

Imperial County Workforce Development Board and San Diego Workforce
Partnership

Southern Border Region Plan

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Background

The Southern Border Region (SBR) is a large and diverse geographic area located at the border with Mexico. Many diverse subregions comprise the Region providing myriad economic opportunities as well as unique challenges for the workforce system to support the disparate needs both of businesses and residents. Our regional plan was established in 2016 in conjunction with our partners and developed three strategic priorities that addressed engaging businesses, career pathway development and human-centered service design. Since then, the SBR has been doing extensive work to better understand the evolving needs of our community. The forces of technical innovation, automation and globalization have generated historical levels of wealth and prosperity, while at the same time leaving behind many of our workers, particularly the justice-involved, and their families in low-wage, low-skill jobs that do not pay family-sustaining wages. Now, as we look to the end of the economic closures due to the pandemic, the short and long-term impact to our Region will be unfolding for some time to come. What is clear is that the impact to businesses and workers has been severe in some of the largest sectors, particularly in sectors that had more traditionally low-paying jobs, such as tourism, hitting workers hard who were already struggling.

Strategy – Our Pillars

The SBR has established clarity around its goals and lasting partnerships, built out infrastructure that supports equity and jump starts the re-building process in our region. While our pillars provide a strong foundation, we must also acknowledge the reality of the current environment. Our work to date under the regional plan has provided a foundational understanding of the labor market and the equity gaps which exist through research, clear definitions of quality jobs, tested innovative strategies for true partnerships with high road employers, incorporating worker voice, and piloted person-centric service delivery mechanisms to meet the needs of marginalized populations. Additionally, the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic must be considered throughout all our work. The SBR has Five Strategic Pillars. They provide structure and guidance for our work to help San Diego and Imperial County residents out of poverty to self-sustaining careers and help businesses thrive while growing the economies.

Job Quality is about simultaneously producing outstanding outcomes for businesses and their frontline workers. It recognizes that businesses thrive with a stable highly qualified workforce.

Outcome-Focused Funding centers on the efficient and effective use of resources to solve intractable social and economic problems. Understanding opportunities to braid funding and find complementary funding sources to address the needs of the whole person and their families.

Inclusive Business Growth focuses on equipping small and mid-sized businesses to compete by meeting their needs for a diverse, skilled workforce.

Population-Specific Interventions concentrates on deepening our programming which is truly differentiated and standardizing common functions in order to better respond to the needs of the community. This pillar considers how to connect programs, services, and organizations to best serve participants as a whole person.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) is at the core of our work. This pillar keeps focus on policies, practices and actions for fair treatment and equitable impact and outcomes for ALL

customers, staff and stakeholders. It includes creating safe spaces and fostering a welcoming culture for people to feel valued and empowered to fully participate.

Regional Economic Analysis

The SBR recognized early on that up-to-date research was critical to the long-term success of the work. To that end, the Workforce Partnership Research Department has always included regional research as part of its mandate. The SBR has the expertise of an economist who leads his team to understand the nuances and unique identities of the individual Counties. This serves to inform the broader work of the Region while not overshadowing one or the other Counties when considering the differences between them.

Economic Overview of the Southern Border Region

When we analyze the Southern Border Region, it's important to recognize that San Diego and Imperial Counties have two vastly different economies with different needs. San Diego is the fifth most populous county in America, with 3,324,000 people; Imperial's population is 1/18th the size, with 180,580 people. San Diego has a \$267.7 billion economy; Imperial has a \$7.5 billion economy.¹ 16% of Imperial County jobs are in agriculture; 0.6% of San Diego jobs are. And while San Diego and Imperial share a border, their populations are quite distant; the closest two population centers are 90 minutes away along Highway 8.

There is wisdom in combining San Diego and Imperial Counties for the sake of regional planning, as the San Diego Workforce Partnership's research resources facilitate planning activities that serve Imperial County, but these counties do not form a unified economy, and if we aggregate labor market information across both counties together (as EDD's LMID does on its regional planning unit page), we simply won't get an accurate picture of either economy. (Insights on Imperial County especially would be lost in the aggregation process, since San Diego's larger numbers will always dominate sums and means.)

¹ Lightcast analysis based on 2022 Bureau of Labor Statistics and Bureau of Economic Analysis data.

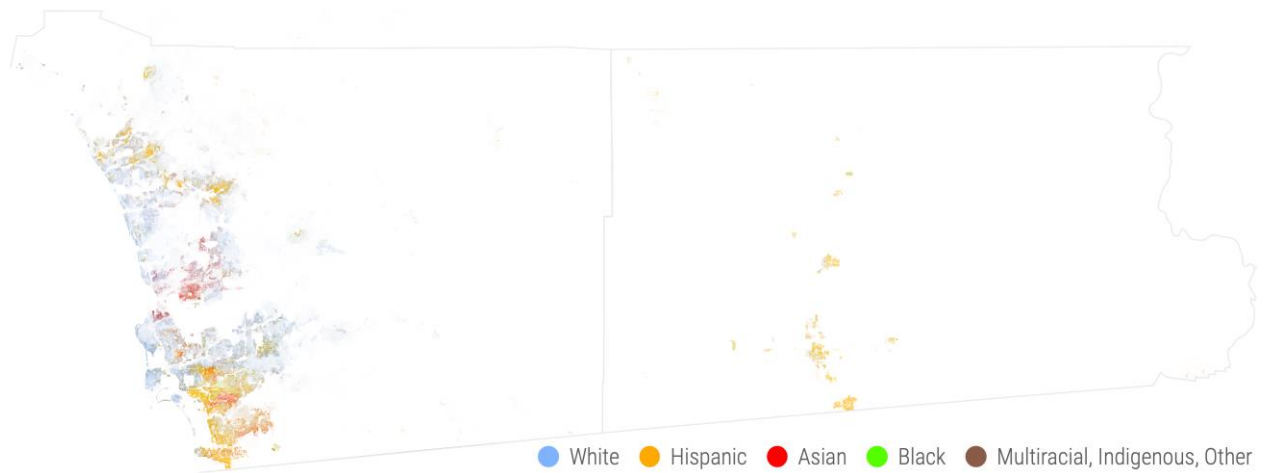


Figure 1. Map of population by race and ethnicity in the Southern Border Region as of 2010²

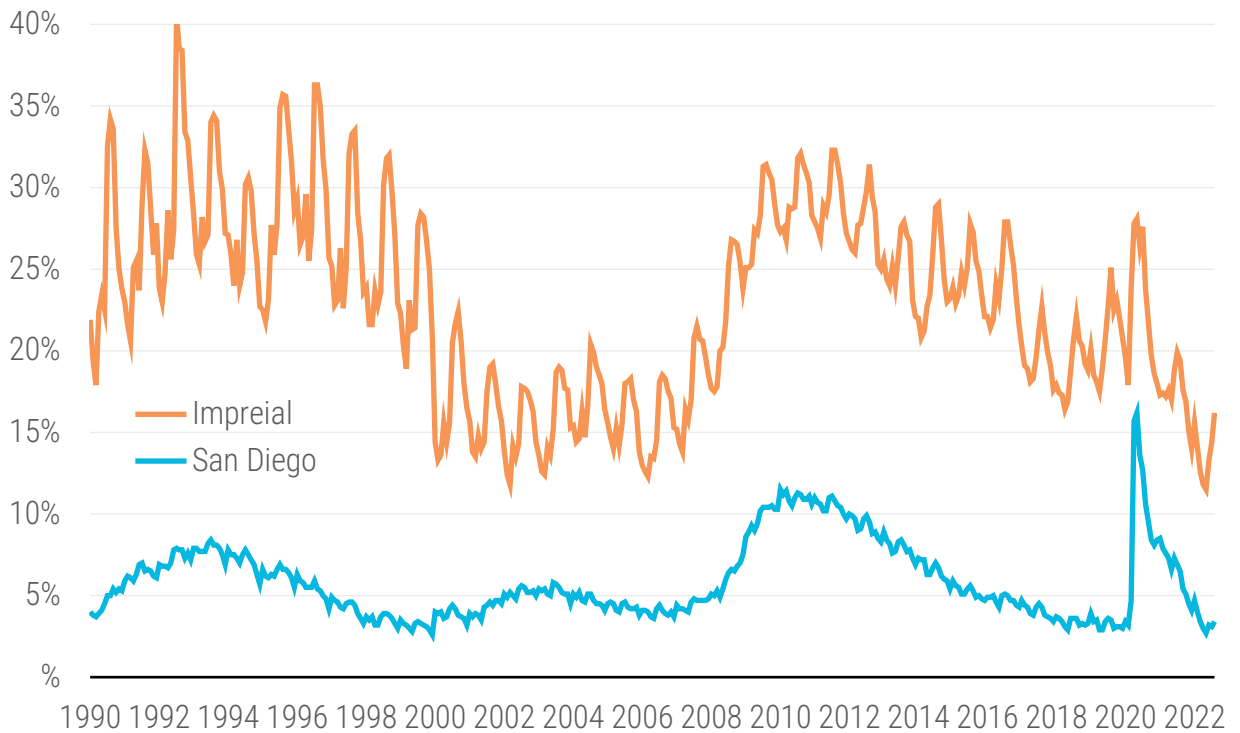
² Cable, Dustin. (2013). The Racial Dot Map. Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, University of Virginia. Available at <https://demographics.virginia.edu/DotMap>. An updated map based on 2020 Decennial Census is not yet available.

Employment Analysis

Imperial County has by far the highest rate of unemployment in California—at 16% in September, it was over twice the next highest county rate in California. Imperial also has a highly seasonal economy, with unemployment typically peaking in August. Since 1990, in a typical year the unemployment rate varies by 6.6 percentage points, with the highest rate 42% above the lowest.

By contrast San Diego's rate is below the state and national average, at 3.1% in September 2022. And San Diego's economy is significantly less seasonal, with rates varying by just 1.3 percentage points in a typical year and the highest rate being only 29% above the lowest.

Figure 2. Unemployment Rate in Imperial and San Diego Counties



San Diego's unemployment rate follows the US rate extremely closely; the rate can be very accurately predicted by multiplying the US rate by 1.4 and subtracting 1.7 points. This linear model explains over 95% of the variance in San Diego rates. By contrast the best linear model for predicting unemployment in Imperial (multiply the US rate by 1.4 and add 13.9 points) explains less than a third of the variance in local rates. In other words, employment in San Diego is a bit more pro-cyclical than in the national economy, but fundamentally it follows national trends very closely. Employment in Imperial does not follow these trends.

Figure 3. Relationship between US unemployment and local rates in Imperial and San Diego Counties over the past decade (Sep 2012–Aug 2022), excluding Apr & May 2020. Each circle represents one month.



Imperial County residents are also much more likely to experience poverty; 24% of residents live in families at or below 100% of the federal poverty line, while just 10% of San Diego County residents live at or below that level. Of course, because there are more than 18 times as many people in San Diego, there are more residents at every level of poverty.

Figure 4. 24% of Imperial residents live at or below the poverty line; 10% in San Diego do.

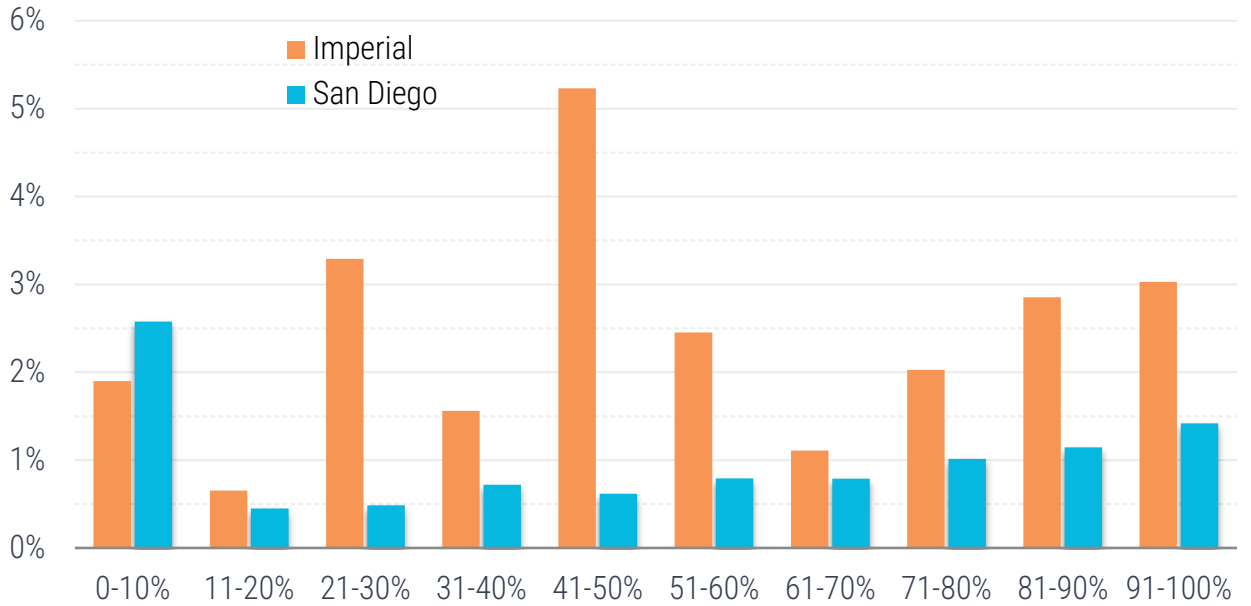
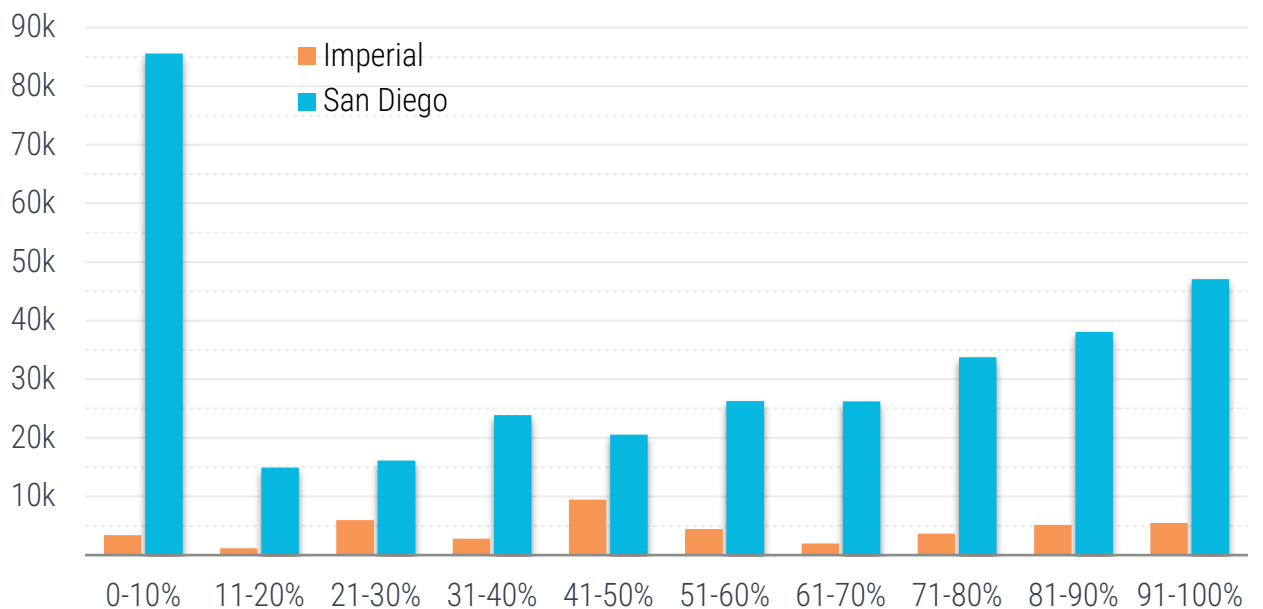


Figure 5. 44,000 Imperial residents live at or below the poverty line; 333,000 in San Diego do.



Workforce needs

The most basic need of a job seeker is employment in a quality job. The most important element of job quality we address is pay, and we focus on the “self-sufficient wage.” To identify these levels in Imperial and San Diego, we took the University of Washington’s 2021 [Self-Sufficiency standard](#) in each county for a single adult earner with no dependents, and inflated it to July 2022 levels using the local Consumer Price Index for the San Diego region. This represents the wage required for a worker to meet their own basic needs at a minimally adequate level without government assistance. The self-sufficient wage in Imperial County is \$12.96; in San Diego it is \$20.82.

Employer needs

We define employer needs simply—by the wages they are willing to pay workers. The stronger the employer’s need for labor, the more they will be willing to pay. Thus “in-demand jobs” are those that pay well.

We find that projections for future employer needs are unreliable at the moment for a number of reasons:

1. Most projections (like those of Emsi/Burning Glass) are linear extrapolations of the last few years of growth, and our recovery from the Pandemic Recession leads to exaggerated estimates of future growth.
2. Most economists believe that the Fed’s efforts to decrease inflation will result in a recession, but it is impossible to predict when that recession will come, how deep it will be, or how long it will last.
3. Most analyses fail to account for technological, political, economic, and social influences on demand for labor. Here are some examples:
 - (1) Technological advances that enable automation are improving rapidly. For example, image generation models have improved more in the past year than the previous 5 years as computational power, research attention, industry funding, and open source code have fueled development. It’s very difficult to predict which domains will experience this kind of growth, when that growth will happen, and which jobs or job tasks those technologies could change. Examples of occupations that may be disrupted by this kind of technological innovation include graphic designers (by image generation algorithms), customer service agents (by chatbots), delivery drivers (by drones or self-driving cars), and copyeditors or proofreaders (by improved grammar models).
 - (2) Political demand for climate action is likely to lead the County of San Diego and/or the state of California to mandate that all new construction uses electric rather than gas-powered appliances. A recent regional analysis by the University of California at San Diego identified pipe-fitters as an occupation likely to grow over the next five years, but the move away from natural gas in construction will likely result in shrinking demand for this occupation.
 - (3) AB257 will enable sectoral bargaining in the fast food industry, paving the way for a minimum wage in fast food jobs as high as \$22 per hour. This represents a substantial change in worker power in fast food, and will have unknown impacts on low-wage jobs across the state. Will fast food become a much more desirable and competitive industry? Will other low wage jobs raise their wages to meet the fast food minimum wage? Because sectoral bargaining is so uncommon in the US, it is extremely difficult to predict the impact of AB257.
 - (4) Reduction in stigma around mental health and substance use treatment, changes to health insurance, trends toward Telehealth, or changes in drug use patterns

(like the opioid crisis) could increase the demand on our already-stressed behavioral healthcare system.

- (5) A natural disaster, public health crisis, political upheaval, or other unexpected national, state, or local event could alter the job market. For example, mRNA innovations, medical testing infrastructure, and remote work and learning shifts catalyzed by COVID-19 altered jobs across industries.
- (6) New companies often seek explosive growth by disrupting an industry, and in doing so, can radically alter the job market within that industry. For example, ridesharing apps disrupted taxi driving—a highly regulated industry—ushering many of those workers into a more precarious employment arrangement. Of course, such disruptions are not telegraphed ahead of time and companies seeking this kind of disruption tend to be secretive about their plans to delay having to compete with other players.
- (7) Globalization has made our national economy increasingly interconnected with the economies of other nations. International actions and events (especially by big economies, like the European Union or China, or changes in conflicts, like the war in Ukraine) can have ripple effects in our economy and job market.

Education of the Workforce and Skills Gaps

It is very difficult to match employer demand for education with worker supply, for three reasons:

1. The best available data on education comes from the American Community Survey. ACS microdata, which allows us to answer complex questions like “how many unemployed individuals have a high school diploma,” is typically released at the end of the year following collection, so in a normal year we would use 2020 data in 2022. Unfortunately, data collection for the 2020 ACS was compromised by the pandemic, so the most recent reliable data is from 2019—three years ago. The ACS does not collect data on certificates earned; anything less than associate degree is likely recorded as some college but no degree—though it could also be recorded as just a high school diploma, if the respondent doesn’t think of the certificate as college coursework.
2. It is unclear how to count employer demand. Is the demand the projected number of openings over the next year? The active job postings at some given time? If the latter what time should job postings be measured? Much of employer demand, especially in Imperial County, is seasonal.
3. It is also unclear how to count worker supply. Again, are we considering all workers who experience unemployment in a year, or just the number unemployed at any given time? And if the latter, when? Unemployment has varied dramatically over the last year. Should we consider the whole population, as does Lightcast? Or just unemployed workers? What about workers who are out of the labor force?
4. If there are enough workers with an associate degree to meet employer demand, does that really mean there aren’t skill gaps? A hospital looking for a radiological technologist with an associate degree can’t hire a worker if their associate degree is in French literature. We are not aware of any data that would give us an estimate of the number of people in a region with specific degrees that match the education requirements of employers.

We chose to define employer demand as the number of projected annual openings in a year. We defined worker supply as the number of people with a given level of education who were unemployed while responding to the 2019 ACS (which was collected throughout the 2019 calendar year). We combined employers’ “certificate” and “some college” education requirements.

This is a good-faith attempt to understand the skills gap. While it's difficult to interpret the results, perhaps they can shed some light via comparison within counties. Figure 13 shows that among unemployed workers in Imperial, there are twice as many individuals without a high school diploma as there are with one. And while there are more openings in priority occupations requiring no formal education than in those requiring a high school diploma, there is a comparative shortage of high-school-educated workers. Figure 14 shows that in San Diego there are almost as many unemployed individuals without a high school diploma as with one, but there are less than one ninth as many openings for individuals without a high school diploma.

Figure 6. Demand and supply for workers by education in Imperial County

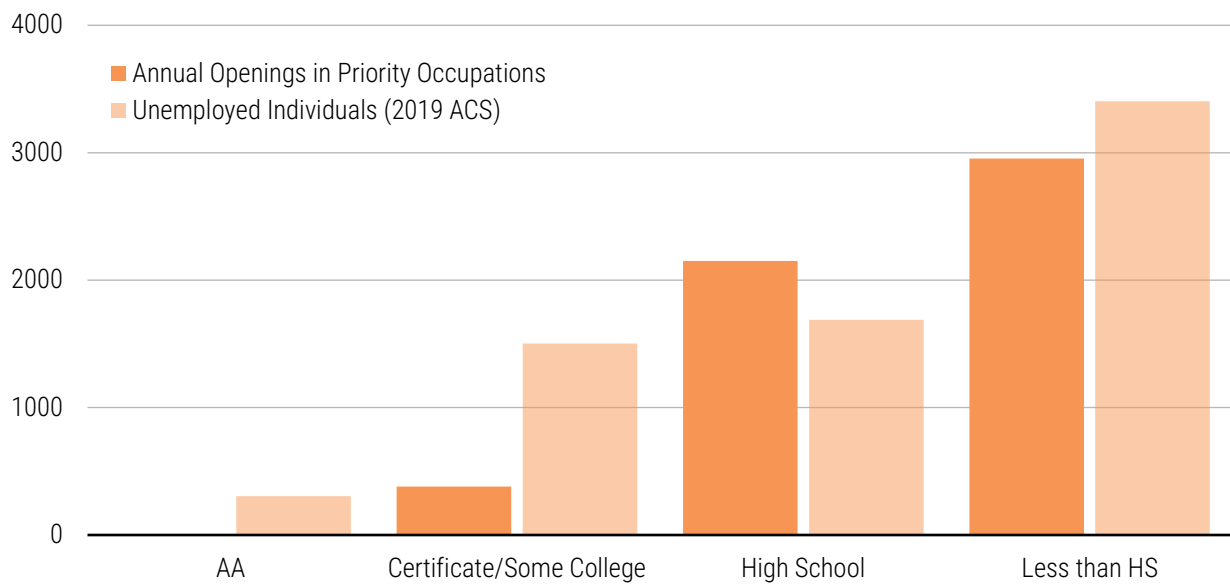
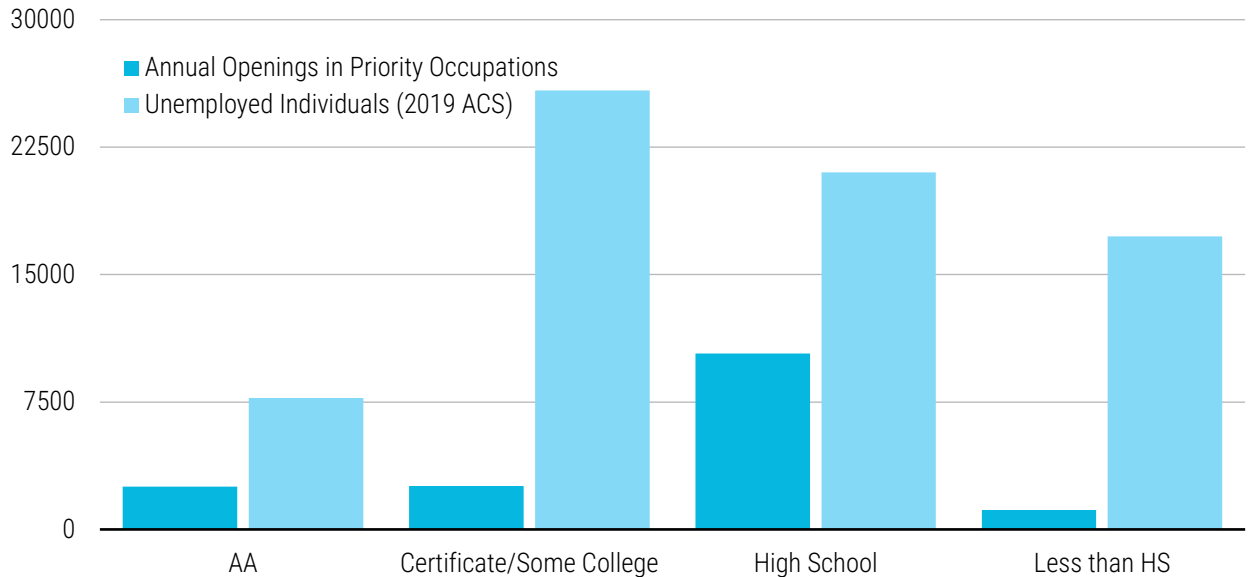


Figure 7. Demand and supply for workers by education in San Diego County



Regional Indicators

The SBR leadership has determined that the indicators: 1) Communicate Workforce Needs to Supply-side Partners; 2) Region Has Policies Supporting Equity and Strives to Improve Job Quality; and, 3) Region Has Shared Target Populations of Emphasis made the most sense for the Region. While it is unrealistic to consider sharing participants other than virtual training in light of the geographic distance, the SBR does employ numerous online tools for frontline staff and participants to use in both Counties. The SBR has however invested a great deal of research and infrastructure development that the Counties can share to advantage their participants and employers. With respect to the fourth Indicator: Region Deploys Shared/Pooled Resources to Provide Services, Training, and Education to Meet the Target Population's Needs, it is unrealistic for the Region to integrate career center services across Counties considering the distance between the population centers. However, understanding the nuances of job quality, engaging new employers and bringing new partners into the network continue to be a regional priority, to enhance the systems within each County.

Process to Communicate Industry Workforce Needs to Supply-side Partners

The work through the regional grants such as High Roads Construction Careers and the various healthcare and information and communication technology sector programming engages both employers, service delivery partners and training providers. This work includes partners like the San Diego and Imperial County Community College District (SDICCCA) and the San Diego and Imperial Labor Council bringing the value outcomes to the entire Region. This programming is designed to address skilled talent shortages in high-demand occupations within priority sectors. By engaging employers at the start of the process up front, vetted opportunities are created for job seekers that align with the needs of the employers. Communication and programming are also made more sustainable by braiding private/public funding. Additionally, the focused work with Community Colleges in San Diego County provides additional engagement with their employer partners bringing career center and mobile career service options to their students as well as increasing the connection to a broader swath of employers. Finally, through the Talent

Pipeline Management (TPM) framework discussed later, employers engage in various initiatives that include supply-side and other workforce partners.

Policies Supporting Equity and Strives to Improve Job Quality

To reach equality of opportunity those practices, systems and policies that have enabled, perpetuated or failed to reverse the trend of growing inequality of opportunity must give way to a new way of thinking about workforce and economic development. As a region, we continue to make changes to our systems and partnerships so that education and training become a lifelong practice and access to networks, resources and knowledge is available to all. Our five pillars keep focus on our work around quality jobs, worker voice, guiding workers and employers toward sustainable career pathways, and expanding our work with specific populations. To further enhance the system, the boards in the Southern Border Region have adopted the core values of Equity and Inclusion:

- Equity – The proactive assessment and implementation of policies, practices, behaviors, and actions that result in access to opportunities, fair treatment and equitable impact and outcomes for ALL customers, staff, and stakeholders
- Inclusion – To create safe spaces that foster a culture where everyone feels welcomed, seen, respected, supported, valued, and empowered to fully participate

Furthermore, the Region has adopted the Listen Learn Act framework to continue improving the equity work. The Listen Learn Act framework centers BIPOC voices and enables all three focus areas to receive appropriate attention. The internal staff, community and especially program participants, as well as our partners in business, will have input through this framework to create a holistic approach to equity and inclusion. While each Board will approach the framework in a way that best serves their County, the commitment to the process will spotlight strategy and policy toward improvements.

Region's Shared Target Populations

From a service delivery perspective, we continue to focus on population specific interventions, as outlined in our strategic pillars. We have even more experience and believe the best way to support special populations is through adapted versions of the Individual Placement Support (IPS) model. The success of the IPS model with individuals dealing with mental health issues has been widely documented. What is even more promising is that the model is showing to be effective with other population groups such as homeless, at-risk of homelessness, CalWORKs recipients, justice-involved individuals and individuals with physical or mental challenges that result in long term unemployment and SSI stipends.

Adult education programs also align their programming with the IPS model. As targeted populations often suffer from trauma and have experience with multiple barriers (i.e.: justice-involved & homelessness), we continue to believe that by incorporating a model that focusses on mental health supports, we will address deep and systemic barriers to ensure long-term engagement of services. The IPS Model is a Team Based approach that targets competitive employment opportunities. In order to achieve success, the employment specialist works in tandem with the community stakeholders which are assisting in housing, mental health, food and clothing. The team comes together at set times to discuss each case in order to eliminate barriers, provide support and achieve rapid movements to stability. Bringing together the right combination of support is key. The IPS Model allows participants to receive services based on

their current need and provides help in an environment of their choice. Specialists meet with the participant in a location and at a time that is convenient for the participant.

During the pandemic, we have been able to meet the need for frequent virtual touch points. The IPS Model can have far reaching effects when executed properly. Stability for participants is key and the Model takes into account the other factors that may be barriers to stability.

One of the key employment elements of the Model ensures that there is not an assumption that the first job a person receives will be the last job. This relieves the stress and sense of hopelessness and failure that may arise from a wrong fit in employment. The specialist works with the employee and employer to provide a bridge and advocate for both. Implementation of the IPS Model: the SBR can use the IPS Model for all targeted population individuals who have indicated their desire to work. As a rapid employment model, the IPS Model has a goal of getting an individual to a face to face (this can be virtual) meeting with an employer within 30 days of the time that they identify as willing to work.

Once the participant is interested in employment, specialists engage in the following:

- Work one on one with the participant to determine suitable types of work based on current skills, interests, barriers and strengths to develop an individualized employment plan
- Offer counseling with regard to public benefits, since the potential loss of benefits upon getting a job can sometimes serve as a disincentive to seeking employment
- Support the participant's rapid job search and placement in a competitive paid position they desire
- Offer ongoing vocational supports such as one-on-one job coaching, and on-the-job training and credentialing
- Integrate employment assistance with other supportive services to better help the individual work through employment barriers
- Continually reassess the client and provide additional support or re-placement as new barriers emerge

The IPS Employment Specialists will identify employers within the appropriate sectors and facilitate interviews. The first job may not be the right fit, so a participant may go through several jobs before stabilizing with permanent work.

The evidence based IPS Model has been used for over 25 years within clinical settings for those with mental health challenges and has high rates of success. The SBR commissioned a fidelity scale model consisting of criteria specifically designed for nonmental health settings to ensure that the program is structured and operating within evidence-based practices for the IPS Model.

We are currently focusing on five core populations: veterans, mature workers, youth, immigrant/refugees and justice-involved, as well as exploring opportunities to support immigrants and individuals with disabilities. Some highlights of current efforts are offered below:

Veterans

The Healthcare sector is engaging with veteran organizations to increase and better serve veterans in our healthcare career programming. The workforce.org/MyNextMove tool will also include a veteran-specific resource page that connects our tools and strategies to their unique experience. We hope to release the updates including these resources in 2023.

Youth

Guiding young adults ages 16–24 on a path to success through skill building, education, social capital, and job-based experiences is a key part of our work. The Southern Border’s goal is to reduce the rate of disconnection in San Diego and Imperial Counties, especially in those neighborhoods where the gap is the greatest. Last year there were 42,000 16 to 24-year-olds in the SBR who were neither in school nor employed. Our Region's research on Opportunity Youth is crucial to guiding interventions that prioritize development of the young workforce, creating opportunities for those who are disconnected to correct course early in their working life. We have refined our focus each year of this research, focusing on different segments of disconnected youth to address the most pronounced inequities. For example, while we have observed the overall youth disconnection rate declining over the past three years, the rate in certain sub-regions has increased. The COVID-19 Pandemic has also increased youth disconnection rates for many reasons. This signals to us and our community partners that more focused effort should be placed on youth in these areas. While we will replicate our prior analyses, the data only provides a point-in-time count. We know anecdotally that non-chronic-youth may experience weeks or months of disconnection, interspersed with periods of school or work.

Immigrants and Refugees

Immigrants and refugee populations are a vital part of the Southern Border community, representing 25% of the population in San Diego and 34% in Imperial—with an additional 22% being second-generation Americans born to immigrant parents. Immigrants contribute 25% of all tax revenue in San Diego and 41% in Imperial. The Southern Border frequently tops all other California counties in refugee arrivals, with San Diego welcoming more than 40,000 refugees since 1995. The immigrant populations in the community are diverse, with large numbers of individuals coming from Mexico, the Philippines, Vietnam, China and Iraq. Most recently, San Diego County east county communities have experienced a significant increase in newly arrival of immigrants and refugees from eastern Europe, middle East and Afghanistan.

The San Diego Workforce Partnership participates in the Workforce Services for Refugees and Immigrants Working Group – a statewide network to support local workforce boards with best practices for refugees, strategies, planned efforts and removing barriers to achieving self-sufficiency.

Immigrants currently make up a significant portion of the workforce in several key industries such as agriculture, general services and manufacturing. Retail is also one of the top eight industries that these individuals are placed in shortly after arrival and hospitality is among the top three. Nationally, immigrants make up nearly 1 in 3 hotel workers and a quarter of food service workers; rates are even higher in California. Many skilled immigrants—those with credentials and degrees from their home country—are often placed in low wage jobs within these industries due to either delays in or lack of support to convert a credential from a home country to the US equivalent. Lack of a quality job places a great strain on the immigrant and their family and often requires newcomers to leverage social services despite their years of knowledge and experience. In a dynamic American economy where more than 70% of jobs require some type of post-secondary credential, the SBR believes it is not only critical to help foreign-born workers strengthen their English skills and earn industry-recognized credentials but more importantly, to help those who already have credentials understand how to navigate US system to set

immigrant families on a path to economic mobility through quality jobs connections to high road employers.

As we continue to refine our online delivery mechanisms, the system will also be able to collect robust data on specific areas such as English language acquisition, digital skills and digital literacy through identification of online engagement with the curriculum and follow-on case manager connections for those who choose to do so. This will help us expand our programming for these particularly important areas to better serve our immigrant customers region wide and do so in a way that is relevant for each County individually.

Mature Workers

Many Americans are working well past the traditional retirement age of 65, into their 70s and 80s. Over the coming decade, workers 55 years and older will be the fastest growing segment of the workforce, gifting our communities with the opportunity to learn and grow from their years of professional experience. In the Southern Border Region, we know that everyone deserves an opportunity to achieve meaningful employment, regardless of age, zip code, background or anything else. By leaving a key talent pool behind we leave valuable skills on the table, which hurts businesses and the economy. The San Diego Workforce Partnership piloted a program for Mature Workers that produced valuable learning such as mature workers bring experience they want to use not start as an intern. The SBR has identified that a multi-pronged approach is required to pilot employment assistance to mature workers to reduce the gap and barriers for them to thrive in the workforce.

Justice-Involved

The SBR, San Diego County Sheriff's Department (Sheriff's), San Diego County Probation (Probation), and Imperial County WDB are the primary partners that aim to expand our impact on reducing recidivism and improve education and employment outcomes among justice-involved youth and adults. The Prison2Employment (P2E) Initiative has greatly contributed to our ability to serve this targeted population through *Reentry Works*. Reentry Works is not just a singular program, but our overall strategy to invest and innovate in, evidence-based solutions to best serve the justice-involved population. To achieve the Prison to Employment performance outcomes, Employment Specialists provide intensive services via the IPS model. The IPS Model is a team-based approach that targets competitive employment opportunities. To achieve success, the Employment Specialists work in tandem with the community stakeholders which are assisting in housing, mental health, food, and clothing. The Employment Specialist's provide both pre-release case management and work readiness services, and post-release transition and job placement services. This is a unique aspect of our program design in that our pre-release and post-release staff serving participants in jail-based and community-based settings are the same, offering consistency and continuity for our clients. It eliminates the challenging handoff process of different case managers from before to after release. More importantly, the time invested in building quality relationships between staff and participants leads to strong connections to support the challenges of reentry participants in the employment process. It also serves to transition participants from learning about career services to discussing their barriers to employment, leveraging the bond with staff to ease into an often difficult and sensitive subject area. *We know that change is driven by trusting relationships. Employment Specialists staff build relationships with participants based on mutual respect, creating safe, comfortable environments to prepare for/succeed in reentry.*

Since 2015, Reentry Works has:

- Provided employment services to 1,700+ participants
- Facilitated 250 Job-Readiness Workshops
- 50% Employment Placement Rate
- 18%³ recidivism rate compared to State of CA average of 50%

Reentry Works Guiding Principles

1. Change is driven by trusting relationships. This includes partnerships across supporting organizations and justice-involved individuals.
2. If organizations seek to support justice-involved individuals, the best time to reach them is before they are released from custody.
3. A job is not always the first step toward self-sufficiency.
4. If justice-involved individuals believe that all an organization cares about are achieving employment placements, they will not communicate challenges that are relevant to their path toward self-sufficiency.
5. Organizations that want to support this population need to agree on a model of service that provides justice-involved individuals experience over the organizations' operational preferences.

Program Design

The program design has been developed through evidenced based models and partner requirements. Through identifying what works best for the justice involved population in the context of the partner, Sheriff, Probation, Parole, environment and expectations provides the best opportunity for success.

Pre-Release Career Exploration & Work Readiness

Pre-release services involve training and workshops integrating employment and education planning, career discovery, resume building, interview coaching, and segment and employer targeted job fairs that integrate the cognitive behavioral approaches currently conducted by the Sheriff Counselors in the facilities. Prior to release, the specialist, Sheriff, and Probation staff will meet with the participant and set an appointment to begin post release services based on individual choice and need. This team holds meetings throughout the participants last 90 days of custody to discuss participants choices and progress which all contribute to the post-release plan. All of the following wrap-around services will be made available to participants through 1:1's with Employment Specialists via the IPS Model: job preparation, comprehensive case management, identification of barriers to employment, needs assessment, development of Participant Plan's, career exploration and planning, assistance with obtaining state identification, legal assistance (e.g., modification of child support orders, expungement proceedings, securing participant licenses, child custody assistance, and protective and restraining order assistance),

³ Recidivism Definition: defined as the percentage of participants who were re-arrested for a new crime or re-incarcerated for revocation of the parole or probation order within one year of their release from jail. If a participant is re-arrested and subsequently released without being convicted of a new crime, he/she may be taken out of the recidivism rate.

counseling, and referrals to the legal and social services required to help them transition back to their communities.

Post Release Services: Reintegration, Wrap-around Services and Rapid Employment

Upon release, the same specialist that supported the individual pre-release makes the first contact post-release. This first meeting is best within the first 48 hours of release. The post-release plan guides the meeting agenda and priority of services. Employment is not the first action step in this meeting, but rather stabilization of basic needs is prioritized. The intensive supportive services provided through P2E allows for connection to housing supports, purchase of hygiene products, and distribution of computers with hot spot accounts to remain in contact with the team of support staff. All of the subsequent meetings include some discussion of basic need supports to ensure there is continued revisiting of goals and needs to increase security.

Once the participant has been supported to address needs such as housing, sobriety counseling, probation requirements, etc., the focus of post-release meetings will shift to rapid employment. Initial employment assessment and first face to face employer contact by client or employment specialist for a competitive job occurs within 30 days (one month) after post-release period begins. Support for the participant's rapid job search and placement in paid positions they desire.

Post Release Services: Education, Training & Employment

Participants choosing education are assessed to determine options for high school completion or equivalency, college readiness, apprenticeship and other school options. Participants receive financial coaching on how to provide for basic needs during hours of school operation. Employment tends to be more applicable and reasonable due to the need to make money, when compared to education for this target population. Participants are coached that the first placement may not be the best fit, but rather a part of the roadmap to find a better job, and then a career. Supportive services continue to be a part of the discussion during follow-ups to ensure that participants can be supported through to the first paycheck, and subsequent paychecks.

Outcomes from the previous Prison to Employment program

Supportive Services and Earn and Learn:

Enrolled - 185
 Training - 22
 Entered Employment - 134
 Retention - 101

Implementation and Direct Services:

Enrollment - 251
 Training - 23
 Entered Employment - 170
 Retention – 101

Additional Needs for Imperial County Justice-Involved

The highest pandemic unemployment rate recorded in San Diego was 15.2%. Imperial County's rate has been higher than that every month for the last 13 years. Moreover, Imperial's unemployment has high (and consistent) seasonal variation due to the large portion of the economy that depends on agriculture. While Imperials County's incarcerated population is much less than San Diego's, their recidivism rate is double San Diego's. Due to this need to provide employment and training services as an intervention to prevent recidivism, we will work to

establish jail-based AJCC's in Imperial County through the P2E 2.0 opportunity. Program staff, correctional staff, Imperial Workforce Board staff, CBO's and stakeholders will regularly meet to ensure the project's successful launch and positive trajectory of services through creation of a job center timeline and roadmap. We anticipate that the first 2 years of P2E 2.0 will support the planning and development of the jail based AJCC's, and 1 year of participant services.

Additional Needs for Youth Justice-Involved

In early 2023, SBR will open its third jail-based AJCC at the East Mesa Juvenile detention Facility. Cohorts of 6 Youth will receive a workshop series to identify the six essential skills-- Emotional Intelligence, Communication, Creative & Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Dependability and Resourcefulness—that apply across all sectors and are relevant at every phase of a career; and yet, employers share that they are some of the most difficult competencies to find in prospective employees. Reflecting on, setting goals around, and practicing these skills can support career readiness and growth, and can make a candidate stand out in a job interview. Justice-involved participants will be introduced to the six essential skills, identify where they excel, and start building language to speak confidently about their abilities.

Areas of Exploration

Every person's unique interests and strengths to offer the world of work. Decades of research have shown that when a person's work aligns with their interests, they experience greater career satisfaction, better job performance, and higher wages. Justice-involved Youth participants will engage with activities to get to know the six RIASEC interest themes, claim the themes that represent them, and learn to apply their themes to a job search.

Like the adult jail based AJCC's, the Employment Specialists provide both pre-release case management and work readiness services, and post-release transition and job placement services. This is a unique aspect of our program design has been shown to increase likelihood of engagement in workforce and workforce services. We plan to serve a minimum of 75 justice-involved youth with pre-and post-release services offered through co-enrollment of WIOA Youth services, and P2E 2.0.

Employer Attitudes Matter: Advocacy for Economic Equity

The SBR believes that an important part in our work to connect justice-involved individuals with employment and training opportunities is also to advocate on the interrelationship of racism in the justice system. We released an article on the Nexus of systemic racism and found linkages between criminal justice involvement and economic opportunity. The article reviews the disparities between incarceration and economic mobility, and a call to action to hire justice-involved jobseekers. In addition to our advocacy work, the SBR released a report on employers' attitudes toward hiring justice-involved workers that established the following facts:

- Most employers do hire applicants with criminal histories
- A criminal history does not predict a prospective employee's likelihood of committing crime at work
- Employees with criminal histories make significant contributions to their organizations
- Having a criminal history is not unusual among American workers
- Criminal records are biased reports of criminal behavior
- Widely used criminal background checks are unreliable

Employers cited in the report included John Hopkins University Medicine in which 20% of entry-level hires have a criminal record. A five-year study of 500 individuals found lower turnover and zero problematic terminations. In their words, hiring these workers is “not a charitable endeavor but a strategic part of the way we conduct our business.” The report has been disseminated to numerous community-based organizations and other stakeholders that are involved in working with justice-involved. The report was constructed into a presentation that included local research on racial equity gaps in San Diego conducted by our senior economist. These presentations have been widely popular with our Workforce Development meetings, County Council meetings and open to the public webinars.

The SBR is now involved in the next phase of funding to further develop the programming to include a more robust involvement from Probation on both sides of the County line. Through this expanded programming, the SBR hopes to reach more justice involved residents and support them through the transition from incarceration to career success.

Region Deploys Shared/Pooled Resources for Target Populations

The SBR employs multiple processes to ensure there are available participant resources that can be shared by staff and partner staff. One important resource is the Career Coach online tool that aids the exploration and understanding of LMI, career pathways and in-demand occupations for both Imperial and San Diego Counties. The data in this tool is supplied by Lightcast, a labor market information firm, while the regional economist and director of learning facilitate the deployment and understanding of the information. It is through the shared technology that the SBR most supports its residents. However, as the State funding has grown to include key mandated partners in regional work, the larger employer systems that provide services in both Counties is a developing means to engage target populations in the work such as justice involved and low-income families looking for career paths to self-sufficiency. To that end, the SBR is targeting healthcare and construction career programming to create a sustainable regional application of programming that will reach many target populations such as women in construction trades.

Indicators for which SBR Has Identified Metrics

The Region focused on the Indicator *Policies supporting equity that strives to improve job quality*. The Region adopted the values of Inclusion: Taking responsibility for creating a culture where everyone is welcomed, heard, valued and empowered to fully participate and reach their full potential; and Equity: Prioritizing those who have been systemically denied opportunity through policies, priorities, practices and behaviors that result in access to opportunity for ALL colleagues, customers and communities. Inevitably, focus on quality wages will encourage partner employers to continue to model quality in their staffing models. It may also serve to engage more partners with both their participants and their employer partners increasing the network and opportunities for residents of both Counties

For example, the job may not pay a quality wage, but it does offer flexible hours or family friendly benefits that make it quality for that individual. The end goal is to understand the variety and volume of quality jobs and quality employers in each County to better measure percentage of job seekers who are placed in what they consider a quality job as well as employers across the sectors recognizing the value in providing quality to their workforce.

At this time, the Performance Measures required by the Title I WIOA funding and negotiated with the California Employment Development Department, are the primary source of data and

measurement. As many have discovered throughout the state of California, collecting meaningful data outside of those required measures relevant to quality can be very challenging.

Identified Impact

The Region anticipates that focus on quality wages will encourage partner employers to continue to model quality in their staffing models. It is important however to recognize that quality varies by individual. While wage is the data that is presently collected, continuing to develop broader data collection methods to understand the intersection of individual job seeker quality definition and the job in which they are placed, will produce a more complete understanding of the percentages of quality jobs in which job seekers are placed. For example, the job may not pay a quality wage, but it does offer flexible hours or family friendly benefits that make it quality for that individual.

In San Diego, as described in the Prioritizing Employers Providing Quality Jobs Section, there is focus on high road employers to support their efforts and help them create a culture of trust and engagement. Additionally, there has been success with the Workforce Partnership business department focusing funding and other supports on businesses that pay the County's living wage or otherwise offer substantial benefits and wrap-around services to barriered communities entering the workforce. This has also moved toward a stronger negotiating position for higher salaries for job seekers served to land higher wage jobs. Moving forward, the Region will continue to study and test opportunities to engage employers around quality and develop techniques to capture actionable data.

It is important to note that the cost of living in Imperial County is much less than in San Diego County. Housing, which is a great challenge for residents to buy and rent in both areas, is much more affordable in Imperial County than in San Diego, which can be a commuting option for San Diego workforce.

In Imperial County there is a focus on upskilling and incumbent worker training that will promote upward job mobility to established employees. Additionally, there is a focus on establishing and developing new industries within the County that will provide great economic growth, not just locally but for the entire Region. This movement includes support from government, academia, and industry, which provides a strong foundation for economic growth and development of the local workforce. With this push, partnerships have been established to support local business needs as well as labor force needs, so that we can create a clear pathway to sustainable employment for the community.

Fostering Demand-Driven Skills Attainment

The SBR supports workers to move into family sustaining jobs and in turn those workers help businesses thrive and the economy grow. We recognize that families come in all different shapes and sizes and that families define themselves in many different ways. Specific focus is on 1. Postsecondary education and employment pathways, 2. Early childhood education and development, 3. Economic asset development, 4. Health and well-being, and, 5. Social Capital Throughout the Region, multiple programming and partner engagements support these efforts.

Regional Sector Pathways

Two very diverse local workforce boards comprise the SBR. However, research has shown that they share some very important sectors. Understanding those shared sectors and how residents

of both Counties can enter them and grow their careers to reach family sustaining employment has been an on-going effort in the Region.

In-demand SBR Industry Sectors or Occupations

The three sectors in common between the Imperial and San Diego Counties are Healthcare & Social Assistance, Public Administration and Administrative Support & Waste Management. In the economic analysis above, a total of 129 in-demand occupations were reported. However, there are only four priority occupations shared between the two counties, supplying 29,000 jobs (15% of all priority-occupation jobs in the region). They are Correctional Officers & Jailers, Detectives & Criminal Investigators, Sales Reps of Services (except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, & Travel) and finally Wholesale & Manufacturing (except Technical & Scientific Products). This shows how very diverse the Region is.

Combining Worker and Employer Needs to Identify Priority Occupations

To identify priority occupations where workforce development clients are likely to find quality jobs and where employers have demonstrated need, we identify those that meet all five of the following criteria:

1. There are at least 30 annual openings projected over the next five years. (Openings are calculated as net new jobs plus exits, and this number represents opportunities for workers not previously employed in an occupation to enter it.)
2. 75% of workers earn a self-sufficient wage. (The subset of occupations paying 90% of workers a self-sufficiency wage are identified as the highest-tier priority.)
3. The typical entry-level education requirement is less than a four-year degree.
4. Less than five years of work experience are required. (The government provides only three categories of work experience requirements—zero, less than five, or more than five years. While a requirement for some job experience is acceptable, five years is clearly beyond the scope of most workforce development interventions.)
5. The job description does not include any reference to supervision. (Supervisors are typically selected from among existing entry-level workers, so these careers are not viewed as accessible to our clients.)

These criteria identify 42 priority occupations in Imperial County and 87 in San Diego County. Priority occupations in Imperial County supply 35,000 jobs (54% of the county's 66,000 jobs). Priority occupations in San Diego County provide 163,000 (10% of the county's 1.6 million jobs).

Figure 8. There are 42 priority occupations in Imperial County and 87 in San Diego. Only four occupations are priorities in both counties.



Figure 9. Priority Occupations in Imperial County

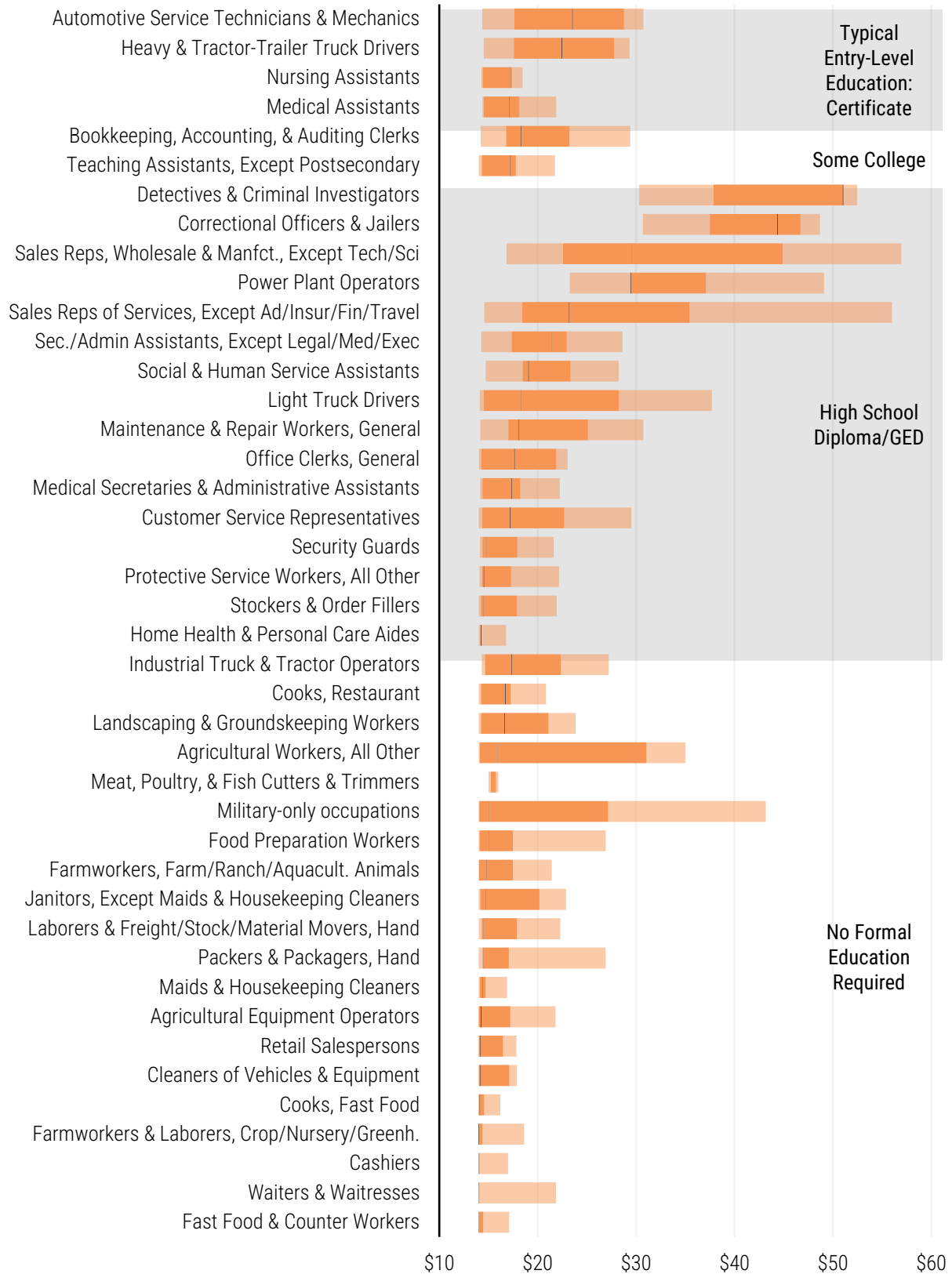


Figure 10. San Diego Priority Occupations

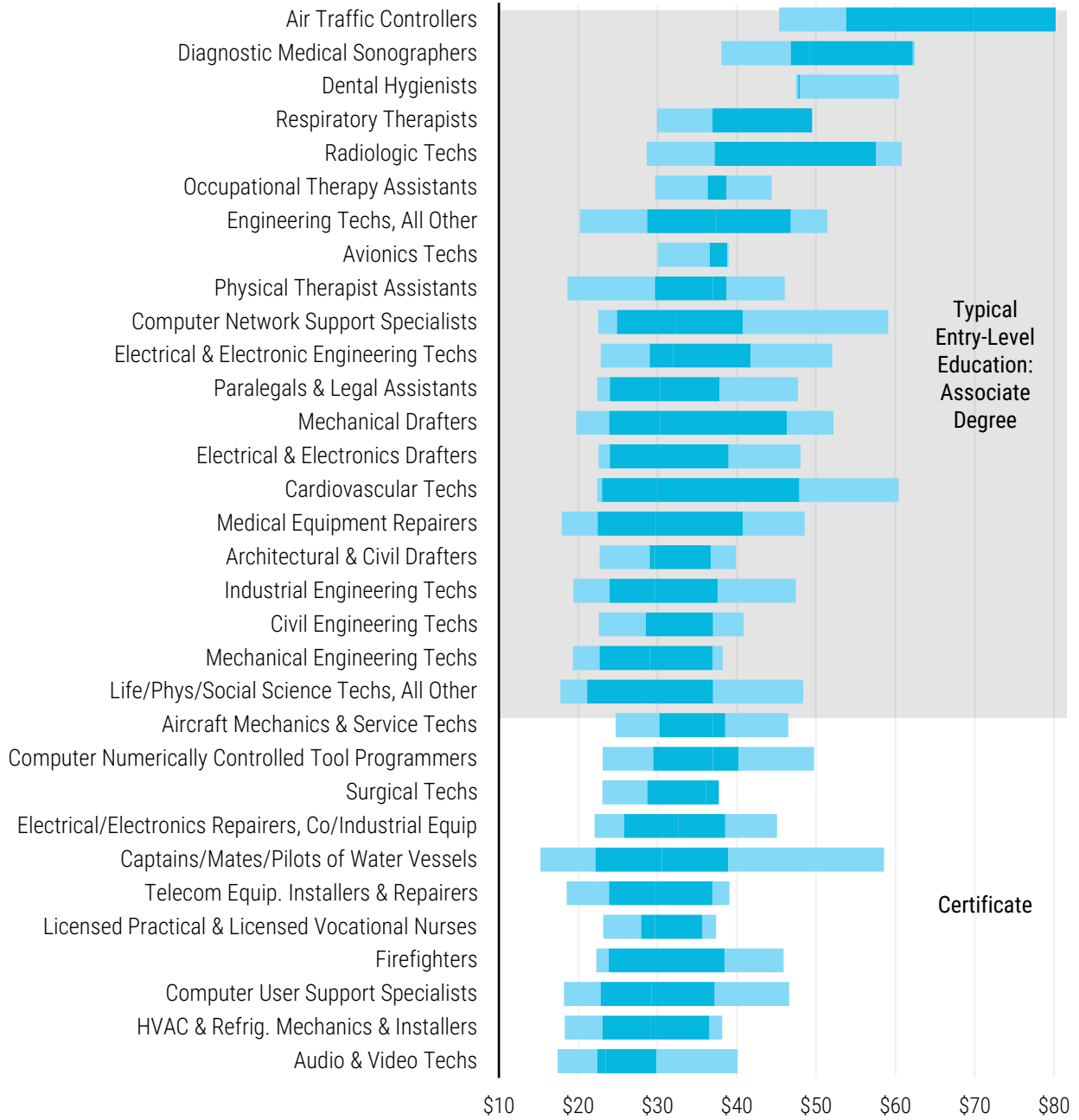


Figure 11. San Diego Priority Occupations (continued)

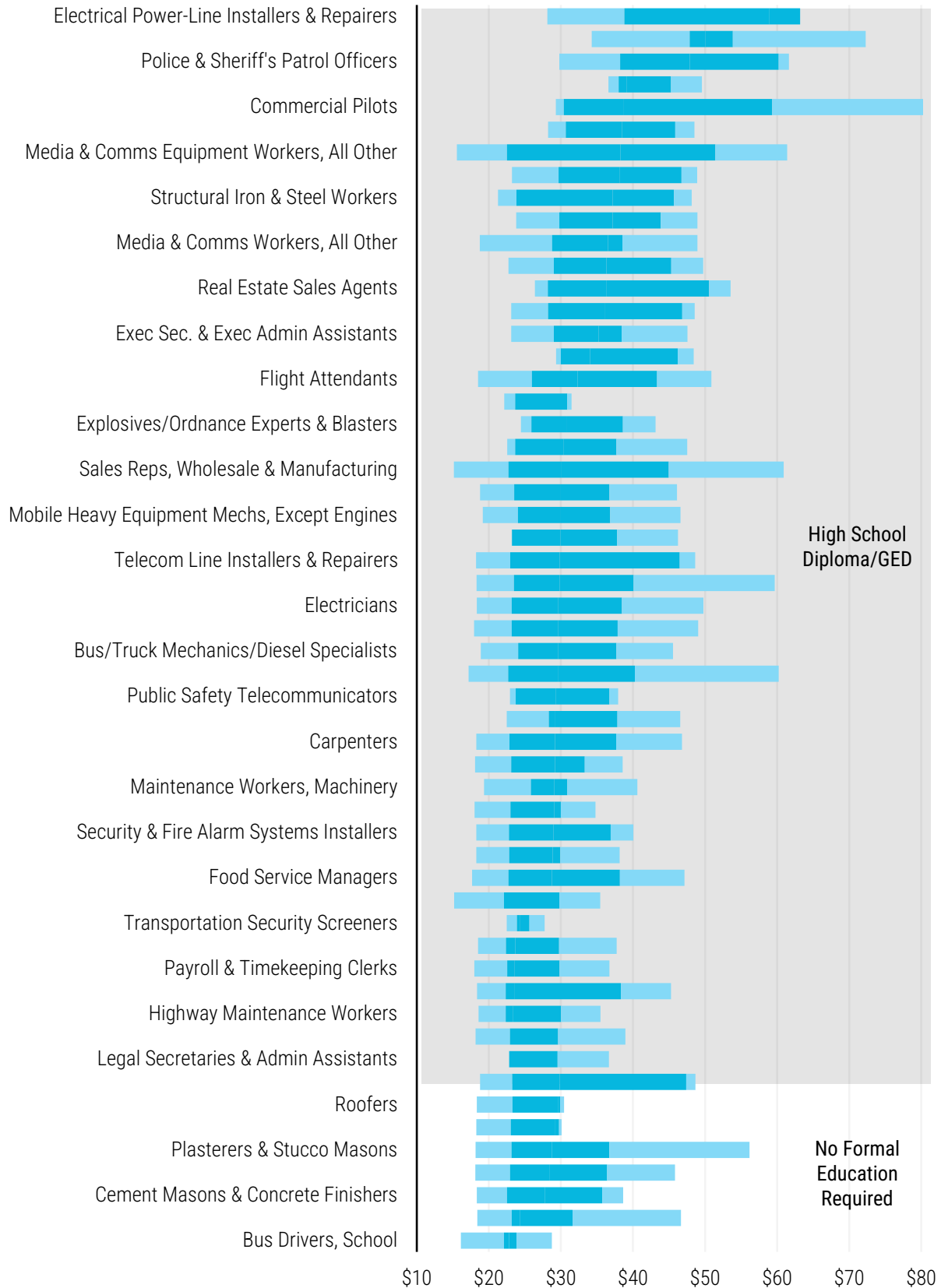


Figure 12. Imperial County Priority Jobs by Sector

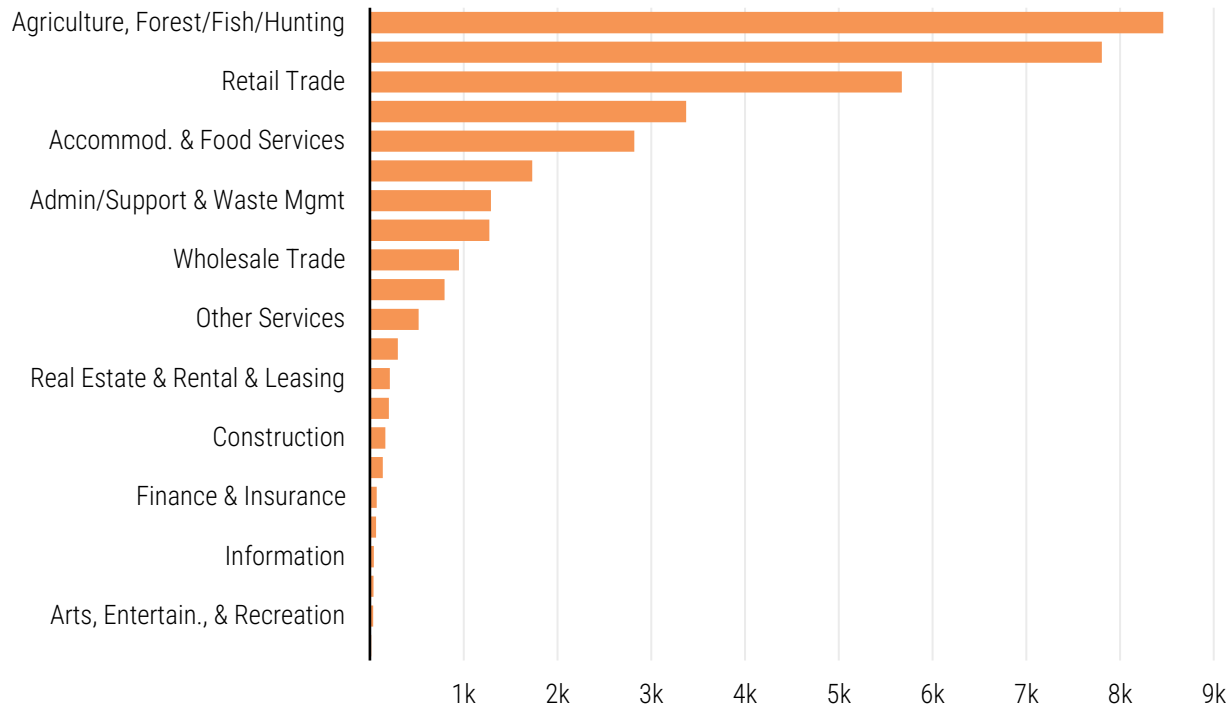
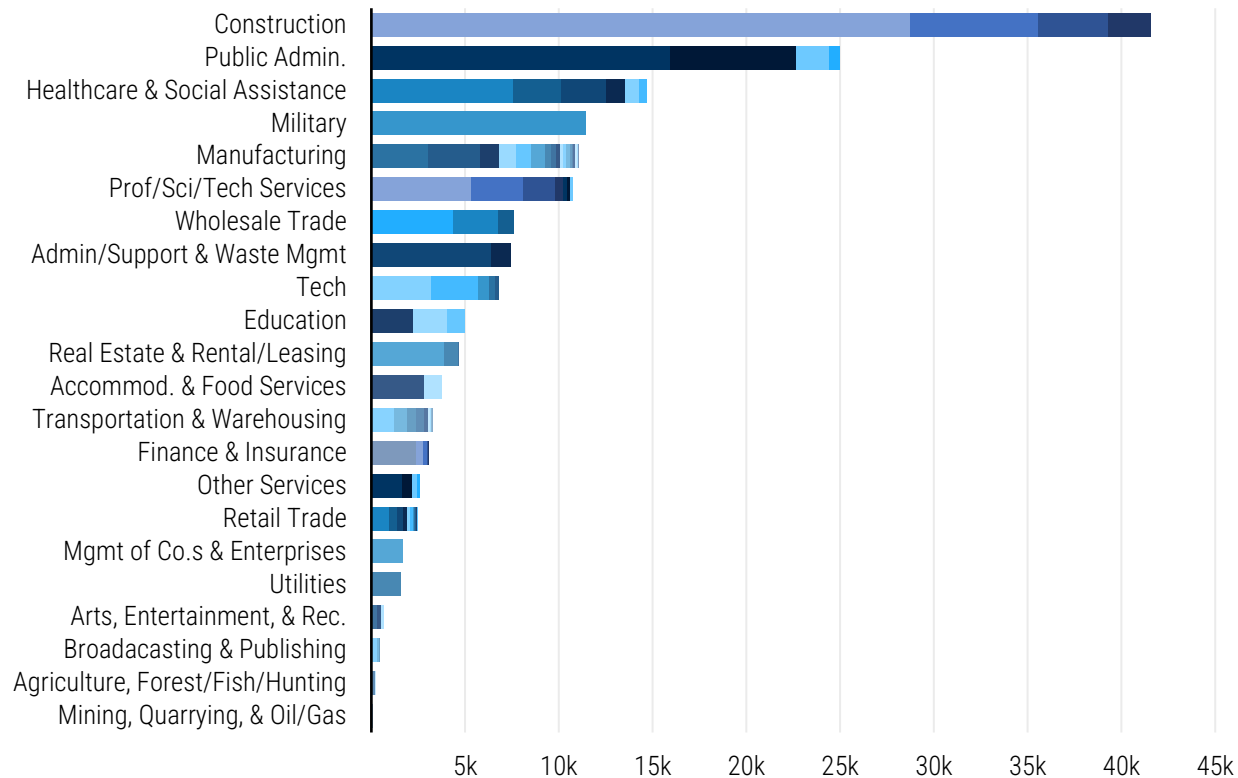


Figure 13. San Diego County Priority Jobs by Sector



As figure 12 shows, these are the sectors supplying the most priority jobs in Imperial County (each over 1,000 jobs):

1. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting
2. Health Care & Social Assistance
3. Retail Trade
4. Public Administration
5. Accommodations & Food Services
6. Education
7. Administrative Support & Waste Management
8. Transportation & Warehousing

As figure 13 shows, these are the sectors supplying the most priority jobs in San Diego County (each over 5,000 jobs):

1. Construction
2. Public Administration
3. Healthcare & Social Assistance
4. Military
5. Manufacturing
6. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
7. Wholesale Trade
8. Administrative Support & Waste Management

Figure 14. Top 8 Priority sectors in Imperial and San Diego Counties



Despite only two boards comprise the SBR, there are extreme differences in their economies and their workforce. This diversity makes the Boards focus on what supports the overall area while not detracting from the individual County's needs. To reiterate, the emphasis on research and technological solutions is key. At this point, with the increased state funding that includes partner systems and cross-county employers, the work to provide services as each County's

residents needs them in a unified approach such as HRCC, will begin to bring programming solutions to the Region.

SBR Communication with Regional Employers

The SBR engages employers in both Counties and between the Counties. Through the regional high roads grants, employers are engaged with offices in both Counties. This is particularly true of construction and healthcare sectors. Through these systems level grants, supply-side and demand-side partners are engaged to provide economic and employment opportunities for the Region.

Through the Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) framework, employers will engage in a nationally recognized framework established by the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation and applied locally through initiatives in cities throughout the United States. It is an employer-led, demand-driven workforce process that applies supply chain management strategies to talent acquisition, reducing the skills gap and solving for skilled talent shortages. Employers play an expanded leadership role as the “end customers” of regional education and training systems by engaging in a six-step process that includes employers engaging in collaboratives and demand planning, communicate competency and credential requirements, analyze talent flows, build talent supply chains and participate in continuous improvement.

Through this process, education and training partners are made aware of the emergent needs in quality jobs and provide up to date training and education for upskilling employees or new employees. In addition to these pre-vetted training providers, space is made for engaging other industry partners providing recognized credentials like centers of excellence and other focused providers.

By beginning with employer partners who directly inform training investments and are committed to hiring from our talent pool, we will set candidates up for even greater success from the outset: with a clear pathway from career interest to training/certifications to quality jobs with employers who are eager and willing to hire from a pre-qualified pool of talent. This demand-informed approach ensures all training investments result in skilled talent that meets industry need. This initiative is aligned with the Region’s strategic pillars of Job Quality, Inclusive Business Growth, Outcomes-Focused Funding and Population Specific Interventions. It also supports the SBR’s advocacy for success metrics that are not yet part of the Workforce system but will align with outcomes and introduces a replicable model for other workforce development boards of demand-driven programming that results in greater impact.

Finally, this initiative enhances the opportunity for braided funding to promote greater flexibility in training and support to enable job seekers and employees to engage in training that provides mobility to resilient and in-demand occupations and sectors. Businesses need a combination of the Education and Training Program List (ETPL) process with access to flexible emergent training and credentials funding to recover and compete in the new and rapidly changing environment, in the post COVID 19 period.

Enabling Upward Mobility

Upward mobility requires a myriad of supports and opportunities. In addition to supports for job seekers and youth to enter and advance in pathways to self sustaining careers, focus on targeted services and support to employers to increase quality are fundamental to individual and family upward mobility.

High Road Workforce System

The SBR understands that the workforce system must have on and off ramps for employees and job seekers to change careers, find family-sustaining careers and filling immediate employment needs while supporting the unique needs of the Region’s employers. In support of connecting job seekers with employers and supply-side with demand-side partners, the SBR continues to engage them at all levels including individual funding opportunities, research and larger County and partner engagement. As noted below, equity is job quality. Access to quality jobs is key to engaging traditionally barriered communities in family sustaining employment.

Job Quality Definition and Implementation

The region has created a job quality framework and set of indicators which inform all of our work. We believe that the path forward is to rebuild equitably and doing so requires strong infrastructure that is equipped to meet the evolving needs of both businesses and our job seekers. One important building block of equity is job quality. Efforts to improve the quality of jobs help to shift centers of power by equipping workers, paying fair wages that sustain families and providing career ladders and employee ownership opportunities.

Figure 15. Job Quality Frame work



Figure 16. Job Quality Indicators.



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The SBR believed strongly in 2021 that quality jobs are not a luxury and there has been no evidence to change that belief today. Quality jobs are not a sidebar. They are not something we can push off until after the pandemic crisis has passed. The creation, protection and elevation of quality jobs will take focus and partnerships. Quality jobs produce both outstanding outcomes for businesses and their frontline workers. The jobs not only pay well but also give workers the stability and support they need to care for their families and take the next step in their careers.

Good jobs help the business meet and exceed its bottom-line goals. The SBR had established goals that it is moving forward through virtual opportunities for customers to learn what businesses have quality jobs as the individual may define it at the time.

Prioritizing Employers Providing Quality Jobs

The SBR recognizes that the work done in one Board supports the larger Region. To that end, the Workforce Partnership's Business Engagement department teamed up with partner Talent Rewire to guide San Diego business partners on how to build a culture that fosters trust and belonging. These "high road" business partners aim to activate the voice of their frontline workers. We engaged the voices of individuals with current and previous experience in frontline employment to share their perspectives and lived experience with participating San Diego area employers. Participants in these conversations had an opportunity to engage with employers who were seeking to learn from frontline employees about how to elevate the voices and opinions of their own frontline workers.

When the pandemic hit, the Business Engagement Department worked closely with partners like One Fair Wage to implement a relief program for restaurants impacted by COVID. Restaurant owners pledged to bring their restaurant staff up to fair wages (with tips on top), and to make dishes available to low-wage workers and health-care workers on a sliding scale. In return, these restaurants received \$5,000 initial investment to put towards these goals, along with wage subsidies and other business relief resources from government and philanthropic partners.

We've made progress in recent months with "high road" employers willing to pay our county's livable wage rates of \$20+. Our department has restricted the awarding of funds to businesses that pay this wage or otherwise offer substantial benefits and wrap-around services to barriered communities entering the workforce. Through this work, we've successfully negotiated higher salaries on behalf of the job seekers we serve. Additionally, we've had an impact on 2 apprenticeship programs to raise the wages of the workers for their earn and learn models. While some small businesses are unable to afford these rates, our consulting has uncovered many other [job quality benefits](#) available to our workers such as on-site childcare, flexible work schedules and robust career pathways. Our service delivery models incorporate consulting on [job quality indicators](#) to grow the community of "high road" business partners in our network.

Regional High Road Employer

The Region is also engaging with the State funding for High Roads employment that includes High Roads Construction Careers (HRCC) and Regional Equity and Recovery Partnerships (RERP). These funding opportunities allows for networks of employers and providers in both counties to support training and engagement of residents in quality jobs and career paths. It also supports focus on the Region's sectors that support the most quality and long-term pathways to self-sufficiency. The RERP work will network employers in the health care sector that in some cases have a footprint in both counties. Additionally, training providers in both counties will engage in the credentialing work to support access for participants recognizing the barrier that the distance between county population centers creates.

SBR Process to Develop Targeted Service Strategies

The SBR Leadership consists of the Vice President of Client Services in San Diego County and the Director of the Workforce and Economic Development Department in Imperial County. Additionally, the Chief Economist and Director of Learning at the Workforce Partnership have roles within the RPU framework. Through this leadership and broader regional participation, strategies are developed and agreed to between the two workforce boards. It is through these key leadership positions that work is decided on that will benefit the larger Region.

Through this leadership structure, SBR elected to use the 5 Strategic Pillars, develop a middle school career center in Imperial County using the model implemented in San Diego County and use the Workforce Partner online infrastructure at the Workforce Partnership to facilitate accessibility in both Counties. Despite efforts to serve participants between Counties, it is the opportunities of the structured High Road grants that support those efforts. Other means are too difficult with the distance between population areas and the contrasts between the Counties' economies and populations.

Fundamentally, the SBR leadership and team are focused on providing the best services possible for their residents. They evaluate opportunities and test out models to see how well they might work. Their recognition that regional work can only enhance their customers' experience and will not detract from either workforce board shows their commitment and professionalism with which they imbue the entire team.

A key component of our regional plan implementation is the execution of work in each of our five pillars. These pillars support the State Plan's overarching policy objectives of fostering demand-driven skills attainment, enabling upward mobility for all Californians, and aligning, coordinating and integrating programs and services. Three of these pillars—population specific interventions, inclusive business growth and job quality— weave together the components necessary to set diverse populations on a road to economic mobility through clear career pathways, innovative delivery mechanisms and partnerships with high road employers. Not every person needs the same support to get into and keep a high-quality job; a one-size-fits-all approach to workforce development simply does not work. Successful service delivery is about listening to the unique needs of each population and individual.

In addition to applying a human-centered approach to the services available at our career centers, we are leveraging the implementation process of our regional plan to make sure we have solutions which are custom designed for the particular needs of individuals and families while working toward impact goals that can be felt (and seen in data) across entire populations. In a dynamic American economy where more than 70% of jobs require some type of post-secondary credential, the Southern Border believes it is not only critical to help foreign-born workers strengthen their English skills and earn industry-recognized credentials but more importantly, to help those who already have credentials understand how to navigate US system to set immigrant families on a path to economic mobility through quality jobs and connections to high road employers.

Additionally, while there had been an observed overall youth disconnection rate decline five years ago, during the COVID-19 pandemic, disconnection rates are much higher and since the rate in certain sub-regions had increased five years ago, it is an even greater need now. This shows that the more focused efforts placed on youth in these areas must be continued.

Our ongoing goal is to explore the dynamics of disconnection and continue to find better ways to gather data to highlight the life events that cause these detours, helping the region to support these youth more effectively.

The Region will engage them through the work with business and population specific interventions discussed above in the strategic pillars and the high roads grant opportunities in conjunction with partners, to provide pathways to resilient and family sustaining employment. In this way, the work will continue to expand networks and systems and continuously improve the work to best serve the residents of both Counties.

Equity and Economic Justice

The Southern Border Region has determined that equity requires prioritizing those who have been systemically denied opportunity through policies, priorities, practices, and behaviors that result in access to opportunity for all colleagues, customers and communities. Earn and learn opportunities are important to offer in multiple forms. While the traditional apprenticeship model is a path to family sustaining union jobs, other sectors benefit from specific employee upskilling or other employer focused training support to focus on barrierred communities entering and advancing in these priority sector and priority job areas.

Aligning, Coordinating, and Integrating Programs and Services

The geography of the SBR requires out of the box thinking to make the greatest use of funding and partner systems to support the Counties' resident job seekers. While it makes sense to provide virtual tools to support staff and participants, actual participant sharing has proven to be unsuccessful. Looking at it in context of sharing businesses is more realistic since many employers have offices in both Counties. It is this aspect that is being most engaged in the new and future regional funding.

System Alignment

The SBR employs programming across the Region as makes sense given the geography. As an experiment with funding opportunities, the Region has engaged in programming around mature workers, leveraging multiple funding sources to enable a single case manager to work with job developers in both Counties and local case managers in Imperial County to provide job search training and internships for mature workers. It was an important learning experience and had added challenges with COVID-19 pandemic issues for this population.

The most critical enhancement to aligning the system between the Boards in the SBR is the new funding opportunities that support the coordination and engagement residents of both Counties in training and job search in shared priority sectors. This programming particularly High Road Construction Careers and High Road Training Partnership brings a larger system together across County lines to engage businesses and training partners to provide residents of both Counties opportunities for quality careers.

Regional Service Strategies

It is within the High Roads grants that regional systems will continue to be developed and grow such as healthcare in RERP and HRCC. The trainings, produced with Regional funding, will be available past the period of the programming to ensure broad coverage in Imperial as well as in San Diego Counties. However, service strategies are shared most effectively by engaging one or the other workforce boards in pilot work with certain populations and sharing the learnings to engage culturally competent programming throughout the Region.

The Region benefits most from staff and partner staff capacity building. This next phase will focus on cultural competency, trauma informed care and distance and digital communication.

Regional Administrative Cost Arrangements

The SBR has employed a strategy of using pooled resources for the past four years. It engages the existing talent within each local workforce board for regional insights and programming. It also uses single site housing of online tools that are available to all regional staff and partner

staff. Examples include the My Next Move and Career Coach tools that are housed on the Workforce Partnership website and trained regularly by the regional learning director who is on the Workforce Partnership's staff. Other shared staff in addition to the Regional Organizer are the Regional Economist performing labor market and special population research across the region and by specific location, as well as pandemic research for the local areas. Moreover, it was determined that it made sense to engage an integrated services manager to focus on online/remote experiences for all customers including “no wrong door” access, remote training and consolidation of eligibility information in a single location. This is a first step and one within a strategy of streamlining the system to make it easier for participants to move between partners to support their specific needs. As this work develops, more systems will be considered to address ongoing community and participant issues around hardware and software accessibility to support participant access to online training.

Additionally, the SBR has determined that because of the structures of each local board, the Workforce Partnership will provide fiscal agent support for regional funding. Each board benefits from those opportunities that make sense locally and the Regional Organizer collaborates to ensure that the integrity of the regional concept is maintained.

Appendix A

Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary

The stakeholder engagement community conversations to develop the update to the San Diego local and regional plans for program years 2021-2024 were held virtually twice, December 14, 2022 and January 6, 2023 to enable the greatest number of interested participants to attend. The Southern Border Regional Plan community input meeting invitations were sent to both the general mailing list for the Workforce Partnership that included 14,000 community members, participants, employers, CBOs and government partners. Added to the list were key stakeholders and partners in the event they were not also on the larger mailing list for both San Diego and the Imperial County Workforce Development Boards.

The Southern Border Regional Plan was held in conjunction with the San Diego Local Plan meetings. The meeting began with introductions that resulted in participants connecting after the meeting as well as good feedback and conversation.

Southern Border Regional Leadership discussed the background to the plans, the reason and the process to explain why it was important and what we were hoping to accomplish, which was to invite community input to our region plan that support the update to the State Plan. The Regional Plan was then discussed beginning with its basic structure provided by the State directive and then a discussion of items that were important to the attendees.

To facilitate input, the regional plan strategies were offered to frame the question: What best practices have you seen or done in your organization in any of the following areas:

Fostering Demand-Driven Skills Attainment

- Processes or strategies to communicate effectively and cohesively with regional employers

Enabling Upward Mobility for All Californians

- Job quality definition/Prioritizing work with quality job employers
- Developing targeted service strategies for unserved and underserved communities

Aligning, Coordinating and Integrating Programs/Services

- Service strategies with partners

The following comments resulted from the conversation. They are not verbatim:

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
Email	San Diego and Imperial stakeholders, partners and broader community	176 registrants. Government, CBO and education partners were all represented.	1. An organization provided an example that they have a person available to help students who need

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
			<p>services walk through and apply for them. It's not a warm handoff it sounds like the IPS model where one person is a contact and coordinator for the person.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Students at a community organization don't have the option to take an unpaid internship so braided funding is needed to ensure that "unpaid" internships from a WIOA program can be paid from other funding. 3. Organizations need preparation to have empathy for first generation college students who don't have the experience and skills like some soft skills needed. The system needs to work with them and many populations to prepare them with these needed skills from keeping the supervisor informed to how to be on time. 4. Target outreach for industries with high numbers of undocumented workers and immigrants to ensure appropriate levels of health and safety and benefits. 5. They train from High school to professional launch – need

Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance	Comments
			<p>employers to have a cultural responsiveness plan.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Youth don't want in person services but need social skills so implementing meetings to go over soft skills needed for work/working with employers to overcome bias about these inexperienced youth. 7. Job quality work with labor for quality definition creating a DEI index for employers Recommend a service strategy to get schools involved to access their large student populations of underserved – also paid micro internships to support students in unpaid internships (creative wioa funds). 8. Employment Training Panel partners with CBOs to connect employers and training with braided funding.

Appendix B

Public Comments That Disagree with Regional Plan

The directive WSD22-05 governs the update to the plan and indicates that the summary of comments is to address those that disagreed with the relevant plan. In fact, there were no comments that disagreed. Instead, they suggested how the next iteration of plans can be made better and potential work in the interim to be considered. The 30 day comment period began January 11, 2022 and ended February 9, 2023. The comments are noted here as a record for the anticipated next plan update in the 2024-2025 timeframe.

There were 5 comments relevant to the Southern Border Regional Plan. Please see the following:

Comment #1

- Immigrants and refugees - here is a place, I think, where adult ed should be included as a crucial partner and training provider.

Resolution:

- There is new collaboration with the Sector Initiatives and an intentional collaborative effort that will mirror, as appropriate, the community college district collaboration with the Workforce Partnership. Again, this will be further rolled out in future updates to the plans as these strategies unfold.

Comment #2

- That is quite in depth-info for justice involved; would be cool to have something similar for the other groups.

Resolution:

- This is part of the lessons learned as we move into more robust programming for other populations as funding is available.

Comment #4

- Deeply appreciate the reasoning for finding projections unreliable

Resolution:

- No resolution required but noted to continue this critique going forward.

Comment #5


- I think I get the (fine) explanation of difference in poverty levels; however, within San Diego's 10% there are some very deep pockets of poverty (as high as 37%)

Resolution:

- No resolution required but noted to continue this critique going forward.

Appendix C Signature Southern Border Regional Plan

The San Diego Workforce Development Board approves the regional plan for submission to the State.

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Signature

Rick Vaccari

Chair

3/27/2023 | 1:17 PM PDT

Name

Role

Date

The Imperial County Workforce Development Board approves the regional plan for submission to the State.



Signature

Jason Jackson

Chair

March 22, 2023

Name

Role

Date