

# Certifications & Licenses

San Diego County  
January 2022



An Analysis of the  
Top Certifications/Licenses  
in San Diego County

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	2
INTRODUCTION.....	4
CERTIFICATIONS/LICENSES IN ONLINE JOB POSTINGS.....	7
CERTIFICATIONS/LICENSES IN THE TOP 50 EACH YEAR, 2011-2020.....	8
TOP CERTIFICATIONS/LICENSES RANKED IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY .....	14
TOP CERTIFICATIONS/LICENSES IN SAN DIEGO AND CALIFORNIA.....	16
CERTIFICATIONS/LICENSES TRENDS DURING THE PANDEMIC.....	18
NATIONAL MEDIAN EARNINGS WITH/WITHOUT A CERTIFICATION/LICENSE.....	20
APPENDIX: CERTIFICATIONS/LICENSES REFERENCED MORE THAN ONCE.....	22

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the number of people in the labor market who earn a certification/license has increased over the last 50 years in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The San Diego-Imperial Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research (COE) analyzed data from online job postings to identify trends in the types of certifications/licenses requested by employers in San Diego County. This labor market information is intended to be used by the San Diego and Imperial Counties Community Colleges to guide meaningful discussions about ways to support the attainment of certifications/licenses in the region.

## KEY FINDINGS

### CERTIFICATIONS/LICENSES IN THE TOP 50 EACH YEAR, 2011-2020

**79**  
CERTIFICATIONS/  
LICENSES IN THE TOP 50  
ONCE OR MORE

Between 2011 and 2020, 79 certifications/licenses made the top 50 certifications/licenses one or more years in San Diego County. Comparing recent years (2016-2020) with previous years (2011-2015) shows a shift in demand for certifications/licenses: Nine made the top 50 more often in recent years than previous years, and 10 made the top 50 more often in previous years than recent years.

**29**  
CERTIFICATIONS/  
LICENSES IN THE TOP 50  
EVERY YEAR

Between 2011 and 2020, 29 certifications/licenses made the top 50 certifications/licenses every year in San Diego County. Twenty-three of those certifications/licenses made the top 50 every year in both San Diego County and California.

### CERTIFICATIONS/LICENSES RANKED BY ONLINE JOB POSTINGS



#1	Driver's License
#2	Security Clearance
#3	Registered Nurse

The top three certifications/licenses ranked by number of online job postings were Driver's License; Security Clearance; and Registered Nurse (2011-2020).

<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics. Monthly Labor Review: Professional certifications and occupational licenses: evidence from the Current Population Survey (See [bls.gov/opub/mlr/2019/article/pdf/professional-certifications-and-occupational-licenses.pdf](https://bls.gov/opub/mlr/2019/article/pdf/professional-certifications-and-occupational-licenses.pdf).)

## CERTIFICATIONS/LICENSES TRENDS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Based on certifications/licenses ranked by the number of online job postings in 2019 compared to 2020, the certifications/licenses featured below increased or decreased in ranking the most during the pandemic.



INCREASED  
IN  
RANKING

Security Guard Certification

Contractor's License

Cash Handling Certification



DECREASED  
IN  
RANKING


Certified A+ Technician

Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP)

Certified ScrumMaster (CSM)

## NATIONAL MEDIAN EARNINGS WITH/WITHOUT A CERTIFICATION/LICENSE

According to national data from the BLS, median yearly earnings across all occupational categories were reportedly higher with a certification/license than without a certification/license in 2020. The three occupations with the greatest differences in median earnings are featured below.



BLS OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES	WITH CERTIFICATION/LICENSE	WITHOUT CERTIFICATION/LICENSE
Legal Occupations	99K	53K
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	69K	51K
Construction and Extraction Occupations	61K	44K

### Data Source and Important Disclaimer

The data presented in this report was derived from Burning Glass Technologies, "Labor Insight Real-Time Labor Market Information Tool." This report examines the most recent data available at the time of the analysis; however, data sets are updated regularly and may not be consistent with previous reports.

## INTRODUCTION

Obtaining a certification/license is one way that workers can advance in a field and distinguish themselves in the job market. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of employed people with a certification/license has increased substantially over the last 50 years in the United States, and more than 24 percent of employed workers in the labor force held a certification/license in 2018.<sup>2</sup> There are numerous reasons why obtaining a certification/license can be beneficial. For one, it can demonstrate a worker's aptitude in a field or position, and through it, employers can determine that a worker has a baseline level of skill or mastery to perform that job. Certifications/licenses can also be important for advancement within a career and may even be required to be employed in a specific position, such as obtaining a job as a *Licensed Clinical Social Worker*. In 2018, nearly 85 percent of people nationwide with a certification/license indicated that it was a requirement for their job.<sup>3</sup> When considering educational attainment, 34 percent of employed workers with an associate degree across the United States also held a certification/license in 2020.<sup>4</sup> Given these national trends and the notable relevance of certifications/licenses across the United States, the San Diego-Imperial Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research (COE) developed this report to provide insight into certifications/licenses that are requested by employers in San Diego County.

To identify the types of certifications/licenses that are relevant to employers in San Diego County and evaluate trends within the region, the San Diego-Imperial COE reviewed online job postings. To explore trends over a notable period of time, the COE reviewed all online job postings between 2011 and 2020 in San Diego County. Within that timeframe, the COE identified the certifications/licenses that appeared in the top 50 each year and noted any trends in the certifications/licenses that were requested by employers in recent years (2016-2020) compared to previous years (2011-2015). For the certifications/licenses that appeared in the top 50 every year between 2011 and 2020, the COE also summarized more detailed and recent (2018-2020) information for these certifications/licenses including: minimum educational attainment posted, top occupation requesting certification/license, and entry-level salaries in San Diego and California. A recent timeframe (2018-2020) was used for these data points to provide colleges and consumers with current information about the top certifications/licenses in San Diego County.

---

<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics. Monthly Labor Review: Professional certifications and occupational licenses: evidence from the Current Population Survey (See [bls.gov/opub/mlr/2019/article/pdf/professional-certifications-and-occupational-licenses.pdf](https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2019/article/pdf/professional-certifications-and-occupational-licenses.pdf).)

<sup>3</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics. Monthly Labor Review: Professional certifications and occupational licenses: evidence from the Current Population Survey (See [bls.gov/opub/mlr/2019/article/pdf/professional-certifications-and-occupational-licenses.pdf](https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2019/article/pdf/professional-certifications-and-occupational-licenses.pdf).)

<sup>4</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics. Certification and licensing status of employed persons 16 years and over by selected characteristics, 2020. (See [bls.gov/cps/cpsaat51.pdf](https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat51.pdf).)

## CERTIFICATION/LICENSE DEFINITIONS

First, it is important to define the terms *certification* and *license* in order to understand the similarities and distinctions between each, and why they are valued by employers. Certifications and licenses can similarly demonstrate skill, knowledge, and aptitude. In some cases, both can serve as alternate signifiers of educational attainment because reaching a certain level of education may be required to obtain that certification or license.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, both certifications and licenses may be renewed periodically, and proof of continuing education is submitted to the issuing entities to ensure that current standards are maintained. The primary distinction between certifications and licenses is the governing bodies that issue and oversee them. A certification is awarded by a third-party organization or industry association that standardizes the assessment process to ensure that a candidate has met a specific set of standards or skills, whereas a license is issued by a government agency and is often required for some professional practices like health, education, and legal careers. It should be noted that a person can obtain multiple certifications or licenses. Detailed definitions of each are provided below.

### WHAT IS A CERTIFICATION?

A **certification** is endorsed by a third-party major industry association that creates a standardized assessment process to ensure that a candidate has met a set of standards that are relevant to perform a job or skill. Although certifications may include both education and exam requirements, the issuing entity may not necessarily offer the training directly. The assessment is standardized, however, even if the educational training is acquired through different institutions. This ensures that while an employer may not necessarily recognize a candidate's phlebotomy educational training, for example, they will recognize a Phlebotomy Certification and its requirements. The credibility of the certification is also generally dependent on the standards of the issuing industry association and some certifications may be perceived as challenging, while others may necessitate few requirements. Examples of certifications include Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) Certification or Project Management Professional (PMP).

---

<sup>5</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics. Monthly Labor Review: Professional certifications and occupational licenses: evidence from the Current Population Survey (See [bls.gov/opub/mlr/2019/article/pdf/professional-certifications-and-occupational-licenses.pdf](https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2019/article/pdf/professional-certifications-and-occupational-licenses.pdf).)

## WHAT IS A LICENSE?

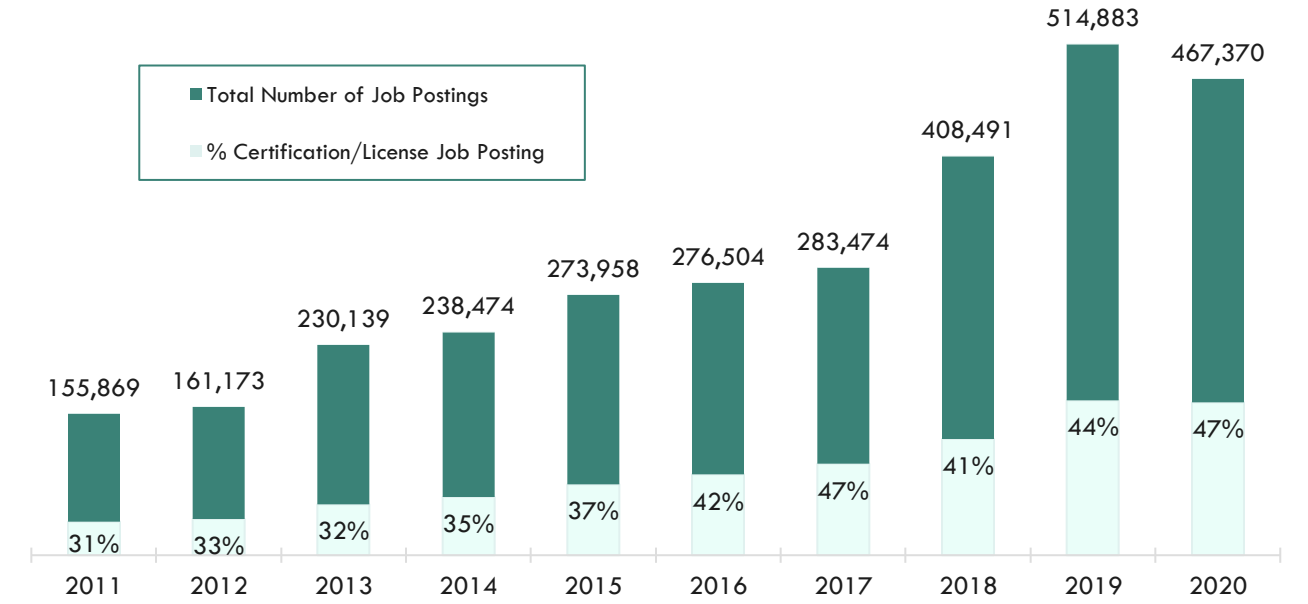
A **license** is issued by a government agency, typically a state government, is executed by licensing boards, and is intended to show that a candidate has met a specific competency standard to perform a job, service, or professional activity. For jobs that require a license to perform a job or service, failure to comply with licensure requirements can result in significant fines or legal consequences. Like certifications, most licenses include some type of training and exam requirements, but may also include a combination of degree attainment, educational certificates, apprenticeship, supervision, or work experience. Examples of licenses include a Teaching Credential or Licensed Vocational Nurse.

The following sections will explore trends in the types of certifications/licenses most requested in online job postings, provide a comparison between certifications/licenses requested in San Diego and California, evaluate trends during the COVID-19 pandemic in San Diego County, and show national median earnings data comparing earnings with and without a certification/license.

# CERTIFICATIONS/LICENSES IN ONLINE JOB POSTINGS

The San Diego-Imperial Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research (COE) analyzed data from online job postings<sup>6</sup> to determine the percentage of total online job postings that requested a certification/license. Between 2011 and 2020, there was an average of 301,034 online job postings per year in San Diego County (Exhibit 1), and over 40 percent of online job postings listed a certification/license every year since 2016. More recently, despite a reduction in the total number of online job postings between 2019 (514,883) and 2020 (467,370), a higher percentage of employers requested a certification/license in 2020 (47 percent) compared to 2019 (44 percent). Please note that online job postings do not equal labor market demand; demand is represented by annual job openings. Employers may post a position multiple times to increase the pool of applicants or post positions that require a license/certification, for example.

**Exhibit 1. Total Number of Job Postings<sup>7</sup> and the Percentage of Job Postings Requesting a Certification/License<sup>8</sup> in San Diego County (2011-2020)**



<sup>6</sup> Online job postings data, or real-time LMI, refers to job analytics data that may provide insight into recent changes in the labor market that may not be captured by historical data or traditional labor market information.

<sup>7</sup> Burning Glass Technologies, "Labor Insight Real-Time Labor Market Information Tool." 2011-2020.

<sup>8</sup> Burning Glass Technologies, "Labor Insight Real-Time Labor Market Information Tool." 2011-2020. This percentage was calculated by deriving the number of job postings that requested a certification/license for a given year, divided by the total number of online job postings in San Diego County that year. Please note that Burning Glass Technologies only provides the top 200 certifications/licenses for each given year and this percentage may not reflect all job postings requesting a certification/license.



## CERTIFICATIONS/LICENSES IN THE TOP 50 EACH YEAR, 2011-2020

To identify certifications/licenses that were most requested by employers, this report analyzed the certifications/licenses in online job postings between 2011 and 2020 in San Diego County.<sup>9</sup> Exhibit 2a lists the certifications/licenses that were in the top 50 certifications/licenses each year, and results demonstrated that 79 were in the top 50 one or more years between 2011 and 2020. Twenty-nine were in the top 50 certifications/licenses every year. Exhibit 2a provides links to additional information about each certification/license, but please note that these links may be outdated at a later time. The list below also summarizes certifications/licenses that were listed by employers in online job postings and may be duplicated if employers call a certification/license by different names, for example.

**Exhibit 2a. Certifications/Licenses in the Top 50 Each Year in San Diego County, 2011-2020**

	Certification/License Title	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	# Years Top 50
1	<a href="#">Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) Certification</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
2	<a href="#">American Heart Association Certification</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
3	<a href="#">Basic Cardiac Life Support Certification*</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
4	<a href="#">Basic Life Saving (BLS)*</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
5	<a href="#">CDL Class A</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
6	<a href="#">CDL Class C</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
7	<a href="#">Certified A+ Technician</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
8	<a href="#">Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
9	<a href="#">Certified Nursing Assistant</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
10	<a href="#">Certified Public Accountant (CPA)</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
11	<a href="#">Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
12	<a href="#">Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA)</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
13	<a href="#">CompTIA Network+</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10

\*This certification/license may be a general category that comprises numerous types of certifications/licenses or may appear more than once because employers may use different titles to refer to the same certification/license, for example. Additional information can be found in the appendix.

<sup>9</sup> Burning Glass Technologies, "Labor Insight Real-Time Labor Market Information Tool." 2011-2020. Certification/Licenses that made the top 50 list each year ranked by number of online job postings in San Diego County.

	Certification/License Title	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	# Years Top 50
14	<a href="#">CompTIA Security+</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
15	<a href="#">Driver's License*</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
16	<a href="#">First Aid CPR AED</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
17	<a href="#">Food Handler Certification (Card)*</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
18	<a href="#">Insurance License*</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
19	<a href="#">IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) Certification</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
20	<a href="#">Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN)*</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
21	<a href="#">OSHA Forklift Certification</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
22	<a href="#">Project Management Certification*</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
23	<a href="#">Project Management Professional (PMP)</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
24	<a href="#">Real Estate Certification</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
25	<a href="#">Registered Nurse</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
26	<a href="#">SANS/GIAC Certification</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
27	<a href="#">Security Clearance</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
28	<a href="#">Series Z</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
29	<a href="#">Social Work License*</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	10
30	<a href="#">American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) Certification</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		9
31	<a href="#">Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA)</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		9
32	<a href="#">Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP)</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		9
33	<a href="#">Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)*</a>	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	9
34	<a href="#">Licensed Professional Engineer</a>	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	9
35	<a href="#">Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate (MCSA) (Retired Certification, 2021)</a>	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	9

\*This certification/license may be a general category that comprises numerous types of certifications/licenses or may appear more than once because employers may use different titles to refer to the same certification/license, for example. Additional information can be found in the appendix.

Certification/License Title	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	# Years Top 50
36 <a href="#">ServSafe*</a>		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	9
37 <a href="#">CA License*</a>			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	8
38 <a href="#">Certified Medical Assistant (CMA)</a>			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	8
39 <a href="#">Microsoft Certified Solutions Expert (MCSE) (Retired Certification, 2021)</a>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•		8
40 <a href="#">Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Certification</a>	•		•	•		•		•	•	•	7
41 <a href="#">Phlebotomy Certification</a>		•	•	•	•	•	•			•	7
42 <a href="#">Six Sigma Certification</a>	•	•	•	•		•	•	•			7
43 <a href="#">Board Certified/Board Eligible (Emergency Medicine)*</a>					•	•	•	•	•	•	6
44 <a href="#">Critical Care Registered Nurse (CCRN)</a>					•	•	•	•	•	•	6
45 <a href="#">CDL Class B</a>				•	•			•	•	•	5
46 <a href="#">Home Health Aide</a>			•	•				•	•	•	5
47 <a href="#">Mortgage License</a>		•	•	•			•	•			5
48 <a href="#">Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP)</a>			•	•	•	•	•				5
49 <a href="#">Paralegal Certification</a>	•	•	•	•	•						5
50 <a href="#">Pharmacist License</a>			•	•	•	•	•				5
51 <a href="#">Series 6</a>	•	•					•	•			4
52 <a href="#">Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)</a>								•	•	•	3
53 <a href="#">Casino Gaming License</a>	•	•				•					3
54 <a href="#">Certified Financial Planner (CFP)</a>	•					•	•				3
55 <a href="#">Certified Information Security Manager (CISM)</a>	•	•			•						3
56 <a href="#">Clinical Laboratory Scientist (CLS)</a>	•	•	•								3
57 <a href="#">Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)</a>	•		•	•							3

\*This certification/license may be a general category that comprises numerous types of certifications/licenses or may appear more than once because employers may use different titles to refer to the same certification/license, for example. Additional information can be found in the appendix.

	Certification/License Title	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	# Years Top 50
58	<a href="#">Food Service Certification*</a>								•	•	•	3
59	<a href="#">Insurance Agent Certification</a>								•	•	•	3
60	<a href="#">Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP) (Retired Certification, 2019)</a>	•	•	•								3
61	<a href="#">Typing Certification</a>	•	•	•								3
62	<a href="#">American Society for Quality (ASQ) Certification</a>	•	•									2
63	<a href="#">Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA)</a>	•	•									2
64	<a href="#">Child Development Associate (CDA)</a>					•	•					2
65	<a href="#">Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert (CCIE) (Retired Certification, 2020)</a>	•	•									2
66	<a href="#">Home Care Certificate</a>									•	•	2
67	<a href="#">Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)</a>									•	•	2
68	<a href="#">Registered Behavior Technician</a>									•	•	2
69	<a href="#">Training For Intervention Procedures (TIPS) Certification</a>							•	•			2
70	<a href="#">Certified Case Manager (CCM)</a>				•							1
71	<a href="#">Certified Pharmacy Technician (CPhT)</a>										•	1
72	<a href="#">Certified Professional Coder</a>					•						1
73	<a href="#">DEA Certificate</a>										•	1
74	<a href="#">Epic Certification</a>						•					1
75	<a href="#">Licensed Attorney</a>		•									1
76	<a href="#">Life Insurance License</a>										•	1
77	<a href="#">Registered Dietitian</a>					•						1
78	<a href="#">Registered Health Information Technician</a>			•								1
79	<a href="#">Series 66</a>							•				1

\*This certification/license may be a general category that comprises numerous types of certifications/licenses or may appear more than once because employers may use different titles to refer to the same certification/license, for example. Additional information can be found in the appendix.

To show trends regarding the certifications/licenses requested by employers in recent years, Exhibit 2b highlights the certifications/licenses from Exhibit 2a that made the top 50 list twice or more in recent years (2016-2020), but once or less in the previous five years (2011-2015). Nine certifications/licenses made the top 50 list more often or only in recent years.

**Exhibit 2b. Made the Top 50 Certifications/Licenses Most Often in Recent Years, 2016-2020**

Certification/License Title	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20
Board Certified/Board Eligible					•	•	•	•	•	•
Critical Care Registered Nurse (CCRN)					•	•	•	•	•	•
Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)								•	•	•
Food Service Certification								•	•	•
Insurance Agent Certification								•	•	•
Home Care Certificate									•	•
Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)									•	•
Registered Behavior Technician									•	•
Training For Intervention Procedures (TIPS) Certification							•	•		

### HIGHLIGHTING CRITICAL CARE REGISTERED NURSE (CCRN)

The Critical Care Registered Nurse (CCRN) certification is certified by the [American Association of Critical-Care Nurses](#), and this certification can be specialized for providing direct care to adult patients, pediatric patients, and neonatal patients. Between 2016 and 2020, the top occupations in online job postings that listed this certification in San Diego County were *Registered Nurses*; *Medical and Health Services Managers*; and *Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians*. The top employer in San Diego County was “Healthcare Travelers.” According to Burning Glass’s salary estimates, the median salary for this certification was 76K in San Diego County.

To show trends regarding certifications/licenses that were not requested by employers in recent years, Exhibit 2c highlights the certifications/licenses from Exhibit 2a that made the top 50 list once or less in recent years (2016-2020), but twice or more in the previous five years (2011-2015). Ten certifications/licenses made the top 50 list less often or not at all in recent years.

**Exhibit 2c. Made the Top 50 Certifications/Licenses Less Often in Recent Years, 2016-2020**

Certification/License Title	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20
Paralegal Certification	•	•	•	•	•					
Certified Information Security Manager (CISM)	•	•			•					
Clinical Laboratory Scientist (CLS)	•	•	•							
Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)	•		•	•						
Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP) (Retired Certification, 2019)	•	•	•							
Typing Certification	•	•	•							
Casino Gaming License	•	•				•				
American Society for Quality (ASQ) Certification	•	•								
Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA)	•	•								
Cisco Certified Internetwork Expert (CCIE) (Retired Certification, 2020)	•	•								

### HIGHLIGHTING MICROSOFT CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL (MCP)

The Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP) certification was a certification issued by [Microsoft](#), but was retired in February 2019 as an official certification and was replaced with role-based certifications that allow specialized training based on specific job roles. Based on online job postings and Exhibit 2a, none of the Microsoft role-based certifications have made the top 50 certifications/licenses list in recent years (2016-2020). Between 2011 and 2015, the top occupations in online job postings that listed this certification in San Diego County were *Computer User Support Specialists*; *Network and Computer Systems Administrators*; and *Computer Occupations, All Other*.

## TOP CERTIFICATIONS/LICENSES RANKED IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Between 2011 and 2020, 29 made the top 50 certifications/licenses every year in San Diego County (see Exhibit 2a). Exhibit 3 displays these certifications/licenses ranked by the total number of online job postings within that timeframe. The three most requested certifications/licenses by employers were Driver's License; Security Clearance; and Registered Nurse. To provide more recent data about these top 29 certifications/licenses, Exhibit 3 also provides the minimum education advertised by employers and the occupation that requested the certification/license most in online job postings within the last three years (2018-2020).

**Exhibit 3. Top Certifications/Licenses Ranked by Online Job Postings in San Diego County<sup>10</sup>**

Rank	Certification/License Title	Min. Education	Top Occupation Requesting Certification/License
2011-2020		2018-2020	
1	Driver's License	HS or Vocational	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products
2	Security Clearance	Bachelor's	Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers
3	Registered Nurse	Associate	Registered Nurses
4	First Aid CPR AED	HS or Vocational	Registered Nurses
5	Basic Life Saving (BLS)	Bachelor's	Registered Nurses
6	Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) Certification	Associate	Registered Nurses
7	Certified Public Accountant (CPA)	Bachelor's	Accountants and Auditors
8	Project Management Certification	Bachelor's	Personal Service Managers, All Other; Entertainment and Recreation Managers, Except Gambling; and Managers, All Other
9	Basic Cardiac Life Support Certification	Bachelor's	Registered Nurses
10	CompTIA Security+	Bachelor's	Network and Computer Systems Administrators
11	CDL Class A	HS or Vocational	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
12	American Heart Association Certification	Bachelor's	Registered Nurses
13	Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN)	HS or Vocational	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses
14	Food Handler Certification	HS or Vocational	Fast Food and Counter Workers

<sup>10</sup> Burning Glass Technologies, "Labor Insight Real-Time Labor Market Information Tool." 2011-2020. Certification/licenses that were in the top 50 every year between 2011 and 2020 ranked by number of online job postings in San Diego County. For each certification/license, the minimum educational attainment in online job postings and the top occupation requested the certification/license between 2018 and 2020 was obtained.

Rank	Certification/License Title	Min. Education	Top Occupation Requesting Certification/License
2011-2020			2018-2020
15	Project Management Professional (PMP)	Bachelor's	Personal Service Managers, All Other; Entertainment and Recreation Managers, Except Gambling; and Managers, All Other
16	IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) Certification	Bachelor's	Computer Occupations, All Other
17	Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)	Bachelor's	Information Security Analysts
18	Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA)	Bachelor's	Computer Network Architects
19	Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner	Master's	Nurse Practitioners
20	Certified Nursing Assistant	HS or Vocational	Nursing Assistants
21	Series 7	Bachelor's	Personal Financial Advisors
22	OSHA Forklift Certification	HS or Vocational	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand
23	Social Work License	Master's	Healthcare Social Workers
24	Real Estate Certification	HS or Vocational	Real Estate Sales Agents
25	Certified A+ Technician	Bachelor's	Computer User Support Specialists
26	Insurance License	Bachelor's	Insurance Sales Agents
27	CompTIA Network+	Bachelor's	Computer User Support Specialists
28	SANS/GIAC Certification	Bachelor's	Information Security Analysts
29	CDL Class C	HS or Vocational	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers



## TOP CERTIFICATIONS/LICENSES IN SAN DIEGO AND CALIFORNIA

Exhibit 4 summarizes the certifications/licenses that made the top 50 certifications/licenses every year in San Diego County and/or California. Twenty-three certifications/licenses made the top 50 every year in both San Diego County and California, six made the top 50 list every year in San Diego County only, and six certifications/licenses made the top 50 every year in California only. Within the last three years (2018-2020), the certifications/licenses with the highest entry-level earnings in San Diego County and California were Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP); Project Management Professional (PMP); and Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner.

**Exhibit 4. Certifications/Licenses in the Top 50 Every Year in San Diego and California, 2011-2020**

Certification/License Title	Made the Top 50 Every Year	San Diego Entry-Level Salary	California Entry-Level Salary
	2011-2020	2018-2020	
Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)	SD & CA	\$81K	\$86K
Project Management Professional (PMP)	SD & CA	\$79K	\$84K
Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner	SD & CA	\$77k	\$86K
Project Management Certification	SD & CA	\$74K	\$80K
SANS/GIAC Certification	SD	\$74K	\$82K
Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) Certification	SD & CA	\$68K	\$69K
Registered Nurse	SD & CA	\$66K	\$68K
IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) Certification	SD & CA	\$64K	\$71K
Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA)	SD & CA	\$62K	\$65K
CompTIA Security+	SD	\$62K	\$63K
Certified Public Accountant (CPA)	SD & CA	\$61K	\$67K
CA Driver's License	CA	\$61K	\$69K
Security Clearance	SD & CA	\$54K	\$55K
American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) Certification	CA	\$51K	\$54K

Certification/License Title	Made the Top 50 Every Year	San Diego Entry-Level Salary	California Entry-Level Salary
	2011-2020	2018-2020	
Social Work License	SD & CA	\$48K	\$51K
CDL Class A	SD & CA	\$47K	\$48K
Series 7	SD & CA	\$45K	\$46K
American Heart Association Certification	SD & CA	\$44K	\$38K
Real Estate Certification	SD	\$42K	\$41K
Basic Cardiac Life Support Certification	SD & CA	\$41K	\$43K
Basic Life Saving (BLS)	SD & CA	\$41K	\$43K
CompTIA Network+	SD	\$41K	\$43K
Insurance License	SD & CA	\$41K	\$40K
Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN)	SD & CA	\$39K	\$39K
Certified A+ Technician	SD	\$38K	\$39K
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	CA	\$38K	\$39K
Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Certification	CA	\$35K	\$32K
CDL Class C	SD & CA	\$33K	\$34K
Driver's License	SD & CA	\$31K	\$31K
First Aid CPR AED	SD & CA	\$30K	\$31K
Phlebotomy Certification	CA	\$30K	\$30K
Certified Nursing Assistant	SD & CA	\$27K	\$27K
OSHA Forklift Certification	SD & CA	\$27K	\$27K
ServSafe	CA	\$27K	\$27K
Food Handler Certification	SD	\$24K	\$24K

## CERTIFICATIONS/LICENSES TRENDS DURING THE PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in unprecedented changes in the economy that may have shifted priorities for the types of certifications/licenses requested by employers. Exhibit 5a shows certifications/licenses that increased in demand during the pandemic, which was defined as certifications/licenses that increased in ranking between 2019 and 2020 based on the number of online job postings. The certifications/licenses with the greatest increase in ranking were Security Guard Certification; Contractor's License; and Cash Handling Certification.

**Exhibit 5a. Certifications/Licenses that Increased in Ranking During the Pandemic, 2019-2020<sup>11</sup>**

Certification/License Title	Ranking in 2019	Ranking in 2020	Increased/Decreased in Ranking	Difference in Ranking
Security Guard Certification	103	53	↑	50
Contractor's License	128	92	↑	36
Cash Handling Certification	131	96	↑	35
Cosmetology License	115	89	↑	26
Licensed Professional Counselor	117	91	↑	26
American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) Certification	104	79	↑	25
Registered Dietitian	110	90	↑	20
Child Development Associate (CDA)	92	73	↑	19
Psychologist License	99	80	↑	19
Certified Surgical Technician	88	70	↑	18
Critical Care Registered Nurse (CCRN)	25	8	↑	17
Casino Gaming License	78	62	↑	16
Certified Pharmacy Technician	63	49	↑	14
Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) Certification	102	88	↑	14
OSHA Safety 10 Hour	107	94	↑	13
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	29	17	↑	12
Registered Respiratory Therapist	96	84	↑	12
DEA Certificate	56	46	↑	10
Certified Teacher	70	60	↑	10
Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB)	76	66	↑	10

<sup>11</sup> This table shows the certifications/licenses in the top 100 in 2020 that increased in ranking by 10 or more between 2019 and 2020.

Exhibit 5b shows certifications/licenses that decreased in demand during the pandemic, which was defined as certifications/licenses that decreased in ranking between 2019 and 2020 based on the number of online job postings. The certifications/licenses with the greatest decrease in ranking were Certified A+ Technician; Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP); and Certified ScrumMaster (CSM).

**Exhibit 5b. Certifications/Licenses that Decreased in Ranking During the Pandemic, 2019-2020<sup>12</sup>**

Certification/License Title	Ranking in 2019	Ranking in 2020	Increased/Decreased in Ranking	Difference in Ranking
Certified A+ Technician	31	50	↓	19
Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP)	41	59	↓	18
Certified ScrumMaster (CSM)	54	72	↓	18
Pharmacist License	68	86	↓	18
Systems Security Certified Practitioner (SSCP)	60	77	↓	17
Certified Quality Engineer (CQE)	81	98	↓	17
Microsoft Certified Solutions Expert (MCSE)	49	65	↓	16
Certified Information Security Manager (CISM)	53	69	↓	16
GIAC Security Essentials Certification	61	76	↓	15
CompTIA Advanced Security Practitioner (CASP)	86	100	↓	14
American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) Certification	50	63	↓	13
Certified Professional Coder	74	87	↓	13
Certified Case Manager (CCM)	69	81	↓	12
Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP)	82	93	↓	11
ServSafe	20	30	↓	10
Professional in Human Resources	87	97	↓	10
Information Systems Certification	89	99	↓	10

<sup>12</sup> This table shows the certifications/licenses in the top 100 in 2020 that decreased in ranking by 10 or more between 2019 and 2020.

## NATIONAL MEDIAN EARNINGS WITH/WITHOUT A CERTIFICATION/LICENSE

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) published national median earnings for full-time wage and salary workers (35+ hours) by certification/license status for 2020.<sup>13</sup> Although this type of information is not available at a regional level for San Diego County, this national data can provide insight into differences in national median earnings based on certification/license status. Across all occupational categories developed by the BLS, national median earnings for workers were higher with a certification/license than without a certification/license in 2020. Occupations with the greatest differences in median earnings with a certification/license were *Legal Occupations; Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations; and Construction and Extraction Occupations*.

**Exhibit 6. BLS National Median Yearly Earnings With/Without a Certification/License, 2020<sup>14</sup>**

BLS Occupational Categories	Median Earnings with Certification/License	Median Earnings without Certification/License	Difference in Median Earnings
Legal Occupations	99K	53K	+46K
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	69K	51K	+18K
Construction and Extraction Occupations	61K	44K	+17K
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	84K	68K	+16K
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	51K	36K	+15K
Management Occupations	91K	77K	+14K
Sales and Related Occupations	57K	44K	+13K
Protective Service Occupations	59K	47K	+12K
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	91K	80K	+11K
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	60K	50K	+10K
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	58K	49K	+9K

<sup>13</sup> "Median weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by certification and licensing status and occupation, 2020 annual averages" Bureau of Labor Statistics, last modified January 22, 2021. [bls.gov/cps/cpsaat55.pdf](https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat55.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Median weekly earnings were converted to yearly salary earnings by multiplying median weekly earnings by 52.14 weeks, which would include vacations and paid time off for full-time workers. All occupational categories were developed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Please note that some occupations require a certification/license to practice in the field or occupation, which may inflate median earnings for those that hold a certification/license.

BLS Occupational Categories	Median Salary with Certification/License	Median Salary without Certification/License	Difference in Median Earnings
Production Occupations	48K	40K	+8K
Community and Social Services Occupations	56K	50K	+6K
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	37K	31K	+6K
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	73K	68K	+5K
Personal Care and Service Occupations	45K	40K	+5K
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	45K	40K	+5K
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	30K	27K	+3K
Healthcare Support Occupations	33K	31K	+2K
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	86K	85K	+1K
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	62K	61K	+1K
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	-	30K	-

## APPENDIX: CERTIFICATIONS/LICENSES REFERENCED MORE THAN ONCE

The following certifications/licenses may be referenced more than once in Exhibit 2a or may represent a broad title. This is because the title may represent a general category that comprises multiple certifications/licenses or may represent a certification/license that employers refer to by multiple names, for example. Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

Certification/License Title	Description
<a href="#"><u>Basic Cardiac Life Support Certification*</u></a>	The American Heart Association Basic Cardiac Life Support Certification (BCLS) is also called Basic Life Saving (BLS) certification.
<a href="#"><u>Basic Life Saving (BLS)*</u></a>	The American Heart Association Basic Life Saving (BLS) certification course is also called Basic Cardiac Life Support Certification (BCLS).
<a href="#"><u>CA License*</u></a>	This is the general category for a driver's license, which may include different types of licenses in California (CDL Class A, CDL Class C, Driver's License, etc).
<a href="#"><u>Driver's License*</u></a>	This is the general category for a driver's license, which may include different types of licenses (CDL Class A, CDL Class C, Driver's License, etc).
<a href="#"><u>Food Handler Card*</u></a>	The official title is a California Food Handler Card, which may also be called Food Service Certification by employers in online job postings.
<a href="#"><u>Food Service Certification*</u></a>	Although this title is used by employers, the official title is a California Food Handler Card and may also be called a Food Service Certification by employers.
<a href="#"><u>Insurance License*</u></a>	This is a general category that may include online job postings about agents & brokers insurance, mortgage insurance, and life insurance, for example.
<a href="#"><u>Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)</u></a>	This is also called a Social Work License by employers in online job postings.
<a href="#"><u>Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)*</u></a>	Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) provide basic care to nursing patients and work under nurses with more advanced titles, and depending on the state, may be called Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN).
<a href="#"><u>Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN)*</u></a>	Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) provide basic care to nursing patients and work under nurses with more advanced titles, and depending on the state, may be called Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN).
<a href="#"><u>Project Management Certification*</u></a>	This is a general category which may include the Project Management Professional (PMP).
<a href="#"><u>Real Estate Certification*</u></a>	This is a general category that may include Certified Residential Specialist, Certified Property Manager, and Certified Real Estate Brokerage Manager, for example.
<a href="#"><u>ServSafe*</u></a>	This is a general category that may include ServSafe Food Handler, ServSafe Food Manager, ServSafe Alcohol, etc.
<a href="#"><u>Board Certified/Board Eligible*</u></a>	This is a general category that may include various types of physicians and specialties, which may be overseen by respective licensing boards depending on the specialty and state.
<a href="#"><u>Social Work License*</u></a>	The Social Work License may also be called the Licensed Clinical Social Worker in California.



Prepared by:

Tina Ngo Bartel, Director ([tngobartel@miracosta.edu](mailto:tngobartel@miracosta.edu))

John Edwards, Research Analyst ([jedwards@miracosta.edu](mailto:jedwards@miracosta.edu))

San Diego-Imperial Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research

### **Important Disclaimers**

All representations included in this report have been produced from primary research and/or secondary review of publicly and/or privately available data and/or research reports. This study examines the most recent data available at the time of the analysis; however, data sets are updated regularly and may not be consistent with previous reports. Efforts have been made to qualify and validate the accuracy of the data and the report findings; however, neither the Centers of Excellence for Labor Market Research (COE), COE host district, nor California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office are responsible for the applications or decisions made by individuals and/or organizations based on this study or its recommendations.

This workforce demand report uses state and federal job projection data that was developed before the economic impact of COVID-19. The COE is monitoring the situation and will provide more information as it becomes available. Please consult with local employers to understand their current employment needs.