

A gloved hand holding a stethoscope against a teal background. The stethoscope is silver and black, with the chest piece resting on the teal fabric. The background is a solid teal color with a subtle texture.

Healthcare

Talent Demand Report 2025
Advancing San Diego

SAN DIEGO REGIONAL

EDC

Table of contents

San Diego's healthcare talent pipeline

Program overview

- [Advancing San Diego](#)
- [Employer working group](#)

Regional overview

- [Regional economy](#)
- [Healthcare economy](#)

Talent supply

- [The workforce of tomorrow](#)
- [K-12 career technical education](#)
- [Occupational training](#)
- [Community college](#)
- [Public universities](#)
- [RN program pass rates](#)

Talent demand

- [Nursing occupational demand](#)
- [Talent demand survey](#)
- [Respondent demographics](#)
- [Expected growth](#)
- [Supply and demand by position](#)
- [Future supply and demand](#)
- [Occupational snapshots](#)
- [General trends](#)
- [Clinical placements](#)
- [San Diego's military advantage](#)
- [Strengthening the pipeline](#)
- [Stay informed](#)

Program overview

Advancing San Diego

Advancing San Diego, a program of [San Diego Regional EDC](#), is a collaborative effort to **better prepare San Diegans for quality jobs via locally-serving education institutions** and expand access to diverse, qualified talent for San Diego companies.

Advancing San Diego is helping the region meet its [Inclusive Growth goals](#) by strengthening relationships between local industry and education systems. Better alignment between these systems will mean that the region can collectively prepare San Diegans for high-demand jobs, and local employers—many of which are small companies—can establish or expand recruitment relationships with locally-serving institutions.



Communicate industry demand

Regularly quantify & communicate broad regional workforce demand.



Expand access for San Diegans

Explore unique solutions to remove barriers to entry into quality jobs.



Adapt existing resources

Help adapt curriculum & workforce systems for better economic mobility.

Program overview

Employer working group

Through [Advancing San Diego](#)'s employer working groups (EWG), EDC gains a real-time understanding of the regional labor market.

The following Talent Demand Report is the culmination of the information gleaned from a series of EWG meetings and surveys intended to help San Diego training providers understand **regional demand for healthcare talent** and align curriculum to the needs of industry. Informed by in-depth conversations with and surveys from **nine key San Diego healthcare employers**, this report serves as a snapshot of local demand for skilled nursing talent.

Representing major healthcare facilities in the region, **these employers collectively employ more than 66,000 people in San Diego County.**



66K
jobs



90
locations



\$7B
revenue

EWG companies:



**FAMILY HEALTH CENTERS
OF SAN DIEGO**



**KAISER
PERMANENTE®**



**SAN YSIDRO
HEALTH**



UC San Diego Health

Regional overview

Regional economy

3.2M+

population
across 18 cities

\$261.7B

GRP
San Diego County

\$103K

median income
per household

The San Diego region is consistently recognized as a **leading life sciences market with an established tech and entrepreneurial ecosystem**, supported by distinguished universities and an **unrivaled quality of life**.

San Diego's economy—combined with the region's diverse communities, population, and global connectivity—supports the attraction and retention of top talent and **some of the world's most innovative companies**.



SAN DIEGO, CA

Regional overview

Healthcare economy

160K
jobs
in San Diego
County

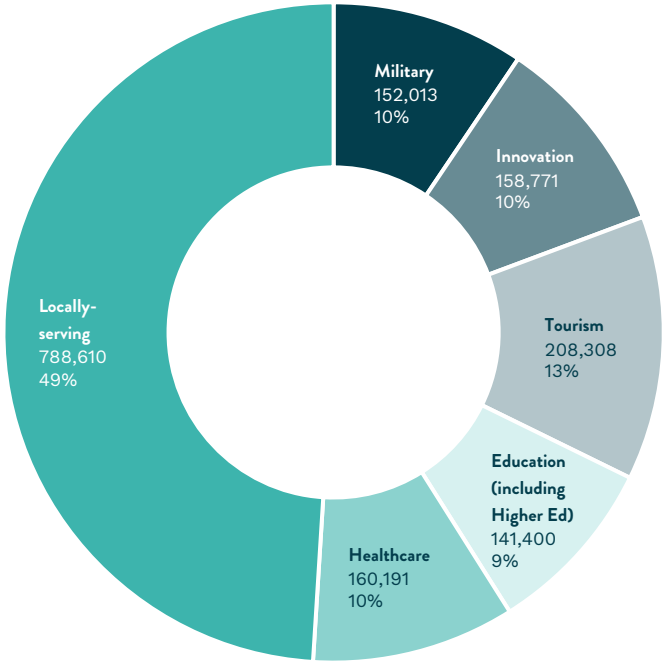
34K
openings
unique job
postings

\$85K
avg income
wages

Healthcare jobs account for 10 percent of San Diego’s total economy, resulting in a **\$23.8 billion annual economic impact**. For every 100 jobs created in healthcare, 69 jobs are created elsewhere in the economy.

Ambulatory healthcare services account for 60 percent of all healthcare jobs, followed by hospitals at 28 percent and nursing and residential care facilities at 12 percent.

San Diego employment breakdown, 2024



"Locally-serving" includes Finance, Real Estate, Insurance, Professional, Information, Construction, Social Assistance, Government, Transportation, Utilities, Manufacturing, Retail, Wholesale Trade, and Other Services.



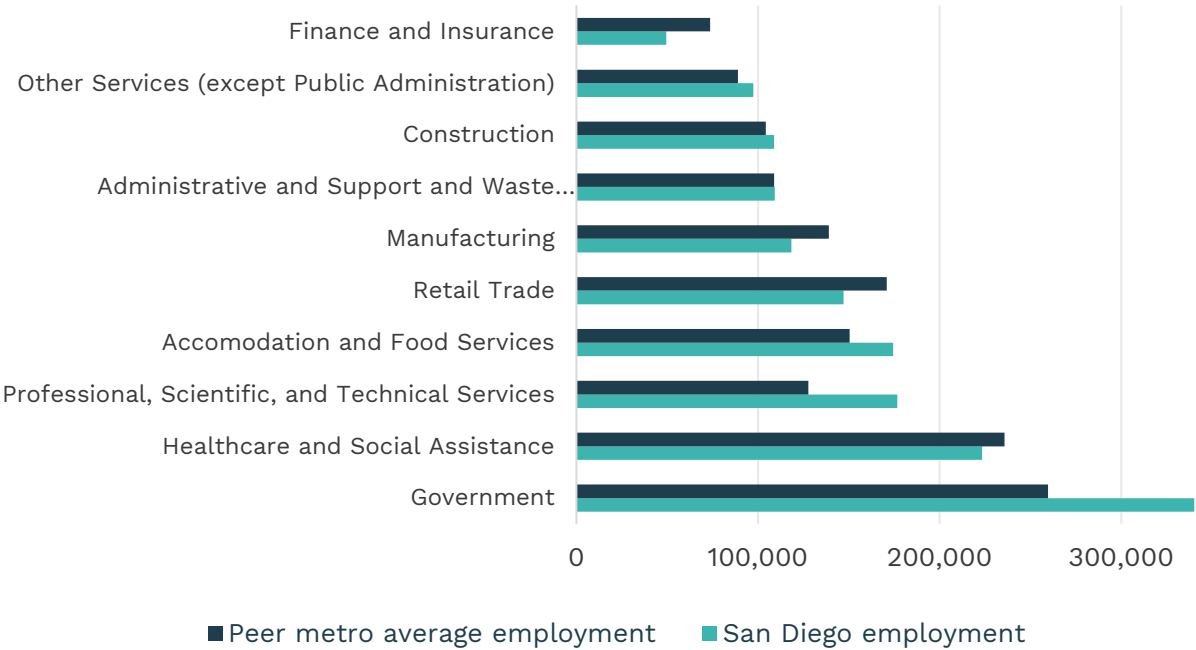
Average annual income for nurses is **\$98,570** in San Diego County, with Registered Nurses making **\$133,099** annually.

Regional overview

Healthcare economy

Healthcare and social assistance is the **second-largest sector in San Diego's economy**, underscoring its critical role in community wellbeing and economic resilience. Yet, the region slightly trails peer metros in healthcare employment share—signaling an opportunity for **strategic growth and targeted investment**.

Industry employment compared to peer metros



Source: Lightcast labor market information (Oct 2024- Sept 2025)

At the same time, a **national nursing shortage** and **aging population** are intensifying demand for skilled healthcare professionals. Addressing this challenge will require **creative, collaborative approaches** that expand training capacity, modernize clinical education, and strengthen connections between employers and educators. By working together, San Diego can position itself ahead of the curve in developing a sustainable healthcare workforce.

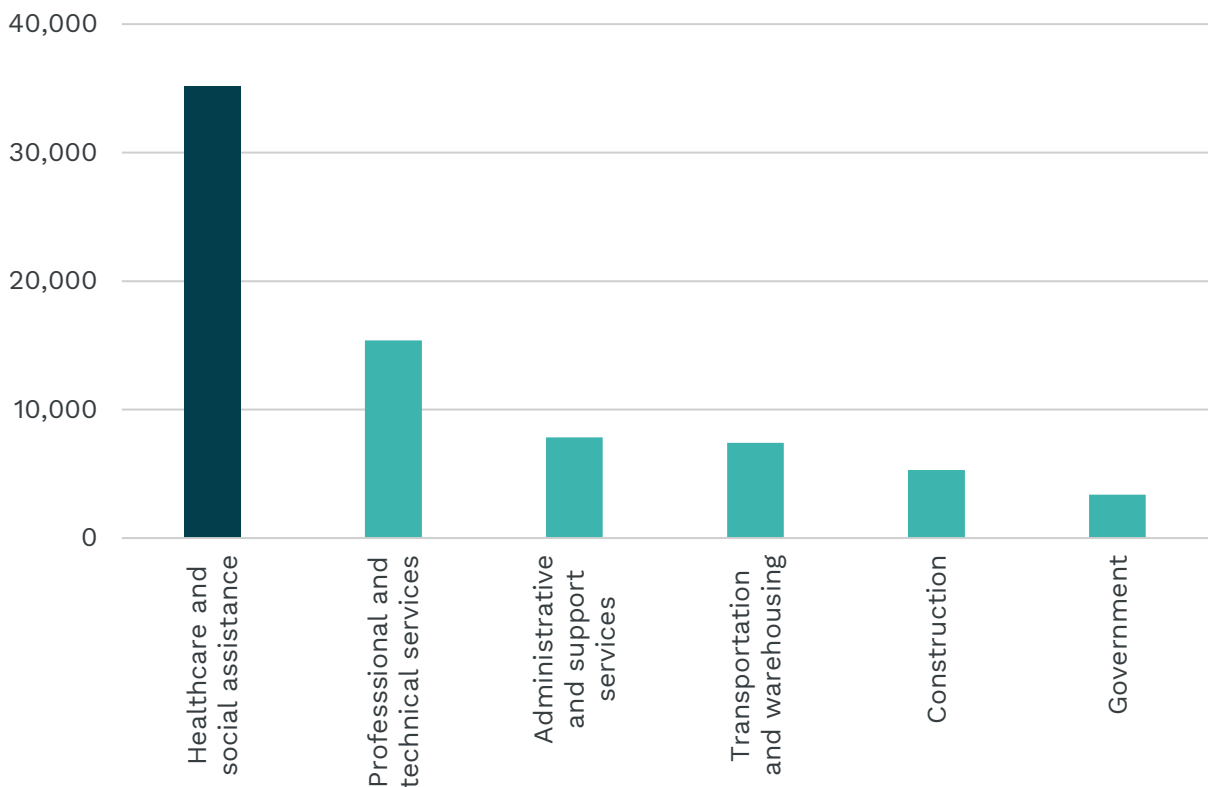
Regional overview

Healthcare economy

Over the past year, healthcare and social assistance have led all local job growth, adding jobs at more than **twice the rate of other key sectors**.

This growth underscores the sector's critical role in the region's economy and its continued ability to expand. However, much of this growth reflects **the increasing demand for care**, with a simultaneous workforce shortage. To support continued growth the region must urgently invest in its healthcare talent pipeline.

Job growth, September 2024 – September 2025



Source: Lightcast labor market information (Sept 2024- Sept 2025)



Healthcare job growth is outpacing local training capacity—creating both opportunity and urgency in upskilling the current workforce while backfilling with new grads.

Talent supply

The workforce of tomorrow

40.6K

grade 12
public enrollment,
2019-2020

35K

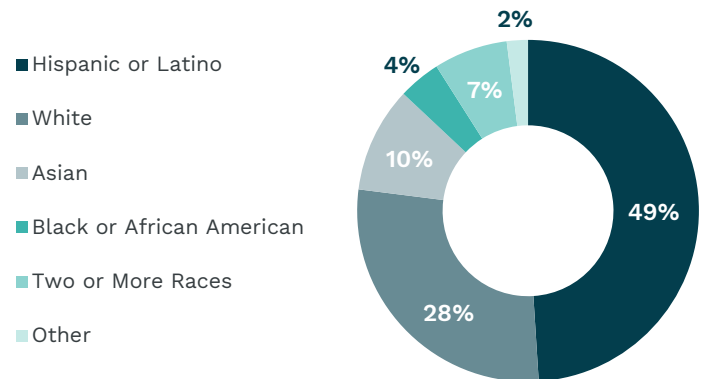
high school
graduates, 2023

20.8K

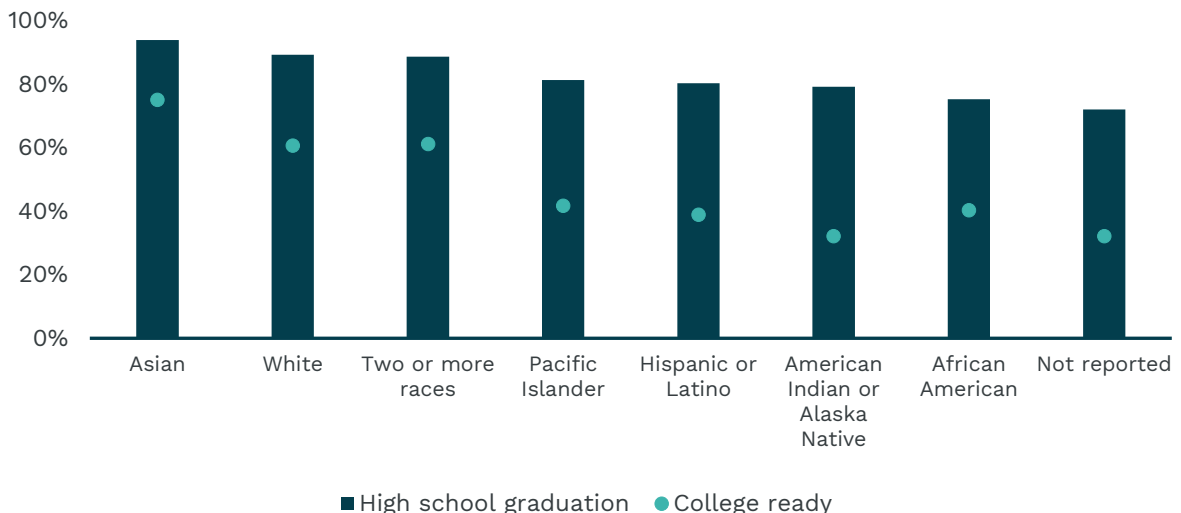
college-ready
graduates, 2023

As displayed in the figure to the right and the figure below, **current trends do not indicate pathways to success for all future workers.** As changing demographics and industry trends increase demand for skilled talent, we must ensure more San Diegans have access to post-secondary education.

K-12 demographics, 2022-2023



Graduation & college readiness rate, 2022-2023



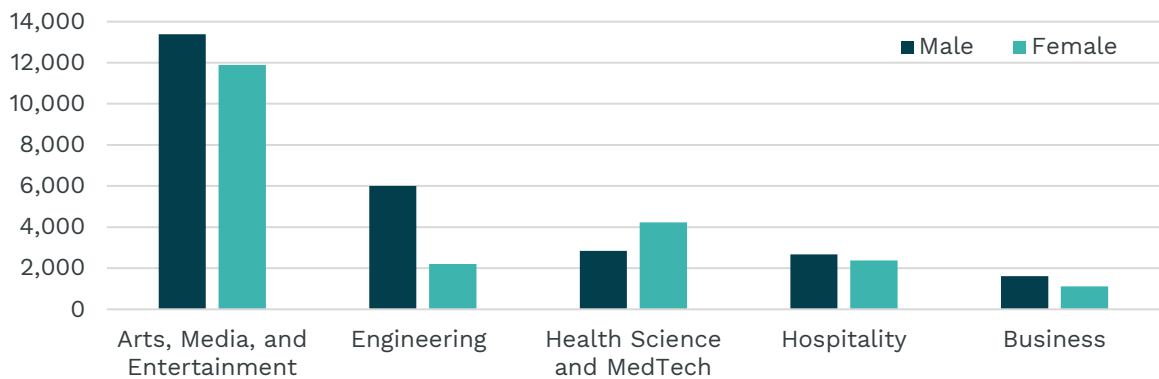
Source: CA Department of Education, 2023

Talent supply

K-12 Career Technical Education

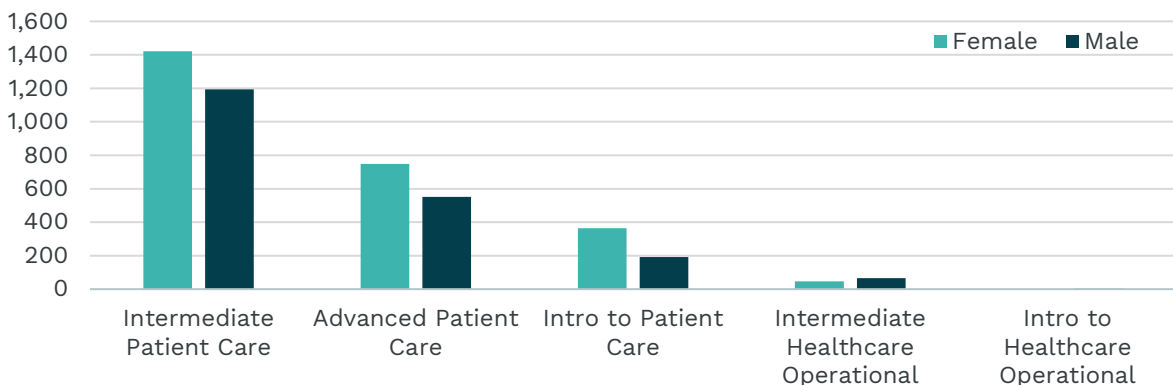
Interest in healthcare careers remains strong in K-12 students across San Diego County, with healthcare ranking as the **second most popular (CTE) pathway**, just behind engineering. Unlike many other sectors, **healthcare CTE programs show a relatively balanced gender split**, signaling equitable interest among students pursuing careers in care and health services. However, the current workforce does not yet reflect this balance, where nursing and many patient care roles remain **predominantly female-occupied**.

CTE enrollments, 2018-2019



Within healthcare CTE pathways, **patient care programs have the highest enrollment rate**, underscoring that most students are drawn to direct care roles such as nursing, rather than administrative or technical tracks. With a **strong foundation of interest** among K-12 students, these patterns present an **opportunity to guide that interest** into a broader range of healthcare careers—while also promoting greater gender balance across the industry as today's students transition into tomorrow's workforce.

Healthcare CTE enrollments, 2018-2019



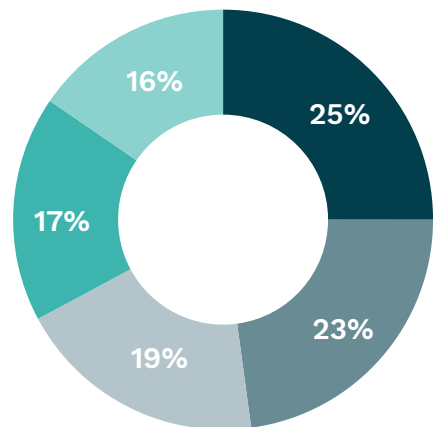
Talent supply

Occupational training

In 2023, there were more than 2,900 San Diego students in nursing occupation training across all institution types. **Enrollments are highest in non-traditional post-secondary training programs and private four-year universities**, which tend to have the highest tuition, making up nearly 50 percent of the market share. Registered nursing and medical assistant programs outpaced other nursing programs, comprising more than 80 percent of the market share collectively.

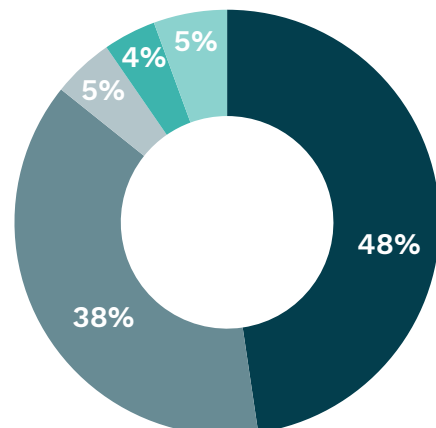
Market share by institution type

- Non-traditional post-secondary training
- Public, 4-year or above
- Private for-profit, 2-year
- Private for-profit, < 2-year
- Public, 2-year



Market share by program

- Registered Nursing
- Medical Assistant
- Nursing Assistant
- Pharmacy Technician
- Other



Talent supply

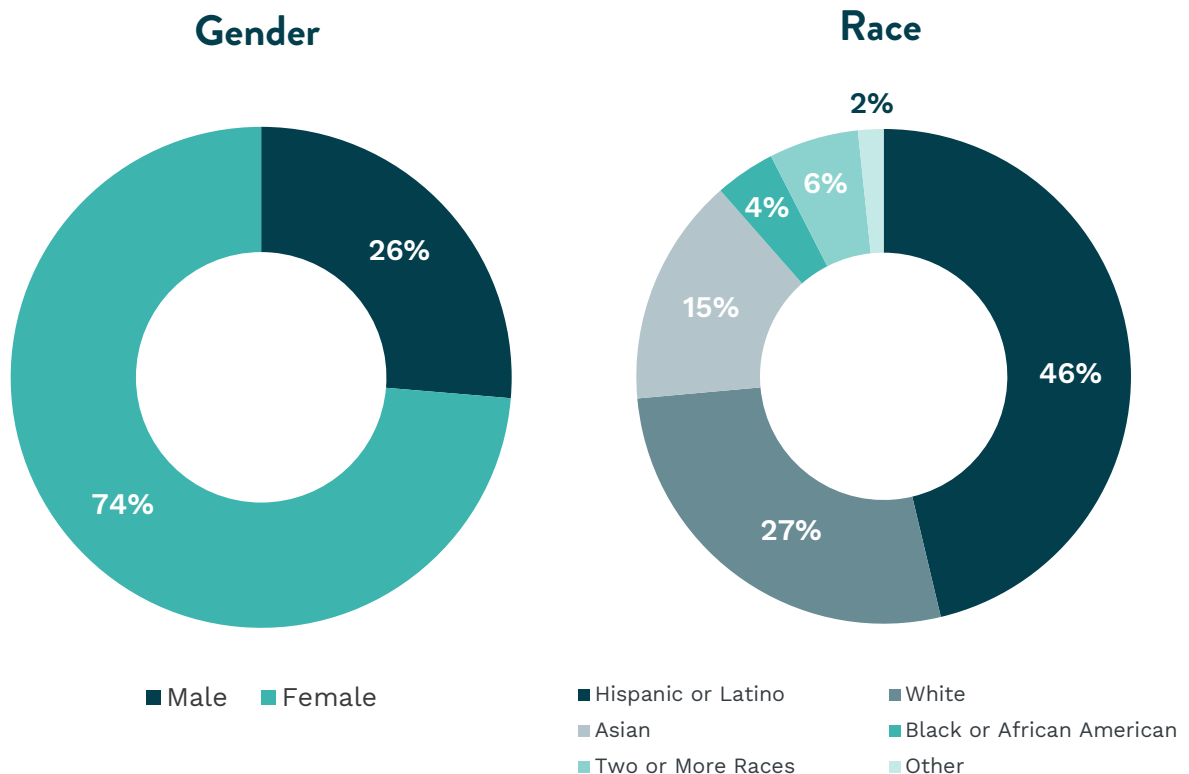
Community colleges

Community colleges serve as critical, **affordable entry points to both high-demand careers and further higher education**, offering flexible programs to student populations that more closely mirror San Diego's diversity.

Female students make up a **significantly higher number of enrollments** in regional community college healthcare programs. Male students represent about 26 percent of enrollments across all regional community colleges, and Southwestern College touts the most gender diverse nursing program at 34 percent male enrollment.

Additionally, community college student demographics more closely mirror the region's K-12 population than those of public universities, highlighting the accessibility of the community college system.

Regional community college nursing students



Talent supply

Public universities

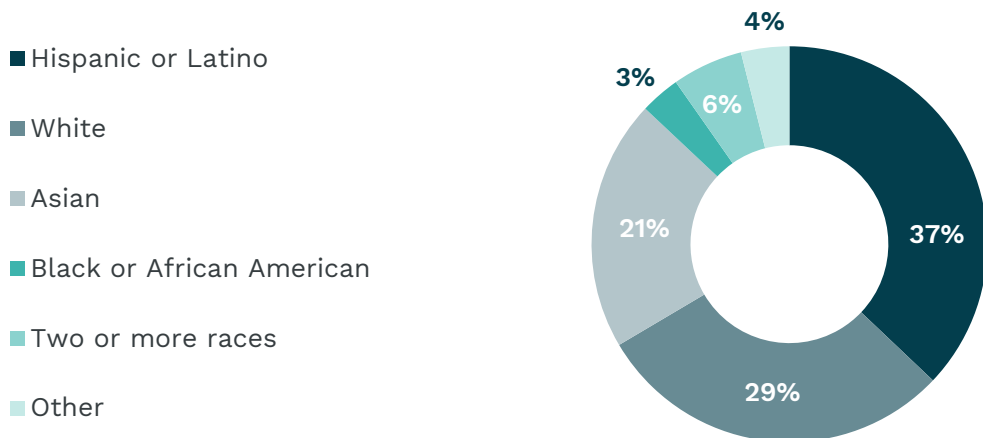
2,883 students enrolled in healthcare programs at public San Diego universities, 2024

20,699 unique job postings for healthcare nursing talent, September 2024 to September 2025

Public university healthcare enrollments by gender, 2024



Public university healthcare enrollments by race, 2024



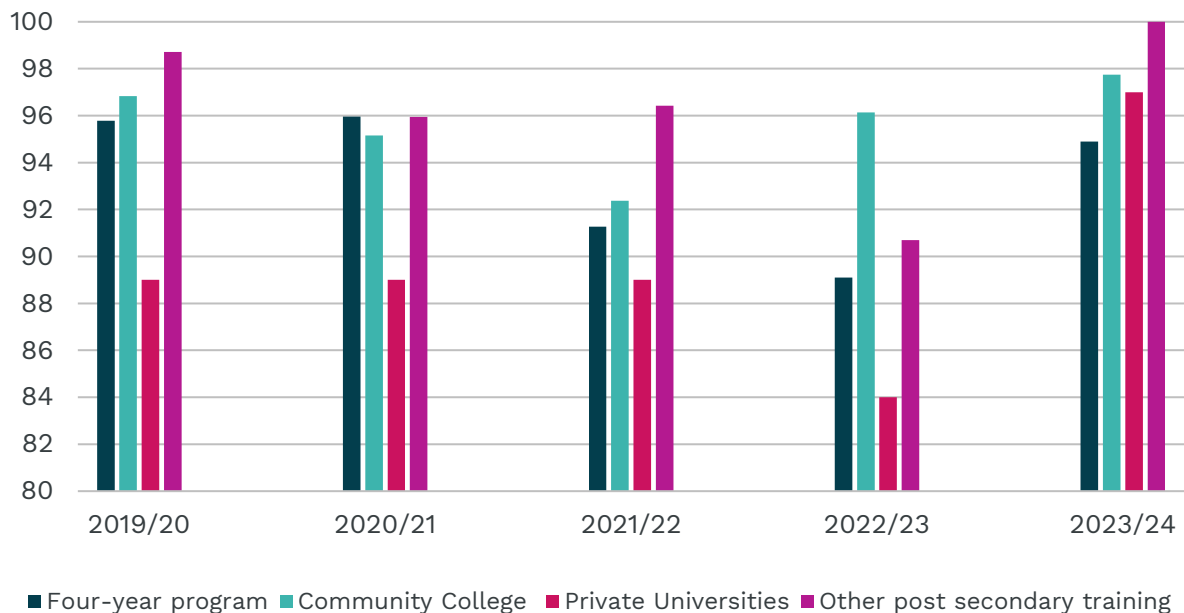
Talent supply

Pass rates for CA Board of Registered Nurses pre-licensure RN programs

San Diego's nursing education programs continue to demonstrate strong outcomes, with **NCLEX pass rates consistently above 90 percent** across both four-year and community college programs.

In recent years, **community colleges have even out-performed** the region's four-year institutions, underscoring the accessibility of high-quality nursing education available throughout the region.

NCLEX average pass rates for RN first-time testers by institution type



These results reflect **the strength of San Diego's diverse education ecosystem**, where collaboration between universities, community colleges, and clinical partners helps ensure new graduates are well prepared to meet the region's healthcare workforce needs.

Talent demand

Nursing occupation demand

55K

regional jobs
per year

1.66K

average monthly
job postings

\$98.5K

average
compensation

Healthcare remains one of San Diego's most in-demand and essential industries.

Within this sector, the need for Registered Nurses (RNs) continues to rise—mirroring both national and statewide trends. However, data provided by EDC's employer working group revealed a **shift in demand** from entry-level or new graduate positions **to specialty RN positions**.

This change in demand presents both a challenge and an opportunity. While regional and state investments in new graduate RN programs remain vital, the data underscore the importance of simultaneously **developing internal career ladders**—creating upskilling opportunities for incumbent nurses to advance into specialty roles while maintaining a steady flow of new graduates into the workforce.

By aligning education providers, healthcare systems, and workforce partners, San Diego can build a **sustainable nursing talent pipeline** that meets immediate employer needs without constraining long-term growth.



Hispanic, Latino, Black, and African American individuals are underrepresented in healthcare roles, indicating a need for investment in equitable access to strengthen the regional workforce.

Talent demand

Talent demand survey

EDC surveyed **nine regional healthcare employers** to identify priority nursing jobs and assess supply and demand for these roles.

Priority occupations include:

- Certified Nursing Assistant
- Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN)
- General Registered Nurse (RN)
- RN Manager/Supervisor
- Specialty RN (Hospital)
- Specialty RN (Non-hospital)
- Imaging Technologist

Key findings:

Like much of the nation, San Diego faces a **critical shortage of skilled nurses**, with the highest demand for **Registered Nurses (RNs)**. Employers surveyed emphasized this as their top workforce gap.

Labor market data confirms a regional RN shortage but doesn't capture the **growing need for specialized nurses**. Employers surveyed identified **Operating Room RNs** as the highest priority for specialty roles.

The region produces more new grad RNs than hospitals can currently hire, highlighting a need to **better align education with employer readiness standards**.

100 percent of surveyed employers said that **cross training Radiologic Technologists and Computed Tomography (CT) Technologists** would add value to their organization, emphasizing a need for additional Imaging Technologists (X-ray, CT, Sonography, etc.) in the region.

Talent demand

Respondent demographics

66.5K

**San Diegans
employed**

175+

locations

38%

**ANCC Magnet
hospitals**

Representing many of the region's largest healthcare systems, survey respondents collectively operate **more than 175 healthcare facilities** including hospitals, clinics, and specialty care centers, employing **more than 66,000 people across San Diego County**.

Notably, **38 percent of participating organizations are American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Magnet–designated hospitals**, reflecting a strong commitment to nursing excellence and high-quality patient care. The breadth and scale of these respondents provided a comprehensive view of the region's healthcare workforce needs and opportunities.

Participating healthcare employers played a critical role in shaping this analysis. Through detailed surveys and interviews, respondents helped **identify priority nursing roles**, shared **real-time data on current and projected demand**, and offered **insights that guided the expansion of this research** to include both **specialty RN positions** and **Imaging Technologist roles**.

Their on-the-ground expertise ensured that this report reflects the realities of San Diego's healthcare workforce and supports targeted, collaborative solutions to meet regional talent needs.



Insights from regional healthcare employers shaped this work, revealing rising demand for specialty RNs and guiding strategies to strengthen San Diego's nursing pipeline.

Talent demand

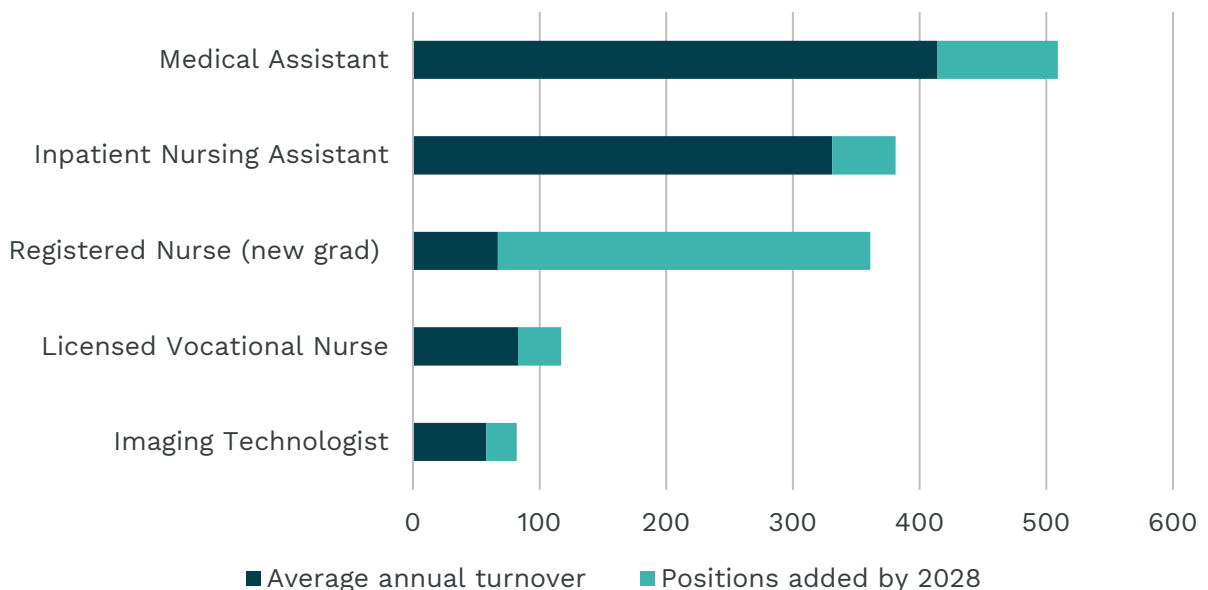
Expected growth by position

Surveyed healthcare employers reported anticipating continued growth across nursing and patient care roles across San Diego County through 2028, with the **largest number of new positions** expected to be **RNs** (nearly 300 new roles), followed by **Medical Assistants** (around 100 new roles).

While employment is expanding, **turnover remains high among Inpatient Nursing Assistants and Medical Assistants**, though it is not always clear whether these separations represent workers leaving the field or **transitioning into new or more advanced roles**.

These trends underscore the importance of **clear career pathways and upskilling opportunities** that help retain talent within San Diego's healthcare system while meeting the region's evolving workforce needs.

Anticipated growth by role



Source: Healthcare demand survey, 2025



Surveyed employers anticipate adding around 300 new grad RN positions in the next three years.

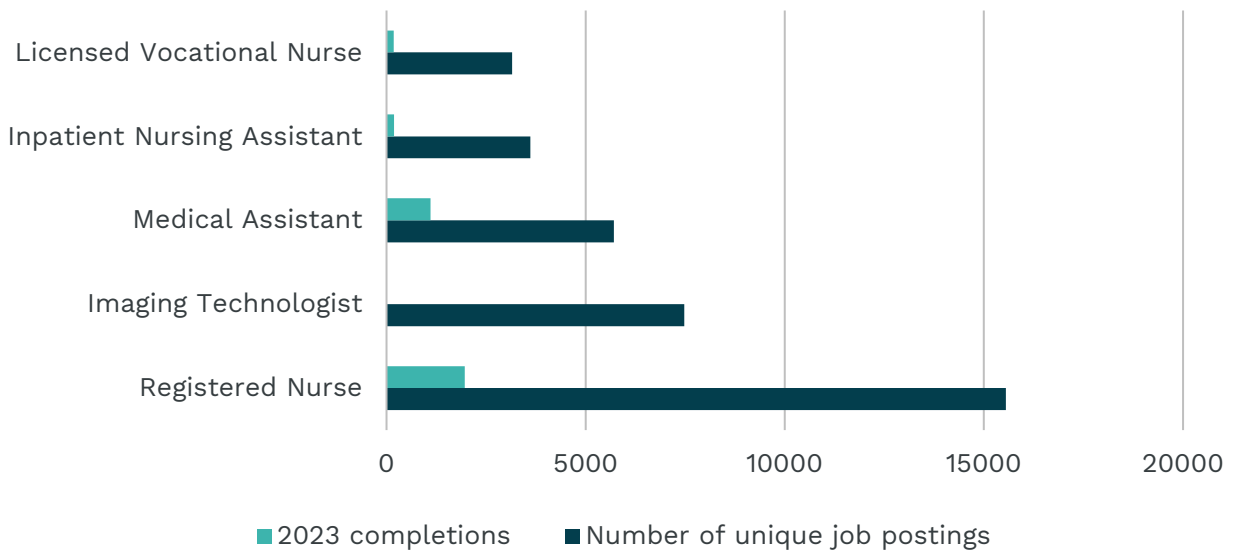
Talent demand

Supply and demand by position

Labor market data show a significant disconnect between the number of registered nurse job postings and local program completions, with more than **15,000 postings in 2024** compared to around **2,000 graduates**. This gap underscores the scale of regional workforce demand for registered nurses.

This is the data most readily available to education institutions and policy makers as they plan to meet regional demand—yet it captures only part of the story.

Supply and demand by position



Employer working group members revealed that **actual regional demand for RNs even exceeds what job postings suggest**, particularly for experienced and specialty RNs.

This disconnect between available data and real time hiring needs points to the need for **stronger alignment between labor market intelligence, employer insight, and education planning**.

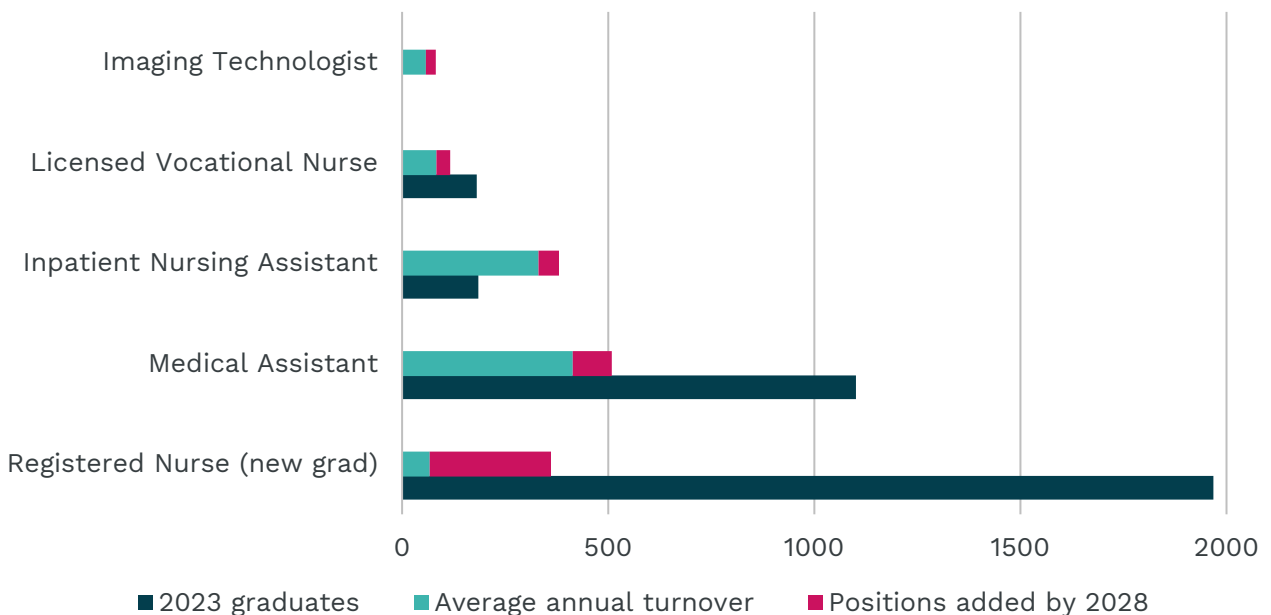
Talent demand

Anticipated supply and demand by position

San Diego institutions continue to produce a strong pipeline of healthcare talent, particularly in Medical Assistant and RN programs with nearly 2,000 graduates per year—**far exceeding the roughly 300 new graduate nursing positions surveyed employers expect to create over the next three years.**

While traditional labor market data shows more than 15,000 job postings for RNs in 2024, these postings reflect demand for **experienced and specialty nurses, not just entry-level roles.** This misalignment illustrates how readily available labor market data—often the primary source for education institutions and policy makers—can paint a misleading picture of actual workforce needs. Integrating **real-time employer insights** into workforce planning is essential to accurately identify critical roles, tailor training pathways, and ensure regional investments align with both current and anticipated demand.

Anticipated demand and program completions



Source: Healthcare demand survey, 2025 and program completion data, 2023
Note – While the original survey referenced Radiology Technicians, subsequent employer input confirmed that Radiologic Technologists more accurately reflects the priority role.



RN graduates currently outpace projected demand, emphasizing the region's need to focus on retention and structured career advancement pathways.

Talent demand

Occupational snapshot: Medical Assistant



Certificate
required
credential



\$12.5K
average
training cost



9 months
average training
duration



1.9K
current
positions



\$57K
average
salary

Hiring difficulty:

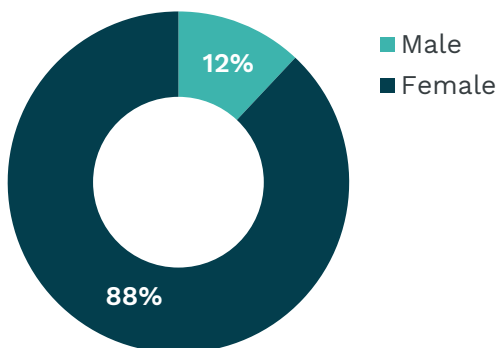
80 percent of respondents noted **professional readiness was the top qualification challenge** for Medical Assistants.

Top qualification challenges:

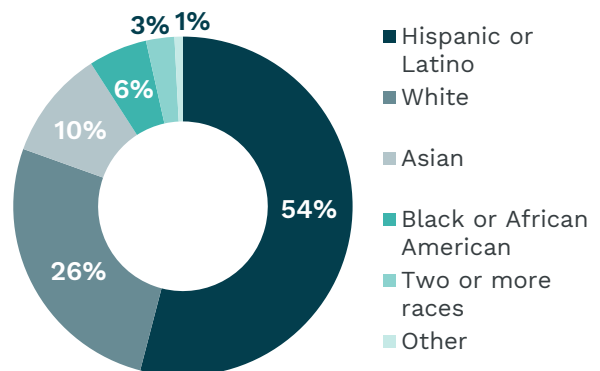
33 percent of respondents noted **missing specific skills** as a challenge.

Source: Healthcare demand survey, 2025

Jobs by gender



Jobs by race



Source: Lightcast labor market data, Oct 2025



67 percent of respondents noted it is “somewhat easy” to find candidates that are qualified and have adequate job expectations.

Talent demand

Occupational snapshot: Inpatient Nursing Assistant



Certificate
required
credential



\$1K
average
training cost



4 weeks
average training
duration



1.8K
current
positions



\$43.5K
average
salary

Hiring difficulty:

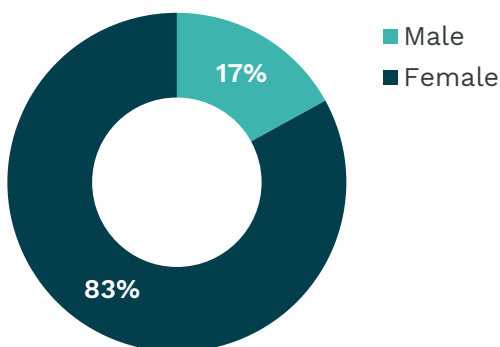
66 percent of respondents noted it is **“very easy” to find candidates, but they are often unqualified** and lack accurate job expectations.

Top qualification challenges:

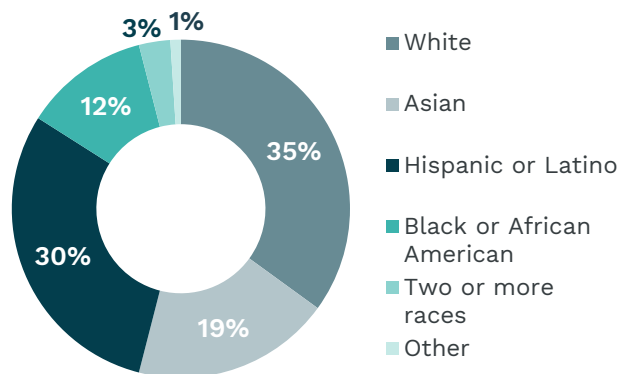
80 percent of respondents noted **soft skills or professional readiness** were the top qualification challenge.

Source: Healthcare demand survey, 2025

Jobs by gender



Jobs by race



Source: Lightcast labor market data, Oct 2025



66 percent of survey respondents noted **limited clinical or bedside experience** as a challenge.

Talent demand

Occupational snapshot: Licensed Vocational Nurse



Certificate
required
credential



\$15K
average
training cost



14 months
average training
duration



560
current
positions



\$80K
average
salary

Hiring difficulty:

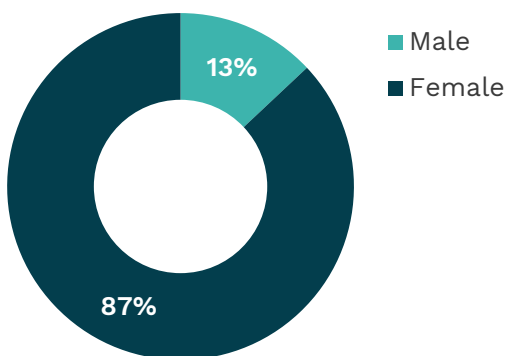
67 percent of respondents noted it is **“difficult”** to find candidates that are qualified and have adequate job expectations.

Top qualification challenges:

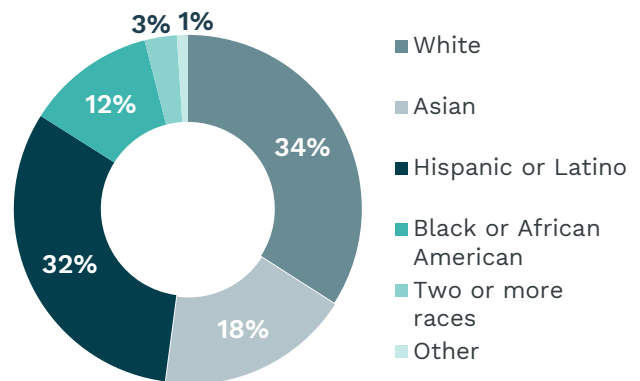
50 percent of respondents noted **lack of formal training and credentials** and **soft skills or professional readiness** as the top qualification challenges.

Source: Healthcare demand survey, 2025

Jobs by gender



Jobs by race



Source: Lightcast labor market data, Oct 2025



More than half of San Diego's Licensed Vocational Nurses have some college experience but no degree.

Talent demand

Occupational snapshot: Registered Nurse (new grad)



Bachelor's
required
credential



\$58.4K
average
training cost



3 years
average training
duration



419
current
positions



\$115K
average
salary

Hiring difficulty:

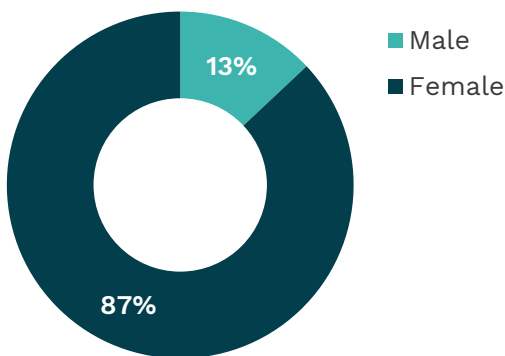
75 percent of respondents noted that **the market is oversaturated** with newly graduated RNs.

Top qualification challenges:

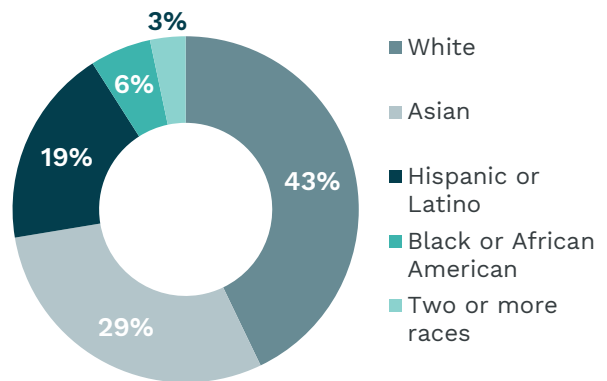
50 percent of respondents noted **limited clinical or bedside experience** as a challenge.

Source: Healthcare demand survey, 2025

Jobs by gender



Jobs by race



Source: Lightcast labor market data, Oct 2025



75 percent of respondents noted it is “very easy” to find candidates that are qualified and have adequate job expectations.

Talent demand

Registered Nurse

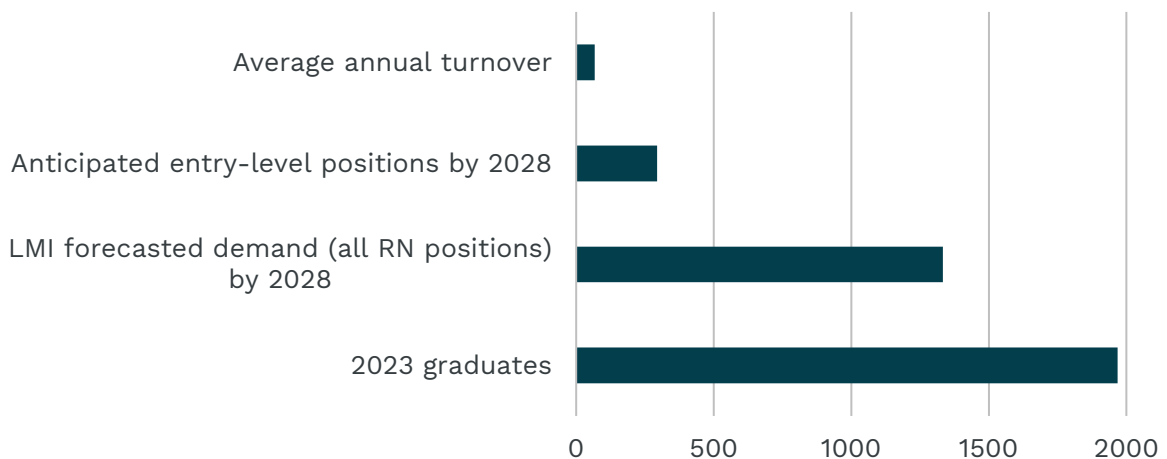
Demand for specialty RNs in the region is not fully captured by traditional labor market information (LMI), which combine new graduate and specialty roles under a single SOC code.

While LMI points to general RN shortages, feedback from EDC's employer working group revealed a more **acute need for nurses with advanced clinical experience** in Operating Room, ICU/Critical Care, Labor and Delivery, Emergency Department, and Cardiac settings.

Although LMI forecasts approximately 1,300 RN openings by 2028, local programs are already graduating close to 2,000 new RNs each year—far surpassing projected demand for entry-level roles. This oversupply contrasts sharply with the persistent shortage of specialty-trained nurses, reinforcing the need to better align training pathways with real employer needs.

This misalignment underscores the importance of maintaining a strong nursing pipeline while also **accelerating pathways into specialty roles**.

Registered Nurse demand



Source: Healthcare demand survey, 2025 and program completion data 2023



Labor market data often combines new graduate and specialized RN roles under a single SOC code, masking the true demand for specialized roles.

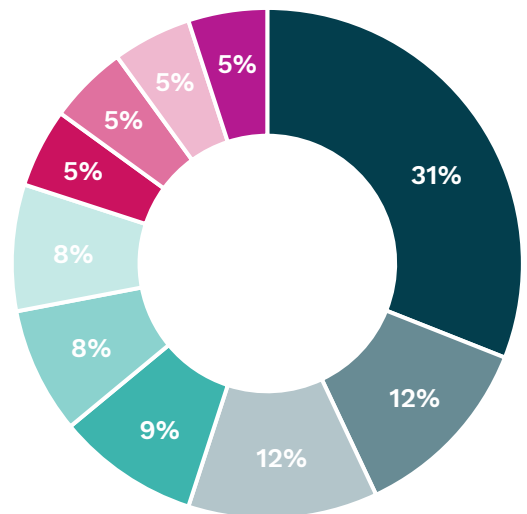
Talent demand

Registered Nurse

Incumbent worker training provides a valuable opportunity to strengthen nursing pathways by advancing individuals who already have clinical experience and understand organizational norms. Supporting transitions from roles such as LVNs, new RNs, and other healthcare positions—including Medical and Health Services Managers, who represent the largest feeder group nationally at 31 percent—is critical to meeting both current and anticipated demand.

Percent of transitions to RN by previous position

- Medical and Health Services Managers
- Nursing Assistants
- Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other
- Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses
- Postsecondary Teachers
- Nurse Practitioners
- Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive
- General and Operations Managers
- Home Health and Personal Care Aides
- Medical Assistants



Source: Lightcast, September 2025



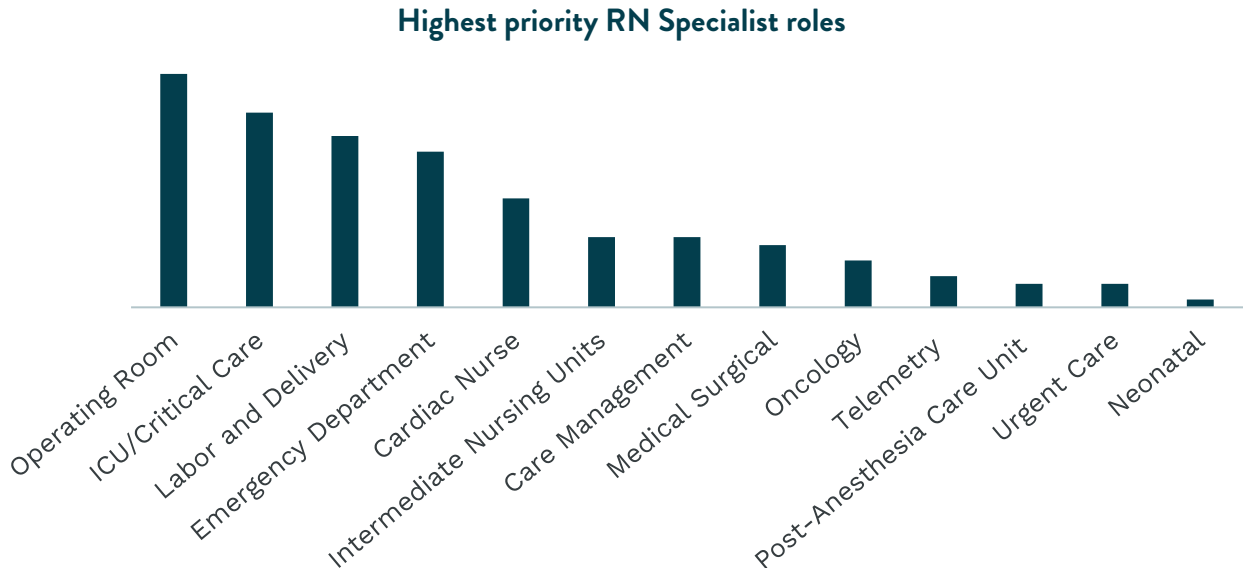
Incumbent workers offer a ready talent pool for advancing into high-demand nursing roles.

Talent demand

Specialty RN

Surveyed employers ranked **Operating Room, ICU/Critical Care, and Labor and Delivery nurses as their highest priorities**, followed closely by Emergency Department and Cardiac Nurses. These findings highlight the continued regional need for RNs with advanced clinical experience in acute and specialty care settings.

As demand for these roles grows, there is an opportunity to strengthen the nursing talent pipeline by **building specialty preparation into existing training and career advancement models**. Developing bridge programs or targeted upskilling opportunities for incumbent nurses—such as LVNs or new grad RNs—could help improve retention and accelerate readiness for these in-demand clinical areas. It would also open entry-level roles to ensure the region can retain as many new graduates as possible, ensuring the long-term health of the talent pipeline.



Source: Healthcare demand survey, 2025
Values reflect weighted rankings based on employer survey responses



Operating Room RNs were identified as the highest priority by 100 percent of surveyed employers, underscoring the critical need for training talent for this role.

Talent demand

Occupational snapshot: Entry-level Imaging Technologist



Bachelor's
required
credential



\$58.4K
average
training cost



9 months
average training
duration



415
current
positions



\$57K
average
salary

Hiring difficulty:

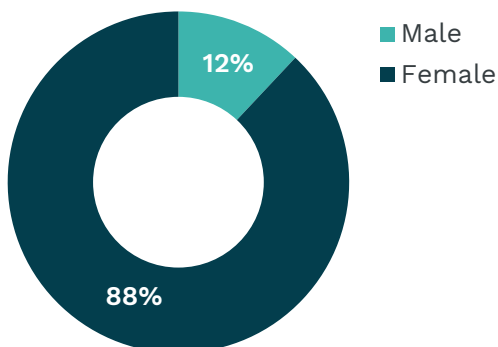
80 percent of respondents noted it is “**somewhat**” or “**very difficult**” to find **candidates** that are qualified and have adequate job expectations.

Top qualification challenges:

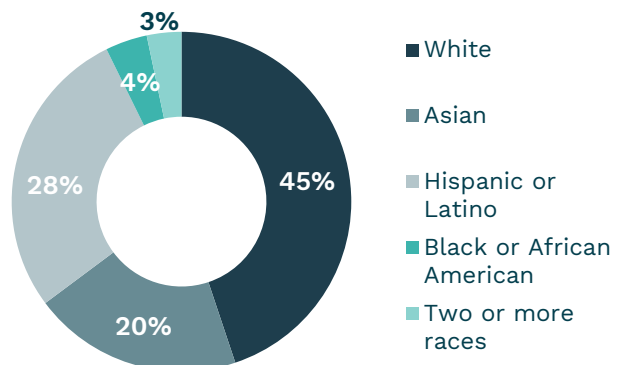
60 percent of respondents noted **limited clinical/bedside experience** as the top qualification challenge for entry-level Imaging Technologists.

Source: Healthcare demand survey, 2025

Jobs by gender



Jobs by race



Source: Lightcast labor market data, Oct 2025



40 percent of respondents noted **missing specific skills** as a challenge.

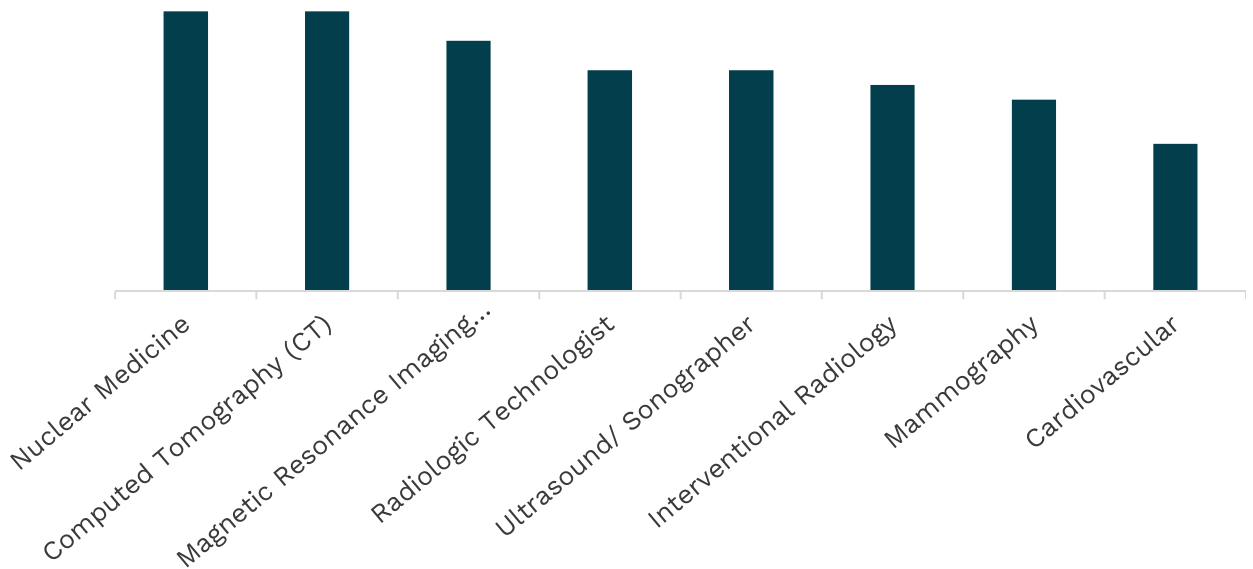
Talent demand

Imaging Technologists

Surveyed employers identified **Computed Tomography (CT) and Nuclear Medicine Technologists** as their highest priority for Imaging Technologists, reflecting strong demand for professionals with advanced imaging and diagnostic capabilities. **MRI Technologists** ranked close behind, followed by **Radiologic Technologists (RTs)** and **Ultrasound/Sonographers**, which remain essential for meeting daily imaging service needs across the region's hospitals and outpatient facilities.

Together, these top five roles represent the most pressing focus areas for workforce development and training alignment in San Diego's imaging workforce.

Highest priority Imaging Technologist roles



Source: Healthcare demand survey, 2025
Values reflect weighted rankings based on employer survey responses



100 percent of survey respondents said that cross training RTs and CTs would add value to their organization, followed by more than 60 percent citing cross training RTs for mammography.

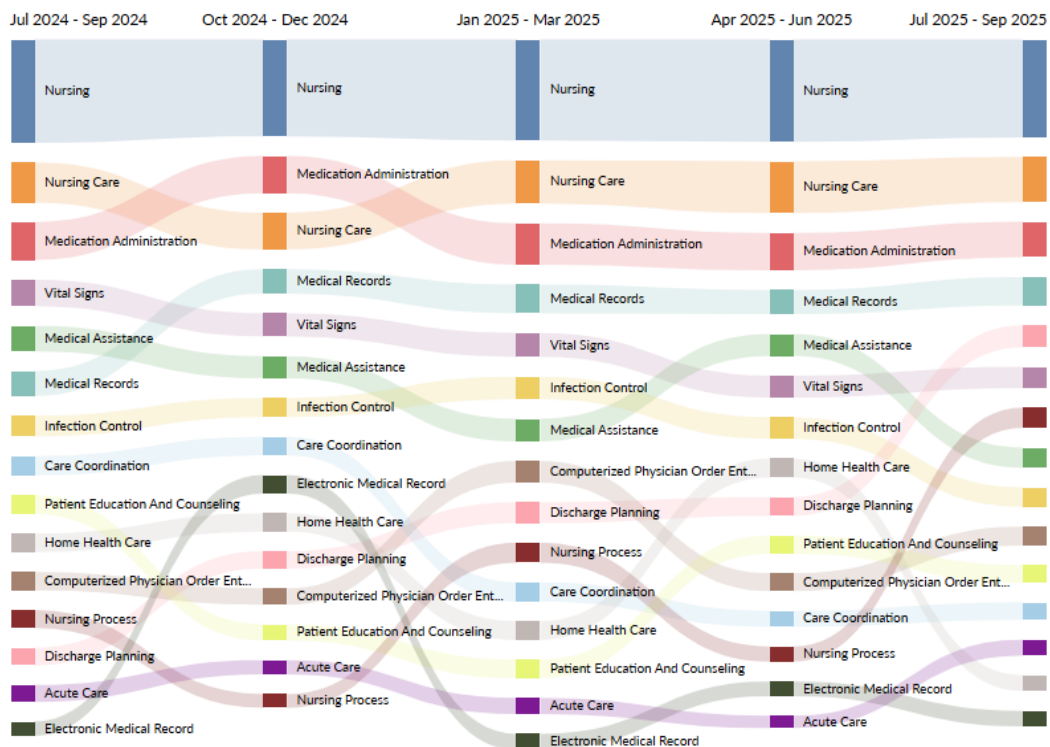
Talent demand

General trends

Healthcare employers across the region reported that even entry-level nursing roles increasingly require **strong technical and clinical skills**. The most in-demand hard skills include **nursing fundamentals, medication administration, and medical records**, reflecting the complex needs of today's patient care settings.

Surveyed employers emphasized the value of **bedside and clinical experience**, noting that hands-on practice is essential for success in both general and specialty nursing roles.

To bridge experience and skill gaps, healthcare systems are creating **mentorship programs, and internal training opportunities** to help new nurses build confidence and advance within their organizations.



This chart highlights the most in-demand skills from unique job postings between September 2024 and September 2025. Each skill (highlighted in different colors) is tracked based on how often the skill is mentioned in job postings for nursing roles in San Diego.

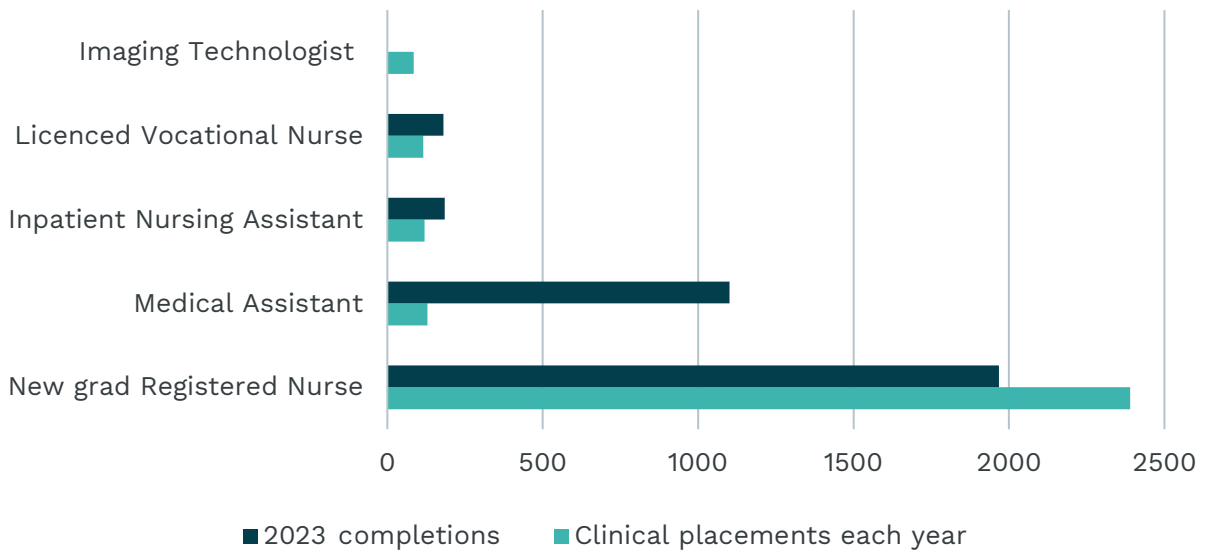
Talent demand

Clinical placements

New graduate RN programs account for the largest share of both completions and clinical placements in the region—far exceeding other healthcare roles.

However, despite the high volume of placements, **most employers hire less than half of the students they host**, underscoring the need for better communication between education and industry.

Completions and clinical placements by role



Source: Education websites and Healthcare demand survey, 2025

These findings highlight the importance of **maintaining and expanding clinical training opportunities** to keep pace with demand.

Strengthening preceptor support, streamlining onboarding, and exploring shared or coordinated placement models will be key to ensuring that San Diego's healthcare system continues to **produce and retain the skilled nurses it needs** while avoiding bottlenecks in the training-to-employment pipeline.

Talent demand

San Diego's military advantage

As one of the largest military communities in the nation, San Diego's active-duty service members and veterans **represent a critical—and often underleveraged—source of healthcare talent**. According to the Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research, more than 6,000 skilled San Diegans transitioned from military service to the civilian workforce in 2020, many of whom bring experience, discipline, and technical expertise that align closely with regional healthcare needs.

The **Enlisted Corpsman (EC)** pathway equips corpsmen with extensive hands-on training—often exceeding that of civilian LVN trainees. This positions them as strong candidates for **accelerated transitions into RN roles**, which the region can leverage by expanding EC-to-RN bridge programs in partnership with local colleges and healthcare systems. Additionally, the **Duty Under Instruction** program at the U.S. Navy Medical Center allows military RNs to pursue advanced education and specialization while maintaining their service commitments, providing a model for upskilling within the military healthcare system.

Together, these programs underscore the unique opportunity San Diego has to **connect its military and civilian healthcare ecosystems**, ensuring that those who have served our nation continue to serve the community—this time as part of a skilled, diverse, and future-ready healthcare workforce.



Talent demand

Strengthening the Specialty RN pipeline

Challenge:

Regional demand for Specialty RNs exceeds pipeline availability and hospitals' internal training capacity.

Solution:

Launch an incumbent worker training program in partnership with at least one regional hospital and a third-party training provider to upskill cohorts of 20-30 current RNs into critical specialty roles, starting with Operating Room RNs.

Goals:

- **Allocate local training and funding resources** to better align with industry need and alleviate existing burden on hospitals to upskill internally.
- With improved talent flow, **open additional new grad RN positions** to retain local graduates.
- In the future, **equip new RN graduates** with essential skills and experience for immediate placement in specialty positions, shortening the time to fulfill employer needs.

Source: Healthcare demand survey, 2025



Picture credit: San Diego & Imperial Counties Community College Association

Talent demand

Strengthening the Imaging Technologist Pipeline

Challenge:

Limited regional training programs for imaging roles due to high equipment and training costs despite being critical for regional employers. **Hospital often train internally** or hire from outside San Diego to meet demand.

Solution:

Strengthen alignment between regional employers and training institutions through an apprenticeship model that lightens the cost for education providers. **Explore education and hospital partnerships** to expand shared training programs and reduce equipment costs. Collaborate with a third-party provider to **cross-train students** as both Radiation Technologists (RT) and Computed Tomography (CT) Technologists.

Goals:

- **Expand the regional pipeline** of Imaging Technologists.
- **Improve employer ROI and career competitiveness** of Imaging Technologists through cross-trained RT/CT talent.

Source: Healthcare demand survey, 2025



Talent demand

Clinical placements



80 percent of respondents identified **preceptor availability** as the **biggest challenge** in hosting clinical placements.



Limited capacity/facility constraints was noted as a challenge, specifically for LVN placements.



Most **hospitals host RN clinicals quarterly**, lasting an average of eight weeks. Imaging clinicals are the longest, averaging 17 weeks across employer programs.



80 percent of respondents hire less than a quarter of the MA students they host. **100 percent hire less than half** of the RN students they host.

Clinical placements are a critical component of the healthcare talent pipeline, yet many regional employers report ongoing challenges in sustaining and expanding access to these opportunities.

80 percent of respondents identified preceptor availability as the biggest barrier to hosting clinical students, particularly in high-demand nursing programs.

While **facility constraints was the primary barrier cited for LVN placements**, the broader issue of clinical capacity affects nearly all healthcare pathways.

Advancing San Diego

Stay up to date on regional talent demand & programs



Learn more about San Diego's talent demand:
advancingsd.org



Connect with our talent initiatives team:
talent@sandiegobusiness.org



Connect with us on social:
[San Diego Regional EDC](#)



Visit our website:
sandiegobusiness.org