



Sacramento Vocational Program Report 2023

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Executive Summary:

- In Sacramento County, vocational education is richly diverse, catering to various interests and career paths, including, but not limited to electrician, medical, automotive, and hospitality. The total number of vocational opportunities amounts to 227 options, with the most popular being in the medical, cosmetics, and construction fields.
- Most vocational schools take a few months to two years to complete, based on the specific careers. In Sacramento County, the time spent in vocational training ranges anywhere from 1 week to 136 weeks, with most training taking around 40-68 weeks.
- Over 80% of vocational institutions are located within the City of Sacramento.
- The average tuition across all vocational institutions is \$9,990 in Sacramento County, with average public institution tuition being \$2,222 and average private institution tuition being \$17,520.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Vocational education is the training of students in preparation for specific occupations, and emphasizes training in the practical skills needed on the job. Vocational education is also known as Career and Technical Education (CTE). In Sacramento County, adults 25 and older were found to have various levels of educational attainment. 9.69% acquired an Associate's Degree, 20.76% acquired a Bachelor's Degree, 7.21% acquired a Master's Degree, 2.27% acquired a Professional Degree, and only 1.06% acquired a Doctorate Degree.¹

In a report written by the California Policy Lab² regarding the impacts of job training programs in California, those who attended CTE programs had an average employment rate of 76.4% compared to the comparison group's 73.5%.

This report provides an overview of the number of programs available across several fields, enrollment figures for vocational/trade colleges compared to traditional colleges, comparisons between public and private institutions, and the distribution of programs and colleges across various cities within the county. Notably, the geographic distribution of vocational programs in Sacramento County is highly concentrated in the city of Sacramento itself.

Apart from technical education and hands-on experience, vocational and skills-training programs often provide job seekers with new skills, as seen in research³ measuring skills acquisition. In addition, several recent studies⁴ have found that CTE credentials can increase earnings, with health sector credentials associated with increases as high as 70%.

¹ <https://www.behealthysacramento.org/demographicdata?id=271§ionId=938>

² <https://www.capolicylab.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Identifying-the-impacts-of-job-training-programs-in-California.pdf>

³ <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/policy-insight/vocational-and-skills-training-programs-improve-labor-market-outcomes>

⁴ <https://www.ppic.org/publication/career-technical-education-in-california/>

Not only that, on average, vocational schools require a shorter time commitment than four-year colleges, saving time and money. According to InterCoast Community College (mentioned in the data as well), the programs offered provide an opportunity to apply newly-learned skills in a controlled environment, which helps the students' chances when applying for jobs past entry-level positions.⁵ Additionally, seen in the 2014 California's In-Prison Vocational Education report, "possessing a CTE certificate improves earnings and hourly wage potential [and]...studies show that on average, certificate holders earn 20% more than high school graduates without any postsecondary education. However, the economic returns vary according to the certificate's holder's field of study and whether the certificate holder works in the field."⁶

However, despite these benefits, in California's economy, a number of occupations that require vocational training have a labor shortage⁷, pushing up costs of many essentials, like housing⁸ and plumbing services. High construction costs lead to high housing costs and lack of affordable housing, especially in urban areas like Sacramento County and the nearby Bay Area⁹. However, due to the shortage of people skilled in these occupations, these occupations should be reflected in the list of potential jobs that students are searching for. Further, it's projected that 70% of jobs will require post-secondary education of some sort¹⁰, and vocational schools are a key part of adapting to that trend.

SECTION 2: METHODOLOGY

Defining Vocational Training

Vocational training refers to certain skill-based educational programs that prepare its students for a specific job, trade, or craft. In this report, there are a variety of programs in several different fields, including (but not limited to) nail technician, barber, dental hygienist, automotive technician, and more.

This report also lists the results of completing the entirety of the vocational training, which covers some type of Associates' Degree, certificate, license, or diploma of some sort.

Defining Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship refers to "on-the-job training" that allows practitioners to gain a license to practice in a regulated occupation. In this report, there are several types of apprenticeship mentioned, such as carpentry, sheet metal technician, plumber, ironworker, and more.

⁵<https://intercoast.edu/blog/vocational-school/>

⁶<https://sor.senate.ca.gov/sites/sor.senate.ca.gov/files/Tesfai%20APA.pdf>

⁷<https://thehustle.co/04242023-trade-school-enrollment/>

⁸https://www.haas.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/Howard_Wang_Zhang_Housing-Supply-and-Construction-Labor-Dayin-Zhang.pdf

⁹<https://www.sbcj.com/the-california-labor-shortage-explained/>

¹⁰<https://research.com/universities-colleges/trade-school-vs-college>

Data Collection and Methodology

We conducted initial internet research of public institutions in Sacramento County. Next, we visited each school's web page to find and compile a list of programs offered. We also referred to the school websites for information on tuition cost, location, program length, etc. For finding a list of private institutions and programs, we used other aggregation sites, then researched for in-depth information on each school's website. Our search was, however, limited by what was readily available through an internet search and what was publicly available on each institution's website. Many institutions require disclosing personal information (which we did not do) to receive more details.

For programs in fields that aren't common or easily defined, we looked into program details, such as specific classes required and outcomes achieved by students, to determine which field best fit the program. This report covers vocational programs in Sacramento County, including the cities/areas of Elk Grove, Citrus Heights, North Highlands, Folsom, and Sacramento itself.

SECTION 3: SUMMARY STATISTICS

- There are 20 different fields in this report. The medical field has the most programs, at 54 programs or 28% of all programs. Eight fields have 3 or fewer programs: 2 programs in agriculture, 2 in business, 3 in manufacturing, 1 in massage therapy, 3 in real estate, 1 in social services, 3 in technician, and 1 in water. **Figure 1** reflects the number of programs in each field as a percentage of the total number of programs.
- This report compares enrollment figures in vocational/trade colleges and traditional colleges in Sacramento County. Data on vocational program sizes are extremely limited, and any available data indicate small program sizes and irregular annual enrollment.
- "For the 2023 school year, there are 11 community colleges serving 73,169 students in Sacramento County, California".¹¹
- "Average cost of a traditional 4 year is more than twice the cost in the 21st century, and has an annual growth rate of 6.8."¹² "Traditional college costs about \$100,000+ throughout a 4 year period".¹³
- The average tuition across all vocational institutions in Sacramento County is \$9,990, with average public institution tuition being \$2,222 and average private institution tuition being \$17,520. **Figure 2.3** shows the average cost of tuition of vocational and trade schools across five cities in Sacramento county: Citrus Heights, El Dorado Hills, Folsom, Rancho Cordova, and Sacramento.
- Financial considerations play a crucial role in educational decisions. This report includes a detailed tuition comparison between vocational institutions and traditional four-year

¹¹<https://www.communitycollegereview.com/california/sacramento-county>.

¹²<https://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/resources/trade-school-vs-college/#:~:text=Most%20vocational%20programs%20take%20two,a%20variety%20of%20career%20paths%20%20https://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/resources/highest-paying-trade-jobs/>

¹³<https://www.degreechoices.com/blog/trade-school-statistics/>

colleges, allowing students and workers to make informed choices based on their financial capacities.¹⁴

- As seen in **Figure 3**, in Sacramento County, the time spent in vocational training ranges anywhere from 1 week to 136 weeks, with most training taking around 40-68 weeks. The nursing programs are generally the longest, taking as many as 136 weeks to complete and the nail technician program is the shortest, taking at least a week to complete.
- Shown in **Figure 4**, there are 85 degree opportunities: 36 A.A.'s, 35 A.S.'s, 2 A.O.S.'s, 1 B.S., and 11 diploma opportunities. There are 132 certificates and 10 license opportunities. Of the 227 programs found, 38 did not distinguish between degree, certificate, or license type. This data indicates that approximately 37% of training results in degrees, 58% of training ends in certificates and 4% in licenses.
- As shown in **Figure 5**, over 80% of vocational institutions are located within the city of Sacramento, which contains both public and private institutions. Public institutions are located in a wider range of cities than private institutions and have a more diverse selection of program subjects. In fact, over half of the cities in Sacramento County are served only by public institutions.

SECTION 4: ANALYSIS

These summary statistics provide an important outline regarding the state of vocational education in the county, although more data is needed for more specific analysis. Data represented in the summary statistics compares the characteristics of various Sacramento vocational programs, including (but not limited to) location, program length, and tuition. For example, vocational training connects students to specific career opportunities by providing industry-based skills, and research indicates that specialized CTE programs can improve employment and wages.¹⁵

Figure 1 (Fields)

As demonstrated in **Figure 1**, the number of programs available in the medical field is significantly higher than the number of programs available in any other field. In fact, the medical field has almost as many programs as the next three most popular programs combined. **Figure 1** also highlights the large number of fields with extremely few programs. Specifically, there are 8 fields which have 3 or fewer programs available in Sacramento county. The data available does not reveal why the medical field has such a high number of programs available relative to other fields, but it is clear that there is a major lack of accessibility for the less popular fields.

Figures 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 (Tuition)

¹⁴<https://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/resources/trade-school-vs-college/#:~:text=Most%20vocational%20programs%20take%20two,a%20variety%20of%20career%20paths%20%20https://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/resources/highest-paying-trade-jobs/>

¹⁵<https://www.ppica.org/publication/career-technical-education-in-california/>

The data shown in **Figures 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3** can provide valuable information for parents, students, educators, and policymakers. For example, by using **Figure 2.3**, prospective students can compare average tuition cost in Sacramento vs Folsom and choose to pursue programs in cities within their budget. This allows individuals to more easily compare prices and decide where to pursue their education. Additionally, vocational schools can be a more affordable option for those looking to gain practical skills and enter the workforce quickly, especially in areas with a high demand for skilled workers. These schools often have strong relationships with local businesses and employers, which can lead to increased job opportunities for graduates. Thus it is clear that vocational programs in the county play an important role in the local economy.

Figure 3 (Time)

Understanding the time commitment required for vocational training is crucial for prospective students and vocational workers, which is demonstrated in **Figure 3**. This report analyzes the average time spent in vocational programs, offering insights into the length (and potential cost) of vocational education. Most vocational programs are under two years in duration, with many being around one year or shorter. In terms of start date, vocational schools have multiple start dates, whereas traditional community or city colleges following the semester system start in the fall of each year. With this increased flexibility, vocational schools are able to effectively provide real-world job training and experience that fit within students' schedules and timelines.

Figure 4 (Type)

This report examines the percentage of vocational training programs that lead to degrees compared to those that culminate in certificates. As seen in **Figure 4**, Sacramento County offers more programs that lead to certificates than associate degrees, providing greater accessibility to vocational programs. These certificate programs require less time and money to complete, making it an attractive option.

This data sheds light on the emphasis placed on formal academic qualifications within the vocational education landscape in Sacramento County, especially because certificates are the vast majority of credentials offered.

Figure 5 (Location)

Shown in **Figure 5**, this report determines that vocational programs are mainly concentrated in the city of Sacramento, which gives a sense of the accessibility, or lack thereof, of these programs. Over 80% of vocational institutions are located within the city. This means that for residents living throughout the county, there may not be vocational education close to home. An improvement in the lack of the geographical spread of vocational programs is likely to increase vocational enrollment.

Data on Los Rios

At Los Rios Community College District, there are over 120 career education programs¹⁶, which include advanced manufacturing, transportation and logistics, environmental technology, as well as programs involving construction and health. Los Rios offers a variety of degree/certificate types, especially for advertising, accounting, and many other careers.¹⁷ According to the information released by the Los Rios Community College District, there are approximately 70,000 students enrolled annually, and there is a \$2.1 billion amount in added income that supports 27,415 jobs, which accounts for almost the entire utilities industry in the region.¹⁸

Notes on the Data

Combined with the fact that data on all vocational program sizes are extremely limited, and any available data for private institutions indicates small program sizes and irregular annual enrollment, it is hard to tell solely by enrollment which programs have long-term sustainability. For general statistics about public schools, we see that “[f]or the 2023 school year, there are 11 community colleges serving 73,169 students in Sacramento County, California.¹⁹” While CTE training appears to improve earnings for those without a four-year college degree, the effectiveness of these programs in raising earnings has not been convincingly established.²⁰

However, even with the reauthorization of the Perkins Act and the establishment of the Strong Workforce program in California, collecting a more comprehensive data system of CTE programs is required to identify and improve lacking aspects.²¹

It is also important to consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic²² on these career education pathways. The COVID-19 pandemic forced many colleges in Sacramento, including vocational programs, to adapt and become more flexible. They swiftly shifted to online learning platforms to continue instruction while prioritizing safety. Virtual internships, technology integration, and strict health measures were also implemented, along with support services and flexible course offerings to accommodate students' needs. Faculty received training to maintain the quality of education during this challenging time.²³

¹⁶<https://losrios.edu/academics/career-education#:~:text=At%20Los%20Rios%2C%20we%20offer,for%20success%20in%20today%27s%20jobs.>

¹⁷Ibid. 16

¹⁸<https://losrios.edu/why-los-rios/facts-and-statistics>

¹⁹<https://www.communitycollegereview.com/california/sacramento-county#:~:text=For%20the%202023%20school%20year,in%20Sacramento%20County%20County%2C%20California.>

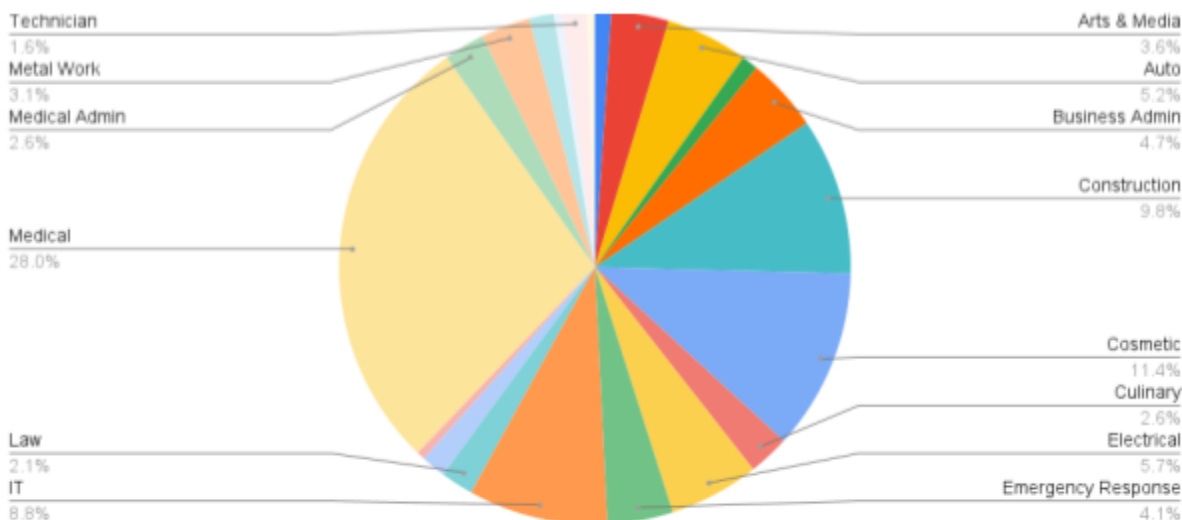
²⁰<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED614253.pdf>

²¹<https://www.ppic.org/publication/career-technical-education-in-california/>

²²<https://www.ppic.org/publication/improving-career-education-pathways-into-californias-workforce/>

²³<https://www.caprado.org/articles/2020/12/06/how-california-community-college-vocational-programs-have-adapted-to-covid-19/>

Over the last decade, the vast majority of students who pursue career education in community colleges never earn a credential, and those who do, take around 2.5 years to do so. Thus, it is important to recognize specific policy recommendations, moving forward from the pandemic.

Figure 1**Sacramento County Vocational Programs per Field****Figure 2.1****Sacramento County Vocational Public School Tuitions**

Average public tuition cost = \$2,222.48

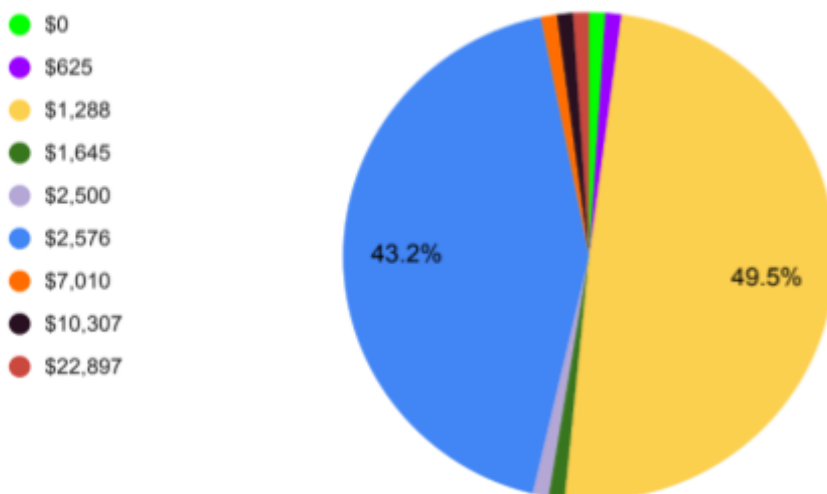


Figure 2.2

Sacramento County Vocational Private School Tuitions

Figure 4

Sacramento County Vocational Program Degree Types

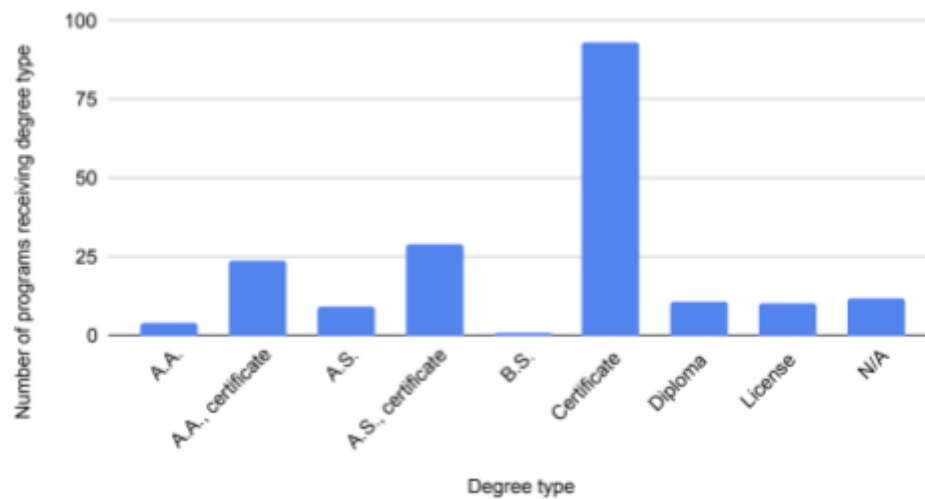
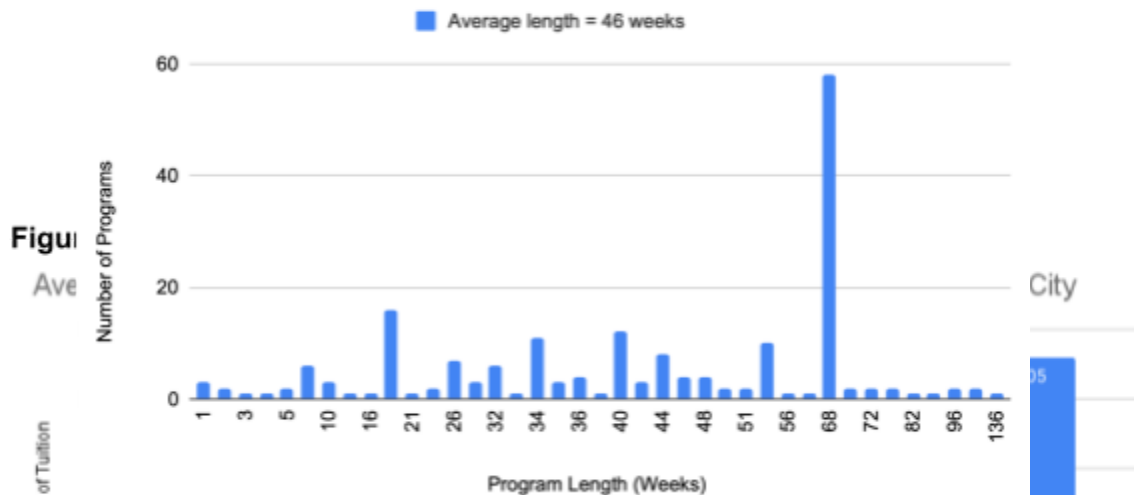


Figure 3



Sacramento County Vocational Program Lengths



ASIAN P/

Average Cost of Tuition

\$5,000
\$2,500Sacramento County, CA in blue (except
Sacramento, in black).

\$5,000

\$2,500

\$1,873

\$555

City

SECTION 5: CONCLUSION

Since there are not enough skilled employees in vocational occupations (thus leading to increased costs for everyday life), Sacramento County should work to increase enrollment in local vocational programs with the goal of having more qualified workers (e.g. more carpenters, auto techs, etc).

Sacramento County has a solid foundation of educational programs to begin with, with a variety of fields represented, although improvements can be made. Vocational programs are mainly concentrated within Sacramento itself, many private institutions do not clearly list tuition and related costs, and many institutions don't report outcomes for their graduates. This means that it's difficult for prospective students to determine whether a particular program is effective and doesn't promote interest in these fields.

To increase enrollment in vocational programs, we can rely on the strong foundation currently in place and require institutions to be more transparent in their tuition and costs, their program structures and details, and the outcomes of their graduates. This will aid decision making for students seeking to start a career and have a reliable income.

When it comes to increasing enrollment in specific fields, a few strategies could prove effective. One option is to offer incentives to students pursuing those fields, such as free textbooks or waived tuition fees for the first semester. Scholarships and financial aid can also motivate students in a particular area. Additionally, location can play a role in attracting students to specific programs. For example, suppose a vocational school is near a high-demand industry, such as healthcare or technology. In that case, it may be more appealing to students who are looking to enter those fields. Ultimately, the key is to make the case for why a particular program or area is worth pursuing and to provide students with the resources and support they need to succeed. By doing so, we can ensure that students can achieve their goals and contribute to the growth and prosperity of their communities.

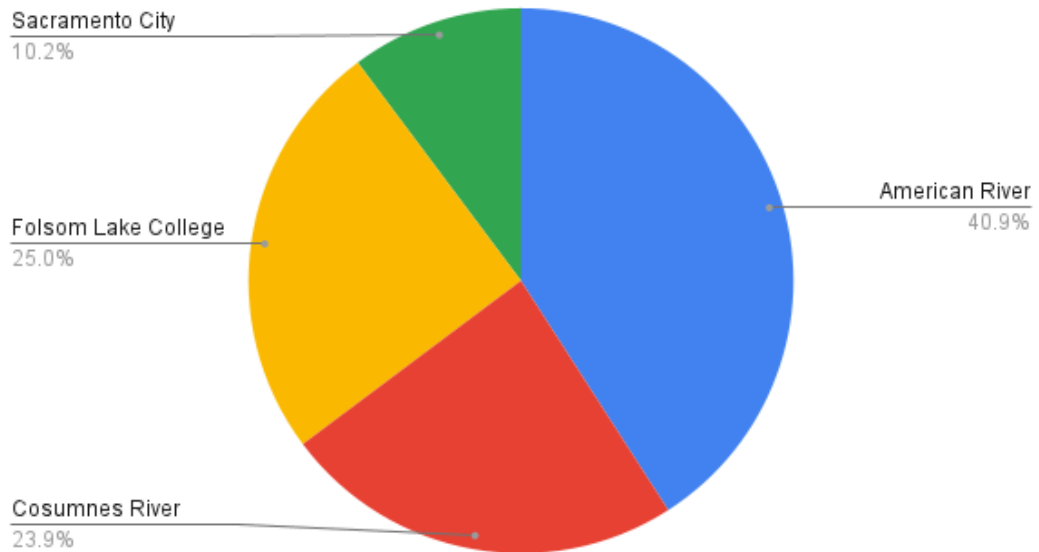
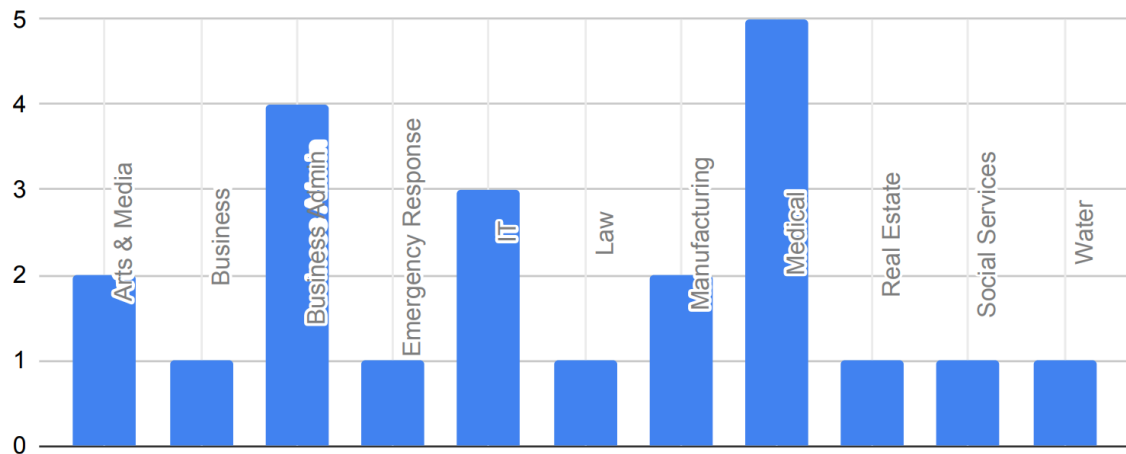
To combat the low enrollment in vocational programs, marketing the benefits of attending vocational trade schools would not only create more awareness but also could likely increase enrollment in trade-specific academies. Similar to how many prospective students tour various university campuses as well as having college alumni speak at many high schools, vocational schools could use the same tactics to their advantage to encourage enrollment. Reports from the U.S. Department of Education indicate that those with vocational education have slightly higher rates of employment than those with academic credentials, completely cutting out the need to study for years to enter the healthcare industry. In addition, there are 11 community colleges with a combined 73,169 students in Sacramento County alone, which alludes to the wide range of educational opportunities provided. Policies that prioritize the benefits of vocational programs are

necessary to encourage engagement with the various vocations community colleges offer. Interest in vocational careers is increasing²⁴, and the local economy would benefit greatly from Sacramento County's timely adaptation to take advantage of this trend.

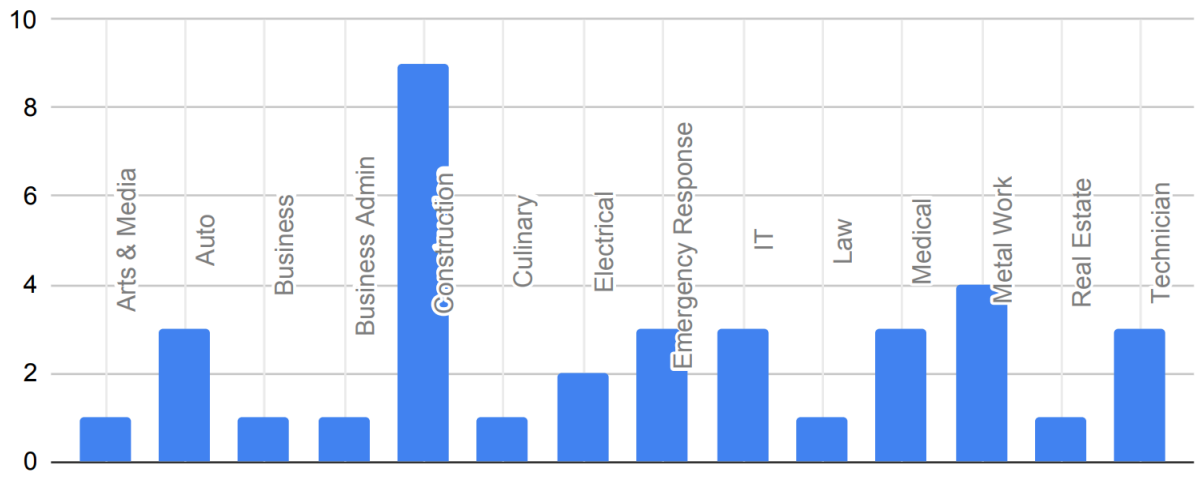
Another option would be to host sample apprenticeship events to allow high school students to explore specific career paths. For example, to provide insight into the lives of Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT), schools and communities could host CPR classes or first aid training. These types of events could also be easily applied towards other technical careers and fields. By doing so, students would have a better understanding of the benefits of vocational programs, thus increasing the rate of enrollment. Not only that, since Folsom has a weekly newsletter in addition to Folsom Times and the Sacramento Bee, vocational programs could be highlighted and advertised onto the newspaper with achievements of current students to encourage others to enroll.

In conclusion, this report offers a comprehensive analysis of the vocational education sector in Sacramento County, California. By comparing the number of programs, enrollment figures, public vs. private institutions, geographic distribution, tuition rates, and training outcomes, this report equips individuals with additional information to make informed decisions about their educational and career paths in the county's vibrant vocational education environment. This report also highlights strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement in the vocational education sector in Sacramento County.

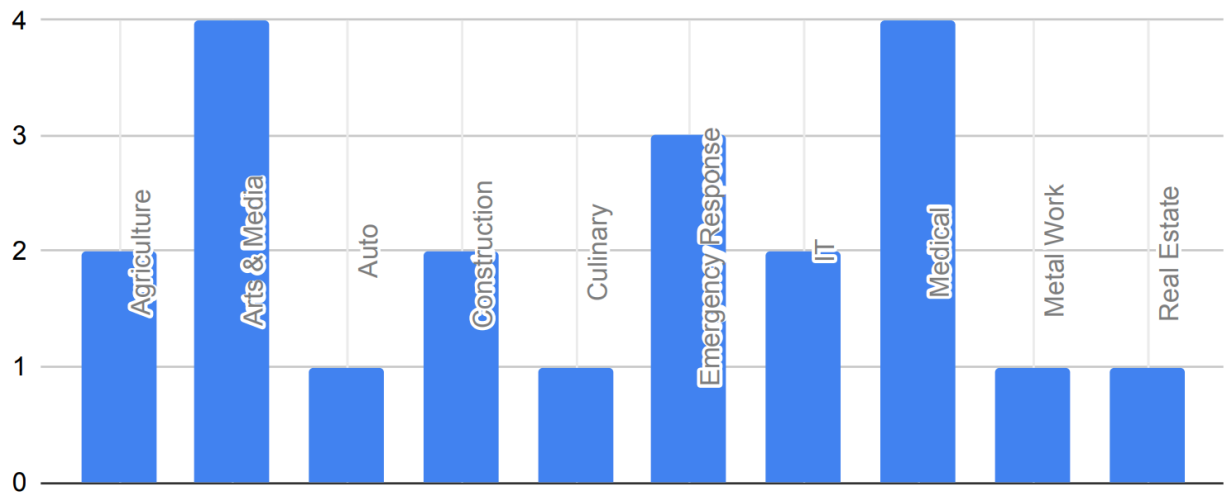
²⁴<https://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/vocational-trade-school/emerging-trends/>

APPENDIX - Los Rios Community College District Field Breakdown by Campus**Los Rios Community College District Vocational Access by Campus****Folsom Lake College**

American River College



Cosumnes River College



Sacramento City College

