



# California Community Colleges Key Facts

## Why We Care About Educating Californians

*United States Census Bureau data show that the wages of college graduates are about 90 percent higher than the wages of workers with only a high school diploma. The value of a college degree has grown rapidly over the past quarter century. In the current economic downturn, unemployment rates are far fewer for college graduates than for adults with less education. California faces a skills gap and will fall 1 million degree holders short of workforce demand. Based on current trends, by 2025 only 35 percent of working-age adults will have a college degree, but 41 percent of jobs will require a degree.*

## We Are the Largest System of Higher Education in the Nation

- The California Community Colleges serve more than 2.4 million students and is the largest system of higher education in the nation.
- The system is composed of 72 districts and 112 colleges.
- California's community colleges are charged with providing workforce training, basic skills education, and preparing students for transfer to four-year institutions. They offer associate degrees and provide short-term job training certificates in more than 175 different fields.

## We Educate a Diverse Student Body

- California Community Colleges are a microcosm of the demographics of California. In 2010-11, the demographics were composed of 0.5 percent Native American, 0.5 percent Pacific Islander, 3 percent Filipino, 7.5 percent African American, 11.5 percent Asian, 36 percent Hispanic, and 31 percent Caucasian.
- Roughly 50 percent of community college students are age 25 or older.
- The California Community Colleges enroll approximately 75 percent of the veterans using GI Bill education benefits in California's three segments of public higher education.
- The number of Pell Grant recipients attending national community colleges increased by 36.8 percent from 2008-09 to 2009-10. Community colleges enroll the state's lowest-income students.

## We Are California's Largest Workforce Training Provider

- The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that occupations which require an associate degree will grow the fastest of any occupations by 18 percent through 2020.
- Middle-skill jobs represent 49 percent of jobs in California. These jobs include health care workers, truckers, police and firefighters. Middle-skills jobs are central to the energy efficiency, wind, solar, bio-fuels and other green tech industries.

- Approximately 25,000 apprentices are educated each year by community colleges. Adjusting for the fastest growing sectors of the economy, colleges are preparing students to work in the fields of health care, information technology, energy and the environment.
- The California Community Colleges offer more than 175 degree and certificate programs in hundreds of vocational fields such as nursing, business and computer science.
- Community colleges train 80 percent of all California firefighters, law enforcement officers and emergency medical technicians. Thirty-nine colleges have police academies and 64 colleges train firefighters.
- California Community Colleges train 70 percent of California's nurses. Nursing programs are offered at 75 of the 112 colleges.

## **We Are a Popular and Cost-Effective Pathway to Transfer to a Four-Year Institution**

- Fifty-one percent of graduates of the California State University system and 29 percent of those in the University of California system transferred from a California Community College.
- Community colleges are a cost-effective route to the baccalaureate degree. Students transferring from a community college to a four-year institution can cut their costs for tuition and fees by almost half while completing their undergraduate degree. Many also save on room and board by living at home and attending their local community college.

## **We Are a Good Investment**

- The California Community Colleges is the largest provider of workforce training in the state and nation.
- For every \$1 California invests in students who graduate from college, it will receive a net return on investment of \$4.50.
- Over the course of a Californian's working lifetime, adults with an associate's degree earn \$1,340,000 more than their peers with only a high school diploma. Students who earn a degree or certificate from a California community college nearly double their earnings within three years.
- Attending or graduating from a community college doubles an individual's chance of finding a job compared to those who failed to complete high school.