



Labor Market Assessment

Alcohol and Controlled Substances Occupations

San Jose City College

November 2025

Key Findings

In California, employment in Alcohol and Controlled Substances occupations (Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors and Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers) is projected to generate an average of 9,670 annual job openings from 2023 to 2033. However, most of these occupations require a master's degree or higher. Within the Bay Region, there are approximately 1,876 such openings annually, accounting for about 19% of the state's total demand. In the Bay Region, community colleges do not offer a bachelor's program in this field. But there are other institutions awarding 1,279 annual awards for a total annual undersupply of 597. This indicates a significant undersupply of graduates relative to available job openings. Therefore, San Jose City College would fill a critical regional need by introducing a bachelor's degree program in Alcohol and Drug Studies, helping to close the workforce gap and providing students with an affordable pathway to a four-year degree. However, note that most of these occupations require a master's degree or higher, and the San Jose City College may want to offer a post-baccalaureate internship or residency to support students in continuing their education. Alternatively, they may provide students with specific job opportunities in the field that require only a bachelor's degree.

In the Bay Region, entry-level counselors typically earn \$23 per hour, while social workers earn \$29 per hour; only social workers exceed the living wage for a single adult. Wages rise significantly with higher education attainment, with job postings showing that candidates holding bachelor's and master's degrees command higher pay. Based on statewide data, for Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors and for Mental Health Substance Abuse Social Workers, the average advertised wage increases from \$24 per hour for those with a bachelor's degree to \$22 per hour for those with an associate's degree. However, the larger wage increase comes from earning a master's degree, with wages of \$36 and \$33, respectively. This wage differential highlights the economic benefits of pursuing both a bachelor's and a master's degree, reinforcing the case for expanding access to bachelor's degree opportunities. Doing so would help students access higher-paying roles and place them on a pathway to earning a master's degree.

Introduction

It provides student outcomes data on employment and earnings for Alcohol and Controlled Substances (TOP 2104.40) in the Bay Region. Reviewing this data helps to understand how student outcomes compare to similar programs at other colleges in the region.

This report evaluates labor market needs and workforce alignment for the proposed bachelor’s degree program called “Alcohol and Drug Studies.” In the sections below, we leverage state and regional data to provide insights into educational and occupational requirements, employment trends, wages, and degree alignment for two occupations: Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors (21-1018) and Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers (21-1023)

Because these occupations are closely related and often work in overlapping service areas, they are combined for demand and gap analysis to give a comprehensive view of the regional workforce needs.

Occupation under Review

- **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.

Occupational Characteristics	
Typical Entry Level Education	Bachelor's degree
Work Experience Required	None
Typical On-The-Job Training	None
Existing Workforce(% of individuals age 25+ with a bachelor’s degree as their highest level of education attainment)	24%

- **Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers (21-1023):** Assess and treat individuals with mental, emotional, or substance abuse problems, including abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and/or other drugs. Activities may include individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, case management, client advocacy, prevention, and education.

Occupational Characteristics	
Typical Entry Level Education	Master's degree
Work Experience Required	None
Typical On-The-Job Training	Internship/residency
Existing Workforce(% of individuals age 25+ with a bachelor’s degree as their highest level of education attainment)	14%

State Level Analysis

Table 1 shows the number of job postings that employers frequently list certifications and licenses such as Licensed Clinical Social Worker (40%), Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (37%), and Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (22%) in job postings, signaling that graduate-level or professional credentials are valuable though not always required for employment.

Table 1. Educational Licenses or Certifications for Alcohol and Controlled Substances Occupations in California

Licenses or Certifications	# of Job Postings	% of Total
Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)	6,809	40%
Licensed Marriage And Family Therapist (LMFT)	6,216	37%
Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor	3,797	22%
Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)	2,286	13%
Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC)	1,404	8%
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	1,375	8%
First Aid Certification	1,257	7%
Clinical Psychology License	1,035	6%
Certified Social Workers Credential	1,000	6%
Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor	858	5%
Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification	463	3%
Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) Certification	157	1%
American Red Cross (ARC) Certification	117	1%
Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) Certification	60	<1%
Licensed Mental Health Professional	50	<1%
Alcohol Certification	40	<1%
Certified Loss Control Specialist	39	<1%
Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Certification	26	<1%

"Job Posting Analytics." Sep. 2024 - Aug. 2025, Source: Lightcast 2025.3

Note: This table combines Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors and Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers.

Tables 2a–2b show the educational levels listed on job postings for each occupation. For Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors, 50% of job postings list a master’s degree as preferred, while for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers, the figure is 41%. Only 17% and 29% of these job postings require a bachelor’s degree. Over a twelve-month period, 73% to 84% of employers included an educational requirement or preference in their job postings, while the remainder did not.

Of those postings that did contain educational requirement information, Tables 2a-2b show that wages levels increase with more education which highlights the value of pursuing bachelor’s degrees. This correlation underscores the economic benefits to students for continuing their education, supporting the case for expanding bachelor’s degree programs in Alcohol and Controlled Substances occupations to align with employer demands and enhance workforce readiness.

Table 2a. Educational Level and Entry Level Wages for Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors in California

Education Level	# of Job Postings	% of Total	25% Hourly Advertised Wage
High school or GED	1,693	12%	\$23
Associate's degree	948	6%	\$22
Bachelor's degree	2,428	17%	\$24
Master's degree	7,312	50%	\$36
Ph.D. or professional degree	2,253	15%	\$39

"Job Posting Analytics." Sep. 2024 - Aug. 2025, Source: Lightcast 2025.3

Note: 27% of records have been excluded because they do not include a degree level. As a result, the chart above may not be representative of the full sample.

Table 2b. Educational Level and Entry Level Wages for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers in California

Education Level	# of Job Postings	% of Total	25% Hourly Advertised Wage
High school or GED	473	12%	\$22
Associate's degree	395	10%	\$22
Bachelor's degree	1,095	29%	\$24
Master's degree	1,559	41%	\$33
Ph.D. or professional degree	293	8%	\$39

"Job Posting Analytics." Sep. 2024 - Aug. 2025, Source: Lightcast 2025.3

Note: 16% of records have been excluded because they do not include a degree level. As a result, the chart above may not be representative of the full sample.

Table 3a and 3b indicates that most job postings for Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors (88%) require only 0 to 3 years of work experience. Similarly, 88% of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers' job postings also list only 0 to 3 years of experience. These findings demonstrate that most positions in this field are accessible to individuals early in their careers, reflecting strong entry-level opportunities and a clear pathway for recent graduates to enter the workforce.

Table 3a. Work Experience Requirement for Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors in California

Working Experience Required	Job Postings	% of Total
0 - 1 Years	1,929	31%
2 - 3 Years	3,528	57%
4 - 6 Years	637	10%
7 - 9 Years	28	0%
10+ Years	31	1%

"Job Posting Analytics." Sep. 2024 - Aug. 2025, Source: Lightcast 2025.3

Note: 56% of records have been excluded because they do not include a degree level. As a result, the chart above may not be representative of the full sample.

Table 3b. Work Experience Requirement for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers in California

Working Experience Required	Job Postings	% of Total
0 - 1 Years	643	33%
2 - 3 Years	1,071	55%
4 - 6 Years	239	12%
7 - 9 Years	1	0%
10+ Years	7	0%

"Job Posting Analytics." Sep. 2024 - Aug. 2025, Source: Lightcast 2025.3

Note: 31% of records have been excluded because they do not include a degree level. As a result, the chart above may not be representative of the full sample.

Table 4 shows that employment in Alcohol and Drug Studies occupations in California is substantial. In 2023, there were 79,052 positions statewide, and the field is projected to grow by 30% over the next 10 years, a rate that significantly outpaces average occupational growth. This expansion is driven by a 32% projected increase for Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors and a 24% increase for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers. Additionally, entry-level to experienced wages range from \$22 to \$29 per hour when combining both occupations, with counselors earning between \$21 and \$28 per hour and social workers earning between \$24 and \$34 per hour. This data underscores both the strong demand and the competitive wages available to individuals pursuing careers in this field.

Table 4. Employment Outlook for Alcohol and Controlled Substances Occupations in California

Occupation	2023 Jobs	2033 Jobs	10-yr Change	10-yr % Change	Annual Openings	Annual Replacement Rate	25% Hourly Earning	50% Hourly Wage
Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	60,189	79,498	19,309	32%	7,738	8%	\$21	\$28
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers	18,863	23,402	4,538	24%	1,932	7%	\$24	\$34
Total	79,052	102,900	23,848	30%	9,670	8%	\$22	\$29

Source: Lightcast 2025.1

Regional Level Analysis

Employment Historical Trend for Alcohol and Controlled Substances Occupations

Table 5 shows that employment in the Bay Region grew significantly for Counselor, increasing 130% between 2013 and 2023, and statewide growth of 178%. Conversely, employment for Social Workers increased by 22% regionally, compared to an increase of 40% statewide.

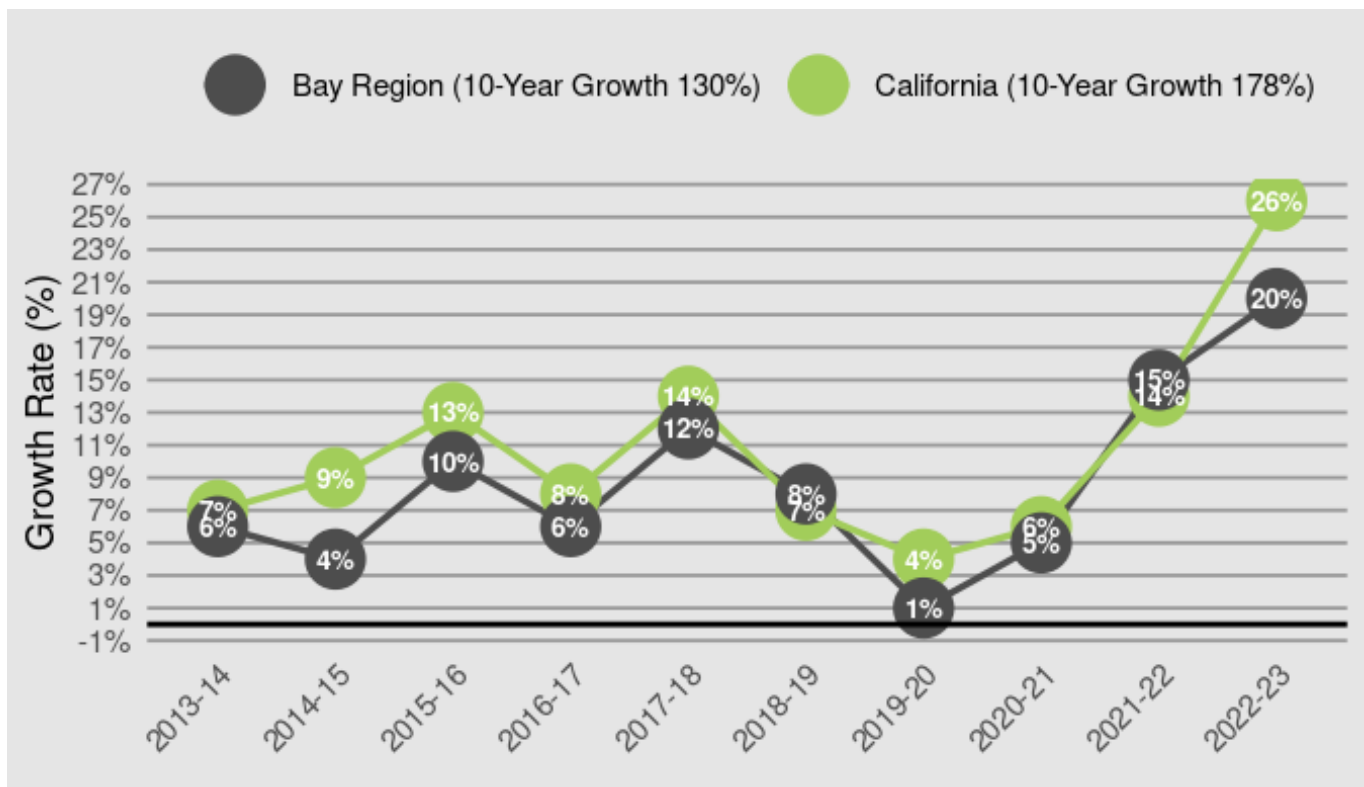
Table 5. Historical 10-Year Employment Trend for Alcohol and Controlled Substances Occupations in the Bay Region vs. California

SOC	Area	2013 Jobs	2023 Jobs	10-yr Change	10-yr% Change
21-1018	CA	21,659	60,189	38,529	178%
21-1018	Bay	5,333	12,253	6,920	130%
21-1023	CA	13,495	18,863	5,368	40%
21-1023	Bay	3,144	3,826	682	22%

Source: Lightcast 2025.1

Figure 1 illustrates the historical employment trend for Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors at both the state and regional levels. The data show that the Bay Region followed a growth trajectory similar to the state from 2013 to 2022, though overall growth in the Bay Region was slightly lower than statewide trends.

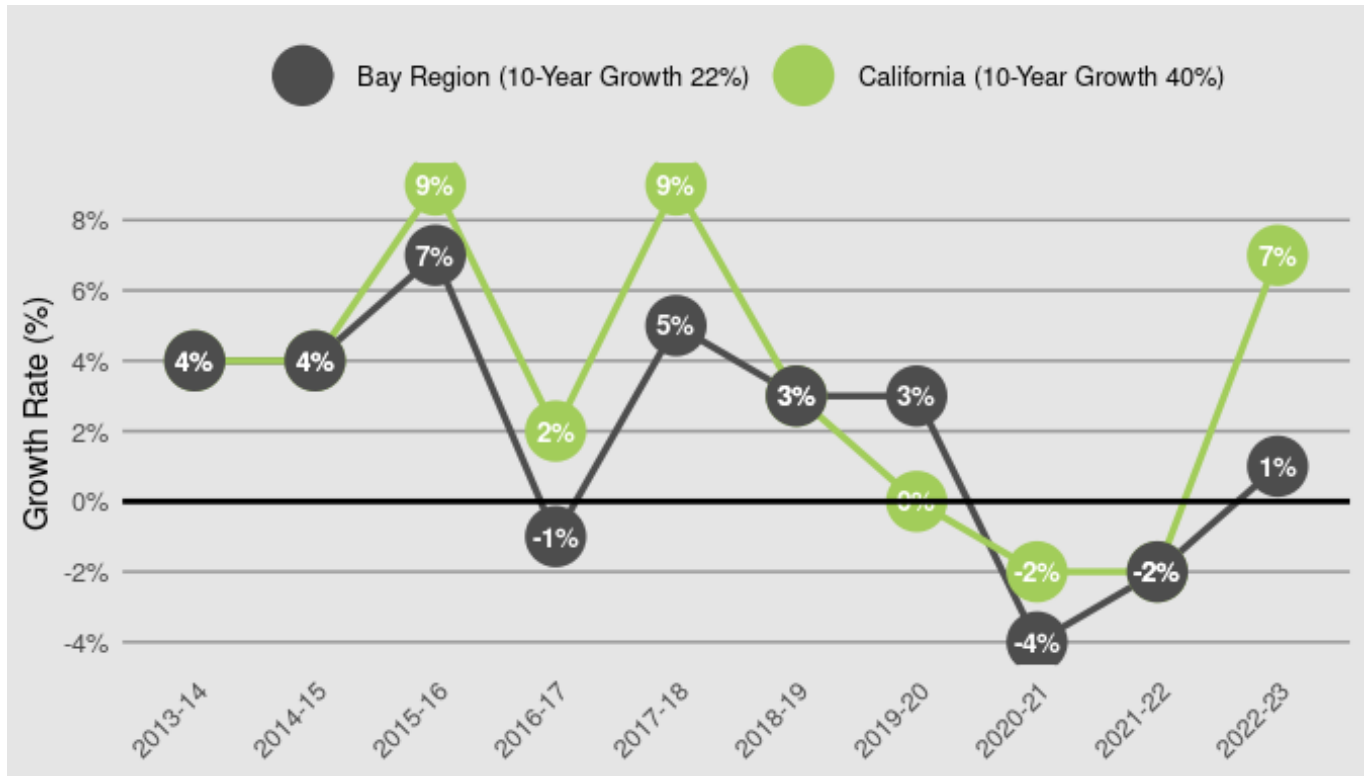
Figure 1. Historical 10 Year to Year Present Change in Employment for Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors in the Bay Region vs. California



Source: Lightcast 2025.1. Year 2013-Year 2023.

Figure 2 illustrates the historical employment trend for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers at both the state and regional levels. The data show that the Bay Region experienced a growth pattern similar to the state from 2013 to 2022, with slightly lower growth overall except during 2019-20, when the region outpaced statewide trends.

Figure 2. Historical 10 Year to Year Present Change in Employment for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers in the Bay Region vs. California



Source: Lightcast 2025.1. Year 2013-Year 2023.

Occupational Demand

Table 6 shows that the Bay Region employed 16,079 workers in 2023 across Alcohol and Controlled Substances occupations. Employment in this cluster is projected to remain stable through 2033, generating approximately 1,876 annual job openings; this number includes replacement numbers. Replacements are jobs that will need to be filled by new hires due to existing workers leaving the occupation. Most positions are in Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselor, which accounted for 12,253 jobs in 2023 and are projected to increase by 28% over the next decade. The entry-level wage is \$23 per hour, while the median wage is \$30. In contrast, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers make up a smaller share of the workforce, with 3,836 jobs in 2023, but are projected to grow by 21%, resulting in 378 annual openings and median wages of \$40 per hour. Together, these data confirm that Alcohol and Controlled Substances occupations provide competitive salaries and stable employment opportunities for graduates entering the field.

Table 6. Employment Outlook for Alcohol and Controlled Substances Occupations in the Bay Region

Occupation	2023 Jobs	2033 Jobs	10-yr Change	10-yr % Change	Annual Openings	Annual Replacement Rate	25% Hourly Earning	50% Hourly Wage
Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors	12,253	15,659	3,407	28%	1,498	8%	\$23	\$30
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers	3,826	4,646	820	21%	378	7%	\$29	\$40
Total	16,079	20,305	4,226	26%	1,876	8%	\$24	\$32

Source: Lightcast 2025.1

The Bay Region includes: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano and Sonoma Counties

Educational Supply

Table 7a shows seven community colleges in the Bay Region issuing 36 associate degree awards on average annually (last 3 years ending 2022-24) on TOP 2104.40 – Alcohol and Controlled Substances. However, students in this field require a bachelor’s degree or higher, and Bay Region community colleges do not offer a bachelor’s degree under this TOP code.

There is no other CTE educational institution in the Bay Region issuing degree awards on average annually (last 3 years ending 2021-23) on CIP 51.1501 – Substance Abuse/Addiction Counseling, and there are no four-year institutions in the Bay Region issuing bachelor’s degree awards on this CIP code, creating a clear gap for students who wish to pursue a four-year educational pathway and advance their careers in substance abuse and mental health services.

Table 7b shows eight other institutions in the Bay Region issuing 568 master’s degree awards on average annually (last 3 years ending 2021-23) on CIP 42.2803 - Counseling Psychology in the Bay Region.

Table 7c shows that eight other institutions in the Bay Region award an average of 127 bachelor’s and master’s degrees annually (based on the last three years, 2021–23) in CIP 42.0000 – Human Services, General.

Table 7d shows that eight other institutions in the Bay Region award an average of 584 bachelor’s and master’s degrees annually (based on the last three years, 2021–23) in CIP 42.0701 Social Work.

Table 7a. Community College Awards on TOP 2104.40 - Alcohol and Controlled Substances in the Bay Region

College	Subregion	Associate degree	Total
Diablo Valley	East Bay	16	16
Hartnell	SC-Monterey	6	6
Merritt	East Bay	4	4
San Francisco	Mid-Peninsula	2	2

College	Subregion	Associate degree	Total
San Jose City	Silicon Valley	5	5
San Mateo	Mid-Peninsula	1	1
Santa Rosa	North Bay	2	2
Total	-	36	36

Source: Data Mart

Note: The annual average for awards is 2021-22 to 2023-24.

Table 7b. Master's Degree Awards on CIP 42.2803 - Counseling Psychology in the Bay Region

College	Subregion	Master's degree	Total
Holy Names University	East Bay	16	16
The Wright Institute	East Bay	68	68
Saint Mary's College of California	East Bay	6	6
California Institute of Integral Studies	Mid-Peninsula	161	161
Golden Gate University	Mid-Peninsula	18	18
University of San Francisco	Mid-Peninsula	170	170
Dominican University of California	North Bay	23	23
Santa Clara University	Silicon Valley	106	106
Total	-	568	568

Source: Data Mart

Note: The annual average for awards is 2020-21 to 2022-23.

Table 7c. Bachelor's Degree or Higher on CIP 42.0000- Human Services, General

College	Subregion	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Total
Notre Dame de Namu University	Mid-Peninsula	16	0	16
California State University- Monterey	Santa Cruz and Monterey	100	0	100
University of San Francisco	Mid-Peninsula	0	11	11
Total	-	116	11	127

Source: Data Mart

Note: The annual average for awards is 2020-21 to 2022-23.

Table 7d. Bachelor's Degree or Higher on CIP 42.0701 Social Work

College	Subregion	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Total
California State University	East Bay	0	67	67
University of California – Berkeley	East Bay	77	93	170
San Francisco State University	Mid-Peninsula	25	37	62

College	Subregion	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Total
California State University	Santa Cruz and Monterey	0	45	45
San Jose State University	Silicon Valley	61	172	233
Pacific Union College	North Bay	7	0	7
Total		170	414	584

Source: Data Mart

Note: The annual average for awards is 2020-21 to 2022-23.

Gap Analysis

Based on the data included in this report, there is a labor market gap in the Bay Region with 1,876 annual openings for Alcohol and Controlled Substances Occupations and 1,279 annual (3-year average) awards for an annual undersupply of 597 students. These calculations do not include the associate degree because most occupations in this field require a bachelor's degree or higher. A bachelor's degree program would help close this gap by preparing more qualified candidates to meet growing employer demand.

Living Wage

The Self-Sufficiency Standard Calculator estimates the income needed for working families to meet basic living standards, considering family composition, children's ages, and regional costs. It calculates a living wage as the hourly income required for full-time workers to cover basic needs, factoring in family budgets, taxes, and local cost variations across counties, Metropolitan Statistical Areas, and states.

Table 8 shows that for Alcohol and Controlled Substances occupations, the entry-level hourly wage is \$24, and the median wage is \$32. These median wages are sufficient to support an adult with no dependents. However, this wage does not fully meet the hourly living wage requirements for an adult with one infant, preschooler, school-age child or teenager.

Table 8. Hourly Living Wage compared to Entry- and Mid-Level Wages for Alcohol and Controlled Substances Occupations in the Bay Region

Earning Wage		Hourly Living Wage				
25% Hourly Wage	50% Hourly Wage	Adult Only	Adult + Infant	Adult + Preschool	Adult + School-age	Adult + teenage
\$24	\$32	\$27	\$56	\$53	\$45	\$36

Source: Lightcast 2025.1

Note. The Self-Sufficiency (SS) Standard for California (2024) Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington. The data combines Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors and Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers.

Methodology

The occupation for this report was identified by San Jose City College. Labor demand data is sourced from Lightcast occupation and job postings data. Educational supply and student outcomes data is retrieved from multiple sources, including CCCCO Data Mart.

Sources

Data and information referenced in this report were compiled from the following public and proprietary sources:

- [Lightcast](#).
- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) [DataMart](#).
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System [([IPEDS](#))].
- U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Occupational Information Network ([O*NET](#))
- Self-Sufficiency Standard at the Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington. [2024 California Dataset](#).

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