

RETURN ON INVESTMENT TO SOCIETY

Where Value Meets Values: The Economic Impact of Community Colleges

Benefits created by America's community colleges extend to far more people than just their students. As students and employers enjoy higher income and increased output, society as a whole benefits from an expanded economy and a range of savings associated with the students' improved quality of life.

AMERICA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES RAISE NATIONAL PROSPERITY

- Students earn more because of the skills and qualifications they acquire at America's community colleges. Further, employers earn more because the added skills of the students they hire make their businesses more productive.
- Together, increases in earnings and business output stimulate corresponding increases in income and employment throughout the U.S. Over their working lives, the 2012 student population at America's community colleges will generate a present value of **\$1.1 trillion** in added income in the nation.

AMERICA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE

- As community college students achieve higher levels of education, they are statistically more likely to develop good health habits. This leads to a present value of **\$37.5 billion** in savings to students and to society as a whole for medical treatment related to smoking, alcoholism, obesity, drug abuse, and mental disorders.
- Students enjoy better employment opportunities as a result of their community college education. This makes them less likely to require income assistance and less likely to commit crimes. These effects translate to a present value of **\$546.9 million** in unemployment-related savings and **\$8.3 billion** in law enforcement savings to society as a whole.
- Altogether, savings to society amount to a present value of **\$46.4 billion**, equal to the sum of avoided costs related to health, crime, and unemployment.

BENEFITS TO SOCIETY OUTWEIGH TAXPAYER COSTS

- U.S. taxpayers paid **\$44.9 billion** to support the operations of America's community colleges in 2012. In return for this support, society as a whole will receive a present value of **\$1.2 trillion** in benefits, the sum of the added income and social savings that the 2012 student population will generate in the U.S. economy.
- For every dollar that federal, state, and local taxpayers spent on America's community colleges, society as whole in the U.S. will receive a cumulative value of **\$25.90** in benefits, for as long as the 2012 students remain active in the U.S. workforce.

PRESENT VALUE OF SOCIAL SAVINGS (BILLIONS)

