



Inland Empire Regional Workforce Development Plan Program Years 2025-28

Inland Empire Regional Planning Unit

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I. Introduction and Overview

This four-year regional workforce development plan for the Inland Empire (IE) region has been developed to guide the region's workforce programs and services at a strategic level. It is intended to be used as a roadmap for coordination in the region that ensures effective workforce development for the community that supports individuals to build family-sustaining careers while enhancing the local economy.

The Inland Empire Regional Planning Unit (IERPU), which collectively developed this plan, includes the Riverside County Workforce Development Board (RCWDB) and the San Bernardino County Workforce Development Board (SBCWDB), which represent both local workforce development areas in the region, Riverside County (RC) and San Bernardino County (SBC). This plan was written in accordance with Directive WSD24-09 from the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) and the Employment Development Department (EDD). The plan covers Program Years (PY) 2025 through 2028: PY 25-26, PY 26-27, PY 27-28, and PY 28-29.

Following an overview of the IE region and the planning process in this section, the plan is organized as follows:

Section II. Analytical Overview of the Region: An analysis of the region's economy, workforce, skills, key industries, and occupations with detailed labor market information

Section III. Regional Indicators: An overview of the objective metrics for selected regional indicators for progress in the IERPU, progress made, and lessons learned from tracking them

Section IV. Fostering Demand-Driven Skills Attainment: A discussion of the region's in-demand sectors, sector-based strategies, and how the region communicates with regional employers

Section V. Enabling Upward Mobility for All Californians: A plan for how the region is addressing job quality, targeted service strategies for underserved communities, climate and environmental sustainability, and equity

Section VI. Aligning, Coordinating, and Integrating Programs and Services: A summary of how the IERPU facilitates a high-functioning regional workforce system

The Inland Empire Region

The Inland Empire (IE) is located in Southern California, spanning from the edges of Los Angeles and Orange Counties to the west and the Nevada and Arizona borders to the east. It is home to over 4.6 million residents across two counties, Riverside and San Bernardino. The region is known for the unique landscape of the picturesque San Bernardino and San Jacinto Mountains towering over urban valleys that lead into the large expanse of the Mojave and Colorado Deserts traveling to the east. Tens of thousands of visitors a year come to camp in Joshua Tree National Park, sail in Big Bear Lake, enjoy the beautiful golf courses in Coachella Valley or the wineries of Temecula.

The IE region is known as a major Transportation and Logistics hub with a very high location quotient of 2.44 with 84% regional growth in the industry between 2017 and 2022.^{1,2} Facilitating Transportation and Logistics, the Inland Empire is home to three major airports, three major interstate highways, and two major railways. The vast majority of goods for Southern California flow through the region and to most states in the U.S., and many are also produced in the region by the region's 3,800 manufacturers.³ One can go nearly anywhere in the world and find products built in, produced in, and moved through the Inland Empire.

Regional Workforce Development Plan Development Process

The teams from the RCWDB and SBCWDB are housed within the Riverside County Workforce Development Division (RCWDD) of the Riverside County Housing and Workforce Solutions, and the San Bernardino County Workforce Development Department (SBCWDD). Collectively, these teams staff the Inland Empire Regional Planning Unit (IERPU) which coordinated and developed this regional plan, supported by MAP Advising and Growing Big Ideas. The regional team held regional stakeholder feedback sessions and job seeker listening sessions for feedback, as described in Appendix A.

¹ JobsEQ, Industry Spotlight, Transportation and Warehousing Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA MSA

² University of California, Riverside, *Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics in the Inland Empire*, February 2024

³ Number of manufacturers per the Manufacturers' Council of the Inland Empire:

<https://mfgcouncilie.com/secretary-stewart-knox-of-the-california-labor-workforce-development-agency-met-inland-manufacturers-in-riverside/>

II. Analytical Overview of the Region

To plan effectively for the regional workforce system, it is necessary to understand the demographics of the local workforce, the demands of regional industries, and where the opportunities lie. The data in this section comes primarily from JobsEQ, a labor market information tool from Chmura Economics & Analytics, unless otherwise noted. JobsEQ is a propriety blend of publicly available data sources such as the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, job posting data, and analysis. The Inland Empire region is known as the Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario CA Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in public labor market data, and will be labeled as such in multiple places below.

Workforce and Economic Analysis

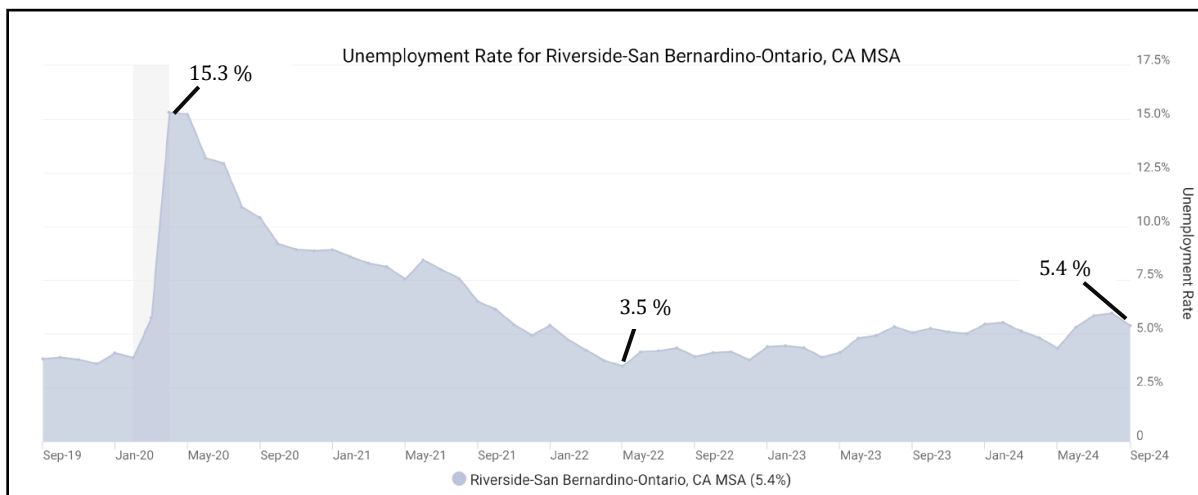
The population in the Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA MSA is approximately 4,610,050, with a civilian labor force of 2,180,516. The labor force participation rate is 61.2%. Its diverse population is 1.1% American Indian or Alaska Native, 7.3% Asian, 7.1% Black or African American, 0.3% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, 23% Other Race, 15.4% Two or More Races, 45.8% White. Across all races, 52.8% are also Hispanic or Latino.

Of individuals 25 to 64 in the IE, 15.1% have a bachelor's degree which compares with 23.1% across the state. The median household income is \$81,190 and the median house value is \$451,953.⁴

Employment and Unemployment

Figure A shows the U-3 measure or the total unemployed as a percentage of the civilian labor force in the Inland Empire from September 2019 to September 2024. The U-3 is the official unemployment rate and the most commonly used statistic for measuring unemployment. There was a large spike in unemployment during the national recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 (the national recession period is depicted with a shaded area of the graph).

Figure A: Regional Unemployment Rate



Source: JobsEQ

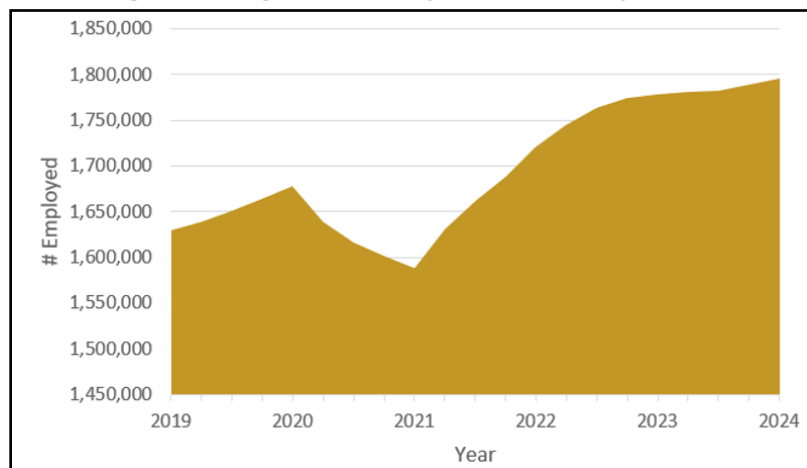
⁴ JobsEQ Economic Overview Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA MSA

As with most areas of the country during this time, the region experienced layoffs, reductions in labor hours, employers shifting teams to remote work, and the closure of multiple businesses . Unemployment in the Inland Empire reached 15.3% as a result.

However, the region steadily recovered, beginning around May 2020, with the lowest rate of 3.5% in May 2022. This decline in the unemployment rate may be due, in part, to the IERPU's response to the pandemic, which included offering virtual job seeker services, expansion of the human resources (HR) hotline to the entire region for businesses, increasing the number of On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts to employers, and streamlining the OJT process by introducing new tools like DocuSign. These strategies support the business community, as well as job seekers in the region, and are discussed in more detail in the sections that follow below.

More recently, the unemployment rate began to climb, from its low in May 2022 to 5.4% as of September 2024. There could be several factors involved here, including inflation in the region. California State University, San Bernardino's Inland Empire Report on Business showed that while inflation has been managed well and decreased overall since the height of the pandemic, the Inland Empire had a higher year-over-year Consumer Price Index change than the U.S. average for most of 2023 and 2024.⁵

Figure B: Regional Employment Levels by Quarter



Source: JobsEQ

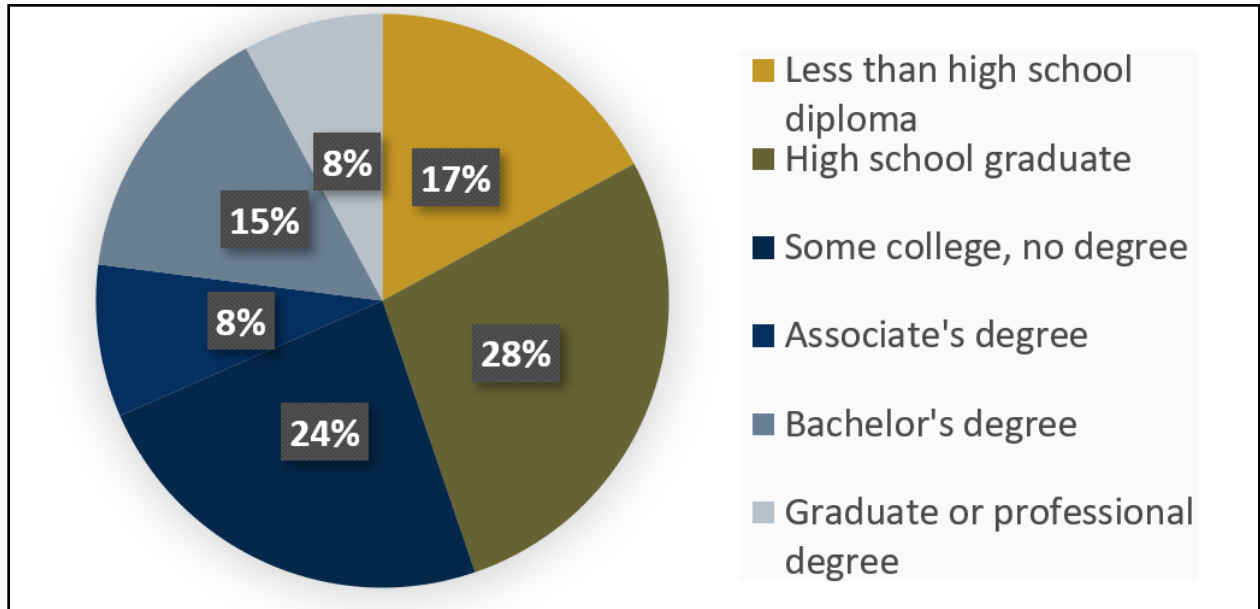
Figure B shows the region's employment rate from the first quarter of 2019 to the first quarter of 2024 (preliminary estimate). As with Figure B, there were increasing employment levels up to a peak of 1,677,442 in Q1 2020 when the pandemic caused large losses in employment. Employment levels then declined to a low of 1,588,098 in Q1 2021, sharply rising from 2021 until 2023. From early 2023 into Q1 2024, the growth has slowed somewhat, to the last estimate of 1,795,445 now working in the region.

⁵ California State University, San Bernardino, Inland Empire Report on Business
https://www.csusb.edu/sites/default/files/upload/file/2024/ROB_September2024_Final.pdf

Educational and Skill Levels of the Regional Workforce

Figure C shows the educational levels of the regional workforce, ages 25-64. While 17% have less than a high school diploma, a large majority have at least a high school diploma (83%), and over half have some education beyond high school.

Figure C: Education Levels of the Regional Workforce



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table A below provides estimates of the gap between the number of workers who possess particular skills and regional job openings requiring those skills. Furthermore, Table A identifies the regional target sectors where that particular skill is most applicable, based on the IERPU's assessment. A darker box on the chart under each industry sector indicates a likely higher demand for that skill, a lighter color indicates some demand, and a white box indicates little or no demand. The skills are sorted from highest to lowest demand, based on the size of the skill gap.

Perhaps most notably, there is both a high number of candidates, as well as a large skill gap, for both Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid certification. While these skill needs are likely most prominent in the Healthcare industry, there are roles in Public Administration that could require CPR, such as Social and Human Service Assistants and Community and Social Service Specialists. Skills in First Aid are relevant to all four target industry sectors.

Language skills, particularly in Spanish and Mandarin, are also in high demand in the region. They may be most relevant in Healthcare and Public Administration, as these sectors require a high level of engagement with the public, however, they are also useful communication skills for any sector. This is why they are also highlighted as relevant to Manufacturing and Transportation and Logistics, particularly for supervisory roles where communication with diverse populations on the front lines may be required more often.

There are a few other skills that are in higher demand across industries, including keyboarding and a couple of specific software applications such as SAP and ArcGIS. SAP is business planning, data, and financial management software, most likely used in office-based jobs, including those in Public

Administration, certain positions within Transportation and Logistics, and non-care related occupations in the Healthcare sector. ESRI ArcGIS is Geospatial Information System (GIS) software, commonly utilized in Transportation and Logistics for analyzing maps and planning routes, and potentially in Manufacturing for managing supply chains.

Finally, there are multiple skills that are clearly related to only one of the target occupations such as Caregiving for Healthcare and Presses for Manufacturing.

Table A: Top 20 In-Demand Skills Aligned with Target Sectors

Skill	# of Workers with Skill	Skill Gap	Healthcare	Manufacturing	Public Admin.	Transp. + Logistics
Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	4,410	-2,019				
Spanish	6,243	-2,003				
First Aid Certification	2,432	-1,646				
Keyboarding / Typing	1,939	-839				
Manufacturing	3,114	-799				
Caregiving	1,165	-633				
Certified Home Health Aide	40	-531				
Microsoft Outlook	6,714	-526				
ESRI ArcGIS	121	-400				
Class A Commercial Driver's License (CDL-A)	530	-371				
SAP	1,465	-292				
Mandarin	93	-200				
Community Outreach	182	-132				
Lathes	299	-128				
Warehouse Management Systems (WMS)	1,466	-117				
Supply Chain Management	157	-90				
Critical Care	249	-87				
Warehousing	279	-80				
Order Fulfillment	355	-80				
Inventory Management Systems	85	-64				

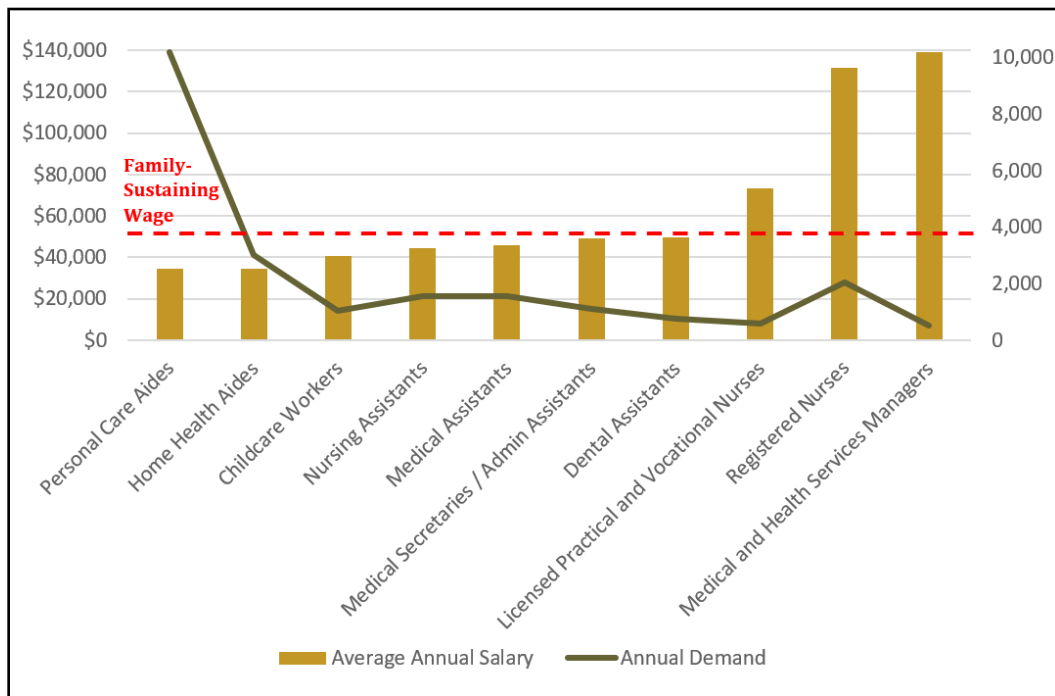
Drill Presses	121	-52			
Ladder Logic	17	-52			

Source: JobsEQ, Regional Assumptions on Industry Relevance

Current Needs of Employers in the Region

The current needs of employers in the region were analyzed using the top ten occupations by annual demand in the four target sectors: Healthcare, Manufacturing, Public Administration, and Transportation and Logistics. Figures D-G below compare the annual demand of these occupations (solid bars and right-side y-axis) to the average annual wage (line and left-side y-axis). A family-sustaining wage of \$53, 601 is shown on each graph to compare the relative quality of these occupations.⁶

Figure D Healthcare Occupational Wages and Annual Demand



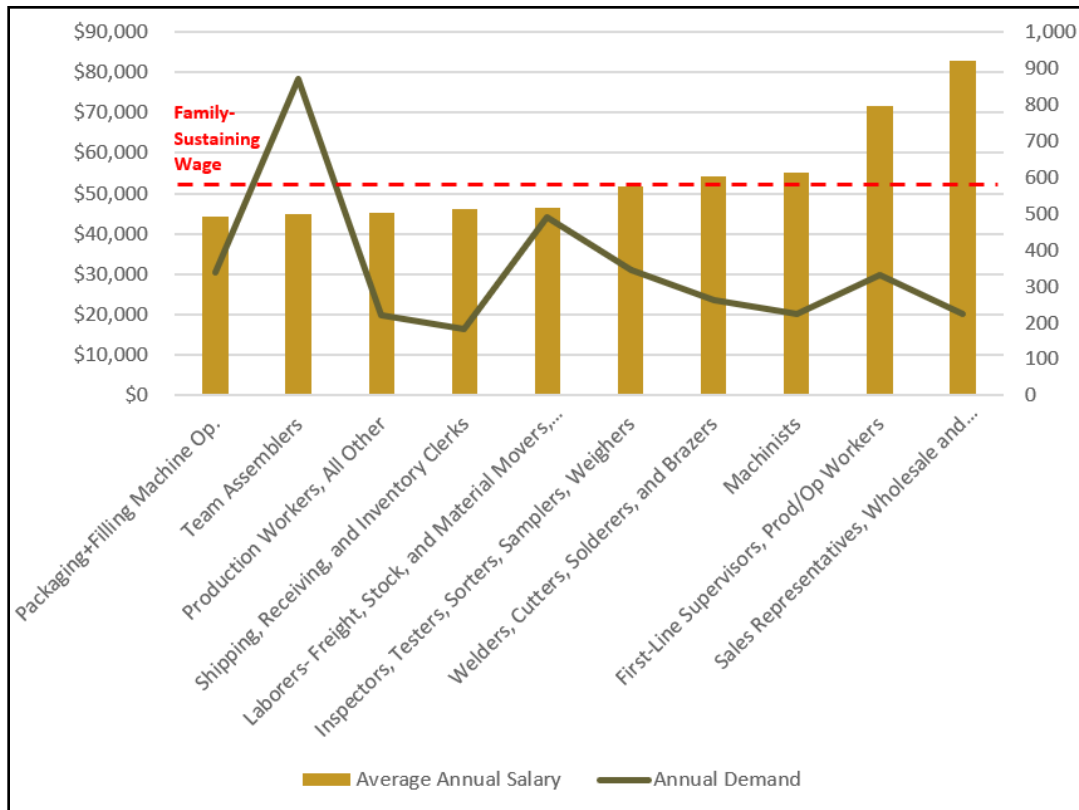
Source: JobsEQ

Healthcare has the highest annual growth of the four target sectors. In Healthcare, there is a high annual demand for Personal Care Aides, which have the lowest pay relative to other occupations on the list, well below the family-sustaining wage. This could be due to an aging population who need in-home care. A couple of other occupations such as Medical Assistants, Nursing and Medical Assistants pay closer to the family-sustaining wage for the region and have annual demand above 1,000 openings per year. The highest-paying occupations, Licensed Practical and Vocational Nurses (LPN / LVN), Registered Nurses (RNs), and Medical and Health Services Managers, all pay far above

⁶ Based on annualizing hourly rate of \$25.77 from the MIT Living Wage Calculator for one adult, no children in the Riverside-San Bernardino Metropolitan Statistical Area: <https://livingwage.mit.edu/metros/40140>

the family-sustaining wage and have an annual demand ranging from 576 for LVN/LPN to 2,060 for RNs.

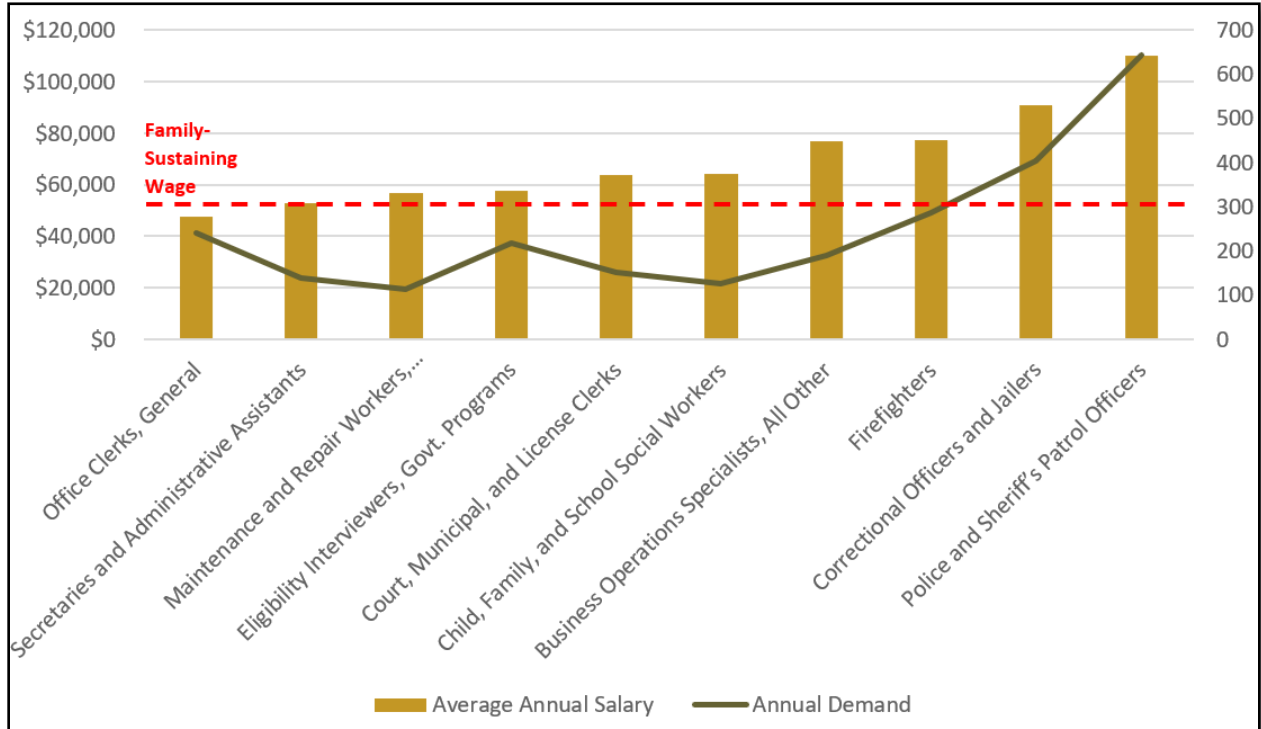
Figure E Manufacturing Occupational Wages and Annual Demand



Source: JobsEQ

The Manufacturing sector has the most demand for one of the lower-paying occupations, Team Assemblers, with nearly 900 openings per year. Additionally, there is demand for occupations with an annual average salary just under the family-sustaining wage such as Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers (346 openings per year). Occupations above the family-sustaining wage with positive annual demand include Welders, Cutters, Solderers and Brazers (262), Machinists (223), and First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operation Workers (332).

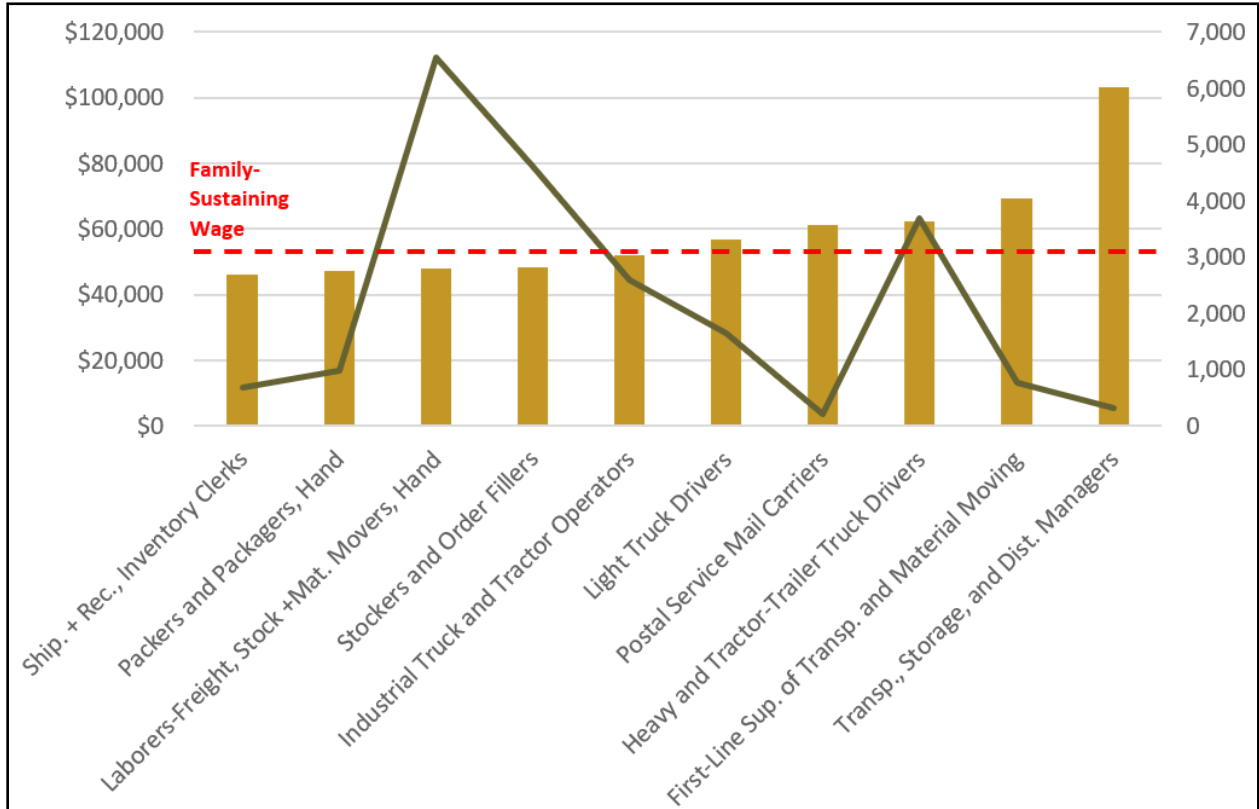
Figure F Public Administration Occupational Wages and Annual Demand



Source: JobsEQ

There are multiple occupations above the family-sustaining wage in Public Administration, with only two in the top ten in-demand falling below. Although the highest paid positions are in Police and Fire, jobs that require less training and education have annual demand, such as Maintenance and Repair Workers (114), Eligibility Interviewers (219), and Court, Municipal, and License Clerks (151). It should also be noted that Secretaries and Administrative Assistants are just under a family-sustaining wage at \$52,700 and an annual demand of 140 job openings.

Figure G Transportation and Logistics Occupational Wages and Annual Demand



Source: JobsEQ

Transportation and Logistics has the 2nd highest annual growth of all four target sectors, and similar to Healthcare, the biggest demand is in the lower-paying occupations such as Laborers. However, there is ample opportunity for jobs that pay above the family-sustaining wage such as Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (3,684), Light Truck Drivers (1,648), and First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material Moving Workers (761).

Analysis of Skills, Sector Demand, and Gaps Between Supply and Demand

In terms of education levels, the majority of high-demand occupations within the targeted sectors require a high school diploma or less (see Table B below). A few require some postsecondary education or training, but none of them require a bachelor's degree or higher. Other occupations that were in the top ten for annual demand and in Figures F-I above do require a bachelor's or higher, such as a Business Operations Specialist (Figure G above), but they mostly fall lower on the list of occupations by level of demand. These statistics align with the regional population, where 83% have attained at least a high school diploma.

In terms of the skill gaps, (Table A), there is a clear need for proficiency in First Aid, Spanish, and Mandarin language skills, across all four target sectors. To address this need, the community colleges and adult education systems in the region could consider adding classes focused on these skills. The IERPU could collaborate with regional employers to develop on-the-job training courses tailored for incumbent workers and new hires. Other skill gaps noted in the chart are more industry-specific.

For Healthcare, there is a clear need for Registered Nurses, but an even higher demand for lower-paying roles such as Personal Care Aide. CPR, Caregiving, and Critical Care are skills that are in demand for the sector. Programs that provide home health or personal care training can help meet some of the skill needs and demands for these jobs and be used as a career starting point in Healthcare. A career pathway in Healthcare could begin with a Home Health Aide position to expose a job seeker to the field, then continuing to train toward becoming a Certified Nursing Assistant, and finally training for a Licensed Vocational Nurse, Registered Nurse, or other roles that pay a family-sustaining wage. It should also be noted here that experience as a Home Health Aide provides good experience and exposure but doesn't have a tangible education or training benefit such as credit for prior learning. In other words, a Home Health Aide beginning a nursing program would have the same requirements to complete as someone beginning a nursing program without any prior Healthcare industry experience. This makes developing career pathways in the field longer and more difficult, but still achievable.

The Manufacturing sector, while having relatively lower overall demand compared to the other three target sectors, includes several occupations that offer family-sustaining wages. The largest demand is for lower-paying occupations such as Team Assemblers and Laborers. However, there is a reasonable demand for Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers and Weighers, which, on average approach family-sustaining wages. This occupation's annual demand is in decline though. In terms of Manufacturing-specific skills such as Lathes, Drill Presses and Ladder Logic, there appears to be a small demand for these, but a larger demand for skills with overlap in other sectors such as Warehouse Management Systems. Building career pathways in Manufacturing could begin with high-demand, low-requirement jobs like Team Assembler or Laborer, and utilize on-the-job training to advance to an Inspector role. Further training could lead to a family-sustaining wage as a Machinist, Welder, or First-Line Supervisor, which are also in demand.

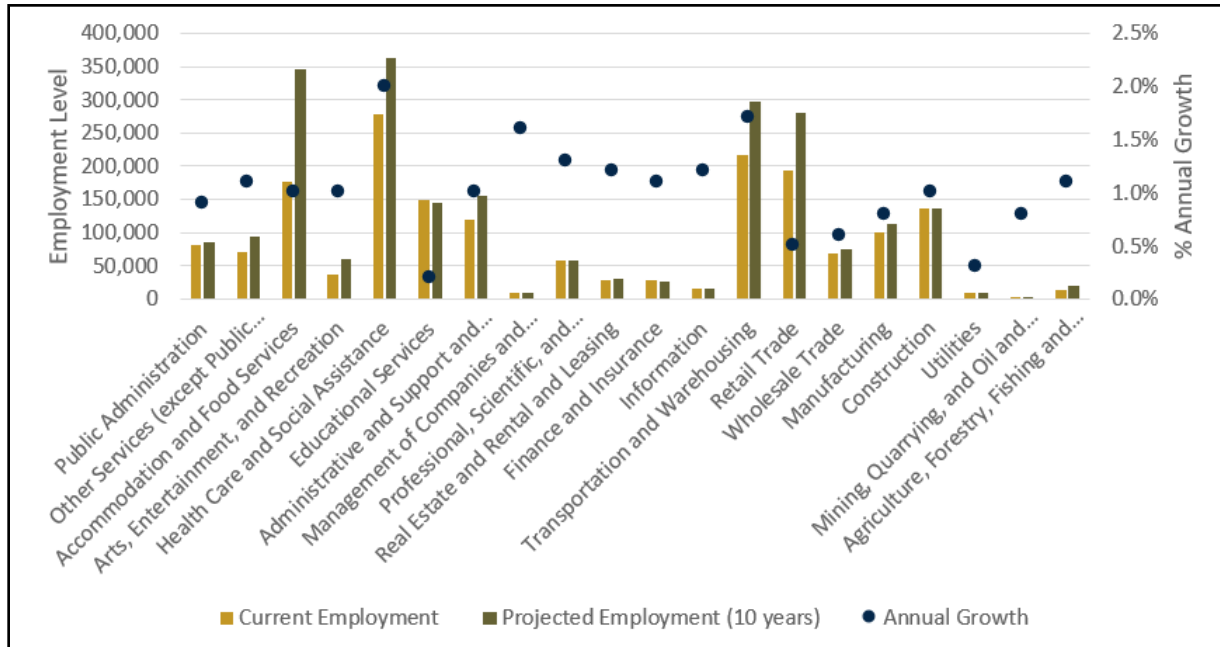
A closely related sector, Transportation and Logistics, has the highest demand overall of the four sectors. As with the others, the largest demand is in Laborers, which is below the family-sustaining wage. However, occupations such as Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers and Light Truck Drivers pay a family-sustaining wage and are in high demand, requiring only some postsecondary training. They require skills that are in demand such as obtaining a Class A Commercial Driver's License. The sector also offers better-paying roles including First-Line Supervisors and Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers that are in demand and would likely require skills like Warehouse Management Systems, Supply Chain Management, and Inventory Management Systems. Given the crossover with these skills in Manufacturing, training job seekers or incumbents in these skills could set them up for roles in either Manufacturing or Transportation and Logistics.

Finally, in Public Administration, Police and Fire occupations have the highest demand and average wages, but considerable barriers to entry in terms of education and training requirements. However, there is opportunity for achieving family-sustaining wages in roles such as Eligibility Interviewer or Court, Municipal, and License Clerks, which typically require only a high school diploma. Job seekers should focus on gaining skills in demand within the sector, such as proficiency in Microsoft Outlook, SAP, and Community Outreach in order to be more competitive for open employment related jobs. A career pathway in this sector can begin with an entry-level role like Office Clerk. From there, additional on-the-job training in the skills noted above could enable career progression to occupations such as Eligibility Interviewer, Administrative Assistant, or License Clerk.

Industries and Occupations with an Emerging Demand

Looking forward, the IERPU will continue to focus on four target sectors: Healthcare, Manufacturing, Public Administration, and Transportation and Logistics. All four of these sectors show emerging demand over the next several years as evidenced in Figure H and Table B below.

Figure H: Regional Industry Employment and Annual Growth



Source: JobsEQ

The sector with the most jobs and the highest annual growth is Healthcare and Social Assistance, with total demand in ten years of 361,976 and a 2.0% annual growth rate. The next is Transportation and Warehousing (referred to by the IERPU as Transportation and Logistics) with 297,532 and a 1.7% annual growth rate. Manufacturing has the next highest demand in ten years at 113,833 jobs but the lowest annual growth rate of the four priority sectors at 0.8%. This is higher than many other sectors though such as Utilities (0.3%) or Retail Trade (0.5%). Public Administration has the lowest projected demand of 85,791 jobs compared to the other three, and an annual growth of 0.9%, coming in third among the four sectors. The demand for this industry is higher, however, than multiple other industries such as Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (58,090) or Finance and Insurance (27,391).

Table B below outlines the top five occupations in each sector based on annual demand excluding occupations that require a bachelor's degree or higher. The annual demand is specific to the sector, while the ten-year anticipated growth (from 2020 to 2030) is a cross-industry figure.

Table B: Projected Growth of Occupations with High Demand

Industry	Occupation	Annual Demand (Industry-Specific)	Future Growth (Cross-Industry, 2020-2030)	Typical Education Requirement	Average Annual Wage
Transportation and Logistics	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	6,554	28.9%	None	\$47,900
	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	3,684	29.7%	Postsecondary, non-degree award	\$62,200
	Stockers and Order Fillers	4,620	29.9%	High school diploma	\$48,300
	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	2,600	36.0%	None	\$52,000
	Light Truck Drivers	1,648	27.7%	High school diploma	\$56,700
Healthcare	Personal Care Aides	10,202	19.8%*	High school diploma	\$34,500
	Home Health Aides	3,030	19.8%*	High school diploma	\$34,500
	Registered Nurses	2,060	16.8%	Associate's Degree in Nursing (ADN) or Bachelor's Degree in Nursing (BSN)	\$131,600
	Nursing Assistants	1,576	18.1%	Postsecondary, non-degree award	\$44,300
	Medical Assistants	1,555	25.7%	Postsecondary, non-degree award	\$45,700
Manufacturing	Team Assemblers	870	6.5%	None	\$44,900
	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	490	28.9%	None	\$46,500
	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	346	-1.8%	High school diploma	\$51,600
	Packaging and Filling Machine	338	21.6%	High school diploma	\$44,200

	Operators and Tenders				
	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	332	15.1%	High school diploma	\$71,500
Public Administration**	Eligibility Interviewers, Government Programs	219	8.5%	High school diploma	\$57,500
	Office Clerks, General	242	6.7%	High school diploma	\$47,500
	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	140	-0.1%	High school diploma	\$52,700
	Court, Municipal, and License Clerks	151	7.8%	High school diploma	\$63,900
	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	114	24.5%	High school diploma	\$56,900

Source: Jobs EQ, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook

* Percentage growth of Home Health and Personal Care Aides combined

** Excluding police and fire occupations

Some occupations in this list are exclusive to the sector they are categorized in, such as Registered Nurses in Healthcare. Others may be occupations that span sectors and industries, such as Office Clerks. For many of the occupations that have an emerging annual demand within the sector, such as Maintenance and Repair Workers, or Light Truck Drivers, there is additional anticipated growth across industries. This makes them ideal occupations to train for, since job seekers who complete training for those occupations will have more options for employment within and outside of the targeted sector. For instance, an Office Clerk trained for the target sector of Public Administration may find employment in another sector, such as Finance.

As noted earlier, most of these occupations are very accessible in terms of education requirements, most only requiring a High School Diploma or less. However, the higher-paying occupations often necessitate some postsecondary training, such as Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers which require training to obtain a Class A Driver's License, and Registered Nurse, which requires an associate's degree at minimum. Some of the other occupations that may only typically require a High School Diploma may prefer candidates that already have certain skills such as proficiency in Microsoft Office, SAP, Warehouse Management Systems, and others noted above. In addition, many positions provide opportunities to learn additional skills on the job, such as Ladder Logic in Manufacturing, enabling workers to advance their careers and increase earning potential through both formal training and practical experience.

III. Regional Indicators

The IERPU selected two of the four regional indicators to establish objective metrics. The first is that the IERPU has policies supporting equity and strives to improve job quality. The second is that the IERPU has shared target populations of emphasis. A brief description of each indicator is below, followed by the objective metrics that were established for them. This is followed by an assessment of their impacts, lessons learned, and progress in tracking and evaluating these indicators to inform future improvements and strategies.

Regional Indicator 1: The region has policies supporting equity and strives to improve job quality.

Below is the IERPU Equity Definitions, which were developed as part of the 2021-2024 Regional Workforce Development Plan Two-Year Modification process.

IERPU Equity Definition

Everyone has value and can contribute to our regional economy. Ensuring equity in workforce development means intentionally targeting accessible resources to individuals who have traditionally experienced systemic barriers in the labor force, allowing them to obtain or retain a high-quality job that enables them to thrive.

Every employer in the region, large and small, contributes to our economy. Ensuring equity in the workplace means supporting employer awareness and expertise in understanding how a diverse labor force can help businesses flourish.

The IERPU has worked to apply both parts of this definition, ingrained into the programs and services it provides to the community. An example of how an equitable approach is implemented regionally is the Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) Model, which utilizes multi-disciplinary care coordination, community partnerships, a system of governance and an integrated data information hub to better serve community members who have complex needs. Both Riverside and San Bernardino Counties use an ISD-approach to service delivery. The region works together on multiple initiatives that improve equity by focusing on its target populations with barriers to employment such as the Regional Equity and Recovery Partnership (RERP) and the Opportunity Young Adult Career Pathway Program (OYA).

The second part of the definition above relates to ensuring employers are a part of ensuring equity for their workers by understanding the diverse needs of their employees. An example of how the region works toward implementing this part is the HR Hotline, which is available to help businesses in the region with a range of supports related to ensuring equity on the job. Both county teams also offer employers trainings that help them learn about how to best support workers with barriers to employment.

The IERPU also developed its Job Quality Definition during the last plan modification process, which is described below.

IERPU Job Quality Definition

A measurable, high-quality job...

- will lead to a family-sustaining wage and benefits within a specified period.
- has a clear career pathway for advancement that leads to a long-term career.
- allows the worker to be fulfilled, self-sufficient, and meets their financial and essential needs for their current stage in life.
- empowers the worker to live, thrive, and stay in the region.
- is vital to the economy, both now and in the future.

The IERPU has been working to apply this definition throughout its programs and services. Examples of each component of the definition are listed below:

- Family-sustaining wage and benefits: The business services teams of both counties prioritize higher-wage positions when setting up On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts with employers.
- Clear pathways for advancement: As part of its CHARGE 2T project with Southern California Edison, the RCHWS team will ensure that well-defined career pathways for high-quality energy-related jobs are in place.
- Fulfillment, self-sufficiency, and meeting financial needs based on current stage in life: The SBCWDB Youth Committee created goals for supporting foster youth, including helping them move along a pathway from a first job through a career to build self-sufficiency over time.
- Empowering workers to live, thrive and stay in the region (and be a vital part of the economy now and in the future): the IERPU has continued to leverage the MOU partners of both counties, its AJCCs, and county partners to holistically meet the needs of its participants. Housing, healthcare, childcare, behavioral health, and access to other critical services play a major role in job seekers' ability to live, thrive, and stay in the region. Both county workforce services' teams continue to build collaborations and integrate services with their partners to meet these needs, as discussed in more detail in each local workforce development plan.

Regional Indicator 2: The region has shared target populations of emphasis.

The IERPU chose the six WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker barriers to define its shared target populations of emphasis: 1) English as a Second Language (ESL), Low Levels of Literacy, and Cultural Barriers, 2) Ex-Offenders (Justice-Involved), 3) Un-housed/Homeless Individuals, 4) Long Term Unemployed (> 27 weeks), 5) Low Income Individuals, 6) Individuals with Disabilities, and 7) Older Adult Individuals. In addition, the IERPU is adding Veterans as an 8th shared target population of emphasis.

Objective Metrics for Regional Indicators #1 and #2

In the two-year plan modification process, the IERPU chose to compare the employment outcomes of individuals without barriers to employment to each of the target populations noted above. It was determined that this would be the best objective metric for ensuring equity for the shared target populations of emphasis. The comparison between Program Year 21-22 when the last plan modification was written and the last Program Year 23-24 is shown in Table C below. In addition,

the proposed outcomes for the Prison to Employment (P2E) initiative were used as another objective metric for that specific shared target population. The proposed outcomes and current results as of December 2024 are in Table D below.

Table C: Regional Employment Rates for Shared Target Populations of Emphasis, Compared to Participants Without Barriers to Employment

Shared Target Population of Emphasis (Based on Barrier)	Regional Percentage Employed, Four Quarters After Exit PY 21-22	Gap From Non-Barrier Participants	Regional Percentage Employed, Four Quarters After Exit PY 23-24	Gap From Non-Barrier Participants	Gap Closure
No Barriers	77.03%	N/A	82.94%	N/A	N/A
ESL, Low Levels of Literacy, Cultural Barriers	56.78%	-20.25%	70.37%	-12.57%	7.68%
Ex-Offenders (Justice-Involved)	54.55%	-22.48%	64.98%	-17.97%	4.52%
Homeless Individuals	48.28%	-28.75%	60.00%	-22.94%	5.81%
Long Term Unemployed >27 weeks	52.56%	-24.47%	62.02%	-20.93%	3.54%
Low Income Individuals	58.81%	-18.22%	69.38%	-13.56%	4.66%
Individuals with Disabilities	50.74%	-26.29%	59.83%	-23.12%	3.18%
Older Individuals	49.52%	-27.51%	59.59%	-23.36%	4.15%
Veterans	58.82%	-18.21%	67.19%	-15.76%	2.45%

Table C shows the employment outcomes for the shared target populations four quarters after exit, compared to participants served without barriers to employment. The rightmost column notes how the difference between this gap changed between Program Year 21-22 to Program Year 23-24. In all target populations, there was an improvement in the gap between the target population and those without barriers between the two years. ESL, Low Literacy, and Cultural barriers improved the most, closing the gap by 7.68%, while Veterans improved the least at 2.45%. It should be noted that Veterans have only recently been added as a shared target population of emphasis in this plan. Another note here is that the employment percentage for participants without barriers also increased from PY 21-22 to PY 23-24, making the gap closure smaller than it otherwise would have been. The analysis below discusses how these improvements were made and how the IERPU intends to build upon its success in working toward greater equity in the region.

Table D: P2E Program Current Outcomes

Outcome Measure	Proposed	Current
Total Participants Served	685	415
Enter Training / Education	240	182
Receive Credential	58	114
Temporary or Subsidized Employment	96	56
Competitive Employment	223	72

So far, the P2E program has exceeded its original target of individuals receiving a credential and is mostly on track to meet the rest. The program timeline is approximately 2/3 complete, ending in December 2025, so there is still a full year for the program to meet all of its proposed outcomes. Going into the last year, the P2E program continues to recruit employer partners and look for innovative ways to serve participants.

Assessment of the Impacts, Lessons Learned, and Progress on Tracking and Evaluating the Regional Indicators

As noted above in Table C, there has been significant progress in reducing the gap between the employment of target populations and participants without barriers. The IERPU has developed specialized programs for many of the target populations, which have contributed to this success. In addition to the P2E program for justice-involved individuals, another is the Disability Navigator project, which has a dedicated Workforce Development Specialist (WDS) and a Business Services Representative (BSR) to provide employment services to individuals with disabilities. The SBCWDD team offers business development and entrepreneurship workshops in Spanish to support ESL business owners, and the RCHWS team has been developing a Veteran population-focused program called the Veterans in Workforce Initiative.

There have also been lessons learned in the process of tracking these metrics for the shared populations of emphasis:

1. **Using IERPU target populations was a good starting place.** The data for barriers to employment used for tracking the regional metric was already available and familiar to the staff. This made tracking the metric that was developed a natural progression of measuring regional outcomes.
2. **The original method for measuring gaps needed to be adjusted.** Originally, the employment levels of the target population were compared to the employment metric for all participants, which included the target populations. Using that method, if employment outcomes for target populations improved, the total employment outcomes would improve and the gap between the two would never close. The adjustment to tracking employment outcomes for the shared target populations of emphasis (WIOA barrier populations) described above allows progress to be made compared to participants without barriers.
3. **The outcomes for some target populations improved more than others.** As noted above, the gap in employment outcomes decreased more for ESL and Homeless Individuals than for the Long Term Unemployed or Individuals with Disabilities. The region intends to regularly evaluate these shared target populations of emphasis to note where new strategies or programs may be necessary.

4. **The regional indicators facilitate data-driven decision-making.** In creating effective solutions, the IERPU ensures its proposed solutions are representative of the data trends in all aspects including demographic, economic, and environmental. This includes efforts to take part in conversations in shared spaces with other entities that specialize in certain industries and also use data to tailor strategies effectively.
5. **Continued progress on the regional indicators will require financial stability of population-specific programs.** The IERPU is working to diversify funding to ensure that there are available funding streams that will contribute to the longevity of certain initiatives like P2E (Justice-involved), Inland Empire Developing Equitable Apprenticeships (Veterans, People with Disabilities, Justice-involved), Regional Equity and Recovery Partnerships (Homeless, Justice-Involved, Veterans), and the Opportunity Young Adult Career Pathway Program (OYA).

As a result of this analysis, the region developed the following goal:

Goal #1: To ensure that programs and services implemented by the IERPU are advancing Regional Indicators #1 and #2.

Tactics:

- Annually review the employment gap between the shared target populations of emphasis and participants without barriers for any necessary changes to programs, services, and partnerships.
- Work to continue closing the gap for all populations to the extent possible.
- Identify additional metrics, if necessary, to track progress for the shared target populations

IV. Fostering Demand-Driven Skills Attainment

Regional Sector Pathways

The IERPU prioritizes regional sector-based pathways, continuing to improve opportunities for the region's job seekers. Sector-based strategy leverages local industry sectors that offer the most opportunity for workers and incorporates business leadership into programs to prepare workers for specific occupations.

In-Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

The IERPU's in-demand industry sectors are **Healthcare, Manufacturing, Public Administration, and Transportation and Logistics**. Each of these sectors show positive growth in the coming years and align with the regional workforce's skills and education as noted in Section II.

Beginning with the Healthcare and Social Assistance industry, Figure I shows it currently employs 279,228 and has an annual growth of 2.0%. Manufacturing now employs 101,150 with an expected growth of 0.8%. Transportation and Logistics (Transportation and Warehousing) has 217,784 working in the industry and is expected to grow by 1.7%. Finally, 81,718 currently work in the Public Administration sector, with an annual growth of 0.9%. These predicted growth rates are estimated to occur annually over the next ten years. Together, these industries represent 10,831 new jobs each year and average 1.4% annual growth, above the region's total growth rate of 1.1% across industries.

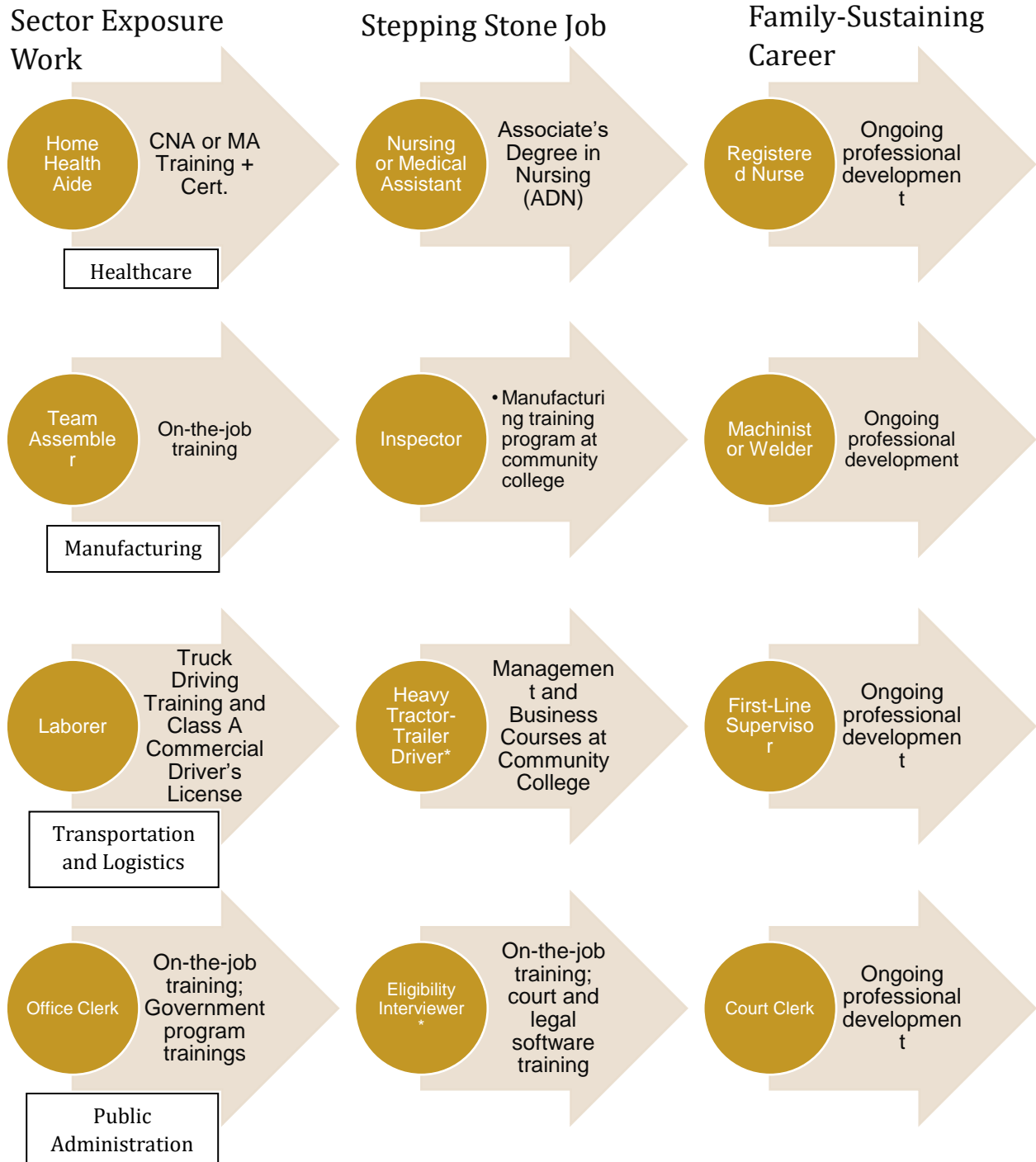
Sector Pathways

Each of the target sectors has multiple in-demand occupations, as demonstrated in Figures D-G and Table B above. However, the largest demand tends to be in occupations with pay that falls under the region's family-sustaining wage of \$53,601.⁷ The sectors all have in-demand occupations that pay at or above the family-sustaining wage also but usually require specialized training and skills. Below in Figure J below are sample pathways for each sector based on the data and analysis in Section II.

Figure J below starts with career exposure jobs on the leftmost side, meaning jobs that provide some sector-based learning opportunities but not a family-sustaining wage. In the middle of the diagram are steppingstone jobs that are a good next step in building a career in the sector. In these scenarios above, Nursing and Medical Assistants in Healthcare or Inspectors in Manufacturing don't pay a family-sustaining wage (on average) but Heavy Tractor-Trailer Driver in Transportation and Logistics and Eligibility Interviewer in Public Administration do. The arrows in the diagram provide some ways that a worker can build their skills toward qualifying for the next job to the right.

⁷ Based on annualizing hourly rate of \$25.77 from the MIT Living Wage Calculator for one adult, no children in the Riverside-San Bernardino Metropolitan Statistical Area: <https://livingwage.mit.edu/metros/40140>

Figure I: Potential Career Pathways in Target Sectors



* Note: Heavy Tractor-Trailer Driver and Eligibility Interviewer pay a family-sustaining wage.

Development and Implementation of Current and Planned Sector Initiatives

Healthcare

RCWDD and SBCWDD jointly manage the Opportunity Young Adults (OYA) Career Pathway Program, which positions young adults, ages 18-28, to obtain access to good-quality jobs in the Healthcare industry, including jobs that pay family-sustaining wages, offer benefits, have predictable hours, opportunities for career advancement, and worker voice. This project also includes investments for wrap-around support and services to increase the likelihood of program completion, employment outcomes, and career pathway advancement, including comprehensive case management with a trauma-informed lens.

The IERPU is working with Healthcare training providers to ensure a seamless transition from their Healthcare training to employment. This program has been deemed extremely successful to the point that we currently have active waiting lists. The conversations that have resulted from this program include collaborations with Healthcare training providers that previously did not exist thus expanding opportunities for residents to benefit from diverse Healthcare training past the life of this grant. Our partnerships with Healthcare training providers have strengthened and we are now focusing on expanding partnerships with Healthcare sector employers to ensure that participants who are completing their respective training are employed promptly.

Manufacturing

In partnership with Victor Valley College, Aviation Maintenance Technology training is offered locally at Southern California Logistics Airport (SCLA). This program includes all classroom and practical training required to prepare for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) licensing exams for Airframe and Power Plant Technicians. The certificate program includes the following courses:

- General Aviation I / II
- Aviation: Power Plant I / II / III
- Aviation: Airframe I / II / III

Aviation Maintenance Technology prepares students for entry level positions in aircraft maintenance. Successful graduates typically find employment opportunities with FAA Certified Repair Stations, Commercial Airlines, Corporate Aviation, Aerospace Defense Contractors, Aerospace Manufactures and Military and Government Agencies.

Through the Inland Empire Developing Equitable Apprenticeships (IEDEA) program with regional community colleges, the following apprenticeships have been made available in the Manufacturing sector:

- Automotive Service Tech and Mechanic
- Electro-Mechanical Supply Chain Technician
- Industrial Automation and Mechatronics Technician
- CNC Operator
- CNC Programmer
- Machine Operator
- Avionics Technician

Transportation and Logistics

The region continues to support training for Class A Truck Drivers and associated certifications: Forklift, OSHA Safety and Health Fundamentals, Roadway Flagger and Class A Commercial Driver's License. Truck Driving employment opportunities have proved to be a good option for justice-involved individuals, such as those served in the Prison 2 Employment Program. The Regional Equity and Recovery Partnership (RERP) program has also supported several populations with barriers to employment, such as Homeless, Justice-Involved, and Veterans to enter positions in Truck Driving with trainings available throughout the Inland Empire, including Riverside, Corona, Indio and Victor Valley College (VVC). In both counties Class A Truck Driving programs exist that provide flexible schedules, portions of curriculum online and transportation resources.

VVC's Commercial Driver Training program, as an example, is a four-course program that results in a certificate of completion and prepares students for obtaining their Class A Driver's License. There are additional courses available to obtain a Hazardous Material and Passenger Endorsements. Given the high demand for drivers in the region, and the family-sustaining wages available, this has been a popular career pathway.

Public Administration

The San Bernardino County Pathway Certificate Program offers training in essential skills to prepare for entry level careers at the County through one of the region's community colleges. The program combines technical and crucial soft skills: communication, emotional intelligence, customer service, contextualized math, Microsoft Office applications, and business writing. Completers of the program receive San Bernardino County's Entry-Level Workplace Certification and are qualified to apply for positions such as Office Assistant III, Health Services Assistant I, Care Assistant, Animal Control Officer Trainee, Child Support Assistant, Park Ranger I, Eligibility Worker Trainee, Sheriff's Custody Assistant, Food Service Worker I, and Workforce Development Technician.

Communicating Effectively and Cohesively with Regional Employers

The IERPU has multiple processes in place for communicating with regional employers. The strategies include:

Forming collaborations: Joining and creating coalitions with business, education, workforce, and community partners focused on employment in high demand sectors aligns workforce strategies with evolving business needs. Quarterly meetings with in-demand sector employers are also utilized to gather feedback on workforce challenges, emerging trends, and skills gaps.

Providing employer recognition: Ensuring employer recognition is integrated into the IERPU's work to celebrate businesses leading in workforce innovation, job quality, and equity efforts supports a high road workforce strategy.

Being an intermediary for education: Facilitating connections between educational institutions and employers in order to enhance curricula and ensure they are meeting employer skill requirements.

Providing vital information: Using email newsletters, webinars, and social media to keep employers informed about workforce programs, funding opportunities, and sector updates. This

includes Labor Market Information (LMI) insights and workforce system information. Riverside County's Dashboards [can be found here](#), and San Bernardino County dashboards [are here](#).

Simplifying communication: Both counties have designated Business Services staff at AJCCs to serve as single points of contact for regional businesses.

Sector-based strategy is a priority for the region and the IERPU intends to continuously improve the sector pathways available in the region. The goal below was developed for this purpose.

Goal #2: To ensure that sector-based career pathways remain robust and provide access to high-road jobs for job seekers.

Tactics:

- Regularly review Labor Market Information (LMI) to look for trends across sectors and opportunities to prepare job seekers for new in-demand occupations
- Continue building relationships with regional employers for guidance, information about in-demand skills and qualifications, and sector-based work opportunities
- Learn from analyzing other sector-based initiatives in the target sectors

V. Enabling Upward Mobility for All Californians

A High Road Workforce System

A high road workforce system requires sector-based strategy, as described above, and a commitment among all partners to high road principles: equity, job quality and a carbon-neutral environment. The IERPU sees itself as a vital source of talent for the region's employers, and can influence high road practices with its employers

How the IERPU Promotes Job Quality and Commits to Working with Employers to Improve Job Quality and Access to Jobs

The IERPU Job Quality definition above is used as the basis for evaluating jobs in the region. The process of a regional workforce system that helps job seekers access high-quality jobs begins with selecting sectors that have in-demand jobs of relative higher quality. The target sectors described above all have in-demand jobs that fit the region's definition of job quality. The other approaches for promoting job quality are categorized below into Education, Earn and Learn Models, and Financial Incentives.

Education

The staff and partners of both RCHWS and SBCWDD provide opportunities for employers to learn about job quality and equitable hiring practices. Trainings are on topics such as Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) to support employers in implementing equitable hiring and workplace practices, and the "Employer of Choice" workshop series described earlier. Business Services staff also leverage informal conversations and meetings to encourage employers to adopt inclusive hiring, pay equity, predictable scheduling, and employee development policies where possible.

Earn and Learn Models

Earn and learn models such as registered apprenticeship programs (RAPs) are usually established for high quality jobs and the region leverages this model as part of its sector-based strategy. Partnering with the LAUNCH Network (Local Apprenticeships Uniting a Network of Colleges and High Schools), the region is working with employers to hire apprentices as LVNs and RNs, Manufacturing Production Technicians, and Electro-Mechanical Supply Chain Technicians. Pairing high-quality training from education partners along with support services from IERPU partners provides high value to employers and allows participants to be trained for high-quality jobs.

Financial Incentives

In addition, the region is selective about which employers receive financial incentives to work with regional partners. On-the-Job Training funds, grant funding and other wage subsidies including incumbent worker training are made available primarily to employers offering high-quality jobs and family-sustaining wages.

How the IERPU Integrates Targeted Service Strategies for the Region's Unserved and Underserved Communities

Several examples of how the IERPU integrates targeted service strategies for specific populations who are unserved and underserved are described in Section III above. At a regional level, there are multiple other ways that the region's unserved and underserved communities are reached.

Data Analysis: The IERPU learns how to find and serve the unserved and underserved through data and mapping barriers such as educational gaps, transportation limitations, housing insecurity, and lack of childcare.

Virtual Services: The region's AJCCs and workforce delivery partners continue to provide virtual services and promote awareness of this option to the community to ensure residents in rural and underserved areas have equal access to programs.

Community Outreach Teams: Staff and partners of SBCWDD and RCHWS travel to meet residents of the region where they live to provide services. This includes but is not limited to offering job and resource fairs in rural areas and those areas disconnected geographically, such as Needles, Blythe, Barstow, and the mountain areas.

Co-Location and Partnerships with Education System: The IERPU's reach is extended by co-locating services with the Employment Development Department and multiple county departments. The region has strong formal and informal partnerships with adult schools and community colleges. P2E and RERP grants are just two examples of programs developed in partnership with community college partners. The adult schools within the region have established strong referral mechanisms with our AJCCs for programs like ESL and HSD/HiSet.

Climate and Environmental Sustainability

How the IERPU is Working Toward Meeting Industry and Workforce Needs to Support a Climate-Neutral Transition

During the development of this plan, the IERPU solicited feedback from both job seekers and partner organizations about jobs that support climate and environmental sustainability. The primary finding was that there is low awareness of jobs, required skills, related training, and employers for these types of opportunities. However, all stakeholders expressed an interest in learning more about these concepts and how to access jobs that support a climate-neutral transition. More research about opportunities, required skills and the best strategies to train and prepare job seekers for careers in this area is needed.

The IERPU has long supported training and access to jobs that support a climate-neutral transition, such as solar energy and weatherization jobs. The region also intends to deepen its investments in this area in several ways, including through a partnership with the Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN). I-REN is one of several agencies across California that leverage funding raised from taxes private utility companies to serve underrepresented populations and public agencies with energy efficiency services and workforce training programs in clean energy occupations.

Both the RCWDD and SBCWDD are entering into partnership agreements with I-REN with the aim of creating new opportunities in the clean energy sector for underserved communities. Specifically, RCWDD and I-REN will jointly identify workforce needs, develop targeted training programs, foster industry partnerships, provide comprehensive support services to trainees, and advocate for equitable policies. The new training programs that are developed will equip individuals from disadvantaged and low-income communities with the technical and soft skills needed to secure and thrive in high-quality energy sector jobs. The partnership is anticipated to launch in mid-2025.

Another key initiative for developing workforce opportunities that support climate-neutral efforts is the IERPU's partnership with Southern California Edison (SCE). SCE is a key partner in a \$600M grant from the U.S. Department of Energy under its Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) program called CHARGE 2T: California Harnessing Advanced Reliable Grid Enhancing Technologies for Transmission. GRIP aims to improve the reliability and environmental sustainability of regional energy grids nationally. SCE and other utility partners across California aim to unlock renewable energy with advanced conductor technologies and dynamic line ratings. CHARGE 2T will work with California colleges and universities to provide courses of study and certifications in power systems and energy management. It is anticipated to begin in summer 2025.

The IERPU will work with SCE and its partners to identify and support trainees for the newly developed trainings. In addition, the IERPU will assess the type and availability of specific occupations in the region related to the training, engaging regional employers to participate in direct hiring, apprenticeships, and work-based learning opportunities for trainees.

Equity and Economic Justice

The Region's Strategy to Achieve Equity and Commitments to Ensure Equitable Access to Regional Sector Pathways, Earn and Learn Opportunities, Supportive Services, and Other Effective Service Strategies

The IERPU Equity Definition is outlined in Section III above and guides the work of the region to ensure equitable access to all programs and services. In practice, there are several approaches of note that are utilized:

Listening and Learning

- Using feedback from focus groups, surveys, and advisory panels with participants to inform ongoing program improvements
- Enhancing training to ensure staff are providing trauma-informed care to understand the needs of diverse populations
- Ensuring worker voice is incorporated into decision-making, as it was for the development of this plan through Participant Focus Groups (See Appendix A)

Partnerships

- Actively partnering in the Inland Empire/Desert Regional Consortium (IEDRC) of the Strong Workforce Program (SWP), an initiative of the California Community College Chancellor's Office to build opportunities for a diverse workforce to train and enter into high quality jobs
 - The IEDRC has a strategic goal in its current plan to "Reinforce efforts to address issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the region's career education programs"
- Partnering with employers to create hiring pathways for women, people of color (POC), justice-impacted individuals, veterans transitioning to civilian careers, and other marginalized communities

Supportive Services

- Achieving equity through leveling the playing field, and providing additional support to workers who need it to access quality jobs

In order to enable upward mobility via a high road workforce system in the Inland Empire, the following goals were developed:

Goal #3: To advocate for job quality and work towards achieving equity.

Tactics:

- Offer employers information, training, and consultation on job quality
- Prioritize working with employers who offer high quality jobs
- Continue using the objective metrics for Regional Indicators #1 and #2 to work toward closing the employment gap for the regional shared target populations of emphasis
- Identify new ideas and examples for improving job quality and equity to learn from

Goal #4: To research and identify opportunities in Climate and Environmental Sustainability.

Tactics:

- Gather research on regional jobs that support climate-neutrality, the skills required, and training to develop these skills
- Work with local partners like I-REN and Southern California Edison to explore regional opportunities and how to help job seekers access them
- Identify climate and environmental sustainability strategies in other regions of the state and country to learn from

VI. Aligning, Coordinating, and Integrating Programs and Services

System Alignment

Regional Service Strategies

The region employs multiple strategies to coordinate the regional workforce system. The IERPU team builds off their respective AJCC System MOUs to engage the signed partners and add additional organizations as new service needs become apparent. Data is shared regularly between partners who can legally share data to coordinate service delivery on the basis of program strengths while also aligning partner programs with the region's particular labor market needs. Cross-sector partnerships with housing, healthcare, and transportation agencies help eliminate participant barriers and expand the coordination of services to the community beyond the workforce system.

IERPU Steering Committee

Another important regional service strategy is the coordination of the IERPU Steering Committee, which continues to meet twice annually. The Committee consists of members from both RCWDB and SBCWDB, who help set regional strategy and policy. The Committee will guide the implementation of this plan, along with both individual workforce development boards.

Joint Annual AJCC MOU Partners Meeting

The IERPU will make a joint meeting of each county's AJCC MOU Partners a priority during the timeline of this plan. At these meetings, implementation of the regional plan goals of both local AJCC systems will be discussed.

The IERPU MOU and Administrative Cost Arrangements

SBCWDB and RCWDB have an MOU in place that dictates roles and responsibilities of both counties (local areas) of the Inland Empire Regional Planning Unit (IERPU). The MOU coordinates ongoing regional planning and implementation, staff and workforce board training and to jointly carry out tasks that are outlined in grant funding from the CWDB. The MOU covers the administrative cost arrangements for the region and the use of regional funds, allowing for sharing of funds between the two counties, regardless of the designated fiscal/administrative lead.

The most recent amendment to the MOU, signed in November 2022, allows the counties to enter into service agreements and allocate grant funding for workforce development activities across the two counties without the need for approval from their respective boards of supervisors, regardless of funding source.

In order to continue facilitating regional workforce system alignment, coordination, and integration, the following goal was developed:

Goal #5: To ensure ongoing alignment between the various agencies, the IERPU will utilize Seven Strategies to Realize High Road Interventions outlined in the CWDB Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan.

Tactics:

- Leverage the seven strategies as a basis for regional collaboration, particularly Creating Cross-System Data Capacity and Fostering Workforce Standards
- Work on system alignment, service coordination, and support towards a sustainable, in-sync regional infrastructure that is committed to the overall goal of helping people get and keep good jobs, and positively affecting the regional economy through sustainable regional sector pathways.

Appendix A: Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary

Understanding the needs, experiences, and aspirations of the communities directly impacted by its outcomes is foundational to creating a successful regional workforce development plan. This summary outlines and highlights the process, insights, and recommendations gathered through a series of interactive engagement sessions conducted by the Inland Empire Regional Planning Unit (IERPU).

These sessions were held with key stakeholders in Inland Empire (including employers, workforce development agencies, colleges and universities, school districts, community-based organizations, and workforce board members), as well as job seekers navigating the employment landscape. Designed to create space and amplify their voices, these listening sessions provided a platform for candid discussions about what is working, existing barriers, and opportunities for growth within the workforce and economic development systems. The voices of stakeholders and job seekers were central to developing a collaborative and human-centered four-year plan that reflects a commitment to inclusion, shared ownership, and innovative solutions, driving sustainable prosperity for individuals, businesses, and the region as a whole.

Sessions and Attendance

Mode of Outreach	Date of Meeting	Target of Outreach	Summary of Attendance		Data Gathered
			Virtual	In-Person	
Virtual Meeting	12/2/2024	Inland Empire Stakeholders*	90	0	480
Hybrid Meeting	12/9/2024	Riverside County Job Seekers	8	2	75
Virtual Meeting	12/10/2024	Inland Empire Stakeholders*	72	0	397
Hybrid Meeting	12/10/2024	San Bernardino County Job Seeker	2	6	61
Total			172	8	1013

*Stakeholders include (but are not limited to) employers, workforce development agencies, school districts, colleges and universities, community-based organizations

Feedback, Analysis, and Inclusion in the Four-Year Regional Plan

The stakeholder listening sessions yielded 877 pieces of feedback, and the job seeker listening sessions yielded 136 pieces of feedback that were aggregated, summarized, and reviewed by the Inland Empire Regional Planning Unit Members to draw out important themes across the four

categories to inform the strategies and planning of the new regional four-year workforce development plan.

Stakeholder Listening Sessions Format

The stakeholder listening sessions were held virtually (via Zoom), and stakeholders from Riverside and San Bernardino Counties attended together. After a brief introduction, ground-setting, and presentation on achievements, attendees were invited to participate in facilitated conversations on any two of the following four topics of their choice:

1. People and Employers
 - a. Current and future needs of employers and job seekers
 - b. Impact of recent events (COVID-19, inflation, technology, automation)
 - c. Aligning, coordinating, and integrating programs and services
2. Californian's Moving On Up
 - a. Ensuring equitable access to pathways and services
 - b. Enabling upward mobility
 - c. Improving job access
 - d. Removing barriers to employment
 - e. Economic justice
 - f. Middle-class pathways
 - g. Supporting high road principles
 - h. Future of work
3. Climate & Environmental Sustainability
 - a. Supporting climate-neutral transitions
 - b. Addressing impacts on frontline industry sectors
 - c. Access to the sector by underrepresented workers
4. High Roads to High Outcomes.
 - a. Aligning programs with industry needs
 - b. Developing career pathways leading to recognized credentials
 - c. Enhancing employer engagement
 - d. Aligning, coordinating, and integrating programs and services

All participants were invited to share, discuss, and record their feedback in a series of Google Slides (See Figures A.1 - A3) either directly or with the support of a facilitator and/or notetaker. Breakout room facilitators were trained and provided sample scripts, workspace links and access, and time for Q&A prior to and after facilitated sessions.

The feedback shared by stakeholders from both sessions was combined and shared with session participants. The IERPU for reviewed the feedback and incorporated it in the development of the new four-year Regional and Local Plans.

Key themes identified by the IERPU were:

- Employers needing HR support for people problems vs. compliance
- The expanded Digital Divide, rapidly changing technology, and lack of access to technology
- The cultural divide with younger workforce - work ethic, language, motivation

- Declining interest in target sectors
- A desire for connection across partners and coordination of services,
- A need for a centralized resource guide or database that provides info about employers, jobs available, etc.
- Increasing access vis satellite AJCCs to provide services, resources, and staff with knowledge
- Increasing connection with CTE with community colleges, secondary education, and employers with opportunities for internships, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and work experience

What are the most pressing workforce challenges your industry (or the primary industry you work with) is facing?			What can workforce programs do to help address these issues and align with your focus industry's evolving needs?		
Finding Classified Employees for Adult School	Finding Application	HR/Recruiting process is lengthy. Candidate volume due to this.	Conduct remote job fairs. Quick interviews and offers. 3 days offer in hand.	Incumbent working trainings	Possible cover cost for trainings
Decrease in candidates interested in healthcare careers	People are moving from Career to Career very quickly	Click to add text.	Would it be helpful to assist with Regional Job Fairs?	Blowing in need of regional job fairs for Bus drivers	Assessing the continuation students with logistics trainings
transportation	Seeking Telework or Perks	Click to add text.	Paraprofessional Training	Running School District has a career training currently working with AJCCs	Desires a working site. Learning's talent to create apprenticeship opportunities
Click to add text	Retention of employees due to minimum wage standards	Click to add text.	Look at how to organize hiring event	Referral process for training for Bus Drivers	Harvest works with OJLC great need for services for youth

Figure A.1

If you could wave a magic wand and change anything in the workforce system, what would you...?		
Start	Stop	Continue
Increased child care and transportation - high cost may be a barrier to employment	Some currently in place procedures are not working/effective	Pay tuition for education training
Focus on lifelong learning to adapt in evolving job markets	Reduce barriers for underrepresented groups- disabilities/older workers	OJT opportunities
Networking with educational institutions and other agencies to better prepare future employees		
A centralized database for all applications for grant funded programs (enrollment)		

Figure A.2

What Are the Biggest Barriers to Upward Mobility for:					
BIPOC	Transportation	Acceptance	Lack of Representation	Uncertainty with regard to health insurance or routine medical services	
LGBTQIA2S+	Transportation	Acceptance	Lack of access to mental health resources		
Immigrant / Refugee	Transportation	Lack of Support Services Education	Fear of Government	In situations, lack of fluency in dominant language	Uncertainty with regard to health insurance or routine medical services
Disabilities / Neurodiverse	Physical and mental health challenges	Limited training programs for "upwardly mobile" job training	Lack of access to medical care Limited access to accommodations	Inaccessible workplaces	Bias or misconceptions
Low-income / Parenting	Unreliable Flexible programming Convenient access to transportation	Food insecurities Housing insecurities Education	Child Development Knowledge & Generational Inheritance	Lack of adequate transportation	Uncertainty with regard to health insurance or routine medical services
Veterans	Transportation	Housing	Lack of understanding of systems of support available	Crossroads to Civilian Life	Lack of individual support services

Figure A.3

Job Seeker Listening Sessions Format

The job seeker listening sessions were held in a hybrid format (in-person with a Zoom option), and job seekers from Riverside and San Bernardino Counties attended separately. After a brief introduction, ground setting, and presentation on achievements, attendees were invited to participate in facilitated conversations on the same four topics described above for the Stakeholder Feedback sessions.

All participants were invited to share, discuss, and record their feedback in a series of Google Slides (See Figures A.4 - A6) either directly or with the support of a facilitator and/or notetaker. Due to attendance, all participants participated in a combined breakout session.

The feedback from job seekers in both sessions was segmented, combined, and shared with session participants and the Inland Empire Regional Planning Unit for review, discussion, and utilization in the development of the new four-year Regional and Local Plans.

Key themes identified by the IERPU were:

- High focus on “intangibles” as part of job quality (e.g. clear expectations, training, communication, quality leadership, respect and recognition, clear and lived mission and values)
- A desire for employers to be more skill-focused (over education)
- Barriers to learning new technology (classes not offered, classes full, unaffordable, too far away)
- More professional development for youth (e.g. Internships, apprenticeships, workshops, professional dress, communication training)
- Access to services outside of 9 am - 5 pm Monday through Friday (especially for those who are under-employed or in school)
- Experienced workers unaware of entry points to specific job segments
- Getting the word out about what the workforce development system offers
- More specific information about career pathways (e.g. green careers, specific entry points, specific training and certifications required, where to get the training, employers who are hiring within those career pathways)

In preparing for the future of work (e.g. automation, AI, remote work) what resources or supports do you need?		What tools or services (e.g. job matching, resume writing, training) would help make your job search easier?
Access to fast internet for remote jobs	Access to resources for tech skills such as data mining and data analysis	Someone to follow up with you once you are employed. Having a support guide for issues that arise once you are employed.
Access to programs that businesses are using currently to receive training	Classes offered (e.g. typing) are obsolete and would like access to tech skills that are actually useful	When you reach out with colleges they are full and/or no one gets back to you so having external support to connect would be helpful
Using AI to write a resume	Learning how to use multiple platforms at the same time	Classes that are full are computer and writing classes so having an alternative place to access courses
Employers have interviews via teams or zoom and you aren't proficient in the platform		A tool that will see if your resume even got past the initial screening would help with future builds
		Job matching and learning how to market yourself once you feel you fall out of the target demographics
		Networking opportunities that are free and reach a variety of employers
		Having someone to practice the interviews with

Figure A.4

What is important to have in a quality job?			What barriers do you need to overcome in order to be successful?		
Feel like you are supported	Everyone works together, feels like family	Benefits	Ageism	Childcare	Transportation
Health insurance, too expensive when adding children	Commute	Phone	Elder care	Employers are looking for recent experience	Resources to get through the first 2 weeks of work until first pay comes
Hybrid Schedule	Support, are they going to support me	Family-friendly	Not being strong in statistics, nervousness		
Pay	Location	Retirement			
Hire within, moving up over time	Values continuous learning	Values work / life balance			

Figure A.5

In searching for jobs you want in your desired field(s), what challenges are you finding?			What challenges do you face when transitioning between careers or industries?		
Needin moe skills	Difficult with resumes	Upgrades with technology	Becoming a subject matter expert in a new field takes time	Having to learn a new skill se	The pressure of now
Work/life balance. Jobs that prioritize this	I can't find a job in medical coding because they require education and I'm one to the field. All on the job training would be very helpful!	Click to add text	Click to add text	Lack of support from some colleges	Click to add text
Click to add text	Click to add text	Click to add text	Click to add text	I've had constant change in and about classes and all and get transferred and I still in constant conflict being able to get assistance to get to classes	Click to add text
Click to add text	Click to add text	Click to add text	Also I applied for WETA for help with training and was approved but was told there's no funding	Click to add text	Click to add text

Figure A.6

Appendix B: Regional Goals

Goal	Tactics	IERPU Lead and Support
<p>Goal #1: To ensure that programs and services implemented by the IERPU are advancing Regional Indicators #1 and #2.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annually review the employment gap between the shared target populations of emphasis and participants without barriers for any necessary changes to programs, services, and partnerships. 2. Work to continue closing the gap for all populations to the extent possible. 3. Identify additional metrics, if necessary, to track progress for the shared target populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: RCWDB and SBCWDB Leadership • Support: RCWDB and SBCWDB Data Teams
<p>Goal #2: To ensure that sector-based career pathways remain robust and provide access to high-road jobs for job seekers.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regularly review Labor Market Information (LMI) to look for trends across sectors and opportunities to prepare job seekers for new in-demand occupations 2. Continue building relationships with regional employers for guidance, information about in-demand skills and qualifications, and sector-based work opportunities 3. Learn from analyzing other sector-based initiatives in the target sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: RC and AJCC System Partners • Support: RCWDB and SBCWDB Business Services Team
<p>Goal #3: To advocate for job quality and work towards achieving equity.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offer employers information, training, and consultation on job quality 2. Prioritize working with employers who offer high quality jobs 3. Continue using the objective metrics for Regional Indicators #1 and #2 to work toward closing the employment gap for the regional shared target populations of emphasis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: RCWDB and SBCWDB Business Services Teams • Support: RC and AJCC System Partners

	4. Identify new ideas and examples for improving job quality and equity to learn from	
Goal #4: To research and identify opportunities in Climate and Environmental Sustainability.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gather research on regional jobs that support climate-neutrality, the skills required, and training to develop these skills 2. Work with local partners like I-REN and Southern California Edison to explore regional opportunities and how to help job seekers access them 3. Identify climate and environmental sustainability strategies in other regions of the state and country to learn from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: RCWDB and SBCWDB Staff • Support: RCWDB and SBCWDB Data Teams
Goal #5: To ensure ongoing alignment between the various agencies, the IERPU will utilize Seven Strategies to Realize High Road Interventions outlined in the CWDB Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leverage the seven strategies as a basis for regional collaboration, particularly Creating Cross-System Data Capacity and Fostering Workforce Standards 2. Work on system alignment, service coordination, and support towards a sustainable, in-sync regional infrastructure that is committed to the overall goal of helping people get and keep good jobs, and positively affecting the regional economy through sustainable regional sector pathways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead: RCWDB and SBCWDB Staff • Support: RCWDB and SBCWDB OSOs