Office Assistant Occupations

Labor Market Analysis: San Diego County

September 2022

Summary

NEW PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION?	EVIDENCE OF A SUPPLY GAP?	AT OR ABOVE THE LIVING WAGE?	EXPECTED EDUCATION FOR MAJORITY OF OCCUPATIONS ANALYZED
🟠 **Proceed with Caution**	☑ ☒	☑ ❌	☐ Bachelor's Degree+ ☐ Associate Degree ☐ Some College or Certificate ☑ HS Diploma or Equivalent ☐ Less than a HS Diploma ☐ Apprenticeship

SUPPORT FOR PROGRAM MODIFICATION?	NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS THAT PROVIDE TRAINING	NUMBER OF ANNUAL JOB OPENINGS	
☑ ☒	**HIGH** 🏛	**HIGH** 👥	

This brief provides labor market information about *Office Assistant Occupations* to assist the San Diego and Imperial Counties Community Colleges with program development and strategic planning. *Office Assistant Occupations* include "Computer User Support Specialists," "Customer Service Representatives," "Office Clerks, General," "Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive," and "Word Processors and Typists." According to available labor market information, *Office Assistant Occupations* in San Diego County have a labor market demand of 7,368 annual job openings (while average demand for a single occupation in San Diego County is 245 annual job openings), and 23 institutions supply 2,637 awards for these occupations, suggesting that there is a supply gap in the labor market. However, entry-level wages are below the living wage for most occupations, except "Computer User Support Specialists." This brief recommends that the colleges proceed with caution when developing a new program for these occupations, but supports a program modification because 1) there is a supply gap; 2) there is a high number of annual job openings; but 3) entry-level wages are below the living wage for most occupations. **The colleges should note that the typical entry-level education for these occupations is a high school education or equivalent.**

Introduction

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

- **Computer User Support Specialists** (SOC 15-1232): Provide technical assistance to computer users. Answer questions or resolve computer problems for clients in person, via telephone, or electronically. May provide assistance concerning the use of computer hardware and software, including printing, installation, word processing, electronic mail, and operating systems.

- **Customer Service Representatives** (SOC 43-4051): Interact with customers to provide basic or scripted information in response to routine inquiries about products and services. May handle and resolve general complaints. Excludes individuals whose duties are primarily installation, sales, repair, and technical support.

- **Office Clerks, General** (SOC 43-9061): Perform duties too varied and diverse to be classified in any specific office clerical occupation, requiring knowledge of office systems and procedures. Clerical duties may be assigned in accordance with the office procedures of individual establishments and may include a combination of answering telephones, bookkeeping, typing or word processing, office machine operation, and filing.

- **Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive** (SOC 43-6014): Perform routine administrative functions such as drafting correspondence, scheduling appointments, organizing and maintaining paper and electronic files, or providing information to callers.

- **Word Processors and Typists** (SOC 43-9022): Use word processor, computer, or typewriter to type letters, reports, forms, or other material from rough draft, corrected copy, or voice recording. May perform other clerical duties as assigned.

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

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

Projected Occupational Demand

Between 2021 and 2026, *Office Assistant Occupations* are projected to decrease by 713 net jobs or one percent (Exhibit 1a). Employers in San Diego County will need to hire 7,368 workers annually to fill new jobs and backfill jobs due to attrition caused by turnover and retirement, for example.

Exhibit 1a: Number of Jobs for *Office Assistant Occupations* (2011-2026)[2]

Line chart titled "San Diego County" showing number of jobs. Y-axis from 26,000 to 86,000. Data point at 2011: 72,262. Data point at 2021: 65,202. Data point at 2026: 64,489.

Labor Market Demand

7,368 annual job openings (2021-2026)
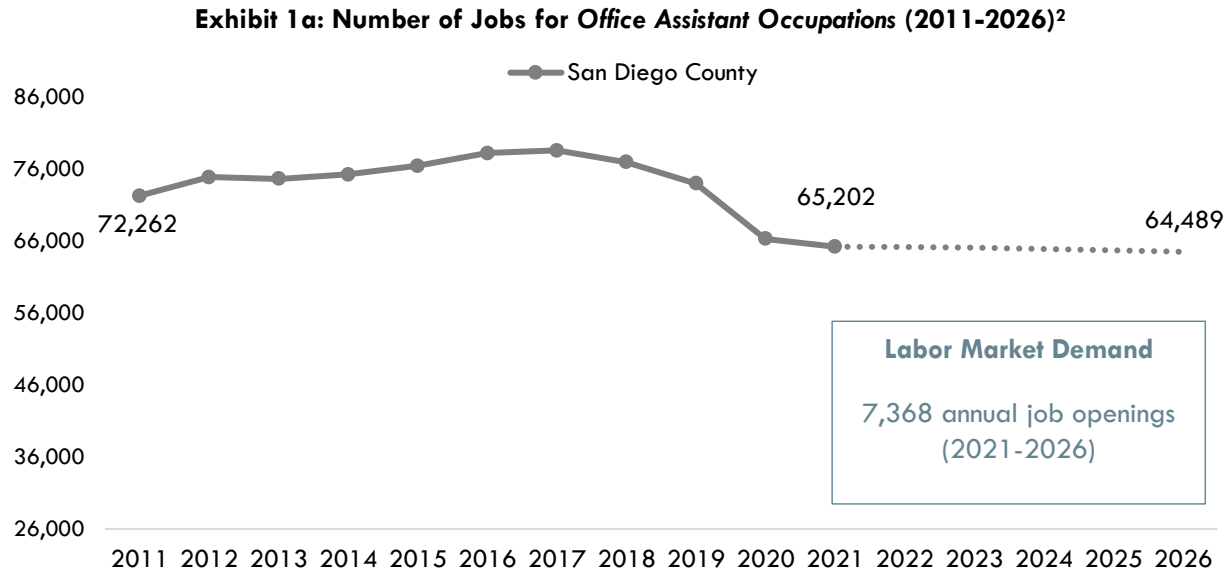
Exhibit 1b disaggregates the projected number of jobs change by occupation. "Office Clerks, General" are projected to have the most labor market demand between 2021 and 2026, with 2,637 annual job openings.

Exhibit 1b: Number of Jobs for *Office Assistant Occupations* in San Diego County (2021-2026)[3]

Occupational Title	2021 Jobs	2026 Jobs	2021 - 2026 Net Jobs Change	2021-2026 % Net Jobs Change	Annual Job Openings (Demand)
Office Clerks, General	23,118	22,992	-126	-1%	2,637
Customer Service Representatives	19,309	18,877	-432	-2%	2,415
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	16,786	16,348	-438	-3%	1,779
Computer User Support Specialists	5,485	5,862	377	7%	484
Word Processors and Typists	504	410	-94	-19%	53
Total	65,202	64,489	-713	-1%	7,368

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[2] EMSI 2022.03; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.
[3] EMSI 2022.03; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

Earnings

Exhibit 2a disaggregates hourly earnings by occupation. The entry-level hourly earnings for *Office Assistant Occupations* range from $14.83 to $22.49.

Exhibit 2a: Hourly Earnings for *Office Assistant Occupations* in San Diego County[4]

| Occupational Title	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings (25th Percentile)	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings (75th Percentile)
Computer User Support Specialists	$22.49	$29.15	$37.51
Word Processors and Typists	$17.91	$22.36	$22.92
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	$17.57	$22.36	$27.57
Customer Service Representatives	$16.88	$18.23	$23.10
Office Clerks, General	$14.83	$18.22	$23.05

On average, the entry-level hourly earnings for *Office Assistant Occupations* are $17.94; this is less than the living wage for a single adult in San Diego County, which is $18.43 per hour (Exhibit 2b).[5]

Exhibit 2b: Average Hourly Earnings[6] for *Office Assistant Occupations* in San Diego County[7]
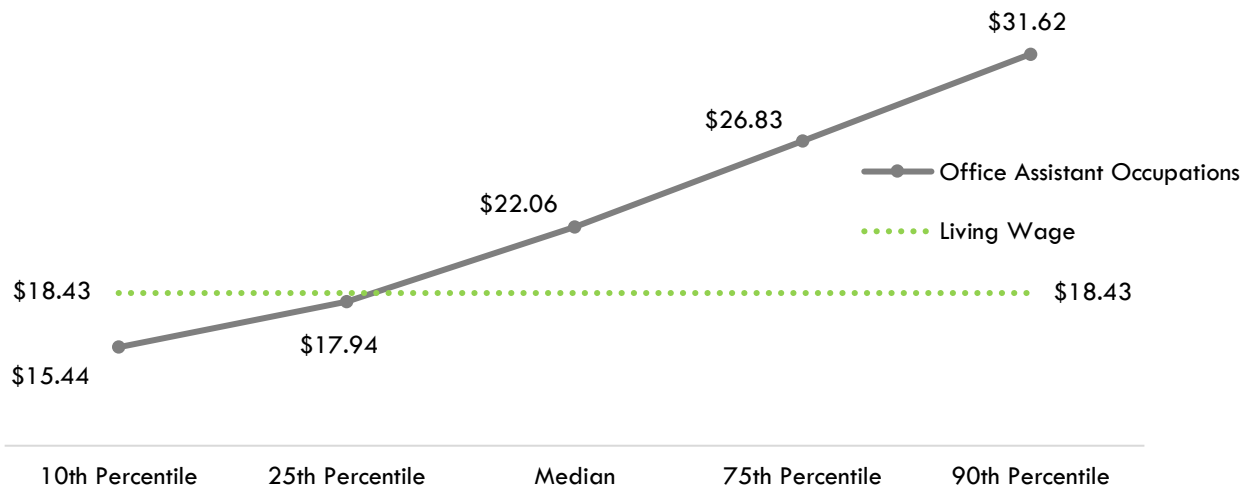
[4] EMSI 2022.03; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.
[5] "Family Needs Calculator (formerly the California Family Needs Calculator)," Insight: Center for Community Economic Development, last updated 2021. insightcced.org/family-needs-calculator/.
[6] 10th and 25th percentiles could be considered entry-level wages, and 75th and 90th percentiles could be considered experienced wages for individuals who may have been in the occupation longer, received more training than others, etc.
[7] EMSI 2022.03; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.

Educational Supply

Educational supply for an occupation can be estimated by analyzing the number of awards in related Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) or Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes.[8] There are nine TOP codes and 19 CIP codes related to *Office Assistant Occupations* (Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 3: Related TOP and CIP Codes for *Office Assistant Occupations*[9]

TOP or CIP Code	TOP or CIP Program Title
TOP 0509.40	Sales and Salesmanship
TOP 0514.00	Office Technology/Office Computer Applications
TOP 0518.00	Customer Service
TOP 0702.00	Computer Information Systems
TOP 0702.10	Software Applications
TOP 0708.00	Computer Infrastructure and Support
TOP 0708.10	Computer Networking
TOP 0708.20	Computer Support
TOP 1301.10	Consumer Services
CIP 11.0103	Information Technology
CIP 11.0601	Data Entry/Microcomputer Applications, General
CIP 11.0602	Word Processing
CIP 11.0899	Computer Software and Media Applications, Other
CIP 11.0901	Computer Systems Networking and Telecommunications
CIP 11.1001	Network and System Administration/Administrator
CIP 11.1002	System, Networking, and LAN/WAN Management/Manager
CIP 11.1003	Computer and Information Systems Security/Auditing/Information Assurance
CIP 11.1005	Information Technology Project Management
CIP 11.1006	Computer Support Specialist
CIP 15.1202	Computer Technology/Computer Systems Technology
CIP 19.0201	Business Family and Consumer Sciences/Human Sciences
CIP 19.0403	Consumer Services and Advocacy
CIP 52.0207	Customer Service Management
CIP 52.0401	Administrative Assistant and Secretarial Science, Gen
CIP 52.0407	Business/Office Automation/Technology/Data Entry

[8] TOP data comes from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart (datamart.cccco.edu) and CIP data comes from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data).
[9] This brief uses a conservative estimate of program supply and only calculates awards from the TOP codes listed in Exhibit 3.

TOP or CIP Code	TOP or CIP Program Title
CIP 52.0408	General Office Occupations and Clerical Services
CIP 52.0411	Customer Service Support/Call Center/Teleservice Operation
CIP 52.1804	Selling Skills and Sales Operations

According to TOP data, nine community colleges supply the region with awards for these occupations: Cuyamaca College, Grossmont College, MiraCosta College, Palomar College, San Diego City College, San Diego College of Continuing Education, San Diego Mesa College, San Diego Miramar College, and Southwestern College. According to CIP data, 14 non-community-college institutions supply the region with awards: Alliant International University-San Diego, Ashford University, ATA College, California Institute of Arts & Technology, California Institute of Arts & Technology-National City, Escondido Adult School, ICOHS College, National University, Point Loma Nazarene University, Poway Adult School, United Education Institute-Chula Vista, United Education Institute-UEI College San Marcos, University of California-San Diego, and Vista Adult School (Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4: Number of Awards (Certificates and Degrees) Conferred by Postsecondary Institutions (Program Year 2017-18 through Program Year 2020-21 Average)

TOP6 or CIP Code	TOP or CIP Program Title	3-Yr Annual Average CC Awards (PY18-19 to PY20-21)	Other Educational Institutions 3-Yr Annual Average Awards (PY17-18 to PY19-20)	3-Yr Total Average Supply (PY17-18 to PY20-21)
0514.00	Office Technology/Office Computer Applications	**1,162**	**0**	**1,162**
	• Cuyamaca	29	0	
	• Grossmont	15	0	
	• MiraCosta	17	0	
	• Palomar	1	0	
	• San Diego City	4	0	
	• San Diego Cont. Ed.	1,075	0	
	• San Diego Mesa	4	0	
	• San Diego Miramar	7	0	
	• Southwestern	10	0	
0702.00	Computer Information Systems	**97**	**0**	**97**
	• MiraCosta	4	0	

TOP6 or CIP Code	TOP or CIP Program Title	3-Yr Annual Average CC Awards (PY18-19 to PY20-21)	Other Educational Institutions 3-Yr Annual Average Awards (PY17-18 to PY19-20)	3-Yr Total Average Supply (PY17-18 to PY20-21)
	• Palomar	20	0	
	• San Diego City	1	0	
	• San Diego Cont. Ed.	47	0	
	• San Diego Mesa	14	0	
	• San Diego Miramar	7	0	
	• Southwestern	4	0	
0702.10	**Software Applications**	**176**	**0**	**176**
	• Grossmont	1	0	
	• MiraCosta	11	0	
	• San Diego City	3	0	
	• San Diego Cont. Ed.	156	0	
	• San Diego Miramar	3	0	
	• Southwestern	2	0	
0708.00	**Computer Infrastructure and Support**	**407**	**0**	**407**
	• Grossmont	11	0	
	• MiraCosta	23	0	
	• San Diego City	31	0	
	• San Diego Cont. Ed.	342	0	
0708.10	**Computer Networking**	**60**	**0**	**60**
	• Cuyamaca	8	0	
	• Grossmont	4	0	
	• MiraCosta	9	0	
	• Palomar	19	0	
	• San Diego Cont. Ed.	18	0	
	• Southwestern	2	0	

TOP6 or CIP Code	TOP or CIP Program Title	3-Yr Annual Average CC Awards (PY18-19 to PY20-21)	Other Educational Institutions 3-Yr Annual Average Awards (PY17-18 to PY19-20)	3-Yr Total Average Supply (PY17-18 to PY20-21)
0708.20	Computer Support	**339**	**0**	**339**
	• MiraCosta	2	0	
	• San Diego Cont. Ed.	336	0	
	• Southwestern	1	0	
11.0103	Information Technology	**0**	**35**	**35**
	• Alliant International University-San Diego	0	2	
	• Ashford University	0	2	
	• Point Loma Nazarene University	0	15	
	• Poway Adult School	0	2	
	• University of California-San Diego	0	14	
11.0602	Word Processing	**0**	**8**	**8**
	• California Institute of Arts & Technology	0	8	
11.0899	Computer Software and Media Applications, Other	**0**	**70**	**70**
	• ATA College	0	3	
	• Escondido Adult School	0	29	
	• Poway Adult School	0	26	
	• Vista Adult School	0	12	
11.0901	Computer Systems Networking and Telecommunications	**0**	**1**	**1**
	• Poway Adult School	0	1	
11.1001	Network and System Administration/Administrator	**0**	**17**	**17**
	• California Institute of Arts & Technology	0	13	
	• California Institute of Arts & Technology-National City	0	2	
	• ICOHS College	0	2	

TOP6 or CIP Code	TOP or CIP Program Title	3-Yr Annual Average CC Awards (PY18-19 to PY20-21)	Other Educational Institutions 3-Yr Annual Average Awards (PY17-18 to PY19-20)	3-Yr Total Average Supply (PY17-18 to PY20-21)
11.1002	System, Networking, and LAN/WAN Management/Manager	**0**	**7**	**7**
	• California Institute of Arts & Technology	0	6	
	• California Institute of Arts & Technology-National City	0	1	
11.1003	Computer and Information Systems Security/Auditing/ Information Assurance	**0**	**2**	**2**
	• Vista Adult School	0	2	
11.1005	Information Technology Project Management	**0**	**65**	**65**
	• National University	0	65	
11.1006	Computer Support Specialist	**0**	**7**	**7**
	• ICOHS College	0	0	
	• Poway Adult School	0	7	
15.1202	Computer Technology/Computer Systems Technology	**0**	**138**	**138**
	• ATA College	0	2	
	• California Institute of Arts & Technology	0	125	
	• California Institute of Arts & Technology-National City	0	10	
	• Point Loma Nazarene University	0	1	
52.0408	General Office Occupations and Clerical Services	**0**	**46**	**46**
	• United Education Institute-Chula Vista	0	30	
	• United Education Institute-UEI College San Marcos	0	16	
			Total	**2,637**

Demand vs. Supply

Comparing labor demand (annual openings) with labor supply[10] suggests that there is a supply gap for these occupations in San Diego County, with 7,368 annual openings and 2,637 awards. Comparatively, there are 93,831 annual openings in California and 9,890 awards, suggesting that there is also a supply gap across the state[11] (Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5: Labor Demand (Annual Openings) Compared with Labor Supply (Average Annual Awards)

	Demand (Annual Openings)	Supply (Total Annual Average Supply)	Supply Gap or Oversupply
San Diego	7,368	2,637	**4,731**
California	93,831	9,890	**83,941**

Please note: This is a basic analysis of supply and demand of labor. The data does not include workers currently in the labor force who could fill these positions or workers who are not captured by publicly available data. This data should be used to discuss the potential gaps or oversupply of workers; however, it should not be the only basis for determining whether or not a program should be developed.
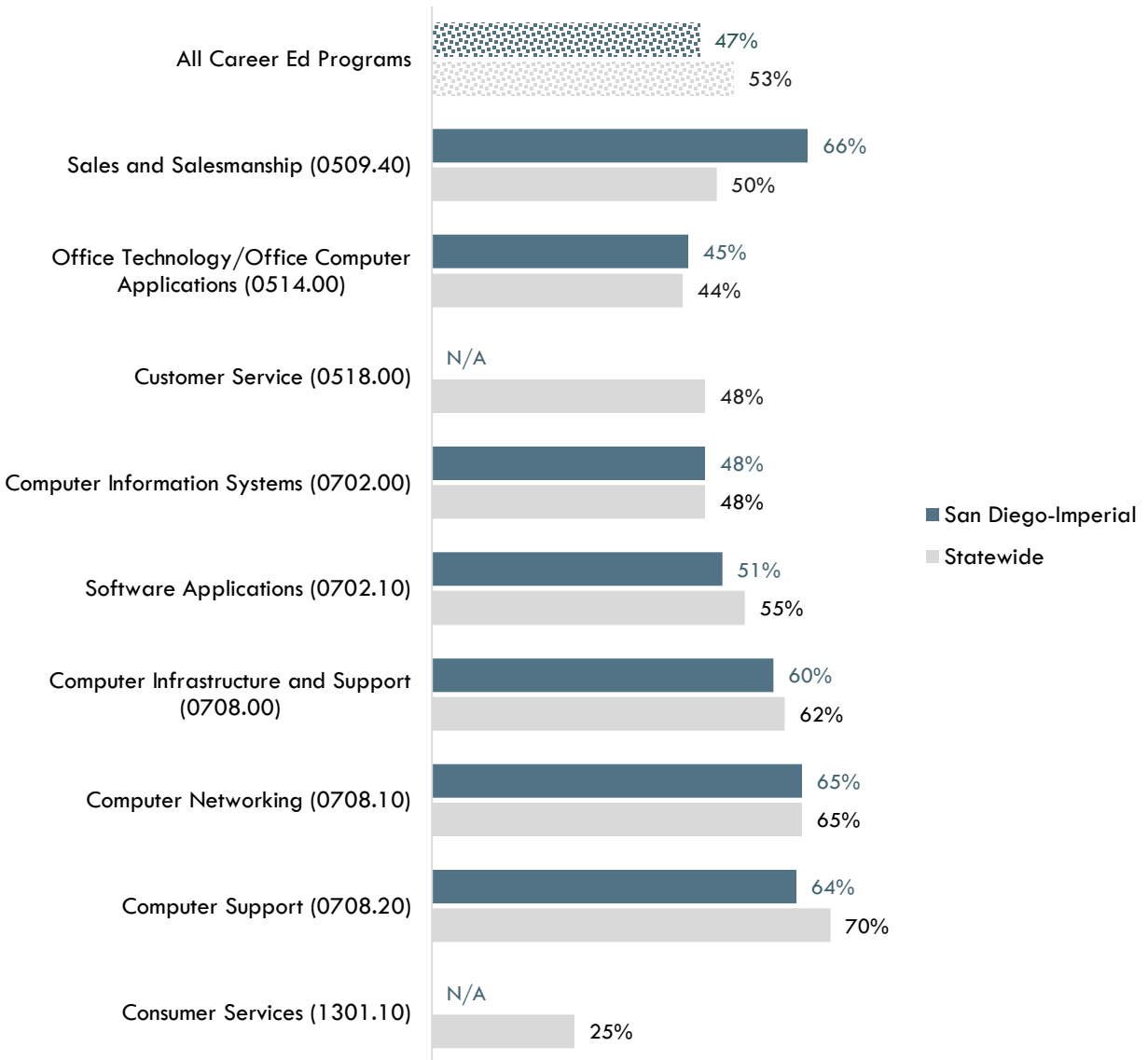
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[10] Labor supply can be found from two different sources: EMSI or the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office MIS Data Mart. EMSI uses CIP codes while MIS uses TOP codes. Different coding systems result in differences in the supply numbers.
[11] "Supply and Demand," Centers of Excellence Student Outcomes, https://coeccc.net/our-resources.

Student Outcomes and Regional Comparisons

According to the California Community Colleges LaunchBoard, 45 to 66 percent of students in the San Diego-Imperial region earned a living wage after completing a program related to *Office Assistant Occupations*, compared to 25 to 70 percent statewide and 53 percent of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 6a).[12]

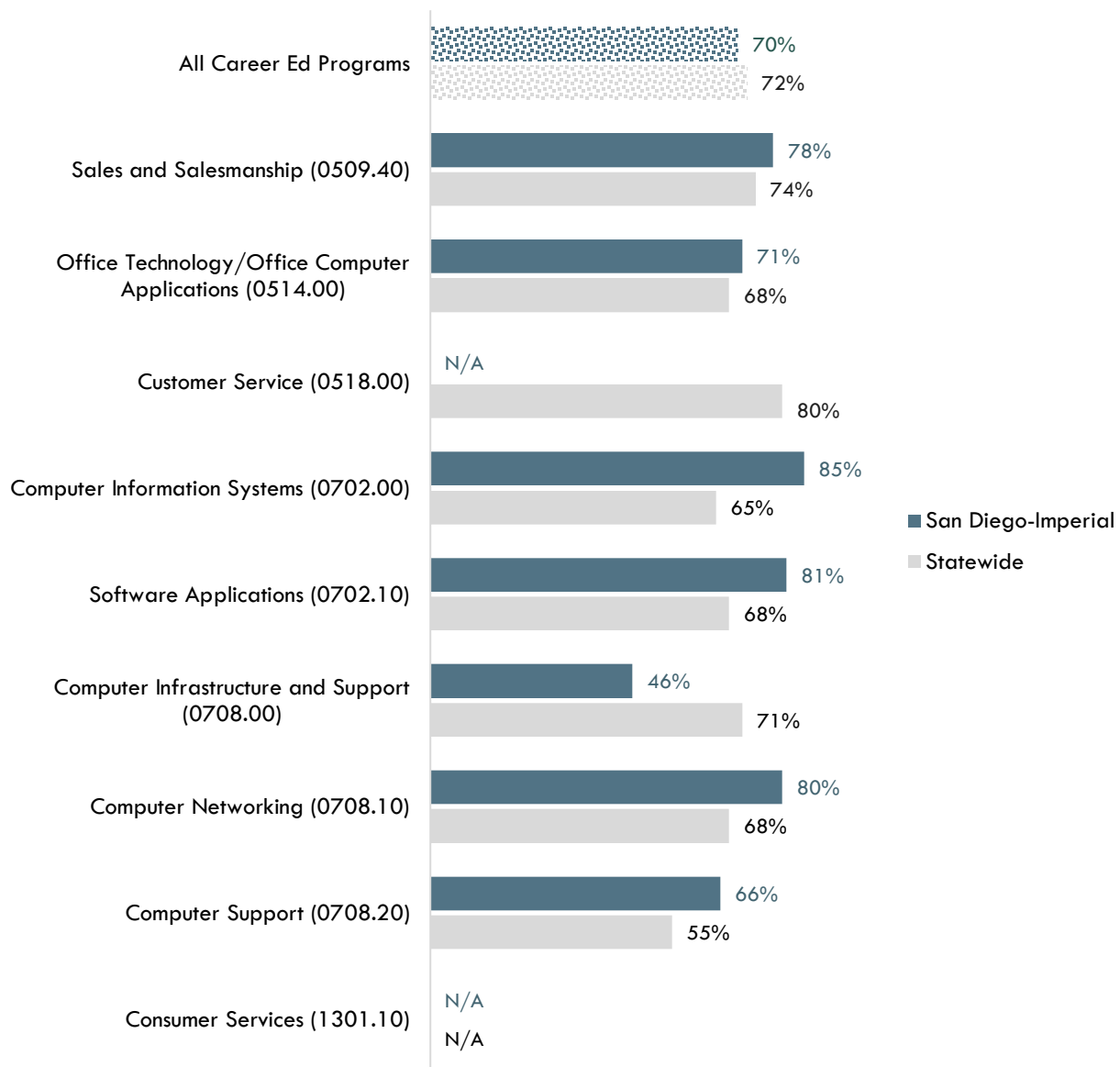**Exhibit 6a: Percentage of Students Who Earned a Living Wage by Program, PY2018-19[13]**

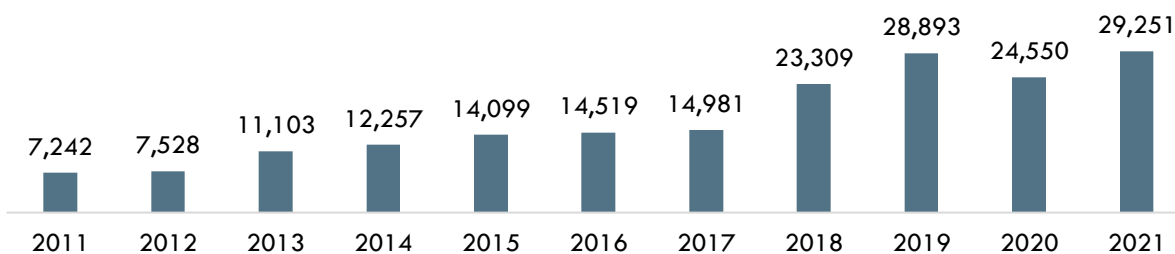| Program	San Diego-Imperial	Statewide
All Career Ed Programs	47%	53%
Sales and Salesmanship (0509.40)	66%	50%
Office Technology/Office Computer Applications (0514.00)	45%	44%
Customer Service (0518.00)	N/A	48%
Computer Information Systems (0702.00)	48%	48%
Software Applications (0702.10)	51%	55%
Computer Infrastructure and Support (0708.00)	60%	62%
Computer Networking (0708.10)	65%	65%
Computer Support (0708.20)	64%	70%
Consumer Services (1301.10)	N/A	25%

"N/A" indicates insufficient data

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[12] "California Community Colleges Strong Workforce Program," California Community Colleges, calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/SWP.aspx.
[13] Among completers and skills builders who exited, the proportion of students who attained a living wage.

According to the California Community Colleges LaunchBoard, 46 to 85 percent of students in the San Diego-Imperial region obtained a job closely related to their field of study after completing a program related to *Office Assistant Occupations*, compared to 55 to 80 percent statewide and 72 percent of students in Career Education programs in general across the state (Exhibit 6b).[14]

Exhibit 6b: Percentage of Students in a Job Closely Related to Field of Study by Program, PY2017-18[15]

Program	San Diego-Imperial	Statewide
All Career Ed Programs	70%	72%
Sales and Salesmanship (0509.40)	78%	74%
Office Technology/Office Computer Applications (0514.00)	71%	68%
Customer Service (0518.00)	N/A	80%
Computer Information Systems (0702.00)	85%	65%
Software Applications (0702.10)	81%	68%
Computer Infrastructure and Support (0708.00)	46%	71%
Computer Networking (0708.10)	80%	68%
Computer Support (0708.20)	66%	55%
Consumer Services (1301.10)	N/A	N/A

"N/A" indicates insufficient data

Online Job Postings

This report analyzes not only historical and projected (traditional LMI) data, but also recent data from online job postings (real-time LMI). Online job postings may provide additional insight about recent changes in the labor market that are not captured by historical data. Between 2011 and 2021, there was an average of 17,067 online job postings per year for *Office Assistant Occupations* in San Diego County (Exhibit 7). Please note that online job postings do **not** equal labor market demand; demand is represented by annual job openings (see Exhibit 1b). Employers may post a position multiple times for various reasons, such as increasing the pool of applicants, for example.

Exhibit 7: Number of Online Job Postings for *Office Assistant Occupations* in San Diego County (2011-2021)[16]

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
7,242	7,528	11,103	12,257	14,099	14,519	14,981	23,309	28,893	24,550	29,251

Top Employers

Between January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2021, the top five employers in San Diego County for *Office Assistant Occupations* were University of California San Diego, Scripps Health, Sharp Healthcare, Rady Children's Hospital, and Best Buy based on online job postings (Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8: Top Employers for *Office Assistant Occupations* in San Diego County[17]

Top Employers	
• University of California San Diego	• Ultimate
• Scripps Health	• Circle K
• Sharp Healthcare	• Walgreens Boots Alliance, Inc.
• Rady Children's Hospital	• 24 Hour Fitness
• Best Buy	• San Ysidro Health

[16] Burning Glass Technologies, "Labor Insight Real-Time Labor Market Information Tool." 2011-2022.
[17] Burning Glass Technologies, "Labor Insight Real-Time Labor Market Information Tool." 2019-2021.

Education, Skills, and Certifications

Office Assistant Occupations have a national educational attainment ranging from a high school diploma or equivalent to some college, no degree (Exhibit 9a).

Exhibit 9a: National Educational Attainment for *Office Assistant Occupations*[18]

Occupational Title	Typical Entry-Level Education
Computer User Support Specialists	Some college, no degree
Customer Service Representatives	High school diploma or equivalent
Office Clerks, General	High school diploma or equivalent
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	High school diploma or equivalent
Word Processors and Typists	High school diploma or equivalent

Based on online job postings between January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2021 in San Diego County, employers posted a high school diploma or equivalent as the educational requirement for *Office Assistant Occupations* (Exhibit 9b).[19]

Exhibit 9b: Educational Requirements for *Office Assistant Occupations* in San Diego County[20]

- HS diploma or equivalent: 67%
- Associate degree: 8%
- Bachelor's degree: 23%
- Master's degree or higher: 1%
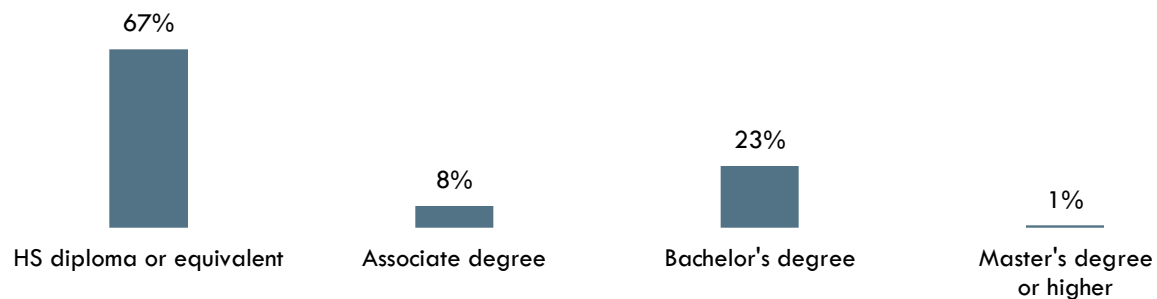
*may not total 100% due to rounding

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[18] EMSI 2022.03; QCEW, Non-QCEW, Self-Employed.
[19] Burning Glass Technologies, "Labor Insight Real-Time Labor Market Information Tool." 2019-2021.
[20] "Educational Attainment for Workers 25 Years and Older by Detailed Occupation," Bureau of Labor Statistics, last modified April 9, 2021. bls.gov/emp/tables/educational-attainment.htm.

Exhibit 10 lists the top specialized, soft, and software skills that appeared in online job postings between January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2021.

Exhibit 10: Top Skills for *Office Assistant Occupations* in San Diego County[21]

Specialized Skills	Soft Skills	Software Skills
• Customer Service	• Communication Skills	• Microsoft Excel
• Administrative Support	• Organizational Skills	• Microsoft Word
• Scheduling	• Detail-Oriented	• Microsoft PowerPoint
• Data Entry	• Computer Literacy	• Microsoft Outlook
• Customer Contact	• Multi-Tasking	• Microsoft Windows
• Appointment Setting	• Problem Solving	• Customer Relationship Management
• Technical Support	• Writing	• QuickBooks
• Sales	• Teamwork / Collaboration	• Salesforce
• Customer Billing	• Troubleshooting	• Microsoft Operating Systems
• Repair	• Typing	• Microsoft Access
• Spreadsheets	• Telephone Skills	• Enterprise Resource Planning
• Administrative Functions	• English	• SAP
• Customer Checkout	• Written Communication	• SQL
• General Office Duties	• Research	• Microsoft SharePoint
• Mailing	• Physical Abilities	• Adobe Acrobat

Exhibit 11 lists the top certification that appeared in online job postings between January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2021.

Exhibit 11: Top Certification for *Office Assistant Occupations* in San Diego County[22]

Top Certification in Online Job Postings
1. Security Clearance
2. Certified A+ Technician
3. CompTIA Network+
4. CompTIA Security+
5. IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) Certification
6. Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA)
7. First Aid CPR AED
8. Typing Certification
9. Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate (MCSA)
10. Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP)
11. Property and Casualty License
12. Real Estate Certification
13. Food Handler Certification
14. Microsoft Certified Solutions Expert (MCSE)
15. Insurance License

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[22] Burning Glass Technologies, "Labor Insight Real-Time Labor Market Information Tool." 2019-2021.

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Important Disclaimers

All representations included in this report have been produced from primary research and/or secondary review of publicly and/or privately available data and/or research reports. This study examines the most recent data available at the time of the analysis; however, data sets are updated regularly and may not be consistent with previous reports. Efforts have been made to qualify and validate the accuracy of the data and the report findings; however, neither the Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research (COE), COE host district, nor California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office are responsible for the applications or decisions made by individuals and/or organizations based on this study or its recommendations.

This workforce demand report uses state and federal job projection data that was developed before the economic impact of COVID-19. The COE is monitoring the situation and will provide more information as it becomes available. Please consult with local employers to understand their current employment needs.