



CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
FOR LABOR MARKET RESEARCH

Workforce Demand for Addiction Counseling in the Central Valley/Mother Lode Region

Labor Market Supply and Demand for
Addiction Counseling Baccalaureate of Science (B.S.)
Degree at Cerro Coso Community College

Prepared by:

Central Valley/Mother Lode (CVML)

Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research

June 2025

KEY FINDINGS

Demand:

- Employment for *Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors* is projected to grow by 27% statewide through 2033. In the CVML region, employment in this occupation is expected to increase by 23% over the same period.
- Over the next ten years, California is projected to have approximately 7,232 annual job openings for this occupation, with 647 of those openings located in the CVML region.
- The entry-level hourly wage for *Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors* is \$21.95 in the CVML region – more than \$5 above the CVML region's living wage.

Supply:

- Between 2020 and 2023, there were no educational providers in the region that conferred bachelor's degrees. However, institutions conferred 33 post-baccalaureate degrees in related programs.

Gap Analysis:

- With no average annual bachelor's degrees issued in the region, 33 post-baccalaureate degrees issued, and 647 projected annual job openings for *Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors*, the potential supply gap is 614 jobs in the CVML region.
- In addition to this occupation having a typical entry-level education of a bachelor's degree, 25% of incumbent workers have completed a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education.

Introduction

The Addiction Counseling, Bachelor of Science Degree, program proposed by Cerro Coso College is designed to prepare students with the comprehensive knowledge and practical skills necessary for a successful career in substance use disorder treatment and recovery services. This program equips graduates to address the complex challenges faced by individuals, families, and communities impacted by addiction. The curriculum emphasizes evidence-based counseling techniques, case management, ethics, trauma-informed care, co-occurring disorders, and cultural competence. Graduates will be prepared to work in a variety of clinical and community-based settings and will be well-positioned to pursue certification and/or advanced study in counseling and behavioral health fields.

The key occupation that typically requires a bachelor's degree is:

Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors (21-1018):

Counsel and advise individuals with alcohol, tobacco, drug, or other problems, such as gambling and eating disorders. May counsel individuals, families, or groups or engage in prevention programs.

Sample of reported job titles: Addictions Counselor, Case Manager, Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor (ADAC), Chemical Dependency Counselor (CD Counselor), Chemical Dependency Professional, Clinical Counselor, Counselor, Drug and Alcohol Treatment Specialist (DATS), Prevention Specialist, Substance Abuse Counselor (SA Counselor)

The purpose of this study is to determine whether there is demand in the statewide and regional labor market for the addiction counseling occupation that is not being met by the supply from relevant training programs. More specifically, this report addresses the labor market components of Assembly Bill 927, which require evidence of unmet workforce needs related to Cerro Coso College's proposed baccalaureate degree program.

Key Addiction Counseling Occupation

The key addiction counseling occupation analyzed in this report was selected from the 2018 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system. This occupation is classified under the Community and Social Service major occupational group (21-0000).

Exhibit 1: Key Addiction Counseling Occupation

SOC	Occupation	Typical Entry-Level Education	Work Experience Required	Typical On-The-Job Training
21-1018	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	Bachelor's degree	None	None

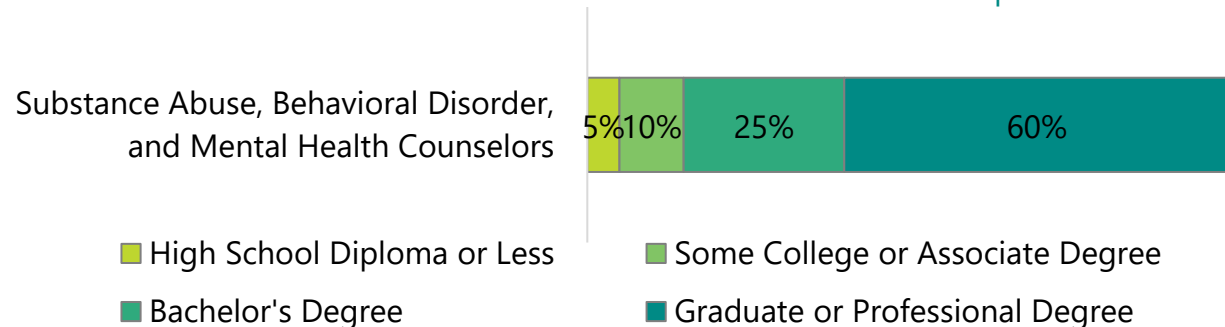
Statewide Analysis

This section presents a statewide overview of the occupation *Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors (21-1018)*, focusing on the following key areas: entry-level education requirements, desired licenses and certifications, work experience expectations, salary differentials by education level, and long-term job projections.

Entry-Level Education Requirements

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists a bachelor's degree as the typical entry-level education for the occupation of interest. National-level educational attainment data indicates 25% of incumbent workers in this occupation have completed a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education. Exhibit 2 shows the educational attainment for this occupation.

Exhibit 2: National-level Educational Attainment for Occupation



While there were 14,141 online job postings for *Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors* over the last 12 months, 3,002 of those postings were specifically related to the target positions aligned with the proposed baccalaureate degree program. These figures account for postings made publicly available; internal recruitment efforts and postings cannot be identified for analysis.

Of the 3,002 postings listing a minimum education requirement, 45% (1,360) requested a bachelor’s degree. Exhibit 3 shows the requested level of education by number of online job postings.

Exhibit 3: Requested Education by Number of Job Postings in California (n=3,002)

Education Level	Job Postings	Percentage of Job Postings
High school or GED	284	9%
Associate degree	557	19%
Bachelor's degree	1,360	45%
Master's degree or higher	801	27%

Licenses, Clearances, and Certifications

Of the 3,002 online job postings, the most requested credentials were a valid driver’s license (29%), and Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor (CADC) (13%). Exhibit 4 shows the most requested qualifications, sorted by number of online job postings.

Exhibit 4: Top Licenses, Clearances, or Certifications by Number of Job Postings in California (n=3,002)

License or Certification	Job Postings	Percentage of Job Postings
Valid Driver's License	873	29%
Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor (CADC)	376	13%
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	311	10%
First Aid Certification	286	10%
Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)	285	9%
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT)	248	8%

License or Certification	Job Postings	Percentage of Job Postings
Release of Information (ROI)	172	6%
Certified Social Workers Credential	128	4%
Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)	106	4%
Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor	104	3%
Certified Substance Abuse Counselor (CSAC)	100	3%
Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification	75	2%

Entry-Level Work Experience

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) lists no years – “none” – as the typical entry-level work experience for *Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors*. However, of the postings for this occupation with program-aligned job titles that listed a minimum experience requirement, 32% (962) requested 2 to 3 years of experience, followed by 12% (374) of postings that requested 0 to 1 year of experience.

Exhibit 5 shows the requested years of experience by number of online job postings for this occupation with program-aligned job titles.

Exhibit 5: Requested Years of Experience
by Number of Job Postings in California (n=3,002)

Years of Experience	Job Postings	Percentage of Job Postings
0 - 1 Years	374	12%
2 - 3 Years	962	32%
4 - 6 Years	313	10%
7 - 9 Years	10	0%
10+ Years	23	1%

Degree Alignment

The proposed program aligns with the educational requirements for the target positions, as more than one third (45%) of relevant online job postings with minimum education requirements require a bachelor's degree. Additionally, the BLS lists a bachelor's degree as the typical entry-level education for occupation and 25% of incumbent workers attained a baccalaureate degree as their highest level of education.

Salary Differentials by Level of Education

In the online job postings with a stated minimum educational requirement, employers for *Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors* advertised \$4.85/hour more in entry-level wages for bachelor's degree holders relative to their associate degree counterparts.

Exhibit 6 lists the advertised entry-level wage for the occupation of interest by level of education.

Exhibit 6: Advertised Entry-Level Wage by Level of Education (n=3,002)

Education	Job Postings	Advertised Entry-Level Wage
High school diploma or GED	284	\$45,800 (\$22.02)
Associate degree	557	\$55,900 (\$26.88)
Bachelor's degree	1,360	\$66,000 (\$31.73)
Master's degree	801	\$92,900 (\$44.66)

10-Year Occupational Projections

Exhibit 7 shows the cumulative number of jobs for the *Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors* occupation, from 2023 through 2033. There were 59,864 jobs for this occupation in 2023. Employment is projected to increase 27% through 2033.

Exhibit 7: Projected Number of Jobs for Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors by Year, 2023-2033

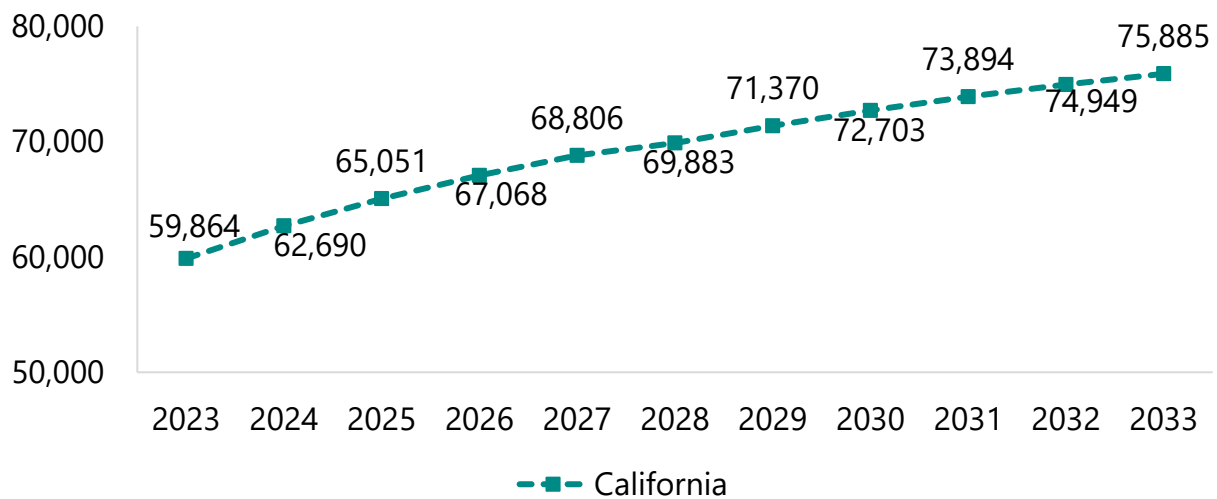


Exhibit 8 shows the ten-year occupational demand projections for *Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors* throughout California. The number of jobs related to this occupation is projected to increase by 27% through 2033, with 7,232 job openings available annually, throughout the state.

Exhibit 8: 10-Year Occupational Demand in California

Occupation	2023 Jobs	2033 Jobs	2023-2033 Change	2023-2033 % Change	Annual Openings
Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	59,864	75,885	16,022	27%	7,232
Total	59,864	75,885	16,022	27%	7,232

Regional Analysis

To gain a deeper understanding of labor market trends for this occupation, this section delves into Central Valley/Mother Lode regional data, examining historical employment trends and demand, educational supply, and wages for the occupation of interest. Due to extensive workforce migration between the 15 counties that make up the CVML region, this analysis examines them together to provide a comprehensive regional view of labor market trends, in line with standard practice that recognizes the counties' integrated workforce and economic dynamics.

Occupational Overview in the CVML Region:

Exhibit 9 shows the historical, annual percent change in jobs for *Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors* from 2013 through 2023. Employment in this occupation remained positive throughout this period with the highest growth in 2023 (23%).

Exhibit 9: 10-Year Historical Annual Percent Change in Jobs for Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors, 2013-2023

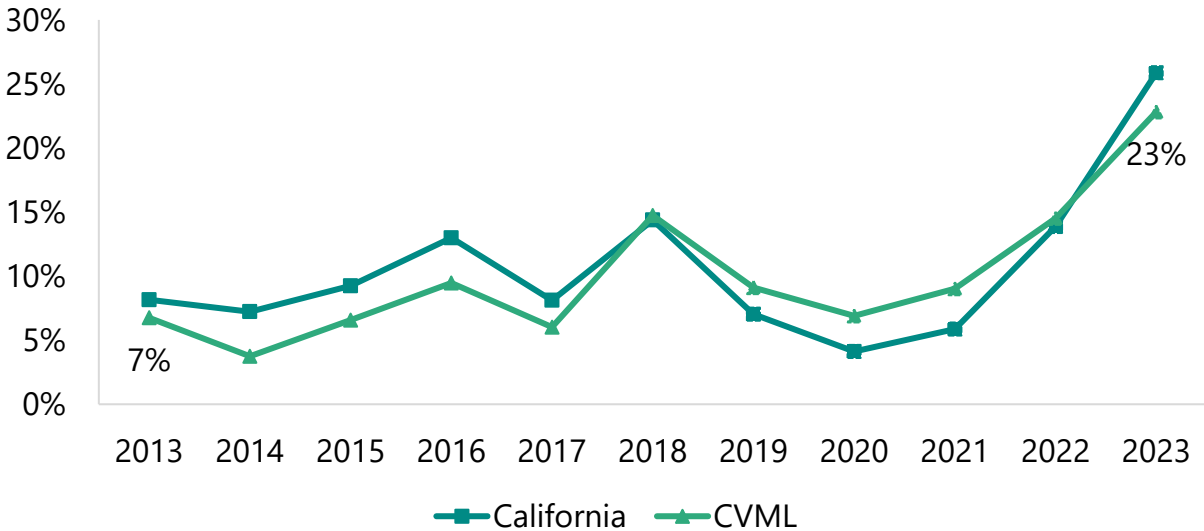


Exhibit 10 shows the ten-year occupational demand projection for *Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors* in the CVML region. The number of jobs related to this occupation is projected to increase 23% through 2033, with 647 job openings available annually.

Exhibit 10: Occupational Demand in CVML region¹

Geography	2023 Jobs	2033 Jobs	2023-2033 Change	2023-2033 % Change	Annual Openings
CVML Region	5,621	6,906	1,285	23%	647
Total	5,621	6,906	1,285	23%	647

¹ Ten-year change represents new job additions to the workforce. Annual openings include new jobs and replacement jobs that result from retirements and separations.

Educational Supply

Community colleges throughout the state offer addiction studies or addiction counseling programs. These programs are often created under Alcohol and Controlled Substances (TOP 2104.40). However, none provide baccalaureate degrees. Therefore, educational supply is based on non-community college awards.

Exhibit 11 shows the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes aligned with program needs and related to *Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors*, as well as the number of non-community college awards conferred in each CIP code.

Exhibit 11: Related Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Codes

CIP Code	CIP Title	CVML Non-CC Baccalaureate Awards	CVML Non-CC Master's or Above Awards	CA Non-CC Baccalaureate Awards	CA Non-CC Master's or Above Awards
42.2803	Counseling Psychology	-	19	-	1,509
51.1501	Substance Abuse/Addiction Counseling	-	-	-	6
51.1503	Clinical/Medical Social Work	-	14	-	59
51.1506	Clinical Pastoral Counseling/Patient Counseling	-	-	-	24
51.1508	Mental Health Counseling/Counselor	-	-	-	85
3-Year Average		-	33	-	1,683

Exhibit 12 shows the annual and three-year average number of awards conferred by non-community college institutions in the related CIP codes in the CVML region. Between 2020 and 2023, non-community college institutions throughout the region conferred an average of 33 post-baccalaureate awards annually in related training programs. NOTE: No baccalaureate degrees were awarded in these programs during this period.

Exhibit 12: Regional Non-Community College Awards, 2020-2023

CIP Code	Program	Institution	2020-2021 Awards	2021-2022 Awards	2022-2023 Awards	3-Year Award Average
42.2803	Counseling Psychology	California State University-Bakersfield	13	18	16	16
		University of the Pacific	2	6	2	3
51.1501	Substance Abuse/Addiction Counseling	N/A	-	-	-	-
51.1503	Clinical/ Medical Social Work	University of the Pacific	-	16	25	14
51.1506	Clinical Pastoral Counseling/Patient Counseling	N/A	-	-	-	-
51.1508	Mental Health Counseling/Counselor	N/A	-	-	-	-
Supply Total/Average			15	40	43	33

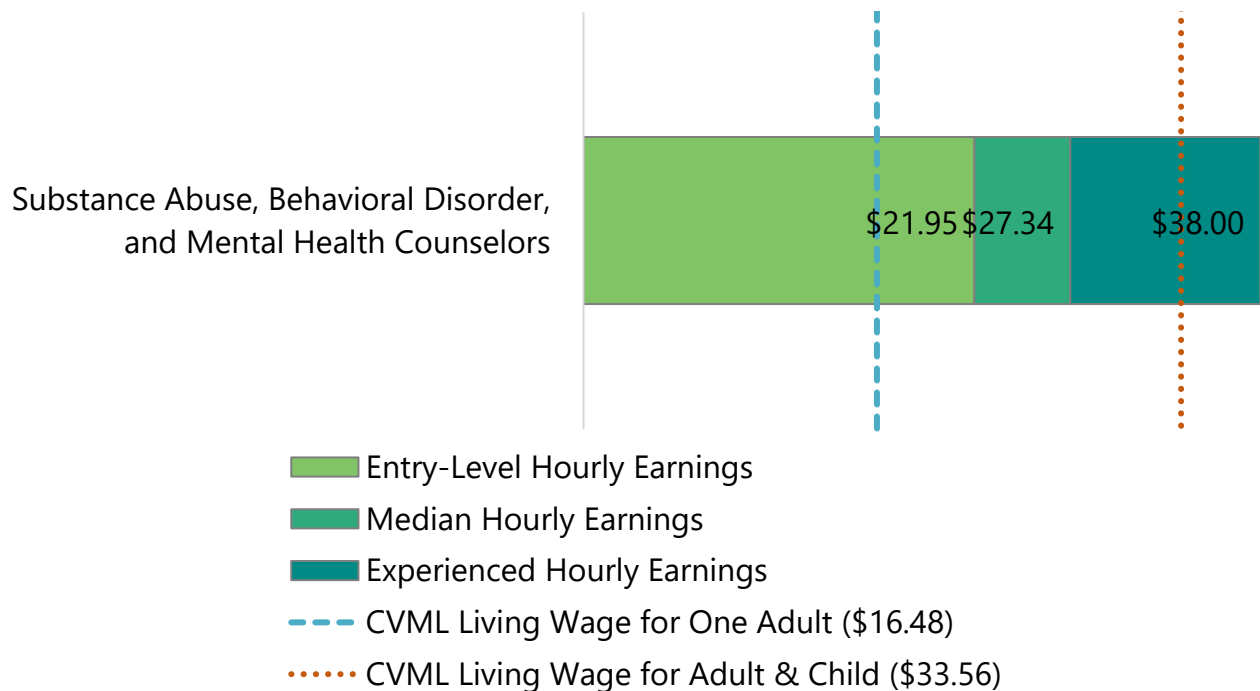
Wages

This report considers the entry-level hourly wages for *Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors* as they relate to the region's living wage. These figures represent the high and low range of regional living wages. Entry-level hourly earnings are represented by the 25th percentile, which indicates 25% of workers in that occupation earn less than that amount while 75% earn more.

CVML Wages

Entry-level hourly wages of \$21.95 for *Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors* are above the CVML region's living wage for one adult (\$16.48) but below one adult with one infant-aged child (\$33.56). Exhibit 13 shows the wage range for this occupation in the CVML region and its comparison to the region's living wages.

Exhibit 13: Wages by Occupation in CVML



Appendix A: Methodology

CVML COE prepared this report by analyzing occupational and educational program data. Occupational data comes from Lightcast, a labor market analytics firm which compiles information from the California Employment Development Department (EDD), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and other agencies. Analysis of emerging occupations is predicated on online job postings data combined with Occupational Information Network (O*NET) profile descriptions. Program supply data was sourced from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Data Mart (datamart.cccco.edu) and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data), also known as IPEDS, which was integrated into the COE's Supply Table. (IPEDS).

Using a TOP-SOC crosswalk, the CVML COE identified middle-skill and above middle-skill occupations aligned with programs in relevant TOP codes. Middle-skill occupations typically require education beyond high school but less than a bachelor's degree, while above middle-skill roles usually require a bachelor's degree or higher.

Labor market supply was determined by calculating the three-year average number of program completions within related TOP and CIP codes. This data informed the "supply table" in the report. TOP codes are used in California to classify community college programs; CIP codes are used nationally across higher education institutions.

The analysis reflects labor market demand for occupations closely related to the proposed baccalaureate degree program, based on the requestor's specifications. Traditional labor market data was used to assess current and projected employment based on data trends for detailed occupations, as well as annual average awards granted by regional postsecondary educational institutions. Specifically, while demand was measured as projected annual openings from 2023 to 2033, supply figures only include non-community college awards, since existing community college programs are unlikely to directly train for the above-middle skill occupations included in this report and/or the AI for cyber operations specialization at the baccalaureate-level. Supply may be overstated, as it's unclear whether these programs specifically address this specialization.

Real-time labor market data (online job postings) assess employer preferences but cannot be used to indicate the number of open positions, number of jobs, or annual openings.

Wage data was evaluated using the Self-Sufficiency Standard from the University of Washington’s Center for Women’s Welfare, which sets CVML’s living wage at \$16.48 for one adult and \$33.56 for one adult with an infant-aged child (as of March 2024).

All findings are based on the most current available data and a combination of primary and secondary sources. While care was taken to ensure accuracy, the CVML COE, its host district, and the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office are not responsible for individual decisions made based on this report.

Appendix B: Data Sources

Data Type	Source
Occupational Projections, Wages, and Job Postings	Traditional labor market information data is sourced from Lightcast, a labor market analytics firm. Lightcast occupational employment data are based on final Lightcast industry data and final Lightcast staffing patterns. Wage estimates are based on Occupational Employment Statistics and the American Community Survey. For more information, see https://lightcast.io/ . Wage differentials were based on online job postings data from Lightcast and compared advertised entry-level wages for positions requiring at least a bachelor’s degree or an associate degree.
Living Wage	“Living Wage” measures the income necessary for an individual or family to afford basic expenses by assessing the costs such as housing, food, child care, health care, transportation, and taxes. Per the CCCCCO’s this report’s endorsement criteria uses the University of Washington’s Center for Women’s Welfare Self-Sufficiency Standard last updated in March 2024, which is \$16.48 per hour (\$34,278 annually) for one adult and \$33.56 per hour (\$69,805 annually) for one adult with an infant in CVML. For more information, see: http://www.selfsufficiencystandard.org/California

Data Type	Source
Typical Education and Training Requirements, and Educational Attainment for Detailed Occupations	The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) provides information about education and training requirements for hundreds of detailed occupations. BLS uses a system to assign categories for entry-level education, work experience in a related occupation, and typical on-the-job training to each occupation for which BLS publishes projections data. For more information, see https://www.bls.gov/emp/documentation/education/tech.htm .
Emerging Occupation Descriptions, Education Requirements, and Employer Preferences	The O*NET database includes information on education requirements, skills, abilities, knowledge, work activities, and interests associated with occupations. For more information, see https://www.onetonline.org/help/online/
Educational Supply	The CCCCO Data Mart provides information about students, courses, student services, outcomes and faculty and staff. For more information, see: https://datamart.cccco.edu The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Integrated Data System (IPEDS) collects data on the number of postsecondary awards earned (completions). For more information, see https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data/survey-components/7/completions

For more information, please contact the Central Valley/Mother Lode Center of Excellence:

Patricia Salinas, Interim District Director
patricia.salinas@sccd.edu

Ignacio Faria, Senior Research and Planning Analyst
ignacio.faria@sccd.edu

Angela Steitz, Program Specialist
angela.steitz@sccd.edu



June 2025