



# **Workforce Supply & Demand for Music Directors and Composers in Los Angeles County**

Labor Market Supply and Demand for  
Electronic Digital Instrument (EDI) of Electronic Popular Music  
Baccalaureate of Science (B.S.) degree at  
Rio Hondo College

*Prepared by: Los Angeles Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research  
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## Key Findings

### Demand:

- **Employment**— Employment for *music directors and composers* has grown by 71% over the last 20 years, experiencing significant job growth over the last two decades.
- **Job openings**— Over the next ten years, nearly 400 *music director and composer* jobs are projected to be available annually in Los Angeles County.
- **Wages**— Average hourly wages for *music directors and composers* in Los Angeles County are \$14.84 lower per hour than the average across all occupations at the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile, \$9.19 lower at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, and \$5.69 lower at the median. A favorable wage gap appears when progressing to the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile, with *music directors and composers* earning \$24.32 per hour more than the average worker in the region, and \$54.26 more per hour at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile, on average, indicating higher wages at the upper end of the spectrum for these professionals.
- **Job postings**— Over the last 12 months, there were 404 unique online job postings for *music directors and composers* in California. The majority of prospective employers (60%) prefer a bachelor's degree for employment.
- **Advertised Salaries**— Employers seeking candidates with a bachelor's degree for *music directors and composers* are advertising annual salaries that are nearly \$10,000 higher per year than those seeking candidates with a high school diploma or associate degree.

### Supply:

- **Awards**— Between 2020 and 2022, educational providers in the region conferred an average of 13 bachelor's degrees from music technology programs.

### **Gap Analysis:**

- **Supply of workers**— With 13 average annual bachelor's degrees issued in the county and 395 projected annual job openings for *music directors and composers*, an occupation that typically requires a bachelor's degree for entry, the potential supply gap at this level of education is 382 unfilled jobs in LA County.
- **Employer preferences**—The majority of prospective employers (60%) prefer a bachelor's degree for employment.

## Introduction

The Electronic Digital Instrument (EDI) of Electronic Popular Music Bachelor of Science Degree program acknowledges that the computer, with user-configured software and performance controllers (EDI), is an instrument of the 21st century. This degree is designed for students interested in pursuing a career in the performance and production of electronic music with an instrumental focus on EDI, including turntable controllers, push controllers, and other gesture controllers. Students will receive training, collaboration opportunities, and live and recording studio performance experience on computer controller instruments in solo performances, small groups, and large ensembles.

For federal reporting purposes, employment of electronic music performers and producers is captured within the Bureau of Labor Statistics' following standard occupational classification (SOC) code:

- **Music Directors and Composers (27-2041)** Conduct, direct, plan, and lead instrumental or vocal performances by musical artists or groups, such as orchestras, bands, choirs, and glee clubs; or create original works of music.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this study is to determine whether there is demand in the statewide and regional labor market for *music directors and composers* 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 Rio Hondo College's proposed Electronic Digital Instrument (EDI) of Electronic Popular Music baccalaureate degree program.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Music Directors and Composers \(bls.gov\)](https://www.bls.gov/occupations/music-directors-and-composers)

<sup>2</sup> [AB-927 Public postsecondary education: community colleges: statewide baccalaureate degree program](#)

## Key Occupation

The key occupation analyzed in this report was selected from the 2018 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system. *Music directors and composers* are classified under the arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations major group (27-0000).

### Exhibit 1: Key occupation

SOC Code	Description	Typical Entry-Level Education	Work Experience Required
29-2011	Music Directors and Composers	Bachelor's degree	Less than 5 years

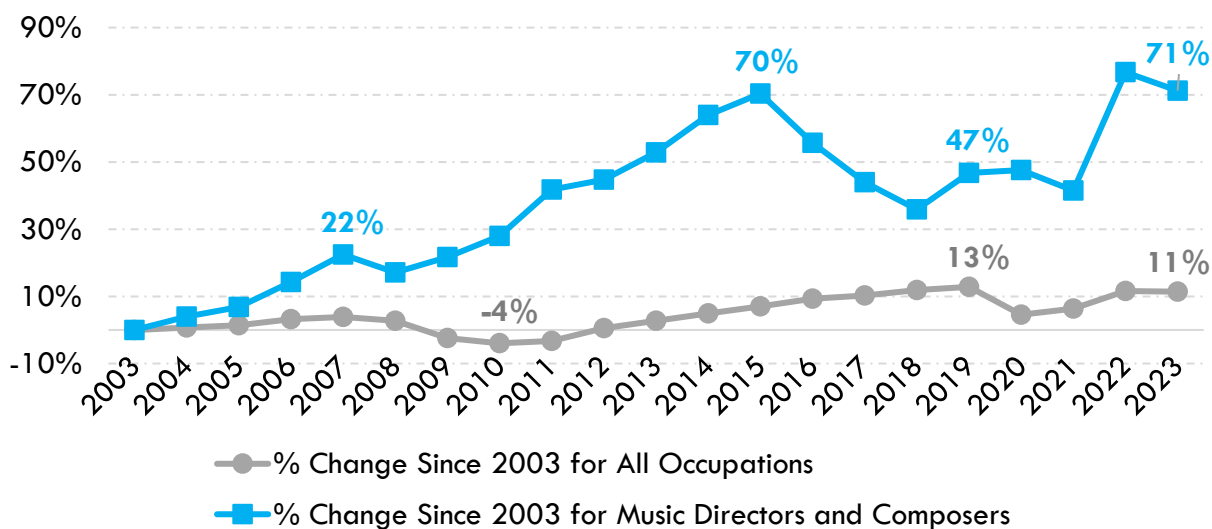
Source: [2018 Standard Occupational Classification \(SOC\) system](#)

## Labor Market Demand Analysis

### Historical employment

Exhibit 2 demonstrates that since 2003, employment for *music directors and composers* has experienced an upward trend over the past twenty years. *Music directors and composers* experienced a steady rate of growth from 2003 until the Great Recession (2007-2009), growing by 22% from 2003-2007. Steady occupational growth also took place between 2008 and 2015, with the number of annual jobs experiencing 70% growth in 2015 compared to 2003. All occupations across Los Angeles County dipped during the Great Recession (2007-2009), and experienced economic shock during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2021), which significantly decreased employment for nearly all occupations. However, the number of jobs in Los Angeles County has increased by 11% since 2003 (on average). While the number of *music director and composer* jobs appears to have declined from 2016-2021, the job count for *music directors and composers* rebounded in 2023 with 71% growth compared to 2003.

### Exhibit 2: Percent change in employment since 2003



Source: Lightcast, Datarun 2024.4

### Projected annual job openings

Exhibit 3 displays detailed 2023 job counts, projected employment figures through 2033, ten-year percentage change in employment, and projected annual job openings for *music directors and composers*. In Los Angeles County, there will be nearly 400 annual job openings through 2033. *Music directors and composers* is projected to grow steadily by 15% by 2033 in LA County. In California, more than 800 job openings are projected to be available annually. This occupation is expected to grow by 12% throughout the state, exceeding 8,000 jobs by 2033. Nearly half of the projected annual job openings throughout the state for *music directors and composers* are located in Los Angeles County (47%).

**Exhibit 3: Occupational demand in Los Angeles County**

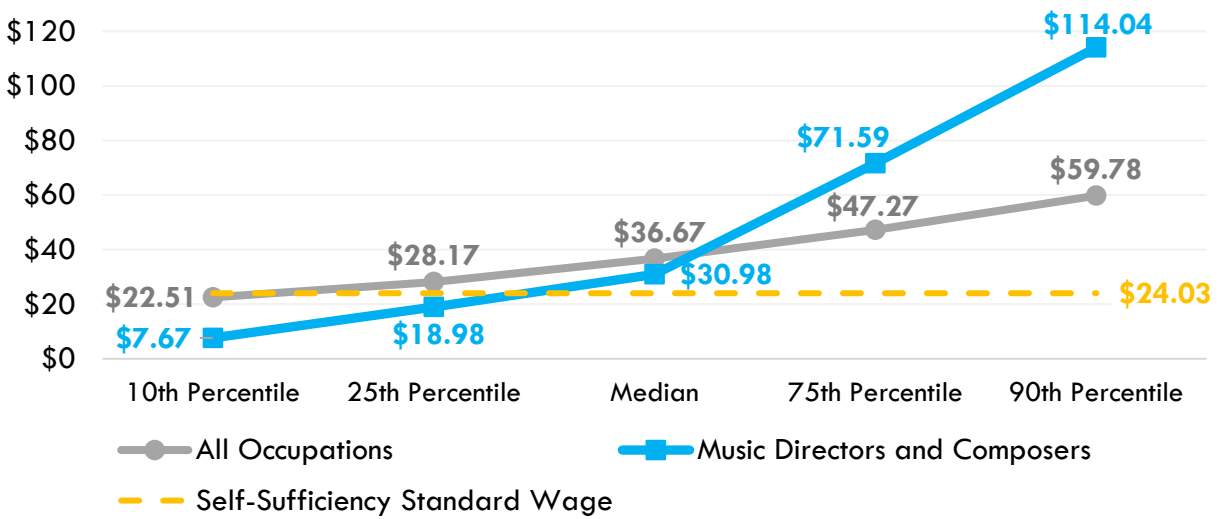
SOC	Occupation	Region	2023 Jobs	2033 Jobs	10-Year % Change	Annual Openings
27-2041	Music Directors and Composers	Los Angeles	3,265	3,759	15%	395
		California	7,154	8,025	12%	838

Source: Lightcast, Datarun 2024.4

### Average hourly wages

The average hourly wage for *music directors and composers* in Los Angeles County at the 10<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, median, 75<sup>th</sup>, and 90<sup>th</sup> percentile is displayed in Exhibit 4. At the lowest percentile available (i.e., the 10<sup>th</sup>), workers employed as *music directors and composers* earn \$14.84 per hour less than the regional average across all occupations. This wage discrepancy is similar at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile and median level, with *music directors and composers* earning \$9.19 and \$5.69 per hour less than the regional average workers, respectively. However, a favorable wage gap between *music directors and composers* compared to all occupations widens considerably among higher earning levels. Progressing to the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile, *music directors and composers* earn \$24.32 per hour more than the average worker in the region, and \$54.26 more per hour at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile, on average. While earnings may vary depending on employer, industry, and city of employment, these represent average wages across Los Angeles County.

**Exhibit 4: Hourly wage range for music directors and composers**



Source: Lightcast, Datarun 2024.4 and the [Self-Sufficiency Standard for California](#)

Detailed median hourly and annual wages are displayed in Exhibit 5 for *music directors and composers* in Los Angeles County.

**Exhibit 5: Median hourly and annual wages for music directors and composers**

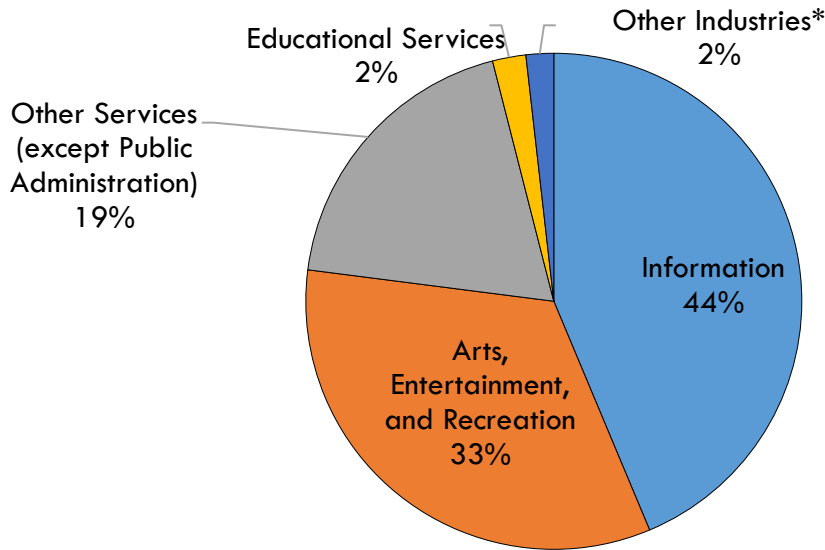
SOC Code	Description	Median Hourly Earnings	Median Annual Earnings
27-2041	Music Directors and Composers	\$30.98	\$64,436

Source: Lightcast, Datarun 2024.4

### Industry employment

Exhibit 6 displays the portion of *music directors and composers* working within each industry sector. The industry sector with the largest share of *music directors and composers* is information (NAICS 51) with a 44% share. Combined with arts, entertainment, and recreation (NAICS 71), these two industry sectors account for 77% of the employment for *music directors and composers* in Los Angeles County. The largest sub-sectors that employ *music directors and composers* include religious organizations (NAICS 813110), sound recording studios (NAICS 512240), independent artists, writers, and performers (NAICS 715510), musical groups and artists (NAICS 711130), and music publishers (NAICS 512230).

## Exhibit 6: Industry concentration of music directors and composers jobs in 2023



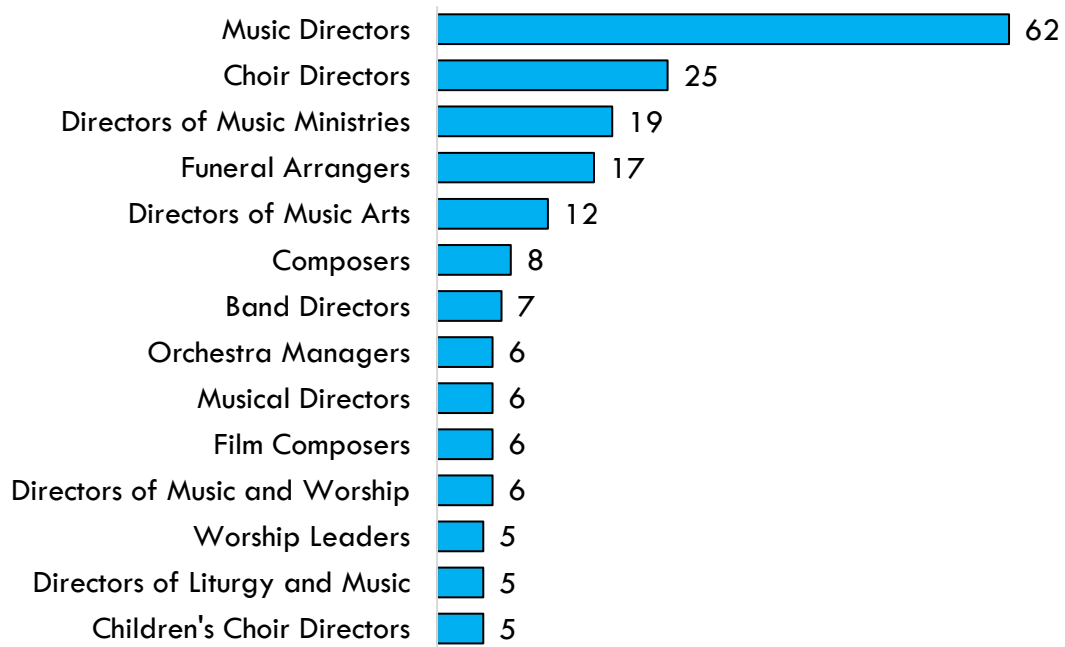
Source: Lightcast, Datarun 2024.4

\*Other Industries include: Government (0.8%), Professional Scientific, and Technical Services (0.5%), Health Care and Social Assistance (0.2%), Manufacturing (0.1%), Retail Trade (0.1%), Transportation and Warehousing (0.1%), Management of Companies and Enterprises (0.1%), and Accommodation and Food Services (0.1%).

### Job postings

Over the last 12 months (January 2024 through December 2024), there were 404 unique online job postings for *music directors and composers* in California. The number of job postings by job title appear in Exhibit 7. The most common job titles from job postings were music directors, choir directors, composers, directors of music ministries, funeral arrangers, and directors of music arts. The employers posting the most job ads during this timeframe were LADGOV, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles, California State University, AppleOne (temp agency), Pasadena High School, University of California, and Waypoint Church. The skills sought most frequently in these job ads were choral music, worship ministry, music education, musical accompaniment, music programming, musical notation, guitars, instrumental music, and liturgical worship.

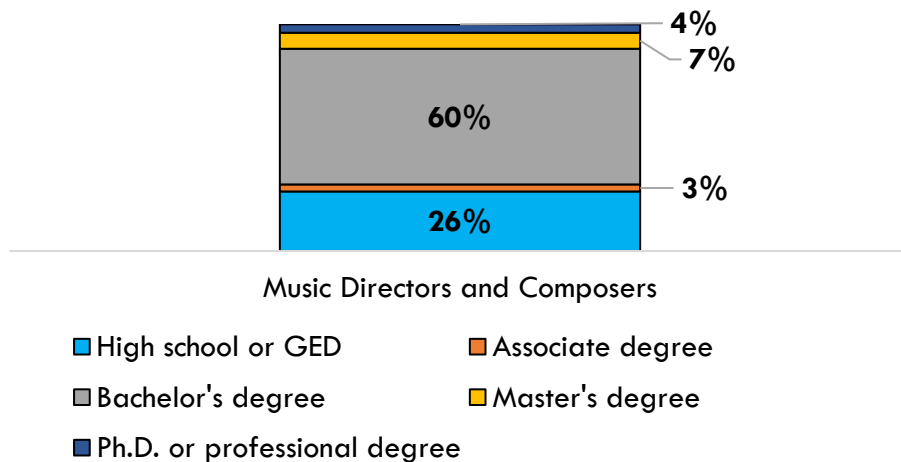
**Exhibit 7: Job postings by job title (January 2024 – December 2024)**



Source: Lightcast job posting data

Of all the job postings that listed a minimum educational requirement, the majority of employers were seeking candidates with a bachelor’s degree (60% of total), demonstrating that employers postings job ads prefer candidates with a bachelor’s degree for *music directors and composers*. Exhibit 8 shows a breakdown of education levels listed in job postings for *music directors and composers*. Nearly one-third (29%) of job postings desired a candidate with an associate degree or high school diploma, while 11% desired a candidate with a master’s degree or Ph.D.

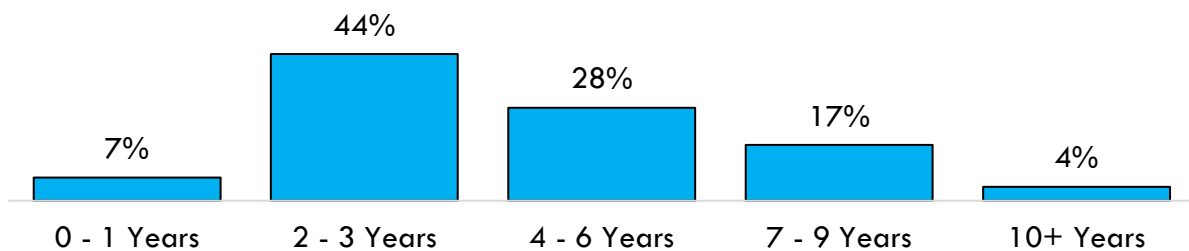
**Exhibit 8: Education breakdown in job postings**



Source: Lightcast job posting data

Of all the job postings that listed a minimum experience requirement, the majority of employers were seeking a candidate with 2-3 years of experience (44% of total), demonstrating that employers postings job ads prefer are currently hiring workers who are newer to the *music director and composer* occupation and less established than veteran workers. Exhibit 9 shows a breakdown of experience levels listed in job postings for *music directors and composers*. While 7% of job postings desired an entry-level candidate with minimal (0-1 years) experience, nearly half (49%) desired a candidate with 4 years or more experience in music directing and composing.

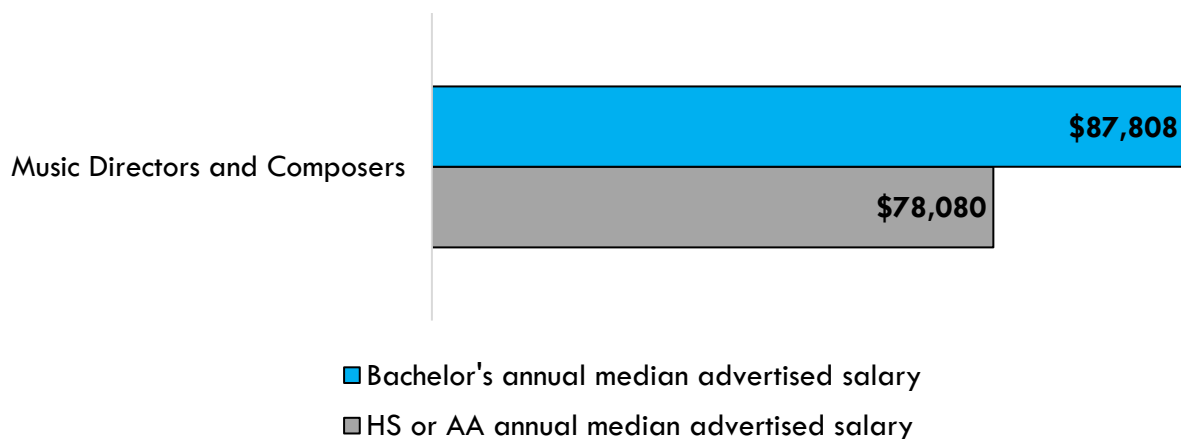
**Exhibit 9: Experience breakdown in job postings**



Source: Lightcast job posting data

Taking a closer look at job postings that listed a bachelor’s degree as the required level of education versus postings that listed a high school diploma or associate degree, employers seeking candidates with a bachelor’s degree for *music directors and composers* are advertising annual salaries that are nearly \$10,000 higher per year than those seeking candidates with a high school diploma or associate degree. Exhibit 10 demonstrates that regional employers posting job ads for *music directors and composers* are willing to pay a higher salary to candidates with a bachelor’s degree than candidates with a high school diploma or associate degree.

**Exhibit 10: Annual median advertised salary by education level**



Source: Lightcast job posting data

## Educational Supply: Training Programs for Music Technology

### Bachelor's degrees

In Los Angeles County, one program related to music technology at one 4-year college has issued bachelor's degrees in a related CIP code (see Exhibit 11 below for summary data and Appendix for details). Between 2020 and 2022, there was an annual average of 13 bachelor's degrees awarded from this program.

#### Exhibit 11: Los Angeles County bachelor's degrees, 2020-2022

Program (CIP)	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	3-Year Average
Music Technology (50.0913)	13	13	12	13

Source: [National Center for Education Statistics' Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System](#)

In California, bachelor's degrees related to music technology have been issued at six different 4-year colleges (see Exhibit 12). Between 2020 and 2022, there was an average of 42 bachelor's degrees awarded annually.

#### Exhibit 12: California bachelor's degrees, 2020-2022

Program (CIP)	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	3-Year Average
Music Technology (50.0913)	38	31	56	42

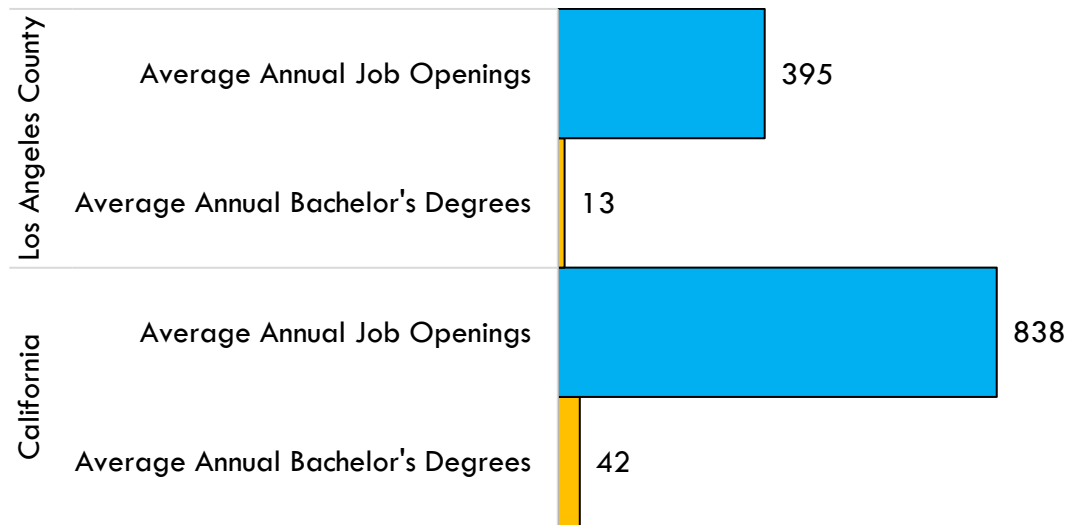
Source: [National Center for Education Statistics' Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System](#)

## Gap Analysis

Breaking down the educational supply and occupational demand for *music directors and composers* in Los Angeles County yields a clear pattern (see Exhibit 13). With 13 average annual bachelor's degrees for music technology programs issued in the county, and 395 projected annual job openings for *music directors and composers* that typically require a bachelor's degree for entry, the potential supply gap at this level of education is 382 unfilled jobs. This projected workforce shortage facing Los Angeles County requires the attention of all regional education and training providers.

In California as a whole, there is a more pronounced gap between the average annual job openings and the average annual bachelor's degrees awarded. While 838 *music director and composer* jobs are projected to be available annually in California, there are only 42 annual bachelor's awards conferred in music technology programs. Therefore, a statewide projected workforce shortage of 796 unfilled annual job openings for *music directors and composers* is certainly a cause for conversation and planning among education and training providers.

**Exhibit 13: Supply and demand gap analysis related to music directors and composers**



Source: Lightcast, Datarun 2024.4; [California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Data Mart](#); [National Center for Education Statistics' Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System](#)

## Recommendations & Discussion

This report demonstrates that the demand for projected jobs for *music directors and composers* is unmet by the talent supply from related education and training programs over the next ten years, both in Los Angeles County and California as a whole. While this is a great starting point to engage in meaningful discussion about the prospects of a community college baccalaureate program helping to bridge the gap between talent supply and occupational demand in the labor market, it is not sufficient based on legislation.

Therefore, this report can be used as a launch board to validate these findings from traditional labor market information and job postings with regional employers and training providers in an effort to assess that the following are true (sub-bullets summarize key points of support from this report):

- **Evidence that employers are having difficulty filling positions that require a baccalaureate degree.**
  - With 404 job postings for *music directors and composers* in California over the last year, there is strong evidence that California employers are actively seeking qualified individuals for these jobs. 60% of these job postings are seeking candidates with a bachelor's degree.
- **Evidence that employers are willing to pay baccalaureate degree holders more than those with a related associate degree or no postsecondary degree.**
  - Regional employers seeking candidates with a bachelor's degree for *music directors and composers* are advertising annual salaries that are nearly \$10,000 higher per year than those seeking candidates with a high school diploma or associate degree.
- **Evidence that employers prefer candidates with the proposed baccalaureate degree.**
  - The majority of regional employers were seeking candidates with a bachelor's degree (60% of total), demonstrating that employers post job ads prefer candidates with a bachelor's degree for these jobs.
- **Evidence of job placement and/or promotion opportunities for candidates with a baccalaureate degree.**
  - Evidence of this criterion requires additional information from regional employers.
- **Evidence that the occupation/field of the proposed baccalaureate degree will provide higher-wage job opportunities.**
  - Average hourly wages for *music directors and composers* in Los Angeles County are \$14.84 lower per hour than the average across all occupations at the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile, \$9.19 lower at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, and \$5.69 lower at the median, and \$0.65 higher at the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile. A favorable wage gap appears when progressing to the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile, as *music directors and composers* earn \$24.32 per hour more than the average worker in the region, and \$54.26 more per hour at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile, on average.

## Methodology

This report has three primary objectives:

1. Assess and quantify the labor market demand for *music directors and composers* in Los Angeles County and California that typically require a bachelor's degree for entry.
2. Assess and quantify the educational supply for such jobs.
3. Calculate the potential unmet workforce demand for these jobs.

For the first objective, the most recent datarun (2024.4) from Lightcast was analyzed using 2023 as a base year and a ten-year projection period through 2033. This ten-year period approximates the time it takes for a typical community college training program to be developed, approved, and for the first cohort of students to enroll, complete the program, and enter the workforce. The average annual job openings for *music directors and composers* that typically require a bachelor's degree for entry was the primary metric analyzed for this objective.

The second objective was calculated using the National Center for Education Statistics' Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). This dataset was queried for the number of bachelor's degrees issued from educational institutions in Los Angeles County and California during the most recent three academic years available (2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22). Reporting in IPEDS is organized by Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP).

The third objective was achieved by calculating the difference between the sum of annual job openings related to *music directors and composers* and the number of baccalaureate awards issued from related programs. This calculation determines whether there is demand in the labor market is not being met by the supply from educational programs that align with the relevant occupation.

## Appendix

**Table A: Los Angeles County bachelor's awards issued related to music technology**

CIP - Program	Institution	2019-20 Awards	2020-21 Awards	2021-22 Awards	3-Year Average
50.0913 – Music Technology	Los Angeles College of Music	13	13	12	13
<b>Grand Total/Average</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>

**Table B: California bachelor's awards issued related to music technology**

CIP - Program	Institution	2019-20 Awards	2020-21 Awards	2021-22 Awards	3-Year Average
50.0913 – Music Technology	California Baptist University	-	-	6	2
	California Lutheran University	10	5	12	9
	Los Angeles College of Music	13	13	12	13
	Point Loma Nazarene University	-	6	4	3
	San Francisco Conservatory of Music	8	3	13	8
	University of Silicon Valley	7	4	9	7
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>38</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>42</b>

### About the Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research

The Centers of Excellence (COE) is a statewide initiative supported by the California Community Colleges' Economic and Workforce Development program. The COE research team represents expertise in labor market analysis with a focus on research design, educational and training program mapping, and identifying skill sets for emerging occupations as well as geospatial analysis. The COE maintains strategic alliances with research organizations whose relationships and technical expertise enhance COE research efforts and with industry associations that assist in validating research findings, ensuring that the most recent industry and labor market conditions are captured. COE studies are used to inform policy discussions, industry-wide legislative efforts, and regional workforce and economic development strategies, as well as guide program and resource development efforts by the California Community Colleges. These reports can be accessed at [www.coecc.net](http://www.coecc.net).