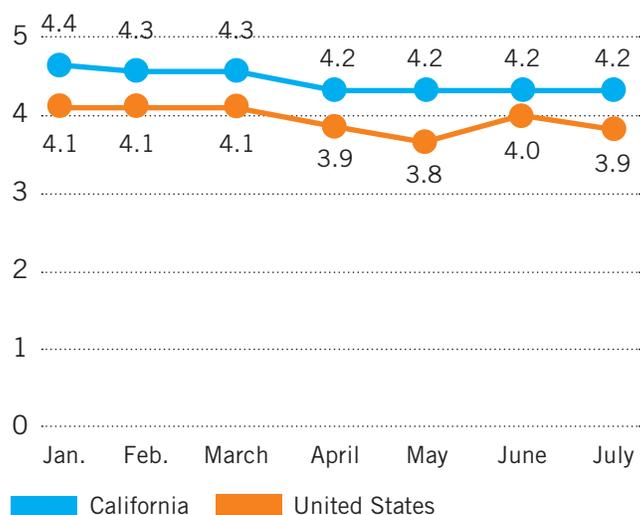




# Southern California Employment Trends Report

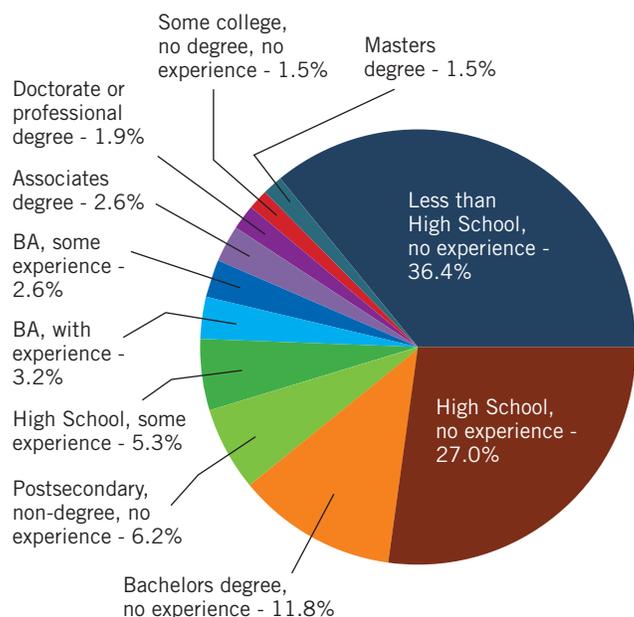
## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

### Unemployment Rate (California vs. U.S.)



Both the California and national unemployment rates hold steady at historic lows. (Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)

### Entry Level Education and Experience Requirements – All Jobs 2016-2021



Entry-level education and training requirements across all occupational projections for Los Angeles County. (Source: LAEDC)

### Employers Increasingly Turn to Workers without High School Diplomas

As the U.S. economy continued its unprecedented 94 consecutive months of adding jobs and the national unemployment rate dipped further to 3.9 percent in July, a segment of workers without high school diplomas hard-hit during the Great Recession is beginning to see a rebound in hiring.

During the economic collapse, employers placed a high premium on a candidate's skills and credentials, resulting in an unemployment rate for workers without a high school diploma that reached nearly 16 percent in 2010. July's 5.1-percent unemployment rate is the lowest since the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) began tracking the figure in 1992.

This trend reflects great news for workers in general, as no education group is missing out. Unemployment rates for those with only a high school diploma at 4 percent and college degrees at 2.2 percent in July are at historic lows.

According to the BLS, 53 percent of adults with only a high school education or less were employed in July, compared to 72 percent for those with at least a bachelor's degree.

Locally, the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) offered a promising outlook for unskilled workers across all industries and occupations in the county. In its most recent [economic update](#), the organization estimated more than one third of the projected job openings for the next five years require workers without a high school diploma and no work experience. Almost another third will require workers with a high school diploma (or equivalent) and no work experience.

For Southern California employers, the key takeaways here are threefold. First, the U.S. economy remains strong and shows no immediate signs of slowing. In fact, the economy expanded at a 4.1 percent annual rate in the April-June quarter, the strongest showing in nearly four years.

Second, employers across the country and region are filling open positions with workers without high school diplomas, who make up 7.2 percent of the nation's labor force.

Third, as underemployed college and high school graduates move to higher paying jobs, and workers without a high school diploma fill many of those roles, the trickle-up effect may drive a corresponding increase in wages. Some companies are offering higher pay to find and keep workers, particularly for specific skills.

Tapping into this pool of untapped labor can be an important strategy for employers that are struggling in a tight labor market and can expand their hiring requirements. As more jobs are added to the local economy, employers across Southern California will need to dig a little deeper to find candidates.

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