

Why Public Safety?

Most public safety related jobs offer competitive wages, comprehensive benefit packages, and many career advancement opportunities. Developing a quality public safety workforce across a full spectrum of occupations is crucial for the health and safety of the state's residents as well a vital component to California's economic health.

Within California's 114 community colleges, public safety occupations are an important and substantial element of career technical education programs. In the 2015-2016 academic year, community colleges accounted for approximately 38,500 full-time equivalent students and more than 12,700 graduates in public safety related programs.

What makes up Public Safety?

For this report, 'public safety' as an industry refers to public or government employment in police and fire protection, courts, legal counsel and prosecution, and correctional institutions and parole/probation offices; in private sector employment, ambulance services and investigation and security services are the most relevant subsectors for the occupations profiled.



Police and Fire Protection — Government establishments primarily engaged in criminal and civil law enforcement, police, traffic safety, and other activities related to law enforcement and preservation of order. Also included are establishments engaged in fire fighting and other related fire protection activities as well as those providing combined fire protection and ambulance or rescue services.



Correctional Institutions and Parole/Probation Offices — Government establishments primarily engaged in managing and operating correctional institutions as well as establishments primarily engaged in judicially administering probation offices, parole offices and boards, and pardon boards.



Ambulance Services — Private sector establishments engaged in providing transportation of patients by ground or air, along with medical care. These services are often provided during a medical emergency but are not restricted to emergencies.



Courts, Legal Counsel and Prosecution — Civilian courts of law (except Indian tribal and Alaska Native). Included are civilian courts, courts of law, sheriffs' offices conducting court functions only and establishments providing legal counsel or prosecution services for the government, such as attorney generals' offices, public defenders' offices, district attorneys' offices, and/or public prosecutors' offices.



Investigation and Security Services — This industry group comprises establishments primarily engaged in investigation, guard, and armored car services; selling security systems, such as burglar and fire alarms and locking devices, along with installation, repair, or monitoring services; or remote monitoring of electronic security alarm systems.

Quick Facts

- Public Safety occupations account for more than half a million jobs in California, comprising 3% of employment in the state and 12% of the public safety employment in the nation.
- Most of the public safety workforce is between the ages of 25 and 54 (80%) and a majority are male (70%).
- Across California 97 community colleges offer about 650 certificate and degree options for students considering careers in public safety.
- The projected annual demand for firefighters totals 1,469 but the number of Firefighter 1 Certifications issued by community college fire academies in 2015-16 was just 439 — a potential gap of 1,039 annually.²
- The projected annual demand for police and sheriff's patrol officers totals 3,501 but community college police academies graduated 1,289 students in 2015-16 — a potential gap of 2,212 annually.²

¹According to California's Employment Development Department's Labor Market Information Division, employment counts for public safety agencies are included under local and state government estimates and are not typically reported as a subset but rather as a combined aggregate. As a result, it is not possible to estimate industry employment totals for public safety. ²Data does not account for graduates of police and fire academies conducted by public agencies outside of community colleges.

Where are the Jobs?

The regional employment of public safety occupations generally follows a population density pattern. Looking forward to 2021, however, growth and declines in employment are not always as predictable.

In the chart to the right, the California Community Colleges' 15 economic regions are shown with the estimated combined occupational employment for 2016, the projected growth and the rate of growth (%) through 2021. It is important to note that these employment data do not include replacement needs by occupation for the period, rather they are representative of anticipated job creation for the period. Data in table sorted in descending order by absolute projected change.



PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYMENT BY COMMUNITY COLLEGE REGION

Region	2016 Employment	2016-2021 Projected Growth	2016-2021 % Growth
Los Angeles County	134,674	9,001	7%
San Diego/Imperial	47,179	4,092	9%
Inland Empire/Desert	44,565	5,633	13%
Greater Sacramento	34,687	3,037	9%
Orange County	31,961	2,146	7%
Central Valley - South	31,279	2,378	8%
East Bay	28,939	2,405	8%
Mid-Peninsula	28,246	2,397	8%
South Central Coast	23,773	1,437	6%
Silicon Valley	22,473	2,129	9%
Central Valley - North	16,288	1,565	10%
North Bay	14,718	1,757	12%
Northern Inland	7,770	489	6%
Santa Cruz/Monterey	7,734	819	11%
Northern Coastal	4,581	295	6%
California	484,261	40,804	8%

What Occupations are in Demand?

In the next few years, the public safety sector will need professionals with varying levels of education. The table below shows projected demand over a five-year period (2016-2021) for a workforce skilled in a variety of public safety fields. Data in the table is sorted in descending order by annual openings.

OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK FOR PUBLIC SAFETY OCCUPATIONS

Job Title	2016 Employment	5-year Growth	% Growth	Replacements	Total Openings	Annual Openings	Entry-Level Annual Wage
Security Guards	158,627	14,194	9%	106,784	121,409	24,282	\$20,958
Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers	76,500	4,448	6%	26,260	30,755	6,151	\$61,006
Correctional Officers & Jailers	39,058	2,980	8%	15,144	18,185	3,637	\$48,797
Firefighters	31,158	1,860	6%	10,702	12,591	2,518	\$39,354
EMTs & Paramedics	19,122	3,886	20%	5,107	9,063	1,813	\$22,277
Detectives & Criminal Investigators	12,878	448	3%	4,576	5,026	1,005	\$71,261
Police, Fire & Ambulance Dispatchers	7,368	326	4%	3,345	3,692	738	\$39,887
Supervisors of Correctional Officers	4,830	306	6%	1,614	1,928	386	\$82,098
Supervisors of Police & Detectives	3,833	418	11%	1,283	1,702	340	\$80,350
Forensic Science Technicians	2,096	313	15%	1,259	1,572	314	\$47,397
Supervisors of Fire & Prevention Workers	2,340	247	11%	721	971	194	\$61,131
Fire Inspectors & Investigators	905	68	8%	486	555	111	\$56,264
Emergency Management Directors	886	65	7%	316	382	76	\$75,005
Fish & Game Wardens	403	26	6%	172	203	41	\$52,853
Transit & Railroad Police	475	28	6%	163	192	38	\$40,019

How are Industry Trends Affecting the Public Safety Workforce?

In public safety fields, occupational regulations and policies, new technologies, and homeland security concerns continuously reshape the workplace and responsibilities of public safety professionals. These include, but are not limited to:

Emerging Trends

- Growth of intelligence policing, which harnesses the power of information for use by an officer in deciding on the best course of action in solving or preventing crimes.
- Growth of predictive policing which matches criminal intelligence with crime statistics and intangible factors to help predict where the risk of crime is highest in the future, so policing becomes more future-oriented and proactive.
- Enhancing communication and information sharing that improves the gathering and assessing of essential information.
- Developing partnerships across jurisdictions with municipal, county, state and federal law enforcement agencies and other governmental agencies that results in more effective policing.

Emerging Specialist Careers

- Crime/Intelligence Analysts
- Forensic Science technicians
- Crime Prevention/Predictive Analytics Specialists
- Community/Neighborhood Outreach Specialists

Emerging Skill Areas

- Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) especially, computer programming and information security.
- Analytical intelligence and crime analysis, specifically with crime statistics, mapping and systematic observations.
- Artificial intelligence
- Homeland security
- Social media

What Education and Training is Typically Required in California?

In the next few years, the public safety sector will need professionals with varying levels of education and training. Most of the occupations will require a combination of an Associate degree, vocational training credential or continuing education. The graphic below demonstrates the importance of postsecondary education and training in preparing for a career in public safety and the earning potential associated with each pathway.

EDUCATION & TRAINING	POLICE	FIRE
Requires HS Diploma/Some College up thru Postsecondary Certificate	Dispatcher [\$36,960 - \$57,130] Community Service Officer [\$38,800 - \$60,000]	Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) [\$21,100 - \$33,240]
Requires Postsecondary Certificate up thru Associate Degree	Police Officer [\$59,340 - \$94,890]	Firefighter [\$36,860 - \$66,250] Firefighter-Paramedic [\$64,060 - \$70,720]
Requires Postsecondary Certificate or Associate Degree plus Professional Development/ Industry Certification	Detective/Investigator [69,640 - \$88,610] Police Sergeant [\$68,530 - \$93,150]	Engineer or Lieutenant [\$79,300 - \$93,300]
Requires Associate Degree (Bachelor Preferred) plus Professional Development and Industry Certification	Police Lieutenant [\$80,100 - \$119,440]	Fire Captain/ Battalion Chief [\$67,434 - \$109,300]
Requires Bachelor Degree plus Professional Development and Industry Certification	Police Captain/Chief [\$134,810 - \$162,160]	Division Chief [\$118,860 - \$153,050]

What do Community Colleges offer?

California community colleges offer a variety of public safety programs, training students in administration of justice, fire technology and forensics, among others. Colleges combine classroom instruction with on campus as well as external work experiences and work closely with state licensing agencies. Of the 114 community colleges in the state, at least 97 offer a public safety related training program. Listed below are the state program areas, the number of colleges currently offering instruction, the number of students who earned an award in the past year, and, where available, the median earnings of former California community college students from each program area two years after graduation.

Program Area	# of Community Colleges	# of Students who earned awards (2015-16)	Estimated Earnings of Graduates		Skills Builders*	
			AA/AS Degree	Certificate	Median \$ Gain	Median % Gain
Environmental Technology	13	81	\$63,864	\$52,669	\$4,756	21%
Emergency Medical Services	20	1,371	n/a	\$49,301	\$4,571	22%
Paramedic	20	836	\$55,790	\$65,091	\$11,645	33%
Administration of Justice	97	7,947	\$36,780	\$45,530	\$4,896	30%
Corrections	37	304	\$44,535	\$42,007	\$4,491	14%
Probation and Parole	3	30	n/a	n/a	\$7,050	25%
Industrial and Transportation Security	10	48	n/a	n/a	\$5,847	15%
Forensics, Evidence, and Investigation	14	119	\$34,606	\$37,111	\$1,349	9%
Police Academy	24	1,289	\$46,969	\$52,912	\$8,921	13%
Fire Technology	60	1,621	\$43,246	\$41,927	\$7,687	19%
Wildland Fire Technology	4	13	n/a	n/a	\$3,483	25%
Fire Academy	17	439	n/a	48,903	\$7,421	20%
Other Public and Protective Services	6	55	n/a	\$50,509	\$3,803	66%

*The term 'Skills Builders' refers to a student cohort identified by the California Community Colleges as those who have completed less than a year of education, including at least one higher level CTE course, but did not receive a degree or certificate and then did not re-enroll in a system of higher education the following year. The median dollar gain and median percent gain are estimates of additional earnings per year for the cohort based on individual wage record matching.



Data notes and sources: Data and information included in the Sector Profile were compiled from the following public and proprietary sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics; CA Employment Development Department; Economic Modeling Specialists, Intl.; Burning Glass' Labor Insight; CA Community Colleges Chancellor's Office DataMart and LaunchBoard. Wage data on this page are aggregated earnings of graduates from a five year period to provide an estimate on the potential wages to be earned two years after receiving a certificate or degree in certain disciplines.