI College-Oceanside (Exhibit 7).

When awards are disaggregated by award type, however, San Diego College of Continuing Education provides non-credit awards, which is not congruent with offerings at other colleges. For this brief, the awards for San Diego College of Continuing Education were not included in the calculation of program supply for the labor supply gap analysis to ensure maximum comparability.

Exhibit 7: Number of Awards (Certificates and Degrees) Conferred by Postsecondary Institutions (Program Year 2021-22 Through Program Year 2024-25 Average)

TOP6 or CIP Code	TOP6 or CIP Program Title	3-Yr Annual Average CC Awards (PY22-23 to PY24-25)	Other Institutions 3-Yr Average Awards (PY21-22 to PY23-24)	Total Average Supply (PY21-22 to PY24-25)
0948.00	Automotive Technology	**551**	**0**	**551**
	Cuyamaca	**15**	**0**	
	• Associate Degree	9	0	
	• Certificate 30 < 60 units	6	0	
	MiraCosta	**51**	**0**	
	• Associate Degree	8	0	
	• Certificate 16 < 30 units	18	0	
	• Certificate 30 < 60 units	5	0	
	• Certificate 6 < 18 units	19	0	
	• Certificate 8 < 16 units	1	0	
	Palomar	**17**	**0**	
	• Associate Degree	6	0	
	• Certificate 16 < 30 units	11	0	
	San Diego Cont. Ed.	**326**	**0**	
	• Non-credit 480 < 960 hrs	25	0	
	• Non-credit 288 < 480 hrs	187	0	

TOP6 or CIP Code	TOP6 or CIP Program Title	3-Yr Annual Average CC Awards (PY22-23 to PY24-25)	Other Institutions 3-Yr Average Awards (PY21-22 to PY23-24)	Total Average Supply (PY21-22 to PY24-25)
	• Non-credit 144 < 192 hrs	59	0	
	• Non-credit 96 < 144 hrs	29	0	
	• Non-credit 48 < 96 hrs	26	0	
	San Diego Miramar	**104**	**0**	
	• Associate Degree	18	0	
	• Certificate 16 < 30 units	86	0	
	Southwestern	**38**	**0**	
	• Associate Degree	7	0	
	• Certificate 16 < 30 units	12	0	
	• Certificate 30 < 60 units	6	0	
	• Certificate 6 < 18 units	13	0	
0948.40	Alternative Fuels and Advanced Transportation Technology	**11**	**0**	**11**
	San Diego Miramar College	**11**	**0**	
	• Certificate 16 < 30 units	11	0	
47.0604	Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician	**0**	**235**	**235**
	United Education Institute-Chula Vista	**0**	**128**	
	• Certificates 1 < 2 years	0	128	
	United Education Institute-UEI College-Oceanside	**0**	**107**	
	• Certificates 1 < 2 years	0	107	
			Total For-Credit	**471**
			Total Non-Credit	**326**
			Total	**797**

Demand vs. Supply

Comparing labor demand (annual openings) with labor supply[14] suggests that there is a supply gap for this occupation in San Diego County, with 546 annual openings and 471 for-credit awards. Comparatively, there are 7,352 annual openings in California and 6,459 for-credit awards, suggesting that there is a supply gap across the state[15] (Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8: Labor Demand (Annual Openings) Compared with Labor Supply (Average Annual Awards)

	Demand (Annual Openings)	**Supply*** (Total Annual Average Supply)	**Supply Gap or Oversupply**
San Diego	546	471	**75**
California	7,352	6,459	**893**

*For-credit awards

Please note: This is a basic analysis of supply and demand of labor. The data does not include workers currently in the labor force who could fill these positions or workers who are not captured by publicly available data. This data should be used to discuss the potential gaps or oversupply of workers; however, it should not be the only basis for determining whether or not a program should be developed.

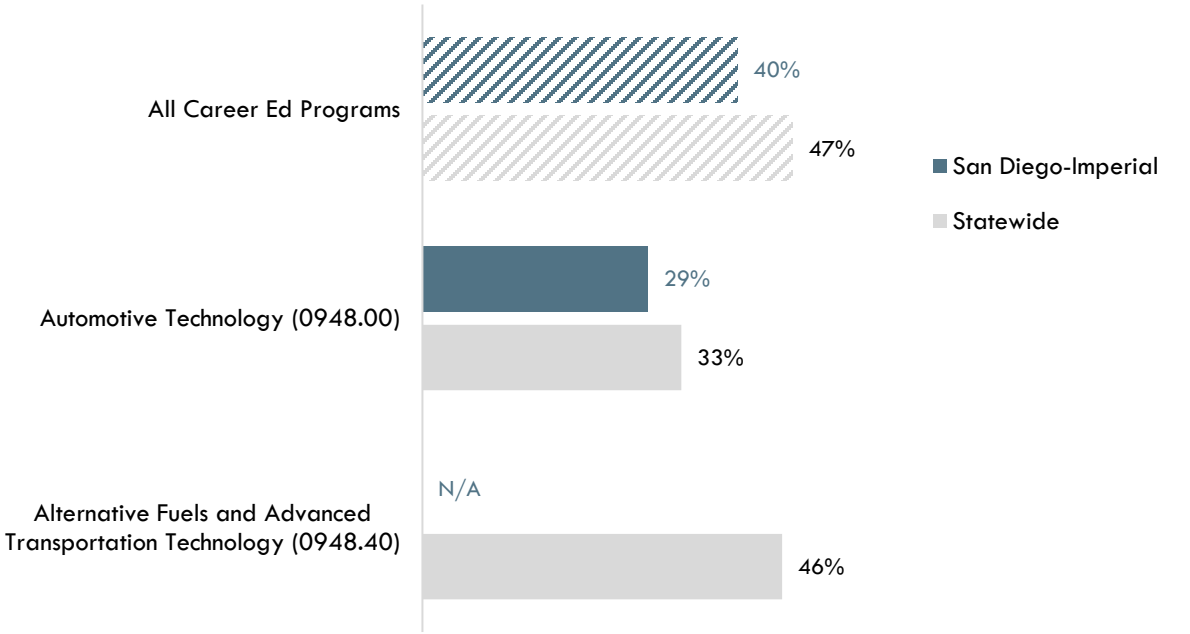
[14] This brief includes for-credit awards from all TOP and CIP codes listed in Exhibit 6.

[15] California Community Colleges Centers of Excellence. Supply and Demand Tables. coeccc.net/our-resources

Student Outcomes and Regional Comparisons

According to DataVista, 29% of students in the San Diego & Imperial region earned a living wage after completing a program related to *Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics*, compared to 33% to 46% of students statewide. In comparison, 40% of students regionally and 47% statewide in Career Education programs earned a living wage (Exhibit 9).[16]

Exhibit 9: Percentage of Students Who Earned a Living Wage by Program, PY2023-24[17]



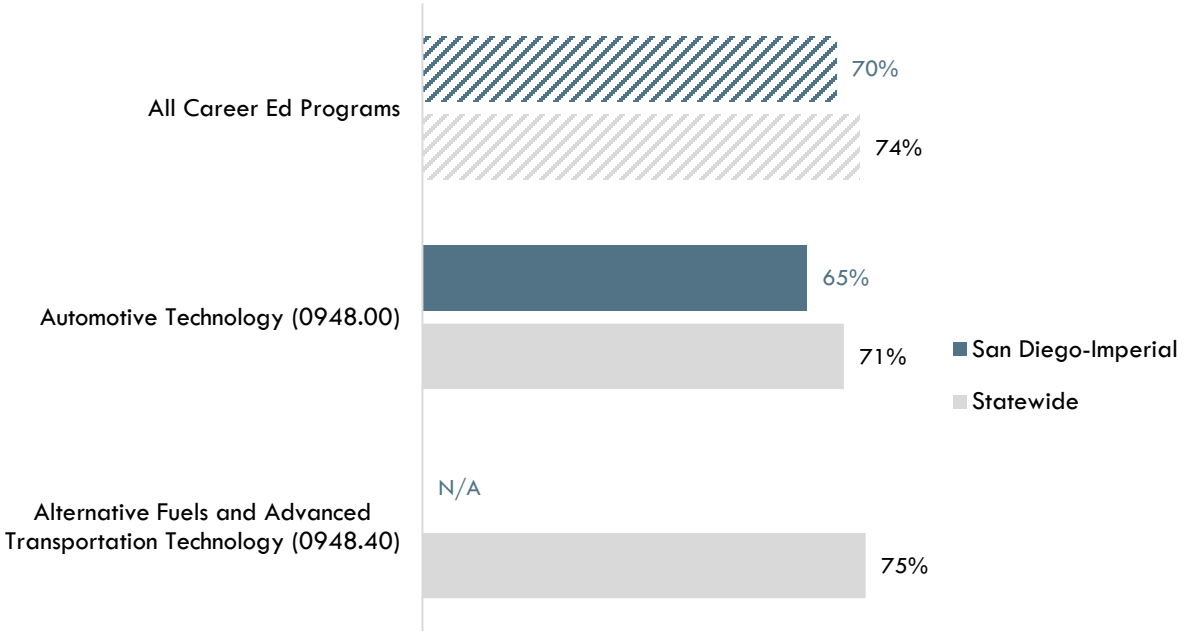
"N/A" indicates insufficient data

[16] DataVista, California Community Colleges, datavista.cccco.edu

[17] Most recent year with available data is Program Year 2023-24. Among completers and skills builders who exited, the percentage of students who attained a living wage.

According to DataVista, 65% of students in the San Diego & Imperial region obtained a job closely related to their field of study after completing a program related to *Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics*, compared to 71% to 75% of students statewide. In comparison, 70% of students regionally and 74% statewide in Career Education programs obtained a job closely related to their field of study (Exhibit 10).[18]

Exhibit 10: Percentage of Students in a Job Closely Related to Field of Study by Program, PY2022-23[19]



"N/A" indicates insufficient data

[18] DataVista, California Community Colleges, datavista.cccco.edu

[19] Most recent year with available data is Program Year 2022-23. 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, 2023 and December 31, 2025, the top five employers in San Diego County for *Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics* were Bridgestone Corporation, Pep Boys, Valvoline, Sunroad Automotive, and Walmart based on online job postings (Exhibit 11).[20]

Exhibit 11: Top Employers for Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics in San Diego County

Top Employers	
• Bridgestone Corporation	• Evans Tire
• Pep Boys	• Goodyear
• Valvoline	• Chevrolet
• Sunroad Automotive	• AutoNation
• Walmart	• Jiffy Lube

Skills

Exhibit 12 lists the top specialized, soft, and software skills that appeared in online job postings between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2025.[21]

Exhibit 12: Top Skills for Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics in San Diego County

Specialized Skills	Soft Skills	Software Skills
• Automotive Services	• Customer Service	• Microsoft Office
• Changing Oil	• Communication	• Web Browsers
• Good Driving Record	• Detail Oriented	• Inventory Control Systems
• Brakes	• Problem Solving	• Safari
• Suspension	• Management	• Firefox
• Lifting Ability	• Strong Work Ethic	• Microsoft Edge
• Transmission	• Positivity	• Microsoft Excel
• Vehicle Inspection	• Troubleshooting	• Microsoft Outlook
• Tires	• Sales	• Spreadsheets
• HVAC	• Operations	• Disassembler

[20] Lightcast Q3 2026; "Job Posting Analytics." 2023-2025.
[21] Lightcast Q3 2026; "Job Posting Analytics." 2023-2025.

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Important Disclaimers

All representations included in this report have been produced from primary research and/or secondary review of publicly and/or privately available data and/or research reports. This study examines the most recent data available at the time of the analysis; however, data sets are updated regularly and may not be consistent with previous reports. Efforts have been made to qualify and validate the accuracy of the data and the report findings; however, neither the California Community Colleges Centers 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.