



The Economic Value of the San Diego Community College District



The San Diego Community College District* (SDCCD) creates a significant positive impact on the business community and generates a return on investment to its major stakeholder groups—students, taxpayers, and society. Using a two-pronged approach that involves an economic impact analysis and an investment analysis, this study calculates the benefits received by each of these groups. Results of the analysis reflect fiscal year (FY) 2024-25.

* The SDCCD consists of San Diego City College, San Diego Mesa College, San Diego Miramar College, and seven campuses of San Diego College of Continuing Education.



Economic impact analysis

In FY 2024-25, the SDCCD added **\$5.3 billion** in income to the San Diego County economy, a value approximately equal to **1.8%** of the county's total gross regional product (GRP). For perspective, the SDCCD's \$5.3 billion impact is an economic boost to San Diego County similar to hosting the Super Bowl **15 times**. Expressed in terms of jobs, the SDCCD's impact supported **49,031 jobs**. For further perspective, the activities of the colleges and their students support **one out of every 48 jobs** in San Diego County.

Operations spending impact

- The SDCCD employed 5,055 full-time and part-time faculty and staff. Payroll amounted to \$318.3 million, much of which was spent in the county on groceries, mortgage and rent payments, dining out, and other household expenses. The colleges spent another \$252.1 million on expenses related to facilities, supplies, and professional services.
- The net impact of the colleges' operations spending added **\$455.7 million** in income to the county economy in FY 2024-25.

Student spending impact

- Around 10% of students attending the SDCCD originated from outside the county. Some of these students relocated to San Diego County. In addition, some in-county students, referred to as retained students, would have left San Diego County for other educational opportunities if not for the SDCCD. These relocated and retained students spent money on groceries, mortgage and rent payments, and other living expenses at businesses in the county.
- The expenditures of relocated and retained students in FY 2024-25 added **\$447.6 million** in income to the San Diego County economy.

Alumni impact

- Over the years, students have studied at the SDCCD and entered or re-entered the workforce with newly acquired knowledge and skills. Today, hundreds of thousands of these former students are employed in San Diego County.
- The net impact of the SDCCD's former students currently employed in the county workforce amounted to **\$4.4 billion** in added income in FY 2024-25.

Impacts created by the SDCCD in FY 2024-25

 Operations spending impact
\$455.7 million

+

 Student spending impact
\$447.6 million

+

 Alumni impact
\$4.4 billion

 Total economic impact
\$5.3 billion

OR

 Jobs supported
49,031



Student perspective

- The SDCCD's FY 2024-25 students paid a present value of **\$56.7 million** to cover the cost of tuition, fees, supplies, and interest on student loans. They also forwent a value of **\$495.8 million** in time and money had they been working instead of attending college.
- In return for their investment, students will receive a cumulative present value of **\$2.2 billion** in increased earnings over their working lives. This translates to a return of **\$4.00** in higher future earnings for every dollar students invest in their education. Students' average annual rate of return is **16.0%**.

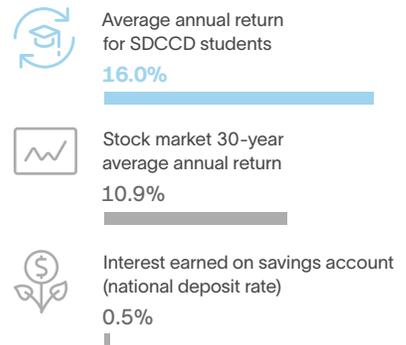
Taxpayer perspective

- Taxpayers provided the SDCCD with **\$539.1 million** of funding in FY 2024-25. In return, they will benefit from added tax revenue, stemming from students' higher lifetime earnings and increased business output, amounting to **\$867.6 million**. A reduced demand for government-funded services in California will add another **\$127.6 million** in benefits to taxpayers.
- Total taxpayer benefits amount to **\$995.2 million**, the present value sum of the added tax revenue and public sector savings. For every \$1 million of public money invested in the SDCCD, taxpayers will receive **\$1.8 million** in return over the course of students' working lives. The average annual rate of return for taxpayers is **4.8%**.

Social perspective

- In FY 2024-25, California invested **\$1.1 billion** to support the SDCCD. In turn, the California economy will grow by **\$11.8 billion** over the course of students' working lives. Society will also benefit from **\$167.8 million** of public and private sector savings.
- For \$1 million invested in the SDCCD in FY 2024-25, people in California will receive **\$10.8 million** in return, for as long as the SDCCD's FY 2024-25 students remain active in the state workforce.

Students see a high rate of return for their investment in the SDCCD



Source: Forbes' S&P 500, 1994-2025. FDIC.gov, January 2024

For every \$1...

-  **Students** gain in lifetime earnings **\$4.00**
-  **Taxpayers** gain in added tax revenue and public sector savings **\$1.80**
-  **Society** gains in added income and social savings **\$10.80**