

California maintains life science dominance, report finds

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California retains the crown as the nation's top recipient of federal life science funding, signifying the industry's dynamism, according to a new

report from Biocom, a California life science trade group.

The state received \$4.2 billion in life science research grants from the National Institutes of Health in the 2018 [fiscal year](#), according to the report released Monday from San Diego-based Biocom. Nearly \$933 million of the state's NIH grants went to research in San Diego County.

Runner-up Massachusetts received about \$2.9 billion in NIH funding in the 2018 fiscal year. The NIH is the country's biggest single funder of life science research.

San Diego County's life science employment rose from 58,267 in 2013 to 65,572 last year. Employees earned an annual average wage of more than \$115,000.

Los Angeles County contributed the largest share of Southern California life science jobs, rising from 88,412 in 2013 to 91,713 in 2018. However average annual wages in 2018 of about \$83,000 were considerably lower than in San Diego.

In San Diego County, the medical device area significantly increased its competitiveness. This was measured by the concentration of jobs in the county compared to the nationwide average. It was the only sector to show such an increase.

The medical device competitiveness index rose from 2.34 in 2013 to 2.93 in 2018. Total medical device jobs rose from 8,371 in 2013 to 11,706 last year.

Medical device companies have a shorter time to market than companies developing drugs, said Joe Panetta, Biocom's president and CEO.

"It's an industry where in most cases the objective is to make your

product attractive to a larger buyer," Panetta said.

The most competitive life science sector, biopharmaceutical manufacturing, fell from an index of 11.13 in 2013 to 7.64 last year. Total jobs in that sector rose from 6,044 in 2013 to 7,304 last year.

Most San Diego County jobs went to research and lab services, rising from 35,957 to 40,587 over the five-year period ended last year.

Statewide, life science provided more than 428,000 jobs in 2018. Of those jobs, 134,689 were in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

Southern California, extending to Ventura County, provided more than 237,000 jobs. (The remainder of jobs were located in counties outside those areas, such as Santa Cruz and Santa Barbara).

While Los Angeles County has major academic centers, they and local life science companies are geographically dispersed. This has made it difficult to form a cluster as in San Diego's bionexus in the La Jolla area.

But the County of Los Angeles has taken an interest in bolstering the industry-it helped fund the Biocom report, along with Deloitte.

And last year, a \$320 million life science venture capital fund, Westlake Village BioPartners, opened in Los Angeles County.

Research is drawing investment into Los Angeles, said Dina Lozofsky, executive director of Biocom's Los Angeles office. The county got nearly \$1.1 billion in NIH funding last year, the most of any county in the state.

"The region as a whole has become much more hospitable in terms of a more cohesive ecosystem for funding or real estate," Lozofsky said.

Orange County [life science](#) employment rose from 56,272 in 2013 to 57,737 last year. Those jobs paid an average of more than \$90,000 a year.

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