

# Career Pathways and Economic Mobility at California's Community Colleges

June 27, 2019

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# Career education is a critical part of public higher education in California

- Career education trains people for middle-skill jobs requiring more than a high school diploma but less than a bachelor's degree
  - Helps meet the state's workforce needs
  - Helps improve students' economic outcomes
- Community colleges are the primary provider of career education credentials in California
  - Offer a wide range of programs
  - Serve a diverse group of students



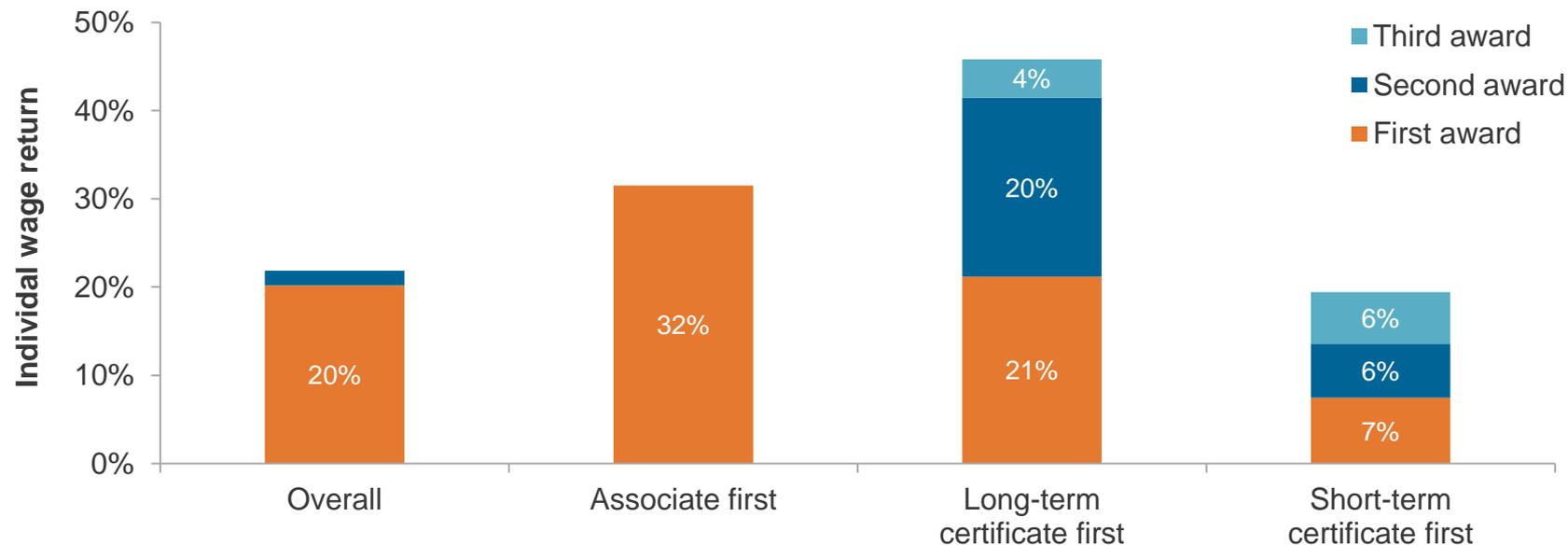
# California has invested heavily in expanding career education programs

- Legislature has allocated \$1.5 billion since 2014
- Different pathways have major implications for students' wage gains
- Students, colleges, and policymakers need a better understanding of the economic gains for various pathways



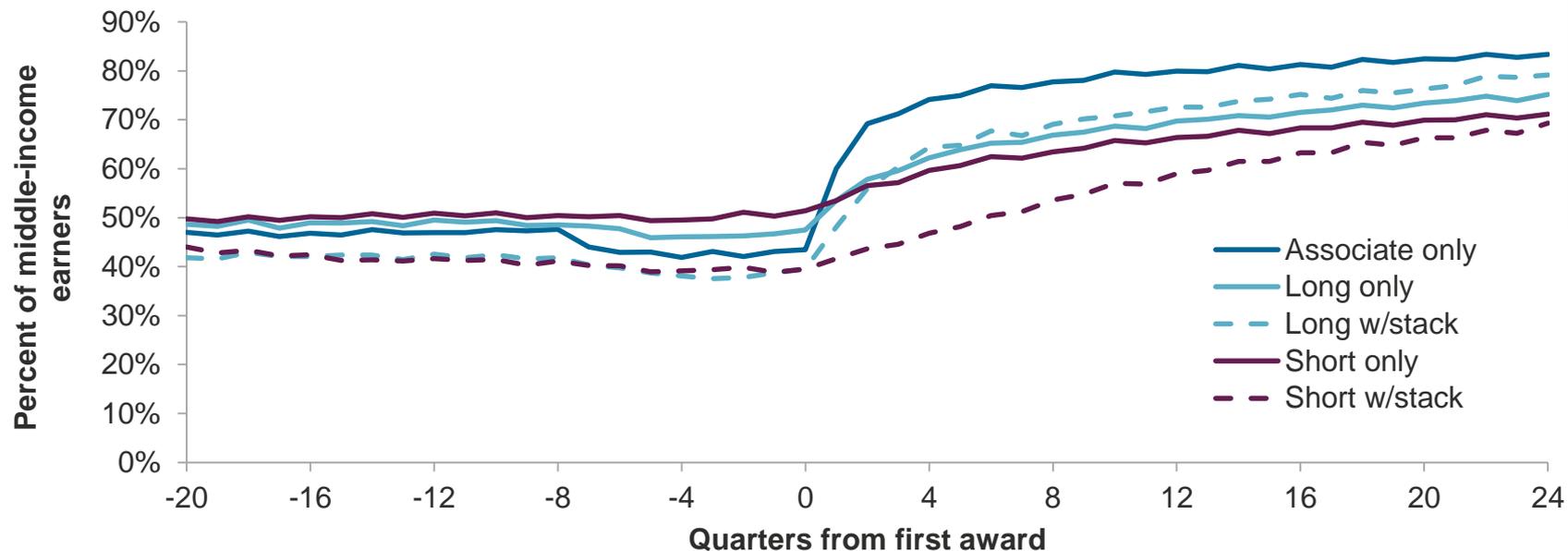
# Students see wage gains after earning career education credentials

Wage returns by credential length



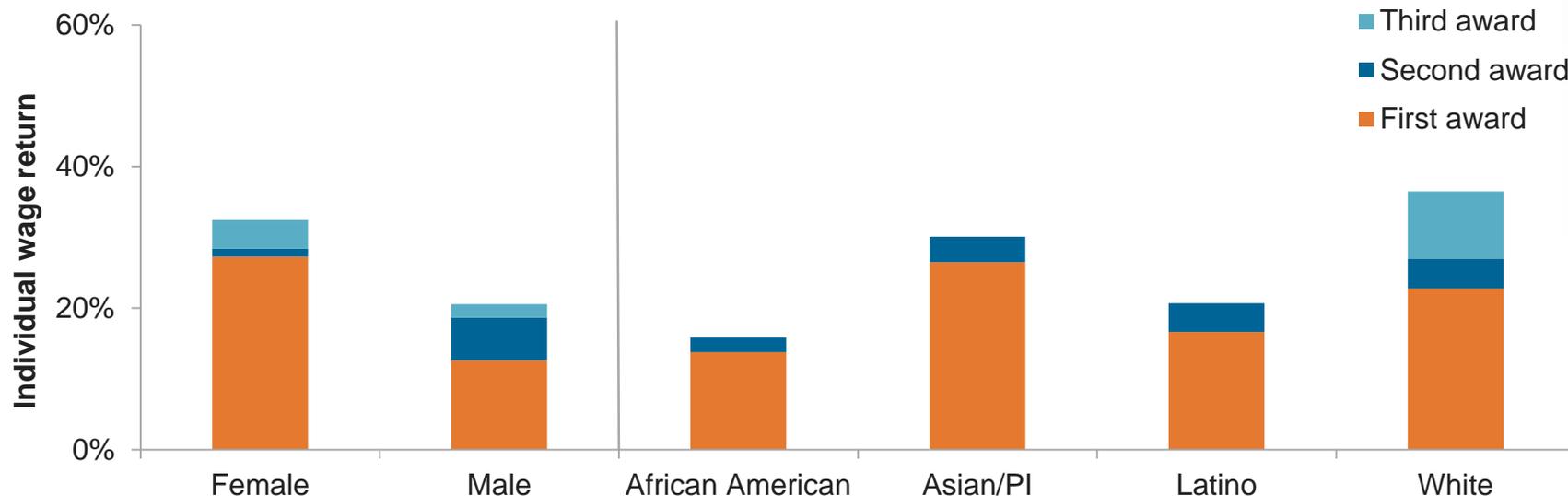
# Most students earn middle-income wages within a year of completing their first credential

## Earnings trajectories across pathways



# Female, Asian, and white students see larger returns from career education credentials

Wage returns across demographic groups

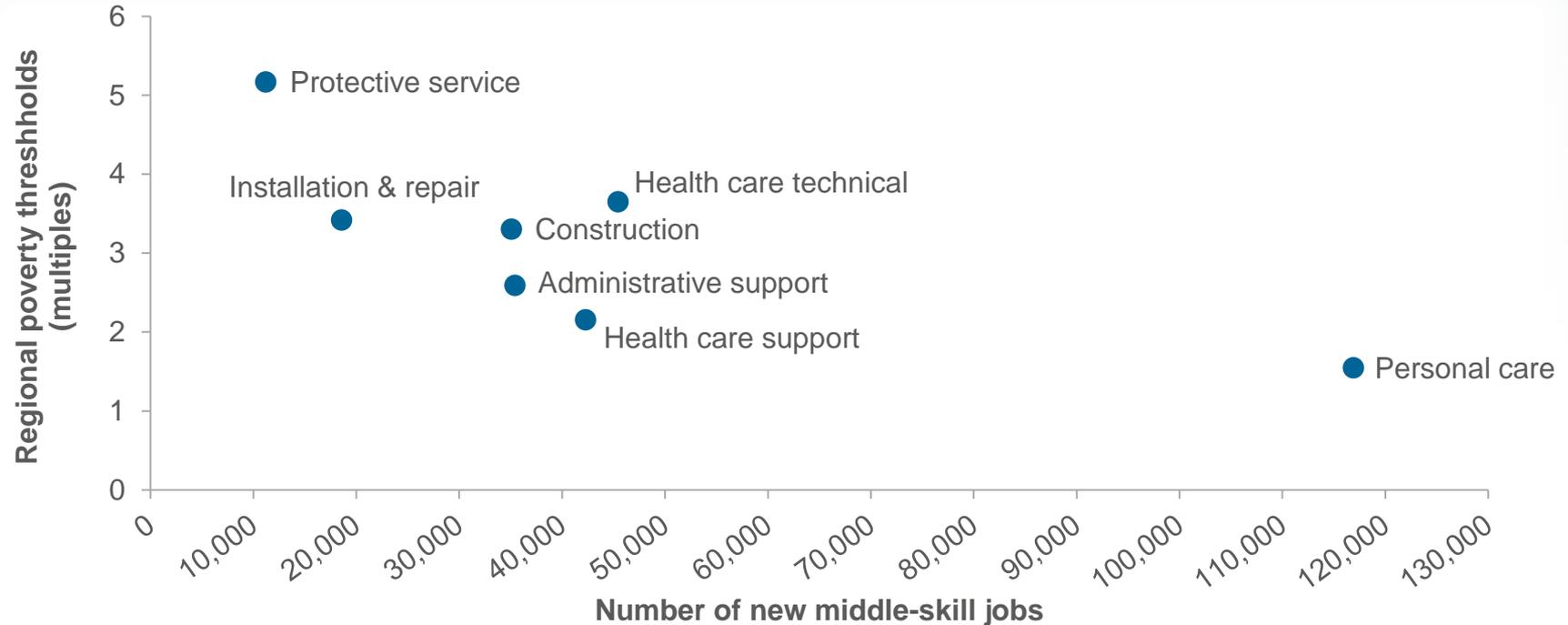


# Economic returns are driven largely by differences across program areas

- Health programs, on average, provide the largest returns
  - Business and IT programs offer the smallest returns
- Some student groups are more likely to earn low-return credentials
- Returns to credentials may not tell the whole story
  - Individuals' initial earnings could be very low
  - Family and consumer sciences is a case in point

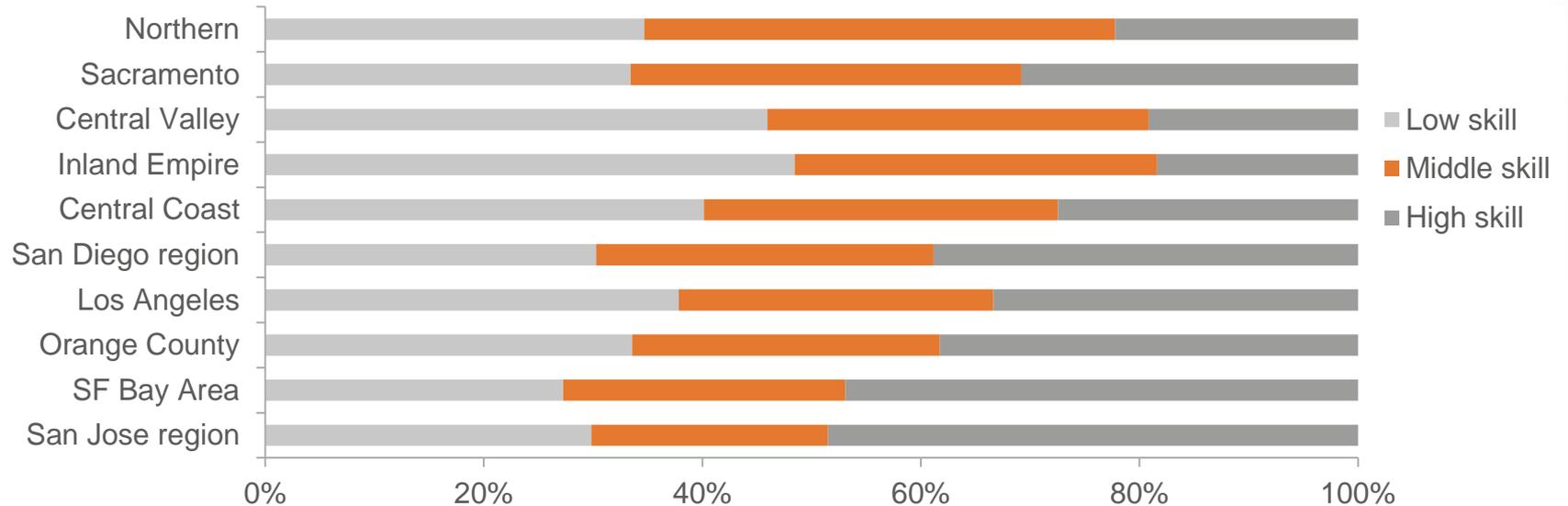


# Future workforce needs do not always align with well-paying jobs



# Regional workforce demand is also a key consideration

Projected new jobs for middle-skill workers by region



# Looking forward

- Provide guidance to students so they have the necessary information before selecting programs
- Expand access to and completion rates for high-return programs through increased financial aid and student services
- Assess and implement ways to shorten the time it takes to complete career pathways
- Engage with employers and industries to support career development and advancement



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# Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.