



SAN DIEGO COUNTY LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS

PUBLIC SECTOR

Employment Trends and Career Opportunities

SAN DIEGO
WORKFORCE
PARTNERSHIP[®]

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The Public Sector is made up of publically controlled and funded entities, providing public goods and services to people living in San Diego County. This study focuses on 36 in-demand occupations in five key occupational clusters within the Public Sector: Administration, K-12 Educators, Maintenance and Landscaping, Public Utilities and Safety. It serves to inform the workforce development system—educational training institutions, the Workforce Development Board and community organizations—on how best to prepare the future workforce for these five occupational clusters.

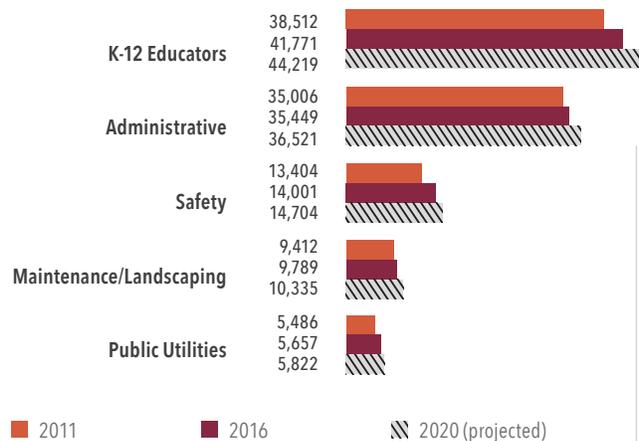
Visit workforce.org/reports to read the full report.

1.3%

Total jobs in the Public Sector increased by 1.3 percent from 2011 to 2016

IN-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

The Public Sector accounts for over 340,000 jobs in the region, spread over more than 780 occupations. The 36 occupations represented in the below clusters comprise about 31 percent of the jobs in the sector. These occupations have grown by 9.4 percent in the past five years.



SKILLS GAP

Soft skills gap — Employers noted a soft skills gap in **political acumen**. Proximity to government makes it necessary to understand political boundaries and policies. Further, employees must navigate the motivations of various offices/individuals that influence decisions. Other soft skill gaps were noted in the following competencies:

- Creative thinking
- Customer service
- Communication
- Teamwork

Hard skills gap — To move up in many of the positions in the Public Sector, attaining certifications (especially in safety and utilities) is important. Writing skills adapted to the workplace are also valuable, especially when considering different audiences and styles of writing needed in different environments.

Some examples include:

- Certifications/licensing: Single Subject or Multiple Subject Teaching Credentials, Engineer-in-Training (EIT), Drinking Water Operator Certification
- Writing skills: memos, technical/policy writing, various styles of business writing

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

- K-12 educators make up over 12 percent of total jobs in Public Sector
- K-12 Education subsector is facing a shortage of qualified applicants
 - STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)
 - Special education
 - Substitute teacher

Some employers are recruiting out-of-state for areas of need, but many of these applicants do not possess the credentials required for California.

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KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLSET FOR TEACHING OCCUPATIONS

- Pedagogy
- Lesson planning
- Scheduling
- Incorporating technology into classroom activities (e.g., personal tablets, educational software)
- Teamwork—need to collaborate with fellow teachers and administrators on curriculum design, coordination of school-wide events and other initiatives
- Interpersonal skills
- Bilingualism—Spanish fluency is in particularly high demand due to San Diego's proximity to the international border. It is vital for communication with both students and parents.
- Cultural competency—understanding challenges faced by students and families from varying backgrounds, including the difficulties associated with learning a second language

IN-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR*



ADMINISTRATIVE

- Business Operations Specialists, All Other (\$35.27)
- Office Clerks, General (\$16.10)
- Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive (\$18.20)



K-12 EDUCATORS

- Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education (\$35.27)
- Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education (\$29.65)
- Teacher Assistants (\$14.93)



MAINTENANCE AND LANDSCAPING

- Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners (\$11.95)
- Maintenance and Repair Workers, General (\$18.54)
- Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers (\$12.51)



PUBLIC UTILITIES

- Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant and System Operators (\$30.37)
- Civil Engineers (\$42.34)
- Electronics Engineers, Except Computer (\$54.16)



SAFETY

- Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers (\$39.41)
- Firefighters (\$29.28)
- Detectives and Criminal Investigators (\$42.20)

*Occupations accompanied by median wage

Visit [ONetOnline.org](https://www.onetonline.org) to learn more about these occupations

CHALLENGES FINDING AND RECRUITING QUALIFIED EMPLOYEES

Nearly 62 percent of survey respondents are having difficulty finding and recruiting qualified employees for occupations identified in the report. Employers most frequently cited the following contributing factors:



67%

Lack of experience



54%

Competition from other employers



54%

Lack of technical or occupational skills



52%

Candidates missing necessary certifications



51%

Low number of applicants



46%

Unable to meet salary/benefit demands



46%

Lack of soft skills



DID YOU KNOW?

A unique aspect of the Public Sector is the frequency and relative ease of transferring between departments within the same organization. As an individual's skills and interests grow throughout their career, they have several pathways open to them. If an employee starts their career in a department with limited career advancement opportunities, this fluidity gives them the chance to pursue new opportunities in another division. Networking is key to opening up these opportunities.

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Public entities and educational/training institutions should partner to expand internship opportunities for students to equip them with the work experience desired by employers.
- Training programs should stress the importance of technical writing skills to improve the competitiveness of graduates. This is just as relevant for public safety employees writing reports as it is for administrative employees.
- Emphasis should be placed on identifying and training individuals with management potential. Employers in every occupational cluster noted lacking leadership and management skills among employees, and sometimes a lack of interest in advancing to management positions.
- Education and training programs for this sector should address social media awareness. The highly-scrutinized nature of the public sector makes it especially important for employees to be aware of how they portray themselves.

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RESEARCH PARTNERS

- Josh Shapiro, Gladys Selfridge,
Gina Carton — UC San Diego Extension

SDWP STAFF CONTRIBUTORS

- Sarah Burns, Henar Hellow

OTHER COLLABORATORS

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Brandy Winterbottom-Whitney — County of
San Diego
- Nicole Orsini — CSUSM Extended Learning
- Gretchen Spaniol — San Diego County
Water Authority
- Beth Kransberger — National University
- David Lopez — Teach for America, San Diego

UC San Diego | Extension

SAN DIEGO
WORKFORCE
PARTNERSHIP®

3910 University Ave., 4th Floor
San Diego, CA 92105
P / 619.228.2900 W / workforce.org

