Arts Media and Entertainment

Date: 2/26/2026
Time: 9:00 - 1:00
Location: Crafton Hills College, Finkelstein Performing Arts Center
Hosted by: SBCROP and Crafton Hills College
Facilitator: Deidra Puentes
Advisory Documents: bit.ly/AME_AdvDocs25-26

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Advisors

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Fatima Call, Assistant Professor Multimedia, Crafton Hills Community College
Gabriela Molina, Owner, Mars Graphix
Kelly McGuire, Audio Engineer, McGuire Sound Factory
Michael Mulligan, Owner, Fortune and Glory Scenic
Shannon Galuszka, Producing Artistic Director, Redlands Theatre Festival

K12 Educational Participants

Alexander O'Brien, Teacher/Art Animation/Video Game Design, Colton-Redlands-Yucaipa ROP
Andrew Mitchell, CTE Teacher, Redlands Unified
Angela Hatter, Principal, Colton Joint Unified School District Adult Education
Beth Higbee, Administrator Mentor, ACSA
Carol Griffitts, Theatre Teacher, San Bernardino City Unified
Carrie Morgan, Educator, Redlands Unified
Cassie Hammond, CTE AME Teacher, Nuview Union
Chee Yang, Teacher/Art of Animation/Game Design, Colton-Redlands-Yucaipa ROP
Chelsea Ramirez, Workforce Development Coord., San Bernardino City Unified
Cynthia Clarke, Project and Activities Technician, San Bernardino County ROP
Daryl Hernandez, Commercial Music/Music Production Instructor, San Bernardino City Unified
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Ethan Linstrom, Workforce Development Coordinator, Granite Mountain Charter School
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Robert Webster, AME CTE Teacher, Colton-Redlands-Yucaipa ROP
Scott Kennedy, Teacher, Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified
Shannon Rogers, CTE Technical Theater Teacher, San Bernardino City Unified
Steven Dominguez, Teacher/Graphic Design, Colton-Redlands-Yucaipa ROP
Steven Lujan, Career Readiness Specialist, Colton-Redlands-Yucaipa ROP
Teddy Nicholas, Arts, Media, and Entertainment teacher, Rim of the World Unified
Tom Wurz, Graphic Communications Teacher, Colton-Redlands-Yucaipa ROP
Wesley Jeffries, Game Design & Development Teacher, Riverside Unified

Opening Remarks – Dr. Kevin Horan

Dr. Horan welcomed participants and emphasized the importance of industry advisory committees in shaping college programs and ensuring alignment with workforce needs. He shared that San Bernardino Community College District is currently gathering community feedback to inform future planning efforts, including a potential bond measure to support facility improvements and program expansion.

He highlighted the district's continued commitment to maintaining affordability within the California Community Colleges system, expanding workforce-aligned programs, and modernizing campus facilities to support evolving industry needs.

Dr. Horan also shared examples of program growth, including new healthcare pathways, expanded bachelor's degree offerings, and career technical education facilities designed to prepare students for emerging fields such as electric vehicle technology and media production. Participants were invited to complete a brief survey to provide input on future program development priorities, workforce training needs, and long-term planning for the college.

He also highlighted recent facility and program developments, including the new Performing Arts Center, expanded fine arts spaces, the development of career-aligned programs such as voiceover and recording arts, and the exploration of student housing options to increase access, particularly for foster youth.

Minutes

The Arts, Media, and Entertainment Advisory panel included industry professionals from fields such as graphic design, audio engineering, theater production, and multimedia. Panelists represented a range of career pathways, including freelance work, nonprofit organizations, education, and commercial production. The discussion highlighted key trends, industry expectations, and skills needed for student success.

Question 1: What emerging trends and technologies do you believe will drive the most change in this industry over the next 3-5 years, and what should teachers and students focus on to stay ahead?

Gabriela Molina: Highlighted the growing use of AI tools among students, specifically referencing platforms like Google Gemini, which are becoming increasingly common in creative work. Emphasized that while AI should be embraced, students must first learn how to independently create, design, and manipulate content before relying on AI. Stressed the importance of maintaining originality by developing ideas first, then using AI as a support tool for refinement, editing, or enhancement. Encouraged educators to guide students in using AI responsibly, ensuring it supplements rather than replaces foundational creative skills.

Alejandro Gutierrez Chavez: Discussed the State of California's Creative Economy Strategic Plan and the broader forces shaping the industry over the next several years. Identified key trends including rapid advancements in AI and technology, the lasting impact of the pandemic on social dynamics, climate change, mental health considerations, housing affordability, and budget constraints. Emphasized that AI is significantly accelerating the speed of production, iteration, and innovation across creative fields. Noted that due to the rapid pace of change, it is difficult to predict specific outcomes, making it essential to build systems that allow educators and students to stay connected to real-time industry practices. Highlighted mentorship and ongoing engagement with current industry professionals as critical strategies to ensure that instruction remains relevant and responsive.

Kelly McGuire: Explained that AI is rapidly transforming the music and audio industries, including the emergence of AI-generated music and digital artists appearing on major streaming platforms. Noted that while AI can assist with tasks such as sound cleanup, noise reduction, and production support, it does not replace the hands-on, physical work required in audio engineering, such as setting up sound systems or managing live production environments. Emphasized that many aspects of the field still rely on real-world application and technical skill. Also highlighted the growing importance of audio networking systems, where sound systems are integrated across multiple spaces using advanced infrastructure. Encouraged students to diversify their skills across multiple areas within the field to increase adaptability and job opportunities.

Fatima Call: Reinforced that AI should be viewed as a tool, similar to industry-standard programs like Photoshop or Figma, and not as a replacement for human creativity. Emphasized

that each student's unique voice and perspective are essential and cannot be replicated by AI. Shared that in professional settings, the use of AI is already expected, making it important for students to learn how to use it effectively and ethically. Encouraged educators to teach students how to leverage AI to enhance their work, such as for feedback, refinement, or small adjustments, while still maintaining ownership of their ideas and creative output.

Shannon Galuszka: Shifted the focus from technology to the importance of in-person collaboration and community within the arts. Noted that while digital tools and online learning environments provide increased access, they can also lead to isolation and reduce opportunities for collaboration. Emphasized that fields like theater rely heavily on human interaction, shared experiences, and collective creativity, which cannot be replicated in virtual environments. Encouraged educators to prioritize opportunities for students to engage in live, in-person work to build collaboration, communication, and community-centered skills.

Michael Mulligan: Expanded on the limitations of AI, emphasizing that it lacks the nuance, intuition, and contextual understanding required for high-quality creative work. Shared examples from his professional experience where AI-generated content, while technically impressive, was not practical or usable in real-world performance settings due to issues such as unrealistic vocal ranges and lack of adaptability. Reinforced that AI currently reflects existing inputs rather than generating truly original or context-aware work. Emphasized the continued importance of human-centered creativity, collaboration, and purpose-driven work within the arts. Encouraged students to focus on foundational skills such as art history, design principles, and creative development, as these provide the basis for meaningful innovation. Also advised students to explore emerging areas such as 3D design while remaining open to new technologies that improve workflow and accessibility, including more user-friendly and mobile-based tools.

Deidra Puentes, Facilitator: Prompted discussion around the accessibility of traditional tools like Photoshop compared to more user-friendly platforms such as Canva and other emerging technologies, raising the importance of considering ease of use when introducing students to industry tools.

Question 2: How should our Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways adapt to ensure students are well-equipped to meet future demands and changes in this industry?

Gabriela Molina: Emphasized the importance of teaching students industry-standard technical practices related to file management and client deliverables. Highlighted that students must understand the differences between file types such as JPEG, PNG, and native working files (e.g., PSD), including when and why each is used. Stressed that students should not automatically release working files to clients, as doing so reduces their professional value and allows others to modify their work without them. Encouraged educators to embed real-world expectations into assignments so students understand how to properly deliver final products while maintaining ownership of their work.

Fatima Call: Emphasized the importance of foundational design thinking, including hierarchy, contrast, accessibility, and visual communication, noting that these core principles allow students to adapt across evolving tools and technologies. Reinforced the importance of teaching students to manage and save multiple file formats, including maintaining original/native files, as flattened files such as JPEGs cannot be edited and may require recreating work from scratch.

Highlighted a growing industry shift toward more authentic, analog-inspired creative work as a response to the saturation of AI-generated content, noting that professionals are intentionally returning to foundational techniques to create more meaningful and differentiated work. Emphasized the importance of teaching both historical and current practices so students understand how and why trends evolve.

Strongly emphasized the need to build creative confidence in students through instructional practices that reduce over-reliance on constant feedback. Described intentionally limiting feedback to technical questions after an initial learning period, requiring students to think independently and make their own design decisions. Noted that many students seek constant validation, which does not reflect real-world expectations where creatives must confidently present and justify their work to clients.

Also emphasized the importance of project-based learning connected to real-world clients, organizations, or community partners. Highlighted that these experiences not only build technical skills but also help students develop professional communication, networking abilities, and industry awareness. Encouraged teaching students to take initiative, say yes to opportunities, and engage in in-person experiences, noting that showing up and building relationships often leads to future opportunities and career growth.

Kelly McGuire: Emphasized the importance of focusing on foundational skills rather than relying on tools to fix work after the fact. Highlighted a common student mindset of creating something mediocre and expecting to correct it in post-production, contrasting this with industry expectations where the quality of the original work is critical. Reinforced that what is captured or created initially is more important than the editing process that follows.

Noted that while tools and technologies evolve quickly and classrooms may struggle to keep pace, strong foundational instruction ensures students can adapt regardless of the tools being used. Emphasized that teaching core principles allows even older tools to remain effective in instruction.

Also highlighted that students often struggle to understand the purpose behind what they are learning because they cannot yet see the "finish line." Stressed the importance of helping students connect classroom learning to real-world applications, including topics such as intellectual property and industry practices. Encouraged educators to broaden student experiences across multiple areas rather than focusing too narrowly, increasing adaptability and employability.

Reinforced that failure is a critical component of learning, sharing that students often learn the most from mistakes. Emphasized that even partial failures provide valuable lessons and should be normalized as part of the learning process to better prepare students for real-world expectations.

Michael Mulligan: Highlighted a noticeable shift in student mindset, noting that compared to previous generations, many students today are more risk-averse and afraid to fail. Shared that earlier students were more willing to take risks, try new things, and learn through experience, while current students often hesitate due to fear of making mistakes.

Emphasized the importance of intentionally creating classroom environments where failure is encouraged, supported, and viewed as a necessary part of growth. Stressed that students need safe spaces to experiment, make mistakes, and learn with the support of instructors and mentors. Reinforced that failure is essential for building confidence, problem-solving skills, and real-world readiness.

Also emphasized the importance of exposing students to industry networks and career pathways. Referenced the Themed Entertainment Association (TEA) and its NextGen initiative as an example of an organization that connects students to a wide range of disciplines, including engineering, design, audio, video, marketing, and production. Highlighted that these types of opportunities help students better understand the scope of the industry and expand their professional opportunities.

Deidra Puentes, Facilitator: Emphasized the importance of strengthening connections between educators and industry to ensure classrooms remain aligned with real-time trends. Suggested creating more structured opportunities for collaboration, such as ongoing workgroups or networks that allow educators and industry professionals to share insights and resources.

Also highlighted the importance of expanding project-based learning through intentional partnerships with industry, including opportunities for cross-school collaboration or competitions that allow students to engage in real-world work. Raised the importance of explicitly teaching communication and inquiry skills, helping students learn how to ask questions, understand client needs, and clarify expectations. Emphasized that these skills are

critical for preparing students to work with clients, especially as they build confidence and navigate feedback in professional settings.

Question 3: What essential skills, educational qualifications, and certifications are currently required to gain employment in your industry, and how might these requirements change in the near future?

Shannon Galuszka: Emphasized that in the arts, particularly theater, hands-on experience is essential and cannot be replaced by classroom instruction alone. Stressed that students need to actively engage in real-world work, learn by doing, and be willing to make mistakes as part of the learning process. Highlighted the importance of mentorship and building strong relationships with students so they feel supported while developing their skills.

Also noted that theater provides opportunities across a wide range of interests, including artistic, technical, and business roles, and encouraged educators to expose students to these environments where they can collaborate with others who are actively creating and producing work. Reinforced that being immersed in these spaces allows students to fully understand and develop a passion for the field.

Further emphasized the importance of reputation and personal presence, noting that how students present themselves and how others perceive them plays a critical role in employment opportunities. Highlighted that building a positive reputation through consistent engagement and professionalism is essential.

Michael Mulligan: Emphasized the importance of gaining real-world experience and stepping outside of the classroom, noting that many students remain in educational settings longer because they are hesitant to enter the workforce. Highlighted that students must actively engage with their community, participate in tours, and seek out opportunities to observe and experience industry environments.

Reinforced that success is not only about who students know, but also about who knows them, emphasizing the importance of visibility, relationship-building, and making oneself known within the industry. Encouraged educators to create opportunities for students to connect with professionals and gain exposure to real-world settings as part of their preparation for employment.

Fatima Call: Emphasized the importance of developing a strong portfolio as a primary requirement for employment in creative fields. Highlighted that portfolios should go beyond showcasing final products and include clear explanations of the student's role, the project goals, and the decision-making process behind the work. Stressed that students must be able to communicate their thinking, not just present visuals.

Also emphasized the growing importance of digital presence, including maintaining portfolios through websites or other platforms and creating short-form content such as reels to showcase work and process. Encouraged students to leverage familiar platforms, such as social media, to present their work and demonstrate their skills in ways that are engaging and accessible.

Reinforced that communication skills are critical, noting that students must be able to clearly explain their work, interact with clients, and understand project expectations. Highlighted the importance of understanding deadlines and professional expectations, as these are essential for success in the field.

Further emphasized that essential skills are a combination of technical and soft skills, with soft skills serving as the foundation. Highlighted human-centered design thinking as a key skill that supports effective communication, problem-solving, and the ability to understand and meet client needs.

Also stressed the importance of branding oneself early, including developing a clear identity, creating a portfolio and website, and practicing skills such as elevator pitches, networking, and professional follow-up. Suggested that these skills could be taught through structured approaches or micro-certifications within CTE pathways to better prepare students for the workforce.

Kelly McGuire: Emphasized the importance of foundational workplace readiness skills, including showing up on time, maintaining professionalism, and demonstrating reliability. Noted that these basic expectations are often overlooked but are critical for success in industry settings.

Highlighted the importance of being eager to learn, observing others, and gaining experience by engaging in real-world environments. Encouraged students to take initiative by volunteering, seeking opportunities, and learning how to navigate professional spaces.

Also noted that many students are unfamiliar with the process of obtaining employment and may feel unprepared or intimidated. Emphasized the importance of incorporating instruction on job readiness skills, including networking, professional behavior, and how to enter and navigate the workforce.

Deidra Puentes, Facilitator:
Highlighted the importance of integrating soft skills and communication into curriculum, reinforcing the panelists' emphasis on professional readiness. Referenced available curriculum resources that support the development of these skills and noted the importance of making these tools accessible to educators.

Also emphasized the evolving nature of technology and skill development, sharing personal experience with adapting to digital tools over time. Reinforced the importance of continuous learning and adaptability as key components of preparing students for future workforce demands.

Question 4: What are a few occupations within the industry that do not require advanced degrees yet offer a living wage? Additionally, what advice would you give to a recent high school graduate that would help them gain employment in your industry?

Gabriela Molina: Emphasized the importance of a strong portfolio as a primary factor in gaining employment, noting that employers often focus on the quality of work and the time it takes to complete projects. Highlighted that students should be prepared to discuss their work, including their process and efficiency. Also advised students to develop the ability to accept feedback without taking it personally, as critique is a regular part of the industry and essential for growth.

Shannon Galuszka: Emphasized that many roles within the arts, particularly in theater, do not require advanced degrees but instead rely heavily on hands-on experience and the ability to problem-solve in real time. Highlighted the importance of creative problem-solving skills, noting that in live production environments, unexpected challenges frequently arise and require quick thinking and adaptability using available resources.

Advised students to demonstrate these problem-solving abilities in interviews by sharing specific examples of how they have addressed challenges. Also stressed the importance of being a positive, collaborative individual, noting that even highly talented individuals may not be hired if they are difficult to work with. Reinforced that reputation and how individuals present themselves play a significant role in employment opportunities.

Michael Mulligan: Emphasized the importance of strong communication skills and interpersonal effectiveness as key factors in gaining employment. Encouraged students to develop their ability to connect with others, suggesting experiences such as acting or improv classes to build confidence and communication skills.

Stressed that employers value individuals who are positive, collaborative, and easy to work with, noting that technical skill alone is not sufficient if a person lacks professionalism or interpersonal skills. Reinforced that being someone others want to work with is critical, as workplace environments are often high-pressure and team-oriented.

Kelly McGuire: Shared that many roles within the audio industry do not require advanced degrees, though certifications can be beneficial depending on the specialization. Noted that defining a “living wage” can vary, but emphasized that opportunities exist for individuals who are willing to build skills and gain experience.

Advised students not to be overly narrow in their focus and instead develop a range of related skills, as many roles require cross-functional knowledge. Highlighted the physical and practical nature of some work, noting that entry-level roles may involve hands-on tasks that build foundational experience.

Encouraged students to actively seek real-world experience through volunteering, internships, or entry-level opportunities, and to ask questions and learn from professionals in the field. Also emphasized the importance of stepping away from reliance on digital platforms and engaging directly in real-world environments to better understand industry expectations.

Fatima Call: Emphasized that in fields such as graphic design, a degree is not always required, and that a strong portfolio, effective communication skills, and confidence are often more important in securing employment. Highlighted the wide range of opportunities available through freelance work, noting that many professionals supplement their income and build experience through independent projects.

Shared the importance of understanding how to price work and adapt pricing over time as skills and experience grow. Encouraged educators to expose students to conversations about how to make money in the field, including real examples of project-based work and compensation.

Reinforced that building a strong portfolio and being able to confidently present and discuss one's work can lead directly to job opportunities, sharing that personal experience and initiative—such as proactively sharing work with potential employers—can open doors even without formal credentials.

Audience Questions

Audience Question 1: *What value do micro-certifications and online learning opportunities have in preparing students for careers in this industry?*

Alejandro Gutierrez Chavez: Emphasized the value of micro-certifications and online learning as part of a broader career pathway, highlighting that these opportunities provide hands-on, targeted skill development that can support entry into an industry. Framed career development as part of an "ecosystem," noting that while students may have a specific goal (e.g., becoming a director), there are many roles and experiences that contribute to reaching that goal.

Stressed that micro-certifications can help students build skills, make connections, and gain exposure to different parts of the industry, ultimately supporting their progression along a non-linear career path. Highlighted that the value lies not only in the credential itself but in the learning experience, relationships formed, and conversations that can emerge from gaining those skills.

Fatima Call: Shared examples of students extending their learning beyond the classroom through online courses, noting that these opportunities allow students to explore specialized interests that may not be covered in the curriculum. Highlighted that students can independently build skills—such as emerging technologies or niche applications—through accessible online platforms. Emphasized that this type of learning supports student curiosity, initiative, and skill development in areas that align with their individual interests.

Kelly McGuire: Emphasized that micro-certifications and completed courses can help strengthen a student's resume, particularly when they lack real-world experience. Noted that employers often look for evidence that a student has followed through on learning something and developed a specific skill.

Highlighted that while traditional degrees have value, shorter, focused learning experiences can also demonstrate commitment and initiative. Encouraged students to complete courses and certifications that provide tangible evidence of their skills and interests, helping them stand out in the hiring process.

Michael Mulligan: Reinforced that certifications and degrees can signal a student's commitment and willingness to invest in themselves, even if they do not yet have extensive professional experience. Shared that employers may view these accomplishments as indicators of reliability, follow-through, and dedication.

Also emphasized the importance of gaining real-world experience alongside certifications, particularly through internships or entry-level opportunities. Encouraged students to seek out hands-on experiences, even in small or supporting roles, as these opportunities provide exposure to industry environments, help build relationships, and support long-term career development.

Audience Question 2: *What advice would you give for supporting adult learners or students from alternative education pathways in gaining exposure and motivation to pursue careers in this industry?*

Fatima Call: Emphasized the importance of getting students involved in real-world work as early as possible, particularly through opportunities such as nonprofit projects that allow students to gain hands-on experience while working with real clients. Shared personal experience working with organizations such as the NAACP and AIDS Project, noting that although these opportunities may not always provide financial compensation, they offer valuable experience, feedback, and exposure to real-world expectations.

Highlighted that these experiences can help students better understand what they want to pursue and expose them to the realities of working in the field. Also emphasized the importance of personal branding projects that guide students through developing their identity and skills from start to finish.

Noted differences in confidence and exposure among younger generations, emphasizing that many students may not recognize the value of opportunities being presented to them. Encouraged educators to continue guiding students toward opportunities that may be outside of their comfort zone, as these experiences are often critical in shaping their direction and growth.

Michael Mulligan: Emphasized the importance of fostering student engagement by creating learning environments where students feel personally connected to the content. Noted that students are more likely to invest in their learning when they feel included in the process rather than being passively instructed. Shared that teaching through conversation and interaction can help build a sense of community and ownership in learning.

Highlighted that motivation is often tied to interest and passion, and that educators play a role in helping students discover what excites them. Acknowledged that external factors can impact student engagement, but emphasized the importance of reinforcing that students will get out of the experience what they put into it. Encouraged continued efforts to help students see the value of investing in themselves and their future.

Gabriela Molina: Shared an example of encouraging a student to participate in a design competition despite initial hesitation and lack of confidence. Noted that providing encouragement and reassurance can help students take risks and engage in opportunities they might otherwise avoid.

Highlighted that when students know they have support, they are more willing to step outside of their comfort zone. Emphasized the importance of exposing students to opportunities and helping them understand the potential outcomes, noting that these experiences can lead to significant achievements and increased confidence.

Alejandro Gutierrez Chavez: Emphasized the importance of balancing high expectations with student-centered support. Highlighted the value of incorporating human-centered design

thinking into instruction by first identifying students' goals and aspirations, then aligning projects and learning experiences to those interests.

Suggested that connecting coursework to students' personal goals can increase motivation and engagement. Also emphasized the importance of creating high-impact experiences that build over time, noting that initial student participation may be small but can grow through peer influence and repeated success.

Highlighted the need for a long-term, multi-layered approach to encouraging students to step outside of their comfort zones, emphasizing that sustained exposure, structured support, and positive peer experiences can lead to increased participation and engagement over time.

Audience Question 3: *Are there examples of educational models where arts programs are integrated across disciplines to support one another and create stronger student outcomes, such as shared resources, collaboration across schools, and portfolio development?*

Fatima Call: Shared that while the idea of integrated arts programs is frequently discussed, in practice, programs often operate in isolation or in competition with one another. Noted that collaboration across disciplines—such as drama, production, and technical programs—does not always happen naturally, but emphasized that increased collaboration would be beneficial and is an area that should be further developed.

Added that capacity and logistics can be barriers to implementing this type of model, particularly when coordinating across multiple programs or sites. Suggested that one approach is to build partnerships with external organizations already doing related work and to focus on developing shared goals and collaborative projects. Emphasized that intentional planning and alignment around common objectives are key to making cross-program collaboration successful.

Deidra Puentes, Facilitator: Referenced a recent conversation with a district representative who has implemented a model similar to what was described, using a combination of funding sources such as Expanded Learning grants and CTE funding to support different program levels. Noted that these types of models often depend on strong internal processes within a district and intentional coordination across programs.

Also offered to follow up and connect the audience member with that contact as a potential example to explore. Emphasized that while these models are possible, aligning stakeholders and implementing cross-program collaboration can be challenging and requires coordinated planning.

Facilitator Closing Remarks

Work-Based Learning & Project Planning: Emphasized that cross-program collaboration can be supported through structured work-based learning experiences aligned to CTE courses. Highlighted the importance of advanced planning when coordinating projects across programs (e.g., aligning production timelines, identifying shared project needs such as performances, recordings, or design work). Noted that these types of experiences can be built into grant-funded projects when aligned to pathway goals.

Emerging Work-Based Learning Opportunity: Shared a potential opportunity through the California University of Science and Medicine for students to serve as standardized patients in simulated healthcare scenarios. Noted that while current opportunities are limited to individuals 18 and older, this represents a potential pathway for graduating seniors to gain paid, real-world experience. Also shared that efforts are underway to explore how similar opportunities could be adapted into work-based learning or internship experiences for high school students.

Instructional Resources for Educators: Highlighted available resources to support classroom instruction, including materials focused on employability skills such as communication, adaptability, and initiative. Noted that these resources include presentations, pre-assessments, activities, and worksheets that can be implemented directly into coursework.

CTE Pathway Navigation Tool: Shared updates to the K–12 Career Education Navigator, which provides a centralized view of CTE pathways across schools. Emphasized that this tool can be used by educators to identify nearby programs, explore partnership opportunities, and support cross-site collaboration across pathways.

Partnership & Program Development: Encouraged educators to explore partnerships with other schools, programs, and community organizations, including nonprofits, to support project-based learning and expand student opportunities. Noted that collaboration across programs can strengthen student experiences but requires intentional coordination and planning.

Cross-Panel Key Takeaways

These are the themes that appeared consistently across the full four questions AND the audience Q&A.

1. **Foundational skills remain critical despite rapid technological change.** Across all discussions, panelists emphasized that while tools and technologies continue to evolve rapidly, foundational skills such as design principles, communication, and problem-solving remain essential. These core competencies allow students to adapt across platforms, industries, and emerging technologies.

2. **Artificial intelligence and technology should enhance, not replace, human creativity.** Panelists consistently noted that AI is becoming a standard tool across creative industries; however, it should be used to support and refine work rather than replace original thinking. Students must first develop independent creative and technical skills before relying on AI.

3. **Real-world experience is essential for career readiness.** There was strong agreement that hands-on, real-world experiences, such as working with clients, participating in internships, or engaging in community-based projects, are critical in preparing students for employment. These experiences help students build both technical skills and professional awareness.

4. **Creative confidence and risk-taking are increasingly important.** Panelists highlighted a growing trend of students being hesitant to take risks or make mistakes. Building creative confidence, encouraging independent decision-making, and normalizing failure were identified as essential components of preparing students for real-world environments.

5. **Soft skills are the foundation of career success.** Communication, collaboration, professionalism, and the ability to work effectively with others were consistently identified as foundational skills. Panelists emphasized that technical ability alone is not sufficient; students must also be able to communicate ideas, work with clients, and build relationships.

6. **Portfolios and personal branding are key to employment.** Panelists emphasized that in many arts, media, and entertainment fields, portfolios are often more important than formal degrees. Students must be able to present their work, explain their process, and develop a personal brand that reflects their skills and identity.

7. **Networking and relationship-building drive opportunities.** A recurring theme was the importance of relationships in career advancement. Panelists noted that success is often influenced by both who students know and who knows them, reinforcing the need for students to actively engage with industry professionals and build connections.

8. **Industry exposure and cross-disciplinary awareness expand opportunities.** Panelists emphasized the importance of exposing students to the full range of careers within the industry, including roles across design, production, technical, and business functions.

Understanding the broader ecosystem allows students to identify multiple entry points and career pathways.

9. **Failure is a critical part of the learning process.** Panelists consistently reinforced that failure is not only expected but necessary for growth. Creating environments where students can experiment, make mistakes, and learn from those experiences was identified as essential for developing resilience and real-world readiness.

10. **Collaboration across programs strengthens student outcomes.** Discussion highlighted the potential benefits of cross-program collaboration, where different disciplines (e.g., performance, production, design, and technical programs) work together to create authentic, real-world learning experiences. While challenging to implement, this approach can significantly enhance student learning and portfolio development.

Cross-Panel Action Items

These action items synthesize the most actionable guidance from the full advisory. These are the steps teachers can embed into coursework, lesson plans, or pathway design.

1. Embed Foundational Skills Across All Instruction:

- Integrate design principles, communication, and problem-solving into daily lessons regardless of the specific software or tools being used.
- Prioritize teaching the "why" behind tasks so students understand real-world applications.

2. Teach AI as a Support Tool, Not a Replacement:

- Design assignments where students create original work first, then use AI for refinement or feedback.
- Incorporate discussions on ethical and effective use of AI in creative work.

3. Expand Real-World, Project-Based Learning Opportunities:

- Develop projects that involve real clients, nonprofits, or community organizations.
- Create assignments that simulate real industry expectations, including timelines, revisions, and deliverables.

4. Intentionally Build Creative Confidence:

- Reduce over-scaffolding by limiting constant feedback and encouraging independent decision-making.
- Create opportunities for students to present and justify their work to build confidence.

5. Explicitly Teach Soft Skills and Professional Behaviors:

- Incorporate instruction on communication, collaboration, professionalism, and workplace expectations.
- Model and practice client interactions, including how to ask questions and respond to feedback.

6. Develop Portfolio and Personal Branding Skills:

- Require students to build and maintain a portfolio that includes both final work and process explanations.
- Incorporate personal branding activities such as creating a website, resume, and elevator pitch.

7. Create Structured Networking and Industry Exposure Opportunities

- Facilitate guest speakers, industry panels, site visits, or virtual connections with professionals.
- Encourage participation in competitions, internships, or community events.

8. Normalize Failure as Part of the Learning Process:

- Design activities where iteration, revision, and mistakes are expected and reflected upon.

- Create a classroom culture where failure is viewed as a learning opportunity rather than a setback.

9. Increase Cross-Program Collaboration:

- Coordinate projects across pathways (e.g., performance, production, design, and technical programs).
- Align timelines and outcomes so students contribute to shared, real-world projects.

10. Leverage Micro-Certifications and Skill-Based Learning:

- Incorporate short, skill-based learning opportunities that students can add to their resumes.
- Encourage students to pursue additional learning outside the classroom (e.g., online courses, micro-certifications, independent projects).

Key Takeaways and Action Items by Panelist

These key takeaways and action item lists highlight each respondent's insights, concerns, and suggested actions to address industry trends and to prepare students for the evolving landscape within their respective industries.

Alejandro Gutierrez Chavez, Executive Director, Arts Connection - San Bernardino Arts Council
Key Takeaways:

- Micro-certifications and targeted learning experiences provide value by building skills, connections, and exposure to industry pathways.
- Career pathways are non-linear and should be understood as part of a broader ecosystem with multiple entry points.
- Relationships and industry engagement are critical components of long-term career success.
- Connecting education to real-time industry practices supports adaptability and workforce alignment.

Action Items:

- Incorporate micro-certifications or short-term learning opportunities into pathway design to build targeted skills.
- Create structured opportunities for students to engage with industry professionals and understand the broader career ecosystem.

Fatima Call, Assistant Professor, Multimedia, Crafton Hills Community College
Key Takeaways:

- Foundational design thinking (e.g., hierarchy, contrast, accessibility) is critical for adapting across tools and technologies.
- Creative confidence must be intentionally developed through instructional strategies that reduce over-reliance on feedback.
- Portfolios, personal branding, and communication skills are essential for employment in creative fields.
- Project-based learning connected to real clients builds both technical and professional skills.

Action Items:

- Design assignments that require students to present their work, explain their process, and justify their decisions.
- Implement project-based learning experiences that connect students with real clients, organizations, or community partners.

Gabriela Molina, Owner, Mars Graphix
Key Takeaways:

- Understanding file types, deliverables, and ownership of work is essential for preparing students for client-based work.
- Real-world expectations, including timelines and client communication, should be embedded into instruction.
- Encouragement and support can help students overcome hesitation and engage in opportunities.
- Feedback is a critical part of the creative process and should be approached professionally.

Action Items:
- Incorporate assignments that require students to submit appropriate file formats and simulate client deliverables.
- Create opportunities for students to participate in competitions or real-world projects to build confidence and experience.

Kelly McGuire, Audio Engineer, McGuire Sound Factory
Key Takeaways:
- Foundational skills are more important than specific tools, as technology continues to evolve.
- Students often rely too heavily on post-production rather than focusing on creating quality work from the start.
- Understanding the purpose behind learning activities is critical for student engagement.
- Workplace readiness skills such as reliability, professionalism, and initiative are essential for employment.

Action Items:
- Design lessons that emphasize quality of original work rather than relying on editing or post-production fixes.
- Integrate explicit instruction on workplace expectations, including professionalism, reliability, and communication.

Michael Mulligan, Owner, Fortune and Glory Scenic
Key Takeaways:
- Failure is a critical component of learning and should be encouraged as part of the educational process.
- Students are increasingly risk-averse and need safe environments to experiment and grow.
- Communication and interpersonal skills are essential for success in collaborative work environments.
- Industry exposure and networking are key factors in gaining employment.

Action Items:
- Create classroom environments where failure is normalized and students are encouraged to take risks.

- Provide opportunities for students to engage with industry professionals and build communication skills.

Shannon Galuszka, Producing Artistic Director, Redlands Theatre Festival
Key Takeaways:
- Hands-on, experiential learning is essential in preparing students for careers in the arts.
- Collaboration and in-person engagement are critical components of creative work.
- Problem-solving and adaptability are necessary skills in live production environments.
- Professional reputation and the ability to work well with others significantly impact employment opportunities.

Action Items:
- Incorporate live, collaborative projects that require students to work together in real-world scenarios.
- Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate problem-solving skills and build a positive professional presence.

Labor Market Information

The following labor market information was sourced from https://www.onetonline.org/ on February 26, 2026.

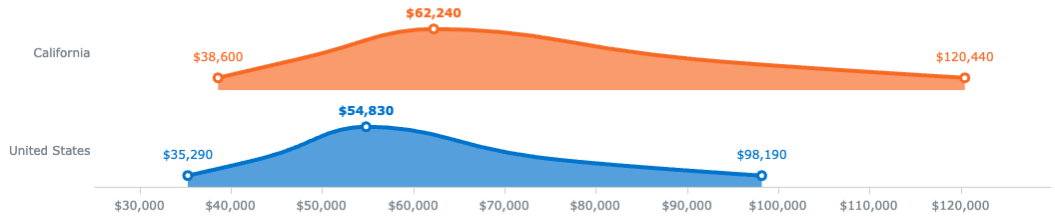
California Wages

27-4011.00 - Audio and Video Technicians

Wages for state: California Go

Wages near ZIP Code: Go

Annual Wages | Hourly Wages



In California:

- Workers on average earn **$62,240**.
- 10% of workers earn **$38,600 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$120,440 or more**.

In the United States:

- Workers on average earn **$54,830**.
- 10% of workers earn **$35,290 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$98,190 or more**.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024 wage data.

California Employment Trends

27-4011.00 - Audio and Video Technicians

View trends for state: California Go

In California:

Employment data for **Audio and Video Equipment Technicians**.

Employment (2022)	12,200 employees
Projected employment (2032)	13,100 employees
Projected growth (2022-2032)	7%
Projected annual job openings (2022-2032)	1,200

In the United States:

Employment data for **Audio and Video Technicians**.

Employment (2024)	92,300 employees
Projected employment (2034)	95,400 employees
Projected growth (2024-2034)	3% Average
Projected annual job openings (2024-2034)	7,300

California source: Projections Central 2022-2032 long-term projections. United States source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024-2034 employment projections. "Projected growth" represents the estimated change in total employment over the projections period. "Projected annual job openings" represent openings due to growth and replacement.

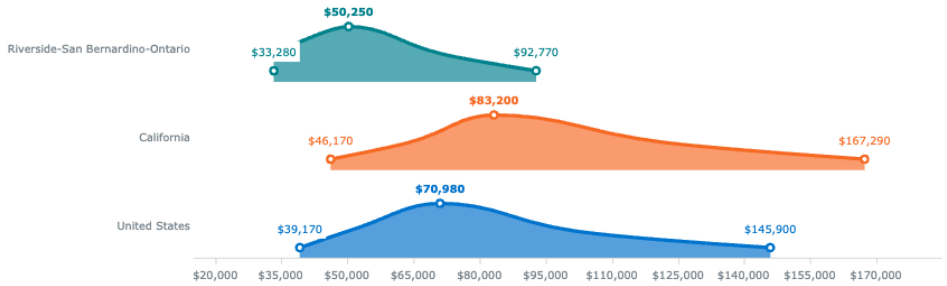
Local Wages

27-4032.00 - Film and Video Editors

Wages for state: California Go

Wages near ZIP Code: 92408 Go

Annual Wages | Hourly Wages



In Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA:

- Workers on average earn **$50,250**.
- 10% of workers earn **$33,280 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$92,770 or more**.

In California:

- Workers on average earn **$83,200**.
- 10% of workers earn **$46,170 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$167,290 or more**.

In the United States:

- Workers on average earn **$70,980**.
- 10% of workers earn **$39,170 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$145,900 or more**.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024 wage data.

California Employment Trends

27-4032.00 - Film and Video Editors

View trends for state: California Go

In California:

Employment (2022)	16,700 employees
Projected employment (2032)	18,000 employees
Projected growth (2022-2032)	8%
Projected annual job openings (2022-2032)	1,600

In the United States:

Employment (2024)	43,500 employees
Projected employment (2034)	45,200 employees
Projected growth (2024-2034)	4% Average
Projected annual job openings (2024-2034)	3,600

California source: Projections Central 2022-2032 long-term projections. United States source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024-2034 employment projections. "Projected growth" represents the estimated change in total employment over the projections period. "Projected annual job openings" represent openings due to growth and replacement.

Local Wages

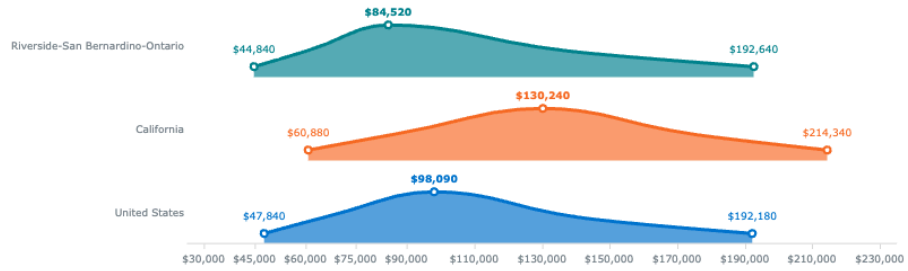
15-1255.01 - Video Game Designers Bright Outlook

Wage data collected from **Web and Digital Interface Designers**.

Wages for state: California Go

Wages near ZIP Code: 92408 Go

Annual Wages | Hourly Wages



In Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA:

Wage data for **Web and Digital Interface Designers**.

- Workers on average earn **$84,520**.
- 10% of workers earn **$44,840 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$192,640 or more**.

In California:

Wage data for **Web and Digital Interface Designers**.

- Workers on average earn **$130,240**.
- 10% of workers earn **$60,880 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$214,340 or more**.

In the United States:

Wage data for **Web and Digital Interface Designers**.

- Workers on average earn **$98,090**.
- 10% of workers earn **$47,840 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$192,180 or more**.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024 wage data.

California Employment Trends

15-1255.01 - Video Game Designers Bright Outlook

View trends for state: California Go

In California:

Employment data for **Web and Digital Interface Designers**.

Employment (2022)	30,400 employees
Projected employment (2032)	34,300 employees
Projected growth (2022-2032)	13%
Projected annual job openings (2022-2032)	2,670

In the United States:

Employment data for **Web and Digital Interface Designers**.

Employment (2024)	128,900 employees
Projected employment (2034)	137,900 employees
Projected growth (2024-2034)	■■■■ 7% Much faster than average
Projected annual job openings (2024-2034)	9,100

California source: Projections Central 2022-2032 long-term projections. United States source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024-2034 employment projections. "Projected growth" represents the estimated change in total employment over the projections period. "Projected annual job openings" represent openings due to growth and replacement.

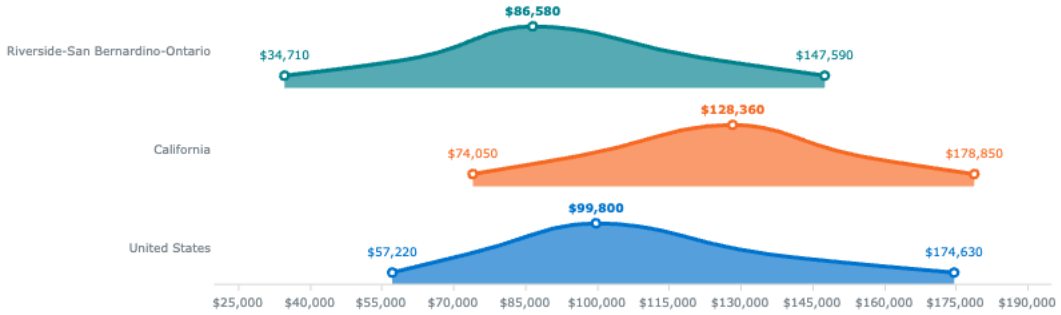
Local Wages

27-1014.00 - Special Effects Artists and Animators

Wages for state: California Go

Wages near ZIP Code: 92408 Go

Annual Wages | Hourly Wages



In Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA:

- Workers on average earn **$86,580**.
- 10% of workers earn **$34,710 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$147,590 or more**.

In California:

- Workers on average earn **$128,360**.
- 10% of workers earn **$74,050 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$178,850 or more**.

In the United States:

- Workers on average earn **$99,800**.
- 10% of workers earn **$57,220 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$174,630 or more**.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024 wage data.

California Employment Trends

27-1014.00 - Special Effects Artists and Animators

View trends for state: California Go

In California:

Employment data for **Multimedia Artists and Animators**.

Employment (2022)	34,200 employees
Projected employment (2032)	36,400 employees
Projected growth (2022-2032)	6%
Projected annual job openings (2022-2032)	3,520

In the United States:

Employment data for **Special Effects Artists and Animators**.

Employment (2024)	57,100 employees
Projected employment (2034)	58,000 employees
Projected growth (2024-2034)	2% Slower than average
Projected annual job openings (2024-2034)	5,000

California source: Projections Central 2022-2032 long-term projections. United States source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024-2034 employment projections. "Projected growth" represents the estimated change in total employment over the projections period. "Projected annual job openings" represent openings due to growth and replacement.

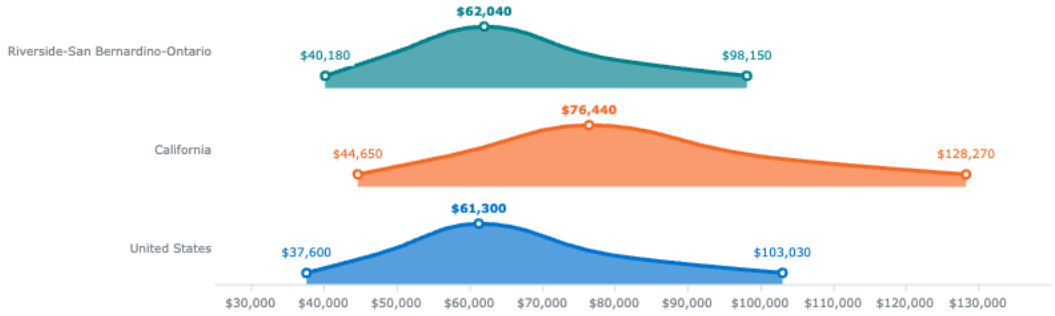
Local Wages

27-1024.00 - Graphic Designers

Wages for state: California Go

Wages near ZIP Code: 92408 Go

Annual Wages | Hourly Wages



In Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA:

- Workers on average earn **$62,040**.
- 10% of workers earn **$40,180 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$98,150 or more**.

In California:

- Workers on average earn **$76,440**.
- 10% of workers earn **$44,650 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$128,270 or more**.

In the United States:

- Workers on average earn **$61,300**.
- 10% of workers earn **$37,600 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$103,030 or more**.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024 wage data.

California Employment Trends

27-1024.00 - Graphic Designers

View trends for state: California Go

In California:

Employment (2022)	36,600 employees
Projected employment (2032)	38,400 employees
Projected growth (2022-2032)	5%
Projected annual job openings (2022-2032)	3,180

In the United States:

Employment (2024)	265,900 employees
Projected employment (2034)	271,500 employees
Projected growth (2024-2034)	2% Slower than average
Projected annual job openings (2024-2034)	20,000

California source: Projections Central 2022-2032 long-term projections. United States source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024-2034 employment projections. "Projected growth" represents the estimated change in total employment over the projections period. "Projected annual job openings" represent openings due to growth and replacement.

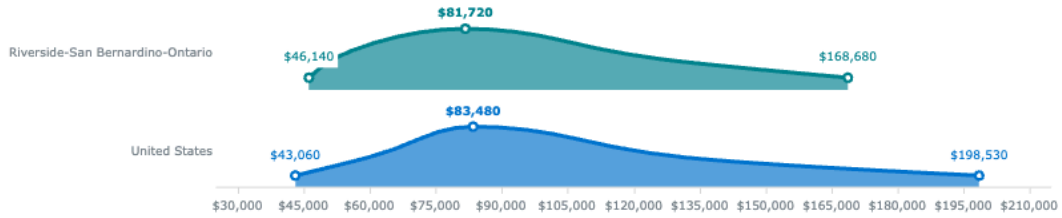
Local Wages

27-2012.00 - Producers and Directors Bright Outlook

Wages for state: California Go

Wages near ZIP Code: 92408 Go

Annual Wages | Hourly Wages



In Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA:

- Workers on average earn **$81,720**.
- 10% of workers earn **$46,140 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$168,680 or more**.

In California:

- Workers on average earn **$122,150**.
- 10% of workers earn **$51,600 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$239,200+ or more**.

In the United States:

- Workers on average earn **$83,480**.
- 10% of workers earn **$43,060 or less**.
- 10% of workers earn **$198,530 or more**.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024 wage data.

California Employment Trends

27-2012.00 - Producers and Directors Bright Outlook

View trends for state: California Go

In California:

Employment (2022)	51,400 employees
Projected employment (2032)	55,700 employees
Projected growth (2022-2032)	8%
Projected annual job openings (2022-2032)	4,790

In the United States:

Employment (2024)	167,000 employees
Projected employment (2034)	175,200 employees
Projected growth (2024-2034)	5% Faster than average
Projected annual job openings (2024-2034)	12,800

California source: Projections Central 2022-2032 long-term projections. United States source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024-2034 employment projections. "Projected growth" represents the estimated change in total employment over the projections period. "Projected annual job openings" represent openings due to growth and replacement.

Local Wages

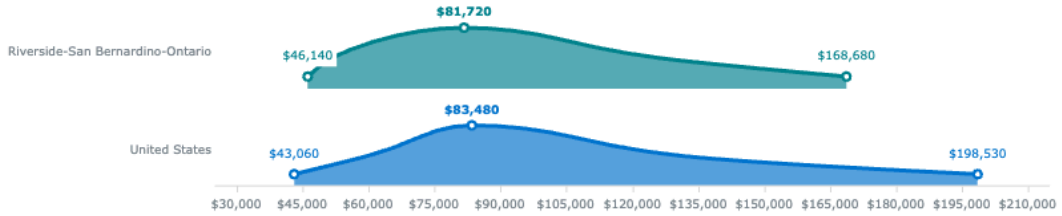
27-2012.05 - Media Technical Directors/Managers Bright Outlook

Wage data collected from **Producers and Directors**.

Wages for state: California Go

Wages near ZIP Code: 92408 Go

Annual Wages | Hourly Wages



In Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA:

Wage data for **Producers and Directors**.

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Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024 wage data.

California Employment Trends

27-2012.05 - Media Technical Directors/Managers Bright Outlook

View trends for state: California Go

In California:

Employment data for **Producers and Directors**.

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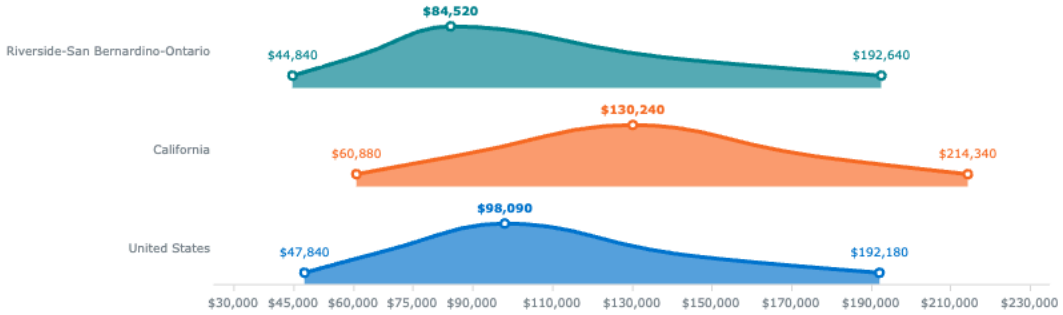
Local Wages

15-1255.00 - Web and Digital Interface Designers Bright Outlook

Wages for state: California Go

Wages near ZIP Code: 92408 Go

Annual Wages | Hourly Wages



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