

---

## **South Central Coast Regional Planning Unit**

### **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Regional Plan**

Program Years 2025-2028

---

**RPU Regional Lead Contact &  
Santa Barbara County Local Workforce Development Area Contact:**

Luis Servin  
Executive Director  
Santa Barbara County Workforce Development Board  
805-614-1543  
[lservin@countyofsb.org](mailto:lservin@countyofsb.org)

**San Luis Obispo County Local Workforce Development Area Contact:**

Dawn Boulanger  
Workforce Development Board Director  
Workforce Development Board of San Luis Obispo County  
805-781-1835  
[dboulanger@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:dboulanger@co.slo.ca.us)

**Plan Submission Date:** TBD

**DRAFT 2.0**

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	4
Introduction.....	4
Research Objectives .....	5
Key Findings.....	5
2025-2028 Regional Plan Goals .....	6
Region Definition .....	8
Analytical Overview of the South Central Coastal Region.....	9
Economic Distress .....	9
Employment Rate.....	12
Unemployment Rate .....	13
Labor Force Participation Rate.....	13
New Jobs and Online Job Postings.....	14
Race and Ethnicity.....	15
Educational Attainment.....	16
Regional Indicators .....	17
Fostering Demand-Driven Skills Attainment .....	21
Regional Priority Industry Clusters .....	21
Industry Deep Dives and Career Pathways Gap Analysis .....	23
Space and Aerospace.....	23
Cleantech and Energy .....	25
Technology and Innovation .....	27
Precision Manufacturing.....	29
Agtech .....	31
Health and Life Sciences .....	33
Building Design and Construction .....	35
Blue Economy .....	37
Enabling Upward Mobility for All Californians .....	40
High Road Workforce System and Job Quality.....	41
Climate and Environmental Sustainability.....	44
Traditional and Clean Energy Employment.....	45

Aligning, Coordinating, and Integrating Programs and Services .....47  
    System Alignment .....47  
Appendix A: Methodology .....48  
    Economic Distress Index .....48  
Appendix B: Additional Figures .....49  
Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary .....51  
Public Comments Received that Disagree with the Regional Plan.....53  
Signature Page .....54

DRAFT

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

---

The South Central Coast Regional Planning Unit (RPU) – which is comprised of Santa Barbara County and San Luis Obispo County – is pleased to submit a Regional Plan for Program Years 2025 to 2028 that aims to foster deeper relationships with new and existing regional partners and create pathways for improved worker access and opportunity to High Road jobs in the South Central Coast.<sup>1</sup>

This Regional Plan is submitted in accordance with EDD Workforce Services Directive (WSD) 24-09 issued on December 20, 2024, as required under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and guides the Program Years 2025-2028, effective July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2029.

This Regional Plan outlines initiatives undertaken by the RPU, and forward-looking goals of the RPU, to advance demand-driven skills attainment, supporting pathways to higher-wage jobs in the region, while affirming its commitment to climate resilience and sustainability.

Thus, the research team compiled and analyzed a breadth of economic and workforce data on regional employment, unemployment, labor force participation, and educational attainment, as well as data on regional high-wage industry clusters offering significant opportunities for growth. Data on labor supply and demand informs the RPU's regional planning efforts and promotes alignment between regional workforce supply and demand.

The Regional Plan also introduces a new performance metric to assess economic inequalities: an economic distress index, which assesses the severity of economic distress faced by subregions by zip code. Identifying subregions experiencing disproportionate levels of economic distress allows the RPU to better target its workforce development efforts to ensure access to resources and opportunities for high-wage career pathways within impacted communities. Regional career pathways and corresponding training opportunities are explored in depth in a separate report commissioned by the RPU, the standalone **SCC 2025 Career Pathways report**.

This Regional Plan serves as a data-driven strategic roadmap for fostering economic growth, developing career pathways, and improving access to High Road jobs. Through alignment with WIOA objectives and regional partners, the RPU will continue to collaborate across agencies, programs, and funding streams to drive coordinated investments, enhance service delivery, and support workforce development in key industry sectors.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Regional Plan was developed in accordance with the requirements outlined in the California Employment Development Department (EDD) Workforce Services Directive (WSD) 24-09, issued on December 30, 2024, for Program Years 2025-2028.

## Research Objectives

---

The research outlined in this report seeks to inform the RPU's strategies to meet the workforce development objectives outlined by the state of California's Employment Development Department:

**1. Fostering demand-driven skills attainment by:**

- a. Leveraging labor market data to uncover strategic opportunities and gaps in training and education.
- b. Educating current and potential jobseekers on employment and upskilling opportunities offered in the region's priority industry clusters.

**2. Enabling upward mobility for all Californians by:**

- a. Measuring job quality outcomes in the region and identifying accessible career pathways leading to High Road jobs.
- b. Establishing strong ties with local employers to communicate industry workforce needs to supply-side partners.

**3. Achieving climate and environmental sustainability goals by:**

- a. Setting the state and region's climate-neutral goals as an explicit workforce development priority.
- b. Measuring the current state of the region's Cleantech and Energy industry clusters and developing accessible career pathways within each to drive growth.

**4. Improving access and opportunity to higher-paying jobs by:**

- a. Recognizing the region's most economically distressed areas and developing strategies to promote equal access to economic opportunity within historically underserved populations.

## Key Findings

---

- 1. Employment in the South Central Coast region recovered from pandemic-induced losses much slower than in California and the overall U.S. (Figure 3).** However, the unemployment rate fell to 4.0 percent in 2024, below the statewide average and on par with the national average (Figure 5). Labor force participation remains below state and national figures (Figure 6), driven by the decrease in prime working-aged residents (Figure 19), and the number of job postings in the region increased dramatically between 2023 and 2024, growing by 32 percent year-over-year (Figure 7).
- 2. One in five South Central Coast sub-regions exhibit severe economic distress, and two in five (42 percent) are somewhat distressed (Figure 2).** Economically distressed sub-regions

experience high unemployment rates and low median earnings, coupled with high housing costs and limited employment and education opportunities.

- 3. Job quality continues to pose a challenge in the South Central Coast region, with nearly three in five jobs (57 percent) falling within the lowest-paying occupational category of Tier 3 jobs (Figure 14).** This concentration exceeds the state average (54 percent) and further necessitates the development of career support services and accessible career pathways in the region (Figure 15).
- 4. However, four of the seven priority industry clusters identified by REACH<sup>2</sup> exhibited strong employment growth and offer high- or middle-wage employment opportunities.** Between 2019 and 2024, these industry clusters exhibited employment growth ranging from 5 to 11 percent, with the most notable increases in the Building Design & Construction (+11.3 percent) and Agtech (+9.7 percent) industry clusters (Figure 12).
- 5. Robust career pathways and growth opportunities exist within REACH priority industry clusters.** Each career pathway begins with entry-level positions that have low educational or experience requirements and offer upward wage growth as workers progress to mid-level and senior positions. Career pathways within each REACH priority industry cluster are identified in the Industry Deep Dives and Career Pathways Gap Analysis section of the Regional Plan. Supporting career pathways within these priority industry clusters is a key element underpinning the RPU's goals to support employment within high-opportunity sectors.

## 2025-2028 Regional Plan Goals

---

Based on extensive research on the South Central Coast's economy, workforce, priority industry clusters, and career pathways, the RPU will continue to work toward the following goals in the 2025 – 2028 Program Cycle:

- 1. Foster collaboration with regional partners via MOUs and formal service delivery agreements** to drive workforce development efforts, with a particular emphasis on improving service delivery impact in South Central Coast sub-regions experiencing severe economic distress.
- 2. Raise awareness of career pathways and educational opportunities to ensure South Central Coast residents have the skills needed for rapidly evolving industry demands.** The RPU will continue to lead efforts to coordinate with local educational agencies and training providers, including K-12 education providers, postsecondary institutions, and other providers, to better align outreach and awareness efforts for degree and certificate programs, CTE programs, and other workforce upskilling and reskilling training initiatives.

---

<sup>2</sup> REACH Central Coast. Strengthening Key Industries on California's Central Coast (2024).

3. **Track, monitor, and review coordinated service delivery partnerships** to ensure maximum efficiency, impact, and program uptake for South Central Coast residents.
4. **Support growth in regional priority industry clusters via cross-functional partnerships with Central Coast economic and workforce development agencies**, including REACH Central Coast and Uplift Central Coast, among others. The RPU will develop educational materials targeted toward current students and jobseekers, that aim to build awareness of high-quality opportunities in key regional industry clusters.
5. **Increase Cleantech and Energy workforce training opportunities to increase the regional pool of qualified workers.** To achieve the climate and emissions-related goals set forth in the City of San Luis Obispo<sup>3</sup> and Santa Barbara County<sup>4</sup> Climate Action Plans, the SCC RPU will prioritize creating an adequate workforce supply within the Cleantech and Energy industries. This will require a sustained effort from the RPU to track and monitor the evolving career pathways in the energy and related clean technology industries as the energy industry continues to transform.

---

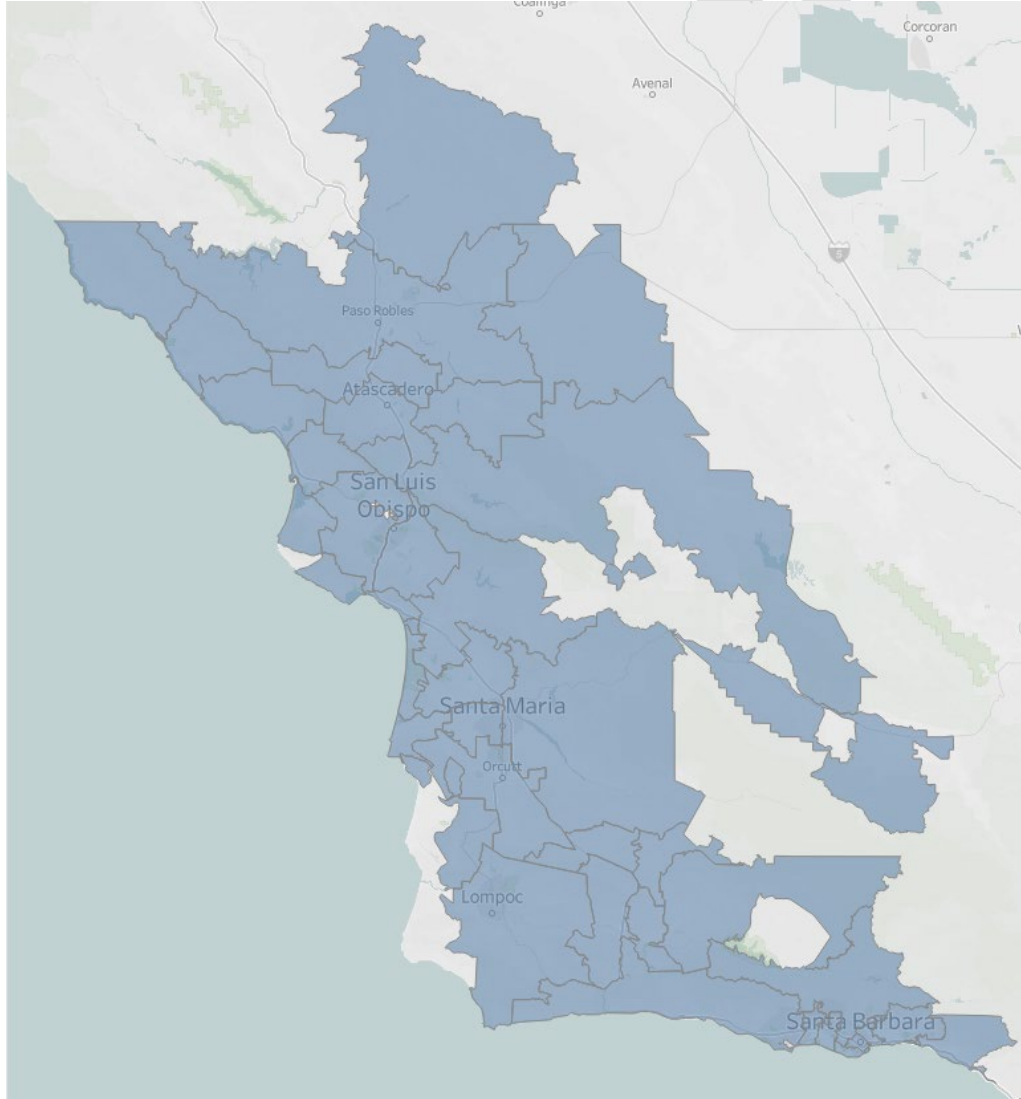
<sup>3</sup> [City of San Luis Obispo. Climate Action Plan for Community Recovery.](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Santa Barbara County. 2030 Climate Action Plan \(2024\).](#)

## Region Definition

The geographic boundaries of the South Central Coast Regional Planning Unit (RPU) region, comprised of Santa Barbara County and San Luis Obispo County, are illustrated below (Figure 1). The analyses presented in this report leverage employment and demographic data on a region-wide, sub-regional, state, and national basis, as applicable. The full list of ZIP codes associated with the South Central Coast region is listed in Appendix B of this report.<sup>5</sup>

Figure 1. South Central Coast Region Definition



<sup>5</sup> In the maps that follow, the unmapped coastal region corresponds to Vandenberg Space Force Base. Maps were constructed based on Zip Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs) assigned by the U.S. Census Bureau to allow for mapping, display, and geographic analyses of the USPS ZIP Codes dataset. Not all valid ZIP codes are represented by a ZCTA, and geographic areas meeting certain conditions may be left unassigned from ZCTA coverage. For more information, please see: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/zctas.html>



## Analytical Overview of the South Central Coastal Region

This section of the Regional Plan discusses key metrics and characteristics of the regional labor force and resident population. Understanding post-pandemic trends within the South Central Coast labor force and broader population allows the RPU to make data-driven decisions in support of more effectively alignment, coordination, and integration of programs and services across the region.

### Economic Distress

---

**Identifying communities facing severe economic distress is important in fostering inclusive economic growth across the South Central Coast region, ensuring all residents – especially historically underserved communities – have access to resources and opportunity.**

Overall economic vitality indicators, while crucial in understanding aggregate trends and providing benchmarks for state or national comparisons, tend to hide the nuances tied to specific indicators at a granular level. A more granular analysis of sub-regional economic distress helps the RPU identify local challenges and enact place-specific workforce and economic development initiatives through targeted investments and programs.

This section describes the index<sup>6</sup> created to analyze levels of economic distress at the ZIP code level, based on the following economic indicators:

- Unemployment Rate
- Labor Force Participation Rate
- Median Income
- Percentage of Uninsured Residents
- Rent as a Percentage of Household Income

The research team compared these indicators in each ZIP code against state averages to determine the "index score" for each indicator. ZIP codes that score above (below) the 75th (25th) percentile in at least 3 of the 5 measures are defined as "distressed". ZIP codes that meet 1 to 2 of these criteria are "somewhat distressed," while those that meet none of these criteria are "not distressed." Table 19 displays the reference values and associated 75th (25th) percentile reference values for the overall state utilized in creating the economic distress index.

---

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix A: Methodology for additional details on the data used to construct the index.

**One in five South Central Coast sub-regions exhibit indications of severe economic distress, and two in five are somewhat distressed (Table 1).**

*Table 1. Economic Distress Index in the South Central Coast Region<sup>7</sup>*

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Number of Sub-Regions<sup>8</sup></b>	<b>Percent of Total Sub-Regions</b>
<b>Not Distressed</b>	17	38%
<b>Somewhat Distressed</b>	19	42%
<b>Severely Distressed</b>	9	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Severely distressed ZIP codes within the South Central Coast are located in the Isla Vista – Naples – Capitan and Guadalupe – West Santa Maria sub-regions of Santa Barbara County, as well as the North San Luis Obispo, Santa Margarita and Cambria sub-regions of San Luis Obispo County.**

The Isla Vista – Naples – Capitan sub-region (93117) faces severe economic distress due to large student populations driving high unemployment rates and low median earnings in the area, coupled with high housing costs, while the Guadalupe – West Santa Maria sub-region (93434, 93458) faces severe economic distress due to its reliance on low-wage, seasonal agricultural jobs, and limited employment opportunities.

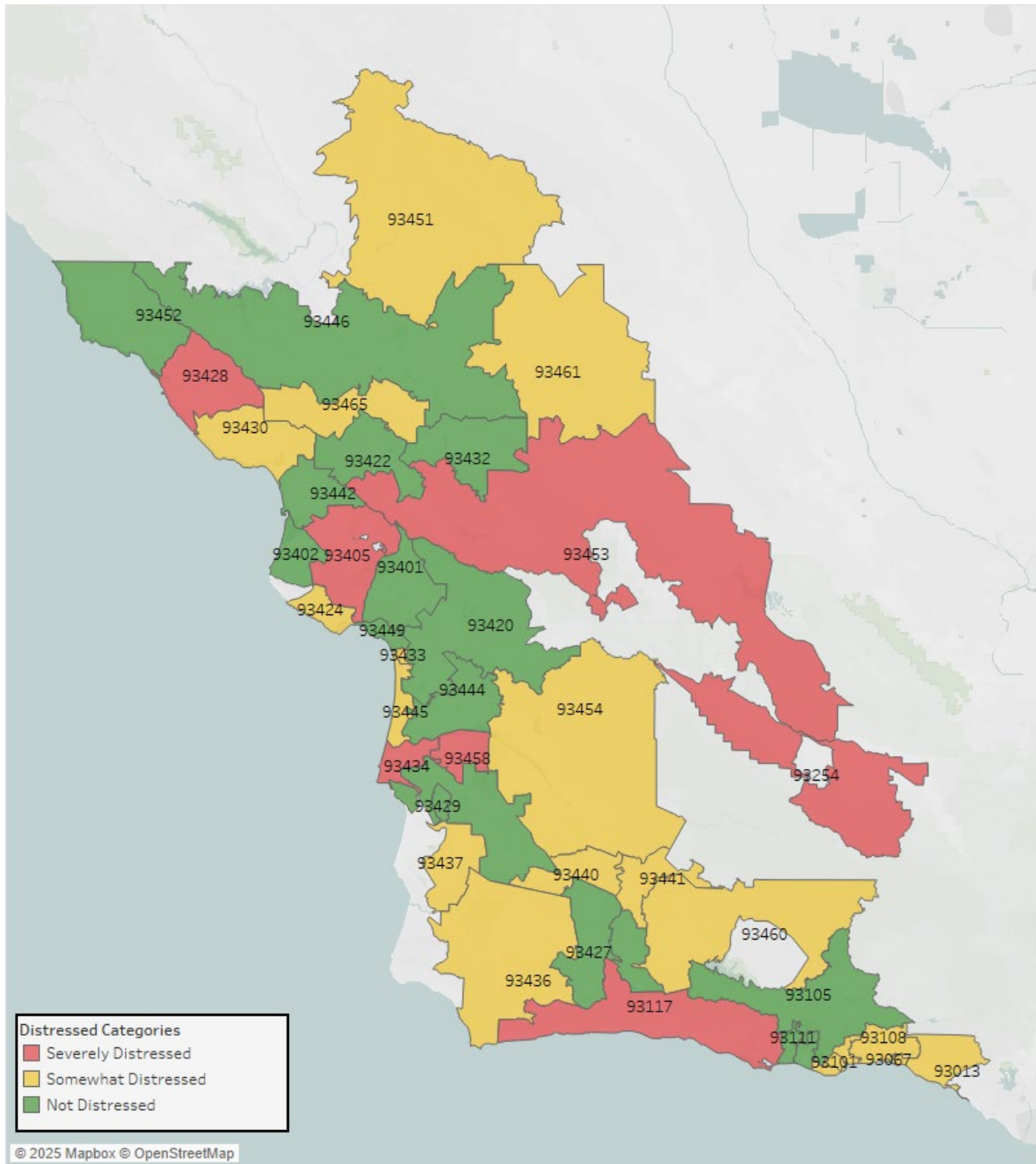
The North San Luis Obispo sub-region, in the City of San Luis Obispo (93405) has large student populations driving high unemployment rates and low earnings in combination with high housing costs, while residents of the relatively isolated Santa Margarita sub-region (93453) have limited employment and education opportunities. Cambria (93428) shows signs of severe economic distress due to a low prime working-age population, with nearly 45 percent of residents aged 55 and older; tourism-driven seasonal jobs; and high property values (Figure 2).

The South Central Coast sub-regions facing severe economic distress will be a particular focus for the RPU’s continued workforce development and program deployment efforts in the 2025-2028 Program Cycle, and the RPU will continue to monitor economic outcomes in these sub-regions to close these disparities and gaps.

<sup>7</sup> Based on United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2023).

<sup>8</sup> 93106, UC Santa Barbara campus ZIP code, and 93407, the Cal Poly SLO campus ZIP code, were excluded from this analysis.

Figure 2. Economic Distress Index in the South Central Coast Region<sup>9</sup>



<sup>9</sup> BW Research analysis of United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2023).

## Employment Rate

**Employment in the South Central Coast region recovered from pandemic-induced losses much slower than in California and the overall U.S. (Figure 3).** Overall employment in the South Central Coast region grew 3.0 percent from 2020 to 2024, outpaced by growth in the overall state (7.5 percent) and the U.S. (9.2 percent). Regional employment remains below 2019 pre-pandemic levels, illustrating the outsized impacts of the pandemic on the South Central Coast (Figure 4).

Figure 3. Employment Growth for the South Central Coast Region, California, and the U.S. (2020 – 2024)<sup>10</sup>

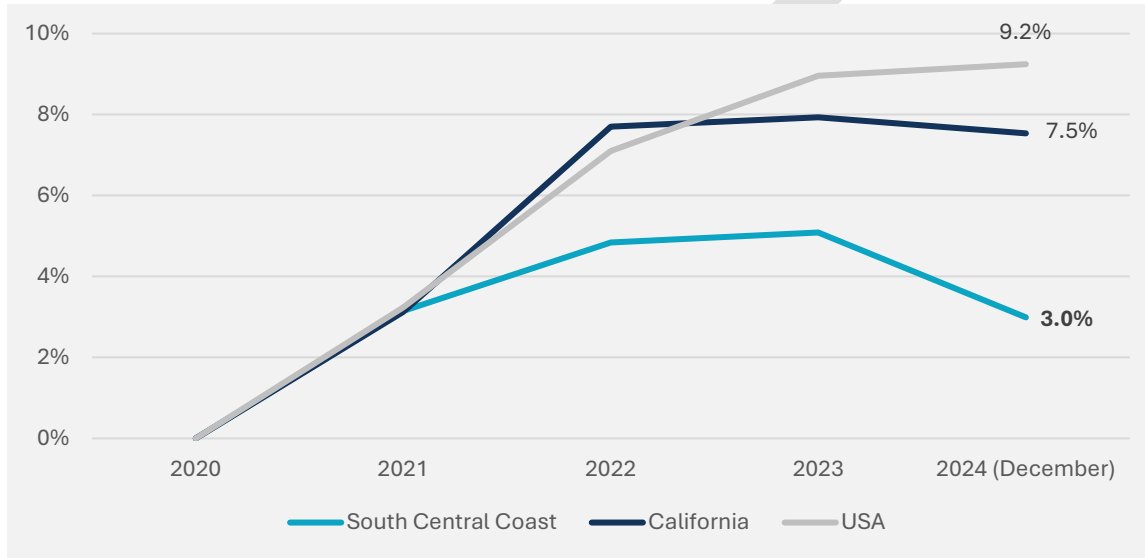
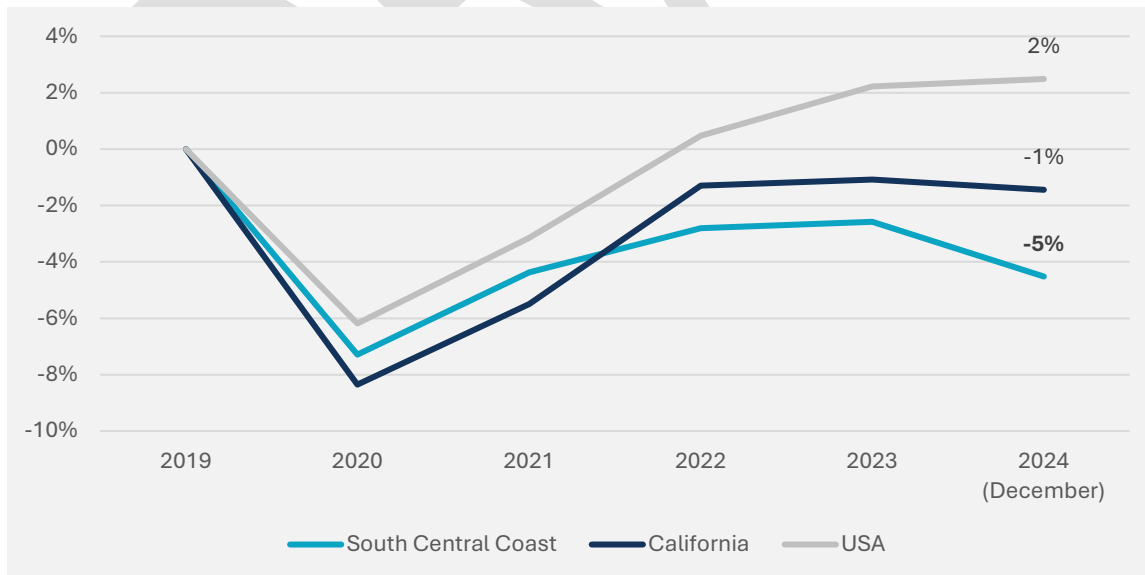


Figure 4. Employment Change for the South Central Coast Region, California, and the U.S. (2019 – 2024)<sup>11</sup>



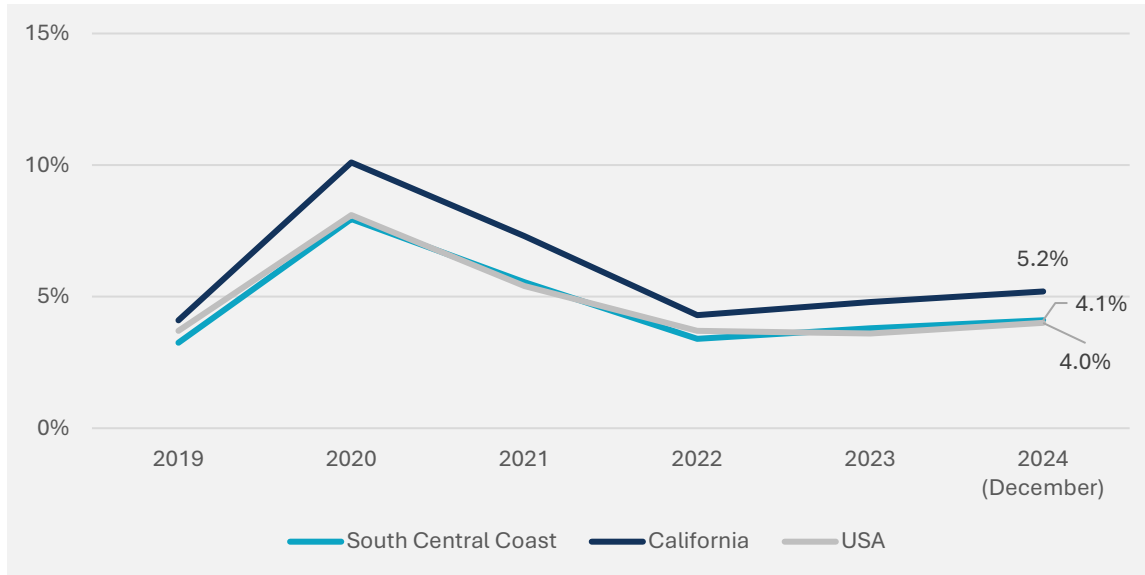
<sup>10</sup> California EDD. Local Area Unemployment Statistics (2020 – 2024).

<sup>11</sup> California EDD. Local Area Unemployment Statistics (2019 – 2024).

## Unemployment Rate

**The South Central Coast region’s unemployment rate has recovered to pre-pandemic levels, with the unemployment rate falling to 4.0 percent in December 2024, below the statewide average of 5.2 percent and on par with the national average of 4.1 percent (Figure 5).**

Figure 5. Unemployment Rate for the South Central Coast Region, California, and the U.S. (2019 – 2024) <sup>12</sup>



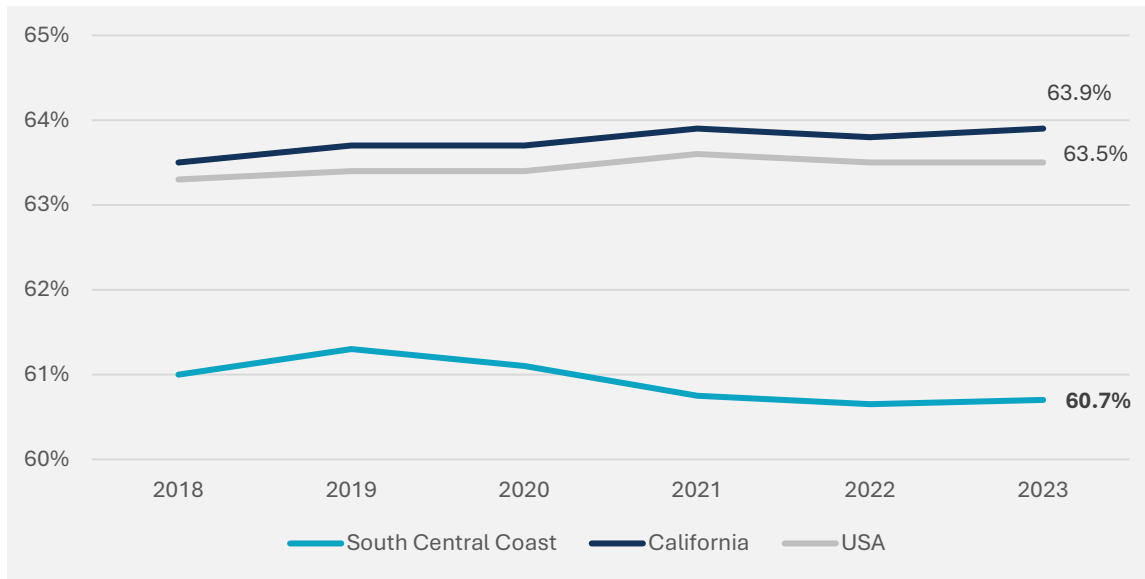
## Labor Force Participation Rate

**The South Central Coast region’s labor force participation rate (LFPR)<sup>13</sup> of 60.7 percent has slightly decreased since 2018** and has remained below the state and national LFPRs of 63.9 percent and 63.5 percent, respectively (Figure 6). The region’s low labor force participation rate is driven primarily by the low proportion of prime working-aged 25 to 54-year-old residents (46.2 percent) compared to the state (53.4 percent) and the South Central Coast’s proportion of 25 to 54-year-old residents declining by 2.7 percent since 2018 (Figure 19).

<sup>12</sup> California EDD. Local Area Unemployment Statistics (2020 – 2024).

<sup>13</sup> The labor force participation rate (LFPR) measures the percentage of the citizen population that is available and willing to work.

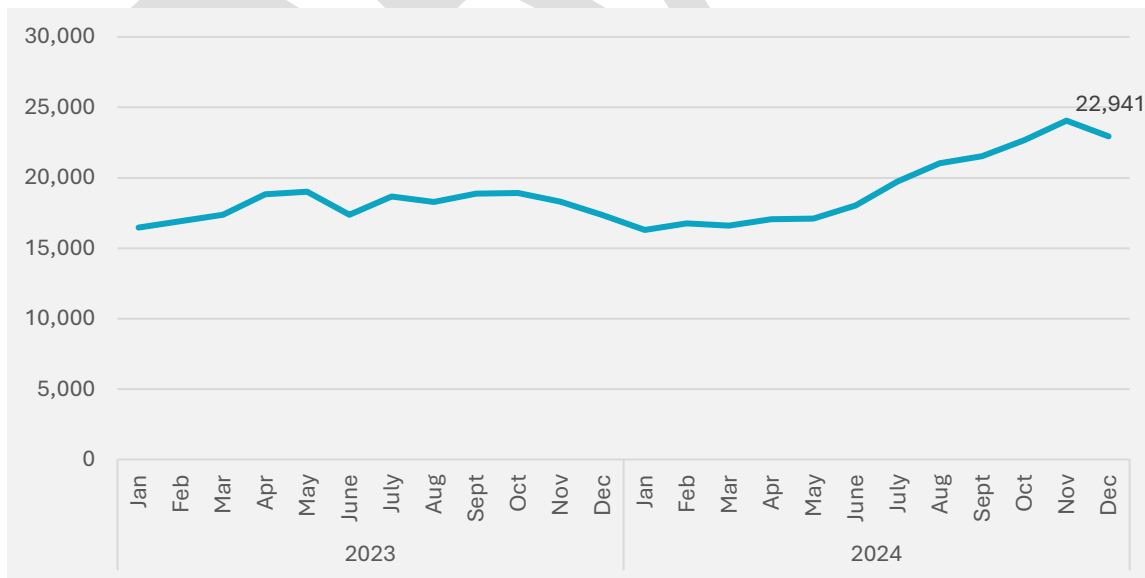
Figure 6. Labor Force Participation Rate for the South Central Coast Region, California, and the U.S. (2018 – 2023)<sup>14</sup>



### New Jobs and Online Job Postings

**Online job postings for positions located within the South Central Coast region have increased 32.1 percent between December 2023 and December 2024**, indicating that hiring expansion and broader industry demand have increased across all positions and skill levels in the past year, particularly in Q3 and Q4 of 2024 (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Job Postings in the South Central Coast Region (2023 – 2024)<sup>15</sup>



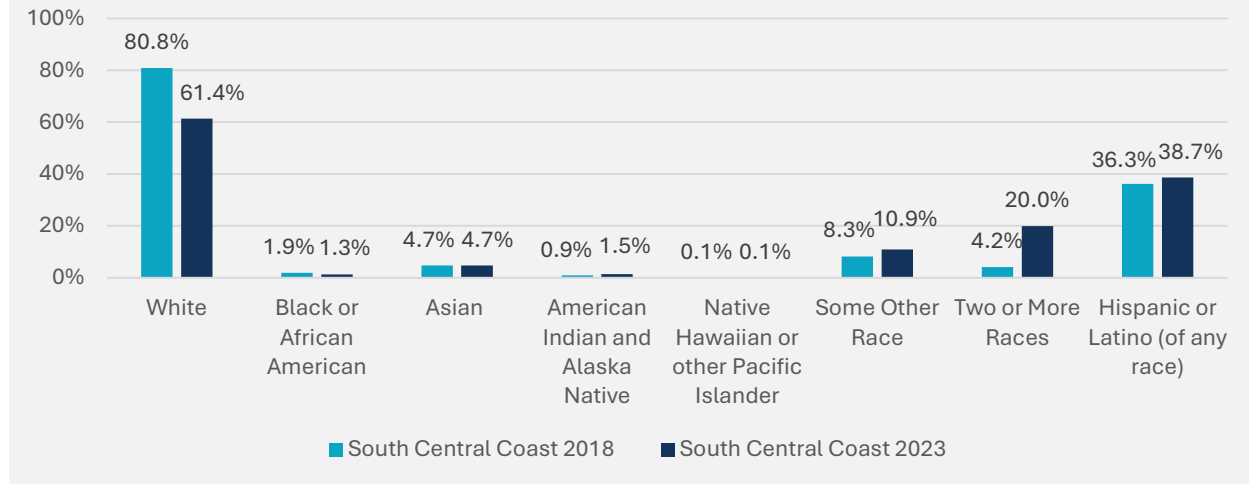
<sup>14</sup> United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2019 – 2023).

<sup>15</sup> JobsEQ. Real-Time Intelligence Tool. Job Postings by Region (2023 – 2024).

## Race and Ethnicity

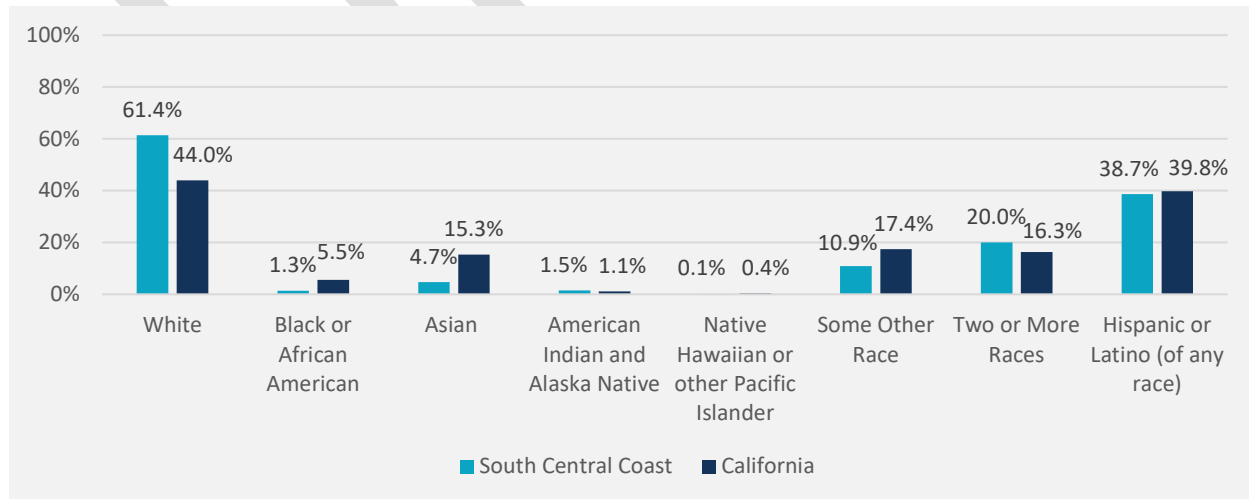
The demographic composition of the South Central Coast region has changed significantly between 2018 and 2023, with the share of White residents in the county decreasing by 19.4 percentage points during this period. In contrast, the share of Multiethnic residents increased by 15.8 percentage points, and the share of Hispanic or Latino residents increased by 2.4 percentage points (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Race and Ethnicity in the South Central Coast Region (2018 – 2023)<sup>16</sup>



Compared to California, the South Central Coast region has a higher proportion of White and Multiethnic residents and a lower proportion of Black or African American and Asian residents (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Race and Ethnicity of the South Central Coast Region and the State (2023)<sup>17</sup>



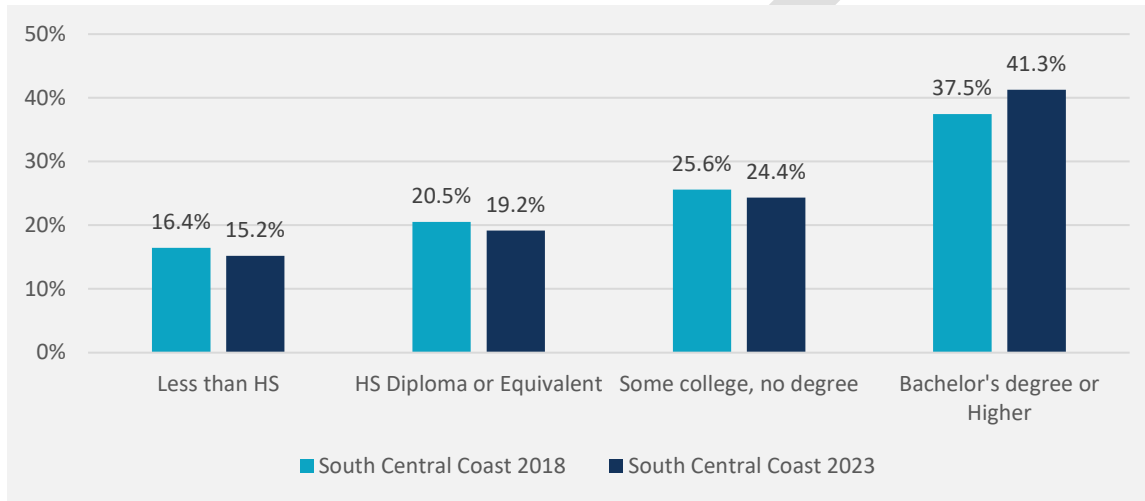
<sup>16</sup> United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2018 – 2023).

<sup>17</sup> United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2018 – 2023).

## Educational Attainment

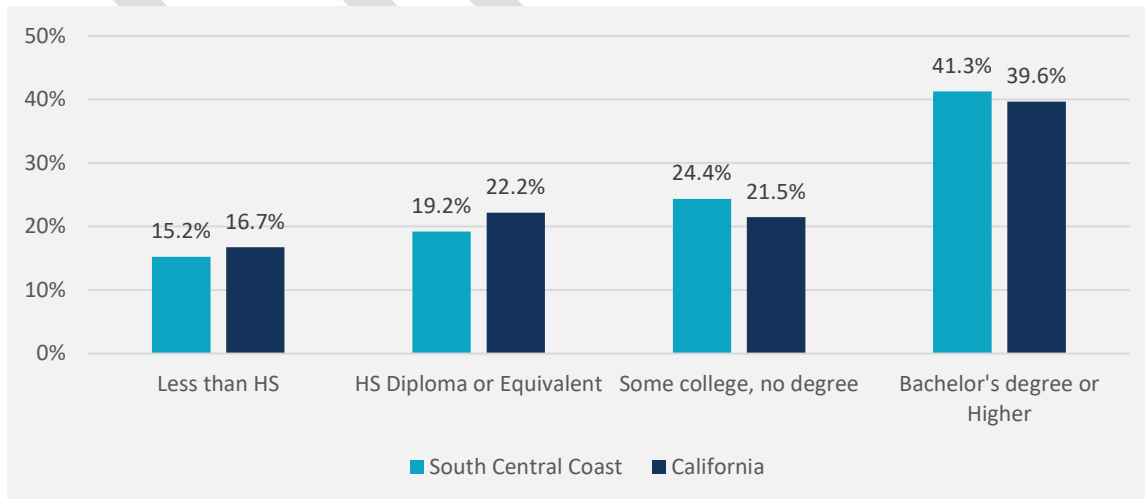
**Educational attainment levels of South Central Coast residents aged 25 and older have slightly increased in the past 5 years**, with 41.3 percent of residents aged 25 and older holding a Bachelor’s degree or higher as of 2023, compared to 37.5 percent in 2018 (Figure 10). This increase is on par with both state and national trends, which both experienced educational attainment increases over the same period (Figure 20, Figure 21).

Figure 10. Educational Attainment of South Central Coast Region Residents Aged 25 and Older (2018 – 2023)<sup>18</sup>



However, approximately one-third (34.4 percent) of South Central Coast residents had a maximum educational attainment of a high school diploma (or equivalent) or less as of 2023, lower than the statewide average of 38.9 percent (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Educational Attainment of Populations Aged 25 and Older (2023)<sup>19</sup>



<sup>18</sup> United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2018 – 2023).

<sup>19</sup> United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2018 – 2023).



## Regional Indicators

**Each RPU is tasked with establishing objective metrics associated with at least two or more of the following four Regional Indicators:**

- The region has a process to communicate industry workforce needs to supply-side partners.
- The region has policies supporting equity and strives to improve job quality.
- The region has shared target populations of emphasis.
- The region deploys shared/pooled resources to provide services, training, and education to meet the target population's needs.

This regional plan describes the metrics established for the selected indicators, including an assessment of the progress and outcomes achieved in tracking these metrics.

**Regional Indicator 1: The region has a process to communicate industry workforce needs to supply-side partners.** The RPU established a goal to work with local employers and possible training providers to identify industry workforce needs and to ensure effective communication with supply-side partners between July 2022 and December 2025. In pursuit of this goal, the workforce development boards of Santa Barbara County and San Luis Obispo County have coordinated on:

- **The High Roads Construction Careers (HRCC) Resilient Workforce Fund (RWF)**, a tri-county partnership led by the Ventura County Workforce Development Board, with the support of the Santa Barbara County Workforce Development Board and the San Luis Obispo County Workforce Development Board, targets expansion of past and present HRCC programs to expand the skilled construction workforce and to increase access to state-approved apprenticeships in the building and construction trades. Over 100 participants completed training through the HRCC RWF in 2024, and collaborations with unions facilitated permanent placements of some completers in 2024.
- **The SLO Healthcare Workforce Partnership**, which was launched to address the critical shortage of healthcare professionals in physical, behavioral, and oral health in San Luis Obispo County. The partnership is comprised of public, private, and nonprofit organizations representing healthcare, education, and workforce development, and is led by the County of San Luis Obispo Department of Public Health, with funding provided by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) through 2026. The Partnership aims to achieve the following objectives:
  - Improving recruitment and retention of healthcare employees
  - Developing healthcare career pathways

- Funding development and advocacy efforts
- Ensuring sustainable partnership operations

The Partnership includes three Working Groups focused on addressing each of the first three objectives outlined above, with the fourth objective to be addressed by the full Partnership membership during its monthly meetings.

WDBSLO is a member of the full partnership and Working Group #2, Healthcare Career Pathways, which meets monthly to develop local pipelines and training goals for physical, behavioral, and oral health. Working Group #2 also includes members from California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo (Cal Poly SLO), Cuesta College, SLO Partners, SLO Health Counts, SLO Cal Careers, as well as local healthcare industry leaders.

The Partnership's 2024 accomplishments included the successful completion of a healthcare employer survey, research to identify the nine most critically needed occupations in San Luis Obispo County by 2030, and the creation of a healthcare career pathway map infographic. In addition, the Partnership developed a pilot program for a career exploration fair and designed a summer paid internship program to be launched in 2025.

In 2025 the Partnership aims to publish a white paper for local employers describing best practices for healthcare recruitment and retention, to build out the healthcare career pathways pipeline program, and to continue to pursue funding initiatives and advocacy efforts at the state and national level.<sup>20</sup>

- **A Regional Equity and Recovery Partnerships (RERP) project**, in coordination with community college partners, that aims to provide jobseekers with classroom training opportunities that lead to in-demand occupations within target career pathways. Participants will also receive comprehensive case management services and wraparound services, including supportive services aimed at supporting the transition from training/education to employment in training related occupations.

The RERP project is funding the analysis of regional career pathways and corresponding training opportunities documented in the standalone **SCC 2025 Career Pathways report** commissioned by the RPU, which will be released later in 2025.

- **Collaboration with local Chambers of Commerce**, including coordination between SLOWDB and the Atascadero Chamber of Commerce on a Layoff Aversion/Business Retention services contract to increase communication of business needs to WIOA-funded services.

---

<sup>20</sup> [SLO Healthcare Workforce Partnership Year 1 Annual Report Highlights](#), February 2025.

**Regional Indicator 2: The region has policies supporting equity and strives to improve job quality.** The RPU members have undertaken various efforts to support equity and job quality, including:

- A collaboration between SBCWDB and Allan Hancock College, which resulted in the creation of an **AJCC GED Testing Center** that addresses a critical community need, allowing residents to achieve their educational goals while supporting the growth and development of the regional workforce.
- The **“Build Your Workforce” Program**, developed in conjunction with the Santa Maria Valley Chamber, connects businesses to SBCWDB resources that offer funding and support for hiring, upskilling, and providing paid work experience to jobseekers.
- The completion of a **landscape analysis** and the development of an **equity toolkit** for local employers, which contains bite sized, actionable components for businesses looking for tips on how to diversify their workforce, including suggested recruiting strategies, sample interview questions, and social media ready postings. The RPU has continued to promote this toolkit in its interactions with local partners, including the Business Engagement Roundtable.

In addition, RPU members have sought to promote job quality via various initiatives targeted at addressing barriers and increasing access to higher-quality jobs for farmworkers, including:

- **The National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP)**, led by SBCWDB, aims to strengthen the ability of migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their dependents to acquire necessary skills to stabilize or advance in their agricultural jobs or obtain employment in new industries.
- The **Farmworker Advancement Program (FAP)** aims to support farmworkers, children of farmworkers, and agriculture employers. The FAP aims to position farmworkers to obtain access to good-quality jobs that pay family-sustaining wages and offer opportunities for career advancement; as well as paid work experience, upskilling, supportive services and provide wrap around services.
- **The Farm Worker Resource Center (FWRC) Program**, led by SBCWDB, aimed to address barriers and increase access to services and referrals for farmworkers, farmworkers' families, employers and farmers a mobile one-stop shop providing countywide outreach, including mental health referrals, job readiness training, childcare assistance, and Mexican Consulate Pop-up sites.

**Regional Indicator 3: The region has shared target populations of emphasis.** The RPU has developed programs to better serve the needs of target populations including the following:

- **The Prison 2 Employment 2.0 (P2E 2.0) Program**, jointly led by SBCWDB and SLOWDB, provides intensive case management, job readiness service, paid work experience, supportive services, and transitional job opportunities, to justice-involved jobseekers.
- The **DOL Growth Opportunities Program**, led by SBCWDB, focuses on introducing and preparing justice-involved youth and/or youth at-risk of becoming justice-involved between the ages of 15-18 or 18-24, for the world of work and paths to equitable career opportunities through placement into paid work experience, education and training.
- The **Summer Training and Employment Program for Students (STEP)**, administered by the SLOWDB WIOA service provider, Eckerd, provides High School and College Students with Disabilities, ages 16-21, with paid work experience and job-ready training opportunities.
- **The Pathway Home 2 (PH2) Program**, led by SBCWDB in partnership with the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office and local community colleges, was funded by a U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) grant and provided currently incarcerated individuals with workforce services prior to release as well as reentry support, including job readiness training, paid work experience, supportive services, and vocational training.
- The **GO-Biz Local Immigrant Integration and Inclusion program** supported immigrants, refugees or asylees, unaccompanied minors, immigrant youth, and hard-to-reach immigrant populations by developing or expanding immigrant integration efforts, building community trust, and enhancing the organizational capacity of local governments to support immigrant populations in the region.
- The **Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative**, led by the SLOWDB WIOA service provider, Eckerd, expands access to services for under-employed individuals to provide up-skilling and training that supports economic mobility by moving individuals along career pathways to increase wages and achieve self-sufficiency.

## Fostering Demand-Driven Skills Attainment

The South Central Coast RPU's primary role is to bridge the gap between regional employers and regional education and training opportunities. By facilitating close collaboration between these entities, the RPU ensures that programmatic development and service delivery aligns with industry needs, enabling jobseekers to develop the skills needed to fulfill regional labor demands.

Furthermore, the RPU aims to support workforce opportunities that offer sustainable wages and clear pathways for career advancement in both established and growing industries. Strengthening ties between jobseekers and employers committed to equitable and high-quality employment will be pivotal to the region's future economic growth trajectory.

This section of the Regional Plan outlines key industry clusters in the region and well-paying career pathways within each priority industry cluster, which informs the RPU's development of targeted strategies to meet regional workforce needs.

### Regional Priority Industry Clusters

---

The following section outlines the 13 industry clusters in the South Central Coast region, which include seven priority industry clusters identified by REACH<sup>21</sup> in its [“Strengthening Key Industries on California’s Central Coast – Talent Pipeline Analysis + Recommendations”](#) report:

- Agriculture Technology (Agtech)
- Building Design and Construction
- Cleantech and Energy
- Health and Life Sciences
- Precision Manufacturing
- Space and Aerospace
- Technology and Innovation<sup>22</sup>

The industry cluster analysis also includes the “Blue Economy” priority industry cluster<sup>23</sup> identified by UC Santa Barbara researchers in its “Economic Impact of the Blue Economy in Santa Barbara County” report.

---

<sup>21</sup> REACH is a Regional Economic Action Coalition uniting public, private, and civic leaders across the Central Coast of California. REACH was responsible for the South Central Coast's [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy \(CEDs\)](#) and the [Uplift Central Coast initiative](#) in support of the California Jobs First directive.

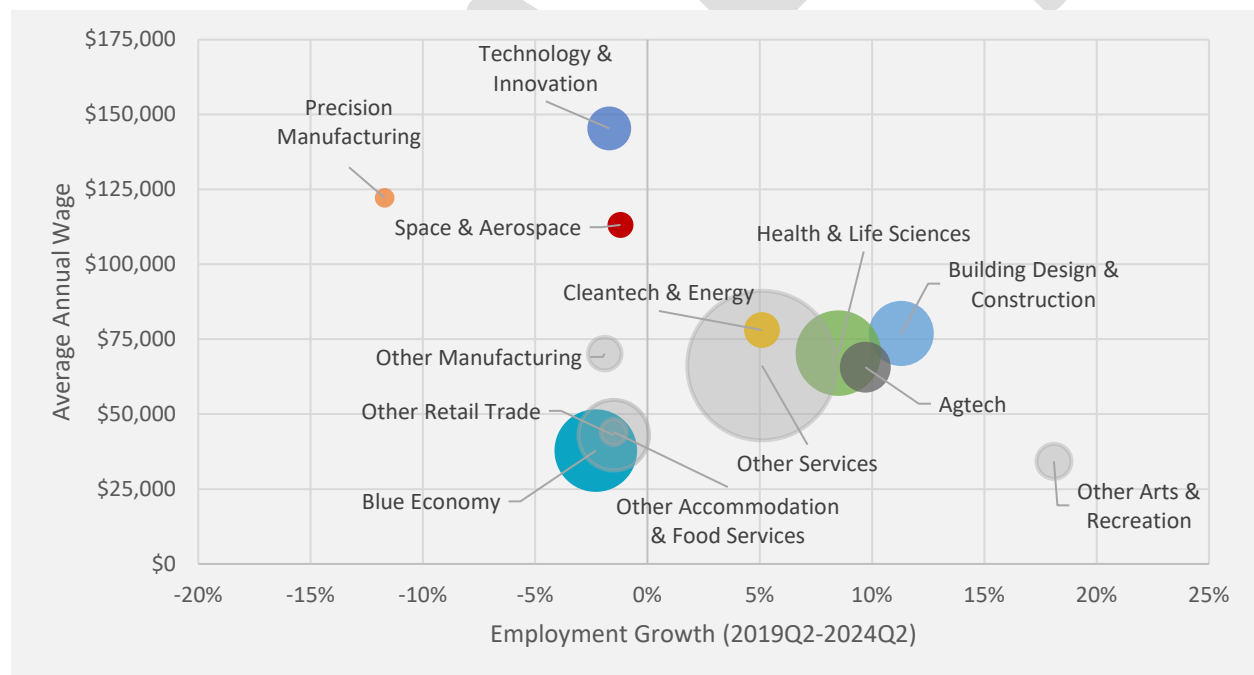
<sup>22</sup> The 7 REACH priority industry clusters and Blue Economy priority industry cluster only represent 46 percent of total employment in the region. The 5 other industry clusters were introduced to represent the entire regional economy.

<sup>23</sup> The Blue Economy industry cluster definition shares minor overlap with the REACH Building Design and Construction, Space and Aerospace, Agtech, and Technology and Innovation priority industry clusters. The 4

Together, these 13 industry clusters provide a comprehensive picture of the region’s economic drivers, informing the RPU and other stakeholders of where to focus its workforce development and program deployment efforts.

**Four of the seven REACH priority industry clusters exhibited strong employment growth and offer high- or middle-wage employment opportunities.** Between 2019 and 2024, these four industry clusters exhibited employment growth ranging from 5 to 11 percent, with the most notable increases occurring in the Building Design and Construction (+11.3 percent) and Agtech (+9.7 percent) industry clusters. However, employment in the top three highest-paying REACH industry clusters declined over the same period, with Precision Manufacturing employment falling by 11.7 percent, Technology and Innovation employment falling by 1.7 percent, and Space and Aerospace employment falling by 1.2 percent. Blue Economy industry cluster employment also experienced declines of 2.3 percent from 2019 to 2024 (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Industry Clusters in the South Central Coast Region (2019Q2 – 2024Q2)<sup>24,25</sup>



**All REACH priority industry clusters offer wages above the regional average wage of \$64,451,** though only three REACH industry clusters meet or exceed the South Central Coast Living Wage determination<sup>26</sup> of \$107,205 for 2 Adults (1 working) and 2 Children. In contrast, the Blue Economy

overlapping NAICS codes were included in each respective industry cluster definition for consistency with the original definitions.

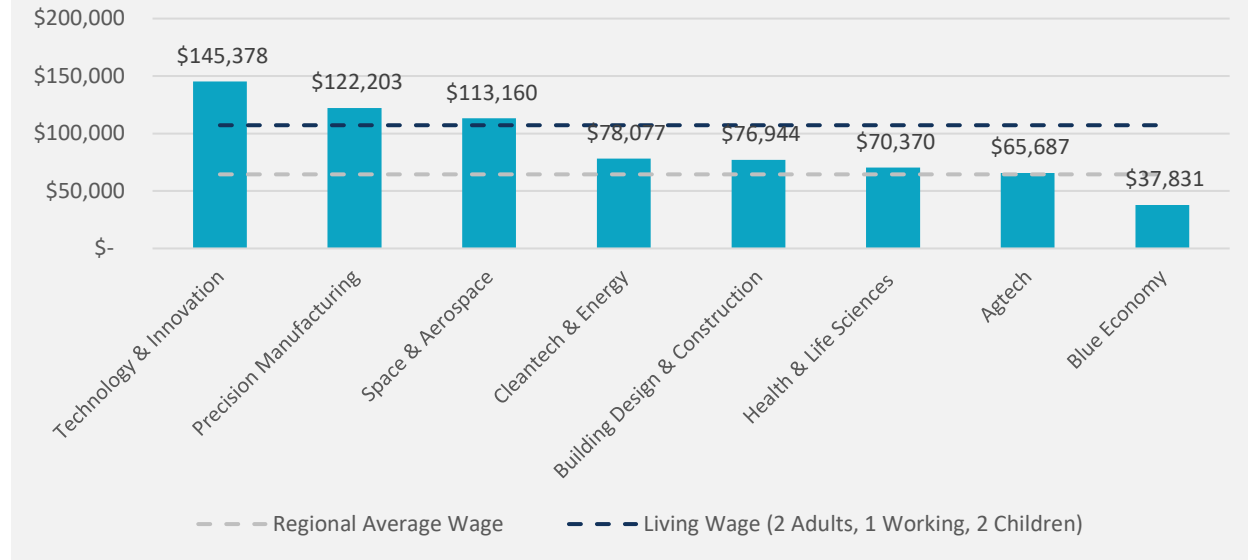
<sup>24</sup> JobsEQ 2024 Q2. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019 – 2024).

<sup>25</sup> Non-REACH priority industry clusters are colored gray, and bubble size is proportional to 2024Q2 employment levels.

<sup>26</sup> MIT Living Wage Calculator (2024).

priority industry cluster offers wages well below the regional average wage and Living Wage determination (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Average Annual Wage in Priority Industry Clusters<sup>27</sup>



## Industry Deep Dives and Career Pathways Gap Analysis

The following section characterizes employment dynamics in each of the priority industry clusters by identifying key employers, occupations, career pathways, and gaps within regional supply and demand by comparing regional education and training program completions<sup>28,29</sup> to job openings within corresponding occupations. For an in-depth analysis of the region’s career pathways and corresponding training program opportunities, please refer to the separately published **SCC 2025 Career Pathways report**.

### Space and Aerospace

**The Space and Aerospace industry cluster in the SCC region encompasses diverse activities, including space launches, satellite development, next-generation drone technology, and advanced air mobility.** Key players in the area include SpaceX, Raytheon, Lockheed Martin,

<sup>27</sup> JobsEQ 2024 Q2. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019 – 2024).

<sup>28</sup> The data presented in this section is derived from BW Research analysis of National Center for Education Statistics, Degrees Conferred datasets, and Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

<sup>29</sup> It is important to note that some training program completions, especially for training programs not registered or recognized on the latest version of the California Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), may not be quantified in this analysis. Certain occupations, such as Laborers, Assemblers, or other entry-level occupations, may not have corresponding formal training programs and thus have no program completions listed.

WhiteFox Defense Technologies, and Umbra, with many smaller local companies contributing to the industry.

The industry employs over 4,500 workers and accounts for 1.2 percent of total employment in the region. The most common occupations in the aerospace industry are **Software Developers**, **Business Operations Specialists**, and **Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Equipment Assemblers**. These occupations face demand constraints, indicated by a greater number of relevant program completions relative to average annual openings (Table 2).

Table 2. Regional Supply and Demand for the 15 Most Common Space and Aerospace Occupations

SOC	Occupation	Employment (2024Q2)	Completions	Avg. Annual Openings	Annual Openings per Completion
15-1252	Software Developers	247	337	228	0.68
13-1199	Business Operations Specialists	223	353	210	0.59
51-2028	Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Equipment Assemblers	149	-	73	-
51-2092	Team Assemblers	130	-	167	-
49-3011	Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	115	-	16	-
15-1299	Computer Occupations, All Other	100	93	73	0.78
11-9199	Managers, All Other	97	2,537	237	0.09
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	93	-	97	-
17-2011	Aerospace Engineers	93	57	9	0.16
17-2199	Engineers, All Other	82	52	27	0.53
13-1023	Purchasing Agents, Except Wholesale, Retail, and Farm Products	79	5	72	13.90
11-9041	Architectural and Engineering Managers	76	48	26	0.55
17-2112	Industrial Engineers	76	230	37	0.16
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	72	-	633	-
17-2141	Mechanical Engineers	71	210	33	0.16

The Space and Aerospace industry cluster offers robust career pathways for engineers, mechanics, and supply chain specialists. In the **Aerospace Engineers and Mechanics** pathway, entry-level Aircraft Structure Assemblers progress to mid-level Aircraft Mechanics, who maintain aircraft systems, and then to senior-level Aerospace Engineers, who design aerospace-relevant components and systems. In the **Aerospace Supply Chain Specialists** pathway, entry-level Production and Planning Clerks move to mid-level Purchasing Agents, and then to senior-level Business Operations Specialists, who oversee supply chain operations and logistics (Table 3).



Table 3. Career Pathways in the Space and Aerospace Industry Cluster

<b>Aerospace Engineers and Mechanics</b>			
<b>Level</b>	<b>SOC</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Average Wage</b>
Senior	17-2011	Aerospace Engineers	\$134,800
Mid	49-3011	Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	\$76,600
Entry	51-2011	Aircraft Structure, Surfaces, Rigging, and Systems Assemblers	\$63,900
<b>Aerospace Supply Chain Specialists</b>			
<b>Level</b>	<b>SOC</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Average Wage</b>
Senior	13-1199	Business Operations Specialists	\$116,900
Mid	13-1023	Purchasing Agents, Except Wholesale, Retail, and Farm Products	\$92,600
Entry	43-5061	Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks	\$75,300

## Cleantech and Energy

**The Cleantech and Energy industry cluster focuses on renewable energy, energy efficiency, and other innovative solutions to reduce environmental impact.** The region is a hub for solar power, energy storage, and electric vehicle infrastructure companies such as REC Solar, BHE Renewable, and Vistra Corp.

The region's Cleantech and Energy industry employs over 8,500 workers, accounting for 2.3 percent of total regional employment. Key occupations in this industry include **Electricians, Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters, Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers, and First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers.**

These roles generally experience an insufficient supply of new workers entering the regional workforce, with annual openings per completion above one in occupations such as Electricians (5.84 openings per program completion) and First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades (5.68 openings per program completion).

Some roles, like **Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks**, experience a severe shortage of new workers entering the workforce, with approximately 7 job openings per regional program graduate (Table 4).

Table 4. Regional Supply and Demand for the 15 Most Common Cleantech and Energy Occupations

SOC	Occupation	Employment (2024Q2)	Completions	Avg. Annual Openings	Annual Openings per Completion
47-2111	Electricians	940	20	115	5.84
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	638	-	72	-
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	567	-	67	-
47-2181	Roofers	461	-	37	-
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	346	22	128	5.68
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	301	-	573	-
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	227	577	393	0.68
47-2061	Construction Laborers	187	-	242	-
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	178	45	327	7.21
51-8031	Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant and System Operators	177	-	21	-
13-1082	Project Management Specialists	158	234	134	0.57
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	147	12	356	30.35
49-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	130	-	80	-
49-9051	Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers	124	-	14	-
41-3091	Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	120	1	179	174.70

The Cleantech and Energy industry offers clear career pathways for professionals in energy efficiency and grid modernization-related roles. In the **HVAC pathway**, entry-level Helpers - Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers progress to mid-level Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers, who specialize in installing and maintaining HVAC systems. From there, individuals can advance to senior Construction Managers, who oversee large construction projects.

In the **Electricians pathway**, entry-level Helpers - Electricians move to mid-level Solar Photovoltaic Installers, who focus on the installation of solar systems. From there, they can advance to senior Electricians, responsible for a range of electrical installation and maintenance tasks (Table 5).

Table 5. Career Pathways in the Cleantech and Energy Industry Cluster

HVAC			
Level	SOC	Description	Average Wage
Senior	11-9021	Construction Managers	\$126,500
Mid	49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	\$71,300
Entry	49-9098	Helpers--Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers	\$46,300
Electricians			
Level	SOC	Description	Average Wage
Senior	47-2111	Electricians	\$81,000
Mid	47-2231	Solar Photovoltaic Installers	\$57,000
Entry	47-3013	Helpers--Electricians	\$48,600

## Technology and Innovation

The region's Technology and Innovation industry cluster is involved in technological research, particularly in creating advancements in photonics research, which involves the science and application of light. Photonics research affects many sectors, from healthcare and defense applications to everyday technologies like fiber optics and barcode scanners. The SCC region is home to globally recognized innovators specializing in optical and photonic components, such as Nexus Photonics, which develops photonic chips for the visible-to-near-infrared spectrum, and Seek Thermal, a leader in thermal imaging products.

The Technology and Innovation industry in the region employs nearly 13,000 workers, accounting for 3.5 percent of the total workforce. Prominent occupations include **Software Developers**, **Computer and Information Systems Managers**, and **Project Management Specialists**, with these roles facing industry demand constraints. Meanwhile, roles like **Computer User Support Specialists** and **Computer Systems Analysts** face inadequate worker supply in the region, with annual job openings per program completion of 1.45 and 1.31, respectively (Table 6).

Table 6. Regional Supply and Demand for the 15 Most Common Technology and Innovation Occupations

SOC	Occupation	Employment (2024Q2)	Completions	Avg. Annual Openings	Annual Openings per Completion
15-1252	Software Developers	1,810	337	228	0.68
11-9199	Managers, All Other	543	2,537	237	0.09
11-3021	Computer and Information Systems Managers	413	137	96	0.70
13-1082	Project Management Specialists	379	234	134	0.57
15-1299	Computer Occupations, All Other	343	93	73	0.78
15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	323	43	63	1.45
41-3091	Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	263	1	179	174.70
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	256	-	146	-
15-1211	Computer Systems Analysts	255	36	48	1.31
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	255	577	393	0.68
11-9041	Architectural and Engineering Managers	209	230	37	0.16
13-1111	Management Analysts	197	252	140	0.55
17-2141	Mechanical Engineers	197	210	33	0.16
13-1199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	193	353	210	0.59
15-1253	Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	192	33	24	0.71

The technology and innovation industry in the region offers clear career pathways for Software Developers and Technological Component Manufacturers. In the **Software Developers pathway**, entry-level Data Entry Keyers handle data input and management tasks. They can progress to mid-level roles such as Computer User Support Specialists, providing technical assistance and resolving software or hardware issues. From there, they can advance to senior-level Software Developers, responsible for designing, developing, and maintaining complex software applications.

In the **Technological Component Manufacturers pathway**, entry-level Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Equipment Assemblers focus on assembling and testing electrical and electronic components. They can progress to mid-level First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers, overseeing the production process and managing assembly teams. At the senior level, individuals can become Electronics Engineers, designing and developing advanced technological components and systems (Table 7).

Table 7. Career Pathways in the Technology and Innovation Industry Cluster

Software Developers			
Level	SOC	Description	Average Wage
Senior	15-1252	Software Developers	\$152,700
Mid	15-1232	Computer User Support Specialists	\$74,800
Entry	43-9021	Data Entry Keyers	\$42,300
Technological Component Manufacturers			
Level	SOC	Description	Average Wage
Senior	17-2072	Electronics Engineers, Except Computer	\$133,300
Mid	51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	\$91,400
Entry	51-2028	Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Equipment Assemblers, Except Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers	\$54,800

## Precision Manufacturing

**The Precision Manufacturing sector is focused on producing high-precision components for industries like consumer electronics, telecommunications, and semiconductors.** Notable companies in the region include SONOS, known for its advanced audio technology; Resonant, specializing in radio frequency filter design for mobile devices; and Revasum, which develops specialized equipment for semiconductor manufacturing.

The precision manufacturing industry cluster employs nearly 2,600 workers, accounting for 0.7 percent of total regional employment. **Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Equipment Assemblers** are the most common occupation in the industry, with 290 workers employed. **Mechanical Engineers** in the region face demand constraints, with only 0.16 job openings per regional completion (Table 8).

Table 8. Regional Supply and Demand for the 15 Most Common Precision Manufacturing Occupations

SOC	Occupation	Employment (2024Q2)	Completions	Avg. Annual Openings	Annual Openings per Completion
51-2028	Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Equipment Assemblers	290	-	73	-
15-1252	Software Developers	188	337	228	0.68
51-2092	Team Assemblers	138	-	167	-
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	81	-	97	-
17-2061	Computer Hardware Engineers	64	84	14	0.17
17-2071	Electrical Engineers	60	154	26	0.17
11-9041	Architectural and Engineering Managers	60	230	37	0.16
17-3023	Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technologists and Technicians	58	2	20	12.47
17-2112	Industrial Engineers	58	48	26	0.55
17-2072	Electronics Engineers, Except Computer	54	76	13	0.17
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	50	-	81	-
17-2141	Mechanical Engineers	49	210	33	0.16
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing	44	15	200	13.24
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	43	-	116	-
11-3021	Computer and Information Systems Managers	41	137	96	0.70

The precision manufacturing industry offers career pathways for Industrial Mechanics and Engineers and Electronic Designers and Engineers. In the **Industrial Mechanics and Engineers pathway**, entry-level Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Equipment Assemblers focus on assembling and testing industrial equipment. They can progress to mid-level roles such as Industrial Machinery Mechanics, maintaining and repairing industrial machinery. At the senior level, individuals can become Industrial Engineers, who design and optimize manufacturing processes, improving efficiency and productivity across industries.

In the **Electronic Designers and Engineers pathway**, entry-level Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers ensure the quality of electronic components by performing detailed inspections and testing. From there, they can advance to mid-level roles as Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technologists and Technicians, supporting the development and implementation of electrical systems. The pathway culminates at the senior level with Computer Hardware Engineers, responsible for designing and developing computer hardware systems (Table 9).

Table 9. Career Pathways in the Precision Manufacturing Industry Cluster

Industrial Mechanics and Engineers			
Level	SOC	Description	Average Wage
Senior	17-2112	Industrial Engineers	\$131,400
Mid	49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	\$73,900
Entry	51-2028	Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Equipment Assemblers, Except Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers	\$49,300
Electronic Designers and Engineers			
Level	SOC	Description	Average Wage
Senior	17-2061	Computer Hardware Engineers	\$177,600
Mid	17-3023	Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technologists and Technicians	\$80,300
Entry	51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	\$56,700

## Agtech

**The Agtech industry cluster is involved in advancing agricultural practices by developing the application of technology solutions in agriculture.** The region is home to several innovative agriculture technology companies driving advancements in agriculture. FarmBot specializes in precision food production hardware and software, Acre Cloud develops farm management software, Hortau focuses on irrigation management, and TRIC Robotics offers chemical-free pest control solutions. These companies are at the forefront of modernizing agriculture with cutting-edge technologies.

The Agtech industry in the region employs nearly 17,500 workers, accounting for 4.7 percent of total regional employment. **Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse** represent the largest occupation at over 3,200 workers. **Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products**, exhibit a significant labor shortage with 13.24 annual openings per completion (Table 10). There is a large amount of missing data regarding completions and openings due to the lack of formalized training programs in this industry.

Table 10. Regional Supply and Demand for the 15 Most Common Agtech Occupations

SOC	Occupation	Employment (2024Q2)	Completions	Avg. Annual Openings	Annual Openings per Completion
45-2092	Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	3,268	-	2,916	-
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	719	15	200	13.24
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	692	-	633	-
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	634	-	336	-
51-9111	Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	625	-	121	-
51-9012	Separating, Filtering, Clarifying, Precipitating, and Still Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	466	40	51	1.26
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	320	-	124	-
53-7064	Packers and Packagers, Hand	302	-	251	-
53-3031	Driver/Sales Workers	287	-	125	-
41-9011	Demonstrators and Product Promoters	281	-	73	-
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	273	-	728	-
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	254	577	393	0.68
27-1026	Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	221	-	52	-
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	197	-	573	-
11-2022	Sales Managers	180	198	120	0.61

The agricultural technology industry in the region provides clear career pathways for Food Market Researchers and Sales Experts as well as Farmers and Agriculture Workers. In the **Food Market Researchers and Sales Experts pathway**, entry-level Demonstrators and Product Promoters introduce and promote agricultural products to consumers. They can advance to mid-level roles such as Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists, conducting market research to identify consumer trends and inform marketing strategies. At the senior level, individuals can become Sales Managers, responsible for overseeing sales teams and developing strategies to maximize revenue.

In the **Farmers and Agriculture Workers pathway**, entry-level Farmworkers and Laborers handle planting, harvesting, and maintenance of crops and nursery plants. They can move into mid-level positions as Agricultural Equipment Operators, using machinery to improve farm productivity. From there, they can advance to senior roles as Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers, overseeing large-scale agricultural operations and managing resources and staff (Table 11).



Table 11. Career Pathways in the Agtech Industry Cluster

Food Market Researchers and Sales Experts			
Level	SOC	Description	Average Wage
Senior	11-2022	Sales Managers	\$124,200
Mid	13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	\$78,000
Entry	41-9011	Demonstrators and Product Promoters	\$46,600
Farmers and Agriculture Workers			
Level	SOC	Description	Average Wage
Senior	11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	\$126,000
Mid	45-2091	Agricultural Equipment Operators	\$44,000
Entry	45-2092	Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	\$39,400

## Health and Life Sciences

**The Health and Life Sciences industry cluster focuses on advancing medical and biotechnology innovations to improve healthcare and patient outcomes, in addition to providing overarching health services for the region.** The region is home to several companies driving advancements in this industry. Cognixion develops AI-enabled assistive research technologies, Promega specializes in biotechnology and diagnostic solutions, and Inogen produces portable oxygen concentrators to enhance respiratory care.

The Health and Life Sciences industry in the region employs nearly 26,000 workers across various occupations, accounting for 13.3 percent of total regional employment. **Registered Nurses** represent the second-most common occupation in the industry with over 4,600 workers. Registered Nurses face labor shortages, with 1.94 annual openings per regional training program completion. Generally, occupations in this industry see a shortfall in supply for new workers with the six most common occupations seeing more openings than completions (Table 12).

Table 12. Regional Supply and Demand for the 15 Most Common Health and Life Sciences Occupations

SOC	Occupation	Employment (2024Q2)	Completions	Avg. Annual Openings	Annual Openings per Completion
31-1122	Personal Care Aides	6,331	9	1,104	129.61
29-1141	Registered Nurses	4,617	144	279	1.94
31-1121	Home Health Aides	2,245	2	321	129.43
31-9092	Medical Assistants	1,790	132	270	2.05
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	1,769	32	270	8.44
43-6013	Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	1,719	35	186	5.32
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	1,153	153	102	0.67
31-9091	Dental Assistants	1,010	43	141	3.29
21-1018	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	879	165	110	0.66
21-1093	Social and Human Service Assistants	826	16	129	8.11
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	816	47	96	2.03
43-4171	Receptionists and Information Clerks	717	-	208	-
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	632	-	573	-
29-2042	Emergency Medical Technicians	603	203	52	0.26
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	541	8	235	27.66

The Health and Life Sciences industry in the region offers structured career pathways for Medical Researchers, as well as Patient Service Providers, with opportunities for advancement in both fields. In the **Medical Research pathway**, entry-level Medical Equipment Preparers are responsible for sterilizing and preparing medical tools and equipment. They can advance to mid-level roles as Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists, who conduct diagnostic tests and analyze biological samples. At the senior level, they can progress to Medical Scientists (Except Epidemiologists), focusing on advanced research to develop treatments and improve health outcomes (Table 13).

In the **Patient Services pathway**, entry-level Personal Care Aides provide essential support for individuals needing assistance with daily activities. They can advance to mid-level positions as Nursing Assistants, responsible for basic patient care under the supervision of nurses. At the senior level, they can become Registered Nurses, taking on more complex patient care tasks and coordinating treatment plans (Table 13).

Table 13. Career Pathways in the Health and Life Sciences Industry Cluster

Medical Research			
Level	SOC	Description	Average Wage
Senior	19-1042	Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists	\$131,200
Mid	29-2011	Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists	\$69,000
Entry	31-9093	Medical Equipment Preparers	\$56,400
Patient Services			
Level	SOC	Description	Average Wage
Senior	29-1141	Registered Nurses	\$134,000
Mid	31-1131	Nursing Assistants	\$45,500
Entry	31-1122	Personal Care Aides	\$37,100

## Building Design and Construction

**The Building Design and Construction industry cluster in the region focuses on advancing sustainable construction practices and innovative building solutions.** Key companies such as RRM Design Group, known for its architecture and planning services; Cannon, offering engineering and construction services; and Precision Construction Services, specializing in general contracting and construction management, are some of the region's core companies in this industry cluster.

The region's Building Design and Construction industry employs nearly 29,000 workers, accounting for 7.7 percent of total regional employment. **Construction Laborers** and **Carpenters** are the most common occupations, each employing 2,310 and 2,149 workers. Construction Managers and Civil Engineer graduates generally face a lack of open regional job opportunities, with less than 1 job opening per graduate (Table 14).

Table 14. Regional Supply and Demand for the 15 Most Common Building Design and Construction Occupations

SOC	Occupation	Employment (2024Q2)	Completions	Avg. Annual Openings	Annual Openings per Completion
47-2061	Construction Laborers	2,310	-	242	-
47-2031	Carpenters	2,149	-	178	-
11-9141	Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers	1,173	4	96	21.88
47-2141	Painters, Construction and Maintenance	1,128	-	90	-
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	1,076	22	128	5.68
41-9022	Real Estate Sales Agents	940	4	76	19.57
11-9021	Construction Managers	901	150	89	0.59
17-2051	Civil Engineers	846	189	68	0.36
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	808	-	573	-
47-2081	Drywall and Ceiling Tile Installers	732	-	49	-
13-1082	Project Management Specialists	690	234	134	0.57
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	689	-	283	-
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	585	577	393	0.68
47-2051	Cement Masons and Concrete Finishers	559	-	39	-
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	548	-	71	-

The Building Design and Construction industry offers well-defined career pathways for Civil Engineers and Construction Laborers and Management. In the **Civil Engineers pathway**, entry-level Construction Laborers perform manual labor on construction sites, assisting with various tasks. They can advance to mid-level roles as Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators, who operate heavy machinery to support construction projects. From there, they can progress to senior Civil Engineers, who are responsible for designing, planning, and overseeing the construction of infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges, and buildings.

In the **Construction Laborers and Management pathway**, entry-level Construction Laborers perform physical tasks on construction sites, such as lifting and carrying materials. They can move into mid-level positions as First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers, overseeing laborers and ensuring worksite safety and efficiency. At the senior level, individuals can become Construction Managers, responsible for planning, coordinating, and overseeing construction projects from start to finish (Table 15).

Table 15. Career Pathways - Building Design and Construction

Civil Engineers			
Level	SOC	Description	Average Wage
Senior	17-2051	Civil Engineers	\$113,000
Mid	47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	\$88,800
Entry	47-2061	Construction Laborers	\$60,500
Construction Laborers and Management			
Level	SOC	Description	Average Wage
Senior	11-9021	Construction Managers	\$119,300
Mid	47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	\$88,000
Entry	47-2061	Construction Laborers	\$60,500

## Blue Economy

**The Blue Economy industry cluster is comprised of all economic activity related to the use of ocean and marine resources, ranging from fishing to offshore mining to restaurants, tourism, and recreation.** Notable companies in this industry cluster include Aqueos, a marine construction and infrastructure firm; Santa Barbara Mariculture, focused on open ocean aquaculture; and Grassy Bar Oyster Company, a sustainable shellfish farm located in Morro Bay.

The region's Blue Economy industry cluster employs nearly 46,000 workers, accounting for 12.3 percent of total regional employment. **Fast Food and Counter Workers** and **Waiters and Waitresses** are the most common occupations, employing 7,781 and 5,501 workers, respectively. Blue Economy occupations with relevant education and training programs generally face labor shortages, as demonstrated by the Restaurant Cooks occupation, which has 20.18 annual openings per regional training program completion (Table 16).

Table 16. Regional Supply and Demand for the 15 Most Common Blue Economy Occupations

SOC	Occupation	Employment (2024Q2)	Completions	Avg. Annual Openings	Annual Openings per Completion
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	7,781	-	2,163	-
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	5,501	-	1,297	-
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	3,576	34	679	20.18
35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food	3,085	-	396	-
37-2012	Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	2,413	-	568	-
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	2,372	36	441	12.30
35-9011	Dining Room and Cafeteria Attendants and Bartender Helpers	1,443	-	355	-
35-9021	Dishwashers	1,359	-	274	-
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	1,299	-	402	-
43-4081	Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks	1,241	-	208	-
35-9031	Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop	1,163	-	317	-
35-3011	Bartenders	1,147	-	452	-
41-2011	Cashiers	906	-	1,216	-
11-9051	Food Service Managers	840	14	140	10.20
53-3031	Driver/Sales Workers	539	-	126	-

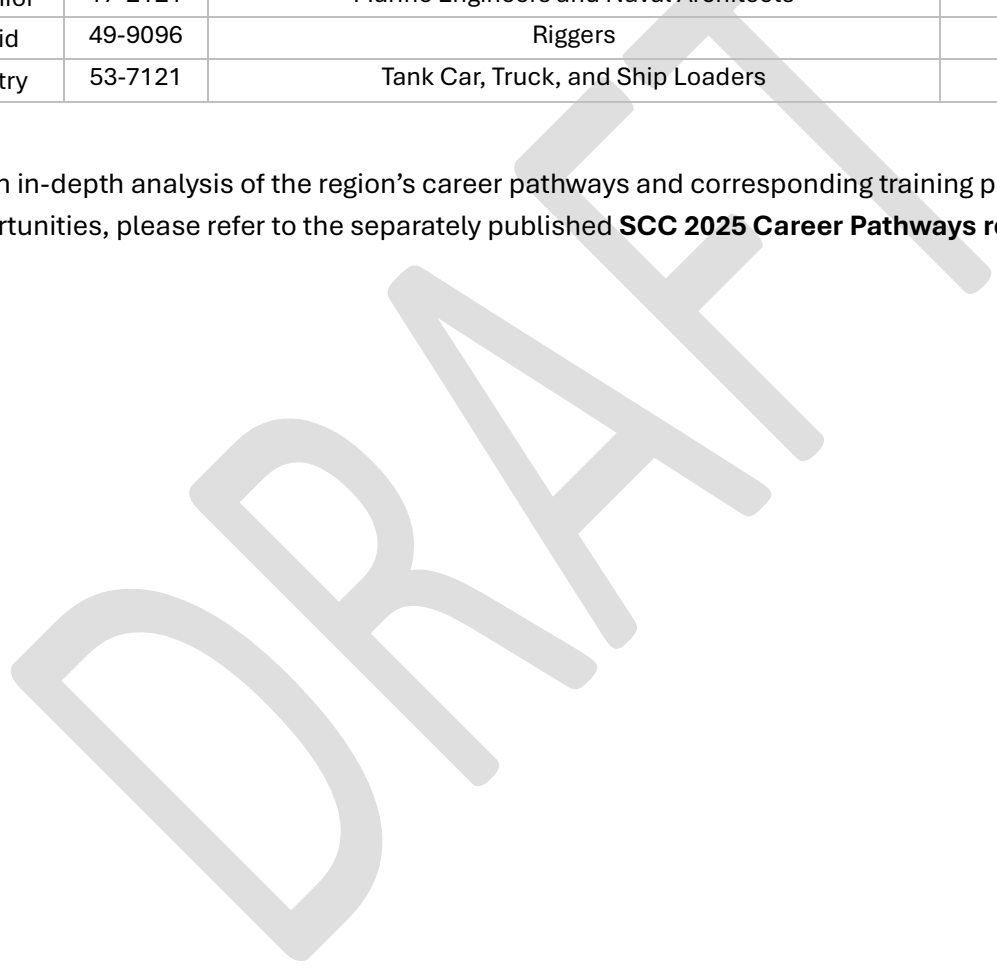
The Blue Economy industry cluster provides clear career progression for those involved in sustainable seafood production and marine resource management. In the **Aquaculture Management** pathway, entry-level Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural play a hands-on role in maintaining aquaculture systems, monitoring aquatic species, and ensuring proper water quality. With experience, they can advance to First-Line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers who oversee aquaculture operations and ensure compliance with environmental and safety regulations. At the senior level, workers can progress to Environmental Science and Protection Technicians, responsible for monitoring environmental impacts and sustainable aquaculture practices.

In the **Marine Construction and Engineering** pathway, entry-level Tank Car, Truck, and Ship Loaders are responsible for safely loading and unloading fuel, cargo, and materials for marine construction projects. With experience, they can transition to mid-level Riggers, who install and operate heavy lifting equipment and assist in assembling marine structures such as docks and offshore platforms. At the senior level, professionals can become Marine Engineers and Naval Architects, who design and oversee the construction of ships, submarines, and marine energy infrastructure, ensuring that structures meet safety and performance standards (Table 17).

Table 17. Career Pathways – Blue Economy

<b>Aquaculture Management</b>			
<b>Level</b>	<b>SOC</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Average Wage</b>
Senior	19-4042	Environmental Science and Protection Technicians, Including Health	\$80,900
Mid	45-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers	\$59,200
Entry	45-2093	Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals	\$47,200
<b>Marine Construction and Engineering</b>			
<b>Level</b>	<b>SOC</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Average Wage</b>
Senior	17-2121	Marine Engineers and Naval Architects	\$131,600
Mid	49-9096	Riggers	\$76,100
Entry	53-7121	Tank Car, Truck, and Ship Loaders	\$65,600

For an in-depth analysis of the region’s career pathways and corresponding training program opportunities, please refer to the separately published **SCC 2025 Career Pathways report**.



## Enabling Upward Mobility for All Californians

The South Central Coast continues to grapple with regional inequalities, further intensified by post-pandemic recovery trends and changing industry skill demands. The emphasis on job quality and upward mobility remains crucial, especially in areas with high cost of living and a significant proportion of lower-skill, lower-wage workers. Enhancing job quality and facilitating career progression for individuals in entry-level roles are vital for the region's sustained economic recovery. This section of the Regional Plan outlines strategies to bolster economic security for residents through collaboration with High Road employers and by improving access to quality jobs for historically underserved populations.

Furthermore, the rapid advancement of AI and automation technologies emphasizes growing workforce needs for digital literacy skills, including the ability to leverage AI tools as an augmentative and productivity-enhancing tool. Digital literacy has become an essential skill, even for entry-level positions, and is a crucial component of worker upskilling and career advancement. The successful implementation of the Digital Literacy Training initiative throughout the region's AJCCs, identified in the 2021-2024 Regional Plan and funded by the RPU's Slingshot 4.0 grant, has provided valuable training to the South Central Coast labor force, and the RPU plans to expand program access and awareness to the region's most underserved populations. The RPU has continued a commitment to digital literacy skills training through RERP grant funding, which currently supports community access to digital literacy skills training throughout the region.

In addition, the South Central Coast RPU has prioritized future-focused workforce strategies highlighting priority industry clusters such as Cleantech and Energy, Precision Manufacturing, and Technology and Innovation. In 2025 and beyond, the RPU will continue enhancing partnerships with employers to develop tailored training programs that not only provide essential skills but also foster long-term career growth in High Road pathways in these industries.

This section summarizes regional job quality metrics and job quality trends within REACH priority industry clusters. The RPU will leverage these metrics to better understand the region's most underserved populations and develop strategies to target these populations and sub-regions.



## High Road Workforce System and Job Quality

Job quality – which is typically measured in tiers – serves as a crucial measure of the economic vitality of a region or an industry. For instance, if a region or industry has many jobs, but most of those jobs pay less than a sustainable wage, workers will struggle to live and work in the region or industry.

To assess regional job quality trends, the research team retrieved wage data for occupational categories and classified each occupation into tier groups as shown in Table 18.

In South Central Coast households with two working adults and two children, each adult would need to work **1.5 Tier 3 jobs** to meet the living wage determination.

Table 18. Job Tier Description<sup>30</sup>

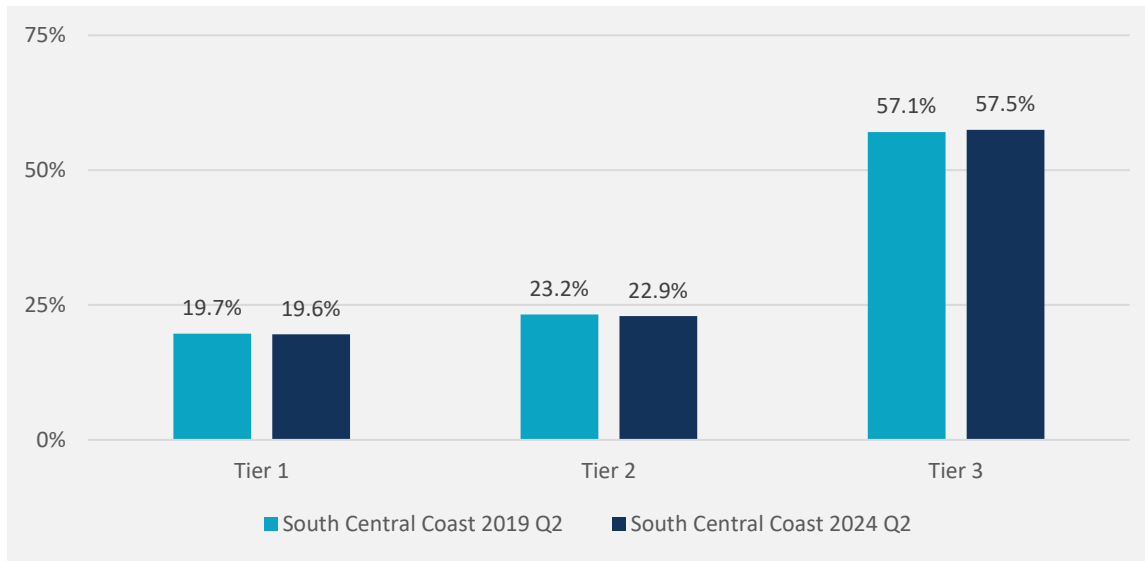
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Tier 1 occupations are typically the highest-paying, highest-skilled occupations in the economy. Such occupations include managerial positions (e.g., Sales Managers), professional positions (e.g., Lawyers), and highly skilled technology occupations, such as engineers, scientists, and computer programmers.	Tier 2 occupations are typically middle-wage, middle-skill occupations. These occupations include office and administrative positions (e.g., Accounting Clerks and Secretaries), manufacturing operations, and production positions (e.g., Electricians, Machinists).	Tier 3 occupations are typically the lowest-paying, lowest-skilled occupations and tend to account for the largest share of jobs in a region. These occupations include food service and retail jobs, building and groundskeeping positions, and personal care positions.
<b>\$115,600</b> Median Annual Salary <b>\$59.70</b> Average Hourly Wage	<b>\$70,200</b> Median Annual Salary <b>\$33.73</b> Average Hourly Wage	<b>\$44,100</b> Median Annual Salary <b>\$21.22</b> Average Hourly Wage

**Job quality remained relatively consistent in the South Central Coast over the past five years.**

Tier 1 jobs accounted for 19.7 percent of employment in 2019 and 19.6 percent in 2024, while the region’s share of Tier 3 jobs increased by 0.4 percentage points from 2019 to 2024 ( Figure 14).

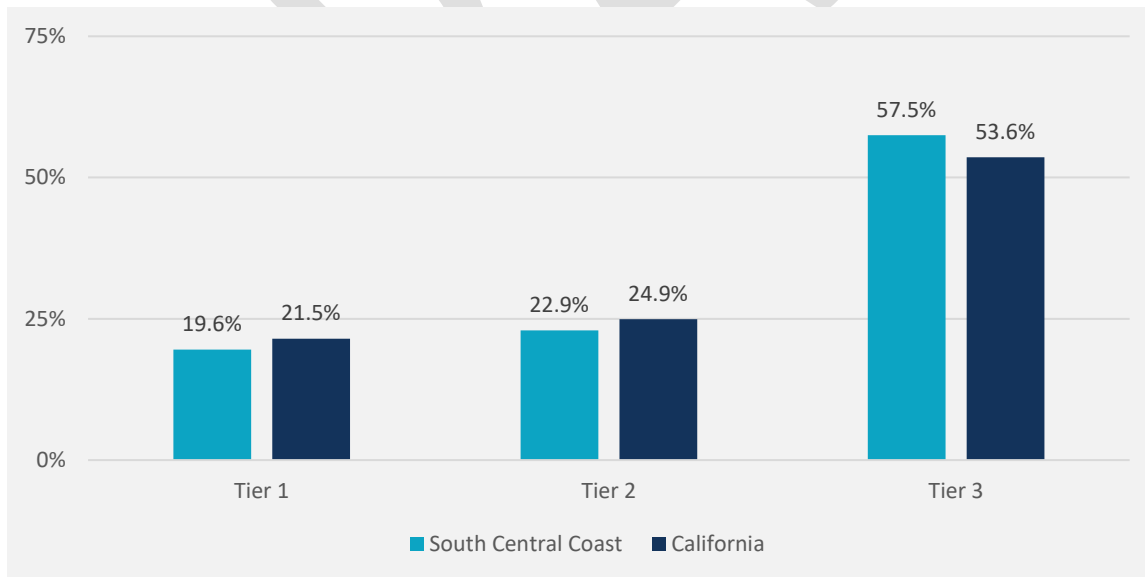
<sup>30</sup> Average annual salary and average hourly wage calculated as of 2024Q2.

Figure 14. Job Quality by Tier in the South Central Coast Region (2019Q2 – 2024Q2)<sup>31</sup>



**Job quality in the South Central Coast region is marginally lower than in the overall state.** Tier 1 jobs account for 19.6 percent and 21.5 percent of South Central Coast and California employment, respectively, while Tier 3 jobs account for 57.5 percent of employment in the region, 3.9 percentage points higher than California (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Job Quality by Tier in the South Central Coast Region and the State (2024Q2)<sup>32</sup>



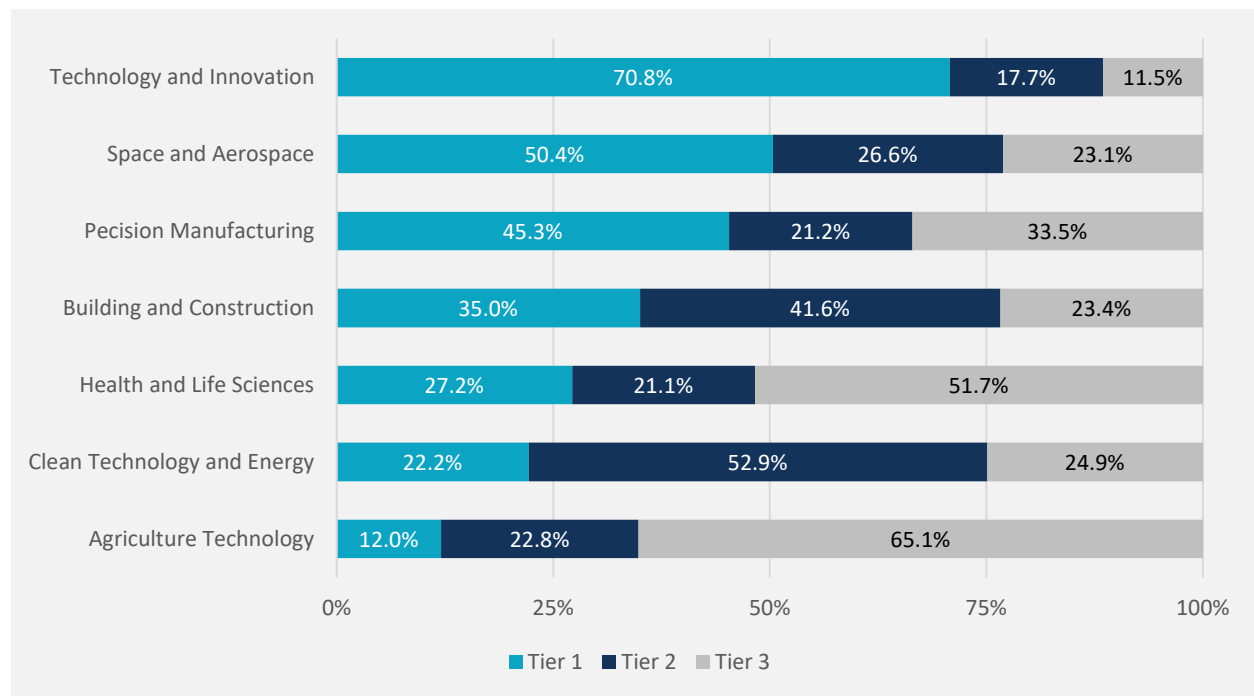
**Among the REACH priority industry clusters, the Technology and Innovation cluster provides the highest quality jobs,** with nearly three in four jobs (70.8 percent) in this cluster classified as

<sup>31</sup> JobsEQ 2024 Q2. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2024).

<sup>32</sup> JobsEQ 2024 Q2. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2024).

Tier 1 jobs. Agriculture Technology has the lowest job quality out of the REACH industries, with 65 percent of jobs classified as Tier 3 jobs (Figure 16).

Figure 16. Job Quality of REACH Industry Clusters<sup>33</sup>



<sup>33</sup> JobsEQ 2024 Q2. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2024).

## Climate and Environmental Sustainability

The South Central Coast RPU actively advances workforce strategies that align with California's High Road vision for climate and environmental sustainability. Recognizing the widespread impact of climate change on industries and employment, the RPU prioritizes workforce development initiatives that support the transition to a carbon-neutral economy.

The City of San Luis Obispo<sup>34</sup> and Santa Barbara County<sup>35</sup> have recently mobilized Climate Action Plans – to achieve the climate and emissions-related goals set forth in these reports, supporting regional goals to ensure that the South Central Coast has an adequate workforce supply within its Cleantech and Energy, climate, and environmental sustainability industries.

Multi-sectoral efforts aimed at advancing regional emissions reductions, climate adaptation, and regional resilience include:

- Participation in the **Santa Barbara County Regional Climate Collaborative** and the **Central Coast Climate Collaborative (4C)**, public/private/nonprofit partnerships that aim to address regional climate challenges
  - Receipt of funding to develop resilience hubs and a regional sea level monitoring plan
  - Development of a five-part webinar on carbon sequestration and offsets
- Launch of the **Tri-County Regional Energy Network (3C-REN)**, a collaboration between Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and Ventura Counties, to provide programs and services to increase energy efficiency in buildings through workforce development, customer programs, and training
- Membership in **Central Coast Community Energy (3CE)**, which launched electricity service to commercial and residential customers in participating cities in 2021, based on a portfolio with a higher level of renewable energy sources
- Collaboration within the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) to develop a **Central Coast Zero Emissions Vehicle Strategy** to support expansion of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure within the Central Coast
- Collaboration with Uplift Central Coast to ensure economic development initiatives incorporate goals related to resilience and sustainability.<sup>36</sup>

These climate-related initiatives are expected to support climate and energy-related employment demand in the South Central Coast Region.

---

<sup>34</sup> [City of San Luis Obispo. Climate Action Plan for Community Recovery.](#)

<sup>35</sup> [Santa Barbara County. 2030 Climate Action Plan \(2024\).](#)

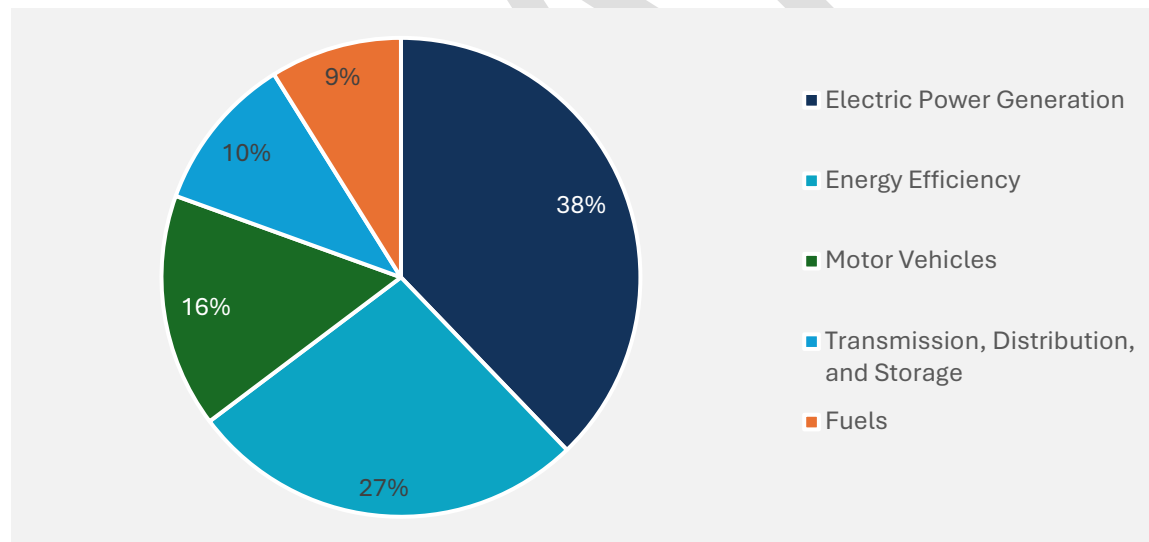
<sup>36</sup> [Santa Barbara County. 2030 Climate Action Plan \(2024\).](#)

This section of the report describes the current levels of climate and energy-related employment in the region, leveraging data derived from the Department of Energy’s United States Energy Employment Report (USEER), a novel dataset that quantifies clean energy employment across counties, states, and the country as a whole.

### Traditional and Clean Energy Employment

Within the South Central Coast’s energy industry, employment is concentrated in the Electric Power Generation<sup>37</sup> sector, representing over one-third (38 percent) of total energy employment in the region as of 2023. The Energy Efficiency<sup>38</sup> sector is the next largest energy employer, representing 27 percent of total energy employment, while the Motor Vehicles<sup>39</sup> sector represents 16 percent as of 2023. The region’s smallest energy sectors are Transmission, Distribution, and Storage<sup>40</sup> and Fuels,<sup>41</sup> each representing approximately 10 percent of total energy employment (Figure 17).

Figure 17. Energy Employment by Technology in the South Central Coast Region (2023)<sup>42</sup>



The proportion of energy industry employment in the region’s Electric Power Generation, Motor Vehicles, and Fuels sectors has slightly increased in the past five years, while the Energy Efficiency and Transmission, Distribution, and Storage sectors have slightly declined (Figure 18).

<sup>37</sup> Includes Solar, Wind, Hydroelectric, Low-Impact Hydroelectric, Natural Gas Generation, and Other Power Generation employment.

<sup>38</sup> Includes High Efficiency HVAC and Renewable Heating and Cooling, Traditional HVAC, ENERGY STAR and Efficient Lighting, and Advanced Materials employment.

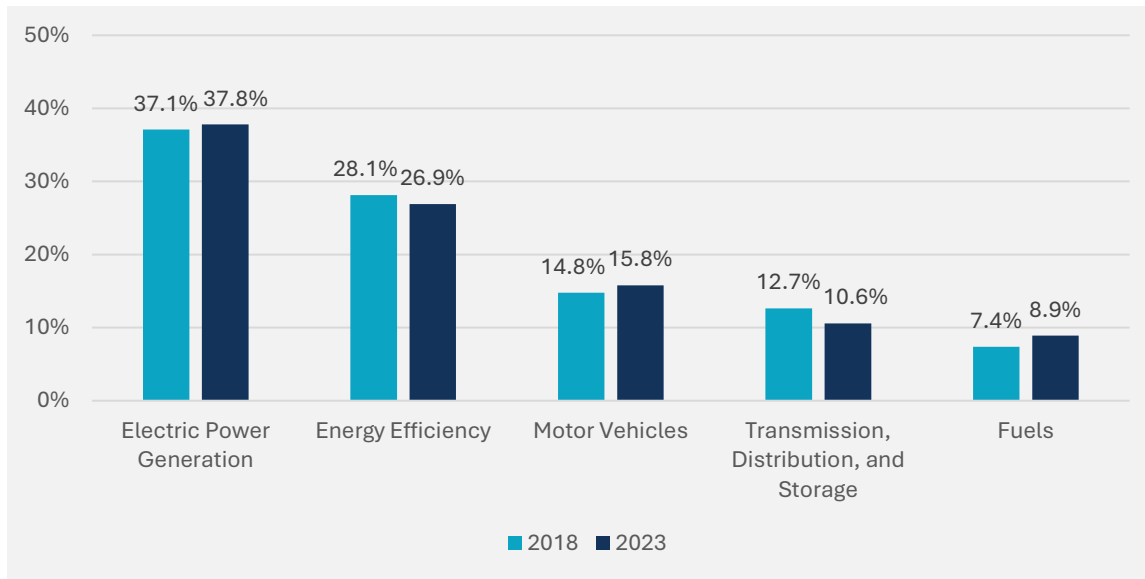
<sup>39</sup> Includes Hybrid Electric Vehicle, Electric Vehicle, Plug-In Hybrid Vehicle, Natural Gas Vehicle, and Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Vehicle employment.

<sup>40</sup> Includes Traditional TDS, Storage, Smart Grid, Microgrid, and Other Grid employment.

<sup>41</sup> Includes Coal, Petroleum, Natural Gas, Woody Biomass, Corn Ethanol, Other Clean Fuels, and Other Traditional Fuels employment.

<sup>42</sup> U.S. Department of Energy, United States Energy and Employment Report (2023).

Figure 18. Energy Employment by Technology in the South Central Coast Region (2018 – 2023)<sup>43</sup>



DRAFT

<sup>43</sup> U.S. Department of Energy, United States Energy and Employment Report (2018 – 2023).

## Aligning, Coordinating, and Integrating Programs and Services

This section of the Regional Plan highlights the RPU's efforts to collaborate with regional partners to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of resources to better serve the community. The South Central Coast RPU's deep familiarity and experience with local partners enables strong relationships and frequent communication to ensure effective program integration and alignment. This section of the Regional Plan describes the RPU's efforts to support system alignment since its formation in the 2021-2024 Program Cycle and provides a framework for coordination and alignment in 2025 and beyond.

### System Alignment

While the South Central Coast RPU does not typically enter into formal service delivery MOUs with the majority of its partners, the RPU maintains strong working relationships and points of contact at partner organizations. Additionally, most, if not all partners, have provided Letters of Support/Commitment for the RPU's special grant programs. Some of the RPU's partners include:

- Santa Barbara City College
- Allan Hancock College
- Lompoc Adult School and Career Center
- Santa Barbara County Sherriff's Office
- Santa Barbara County Education Office
- Santa Barbara County Public Health Department
- The Salvation Army
- The Good Samaritan
- Chambers of Commerce in each part of the County of Santa Barbara
- Econ Alliance

The following MOUs are also currently in place:

- **San Luis Obispo County Cybersecurity Consortium (SLOC3)** – WDBSLO has entered into an MOU led by California Polytechnic University (Cal Poly) aimed at increasing regional cybersecurity awareness and career pathway opportunities and establishing a multistakeholder partnership with a regional focus.
- **Santa Barbara County Probation** – SBCWDB has entered into an MOU with the Santa Barbara County Probation for the Prison 2 Employment 2.0 (P2E 2.0) Program, which provides intensive case management, job readiness service, paid work experience, supportive services, and transitional job opportunities, to justice-involved jobseekers.

# Appendix A: Methodology

## Economic Distress Index

The research team developed an index to quantify the level of economic distress in subregions at a granular ZIP code level. This index quantifies economic distress at the ZIP code level by looking at 5 different economic indicators derived from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, which provide detailed labor market data at various geographic levels:

- Unemployment Rate
- Labor Force Participation Rate
- Median Income
- Percentage of Uninsured Residents
- Rent as a Percentage of Household Income

The research team then compared these indicators in each ZIP code against state averages to determine the "index score" for each indicator. ZIP codes that score above (below) the 75th (25th) percentile in at least 3 of the 5 measures are defined as “severely distressed”. ZIP codes that meet 1 to 2 of these criteria are “somewhat distressed,” while those that meet none of these criteria are “not distressed.” Table 19 displays the reference values and associated 75th (25th) percentile reference values for the overall state utilized in creating the economic distress index.

Table 19. Economic Distress Index – California Reference Values<sup>44</sup>

	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	<b>Median Annual Wages</b>	<b>Percentage of Residents with Health Insurance Coverage</b>	<b>Labor Force Participation Rate</b>	<b>Percentage of Households that spend 35% or More of Their Income on Rent</b>
<b>75<sup>th</sup> Percentile</b>	7.9%	-	-	-	55.8%
<b>25<sup>th</sup> Percentile</b>	-	\$36,561	90.7%	55.2%	-
<b>Direction of Analysis</b>	> 7.9%	< \$36,561	< 90.7%	< 55.2%	> 55.8%

<sup>44</sup> United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2023).



## Appendix B: Additional Figures

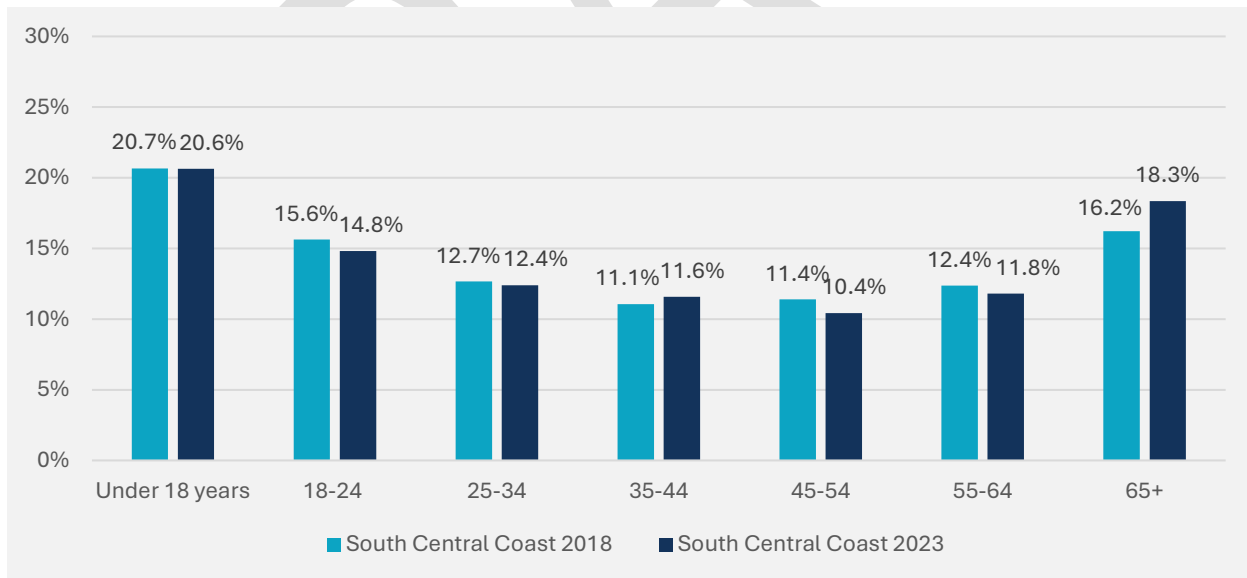
Table 20. Santa Barbara County Region Definition

Santa Barbara		
North	Central	South
93429, 93434, 93454, 93455, 93456, 93457, 93458	93254, 93427, 93436, 93437, 93438, 93440, 93441, 93460, 93463, 93464	93013, 93014, 93067, 93101, 93102, 93103, 93105, 93106, 93107, 93108, 93109, 93110, 93111, 93116, 93117, 93118, 93120, 93121, 93130, 93140, 93150, 93160, 93190, 93199

Table 21. San Luis Obispo County Region Definition

San Luis Obispo			
North	Coastal	SLO Sub-Region	South
93422, 93432, 93446, 93451, 93453, 93461, 93465	93402, 93424, 93428, 93430, 93442, 93452	93401, 93405, 93410	93420, 93433, 93444, 93445, 93449

Figure 19. Age Distribution of South Central Coast Residents (2018 – 2023)<sup>45</sup>



<sup>45</sup> United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2018-2023).

Figure 20. Educational Attainment of California Residents Aged 25 and Older (2018 – 2023)<sup>46</sup>

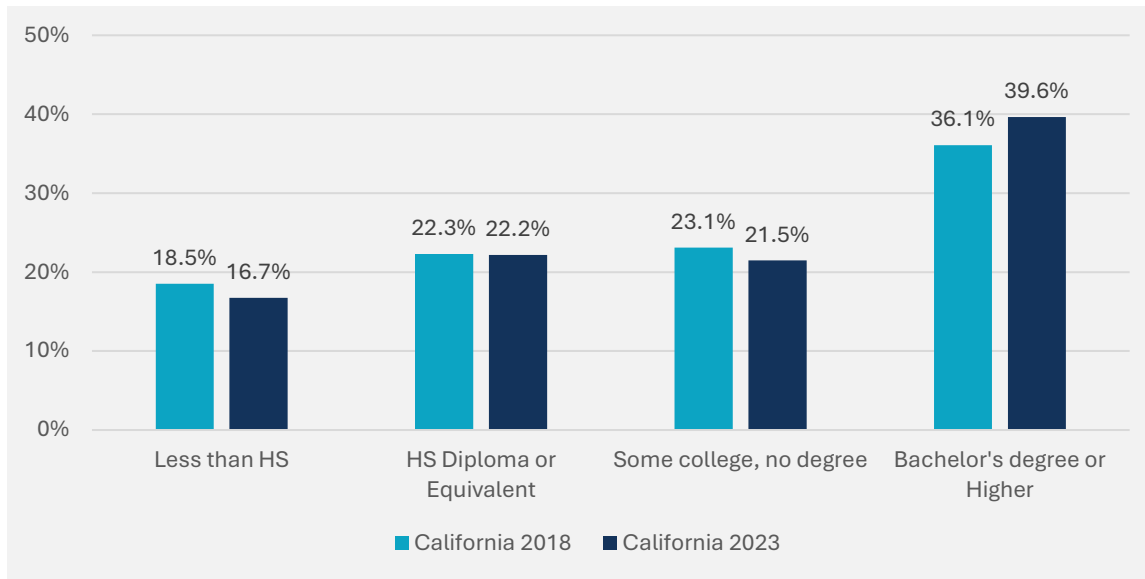
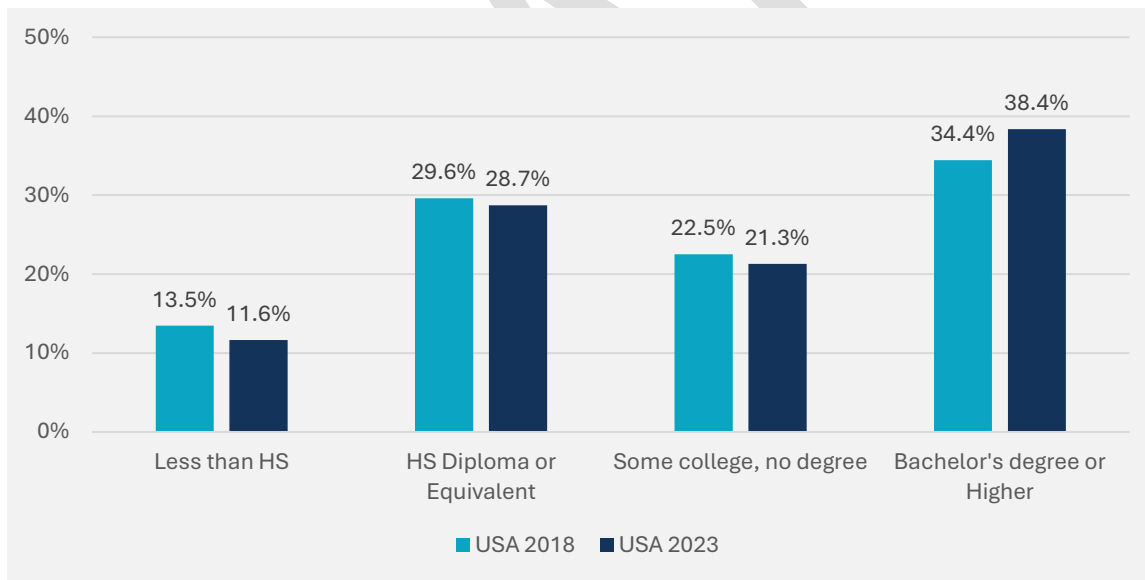


Figure 21. Educational Attainment of U.S. Residents Aged 25 and Older (2018 – 2023)<sup>47</sup>



<sup>46</sup> United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2018-2023).

<sup>47</sup> United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2018-2023).

## Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary

The development of comprehensive plans entails building broad and inclusive partnerships with regional and local entities in a variety of sectors. This includes engaging with employers, labor organizations, and community-based organizations as well as WIOA core, required, and strategic program partners. Utilizing input from the communities themselves will ensure the inclusion of person-centered approaches to addressing multifaceted barriers to employment.

Stakeholders participating in the planning processes include, but are not limited to, employers, labor organizations, education partners, human services and housing partners, as well as community-based organizations that provide services to target populations such as the following: justice-involved, English language learners, refugees, immigrants, youth, older adults, veterans, people with disabilities, and any other entities supporting historically unserved or underserved communities.

The following table summarizes stakeholder involvement and community engagement efforts taken in developing the Regional Plan.

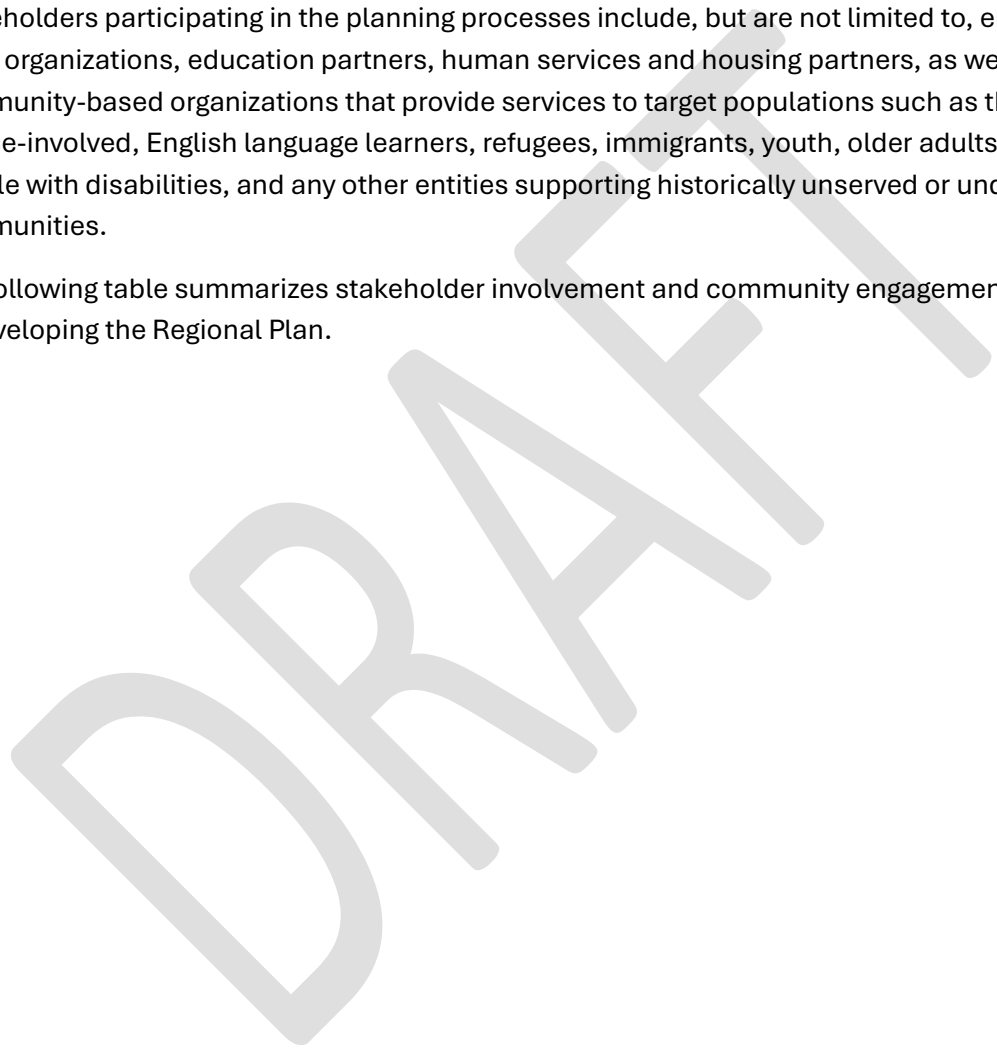


Table 22: Summary of Stakeholder Engagement Efforts

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
In-person	TANF	CalWORKs/CalFresh managers and case managers	Increase awareness among CalWORKs/Welfare to Work case managers about WIOA/SLO Cal Careers services beyond subsidized employment training opportunities; Develop policies and procedures for co-case management of co-enrolled WIOA/TANF participants.
Virtual	Economic Development & Employers/Local Business Community	REACH; Chambers of Commerce staff, City and County (SLO & Santa Barbara) economic development staff	Improve communication to Chambers about procurement activities/opportunities; Support development of Chambers' knowledge of WIOA-funded business services. Simplify outreach messaging about the variety of services available through AJCCs. Increase outreach to businesses not engaged with Chambers of Commerce; Simplify multitude of information available about WIOA/AJCC services.
In person	Santa Barbara stakeholders involved in and/or interested in regional and local education and workforce development planning efforts	Santa Barbara County industry professionals, CTE Advisory Committee members, high school educators, and community partners	Pathways to Success: Early College & Employer Engagement Event hosted by Allan Hancock College in collaboration with the SBCWDB. Presentation outlining draft research findings were presented in-person, and feedback was obtained from participants and integrated into the local and regional plans.
In person	SLOWDB Executive Committee Members and public. Review of Draft Local & Regional Plans and public input opportunity.	Local Employers, Chamber of Commerce, Department of Rehabilitation	Include recommendations/action steps the SLOWDB/Local Area can take in response to needs identified through LMI included in the Plans. SLOWDB to identify opportunities to outreach/present on findings of Plans to increase community awareness of workforce needs, programs available, and activities of the SLOWDB/SLO Cal Careers.
Virtual & In-person	SBC members and interested parties (open to public)	TBD	Meeting information posted on SBCWDB website. Virtual presentation of key findings from the local and regional plans to be delivered to the SBCWDB Board via Zoom. Comments received from the public will be recorded in the regional and local plans.
SBCWDB Newsletter	SBC members & key stakeholders	TBD	Announce availability of draft plans for comment.

## Public Comments Received that Disagree with the Regional Plan

**[PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD PENDING]**

DRAFT

## Signature Page

By signing below, the Local Board Chairs request approval of the South Central Coast’s 2025-2028 Regional Plan.

**Local Board Chairs**

**Local Board Chairs**

---

**Signature**

---

**Signature**

---

**Name**

---

**Name**

Chair, Workforce Development  
Board of San Luis Obispo  
County

Santa Barbara County  
Workforce Development Board  
Chair

---

**Title**

---

**Title**

---

**Date**

---

**Date**

