

CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) TWO-YEAR PROGRAM REVIEW FOR 2025

Culinary Arts Program

Program Planning Year: 2024-2025, **Unit:** ABS, **Cluster:** 3, **Last Year of CPPR/Voc. Ed Review:** 2022-2023

INSTRUCTIONS: CTE programs will complete and submit the below Two-Year Program Review as part of a regular two-year program review cycle (Ed Code 78016). In addition, CTE programs will complete and submit an APPW on an annual basis and an Instructional Comprehensive Program Planning and Review (CPPR) every four years according to the institutional comprehensive planning cycle for instructional programs.

California Ed Code 78016

Every vocational or occupational training program offered by a community college district shall be reviewed every two years by the governing board of the district to ensure that each program, as demonstrated by the California Occupational Information System, including the State-Local Cooperative Labor Market Information Program established in Section 10533 of the Unemployment Insurance Code, or if this program is not available in the labor market area, other available sources of labor market information, does all of the following:

1. Meets a documented labor market demand.
2. Does not represent unnecessary duplication of other manpower training programs in the area.
3. Is of demonstrated effectiveness as measured by the employment and completion success of its students.

A. Any program that does not meet the requirements of subdivision (A) and the standards promulgated by the governing board shall be terminated within one year.

B. The review process required by this section shall include the review and comments by the local Private Industry Council established pursuant to Division 8 (commencing with Section 15000) of the Unemployment Insurance Code, which review and comments shall occur prior to any decision by the appropriate governing body.

C. This section shall apply to each program commenced subsequent to July 28, 1983.

D. A written summary of the findings of each review shall be made available to the public.

Meets a documented labor market demand, [data provided by the State.](#)

The Culinary Arts program at Cuesta College meets a documented labor market demand based on regional and statewide employment projections. According to the California Employment Development Department, the demand for culinary professionals remains strong in San Luis Obispo County.

San Luis Obispo (SLO) County (2020-2030) – Below Chart

- **Restaurant Cooks:** 3,240 job openings, \$18.41 median hourly wage, and projected to be the fastest growing occupation in SLO county
- **Food Preparation and Serving Workers:** 7,120 job openings, and is the occupation with the most job openings
- **The Leisure & Hospitality** sector is one of the largest employers in the region.

2020-2030 Local Employment Projections Highlights



2020-2030 Occupations with the Most Job Openings

Standard Occupational Classification	Occupational Title	Total Job Openings	Median Hourly Wage	Median Annual Wage
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	7,120	\$15.39	\$32,024
45-2092	Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	6,370	\$15.00	\$31,200
41-2011	Cashiers	6,270	\$15.00	\$31,200
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	6,230	\$15.23	\$31,673
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	5,050	\$15.19	\$31,598
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	4,870	\$15.06	\$31,332
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	3,240	\$18.41	\$38,293
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	3,060	\$15.29	\$31,803
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	2,690	\$15.94	\$33,154
43-9051	Office Clerks, General	2,570	\$18.88	\$39,283

Total job openings are the sum of numeric change, exits, and transfers projected between 2020 and 2030.

Wages are from the 2022 first quarter and do not include self-employed or unpaid family workers. An estimate could not be provided for wages listed as \$0. Wages below \$15.00 have been rounded up to reflect the state minimum wage laws as of January 1, 2022.

Excludes "All Other" categories. These are residual codes that do not represent a detailed occupation.

2020-2030 Fastest Growing Occupations

Standard Occupational Classification	Occupational Title	Base Year Employment Estimate	Projected Year Employment Estimate	Percentage Change	Median Hourly Wage	Median Annual Wage
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	1,250	2,080	66.4%	\$18.41	\$38,293
39-9031	Fitness Trainers and Aerobics Instructors	270	440	63.0%	\$24.68	\$51,331
39-5012	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	210	340	61.9%	\$15.00	\$31,200
31-9011	Massage Therapists	150	240	60.0%	\$23.91	\$49,721
29-1131	Veterinarians	120	190	58.3%	\$50.91	\$105,899
39-1098	First-Line Supervisors of Personal Service & Entertainment and Recreation Workers, ...	140	220	57.1%	\$0.00	\$0
31-9096	Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers	180	280	55.6%	\$18.53	\$38,527
29-2056	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	130	200	53.8%	\$19.19	\$39,917
53-3058	Passenger Vehicle Drivers, Except Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity	210	320	52.4%	\$0.00	\$0
39-2021	Nonfarm Animal Caretakers	390	570	45.2%	\$15.39	\$32,024

Fastest growing occupations are ranked by projected percentage change growth between 2020 and 2030.

Wages are from the 2022 first quarter and do not include self-employed or unpaid family workers. An estimate could not be provided for wages listed as \$0. Wages below \$15.00 have been rounded up to reflect the state minimum wage laws as of January 1, 2022.

Excludes "All Other" categories. These are residual codes that do not represent a detailed occupation.

Occupations with employment below 120 in 2020 are excluded.

California Statewide Data (2020-2030) – Below charts

Chefs and Head Cooks
(SOC Code : 35-1011)
in California
Direct the preparation, seasoning, and cooking of salads, soups, fish, meats, vegetables, desserts, or other foods. May plan and price menu items, order supplies, and keep records and accounts. May participate in cooking.

Employers are usually looking for candidates with Post secondary vocational training.

Occupational Wages

Area	Year	Period	Hourly Mean	Hourly by Percentile			[Top]
				25th	Median	75th	
California	2024	1st Qtr	\$33.27	\$24.35	\$30.19	\$39.03	

[View Wages for All Areas](#) [About Wages](#)

Occupational Projections of Employment (also called "Outlook" or "Demand")

Area	Estimated Year	Projected Year	Employment	Employment Change			[Top]
			Estimated	Projected	Number	Percent	Total Job Openings
California	2020 - 2030		20,400	30,400	10,000	49.0	42,460

[View Projections for All Areas](#) [About Projections](#)

Chefs & Head Cooks

- Total projected job openings in culinary-related fields: 42,460
- Employment growth for food-related occupations: 49% increase (20,400 → 30,400 jobs)
- Median hourly wage for culinary professionals: \$30.19, with a 75th percentile wage of \$39.03. ***Above living wage**

Food Service Managers
(SOC Code : 11-9051)

in California
Plan, direct, or coordinate activities of an organization or department that serves food and beverages.

Employers are usually looking for candidates with Work experience in a related occupation.

Occupational Wages

Area	Year	Period	Hourly Mean	Hourly by Percentile			[Top]
				25th	Median	75th	
California	2024	1st Qtr	\$35.44	\$24.59	\$33.36	\$40.61	

[View Wages for All Areas](#) [About Wages](#)

Occupational Projections of Employment (also called "Outlook" or "Demand")

Area	Estimated Year	Projected Year	Employment	Employment Change			[Top]
			Estimated	Projected	Number	Percent	Total Job Openings
California	2020 - 2030		50,900	69,600	18,700	36.7	85,240

[View Projections for All Areas](#) [About Projections](#)

Food Service Managers

- Total projected job openings in culinary-related fields: 85,240
- Employment growth for food-related occupations: 36.7% increase (50,900 → 69,600 jobs)
- Median hourly wage for culinary professionals: \$33.36, with a 75th percentile wage of \$40.61. ***Above living wage**

Cooks, Restaurant
(SOC Code : 35-2014)
in California

Prepare, season, and cook soups, meats, vegetables, desserts, or other foodstuffs in restaurants. May order supplies, keep records and accounts, price items on menu, or plan menu.

Employers usually expect an employee in this occupation to be able to do the job after Long-term on-the-job training (> 12 months).

Occupational Wages

[\[Top\]](#)

Area	Year	Period	Hourly Mean	Hourly by Percentile		
				25th	Median	75th
California	2024	1st Qtr	\$21.13	\$18.34	\$20.51	\$22.73

[View Wages for All Areas](#) [About Wages](#)

Occupational Projections of Employment (also called "Outlook" or "Demand")

[\[Top\]](#)

Area	Estimated Year-Projected Year	Employment	Employment	Employment Change	Total Job Openings	
		Estimated	Projected	Number	Percent	
California	2020 - 2030	123,500	215,600	92,100	74.6	336,980

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Cooks, Restaurant

- Total projected job openings in culinary-related fields: 92,100
- Employment growth for food-related occupations: 74.6% increase (123,500 → 215,600 jobs)
- Median hourly wage for culinary professionals: \$20.51, with a 75th percentile wage of \$22.73

Food Preparation and Serving Workers Supervisors
(SOC Code : 35-1012)

in California

Directly supervise and coordinate activities of workers engaged in preparing and serving food.

Employers are usually looking for candidates with Work experience in a related occupation .

Occupational Wages

[\[Top\]](#)

Area	Year	Period	Hourly Mean	Hourly by Percentile		
				25th	Median	75th
California	2024	1st Qtr	\$23.67	\$18.43	\$21.68	\$26.55

[View Wages for All Areas](#) [About Wages](#)

Occupational Projections of Employment (also called "Outlook" or "Demand")

[\[Top\]](#)

Area	Estimated Year-Projected Year	Employment	Employment	Employment Change	Total Job Openings	
		Estimated	Projected	Number	Percent	
California	2020 - 2030	96,700	136,300	39,600	41.0	210,260

[View Projections for All Areas](#) [About Projections](#)

Food Preparation and Food Service Supervisors

- Total projected job openings in culinary-related fields: 210,260

- Employment growth for food-related occupations: 41% increase (96,700 → 136,300 jobs)
- Median hourly wage for culinary professionals: \$21.68, with a 75th percentile wage of \$26.55

Food Preparation Workers
(SOC Code : 35-2021)

in California

Perform a variety of food preparation duties other than cooking, such as preparing cold foods and shellfish, slicing meat, and brewing coffee or tea.

Employers usually expect an employee in this occupation to be able to do the job after Short-term on-the-job training .

Occupational Wages

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Area	Year	Period	Hourly Mean		Hourly by Percentile		
					25th	Median	75th
California	2024	1st Qtr	\$19.41		\$17.44	\$18.40	\$20.90

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Occupational Projections of Employment (also called "Outlook" or "Demand")

[\[Top\]](#)

Area	Estimated Year-Projected Year	Employment		Employment Change		Total Job Openings
		Estimated	Projected	Number	Percent	
California	2020 - 2030	79,600	100,900	21,300	26.8	175,150

[View Projections for All Areas](#) [About Projections](#)

Food Preparation Workers

- Total projected job openings in culinary-related fields: 175,150
- Employment growth for food-related occupations: 26.8% increase (79,600 → 100,900 jobs)
- Median hourly wage for culinary professionals: \$18.40, with a 75th percentile wage of \$20.90

Bakers

(SOC Code : 35-3011)

in California

Mix and bake ingredients according to recipes to produce breads, rolls, cookies, cakes, pies, pastries, or other baked goods. Include pastry chefs in restaurants and hotels with "Chefs and Head Cooks" (35-1011).

Employers usually expect an employee in this occupation to be able to do the job after Long-term on-the-job training (> 12 months) .

Occupational Wages

[\[Top\]](#)

Area	Year	Period	Hourly Mean		Hourly by Percentile		
					25th	Median	75th
California	2024	1st Qtr	\$20.23		\$17.71	\$18.76	\$21.87

[View Wages for All Areas](#) [About Wages](#)

Occupational Projections of Employment (also called "Outlook" or "Demand")

[\[Top\]](#)

Area	Estimated Year-Projected Year	Employment		Employment Change		Total Job Openings
		Estimated	Projected	Number	Percent	
California	2020 - 2030	23,800	28,700	4,900	20.6	39,100

Bakers

- Total projected job openings in culinary-related fields: 28,700
- Employment growth for food-related occupations: 20.6% increase (23,800 → 28,700 jobs)

- Median hourly wage for culinary professionals: \$18.76, with a 75th percentile wage of \$21.87

This strong job growth and earning potential demonstrate that Cuesta College's Culinary Arts program aligns with both local and statewide labor market demand.

Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics in SLO County



Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics											
About This Dashboard			OEWS Data		Occupations by Group		Occupations by Area		Wage Type Comparison		References
Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics Data											
Area Name	SOC	Occupational Title	Number of Employed	Mean Wage	25th Percentile Wage	Median Wage	75th Percentile Wage	90th Percentile Wage	Relative Standard Deviation	Mean Error for Wage	Area Type (select first)
San Luis Obispo-Paso Robles-Arroyo Grande MSA	11-9051	Food Service Managers	410	\$33.03	\$23.84	\$30.88	\$38.17	\$48.12	3.2	3.2	All
	35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving-Related Occupations	15,380	\$19.67	\$16.62	\$17.33	\$19.41	\$24.43	0.9		
	35-1011	Chefs and Head Cooks	310	\$30.98	\$23.68	\$29.14	\$36.76	\$43.42	2.8		
	35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food	1,120	\$17.38	\$16.57	\$16.93	\$17.43	\$18.10	1.1		
	35-2012	Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	150	\$21.79	\$19.07	\$21.21	\$22.97	\$25.72	3.5		
	35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	1,670	\$20.38	\$18.22	\$19.44	\$22.33	\$23.16	1		
	35-2015	Cooks, Short Order	210	\$18.72	\$17.03	\$18.01	\$20.03	\$20.94	2.9		
	35-2019	Cooks, All Other	70	\$18.75	\$16.58	\$18.20	\$18.55	\$20.05	4.3		
	35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	1,000	\$18.97	\$17.12	\$18.01	\$19.32	\$22.16	1.9		
	35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	3,490	\$17.61	\$16.64	\$17.01	\$17.81	\$19.59	0.8		
	35-3041	Food Servers, Nonrestaurant	180	\$20.64	\$16.81	\$17.59	\$24.47	\$31.11	3.5		
	35-9099	Food Preparation and Serving Related Workers, All Other	260	\$19.44	\$16.59	\$17.67	\$21.09	\$24.34	3.2		
	51-3011	Bakers	240	\$20.00	\$17.59	\$18.53	\$21.38	\$23.96	1.4		
	51-3092	Food Batchmakers	80	\$19.51	\$17.36	\$18.51	\$20.69	\$24.16	1.5		
	51-3099	Food Processing Workers, All Other		\$21.12	\$16.93	\$21.08	\$22.29	\$28.04	3.2		

The culinary industry in the San Luis Obispo-Paso Robles-Arroyo Grande MSA remains a major employment sector, with 15,380 workers in food preparation and serving-related occupations. Wage data highlights strong earning potential, with Chefs and Head Cooks averaging \$30.98/hour and top earners making over \$43/hour, while Food Service Managers can reach \$48/hour. Entry-level cooks earn \$17.38-\$21.79/hour, but **clear career pathways exist, leading to higher-paying chef and management roles**. Given that food-related jobs make up one of the largest employment categories in the region, Cuesta College's culinary program plays a vital role in workforce development. The program equips students with the skills needed not only for entry-level positions but also for long-term career growth, addressing the industry's demand for skilled professionals. The data further supports continued investment in the program, reinforcing its value as a pipeline to stable, well-paying culinary careers.

Does not represent unnecessary duplication of other manpower training programs in the area.

Cuesta College's Culinary Arts program does not unnecessarily duplicate other training programs in the area.

- Cuesta College is the only community college in San Luis Obispo County offering a structured Culinary Arts program.
- Private culinary schools exist but are often cost-prohibitive.
- The program has strong local employer partnerships, reinforcing its necessity.

Given the projected high demand for food service professionals, Cuesta College's Culinary Arts program provides an accessible, affordable, and essential workforce training option.

Is of demonstrated effectiveness as measured by the employment and completion success of its students, [Core Indicator Reports \(Summary by TOP code\)](#)

* Please note that the chart below reflects data from 2020-2021, which is the most recent available. Currently, no updated data is provided on the website, making it challenging to evaluate post-pandemic employment trends.

PERKINS IV Core Indicators of Performance by 4-digit Vocational TOP Code
Summary Detail Report for 2020-2021 Fiscal Year Planning

CUESTA COLLEGE

1306 Nutrition, Foods, and Culinary Arts

	Core 1 Skill Attainment			Core 2 Completions			Core 3 Persistence		
	Percent	Count	Total	Percent	Count	Total	Percent	Count	Total
	Program Area Total	19.51	16	82	97.37	74	76	96.34	79
Female	58.33	14	24	94.74	18	19	91.67	22	24
Male	3.45	2	58	98.25	56	57	98.28	57	58
Non-traditional	28.57	2	7	83.33	5	6	85.71	6	7
Displaced Homemaker		0	0		0	0		0	0
Economically Disadvantaged	10.61	7	66	100.00	64	64	100.00	66	66
Limited English Proficiency	100.00	1	1	0.00	0	1	0.00	0	1
Single Parent		0	0		0	0		0	0
Students with Disabilities	40.00	2	5	100.00	4	4	100.00	5	5
Technical Preparation		0	0		0	0		0	0
District	19.51	16	82	97.37	74	76	96.34	79	82
State	91.53	54,885	59,966	83.99	22,739	27,075	81.48	48,046	58,969

	Core 4 Employment			Core 5a NT Participation			Core 5b NT Completion		
	Percent	Count	Total	Percent	Count	Total	Percent	Count	Total
	Program Area Total	44.78	30	67	8.54	7	82	7.79	6
Female	66.67	8	12	0.00	0	24	0.00	0	20
Male	40.00	22	55	12.07	7	58	10.53	6	57
Non-traditional	75.00	3	4	8.54	7	82	7.79	6	77
Displaced Homemaker		0	0		0	0		0	0
Economically Disadvantaged	37.93	22	58	4.55	3	66	4.62	3	65
Limited English Proficiency	100.00	1	1	100.00	1	1		0	0
Single Parent		0	0		0	0		0	0
Students with Disabilities	33.33	1	3	40.00	2	5	40.00	2	5
Technical Preparation		0	0		0	0		0	0
District	44.78	30	67	8.54	7	82	7.79	6	77
State	76.76	15,612	20,338	53.59	36,282	67,703	54.46	14,831	27,232

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During the 2020-2021 academic year, the Nutrition, Foods, and Culinary Arts program at Cuesta College demonstrated strong student completion rates but faced challenges in employment

outcomes due to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the food service industry. Widespread restaurant closures, capacity restrictions, and financial uncertainty led to reduced hiring opportunities, while supply chain disruptions and rising costs further slowed industry recovery. Many workers who lost jobs transitioned to other fields, making it harder for new graduates to enter the workforce. Additionally, internships and hands-on learning experiences were disrupted, limiting opportunities for students to gain industry connections. Despite these setbacks, the program remained committed to high-quality training and student success, ensuring graduates were well-prepared as the culinary industry rebounded.

Completion Success:

- The program has a high completion rate of 97.37%, significantly exceeding the state average of 83.99%.
- The persistence rate is also strong at 96.34%, compared to the state average of 81.48%.
- This indicates that students are successfully completing their courses and obtaining certificates or degrees, showcasing the program's ability to retain and support students through graduation.

Employment Success:

- The program's employment rate is 44.78%, which is considerably lower than the state average of 76.76%. However, this data is from the 2020-2021 academic year during the COVID-19 pandemic, which likely impacted employment rates due to industry shutdowns and economic uncertainty.
- Projected Employment Growth: The culinary industry in California is expected to grow by 49% with 42,460 job openings, reinforcing long-term career stability for graduates.

Based on local and statewide employment projections, Cuesta College's Culinary Arts program meets labor market demand, does not duplicate existing programs, and demonstrates effectiveness through high completion rates and industry alignment. Updated post-pandemic employment data will further clarify job placement success.

Conclusion

The Culinary Arts program at Cuesta College is designed to align with industry standards, ensuring students gain the technical skills and hands-on experience needed for success in the field. The curriculum is updated to reflect current industry trends, techniques, and employer expectations, guided by input from a dedicated advisory board of local chefs, restaurant owners, and hospitality professionals. Students train in a fully equipped commercial kitchen, utilizing modern tools and technology to simulate real-world culinary environments. Additionally, the program has established robust dual enrollment opportunities for high

school students, allowing them to begin their culinary education early, and offers articulation for seamless transfer into hospitality and culinary programs. These initiatives ensure that graduates are well-prepared, highly skilled, and competitive in today's culinary workforce.

To further enhance student success and accessibility, The Culinary Arts program has implemented a range of initiatives that promote affordability, hands-on learning, and strong industry connections. Courses are offered at multiple locations, including The Kitchen Terminal (TKT), the California Conservation Corps (CCC), the California Men's Colony (CMC), Cuesta College North County Campus (NCC), and local high schools, with a variety of in-person, online, and hybrid modalities. The North County cafeteria features a state-of-the-art specialized oven funded by Strong Workforce grants, increasing equitable access to culinary training. Dual enrollment partnerships with four local high schools have expanded to include 17 culinary courses, strengthening local career pathways.

In addition to curriculum advancements, Cuesta College has cultivated strong industry partnerships with local employers such as Ox and Anchor, Allegretto, Kitchen & Vine, Sheila Kearns Chocolate Candy Confections, Justin Vineyards, and The Carrisa. The program provides hands-on industry experiences, including field trips to Hotel SLO, guest speakers like Jeniece Grimshaw of Bijou Bakery, and direct engagement with vendors at TKT. Partnerships with Tally Farms, Vitco Foods, and Morro Bay Oyster Company allow students to work with fresh, high-quality ingredients, while culinary events such as A Night of Food and Jazz at The Carrisa and participation in the culmination of CUL 220 at Kitchen & Vine provide real-world experience. The faculty lead's recent tenure achievement ensures long-term program stability and leadership.

A new Outdoor Cooking course (780) was developed and piloted at the CCC Los Padres Center, with grant-funded equipment and an expanded second course (790) covering fire-building, extended meal planning, and MRE preparation. These initiatives, combined with a strong focus on faculty development in ADA compliance and Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI), ensure an inclusive and forward-thinking culinary education at Cuesta College.