

# COMMUNITY COLLEGES CAN'T DELIVER FOR US UNLESS WE DELIVER FOR THEM.

## Delivering National, Statewide and Local Economic Benefits

- State and local governments reap a 16 percent return on every dollar they invest in community colleges due to the increased earnings of community college graduates.
- Community colleges rely on state and local appropriations for 55 percent of their funding to keep them intentionally less expensive for students.
- Community colleges enroll 44 percent of all American higher education undergraduates, awarding about 932,000 associate degrees or certificates annually.
- 12.4 million students attend courses at community colleges each year.

## Delivering Skills for Today's and Tomorrow's Jobs

- Close to 80 percent of firefighters, law enforcement officers, and EMTs are credentialed at community colleges.
- 20 percent to 40 percent of the nation's teachers began their education at community colleges.
- 44 percent of students who receive baccalaureates or master's degrees in STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) fields attended a community college at some point in their careers.
- 52 percent of new nurses and the majority of other new health-care workers are educated at community colleges.
- Community colleges offer training in these medical fields: dental hygiene, nutrition, emergency medical services, health information management, clinical laboratory sciences and medical technology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, radiologic technology, nuclear medical technology, rehabilitation counseling, respiratory therapy, speech-language pathology, and audiology.

“ Now is the time to build a firmer, stronger foundation for growth that will not only withstand future economic storms, but one that helps us thrive and compete in a global economy. It's time to reform our community colleges so that they provide Americans of all ages a chance to learn the skills and knowledge necessary to compete for the jobs of the future. ”

– PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA,  
OCTOBER 2010

“ Community colleges are the unsung heroes of our education system. They prepare today's workers for tomorrow's careers, and they get little support and even less recognition for their efforts. For millions of Americans, the local community college is the gateway to the American Dream. ”

– MELINDA FRENCH GATES,  
OCTOBER 2010



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### Delivering Opportunity for All Americans

- More than 12 million Americans are enrolled in community colleges, including:
  - 53 percent of all Native American undergraduates;
  - 52 percent of all Hispanic undergraduates;
  - 45 percent of all Asian/Pacific Islander undergraduates; and
  - 44 percent of all African American undergraduates.
- Half of college-going adults who are 50 or older are enrolled in community colleges, compared with just 33 percent of adults aged 25 and younger.
- 42 percent of all first-generation college students attend community colleges.
- 46 percent of community college students receive financial aid to assist with their college costs.

### Delivering Personal Benefits

- An associate degree increases earnings by an average of \$7,900 annually over those with only a high school diploma.
- Licensees and certificate holders earn 27 percent more than those with a BA alone.
- Community colleges are traditionally the most affordable schools, with an average price tag of \$2,544 a year compared to \$7,020 for four-year public research institutions.

“Community colleges have made a significant contribution to expanding educational opportunities. Attendance at one of these institutions is associated with higher wages, even if a degree is not completed. Evidence suggests that each year of credit at a community college is worth almost as much, in terms of increased earnings potential, as a year at a four-year college.”

– BEN S. BERNANKE  
CHAIRMAN OF THE  
FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM  
SEPTEMBER 2007

“Community colleges represent an affordable, accessible route for a wide income spectrum of students to access well-paying, high-demand jobs, as well as further education.”

– THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION,  
MAY 2009



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