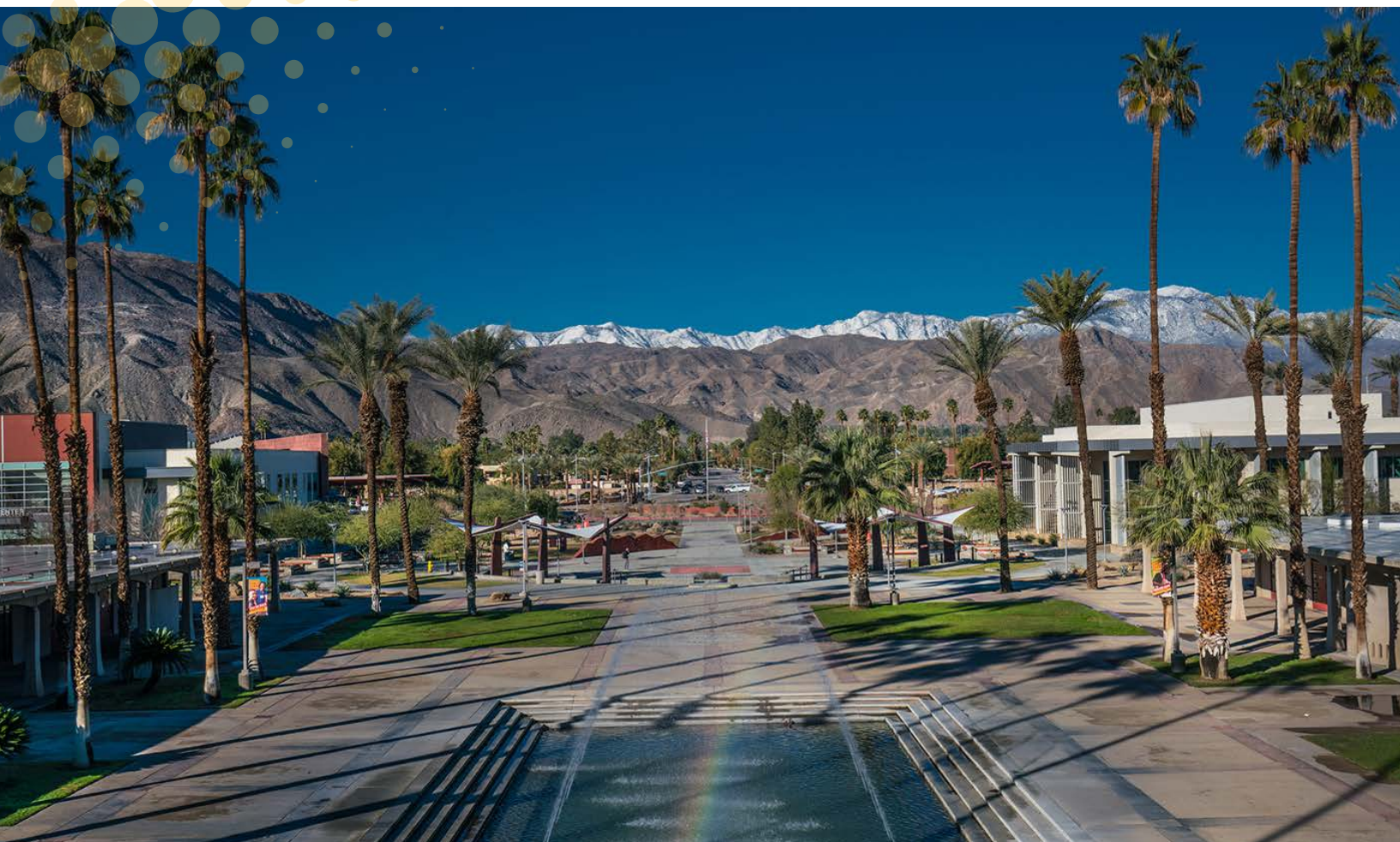




STRATEGIC EDUCATIONAL MASTER PLAN

2024-2029





CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

College of the Desert (COD) builds brighter tomorrows for students, families, and communities across the Coachella Valley by providing access to financial and educational resources leading to economic advancement. We are a diverse community of advocates for a more inclusive, flourishing future.

The future of education at COD will be guided by the Strategic Educational Master Plan (SEMP). The SEMP draws from and is grounded in research conducted as part of the Strategic Master Planning Process and the Educational Master Planning Process. In addition, through a combination of listening tours, input sessions, and focus groups with community, P16 and workforce partners, faculty, students, and staff, with direction from the Board of Trustees and in alignment with the Strategic Master Plan (SMP) the SEMP Work Group identified key priorities to incorporate into the SEMP, including enrollment recovery and retention; student outcomes; program alignment to the regional labor market; fiscal sustainability and infrastructure improvement; and creating an anti-racist, inclusive culture and climate at the college. To ensure alignment between COD's various institutional planning processes, the SMP as well as elements of the Enrollment Management Plan, Technology Plan, Equity Plan, and Vision for Success Goals, have all been incorporated into the SEMP.

COD prepares workforce professionals and leaders who will strengthen the economy, close equity gaps, and enhance the quality of life in the Coachella Valley and surrounding areas. The College believes in empowering learners to achieve their goals and dreams, regardless of their background or circumstances.

As part of this focus, the Desert Community College District (DCCD) is more committed than ever to providing a SEMP that addresses the current needs of the community and reflects the community's values, priorities, and vision.

CONTRIBUTORS

College of the Desert (COD) would like to thank the Roadrunner community for your contributions to the development of the 2024–2029 COD Strategic Educational Master Plan (SEMP), including students, faculty, classified staff, members of the College of the Desert Foundation, and the community. Your input was invaluable in developing a student-centered, data-driven, and equity-focused SEMP that reflects the strengths and opportunities at our college and will serve as a guide for institutional planning over the next 5 years.

Special thanks to members of both the Strategic Master Plan and Educational Master Plan Work Groups who met throughout the summer and during the academic year to support the development of COD's plan. Educational Master Plan Work Group members included Scott Adkins, Oxana Aghaei, Beth Allan-Bentley, Kristie Camacho, Monica Camargo, Pui Choi, Scott Cooper, Jessica Enders, Carl Farmer, Robert Guinn, Michael Hamilton, Neil Lingle, Carlos Maldonado, Val Martinez Garcia, Angel Meraz, Kelly Merchant, Dean Papas, Armando Robles, Kurt Spurgin, Brian Sylva, Rosalyn Weissmann, Corbyn Wild, and Isaac Zarco. Strategic Master Plan Members included Scott Adkins, ASCOD Officer of Academic Affairs, Douglas Benoit, Sara Butler, Oceana Collins, Linda Costagliola, Maria Elena Diaz, Kim Dozier, Gwendolyn Earle, Jessica Enders, Carl Farmer, Mike Gladych, Donna Greene, Christina Tafoya, Evelyn Trejo, Steven Holman, Catherine Levitt, Jim Lilly, Dean Papas, Miguel Pena III, and Kurt Spurgin.

ABOUT THE DISTRICT

College of the Desert is located in Palm Desert—the heart of California’s Coachella Valley. COD is the only community college in the Desert Community College District (DCCD), which was founded in 1958 and welcomed its first students in the fall of 1962. As the area’s population expanded over the next several decades, the College added new programs, services, and facilities to meet the educational needs of the communities it serves and contribute to the economic vitality of the Coachella Valley. Today, there are 13 primary service area cities in the DCCD located in a wide geographic zone of approximately 4,000 square miles: Cathedral City, Coachella, Desert Hot Springs, Indian Wells, Indio, La Quinta, Mecca, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, Rancho Mirage, Thousand Palms, Thermal, and Whitewater. Currently, COD offers more than 100 degree and certificate programs at several locations, including campuses at Palm Desert, Mecca/Thermal, Indio, and Desert Hot Springs and a temporary location in Palm Springs, which opened in 2018. With a focus on improving access to higher education throughout the Coachella Valley, critical educational partnerships, such as those with three local unified school districts (Coachella Valley Unified, Desert Sands Unified, and Palm Springs Unified), have allowed the College to also offer classes on high school campuses.

Additionally, COD collaborates with educational and workforce partners from across the Coachella Valley as a member institution in the Desert Regional Adult Education Consortium, which provides programs, services, and opportunities for a diverse population of adult students.

Understanding the critical role it plays in providing students with equitable pathways to higher education and living-wage occupations, the College’s pledge to Engage Develop, Grow, Empower (pLEDGE) program offers 2 years of tuition-free support to local high school students who graduate and who enroll at COD full-time. COD is also proud to be a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and has been a past recipient of several Title V HSI grants from the U.S. Department of Education. To strengthen the College as an HSI, these grants provided millions of dollars to assist with increasing transfer rates and improving academic support services for Hispanic/Latinx and first-generation college students. As it looks toward the future, COD is steadfastly committed to expanding equitable educational and career opportunities that meet the needs of the diverse and vibrant communities it serves. This Strategic Educational Master Plan (SEMP) serves as the foundation for the College’s bright future as outlined in COD’s mission, vision, and values.





MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

Development of College of the Desert's SEMP was guided by our Mission, Vision, and Values, which underwent a comprehensive review and update as part of the Strategic Master Planning Process in 2022.

MISSION

College of the Desert is an inclusive, student-centered community college providing high-quality degree, certificate, and transfer programs that are accessible, affordable, and responsive to the diverse needs of students and our community. By preparing workforce professionals and leaders, the College enhances the local economy, closes persistent equity gaps, and improves the quality of life in the Coachella Valley and surrounding communities.

VISION

College of the Desert will provide a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice while continually improving community access to relevant training, certificates, degree programs, services, and transfer opportunities.

VALUES

We fulfill our Vision and Mission by creating and sustaining a community where all are welcomed and valued. Recognizing the importance of diversity, we acknowledge the rich and unique contributions each person makes to achieve the Vision and advance the Mission of the College. To this end, the following Values will guide our actions:



ACCESS:

To fulfill our Mission and achieve our Vision, we commit to ensuring open access to educational opportunities.



COLLEGIALITY:

We value the thoughts, words, and actions of our students, colleagues, and community members. We encourage open dialogue, respectful dissent, and varying opinions in an inclusive forum. We pursue broad understanding, effective dialogue, and inclusive decision-making.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY (DEIA):

We embrace the diversity of our community and uphold the dignity and worth of every individual. We strive to create safe, equitable, and accessible environments so individuals can learn, grow, and complete their educational goals.



FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY:

As good stewards of the public trust, we take thoughtful, intentional, and responsible action in allocating resources to fulfill our Mission and Vision. We anticipate and respond to dynamic fiscal conditions through ongoing evaluation, effective planning, reallocating existing resources with an equity lens, and developing and seeking new funds.



EMPATHY:

We listen to each other compassionately, with open minds, and without judgment.



INNOVATION:

We create an environment of empowerment, creativity, courage, and exploration to provide a unique student-learning-centered culture that fosters innovation.



INTEGRITY:

We take accountability for our actions and adhere to the highest ethical standards in all our professional and personal responsibilities. We communicate openly, honestly, and with authenticity.



SOCIAL JUSTICE:

We commit to a fair and equal society in which all people and groups are valued and affirmed. We embrace efforts to end systemic racism. We recognize the legacy of past injustices and promote actions in support of restorative justice and full implementation of human and civil rights. (Based on: John Lewis, Institute for Social Justice.)



STUDENT SUCCESS:

We commit to student learning, goal completion, personal fulfillment, and lifelong learning.



CHAPTER 2: PURPOSE AND PROCESS

PURPOSE

College of the Desert's Strategic Educational Master Plan (SEMP) 2024–2029 is the navigational guide for the institution's decisions, which direct the District's focus and resources as it fulfills its mission, vision, and values; meets new challenges; and responds to both current and future needs of the communities it serves. Moreover, this SEM is foundational to COD's approach to integrated planning, which aligns the institution's vision, critical priorities, educational pathways, and resources to support flexible, timely decision-making and continuous evaluation and improvement.

To support effective plan integration, COD's SEM 2024–2029 relies upon relevant information—economic and demographic trends, labor market forecasts, student population data, enrollment management initiatives, employee demographics, state mandates and initiatives, technology needs, and essential professional learning needs - all of which directly impact the coordination and allocation of all human, fiscal, and physical resources. Consequently, this SEM positions COD to effectively align its institutional plans (e.g., Educational Master Plan, Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, Technology Master Plan, Facilities Master Plan), which allows for the coordination of institutional priorities in accordance with COD's planning and budget cycles.

STRATEGIC EDUCATIONAL MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The SEMP was constructed to build off the extensive engagement and planning work conducted for College of the Desert's 2023 Strategic Master Plan. COD engaged in a comprehensive and inclusive four-phase approach to developing the SMP which commenced in April 2022 and concluded in December 2022.¹



Following the development of the SMP, the College embarked on the development of the SEMP—a longer term plan for the College. To ensure the SEMP was grounded in the most current data available, WestEd provided analyses of institutional data and a review of regional demographic and workforce data. These analyses supported the College in identifying strengths and opportunities for achieving more equitable student outcomes, increasing enrollment and retention, and ensuring fiscal sustainability.

Following a similar process to developing the SMP, a 23-member SEMP Work Group, composed of faculty, administration, student representatives, and classified staff, met biweekly during the summer and into fall 2023 to create the SEMP. The Work Group provided valuable input into the strategies for engaging the campus community, K-12, workforce, and community partners. The Work Group also provided feedback on campus priorities for the next 5 years and the actions necessary to realize those goals.

To gather additional input on how COD should prioritize system improvements over the next 5 years, COD held focus groups with students (in English and Spanish) and faculty, input sessions at three campuses, and a Flex Day input session. To strengthen the SEMP and ensure a shared commitment to the goals and strategic actions outlined, the draft plan was reviewed and approved by the COD cabinet, the SEMP Work Group, and shared governance committees.

During the review process, COD leaders were alerted to the need to further align and consolidate the goals and strategic actions included in the SMP and the Educational Master Plan. This led to the merger of the Educational Master Plan with the SMP and the creation of a comprehensive Strategic Educational Master Plan that aligns all goals and strategic frameworks into a single document. The SEMP focuses on five specific focus areas: enrollment recovery and retention; equitable student outcomes; program alignment to labor market needs; fiscal sustainability and infrastructure improvement; and a culture of equity and inclusion, anti-racism, and social justice.

¹ The supporting documents for the activities in each phase can be found online on the College of the Desert SMP webpage. This webpage also includes a comment portal through which internal and external stakeholders were able to submit comments, questions, and feedback.

CHAPTER 3: ENROLLMENT RECOVERY AND RETENTION

The COVID-19 pandemic caused enrollment to decline nationally, across community colleges in California, and at COD. Although COD's enrollment has improved since 2020, the college's enrollment was still below pre-pandemic levels as of the 2022–23 school year. In part, enrollment decline at COD may be explained by the region's recent economic recovery, as low unemployment rates and higher wages, on average, entice potential and current COD students to enter the workforce rather than continue their education.

By rebuilding enrollment, COD can expand its reach in the community and provide high-quality, affordable educational opportunities that meet the needs of students and the regional labor market—a benefit to students and the community. Furthermore, enrollment recovery supports the long-term fiscal health of the college and district. This section reviews enrollment trends over time and across age, race/ethnicity, and gender as the basis for COD's enrollment recovery and retention goals.



KEY FINDINGS

- **Need for enrollment recovery.** Headcounts have been increasing in recent years at COD but have not reached their 2019–20 levels. Headcounts among 20- to 24-year-olds have declined by 20 percent since fall 2018.
- **Dual enrollment efforts have been successful.** Younger students are enrolling at COD at higher rates than any other group. The number of students 19 or younger has increased by 11 percent since 2019–20.
- **Fewer students are enrolling full-time.** The number of students enrolled full-time is down 21 percent since fall 2019 but increased by 2 percentage points from fall 2021 to fall 2022. Overall, a larger share of male students at COD are enrolled full-time than female students.² This is particularly true among Hispanic/Latinx and Black or African American students.
- **Increased enrollment in noncredit courses.** The number of students enrolled in noncredit courses increased by nearly 80 percent between fall 2021 and fall 2022.
- **Opportunity to attract more students from local high schools in the short term.** The number of high school completers in Riverside County is projected to increase by 2 percent between 2021 and 2026 and then decrease by 5 percent between 2026 and 2032.
- **Retention³ is a key issue.** Fall-to-spring persistence rates⁴ have declined from 73 percent to 66 percent between 2014–15 and 2021–22.

² While there were more female students than male students enrolled at COD overall, male students were more likely to enroll full-time.

³ In the context of this SEMP, we use fall-to-spring persistence as a measure of students' tendency to remain enrolled at COD, not in the context of course-level retention.

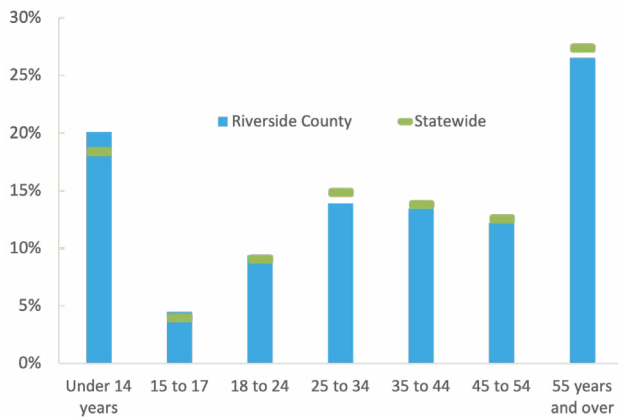
⁴ Defined as the share of students who enrolled in fall and spring terms, excluding students who completed an award or transferred to a postsecondary institution.

DATA PROFILE

RIVERSIDE COUNTY POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Riverside County's population closely mirrors California's age distribution but trends slightly younger. Riverside County has slightly more people who are elementary- and middle-school age and younger (20.1 percent) compared to the state as a whole (18.4 percent). The county also has fewer older adults. There are 110,276 people in Riverside County ages 15–17 (high school age) (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Riverside County's Population is Younger Compared to the State

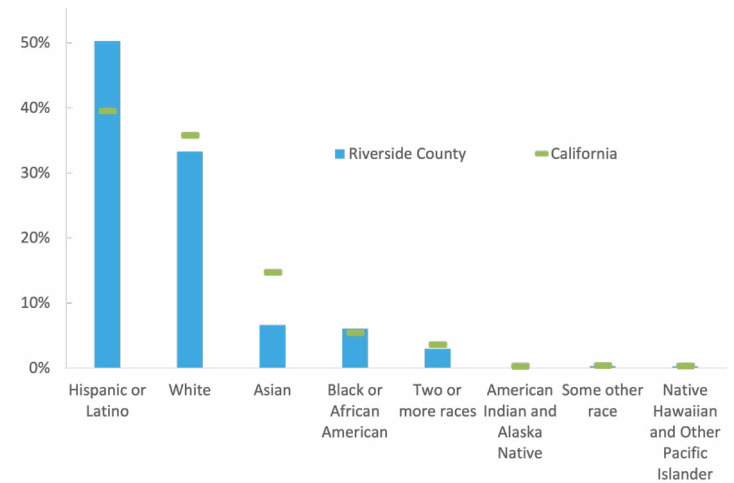


Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). *Age and sex*. American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates, Table S0101. Retrieved from https://data.census.gov/table?q=Age+and+Sex&g=010XX00US_040XX00US06_050XX00US06065&tp=false

50.3 percent of Riverside County is Hispanic or Latino compared to 39.5 percent of California (Figure 2).

The population of white adults in Riverside County (33.2 percent) is similar to that of the state (35.8 percent), while the population of Asian adults in the county (6.6 percent) is lower than the state (14.7 percent).

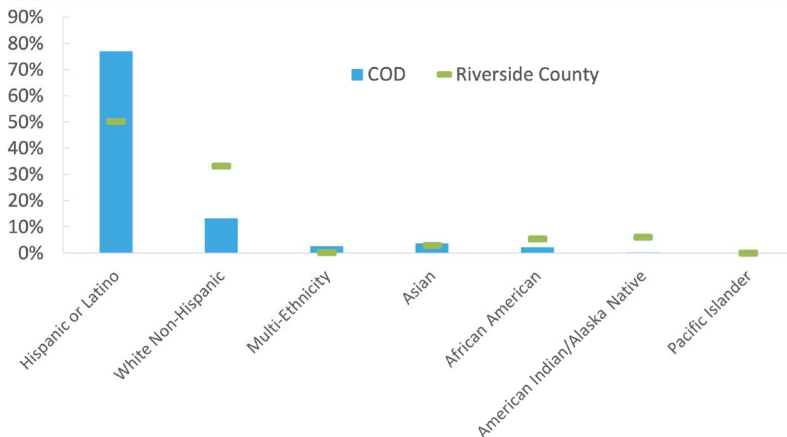
Figure 2. More Than Half of Riverside County is Hispanic/Latino



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2017–2021). *Hispanic or Latino origin by race*. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table B03002. Retrieved from https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2021.B03002?q=hispanic+or+latino+and+race&g=040XX00US06_050XX00US06065&moe=false

The population of college students is also somewhat different from the population of the county. In 2022–23, the majority of students at COD were Hispanic/Latino (76.9 percent). Black or African American and American Indian/Alaskan Native students are also underrepresented at COD. These racial/ethnic groups comprise over 11 percent of the county population but only 2.5 percent of the COD student body (Figure 3).

Figure 3. College of the Desert Has a Larger Share of Hispanic/Latino Students Than the County



Sources: For Riverside County: U.S. Census Bureau. (2017–2021). *Hispanic or Latino origin by race*. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table B03002. Retrieved from https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2021.B03002?q=hispanic+or+latino+and+race&g=040XX00US06_050XX00US06065&moe=false. For college: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Data Mart. (2023). Full time equivalent students (FTES) summary report. Retrieved from https://datamart.cccco.edu/Students/FTES_Summary.aspx

LOCAL HIGH SCHOOLS

High school enrollment and completion in Coachella Valley have declined (Figure 4).⁵ La Quinta High, Coachella Valley High, and Palm Desert High have the most high school graduates in the area. Declines in completion are not uniform within or across districts.

For instance, within Desert Sands Unified, the number of completers from Shadow Hills High and Palm Desert High increased, while the number of students who graduated declined precipitously for La Quinta High.

The number of completers from Palm Springs Unified has also fluctuated significantly since 2015, as roughly 300 students now graduate from the relatively new Rancho Mirage High.



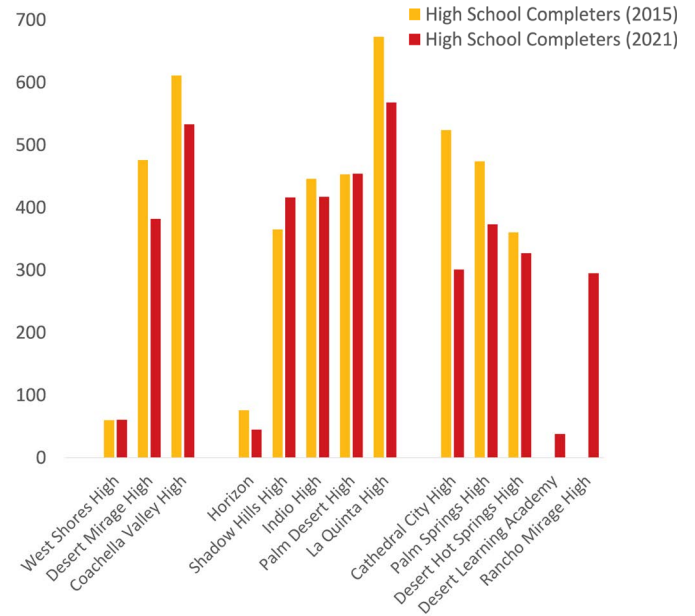
More than 35 percent of high school completers from Desert Sands Unified attended a community college in 2021 (Figure 5). La Quinta High and Palm Desert High each have significant enrollment and send the highest proportion of graduating students who enroll in a community college (43 percent for both schools).

Cathedral City High has experienced significant declines in enrollment and completion, but many of its students (38 percent of all completers) enroll in community college.

Desert Mirage High and Desert Hot Springs High had two of the lowest capture rates in the area (roughly 25 percent) while being two of the larger local high schools.

In 2021, these two schools accounted for 16 percent of all high school completers from the three service area districts. High schools with fewer students enrolling at COD are important to identify so that COD can adjust its outreach and engagement efforts to attract more of these students.

Figure 4. High School Enrollment and Completion in Coachella Valley is Declining



Source: California Department of Education DataQuest. (2023). *College-going rate for California high school students by postsecondary institution type*. Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>⁶

Figure 5. Over 35 Percent of High School Completers from DSUSD Attended a Community College (Most Often COD) in 2021



Source: California Department of Education DataQuest. (2023). *College-going rate for California high school students by postsecondary institution type*. Retrieved from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/files/cgr12.asp>

⁵ Declines in the number of graduates may reflect a decline in the number of students enrolled in these high schools in addition to any decline in graduation rates.

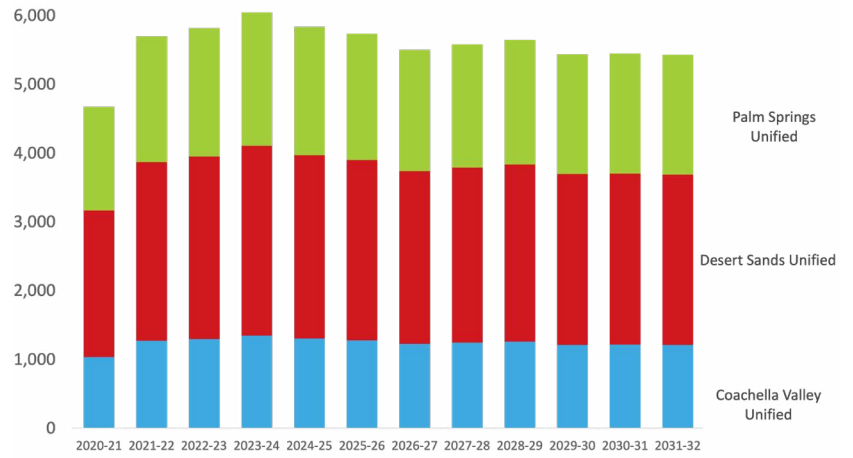
⁶ Without executing data sharing agreements with local districts, the SEMP authors had to rely on public data for this figure. The year 2021 was the most recent year for which public data was available.

Declines in high school completion within Riverside County are predicted to be less severe than statewide declines (Table 1). While the number of high school completers is projected to decline across the state by 2026, the figure in Riverside County is projected to increase by 2 percent though it is expected to decrease between 2026 and 2031.

Public K–12 districts are expected to maintain their relative shares of students, with Desert Sands Unified being the largest (Figure 6).

Based on the California Department of Education’s forecast of completers by county, Figure 7 below estimates how many high school completers each district may have in the next 9 school years.

Figure 6. The Amount of High School Completers Graduating from Local High School Districts is Not Projected to Decline Drastically by 2031–32



Source: California Department of Education DataQuest. (2023). *College-going rate for California high school students by institution type*. Retrieved from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/filescgr12.asp>

Table 1. High School Completers by County Compared to California Average

County	Change in the number of high school completers (2021–2026)	Change in number of high school completers (2026–2032)
Riverside	2%	-5%
San Bernardino	3%	-7%
Kern	13%	-3%
Los Angeles	-8%	-15%
Orange	-8%	-12%
San Diego	-5%	-6%
Imperial	-1%	-10%
California Average	-3%	-9%

Source: California Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit. (2022). *California public K–12 graded enrollment and high school graduate projections by county – 2022 Series*. Retrieved from <https://dof.ca.gov/forecasting/demographics/public-k-12-graded-enrollment/>

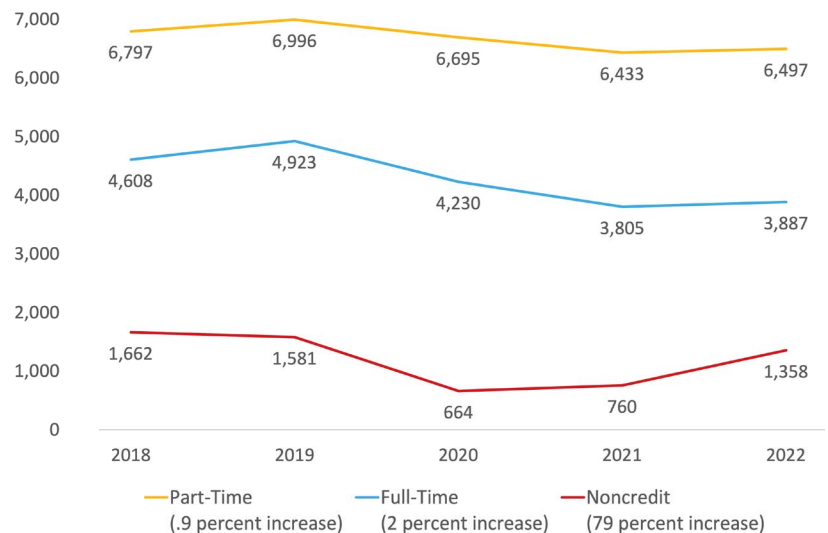


ENROLLMENT AT COLLEGE OF THE DESERT

Like most colleges, enrollment at COD declined during the COVID-19 pandemic. From fall 2019 to fall 2020, enrollment dropped among all COD student groups, especially noncredit students (Figure 7).

Enrollment has since rebounded and is approaching pre-pandemic levels. The number of noncredit students jumped from 760 in fall 2021 to 1,358 in fall 2022, a 79 percent increase.

Figure 7. Increase in Enrollment Since Fall 2021

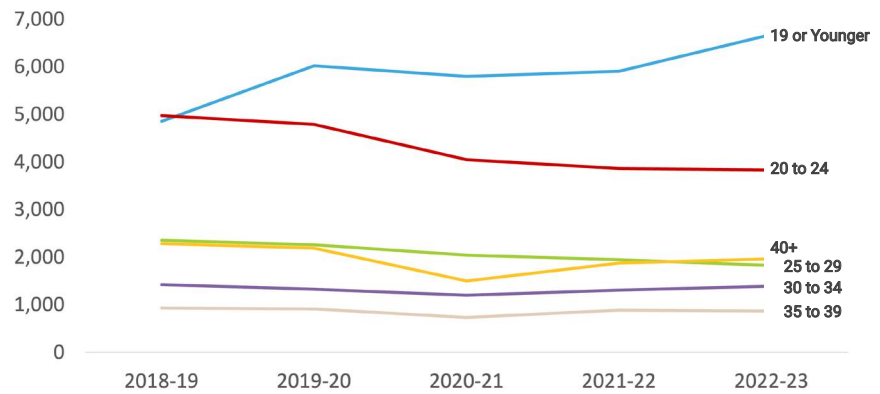


Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office Management Information Systems Data Mart. (2023). *Full-time/part-time (unit load) status summary report*. Retrieved from https://datamart.cccco.edu/Students/Unit_Load_Status.aspx

Headcounts among younger students are increasing most quickly, likely as a result of large increases in the number of dual enrollment students⁷ (Figure 8). The number of students 19 or younger has increased by 11 percent since 2019–20.

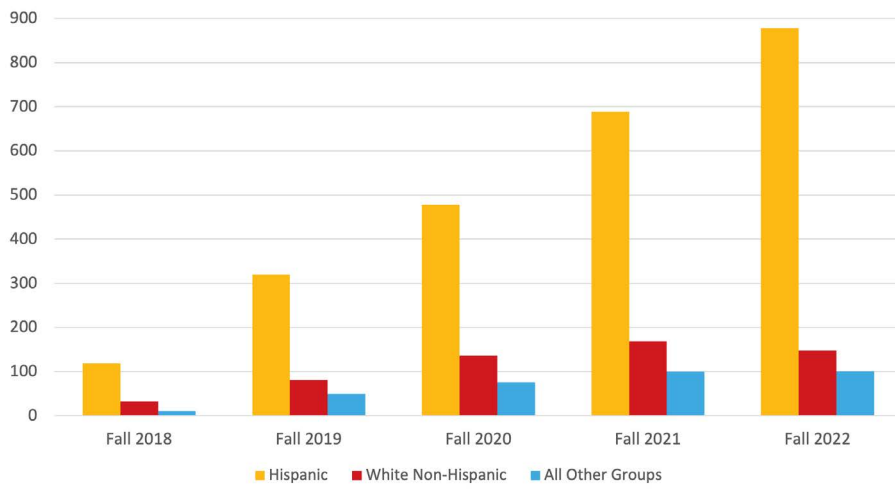
Headcounts among 20- to 24-year-olds have declined by 20 percent in this time span.

Figure 8. The Number of Students 19 or Younger at COD Has Increased Faster Than Other Age groups



Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Data Mart. (2023). *Annual/term student count report*. Retrieved from https://datamart.cccco.edu/Students/Student_Headcount_Term_Annual.aspx

Figure 9. Dual Enrollment at COD Since Fall 2018



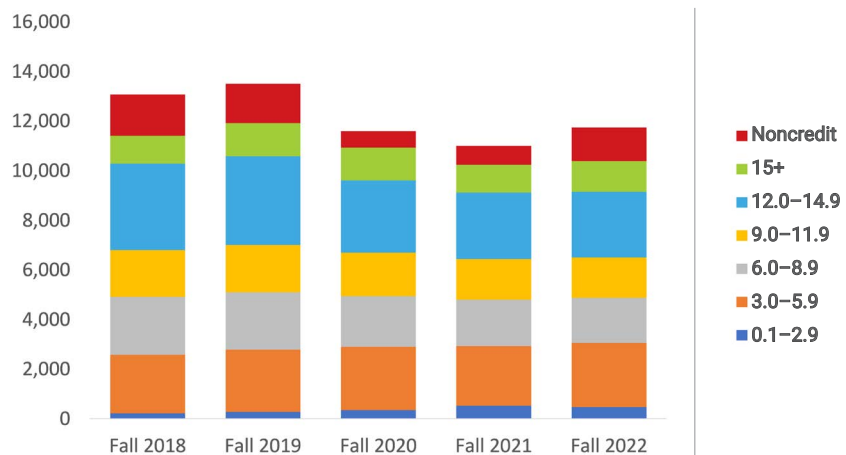
Since fall 2018, the number of dual enrollment students at COD has increased by nearly 1,000 (Figure 9). The racial/ethnic breakdown of dual enrollment students was similar to that of the larger COD community: over three quarters of dual enrollment students tended to be Hispanic/Latinx, while the next largest racial/ethnic group was White students.

Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Data Mart. (2023). *Enrollment status summary report*. Retrieved from https://datamart.cccco.edu/Students/Enrollment_Status.aspx

While headcounts have increased in recent years, students have changed their preferences around how many units to take. The share of students taking 6 or fewer units and 15 or more units has increased since 2018 (Figure 10).

A plurality of COD students enroll in 12 to 14.9 units, but the share of students enrolled in this many units declined from 26.7 percent to 22.5 percent between fall 2018 and fall 2022.

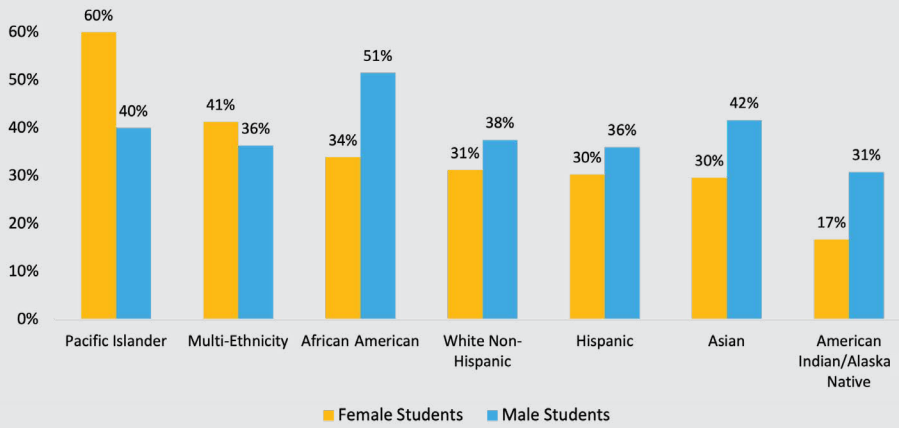
Figure 10. Headcounts Recovered Between 2021 and 2022 as a Higher Share of Students Enrolled in Fewer Than 6 or More Than 15 Units



Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Data Mart. (2023). *Full-time/part-time (unit load) status summary report*. Retrieved from https://datamart.cccco.edu/Students/Unit_Load_Status.aspx

⁷ These are also referred to as Special Admit students and are students who attend a K–12 institution at the same time as COD.

Figure 11. The Share of Students Enrolled Full-time Varies by Race/Ethnicity and Gender



Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Data Mart. (2023). *Full-time/part-time (unit load) status summary report*. Retrieved from https://datamart.cccco.edu/Students/Unit_Load_Status.aspx

The share of students taking courses full-time also varies by race/ethnicity and gender (Figure 11).

In general, male students are enrolled full-time more often than female students. Looking within the Hispanic/Latinx population of COD students (the vast majority of the student body), 36 percent of male students were enrolled full-time, while 30 percent of female students were enrolled full-time.

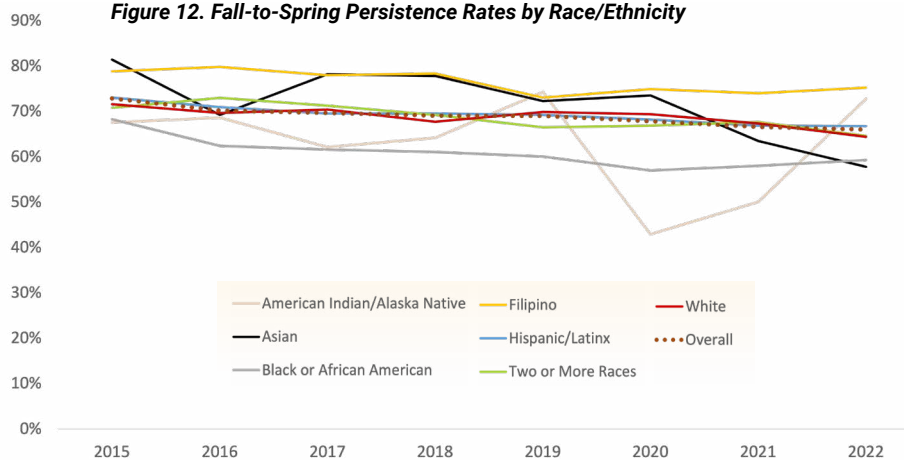
It should be noted that while a smaller percentage of female Hispanic/Latinx students were enrolled full-time than were male Hispanic/Latinx students (i.e., 30 percent vs. 36 percent), there were still about 400 more full-time female Hispanic/Latinx students than male full-time Hispanic/Latinx students overall. This is due to the fact that there are many more female students than male students enrolled at COD in general.

Overall, fall-to-spring persistence rates have dropped from 73 percent in 2014–15 to 66 percent in 2021–22. Fall-to-spring persistence rates are similar for Hispanic/Latinx students, White students, and students reporting two or more races.

Persistence rates for these student groups follow a trend similar to the overall trend, while Black students and American Indian/Alaska Native students have lower persistence rates than the COD average.

Since 2015–16, Filipino students have had higher persistence rates than the COD average (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Fall-to-Spring Persistence Rates by Race/Ethnicity



Source: California Community Colleges LaunchBoard: Student Success Metrics. (2023). *Persisted from fall to spring at the same college*. Retrieved from <https://www.calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/Student-Success-Metrics.aspx>





GOALS FOR ENROLLMENT RECOVERY AND RETENTION

Based on the analysis of regional and institutional data, input from the Roadrunner community and community partners, and to align with the College's Vision for Success Goals, COD established the following goals to support enrollment recovery and retention over the next 5 years, with a focus on disproportionately impacted students (aligns with Objective 1a from the Strategic Master Plan).

- To support fiscal sustainability, by 2025, COD will increase apportionment Full-Time Equivalent Students (FTES) to be at least a mid-sized district (10,000 FTES minimum).
- To support more targeted outreach and engagement for enrollment recovery, COD will develop a strategic outreach plan. The plan will include a strategy for hosting high-touch events to improve visibility for COD, marketing to improve COD's reputation in the area, and improvements to the COD website.
- To support enrollment recovery and growth, COD will increase the number of dual enrollment students to 4,500 (currently at 1,127) by 2029.
- To support enrollment recovery and growth, by 2029, COD will increase the number of full-time students by 18 percent to 4,600 (currently at 3,887).⁸
- Based on demand⁹ and to support enrollment recovery, by 2029, COD will increase the number of noncredit course offerings by 25 percent.
- Recognizing that retention rates have fallen, COD will increase fall-to-spring persistence to 75 percent (currently at 66 percent).
- To maximize enrollment and flexibility, COD will increase the number of short-term classes by 30 percent over the next 3 years.
- To support retention, COD will implement incentive nudges that support a culture of recognition.

⁸ Assumes average annual growth of 3 percent each year; 4,600 is also (roughly) the number of students enrolled in 2018–19 (i.e., the goal represents making up pandemic declines).

⁹ Input sessions and student focus groups indicated that students would take more noncredit courses if more were offered. This is corroborated with the large increase in noncredit enrollment between fall 2021 and fall 2022.

CHAPTER 4:

EQUITABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES

COD's central focus is supporting the thousands of students who attend the College each year to achieve their educational goals. As part of this focus, the College is committed to supporting students to ensure that student outcomes are not systematically better or worse for one student group than any other. This support comes in many forms—from efforts to ensure rigorous, engaging, real-world learning opportunities to expanding access to financial aid, food pantries, counseling, and educational planning. To understand whether existing supports are achieving their intended effect and to look for areas of improvement, COD reviewed student outcomes (e.g., degree and certificate completion, transfers, course success rates) over the last 5 years by gender and race/ethnicity as a foundation for the establishment of its goals to improve student outcomes and ensure outcomes are equitable.



KEY FINDINGS

- **Student success rates have declined in the last 3 years.** Success rates—the proportion of course enrollments where students received a passing grade—have decreased to 67 percent down from 75 percent in 2019–20.
- **Course success rates are disproportionately higher for Asian, Filipino, and White students.** Overall, success rates are usually near 70 percent but are lower for Hispanic/Latinx, Black, and American Indian/Alaska Native students. In 2021–22, only Asian, Filipino, and White students had success rates higher than 70 percent.
- **Most students do not pass transfer-level English and Math in their 1st year.** The number of students enrolled in transfer-level English and Math courses has declined since 2019–20. In 2021–22, about 26 percent of enrolled students passed transfer-level English and 5 percent passed transfer-level Math courses in the 1st year.¹⁰ In 2021–22, male and female students completed transfer-level Math courses at roughly the same rate, while female students more often completed transfer-level English courses than male students (28 percent vs. 25 percent).
 - Among the 112 students who completed transfer-level Math and English in 2021–22, 59 percent were Hispanic/Latinx, while 25 percent were White.
- **Increases in degrees attained, but disproportionate rates by race/ethnicity.** In 2021–22, 1,212 students earned any associate degree, up from 679 in 2014–15. In that school year, 9 percent of White students and 10 percent of Filipino students earned associate degrees, compared to 8 percent of Hispanic/Latinx, 7 percent of Asian students, and 6 percent of Black or African American students.
 - In 2021–22, 740 students earned credit certificates,¹¹ up from 197 in 2014–15.
 - In 2021–22, 1,306 students earned any award,¹² up from 840 in 2014–15.
 - In 2021–22, 788 students earned ADTs,¹³ up from 289 in 2014–15.
 - In 2020–21, 720 students transferred to a UC or CSU,¹⁴ increasing by 65 percent since 2014–15.
- **Decreases in the average number of units earned by students who complete degrees.**¹⁵ In 2021–22, the average number of units earned by students who completed an AA/AS (including ADTs) was 82, down from 94 units in 2014–15.

¹⁰ Among students enrolled in transfer-level Math and/or English, the proportion of students who completed transfer-level Math and/or English within their 1st academic year of credit enrollment at COD

¹¹ The number of students who earned a Chancellor's Office approved credit certificate

¹² Includes Chancellor's Office approved credit certificates and any type of associate degree

¹³ The number of students who earned an AA-T or AS-T for the first time

¹⁴ The number of students who earned 12 or more units and who enrolled in a CSU or UC in the subsequent year

¹⁵ Among students who earned an associate degree for the first time, the average number of semester units in the California community college system earned

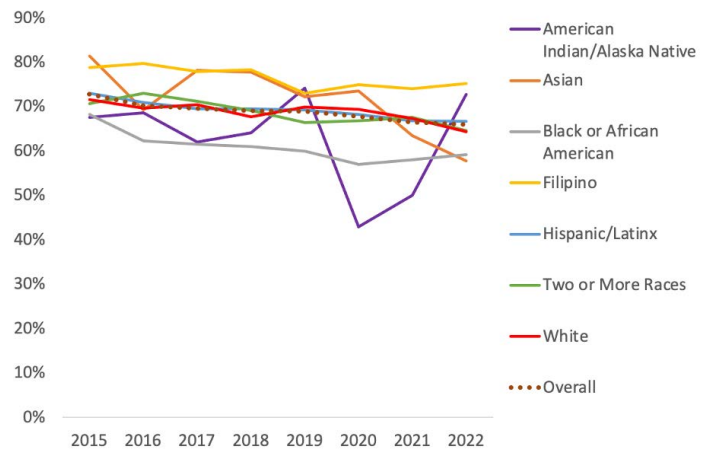
DATA PROFILE

OUTCOMES AND SUCCESS



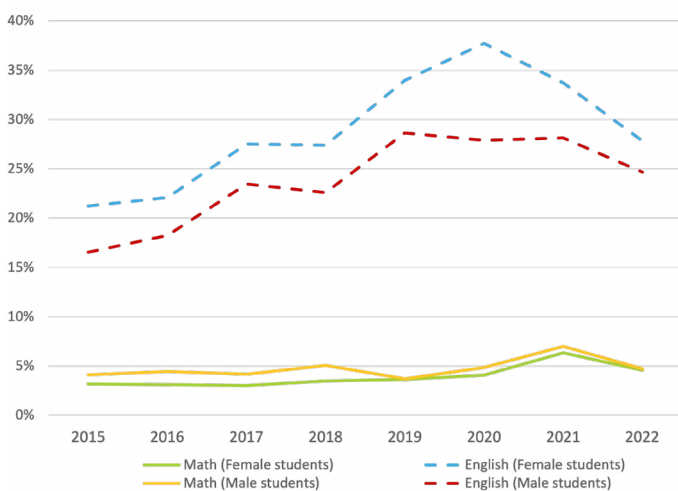
Course success rates vary by race/ethnicity (Figure 13). Overall, success rates are usually near 70 percent but are lower for Hispanic/Latinx, Black, and American Indian/Alaskan Native Students. In 2021–22, only Asian, Filipino, and White students had success rates higher than 70 percent.

Figure 13. Course Success Rates Vary by Race/Ethnicity



Source: California Community Colleges LaunchBoard: Student Success Metrics. (2023). Course Success Rate. Retrieved from <https://www.calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/Student-Success-Metrics.aspx>

Figure 14. Transfer-Level Math and English Completion (Within the 1st Year) by Gender



Source: California Community Colleges LaunchBoard: Student Success Metrics. (2023). Completed Transfer-Level Math and English. Retrieved from <https://www.calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/Student-Success-Metrics.aspx>

Figure 14 displays the rates at which students have passed transfer-level Math and English courses within their 1st year of enrollment at COD. Dashed lines indicate success rates for transfer-level English courses, while solid lines indicate success rates for transfer-level Math courses.

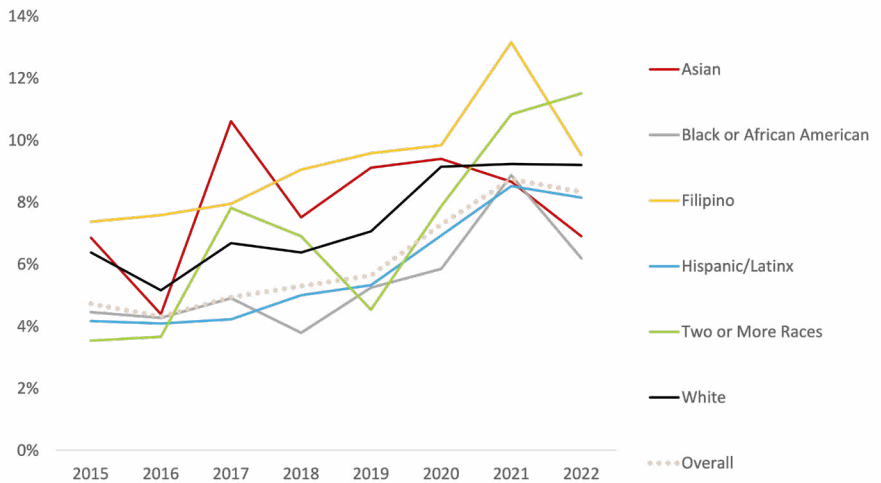
Male students tended to pass transfer-level Math courses at slightly higher rates than female students, while female students tended to pass transfer-level English courses significantly more often than male students. In 2014–15, 3,156 students were enrolled in transfer-level Math and English courses.

This amount increased each year to 4,335 in 2019–20 and has since declined to 3,683 in 2021–22.

Overall, the percentage of COD students who earned any associate degree increased from 5 percent to 8 percent between 2014–15 and 2021–22, but this rate varied by race/ethnicity (Figure 15).

Over this time span, the percentage of Asian students, Filipino students, and White students who earned an associate degree tended to be higher than that of Hispanic/Latinx and Black or African American students.

Figure 15. Percentage of COD Students Who Earned Any Associate Degree, by Race/Ethnicity



Source: California Community Colleges LaunchBoard: Student Success Metrics. (2023). Transitioned to Postsecondary or Earned an Award. Retrieved from <https://www.calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/Student-Success-Metrics.aspx>

Table 2 provides an update on progress on COD’s 2017 Vision for Success Goals related to student outcomes. The figures indicate that COD has successfully met or improved outcomes across all Vision for Success Goals.

Table 2. Update on 2017 Vision for Success Goals

Vision for Success Goals	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
# of students earning degrees	797	875	936	1,221	1,259	1,212
# of students earning credit certificates	125	189	183	193	156	740
# of students earning any award	896	1,021	1,077	1,363	1,356	1,306
# of students earning ADTs	446	523	603	769	818	788
# of transfers to UC/CSU	464	534	596	677	720	
Avg # of units earned for AA/AS	90	90	89	84	82	82
% of students working in field of study	60	70	69	62		

To continue to improve outcomes for students, COD has set new goals for ensuring students achieve their educational goals and to achieve more equitable student outcomes. Table 3 includes COD’s new Vision for Success Goals.

Table 3. Vision for Success Goals for 2028–29

Vision for Success Goals	2016–17 amount	Goal for 2021–22 set in 2017	2021–22 amount	SEMP goal for 2028–29
# of students earning degrees	797	956	1,212	2,100
# of students earning credit certificates	125	150	740	950
# of students earning any award	896	1,075	1,306	2,150
# of students earning ADTs	446	602	788	1,650
# of transfers to UC/CSU	464	566	720 ¹⁶	1,450
Avg # of units earned for AA/AS	90	79	82	TBD

¹⁶ The 2020–21 value is reported, as that is the most recent year for which the datapoint is available.

GOALS FOR MORE EQUITABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES

Based on the analysis of institutional data, input from the Roadrunner community and community partners, and to align with the College's Vision for Success Goals,¹⁷ COD established the following goals to support more equitable student outcomes over the next 5 years, with a focus on improving outcomes for disproportionately impacted students (aligns with Objective 1a from the SMP).

- By 2029, increase course success rates for Hispanic/Latinx and Black students by 10 percent (currently at 66 percent, and 58 percent, respectively).
- By 2029, increase the number of students who complete transfer-level Math and English¹⁸ within 1 year by 50 percent.¹⁹
- By 2029, increase the percentage of female students who complete transfer-level Math within 1 year.
- By 2029, increase the percentage of male students who complete transfer-level English within 1 year.
- By 2029, increase the number of students earning any associate degree by 73 percent to 2,100.
- By 2029, increase the number of students earning credit certificates by 28 percent to 950.
- By 2029, increase the number of students earning any award by 65 percent to 2,150.
- By 2029, increase the percentage of Hispanic/Latinx students and Black students earning associate degrees by 10 percent.
- By 2029, increase the number of students earning ADTs by 109 percent to 1,650.
- By 2029, increase the number of students who transfer to a UC or CSU by 101 percent to 1,450.
- By 2029, increase the percentage of CTE students working in their field of study to 76 percent, up from 62 percent in 2019–20.



¹⁷ COD's Vision for Success Goals: <https://www.collegeofthedesert.edu/faculty-staff/research/college-goals.php>

¹⁸ In 2021–22, 171 students completed transfer-level Math and 968 students completed transfer-level English within their 1st year of enrollment at COD, and 112 students completed both transfer-level Math and transfer-level English within their 1st year of enrollment at COD.

¹⁹ The Enrollment Management Plan includes the same goal.



CHAPTER 5: PROGRAM ALIGNMENT TO REGIONAL LABOR MARKET NEEDS AND THRIVING WAGE CAREERS

To meet the needs of the regional labor market and ensure thriving wage jobs for all students after they attend COD, the College is focused on aligning its programmatic offerings with high-demand, high-wage industries in the Coachella Valley.

This section examines which occupations and industries are growing the fastest and which offer the highest wages. We also employ an analytical framework to illustrate how many students are enrolled in high-, medium-, and low-opportunity programs as determined by current labor market opportunities.

KEY FINDINGS

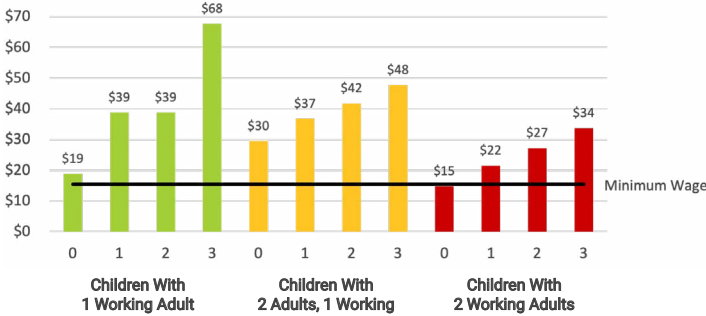
- **COD offers some programs that support careers in the fastest-growing occupations in the Coachella Valley.** Some of the fastest-growing occupations are Nursing Assistants; Truck Drivers; and Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Technicians.
- **COD offers some programs that support careers in the largest industries²⁰ and occupations in the Coachella Valley.** In the Coachella Valley, Healthcare, Construction, and Government stand out as large industries (more than 15,000 jobs) with high earnings (\$60,000+). The largest occupations in the Coachella Valley with high earnings are
 - Licensed Vocational Nurses, Firefighters, and Computer User Support Specialists, for jobs that typically require a certificate or some college, and
 - General Managers, Registered Nurses, and Elementary and Middle School Teachers for jobs that typically require a bachelor's degree.
- **High enrollment programs at COD have the potential to lead to high- and medium-opportunity jobs (Transfer or CTE).** Several vocational programs at COD are expected to lead to high opportunity (earnings) immediately following graduation.
- **COD has the opportunity to develop allied health programs to meet local labor market demand.** Several of the top jobs in the region with high earnings that typically require an associate degree are Radiologic Technicians, Dental Hygienists, and Sonographers; programs to prepare students for these jobs are not currently offered by the college.

²⁰ Establishments (businesses) are classified into industries by the federal government according to similarity in the processes used to produce goods or services. Each industry includes several occupations. For example, some of the top occupations within the Government industry are Elementary School Teachers, Library Occupations, and Law Enforcement Workers. For more details on occupational employment within each industry, see <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oesrci.htm#23>.

DATA PROFILE

LABOR MARKET CONTEXT

Figure 16. Hourly Living and Minimum Wage in Riverside County



Source: Glasmeier, A. K. (2023). Living wage calculator. Living wage calculation for Riverside County, California. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. <https://livingwage.mit.edu>

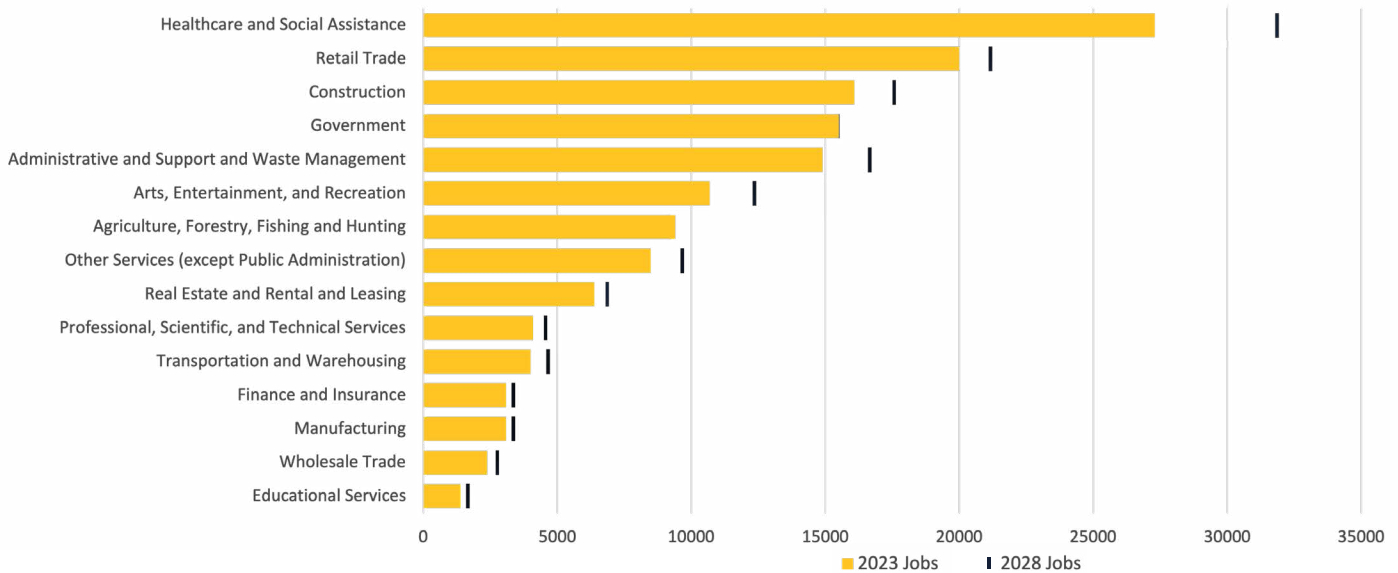
COD’s mission is to provide high-quality programs that prepare students for in-demand jobs earning thriving wages. Figure 16 displays the living (or thriving) wage for different family sizes in Riverside County.²¹

The minimum wage (\$15.50) is insufficient to meet the minimum living standards in Riverside County for nearly all family sizes; only in a family with two working adults and no children is the minimum wage sufficient to be considered a thriving wage.

The living wage in Riverside County ranges from \$15 per hour for a family with two working adults to \$68 an hour for a family with one working adult and three children.

Understanding the top industries²² in the Coachella Valley can inform the types of programs the College offers to meet local labor market demand. The Healthcare and Social Assistance industry is one of the largest in the Coachella Valley (Figure 17), and it is expected to grow considerably in the next 5 years. Healthcare jobs are projected to expand from 27,300 in 2023 to 31,800 in 2028. Most of the largest industries in the Coachella Valley are expected to grow in the next 5 years, except Government and Agriculture.

Figure 17. Largest Industries in Coachella Valley²³



Source: Lightcast™. (2023). Highest ranked industries: Top industries (2-digit) in COD service area: Largest industries. (Lightcast Q2 2023) [Data set].

²¹ The living wage is the local hourly wage that a full-time worker requires to cover the costs of their family’s basic needs where they live.

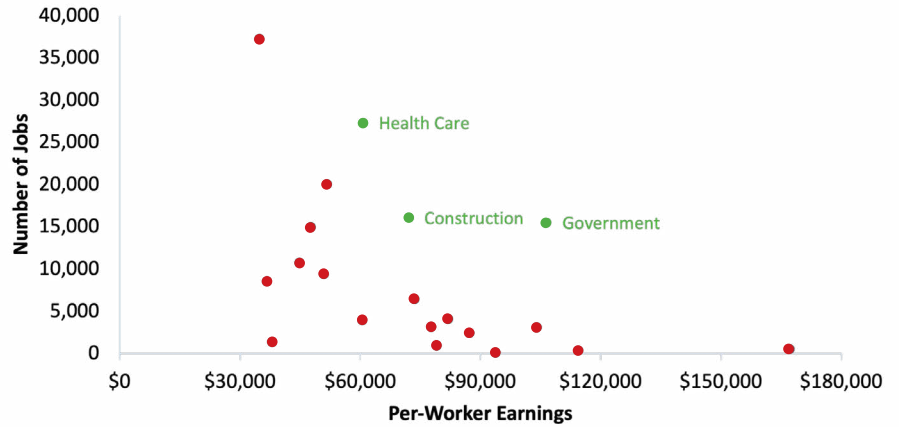
²² Establishments (businesses) are classified into industries by the federal government according to similarity in the processes used to produce goods or services.

²³ Accommodation and Food Services is excluded from this figure. Like most regions, the largest industry in Coachella Valley is Accommodation and Food Services, which has 37,000 jobs—nearly twice as many jobs as retail trade (Figure 17). Food services jobs, which includes hotels, caterers, bars, and restaurants, are characterized by low wages (earning about \$35K annually), and many jobs in that industry do not require a college certificate or degree.

It is essential to understand not only the largest industries but also those with jobs that typically have high earnings. Construction, Government, and Healthcare are all relatively large industries (with more than 15,000 jobs) in the Coachella Valley, and workers in these three industries also typically earn high wages, more than \$60K annually (Figure 18).

Some of the top jobs in the Construction industry sector include Construction Trade Workers, Construction Laborers, and Office and Administrative Support Occupations. Some of the top jobs in the Healthcare sector include Healthcare Diagnosing or Treating Practitioners; Home Health and Personal Care Aides; Nursing Assistants, Orderlies, and Psychiatric Aides; and Health Technologists and Technicians.

Figure 18. Healthcare, Construction, and Government Stand Out as Large Industries With High Earnings

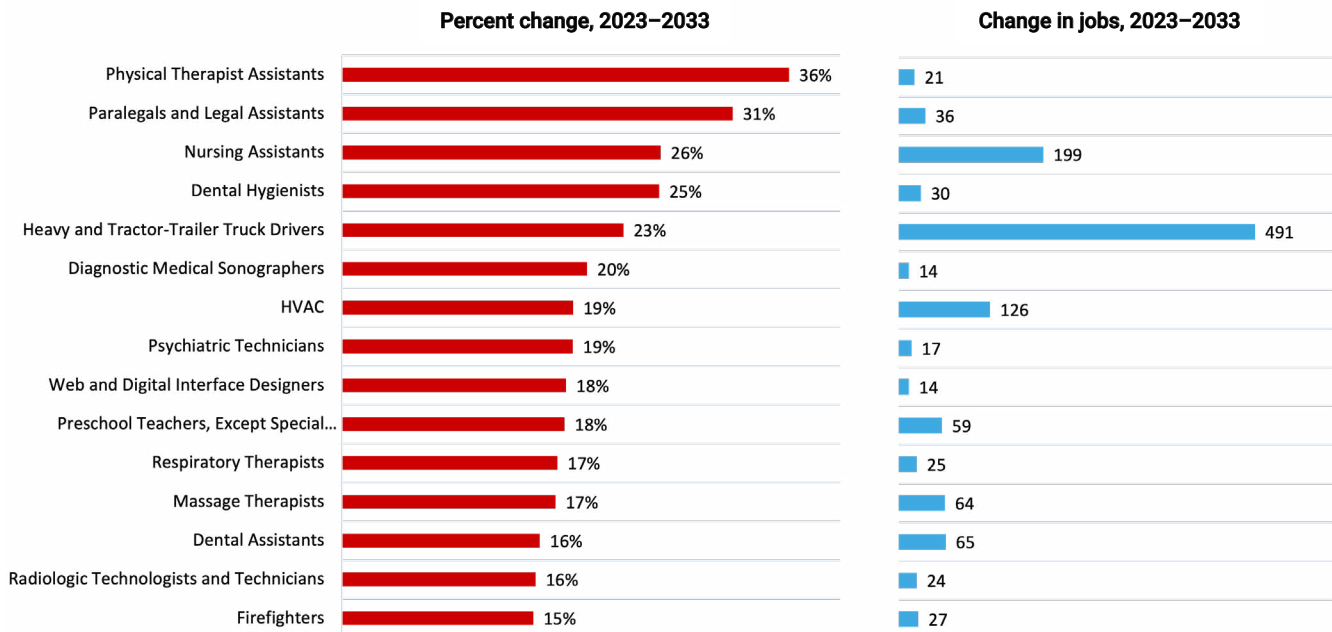


Source: Lightcast™. (2023). Highest ranked industries: Top industries (2-digit) in COD service area: Highest paying industries: 2023 jobs and 2022 annual earnings per worker. (Lightcast Q2 2023) [Data set].

The following figures move from examining whole industries (different types of businesses) to specific occupations. Figure 19 shows the top 15 occupations (typically requiring some college, a certificate, or an associate degree) in the COD service area from 2023 to 2033. We see high growth (36 percent) among Physical Therapy Assistants, but Physical Therapy Assistants are a relatively small occupation in the Coachella Valley; only 21 jobs will be added from 2023 to 2033.

The Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers occupation is projected to grow considerably in the next decade (with an estimated 23 percent increase in the number of jobs), and it is a relatively large occupation, with 491 jobs added in the next decade. This suggests Advanced Transportation Technologies or similar programs at COD could be expanded in the next several years to meet the growing demand.

Figure 19. Top 15 Fastest Growing Occupations in Service Area



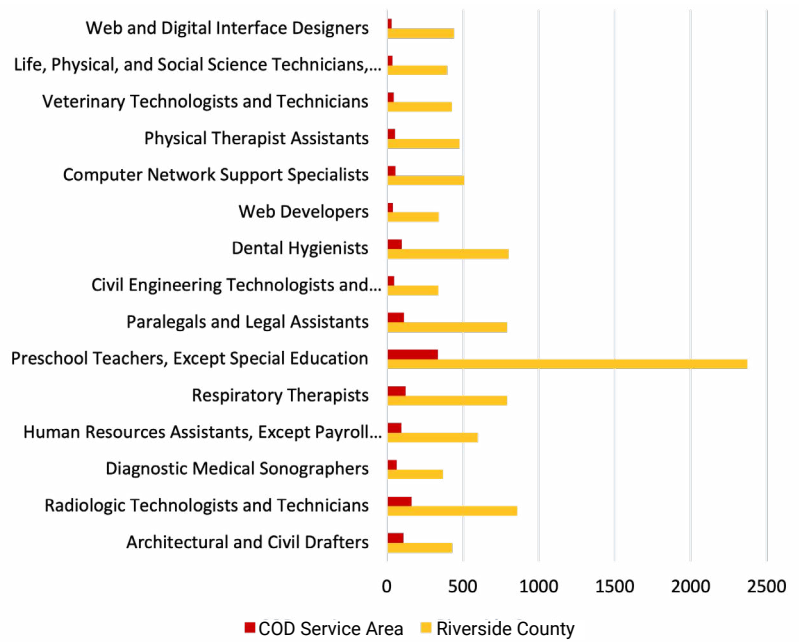
Source: Lightcast™. (2023). Highest ranked occupations: Top occupations (5-digit) in COD service area: Fastest growing occupations. Education levels: Some college, no degree; postsecondary non-degree award, Associate degree. (Lightcast Q3 2023) [Data set].

Some jobs are more prominent in Riverside County as a whole compared to the Coachella Valley region.

Figure 20 shows the number of jobs that typically require an AA in the COD service area compared to Riverside County. Because Riverside County is a much larger geographic area, there are more jobs in the county than in COD’s service area. For example, there are 14 times as many Web and Digital Interface Designers in the county as in the COD service area.

Similarly, Physical Therapy Assistants is a relatively small occupation in the Coachella Valley, but it has nearly 500 jobs in Riverside County in 2023. This suggests that students training in Digital Design and Production or the Physical Therapy Assistant program at COD may need to find work outside of the Coachella Valley.

Figure 20. Top Occupations in COD Service Area and Riverside County



Source: Lightcast™. (2023). Highest ranked occupations: Top occupations (5-digit) in COD service area: Largest occupations. Education levels: Associate degree. (Lightcast Q3 2023) [Data set].



LABOR MARKET EQUITY

Since many community college students attend college in the region where they live and work, it is important for College of the Desert to offer programs that train students for the top jobs in the local economy. COD is focused on training students not only for the largest jobs in the region where they are more likely to find employment but also for those jobs that offer high earnings where students are more likely to become upwardly mobile. The following three figures list the top jobs in the COD’s service area, organized by the level of education typically required for workers in that job: a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor’s degree.

To easily categorize jobs based on the general level of opportunity they are expected to provide, COD follows a framework from the Community College Research Center at Teachers College at Columbia University.²⁴ The framework classifies jobs as “low,” “medium,” and “high” opportunity based on the extent to which they meet the living wage threshold for different family sizes in Riverside County.

Table 4. Low-, Medium-, and High-Opportunity Threshold for College of the Desert

	Low opportunity	Medium opportunity	High opportunity
Hourly living wage	\$19	\$29	\$39
Annual living wage	\$39,000	\$60,000	\$81,000

Source: Glasmeier, A. K. (2023). Living wage calculator. Living wage calculation for Riverside County, California. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. <https://livingwage.mit.edu>

²⁴ See Fink, J., & Jenkins, D. (2020). Unpacking program enrollments and completions with equity in mind. Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University. <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/unpacking-program-enrollments-completion-equity.html>

Only a few jobs that typically require a certificate offer medium earnings. For jobs that usually require a certificate (Table 5), Licensed Vocational Nurses, Firefighters, and Computer User Support Specialists are all medium-opportunity jobs, with hourly earnings of around \$29/hour.

Table 5. Top 15 Occupations That Usually Require a Certificate or Some College Credits

Rank	Occupation	2023 jobs	2028 jobs	Change in jobs (2023–2028)	Projected growth	2021 median hourly earnings
1	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	1,881	2,296	416	22%	\$15.57
2	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,728	1,892	164	9%	\$23.13
3	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	1,605	1,676	71	4%	\$22.28
4	Medical Assistants	1,196	1,275	79	7%	\$17.43
5	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	958	1,001	44	5%	\$22.70
6	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	941	963	22	2%	\$18.21
7	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	686	734	48	7%	\$28.33
8	Nursing Assistants	680	773	93	14%	\$17.13
9	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	642	715	73	11%	\$21.90
10	Manicurists and Pedicurists	413	471	57	14%	\$14.49
11	Dental Assistants	413	452	39	9%	\$18.39
12	Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	246	263	17	7%	\$21.96
13	Firefighters	238	255	17	7%	\$29.86
14	Emergency Medical Technicians	200	203	3	1%	\$17.31
15	Computer User Support Specialists	195	216	21	11%	\$28.53

Source: Lightcast™. (2023). Highest ranked occupations: Top occupations (5-digit) in COD service area: Largest occupations. Education levels: Some college, no degree; postsecondary non-degree award. (Lightcast Q3 2023) [Data set].

Several top jobs in the Coachella Valley that typically require an associate degree have higher earnings (Table 6). Allied health jobs (Radiologic Technicians, Dental Hygienists, and Sonographers) are high-opportunity jobs with earnings over \$39/hour.

Table 6. Top 15 Occupations That Usually Require an Associate Degree

Rank	Occupation	2023 jobs	2028 jobs	Change in jobs (2023–2028)	Projected growth	2021 median hourly earnings
1	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	336	362	26	8%	\$17.15
2	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	162	175	13	8%	\$43.66
3	Respiratory Therapists	121	130	9	7%	\$37.32
4	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	109	132	22	20%	\$29.77
5	Architectural and Civil Drafters	107	114	7	7%	\$28.74
6	Dental Hygienists	97	115	18	18%	\$49.09
7	Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping	95	100	5	5%	\$22.66
8	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	64	70	6	10%	\$45.50
9	Computer Network Support Specialists	56	61	5	8%	\$30.64
10	Physical Therapist Assistants	52	62	10	19%	\$36.10
11	Civil Engineering Technologists and Technicians	46	48	2	4%	\$32.38
12	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	43	48	5	13%	\$18.15
13	Web Developers	40	45	5	14%	\$31.63
14	Medical Equipment Repairers	39	45	7	17%	\$27.31
15	Legal Support Workers, All Other	38	40	1	3%	\$18.40

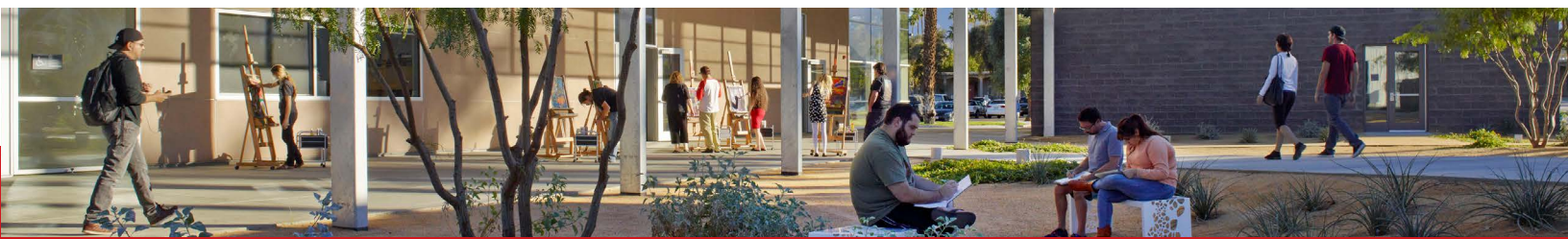
Source: Lightcast™. (2023). Highest ranked occupations: Top occupations (5-digit) in COD service area: Largest occupations. Education levels: Associate degree. (Lightcast Q3 2023) [Data set].

For occupations that require a bachelor's degree (Table 7), we see consistently higher earnings for the largest occupations, with 5 jobs earnings well over the high-opportunity threshold of \$39/hour, including Managers and Teachers. Nursing is one of the top jobs in the Valley, and it has high earnings, suggesting that Nursing programs at COD are especially promising for students.²⁵

Table 7. Top 15 Occupations That Usually Require a Bachelor's Degree

Occupation	2023 jobs	2021 median hourly earnings
General and Operations Managers	2,608	\$46.12
Registered Nurses	2,555	\$48.40
Elementary and Middle School Teachers	1,422	\$47.97
Teaching Assistants	991	\$18.37
Miscellaneous Managers	955	\$37.27
Miscellaneous Business Operations Specialists	914	\$29.82
Accountants and Auditors	837	\$36.83
Miscellaneous Community and Social Service Specialists	802	\$20.22
Counselors	798	\$25.92
Construction Managers	780	\$35.56
Secondary School Teachers	750	\$48.61
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing	721	\$29.99
Marketing and Sales Managers	629	\$49.44
Social Workers	625	\$31.00
Designers	537	\$19.31

Source: Lightcast™. (2023). Highest ranked occupations: Top occupations (5-digit) in COD service area: Largest occupations. Education levels: Bachelor's degree. (Lightcast Q3 2023) [Data set].



LABOR MARKET ALIGNMENT

We draw on the opportunity framework introduced by the Community College Research Center to understand what opportunity each program at College of the Desert leads to in terms of further education (e.g., transfer to bachelor's programs or bridges into more advanced workforce credentials) and/or immediate job prospects and earnings. This framework is a tool for understanding what programs at the College lead to relatively more economic opportunity after graduation.

Six categories—three Workforce, two Transfer, and one Other—show what opportunities programs lead to for further education and earnings. Workforce programs lead to immediate job prospects and earnings. Transfer programs lead to opportunities to transfer to bachelor's degree programs. For students in Transfer programs, we distinguish between structured transfer programs—those explicitly designed to prepare students for transfer with junior standing in a major at a 4-year destination college—and unstructured general education associates of arts programs.²⁶ These categories can help us understand which programs lead to greater or lesser economic opportunity.

²⁵ Students can become a registered nurse with an associate degree or a bachelor's degree.

²⁶ We separate structured and unstructured transfer programs based on research from Washington and California indicating that students in structured transfer programs are more likely to transfer, earn bachelor's degrees, and to do so with fewer excess credits than those in unstructured transfer programs.

Table 8. Program Classification Framework

Opportunity category	Description	Examples
Workforce: Low	Program places students into jobs that pay \$19/hour or less	Automotive technology, criminal justice, early childhood education
Workforce: Medium	Program places students into jobs that pay \$20–\$39/hour	Accounting, business management, dental assistant
Workforce: High	Program places students into jobs that pay \$39/hour or more	Dental hygiene, nursing, radiological technician, sonography
Transfer: Unstructured	Program designed for general transfer	AA-general studies, general transfer
Transfer: Structured	Program designed for transfer to a particular bachelor's degree major or a specific 4-year destination college	AA-business (direct transfer agreement), AS-T (engineering)
Uncategorized or Other	Non-degree seeking, ESL, ABE, high school dual enrollment	Basic education, ESL, Running Start, or Middle College

Source: For living wage: Glasmeier, A. K. (2023). Living wage calculator. Living wage calculation for Riverside County, California. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. <https://livingwage.mit.edu>; For classification framework: Fink, J., & Jenkins, D. (2020). Unpacking program enrollments and completions with equity in mind. Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University. <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/unpacking-program-enrollments-completion-equity.html>

Note: The opportunity categories were calculated using the living wage threshold in Riverside County for one adult (\$19) and one adult and one child (\$39).

Table 9 displays the programs at COD with the highest enrollment by TOP code, with the 2022 student enrollment listed in parentheses. Nearly 1,800 students were enrolled in programs classified under “Health Professions,” and more than 1,000 students were enrolled in Business Administration programs in 2022. Several vocational programs at COD are expected to lead to high opportunity (earnings) immediately following graduation.

Other programs, such as Psychology, Computer Science, and Transfer, are structured transfer programs that lead to a particular bachelor’s degree program at a 4-year college. Programs classified under the “humanities” TOP code would most likely prepare students for transfer into one of several majors at a 4-year college (rather than provide immediate job prospects).

Table 9. High-, Medium-, and Low-Opportunity Programs (Fall 2022 Enrollment Shown in Parentheses)

TOP name (number of students within major)	Most applicable opportunity category
Health Professions, Transfer Core Curriculum (1772)	Workforce: High
Business Administration (1073)	Workforce: Medium
Psychology, General (1039)	Transfer: Structured
English as a Second Language - Integrated (952)	Other
Biology, General (690)	Transfer: Structured
Administration of Justice (647)	Workforce: Low
Computer Science (Transfer) (460)	Transfer: Structured
Child Development/Early Care and Education (450)	Workforce: Low
Business and Commerce, General (384)	Workforce: Medium
Kinesiology (382)	Workforce: Low
Computer Networking (354)	Workforce: High
Automotive Technology (346)	Workforce: Low
Humanities (320)	Transfer: Unstructured
Culinary Arts (310)	Workforce: Low
Engineering, General (Transfer) (305)	Transfer: Structured

Source: Authors’ analysis of College of the Desert’s administrative data



ALIGNMENT TO VISION FOR SUCCESS GOALS

To align the goals included in the SEMP with COD's Vision for Success Goals the COD institutional research team updated progress on the 2017 goals related to workforce outcomes (Table 10). The analysis shows increases in median annual earnings, the percentage of students attaining a living wage, and the percentage of students working in their field of study.

COD used these analyses and the analysis of workforce and program data to inform the development of their SEMP goals for strengthening program alignment with labor market indicators on growing industries that support thriving wage jobs.

Table 10. College of the Desert Vision for Success Workforce Metrics

Workforce metrics	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Median annual earnings of all students	\$26,963	\$27,373	\$27,152	\$29,278	\$32,468
Percent of students attaining a living wage	44	45	45	50	57
Percent of students working in their field of study	60	70	69	62	

Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office LaunchBoard, Student Success

Definitions

Median annual earnings: Among students who exited the community college system and who did not transfer to any postsecondary institution, median earnings following the academic year of exit. Living wage among students who exited the community college system and did not transfer to any postsecondary institution, the proportion who attained the district county living wage for a single adult measured immediately following the academic year of exit.

GOALS FOR PROGRAM ALIGNMENT WITH LABOR MARKET NEEDS AND THRIVING WAGE JOBS

Based on the analysis of labor market information, program data, and input from the Roadrunner community and community partners, and to align with the College's Vision for Success Goals,²⁷ COD will focus on establishing the following goals to support stronger alignment between program offerings, labor market needs, and thriving wage careers over the next 5 years.

- By 2029, increase opportunities to enroll in high-wage pathways by biannually (every 2 years) reviewing labor market indicators (LMI) data and comparing the data alongside program offerings and enrollment.
- By 2029, increase the number of students participating in the workforce apprenticeship program by 25 percent.
- By 2029, increase the number of students who participate in internships.
- By 2029, increase the median annual earnings of all students to \$44,000.
- By 2029, increase the percentage of students who attain a living wage to 62 percent.
- By 2029, increase the percentage of students working in their field of study²⁸ to 76 percent.
- By 2029, increase the percentage of students who became employed²⁹ to 50 percent.

²⁷ COD's Vision for Success Goals: <https://www.collegeofthedesert.edu/faculty-staff/research/college-goals.php>

²⁸ Among CTE students in selected student journeys who responded to the CTE Outcomes Survey and who did not transfer to any postsecondary institution, the proportion who reported that they are working in a job very closely or closely related to their field of study.

²⁹ Among students in selected student journeys who exited the community college system and did not transfer to any postsecondary institution, the proportion of students who were unemployed and became employed after exiting college.

CHAPTER 6: FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Enrollment declines since the COVID-19 pandemic have created a new challenge for community college fiscal health across California, including College of the Desert. California's community college funding formula, the Student Centered Funding Formula (SCFF), funds colleges based primarily on student enrollment, with additional funding allocated based on the number of students receiving a College Promise Grant, students receiving a Pell Grant, and students covered by AB 540, and based on student outcomes.³⁰ Accordingly, COD leaders and Work Group members reviewed SCFF

funding information for COD and have aligned their planning goals for enrollment recovery and retention, student outcomes, and alignment to the regional labor market with the SCFF metrics.

SEMP Work Group members, faculty, staff, and students were also asked to provide input on COD infrastructure, including technology, facilities, and course modality. This section describes the key findings from this input and the corresponding COD planning goals for fiscal sustainability and improved infrastructure over the next 5 years.



KEY FINDINGS

- **A larger share of students are taking courses online.** Distance Education FTES accounted for half of all FTES in 2022–23. Since 2018–19, the number of Distance Education FTES more than tripled, while in-person FTES declined by nearly 50 percent.
- **The most common course start time was 8 a.m.** Roughly a third of courses began at 9:30 a.m. or earlier.
- **Input from focus groups and input sessions suggested the need to improve hiring practices** to ensure vacant positions are filled in a timelier manner and the need to improve retention rates for senior leaders.
- **To improve fiscal sustainability, COD must focus on enrollment recovery and improving student outcomes.**

³⁰ The number of students earning associate degrees and credit certificates, the number of students transferring to 4-year colleges and universities, the number of students who complete transfer-level Math and English within their 1st year, the number of students who complete nine or more career education units, and the number of students who have attained the regional living wage.

DATA PROFILE

COURSE MODALITY

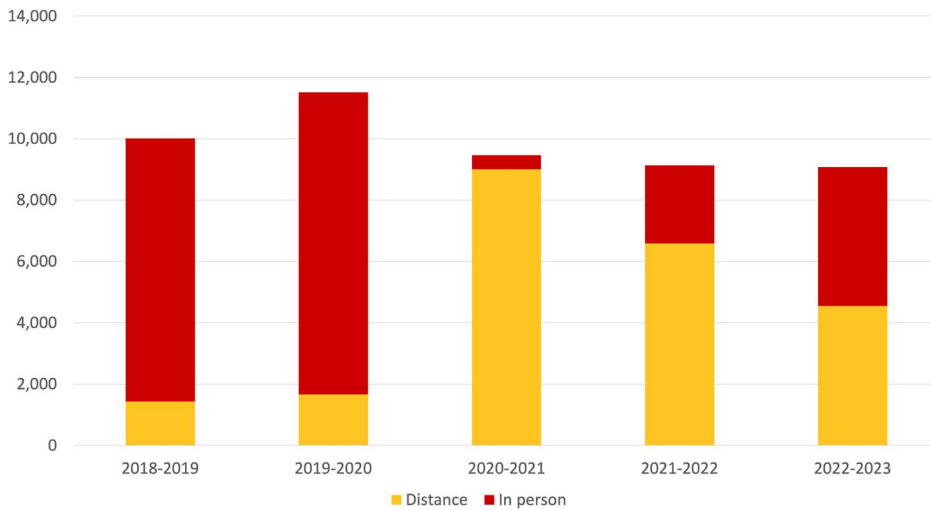
COD's student body is composed of a broad swath of individuals who come from across –and outside of–the Coachella Valley and have a myriad of preferences around when and how they prefer to take courses. Many COD students work full-time and cannot attend classes during normal working hours. Conversely, many COD students are parents and can only take courses in the middle of the day while their children are at school. Some COD students prefer exclusively online courses, while others are only able to engage fully with their schooling if enrolled in in-person courses. The College analyzed its course offerings from several angles to address these potentially conflicting preferences.

A larger share of students are taking courses online (Figure 21). Distance Education FTES accounted for half of all FTES in 2022–23. Since 2018-19, the number of Distance Education FTES tripled, while in-person FTES declined by nearly 50 percent.

In fall 2021, the campus was not fully reopened from the COVID-19 closure. Spring 2022 was the first semester when the campus started back in person. Even then, there were some exceptions with faculty, vaccinations, and bringing folks back. Fall 2022 was more typical. As of spring 2023, the split was approximately 60/40 in-person/distance. Fall 2023 has been most normal comparatively since pre-COVID

Even though this was a result of the public health emergency, there are clear implications for student success. Retention and success rates are higher for in-person courses before, during, and after 2019–20. Most recently, in-person and distance learning success rates were 70 percent, and 63 percent, respectively. Since 2018–19, success rates tended to be 5 to 8 percentage points higher for in-person success rates.

Figure 21. Total FTES by Modality (Distance vs. In-person)



Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems Data Mart. (2023). *Distance Education (DE) Full-Time equivalent students (FTES) summary report*. Retrieved from https://datamart.cccco.edu/Students/FTES_Summary_DE.aspx

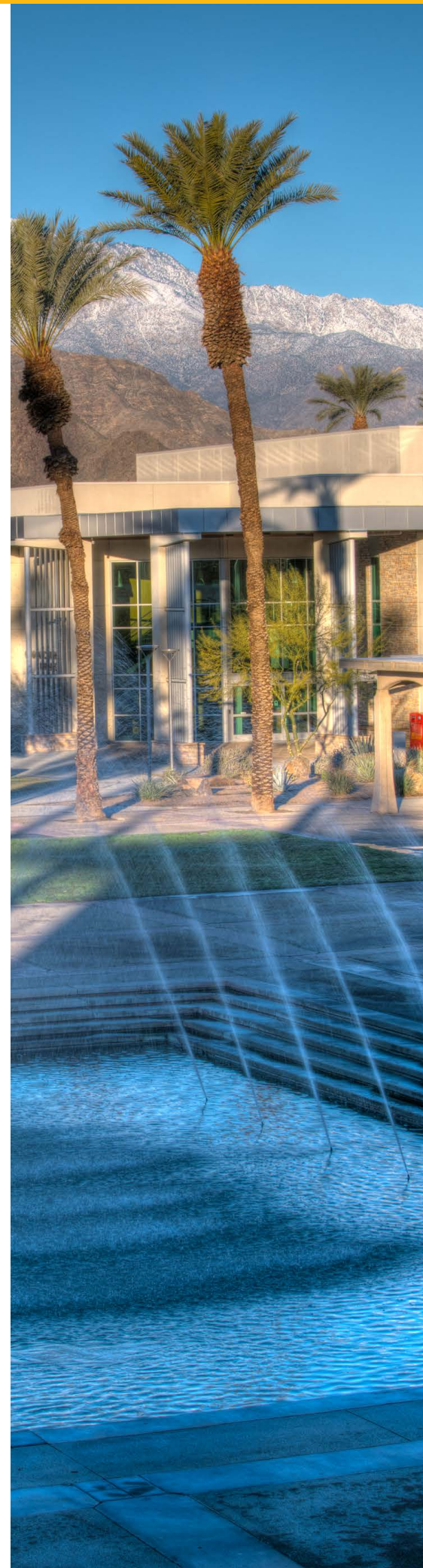
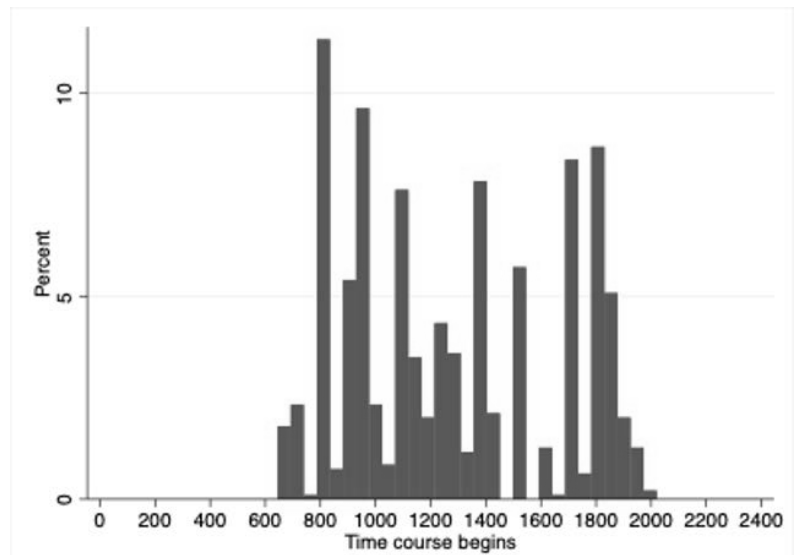




Figure 22. Times Courses Begin, Fall 2022



Source: Authors' analysis of College of the Desert's administrative data

In fall 2022, most in-person courses met earlier in the day (Figure 22). The most common course start time was around 8:00 a.m. Roughly a third of courses began at 9:30 a.m. or earlier. Only about a quarter of courses started after 5 p.m.

More classes begin at 8:00 a.m. than any other time, and roughly a third begin at 9:30 a.m. or earlier. Just under half of all courses begin by noon or earlier, a third of courses begin at 3:00 p.m. or later, a fourth begin at 5 p.m. or later.

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Faculty, students, Work Group members, and staff noted several challenges related to turnover and the hiring processes at COD. Below are comments representative of these challenges based on the notes taken during input sessions and focus groups.

- Hiring teachers is a slow process for adjuncts. We are running around looking for who can take an overload.
- Reducing turnover in senior leadership is important because of the costs associated with decision-making.
- So many interim and temporary positions, or people working out of class, it's expensive to hire and rehire. There should be a more efficient way of filling vacancies.
- The turnover problem relates to culture; they didn't feel they were listened to. Lost a lot of institutional knowledge.
- The hiring process is so cumbersome. The problem is the excessive number of vacancies to hire.
- We are still hiring faculty, and the fall term has already started.
- Potential candidates and the hiring process to get into COD was difficult. There are too many obstacles that discourage people from applying.

- There is a lack of transparency and communication about why individuals get eliminated based on the interpretation of requirements.
- Talk to recent hires and those who applied but didn't get selected to understand where the process could improve.

Other suggestions from input sessions and focus groups related to campus infrastructure included focusing on campus facilities and developing community and social spaces for students to eat, study, collaborate with other students, and take online courses. Discussions with COD leaders and Work Group members also suggested the need to develop principles to guide course programming at each of the campuses and to help campuses develop their unique identities and course offerings based on the specific needs of the local community.

Finally, in addition to efforts to focus on fiscal sustainability, some faculty and Work Group members mentioned the need for timely approval of the budget and more equitable allocation of resources across campuses.

GOALS FOR FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT

- Improve retention of COD leaders and faculty and reduce staff vacancies through timely hiring and employee retention.
- Improve facilities to make them more student-centered, developing spaces that allow students to stay on campus for more of the day.
- Meet enrollment goals to ensure fiscal sustainability.
- Focus on course modality as key components of the technology, equity, and strategic enrollment management plans.
- Increase the number of courses offered after 5 p.m. by 5 percent.
- By 2029, increase the number of multiple modality courses offered by 20 percent.

CHAPTER 7: A CULTURE OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION, ANTI-RACISM AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Students, staff, and faculty need to experience a culture of equity and inclusion free from bias and racism, to feel a sense of community and belonging, and to thrive in teaching and learning successfully and as a team member at College of the Desert. The COD community is representative of many diverse races, ethnicities, abilities, backgrounds, and languages. Three quarters of the COD student body is Hispanic/Latinx, and others are first-generation students and Dreamers. All members of the COD community need to be respected, acknowledged, and supported. The 2023–28 COD Strategic Master Plan goal commits to strengthening a culture of equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, and social justice by cultivating a culture of care, empathy, and mutual support in which students and employees are valued and respected. Accordingly, COD leaders and Work Group members have aligned their planning goals to support and foster a culture of equity and inclusion, anti-racism, and social justice by addressing recruitment and retention of a more diverse workforce; embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion practices throughout the college; and communicating the various student support services available to provide comprehensive programs and services



SEMP Work Group members, faculty, staff, and students were also asked to give input on fostering a culture of equity and inclusion, free from bias and racism, and social justice, and COD's 2022 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, and Challenges survey was reviewed. This section describes the key findings from this input and survey and the COD planning goals for fostering a culture of equity and inclusion, free from bias and racism and social justice, over the next 5 years.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Student services are a key climate and culture support.** High-quality support services were a top strength of the college, but communication regarding student support services was reported as a weakness. There was a noted need for access to student services in the evenings and weekend hours. Supporting students' basic needs (e.g., food, housing, health, and mental wellness) was a weakness.
- **Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) is a key social justice, culture, and inclusion support.** There is an expressed desire for curricula to be representative of the diversity of COD, including LGBTQ+. Cultural celebrations, graduation ceremonies, and food pantry items reflective of the diversity of the campus population were identified as areas for improvement.
- **Diversifying faculty and staff to be representative of the COD community is critical to improving climate and culture.** There is an opportunity to diversify administration, staff, and faculty personnel (including leadership) representative of the student population.³¹ The lack of bilingual staff and faculty is a challenge for multilingual students.
- **DEIA professional development and training for administration, staff, faculty, and students is key to supporting a culture of inclusion and anti-racism.**
- **Facilities were noted as an essential area of focus for improving campus culture and climate.** There was a noted desire for all campus spaces, such as study areas, lounges, and communal areas, to be welcoming and inclusive for all students. There was also a desire for facilities to be reflective of campus diversity, including gender-neutral restrooms.
- **Inclusion of diverse employee roles, backgrounds, and perspectives in engagement opportunities** about the College's initiatives, programs, and plans is key to improving employee apathy, disengagement, and low morale.³²

³¹ COD's 2022 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, and Challenges survey

³² College of the Desert Strategic Master Plan (2023–2028). COD's 2022 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, and Challenges survey



DATA PROFILE

CAMPUS CULTURE

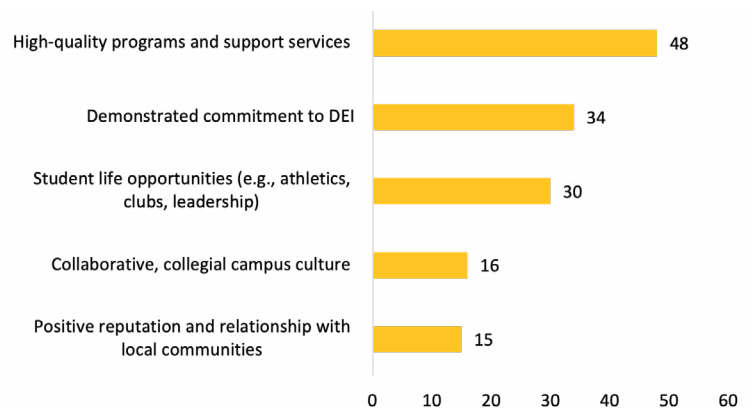
College of the Desert's 2022 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, and Challenges (SWOTC) survey asked respondents (n = 82) to identify the top 5 qualities that enable the College to accomplish its mission. The survey asked respondents to identify things that the College does particularly well and beneficial aspects or capabilities that allow the College to continue or sustain its successes.

The SWOTC survey was created by the Colleges' consulting team, Integrated Academic Solutions (IAS), as part of the SMP process and distributed to the faculty, staff, and students at COD.

"High-quality support services" was selected 48 times as a top college strength (Figure 23). The college's commitment to DEI was selected 34 times. A collaborative, collegial campus culture was chosen only 15 times, suggesting that the college can improve in this area.

However, the survey did not specify whether people thought the College was overcommitted or not committed enough on issues related to DEI.

Figure 23. Top Strengths Related to Culture and DEI



Source: College of the Desert. (2022). Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, and Challenges survey.

Findings From the 2022 SWOTC Survey Related to Campus Culture

- **Top weaknesses**
 - Community outreach and engagement ($n = 28$)
 - Commitment to or understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion principles ($n = 25$)
 - Students' basic needs (e.g., food, housing, health, and mental wellness) ($n = 19$)
- **Top opportunities**
 - Embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion practices throughout the college ($n = 39$)
 - Attracting non-traditional students ($n = 38$)
- **Top challenges**
 - Employee apathy, disengagement, low morale ($n = 48$)

Source: College of the Desert. (2022). Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, and Challenges Survey.



GOALS

- Increase faculty, staff, and administration diversity by creating equity-centered hiring practices and creating new strategies for recruitment, mentoring, and onboarding of diverse faculty, staff, and campus leaders.
- Focus on climate and culture in the design of all campus spaces and services. Campus facilities, curriculum, celebrations, graduations, and food pantry items should reflect COD's diverse students.
- Increase opportunities for in-person classes to bring faculty and students together more frequently, develop strategies for increased collaboration in virtual classes, and increase the number of campus events and celebrations.
- Expand student support services hours beyond "traditional" working hours.
- Improve communication about comprehensive student support services availability.
- Increase opportunities for diverse employee engagement about the College's initiatives, programs, and plans.
- Provide ongoing DEIA professional development and training for administration, staff, faculty, and students.
- Complete a campus climate survey that includes employees and students. Interventions to improve justice, equity, and belonging should address the findings of the survey where improvement is needed.

CHAPTER 8: STRATEGIC ACTIONS

To achieve the goals outlined in the 2024–2029 Strategic Educational Master Plan, College of the Desert will focus on a series of strategic actions that are aligned with other planning processes and documents, including the Chancellor’s Office Vision for Success and Guided Pathways, the COD Technology Plan, Enrollment Plan, Equity Plan, and the 2023 SMP.

The strategic actions focus on high-level strategies that have the potential to positively improve conditions and outcomes for students and COD infrastructure.

The strategic actions outlined in this section were selected because of their potential to positively impact enrollment and retention, student outcomes, program alignment to the regional labor market, budget sustainability, and COD culture and climate and are a direct reflection of input from faculty, staff, students, and community partners during input sessions and focus groups.



MARKETING AND ENGAGEMENT

Faculty, students, Work Group members, and community partners suggested expanding and improving marketing, outreach, and communication (external and internal), including internal communication about existing supports and opportunities and making website improvements. Specifically, the website should be redesigned to be user-friendly, mobile-responsive, and informative.

Expanded outreach and marketing should focus on strengthening partnerships with P–16, K–12 and community partners to promote COD enrollment and increase the college's visibility through positive media coverage. Hiring a public information officer was suggested as a critical action for the college to take to improve visibility and the College's profile/reputation in the community by showcasing COD's successes.

Other suggestions included launching a public relations campaign in the community to promote new courses and existing pathways to completion and employing digital marketing and social media advertising to showcase success stories and notable alumni to inspire potential students.

Suggestions also included increasing outreach to the high schools by student ambassadors to increase dual enrollment and enrollment at COD once students graduate from high school. Increased campus tours explicitly aimed at students from high-enrollment, low-capture-rate schools; career fairs; family nights; senior days; and opportunities to meet/talk with faculty and staff would create “meaningful connection points” across all COD campuses.

STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Several objectives from the Strategic Master Plan suggest the need to focus on strengthening community partnerships as part of the College's engagement and outreach. Objective 1b from the SMP is to expand strategic, mission-aligned partnerships with regional K–12 districts, 4-year colleges and universities, local industries and employers, and nonprofit organizations. Objective 2d is to create and implement formal and informal mentorship and internship opportunities between students and industry professionals to support job exploration, internships, and living-wage job placement. These mentorship opportunities rely on the College's continuing to strengthen its existing workforce partnerships and developing new partnerships. Furthermore, Objective 3g is to pursue strategic grant opportunities and build relationships with community, businesses and alumni to augment curricular and student support pathways and programs.



ACTIONS TO MAKE COLLEGE ATTENDANCE EASIER FOR STUDENTS

Steady enrollment recovery requires an easy, student-friendly, and streamlined enrollment process and access to relevant educational pathway coursework during times of the day that are focused on student needs and are accessible through reliable transportation or offered near students' communities.

Students, faculty, and staff overwhelmingly maintained that efforts to make college attendance easier for students were critical to improved enrollment, retention, and outcomes. Many of the suggestions focused on efforts to help reduce the cost of attendance for students, including shifting to zero textbook cost (ZTC) courses and supporting students to apply for financial aid to improve college affordability. Students, SEMP Work Group members, and faculty also suggested streamlining the enrollment process. Accordingly, COD will work to increase or enhance partnerships with nonprofits and local agencies to address students' basic needs, including, but not limited to, food, housing, transportation, computing and information technology, and medical and mental health resources (Objective 1f from the SMP).

Students also suggested that the college should put information out earlier about class offerings, ensure that curricular pathways are clear, and ensure that students can access support services easily. Students should know which courses will be offered each semester and be able to plan out their classes for the year. This would make it easier for students to plan their path to meeting their educational goals, which could impact student outcomes and potentially reduce the number of units students take before earning their degree.

Furthermore, COD leaders, community partners, faculty, and students all identified the need for improved transportation options to make it easier for students to get to campus. Some noted that bus routes can sometimes exceed 2 hours of travel time to and from campus, a critical time out of the day for students who want to attend classes. Others noted the difficulty of traveling from one campus to another if the classes students want require them to travel to multiple campus locations. For students at extension sites, a suggestion was made to reduce their need to travel to the main campus for faculty advising/conferencing and library and student services as much as possible.

Similar to the suggestions around transportation, a range of input was provided around strategies for removing barriers to attendance, including updating the course catalog to rearrange the content so it's easier to access. Similarly, input included the suggestion to remove barriers to course enrollment, such as current restrictions on when and how waitlisted students can be added to course rosters and having all employees go through the application and registration process to see what students must navigate. To address these needs, COD will improve the District's operational effectiveness and ensure students' access to consistent, accurate, easily obtained information and support through the analyses and revision of existing policies, practices, and procedures that are barriers to the efficient, equitable delivery of programs and services at all campuses and teaching sites (Objective 1e).

DEVELOP STUDENT-CENTERED FACILITIES

Students, faculty, and staff shared numerous suggestions for strategic actions to make facilities more student-centered. As noted in the budget sustainability and infrastructure section of this SEMP, these suggestions can potentially improve campus climate and culture, outcomes, and retention.

For example, students, faculty, and Work Group members all suggested keeping campus libraries, cafes, lounges, and other communal areas open longer to the extent possible. Students mentioned that they sometimes need to leave campus to find a quiet space to work between classes or get something to eat. Once they leave campus, they are more likely to go home rather than stay on campus and continue to work. This suggestion aligns with requests for additional evening and weekend class offerings.

Faculty and Work Group members also suggested updating classrooms to support HyFlex instruction and developing a plan addressing how technology and instruction are connected.

Relatedly, several SMP objectives focus on strengthening the technology infrastructure at COD. These objectives are to

- regularly evaluate and update the District's Technology Master Plan and its information technology to ensure the quality and capacity to support institutional operations, programs, services, digital equity, and student success (Objective 3a);
- invest in and maintain innovative and secure information technologies, which enhance the learning and working environment and support guided pathways, student success, goal completion, and institutional effectiveness (Objective 3b); and
- enhance the District's cyber security and utilize solutions that ensure data security (Objective 3c).

Furthermore, strategic actions should ensure spaces like libraries, labs, and study rooms are conducive to learning; foster collaboration and innovation; ensure more timely approval of the budget to strengthen planning efforts and implement systems to gather regular feedback from students, faculty, and staff about the learning and work environment.





ADJUSTMENTS TO CLASS OFFERINGS

One of the most common suggestions for change at COD was around class offerings and student-centered, evidence-based scheduling redesign. These changes include suggestions for when classes were offered, course modality, and specific class types. For example, students, faculty, and Work Group members acknowledged that students and faculty desire flexibility in course modality—HyFlex, virtual, and in-person. However, both students and faculty also mentioned the need for more in-person classes because of the rich opportunities for learning and engagement with peers and faculty. Input also included suggestions for programmatic changes, including increasing the number of course offerings for the most popular courses and courses in high-demand programs and expanding degree offerings, including providing more BA options and creating regionally relevant course offerings to support the development of campus identities. The COD community also suggested enabling more students to enroll in courses outside of the 9-to-5 time frame when they may be working or busy with family or other obligations. This would include expanded facilities offerings and student service hours so that they are open in the evenings and weekends, which is a critical complement to extended class hours. Similarly, Objective 2c from the SMP is to develop alternative schedules of classes and services on weekends and evenings to meet the needs of adult learners.

Several suggestions were made for specific actions the college can take to improve alignment between course offerings and regional labor market needs. These included adding more skills builder courses (not necessarily leading to a certificate or degree) for upskilling workers employed by local companies, developing more certificate opportunities and stacked credentials, designing and implementing clear educational pathways based on regional labor market needs, creating geographically relevant programming, and introducing unique new courses based on the needs of the COD community and region. In addition, several strategic actions emerged from the Strategic Master Planning Process around changes to how courses are offered to support improved program alignment with labor market needs:

- Strengthen adult education pathways, which provide seamless, easily navigable pathways for adult learners throughout the College's service area (Objective 1c).
- Design and implement clear educational pathways from high schools to postsecondary, including the use of credit, noncredit, not-for-credit, dual enrollment, and transfer programs, which expand student employability and meet the needs of regional employers (Objective 2a).
- Create easily accessible, short-term pathways for adult learners to support entry into living wage jobs (Objective 2b).

SUPPORT RETENTION OUTREACH AT THE PROGRAM LEVEL

To support retention efforts, department chairs suggested providing more information on which students enroll in their major and on those who decide not to enroll, which would allow them to do individual student outreach in their designated major if those students do not return from one semester to another.

Without this information, faculty are unable to provide this critical outreach and encouragement to students to help them persist and meet their educational goals. Faculty also suggested creating student cohorts that build community and provide mentorship to see students successfully through pathways.



IMPROVE STUDENT SUPPORTS AND CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING

A repeated theme in input sessions and focus groups was the need to increase awareness of organizations and resources available to students, including those to support equity and inclusion (Dreamers, Foster Youth Service, Black Student Success Center, Trio, LGBTQ+, food pantry) through Canvas flyers in courses or quarterly newsletters, and more. In addition to more communication about existing support available to students, faculty, staff, students, and Work Group members, they also discussed the need to expand student support. Objective 4b from the SMP similarly calls for addressing students' basic needs to advance economic and social justice by addressing students' basic needs, including, but not limited to, food and housing insecurities, transportation, health care, mental wellness, and access to technology. During input sessions, focus groups, and Work Group meetings, several people also mentioned the success of the Edge/pLEDGE programs and a desire to expand those programs to serve more students.

An important action for the college over the next 5 years is to increase work-based education experiences for students as part of a larger effort to strengthen alignment between course offerings and regional labor market needs. Objectives from the SMP also speak to the need to improve campus climate and culture and the conditions for learning at COD. These objectives include

- increase on-campus and community-based student engagement opportunities to develop communities of belonging and support, as well as enriched experiences beyond the classroom (Objective 1g) and
- implement policies and procedures to assess classroom and campus climates regularly to ensure an inclusive, equitable, and collaborative environment (Objective 4a).

STRENGTHENING FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Another set of suggestions around strategic actions included the need to establish a set of principles for each campus that describe, for example, the mix of credit and noncredit courses and services that will be provided at all campuses and that guide the development of specific identities or unique features of each campus based on the specific needs of students and the community. The campus community also suggested ensuring that expenditures across campuses are equitable (e.g., expenditure of bond funds). Relatedly, Objective 3e of the SMP is to develop and implement a granular, strategic enrollment management plan to improve scheduling goals for all teaching sites and include a financial analysis in the plan, which will identify year-to-year funding needs for each location. Furthermore, Objective 3f is to regularly assess policies, processes, and practices and implement revisions to improve standardized business operations continuously.

Other suggestions around strategic actions to strengthen COD infrastructure include reducing turnover among senior leadership to provide stability for the college and improving Human Resources processes. Faculty and Work Group members noted that delays in filling vacant positions and the length of time that it takes to hire faculty is a major barrier to filling positions. A suggestion was also made to develop a comprehensive professional and staff development program to support the large turnover in the employee base and the COD legacy. Accordingly, Objective 3d of the SMP is to develop and implement a human capital management plan (HCMP) that addresses workforce recruitment and retention and reflects the diversity of the student population and community, long-range staffing needs, and ongoing professional development for all employees.

Finally, faculty and staff suggested actively recruiting and retaining more diverse staff, faculty, and leadership and exploring methods to improve faculty diversity/focus on the retention of diverse staff. Relatedly, Objective 4e of the SMP is to build trust and improve morale by maintaining an environment of transparency and open communication among all employee groups and ensure the inclusion of diverse employee roles, backgrounds, and perspectives by proactively encouraging widespread engagement opportunities for input into the College's initiatives, programs, and plans. For example, they suggested creating mentor programs for current adjunct faculty and students of color interested in teaching college. In addition, input session participants suggested the need for ongoing equity and inclusion, anti-racism and social justice training for all staff and creating a robust, culturally responsive curriculum program based on the previously created curriculum review. The SMP similarly includes two objectives focused on the need for professional development to support DEIA at COD. These objectives are to

- provide regular and easily accessible equity-minded professional development opportunities, which focus on developing racial literacy and engaging in honest and reflective dialogues around racial identities, racism, and racial justice (Objective 4d) and
- provide all employees with professional learning and connection opportunities that promote healing, conflict resolution, vulnerability, honesty, and trust, focusing on mental health, interpersonal communication, and work-life balance (Objective 4f).

The Roadrunner community also suggested administering a new inclusivity climate survey, including students, faculty, and staff, to determine their experiences.



IMPROVE THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Several suggestions were also made related to improving the conditions for learning in classrooms. For example, faculty, students, and staff suggested the need for professional learning opportunities to continue to strengthen teaching and learning, supporting faculty to integrate new technology into instruction, improve engagement in online learning, and improve the campus's focus on DEIA.

Accordingly, in alignment with Objective 1d from the SMP, COD will increase professional learning opportunities for College employees that focus on innovative approaches to improving student success and eliminating opportunity and outcomes gaps between different student populations.

CHAPTER 9: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

To ensure the Strategic Educational Master Plan strategic actions are successfully implemented and that COD is making progress toward its goals, the College will engage in an ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement process to assess, document, and

report the status of each goal and adjust COD's approach, as needed. This implementation plan aligns with the annual planning and budget development cycle and establishes the specific activities for the upcoming academic year, which are as follows:

STEP 1.

[SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER] The Assessment of Planning and Outcomes Subcommittee (APO) will

- a. review the SEMP goals and strategic actions and develop initial draft recommendations for the College Planning Council (CPC) regarding the critical actions needed to achieve each goal, the position with oversight responsibility for each activity, and the timeline for activity completion;
- b. review Annual SEMP Implementation Reports and make recommendations to the CPC and the president for activities to include in the Annual SEMP Implementation Guide for the following academic year; and.
- c. provide an update at least annually at one FLEX session.

STEP 2.

[OCTOBER/NOVEMBER] The CPC will create an Annual SEMP Implementation Action Guide for the following academic year, which will identify the following:

- a. activities needed to achieve specific key actions associated with the overarching SEMP goal
- b. the Activity Process Leads (i.e., R.A., or "responsible administrators") for overseeing the completion of each activity
- c. the outcome(s) for each activity
- d. resource(s) needed for each activity.

STEP 3.

[DECEMBER] The Annual SEMP Implementation Action Guide is posted on the College's website and distributed to the College community.



STEP 4.

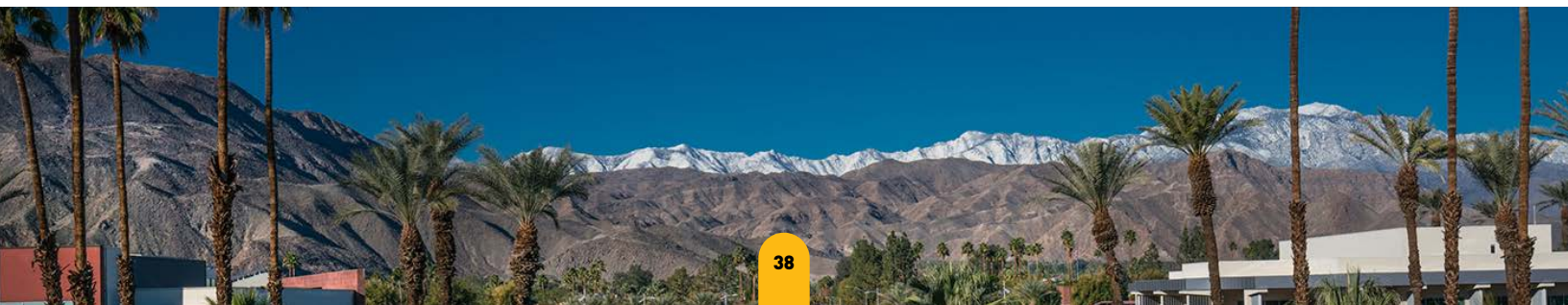
[APRIL] Activity Process Leads will each complete and submit to the CPC an Annual SEMP Implementation Report, including

- a. progress on each activity,
- b. outcomes for completed activities, and
- c. additional actions and anticipated completion deadline for activities still in progress.



STEP 5.

[APRIL] Annual SEMP Implementation Reports are due and submitted to APO for review in April with specific deadlines (days/dates) published each year in the Annual SEMP Implementation Action Guide.



APPENDIX

TABLE A1. COLLEGE OF THE DESERT SERVICE AREA

Service area	City	ZIPCODE
West Valley	Cathedral City	92234
West Valley	Cathedral City	92235
West Valley	Desert Hot Springs	92240
West Valley	Desert Hot Springs	92241
West Valley	North Palm Springs	92258
West Valley	Palm Springs	92262
West Valley	Palm Springs	92263
West Valley	Palm Springs	92264
West Valley	Whitewater	92282
Central Valley	Indian Wells	92210
Central Valley	La Quinta	92247
Central Valley	La Quinta	92248
Central Valley	La Quinta	92253
Central Valley	Palm Desert	92211
Central Valley	Palm Desert	92255
Central Valley	Palm Desert	92260
Central Valley	Palm Desert	92261
Central Valley	Rancho Mirage	92270
Central Valley	Thousand Palms	92276
East Valley	Coachella	92236
East Valley	Desert Center	92239
East Valley	Indio	92201
East Valley	Indio	92202
East Valley	Indio	92203
East Valley	Mecca	92254
East Valley	Thermal	92274



STRATEGIC EDUCATIONAL MASTER PLAN

2024-2029

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