

# The Economic Value of the Maricopa County Community College District





## THE MARICOPA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

(MCCCD) creates value in many ways. The colleges play a key role in helping students increase their employability and achieve their individual potential. The colleges draw students to the county, generating new dollars and opportunities for Maricopa County. The colleges provide students with the education, training, and skills they need to have fulfilling and prosperous careers. Furthermore, the colleges are places for students to meet new people, increase their self-confidence, and promote their overall health and well-being.

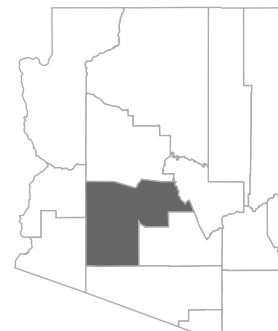
MCCCD influences both the lives of students and the county economy. The colleges support a variety of industries in Maricopa County, serve county businesses, and benefit society as a whole in Arizona from an expanded economy and improved quality of life. Additionally, the benefits created by MCCCD extend to the state and local government through increased tax revenues and public sector savings.

This study measures the economic impacts created by MCCCD on the business community and the benefits the colleges generate in return for the investments made by their key stakeholder groups—students, taxpayers, and society. The following two analyses are presented:

 **Economic impact analysis**

 **Investment analysis**

All results reflect employee, student, and financial data, provided by MCCCD, for fiscal year (FY) 2023-24. Impacts on the Maricopa County economy are reported under the economic impact analysis and are measured in terms of added income. The returns on investment to students, taxpayers, and society in Arizona are reported under the investment analysis.



**Maricopa County,  
Arizona**

MCCCD influences both the **lives of its students** and the **county economy**.



# Economic impact analysis



MCCCD promotes economic growth in Maricopa County through its direct expenditures and the resulting expenditures of students and county businesses. The colleges serve as employers and buyers of goods and services for their day-to-day and construction operations. The colleges' activities attract students from outside Maricopa County, whose expenditures benefit county vendors. In addition, the colleges are primary sources of higher education to Maricopa County residents and suppliers of trained workers to county industries, enhancing overall productivity in the county workforce.

## Operations spending impact



MCCCD adds economic value to Maricopa County as an employer of county residents and a large-scale buyer of goods and services. In FY 2023-24, the colleges employed 10,499 full-time and part-time faculty and staff, 93% of whom lived in Maricopa County. Total payroll at MCCCD was \$642.9 million, much of which was spent in the county on groceries, mortgage and rent payments, dining out, and other household expenses. In addition, the colleges spent \$360.0 million on expenses related to facilities, supplies, and professional services (excluding construction).

MCCCD's operations spending added \$854.2 million in income to the county during the analysis year. This figure represents the colleges' payroll, the multiplier effects generated by the in-county spending of the colleges and their employees, and a downward adjustment to account for funding that the colleges received from county sources. The \$854.2 million in added income is equivalent to supporting 11,414 jobs in the county.

## Construction spending impact



The colleges invest in capital projects each year to maintain facilities, create additional capacities, and meet growing educational demands. While the amount varies from year to year, these quick infusions of income and jobs have a substantial impact on the county economy. In FY 2023-24, the colleges' construction spending generated \$4.9 million in added income, which is equivalent to supporting 47 jobs.

Impacts created by  
MCCCD in FY 2023-24



Operations spending impact  
**\$854.2 million**

+



Construction spending impact  
**\$4.9 million**

+



Student spending impact  
**\$828.4 million**

+



Alumni impact  
**\$7.1 billion**



Total economic impact  
**\$8.8 billion**

OR



Jobs supported  
**108,190**



## Student spending impact



Around 15% of students attending the colleges originated from outside the county in FY 2023-24, and some of these students relocated to Maricopa County to attend the colleges. These students may not have come to the county if the colleges did not exist. In addition, some in-county students, referred to as retained students, would have left Maricopa County if not for the existence of MCCCDC. While attending the colleges, these relocated and retained students spent money on groceries, accommodation, transportation, and other household expenses. This spending generated \$828.4 million in added income for the county economy in FY 2023-24, which supported 10,009 jobs in Maricopa County.

## Alumni impact



The education and training the colleges provide for county residents has the greatest impact. Since the colleges were established, students have studied at MCCCDC and entered the county workforce with greater knowledge and new skills. Today, hundreds of thousands of former MCCCDC students are employed in Maricopa County. As a result of their education from MCCCDC, the students receive higher earnings and increase the productivity of the businesses that employ them. In FY 2023-24, MCCCDC alumni generated \$7.1 billion in added income for the county economy, which is equivalent to supporting 86,720 jobs.

## Total impact

MCCCDC added \$8.8 billion in income to the Maricopa County economy during the analysis year, equal to the sum of operations and construction spending impacts, the student spending impact, and the alumni impact. For context, the \$8.8 billion impact was equal to approximately 2.4% of the total gross regional product (GRP) of Maricopa County. This contribution that the colleges provided on their own was almost twice as large as the entire Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation industry in the county.

MCCCDC's total impact can also be expressed in terms of jobs supported. The \$8.8 billion impact supported 108,190 county jobs, using the jobs-to-sales ratios specific to each industry in the county. This means that one out of every 30 jobs in Maricopa County is supported by the activities of the colleges and their students. In addition, the \$8.8 billion, or 108,190 supported jobs, stemmed from different industry sectors. For instance, among non-education industry sectors, the spending of MCCCDC and their students and the activities of their alumni in the Health Care & Social Assistance industry sector supported 12,433 jobs in FY 2023-24. If the colleges did not exist, these impacts would not have been generated in Maricopa County.

### MCCCDC impacts by industry (jobs supported)



12,433

Health Care & Social Assistance



12,375

Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation



12,010

Professional & Technical Services



10,427

Retail Trade



5,920

Accommodation & Food Services

**One out of every 30 jobs** in Maricopa County is supported by the activities of MCCCDC and its students.





# Investment analysis

An investment analysis evaluates the costs associated with a proposed venture against its expected benefits. The analysis presented here evaluates MCCC CD as an investment from the perspectives of students, taxpayers, and society in Arizona. As with the economic impact analysis, this analysis considers only FY 2023-24 activities.

## Student perspective



In FY 2023-24, MCCC CD served 143,857 credit and 12,780 non-credit students.

In order to attend the colleges, the students paid for tuition, fees, books, and supplies. They also took out loans and will incur interest on those loans. Additionally, students gave up money they would have otherwise earned had they been working instead of attending college. The total investment made by MCCC CD students in FY 2023-24 amounted to a present value of \$476.8 million, equal to \$210.8 million in out-of-pocket expenses (including future principal and interest on student loans) and \$266.0 million in forgone time and money.

In return for their investment, MCCC CD's students will receive a stream of higher future earnings that will continue to grow throughout their working lives. For example, the average MCCC CD associate degree graduate from FY 2023-24 will see annual earnings \$9,500 higher than a person with a high school diploma or equivalent working in Arizona. Over a working lifetime, the benefits of the associate degree over a high school diploma will amount to an undiscounted value of \$389,500 in higher earnings per graduate. The present value of the cumulative higher future earnings that MCCC CD's FY 2023-24 students will receive over their working careers is \$2.5 billion.

The students' benefit-cost ratio is 5.2. In other words, for every dollar students invest in an education at MCCC CD in the form of out-of-pocket expenses and forgone time and money, they will receive a cumulative value of \$5.20 in higher future earnings. Annually, the students' investment in MCCC CD has an average annual internal rate

### Students see a high rate of return for their investment in MCCC CD



Average annual return for MCCC CD students  
**17.6%**



Stock market 30-year average annual return  
10.1%

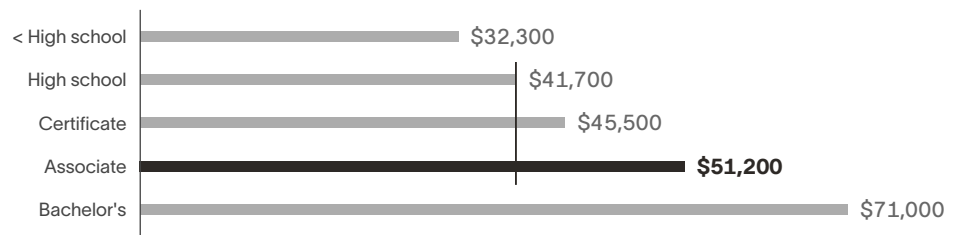


Interest earned on savings account (national deposit rate)  
0.5%

Source: Forbes' S&P 500, 1994-2023; FDIC.gov, March 2023

### Average earnings by education level at career midpoint

The average associate degree graduate from MCCC CD will see an increase in earnings of **\$9,500** each year compared to a person with a high school diploma or equivalent working in Arizona.



Source: Lightcast employment data

of return of 17.6%, which is impressive compared to the U.S. stock market's 30-year average rate of return of 10.1%.

## Taxpayer perspective



MCCCD generates more in tax revenue than it receives. These benefits to taxpayers consist primarily of taxes that the state and local government will collect from the added revenue created in the state. As MCCCD's students will earn more, they will make higher tax payments throughout their working lives. Students' employers will also make higher tax payments as they increase their output and purchases of goods and services. By the end of the FY 2023-24 students' working lives, the state and local government will have collected a present value of \$899.5 million in added taxes.

Benefits to taxpayers will also consist of savings generated by the improved lifestyles of students attending MCCCD and the corresponding reduced government services. Education is statistically correlated with a variety of lifestyle changes. The education that MCCCD students receive will generate savings in three main categories: 1) health care, 2) justice system, and 3) income assistance. Improved health will lower students' demand for national health care services. In addition, costs related to the justice system will decrease. MCCCD's students will be more employable, so their reduced demand for income assistance such as welfare and unemployment benefits will benefit taxpayers. For a list of study references, contact MCCCD for a copy of the main report. Altogether, the present value of the benefits associated with an education through MCCCD will generate \$87.3 million in savings to state and local taxpayers.

Total taxpayer benefits amount to \$986.7 million, the present value sum of the added tax revenue and public sector savings. Taxpayer costs are \$702.1 million, equal to the amount of state and local government funding MCCCD received in FY 2023-24. These benefits and costs yield a benefit-cost ratio of 1.4. This means that for every dollar of public money invested in MCCCD in FY 2023-24, taxpayers will receive a cumulative present value of \$1.40 over the course of the students' working lives. The average annual internal rate of return for taxpayers is 2.7%, which compares favorably to other long-term investments in the public sector.

For every dollar of public money invested in MCCCD, taxpayers will receive a cumulative value of **\$1.40** over the course of the students' working lives.

## Social perspective



Society as a whole in Arizona benefits from the presence of MCCCD in two major ways. Primarily, society benefits from an increased economic base in the state. This is attributed to the added income from students' increased lifetime earnings (added student income) and increased business output (added business income), which raise economic prosperity in Arizona.

Benefits to society also consist of the savings generated by the improved lifestyles of MCCCD's students. As discussed in the previous section, education is statistically correlated with a variety of lifestyle changes that generate social savings. Note that these costs are avoided by the consumers but are distinct from the costs avoided

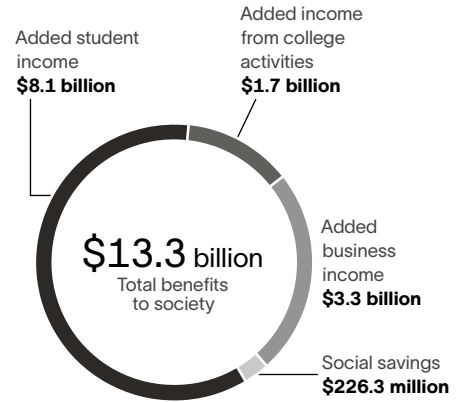


by the taxpayers outlined above. Health care savings include avoided medical costs associated with smoking, obesity, substance abuse, and depression. Justice system savings include avoided costs to the government and society due to less judicial activity. Income assistance savings include reduced welfare and unemployment claims. For a list of study references, contact MCCCDC for a copy of the main report.

Altogether, the social benefits of MCCCDC equal a present value of \$13.3 billion. These benefits include \$8.1 billion in added student income, \$3.3 billion in added business income, \$1.7 billion in added income from college activities, as well as \$226.3 million in social savings related to health, the justice system, and income assistance in Arizona. People in Arizona invested a present value total of \$1.3 billion in MCCCDC in FY 2023-24. The cost includes all the colleges' expenditures and student costs.

The benefit-cost ratio for society is 9.9, equal to the \$13.3 billion in benefits divided by the \$1.3 billion in costs. In other words, for every dollar invested in MCCCDC, people in Arizona will receive a cumulative value of \$9.90 in benefits. The benefits of this investment will occur for as long as MCCCDC's FY 2023-24 students remain employed in the state workforce.

### Social benefits in Arizona from MCCCDC






Source: Lightcast impact model

## Summary of investment analysis results

The results of the analysis demonstrate that MCCCDC is a strong investment for all three major stakeholder groups—students, taxpayers, and society. As shown, students receive a great return for their investments in an education through MCCCDC. At the same time, taxpayers' investment in MCCCDC returns more to government budgets than it costs and creates a wide range of social benefits throughout Arizona.

### Summary of investment analysis results

 <b>Student perspective</b>		 <b>Taxpayer perspective</b>		 <b>Social perspective</b>	
Present value benefits <b>\$2.5 billion</b>		Present value benefits <b>\$1.0 billion</b>		Present value benefits <b>\$13.3 billion</b>	
Present value costs <b>\$0.5 billion</b>		Present value costs <b>\$0.7 billion</b>		Present value costs <b>\$1.3 billion</b>	
Net present value <b>\$2.0 billion</b>		Net present value <b>\$0.3 billion</b>		Net present value <b>\$12.0 billion</b>	
Benefit-cost ratio	Rate of return	Benefit-cost ratio	Rate of return	Benefit-cost ratio	Rate of return
5.2	17.6%	1.4	2.7%	9.9	n/a*

\* The rate of return is not reported for the social perspective because the beneficiaries are not necessarily the same as the original investors.

# Conclusion

*The results of this study demonstrate that MCCCDC creates value from **multiple perspectives**.*

The colleges benefit county businesses by increasing consumer spending in the county and supplying a steady flow of qualified, trained workers to the workforce. MCCCDC enriches the lives of students by raising their lifetime earnings and helping them achieve their individual potential. The colleges benefit state and local taxpayers through increased tax receipts and a reduced demand for government-supported social services. Finally, MCCCDC benefits society as a whole in Arizona by creating a more prosperous economy and generating a variety of savings through the improved lifestyles of students.

## About the study

Data and assumptions used in the study are based on several sources, including the FY 2023-24 academic and financial reports from MCCCDC, industry and employment data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau, outputs of Lightcast's Multi-Regional Social Accounting Matrix model, and a variety of studies and surveys relating education to social behavior. The study applies a conservative methodology and follows standard practice using only the most recognized indicators of economic impact and investment effectiveness. For a full description of the data and approach used in the study, please contact the district for a copy of the main report.



Lightcast provides colleges and universities with labor market data that help create better outcomes for students, businesses, and communities. Our data, which cover more than 99% of the U.S. workforce, are compiled from a wide variety of government sources, job postings, and online profiles and résumés. Hundreds of institutions use Lightcast to align programs with regional needs, drive enrollment, connect students with in-demand careers, track their alumni's employment outcomes, and demonstrate their institution's economic impact on their region. Visit [lightcast.io/solutions/education](https://lightcast.io/solutions/education) to learn more or connect with us.