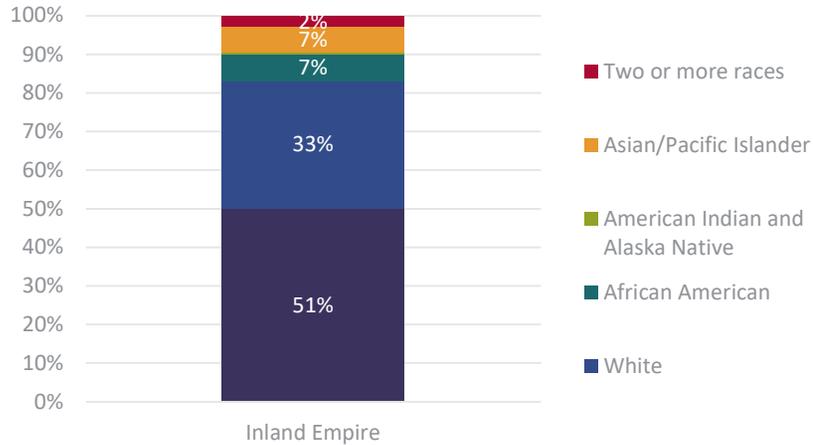




1 | Inland Empire Regional Data
and Analysis

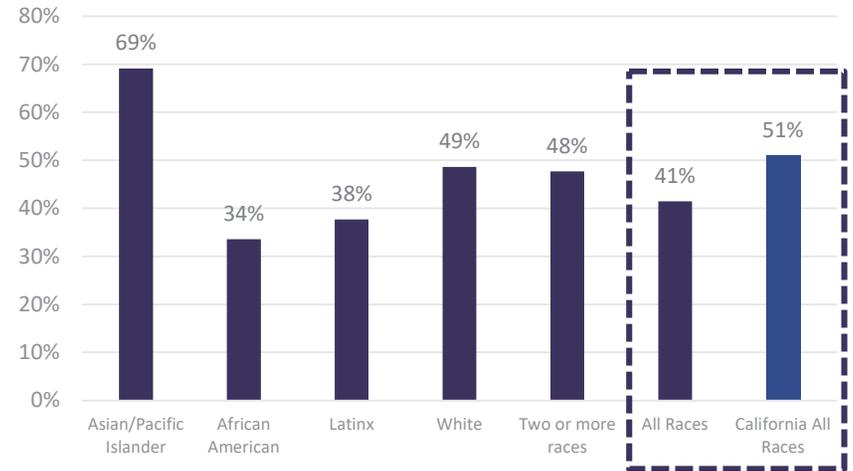
The Inland Empire is similar to the Los Angeles region in demographics, but trails the state average in both educational attainment and A-G completion

Distribution of Inland Empire Population By Race/Ethnicity

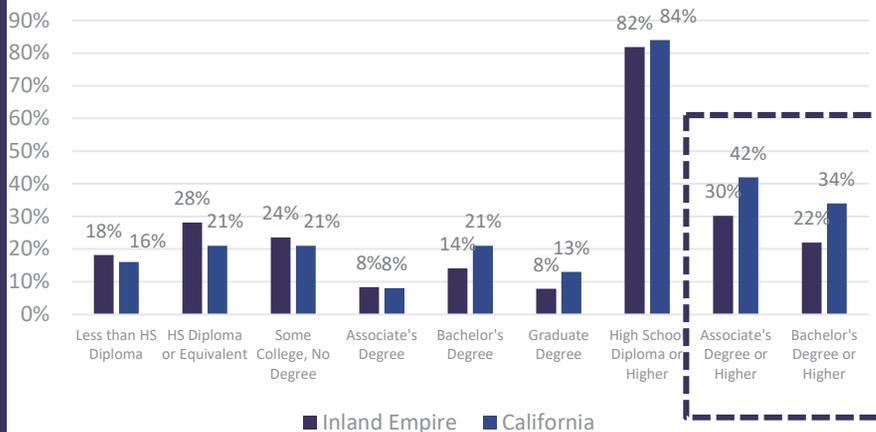


Note: In our research and equity frameworks we generally prefer the terms "Latinx" and "Black," but some data sources still use the terms "Hispanic," "Latino," and "African American." We keep the original term from the original data source in order to maintain fidelity to the data, for example, in the graph above.

Percentage of Inland Empire High School Students Meeting A-G Eligibility Requirements



Inland Empire Population Aged 25 and Older by Highest Level of Education Attained



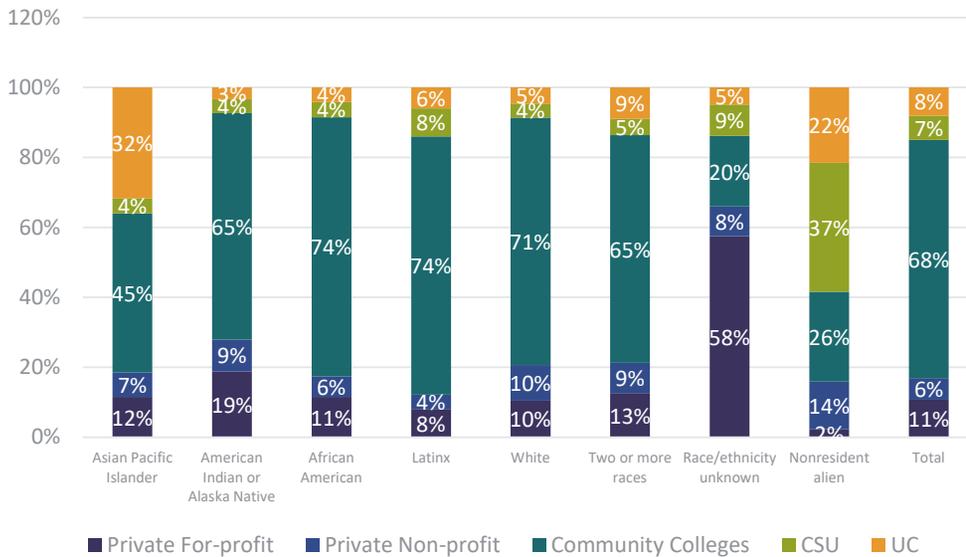
14% unemployment

California: 15% unemployment

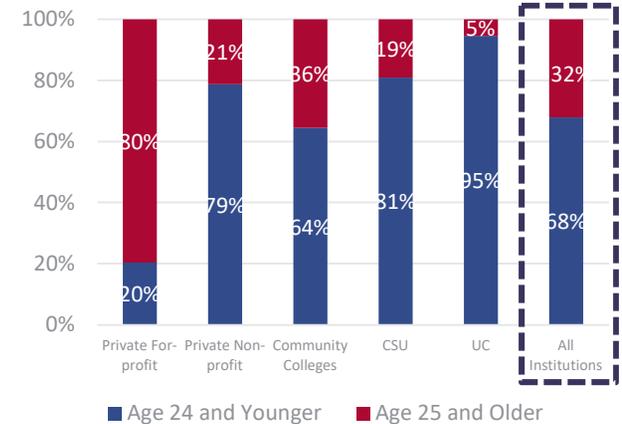
Source(s): U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey 2013-2018; CA Department of Education (2018); U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2018

Only two of the Inland Empire's fastest growing occupations require postsecondary education, indicating that the faster-growing jobs in the region may not all offer sustainable wages and career growth

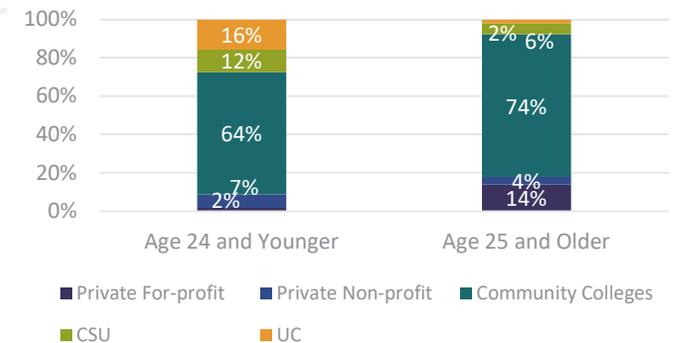
Distribution of Undergraduates at Inland Empire Institutions by Race/Ethnicity and Type of Institution



Distribution of Undergraduates at Inland Empire Institutions by Age



Distribution of Undergraduates at Inland Empire Institutions by Age and Type of Institution



10 Fastest Growing Occupations in the Inland Empire

Occupation	Education Required	% Change
Food Processing Workers, All Other	No formal educational credential	77%
Machine Feeders and Offbearers	No formal educational credential	47%
Home Health Aides	High school diploma or equivalent	43%
First-Line Supervisors of Helpers, Laborers, and Material Movers, Hand	High school diploma or equivalent	42%
Personal Care Aides	High school diploma or equivalent	40%
Software Developers, Applications	Bachelor's degree	37%
Roofers	No formal educational credential	37%
Structural Iron and Steel Workers	High school diploma or equivalent	36%
Brickmasons and Blockmasons	High school diploma or equivalent	36%
Nurse Practitioners	Master's degree	36%

Note: Regional information is based on Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). As a result, it may undercount occupations from rural sections of the regions that are not part of an MSA. Occupations were excluded if the base year employment did not exceed 1,500.

Source(s): U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Full-Year Enrollment Survey 2018; U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Fall Enrollment Survey; CA Employment Development Department

Our conversations in the Inland Empire elevated the following key themes regarding stakeholder needs and equity

1. Education remains a priority for students, but the value proposition of a postsecondary education is shifting

2. Limited funding and capacity restrain equitable approaches to policy and practice for system stakeholders

3. Displaced workers require innovative training to endure uncertain economic conditions

4. The role of higher education institutions is evolving; leaders are exploring strategies to better address students' basic needs

5. An inflexible postsecondary education system impedes intersegmental collaboration

6. The COVID-19 impact has exacerbated the digital divide

7. Higher education institutions' transition to online learning has left students feeling less supported



Stakeholders across the Inland Empire expressed student needs and challenges, as well as system barriers and opportunities for redesigning with equity (1 of 4)

<p>Students' postsecondary choices based on shifting value proposition</p>	<p>Students are skeptical of the value proposition of higher education given the high cost and current quality of online learning; this is having an impact on students' choice of institution and enrollment decisions this year, and could also impact persistence and retention going forward</p>	<p>“ “I never considered taking off a semester, but I know someone who did. She wasn't retaining the material and didn't want to pay the money to not retain information. So, she didn't drop out but is taking a leave. Another person said she would take classes that are not important to her major. She is taking gen ed courses now instead of the more important classes for her major. I did the same thing; taking gen ed and electives.”</p> <p>Student</p>	<p>“ “Deciding where I wanted to go was harder because I was thinking about what would be easier: to attend a school where I have to stay there or make it easier for my parents by staying home and going to school nearby. I decided to go to La Sierra because I liked their responses regarding benefits to me. I had other options, I wanted to attend UC Santa Barbara. It was difficult because it was more expensive.”</p> <p>Student</p>
<p>Limited funding and capacity</p>	<p>Funding inequity and budget cuts exacerbate current challenges; tight margins and limited capacity challenge the ability to redesign the postsecondary system to be focused on equity</p>	<p>“ “I have kids at Cal States who don't have award letters yet. They started school and don't have money. Those systematic barriers that are happening disproportionately affect low-income kids. They tried to tell kids how to get access to an EBT card because they aren't enrolled and don't have access to the pantry. There has to be an increase in student support staff.”</p> <p>Non-profit Leader</p>	<p>“ “The system isn't equitably funded. The community colleges are the champions of equity, yet victims of inequity. You can't provide holistic services with resources that are just not there. When we look at Cal Grant, how our students are funded, our students don't get access to Cal Grant because we have lower tuition.”</p> <p>Higher Education Leader</p>

Stakeholders across the Inland Empire expressed student needs and challenges, as well as system barriers and opportunities for redesigning with equity (2 of 4)

<p>Displaced workers</p>	<p>A lack of short-term, flexible credentialing programs linked to existing and emerging jobs limits opportunities for displaced workers to retrain and recover</p>	<p>“We have adults at home who could be upskilling right now, but don’t have technology or access to do that. How can we support the upskilling needs of adults and the instruction for the kids? There is a huge population that needs resources. All our displaced workers should have a connection that helps them prepare for more than a minimum wage job after this. This needs to be at the forefront. I don't want to train people to go back to minimum wage jobs.”</p> <p>Workforce Partner</p>	<p>“We need work-based learning that can get folks into jobs that doesn't make them compromise. How do you structure that in a way that allows them to play all the roles they have to play in life? You can do the dual generation approach in Inland Empire.”</p> <p>Workforce Partner</p>
<p>Institutional role</p>	<p>Higher education is challenged by evolving institutional roles, including advancing social justice and equity reforms</p>	<p>“I don’t know if public higher education has really grappled with the expectation that the public higher education institutions are to be social service agencies. We need partnership with county social services and other organizations that can connect our students. Because we have responded to give students what we thought they needed, it continues to build higher and higher expectations of us. So we have to come to grips with: Are we going to be mental health agencies? Are we going to be homeless shelters? Are we going to be all the kinds of things that are real needs for our students?”</p> <p>Higher Education Leader</p>	<p>“The school has gotten a lot of bad attention for how they have responded to racial justice issues. They took a long time to address George Floyd, a week or longer. There was controversy, and students who were unhappy with how administration has dealt with racial issues.”</p> <p>Student</p>

Stakeholders across the Inland Empire expressed student needs and challenges, as well as system barriers and opportunities for redesigning with equity (3 of 4)

<p>Policy and intersegmental collaboration</p>	<p>K12, higher education and workforce stakeholders believe they don't have the flexibility to meet student needs for access and convenience that could make students' experiences more streamlined, relevant and affordable (e.g., transfers, microcredentials, work-based learning, etc.)</p>	<p>“The transfer—ADT—is an example of a program from the state that was supposed to strengthen the transfer process, but it's a mystery to most students; even those that qualified.”</p> <p>P16 Partner</p>	<p>“We need a much more dynamic work-based learning and experiential learning piece to our community college system. It's the missing pin to the experience we provide our students. Simple changes—most work experience are capped at 16 units, so they do that as a very small part of their elective experience. How do we make that more dynamic?”</p> <p>Higher Education Leader</p>	<p>“Someone creates a bank of classes that are vetted and A-G approved. Students could take them on their own and it wouldn't take away from their district. Sometimes, districts don't want students to do that because it would mess up their funding.”</p> <p>K12 Leader</p>
<p>Digital divide</p>	<p>The digital divide—access to and cost of both devices and internet connectivity—has been fully exposed and exacerbated by COVID-19</p>	<p>“I was looking on my school's website and they were trying to provide Wi-Fi with companies. But it can get pricey and now my mom has an internet bill. If we could do something about that, that would be incredible. There's a lot of underprivileged families that can't afford Wi-Fi or internet connection. It's important right now. How can we expect students to do well when their Wi-Fi is cutting off, they're missing lectures, they're getting kicked out of Zoom meetings. It's important.</p> <p>Student</p>	<p>“I think with my school, they're trying to provide devices they can loan out, or having Wi-Fi connections to let students park in the parking lot and get the Wi-Fi connection. It's a huge requirement to do online school and a lot of people can't afford it. I hate for that to be the reason for them to stop their education. Internet is critical and important.”</p> <p>Student</p>	

Stakeholders across the Inland Empire expressed student needs and challenges, as well as system barriers and opportunities for redesigning with equity (4 of 4)

<p>Transition to online</p>	<p>The transition to a fully online school experience created challenges, including barriers to engaging and enrolling, difficulties learning online, and a lack of connection and support</p>	<p>“When you are in person, you get to know people better. I would go talk to my teachers, tell them where I am struggling, and I would stay after school to get tutoring and help. But I don’t know how that will be virtually. I hope if I need help from a teacher, they will have time to work with me personally.”</p> <p>Student</p>	<p>“With professors there’s a lot of lapse in knowledge about how to guide students with virtual learning—with misinformation from professors because they’re not used to virtual classes. It’s new to them. Not only do they struggle, but as students we struggle even more. So, when they don’t know what’s going on, it affects us. If we could get teachers more training, they could guide us to success, and it would benefit everyone.”</p> <p>Student</p>
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Given what we are learning from stakeholders, what are the likely implications of some of these issues in the Inland Empire, other regions and potentially statewide? (1 of 3)

Digital Equity

Reliable, affordable internet access is necessary to fully participate in online learning. Unlike other utilities—like electricity—it is unequally accessible and expensive. **If the internet were available like other utilities, what impact might that have on students' ability to learn?**

Student Engagement

Because we know that **relationships and belonging matter in persistence and completion—particularly to first generation, Black and Latinx students**—how will colleges build relationships with and support students well in the online environment? What changes need to occur for that to be true?



Given what we are learning from stakeholders, what are the likely implications of some of these issues in the Inland Empire, other regions and potentially statewide? (2 of 3)

Course Delivery

Given that there are limited seats in postsecondary in California, what would **help institutions exercise the maximum flexibility already available to them** to craft course delivery options to serve greater numbers of students well? What, specifically, stands in the way?

Enrollment Uncertainty

Many current and potential college students—particularly **students of color and students experiencing poverty**—are **rethinking their plans for this fall**. If significant numbers of students in California do not enroll, persist and/or complete, what will this mean to the region and to the state over the next 5-10 years?



Given what we are learning from stakeholders, what are the likely implications of some of these issues in the Inland Empire, other regions and potentially statewide? (3 of 3)

Transfer Improvements

ADT was supposed to strengthen the transfer process for students, helping more earn a four-year degree. **How can ADT be improved?** If it is better known and used, does that go far enough to create the impact for students we wish to see?

Online Instruction

What will it take to support faculty in delivering **high-quality online learning experiences** that encourage student interaction and provide support for their questions and challenges?





Early Themes Across All
Regional Conversations To-
Date

Interviews and focus groups are continuing, but so far, here is an early look at the cumulative themes we are hearing across California (1 of 3)

Key early findings from our interviews across all five regions. . .

1. COVID-19 has exacerbated existing inequities in society. This has heightened barriers to students getting their basic needs met.



Students need to meet basic needs in order to engage in education. **COVID-19 has raised additional barriers to getting these needs met, particularly for students who were already experiencing disadvantage in the system.** These needs include food, shelter, healthcare, internet, employment and mental health services. How can higher education institutions find their role in meeting these needs *and* how can higher education partner with outside organizations to meet needs?

2. The digital divide—access to and cost of both devices and internet connectivity—has been fully exposed and exacerbated by COVID-19.



Particularly **for low-income students and students in more remote areas, access to internet can be extremely challenging.** In some places, connectivity is not available, and in all places, connectivity adds to family expenses. For families with children, a higher level of bandwidth is needed to accommodate K12 learning and online college classes at the same time. In addition, homes must have multiple devices to effectively accommodate multiple learners engaged at the same time. While schools and universities tried to provide connectivity through wifi hot spots by working with internet providers or extending service to school parking lots, each came with its own challenges, creating additional costs or inconvenience.

3. Funding and budget cuts due to COVID-19 exacerbate existing financial challenges and inequities in the higher education system.



Across and within the three segments, higher education stakeholders perceive that funding is inequitable between them, and that institutions serving the highest-need students get the least funding. In addition, they feel funding is not necessarily focused on students who could benefit most. For example, returning adults or students who have stopped out do not qualify for all of California's financial aid programs. Many institutions will be losing significantly more funding from not having students on campus (and have more cost pressure because of the pivots they need to make to online learning) than they are expecting to lose in state funding. With any significant enrollment shifts—which are expected—institutions are hit on costs from all sides.

“We cannot serve our students quickly enough. There are not enough resources to fill the gap.”

—Higher education systems leader

“This pandemic means that some jobs are permanently lost. Not coming back.”

—Higher education systems leader

“I need us to think as one ecosystem...be co-dependent and not independent.”

—Higher education systems leader



Interviews and focus groups are continuing, but so far, here is an early look at the cumulative themes we are hearing across California (2 of 3)

Key early findings from our interviews across all five regions. . .

4. Connection between higher education and workforce needs to be strengthened.



Pathways, internships, work-based opportunities, micro-credentials and support for working students can both **help students more easily find their way to and through postsecondary credentials, and also help them target their career and gain valuable experience** along the way. Strengthening these connections is important to helping students prepare for and choose jobs that are in-demand, help their prospects, and increase the value proposition of attaining credentials and degrees that support the state’s economic recovery in an equitable and sustainable way.

5. Lack of flexibility within the higher education system (and related policies) creates barriers to equity-focused change.



Lack of coherence across segments makes it difficult for students to easily navigate from one segment to the next in predictable and smooth ways to earn credentials and degrees. Policies intended to support students—like the “50 percent rule”—can limit the flexibility of institutions to tend to student needs (e.g. advising) and limit statewide transferability.

6. The value proposition of higher education is changing.



Students expressed **skepticism that the price being paid for online education—which they perceive to be of less quality and more difficult to engage with than their in-person college experience—is not worth the same tuition cost as being on-campus** where they can take advantage of other supports and activities. Some students are making choices based on this perception to either defer enrollment, change schools or limit the classes they choose to take to lower level courses outside of their majors. This is particularly difficult for students in low-income families, for whom the cost of college can be overwhelming.



Interviews and focus groups are continuing, but so far, here is an early look at the cumulative themes we are hearing across California (3 of 3)

Key early findings from our interviews across all five regions. . .

7. California needs a statewide data system.



Without a statewide data system it is extremely difficult to know how students are moving from one segment to the next, and how best to understand both regional and statewide needs.

While California approved the Cradle-to-Career Data System Act in 2019 and that work is still moving forward, ensuring ample funding and an accelerated timeline could be important considerations. A data system is needed that both protects student privacy and supports intrusive advising. Data that track completion in an on-time and cost-efficient manner and that allow for measuring both persistence and success in degree and workforce engagement are critical tools for supporting students at scale and throughout their K12-postsecondary-workforce journey.

“Getting people to believe that this is possible. I think when you have large issues that go back hundreds of years (systemic racism, closing opportunity gaps, etc.) there is this hopelessness... like ‘well, we’ve tried everything.’ We need to look much deeper.”
—K12 education systems leader

8. If not addressed, the long-term impact of inequities and racial injustice could be even more dramatic going forward.



Racial injustice—which was present pre-COVID-19—combined with economic uncertainty and the removal of students from school and college environments where they have relationships and support is taking a toll on students’ sense of belonging. **Many students are wondering “What is my place in the world? Am I going to be welcome at college?”** It will take ongoing and consistent action to support students along the path to and through college, as well as a mindset shift for some, from “college is only for some kids” to the belief that it is truly for all.

